



Land Trust News

The newsletter of the Westborough Community Land Trust

2010

Charm Bracelet Anniversary Celebration

Mark your calendar for the Charm Bracelet 10th Anniversary celebration in September!

Join other WCLT members and their families

on Sunday afternoon, September 26, 1 – 3 p.m., on the Mill Pond School grounds. The celebration will include a bring-your-own-picnic and walks on nearby trails.

Ten years ago this summer, volunteers from WCLT, the Town's Open Space Preservation Committee, and the local community were already hard at work building trails for the Charm Bracelet loop around Westborough. The inaugural walk on the Charm Bracelet took place in October 2000, led by Don Burn, who originally proposed the trail network and has worked tirelessly on it ever since.

Today Westborough boasts 21 miles of Charm Bracelet trails and 24 miles of side trails interconnecting open space areas (the "charms") and neighborhoods. Among other efforts, many Boy Scout Eagle projects have contributed to the construction of these trails.

WCLT is working to secure three easements and one state agreement that would provide an initial route connecting existing stretches of Charm Bracelet trail.

As the celebration date approaches, check the WCLT web site for details and to download a trail map of the Headwaters Conservation Area adjacent to Mill Pond School: www.westboroughlandtrust.org.



A Galerucella beetle feasts on purple loosestrife leaves after overwintering in the wild in Westborough. Last year Westborough High School students and WCLT volunteers raised and released these beetles to control the invasive purple loosestrife that is taking over Westborough's wetlands. Photo credit: Janet Anderson

WCLT Focuses on Invasive Species

Over the past few years, the Westborough Community Land Trust (WCLT) has been developing a new focus on invasive species.

This focus has grown naturally out of WCLT's efforts in environmental stewardship and education in Westborough. These efforts raise community awareness of the natural environment and support WCLT's mission of safeguarding land and preserving open space in town.

Invasive species are non-native plants and animals that dominate or disrupt native ecosystems and cause economic or environmental harm. Human activity typically brings them here from other continents, either deliberately or inadvertently. Once here, they are far from the competitors, diseases, and predators that kept them in check. They spread rapidly and outcompete native plants or animals.

WCLT's focus on invasive species enlists the help of the Westborough community in removing or controlling the spread of these species in selected areas. At WCLT's Gilmore Pond property, numerous volunteers from many organizations have been engaged in a sustained, multi-year effort to restore the pond to a natural environment, as it was — and would be — without the intrusion of invasive plant species. Participation has been far reaching, including volunteers from the Civic

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Club, Congregation B'nai Shalom, Boy Scouts, and Westborough High School, as well as WCLT. Over the past three years the removal of invasive shrubs and vines has opened up views of the pond and is restoring the natural scenery of the site.

In addition to Gilmore Pond, WCLT sponsors various woodland restoration projects around town. Boy Scouts and other community and WCLT volunteers have been working to remove invasive burning bush shrubs from WCLT's Indian Pond property, recently acquired in 2009. WCLT is also working with Boy Scouts to clear honeysuckle shrubs and oriental bittersweet near the Andrews Street entrance to the town-owned Headwaters Conservation Area (HCA), which WCLT stewards. At the town's first conservation area, the Bowman Conservation Area, WCLT volunteers have been pulling up garlic mustard, which is just beginning to invade Westborough, to prevent this invasive plant from becoming established.

In 2009 WCLT expanded its invasive control program and engaged the Westborough High School Science Department, WHS environmental sciences classes, and the WHS environmental club in controlling the spread of purple loosestrife by using biocontrols. Now in its second year, this educational and environmental project combines classroom study and field work in a multi-year effort to control the purple loosestrife that has invaded Westborough's wetlands over the past 20 years.

WHS students and WCLT volunteers raise and release *Galerucella* beetles that consume and control invasive purple loosestrife. In the process students apply ecological principles learned in class and care for their local environment.

Areas targeted include the Mill Pond shoreline, owned by the Mass Department of Conservation and Recreation (Mass DCR), and the Westboro Management Area, owned by Mass Division of Fish and Wildlife (Mass DFW). Initial field surveys report that beetles overwintered successfully and are reproducing at the 2009 field sites.

