



# Running in Rubber Boots

Dick Randall used to say that the measure of any apple season was not the size or even the quality of the crop. It was the sale of all of the apples. When Robert Randall inherited Randall Orchards in Standish from his father Dick in 2015, he and his wife Julie had well-established careers remote from farming. Robert was a 28-year employee and supervisor with Shaw Brothers before he entered full-time farming. Julie continues in her 20th year as a school bus driver. As farmers, Robert and Julie are in the middle of their fourth harvest. In each of the first three, all their apples sold.

Robert and Julie have filled some very large Randall shoes and shown that they can run in them. They bring an entrepreneurial spirit to the Randall homestead that is exceptional by any measure. To extend the retail season, they now purchase Christmas trees and sell them from the rejuvenated farmstand as the apple season concludes. They planted 400 new apple trees, including the popular new Honeycrest variety. They graded two acres along Route 25 for the future planting of blueberry and raspberry bushes, while expanding the hours and products available at the farmstand. Robert and Julie now grow their own summer and fall garden vegetables and two acres of garlic to supplement products they sell from nearby farms. Finally, to extend the season for farmstand products they built a hoop house. Robert and Julie may both be new to farming, but they are showing themselves to be capable fourth-generation stewards of the Randall Farm.

Nearly a decade ago, Dick Randall decided to conserve 500 acres of his land ensuring it will stay as farm and forest forever. Our Land Trust will forever hold the conservation easement and Randall Orchards continues to be one of the largest conservation projects in the Greater Portland area. Understanding the major responsibility the Land Trust had accepted in holding the Randall Orchard conservation easement forever, Dick donated \$10,000 towards ongoing land stewardship. He also established a \$100,000 Land Trust endowment to help build a sustainable organization that can forever steward conserved lands like Randall Orchards.

Randall Orchards is now open not only for apple picking, but also walks in the forest on this forever conserved

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Julie and Robert Randall with Toby Jacobs announcing the Randall Trail opening

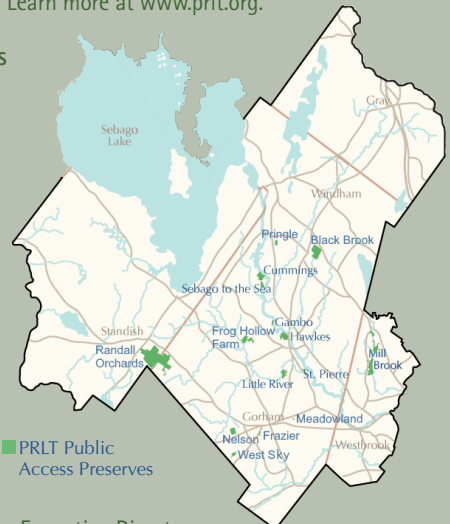
## Presumpscot Regional Land Trust

Presumpscot Regional Land Trust engages with communities to conserve, steward, and provide access to local lands and clean water for current and future generations to enjoy.

We are a community based nonprofit primarily serving Gorham, Gray, Standish, Westbrook, and Windham. We hold 1,600 acres of conserved lands with 16 free public access preserves that include trails and water access. We are the water stewards of the Presumpscot River watershed and we coordinate the Sebago to the Sea Trail, a 28-mile trail from Standish to Portland. Learn more at [www.prlt.org](http://www.prlt.org).

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- Rachelle Curran Apse, Executive Director
- Toby Jacobs, Stewardship and Outreach Manager

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land. Our Land Trust has been working with the Randall family for the last couple years to plan a future trail system in the 300 acres of conserved forest surrounding the orchard. Phase one, the 1.5 mile Randall Loop Trail, was funded by Narragansett Number One Foundation and Old Port Advisors and was opened in September. It has two trailheads, one along Randall Road and the other at the back of the Colonial Marketplace (Hannaford) parking lot. This trail is easy to moderate terrain with views of wetlands, vernal pools, stonewalls, and a diversity of majestic hemlock, pines, oaks and maples trees. The North Branch of the Little River, a tributary of the Presumpscot River, meanders through. Over the next couple years the Land Trust plans to add an additional 5 miles of loop trail through the forest surrounding the orchard.

