The Heron

Fall / Winter 2026

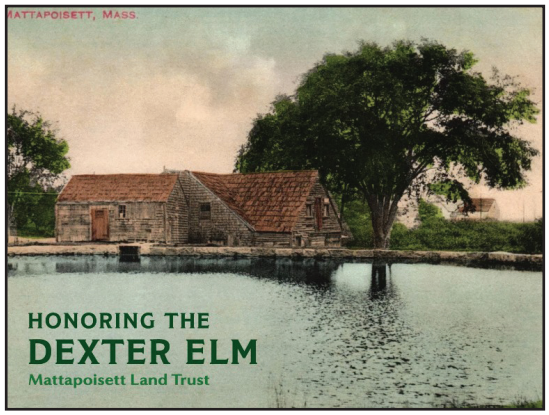
ISSUE No. 55

The Newsletter of the Mattapoisett Land Trust, Inc. • www.mattlandtrust.org • E-mail: info@mattlandtrust.org



MLT Helps Mattapoisett Celebrate the Nations' 250th Birthday

The Mattapoisett Land Trust was honored to kick off the town's 250th Celebration of our nation. A crowd of townspeople gathered on a beautiful Sunday afternoon in June at the Dexter Mill Preserve to witness the rededication of the Elm tree planted by the land trust in 2004 to honor the original Dexter Elm "Witness Tree" which stood near this location for centuries. The audience was treated to a ceremony that featured members of the town selectboard Frances-Feliz Kearns and Nicole Doyon Lynch, state representative Mark Sylvia, Connor Gaudet, curator at the Mattapoisett Museum and Bobbi Gaspar, chair of the town's 250th Committee. Board president Mike Huguenin kicked off the event with an animated description of the history of the Dexter Elm.



After the remarks, Huguenin unveiled the new interpretive sign honoring the original Dexter "Witness Tree." The sign was designed by Hannah Haines with information and photographs provided by MLT and the Mattapoisett Museum. Funding for the sign was provided by MLT and the town of Mattapoisett. The sign is located underneath the elm tree to the east of the Tub Mill Raceway. Visitors may park in the lot across from the DPW on Mendell Road to visit the tree anytime!



Speakers included Bobbi Gaspar, chair of the 250th Committee, seated from left: Frances-Feliz Kearns, selectboard, Connor Gaudet, curator Mattapoisett Museum, Mike Huguenin, MLT president, Nicole Doyon Lynch, selectboard, Mark Sylvia, state representative.

Up the road apiece, another event took place as part of the town's festivities. The Mattapoisett Woman's Club, spearheaded by member Mary O'Keefe, and the town of Mattapoisett's 250th Committee chairperson Bobbi Gaspar conceived of a Field of Flags to be located at MLT's Dunseith Gardens. The site was chosen for its prominent location on the corner of Rt. 6 and North Street and its easy access for visitors. Mattapoisett residents were invited to submit the names of loved ones they wished to be remembered during the July 4th celebration. Bobbi, with the help of other volunteers, wrote each submitted name on a ribbon and tied each ribbon to an American flag. MLT and the Woman's Club volunteers installed 400 American Flags in the days before the July 4th

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My Summer at MLT by Emily Furciniti

This past summer I had the opportunity to spend two days a week working with the Mattapoisett Land Trust as their Summer Land Steward through my internship with the Buzzards Bay Coalition. I had just graduated from Bridgewater State University in May, and this was my first step into a "big girl" job. From mid-June through the end of August, I split my time between the Coalition and MLT. I spent my days outside clearing and maintaining trails, properties, and beautiful open spaces in the town of Mattapoisett.

My primary responsibilities with the Land Trust were maintaining trails and properties through weed-whacking, mowing, and pruning, as well as putting up signs. Much of my time was spent in the Old Aucoot District and the Brandt Island Cove District among other properties and preserves. I worked to keep the properties accessible and enjoyable for the great community I got to know.

