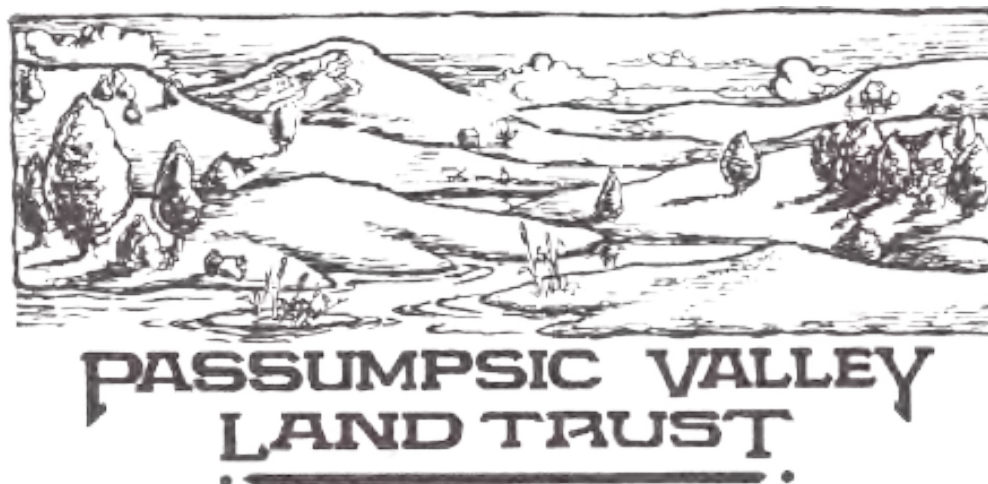


# Passumpsic Valley Land Trust

Summer 2023 NEWSLETTER

WWW.PVLT.ORG



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.

## PVLT Records Find a New Home

The PVLT file cabinet and records have found a home in the St. Johnsbury Universalist Unitarian Meeting House. Lenny has been busy organizing and cleaning out the physical files. Much of the material is digital but it is good to have access to the original documents and maps.

You can see some of the information on the conserved properties by going to [Passumpsic Valley Land Trust – Vermont \(pvlt.org\)](http://Passumpsic Valley Land Trust – Vermont (pvlt.org))



## Upcoming Events

**Big Old River Event: Have lunch with us by the river!**  
Saturday, Sept. 2nd (rain date Sept. 3rd)  
Location TBD  
All are welcome!



**SCAN ME**

to join PVLT or renew  
your membership

# **Hello PVLT Members & Friends!**

Dear People of the Watershed,

Foremost, the PVLT Board is united in the hope that you and your loved ones have stayed safe and well during the recent flooding we have seen in our area. The impacts to our communities are significant, and we are consistently amazed and impressed with the care and generosity shown between neighbors and neighborhoods as we continue to see these devastating impacts of climate change. Kindness, helpfulness, and thoughtful care continue to be critical elements in the success of any community of any size, be it street, village, town, state, or nation.

As I watch this recent abundance of rain water flow across a parking lot and into the woods by my office, I am reminded that we all live downstream from someone and upstream of someone else. I think about the journey of that water from cloud to rain to ground to river and beyond, and all of the places that water will touch. It is both my job and my passion to make sure the water that passes through my sphere of influence and on downstream is as clean as I can make it, and I am proud to be able to bring that motivation to the work we do at PVLT.

As members of a land and water conservation organization like PVLT, you are helping us as a land trust keep the water that passes through our conserved lands as clean as we can make it through building robust, water filtering forests and strong, sediment-settling floodplains in the Passumpsic River Valley. We appreciate your support, and we hope you will join us in our mission to make positive changes and maintain critical features in the watershed we call home. Your continued membership and support is so appreciated; we couldn't do what we're able to do without it.

