



Dudley Conservation Land Trust Newsletter

Autumn 2015



Phone: 508 949 0250 Email: DCLTrust@aol.com www.Dudleyclt.org

A Message from the President – Paul Wieloch

In the world of land conservation, the impossible can become possible. Four years ago, two brothers approached the DCLT with an interest in donating their land. This began a long process of educating the donors and the recipients on Wetland Reclamation and Dam Removal, the Massachusetts Tax Credit Program, the Due Diligence Grant and Conservation Restriction with MassAudubon. After the brothers approached us, the DCLT board walked the property, as we do with all properties that come before us, and completed the Land Acquisition Guidelines, giving it the highest conservation value score to date. The DCLT board decided that we would like this property but we had one major problem, the dam. DCLT would not accept the property with the dam because of liability, insurance, and maintenance costs. The family began the arduous process of dam removal and wetland reclamation by hiring an engineering firm. Plans were made for the dam removal and the necessary state and local permits were obtained. This time frame was approximately 3 years. Because of the lengthy permitting process, the family had the opportunity to apply to the Massachusetts Conservation Land Tax Credit Program for a tax credit on their donation. This program gives the donors a tax credit of up to half the appraised value of the property, with a cap at \$75,000. Following a lengthy application process, it was determined that this property met the conservation value criteria on a grand scale. Once accepted into the program there were many hurdles (too many to mention) that needed to be met. The MA Tax Credit Program required the land to have a Conservation Restriction (CR) to be held by another conservation organization. We were happy to partner with MassAudubon who offered to hold the CR. In the spring of 2015, the family received a Due Diligence grant of \$7,700 from the state to help offset the costs of the title search, survey, appraisal, and legal fees. All permits for dam removal have been obtained. As of June 30th 2015, we are happy to announce the acquisition of WIELOCH WOODS, DCLT's newest sanctuary thanks to Thomas and Francis Wieloch.

There is still much work to be done at Wieloch Woods such as a kiosk, a parking area, trail marking and signage. All to be done in due time.

On October 11th and October 18th, 2015 the DCLT, in partnership with the Last Green Valley, held two Walktober events to showcase Wieloch Woods. There was a most enthusiastic response, with 42 people from 3 states enjoying this beautiful landscape during perfect autumn weather.

Hope to see you enjoying Wieloch Woods.



Left: Thomas, Paul and Francis Wieloch,

Right: Walktober event at Wieloch Woods



Upcoming Events:

December 15th, 2015

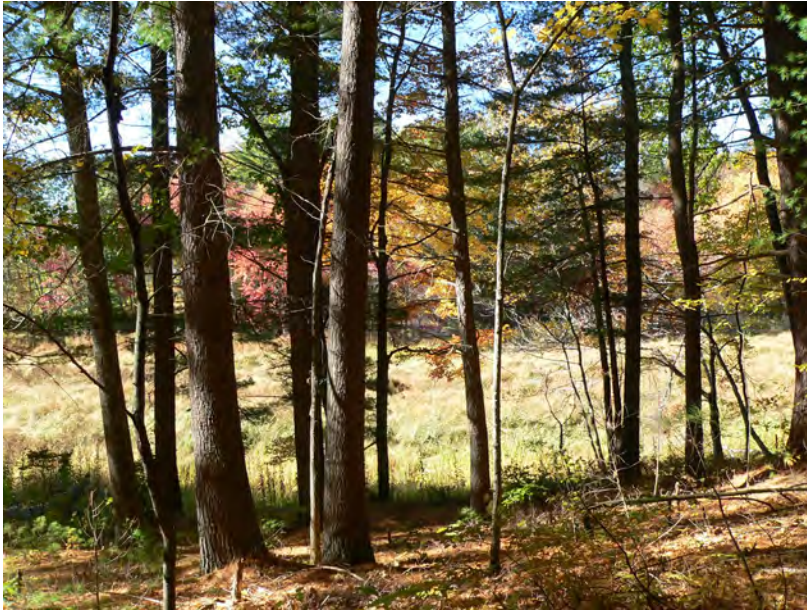
General Meeting – open to all
7:00 PM at Dudley Senior Center at Town Hall.

A Unique Opportunity

The DCLT has a unique opportunity to purchase 10 acres of pristine forest land which interconnects Wieloch Woods. We need to raise \$15,000 for the purchase of this land and for stewardship. We are most appreciative to have just been granted \$5,000 grant from the Wharton Foundation. I know many of you have received a brochure outlining this campaign and I hope you will consider a tax-deductible donation for this project, if you have not already done so. Checks may be made payable to: DCLT and sent to PO Box 15, Dudley, MA 01571. Thank you for your endorsement of land conservation.

