



# The Newsletter of Presumpscot Regional Land Trust

Engaging with communities to conserve, steward, access and enjoy local lands and clean water

Fall 2019

## New Recreation and Conservation Destination in Westbrook

Mill Brook Preserve South in Westbrook officially opened to the public with a ribbon cutting and guided trail walk on October 20th. This new conservation project protects 32-acres of land along Mill Brook. It provides a 1.5 mile family-friendly loop walking trail, free and open for the public, that includes extensive forests, wetlands, and great views of Mill Brook.

Mill Brook Preserve South is a reality thanks to Westbrook Housing, which generously provided the trailhead parking at their Millbrook Estates senior affordable housing on East Bridge Street, as well as a trail easement. Chris LaRoche, Executive Director of Westbrook Housing, said: "We are excited about our relationship with the Land Trust. We feel that combining affordable housing with the ability to provide open recreational amenities to the greater community is a civic responsibility and a benefit to everyone. It was our desire to incorporate recreational walking for our residents, and our collaboration with the Land Trust provided us with that opportunity. As a result, together we are able to provide an expanded urban recreational corridor that is also available to the general public and benefits everyone." The new trailhead is close to downtown Westbrook, the Westbrook Community Center, the Sebago to the Sea Trail, and is a stop on the Greater Portland Metro #3 Bus Line.

In addition, lead funding by Cornelia Warren Community Association made it possible to engage over 100 youth from Westbrook to be a part of creating the new preserve. Youth from the Westbrook Community Center's Summer Camp, My Place Teen Center and the Westbrook High School's Alternative Education COMPASS Project were engaged. They helped build the trail and improve the wildlife habitat, while getting to know the outdoors and nature close to home.

In the future, while Mill Brook Preserve South is not currently connected to Mill Brook Preserve, it is our vision to create a corridor park that is connected both for wildlife and for people to enjoy for generations to come.



Westbrook Community Center Summer Camp Youth Volunteering.



Kids exploring the giant Oak Tree at Mill Brook Preserve South.

### 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.

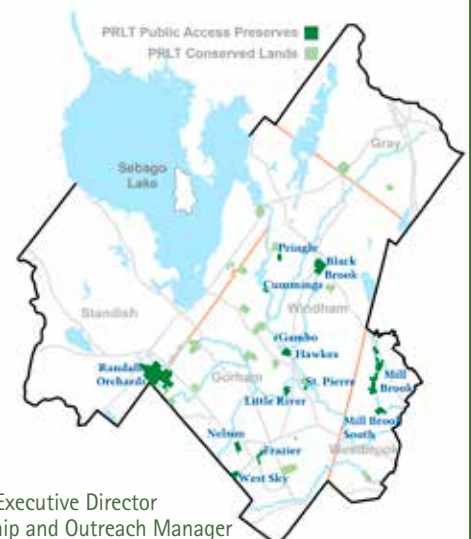
We are a community based nonprofit primarily serving Gorham, Gray, Standish, Westbrook, and Windham. We hold 1,650 acres of conserved lands with 15 free public access preserves that include trails and water access. We are the water stewards of the Presumpscot River watershed and we coordinate the Sebago to the Sea Trail, a 28-mile trail from Standish to Portland. Learn more at [www.prlt.org](http://www.prlt.org).

#### Board of Directors

- Gretchen Anderson
- Sarah Andre
- David Cole
- Matt Craig
- Richard Curtis
- Jesse Ferreira
- Melissa Hamlin
- Tammy Heiselmeyer
- Jim Hughes
- Priscilla Payne
- Tamara Lee Pinard
- Tom Pitman
- Matt Streeter

#### Staff

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



# Letter from the Co-Presidents

This year we say thank you and farewell to Co-President Priscilla Payne, as she transitions from Co-President to board member, and welcome to Matt Steeter who is moving into the role of Co-President with existing Co-President Tamara Lee Pinard.

As Project Manager for Maine Rivers, Board Member of the Sebago Chapter of Trout Unlimited, and a fisherman, Matt sees the Presumpscot River and its watershed as a unique gem in Southern Maine. Remarkably, the watershed still supports wild brook trout populations despite increasing development. Tamara has found, in her over twenty years of working in the conservation field, that conserving land is the only true way to ensure that land and water are protected for generations to come.

Matt and Tamara look forward to working together as volunteer leaders to continue building the Land Trust's organizational strength, and to conserve and provide access to local lands and clean water for current and future generations to enjoy.



