



Land Trust News

The newsletter of the Westborough Community Land Trust

2008

Green Interest Grows at WCLT

Breezes are blowing green in Massachusetts these days, and interest in sustainability is growing among Westborough Community Land Trust (WCLT) members.

What is sustainability? One short answer: It is managing resources so that we do not negatively impact them for future generations.

“As the only environmental organization in town,” comments WCLT president Garry Kessler, “we can bring topical environmental issues and a focus on sustainability down to a level that’s personal for Westborough residents.

These issues include energy consumption, water conservation, land preservation, invasive plants, and changes in the environment because of temperature. We can look for things that town residents can do in their everyday lives to make a difference.”

“Sustainability is a mindset,” says Scott Shumway, chair of WCLT’s recently formed Public Outreach Committee.

Scott notes that the committee’s goals include finding “ways of promoting green initiatives in support of the widely held belief among WCLT members that we should conduct our lives in a more sustainable way and actively work to decrease our footprint on the Earth.”

Kris Allen, chair of the Education Committee, points out that WCLT’s mission — to safeguard land to meet the environmental, recreational, agricultural, and scenic needs of Westborough and to

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Rain Barrels for Water Conservation

Rain comes swooshing off the roof, gushing out a gutter and is gone. It can run off lawns, driveways and walks, carrying sand, oil, fertilizers or pollutants into a storm drain, and from there, into our drinking water supply. Or it can be collected in a rain barrel and used to water gardens, wash cars, and fill wading pools.

Harvested rainwater does not cause flooding or erosion but is absorbed more slowly into the ground. It can even reduce homeowners’ water bills, considering that average homeowners put 40 percent of their water to outdoor use in the summer.

This spring Westborough Community Land Trust (WCLT) partnered with the Westborough Civic Club and the Department of Public Works to promote the sale and use of 60-gallon polyethylene rain barrels. Coordinated by WCLT director Doug Mosher, the program offered rain barrels at cost from two manufacturers, SkyJuice New England and the Great American Rain Barrel Company. The program was supported in part by a grant from the state’s Department of Environmental Protection.

Doug reports that the sale was a great success, with orders for 139 rain barrels.

“This program allows residents to purchase a rain barrel at a reasonable price. Otherwise they might be priced out of doing what they feel is right because of the high retail price.”



WCLT director Doug Mosher with a rain barrel display

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Environmental educator Larry Keating presented his red-tailed hawk, Saber, at his live raptor program, “Raptors’ Struggle to Survive,” a WCLT-sponsored Earth Day event. He also showed a barred owl, an American kestrel, a gray screech owl, and a European barn owl, and pointed out that Westborough’s Headwaters Conservation Area provides living space for birds of prey.



2008 WCLT Town Clean-up



Hearty volunteers, such as site coordinator Mimi Cronin, helped rid the town of more than 40 bags of litter during the WCLT Town-wide Clean-up.

More than 40 bags of trash disappeared from Westborough's roadsides, thanks to the public-spirited volunteers who participated in WCLT's 2008 Town-wide Clean-up. Bruce Tretter, this year's clean-up coordinator, took the effort to a new level by soliciting suggestions from the public on the most litter-strewn locations and inviting businesses to clean up their outdoor areas.

Bruce energetically scouted out sites, recruited site leaders, and oversaw the volunteer activity. Coordinators who organized the activity at each site included: George Barrette at Bellows Road; Warren and Janet Anderson at Lake Chauncy; Kevin and Mimi Cronin at West Meadow intersection; and Jerry Lyle at Minute Man Park.

Confirmation Class of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, coordinated by Beth Mazzola, rallied 28 youths with

extraordinary spirit and hard work to clear 25 bags of trash from the Smith Valve Parkway near the railway station at an earlier work session.

Businesses, such as Dolan Insurance, also volunteered to pick up their sites. Individuals who adopted roadways to clean up included Dick Passler, Mary Aronson, Caitlyn Sullivan, Maureen Bryne, and Joe and Didi Harrington. Other groups, such as the New Hope Chapel volunteers, signed on to clear more litter in specific locations in May.

As ever, the Department of Public Works, especially John Walden, Dan Moynihan, and Don Gale and his crew, were invaluable in providing supplies and collecting the trash.

WCLT appreciates all those who enthusiastically answered this clean-up call to action.



Rain Barrels for Water Conservation

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Although the initial sale ran in spring 2008, there are plans to repeat the sale in 2009 through the Board of Health and DPW.

The goal of the rain barrel project, Doug says, is "to promote water conservation and reduce storm water runoff, not only literally, but more importantly, to visibly remind us daily around our homes that we can live more sustainably, and to instill that idea in our children and neighbors."



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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preserve open space and the natural character of the land — is compatible with the goal of sustainability.

