



# The Newsletter of Presumpscot Regional Land Trust

Engaging with communities to conserve, steward, access and enjoy local lands and clean water Spring/Summer 2018

## Coming Soon: Family-Friendly Trails

We are excited to introduce our new Family Friendly Trails initiative, which will expand the options for people of all ages to access and enjoy walking on our trails. This year we will create family friendly trails on parts of our four most popular preserves: Black Brook, Frazier, Hawkes, and Mill Brook.

Family friendly trails will be wide enough for a parent and child to walk together holding hands. The terrain will be manageable for small legs and in most cases all-terrain strollers, and there will be benches along the trail to regularly rest and enjoy a snack. To make the experience more interactive, we will add educational signage, storybook walks, and natural play areas. These changes will allow sections of these preserves to be more accessible to all.

Black Brook Preserve, located in Windham Center, is 105 acres of conserved land with two miles of trail through rolling hills, mature trees, and brooks. A segment of the current trail will be

improved to be family friendly over the next two years. This will include covering exposed roots, and replacing bridges and boardwalks.

Mill Brook Preserve, in Westbrook, is 130 acres of conserved land and five miles of trail, in which the largest migratory fish run from Casco Bay can be viewed. In late May, thousands of alewives begin their migration from the ocean, up the Presumpscot River, into and up Mill Brook, and eventually to Highland Lake. Those who have visited Mill Brook Preserve know that the terrain includes steep banks creating dramatic scenery and challenging trail walking. This summer we will make the northernmost section into a family friendly trail, and we will also build a new family-friendly section from the southern trailhead to a fish viewing pool.

*(article continues on page 2)*



New family friendly bridge at Hawkes Preserve

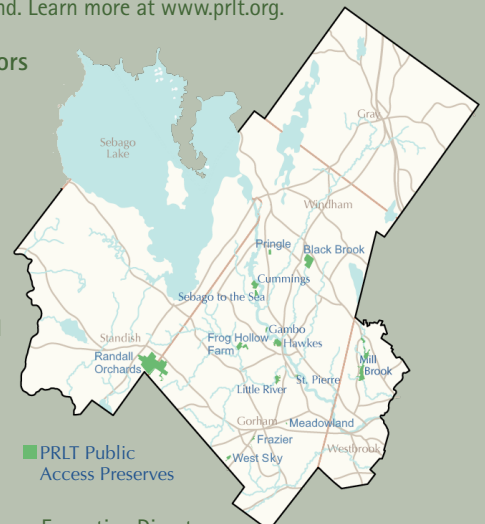
### Presumpscot Regional Land Trust

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 14 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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#### Staff

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

*(cover story continued from page 1)*

Frazier Preserve in downtown Gorham is about a mile of trail that is popular for both walkers and mountain bikers. With a convenient trailhead near Gorham High School, this is the perfect trail for a quick family walk or a longer journey, as it connects with a large network of Town of Gorham trails. Part of the trail is a family friendly rail-trail; and where the trail leaves the railbed it becomes narrow and needs bridge improvements and trail widening to create a family friendly trail experience.

Hawkes Preserve, in Little Falls Village, Gorham, is 41 acres of conserved land with a one-mile loop trail that connects the Presumpscot River and Great Falls Elementary School. The family friendly trail section of Hawkes Preserve is on the Cumberland-Oxford Canal Towpath along the Presumpscot River. Making this section family friendly began last year when we created a new bridge (with invaluable help from many volunteers). This spring, Great Falls Elementary students will plant native shrubs and trees around the bridge to stabilize the shore, provide valuable habitat, and create a beautiful setting during flowering season.

Our family friendly trails initiative originated from community feedback collected as part of our 2018-2022 Strategic Plan. In addition to family friendly trail improvements, look for new



Family Learn to Snowshoe Program on the Sebago to the Sea Trail

quarterly programs geared specifically towards families. We welcome feedback on this initiative and look forward to seeing you on the trails.