“As co-owner of Randall Orchards I’m excited that the Land Trust is putting in trails for the community to use in the forest surrounding the Orchard. I hope people will come and walk, bike and snowshoe our trails” said Julie Randall.

Robert and Julie have further partnered with the Land Trust to host numerous events such as full moon snowshoeing and Land Trust Annual Meetings. Randall Orchards and

our Land Trust are thriving in a mutually supportive way that would bring joy to the heart of Dick Randall, who envisioned his land as farm forever and partnered with our Land Trust to help make that vision a reality.

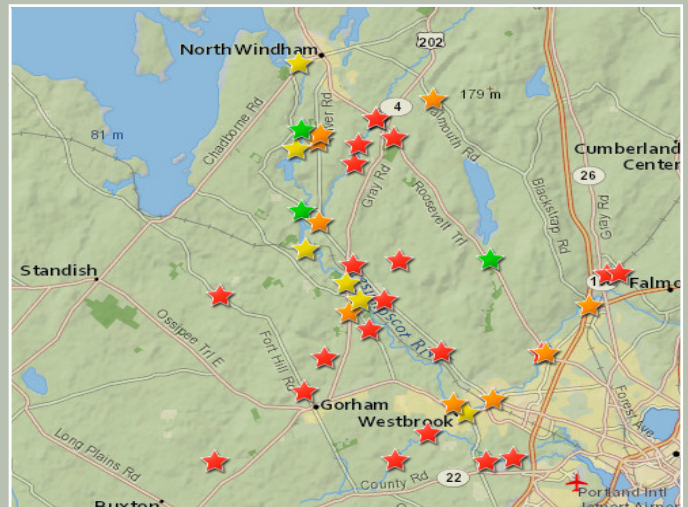


Crowd at Randall Trail Opening

## 2018 State of Clean Water Update

Thanks to volunteers and summer intern Abigail Owen, we completed a second year of our ongoing Water Stewards program. The goal of this program is to monitor the water quality of the Presumpscot River and its many tributaries to understand its status and how it may be changing. The 2018 results can now be viewed through the interactive map on our Land, Water, and Trails webpage at [www.prlt.org/water](http://www.prlt.org/water).

Good water quality is vital to wildlife as well as the health of humans who recreate in or on the river. Citizen scientists measure temperature, dissolved oxygen, and bacteria levels. Aquatic life, like fish, survive and thrive when levels of dissolved oxygen are high. Water is healthy for humans to swim and recreate in when bacteria levels are low. This sampling season we encountered the stark reality that only 3 of the 40 sites we tested were below the state water quality threshold for E. coli bacteria levels throughout the season. E. coli is a key indicator, so this means that human and/or animal waste is likely causing negative impacts to the river system. The results from our Water Stewards program helps our Land Trust and its partners identify important places to conserve land to maintain clean water and potential restoration projects to improve water quality.



Results of bacteria testing from 2018 Water Stewards Program.

The Water Stewards program was possible this year thanks to 31 volunteer citizen-scientists who together sampled 40 sites throughout the watershed on a biweekly basis from May through September. Thank you to Casco Bay Estuary Partnership for being the lead funder, to USM’s Environmental Science and Policy Department for program collaboration, and to the Town of Windham’s Watershed Protect Grant for support of our Water Stewards program.

# Letter from the Executive Director



Rachelle Curran Apse

My family headed out to Randall Orchards last weekend to see the beautiful fall foliage, pick apples and then walk the new Randall forest trail, or I should say gallop. My three and five year old bounded down the trail pretending to be horses galloping through the forest. I asked them why horses? They said the ground is so bouncy. I smiled knowing that by creating a new forest trail close to home, we are providing opportunities to experience the soft bouncy forest floor that is only possible in an old forest with a new walking trail.