This year the biocontrol program has expanded and includes a Girl Scout Gold Star project (the equivalent of a Boy Scout Eagle project) that is raising 30 percent of the beetles.

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Westborough Community Land Trust is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.



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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Children Meet New England Animals

For the third spring in a row, Westborough children connected with nature through a WCLT Earth Awareness Month live animal event. This year's program, "Introducing New England Animals," drew more than 125 people. The annual event has grown in popularity and visibility each year.

School science teacher David Fassler of Animal Adventures of Bolton, MA, delighted the children with such native animals as an eastern box turtle, a skunk, a milk snake, a snapping turtle, and a tree frog. In this safe setting, children met live animals found in the Westborough woods and their own backyards. Encouraged by their older siblings, even toddlers greeted some of these creatures with a tentative, yet friendly, pat. The audience also learned to identify the animals and discovered how they live in the wild and near people's homes.

WCLT's Earth Awareness Month programs aim to build an appreciation for nature and a respect for wildlife. The 2010 program was funded in part by a grant from the Westborough Cultural Council, supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Sponsors also included the Knights of Columbus of Westborough.

Record-Breaking Earth Day Clean-up

More public-spirited volunteers than ever — 110 people of all ages — joined the Town-wide Earth Day Clean-up sponsored by the Westborough Community Land Trust (WCLT) on April 24. Volunteers collected more than 125 bags of trash from Westborough's streets, lakesides, woods, and parks.

Families, church groups, Scouts, and individuals did their part to protect our local resources and make Westborough cleaner. The confirmation youth group of the Good Shepherd Lutheran Church put their considerable energy into cleaning up around the MBTA station.

The spirited early bird teams showed up at 6:30 a.m. to clean the litter-strewn Bellows Road and Route 9/30 underpass, as well as the Route 135/Westmeadow Plaza intersection. Other volunteer teams went at 9 a.m. to clean up along Flanders Road, Connector Road, Lake Chauncy, Haskell Street, Arch Street, Oak Street, West Main Street, East Main Street, and Smith Valve Parkway.

The coordinator of the clean-up, Bruce Tretter, deserves special thanks for his outstanding work in identifying areas needing clean up, publicizing the event, and recruiting new volunteers. He was aided by Kris Allen, Elaine Moore, and Kate Donaghue in the logistics of assigning sites.

The New Hope Chapel generously provided refreshments for the clean-up volunteers and sent a large contingent of their members to pick up litter. WCLT also values the tremendous help of the Department of Public Works, particularly Don Gale and his crew, in collecting all the trash bags.



This year it was gratifying to have so many families with younger children join in the annual WCLT Earth Day Clean-up. The children learned important lessons about civic responsibility, team spirit, and protecting our environment. WCLT very much appreciates this annual outpouring of enthusiasm and effort by citizens who show their care about our town and its resources in this tangible way.

Calendar of Upcoming WCLT Events

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

Wednesday, July 14

6:45 pm

Willows WCLT Benefit Concert

Westwood Swing Band at The Willows.

Sunday, August 22

1:30 – 4:30 pm

Great Meadows Field Trip

Discover Great Meadows Wildlife Reservation, Sudbury. Carpool from Westborough Library at 1:30 pm.

Sunday, September 26

1 – 3 pm

Charm Bracelet 10th Anniversary Celebration

Bring your family to Mill Pond School (outside) for a bring-your-own-picnic celebration, with walks on nearby trails.

Sunday, October 17

1:30 – 3:30 pm

Signs of Fall Hike

SVT Walkup-Robinson Reservation
Hike the trails and old trolley line at Walkup-Robinson Reservation, off Connector Road.

Contact: krisallen@charter.net

Sunday, November 7

1:30 – 3:30 pm

Harvest Home Ramble

Around Lake Chauncy
Explore the shores of Lake Chauncy and nearby agricultural fields.

Contact: burn@windrvr.com.



Native Plants for Gilmore Pond

This spring a new phase of WCLT's Gilmore Pond restoration project made a small start when several nodding trillium plants were transplanted to an area recently cleared of invasive shrubs.

These native spring wildflowers came, with permission, from another location in Westborough. Anyone interested in contributing native wildflowers from their garden or property should contact Kathy Leblanc

kandleblanc@mindspring.com or Garry Kessler gkessler001@aol.com.

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