



Land Trust News

The Newsletter of the Westborough Community Land Trust

Spring/Summer 2005

A Letter from the President

I am delighted to report that the Westborough Community Land Trust has grown to more than 300 members who share the goal of conserving open space for the enjoyment of present and future generations. To date, WCLT has preserved more than 118 acres in Westborough. Through its lively committees, WCLT negotiates for new parcels to be protected and then creates and maintains trails as responsible stewards of that land. This newsletter outlines some of WCLT's recent activities.

The Stewardship Committee, for example, is engaging in grasslands restoration. With the help of local Boy Scouts, they are reclaiming a meadow to provide a varied habitat and an open vista near the Bowman Conservation area. Throughout the year, these Stewardship volunteers take to the woods to clear trails to keep them accessible for the public. One of these trails along the shores of Mill Pond will be dedicated in memory of long-time conservationist John Malley.

The Westborough Community Land Trust is also committed to educating residents of all ages about the wonders of nature. On "Westborough Walks," usually the first Sunday of the month, local and regional experts share their knowledge in such areas as tracking, geology, wildflowers, and birding. The WCLT "Nature Notes" newspaper column provides fascinating insights on local flora and fauna.

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Trail Named for John F. Malley

The Westborough Community Land Trust and the Westborough Conservation Commission have voted to name a section of the Charm Bracelet Trail along the shore of Mill Pond in memory of John F. Malley. The Malley Trail is about 1.25 miles long, winding from the boat ramp at Mill Road to the access to the pump house near Andrews Street, where the Malley family lives.

John made protecting Westborough's wetlands and open space his mission for his 19-year tenure on the Westborough Conservation Commission. His tenacious efforts to educate developers and the public about the importance of preserving local natural resources have made a significant, lasting contribution. One of the first certified vernal pools in Westborough was documented by John and is located near the Malley Trail.

John, who earned master's degrees in electrical engineering and business administration from Worcester Polytechnic Institute, worked for the New England Electric Systems (NEES/National Grid) for 27 years. He eventually became vice president of the subsidiary New England Power Company. He was instrumental in creating a plan with the Conservation Law Foundation that reduced power plant emissions and increased NEES commitment to renewable energy and load conservation.

On March 2, 2005 John Malley lost a gallant battle for life, after living with ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) for 11 years. The Westborough Community Land Trust is proud to honor his courage, spirit of public service, and dedication to conservation with the trail that bears his name.

will we be able to get a photo of John?

WCLT's Nature Notes Bears Fruit

"WCLT's Annie Reid and Garry Kessler have inspired us to journal in our own backyard."

So proclaimed a bulletin board this spring at Gibbons School, where seventh-grade science students used WCLT's "Nature Notes" column as part of their study of local wild plants. The column has appeared biweekly in *The Westborough News* for the past year. It is written by Annie Reid and illustrated with nature photographs by Garry Kessler, both WCLT members.

Emphasizing "place-based learning" and journal-writing, teacher and WCLT member Allison Gergely had her students pair up to create approximately 60 larger-than-life

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Lady slipper

journal pages in the form of hand-drawn posters. Each information-packed poster featured a wild plant in Westborough.

Allison explains that students come to her class knowing all about South American poison-dart frogs from TV nature programs but very little about what lives and grows right in Westborough.

“I’d like to get their hands back in the dirt,” she says. She hopes her students will become conservation-minded. She likes to quote 19th-century scientist Louis Pasteur, “The role of the infinitely small in nature is infinitely great.”

Allison’s inspiration also comes from her work toward a master’s

degree in ecological teaching and learning in the Audubon-Lesley program at Lesley University in Cambridge. She expects to complete her degree in December.

How has the study of local plants changed the way the seventh-graders think? As one student said, “Now plants aren’t just things growing from the ground.” This spring and summer many students plan to look for the plants they researched during the winter.

What made an impression on these students? Invasive plants captured their interest. They also liked finding out novel ways that local plants get nourishment and spread seeds. The plants’ interrelationships with other plants, animals, and the environment caught their interest. The students also became more aware of Westborough’s trails.

The WCLT 2004 President’s Award was presented to Annie Reid and Garry Kessler for their outstanding contributions of talent and commitment to the vitality and growth of the Westborough Community Land Trust through their “Nature Notes” column.

Past “Nature Notes” columns are posted on the WCLT web site:
www.westboroughlandtrust.org/NatureNotes.htm



Do we know who this is??

Earth Day 2005

Despite gray skies, hardy volunteers of all ages turned out to help “green up” Westborough for the annual Earth Day clean-up, sponsored by the Westborough Community Land Trust. WCLT volunteers were able this year to work all over town at six different locations. They filled more than 50 yellow trash bags, thanks to help from the Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts and many dedicated citizens. Bottles, cans, paper, plastic cups, and even an occasional tire and bicycle were found by the wayside and brought out of the woods. Our community has never looked so bright and clean. Thanks also to the Westborough DPW for providing trash bags and picking them up. A true team effort!



Join us! I would like help protect Westborough Open Space by joining WCLT.

