

Remembering Pam Smith, former Trustee of Harvard Conservation Trust

Former Trustee and benefactor Pam Smith passed away in March. Pam lived in Harvard on Oak Hill for over thirty years. She was a Trustee in the 1980s and a generous supporter of the Trust throughout her years in Harvard and after she moved to Carlton-Willard Village in Bedford. In 2005 when Pam decided to move to Carlton-Willard Village, she worked with the Trust to permanently protect a portion of her land. Pam gifted the land to the Town and granted a permanent conservation restriction to the Trust. Understanding that conservation restrictions require on-going monitoring, she provided additional generous funding to the Trust for conservation restriction stewardship. In addition to the Trust, Pam's commitment to her Harvard community included support of Fruitlands Museum, Nashua River Watershed Association, and Indian Hill Music.



Elizabeth May (a deceased benefactor of HCT), left, Pam Smith, middle

by Pam Durrant

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The Town later voted to purchase the land from the HCT.

Since its inception, the Trust has assisted the town in the protection of 1,725 acres of open space in Harvard. As a result of the tremendous vision of Erhart Muller and the founding Trustees, as well as the commitment of Harvard's leaders and many volunteers, Harvard remains a more scenically beautiful place to live.

In 2000, in recognition of their endless dedication and commitment to the Town of Harvard, Erhart and his wife Ruth were honored with a tree planting and dedication ceremony. With many town officials and townspeople participating, a Washington

Elm was planted in the Town Center to the left of the Harvard Inn, a building saved by the HCT in the 1970s. The Muller Elm sits across the street from Ruth's childhood home and the Old Town Library where she and Erhart first met.

When people pass the Muller Elm or walk Conservation Trust Land or explore the Town Conservation Land Trails, they should be reminded of the Mullers' commitment to the Town of Harvard. They are a prime example of the importance of volunteering and how each one of us can make a true difference in our Town. Erhart Muller will be greatly missed by all.

by Mark Finnegan, Trustee

Conservation:

"The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn" - *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Stewardship:

I believe that there is a subtle magnetism in Nature, which, if we unconsciously yield to it, will direct us aright. -*Henry David Thoreau*

Discovery:

"One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." -*William Shakespeare*

Harvard Conservation Trust Upcoming Events

Saturday, May 2	8:00 am – 12 pm	Tree-for-All: Bayberry	Transfer Station
Sunday, May 3	10 am – 12 pm	Tree-for-All: Bayberry	Town Center
Sunday, May 3	7:00 am	Bird walk with Pat White	Bare Hill Wildlife Sanctuary, Bolton Road
Saturday, June 6	10:00 am	Spring Walk at Oxbow, with Fruitlands Museum & Friends of Oxbow	Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge, Still River Depot Road
Sunday, September 7	tbd	Run for the Hills 5K	McCurdy Track



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Would you Like to Become a Member? Need to Renew?

Yes, I want to preserve the unique character of the town of Harvard by joining the Harvard Conservation Trust.

Membership is on a calendar-year basis and is tax deductible. Make check payable to "Harvard Conservation Trust" and send to PO Box 31, Harvard, MA 01451, or save a stamp and renew or join online at www.HarvardConservationTrust.org.

___ \$25 Individual ___ \$50 Family ___ \$100 Friend ___ \$250 Associate ___ \$500 Sustaining Other _____

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ Email _____

If your employer will match your contribution, please enclose the application form.

The following committees of the Trust invite your participation. Please check any that interest you.

