

Highlights of PVLТ's Annual Meeting, August 2008.

This year the Passumpsic Valley Land Trust (PVLТ) annual meeting did not include the customary field trip. This was possibly a disappointment to some members but, in view of the wet summer, it was perhaps a good thing. The Board decided instead to give interested members an overview of the work of the organization over the past year, using a power point presentation to describe some of the features of the properties that are now owned in fee by PVLТ, or to which we hold easements. The meeting was held at the Fairbanks Museum on the evening of August 6, 2008.

A short business meeting was held to re-elect two board members, Kellie Merrill and Jay Abramson, and a summary of the finances of the organization was presented by treasurer, Len Gerardi. President Kellie Merrill delivered the annual report that covered the year's activities of the Land Trust. Here are some of the highlights of the report that indicate that, although PVLТ is a volunteer organization we have been able, through careful use of funds, to play a large part in conserving land in the Passumpsic river watershed.

In September 2007 Bill Bridge was contracted to work as a consultant on the Riparian Project supported by the Mitigation and Enhancement Fund grant. Through this grant and Bill's expertise we have purchased riparian land in Lyndon adjacent to Powers Park and continuing north along the riverbank behind the Main Street properties. Mowing on this land was suspended to allow a natural vegetation buffer to grow. We are pleased to have the cooperation of VAST members in encouraging responsible use of this area in the winter.

The Burdick family of Peacham generously donated land adjacent to a large parcel previously purchased by PVLТ and other organizations from the Merck holdings close to Keiser Pond in Danville. This donation enabled the expanded conservation of a beautiful, small Vermont pond.

The Dwyers of Barnet accepted our offer to buy 110 acres of forested river front land along the eastern shoreline of the Passumpsic, south of the confluence with the Water Andric. PVLТ Board members also met with landowners in the Water Andric corridor to discuss the formation of "The Friends of the Water Andric". This group will work with neighbors and PVLТ to encourage conservation activities in that watershed.

After a project last fall, funded by a WHIP grant from Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Caledonia Conservation District, to eradicate invasive species (Tartarian honeysuckle, Japanese Knotweed and Purple Loosestrife) from two of our properties, one in Lyndon and one in Burke, Mike Miller of Lyndon State College planted many native saplings on the former Davis property in Burke. The wet weather was a boon to this process and the small trees seem to be doing well. The trees were transplanted from within the watershed and obtained from a local landowner.

The Highfield Foundation gave PVLТ a generous grant that will be used next summer to fund plantings on the former Murphy property in Lyndon.

The virtual tour of the properties was interesting and many of the images, maps and information can be found on the PVLТ web site: www.pvlt.org . The properties that are owned in fee by PVLТ are conserved to allow a buffer zone to grow back along the river bank, to protect the watershed and are available for appropriate public recreational use such a swimming, fishing and canoeing. Please use them responsibly.

Isobel P. Swartz