



# PUTNEY MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION

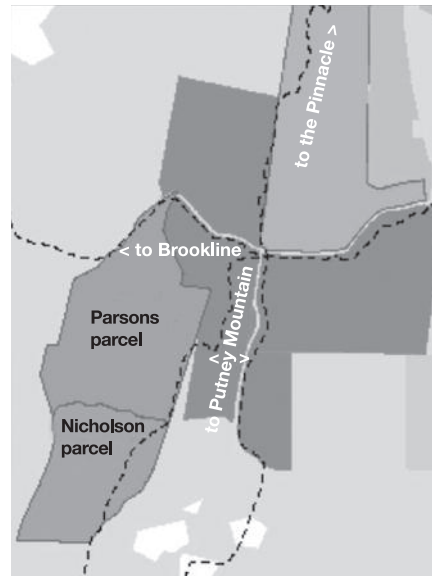
*A volunteer non-profit conservation organization  
P.O. Box 953, Putney, VT 05346 • [www.putneymountain.org](http://www.putneymountain.org)*

## Important Land Acquisition in the Pipeline

*Steve Anderson*

The Association recently signed agreements with two Brookline families to purchase 182 acres of wonderfully diverse hillside forest land on the western slope of the Windmill Hill Ridgeline.

The accompanying map shows the location of the two parcels, which abut land held by PMA since the Nineties. They consist mainly of steep, heavily forested terrain suitable for many different species of wildlife. There is also a small, year-round mountain stream and several potential fine views to the west. In addition to greatly expanding the



amount of conserved wildlife habitat on Windmill Ridge, the acquisition will also provide a permanent location for an existing trail, and the possibility of a shorter access trail from Brookline to the Putney Mountain Summit.

Support from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, which has been so helpful in past project, is anticipated. A large grant has already been awarded by a private conservation foundation, and the public phase of a major fund-raising effort will start this summer. Stay tuned! ■

## Grazing Project

Sheep will be grazing on the Putney Mountain summit again this summer. We have seen significant weakening of the invasive glossy buckthorn following three summers of intense grazing, and look forward to seeing its condition as it leafs out this spring.

Last summer, twenty five volunteers took turns tending the sheep. Again this summer, volunteers will provide water from a tank located on the summit, filled via a line from board member Hugh Davis's well, and David Major, owner of the grazing rams, will see that we have a supply of grain to dole out by a small amount each day. Several volunteers have learned to move the sheep when grazing in one paddock becomes sparse and another area needs grazing.

Many of last year's volunteers have signed up again for this summer. The opportunity is still open. It works well when there are many so that no one is overburdened. Some like to go in pairs and some are comfortable alone. Volunteers can schedule for as often as once a week, or as little as once a month, and if something gets in the way of going when expected, there are others to fill in. What better way to make sure

to be up on the summit occasionally! If you would like to give it a try, please be in touch with Claire Wilson, 802-387-6635, or [claire34wilson@gmail.com](mailto:claire34wilson@gmail.com).

A new aspect to this project has developed. David Major donated the rams' shorn fleece to the Green Mountain Spinnery to be made into knitting yarn. David Ritchie, production manager at the Spinnery and a staunch supporter of the grazing project, reports that approximately twenty pounds of yarn has been made. It is undyed, natural white, worsted weight, with a firm twist, making it ideal for long-wearing mittens, socks, vests and sweaters. The Spinnery will donate proceeds from sale of the yarn to PMA. Plans are underway for a raffle for skeins and items knit from the yarn. Starting mid summer, check the PMA website for details. ■



## Spring Wildflowers

Pat Shields

I never know which I like best — the spring wildflowers that so quickly appear and disappear having done everything necessary to ensure the next generation or the ferns that I can leisurely watch unfurl, grow, scatter their spores to reproduce, then either die back in fall or go boldly forth into winter. Both are magic, but it is spring now so my heart is with the wildflowers. Spring ephemerals wait for no one; they must grow, flower, get pollinated, fruit, and disperse seeds all in the short time between snow melt and trees leafing out. They have a very fast rate of photosynthesis to make the most of available sunshine. The leaves of other early spring flowers persist through the summer storing energy, but they must meet many of the same challenges even though they are not true ephemerals. Rich moist woods provide a good start and a variety of strategies are employed.

It's cold when spring flowers first appear. The multi-hued hepatica opens its low flowers while last year's leaves still cover its roots and is easy to miss. It wears a "fur coat", protected by fuzzy hairs on stem and leaves, and clusters together for added warmth. After the flowers fade, the new green leaves appear and last for a year. Look under the paired leaves of wild ginger to find the single bud and stem similarly attired. Bloodroot comes up wrapped in a large leaf which protects the bud. Its thick root with toxic orange-red sap has a store of food from the previous year to give it a jump start and leaf and flower are ready to go from pre-growth underground the year before. In trout lilies a liaison with a mycorrhizal fungus provides the nutrient boost for this growth.

Flowers are all about sex; they are the "pretty dress", the alluring perfume, to help get the plant pollinated.



The white or pink petals of spring beauty have darker veins to guide the insects to the nectar. Bloodroot has no nectar, but its petals and bright yellow anthers attract insects that collect its pollen. Like many of the early flowers, it closes its flower at night or on colder cloudy days when insects are not flying. Flies, beetles, and some early bees do the earliest pollinating as they can fly at lower temperatures than most bees.