Conservation	Stewardship	_____ event planning
_____ lands	_____ trail maintenance	_____ membership
Administration	_____ land monitoring	_____ publicity
_____ finance	Discovery	_____ website
_____ fundraising	_____ walks & talks	_____ photography
_____ archives	_____ tree-for-all	_____ graphic design/posters
	_____ newsletter & writing	_____ printing/mailing
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Celebrating 42 Years

Spring 2015



Harvard Conservation Trust Legacy Review

President: Peter Dorward
Executive Director: David Outman

Trustees: Chris Candon, Robin Carlaw, Tom Cotton, Pam Durrant, Mark Finnegan, Glen Frederick, Michèle Girard, Patricia Hurter, Jim Lee, Ted MacMahon, Jonathan Panek, Marc Sevigny, Lucy Wallace

Trustees Emeriti: Francis Coolidge, Larry Finnegan, Edward Squibb

Honorary Trustee/Harvard Conservation Trust Librarian: Audrey Ball

This is a publication of the **Harvard Conservation Trust**.

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Design: Karen Polcaro

Membership is open to all. To join the Trust, send your tax-deductible check for dues with the remittance at the back page of this Legacy Review. Alternatively, renew or join online.

Harvard Conservation Trust
PO Box 31
Harvard, MA 01451
Tel: 978.456.9292
www.HarvardConservationTrust.org

Explore the trails!

Call us or send an email message if you're looking for:

Trail Guides \$10
(also at the General Store & Town Hall)
HCT baseball caps \$20

We're at:
102 Prospect Hill Road
(Fruitland's Museum)
978-456-9292
info@HarvardConservationTrust.org



Frank Coolidge (left), Erhart Muller (middle), and Larry Finnegan (right).

Remembering Erhart Muller, a Founding Trustee of Harvard Conservation Trust

On March 20th, at the age of 105, the Harvard Conservation Trust lost Erhart Muller, a founding Trustee and life long supporter of the HCT. Erhart first served on the Harvard Conservation Commission and then, in 1973, co-founded the HCT with Larry Finnegan, Ed Squibb, Frank Coolidge and Al Anderson. He worked tirelessly to protect and enhance the scenic beauty of the town.

In the early 1970s Harvard was a distinctly rural community comprised mostly of dairy farms and apple orchards. Open space abounded but only the Town Forest, the Abbot Land and the Scorgie Land, some 217 acres, were protected in conservation. That would soon change. In 1970, Erhart was on the Conservation Commission when a developer proposed a large-scale housing development called Shaker Hills. The proposed project was to be located adjacent to Shaker Village and included a potential house lot on the historic Shaker dancing grounds on Holy Hill. With little time to spare, Erhart, as Chairman of the Conservation Commission, and fellow Commissioner Larry Finnegan, moved

quickly to negotiate the purchase of a large portion of land from the developer that included Holy Hill. The Commission brought the proposed deal to the town at Town Meeting and subsequently Harvard voted to purchase what became known as the Shaker Hills Conservation Land. This landmark purchase was a first for the Town of Harvard marking the beginning of a land acquisition movement that has lasted for 45 years.

In 1973, recognizing the advantages that conservation land trusts offered over the slower, more complex town purchasing processes, Erhart and others formed the Harvard Conservation Trust. The Trust's prime purpose was to work closely with the Conservation Commission and the town to expedite the purchase of open space to secure and preserve the rural character of Harvard forever. This new model was put to the test immediately when a large portion of the Town Beach and surrounding land was put on the market for a quick sale. The HCT, under Erhart's leadership, moved quickly to secure the property for Harvard.

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Recap: Harvard Conservation Trust's 2014 Annual Meeting



Mary Holland with Pam Durrant, Trustee

The 2014 HCT Annual Meeting, held on the evening of November 19 at the Harvard Public Library, was a well-attended success. Executive Director Marylynn Gentry and President Molly Cutler recapped the Trust's 2014 land protection, stewardship, and outreach activities and Treasurer Glen Frederick offered a brief financial report. Nominating Committee chair Ted MacMahon thanked outgoing Trustees Tim Arnold, Molly Cutler, Pete Jackson, Kim Manning, and Susan Tarrant and presented the following slate of Trustee candidates for 3-year terms: Chris Candon, Tom Cotton, Trish Hurter, Jon Panek, and Marc Sevigny. The members voted unanimously to accept and welcome the new Trustees.

