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# FIELD NOTES 2016

Newsletter of the Great Barrington Land Conservancy

## Connecting for Conservation

Christine Ward



When 5 ½ year old Alyma won her own oak tree after completing the Celebrate Lake Mansfield ID Challenge with her mom, she was ecstatic. Her mom emailed us to say, *“I wanted to let you know how beyond thrilled Alyma is to have won the oak tree. She reads and talks to it, and wishes it goodnight. We will be planting it in its new home in a few weeks, until then, how much and how often should we water it? Tree care is all new to us, but we are happy to have this tree as a part of our family now! ~ Thanks, Molly (and Alyma, Mahali and Ali) ”*

Experiences that connect a child and her family with a new awareness and understanding of the natural world are essential to our mutual health and well-being.

Great Barrington Land Conservancy is intentionally striving to provide the connections that will fuel conservation and stewardship efforts across generations and will insure that changes for the future are aimed at securing the treasures we enjoy today.

Joy and discovery fuel this essential work aimed at guaranteeing that a future filled with the beauty and enjoyment of our lakes, rivers, and woodlands. Our efforts are ongoing and involve engaging all ages in the appreciation, stewardship, community planning, partnering and collaboration required to ensure that our special places are well cared for and secured for future generations.

Come be a part of this important work. Join our team as a volunteer, donor, and community advocate. It takes great energy, skill, and commitment to protect the richness of our land. Become a part of this joyful work in protecting the special places and vibrant experiences that we so cherish and enjoy.

# Meet the New River Walk Team

Rachel Fletcher



Left to right - Drew Wojtkowski, Mac Litishin, Elia Phillips Del Molino



Elia Phillips Del Molino

A few years ago, River Walk formed a partnership with our local Greenagers who now take responsibility for the daily management and maintenance of the site. In this win-win scenario, River Walk provides a teaching and training laboratory, and in turn, the teens lend their considerable energy and newly acquired skills to the work at hand.

Leading this operation is River Walk's new site manager, Greenagers Trails Coordinator Elia Phillips Del Molino. Elia has a B.Sc. from the University of New England and a certificate in GIS from the University of California. He is the current Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT) Program Manager and was a 2012 Berkshire Natural Resources Council (BNRC) Rice Fellow. Elia grew up hiking the forests and swimming the lakes of Berkshire County and now resides in Great Barrington.

Elia has been with River Walk just a few short months, but he's hit the ground running, applying his considerable GPS and conservation skills to make sure that we keep pace with any new plans for the redevelopment of Searles School, adjacent to River Walk's downstream section. The proposed landscape scheme and stormwater and wetlands mitigation plans for this ambitious hotel project will have a significant impact on the Housatonic River and River

Walk's fragile environment. Elia—indeed the entire River Walk team—are giving these proposals our most careful attention and review.

In addition to managing the site, Elia coordinates River Walk's workdays and educational programs and brings his skills and experience to mentoring River Walk's apprentices. Trevor Turner was back for a second year as the Greenagers Senior Apprentice. He is hardly a stranger to River Walk, having volunteered for more than ten years. Trevor attends Bard College at Simon's Rock, where his focus is market analysis and economics. He is skilled in maple sugaring, carpentry, skid loader operation and dairy farming. River Walk's newest apprentice is Mac Litishin. Mac has been with Greenagers for three years, attends Berkshire Community College with an emphasis in art and has special skills as a lumberjack.

Stay tuned to see how River Walk evolves with this new and exciting team now in place.

# GBLC Community Feast 2015

Our 2015 Community Feast was made possible by an enormous amount of community and family support. Our special thanks go to Ethan Culleton, our Community Feast host, for providing this riverside event in the village of Housatonic. What a wonderful opportunity to experience the possibilities of a riverside open space in the heart of an historic mill setting!

We are very grateful to Ethan's extended family who worked tirelessly to make this event possible and for the very generous support of our other lead donors: Berkshire Property Agents, Jane Iredale and Herrington's. The event featured the talent of many. Doug Trumbull captured the beauty of water with an enormous projection of a flowing river, a wonderful compliment to the Housatonic River flowing along the property edge. Music provided by Jim Toth Audio Systems filled the enormous space. A sumptuous feast was provided through the generosity of The Meat Market, Flour Bin Catering, Lila's Mountain Lamb, Rubiner's, Indian Line Farm, Bizen and Glass Bottom Brewery. Meadow grasses and flowers brought the natural world indoors through the donation and support of Ward's Nursery and Helia Land Design. We are blessed to live in such a generous community and truly appreciative for this assistance and funding.

Best of all, our Community Feast was enjoyed by many guests who attended to share the bounty and support the work of Great Barrington Land Conservancy. All funds raised have gone directly to support Great Barrington Land Conservancy, a 501(c)3 non-profit, dedicated to conservation efforts and the stewardship of our community's natural resources and special places.

