



Land Trust News

The newsletter of the Westborough Community Land Trust

Summer/Fall 2007

A Decade of Accomplishment



As part of Gilmore Pond's restoration, Troop 4 Boy Scouts work with Civic Club and WCLT members to clear invasive species.

WCLT's ten years of accomplishments

have revolved around land preservation and stewardship, and building public awareness of their importance.

Land Preservation: Working with private citizens and developers, to date WCLT has acquired 128 acres of open space. Some areas are links of the greenbelt, the 28+ mile Charm Bracelet. Others are pristine woodlands with meadows, ponds, and forests for natural resource and habitat protection.

WCLT lands include the Orchard Swamp Reservation and the Upper Jackstraw Brook Reservation, with a number of smaller parcels and easements throughout the town.

Stewardship: The all-volunteer WCLT now stewards most of the 40 miles of Charm Bracelet main and side trails and more than 300 acres, including

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Tufts University Cummings School Honored

Green fields sweep down to meet a backdrop of rolling hills, creating a vista that invigorates hikers. The scenic trail north of Route 30 welcomes local runners and walkers as they circle the open fields and enter the woods. Their frolicking dogs keep pace. On the crest of the hill, kite flyers launch colorful gliders in autumn, and laughing children pile onto sleds in winter.



The agricultural field at Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine is among the most popular

Farm supervisor Jim Phillips, left, and Associate Dean of Administration and Finance Joe McManus, right, discuss this year's hay crop in a field overlooking the trail at Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine.

Charm Bracelet trails. For its contribution in preserving its open fields and providing public access, Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine received the 2007 Eleanor and Jack Pepper Award from the Westborough Community Land Trust (WCLT). Joseph McManus, Westborough resident and Associate Dean of Administration and Finance, accepted the award at the 2007 WCLT annual meeting.

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WCLT Celebrates Ten Years

"A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

– Margaret Mead, anthropologist

Ten years ago the founders of the Westborough Community Land Trust (WCLT) set out not to change the world, but to preserve a piece of it forever.

Alarmed by the lack of public support for land preservation, in 1997 about 20 concerned citizens met to form a land trust that could move quickly and partner with other public and private stakeholders to preserve the rapidly diminishing open land in Westborough. Its mission: To safeguard land to meet the environmental, recreational, agricultural, and scenic needs of Westborough and to preserve open space and the natural character of the land.

The founders ranged from Westborough natives to newcomers but shared a commitment to balance development with land preservation. They incorporated the Westborough Community Land Trust in 1997 as a nonprofit organization able to receive gifts of land, purchase open space, and secure conservation rights. In the

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In recent years, conflicting agricultural and public uses jeopardized public access to this open space. The land is not a public park, nor is recreation its main purpose. Its hay, alfalfa, and corn crops are the primary food source for the farm animals used in teaching and for the large animals treated in the hospital. Public use of the property led to increasing problems. Dogs were fighting, biting, and running into Route 30. People were having near accidents with the farm machinery.

“It was a challenging issue for us,” says Joe. “We operate 200 acres of farm with dairy cows, beef, sheep, goats, and swine and grow all the food for the animals. The school must provide wholesome feed under USDA requirements. With dog waste in the field, lack of control of people’s animals, and concern for public safety, our farm department wanted to close the hay field.”

Concerned WCLT stewards, including Don Burn and Al Sanborn, approached Joe to explore ways of keeping the field open as part of the Charm Bracelet. Enforceable regulations that promote responsible use and a new land management plan proved the key.

“After many meetings with the Land Trust, we got to yes,” Joe explains. “We decided that that with some compromise Tufts could continue to open the trail to benefit the community.”

In 2005 Tufts fenced the hayfields and introduced a Responsible Use Policy to reduce public health and safety problems. Tufts mows the trail through November and has added a gravel parking area to prevent parking on the trail, crops, and tree roots.

Says Don Burn, “Tufts officials worked hard with us to find ways to better manage the property for agricultural and public use. Their willingness to keep the trail open has made a great contribution to the community.”



Anniversary Photo Exhibition and Contest

Submit your best nature photos to our anniversary photo exhibition and contest, “Westborough’s Natural Treasures.” Photos must be taken in Westborough between October 2005 - October 2007 and received by 4 pm October 15, 2007. Watch for details. Winning photos will be exhibited November 10 –18 at the Westborough Public Library, with winners announced at the opening reception.

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

- \$35 Individual \$50 Family \$100 Sustainer \$250 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, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization working to preserve open space in Westborough.

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Founding Director Tim Buckalew works on a trail, as WCLT volunteers have done throughout the organization's ten years.

decade since, WCLT has permanently preserved more than 128 acres of land essential for healthy water, viable wildlife habitat, and natural beauty.

