



PASSUMPSIC VALLEY LAND TRUST

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Board decides on Herbicide use to Tackle Invasive Species

By Mary Wheeler

The Directors of Passumpsic Valley Land Trust have decided to proceed with their original plan of using an herbicide to control three invasive species found on PVLТ properties along the Passumpsic River. These species include; Japanese Knotweed, Tartarian Honeysuckle, and Purple Loosestrife.

Japanese Knotweed in particular, has been found in many local areas, including: along the banks of rivers and streams, at the edges of meadows and woodlands as well as in gardens. Japanese Knotweed, an invasive non-native species, grows quickly and rapidly spreads over an area, becoming a major risk for existing plants and wildlife.

The board began looking into the issue of invasive species about two years ago, when they discussed the removal of Glossy Buckthorn from the St. Johnsbury Arlington Woods.

Japanese Knotweed (which resembles bamboo) can reach up to ten feet tall, and crowds out native species that are essential for the natural food chain. Important food and shelter for native animal species is affected as a result of the plant. Japanese Knotweed has only been found in small quantities in locations held by the PVLТ in Lyndonville.

According to Pat Swartz, a member of the PVLТ Board

there are different types of herbicide chemicals that provide a variety of effects on a plant. Some of the plant hormones can interfere with the plant's overall growth, while other chemicals can cause imbalances with a plants physiology poisoning it from within.

Some members are not in favor of using herbicides. Mike Miller believes there are more profound ways of treating Knotweed. He said using chemicals is not a good idea because of the risk or unknown adverse effects on the environment. Some of the dangers of using herbicides include: damage to the surrounding environment including local streams and

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rivers, ground water, harm to other plants, birds, fish, soil fauna and flora as well as humans, Swartz said.

The decision to use an herbicide came as a result of the Board speaking to individuals in the field of plant eradication, as well as landowners who had personally eradicated invasives, general research, and reading articles. After consulting with the funding source for the properties and an environmental agency, the choice was made to use a least toxic form of herbicide, Rodeo, and work through the Vegetation Control Services Inc. The application of the herbicide is very limited and

directed at the invasive species only. It also is designed not to affect nearby water sources.

Located in Athol MA, Vegetation Control Services Inc. has experience working in many public areas and State parks, as well as having a solid reputation for their knowledge and proper use of herbicides. Jeff Taylor, a certified arborist, will oversee the project.

According to Swartz, there are several techniques that will be used for the removal of the species. First, the species will be carefully pulled from to ground, as a way to prevent any seeds dispersing and causing additional growth. An herbicide application will be applied from the river up the bank as a way to avoid any contamination of the water.

Large bushes of other invasive plants will also be removed, allowing for the chemically treated roots of the now dead plants to stabilize the banks until the native species can grow back and flourish again.

The board began looking into the issue of invasive species about two years ago, when they discussed the removal of Glossy Buckthorn from the St. Johnsbury Arlington Woods, Swartz said.

The PVLТ will follow-up with the Vegetation Control Services Inc. next year on their progress.

Editor's Note: Jeff Taylor was unavailable for comment at the time this article was written.

PVLТ Seeks Volunteers to Monitor Land Preservations

Feeling the grip of winter coming and wondering how you might find a good way to break those blues while doing something helpful?

Once a year PVLТ must monitor each of its parcels in order to ensure that the special qualities which have made the land worthy of preservation are not being threatened. You can volunteer to monitor one or more properties. The monitor's job is to carefully walk the property and to observe the conditions there. To make sure the monitoring is consistent from year to year, PVLТ provides each monitor with a check-list form to use while



surveying the property. The checklist makes the job easy, while allowing you to become a more careful observer.

Volunteers who wish to monitor a property can select

one that fits their sense of adventure and meets their time restraints. Depending on the size and remoteness of the property the activity could take
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from 30 minutes to a couple of hours. Most of PVLТ’s parcels are easy to get to and would make a fine family activity.

For example, the well-known **Arlington Woods in St. Johnsbury** is a 33 acre city park for which PVLТ holds a conservation easement. The park includes a mile long trail that winds through evergreens and ferns, past ancient orchards and granite outcroppings.

The Passumpsic fishing platform is the Land Trust’s smallest property, and provides visitors with a restful place to watch the river flow.

People who would like a bit more rugged view of the river, but still want the feel of human culture, should enjoy monitoring PVLТ’s three properties in East Burke.

