



# BARRINGTON LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

• ESTABLISHED 1979 •

PRESERVE. ADVOCATE. EDUCATE. ENGAGE.

## Volunteer Power Fuels Tuesday Trails Team

You might never see them, but their work makes it possible for the Barrington Land Conservation Trust to care for nearly 300 acres of preserved land. On the second Tuesday of each month, the Tuesday Trails Team gathers to maintain trails,

help preserve and heal our local environment," says Victor. The team also seeks volunteers with specialized knowledge of environmental science, birdlife, plants and animals, as well as people with outdoor skills like chainsaw use.



Tuesday Trails Team volunteers cover miles of trails through forests, fields and sand. (l-r) Victor Lerish, Dick Greene, Ann Brouillette, Susan Beck, Tom Pezzullo, Ellen Berren, Frank Hearn.

remove invasive plants, repair bridges, remove trash and clean up beaches. These volunteers, led by BLCT Stewardship Chair Victor Lerish, have donated 169 hours of time this year.

***"Volunteering for the Tuesday Trails Team is a great way to explore the undeveloped parts of town."***—Ellen Berren, Tuesday Trails Team Volunteer

"I love being outdoors, so the Tuesday Trails Team is a good fit for me," said volunteer Susan Beck, a retired mental health therapist who has volunteered for the team for 7 years. "I've discovered BLCT properties I never knew existed. Johannis is gorgeous, Pic-Wil is beautiful, but there are so many properties, including tiny ones and land that isn't open to the public. Who knew? Now when I'm on the bike path, I notice these little areas that we manage."

You don't need any particular skills to join the Tuesday Trails Team. "All you need is a love of the outdoors and a desire to



Special projects, like the planting of indigenous trees, are made possible by Tuesday Trails Team volunteers. Mary Caplin and Frank Hearn create wire cages to protect new plantings, while Ann Brouillette prepares the ground. Photo by Elizabeth Welch.

"I keep volunteering because I'm learning a lot, it's a nice group of people, and I enjoy the tasks," says Ellen Berren. "Come join us! The Land Trust has so many beautiful hidden properties. Volunteering for the Tuesday Trails Team is a great way to explore the undeveloped parts of town. The Tuesday Trails Team helps to preserve these properties so that native flora and fauna can survive."

To join the Tuesday Trails Team or to inquire about other ways you can volunteer for the Barrington Land Conservation Trust, fill out our online form (<https://www.blct.org/trails-team-volunteer-form/>) or email [cindyelder@blct.org](mailto:cindyelder@blct.org).



# Rediscovering My Hometown

*Cindy Elder, BLCT Executive Director*

In the last two months, I've walked forest trails and photographed windswept nature preserves I'd never visited in my hometown of Barrington. It's one of the perks of serving as the first executive director of the Barrington Land Conservation Trust.

Although I've supported the Land Trust for years as an annual donor, I hadn't experienced many of the places my donation helped to protect. Hundreds of acres of preserved land lay virtually at my doorstep, yet my hour-long commute to work discouraged me from exploring beyond my well-trodden pathways. Now that I'm visiting these trails, forests, fields and shorelines, I can't believe I waited so long.



BLCT Executive Director Cindy Elder (left) introduces Kate Sayles, Executive Director of the RI Land Trust Council, to Sowams Woods, one of the properties owned and managed by the Barrington Land Conservation Trust. Photo by Virginia Streever.

There's a healing quality to the solitude one finds in natural places, where birds outnumber people and each footstep takes you a little farther away from the demands of the day. I like to bring a camera because it reminds me to focus on the small wonders: the startling blue of

***"There's a healing quality to the solitude one finds in natural places."***

roundleaf greenbrier berries against fall colors, the inviting call of a footbridge urging me into a wild place.



To protect sensitive areas, BLCT has collaborated with the Boy Scouts to build narrow foot bridges, like this one at Osamequin Nature Preserve. Photo by Cindy Elder.

I've also discovered people who share my love of the outdoors and folks who volunteer a few hours each month to keep our trails and nature preserves in good condition. I've visited the homes of Land Trust supporters who rejoice in the open space we have preserved for future generations.

In the months ahead, I'd like to understand why *you* think the work of the Barrington Land Conservation Trust is important. We could



Roundleaf greenbrier berries provide a striking contrast against fall colors at Osamequin Nature Preserve, a property owned by the Town of Barrington and managed by the Barrington Land Conservation Trust. Photo by Cindy Elder.

go for a walk, meet for coffee, or chat on the phone. With your help, we can shed some light on Barrington's best-kept secret. I invite you to email me at [cindyelder@blct.org](mailto:cindyelder@blct.org) to share your thoughts.

