



SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER

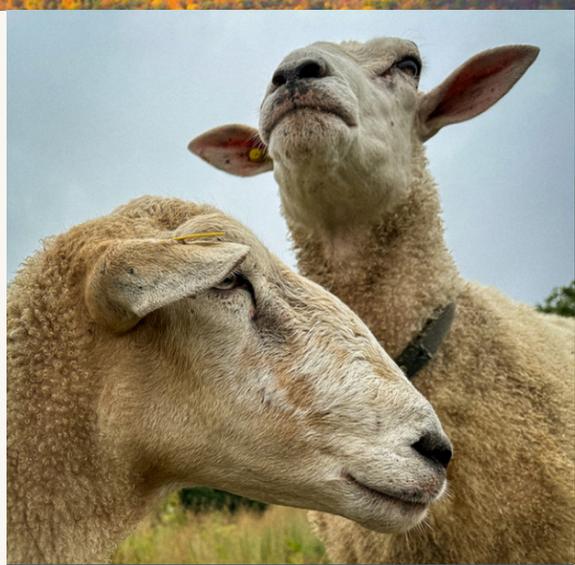
RAMS TO THE RESCUE— JOIN TEAM SHEPHERD

Each summer the Putney Mountain summit becomes home to a small band of hungry rams who feast on the invasive buckthorn plants.

With the rams also comes a band of volunteer shepherds, who alternate taking daily jaunts to the summit to provide supplementary grain, water, and minerals.

Many thanks to David Major at Vermont Shepherd for volunteering the rams, and to the members of the Grazing Committee who work hard to set up the fencing, water supply, etc.

Being a volunteer shepherd is a fun activity and a chance to spend some quality time with the characterful rams amidst beautiful scenery. If you would like to be part of Team Shepherd, please contact Bennett Jackson (bennett@putneymountain.org). Don't have time to volunteer on a weekly basis? No problem! We're always looking for subs, as well as regular weekly shepherds.



Inside the newsletter you'll find a handy sheet of our planned, upcoming events for the community.

We hope you register to attend and bring a friend!



1,000-Acre Milestone on Windmill Ridge

On Earth Day, Putney Mountain Association purchased 159 forested acres in Dummerston from long-time supporters, Greg Brown and Carolyn Mayo-Brown. PMA now safeguards more than 1,000 acres along the local ridgeline.

This milestone rests on many generous shoulders: the tireless project leadership of Pat Shields and the assistance of Kate Sjoberg, who secured major grants for the Fall Brook project from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, The Nature Conservancy, and the Open Space Institute. These were followed by generous funding from the Davis Conservation Fund, the William P. Wharton Trust, and the Fields Pond Foundation. Jennifer Garrett of the Vermont Land Trust provided essential technical support and our indefatigable attorney Jane Krochmalny spent many hours researching deeds and pulling together the necessary documents for our Earth Day closing. We are grateful for their expertise and good cheer.

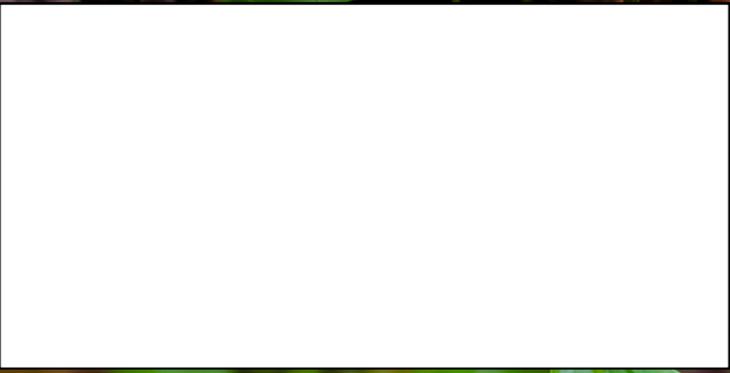
Most of all, thank you, members. Your enduring commitment turned possibility into permanence.

