



# PUTNEY MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION

## NEWS + EVENTS

### SPRING-SUMMER 2020

## The Missing Links



What is the Missing Links? It is Putney Mountain Association's exciting new acquisition project. Simply described, the Missing Links project connects PMA trails to those on Prospect Hill, in Dummerston. The trail will run over rocky outcrops, through old hemlocks and young hardwoods before threading its way through more settled areas north of Prospect Hill. It will be a southern extension of the Putney Mountain/Pinnacle ridgeline trail which provides public access to the recreational trail system extending from Grafton to Brattleboro. The seed of this dream was planted long ago by the Dummerston Trail Committee with support from Putney Mountain Association. It lay dormant for some 20 years, but clearly the idea was not dead.

The current vision, well on its way to reality, has many moving parts. The key piece is the purchase of two parcels of undeveloped land just south of the Putney/Dummerston town line. These are the only two undeveloped properties along the Hague/Evans Road continuum. Conserved under PMA ownership, they will be part of the crucial wildlife corridor which connects two large forest blocks of undeveloped land in East Dummerston. The parcels will be a permanent addition to Putney Mountain habitat block and will help in mitigating climate change while providing public access to the land. The route of the new trail from PMA lands south to Prospect Hill is a wonder. Locating the trail through the purchased properties was the first step. To complete the route, six families, all Dummerston residents with contiguous lands, generously donated either easements or trail access across their properties. These public-spirited donations in combination with the land purchase close the gap between PMA lands and

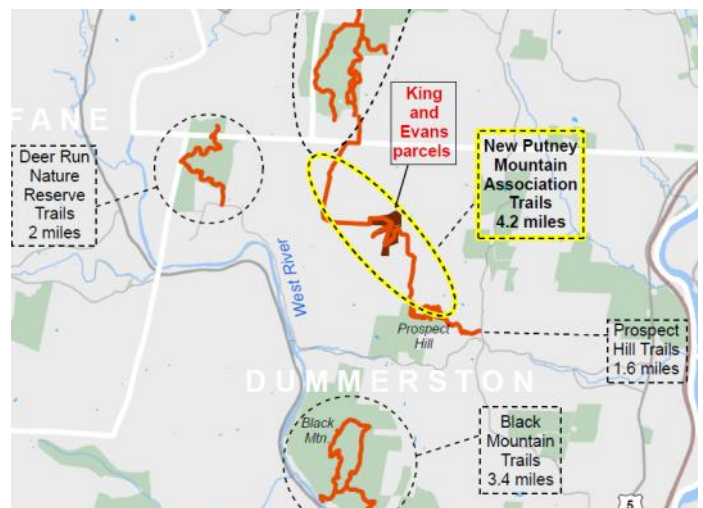
Prospect Hill, providing what is literally The Missing Link between two landmarks.

Funding for the project is well underway, beginning with the contribution of those important trail easements. Beyond that, a budget of approximately (\$205,000) will cover land purchases, stewardship and conservation easements, etc.. An early grant from VHCB provided an anchoring \$116,000, other grants and a number of generous private gifts brought the tally to \$190,000. The remaining \$15,000 will, with luck and good will, be provided by gifts within our community.

Many thanks to those who dreamed the dream twenty years ago, and to those who are now bringing it to reality. Please join in!

### The Bigger Picture

Grafton to Brattleboro? The Missing Links project, directly connecting Putney Mountain trails with those on Prospect Hill, is only one part of the picture. The map below shows how our current project, with an extension to Black Mountain in the future, adds to a trail system built by several conservation groups who share PMA's commitment to public access to recreational trails. There are many groups: The Nature Conservancy (Black Mountain), Friends of the West River, the Green Mountain Conservancy (Deer Run), and The Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association. What a miracle that such an informal collaboration should produce over 50 miles of trail, all maintained by volunteers!