Tamara Lee Pinard



Matt Steeter

# Letter from the Executive Director

As I begin my fifth year as Executive Director for the Land Trust, I was delighted to see 120 people join us for our annual meeting at Randall Orchards. We celebrated successes, voted in new volunteer board members, caught up with each other, and met new Land Trust supporters—all while enjoying the sweeping views of the forever protected Randall Orchards farm and forest.

This was a busy summer for the Land Trust. We opened Randall Orchards trail phase two, Mill Brook Preserve South trail, and tested water quality regularly at 40 sites throughout the Presumpscot River and Stroudwater River watersheds. We expanded our community engagement, collaborating with school, afterschool, and summer camp programs, helping over 150 youth get hands-on experience

improving wildlife habitat close to their homes. We also continued to provide monthly outdoor education programs to both adults and families.

Behind the scenes, we met with a dozen different land owners about potentially conserving their land to be protected forever for wildlife and future generations. Stay tuned for exciting conservation projects coming soon. All of this would not be possible without the ongoing support from 100+ volunteers, business partners, foundations—and most importantly, our 300+ member families.



Rachelle Curran Apse

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# What's your legacy?

Consider making it the places that make our part of Maine such a wonderful place to live, work, and play. Consider including Presumpscot Regional Land Trust in your will or estate plan.

Through a planned gift to our Land Trust, you can leave a legacy of forested river corridors, sweeping views of working farms, and walking trails for the next generation, allowing everyone to experience the value of nature.

Planned gifts come in all sizes, and each is an expression of a person's desire to make a difference and leave a lasting legacy. A bequest is the most common way to make a planned gift. You can donate a specific amount or a percentage of your assets in your will or estate plan, or make a donation of land to our Land Trust.

We would be honored to discuss planned giving options with you. Please contact our Executive Director, Rachelle Curran Apse, at (207) 839-4633 or [rachelle@prlt.org](mailto:rachelle@prlt.org), and learn more at [www.prlt.org/planned-giving](http://www.prlt.org/planned-giving).



Next Generation Exploring Randall Orchards Trails.

# Historic 200 Year Old Canal Still Visible at Gambo and Hawkes Preserves

By Don Wescott, Steward for the Gambo and Hawkes Preserves

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If you have not yet been to our Gambo Preserve and Hawkes Preserve, both along the Presumpscot River in Gorham and adjacent to Windham, we recommend taking a walk through history. You can either take a self-guided walk using the education signage in the preserves, or join us Sunday November 10th for a guided tour of Gambo Preserve.

Prior to railroads and other forms of transportation, canals were common in many parts of the world. In 1821, the Cumberland and Oxford Canal Corporation began construction of a canal from the Portland harbor to Sebago Lake. The canal was completed in 1830. The construction included 28 locks to raise the boats to the level of Sebago Lake. By 1835, 150 canal boats were operating between Portland and Harrison. Along the canal, the boats were pulled by horses along tow paths. To cross Sebago and Long Lakes, folding masts and sails were raised to capture wind power.

Much of the old canal was destroyed when the river level was raised, but much of it can still be traced on satellite images. If you know where to look and what to look for, there are several publicly accessible locations with visible remains of the canal, towpath, and locks.

Portions of the old canal and towpath may be easily observed at both the Gambo and Hawkes Preserves. When walking along the towpath trail, it is interesting to consider what has (and has not) changed since the canal itself ceased to operate around 1870. Maybe you'll imagine the canal boats and horses passing through, or the sounds of boats entering and leaving the locks.

In addition, at the Gambo Preserve, you can see historic remains of the Gorham-Windham Gunpowder Mills. Locally referred to as the Gambo Powder Mills and operational from 1820, it became historically significant as a provider of military gunpowder to the Union Army during the Civil War. After ceasing operations in 1904, the gunpowder machinery was relocated and most of the buildings fell into disrepair. Today, a pathway and stone foundations remain.

For trail maps and directions to both the Gambo and Hawkes Preserves, go to: [www.prlt.org/preserves-trails](http://www.prlt.org/preserves-trails). These trails are family-friendly and can be enjoyed year-round.

*Work Consulted: Whitten, The Gunpowder Mills of Maine, 1990*



Gambo Preserve Mill Structure.



Hawkes Preserve Tow Path.

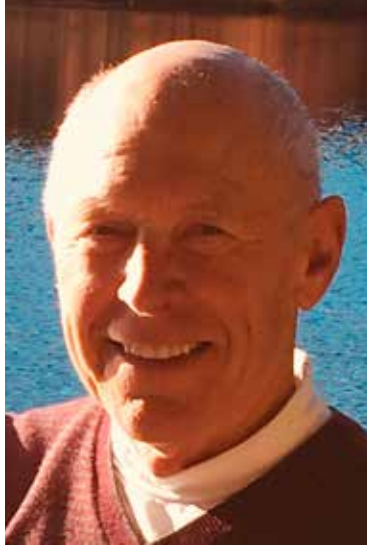


Gambo Preserve Tow Path.