Both **the Cox property** and the **Davis property** hug the shore of the sparkling East Branch of the Passumpsic, while **the East Burke Dam** site allows monitors to get a

feel for the history of the human impact on our watershed.

One of the least explored but most accessible and enjoyable stewardships is **The Murphy parcel in Lyndonville**. The land includes several acres of shoreline meadows, woodlands and fields. The stroll through the property provides a unique look at our own backyard.

The Joes Brook property follows a series of rapids and pools along the clear cool waters of that stream. It includes berry bushes, granite overlooks and solitude from the bustle of everyday life.

Perhaps the most isolated and wild stewardship is **Cow Mountain Pond in Granby**. It is not named after the bovine, but rather for the

many moose that roam the area. Standing below pretty Cow Mountain at the edge of Vermont’s least populated region, Cow Mountain Pond is a jewel in the Passumpsic watershed.

Not far from Cow Mountain Pond in Granby is the less prosaically named **Mud Pond**. Moose are also frequent visitors to this site and it hosts unusual plants and rare migratory birds.

Finally, the shoreline **Kirby property** provides a feel for wild Vermont while in sight of busy US Highway 2. Fox, beaver, and otter frequent the thick under-story of this unusual land just east of St. Johnsbury.

To volunteer, call PVLТ at 748-8080 during normal, weekday business hours, **or contact Alan Boye at 748-2570, or email him at (alan.boyе@lyndonstate.edu.)**

Please specify which property or properties you would like to visit. We’ll provide you with the monitor checklist and directions to the parcel



New Environmental Consultant hired for the PVLТ

By Sarah Donaghy

The Passumpsic Valley Land Trust has recently hired a new environmental consultant to negotiate with local landowners along the Passumpsic River. Bill Bridge, the new consultant, will be taking over the position that Tara Hamilton held. Hamilton was the original environmental consultant for the project but did not renew her contract when it ran out last winter.

Bridge will be working from a grant originally given to PVLТ in 2005 to acquire land around the Passumpsic River, both through outright purchase, known as fee ownership, and easements with landowners, to control development around the river. This will help avoid erosion, control flood damage, and prevent damage from ice build-up.

“Rivers are kind of the blood of the land,” Bridge said. “We need to restore them for the health of our community and for enjoyment.”

Although not a native Vermonter, Bridge moved to

the state in 1979. He grew up in the Boston area and got his degree at Dartmouth College in Geology, so he is no stranger to the Northeast.

He is also no stranger to the kind of work he will be doing for PVLТ. Since the 1990s he has worked for the



Upper Valley Land Trust doing similar work. He worked extensively in many areas of the job but particularly with architectural drafting, making conservation maps of areas which they were acquiring along the Connecticut River for the same purpose. He worked combining maps from several different sources and different

types of maps to chart areas in a way that would be easiest for those who were taking care of the property to negotiate, especially in areas with mostly natural landmarks and sometimes few or no trails.

Bridge prefers to work with easements, allowing landowners to continue to use their land in the ways they want and need with restrictions placed to provide buffers for the river and allow some public access to get the “highest civic use of the land.”

He describes his job as, “A rediscovery of the central feature of the valley, the center to wildlife and vitality.”

“One thing people need to be aware of is that having a land trust can be a great responsibility,”

Bridge says. Someone is needed to provide upkeep on the land and make sure that the use it is getting is best for the adjacent river.

In his free time Bridge enjoys many outdoor activities including hiking, bushwhacking (making his own trails), biking, and sea kayaking. He also enjoys

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doing things with his family, including spending time with his young grandchild.

Bridge signed his one year contract in the beginning of September. It is a three year

project and he will be given the option to renew his contract at the end of the year. He says he would like to both accomplish the conservation concepts and leave behind a good filing system, as well as a

lot of information and pictures of the watershed for the PVLТ employees to use when he has finished to job.

Help contribute to the future of the Passumpsic Valley

This newsletter was written and edited by Sarah Donaghy and Mary Wheeler

The Passumpsic Valley can be protected best by those who know it best. The land trust is your chance to protect the Passumpsic River watershed. Your membership fees go directly to preservation and recreation projects. Make a commitment to the future of the Passumpsic Valley.

Sponsor	\$250	Family	\$25
Associate	\$100	Individual	\$10
Supporting	\$50	Business	\$100

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