On behalf of the people, plants and animals who make this town home, thank you for supporting the preservation of open space in Barrington.

## Name That Plant

*Answer on page 7*



Photo by Clare Dellwo Cole



# Many Hands Create Native Plant Corridor

A parade of native trees and shrubs, lovingly planted and protected with wire cages, now lines a trail between forest and field at Johannis Farm Wildlife Preserve, one of the properties owned and managed by the Barrington Land Conservation Trust.

This volunteer-driven effort is part of a three-year planting program funded by an Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Barrington Land Conservation Trust. Our thanks, as

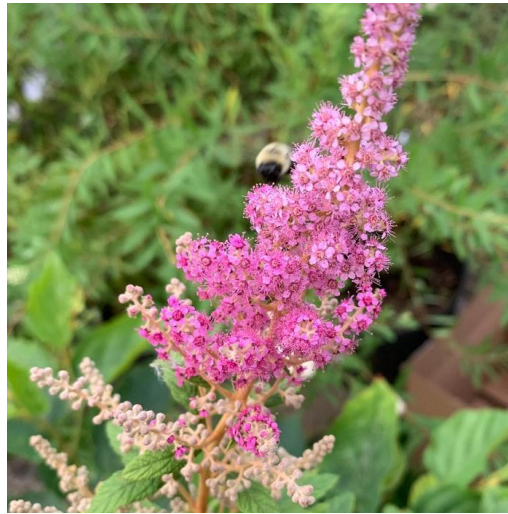
entomologist Doug Tallamy and other leading experts. Over time, the new plants will help strengthen the ecosystem of the preserve."

RI Audubon's Youth Conservation League dug holes for the new plantings, which were planted and mulched by 14 BLCT volunteers. They built wire cages to prevent deer from making a quick meal of the young trees and shrubs.

Due to the sensitive environmental conditions on the



BLCT volunteers carry wire mesh to the planting site to create deer-excluder cages. Photo by Beth Welch.



Steeplebush in bloom. Photo courtesy of American Roots Native Nursery.



Steeplebush (*Spiraea tomentosa*) is one of the native plants selected for the project at Johannis Farm Wildlife Preserve. Photo by Cindy Elder.

well, to BLCT Board Member Cindy Moura Larson and her husband, Ed Moura, who donated a percentage of the proceeds from Prickly Ed's Cactus Patch to cover the cost of additional plantings over the three-year lifecycle of the project.

A BLCT planting committee, led by Board Member Mary Grover, selected winterberry, lowbush berry, St. John's wort, spice bush, steeplebush, high bush blueberry, smooth arrow wood, flowering dogwood, American witch hazel, gray dogwood, northern bush honeysuckle, red osier dogwood, black chokeberry, nannyberry, common elderberry, spirea alba and serviceberry.

"The 38 trees and shrubs that were added to the Johannis property in September are an important addition to the nature preserve," said Mary. "The plants were carefully selected for their high wildlife value, providing nectar, berries and habitat for many birds, butterflies, moths, hummingbirds and small mammals. Only native trees and shrubs were chosen, including several keystone plants suggested by

property, Johannis is not open to the public. BLCT leads public walks several times a year, including this

***"Over time, the new plants will help strengthen the ecosystem of the preserve."***

***– BLCT Board Member Mary Grover***

year's Day After Thanksgiving Walk (see page 8).

NRCS also funded a new 10-year Forest Management Plan for Johannis. Prepared by Bourque Forestry Service, the Forest Management Plan documents the natural resources of the wooded lands. The report recommends activities to maintain the traditional forest uses of the Johannis woodlands.

Johannis encompasses more than 32 acres of woodlands, open fields and salt marshes. The plan focuses on the 16 acres of woodland, with the goal of preventing the invasion of non-native shrubs and promoting tree health, pollinator diversity, wildlife habitat enhancement and water quality protection.

# Why Do You Support the Land Trust?

Lynne Seacord and David Mehl didn't grow up in Barrington, and they didn't raise their children here. Lynne spent 40 years as a cardiologist in St. Louis, Missouri, where David served as a congregational minister. They wanted to be closer to their children in Boston but didn't want to deal with city traffic.

In 2019, they found a slice of heaven off Washington Road, surrounded by conservation land owned and managed by the Barrington Land Conservation Trust.