Thank you,  
Meg Carter  
PVLT Board President



**Interested in helping  
clean up PVLT  
properties?**

**Email us at  
[pvlandtrust@gmail.com](mailto:pvlandtrust@gmail.com)**

## **Paddle Trip on the River    By Brain Lamoureux**

For me, Memorial Day Weekend normally brings a packed calendar of family cookouts, late campfires with friends, and a long recovery from social burnout on Monday. This year, I had committed to planning an epic solo outing - something that would be restorative and allow time for quiet reflection. I was fortunate enough to have only the PVLT Board of Directors meeting slated for Saturday, and the luxury of blank white squares Sunday and Monday. I was originally thinking of thru-hiking the Kingdom Heritage Trail and bushwhacking to check out the condition of the belay ledges at Black Mountain, but the Directors Meeting threw a bit of a wrench in the scheme. A full canoe tour of the navigable waters of the East Branch of the Passumpsic down to the Connecticut, with a timely stop at the Confluence parcel where the meeting was to be held, seemed like a brilliant alternative.

Friday night was spent planning logistics and packing. I knew a bit of the river from white water canoe and kayak courses I took in the Mountain Recreation Management program at Northern Vermont University, but there was a lot I didn't know - a recipe for a grand adventure.



## Continued...

At the time, I hadn't known about Green Mountain Power's awesome Passumpsic River Paddling Guide, so I picked through miscellaneous websites online and traced the route on a mapping software we used at NVU. About 30 miles of paddling down a mix of slow moving flat water and class I/II rapids, seven identifiable portages, and a 34ish mile bike ride along Rt. 5/114 to get back to my vehicle over two days was what I was faced with. The forecast: 75 and sunny all weekend; I could not be luckier.

Saturday morning came, and after staging my bike in a treeline where I'd take out on the Connecticut, scouting a few of the portages I didn't know, and stashing my camping gear downriver of the gnarliest of the rapids, it was time. I launched my solo Old Town at the 1928 Bridge on the North end of School Street in East Haven where a friend was letting me park my truck overnight.

There hadn't been a significant rain event in the watershed in a few days, so water levels were way down. Aside from a few brief sections of walking the boat over shallows, there was usually a viable line with the right bit of maneuvering. The rapid beneath the bridge in East Burke Village, which had swamped my boat on several earlier sends, was a fun rip that only gave me a couple inches of water. Board member, Lenny Gerardi, had warned me of the rapid below the Pierce Road Bridge, which is normally not navigable unless it takes its class III form in higher water. The ledge the water courses over created a good horizon line with lots of roar; I was intimidated. After some scouting, I felt comfortable enough to solo send a line on river right. With a quick ferrying upriver and sending my rescue buddy a "if you don't hear from me by" text, I entered the top of the rapid. There was a tense moment when I missed a stroke in shallow water and was pulled towards a less-than-ideal hydraulic, but I recovered and slipped into a beautiful 2 ft. pour over with a wave train finish. My celebration hoot was drowned out by the endless chorus of waves.

Throughout the paddle, I was continually amazed at the clarity of the water. I could make out little flecks of mica and wavy aquatic plant life in the shallows of the East Branch, trout beneath the Sanborn Covered Bridge, and over one hundred tires downriver of St. J and Barnet. Almost the entirety of the river has a clear sandy bottom, aside from a few sections where algae has taken over.

I observed many other users of the river. There were campers lounging in East Haven on the cool banks shaded by tall, leaning hemlocks and cedars. I could make out the blue blazes of a boater who had chosen the same lines as I on another date in shallower water on the whole East Branch. Swarms of mountain bikers took post-ride baths at the sun rocks in East Burke Village while their kids splashed in the pool below the first set of ledges. A family of tubers floated lazily from Confluence into Lyndon. A fly fisherman tried his luck in St. J with two teens in their pajamas watching from the viewing platform above. I ran into two friends from NVU, Holden and Maxstar, who were working a rod and reel in the waters at the Passumpsic Station. Vermont Fish and Wildlife Warden Will Seegers checked in on me during a long portage by the East Barnet Dam in the intense heat of that Sunday before heading off to check in on fishermen in the vicinity. Two canoers in matching wide brim sun hats cruised by in the faster current of the Connecticut as I drifted in the last waters of the Passumpsic.