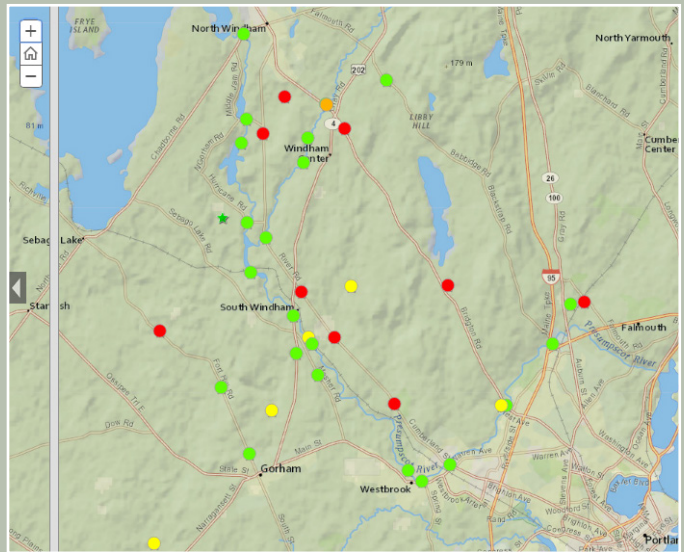
We want to thank Westbrook Recreation and Conservation Commission, Maine Coast Heritage Trust's L.L. Bean grant, Town of Gorham, and Business Partners and Individual Members for helping to fund this new program.

# Findings from our Water Stewards

We just completed the first year of our new Water Stewards program, which we added to the Land Trust when we merged with Presumpscot River Watch. Our Water Stewards program monitors the water quality of the Presumpscot River and its tributaries. You can now see the results through interactive maps on our Land, Water, and Trails webpage.

Water quality monitoring is an important way to assess the health of rivers and streams in our region for both humans and wildlife. Citizen scientists measure temperature, dissolved oxygen, and bacteria levels. Water is healthy for humans to swim and recreate when bacteria levels are low. Aquatic life, like fish, can survive when there is enough dissolved oxygen. The results from our Water Stewards program can help our Land Trust identify important places to conserve land and potential restoration projects throughout the region.

The Water Stewards program was possible last year thanks to 36 volunteer citizen scientists who together sampled 35 sites throughout the watershed biweekly



Preview of the water quality maps now on our website

May through September. Thank you to Casco Bay Estuary Partnership, Town of Windham Watershed Protection Fund, USM's Environmental Science and Policy Department, and to Business Partners and Individual Members for your support of our Water Stewards program.

# New Conservation Land with Trails Nearly a Reality in Gorham



Jane Nelson

As part of Jane Nelson's legacy, she generously offered the gift of a 37-acre forested parcel of land in Gorham for conservation and public access to the Land Trust. The Nelson parcel is part of a 300+ acre undeveloped block of forest that includes Brandy Brook, which the state has identified as habitat for wild brook trout.

their land in Gorham and always hoped to share it with the community. As children we found ourselves walking the woods trails with our parents and dogs. Jane and Clifford made provisions in their will for the local Land Trust to inherit the property so it would be conserved. We are committed to seeing this land protected, which is why we have given a financial gift to help protect this land. Please consider joining us in donating to ensure this land is protected for the entire community."

The Land Trust Board of Directors has voted to accept the gift, provided the necessary funds are raised to cover the transaction, the stewardship, and the trail-building costs. As a community based nonprofit, every new conservation project, even when the land is donated, comes with costs that need to be covered before the Land Trust can commit to hold the conservation land in perpetuity.

We are looking to individuals to help raise the remaining \$4,000 in needed funds this spring. If you want to see more land conserved in Gorham in perpetuity, providing access for the public to get out and enjoy the forests now and into the future, please consider making a gift to this effort using the form below.

Our priority for the future Nelson Preserve will be to ensure a healthy forest for wildlife habitat and to provide a public access one-mile loop trail. This will offer low impact recreation in a region of Gorham, just west of downtown, that currently has no open space.

The Nelson Preserve budget is \$77,200. The great news is that the Land Trust has 95% of the funding and has only \$4,000 left to raise. Thank you to the Town of Gorham for donating \$10,000 from the Open Space Impact Fee fund towards this conservation project.

