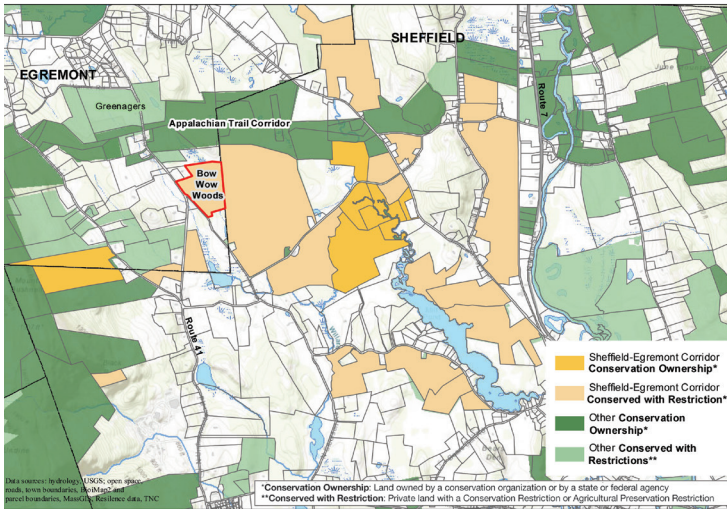


EGREMONT

LAND TRUST

◆ 2022 NEWSLETTER ◆



BOW WOW WOODS MAP

NEWS FLASH

Bow Wow Woods in Egremont!

As soon as the purchase is completed, Bow Wow Woods will be the newest addition to the Sheffield-Egremont Agricultural, Ecological and Scenic Corridor project. Since 2001, phases 1 through 4 of the project have seen more than 1,200 acres in southeast Egremont and northwest Sheffield conserved, and seven working farms have been saved. Most of the land in the Corridor project lies between Routes 7 and 41, connecting with more than 5,000 acres of protected federal and state land. (See map.)

Phase 5 of the project will eventually add more than 500 acres of preserved forest, fields, wildlife habitat, and farmland in Sheffield and Egremont, and the 54-acre Bow Wow Woods will anchor this phase. If we successfully conserve Bow Wow Woods, we will be eligible for a \$1.25 million landscape partnership grant to preserve 500 acres.

Most of Bow Wow Woods is a mature, healthy forest of conifers and deciduous trees. Its diverse ecology results from a combination of dry upland and low wetland forest, and it is home to a number of species protected by the state's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. Its calcareous rock outcrops, rich mesic woods, moderate-fertility wetlands, and potential vernal pools provide important plant and wildlife habitat.



CONSIDER TAKING PART IN THE BOW WOW WOODS CHALLENGE!

Three organizations have partnered to accomplish the million-dollar purchase: the Sheffield Land Trust, the Egremont Land Trust, and Greenagers. The owner of the property will be Greenagers, which will convert the old logging trails into accessible public trails, expand its conservation education programs for area schools, and lovingly maintain the property and its trails. Part of the \$1M will be a \$200,000 stewardship endowment that will generate \$8,000 to \$10,000 annually, which will allow Greenagers to manage the property responsibly in perpetuity. The conservation restriction, which permanently protects the property, will be held jointly by the two land trusts.

We are fortunate to have received a \$500,000 challenge grant from local foundations and long-time land trust members. Henceforth, every dollar donated by individuals, businesses, and foundations will be matched by another dollar, up to that amount. Donations can be made via mail or online to any of the three organizations. Be sure to note that the donation is for the Bow Wow Woods and Corridor project. (To donate via ELT, please mail to us at PO Box 132, South Egremont, MA, 01258, or use our website's donation page: <https://egremontlandtrust.org/donate/>.)

We hope you'll make as generous a gift as you can, as a single contribution or a multi-year pledge, to help bring Bow Wow Woods to its \$1 million goal. ◆

Spring Wildflower Walk 2020

Egremont Land Trust is very fortunate that, even though our annual spring wildflower/Green River walk was canceled again because of the pandemic, Egremonter Stephanie Bergman created a YouTube video so that we can enjoy it virtually. In April 2020, she went to ELT's property on Route 71 in North Egremont, where we usually celebrate spring with her in person. Accompanying her were cameraman Robert Hoehster and their two daughters.

