

May 2023

# HALIFAX NEWS

## ANOTHER COOL SPRING?

– Laurel A Copeland, Halifax, Vermont

The nor'easter of mid-March had lingering effects as April started out cool, with the deep snow thawing slowly and raising a mist among the trees. The meltwater roiled up the streams, turning them brown and imparting a mesmerizing rushing and roaring sound to a walk along them. Looking at the forecast early in April, I actually worried more that the month might be too dry. In fact, the State of Vermont issued a Red Flag Warning, meaning the risk of wild fires was very high. Remember -- **Red Flag Warning = No Fires!!**

Well, it got pretty wet by month's end. But I snapped a few moody pictures, shown below. Hardly seems like this was only a month ago!



## INVASIVE PLANTS ON THE LAND – JAPANESE KNOTWEED

Invasive Japanese Knotweed is not native to Vermont. Yet it is spreading quickly along our streams, rivers, and roadsides. As it grows, knotweed—sometimes erroneously called “bamboo”—forms dense mats of roots and stems, killing off native vegetation. It degrades trout spawning habitat and clogs drainage ditches. Knotweed can crack pavement and damage retaining walls and building foundations.

Please help manage Japanese knotweed! Knotweed was brought to America as an ornamental plant for gardens. It’s pretty. But it is bad.

- Type: perennial.
- Height: over 10 feet tall.
- Stems: red; hollow. Stems grow 3 to 4 inches per day in summer!
- Leaves: dark green, spade- or heart-shaped, up to 6 inches long, squared base, pointed tip.
- Flowers: sprays of tiny white flowers sprouting all along the stem.
- Reproduction: new plants form from pieces of rhizomes and stems.
- Status: On the [Vermont Noxious Weed Quarantine List](#)



© Elaine Haug

Flowers (above): USDA. Young shoots (left): VtInvasives.org, UVM and State of Vermont.



5452604



*Japanese knotweed along a Maine road*

Photo: Town of Groton Massachusetts Invasive Species Committee; 2017.

### What to Do:

- Mow or cut down knotweed 3-4 times every year to discourage spread.
- Dig out its root system. Get all of it! Each little piece can generate a new plant.
- Lay wire mesh (1/2-inch by 1/2-inch openings) on cleared patches; new knotweed will grow through the little holes and eventually girdle itself.
- Bag all plants and roots and let them rot.
- Revisit all sites annually for 5 years.

Was this information helpful? Need help? Email [LaurelACopeland@gmail.com](mailto:LaurelACopeland@gmail.com) or [LesleyPollitt@gmail.com](mailto:LesleyPollitt@gmail.com) of the Halifax Conservation Commission or call Laurel at (802) 368-2439

### More information:

<https://vtinvasives.org/news-events/news/a-new-way-to-treat-knotweed>  
<https://vtinvasives.org/invasive/knotweed-japanese>

**And don't put any Japanese Barberry bushes in your garden: it's a prohibited species throughout New England.**

**Helpful information on 6 invasives in Halifax—Barberry, Asiatic Bittersweet, Buckthorn, Japanese Knotweed, Phragmites, and Poison Parsnip—is online here:** <https://czresearch.com/conservation/>





**Halifax (Vermont) Sanctuary or Johnson Memorial Nature Preserve** was gifted to Trust for Wildlife (TFW) in 1982, through its founder Marshal T Case by Pat Johnson in memory of her husband, Norris Johnson. Mrs. Johnson’s gift included a small summer cabin with 115 acres of woodlands and open fields. Mrs. Johnson stipulated that TFW continue to manage the property for wildlife as well as selective forest management. TFW has honored this with a management approach that compares selective cutting (logging) every 20 years, leaving half the land untouched as “old growth” forest. This enables students and researchers to see how the “management” of our forests and fields affects the flora and fauna on the property both negatively and positively.

Marshal’s dream was to establish a nature preserve and education center. The cabin has turned into a mini-nature center complete with aquaria, natural history posters, a small resource library,

and all the tools necessary for a nature sanctuary.

Times change, leadership changes, but there has been a consistency in the quality of summer science/nature education free for all young residents of the Deerfield Valley. 2023 marks our 41<sup>st</sup> anniversary. Camp focuses on exploring woods, fields, and waterways, and learning about native plants and animals, their food chains and habitats. Field studies introduce important tools to each student, including nets, microscopes, binoculars, and field identification books. The sanctuary is located on Woodard Hill Road in Halifax.



