



PUTNEY MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION

A volunteer non-profit conservation organization
P.O. Box 953, Putney, VT 05346 • www.putneymountain.org

A S E M I - A N N U A L N E W S L E T T E R

W I N T E R 2 0 1 4

PMA Receives \$195,000 Grant Award!

In early December the Putney Mountain Association received a \$195,000 award from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, to be used for land acquisition. This significant grant will be the foundation of a major fund-raising effort; the goal is the purchase and conservation of 144.5 acres of prime ridge land which sits high on the spine of Putney Mountain, on Holland Hill Road. This beautiful piece of forested land, which



has been in the Hannum-O'Connor Family since the 1920's, would mark the southern end of the Windmill Hill Nature Reserve. The varied terrain of the land includes gentle slopes, stony ledges, old stone walls, a wetland and the headwaters of Salmon Brook.

Its value is multiplied by its location. The property lies between two existing conserved areas, PMA's Dine property and the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge. Its conservation will preserve important wildlife habitat and protect a section of a vital wildlife movement corridor on Windmill Ridge. It will enable us to develop a new public trail system connecting with our Dine trail on Holland Hill Road and is an important step towards linking with PMA and Windmill Hill Pinnacle trails to the north.

The VHCB grant will cover approximately half of the anticipated Project cost of \$407,150. PMA is seeking the balance of needed funds from foundations, corporate, and individual donations and will soon announce a major fund raising campaign. If PMA and its supporters are successful, we will close on the purchase of the land in July 2014.

Guest Speaker, Nancy Bell

The Boards of Putney Mountain Association and Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association met together at the Westminster West Church on November 21st to welcome guest speaker Nancy Bell. Ms. Bell is a resident of Shrewsbury, VT and a representative of The Conservation Fund, an Arlington, Virginia-based national non-profit conservation organization. Working primarily in Northern New England, she has been intimately involved in bringing literally tens of thousands of acres under the conservation umbrella.

Ms. Bell talked about her beginnings in the conservation movement and how her activism has provided her with insight regarding team building, helping seemingly disparate groups to agree on shared goals. Her ability as a facilitator and consensus builder have put her in the forefront of efforts such as the purchase of 8,910 acres surrounding Success Pond in New Hampshire. She stressed how important it is for wildlife to have large contiguous areas of conserved habitat, and acknowledged the careful work done by our organizations to provide such areas in perpetuity.

Her time spent with us was fascinating, informative, and inspirational. She urged the PMA and WHPA to reach out and build partnerships with like-minded groups and to look for support in places where such support may not have been expected.

Goats and Buckthorn Control

For many years we have attempted to control invasive buckthorn on the Putney Mountain summit by cutting. Perhaps if we had sufficient man and woman power, all fitted out with clippers and loppers, able to volunteer three times over the growing season, cutting would keep it under control.

Lacking that, we explore other options, and have learned that in many places around the country goats are being used to control invasives. It so



happens there is an organization in Amherst, MA, The Goat Girls, which can provide 14 goats, contained with a solar powered electric fence and overseen by goatherds. We applied to the New England Environment Fund for a grant, and have received a \$1000. Seed Grant. This will give us a start. Keep tuned for further developments!

**image courtesy of The Goat Girls, www.thegoatgirls.com*

On Putney Mountain... Hawkwatch

Volunteers have been monitoring migrating raptors from the Putney Mountain summit for decades. Data is compiled and sent to the Hawk Migration Association of

North America, hmana.org. Data for Putney can be seen on putneyvermont.org/hawks/.

Here is John Anderson's commentary on this year's Putney Mountain hawkwatch.

Fellow Hawkwatchers,

Two thousand thirteen was an average count year on Putney Mountain. Average. Just simply average. Our ten year

statistical average has been 6,282 raptors

sighted. This year we managed to tally 6,264. Average. The bird gods did us no favors. And, the birds were scattered; to the perception of most watchers there was seldom that steady satisfying flow of raptors down the ridge that we all so eagerly anticipate, there was just a slow sporadic drip. And, while our results were statistically average that average felt very very mediocre to a lot of us. Days were often long and slow.

Our coverage was good. Those things that we could control we did control. There were almost no hours when the site should have been covered and was not, and it was well covered. We did our part. Seventy-eight days were covered. Four hundred ninety one watcher hours were spent on the ridge, an all time watcher hour high for Putney Mountain. But, in the end, the results were only average.

This year's results brought to mind a quote, the author and the intended context of which have long been lost to me, but I'll share it anyway, "For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business."

That about sums it up. We tried. We counted what there was to count. The rest, the choices of tens of thousands

of raptors exercising individual free will and volition and following the ever-varying winds of fate, is not our business.

So, once again, it is done. The long, complex, tiring, fascinating, occasionally exhilarating process of a comprehensive fall raptor survey is behind us. The resulting counts were average. Just average. However, the process was absolutely stellar. We have never done better. And process, after all, is our business.

This year we had a first class hawkwatch, and 6,264 raptors chose to put in an appearance. We took care of those things that are our business and these were the results.