While the work was certainly demanding some days, it was exactly the kind of work I love to do. I have enjoyed being outdoors my entire life, but this summer I got the pleasure of doing it every day. Rather than sitting behind a desk, I was able to see the results of my work firsthand which was especially rewarding. Knowing that I was able to beautify, improve, and maintain these special properties gave me a strong sense of purpose.

The Old Aucoot District became one of my favorite places to work, especially Grace Pond and the Blueberry Patch. I spent countless hours at the blueberry patch early on in my internship, clearing the rows and around the bushes to allow people to pick the delicious blueberries more easily! Every property had something different to offer, and getting to know all these places as the summer went on was a wonderful experience. One of my favorite days was spent at the Brandt Island Cove District looking for Saltmarsh Sparrows. I learned a lot about the species and its habitat, and it was a reminder of how important it is to maintain and protect conservation lands and open spaces. Not only so the public can enjoy them, but so thousands of different species and types of vegetation have a place to call home.

I also had the opportunity to become involved in several community events. I volunteered and worked at Harbor Days in July, helped install flags for the Fourth of July "Field of Flags," assisted with setting up for the Great Community Picnic, and helped with the planting of three new Yellow Birch trees at Grace Pond. These experiences gave me the chance to see the personal side of the Land Trust. It became more than just a job; I felt embraced in a community of people that deeply cared about the land around them.



Emily and a wild friend

One of the most rewarding parts of the summer was meeting so many of the volunteers who generously dedicate their time to the Land Trust. Although I worked independently for the majority of the time, I had the opportunity to work alongside volunteers on several occasions. Seeing how much time and energy people were willing to dedicate to protecting these properties really solidified my belief in the work we do.

I owe a great deal to my supervisor, Sarah Storer. Sarah made every day with MLT fun, and we had many laughs throughout the summer. Having someone who was so willing to share her knowledge and compassion made hard days better. My experience would not have been nearly as meaningful without her.

Although my summer position has now ended, my connection with Mattapoisett Land Trust has not. My internship with the Buzzards Bay Coalition was extended for another six months, so I now primarily work with the Coalition while getting to spend two days a month with MLT.

Looking back on the summer, I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity. The experience confirmed that conservation work is where I want to be. I love working outside, caring for the land, learning about its wildlife and seeing the direct impact of the work I do.

In my short time with MLT, I felt that I became part of the community. I met so many wonderful people, worked in places that have deeper meaning to me now, and gained experiences that I will carry with me throughout my career. It was a great summer, and I am incredibly grateful to everyone at MLT who made it such a memorable one.

I give my thanks to Sarah Storer, Mike Huguenin, Paul "Ozzie" Osenkowski, Kathleen Urquhart, Don Cuddy, Arthur Damaskos, Molly Butler Whitney, Howie Richman, and all the others I met along the way, even briefly, who made this experience one I will never forget.



Save The Date for MLT's FREE Forest and Farm Family Day at Grace Pond

Saturday November 14th from 2:00 - 5:30

Featuring Pine Meadow Alpacas, a cozy fire, warm cider and s'mores! Plenty of parking! Grace Pond is located at the end of Bowman Road off of Aucoot Road in MLT's Old Aucoot District.

PINE MEADOW FARM
MATTAPOISETT, MA



Mike Huguenin unveils new interpretive sign at Dexter Mill

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weekend. The group created 4 squares of 100 flags each, within which there was a section of flags with the memorial ribbons. Once all the flags were installed, the group gathered together and were led in a moment of silence by Woman's Club member Katherine Gaudet to honor those memorialized. They then broke into a spirited rendition of "You're a Grand Old Flag!" MLT and the Woman's Club would like to extend a huge thank you to all the volunteers who worked to make the Field of Flags a success! The flags were on site at Dunseith through mid-July.



MLT Welcomes New Board Member Kathy Costello

By Don Cuddy

This fall the Land Trust is pleased to welcome our newest board member, Kathy Costello, whose name may already be familiar to many after spending more than a decade as principal assessor in Mattapoisett. Kathy is also currently a member of the town's Finance Committee.