# Tribute to Outgoing Board Members

## Mike Parker

Mike Parker joined the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust board ten years ago, and what a great ten years they have been. In that time, we have put our finances on a sounder footing, hired staff, and merged with three other conservation organizations, while also increasing membership, trails, events, and conserved land.



Mike Parker

Thanks to Mike's leadership, Mill Brook Preserve corridor has transformed from a possibility to a reality, with miles of linked trails and wildlife viewing of the alewife migration from Casco Bay to Highland Lake. Mike has been a major force and inspiration to help grow and sustain the work of the Land Trust, both in his role as former board President and longtime volunteer leader. Thank you, Mike, for continuing to volunteer as a conservation advisor and by joining the new Advisory Council.

By Board Member, Richard Curtis

## Fred Dillon

Fred Dillon started as a volunteer leader with Presumpscot River Watch over 20 years ago. After the merger in which water quality monitoring became a program within the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust, Fred continued on as a member of our Board.



Fred Dillon

If there is one thing I have learned in the last twenty years of volunteering alongside Fred, is that you can count on Fred to... 1) bring his whole self to everything he undertakes—which means we all win, because Fred is insatiably curious, hard-working, and savvy; 2) ask the question that brings board members more understanding before making decisions; and 3) show his fun sense of humor through story or anecdote, to make everyone smile. Thank you, Fred, for continuing to serve as a volunteer water steward and for joining the new Advisory Council.

By Board Member, Tamara Lee Pinard

## Welcome to New Board Members

Gretchen Anderson lives in Westbrook and is the Environmental and Sustainability Coordinator for the Town of Windham. In her free time, she likes to hike, play basketball, and go to the beach.

Sarah Andre lives in Westbrook with her husband and two children. Sarah is a Development and Communications staff for the Opportunity Alliance. Her favorite activities are trail running and family hikes.

Dave Cole lives in Gorham with his wife and has two adult children. He recently retired as the Town Manager for the Town of Gorham, a position he held for 24 years. In his free time, he likes to hike.

Jesse Ferreira lives in Old Orchard Beach with his wife and new baby. He works at Otis|Atwell as a CPA Auditor, where he audits nonprofits. Jesse is now the Land Trust's treasurer. He enjoys fishing, hiking, kayaking, and biking.



Sarah Andre



Gretchen Anderson



Dave Cole



Jesse Ferreira

# A Summer of Connecting Youth to Nature Near to Home

The Land Trust is always seeking to expand both the scope of our projects and the diversity of people who enjoy our conserved lands. With that in mind, the 2019 field season saw a new emphasis on involving youth from Gorham, Standish, Westbrook, and Windham in improving wildlife habitat at our Preserves. Our summer college intern, Kyla Curtis, was able to relate the kids' experience to her own childhood, saying "I remember as a kid growing up in urban Lewiston how many of my friends did not get the opportunity to get out to see forests, streams, wildlife, and nature. "It's so refreshing to see how excited many of the youth I worked with this summer got when experiencing the outdoors and helping wildlife, because formany that oppportunity is not available."



Windham Recreation Summer Camp Youth at Black Brook Preserve.

The next time you go for a walk at Black Brook Preserve in Windham, you will see the new pollinator garden near the trailhead. The 1,000 square foot honeycomb-shaped garden was one of Kyla's main internship projects, and it offers much needed food and habitat for quickly declining pollinating insects like bees and butterflies. After determining which native shrubs and wildflowers would go in the garden, we turned to the youth to help make it happen: Windham Recreation Department's Summer Campers. They first laid down mulch and then they planted and watered the garden. They were enthusiastic about giving back and said they wanted to come see the insects that the garden attracts. Visitors will see these same sights and also come away with ideas of what to plant in their own home gardens to support pollinators.



My Place Teen Center youth volunteers at Mill Brook Preserve South.

Our Land Trust aims to control invasive plants, while also using them as a teaching tool for youth. This summer, students and campers joined in identifying and eliminating invasive plants with gusto. Westbrook's My Place Teen Center helped remove destabilizing Japanese knotweed from the banks of Mill Brook. Standish Recreation Summer Campers took on Japanese barberry at Randall Orchards. Gorham Recreation Summer Campers tackled honeysuckle and bittersweet at the Frazier Preserve. Teaching youth how to identify and control these invaders gives them an understanding of the fragile local ecology and some valuable tools to help protect it.