The guest speaker for WCLT's June 2008 Annual Meeting, Christine Loughlin, O.P., was chosen to address sustainability and our wider connection to the earth. A Dominican Sister, she is the co-founder and director of Crystal Spring Center for Earth Learning, located in southeastern Massachusetts. It offers programs in cooking and gardening, Earth Festivals, and children's summer adventures, and supports local CSA farming and the local food movement. Christine's work focuses on the Religious Lands Conservation Project, an innovative work of Crystal Spring in partnership with the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition.

On a personal level, WCLT members are choosing to pursue sustainability. Andy Koenigsberg, a WCLT director, recently had a 5 kilowatt-hour photo-voltaic energy system installed at his house. On a sunny day, it generates enough electricity for his family's needs, and then some. The excess is sold back to the power company.

"Anything we do not use goes from our house into National Grid's power system, which runs into the community," Andy reports. "Given the rate at which electric rates are increasing, I am pretty sure that I will break even in about 8 years. The system has no moving parts and requires no maintenance."

The idea of sustainability is bringing new energy and initiatives to WCLT. This spring, WCLT partnered with the Westborough Civic Club and the Town of Westborough to make rain barrels available to Westborough residents at reduced prices.

By collecting rainwater to use in their yards and gardens, residents can help conserve water, reduce the stress on the town's drinking water supply, and improve storm water management.

Doug Mosher, WCLT director who spearheaded the rain barrel project after using rainwater in his own yard, says, "My young children and I take pride in not taking water out of the town's water system. It's one way of living more sustainably on the earth. You can make a difference."



WCLT nature crafts attracted Olivia and Isabella Cassinari and Mary McCormack during the 2008 Fish Festival.



Sue Bush (left) ran the WCLT nature crafts, aided by Devon Drohan and Courtney Swenson. Scott Henderson (right) and his family enjoyed the activities.

Clearing Invasives at Gilmore Pond

Anyone out walking the trails at Gilmore Pond will notice that once again a large brush pile has appeared near the kiosk, thanks to the hard work of recent volunteer work parties. Kicking off this year's effort, volunteers from Boy Scout Troops 4 and 382, the National Honor Society, the Westborough Civic Club (WCC), and WCLT cleared at least a quarter-acre of invasive shrubs in early May. More labor and progress followed in June with volunteers from Congregation B'nai Shalom, WCC, and WCLT.

Volunteers are invited to join the fight against the invaders, which is an important first step in the multi-year Gilmore Pond restoration project. Summer work parties are scheduled for July 12 and August 9. Check the WCLT web site for updates and details.

WCLT will set up special work parties for groups looking for something different to do, if these scheduled dates are not suitable.

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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, July 12

9 am - noon

(Rain date July 19)

Gilmore Pond Work Party

Bring loppers and work gloves. Gilmore Farm Road.

Contact: stewardship@westboroughlandtrust.org

Wednesday, July 16

6:45 pm

Willows WCLT Benefit Concert

Westwood Swing Band at The Willows

Saturday, August 9

9 am - noon

(Rain date August 16)

Gilmore Pond Work Party

Bring loppers and work gloves. Gilmore Farm Road.

Contact: stewardship@westboroughlandtrust.org

Saturday, August 23

9:30 am

Sustainability Field Trip

Local Food Fest, Crystal Spring Learning Center (Plainville). Carpool from Public Library.

Contact: Rosemary Johnson
rosemjohn@verizon.net

Sunday, September 14

1:30 pm

Overland Ramble

Hike to Gilmore Pond via the Bowman West Meadow. Meet at Bowman Conservation Area parking lot.

Contact: Mark Fox mafox@charter.net

Sunday, October 19

1:30 pm

Fall Foliage Hike

Family hike through Wile Forest. Meet at Carroll Drive.

Contact: Barry Hall
barry@ninestones.com

Saturday, November 1

9 am - noon

Nourse Trail Building

Bring loppers and bow saws to build a new trail.

Meet at Mill Pond School.
Contact: stewardship@westboroughlandtrust.org



Old Vehicles Can Benefit WCLT

Rising gas prices and growing interest in sustainable living are fueling the popularity of new, more energy-efficient vehicles, but older vehicles, too, can help environmental causes. It's now possible for owners to donate used cars or trucks to benefit WCLT instead of trading, selling, or junking them.

Donors get a federal tax deduction and an easy way to help a local environmental organization. WCLT gets a donation from the proceeds of the sale of the used vehicle.

How is it done? WCLT is listed on the Donation Line web site as a nonprofit organization that a donor can name to receive proceeds from vehicle donation. For more information, or to donate, check: www.donationline.com

Or contact WCLT treasurer Allison Johnson Hall:
ajohnson@fscpartners.com

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