Regular interaction with MLT president Mike Huguenin while in the assessor's office led to her initial connection with the MLT's mission and goals. Mike made several attempts to recruit Kathy during that time, but she always declined in order to avoid any possibility of a conflict of interest.



Kathy grew up in East Bridgewater and went to Northeastern University to become a medical lab tech. She and her husband Mike moved here thirty-five years ago from Newburyport for both the school system and the sailing opportunities afforded by Buzzard's Bay. Her eldest daughter started kindergarten just two days after they arrived.

After several years in the med tech field Kathy needed a change and she began working in the elementary school system in town while taking appraisal classes. This eventually led to a position with Vision Government Solutions, a reevaluation company. "I was traveling a lot when the kids were at an age where it wasn't good," she said. "So, when the assessor job came up in town I applied, and I got it. It was great."

Kathy later left her position with the town for the private sector but is now looking to retire at the end of the fiscal year. "I made the mistake of telling Mike," she said. "But now I'm really looking forward to joining the board and helping out."

Karen Perilli Eustis – designer of the MLT Heron newsletter

We'd like to introduce you to Karen Eustis, who took over in the Fall of 2025 from Charlie Radville as the designer of our "Heron" newsletter.



Karen began her career in the 1980's, having earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a minor in Commercial Art. She worked for an agency in Connecticut doing graphic design and layout of advertising. Karen put her career on hold to raise two children and by 1998, she started taking college courses and seminars to learn the new innovations in her profession. She volunteered for a local non-profit organization, The Granby Drummer Newspaper in Granby, CT. (1999 – 2020) working alongside the ad manager, and taking over after he retired.

Karen has worked as a photo editor for a photographer, created real estate ads, and does photo restorations and digital archiving. In 2004 she was commissioned by the Coast Guard Academy Alumni organization to create a large wall mural of images from all their yearbooks.

From 2007 - 2019, Karen taught courses at Central Connecticut State University in computer graphics. In 2009 she earned her Master's degree in Technology Management. All throughout, Karen has continued to freelance as a graphic designer. She helped create two books of local historical significance: Holcomb Farm Heritage Granby, CT and Postcards from Ogunquit, ME. Her first love is photography, and she also enjoys creating digital quilts where text is often incorporated into the finished product.

Karen lives in Mattapoisett with her husband Ralph, who is on the MLT Board of Directors. When asked why she volunteers her time for MLT, Karen replied "What draws me to non-profits is that they are filled with people who give back to their community. They have a love of something that they want to share for our time and generations to come. To me this is the essence of what makes life worth living. When societies strive to give more than themselves, it makes the world a better place. It's like we are earning the right to be stewards of this beautiful planet." Thank you, Karen!

Garden Groomers do more than weed

by Molly Butler Whitney, head Groomer

The groomers had a pleasant and productive season tending to the usual maintenance at MLT properties as well as adding more New England native plants, some of which were propagated over the winter by a few hardy horticulturists! We worked with the stewardship crew at the Blueberry patch in Old Aucoot District clearing out invasives among the bushes prior to them fruiting. We maintained Dunseith, Dexter Mill and Munro all summer for everyone to enjoy.

We also enjoyed assisting Don Cuddy with the Sunflower Project at Dunseith which brings so much joy to many. The students at Center School and their families get to watch the fruits of their labors all Summer as the flowers line the sidewalks of Dunseith Gardens. Thank you, Don!

We most recently planted native flowers at Grace Pond where we added some of the propagated columbine near the new path to the pond as well as hyssop to the existing flower patch on the northeast corner of the pond. Hopefully these efforts will bring more and more flowers and feed pollinators in the years to come. Tree Talk Natives in Rochester donated 5 yellow birch trees to us, three of which we planted near Grace Pond. The other two will be planted soon. We continue to add plants to Dunseith and Munro also. For those interested in helping with this essential mission, we would love to welcome you to our fun group next year. Email MLT if you are interested in joining us and we will notify you next Spring of our activities. Thank you so much to our existing groomers (including Squeak our honorary member) for all your help and support in 2026 and see you next Spring!