John Anderson

Tree Walk on Putney Mountain

In early November, Arthur Westing led us on an informative tree walk. He discussed means of identifying the trees without their leaves. We learned about the individual characteristics of the trees, their roles in nature and their past and present use to us.



an ode to life*

full sun pioneers come first
those sturdy tall trees
that abhor shade.
they drop their seeds
but those babies can't survive
in the darkness caused by
their own parents.
only the wind and rain
can save them by
casting them off in the distance
to survive in their own sun.

symbiosis
increases the chances of survival
mushrooms and roots
myco+rhizal
increases moisture
wards off toxins and disease
another fluke, or miracle,
however you look at it.

fire, wind, chainsaws
can take out this delicate balance
in an instant
destroy the cooperative delicate effort
in a flash of lightning, a match
a hard jerk on the starter cord.

the mast that feeds the bears
essential, these beeches
with their papery winter-long leaves
delicately fluttering through
the cold and dark season
the mast is disappearing
disease
brought in by warm weather insects
now, who
live
in our warming forests.

how is it that healthy seeds
can fall and grow from
sick parents?
how is it that the strength
of relationship means life goes on
or not
while an ancient one stands
dead
nearby?
how is it that life can invent
new functions or skills
that were unknown, before?

survival is not for the fittest
but for the adaptable.

* By Nancy Clingan (Putney, Vermont), 10 November 2013, being in response to a Putney Mountain Association tree walk led earlier that day by A.H. Westing on Putney Mountain.

Some Trees Found on Putney Mountain (Putney Town Forest & Putney Mountain Association Reserve),

Sunday, 10 November 2013

by Arthur Westing

"SOFTWOODS", "EVERGREENS" (Gymnosperms, Conifers)

Hemlock, Eastern [Tsuga canadensis] Pine, Eastern White [Pinus strobus] Pine, Red [Pinus resinosa]

Spruce, Red [Picea rubens]

"HARDWOODS", "DECIDUOUS TREES" (Angiosperms, Dicotyledons [Dicots])

Ash, White (American) [Fraxinus americana] Beech, American [Fagus grandifolia]

Birch, Paper (White) [Betula papyrifera] Birch, Yellow [Betula alleghaniensis]

Cherry, Black [Prunus serotina] w/bark lenticels Hornbeam, Hop (Ironwood) [Ostrya virginiana] Maple, Red [Acer rubrum]

Maple, Sugar (Rock) [Acer saccharum]

Oak, Northern Red [Quercus rubra]

NON-TREE MISCELLANY

Buckthorn, Glossy [Frangula alnus = Rhamnus frangula] an invasive Fern, Christmas [Polystichum acrostichoides]

Fern, Evergreen wood [Dryopteris intermedia]

Clubmoss, Common (Staghorn) [Lycopodium clavatum] Clubmoss, Ground-cedar [Diphasiastrum complanatum] Clubmoss, Princess-pine [Dendrolycopodium obscurum]

Moss, Button (Cushion) [Ulota crispa] Moss, Hair-cap [Politrichum commune]

Lichen, Old-man's beard [Usnea cavernosa] Lichen, Shield [Parmelia sulcata]

Lichen, Whitewash [Phlyctis argena]

2013 VT Welcome Center Fundraiser

This year PMA had the extraordinary good luck to be assigned the Friday before Columbus Day for its Coffee Break stint at the Welcome Center on I-91 in Guilford. This is generally considered to be the best day in the whole year for donation-fundraising, and we did our best to take advantage of it, with plenty of brownies, cookies, sandwiches, apples, and of course gallons of hot coffee, tea, and cider for weary travelers to refresh themselves with, by donation only, of course. We received \$1620 in donations, and cleared, \$1334, a substantial contribution to our operating fund, from which we pay our yearly bills for insurance, taxes, maintenance, and public outreach.

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 Putney Mountain Association lifetime membership to: \$25 ea _____

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____ e-mail and phone _____

I would like to give a contribution. \$ _____

Rugged, waterproof trail maps showing trails on PMA and Windmill Hill Pinnacle Lands @ \$7 _____

Adjustable Putney Mountain baseball caps @ \$15 _____

Bug buster ankle guards @ \$9 _____

Mosquito head net @ \$9 _____

Postcards (4), 1 each of Pete Guenther's lovely photos of the 4 seasons on the reserve @ \$5 _____

Please include \$1 shipping for postcards and maps, and \$3 for the other items @ \$ _____

Grand Total \$ _____

Make checks to Putney Mountain Association

Mail to: Claire Wilson, 26 Spring Hill Road, Putney, VT 05346

PUTNEY MOUNTAIN ASSOCIATION

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 clairewi@sover.net

Visit and "Like" our FACEBOOK page at
 www.facebook.com/PutneyMountainAssociation

Please "Like" and share with your friends to keep up on the latest PMA news on Facebook.

ANNUAL MEETING – come one, come all!
Sunday, January 19, 4:00 PM
Putney Community Center, Christian Square

After a brief business meeting, Mary Holland, author of the acclaimed book, *Naturally Curious*, will speak about and show photos of our amazing natural world. Mary has written several books for young readers, each featuring a particular plant or animal.

A quote from her website: *"It's very subtle, but in winter, especially when it's very cold outside, there is a way to tell if a beaver lodge is occupied."*

Come and learn the answer to this, and much more! Bring your family and friends!

visit www.putneymountain.org for more details.