

Nashoba Conservation Trust Winter 2019 News

Conservation Corner

Ken Hartlage

On a bitterly cold night in late December I opened my bedroom window and pointed my telescope toward the southern sky. I was 11 at the time and fascinated by the stars. I'm pretty sure that was all I talked about; well, that and the planets. To my good fortune, my parents rewarded my fascination with a telescope for Christmas. I didn't know my azimuth from my altitude back then, but who cared? I had a brand-new refractor telescope from Sears, and I was going to explore the stars come what may. So, when I opened the window that evening staring me in the face was the constellation Orion the Hunter, easily identified by the trademark three stars making up his belt.

But as I moved the scope down toward Orion's sword, something caught my eye, something I hadn't noticed before with the naked eye – a fuzzy, amorphous blob of a thing that surely wasn't a star. So, if it wasn't a star, and it wasn't a smear on my lens, it could be only one thing – a nebula, the place where stars are born. I was so excited I ran downstairs and told my parents that I had discovered a nebula. In Orion! With my new telescope! From Sears!

I subsequently learned from one of my astronomy books that my "discovery" was the Great Nebula in Orion. Nowadays it is known simply as the Orion Nebula, or in astronomy circles as M42. Hey, call it what you want, but as the Hubble telescope image here shows, there is no denying it is, indeed, "Great."

Nearly 50 years later, I recall that moment like it was yesterday, especially this time of year when Orion graces our skies from dusk until the wee hours. Winter is a great time to explore the stars, as well as our planets. Whether you venture outside, or just look out the window, take a moment to look up and make your own discoveries.



A Little Piece of Heaven - Mt. Lebanon Woods

Paul Peavey

On a cold, February afternoon in 1980, my wife and I were riding around with a realtor from Groton. It was the last piece of property we were going to look at that day. We were convinced that Pepperell was too far out in the 'boonies' to be considered. As we crested the hill top on Mt. Lebanon St. and looked out over the view to the East and I got a strange feeling. At 5:00 AM the next morning I was back on that hill watching a beautiful sunrise. I knew I was home.

During the two years it took us to get the property ready to build on, we got to know the land around our lot. The 55 acre Blood Farm on one side and the 50+ acre conservation parcel, at the time known as the Stromsted Property, just over the stone wall on the back side. After the house was built in 1982 we started to settle in and explore. We soon got to know the trails of the conservation area. We soon learned what a gift it was to live so close to conservation lands.



In the intervening 37 years my wife and I, along with our various dogs, have walked the trails countless times. There is always a surprise waiting for you on every walk. Coyotes, Foxes, and Deer in the woods or the surrounding fields. Otters, Great Blue Herons and Painted Turtles on the little pond. A pretty little stream flowing out of the pond and down through the woods. You can hear Fisher Cats screeching and Barred Owls hooting away at each other during any time at night. As I look out my back window, I can see people ice skating and playing hockey on the pond. After a new snow fall, we hurry out hoping to be first to cut a path with our snow shoes or skis.

We are truly blessed to live next to this little piece of heaven.

Visit the NCT website for a trail map and to learn more about the Mt. Lebanon Woods property.

Upcoming Events

Natural History walks with Pat Swain Rice

Pat Swain Rice is back again for the 2019 season. Tentative schedule for now will be April 14th, and the 28th. The timing of the initial walk is very dependent on progress of early plants. There will possibly be a walk on May 12th, but that being Mother's day, is up in the air. There will be a break until June and then we'll start again on June 2nd, June 16th, June 30th, July 14th, July 28th, and August 11th. Again, this a tentative schedule for now. It is quite possible these walks will be scheduled into the early fall. As we get closer to the actual dates, we will be publishing our normal e-blast notifications with specifics on timing and locations.



Breakfast with the Birds

Saturday, May 18th, 2019 - 6:30 AM at the Heald Street Orchard (East Gate).



This annual event is sponsored by the Town of Pepperell Conservation Commission and the Nashoba Conservation Trust. Coffee, juice, bagels, muffins, and donuts are provided. We will stroll through the Orchard and enjoy the spring migration of many bird species.

Re-start of activities on the Pollinator Garden project

Michael Veit, project manager

The Pollinator Meadow project will start up sometime in May. Although the work won't be as intensive this season as last year, we will need to continue to control undesirable plants by mowing, pulling, and selective herbicide application. In addition, we want to begin to clear and build access trails.



Call for Articles

As you can see from the articles in this edition, we have some excellent writing talent out there in our NCT member base. If you have anything you are interested in or passionate about, from a conservation perspective please use the link below to let us know. 100 – 300 words is about average. We are always looking for volunteers to lend a fresh perspective to our newsletters.

Newsletter@nashobatrust.org

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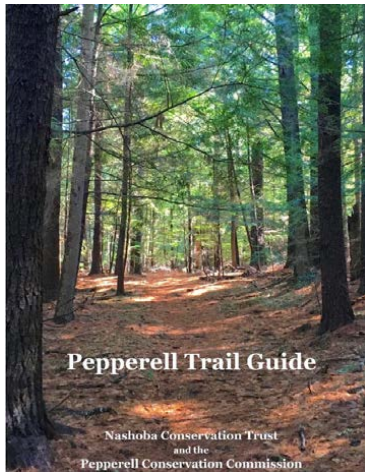
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The Pepperell Trail Guide describes sixteen conservation area

and almost 20 miles of trails, some of which pass through or alongside some of Pepperell's most stunning natural areas, including the Nashua and Nissitissit Rivers, Heald Pond and Gulf Brook Ravine. Visit the NCT website at www.nashobatrust.org to download a copy.



Support NCT with your donations

The NCT offers the following levels of membership:

Individual - \$35

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All memberships include subscription to the NCT Quarterly Newsletter. Visit the website at nashobatrust.org to donate or mail your check to:

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