Munro Preserve with volunteer Squeak

Donate at the click of a button…

Why not eliminate any concerns about whether your membership is up-to-date? Set up a recurring annual contribution today! Scan this QR code to go directly to the donate page on our website! Of course, you can still make a one-time donation if you choose.

In addition to membership, the site can accept honor / memorial donations as well as donations for a special purpose, such as contributions to the Operations Support Endowment.



A crowd gathered on Saturday June 20 at Grace Pond in the Old Aucoot District to celebrate MLT's All Access Path and honor the memory of dedicated MLT volunteer Steve Bowman. Seated: Lori Bowman Serpa and Paul "Ozzie" Osenkowski. Standing: Charlie Duponte and Mike Huguenin

Linden White Awarded Blanche B. Perry Scholarship

The 2026 Blanche B. Perry Scholarship has been awarded to Linden White. The scholarship is awarded to a Mattapoisett senior planning to pursue environmental studies in a four-year university program.

Linden has begun studies in Ocean Engineering this fall at the University of New Hampshire. He says he has been drawn to this field "because of my personal experience with the bike path and the coastal environment of Mattapoisett." His ambition is to create systems that encourage sustainable interactions with coastal environments.



Linden White accepts scholarship from MLT Ed Committee member and ORR teacher Karen Browning

Linden has been active locally on Mattapoisett's Pedestrian Committee, Friends of the Rail Trail, and SRPEDD. Sponsored by the Mattapoisett American Legion Post, he represented the town at Boys State, a program to introduce high school leaders to local and state government and civic engagement. Through it all, Linden has been a passionate advocate for the coastal environment. In addition, for several years he has volunteered with Tour de Creme and the Mattapoisett Fourth of July Road Race. A lead baritone saxophone player in the Old Rochester Jazz Band, Linden received the Massachusetts Association for Jazz Education Individual Award for performance at the Cape Cod Coastal Jazz Festival.

MLT's Blanche B. Perry Scholarship is made available through the Edith Glick Shoolman Fund, a bequest left to provide support to children in the community.

The 2026-2027 Hunting Season is Here!

Deer hunting season in Mattapoisett opened on October 5 (archery) and continues through the end of the year depending on the firearm used. Note, there is a Winter deer season that begins January 1, 2027 and runs to the end of the month. Limited small game and waterfowl hunting continue into January and February 2027. Hunting activity in the woods will peak from November 30 to December 12 during shotgun season for deer. Migratory gamebird season opened September 1 with an early Canada goose season, other varieties of sea ducks and other species began October 1. Always check the Mass.gov website for the most up to date seasons and regulations.



Sport your own Blaze Orange MLT winter cap – contact manager@mattlandtrust.org to get yours today! $25 while supplies last…

Mattapoisett Land Trust properties are open to lawful hunting, in accordance with state regulations. Please be aware of and respect hunters who are legally using MLT lands. Dress for safety, using hats and/or vests of "Blaze Orange" to improve your visibility. And remember, hunters are generally less active during the middle of the day, and no hunting is allowed on Sundays.

MLT welcomes hunters using Land Trust properties but reminds them that all hunting stands must be removed no later than March 30. We hope hunters and non-hunters alike will enjoy MLT's woods, fields and marshes!



Munro Preserve Sunset ***Photo by Michelle Huggins***

Do you have a favorite MLT preserve or park that you visit often? If so, we would love to know what you observe there! Submit a photo or send us an email if you have seen something you found interesting or noteworthy - we want to know! We also may post it on social media or feature it in one of our newsletters. To submit a photo or tell of a sighting, send to ***info@mattlandtrust.org***

Learning Blooms With MLT Grant

by Diane Brown-Couture

Center and Old Hammondtown Schools used an MLT grant to get students involved in hands-on learning through the Sunflower Project. Spearheaded by Head of Science Ben Squire and second-grade teacher Amy Renna at Center School, second and third grade students participated in the project.



Back in the classroom with their sunflower.

