








The NRT Report Volume 23, Spring 2026
NRT Report

Natural Resources Trust of Mansfield

UPCOMING EVENTS

-  **54th NRT Annual Meeting**,
April 9th, 7:30 PM,
Mansfield Historical Society
150 Rumford Ave.
-  **Great Mansfield Cleanup**
April 25th
[Click here for details](#)
-  **Family Fun Night**
July 7th
6-9 PM North Main Street
-  **Hazardous Waste Day**
[Click here for details](#)
-  **Check our [Facebook](#) page**
for upcoming trail openings
and nature walks.

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MEMBERSHIP

Your membership is important to us. It allows us to continue our mission to increase
Please join or renew.
Thank You



President's Message — Deborah Snyder

The NRT has had another successful year. We participated in the Town of Mansfield's 250th parade, with our own President Emeritus Lou Andrews serving as grand marshal.

We created large blow-up maps of the town's trails for our float (thank you to Board Member John Southard for the idea). Tod Snyder and Colin Cauldwell affixed the maps and our banners to Board Member Lisa Dye's truck and drove it in the parade.

Due to an unanticipated antique car malfunction, they wound up having to tow the car carrying Mansfield's oldest (103 years old) resident through the parade route as well! Quite the experience.



Grand Marshal Lou Andrews with his wife Mary

We continue to offer annual college scholarships to Mansfield residents ([See article on page 5](#)) who have shown commitment to the environment. In addition, a subcommittee has been formed to look into giving an annual award to a Mansfield resident who has benefitted conservation efforts or the environment in some impactful way. Thank you to Outreach Officer Mary Kate Flynn for this excellent idea.

Looking forward to another great year!



Tod and Colin with parade truck

Our land steward Matt Griffin made great headway in creating walking trails on our new Sheehan property across from the Animal Shelter. A formal spring dedication of the Sheehan property is planned, and the date will be announced soon. If you haven't been on the trails yet, go check them out! Thanks to Colin's involvement with Blue Wave and Lou's re-negotiations of an existing land easement ([See article on page 2](#)) we remain in excellent financial shape.

The NRT board voted to establish an Ad-Hoc committee to come up with plans to make trails friendlier for older and handicapped people.

The committee will initially focus on the Dorothy York and WWII Veterans' areas, then the Wading River and Sheehan properties.

Members include Lou Andrews, Mary Kate Flynn, and Matt Griffin.

Sheehan Property Dedication to be Scheduled this Spring

In 2023, the NRT acquired 23 acres from the Sheehan family. Over the past year, Boy Scout Troop 17, under the leadership of scout leader and NRT Stewardship Director Matt Griffin, did a great job clearing the 0.81 mile trail.

Plans are to mark the trails and install signs this spring. Watch for an e-mail and check our [Facebook](#) page for the date of the formal opening, dedication and guided walk.

The property is easily accessible from the Mansfield Animal Shelter road, off Fruit Street.



Sheehan's Trail



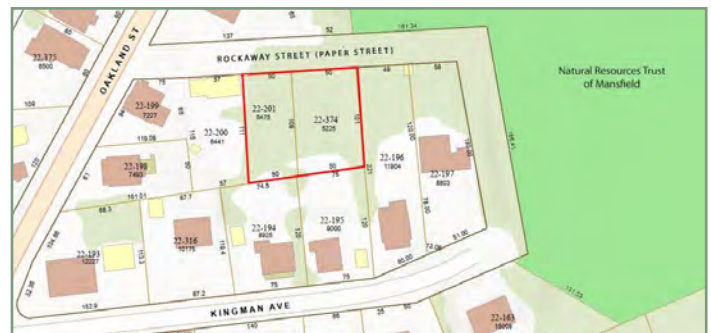
Entrance sign rendering

Land Donation to Habitat for Humanity

The NRT board of directors voted to donate land to [Old Colony Habitat for Humanity](#) for them to build a home for a low or moderate income household.

The properties, outlined in red on the map, were donated to the NRT as a part of a larger acquisition. The land is on a paper street and does not meet our standards for protection as open space/conservation.

A final vote at the upcoming annual meeting is needed to formalize the donation.



New Easement Agreement — Lou Andrews

The NRT negotiated an easement extension agreement on land owned by the NRT that is adjacent to the Corporal Hardy Conservations Area.