Welcome to Our New Board Members

The DCLT is very pleased to welcome David Harrigan and Nancy Vajcovec as our two new board members. Both of them have already demonstrated their interest and enthusiasm, with Dave volunteering to be a land steward and Nancy taking on the duties of the Clerk. Thank you both!



Top: Wet meadow at Wieloch Woods

Center: Supermoon rises over Tufts Branch Valley as viewed from knoll

Left: Bobcat captured by wildlife camera on knoll on June 16th, 2015

“David Grayson – Writing about Nature”

As the weather gets colder and darker, much of my evening time is spent reading. While my wife, Karin, enjoys a good murder mystery, I’m drawn to essays about nature. Most of my favorite authors hail from New England and include Henry David Thoreau and less well known writers such as Haydn Pearson from Hancock, New Hampshire and David Grayson from Amherst, Massachusetts.

David Grayson’s story is particularly interesting. David Grayson is, in fact, a pseudonym for Ray Stannard Baker. He was born in Michigan in 1870 and had a high profile career as an investigative reporter. The work was rewarding, with numerous articles about unfair labor practices and discrimination, but draining personally. Early in the 20th Century, he moved to Amherst, MA, where he bought a farm and began writing under the name of David Grayson. The Grayson books, written in a very gentle, easy reading style extolling the joys of living simply and appreciating nature, became extremely popular. In fact, David Grayson Societies were formed around the country to discuss his books. There were also imposters who claimed they were David Grayson, which eventually forced Baker to reveal himself as the sole authentic David Grayson.

So, why all the fuss about this man? I think it’s his yearning for a simpler life and the beauty of his writing. Here are a few quotes from the 10 books he wrote between 1906 and 1942:

“How few of us really use our senses! I mean give ourselves fully at any time to the occupation of our senses. We do not expect to understand a treatise on Economics without applying our minds to it, nor can we really smell or hear or see or feel without every faculty alert. Through sheer indolence, we miss half the joy of the world!”

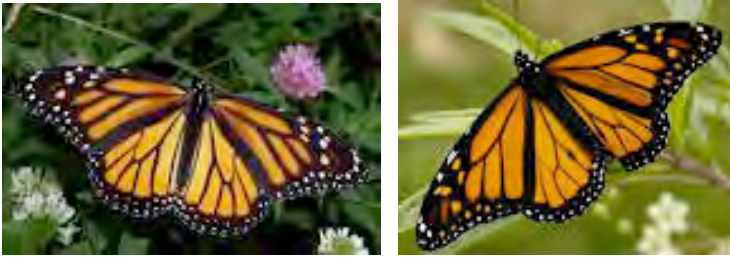
“What a blessed anodyne these days is work – hard physical work. I came in late last night after having planted potatoes and set out strawberry plants until my legs ached. I came in so tired that I stumbled into bed and fell at once into a deep sleep – a deep, blessed sleep – and awakened this morning with the sound of rain in the gutters and a vast sense of renewal.”

“To be made happy by the sight of a song sparrow on a hemlock bough – all of its little flashing graceful movements – that is something!”

Ray Stannard Baker passed away in 1946, but he lives on by anyone who reads his writings. He is also remembered by the University of Massachusetts where two dormitories (Grayson and Baker) are named after him.

I hope all of you enjoy the coming winter months, and you find time to revel in the wonders of nature and perhaps read a special book or two.

Submitted by Keith Kirkland



“Where Have all Monarchs Gone?”

This past summer and fall I have not seen one Monarch Butterfly. Why is this? According to many watchdog organizations such as Natural Resources Defense Council, “monarch butterfly populations are diminishing rapidly with migrating numbers down from one billion to a mere 56 million.” One of the major causes for this decline is the widespread use of glyphosate found in many herbicides (such as Roundup) used extensively on genetically modified herbicide resistant corn and soybeans. These herbicides kill the weeds, so the grower does not have to till, but they also kill the milkweed and nectar sources which are necessary for monarch survival. In recent years, more than 80 million acres of monarch habitat has been lost due to the use of such herbicides.

What Can Be Done?

According to information from www.monarchwatch.org “To offset the loss of milkweeds and nectar sources we need to create, conserve, and protect milkweed/monarch habitats. We need you to help us and help monarchs by creating ‘Monarch Waystations’ (monarch habitats) in home gardens, at schools, businesses, parks, zoos, nature centers, along roadsides, and on other unused plots of land. Without a major effort to restore milkweeds to as many locations as possible, the monarch population is certain to decline to extremely low levels.”