This summer we focused on our Family Friendly Initiative by improving trails at our four most popular preserves to ensure that people of all ages and varying abilities get to experience nature near home: Black Brook Preserve in Windham, Frazier Preserve in Gorham, Hawkes Preserve in Gorham and Mill Brook Preserve in Westbrook. In addition we now provide family friendly programs every season of the year. We are so glad over 30 families joined us to experience snowshoeing, try out river paddling and view migratory fish.

As I head into my fourth year as the director for our Land Trust, I am proud to share we have quadrupled our service to the community. We now provide 16 different preserves with trails and water access that are always

free and open to the public, compared to five trails in 2015. As a result, this year our board members and staff together had the capacity to update our governance structure and our conservation plan. We agreed our five priority conservation values are: protecting clean water, expanding significant wildlife habitat, increasing access to outdoor recreation, conserving farmland, and connecting the next generation to nature near home. We mapped our values and identified highest priority areas for conservation within our region. In the coming years, with your support we will all see the results. In a fast developing region, we will conserve more lands forever, ensuring the quality of life in the Maine we love continues for the next generation.



Galloping along the new Randall Trail

# Letter from the Co-Presidents

The bounty of fall brings with it a fun time for our Land Trust. We joined with over 100 friends to celebrate our annual meeting at Randall Orchards, which started with the opening of our new 1.5 mile Randall loop trail that winds its way through the forested land that borders the orchard. We enjoyed the bounty of the fall harvest with delicious pies in many flavors and we paused to celebrate the volunteers, members, supporters and staff who make our work possible – thank you.

As our Land Trust grows to meet the needs of our communities, we are excited to be enriching our trail experiences with family friendly trails that have been designed to offer an easier walking experience for access by all ages. We are delighted to see the improvements that have already happened at Black Brook Preserve in Windham over the summer that allows our youngest and oldest community members an easy and enjoyable experience on the trail.

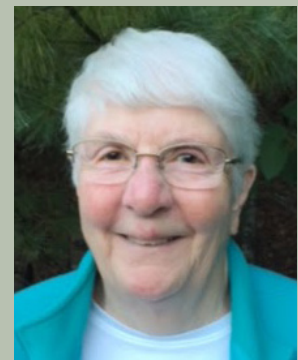
Thanks to our staff, events are planned each month to help folks get to know and enjoy the lands we have conserved. Check out our website, [www.prlt.org](http://www.prlt.org), for a list of upcoming events.

We want to welcome four new members to the Board of Directors who were elected at the annual meeting this fall: Jim Boyle, Brian Conde, Tammy Heiselmeyer and Jim Hughes. Thank you to all board members for their leadership and service to the community.

Many thanks to our members, business sponsors, and grantors for making all of this possible.



Tamara Lee Pinard



Priscilla Payne

# Coming This Fall: Loop Trail at Nelson Preserve

As a donation from the late Jane Nelson, we are very appreciative to have received the 37 acres in Gorham that make up the new Nelson Preserve. This summer we successfully completed the project fundraising and we were able to accept the land donation. Thanks to the Town of Gorham and individuals who helped raise the needed stewardship costs for this project, we have nearly completed the new trail.

The forest within the Nelson Preserve is varied and beautiful, especially notable are large old growth red oaks throughout the uplands. Looking beyond the immediate boundaries, the Preserve is part of a 300+ acre undeveloped block of mature forest and wetlands. It also includes signs of history going back to colonial times with moss-covered stone walls and the remnants of a stagecoach road that was a main route for travelers between Maine and New Hampshire.