Lars Nelson and Susan Nelson Carver, son and daughter of Jane and Clifford Nelson, explain: "Our parents loved



Brandy Brook on proposed Nelson Preserve



I want to make a gift to help make the Nelson Preserve a reality:

\_\_\_\$250 \_\_\_\$500 \_\_\_\$1,000 \_\_\_\$2,000 Other \$\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable and mail to: Presumpscot Regional Land Trust, P.O. Box 33, Gorham, Maine 04038. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, all donations to PRLT are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. To learn more about the Nelson land acquisition project contact Executive Director, Rachelle Curran Apse at rachelle@prlt.org or 839-4633.

# Letter from the Executive Director



I saw a great blue heron fly over yesterday and smiled, knowing spring is now here. Spring means our water stewards, land stewards, wildlife stewards and trailwork volunteers will all soon be busy. As a community based nonprofit, volunteers are core to meeting our mission and we are so thankful to the 100+ ongoing

volunteers with our Land Trust. We are looking for dozens of new volunteers this spring, so now is a great time to become a volunteer.

I am excited to report that our Stewardship and Outreach Manager, Toby Jacobs, is now full time. Our increased staff capacity means we can leverage more support because Toby will coordinate all our field volunteers and two interns this year. As a result, you can expect to see the difference on the ground with trail improvements throughout our preserves and 15 miles of trails making it easier for everyone to get outside and enjoy nature.

Having just finished our 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, one of the clear priorities is to focus more on the next generation. As a result, we now are providing quarterly Family Friendly programs. Learn to snowshoe on the Sebago to the Sea Trail was our first program; to see future programs go to our events webpage.

Our ongoing service to the community is only possible due to members like yourself who support the Land Trust; thank you to everyone who is a member. We recently started two programs for members the River Partner monthly giving program, and the Sustainers \$1,000+ giving program. Both programs have grown quickly and will continue to be critical to our sustainability. Thank you to the founders of both programs. Please consider joining one or both of these programs to be a part of supporting clean water, the conservation of local lands, and access to explore nature for all into the future.

With gratitude,  
*Rachelle Curran Apse*

# Letter from the Co-Presidents

With crocuses and daffodils pushing through the ground, it is a clear sign that spring is upon us. As the air warms and the days get longer, there is no better time for us to invite you to explore our trails. We are introducing our new initiative Family Friendly Trails.

Spring is also a good time to express our heartfelt gratitude to the many individuals, families, and businesses who are generously supporting the good work of our Land Trust. THANK YOU.

Your support is integral to our ability to strengthen our organization and achieve our vision of a future where networks of conserved land, clean water, wildlife habitat, working farms, and public access to nature are recognized as vital assets to the economy and quality of place; with people of all ages connected to the outdoors and the next generation inspired to be environmental stewards.

In order to achieve this vision, we depend on our skilled staff and over 100 active volunteers who are thoughtfully engaging with communities to conserve, steward, and provide access to our local lands and clean water for current and future generations to enjoy.

We are gearing up to train our volunteer water stewards, who will be testing the waters in the Presumpscot Watershed to help keep tabs on the water quality that is so important to all of us. We are also starting to clear trails and do maintenance so our lands will be ready for you to enjoy.

Speaking about enjoyment... Have you heard the peepers yet? We have, and that is a sure sign that is encouraging us to get out and appreciate all that nature has to offer.

Warm regards,  
*Priscilla and Tamara*



Tamara Lee Pinard



Priscilla Payne

# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

## Choose Your Own Adventure



Trail work volunteers

We are looking for volunteers in the following areas for the 2018 field season:

### NEEDED: Water Stewards

This summer will be our second water quality sampling season (building on decades of work by the Presumpscot River Watch). We need up to 50 volunteer citizen scientists willing to spend a couple of hours every other Saturday from May to September. No prior experience is necessary, as all training is provided. This year, the volunteer training will be held Saturday, May 5 at the University of Southern Maine Gorham Campus. This is a great way to spend time by the water, discover new areas, and make a real contribution to the health of our waterways. New this year, Water Stewards will monitor water quality not only in the Presumpscot River watershed but also in the Stroudwater River.

### NEEDED: Wildlife Stewards

You may have heard of the spring alewife run in Mill Brook, but here's your chance to see it up close and personal. Alewife are migratory fish that make their way from the ocean into the Presumpscot River and then Mill Brook so they can reproduce in Highland Lake before returning to the sea.