Many spring flowers do not get pollinated but plants have back-up strategies. They can self-pollinate. An infusion of new genes is preferable so plants limit self-pollination if there's a good chance at cross pollination. Their reproductive structures mature separately. Often the female stigma matures before the male anthers, so the plant will receive pollen from a different plant. Bloodroot's anthers bend away from the stigma for a few days, then if the flower has not been pollinated, turn towards the stigma to pollinate it. Others, like trout lily, spread vegetatively via underground rhizomes and can form large long-living patches of clones.

Pollination is not the end. Seeds need to get to a good place to germinate. Many plants, including bloodroot, anemones, dutchman's breeches, hepatica, wild ginger, use ants. Their seeds have a fatty appendage called an elaisome that ants can't resist. They drag the seed back to the nest, then eat only the oily elaisome leaving the seed which then has a protected place to sprout safe from predation. Spring beauties are doubly insured; they have an elaisome but also explosively shoot their seeds as far as two feet away.

I could go on — there're so many flowers, all with fascinating stories. But you get the point. Now go out, quickly, and see for yourself. Take a *close* look. ■

### At the January 22 annual meeting;

We were pleased to welcome Elizabeth Bissell as a new member of the Board of Trustees. Zach Caldwell was our speaker. For a kid with the drive and freedom to roam the trails and woods, growing up with Putney Mountain and Windmill Ridge in the backyard was an opportunity not to be missed. In "An Athlete's Path to Self Discovery on Putney Mountain", Zach described how exploring the terrain and learning the trails developed his sense of both place and self. Now an adult, still immersed in athletics and still cruising his childhood playground, Zach finds the time to offer his love of outdoors, exploration, and exuberant play to kids today as they begin their own paths to self-discovery.

## Upcoming Events Spring/Summer 2017

### Wildflower Walk with Pat Shields

Sunday, May 7, 1:00 PM

Join Pat to explore the wildflowers of the Putney Central School Forest. From the driveway in front of the school, turn right on School Forest Drive, and meet at the kiosk. The walk to the site might be wet, so boots are a good idea. *This walk is co-sponsored by the Putney Mountain Association and the Putney Conservation Commission.*

### Bird Walk with Richard Foye

Saturday, May 13, 7:00 AM, rain date May 14

Birds we are likely to see and/or hear are: red eyed verio, solitary verio, warbling verio, and if we're lucky the yellow throated verio. As for warblers, the chestnut sided, yellow rumped, black-throated blue, pine, yellow throat, and more, plus red starts and oven birds. *Meet in the Putney Mountain parking lot.*

### Moss Walk with Sarah Cooper-Ellis

Saturday, June 10, 10:00 AM, rain date June 11

Sarah has studied mosses extensively. On this walk we will discuss the basics of what moss is and how it grows, and we will look at some common species. Bring a hand lens, and extras if you have them. *Meet in the Putney Mountain parking lot.*

### Tree Walk with Rich Grumbine

Saturday, July 1, 10:00-12:00 PM

Rich is Professor of Biology at Landmark College. Using the dichotomous key he has developed, he will guide us in identifying trees in the growing season by

observing their leaf and twig anatomy. This will be a slow hike, stopping frequently to observe trees and identify them using the guide. *Meet in the Putney Mountain parking lot.*

### Orienteering with Andrew Morrison

Sunday, July 30, 12:00 PM

Andrew, a PMA board member, will share an afternoon of orienteering fun for adults and children (preferably in at least 3rd grade). Activities will build an understanding of how to read a map, how to stay oriented in the woods with a compass and the terrain, and will culminate in an orienteering challenge across Putney Mountain. Bring a personal compass if you have one, but all necessary materials will be provided. **To register, please RSVP to [mr.a.morrison@gmail.com](mailto:mr.a.morrison@gmail.com).** *Meet in the Putney Mountain parking lot.*

### Invasive Plant Walk with Andrew Morrison

Saturday, August 26, 10:00 AM

Andrew is an invasive plant specialist and will do a guided walk of Putney Mountain trails to familiarize participants with some of our most common invasive plant species. The walk will include a visit to the Putney Mountain summit to discuss the ongoing project using grazing animals to control glossy buckthorn, and conversation about the history of invasive plants in Vermont, the connection between invasive species and our agricultural history, and what the future might bring for invasive plants in New England. *Meet in the Putney Mountain parking lot.*

### MEMBERSHIPS, DONATIONS AND ITEMS FOR SALE

*Putney Mountain Association is an all volunteer organization. Your donations help pay property taxes and insurance, and make conservation of Putney Mountain lands possible. Thank you for contributing.*

**I would like to give a contribution to the Putney Mountain Association** \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
**I would like to give a Putney Mountain Association lifetime membership to:** \$25 ea \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ qty. Adjustable Putney Mountain baseball caps @ \$15 ea \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ qty. Tick Ankle Guards @ \$10 ea \_\_\_\_\_

*Please include \$3 shipping* \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Grand Total** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Rugged, waterproof trail maps showing new trails on PMA lands available soon. Visit [www.putneymountain.org](http://www.putneymountain.org)*

Make checks to Putney Mountain Association — Mail to: Claire Wilson, 26 Spring Hill Road, Putney, VT 05346

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P.O. Box 953  
Putney, VT 05346

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

*Please let us know if your address changes*

Help save paper and postage:  
to receive future newsletters digitally, send your  
email address to [mr.a.morrison@gmail.com](mailto:mr.a.morrison@gmail.com)

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Visit our website at [www.putneymountain.org](http://www.putneymountain.org)



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