## JOIN IN the Planning for Improvements at Lake Mansfield

After a decade of cleanup and restoration efforts by Lake Mansfield Alliance and the Lake Mansfield Improvement Task Force, the lake has become an increasingly popular year-round recreational retreat for town residents and visitors from near and far. In response to a task force recommendation, the Town voted in 2015 to approve a \$40K expenditure for a planning team to engage the community in creating a comprehensive plan for Lake Mansfield that will encompass Lake Mansfield Road, the beach and park area, and the larger recreation area spanning from Dehon Road to the boat launch. This Lake Mansfield Improvements Plan will identify improvement options, outline the environmental and permitting requirements related to each improvement, recommend a phasing schedule for implementation, and develop cost estimates for design, permitting, and construction. As a part of this process, the task force is holding a series of public forums to gain input from the community. The first meeting was held on Wednesday, November 4th. **Upcoming forums are planned for January 13th and March 2nd 2016. More details are available at [www.lakemansfield.org](http://www.lakemansfield.org) and [www.townofgb.org](http://www.townofgb.org).**



*Flag Rock Farm, host of the 2015 Community Feast*



# Run for the Hills is a "Family" Affair

Kateri Kosek

The Great Barrington Land Conservancy's annual Run for the Hills, held at Bard-Simon's Rock on October 4, turned out a crowd of 127 runners, hailing from near and far in the tri-state area. While the majority of these were competing in the 5K, a couple of dozen hardy runners tackled the second running the newer 10K route. Also in its second year, the 1K Kids' Fun Run added an exuberant group of young runners to the ranks.

All proceeds of this annual event benefit the Great Barrington Land Conservancy's many projects, including: Lake Mansfield Alliance, Pfeiffer Arboretum, which provides the only public access to Long Pond, and the Housatonic River Walk in downtown Great Barrington.

John Cambi of Great Barrington entered not only himself, but five of his family members into the race. "I just like to run," he said. His son, Luis Tamayo Cambi, 15, ran a respectable 5K in 32 minutes despite it being his first race ever. "My dad just wanted us all to run and it was fun" He said. Luis's 8-year-old brother John ran the 1K. Running the 5K with Luis were his cousin, his

mother Sonia, and his 70-year-old grandfather Luis Cambi, native of Ecuador. Sonia Cambi echoed her son's sentiments. "We're not runners! This is the first time for us. It's nice! It's a good experience." They all turned to cheer as John Cambi, the only one of them to run the 10K, approached the finish line. They may not be runners, but even Luis Cambi Sr. put in a respectable showing, running the 5K in 44 minutes, for an overall rank of 67 out of 101. Run for the Hills is certainly a family-oriented event!

Julie Repass of West Hartford, Conn. sat relaxing with her niece Margaret after an impressive run, both of them clocking in at 31:23 for the 5K. "She really cooked up that hill," said Julie. I was so amazed at her ability—she's only 12, but she's really set her mind to having the endurance and picking up speed."



# Conservation Efforts

GBLC's conservation and stewardship committee constantly has its ears and eyes open for new opportunities for land conservation and community trails. We are actively working with a number of land owners on potential new trails and trail extensions in Great Barrington and Housatonic. We will share details as the opportunities solidify. We also continue to communicate with land owners, especially in the Green River and Monument Valley watersheds, about possible future land protection projects. While these efforts are often slow and quiet in the making, they can bear fruit with important conservation outcomes. One project of note, is our ongoing support of David Inglis's farm preservation and conservation goals for his Mahaiwe Farm project along the banks of the Green River. Our volunteer board and generous community members have been instrumental in raising funds and providing guidance for David's conservation effort. We look forward to keeping you posted as projects develop.

She also remarked on how lovely the scenery was with the rolling hills and farms. "Annie!" they cheered as another relative appeared by the finish line. "See? I told you she wouldn't be last!" shouted Margaret.

Lester Blumenthal and son Max also ran together. Max, only ten years old, came in 18th overall in the 5K, running it in under 25 minutes. Great Barrington selectman Sean Stanton ran the 5K with his baby daughter Lola in a stroller, which she didn't mind one bit. "She slept the whole time," he said. It was his second time doing the event, and Lola's first time. Stanton hopes it will be a yearly thing, adding that he is a great believer in the GB Land Conservancy. They came in 2nd in Sean's age bracket, and 24th overall. "I don't run as regularly as I would like to, so I was surprised with how well we did."

Max Orozco was just as optimistic about his 2nd place in the 1K Kids' Fun Run, completing it in eight minutes: "I almost was in front of them!" His mother, Adriana Orozco, was the female winner of the 10K.

While most race participants were familiar with the organization behind the event, they came equally for the running. Teams that came out included four runners from the Berkshire Community College Cross Country Team. According to team captain Kim Grahm, the College has endeavored to create a healthier environment for students, instituting a smoke-free campus, for instance, and offering yoga and other classes. "What a great way for us all to be involved. And everyone from the team placed!" she said excitedly after the race, including Nate Bruno who came in 2nd in the 5K with a time of 19:47.

A few participants, including Thomas Norton, ran attached not to children, but to their dogs. "They always love it," Norton said, "they were just a little mad that they were on a leash." He added, "That was my excuse to run slow. I blame my dogs."