## Nature Trail Update

The two year Nature Trail revamp is complete. By the end of October 2019 Richard and Geordie finished digging the last of nineteen holes and placing the last of nineteen locust posts with interpretive signs. While several of the holes only reached the expected depth of four to six inches before striking bed-



*Richard Fletcher setting a post*

rock, a pleasantly surprising number went beyond two feet before bottoming out. On more than one occasion during the process appreciative hikers were reading the new signs as we placed them, they thanked us for the work and commented especially on the quality of John Anderson's descriptive writing. Unfortunately, not all visitors to the mountain have the same respect and appreciation. The first few signs we placed were vandalized so that we had to go to extra work and expense to ensure the long-term viability of the project.

The Nature Trail is the West Cliff/Ridgeline Trail (Main Trail) loop in either direction from the parking area. Topics range from Hop Hornbeam to Rock Structure to Pileated Woodpecker. Come take a walk and check it out.

## Moonlight on the Mountain

Many people love to be on the Putney Mountain summit to see the sun set in the west followed by the rise of the full moon in the east. Louise Garfield has studied the astronomical logistics and offers this advice:

Because the rise of the full moon is in approximate sync with the setting of the sun (which only then illuminates the moon), and because both orbs are clearly visible from the well-pruned top of Putney Mountain, its peak provides a wonderful viewing point on a clear evening on the night before or the night of the full moon. Bring a picnic to enhance the experience!

See the back page for estimated times to view the full moon from Putney Mountain. And don't forget to bring a flashlight to navigate the trail back down!

For the latest updates on all of our programs, please follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and visit [putneymountain.org](http://putneymountain.org).

## Invasive Species Control



*With rams from Vermont Shepherd farm*

For six summers we have invited sheep to Putney Mountain summit to eat buckthorn. This photo says a lot. Notice the spindly shoots of buckthorn with very few leaves; in the right corner are healthy shoots of oak, and on the left vigorous birch leaves. Yes, the sheep actually prefer the buckthorn. When they have eaten most of the buckthorn leaves it's time to move the sheep to another location. As the summers of our grazing project have progressed we have been able to increase the range of the project and reduce the number of days the sheep are there. The buckthorn is having a hard time.

Volunteers make this possible. Every day the sheep are on duty there needs to be a volunteer to tend them. The photo shows the solar powered electric fence, a large water trough behind the standing ram, a small mineral dish near the fence, and a rectangular grain trough between the lying-down ram and the fence.

Each year there is a need to train new volunteer shepherds. This doesn't seem possible under present circumstances. We have canceled the grazing program for this summer, and fully expect to resume next year. If conditions permit we may schedule a buckthorn pruning day. Meanwhile we hope you are able to visit the summit and enjoy the view sheep have helped to maintain.

### New PMA Board Members

PMA is pleased to welcome two new members to the board of trustees! Cathy Abbott and Noah Hoskins joined the board in January.

# Upcoming Guided Walks

Please check [putneymountain.org](http://putneymountain.org) for up-to-date event details related to social distancing and/or cancellations.

Unfortunately this pandemic has upended our springtime programming this year. While the out-of-doors remains one of the places we can safely seek refuge, find mental comfort, and allow our eyes to rest on the small signs that life continues on, we aren't able to enjoy the wilds in the company of others right now. We had several great events planned including our annual bird and wildflower walks, a jaunt up Prospect Hill, and an exploration of our newly acquired Missing Links land.

Please don't let this situation stop you from hiking the PMA trails but be safe and respectful to all. Our trailhead parking is currently open. We ask that you follow the most recent CDC guidance on distancing and personal and community protection.

If you would like to be notified about changes to our upcoming events please email us at [putmta@gmail.com](mailto:putmta@gmail.com) so that we can add you to our email list.

## Special Note

The May 1<sup>st</sup> sunrise Morris Dancing at the summit has been cancelled this year.