Our Land Trust is a partner in an annual migratory fish count-coordinated by the University of Southern Maine. Volunteers will count fish as they migrate upstream, from late May to early June. It is a simple and exciting way to volunteer and experience an amazing natural phenomenon. No experience is needed, the volunteer shifts are just 30 minutes long, and a short training will be provided.

### NEEDED: Spring Trail Clean-up Volunteers

This May and June will be our annual clean-up at each of our public access preserves. Led by the Volunteer Steward for each preserve, clean-ups are essential in getting the trails in great shape for hiking season. Stretch your legs after a long winter while becoming more acquainted with one of your favorite preserves (or discovering a new one). No prior skills are needed, and we will provide all necessary tools and equipment.

### NEEDED: Outreach Volunteers

We are continually expanding our outreach events. In addition to the monthly events, we have begun hosting seasonal family-friendly events this year. Volunteers can help us with set-up, check-in, taking photos, and general outreach support.

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.

# River Partner Invitation

Like a river, your donation to the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust will "flow" year round, when you become a River Partner and make a recurring monthly gift. It's a great way to spread your support throughout the year.

The River Partner program is a safe and easy way to give. You choose how much to donate, and you can increase, decrease, or stop your gift at any time. Your recurring gift can be made either through a credit card by going to [www.prlt.org](http://www.prlt.org) and click on donate, or through bank to bank transfer (ACH) by filling out the information below.

## I want to be a River Partner giving a monthly gift of:

\_\_\_ \$10    \_\_\_ \$15    \_\_\_ \$20    \_\_\_ \$25

\_\_\_ \$50    \_\_\_ \$100    Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Town/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ I want to be a River Partner and give through bank to bank transfer. I have enclosed a check for my first month's gift. Please transfer my future monthly gifts from my checking account using the bank information on my check.

Signature (required for River Partner monthly giving through ACH)

Date

I understand that this is an automated monthly giving program billed on or about the 20th of each month. Gifts are processed directly through Gorham Savings Bank. For questions or to make changes please email us at [info@prlt.org](mailto:info@prlt.org) or call us at 839-4633. You will receive a tax-deductible receipt for your contributions at the end of each year.

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.

# NEW Adopt-a-Trail Program

Adopt-a-Trail sponsorships offer businesses a concrete way of supporting the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust by sponsoring a trail with a donation of \$2,500. Sponsorships are renewable yearly. In our first year, we have Adopt-a-Trail opportunities at our four most popular trailheads: Black Brook Preserve in Windham, Frazier Preserve in Gorham, Hawkes Preserve in Gorham, and Mill Brook Preserve in Westbrook.

Adopt-a-Trail sponsors will be recognized at the trailhead with full-color signs that include the business logo. Sponsors also receive business exposure through Land Trust email, website, events, social media, and press releases. We'll also host a day of trail activities specific to the business, with team-building and skill-building activities that can include trail building, trail clean up, or a guided walk on the adopted trail.

Thank you to Westbrook business, Artel, for being the first business to become an Adopt-a-Trail sponsor. Richard

Curtis, Chairman of Artel said: "Artel is committed to supporting the quality of life in Maine which our employees and the greater community value. We know that our quality of life depends on having a healthy community which gets outdoors and enjoys the natural lands in our region. We are proud to be an Adopt-a-Trail sponsor with the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust and look forward to seeing many happy users on the trail."

For more information and to become an Adopt-a-Trail sponsor go to [www.prlt.org](http://www.prlt.org) and click on donate or contact us at [info@prlt.org](mailto:info@prlt.org) or 839-4633. We look forward to announcing more Adopt-a-Trail sponsors this coming year.



## INTERN SPOTLIGHT

We are excited to welcome our two recently hired interns who will be working with us this summer.

Melody Larson will be working with us full-time for ten weeks this summer as a Stewardship Intern. Melody's background in environmental studies and outdoor activities makes her a great fit for this position. She says, "As a native Mainer, I have grown up exploring the outdoors and seeing firsthand the importance of Maine's environment which sparked my interest in studying the environment." She will assist in researching and writing management plans, planning and building trails, and hosting outreach events. Melody hails from New Gloucester and graduated from Gray-New Gloucester High School. She is currently a rising junior at Colby College where she is studying Environmental Policy and Education.



