



# GROTON CONSERVATION TRUST

gctrust.org



Photo Courtesy of Steve Lieman

**Dear Susan,**

We have exciting environmental news to share from two different directions. The first is a discovery, the second is progress!

## **Marbled Salamander**

At our vernal pool walk we were happily surprised to make a newsworthy discovery. In addition to certifying another vernal pool, those who attended witnessed the discovery of a Marbled Salamander. "The Marbled Salamander finding in Groton is significant because



*Baby marbled salamanders found in Groton. Photo thanks to Michelle Rubin.*

the species is extremely rare in that region of that state, and it fills an important information gap regarding what we know about the species' distribution in Massachusetts," reports Jacob Kubel,

**Your support helps us protect Groton's open spaces.**

[Renew your membership now](#)

**July 27: GCT gives back**  
Community Dinners  
First Parish Church in Groton

Join your friends at the GCT as we help with the July 27 [Groton Community Dinners](#). We will be serving, cooking and cleaning and you can join us in this valuable service in our area. If you are interested, please contact trustee [David Pitkin](#).

Conservation Scientist for the MA DFW. "For example, we already knew of multiple local populations Bolton, but only one each from Harvard, Littleton, and Pepperell. The Groton find helps fill a missing piece of the puzzle in explaining how Marbled Salamanders may have come to occur in Pepperell, and it gives us renewed hope that there are additional local populations to be found in western Middlesex County and northeastern Worcester County."

According to the [National Heritage & Endangered Species Program](#), within Massachusetts, the Marbled Salamander status is threatened.

The next steps for this discovery are to:

- record the observation as an official state record in the NHESP database;
- delineate a habitat area for the local population, for potential inclusion in Priority Habitat and associated protections pursuant to the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act regulations (321 CMR 10.00);
- conduct additional survey work to evaluate the geographic extent of the local population and determine whether additional vernal pools in the area are being used by the species; and
- incorporate the site into long-range conservation planning (e.g., land protection, habitat management) for Marbled Salamanders in the region.



Image from the [National Heritage](#) of a grown salamander.

## Loosestrife Biocontrol

The second exciting piece of news is a report from trustee David Black about his project of releasing Galerucell beetles along the rail trail to reduce the Purple Loosestrife growth in the area. This chart shows an impressive reduction. According to David, the goal of these types of biological control is to reduce the density of the invasive plant and try to keep it and its predator in some kind of equilibrium.

## Spring Tree Walk

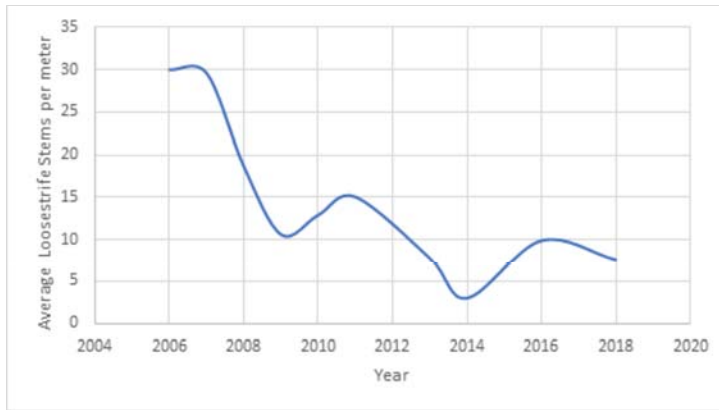
Trustee Michelle Ruby led an enthusiastic group for a May tree ID walk at Shepley Hills. The day was beautiful and the trees were just beginning to be identifiable. Future walks will yield more clues.



Thanks to Lisa O'Neill and Michelle Ruby for the photos.

## Harlan is Hiding!

Harlan the gnome is back in the woods of Groton waiting to



David further explains: "There is evidence of native species abundance increasing, and these fluctuations at lower densities are the desired outcome. This year, I changed the sampling protocol away from the fixed plots because the density at those locations was no longer reflective of the population as a whole. We are now using a larger number of randomly spaced 0.94 square meter plots, the area defined by a hula hoop. The beetles have also spread at least as far south as Groton School and this dispersal study will be given more importance in the years to come. The final good news is that I can teach an awful lot of ecology and data analysis with this activity; the graph above was produced by two ninth graders as part of a much longer report."

The potential downside is that *Phragmites australis* has moved in to the newly loosestrife-free area. The infestation is still small, but it is dense. David will take a closer look at this come winter, and may at least cutback the above ground stems to slow the rate of colonization.

### Fortier Memorial at The General Field

On June 3, a small gathering of friends and family dedicated a granite bench to honor John Fortier. The bench, a donation from John's co-workers at Epsilon in Burlington, and the first of its kind on GCT property, was a tribute to John and an acknowledgement of the peace Barb found at this spot during her husband's last months. Family friend Andy Schell memorialized John and his love of the outdoors and offered his thanks. "That we are unveiling this bench at the General Field is not by accident; this space is a special place in Groton, a place to contemplate and reflect, enjoy the outdoors and to look west - to the future.

Special thanks to Nancy Wilder, a family friend and neighbor of the Fortier's who made the connections for



Paul Funch gave Harlan his name.

be found. He is resting on one of the 37 GCT properties, about 60 feet from the marked trail.

Harlan is a brownish bronze gnome about two feet tall and one foot wide, in case you missed at our annual meeting. Remember, there is a \$25. Johnson gift certificate to the sharp-eyed person who finds him. The mountain laurel is in full bloom now. Harlan chose a patch near a small mountain laurel, but further up or down the trail the mountain laurel is covered with flowers.

It is a great time for a hike in the woods to enjoy the spring wildflowers. While hiking, keep your eyes open for Harlan.

### Quick Links

#### [Amazon Smiles](#)

(where Amazon donates to the GCT with every purchase!)



#### [GCT Events](#)

[How you can help](#)

us to the Groton Conservation Trust.

The Groton Conservation Trust has been gracious and accommodating as we sought to have a bench placed on this amazing property. Everyone was on the same page - enhance the property with the right approach, get the right location and positioning, the right materials and the right timing."



*Photos courtesy of Holly Estes.*

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.

[Our Properties](#)  
[Contact Information](#)  
[Trustees and Founders](#)  
[Groton Trails Website](#)

### **Andy Schell's closing words at the Fortier memorial:**

For those that come to The General Field, this memorial bench, with John's name and the phrase "Into the west" inscribed, our hope is that they will be inspired by the outdoors and the beauty that surrounds them, and pay it forward like John did - be a great person, care for others and the land around them, and be true to who you are.

### **Wildflower challenge!**



Trustee David Black has a request for everyone using the iNaturalist app: if you take wildflower pictures for iNaturalist would you also upload them to his "Pollination Ecology - Groton School" project (found at the site). He is working to map the emergence times of the flowers and their pollinators with the goal both of tracking populations and of exploring network theory.

Groton Conservation Trust, PO Box 395, Groton, MA 01450

[SafeUnsubscribe™ {recipient's email}](#)

[Forward this email](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by [susahughes@gmail.com](mailto:susahughes@gmail.com) in collaboration with



Try it free today