Stephanie points out native plants and invasives, shows us activity by beavers along the Green River, and speaks about river ecology.

To view the YouTube video, go to www.egremontlandtrust.org, and click on the News tab in the upper right corner of the homepage. Then click on "2020 Wildflower Walk."

Stephanie lives in Egremont with her husband and two daughters, where she tends to a big garden, makes herbal remedies, and raises chickens. Stephanie is currently the Development Manager for Mass Audubon Berkshire Wildlife Sanctuaries. She holds a master's degree in environmental education from Lesley University/Audubon Expedition Institute and a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Michigan. ♦



RED TRILLIUM



TROUT LILIES

ELT

Stewardship Report

ELT has applied for a Forest Stewardship Grant for our new 21-acre property adjoining the 37 acres on Mt. Washington Road that we already owned, and an action plan will be developed once the entire property has been surveyed.

In response to our newly approved policy on hunting on ELT properties, the Land Trust has determined that certain of its properties without hunting permission deeded or otherwise required should be posted to prohibit hunting. Signs will be posted before the 2022 hunting seasons.

We have completed the annual Stewardship walks: with Fisheries and Wildlife on the Highway 71 (Smith) property, and with BNRC on the McCain, Shapiro, Kellerman property. All are in excellent condition.

With the beaver situation currently under control, the Baldwin Hill Fen has returned to its optimal condition. Some dead trees near the entrance will be removed, and Greenagers will continue to do brush clearing on the west side of the Fen. A plan has been developed for providing some wet meadow plantings at the north side of the property, and this will be carried out in the spring.

Overall, the lands owned or managed by the Egremont Land Trust are in excellent condition. Although industrial or residential development do not currently present challenges to the Land Trust's preservation mission, woolly adelgid and emerald ash borers are causing significant damage to hemlocks and ash trees, and forested lands must be monitored and managed appropriately. Moreover, with climate change a reality, we can anticipate future issues with flooding in wet areas and increased wind damage in wooded areas. ♦



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The ELT Website

www.egremontlandtrust.org

We regularly update our website. Our latest improvement is the addition of a secure option to donate to ELT, to become a member, or to renew a membership online. Choose a credit card or a debit card payment, and follow the simple directions under the tab "To Join, Renew, or Donate Online or by Mail" located on our website's home page. Another option is to print the donation/membership form, fill it in, and mail it to PO Box 132, South Egremont, MA 01258, along with your check.

Be sure to take a look at our website and see what's new! This 2022 Newsletter will be there, along with many previous issues. Unfortunately, our Calendar of Events is not current, because of Covid, of course. We'll update it when we can. ♦



TOM WITH LARRY THE BOX TURTLE



BLACK SALAMANDER



RING-NECKED SNAKE

September Presentation

Tom Tynying 2021

ELT President Peg Muskrat introduced Tom Tynying, who presented “Frogs and Turtles Matter.”

About 40 people came to French Park to hear Tom Tynying, herpetologist, talk about turtles and frogs, his passion since he was small. Tom studied wildlife biology and organismic and evolutionary biology at UMass Amherst, focusing on the timber rattlesnake. He then worked for Mass Audubon for 24 years. Since 1999, he’s been a professor of environmental science at Berkshire Community College.

Tom brought an assortment of amphibians and reptiles, which he used as a springboard to inspire us.

- The ring-necked snake is one of our smallest snakes, pencil-thin and only about 15 inches when grown. Ring-necked moms establish communal nesting sites, with each laying about six eggs. Tom found a nest of 24 eggs and took a few, from which this 7-inch-long baby hatched only 1 week ago. The babies don’t eat until they finish shedding, which could be next spring. Adult ring-necked snakes spend the winter in the tunnels of ant colonies, where they eat only ant pupae. Snakes play an important role in our planet’s complex ecology.
- Spotted salamander. Members of this species can live 30 to 40 years. They thrive in vernal pools and in leaf litter. Their primary predators are rabbits, squirrels, and chipmunks, and they are also enjoyed by owls and hawks.
- This gray treefrog survived being hit by a car 3 years ago. Babies of this genus are fluorescent green. Wood frogs, in a related genus, breed only during the first rainy night of the spring. After a brief courtship, the females lay an egg mass containing about 1000 eggs.
- Larry the box turtle was hit by a car in Pittsfield 18 years ago and is now about 75 years old. A box turtle can draw all its appendages, including its head, inside its hinged shell, which then closes to look like a box. Most box turtles found in this area are probably discarded “pets.” Larry

loves earthworms. Never try to relocate a turtle; they know where they want to be.