The next Run for the Hills 1K/5K/10K is scheduled for Sun., Oct 2, 2016; more info at [www.runforthehillsgb.org](http://www.runforthehillsgb.org)

# Meet Kristin Sanzone

## *GBLC's Administrative Assistant*

Carol Noble

Welcome Kristin Sanzone, our new Administrative Assistant!, Kristine is working 10 hours a month with GBLC's President and the River Walk Legacy Campaign and in her brief tenure, she is already having an impact. I recently sat down with Kristin and had a wonderful time getting to know her.

**6 CN: How did you first learn about the GBLC?**

KS: I did a fieldwork internship with River Walk about 10 years ago when I was getting my Masters from Antioch in Environmental Studies. It was a great opportunity, giving me a chance to develop an environmental education program and coordinating the interns.

Even though I had grown up in Great Barrington I did not know about River Walk until I got involved with it as a graduate student. It is a gem that deserves a higher profile. My River Walk fieldwork internship gave me a chance to improve River Walk's visibility by creating and facilitating experiential environmental education programs for all ages.

**CN: What got you involved in environmental work?**

KS: It took me a bit of time to find my passion. I earned my undergraduate degree in Psychology at UMASS, Dartmouth.

I then returned to Great Barrington, not sure of what I wanted to do. I realized that I had always loved being outdoors, having spent lots of time as a kid exploring the woods. So, I enrolled at BCC and got an Associates Degree in Environmental Science and Biology. It is a wonderful little school which gave me a great foundation to pursue my Masters. While at BCC I was a Rice Fellow for Berkshire Natural Resources Council (BNRC) working in land stewardship and monitoring their conservation restrictions.

**CN: What interested you about this opportunity?**

KS: As the mother of two, Lily, 9 and Jack, 6, it is a perfect fit. It gives me an opportunity to do work that is important in our local community and has enough flexibility in terms of scheduling for me to be involved with my children and their school.

**CN: GBLC is very fortunate to have someone with your passion and amazing skill-set. What do you like to do in your spare time?**

KS: I love to take hikes with my children and my dog, Rosebud. I am very involved with my children's school, The New Marlborough Central School. It is a wonderful little school, grades K-4. One thing that is unique is the multi-grade classrooms that give older children the opportunity to be leaders and models for the younger ones. I have been the PTA president and Vice President for a total of four years.

CN: I've enjoyed getting to know you and am very happy that you are a part of GBLC's effort to make a difference to our local landscape.



*Kristin Sanzone, left, with Carol Noble*

Support your Land Conservancy  
**sign up to volunteer!**



Volunteer Sharon Siter at the Pfeiffer arboretum.

Trails at the Pfeiffer Arboretum are ready for some major work. Bog bridging Sections need to be extended or replaced. The Boardwalk and Viewing station must be rebuilt. GBLC is partnering with Greenagers to accomplish these much needed improvements. We will be developing a plan, seeking the special permits required and applying for grants. Matching funds and dedicated volunteers will ensure that we succeed. Sharon Siter will tell you that volunteering with GBLC is fun and rewarding. Sharon joins in work days, helps post posters, walks in Run for the Hills and creates slideshows for our GB Trails beginning birding series. You can Volunteer too just email us [info@greatbarringtonlandconservancy.org](mailto:info@greatbarringtonlandconservancy.org). Share your skills with GBLC!

# GBLC Membership Form

Enclosed is my tax-deductible membership contribution to GBLC to support efforts to preserve and enhance the community's natural resources and special places.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student    | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Guardian    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Individual | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 Steward     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Family     | <input type="checkbox"/> \$1000 Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Supporter  | <input type="checkbox"/> \$_____ Other     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Conserver |  |

**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: GBLC**

**In addition to my membership, I would also like to support my favorite projects:**

\$\_\_\_\_\_ *Mahaiwe Harvest Farm Project*

\$\_\_\_\_\_ *Conservancy Endowment Fund*

\$\_\_\_\_\_ *Pfeiffer Arboretum Trail*

\$\_\_\_\_\_ *Housatonic River Walk*

\$\_\_\_\_\_ *Lake Mansfield Alliance*

\$\_\_\_\_\_ *Great Barrington Trails and Greenway*

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## SAVE THE DATE!

### GBLC 2016 Events

April 23 River Walk Earth Day Clean Up

April 30 Lake Mansfield Clean Up

June 4 National Trails Day

July 23 A.T. Community Day

October 2 Run for the Hills 5 and 10K

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# GREAT BARRINGTON LAND CONSERVANCY

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**GBLC is dedicated to conservation and stewardship of our community's natural resources and special places.**

We work to protect open space for ecological, recreational, agricultural, and scenic purposes.

We organize community volunteers on behalf of land conservation and stewardship.

We partner with local, regional, and national land trust organizations.

We support sustainable agriculture as a means of preserving our farming heritage.

We support neighborhood initiatives that align with our mission.

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*GreatBarringtonLandConservancy.org*

Graphic Design by Bill Allen  
GBLC logo courtesy of Michael McCurdy

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