If you come upon an exploding milkweed pod, gently remove at least six of the billowy seeds and place them in an open field, or garden or open space where they won’t be mowed down. Go online to learn how to create a monarch butterfly garden. Monarchs love phlox, Echinacea, Rubeckia, Joe Pye weed, and of course, the Butterfly Bushes.

You can also let companies (such as Monsanto and Dow Chemical), know your concerns regarding this grave threat to the Monarch Butterfly.

by Sandy Peterson



Left to right:
Ken Butkiewicz,
Mark Smith and
new board
member David
Harrigan at
kiosk on
Quinebaug Rail
Trail

With Great Appreciation

The Dudley Conservation Land Trust proudly salutes Ken Butkiewicz for his enormous accomplishment in creating the Dudley portion of the Quinebaug Rail Trail. This trail, nearly five miles long, provides a quiet and scenic pathway for hiking, biking, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding, and follows the path of the Southbridge branch of the old Providence Worcester Railroad. This past fall, a few of us had the privilege of touring the trail with Ken and thoroughly enjoyed the scenic views of lush agricultural lands and the beautiful a natural forests along the Qinebaug River valley.

Although Ken received some help along the way, it is fair to say that he single-handedly made the project a reality through his perseverance, dogged-determination, and quiet persistence. Beginning the project in 2006, Ken was able to secure substantial state funds for the project, and employed ingenious cost saving measures that enabled the project to come to fruition. By innovatively leveraging the recycling value of the steel tracks, Ken worked with the Dudley Highway Department on their off duty time to complete the project. Ken also secured a generous grant from the Janet Malser Humanities Trust to purchase the benches, picnic tables, signs, kiosk, and trash receptacles. Ken continues to vigilantly steward the area with regular monitoring of the trail.

We give high praises and much gratitude to Ken for providing this unique Dudley treasure for all to enjoy.

submitted by Mark Smith and Sandy Peterson

DCLT Meetings Open to All

As most of you know, the DCLT Board of Directors meets monthly on every third Tuesday except for July. Four meetings per year (in March, June, September and December) are our general meetings and open to all members and friends to hear what the land trust is doing, and to learn about land conservation. The next general meeting is scheduled for December 15, 2015, 7:00 PM at the Dudley Senior Center, when we will offer a presentation on land stewardship, as well as an update on DCLT activities, and some great refreshments. Hope to see you then.

The general meetings of 2016 are scheduled for March 15, June 21, and December 20, all to be held at the Dudley Senior Center at 7:00 PM. Additionally our annual meeting will be scheduled for September. Programs for these meetings to be announced.

During the year, if anyone would like to attend a regular board meeting, to learn about DCLT business or to bring an issue to the board, please call Visha at 508-949-0250 and ask to be placed on the agenda.

Artisan Cheeses Right here in Dudley by Sandy Peterson

Calling all cheese-lovers! Marie-Laure Couet of Couet Farm and Fromagerie, has recently opened a cheesestead on her farm located at 236 Ramshorn Road where she makes all her own cheese. Marie-Laure learned the art of cheese making in Europe and loved the idea of local farm to table offerings. For this past year, she has been making cheese from raw milk obtained from Walnut Lane Farm here in Dudley. I have sampled three of her cheeses and savored each one with its distinctive flavor and texture. The Cheesestead is open Mon-Sat, 9 am- sunset, and Sun, noon to sunset. Marie-Laure also offers fresh eggs from her own hens. Recently, she has joined with Walnut Lane Farm and Kettle Brook Farm in a community supported agriculture program, and will be selling CSA boxes of local cheese, meat, and vegetables.

For more information go to her web site at www.couetfarm.com or visit her farm.



Left: Marie with her arms in cheese vat full of curds and whey
Right: Couet Farm Cheese Barn



Can you dig it?

Plant Sale 2016 is a-coming! This year the Plant Sale will be May 21st and 22nd. The Plant Sale Committee will start meeting in February. If you're interested in joining us, send your contact info (either email or phone) to Peggy Collins, mac2@charter.net, 508-949-2092 (texts are OK). If you can't join the committee but are willing to help out by donating plants or your time working at the plant sale, that would be wonderful, too. Welcome aboard!



Dudley Conservation Land Trust
P.O. Box 14
Dudley, MA 01571