- The black salamander is a lungless salamander related to the mudpuppy, which is found in Prospect Lake. The mudpuppy lives its entire life, which can be 40 years, in the water. It exhibits neoteny, which means that it reaches maturity without losing all its juvenile features – in this case, its gills.
- The red-backed salamander is the most abundant vertebrate, by biomass, in our forests. It is terrestrial and a detritivore, the main conduit between our layers of leaf litter and a healthy forest floor.
- Water snake. Tom found this guy recently, and as he carried it, the snake held onto his finger with its jaws, but the bite didn’t hurt. Vocabulary tip: “Poisonous” refers to something we eat, whereas a “venomous” snake injects poison (venom) via its bite.
- Jumping worms are a rather new exotic invasive (“exotic” here means coming from elsewhere). They are responsible for denuding our forest floor without contributing nutrition to it. Neat fact: Our familiar earthworms are not native to Massachusetts. Any that might have been here were wiped out by the glacier.

Our native amphibians and reptiles face many challenges. Poachers take salamanders and turtles to sell. A sting operation in New York State was successful, but, unfortunately, the animals recovered could not be released into the wild because they may well have picked up pathogens. Tom told us the sad story of a female musk turtle that was crushed by a car, killing her and the eggs she was carrying. Be aware in wetland areas: Turtles do not jump out in front of cars. Snapping turtles, which are primarily vegetarian, bite defensively because their bottom shell (plastron) is too small to be protective.

Most important Tynying take-away: The more complex an environment is, the sturdier it is.

Addendum: This report brings you only a fraction of the fascinating family-friendly tidbits offered by Tom Tynying. We hope that you will have an opportunity to hear him speak. ♦

ELT Members & Supporters 2020 -2021 Many thanks to our loyal supporters, listed below. Without you, our accomplishments would simply not exist. Please renew your membership for 2022, or if you are not already a member, join us. Use the enclosed envelope. We welcome you!

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Bonnie Oloff	& Julia St. Clair-Voiers	
Faith Parker & Terry Moore	Joan C. Steiger	

ELT'S 2021

Annual Meeting

After enjoying Tom Tynning's presentation, the Land Trust and community members gathered at the French Park Pavilion for the September 2021 Annual Meeting. President Peg Muskrat introduced the Board. In addition to Peg, the Board members present were Molly Cliff, Robin Goldberg, Wendy McCain, Abby Rogers-McKee, David Seligman, Susan Shapiro, Maureen Steiner, Marj Wexler, and Member Emerita Ursula Cliff. Interested members of the community were welcome to stay for this meeting.

Treasurer Maureen Steiner reported that in addition to paying our ongoing bills (e.g., rent at April Hill and website expenses), we sent donations to our partners, including the Pollinator Garden, the Mass. Land Trust, the Housatonic Valley Association, the Berkshire Natural Resources Council,

and Greenagers. We contributed to the effort to secure Smiley's Pond (now owned by Mass. Fish and Wildlife). We accepted David Seligman's donation of land near Mt. Washington Road. We are the umbrella organization for Terry Moore's Karner Brook Walk. And we will be contributing to Bow Wow Woods, part of the Corridor Project we support along with the Sheffield Land Trust and Greenagers.

Susan Shapiro named the Board members whose terms were up: Peggy Barrett, Molly Cliff, Robin Goldberg, Peg Muskrat, Maureen Steiner, Marj Wexler, and Heidi Zorn. The members on the slate were unanimously reelected by voice vote. The annual election of officers will take place at the next regular ELT meeting. Peg encouraged anyone interested in becoming a Board member to contact her or another member.

