



# PASSUMPSIC VALLEY LAND TRUST

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## PVLT Founding Member Paddling to New Waters

The year was 1993. A small group of environmental advocates with a visionary idea for the Passumpsic River transformed it into action. That action was the creation of the Passumpsic Valley Land Trust. Dottie Weinstein was one of the visionaries. For the ensuing twelve years Dottie, one of only two founding directors still on the PVLT Board, volunteered her time and energy to develop PVLT into the widely known, and highly respected riverfront conservation force it is today. PVLT has benefited from, nay, depended upon Dottie's dedication to the vision for its survival and growth for more than a decade. Now, after 35 years of life and service in the Northeast Kingdom Dottie has

decided it's time to challenge herself professionally and personally by testing new and unfamiliar waters, moving from our little NEK pond to Washington, D.C., a truly big tidewater pond.

Dottie came to St. Johnsbury in 1971 after graduating from Middlebury College. Here she raised three daughters, completed a Masters degree in Natural Resource Planning from UVM and worked as a community planner for both Northeastern Vermont Regional Development Association and the North Country Council in New Hampshire. Dottie served as a member of the St. Johnsbury Zoning Board of Adjustment for many years. Since 1999 she has been the

Trail Protection Director for the Catamount Trail Association, Vermont's end-to-end cross-country ski trail.

In her spare and not-so-spare time she has generously made all her experience and talents available to PVLT. She has been the PVLT Board's president or vice president for as long as anyone can remember. She has played a key role in most of PVLT's land and easement acquisitions, and in its various initiatives, like the River way project. Most recently she has been instrumental in securing major grants for and then overseeing PVLT's Riparian Lands inventory and acquisition project. (Continued on Page 3)

# PVLT Receives Major Grant for Conservation Project

The Passumpsic Valley Land Trust has been awarded a grant to complete 21 conservation projects over the next three years. The Passumpsic River Conservation Project is designed to protect the river's health by allowing the natural shoreline to regenerate through conservation easements or the purchase of particular properties.

The properties were identified based on such things as the importance of their wetlands, river frontage and other natural features, and whether protecting the property will contribute to the health of the river and reduce the potential impact of floods.

The Upper Connecticut River Management and

Enhancement Fund announced the award in mid February. The Fund was created as part of the settlement agreement between parties involved in the federal process to award a new operating license for three hydroelectric dams on the Connecticut River between Littleton, NH and Ryegate, VT. The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and the Vermont Community Foundation hold the funds and coordinate the grant-making program, which is guided by a 12-person advisory committee.

An earlier grant from that organization allowed PVLT to complete the first phase of the project by identifying 65 places along the river as potential conservation projects.

As a result of the earlier grant PVLT created digital maps of the entire length of the main stem of the Passumpsic River and gathered information about each parcel. They determined which areas had highest priority and then contacted landowners who were willing to discuss the benefits of conservation through gifts, sale, or the establishment of conservation easements.

Dottie Weinstein, president of PVLT said the goal for the first year of the \$470,500 grant was to complete eight high-priority projects that involve motivated landowners. (Continued page 4)

## With New Funding Comes a New Face *continued on pg. 3*

The Passumpsic Valley Land Trust recently acquired a grant, allowing the purchase of land which abuts the river. This grant also allows the Trust to higher someone to talk with community members and explain to them what this will mean for their land which touches the river. Tara Hamilton, a conservation planner with Mad River Watershed Conservation Partnership, is the person who has been highered for the task.

Hamilton, who has been working as a

Conservation Planner for the Mad River Watershed Conservation Partnership, has had numerous years experience in this particular field. After graduating from the University of Vermont with a Masters in Natural Resources Planning and Management she began working with the Stowe Land Trust. Over the years she has continued to work as an Environmental Consultant and planner within Vermont.

It was while working with Dottie Weinstein, Trail

Protection Director of the Catamount Trail Association and President of PVLT, that she was approached about the PVLT position. "Working with landowners who are choosing to restore and enhance the health of the Passumpsic River is very exciting," states Hamilton. Essentially, the landowners are giving all their rights to build or farm on these riparian zones. These zones are determined by both the landowner as well as the easement holder, PVLT.

## PVLT Founder Paddling to New Waters *continued from pg. 1*

Dottie has maintained PVLT's office, gathered its supplies, kept its files, placed its ads, sent out its "thank yous," oriented its new directors, and been its social director. Dottie has been the cement that holds PVLT's aggregate together.

The water level in the Passumpsic will drop appreciably when Dottie steps out of our watershed in June, that is to say, she will leave

such a huge void that water may have to flow upstream to fill it. But Dottie leaves behind a string of land conservation accomplishments that the NEK will cherish in perpetuity, an orderly organizational structure that positions PVLT well for its future, and a major river corridor conservation initiative that is off, running and destined to be very productive

over the next several years. Words are inadequate to express how much Dottie will be missed by PVLT, her fellow directors on the Board and her colleagues and friends in the region. Dottie, we wish you the very best, and beg you to return, like the Atlantic salmon, to swim again in our Passumpsic Valley headwaters.

## With New Grant Comes a New Face *continued on pg. 3*

According to Hamilton, the improvement of the Passumpsic River and its watershed will lead to bigger and better things. "The health and vitality of all of Vermont's

rivers are of utmost importance to the ecological, economic and cultural well being of the state." In turn this will lead to the well-vegetated stream banks. These stream banks will be protected from erosion, flood damage, especially from spring time floods.

Eventually this project will lead to "the river being permanently protected" and for

many of the farmers in the area; this means the protection of their land. Those who release their rights to PVLT will be compensated for their decision not to develop on that

easement on a parcel is a way of guaranteeing that the land right next to the river won't be developed inappropriately."

Even in all this busy work, Hamilton is just like the

rest of us. "I'm not exactly a stand-out-from-the-crowd kind of person," explains Hamilton. She likes to be outside, hike, garden, camp, ski, and simply be with her family. She is a traveler at heart and hopes after the PVL Trust is completed she will have a little

more time to do it. She is just an everyday kind of person, working to better the environment.



piece of land. Hamilton explains, "Most landowners these days see the wisdom in not developing close to the river...putting a buffer

## Help contribute to the future of the Passumpsic Valley

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

<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>\$250</b>	<b>Family</b>	<b>\$25</b>
<b>Associate</b>	<b>\$100</b>	<b>Individual</b>	<b>\$10</b>
<b>Supporting</b>	<b>\$50</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>\$100</b>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail your tax-deductible check to: Passumpsic Valley Land Trust, Box 624, St. Johnsbury, VT 05819

## PVLT Receives Grant for Conservation Project *continued from pg. 2*

Additional projects in the two remaining years of the grant involve other high-priority property. PVLT will also use the grant to hire a part-time contractor who will manage the project.

“This is an enormous undertaking for an all-volunteer regional land trust,”

Weinstein said. “Being awarded this grant is both an honor and a validation of the work of the Passumpsic Valley Land Trust.”

Alan Boye, member of the PVLT Board said the grant will help to protect the rich variety of plants and animals that are native to the

Passumpsic Valley. “The best thing we can do is to make sure the river’s shoreline is undisturbed.” Boye said. He said the Passumpsic River Conservation Project will also provide appropriate public access to the river.

**This edition was written and produced by Hannah Fadden**

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