Luckily, the trail work has already been completed by Roger Haydock, Richard Fletcher, and their trusty band of trail builders. The Missing Link Trail, completed in August of last year, will lead you from the Hague Road trailhead across the stream and up the slope, past a two-hundred-year-old ash tree, to a sweeping view to the West River valley. From there you can continue up to Holland Hill Road and, if ambition strikes, all the way to Putney Mountain summit. Our trail system is a thing of pride, one that can only be built through the tireless efforts and generous contributions of foundations, grant writers, lawyers, land owners, private donors, trail blazers and volunteer organizations like PMA.

Most important is that, with our placement of a conservation easement upon this land, it is protected forever from development and will continue to provide essential habitat for wildlife, plants, and a myriad of other creatures. Fall Brook will remain intact, continuing to filter water, purify air, store carbon, and bestow nature's benefits in perpetuity.

— Meg Mott, Chair, Putney Mountain Association

P.S. Have an idea for an autumn event? Contact me directly (meg@putneymountain.org) and we'll try to get it organized!



Putney Mountain Association
PO Box 953
Putney VT 05346



Putney Mountain Association

WWW.PUTNEYMOUNTAIN.ORG

PROTECTING WHITE ASH FOR GENERATIONS TO COME



The Fall Brook forest is a diverse and unfragmented northern hardwood and hemlock woodland, interspersed with headwater wetlands and streams of the West River and several biodiverse seeps. It also happens to be home to Vermont's second largest white ash tree. At 90 feet tall, this Legacy Ash dominates the canopy, measures 5.5 feet in diameter, and likely exceeds 200 years in age.

Keeping our Legacy Ash healthy is a priority

The emerald ash borer (EAB), first documented in Windham County in 2019, has the potential to dramatically alter our northern hardwood forests. The larvae of EAB are especially adept at burrowing under the bark of white ash trees, feeding on the phloem, and damaging the tree's ability to distribute nutrients. In midwestern states, where EAB has thrived for over twenty years, the mortality rate of infected trees approaches 100%.

A regional effort is underway to prevent white ash from disappearing from northeastern forests. Scientists are collecting genetic material and working to develop EAB-resistant white ash seedlings. Other researchers are exploring the use of parasitoid wasps as a biological control of EAB.

In 2022, the Legacy Ash tree was injected with a bacterially-derived insecticide to protect it against EAB. But because white ash is a dioecious species (each tree is

either male or female), more than one is needed to produce viable seeds. PMA is now exploring the possibility of expanding the inoculation effort to include ten nearby white ash trees. By preserving a small patch of healthy trees, capable of exchanging pollen with our champion, we may increase the likelihood that white ash will persist for generations to come.

Local arborists Pete Butler and Kevin Brewer are planning a second inoculation of PMA's Legacy Ash this summer. If you'd like to learn more about efforts to protect white ash, please contact Cat Abbott (cat@putneymountain.org) and visit our website to register for the June 14th inoculation.

Want to adopt a white ash tree for inoculation? \$200 protects a single tree for three years.

Scan the code or visit our website to donate today.



WHAT IS AN EASEMENT?