## SUMMER NATURE CAMP 2023

Join Wildlife Biologist & founder of Trust for Wildlife, Marshal T Case, Naturalist and Artist, Joanne Case, and Teacher and Naturalist, Merritt Youmell, for **four half-days** of Nature Adventures at the Halifax Sanctuary.

**When:** July 10-13, 2023 / 9:00AM-NOON

**Where:** Halifax Nature Preserve, 704 Woodard Hill Road, Halifax, VT

**Who:** Ages 6-15. **Limit:** 14 campers.

**What:** We will explore nature on the 115-acre sanctuary. Nature adventures will focus on exploring woods, fields, and waterways, and examining native plants and animals.

All children of the Deerfield Valley are invited to attend at NO COST.

The camp is sponsored by Trust For Wildlife, Inc ([trustforwildlife.org](http://trustforwildlife.org)) and offered free of charge.

To enroll your child please contact Joanne Case at [tfwvermont@gmail.com](mailto:tfwvermont@gmail.com) or call 802-442-2999.



What are those slimy softballs in spring’s shallow pools?

← These are wood frog egg masses. Wood frogs and spotted salamanders are two of the five vertebrate animals that breed in temporary pools in woodlands. Too old for Summer Nature Camp but still want to play in the muck? Check out the Vernal Pool Monitoring Project organized by Vermont Center for Ecostudies, <https://vtecostudies.org/projects/forests/vernal-pool-conservation/vermont-vernal-pool-monitoring-project/>. Or email me, and I’ll bring you along to a few of our vernal pools in Halifax. – [LaurelACopeland@gmail.com](mailto:LaurelACopeland@gmail.com)



## TOWN NEWS

### YOGA – TUESDAYS AT 10:00 AM IN WEST HALIFAX

Seth Geeslin is offering a free 10-week series of yoga sessions on Tuesdays throughout May and June. Come May 2<sup>nd</sup> for the first session! Starts at 10:00 a.m. in the Halifax Community Hall, 20 Brook Road, West Halifax, Vermont. Dress comfortably.

### COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO BEAUTIFY THE WEST HALIFAX CEMETERY.

Contact Gary Rand [Grand221@gmail.com](mailto:Grand221@gmail.com) or 860-558-3565 for details

### ITEMS NEEDED FOR THE FIREMEN’S AUCTION! Call (802) 368-7809

### SENIOR MEAL IN HALIFAX – FRIDAY, MAY 19, AT 12:00 NOON

Friday May 19 is the next meal at the Halifax Community Hall, 20. Brook Road, West Halifax, Vermont. We serve at noon. Menu: sloppy joe on a bun, baked potato, vegetable, rolls, and dessert. All are welcome. Seniors 60 or older \$3.00, under 60 \$4.00. A call to Joan is appreciated 802-368-7733. – *Joan Courser*

### JOAN’S SIGHTINGS.

I am not having as many birds as I usually do for this time of year...but some new spring ones are arriving. Two Rose-breasted Grosbeaks!!! The Goldfinch males are bright, bright yellow, and some females are here, too. Way, way too many Blue Jays: we counted 17!!! A few Sparrows, Titmice, lots of Red-winged Blackbirds. The Hummingbirds are due the 5th of May, the date they have arrived each year. Laura & Lewis saw a Bobcat in Halifax. The turkeys have stopped coming to our place—they can find food now. I loved having them visit each day. Lots of Brown-headed Blackbirds, and many, many Mourning Doves are here. – *Joan Courser*

**Elsewhere Around Town.** April brings the songbirds! Mornings are filled with robins singing and juncos trilling. The Eastern Phoebes return, shrieking. Nuthatches flash around the trees muttering “meep, meep, meep.” Sapsuckers, hairy woodpeckers, and pileated woodpeckers are making a racket, competing with the chickadees, ravens, and barred owls. It’s a wonderful thing. And in May, bird-banding on Hogback Mountain will resume. This project is great. If you are curious, read about it online and contact the ornithologist, Eric Slayton, at [eric.slayton@me.com](mailto:eric.slayton@me.com); <https://www.hogbackvt.org/bird-banding-project>; <https://czresearch.com/newsletter/HalifaxNewsletter2022-Jun.pdf>.

Other animals around here are mourning cloak butterflies, red squirrels, grey squirrels, chipmunks, turkeys, and wood frogs.



Photos: A barred owl watched me closely as I passed under it on Brook Road. I tried to speak with some goats and their wise draft horse one day. They seemed skeptical.