"Of course, the world closed down just a few months later," said David, recalling the early days of the pandemic. "Imagine if you were 40 stories up in an apartment. It would be awful." Lynne and David reflected on how lucky they felt to be "hostage" in this beautiful place, surrounded by wildlife, trees and the network of public trails in Sowams Woods.

***"We get such peace going through the forest. We know its every trail. We know its every mood." – Lynne Seacord***

"To the west is Narragansett Bay," said David. "Mussachuck Beach is a five-minute walk. We can hear the boat horns when they come up and down the harbor."

"We wanted to support the Trust from the very beginning of our time here, because we spend so much time in Sowams Woods," said Lynne. They also toured another Land Trust property, the Doug Raynor Wildlife Refuge, with volunteer land steward Pete McCalmont. "What a labor of love... and the terrapins!"



Their own yard is filled with native plants. They're tuned in to the problem of invasive plants infringing on our native flora. Lynne and David look forward to joining the Tuesday Trails Team, so they can help maintain the trails they enjoy and discover some of the more sensitive areas not open to the public.

"We get such peace going through the forest," said Lynn. "We know its every trail. We know its every mood. It soothes your soul."

On a more global level, they see the preservation of open space as an existential question. "This is another save the planet moment," said David. "If we're not doing something, pushing back against degradation, then we're sleeping at the switch."

## Why Your Gift Matters

Your support makes it possible for us to pay ongoing expenses, like insurance for the properties we steward, trail maintenance equipment and educational materials. We keep our operational expenses low, thanks to our amazing volunteers.

When opportunities arise to acquire open space, we rely on donations to cover costs associated with that process. Thank you for supporting the Barrington Land Conservation Trust.

## Ways to Give

1. ONLINE: Go to [www.blct.org/make-a-donation](http://www.blct.org/make-a-donation).
2. CHECK: Make check out to BLCT and mail to: BLCT, PO Box 324, Barrington, RI 02806.
3. DONOR ADVISED FUND: Search for: Barrington Land Conservation Trust, Inc.
4. SECURITIES AND BEQUESTS: Let's chat! Email [cindyelder@blct.org](mailto:cindyelder@blct.org) or call Cindy at 508-733-2443 for a personal meeting.
5. MEMORIAL AND TRIBUTE GIFTS: Our online giving form allows you to honor a special person, place or animal. If you send your donation by mail, please include a note regarding your tribute and the name and address of anyone who should be notified that you have made a gift in their honor. Email [cindyelder@blct.org](mailto:cindyelder@blct.org) with questions. Thank you!





## Former BLCT President Reflects on 10 Years of Service

*Thank you, Melissa!*

Melissa Horne recently completed ten years on the Board of Directors of the Barrington Land Conservation Trust, including three years as President and one as co-president. She also works as an attorney with Higgins, Cavanagh and Cooney in Providence. We sat down with Melissa to reflect on her time with BLCT.

### **Q: How did you come to volunteer for BLCT?**

**A:** I got indoctrinated into volunteering early in life. When I was a little kid, my mom would bring home envelopes to stuff for a charity and set me up at the dining room table to help. When we moved to Barrington, I volunteered on the Athletic Fields Committee and that led to serving on the Parks and Recreation Committee. That's how I got to know Charlotte Sornborger, who was instrumental in bringing the Land Trust to where it is now. She persuaded me to join the board."

### **Q: Why did you devote your volunteer energy to the Land Trust?**

**A:** Preserving open space is important. Not everybody has a big back yard or access to open space that feels secluded. If not for the Land Trust, there would be a lot more buildings in town. Some people say there's an economic benefit to having more buildings, but there's also a benefit to having spaces where deer, fox and rabbits can roam. Kids can walk through our natural places, see those animals, experience the changing leaves and all the little things that pop up in the spring. It's important to have places where everybody in town can get away from civilization.

### **Q: What was the BLCT's biggest challenge during your tenure?**

**A:** We always needed more help. I think some people overestimate the amount of time they would need to contribute as a BLCT volunteer. Many of our committees could benefit from volunteers who have a couple hours a month to share. The Communications Committee could use people to help with the newsletter. The Education Committee could use people to host walks or recommend a good speaker for a presentation.



### **Q: What was BLCT's biggest victory in the last few years?**

**A:** Acquiring the Vendituoli Farm, now home to the Barrington Farm School, was a big victory for us. We raised a significant amount of money with the help of Tim Faulkner, who was president of BLCT at the time, and the Faulkner family, who have been generous supporters of the Land Trust.