## Five Corners Rendezvous

Joint walk with Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association  
Saturday, June 6<sup>th</sup>

Leave in time to meet for lunch with other hikers at noon at Five Corners. Hikers can get there from five different directions:

- Putney Mountain Trailhead (2.7 miles) on either the West Cliff Trail or the Ridgeline trail
- Holden Trailhead (2.5 miles) on Holden Trail to Headwaters Trail to Ridgeline Trail
- Grassy Brook Trailhead in Brookline (1 mile) on Windmill Hill Trail
- Ed Dodd Trailhead on Holden Road (0.8 mile) via Ed Dodd Trail

To estimate your departure time divide the miles by one mph for casual walkers and two mph for brisk walkers. You can choose to walk back the way you came or swap cars with someone who left from a different trailhead, and drive their car to a pre-arranged meeting spot (e.g. PCS parking lot, town turn-around or WW church). Visit [putneymountain.org](http://putneymountain.org) to look at trail maps and access point information or last minute changes.

## Fabulous Fantastic Ferns Identification

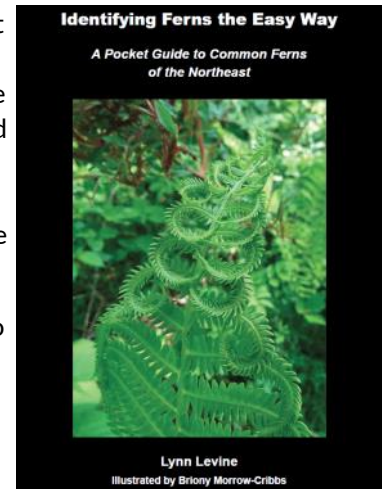
Led by Lynn Levine

Sponsored by PMA and Putney Library

Saturday, July 25<sup>th</sup>, 9–12pm

The workshop will begin at the Putney Library with a talk about ferns: incredible plants which have survived four mass extinctions. Lynn will then lead an outdoor exploration at the Beatrice Aiken Preserve.

This workshop is limited to 16 people. As part of the \$10 registration fee, each participant will receive their own copy of Lynn's book, *Identifying Ferns the Easy Way*. Register by July 22<sup>nd</sup> by phone 254-4717 or email [forester.lynn@gmail.com](mailto:forester.lynn@gmail.com). (rain date: July 26<sup>th</sup>)



## Sketching Class on Putney Mountain

Led by Nina Salvatore

Saturday, August 8<sup>th</sup> at 12:30–4pm

Meet in the parking lot at Putney Mountain. I will show you that by looking at light and shape, anyone can draw in nature. The cost is \$15 per person and will include a set of drawing pencils, eraser, sharpener, and quality drawing paper. You may take the supplies with you at the end. Please bring a clipboard if you can. Please email [n.sara.salvatore@gmail.com](mailto:n.sara.salvatore@gmail.com) to register by July 31<sup>st</sup>. (rain date: August 9<sup>th</sup>)

## Western Slope Walk

Led by Roger Haydock

Saturday, September 12<sup>th</sup>

Roger will lead a walk on the western slope land which became part of Putney Mountain Association in 2018. He has laid out a trail named Parson's Cutoff to be completed this year. Time and meeting place TBA; please keep an eye on the PMA website. (rain date: September 13<sup>th</sup>)



# Putney Mountain Association

PO Box 953  
Putney, VT 05346



Photo: Steve Connor

*Painted Trillium*

Prefer to receive newsletters digitally?

Please send your email address to:

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

## *Moonlight On The Mountain*



**May 7**

Sunset: 7:57pm

Moonrise: 8:26pm

**June 5**

Sunset: 8:25pm

Moonrise: 8:31pm

**July 5**

Sunset: 8:32pm

Moonrise: 9:18pm



### Become a member of PMA!

Putney Mountain Association is an all-volunteer organization. Your donations help pay property taxes and insurance to make land conservation possible. Thank you!

PMA lifetime membership \$25 ea. Is this a gift? \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL + PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### Make checks payable to:

Putney Mountain Association

Putney Mountain Association is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

#### Please mail this form to:

Claire Wilson  
26 Spring Hill Rd  
Putney, VT 05346