Special thanks were expressed to outgoing President Molly Cutler for her many years of commitment and leadership. The Annual Meeting also marked the last day at HCT for Marylynn Gentry who resigned in October after serving as our Executive Director for five years. Marylynn, who serves as a Director of the Sudbury Valley Trustees regional land trust, was thanked for her expertise and dedication to our organization.

The always entertaining author, blogger, naturalist, and former Harvard resident Mary Holland presented a lively talk and slide show based on her observational nature studies around New England. Mary also had on hand an array of skeletons, shells, scat, nests, and feather specimens for viewing and handling, along with copies of Naturally Curious, her award-winning photographic field guide.

Following tradition, the social gathering to close out the evening featured gingerbread and cider.

by Robin Carlaw

New Years Day Walk

A beautiful sunny day before the heavens opened with snow later in January and February



Nature Sightings Webpage—share your photos!



"Anybody home" photo: Prime wildlife real estate at Oxbow, photo by Michele Girard

If you happen to take a great photo of a landscape, a wild animal, or a special plant, why not share it with your fellow Harvard Conservation Trust members? The nature sightings webpage at HarvardConservationTrust.org/nature_sightings.htm allows members to share their experiences in nature with others. You are invited to send your photos to info@HarvardConservationTrust.org.



Raccoon tracks at Oxbow, photo by Michele Girard

Harvard Conservation Trust Hires New Executive Director



We are very pleased to announce that David Outman has joined us as HCT's second Executive Director. David has worked at the Trustees of Reservations for the past ten years in their land protection department. During his tenure he has exercised nearly every land-protection tool available in the Commonwealth – from outright fee acquisition to conservation restrictions and trail easements. His land protection work even extends into urban environments. David was Trustees of Reservations' lead on the Gateway Cities Project in Fitchburg that created a riverfront park with a loop trail on both sides of the river.

A resident of Littleton, David is very familiar with our local area and our special attachment to "place." Coming from a state-wide organization, David has contacts throughout the Commonwealth – individual land trusts, specialists in other conservation organizations and people at the state level. His experience brings myriad examples of how other groups have approached the same challenges that we face at HCT.

The HCT Board of Trustees feels we are very fortunate to have David as our new Executive Director.

David is very anxious to meet our members, and will attend this year's Tree-for-All on May 2nd and 3rd. Please stop by to introduce yourself, and to pick up your morella caroliniensis (aka small bayberry).

by Jon Panek

Take the Trail Challenge

Anyone interested in taking the trail challenge should visit the Trust's website at HarvardConservationTrust.org for details.

Tree-for-All 2015—Morella caroliniensis—Small Bayberry



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The Harvard Conservation Trust (HCT) hosted its first annual Tree-for-All membership benefit program in 1981. Since its inception, Tree-for-All enthusiasts have selected a new, unusual, or otherwise interesting tree or shrub to give to our members and friends each spring. The seedlings chosen have covered the gamut—from ornamental specimens such as Fragrant Snowbell and Kousa Dogwood to New England natives such as Tupelo and Beach Plum.

In recent years, HCT has selected native plants to encourage good stewardship. Native plants are the perfect choice for landowners striving to create garden



habitat for wildlife and to protect the local biodiversity of natural areas.** In 2015, HCT is taking the concept of "native" a few steps further by selecting a shrub with roots of truly local provenance. This year's selection, *Morella caroliniensis*, is commonly known as small bayberry. Our bayberry seedlings were grown from seeds collected in Barnstable County on Cape Cod. We ordered bayberry plants last spring and they've been growing at Nasami Farm in Whatley, Massachusetts over the winter.

Small bayberry is a member of the Myricaceae family. It is a multi-stemmed, broadly-leaved woody plant that can grow from six to twelve feet in height. It occurs in eastern Canada and North America, ranging from Newfoundland south to Florida and west to Texas and Arkansas. Robust and versatile, small bayberry can tolerate full sun to some shade and can grow in dry to wet conditions. It is commonly found along beach borders and dunes, yet it also grows along forest edges, ledges, open fields and meadows. The roots contain nitrogen-fixing nodules, allowing the shrub to tolerate nutrient-poor, acidic soils.