## Volunteer Spotlight: Jerry Gonville

*By Meghan Frost, BLCT Board Member*

With properties scattered throughout the town of Barrington, the Barrington Land Conservation Trust maintains our town's natural beauty and open land. Behind the scenes, a committed corps of volunteers make the organization run, from board members and committee volunteers to the Tuesday Trails team and property stewards.

Jerry Gonville is a multifaceted BLCT volunteer. In addition to his service on the Tuesday Trails team, he is a special events volunteer and a property steward who oversees management of Deep Meadow Bluff. He's also restored and monitored bird boxes at Osamequin Nature Preserve, PIC-WIL Nature Preserve and Mussachuck Beach.

"Volunteering is great way to give back to the town of Barrington," Jerry said. "It's enabled me to assist in our community's conservation efforts, keep trails open and safe for public use, and maintain trails for exercise and wildlife viewing."

Mussachuck Creek is one of Jerry's favorite BLCT properties. "The creek and neighboring woods provide a nice walk, including a beautiful shoreline where you can see purple martins, dragonflies and osprey." He loves visiting Allin's Cove and its surroundings to view the wintering birdlife and changing tides. Jerry takes his grandchildren to Sowams Woods, which he appreciates for its biodiversity and pine woods alongside open waters, perfect for spring migrations.



*Jerry Gonville, BLCT Volunteer. Photo by Cindy Elder.*

"It's great to see lots of young families out there these days, just enjoying a walk in the woods, birding, fresh air, exercise and wildlife."

Why does Jerry share his time with the Land Trust? "Volunteering is a great way to get outside and to accomplish something the community can enjoy. At the same time, it's a chance to work with a knowledgeable and fun group of volunteers. It is something I look forward to."

# Tread Lightly... Nature is Listening

*Cindy Moura Larson*

Increased development pressures in the East Bay have left little conservation space for wildlife and wild places. The nearly 300 acres of land preserved by the Barrington Land Conservation Trust provide important habits for local plant and animal life. Some of our properties are home to endangered flora and fauna.

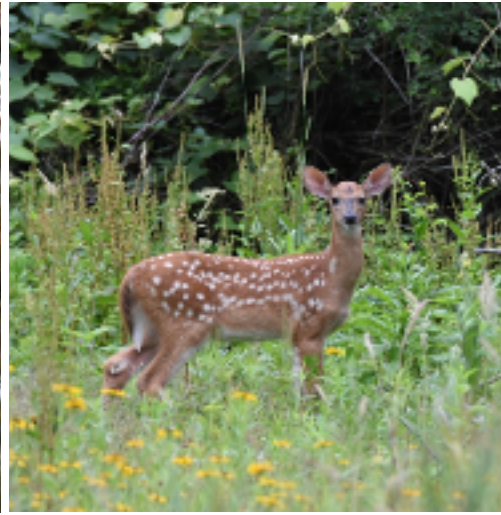
Most of the properties owned by BLCT welcome visitors to enjoy the open spaces and experience a healthy dose of nature therapy. Properties which are closed to the public, including Johannis Farm Wildlife Preserve and Pic-Wil



Nature Preserve, are true wildlife refuges. We offer guided tours of these special properties to allow people to experience the beauty of these sensitive places. At all other times, there is no public access.

When visiting any of the properties managed by BLCT, we hope you will marvel in the beauty but ask that you visit with a "leave no trace" mindset.

Some of the conservation properties in town prohibit dogs. This includes the Doug Raynor Refuge, Johannis and Pic-Wil. We understand that dogs make wonderful companions and you want them to spend time with you outdoors. However, these particular properties are maintained for the benefit of the wildlife that call them



home. Birds and animals see dogs as a threat. This causes enormous stress, especially for pregnant wildlife and nesting young. Even after a dog has left the site, the scent lingers and this will cause some wildlife to avoid the area entirely.

It is energizing to see more people enjoying time outdoors in our communities. BLCT seeks to protect and conserve the environmentally sensitive parcels we own and manage so these remarkable natural places will be there for generations to come.

Thank you for helping us to be good stewards of these properties.

## Join a Guided Walk

Every month, Executive Director Cindy Elder will lead a guided walk on a property owned and/or managed by the Barrington Land Conservation Trust, including some seldom-seen properties that are not generally open to the public. If you'd like to participate, email Cindy at [cindyelder@blct.org](mailto:cindyelder@blct.org), and she'll get you on the list.