Early morning on June 4, Dunseith Gardens came alive with the excited chatter of second-graders as they gathered for the annual planting of sunflower seedlings raised in their classrooms. Four beds of sunflowers were planted under the direction of Mattapoisett Land Trust member Don Cuddy, Center School teachers, and Mr. Squire.

The work began in the classroom with the planting of small grow kits for 100 sunflowers. Once the seedlings were ready, each class planted a bed and participated in other parts of the program. Mary Cabral, MLT Education Committee Chair and a former science teacher, led the students through a lesson on the life-cycle of the plant: sprout, adult plant, and finally, wilted plant. The children then wrapped up with a story walk, "Plant Secrets."

By mid-summer, results of the project were highly visible at the edges of Dunseith Gardens at the intersection of Route 6 and North Street where tall sunflowers swayed in the breeze, their giant flowerheads following the sun. "It's a real-life situation, not just textbooks," points out Mr. Squire. "The kids get pretty excited."

After the sunflowers have grown, there's follow-up in the classroom. Third graders diagram, label, and predict how many seeds the sunflower will have. Then the seeds are dissected in the lab. "These are the kinds of things that get the kids really excited," says Ms. Renna.

The program had its early beginnings during COVID, when in 2021, MLT members Ellen Flynn, Wendy Copps, and Mary Cabral and Old Hammondtown teacher Michelle Barry led students in planting seeds in an outdoor tent. Students then raised their seedlings at home. The current program was started by Don Cuddy in 2023 in solidarity with Ukraine. Today, the swaying sunflowers by Salty the Seahorse seem to be a sure sign of summer in Mattapoisett.

Honor Your Loved Ones

The following individuals or groups have chosen in the last six months to honor their loved ones through donations to the Mattapoisett Land Trust.

In memory of Ruth E. Anderson:
Robert Anderson
Whitinsville, MA

In memory of Steve Bowman & Sherry Haskell:
Cynthia Haskell
Falmouth, MA

In memory of Steven Bowman:
The Arnold Foundation
Mattapoisett, MA
Erika Warmbrunn & Peter Guernsey
Mattapoisett, MA

In memory of Gerry Dyer (1936-2005):
Janis Dyer
Concord, MA

In memory of George "Jock" Graham, Jr.:
Luana Josvold & Gary P. Johnson
Mattapoisett, MA

In honor of Gary Johnson's birthday:
Luana Josvold
Mattapoisett, MA
Marta & Tim Schnake
Williams Bay, WI

In memory of Faron Margeson:
Hector & Janet Margeson
Show Low, AZ

In memory of Robert Norton:
Mary & Gary Pforzheimer
Belmont, MA

In memory of Rosamond Pierce:
Ann Coggins
Venice, FL
Deborah Crook
Breckenridge, CO
Duponte Landscape Contractors
Mattapoisett, MA
Elizabeth Keith
Dartmouth, MA
Lynn Meier
Fredericksburg, VA
Phil & Pat Richardson
Venice, FL

In memory of James T. Rizza, Jr.:
Stephen Gowing
Canton, MA

Thank you for your generous contributions. Unless otherwise directed, memorial donations are invested in our Operations Support Endowment to further our mission of protecting the land and the environment of Mattapoisett for generations to come.

Seeking Members for the Land Stewardship Committee

MLT owns and protects almost 1000 acres in Mattapoisett. We protect meadows, saltmarshes, streams, wetlands and woods. We maintain miles of walking paths, parking lots, kiosks and other public amenities. We steward our lands for people and for nature, to ensure ecological health for future generations and to promote climate resiliency. It's a big job and we need the voices of our membership to help us as we make stewardship decisions for our preserves. Would you like to add YOUR voice to the Stewardship Committee? We meet 4 times a year and work on the land year-round. You can be on the committee even if you can't join us in the field!

If you are interested reach out to Sarah at ***manager@mattlandtrust.org*** and she will answer any questions you may have.



Thistle - photo by Marc Anderson

Kids' Corner

Look Up! The skies are busy!

Right now, millions of birds are flying over Mattapoisett in the fall migration — and most of them are doing it at night while you sleep.