The meeting ended at about 1:00 PM. We enjoyed meeting members of the community, and we were delighted that some joined ELT. ♦



SMILEY'S POND IN WINTER



SMILEY'S POND IN SUMMER



SMILEY'S POND IN AUTUMN



SMILEY'S POND BUSTLING IN SPRING

Smiley's Pond

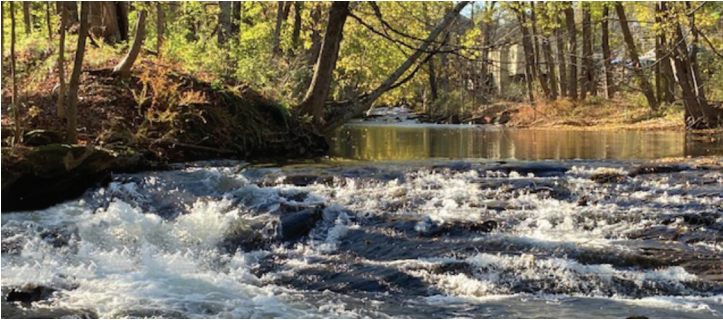
On the western edge of the village of South Egremont sits Smiley's Pond. In the 1930s, this "pond" was a cow pasture owned by Major Hugh Smiley. Over time, ownership changed, and, when cows no longer grazed there, the brooks running through the field overflowed, the landscape was altered, a dam was built, and a pond was created. Today the pond is a natural habitat for a variety of wildlife, including turtles who emerge in the spring to lay their eggs and then return to the pond, as do their newly hatched young. It is also a magnet for marsh-loving birds.

Fortunately for all of us and for the native wildlife, the newest owners of this property, Jocelyn Gordon and Bruce Mallory, realized the importance of protecting this unique landscape. They agreed to sell the pond and some surrounding land, totaling 103,624 acres, to the MA Division of Fisheries & Wildlife and to place it under their conservancy.

Many thanks to Bruce and Jocelyn and to Peter Milanesi of MA F&W for making sure this property is protected. Thanks also to the tireless efforts of Ari Zorn, who founded Friends of Smiley's Pond and has worked to preserve it and to improve the habitat for the turtles. The plan is to remove, over a period of time, the invasives that have crowded out much of the native flora and fauna, and to restore Smiley's Pond. The accompanying photos can only begin to convey its beauty. ♦

GOING GREEN! We at the Egremont Land Trust continue to collect email addresses so that we can save paper (not to mention postage) when we send out announcements and notifications of events. Please send us your email address by clicking on the "contact" tab of our website (<http://egremontlandtrust.org>), or by contacting Marj directly (mwexler43@gmail.com).

♦ THANK YOU! ♦



KARNER BROOK

The Overlook at Karner Brook

In 2019, Terry Moore, owner of the Old Mill restaurant, brought to the ELT board an idea. He wanted to clean up the neglected land between the Old Mill and Mom's Café and create a serene walking path along the Karner Brook. He had already accomplished the first step: the owners of that strip of land, Linda and Robert Noonan, generously offered to donate it to ELT. Now, would ELT accept the donation and become its stewards? The project fit with our mission, and we enthusiastically accepted the challenge. Al Thorp would survey the property, Alexis Wreden and Robbie Fakelmann (of Workingdesign in South Egremont) would design the walk, Greenagers and Tom Ingersoll (of Ingersoll Land Care) would help on the ground, and Terry would manage the fundraising. And thus the Overlook at Karner Brook project came into being. (See below* for how to donate through ELT.)

The Karner Brook site is distinguished by changing surface textures, materials, and flora. When the project is complete, the Overlook at Karner Brook will offer a contemplative brookside respite where people can appreciate the hidden beauty of one of Egremont's historic and natural resources.

The walk will have two main sections: a raised landing overlooking the marble ledge, and a ramp and a series of steps and level areas attached to the Old Mill's existing retaining

walls. At various points, distinctive resting areas will invite contemplative musing, alone or with a friend, along the quiet brookside.