In 2001, the NRT gave a 25 year easement across land that is over a culvert that feeds a retention area owned by the NRT. The land has no conservation use to the NRT (see map). The company to which we gave the original easement owned land on both sides of our property and needed the easement to access it. We received \$35,000 for the easement.

The original agreement was with VAM Realty Trust. They sold the property a few years ago to Atlantic Oliver II Francis Avenue, LLC.

The easement extension agreement is for two 25 year periods. We will receive a lump sum of \$60,000 for the first period, starting in August. For the second 25 year period the NRT will received \$60,000, plus an adjustment for inflation over the previous 25 years.

The funds will go a long way towards improving our trails.



Wading River Wildlife Protection Area Project Update — Lou Andrews

Last year the NRT received funding from a [consent decree](#) regarding the Commonwealth of Massachusetts v. a local company, for a Clean Water Act violation. The company was required to make payments for violations within the Taunton River watershed. The NRT made a proposal for a project on our land off McKenzi Lane, which was accepted by the Attorney General's office. The Taunton River Watershed Alliance also received funding.

We completed the first two phases of the project to restore the land by removing invasive plants and planting a variety of trees. Thanks to Colin Caldwell and Tod Snyder for helping coordinate the project and watering the trees. Watering required filling 55 gallon drums from a well on my property, trucking to the site, and either syphoning or carrying buckets of water to each tree.

The project is scheduled for completion this year, with the planting of bushes to attract bees and birds, marking a new trail, and adding signage. Check your e-mail or the NRT [Facebook](#) page for the grand opening in late summer or early fall.



Outreach Report

— *Mary Kate Flynn, Outreach Director*

In 2025, the NRT participated in several community events aimed at educating the community about the mission and efforts of the NRT to acquire and maintain public space in town for all to enjoy. In 2026, we look forward to finding additional new outlets to share our mission, provide opportunities for public engagement with our organization and properties, and partner with other community organizations when interests align.

In May, the NRT joined with other community and civic organizations to celebrate Mansfield's Sestercentennial by driving an NRT themed truck boasting giant maps of our properties and trail systems in the 250th Parade.

In July, the NRT participated in the Mansfield Family Fun Night. Our table seemed to never be without a visitor, with residents asking about who we are and walking away with trail maps and other information. This year, we were able to showcase the GRIT Freedom Chair purchased by the NRT and gifted to the Town of Mansfield for use by nonambulatory residents to enjoy the trail system. Many residents were excited to learn that the chair was available for lending through the Mansfield Public Library.

In October, the NRT participated in the Mansfield New Residents Night at the library. Members were able to connect with individuals and families new to Mansfield and share information about our organization.

Looking toward the future, we plan to offer an NRT community recognition award to a resident or organization whose work or volunteerism furthers environmental ideals. We will also continue to explore ways to make our trails more accessible to all residents, provide more guided walks for the public through our trails, and invite residents to enjoy our beautiful trails and properties.

Acquisitions Update

— *Tod Snyder, Acquisitions Director*

In 2025 the NRT is acquired a six-acre parcel off Smith Road. This acquisition abuts our current holdings in the Plymouth Street area and would increase the total NRT holdings in that area to 164 contiguous acres. The total amount of land held by the NRT in Mansfield is now 536 acres, plus an additional 468 acres of conservation restrictions.

The Acquisitions Committee is always looking for additional land to acquire for open space.

As a reminder to future potential donors, a donation not only preserves the land as conservation in perpetuity, but can also result in a charity tax deduction.



NRT ANNUAL MEETING

April 9th, 7:30 PM

Mansfield Historical Society
150 Rumford Avenue

Presentation of "Some Serious Trash Talking"
by Keep Mansfield Beautiful founder Neil Rhein

THE PUBLIC IS INVITED
Refreshments

Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee recommends the following slate of officers and directors for FY 2027.

Officers - For 1 year term expiring in March 2027

*Tod Snyder, President; Colin Caudwell, Vice President;
Michelle White, Secretary; Lou Andrews, Treasurer*

Board of Directors - For 3 year term expiring in March 2029

Lisa Dye, Matt Griffin, Deborah Snyder, Dana Hourigan

Board of Directors - Open 1 year term ending in March 2027

Inigo, Havaloyes

Respectively submitted, Nominating Committee

Colin Caudwell, Sharon Freidman, Michele White

Stewardship Update — Matt Griffin, Stewardship Director

By the close of 2025, most of our properties were well-maintained and in solid shape.