Every fall, birds that spent the summer in Canada and northern New England head south for the winter. Eastern Massachusetts sits right along their route, so September and October are two of the best months of the year to go birding.

Species have different dates for their departure, however. Shorebirds go first, some as early as July. Warblers and thrushes pour through in September, mostly after dark, using the stars to steer. Hawks, on the other hand, travel by day. On a warm, sunny afternoon in mid-September, hundreds of broad-winged hawks can spiral together in a rising column called a "kettle." In late October and November, ducks and geese arrive from the far north, and sea ducks like **Long-tailed Duck** *(Clangula hyemalis)* bob offshore in large groups. You might spot the males in their white winter plumage if strong winds blow them close to shore.



Before they start their migration, birds eat constantly. A tiny **Blackpoll Warbler** *(Setophaga striata)* from northern Canada nearly doubles its weight on berries and insects, then flies out over the Atlantic Ocean without stopping - a journey that takes it to northern South America and can last three days.



Want to see it yourself?

- Go early. Most songbirds feed in the first two hours after sunrise.
- The MLT has two prime areas for viewing: the salt marsh and woodlands around Pine Island Pond and those in the Brandt Island Cove district. The Nasketucket Bay State Reservation is another interesting site.
- Take a field guide with you to help with identification. Both the Cornell Lab of Ornithology ***(https://www.allaboutbirds.org)*** and the Audubon Society ***(https://www.audubon.org)*** have websites and apps that will help with your identification, including identification by song.

We are lucky to live in a town that gets a changing variety of birds every fall. Take some time to enjoy it.

MLT Trail Maps … Have them your way!

Did you know MLT preserve trail maps are available right on your phone? You can download a FREE app, Avenza Maps, for smart- phones and tablets. Trail maps will display on your device with your location updated in real time as you explore the property. The app also allows users to record a GPS track, navigate to a destination, and measure distances.
If you prefer old school paper maps, printable maps can be download as PDF files on ***mattlandtrust.org/mlt-trail-maps/.***
If you have problems, email us at ***info@mattlandtrust.org.***
Also, find our trail maps on the user friendly app, ***AllTrails***.

Mattapoisett Land Trust, Inc.
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Permit #639



Please Note Membership Expiration Date Below

The Heron
Fall - Winter 2026

Calendar 2026 Fall and Winter Activities

Check MLT's website and social media for new activities and updates.

DATE	TIME	EVENT	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION
Sat. November 7	10 am-2 pm	Holiday Fair	MLT Merch for sale for the Holidays!	Carriage House, Mattapoisett Museum
Sat. November 14	2 pm-5:30 pm	Forest and Farm Family Day	Free Family fun with Pine Meadows Alpacas, s'mores, kids activities and music	Grace Pond parking lot Old Aucoot District
Fri. November 27	4 pm	Owl Prowl	Look and listen for owls	Grace Pond parking lot Old Aucoot District
Sun. December 6	10 am	Adventure Dog Walk	With Outhounds Adventure and Training Academy (no dog necessary)	Grace Pond parking lot Old Aucoot District

The Heron is published semi-annually by the Mattapoisett Land Trust.

The MLT, formed in 1974, is a non-profit, tax-exempt charitable organization incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Its purpose is to preserve open space for the enjoyment of current and future residents of Mattapoisett, as well as to educate the public about the sound use and stewardship of natural resources, and to work with other organizations having the same goals. Our membership consists of annual contributors – our primary source of revenue – and a volunteer Board of Directors: Mike Huguenin President, Kristen McCormack Vice President, Gary P. Johnson Treasurer, Marc Anderson Clerk, Matt Borges, Mary Cabral, Wendy Copps, Kathy Costello, Don Cuddy, Arthur Damaskos, Ralph Eustis, Jane Finnerty, Sandra Hering, Jenn Kaiser, Tim Ladd, George Mock III, Paul Osenkowski, Michael Taubenberger, Kathleen Urquhart. Olivia Thompson, ORR student representative.

The MLT is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization. All contributions are fully tax deductible.

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