The opening of the Nelson trail in this beautiful spot will be a great ending to the fall season. The trail is a 1.5 mile loop, beginning at the trailhead on Flaggy Meadow Road, just a few short miles west of downtown Gorham. Designed and built by our summer intern Melody Larson in conjunction with neighbor (and superb amateur historian) Tom Johnson. The trail is easy-moderate to walk and winds through a natural and remote landscape. Trail work is nearly complete, with local Eagle Scout Ethan Boardman working hard on a trailhead kiosk that will be installed soon. The grand opening of the trail will be on Saturday, December 2nd. We look forward to seeing you there.



Nelson Preserve

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

*Choose Your Own Adventure*



Mill Brook Preserve trail improvements

Our success as a local community based-nonprofit is based on active and engaged volunteers. We want to say a big thank you to all of the volunteers who helped our Land Trust this year including water stewards, land stewards, trail builders, event supporters, and board members. We have more volunteer opportunities this fall; if you want to learn about the trails and natural history of the region, one of these might be the perfect opportunity for you:

### TRAIL WORK

We need more volunteers to help expand the new Mill Brook Preserve family friendly trail to one of the fish viewing pools. We are also working on finishing a 1.5 mile loop trail at the new Nelson Preserve. You can work in a group or independently, and tasks range from very active to light. This is a great way to check out the new trails, meet other involved volunteers, and make an important contribution to the Land Trust.

### PRESERVE STEWARDS

Preserve stewards are key to our overall stewardship as a land trust. They get to know one preserve intimately, helping plan and complete necessary improvement projects. We have added several new preserves this year and are looking to add preserve stewards to regularly walk trails and perform light monthly trail maintenance.

### PHOTOGRAPHERS

Photos help us tell the story of the beautiful lands and waters we conserve, and the wide variety of people who use them. Would you like to see a picture you captured in our newsletter or on our Facebook, Instagram, or web site? We are looking for volunteers who love to take photos and want to spend time visiting our preserves and taking photos in different seasons and during our events.

Learn more and sign up for any of these volunteer opportunities at

[www.prlt.org](http://www.prlt.org)

or contact Toby Jacobs at [toby@prlt.org](mailto:toby@prlt.org) with questions.

# Mill Brook Preserve: Creating a Corridor for Wildlife and People

Mill Brook Preserve is the largest forever conserved land in Westbrook and it continues to grow. This summer Janet Smith donated to our Land Trust a 27 acre parcel of land with half a mile of frontage on Mill Brook, which brings Mill Brook Preserve to 157 acres. This newly conserved land is adjacent to Mill Brook Estates an affordable housing complex owned by Westbrook Housing. This fall Westbrook Housing will be donating a 20 acre conservation easement and public access easement to our Land Trust, which will allow trailhead parking and a trail system to be created from East Bridge Street in Westbrook.

This new project is called Mill Brook Preserve South because it does not yet directly connect to our current trail system. We envision Mill Brook Preserve continuing to expand along the Brook providing one continuous corridor for wildlife and people. The Mill Brook Preserve South project will include a one mile loop trail with extensive boardwalks for the public to enjoy. The Westbrook Community Center (located just one mile from the future trailhead) will collaborate with our Land Trust, engaging afterschool and summer students in the trail planning and building process. This project is made possible by a grant from the Cornelia Warren Community Association. We expect to open this trail system to the public in the fall of 2019.

As part of our Family Friendly Initiative we are expanding the Mill Brook Preserve trail system this year to six miles



IDEXX volunteers at Mill Brook Preserve

and two of those miles have been improved so they are family friendly with benches and educational signage. These trail improvements are thanks to a grant from Westbrook Recreation and Conservation Commission.

As stewards of the fish migration through Mill Brook, we are delighted to announce that this was the largest fish migration from Casco Bay through Mill Brook to Highland Lake recorded at nearly 67,000 fish. For those who got to see the fish migrate it was a spectacular site. If you have not yet seen the fish migration at one of the fish viewing pools in Mill Brook Preserve, mark your calendar for the end of May and beginning of June to see this natural phenomenon.