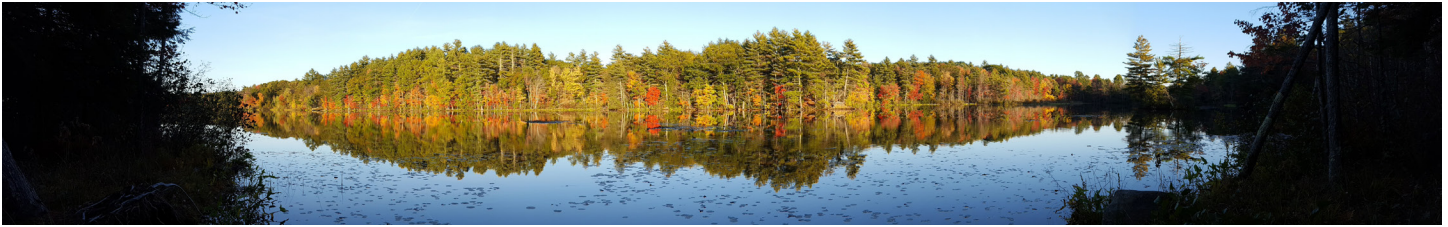
Melody Larson



Abigail Owen

Abigail Owen is our 2018 Water Quality and Fish Count Summer Intern. Abigail says, "I've always loved the outdoors, and I'm excited to learn more about field work and water quality while interning with the Land Trust." She will be assisting in the coordination of the Water Stewards program, including supporting the volunteer citizen scientists, running water samples in the lab, and conducting data analysis. In addition, she will be a wildlife steward, assisting in the coordination of USM's annual alewife count used to estimate how many fish reach Highland Lake from the ocean through their spring migration. As a wildlife steward she will also help to ensure alewife passage in the spring and fall through Mill Brook. She was a volunteer Water Steward with our Land Trust last year. Abigail is a rising senior at the University of Southern Maine where she is majoring in Environmental Science.

These internship positions are possible thanks to Casco Bay Estuary Partnership, Maine Coast Heritage Trust, and our Land Trust Business Partners and Individual Members.



# Thank you to everyone who supported our Land Trust in 2017 through winter 2018

Together we protected more open space for wildlife and people to enjoy, we monitored the water quality of the streams and rivers, we built and improved more trails to get into the outdoors, and we provided educational programs to hundreds of people to learn about and discover the unique natural areas in our region.

## INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS - *Gifts of all sizes make individuals members for a year*

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 Freightliner and Western Star of Maine  
 Great Falls Construction  
 Hillside Lumber  
 IDEXX  
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 MCHT's Maine Excellence Program  
 MCHT's Merger Fund  
 Maine DEP  
 Maine Medical Center  
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 Pierce Atwood  
 Sewall Foundation  
 Town of Gorham  
 Vienna Farm  
 Westbrook Trailblazers  
 Westbrook Recreation and Conservation  
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 Windham Watershed Protection Grant  
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**Presumpscot Regional Land Trust**

PO Box 33, Gorham, Maine 04038 | [info@prlt.org](mailto:info@prlt.org) | [www.prlt.org](http://www.prlt.org)

## Upcoming Events

### **Sebago to the Sea Bike to Local Foods**

Saturday May 19 at 1 pm

Sebago to the Sea Trail, Windham and Gorham

### **Spring Run: Fish Migration Walk**

Saturday June 2nd at 10am

Mill Brook Preserve, Westbrook

### **Exploring Mushrooms**

Saturday July 14 at 10am

Black Brook Preserve, Windham

### **Intro to Paddling the Presumpscot for Families**

August, Date TBD

Sebago to the Sea Trail, Gorham and Windham

### **Paddling the Presumpscot**

August, Date TBD

Sebago to the Sea Trail, Gorham and Windham

### **Harvest Celebration and Annual Meeting**

September 16 at 5pm

Randall Orchards, Standish

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.**