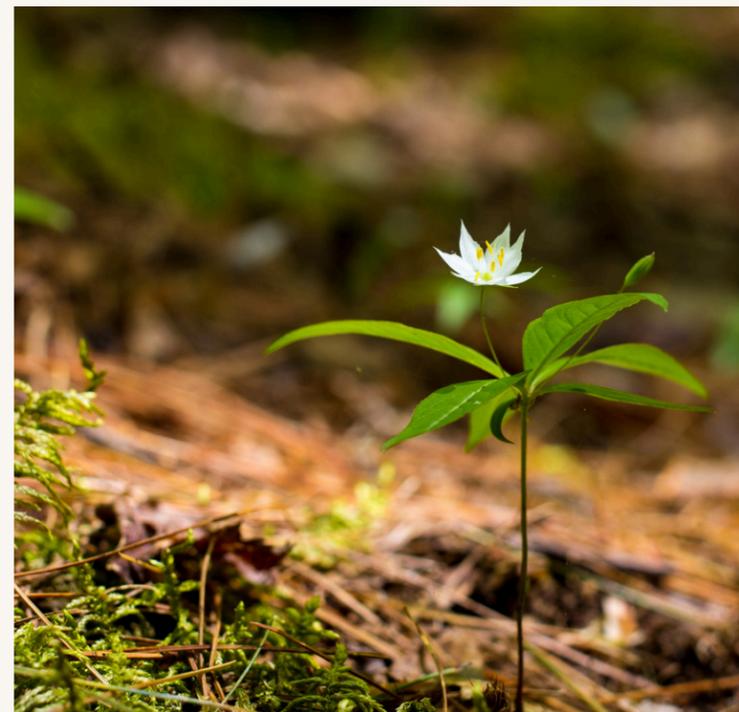
At PMA, conserving Windmill Ridge's wildlife habitat is more than a promise—it's a legal commitment. We protect every parcel with a conservation easement that keeps critical features intact for present and future generations.

Because "forever" is a long time, we draft these easements with care and trusted partners: the Vermont Land Trust (VLT) and the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB). Our easements bar subdivision and new dwellings, yet leave room for science-based forest management, including selective logging if the land ever needs it.

That flexibility is backed by a companion document—a management plan—updated every ten years. It spells out practical steps for invasive removal, trail-erosion fixes, and wildlife monitoring, all guided by current research.

Why not just let nature run wild? Because today's threats—emerald ash borer, jumping worms, aggressive buckthorn—weren't on the radar a century ago. Tomorrow will bring new challenges and, we hope, new solutions: blight-resistant chestnuts, disease-tolerant ash, fungi that tame invasives. By pairing a rock-solid easement with an adaptable plan, we can help this forest mature into the rich, resilient ecosystem we all imagine—snags, leaf litter, fungi, songbirds, and diverse vegetation included.

Bottom line: strong legal roots plus flexible stewardship provide us with the flexibility to innovate and adapt now and into the future.



FULL MOON ON THE SUMMIT

Have you hiked to the summit to see the rising full moon? Here's your chance over the next few months. Bring a friend or make new ones.

JUNE 11
JULY 10
AUGUST 9
SEPTEMBER 7



WHAT ARE WE CONSERVING?

With the purchase of Fall Brook, PMA now safeguards over 1,000 acres. Wildlife habitat, species diversity, forest health, and water quality; protected in perpetuity. But is conservation just about preserving wild places from human development? Some conservationists say that ecological protection is not enough. If we want to conserve the forest and the ridgeline, we have to conserve the ways of life tucked into those hills.

Wendell Berry, a farmer and poet from Kentucky, urged his fellow conservationists to make common cause with their rural neighbors. In a 1996 essay, Berry described similarities between those conserving forests and those sustaining businesses and farms. "All of these people, who are fighting sometimes lonely battles to keep things of value that they cannot bear to lose, are the conservation movement's natural allies." Berry imagined a coalition of rural conservatives and progressive conservationists, both having reason to be suspicious of moneyed interests that swoop into town and extract value before moving on.

Putney Mountain Association has always understood that we are better conservationists when we make common cause with our neighbors. We were founded in 1946 in order to "establish and maintain a civic organization in Putney, Vermont for the general purpose of civic development." In the early days, civic engagement looked like a chicken barbecue "clearing and cleaning party" on the summit (1956), or the launch of the hawk-watching project (1974). Over the years we've hosted countless educational programs, led by local naturalists, and attended by regional enthusiasts. We could not keep the trails cleared, the signs painted, and the rams shepherded without the good will of our volunteers.

Berry would be pleased with this civic-minded approach to conservation. Instead of treating our neighbors with suspicion, Berry encourages conservationists to "go to these people, ask what they can do to help, and then help." That sort of good neighborliness will come in handy, he concludes. When you help your neighbors, they will be willing to help you. In our almost-eighty years of conservation, PMA continues to prove that point. We do better job of conserving the forest when we work to preserve the things of value in our towns as well.