Standing near the Old Mill's back walls, one can appreciate the brook's meandering course. Existing remnants of stone foundations evoke images of the town's industrial past—for years, Karner Brook was the principal source of power for the town's factories and mills. The raised landing overlooking the marble ledge focuses on a beautiful marble outcropping shaped by the brook's constant ebb and flow. We'll experience the sound and movement of water as the seasons change. Here, natural occurrence and cultural history coalesce to give the overlook special meaning.

The Overlook at Karner Brook project will clean up a degraded riparian buffer between Karner Brook and Main Street. When the work starts, the brook's natural environment will be improved by the removal of trash and invasive species. Removing non-native and invasive species will encourage the health and growth of existing and newly planted native trees. Removing the lower limbs of various trees will allow more light to reach the new saplings and will enhance views. Native plants and ground covers will be installed in key areas. Healthy riparian vegetation, with the help of natural materials to control runoff, will stabilize the stream banks, reduce erosion, and improve water quality. The work of cleanup, planting, pruning, and construction is expected to take at least 5 years.

The Karner Brook watershed is designated as an ACEC site. Areas of Critical Environmental Concern in Massachusetts receive special recognition because of the quality, uniqueness, and significance of their natural and cultural resources. The Overlook at Karner Brook will become a valuable public asset in the center of South Egremont.

*To donate to the Karner Brook Walk, write a check to Egremont Land Trust, note "Karner Brook" in the memo line, and send to ELT, PO Box 132, South Egremont, MA 01258. Thank you! ♦

Berkshire Natural Resources Council



Meet one of our partners, the Berkshire Natural Resources Council (BNRC). Thanks to its donors and volunteers, BNRC protects and preserves the natural beauty and ecological integrity of the Berkshires for public benefit and enjoyment.

There are more than 50 BNRC nature reserves across the Berkshires that you can visit and enjoy, any day of the year, for free. Barrett Woods West, off Pumpkin Hollow Road in Egremont, is one of the newest.

BERKSHIRE
Natural Resources Council

BNRC played a leading role, along with the Egremont Land Trust, in permanently conserving much of the farmland on Baldwin Hill by placing it into the Massachusetts Agricultural Preservation Restriction program.

BNRC frequently collaborates with the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Conservation and Recreation on conservation projects, including projects in Egremont. BNRC also works with Greenagers on trail-building initiatives, and it has provided advice in efforts to preserve Smiley's Pond.

If you have questions about placing your own land in conservation, have questions about where and how you can get outside on BNRC lands across the Berkshires, would like to donate to the work that happens through BNRC, or are interested in being a BNRC volunteer, please visit bnrc.org, or contact Rich Montone at rmontone@bnrc.org. ♦

ELT Office

The Egremont Land Trust meets about once a month at April Hill, the home of Greenagers, at 62 Undermountain Road, or by Zoom when necessary. Call our president Peg Muskrat with any questions.

Egremont Land Trust Online: www.egremontlandtrust.org

Our calendar of events is always posted on our website, but as of now, none are scheduled. We do hope to have our Annual Presentation at French Park in September, as we did in 2021, and we expect to resume our bird, wildflower, and invasive plant walks as soon as the pandemic allows. Stay tuned! Send us your email address to receive announcements or a membership and donation form. We do not share membership information with anyone, no matter how worthy the cause.



PHOTOGRAPH BY: SELIGMAN

BALDWIN HILL ELM

PLEASE RENEW OR JOIN US!

THIS IS THE TIME FOR MEMBERS TO RENEW THEIR MEMBERSHIP IN ELT!

If you love Egremont but haven't yet joined ELT, please use the enclosed envelope to become part of our work. If you are already a member and don't need the envelope to renew, please pass it to a friend who might be interested. Not sure if you have renewed? Email information@egremontlandtrust.org and ask us!

Egremont Land Trust Online:
www.egremontlandtrust.org

Ursula Cliff, *member emerita*
Robin Goldberg
Wendy Linscott
Wendy McCain
Abigail Rogers-McKee
David Seligman
Susan Shapiro
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Peg Muskrat, *president*
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