The wildlife viewing and listening was spectacular. The ethereal shrills of hermit thrushes and veeries were all that could be heard before the roar above Great Falls Dam, along with countless other birds throughout. I had the delight of seeing a black bear stomping around in the bushes along the bank above Pierce Mills Dam, then a raccoon on the opposite side around the next bend. A bald eagle took flight when I got to the Rt. 2 bridge in St. J, headed down river. A fox crossed Rt. 114 only about 15 yards from me on the bike ride back. The coolest sight was easily a brave gosling about half a mile upriver from East Burke Village. I had passed many families of Canadian geese, who, for the most part, all tried to hide behind curtains of grasses dangling down from sloughing bluffs. While rounding a bend in a swift current, I spooked two adults, who abandoned their five goslings to fend for themselves. Four split upriver for an eddy behind a vegetated peninsula; the fifth tried to beat me downriver in the current. It dove underwater and swam alongside the canoe. Its legs kicked powerfully and its glossy body glinted with sun through the clear water. As it resurfaced, we entered the top of a shallow rapid. It dove again and fought its way into an eddy as I shot away.

Despite following Rt. 114 and Rt. 5 for the majority of its course and thus being married to the corresponding development, there are stretches of the Passumpsic that maintain a wildness to them, affording a user ample opportunity to have a unique, natural experience. There are a number of areas where projects could be performed to protect the quality of the water, ecosystem, and the user's experience, such as invasive species control, riparian buffer plantings, and building durable access points. It is all PVLTA can do to just hold parcels and chip away at this long list of projects. I could not be more excited to be working with the folks who are stewarding this watershed, and I look forward to its continued protection.

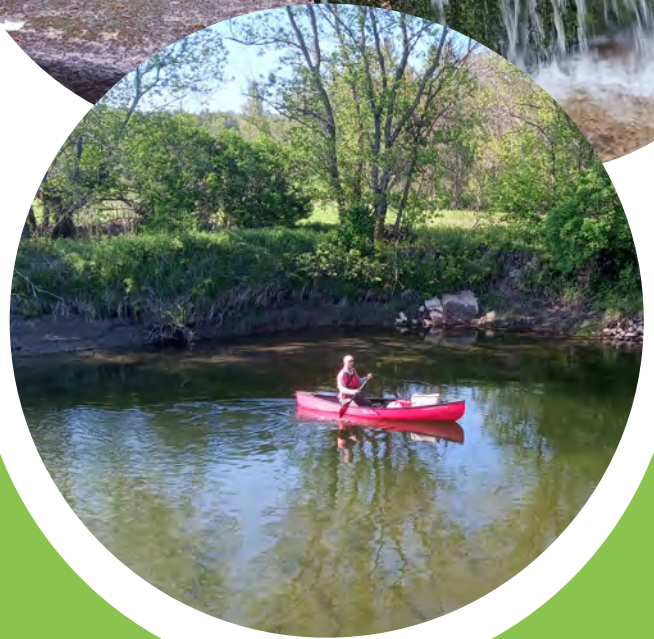




## Stay up to date with the river on our social media accounts.

Each week our board of directors are sharing pictures, wildlife tips, and their favorite things to do around the river.

**Follow us on  
Instagram at @pvlandtrust  
Facebook at  
Passumpsic Valley Land Trust**



## The bench survived!

Come and enjoy the scenic views that the river can provide. Take a seat on the PVLT's benches and take in nature. You can find this bench at our Lindsay property.

Our very own Damon Cawley, PVLT's secretary, went out and checked on the bench himself. The bench was dedicated in 2021 to David Conant.