Little brown bats are a species that needs help, and Westbrook students are answering the call. The bat numbers have declined dramatically due to white-nose disease and habitat loss, and the Land Trust is setting up bat boxes to provide them homes. This semester students from Westbrook High's alternative education COMPASS program will be building these boxes and then posting them at various Land Trust Preserves.

We are so glad to be able to collaborate with a wide variety of youth programs and excited about our future work with youth. These projects have a direct benefit to wildlife—but just as importantly, are helping to encourage today's youth to become tomorrow's environmental stewards, ensuring that the diverse natural places in our region will be well taken care of for generations to come.

# Closing the Loop: Trails at Randall Orchards Now Complete

The second Randall Orchards family-friendly trail is now complete with a 2-mile loop through wetlands and forest, bringing the total length of the trail network to 3.5 miles.

The new trail offers a unique experience in every season. In the spring, vernal pools are alive with sound. Summer brings quiet shade and abundant birdlife. In fall you can pick apples at the orchard before or after a walk. In winter, the bare trees allow for sweeping views of the orchard.

This project was made possible by multiple generations of the Randall family. Richard Randall had the vision to protect the almost 500 acres that are now conserved. Richard's son T-Bone Randall and his wife Julie now own the land and have supported adding trails.

The local Narragansett One Foundation provided funding for this project, making it possible for our summer interns Ben Libby and Kyla Curtis to learn to design the trail route, cut the path, and lead trail-building volunteer groups. Numerous volunteers helped build the trail. Three groups of intrepid Standish Recreation Department Summer Campers helped build bridges and clear trail while learning about natural history. A group of IDEXX employees built a thirty-foot boardwalk, and a special thanks to steward Steve Roberts for volunteering hundreds of hours on this project.

If you have not visited Randall Orchards recently, we hope you will make it this fall to pick apples and walk the new forest trail.



Standish Recreation Summer Camp Volunteers.



Standish Recreation Summer Camp Volunteers Building a Bridge.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

*Choose Your Own Adventure*



Volunteers from Sebago Brewing at Nelson Preserve.

Our success as a local community based-nonprofit is founded on active and engaged volunteers. We want to say a big thank you to the over 150 volunteers who helped our Land Trust this year, including water stewards, land stewards, trail builders, event supporters, office volunteers, committee members, and board members. We have more volunteer opportunities this fall:

### WILDLIFE STEWARDS

We will continue several projects to improve wildlife habitat at our preserves. Projects include removal of invasive Japanese knotweed from floodplains, making and posting wooden boxes for little brown bats, and preparing to plant more pollinator gardens.

### COMMITTEES

Interested in being a volunteer leader with the Land Trust? Join a committee and be a part of the inner working of the Land Trust. We ask everyone who is interested in joining the Board of Directors to first be a part of a committee. Committees include: 1. Fund Development - help build the financial resources; 2. Finance - review financial reports; 3. Leadership Development - design trainings for the Board of Directors.

### PHOTOGRAPHERS & VIDEOGRAPHERS

Photos and videos help us tell the story of the beautiful lands and waters we conserve, and the wide variety of people who enjoy them. We are looking for volunteers who enjoy taking photos and video and want to spend time visiting our preserves, capturing the different seasons, and joining us 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.

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Summer College Interns Kyla Curtis and Ben Libby



# JOIN US

Presumpscot Regional Land Trust is a community-based nonprofit that exists due to member support from people like you. If you are already a member – thank you.

**MEMBER BENEFITS** – As a member you are 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.

\$50     \$100     \$250     \$500

Sustainer \$1000     Other \$\_\_\_\_\_

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- My company will match my gift
- I/We prefer to stay anonymous
- The Land Trust is in our planned giving
- I wish to volunteer

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**  
PO Box 33, Gorham, Maine 04038 | info@prlt.org | www.prlt.org

## Upcoming Events

### **Gambo History Walk**

Member Thank You Event  
Sunday Nov 10th at 1 pm  
Gambo Preserve, Gorham

### **Full Moon Snowshoe**

Saturday January 11th at 4:30 pm  
Randall Orchards, Standish  
Member Thank You Event

### **Family Learn to Snowshoe**

February, Date TBD  
Hawkes Preserve, Gorham



Paddle the Presumpscot event summer 2019.

Space is limited and RSVP is required.  
To learn more about these events and to RSVP, please go to our website  
**www.prlt.org or call 839-4633.**