- \$35 Individual
- \$50 Family
- \$100 Sustainer
- \$5250 Benefactor
- Other \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

E-mail _____ Telephone _____

- My employer matching gift form is enclosed.
- I am interested in making a gift of land or real estate. Please contact me.

Make checks payable to the Westborough Community Land Trust
PO Box 838, Westborough, MA 01581

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Westborough Community Land Trust

The *Land Trust News* is published by the Westborough Community Land Trust. Westborough Community Land Trust is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization working to preserve open space in Westborough.

WCLT is a member of: Land Trust Alliance, Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition

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This is the south end looking north in early January 2005 from the Long Drive entrance. All of the brush you see has been or will be cleared. The large trees in the background form the distant perimeter.

WCLT Stewards Make a Meadow

A former pasture on the Charm Bracelet Trail between Bowman Street and Long Lane is being rescued from forest succession. Coordinating the clearing of the three acres is WCLT Director Mark Fox, who learned about managing grasslands at a Putnam Conservation Institute session.

“Human beings have been clearing open areas here for thousands of years, and wildlife has adapted to this habitat. It is important to reclaim the meadows for small mammals, birds, and insects, particularly pollinators,” says Mark. “At least 10 acres are usually recommended for a wildlife habitat, but we felt that this meadow is important because it offers a visual contrast to the 95 percent of our trails that cross forested areas.”

Mass Audubon meadow expert Jeffery Collins walked the land and volunteered to make a quick plant inventory. He pointed out the boundaries and indicated the presence of invasive alien plants, such as multiflora rose and Japanese honeysuckle. “He also recommended that we remove the staghorn sumac, red maple, and white pines and pile the brush around the borders in certain places to provide habitat,” says Mark.

The stewards opted to clear the brush with hand tools, rather than burn off the overgrowth or clear the land down to the top soil with heavy equipment. In the spring “Make a Meadow” work parties, including a Cub Scout pack led by Andy Koenisberg, began reclaiming the meadow from the center out. Adults chopped the brush while the boys stacked it along the perimeter.

“This meadow will require yearly maintenance,” notes Mark, “but it can be done if volunteers come out with loppers and take out the woody growth, and the Cub Scout pack continues to help by adopting this section of the trail.”



Redtail Hawk - could you write a caption about him?



Calendar of Upcoming WCLT Events

For meeting places and details about these events, check the WCLT web site at www.westboroughlandtrust.org

Monday, June 13 • 7:30 – 9 pm

WCLT Annual Meeting

See a slide presentation by Jill Phelps Kern, author of Hiking the SuAsCo Watershed. St. Luke's Parish Hall.

Monday, June 20 • 7 pm

Midsummer's Eve Meander

Take a short walk explore the beautiful woods around Gilmore Pond. Contact: Don Burn at 508-366-6458

Thursday, July 14 • 6 – 8 pm

Edible Plants Walk

Learn about edible plants from wild foods expert Russ Cohen. Meet at the rear of St. Luke's Cemetery. Reservations needed. Contact Leslie Leslie: at lmleslie@charter.net

Wednesday, July 20 • 7:15 pm

Fantasy Big Band Concert

Attend a concert at the Willows to benefit WCLT.

Sunday, August 14 • 1:30 pm

Walk on the Wild Side

Take a family nature walk from Little Chauncy Pond to Cedar Hill in the summer woods and meadows with Garry Kessler and Scott Shumway. Contact: gkessler@aol.com.

Sunday, September 11 • 1:30 pm

Dedication of the John Malley Trail

Walk the John Malley trail along the south shore of Mill Pond, beginning at the Mill Road boat ramp. Contact: Kris Allen at krisallen@charter.net.

Saturday, September 17 • 6 – 8 am

Fall Migratory Bird Walk

Look for land and water birds at the Headwaters Conservation Area with Mark Lynch. Limited to 15. Contact: Kris Allen at krisallen@charter.net.

Saturday, September 17 • 9 am

OAR River Cleanup

Help clean up the Assabet River and surrounding land. Contact: Don Burn at burn@acm.org.

Saturday, October 15 • 10 am – 3 pm

Fall Foliage Celebration – Mill Pond School

Families are invited to join a hikers' hunt at the Headwaters Conservation Area. Details to come at www.westboroughlandtrust.org.

Sunday, November 6 • 1:30 pm

Archaeology Walk in Cedar Swamp

Find out about Native Americans of Westborough's past with a local archaeologist. Contact: Kris Allen at krisallen@charter.net

President's Letter

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WCLT also works as a partner with Town committees and other environmental organizations to lead town-wide Earth Day clean-ups and to help protect our shared natural resources. Since Westborough is the headwaters of both the Sudbury and Assabet Rivers, a major WCLT goal is to protect local wetlands and aquifers. Toward this end, WCLT volunteers and local Girl Scouts joined Southborough neighbors to stencil storm drains that flow directly into the Sudbury and Assabet Rivers. Armed with stencils proclaiming "Do not Dump — Drains to River," teams marked the storm drains identified by the DPW as located in the most vulnerable areas.

We invite all residents to join our activities and to share in the protection and enjoyment of Westborough's natural beauty.

Kris Allen, President

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