In its first year, WCLT received the \$1,000 Allen Morgan Award from the national Land Trust Alliance for its outstanding membership drive. In its second year, WCLT negotiated a management agreement for what became the Headwaters Conservation Area and with the aid of

town volunteers created and repaired trails to open the forest and lakeshore for more, but wiser use.

Since 2000, WCLT has continued to preserve and protect open space by partnering with the Open Space Preservation Committee to create the Charm Bracelet trail network that will connect fields, woods, wetlands, and ponds around the town in a continuous trail system. In 2002 WCLT received a \$45,000 grant from the Department of Environmental Management to acquire easements over private property to close gaps in the Charm Bracelet and link it with neighboring towns. In recent years, WCLT has strengthened partnerships with state agencies and land organizations in neighboring Southborough, Grafton, and Northborough to share expertise and link trails across borders.

Today, with nearly 400 members, WCLT is working to ensure the fulfillment of the original vision and to protect and acquire open space for the benefit of our natural and human communities.



WCLT Accomplishments

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With the Department of Public Works, WCLT teams labeled storm drains to remind people not to dump anything down them. (l-r): Kris Allen, Miles Henderson, Steve Hilton, Craig and Lydia Stedman, Barbara Muise, Elaine Moore (plus Scott Henderson, photographer).

the 100-acre Headwaters Conservation Area (HCA). WCLT stewards create, repair, and map trails; tackle invasive overgrowth; and build bog bridges. Stewards have overseen more than 20 Eagle Scout projects, sharing their expertise in trail construction and outdoor skills.

Land management is a major focus for WCLT. Off Long Drive, stewards reclaimed a meadow as a habitat for small mammals, pollinators, and birds. A butterfly garden was created at HCA. Intensive surveys were done of property conditions and the alien invasive plants on open space parcels.

With Westborough Civic Club as a sponsor, WCLT has begun a multi-year restoration of Gilmore Pond to create a park-like woodland. A formal management plan directs the monitoring of water quality, opening pond views, and clearing new trails.

Public Awareness: To underscore the benefits of land preservation, WCLT has annually offered nature walks on open space properties and talks by such experts as forager Russ Cohen and birder Mark Lynch. The "Nature Notes" column in the Westborough News, WCLT website, Scout badge assistance, and the Nature-thon/Adventure Quest encourage residents to appreciate nature locally.

As a school partner, WCLT trained Trail



For Earth Day 2007, more than 60 spirited volunteers, from preschoolers to seniors, answered WCLT's call to clear litter from Westborough's parks and public ways. Their efforts recalled WCLT's first public event, the 1997 Earth Day Celebration at Sandra Pond. This year's volunteers included: (l-r) Allison Hall, Ian Johnson, Liam Johnson, and Maureen Johnson.

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Calendar of Upcoming WCLT Events

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

Saturday, June 16 • 1:30 - 3 pm
(rain date June 17)

WCLT Nature-thon Passport Trail

Trail with clues and forest secrets.
Children ages 2 – 7. Walkup Robinson Reservation.

Saturday, June 16 – Saturday, July 7
WCLT Anniversary Adventure Quest

Follow clues to historical and natural sites around town. Prize drawing. Enter at <http://www.westboroughlandtrust.org>.
Contact: Garry Kessler
Gkessler001@aol.com

Sunday, July 8 • 1:30 pm
Farm Frolic — Nourse Farm

Hike state's 10th oldest family farm with Jon Nourse.
Contact: jwnourse@aol.com

Wednesday, July 18 • 6:45 pm
Westwood Swing Band Concert

Concert at The Willows to benefit WCLT.

Sunday, August 12 • 1:30 pm
Botany at Bowman

Explore Bowman Conservation Area with Barbara Muise.
Contact: bmuise2@aol.com



Sunday, September 9 • 1:30 pm
Paddling on Mill Pond

Kayak or canoe with biologist Scott Shumway.
Contact: sshumway@wheatonma.edu

Sunday, October 14 • 1:30 pm
Lake Chauncy History Hike

Hike and hear about lake's exotic past.
Contact: Don Burn burn@windvvr.com

November 10 – 18
10th Anniversary WCLT Photo Exhibition

Opening Reception: Saturday, November 10 • 2 – 5 PM

View Westborough through nature photography. Westborough Library.

WCLT Accomplishments

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Teachers for Mill Pond School, worked with the WHS Environmental Club, and received a 2005 Cultural Council grant for a Nature Reflections program for seventh graders. The WCLT Scholarship, established in 2006, rewards a high school senior for the best essay on a local environmental issue.

To educate on water source protection, WCLT cooperated with the Department of Public Works to mark more than 200 storm drains with pollution warnings. Finally, for 10 years, the annual Earth Day Litter Clean-up has engaged residents of all ages to improve our shared environment.

With the help of its dedicated volunteers, WCLT looks forward to building on this decade of accomplishment.



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