## Leave No Trace

- Don't leave behind any waste or debris during your visit.
- Don't take anything from the site (except pictures and happy memories).
- Never start a fire.
- Don't use motorized vehicles such as ATVs or snowmobiles.
- Stay on the trail system. They've been designed to keep you safe and prevent human contact with environmentally sensitive areas.
- On properties where dogs are allowed, keep them on leashes at all time to avoid harm or stress to wildlife and nesting young.



# In Memoriam: Robert Kilmarx

## *Co-Founder of the Barrington Land Conservation Trust*

Robert Dudley Kilmarx ended his 94-year journey through life on Sept. 21, 2022, after a lifetime of service, kindness and generosity. Bob was a co-founder of the Barrington Land Conservation Trust, along with Mary Chaffee and Mary Liz Roelke.

"Throughout the 17 years of my presidency, Bob not only held my hand, but was always at the other end of the telephone to answer the many questions we had in the early days of our organization," recalls long-time BLCT Board President Charlotte Sornborger. "He traveled around the state to help other towns create their own land trusts, as well. Bob was truly a blessing for Rhode Island and is largely responsible for our state's dedication to preserving its natural resources."

Among his many personal and professional pursuits, Bob and his wife Mary were passionate and powerful champions for environmental protection. Their warmth and graciousness endeared them to a vast sea of friends and colleagues.

The Barrington Land Conservation Trust extends our sympathy to Bob's family and celebrates with gratitude the life of a true public service hero.



## Name That Plant

*Answer: Eastern Skunk Cabbage (Symplocarpus foetidus)*

*By Sara Horvet, BLCT Volunteer*

The eastern skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*) is one of the first flowering perennial plants to emerge in the spring. It can be found throughout eastern Canada and the northeastern United States and emerges between February and May in woodlands, wetlands, and near streams.

It gets the name "skunk cabbage" because bruised leaves of the plant omit a smell similar to a skunk. Skunk cabbage has the amazing ability to produce heat that allows it to emerge and bloom even when the ground is still frozen.

During the winter when temperatures are below freezing, the flower buds are able to warm up to 70 degrees Fahrenheit, which can melt snow around the plant. Pollinated flower heads develop berry-like fruits containing seeds, which germinate into new skunk cabbages the next growing season. Plants can live up to 20 years.

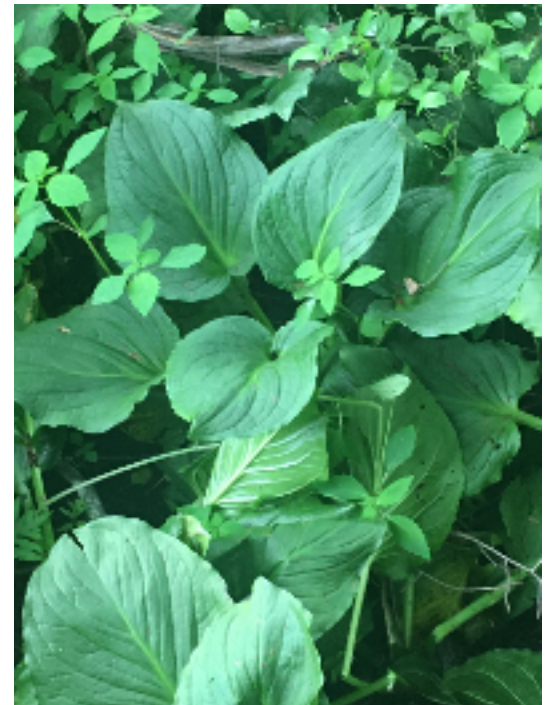


Photo: iNaturalist.org

**Did you know:** Skunk cabbage is the most observed species in the iNaturalist app BLCT project. The app allows you to contribute to an inventory of plants found on Barrington Land Conservation Trust properties.

Download the iNaturalist app at [www.inaturalist.org](http://www.inaturalist.org). Search for Barrington Land Conservation Trust to join the project. We look forward to seeing what you find!

# Day After Thanksgiving Walk

## Register today!

Get outside with family and friends on Friday, Nov. 25, the day after Thanksgiving. Experience Johannis Farm Wildlife Preserve, a property owned and managed by the Barrington Land Conservation Trust that is not normally open to the public. Johannis will be open from 11am to 1pm. Arrive anytime during these hours and walk the preserve at your own pace. Sorry, no dogs allowed due to the birds and wildlife. The walk is

*Registration required. Register at <https://barringtonlibrary.libcal.com/event/9713691> or scan the QR code.*

