



P.O. Box 624
St. Johnsbury
Vermont 05819

Passumpsic Valley Land Trust

2018 AUTUMN NEWSLETTER: VOL 24(1)

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**PASSUMPSIC VALLEY
LAND TRUST**

The Passumpsic Valley Land Trust is a nonprofit conservation group composed of local volunteers who are dedicated to preserving the beauty and ecological habitats of the Passumpsic River and its watershed, as well as improving public access.



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VOTING FOR DIRECTORS

In accordance with PVLT bylaws (Article III, Section I, parts A, B, and C) the Nominating Committee presents the following slate of Directors for a three-year term beginning December 2018:

- Damon Cawley (2018-2021) Re-election
- Leila Nordmann (2018-2021) Re-election

If you are a current PVLT member with voting rights, that is, you have made a qualifying membership contribution since November 2017, then you may vote by cutting or photocopying the ballot below and sending it to: **PVLT, P.O.Box 624, St. Johnsbury, VT 05819**. Ballots for election of Directors must be received no later than **Friday November 30, 2018**.

PVLT'S ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL REMINDER

It's time for PVLT's once-per-year membership renewal reminder that we now integrate into the autumn newsletter, in place of personalized reminder letters that long-time members may remember. A membership that is current entitles you to cast a ballot for your Board of Directors at Annual Meeting time, and to vote on any special items that may come up, e.g., by-law changes. PVLT depends on your faithful support not just for underwriting your organization's land conservation activities but also for demonstrating to grantors that PVLT is recognized, vital and respected.

The mailing label on this newsletter displays the month and year that your membership will or did expire, roughly one year since your last contribution. If you recently sent a renewal, thank you. If you renew on a different annual cycle that works for you, please disregard this request.

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Cut or photocopy the ballot, cast your vote and return it addressed to:
PVLT, P.O. Box 624, St. Johnsbury, VT 05819, for receipt no later than Friday, November 30, 2018.

Ballot for PVLT Board of Directors, each for 3-year term 2018-2021

(Check or write-in no more than three names)

Damon Cawley [] or Write-in candidate _____

Leila Nordmann [] or Write-in candidate _____

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If you are due for renewal, or not a current member but wish to establish or renew your membership to enable you to vote for Directors in the 2018 election, send in the ballot with your new or renewed annual membership dues, a minimum of \$10 for an individual membership, \$25 for a family membership. A family membership entitles two family members to cast a ballot. You may photocopy the ballot to enable a second vote.

Annual membership dues (minimum amount) for various membership categories:

Individual: \$10 Family: \$25 Organization / Business / Corporate: \$25

Name(s): _____

Mailing address: _____

Phone / email: _____

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN SERVICE? PVLT Needs Board Members

Are you committed to preserving the beauty and ecological habitats of the Passumpsic River and its watershed? Are you interested in increasing public use of conserved land for boating access, recreational trails, picnic areas, and wildlife habitats for everyone in the community to enjoy? Are you available once a month usually on Wednesdays for board meetings with a small, fun group? Do you have experience with land stewardship and easements, or are you interested in learning more? PVLT needs local volunteers to help lead the group and move us into the next phase of our conservation efforts as we work to improve access to our properties. Contact Damon at damoncawley@gmail.com for more information.

PVLT 25th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AND ANNUAL MEETING

COME AND CELEBRATE OUR SILVER ANNIVERSARY!!!

The year was 1993. A diverse group of community *sparkplugs* had coalesced around a bike path concept that centered on St. Johnsbury's *Three Rivers* – Passumpsic, Sleepers and Moose. The challenges of land and easement acquisition led the group to an elegant, more expansive solution – creation of a watershed-based land trust focused on increasing river access for recreation. The goal quickly expanded, as founder Chris Hamilton put it in the inaugural newsletter, "to encompass conservation of natural areas, farmland, undeveloped shoreline and other locally significant features". And thus Passumpsic Valley Land Trust sprang to life. By November PVLT was incorporated in the State of Vermont and recognized federally as a 501(c) 3 non-profit. Since those seminal steps by the visionary founders -- Chris, Alan Boye, Cathy DeLeo, Bob Gensburg, Bruce Ralston, and Dottie Weinstein -- what a wild and productive ride it's been!

Now PVLT invites you to help celebrate a quarter-century of successful conservation work in the watershed with a gathering and Annual Meeting on Sunday, December 2 at the Fairbanks Museum. Through diligence, patience, perseverance, sustained commitment of its membership, faith of its funders, landowner generosity, and a heap of good luck PVLT has converted the vision of its founders into reality. PVLT now owns 17 parcels in fee, totaling just under 400 acres, and ranging in acreage from a 0.2 to 110. PVLT holds conservation easements on an additional 6 parcels (roughly 200 acres) and has assisted the Vermont Land Trust in waterfront conservation at two other properties with substantial acreage and shoreline. PVLT no longer owns a dam, because it has been removed!!!, greatly enhancing the water, habitat, aesthetic and recreational quality of the East Branch and PVLT's adjacent properties. This all translates in practical terms to protection of over 10 miles of riverfront and shoreline, and the recreational access they afford. Over this past quarter-century PVLT has managed to extend its conservation reach throughout the watershed: 10 different towns – Barnet in the south to Granby and Victory up

