

# Passumpsic Valley Land Trust

FALL/WINTER 2023 NEWSLETTER

Vol. 30, No. 2

WWW.PVLT.ORG



**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.

## President's Pen

Meghann Carter PVLT Board President

"Loving nature in the fall is a series of lessons in letting go. We let go of bright greens and warm breezes. We let go of summer birdsong and swimming. It's a time to re-learn to love the bare bones of life as it sleeps: sticks, ice, stones, and wind. Sharp edges that had been softened and covered by summer's broad & forgiving leaves are exposed. Summer visiting loons take laborious flight and wave goodbye with each wingbeat. Wood frogs freeze solid and snapping turtles take their final breath in the fall to hold inside until they wake up in the spring. Life turns inward to rest and reflect.

With the chorus of nature on the decrescendo and the fall project season wrapping up, I am feeling very grateful for this chance to lovingly let go of things we didn't do over the warm season; property walks I wanted more of, trash cleanups we hoped to do, signage we dreamed of posting. The want-tos and could-haves fall away as the cold sets in, and we're left looking at the things we actually were able to do; property walks on Confluence and in Arlington Woods, settling into a great office and storage space, barbecuing and making friends at our first annual Big Old River Event, planting thousands of stems in the floodplain both in the spring and in the fall, buying ourselves a beautiful banner, and continuing our stewardship monitoring of our properties. The reality of them stands out like dark branches written against a gray sky. I am taking this opportunity to feel proud of the things we have done, and I hope you are too!"



# October Tree Planting

PVLT's floodplain forest restoration efforts continue this season with tree planting on both the Towns and Confluence parcels. In partnership with the Connecticut River Conservancy and the NorthWoods Stewardship Center, we are planting over 2,000 stems along the Passumpsic River in Lyndon. Over the past 4 years, including this season, PVLT has planted over 7,000 trees and shrubs on our Lyndon properties. This summer's flooding has shown how good and necessary floodplains can be for flood attenuation, and we are proud to support the restoration of robust and functional floodplain forests!



## Loons by Brian Lamoureux

As I sit here tasked to write something about nature for the newsletter, I am initially stunned that I don't have any sort of specific inspiration. I guess I'm feeling a bit of a disconnect with the natural world this year. My butt is getting handed to me in a one year MBA program at UVM, which affords little, if any, time for field and forest leisure. Each day consists of waking early to finish up In the summers of my youth, I'd camp with my family in northern New Hampshire on the same lake every year during the last week of July. My aunts, uncles, and many of our family friends would join us, booking sites adjacent to one another so we could establish a large compound with a central kitchen and fire where we'd share meals and stories. It was prime for memory making. Easily, the highlight of the week was the fishing tournament; the two people who landed the biggest fish got their name on a cheap trophy we passed around, but winning was never as great as the pursuit. In the evenings, I would convince one of the boozed up elders to agree to hit the water early the next morning. It was always the first call of the loons that served as the alarm clock, typically somewhere between 4-5am. Sometimes the adults would respond to their call, other times it might have taken an insistent series of taps on the sides of the tent for encouragement. With a scraping of the sand, the fishing party would set off in canoe and kayak onto the glassy lake. We would glide into the fog of our favorite coves until the first rays turned the shroud and our pole tips golden, oftentimes without a single word being spoken. One morning, we were making our way to a prominent drop off one of the uncles had told me about. All of a sudden, there was a loud whooshing sound overhead as a loon descended and splashed down less than 15 yards from us. It hunted nearby for a while, diving and resurfacing several times before we had made our way close to the drop off, which had the wildest echo on a dense tree-line. When the bird called out, it seemed as if we were surrounded by a dozen, the eerie call swirling with the echo. All else was still and quiet when the noise faded- it was breathtaking. Eventually the loon made quite the ruckus in its attempt to take off. It flapped its wings and seemingly ran across the surface of the water for what must have been at least 40 yards before getting airborne.

In Fall of 2021, I was a Green Mountain Club caretaker and was blessed with a pair of loons at my site on Stratton Pond. Every morning, their shrill calls signaled it was time to wake up for trail maintenance. I'd throw on a warm layer, make coffee, then bid them farewell as I left the pond shore to clear drains and blowdowns. In the evening, I would paddle to a fee collection site on the far side of the pond, often having the loons come shockingly close to the gunwales to check me out. They'd sometimes clean their plumage and spread their wings as if showing off; it was always quite the display, the distinct black and white patterns in stark contrast to the changing foliage reds, oranges, and golds on shore being reflected in the water. Only once when I paddled into a specific cove did one of the loons "penguin dance", an act of spreading its wings while facing me and kicking its legs fast to rise up in the water in order to deter me. Throughout the season, I wondered who would leave the pond first: me or the birds? I was pulled off the site around October 17th and still the pair remained. I wondered if the birds would migrate later and later every year, if at all, with the changing of the climate.

I am currently in a rigorous one-year MBA program at UVM, which affords little, if any, time for field and forest leisure. Each day consists of waking early to finish up assignments from the night before, sitting yearningly by the window through lectures, then grinding away at a seemingly endless horizon of projects and deadlines. My MBA program has a specific focus on sustainability, and as such, we started with reviewing models that use detailed data from several groups of scientists to forecast an average prediction of how Climate Change is going to play out over the current century. We also reviewed several sets of global polling data around attitudes towards Climate Change. My takeaways were that it is pointless to be pessimistic, potentially fatal to be optimistic, and it was going to take an enormous effort to address what is being faced. It is no longer a question of winning or losing the battle- greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere will indeed rise to levels that cause more frequent natural disasters, and threaten to throw ecosystems so out of whack that species cannot adapt and may go extinct. Instead, it is about mitigating the risks of these occurrences, and doing the work to reduce those risks for the benefit of future generations.