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## Westbrook COMPASS Students Learning in the Outdoor Classroom

This month marks the beginning of an exciting collaboration between the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust and Westbrook High School's alternative education COMPASS Academy. A group of about 15 students will come out at least once a month throughout the school year to one of our Preserves to help with trail planning, building and preserve maintenance. We expect the group to be especially involved in the construction of the new Mill Brook South trail. This collaboration provides an outdoor classroom for hands on learning.

In the words of COMPASS teacher Sarah Anthony, "The COMPASS Academy is excited to partner with the Land Trust. We feel it is important to connect classroom lessons to real-world, authentic field experiences. This partnership not only provides a fantastic learning experience, it also helps the students establish roots and feel connected to their community. Cultivating a strong sense of local and global citizenship is important to us. Service learning opportunities like these are excellent ways for students to meet the Maine Guiding Principles and give back to their community in a way that is authentic and lasting. We are excited to see what awesome adventures this collaboration with the Land Trust and COMPASS will bring to the community."



COMPASS Academy students at Mill Brook preserve



Volunteer crew at Black Brook Preserve



Black Brook Preserve

# New Look for Black Brook Preserve Trails

As part of our Family Friendly Initiative, Black Brook Preserve in Windham saw significant family friendly trail improvements this summer thanks to the weekly efforts of dedicated volunteers and staff. We have created several new bridges, widened and strengthened existing ones, re-routed the trail around rooty sections, and removed countless large rocks and roots. Finally, we are currently adding directional trail signs and updating maps to mark the newly improved route. The changes make the Black Brook Preserve trails easier and more comfortable to walk, so you can enjoy the beautiful surroundings without having to worry about major obstacles. We also added benches along the trail to provide rest and viewing spots.

# Volunteer Spotlight

Black Brook Preserve is a 105 acre jewel in Windham, which was protected with the hard work and determination of the Windham Land Trust (now merged with Presumpscot Regional Land Trust). Windham Land Trust was founded in 2000 with the mission to preserve the land that became the Black Brook Preserve from becoming a large housing development. It was a successful effort by dedicated people who made a huge impact and some of those leaders are still involved today. Valerie DeVuyst, Dennis Hawkes, and David and Glenice Stover were four of the founders of Windham Land Trust, who stayed on through the merger to continue volunteering with the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust. All four will be honored for their nearly twenty years of volunteer leadership with plaques on the new benches that have been placed in scenic locations along the Black Brook Preserve trails.



Top: Windham Land Trust founders. Bottom: Volunteer Spotlight Honorees, photo taken in 2014

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Mill Brook Preserve trail improvements



# JOIN US

Presumpscot Regional Land Trust is a community based nonprofit that exists due to member support from people like you.

**MEMBER BENEFITS** - As a member you will be part of protecting and caring for your favorite rushing brooks, local farms, and forested river corridors that are essential to our quality of life. Members also receive our newsletters, invitations to events, and our printed trail map.

Yes, I want to support the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust today.

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Make check payable and mail to: Presumpscot Regional Land Trust,  
P.O. Box 33, Gorham, Maine 04038 or donate at [www.prlt.org](http://www.prlt.org).

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, all donations to PRLT are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Donations of any size makes you a member for one year. The more generous your gift, the more service our organization can provide to the community.





**Presumpscot Regional Land Trust**

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## Upcoming Events

### **Mill Brook Family Friendly Trail Opening**

Sunday Nov 18 at 1 pm  
Perry Court Trailhead, Westbrook

### **Nelson Preserve Grand Opening**

Sunday Dec 2nd at 1 pm  
Nelson Preserve, Gorham

### **Full Moon Snowshoe**

Saturday January 19th at 4:30 pm  
Randall Orchards, Standish

### **Family Snowshoe**

February, Date TBD  
Hawkes Preserve, Gorham

All events are free, but space is limited, and RSVP is required.  
To learn more about these events and to RSVP, go to our website  
**[www.prlt.org](http://www.prlt.org) or call 839-4633.**