north, Kirby in the east to Cabot in the west. Today PVLT provides formal riverfront and pond access in Barnet, Burke, Cabot, Danville, Lyndon, Passumpsic and St. Johnsbury, in the form of parking, paths, steps and a handicapped-accessible fishing platform. PVLT hosts VAST snowmobile and KTA mountain bike trails across a couple of its parcels. Its larger properties in Barnet, Cabot and Granby offer the public the opportunity for a more backcountry experience – hiking, bushwhacking and hunting. Virtually all of PVLT's fee-owned and easement-protected lands and waterfront represent valuable wildlife and aquatic habitat, permanently protected from encroachment by unwise development and infrastructure. PVLT has also contributed directly to the important public safety goal of flood resiliency, by demolishing two damage-prone structures in the floodway, lowering flood elevations by removing a dam and promoting riparian zone reforestation with tree and shrub planting. PVLT can be proud of this impressive body of accomplishment whether or not it surpasses what that group of visionaries was hoping for 25 years ago.

Now looking forward to the half-century mark, PVLT cannot stand still. Although as of this writing PVLT is about to acquire yet another parcel in the wetlands at the head of Joes Pond, our focus in the short term has moved from land acquisition to upping the stewardship and public visibility for our conserved lands, strengthening our institutional capacity, building the membership and its participation, and assuring PVLT's sustainability over time. PVLT, up to now a strictly volunteer operation, is about to bring in some assistance in managing its administrative workload and raising its community profile through outreach and social media. PVLT hopes to continue working quietly and effectively toward the goals set at its inception, so look forward to an expanding legacy of conservation accomplishments and a more visible presence in the Passumpsic Valley.

WHEN: Sunday, Dec. 2, 2018
From 2:00-4:00pm

WHERE: Fairbanks Museum
1302 Main St., St. Johnsbury, Vt

BUSINESS MEETING AGENDA

1. Reading and acceptance of Annual Report
2. Reading and acceptance of Financial Report
3. Report of Nominating Committee and election of director.

Please join PVLT to celebrate 25 years of conservation activities related to the Passumpsic River and its watershed! PVLT is the epitome of the "think globally, act locally" maxim, and we'll be showcasing this little organization's accomplishments while sharing the vision of where we're headed next.

PVLT is pleased to announce guest speakers: Bruce Berryman, retired Lyndon State College professor of climate science, and Jim Kellogg of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation.

PVLT holds a conservation easement at Cow Mountain Pond in Granby, the first in the nation Forest Legacy Program project. Bruce will share the story of how Cow Mountain Pond was conserved despite a little known 11th hour wrinkle. It's a great story and one of the first PVLT got to play a part in.

Jim will talk about trends seen in long term acid rain monitoring on Cow Mountain Pond and other lakes like it in Vermont.

Refreshments will be served.

RSVP appreciated, at info@pvlt.org or call 802-357-2024.





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EAST BURKE DAM --- WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES!!!



A year ago in October a momentous transformation was underway in East Burke. An 85-year-old deteriorating dam, the most recent iteration of mill town infrastructure on the Passumpsic's East Branch, was being jack-hammered to pieces, allowing the river to flow unimpeded over its newly sediment-free ledges, boulders and cobbles. The area is now benefiting from improvements in water quality, trout habitat, fish passage and sediment transport, as well as a reduction in ice jamming, flood hazard and danger to paddlers and swimmers. Recreation access has been enhanced with paths and steps and the long history of the dam's contributions to East Burke village and NEK residents has been memorialized with a commemorative display.

The dam removal was accomplished last autumn and celebrated by PVLT, the project's major players and many in the community. In November we held a champagne-toast event at the East Burke Clubhouse, followed in May by a festive group paddle down the East Branch. But these were hardly the end of it. The restoration of the site and final completion of the project has been ongoing, led diligently by the project manager, Connecticut River Conservancy's Ron Rhodes, and the chief engineer, Milone & MacBroom's Roy Schiff.

The parking lot serving RubyDee's and the River Garden Café has been gravelled and regraded. Following spring high water, George Wagner Jr. attended to erosion control on the slopes at the dam site. Northwoods Stewardship Center completed a nice set of rock steps for access on the Burke Hollow Rd. side of the river. Thanks to Trout Unlimited's Embrace-A-Stream grants assisting the efforts of Fritz Gerhardt of Beck Pond LLC, Northwoods, and volunteers from the Burke Town School 8th grade, Burke Conservation Commission and MadDog TU Chapter, scads of trees and shrubs have been planted on the riverbank, extending way up along the former impoundment. Northwoods also attacked the pesky infestation of Phragmites at the site. Post-demolition survey work required by the Army Corps of Engineers has been completed.

A very handsome display commemorating the historic significance of two centuries of the dams and mills at the site has been installed. Roy coordinated another annual CR-Conservancy Source-2-Sea cleanup on the East Branch. And, of course, the river has been working tirelessly the whole time, scouring out a century's worth of accumulated sediment from its nooks and crannies and adjusting its bed materials to its restored configuration. Despite eighteen years of trials and tribulations to bring this project to fruition, it's been worth the wait!

