

Nashoba Conservation Trust Winter 2017 News

Naming Our Newsletter

We have chosen a name for our Newsletter! After much deliberation among the Board of Directors, with over a dozen possibilities, we have agreed upon *Outside Insight* as the new title of the newsletter. We would like to extend our thanks to all who participated.



Conservation Corner

Ken Hartlage

Calvin: “Look at all the stars! The universe just goes out forever and ever!”

Hobbes: “It kind of makes you wonder why man considers himself such a big screaming deal.”

If you ever needed a reason to step outside, whether to gaze at the stars or walk in the woods, Florence William’s engaging book, *The Nature Fix*, supplies it in spades. *The Nature Fix* explores the beneficial physical, psychological and social changes that nature induces in us, and explains the science behind it.

Amongst the many intriguing studies covered, researchers in Japan and Finland showed that spending just fifteen minutes in nature lowered blood pressure, stress levels and improved the overall mood of test subjects. Bumping up that nature experience to 45 minutes actually elicited improved cognitive performance in test subjects.

Apparently, a small dose of nature gives the “executive office” of our brain a rest. That’s the part of the brain where problems are solved and decisions made; a little bit of rest allows it to bounce back at peak performance.

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Conservation Corner

Ken Hartlage

And the benefits don't stop there. Nature, it seems, can improve our creativity and even has the capacity to make us more compassionate and generous. In a study designed to examine the impacts of awe inspiring experiences, one test group was instructed to gaze up at 200-foot tall Eucalyptus trees for one minute while another group was instructed to stare up at a rather non-descript building. Both groups then separately witnessed a carefully staged "accident" and were unknowingly evaluated on how helpful they were to the person needing assistance. Guess which group was the more helpful? The body of research suggests that awe inspiring experiences, like watching a beautiful sunset or staring at the Milky Way as Calvin did, make us feel part of something bigger than ourselves, and that helps make us feel more connected to each other. Interesting.

In Pepperell and our surrounds, we're very fortunate to have nature so close at hand. Spending just a few minutes a day there walking, biking, riding or simply hanging could do us, and our community, a lot of good.

Christmas Bird Count

Michael Veit

Each winter the National Audubon Society organizes their Christmas Bird Count which takes place throughout the United States and abroad. We are very fortunate that Pepperell is within the Groton-Oxbow Christmas Bird Count Circle which gives our residents an easy way to participate in this fun and worthwhile exercise. Many of the current participants have been involved for the entire sixteen years of its history and Pepperell has contributed many significant records over the years. Our count date this year was Dec. 18 and we had over a dozen residents participating. Some were out for most of the day and night braving the cold and visiting a diversity of land parcels while others stayed at home and simply counted at feeders on their own property. Numerous miles were logged on foot and in car chasing down birds of all kinds throughout the town. We are proud that the count total for Pepperell was over 1978 birds from 39 species!



Our local Christmas Bird Count is a wonderful excuse to get outside, visit and appreciate some of Pepperell's diverse open space properties during a time of year when many people normally do not, and make a contribution to a valuable effort. It's also a great opportunity to meet and gather with other nature enthusiasts from surrounding towns.

The count is open to everyone no matter how experienced a birder they are. The Groton-Oxbow count is held each year on the first Sunday of the count period. If you would like to participate, you can contact our town count compiler and NCT's Vice President, Paula Terrasi, at: lakelover207@yahoo.com

General information about the National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count, including results for each count circle, can be found on their web site: <http://www.audubon.org/conservation/science/christmas-bird-count>

New Trail Opened in Town Forest

Paul Peavey

In 1925, the Town Forest Committee (a Committee that was formed in response to the Board of Selectmen's 1922 request to establish a Town Forest) purchased over 100 acres (90 acres on River Road and additional acreage off of Jewett Street) for \$500. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts provided 5,000 white pine seedlings to any community who established a Town Forest of 100 acres or more. The white pine seedlings were planted by local groups including scouts and school children.

The Town Forest is managed by the Town Forest Committee.

Last summer work was under way at the Forest to create a fire road, which was identified as a "need" in the Ten-year Forest Management Plan for this protected area. Conveniently, the fire road can be used as a trail and we made sure it connected with the trail that connects with Keyes Farm. We also made a short connection to the Town Forest picnic area during the construction of the fire road.

Late last fall NCT, working in collaboration with the Town Forest Committee, created a new trail in the Forest. The GOLD trail starts at the picnic tables on River Rd. and extends over to Elm St. It also links up with the RED trail which leads into Keyes Farm Conservation area. One of the primary reasons for this new trail was that it opens many options to hikers on four adjacent conservation areas.

In August of 2016, NCT sponsored a successful hike that started at the Elm St. entrance of Keyes Farm, linked with the the Town Forest trails, and ended on the Nashua River on the West Side Trail. The GOLD trail also connects to the Linkel Woods parcel on Elm St. which can be used for moderate hikes. Enjoy!



Member Articles

Paul Peavey

As you can see from the article above, we have some excellent writing talent out there in our NCT member base. If you have anything you are interested in or passionate about, from a conservation perspective please use the link below to let us know. 100 – 300 words is about average. We are always looking for volunteers to lend a fresh perspective to our newsletters. Newsletter@nashobatrust.org

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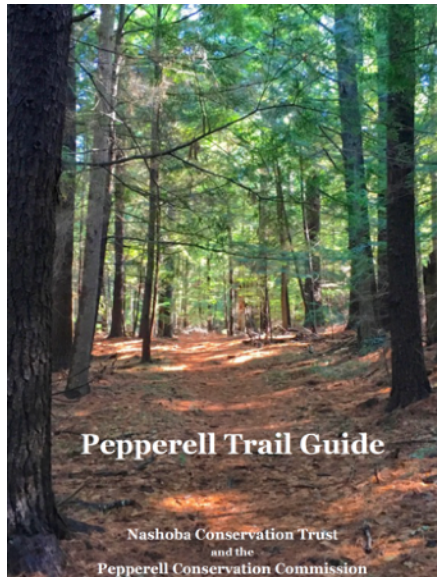
Linn Clark

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Michael Veit

Our new 2016 trail guide is available. The guide describes (16) different conservation areas managed by NCT and the Pepperell Conservation Commission. Contained in each section is a description of the parcel, a detailed trail map, and other information to help you enjoy each of these beautiful areas. If you would like a trail guide just visit the NCT website at www.nashobatrust.org



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All memberships include subscription to the NCT Quarterly Newsletter.

Visit the website at nashobatrust.org to donate or mail your check to:

Nashoba Conservation Trust
PO Box 188
Pepperell, MA 01463