– *Laurel Copeland*



## FIRE DEPARTMENT NEWS.

On May 1, seven men and one truck responded to an alarm sounding on Collins Road, found to be caused by work on the plumbing system; there was no fire.

**Burn Permits are Required – call before you burn. Dennis (802) 368-7809 or Malcolm (802) 368-2484**

Emergency services — call 911 // New Suicide & Crisis Lifeline — call 988

Veterans Crisis line — call 988 then press 1, or text 838255

**Monthly Fire Department 50/50 raffle: Buy tickets (\$10 each) from any fireman**



## CALENDAR

**May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30:** Free 10-week Tuesday **Yoga Sessions** at the Community Hall in West Halifax 10-11 am.

**May 6, 2023: Green-Up Day!** Saturday morning followed by **Community Conversation Part 2** from 12:30-2:30 pm in the school multipurpose room. Bring a snack to share if you like!

**May 13, 2023: PANCAKE BREAKFAST** on Saturday morning serving from 7:30 to 11:30 A.M. Adults \$9.00, children under 12 \$5.00, Preschool free. Pancakes—blueberry, chocolate chip, and plain; sausage, hash brown casserole, eggs cooked as you want them, and Eggs Benedict. Juice and coffee or tea.

**May 13, 2023: Halifax Historical Society Art Exhibit** featuring Kyra Markham, Actress, Artist, Muralist. At the Halifax Historical Society Museum, 9:00-2:00.

**May 27, 2023: Plant Swap** at Community Hall, 9:00-1:00.

**May 27, 2023: Open House** at Historical Society, with coffee, cookies, and other goodies. 9:00-2:00.

**June 3, 2023** (rain date: June 4): West Halifax Cemetery **Restoration Work Party** with VOCA. We need you to help clean and restore the grounds! Meet at the Hall at 9:00 am. Contact: Gary Rand [Grand221@gmail.com](mailto:Grand221@gmail.com) or 860-558-3565.

**July 1, 2023: Firemen's Auction** begins 10:00am in West Halifax.

**July 15, 2023: Annual Meeting** of the Halifax Historical Society, 1:00-2:00, followed by a **presentation** on the Life of Kyra Markham. Halifax Community Hall, 20 Brook Rd, West Halifax.

**August 5, 2023: Clam Bake!** Serving 1-3pm at the Old Cody Farm on Old County Road in Halifax. Tickets must be purchased in advance; available from any fireman.

## SORROW

We are sad to note the passing of Madeline Hager Burnett at the age of 96 (July 2, 1926-April 13, 2023). She married Clayton A. Burnett of West Halifax, VT, in 1946; he predeceased her in 2018. There will be a memorial lunch and fellowship time for the family in the Halifax Community Hall on May 20. Burial in Halifax Cemetery. She will be missed.



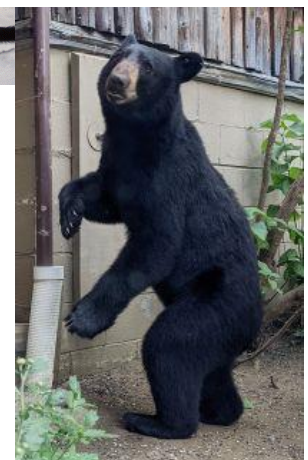
## WILDLIFE CONNECTIVITY PROJECT

**Have you seen any of these 5 animals crossing a road?** As part of a wildlife connectivity project, I am interested in where five wide-ranging mammals cross the road. If you see one on or crossing a road, or if you see tracks that suggest one crossed the road, let me know ([LaurelACopeland@gmail.com](mailto:LaurelACopeland@gmail.com), 802-368-2439). Include **date, time, & location**. The 5 animals are **Moose, River Otter, Fisher, Bobcat, and Black Bear**.

(Photo at right by E J Hull)



Kyra Markham's Mural of the Community Hall being built graces the Hall's interior





Newsletter  
P O Box 27  
West Halifax VT 05358



We noticed.



Spring bulbs crowd a garden on Josh Road

# Halifax News

MAY 2023

Getting this newsletter by US mail?  
Check address label for your  
subscription expiration date.  
Cost is \$7 to cover postage for your  
paper copy. **Send check made out to  
“Newsletter” to  
P O Box 27  
West Halifax VT 05358.**

**NEWSLETTER STORIES** - Send your  
Halifax story to Laurel  
[LaurelACopeland@gmail.com](mailto:LaurelACopeland@gmail.com) or  
Joan [JWCinVt@gmail.com](mailto:JWCinVt@gmail.com)  
(PO Box 27, 05358).