You will notice small bayberry's dark, waxy leaves produce an attractive aroma when crushed. Although it is a deciduous plant, its leaves can persist into winter. (In southern states it is considered an evergreen). It is wind pollinated and produces catkins in early spring. On female plants, it grows waxy yellow-green fruits along the stem,



interspersed among the leaves. Birds find their fruits, which persist through winter, very attractive, and their waxy coatings have been used historically to make candles.

Harvard Conservation Trust members will distribute small bayberry seedlings at the Transfer Station Saturday, May 2, from 8:00 am to noon, and on the Common across from the General Store Sunday, May 3, from 10:00 am to noon. The seedlings are a Harvard Conservation Trust membership benefit and are also available to non-members for \$5.00 while supplies last. Please stop by the Transfer Station or Town Center to let us say thank you for your support!

Content compiled by Michèle Girard from the following sources:
<https://gobotany.newenglandwild.org>

More information at International Institute of Tropical Forestry: <http://tiny.cc/yixbxx>

**To learn more about encouraging local biodiversity by planting native plants, check out *Bringing Nature Home: How You can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants* by Douglas W. Tallamy. Check it out at Harvard Public Library through interlibrary loan.

Photos courtesy of Cayte McDonough, Nasami Farm. Adult shrub with fruit, courtesy Karan A. Rawlins, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org

What's That Odd Barcode I see on HCT trail signs?

That's called a QR code, and contains digital information that can be read from QR readers. If you have a smart phone, you can download a QR Reader app. When you see one of those QR codes, bring up the QR reader app, point your camera display at the QR Code, and it will automatically bring up a web link that the unique QR code represents!

In the case of the HCT trail signs, the QR code will bring up a page showing all of the Harvard conservation trails. You can then click on one of the maple leaf icons to bring up the trail map for that land. The map shows the trail locations, features and a text description of the trails.

Give it a try!

Message from the HCT President

2014 was a busy and productive year for the Trust. In concert with several individuals and the Conservation Commission, the Trust was able to protect a beautiful mature upland forest on Old Littleton Road. The land abuts the Dunlap conservation land and had been slated to become five large houses. This project is a great example of how different parties can pool their resources to protect open spaces from development.

Many people volunteered to help clean up our newly acquired Brown property at the end of Murray Lane – battling the invasives, reclaiming the orchard and fields, and blazing several new trails that connect to the trail network on the Great Elms conservation land. We hope you will visit to view our progress and to enjoy this lovely land.

We thank you for your continuing help and support in our mission to preserve the unique character and natural resources of Harvard. We'd also especially like to remember two HCT Trustees who recently passed away – Erhart Muller and Pam Smith. Their leadership, vision and support were instrumental in creating and nurturing the Trust. We are indebted to them.

-Peter Dorward



The Harvard Conservation Trust welcomes and thanks our newest members!

Joanna Bentley
Aron and Alana Clarke
Elizabeth Cooper
Colin Dangel
Judith Eaton
Mary Ells
Tina and Rich Fisher
Henry Fitek
Andrea Harrison
Lynda Moulton
Amy Nutt
Sam Potter

Appreciating a commitment to conservation . . . **Won't you join us?**



The Most Affordable House in Harvard... FREE!

Harvard isn't known for bargain houses, but here's one that is a real exception. The HCT acquired the spectacular Brown property at the end of Murray Lane, and needs to find a new home for the farm house. Unfortunately, the house has no functioning septic system, so it cannot be occupied at its current site. It would be a shame to have such a charming house demolished. Can you help?

The 2-story, 3 bedroom, 1 1/2 bath house has its charms, with nicely proportioned rooms and about 1600 sq ft of interior living space. If you want it, it is yours! One hitch... you'll have to move it.

If you can come up with some creative reuse for this lovely old home, please contact the HCT office at info@harvardconservationtrust.org.