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Dear Susan,

Land Management Updates

Planned maintenance on the **Bates Land** property includes three meadows that will be mowed and the brush (much of it invasive species) hacked back at the entrance as well near the stone bench. In addition, this fall, Jesse King of Groton, completed his Eagle Scout project which involved building an information kiosk and cleaning the dedication stone, just in time for the 45th anniversary of the dedication of the property by Natica Bates.

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**Renew your
Membership!**

The newly cleaned dedication stone at Bates Land entrance

At **Still Meadow**, our efforts were to move the meadow boarders back to where they were before invasives took over. Trees fall in or in growth preventing mowing. Much of what was removed was bittersweet and trees that the bittersweet has engulfed. We freed up several white birches as well as a crab apple. The goal is keep the meadow open while removing the invasive (or at least slowing its advance).

Trustee Mark Gerath tackling bittersweet.

Mason Invasives Clearing/Maintenance Budget - the property was inspected at the site by trustee David Black with Bennett Black, Jr. The property is in generally good condition but lack of invasive control is threatening the field habitats. To restore them would require cutting trees, pulling honeysuckle and buckthorn, and collecting them in burn piles. The small islands of trees in the fields, while attractive, reduce the integrity of the field habitats, and Black recommends we remove them completely and burn them in this effort. The total cost is about \$4,500, including seeding the disturbed edges.



**GCT Property Key in the Development
of the Unkety Brook Wildlife
Management Area**



Members receive newsletters and invitations to walks and talks. Memberships start at \$25 per year. You can join by printing the [membership form](#), filling it out, and sending it in. Please help us in our efforts to protect open space and manage conservation lands to protect biodiversity and promote an appreciation for the rich resources that we enjoy.

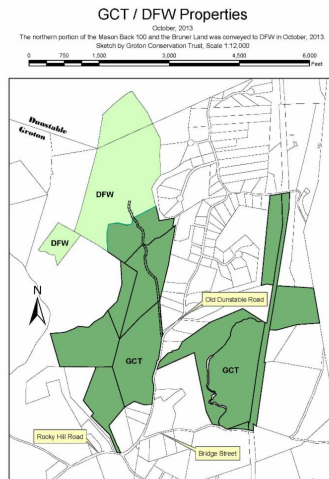
**Discover
Taplin Wildlife Sanctuary**

The Taplin Wildlife Sanctuary consists of 5 acres at Lowell Road and Cow Pond Brook with frontage on Whitney (Cow) Pond, donated by John and Virginia Taplin in 1996.

The parcel is of ecological value as it provides upland and wetland habitat. The parcel has a small trail that allows access to the Pond. It is possible to launch canoes or kayaks from the trail. Accessible for fishing.

**GCT Gnome Found
Paul Funch wins
naming rights**





The Division of Fish and Game (DFG) has acquired an 80 acre portion of the 140 "Mason Back 100" and a 10 acre parcel named "Bruner North", both owned by the Groton Conservation Trust (GCT). The northern portion of the Mason property is a prime habitat for Blanding's turtles, an endangered species. The area is also the site of a peat bog, rare this far south in New England. The DFG plans to use this parcel and the Bruner parcel in the creation of the Unkety Brook Wildlife Management area, covering many parcels in the area. The entire Mason property, including both the portion now owned by DFG and the portion still owned by the GCT, will retain the name Mason Back 100. All of the properties, located on Blood Road off of Old Dunstable Road, will remain open for public recreation. [READ MORE](#)

From the GCT President:

For the past 50 years the GCT has worked hard to fulfill our mission to the Town of Groton "... to acquire, preserve and provide public access to lands with significant conservation value." To date, the GCT's accomplishments are impressive: GCT currently maintains 36 preserves protecting agricultural lands, forests, wetlands, and water sources, including the 160-acre General Field and the 138-acre Skinner Forest. Its five Conservation Restrictions will permanently keep open another 64.2 acres of developable land, helping to maintain Groton's rural character.

At this time of year, we invite members to join in for a donation of time or money - there is no minimum. The victories are sometimes small, such as the mowing of Still Meadow. Sometimes

The winner of the contest to find and name the Groton Conservation Trust Gnome has been announced by the Trustees of the GCT to be Paul Funch.

As a long-time member of the Groton Trails Committee and a person likely to be on Groton trails, Paul acknowledged that it still took him three trips through Fitch-Woods, specifically looking for the Gnome, to find him perched about thirty feet from the trail.

Paul offered the name of "Harlan" in honor of Harlan Fitch, former owner of Fitch-Woods, and the GCT Trustees think that's a neat choice

Next spring, "Harlan" will be placed on another Groton Conservation Trust property for other eager seekers to find.

Winter Hikes!

The Groton Trails Committee plans to lead a series of winter hikes in Groton.

Sunday, Dec. 15, Wharton Plantation, 1 PM sharp.

From Rt. 40 (Lowell Rd.), take Old Dunstable Rd. north for 0.9 miles. Just past a light green house on the left, bear left onto Rocky Hill Rd (a gravel road). Proceed 0.3 miles to where signs say that

they are large, such as enabling us to hire interns during the summer to work with trustees to catalog and identify all the species we protect. Cumulatively, it is a record of accomplishment we can all be very proud of. And 100% of dues and donations stay right here in Groton, working directly to help preserve our environment, our quality of life.

Use a donation of time to become an active land steward, or joining in on one of our work teams. All of our volunteers have a special talent that can help the GCT!

The GCT is run entirely by the hard work and dedication of volunteers. The lean operating budget is raised, in part, through annual donations from members, and we hope we can continue to count you among our supporters!

Happy holidays on behalf of the trustees of the GCT,
Dan Wolfe
 President

Celebrating 50 years of land preservation



Be a land steward!

With over 30 properties we always appreciate your help! We have land stewards who "adopt" a particular property and let us know when you see something we should address. If you are interested in helping in this way, contact Susan Hughes at susanh@gctrust.org with the space you'd like to watch, or I can give you one we need help with! Thank you!

The Groton Conservation Trust is a private, non-profit land trust in Groton, Massachusetts. It was founded in 1964 to acquire, preserve, and provide public access to lands with significant conservation value. The Trust is governed by a Board of Trustees made up of Groton residents with varied backgrounds, occupations and interests.

You are receiving this email as an interested member of the GCT. If you no longer wish to receive this email, click [HERE](#) and note "remove me" in the subject line. Thank you.

Rocky Hill Rd. turns into Martins Pond Rd. Park there at the sign for Wharton Plantation trails, where there is also a gated cart path (Dan Parker Rd., no sign.) 42.62776N, 71.52350W. Olin Lathrop, olin@embedinc.com, (978) 742-9014.

Saturday (not the usual Sunday), January 14, 2014 at the J Harry Rich State Forest

Saturday, February 9, 2014, hiking Groton Place (the "dog park") to Surrenden Farm. The Saturday hikes will be co-sponsored by the Groton Trails Committee and the Appalachian Mountain Club, and will be led by Trails Committee member, Olin Lathrop.

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