I wonder which species of birds will be around for the children I may one day have and how different those species' migration habits will be. I can't help but also think about how human migration will change. Will our towns begin to migrate out of flood plains to the safety of the high ground? Will this region see a population increase from climate refugees? What is the role of PVLT to address these issues? These are the conversations we need to have in order to be proactive, and to be able to maintain rational optimism moving into the future.



# Passumpsic Valley Land Trust

WWW.PVLT.ORG

## PASSUMPSIC VALLEY LAND TRUST - NOTICE OF 2023 ANNUAL MEETING

The Passumpsic Valley Land Trust invites you to attend its 30th Annual Meeting for the year 2023.

**WHEN:** Saturday, January 27, 2024, 3 PM

**WHAT:** Annual Business Meeting

**WHERE:** Universalist Unitarian Congregation of St. Johnsbury at 47 Cherry Street. Parking is in the lot before you get to the building or on the street. Cherry Street is a one-way street. Event is hosted by Universalist Unitarian Congregation of St Johnsbury.

### The Annual Meeting Program

The PVLT Board of Directors will conduct a brief Business Meeting with a presentation of the Annual Report, the Financial Report, the Nominating Committee Report, and the result of the voting for Directors. Light refreshments will be offered.

### Annual Business Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome and President Meg Carter's opening remarks
2. Reading and acceptance of the Annual Report
3. Reading and acceptance of the Financial Report
4. Committee updates
5. Report of the election of Directors
6. Guest speaker

### 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 January 2024:

Meg Carter (2024-2026) Re-election

Brian Lamoureux (2024-2026) Re-election

Laurie Olszowy (2024-2026) Re-election

- Current PVLT members are eligible to vote in the election of Directors to the PVLT Board.
- If two or more names are shown on your mailing label, you may have a current family membership entitling two family members to cast ballots. You may photocopy the ballot below to enable a second vote.
- If you are not a current member but wish to establish or renew your membership to enable you to vote for Directors in the 2023 election, you may submit your annual membership dues along with your ballot. Tax-deductible membership contributions are \$10 for an individual, \$25 for a family, or \$25 for a business or organization. Contributions larger than the threshold for membership are welcomed and gratefully appreciated.

### Gifts to Passumpsic Valley Land Trust

Support PVLT's conservation activities related to the Passumpsic River and its watershed.

Every gift makes a difference and impacts the recreational, educational, ecological, and historic assets of these resources.

Now is the time to consider giving to Passumpsic Valley Land Trust! Want to learn more? Please contact board member

Laurie Olszowy at

[pvlandtrust@gmail.com](mailto:pvlandtrust@gmail.com)

**PVLT Bylaws:** Article II Membership and Structure. Section I – Members. A. Any person or organization shall be entitled to membership in the Trust upon payment of annual dues. B. For the purposes of voting, annual membership for new members shall be effective 14 days following the receipt of dues payment and shall run for one full year beginning with the effective date. For renewing members, membership shall begin immediately and run for one full year from the date of dues receipt by the Trust.

Ballots for election of Directors must be received **no later than Wednesday, January 17, 2024**, at PVLT, PO Box 624, St. Johnsbury, VT 05819.

Please cut here and return your completed ballot to:

PVLT, PO Box 624, St. Johnsbury, VT 05819, for receipt **no later than Wednesday, January 17, 2024.**

**Ballot for PVLT Board of Directors, for 3-year term 2023-2025**

**(Check or write-in no more than two names)**

Meg Carter [ ] or Write-in candidate \_\_\_\_\_

Brian Lamoureux [ ] or Write-in candidate \_\_\_\_\_

Laurie Olszowy [ ] or Write-in candidate \_\_\_\_\_



## MOVING?

You don't need to be in the Passumpsic Watershed to appreciate PVLТ's Mission Statement.

**Stay with us!**

Email us at [pylandtrust@gmail.com](mailto:pylandtrust@gmail.com) with your new mailing address.

We want you to be a part of what we do!



Picture of river from Murphy property



**SCAN ME**

to join PVLТ or  
renew your  
membership

## Value of Flood Plains

This year floodplains demonstrated their value in Vermont. Those living on the Passumpsic downstream from the PVLТ lands have benefited from the services of these conserved areas. Where the river is winding and can expand into the areas beside the river, the water slows down. As the water expands into the floodplain, it drops some of its sediment and seeps into the ground or waits for the river level to decrease and then flows back into the river. This decreases the flooding and erosion further down the river. The picture of the Murphy property and surrounding area in Lyndonville taken on July 11 shows how extensively the river water moved out into the flood plain.



Picture of Murphy Property flooded

## PVLТ's Annual Membership Renewal Reminder

In the past PVLТ changed the way it reaches out to members annually to renew your support for your land trust. PVLТ is now on a once-per-year reminder integrated into this newsletter. A membership that is current entitles you to cast a ballot for your Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting or to vote on any special items that may come up, such as Bylaws changes. PVLТ depends on your faithful support not just for underwriting your organization's land conservation activities but also for demonstrating to grantors that PVLТ 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 following your most recent contribution. If you recently sent us a renewal, or prefer to stick with a different annual cycle that works for you, just ignore this reminder.

Annual membership dues (minimum amount) by membership category (# of voters). Contributions larger than the threshold for membership are welcomed and gratefully appreciated.

Individual (1) \$10 // Family (2) \$25 // Organization/Business/Corporate (1) \$25

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Did you  
fill out the  
ballot?**