During the summer of 2025 the [World War II Memorial Trail](#) was completely cleared of fallen trees and the overgrown section of the red trail along the Back Bay Brook was widened to allow easy walking.

On the [Sheehan Property](#) a trail was laid out and a 1-mile-long figure 8 trail was cleared by the Boy Scouts of Troop 17 on the property in the fall of 2025. Trail markers and entrance signage still remain to be installed this spring. A couple of trees have fallen during the winter on the new trail that will be our first task this year.

We have been approached by an Eagle Scout Candidate looking for a service project and he was presented with a list of possible projects that would benefit us and he selected completing the remaining Sheehan Property tasks.

Annual Meeting Presentation - Neil Rhein

Join Us For Some Serious Trash Talking!

Are you confused about what goes in your trash bin and what goes in your recycling bin? If so, you're not alone!

Attend [Keep Massachusetts Beautiful's](#) Talking Trash & Recycling presentation on (insert date and time) to learn ways to reduce the amount of trash you generate, improve your recycling habits, and make simple changes to lead a more sustainable lifestyle. You'll learn what happens to your trash and recyclables here in Mansfield and get an overview of [MassDEP's innovative RecycleSmartMA](#) program. This program is delivered in 45 minutes, followed by a question-and-answer session.



Neil is the founder and executive director of [Keep Massachusetts Beautiful](#). Neil organized the first Great Mansfield Cleanup in 2008 and later launched [Keep Mansfield Beautiful](#). In 2014, Neil founded Keep Massachusetts Beautiful to help bring successful litter abatement and beautification programs to towns and cities across Massachusetts. Previously, Neil served on the Mansfield Select Board from 2017 to 2023.

The presentation starts at 7:30 PM, following by the annual meeting.

"To acquire and preserve natural resources for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations"

The project will also include the construction of some Leopold Benches that can be deployed along trails on our various properties. He is working on obtaining approval from the Boy Scout Council and will start once approved.

The board approved the purchase of a brush mower which will allow for faster and more frequent clearing of our trails. This will be particularly useful on the new Sheehan property and the World War II Memorial Trail.

2026 looks to be an exciting year with the formal opening of the Sheehan Trails and the construction of some Leopold benches along some trails. We will communicate about opportunities in the future to help with some great projects to help enhance the trail experience across our properties throughout this year.



Leopold bench



I N M E M O R I A M



In December, we lost our long time director Steve Pyne, after a long battle with cancer.

Steve joined the NRT in 2012.

Steve helped with the field maintenance and haying of the Scott/Goyea farm for over 40 years. With his wife Fran, he maintained the garden in front of the Great Woods Oak Street entrance. They kept the area clear of trash, and invasive species along the stone walls.

In 2017, Steve and Fran received a certificate of appreciation from the conservation commission for their efforts.



Commission chair Mike Healy present award to the Pynes

We will miss his infectious smile and positive outlook.

[Link to his obituary](#)



Environmental Scholarship

The winner of the 2025 NRT Leonard and Marydee Flynn Environmental Scholarship is Mansfield High School senior Andrew Znoj.



Andrew is a four-year member of the MHS environmental club and has served as its co-president for two years. He loves to spread the word about helping the environment, and his outreach succeeded in increasing the club's membership by twenty students. He organized campus cleanups for both the middle and high schools.

Andrew will be attending the University of New England in Maine. He plans on majoring in applied exercise science with the ultimate goal of becoming a physical therapist. One of the reasons he chose that school was because of its strong focus on sustainability.

"I'm excited to continue being involved in environmental efforts while pursuing a career that helps people live healthier lives," he said.

We are happy to be able to help Andrew on his academic journey and wish him the best of luck.

GRIT Wheelchairs Available for Use

GRIT Freedom Chair and the GRIT Freedom Chair Junior (wheelchairs which will allow residents with ambulatory restrictions to access our trails are available at the Mansfield Library "Library of Things.")



GRIT Freedom Chair

The wheelchairs were purchased by the NRT and Mansfield's Non-Profit Gift Fund.

Mansfield Conservation History



Great Woods spotlighted

Louis Andrews, left, chairman of the Great Woods Study Committee, and Frederick Rys, chairman of the Mansfield Conservation Commission, are shown in front of video displays of the Great Woods during Tuesday night's Mansfield town meeting.

Mansfield News April 13, 1978

1978 - Town approves funding to start acquisition of the Taylor's Hill section of the Great Woods.