



Westborough Community Land Trust Celebrates 15 years!

Land Trust News

The newsletter of the Westborough Community Land Trust

2012

WCLT Hall of Fame

WCLT Founders

(Incorporating directors, April 7-10, 1997)

Timothy Buckalew, President

*Ellen L. Lutz, Vice President

Karen Heitzman, Treasurer

Harry Newell, Vice Treasurer

Ellen Gugel, Clerk (Secretary)

Lesley Barnhart Drohan

Ellen Bishop

Rosemary Johnson

*Mary Emily Libbey

*Eleanor R. Pepper

Kristina N. Allen

Augustus T. Ashton

Scott G. Hutchins

Allison Q. Sanborn

*deceased



WCLT's 15th Anniversary

Anniversaries are a time for celebration, but also for reflection. Fifteen years ago in 1997, your land trust was created thanks to the vision and efforts of concerned residents, including the 14 founding directors (see Hall of Fame). The Westborough Community Land Trust (WCLT) has since expanded to more than 300 residents, with many active members contributing to make it a presence in the community. WCLT plays an ongoing role in shaping what Westborough is today and will be for future generations.

Take a moment to imagine how different the town of Westborough would be for families today without the following:

- **160 acres of land conserved for future generations** through ownership by WCLT, including WCLT's largest parcel, the Upper Jackstraw Brook Reservation encompassing Gilmore Pond
- **The Charm Bracelet** trail system, a project for the past 11 years of WCLT and the Town's Open Space Preservation Committee, nearly encircling Westborough and connecting with many side trails for a total of more than 40 miles of trails open for the public to enjoy



2012 – 2013 Board of Directors

John Metzger, *President*

Sharon Williams, *Vice President*

Marjorie Fisher, *Secretary*

Allison Johnson Hall, *Treasurer*

Steven Rowell, *Assistant Treasurer*

Sue Abladian, *Member at Large*

Scott Shumway, *Member at Large*

Mary Casey Vivian Kimball

Mark Fox Rickey Lopatin

David Jablon Bob Nolan

Maureen Johnson Kelly Thomas



- **The annual Earth Day Town-wide Clean-up** sponsored by WCLT, a community activity for the past 14 years
- Environmental and trail projects with WCLT by the town's scouts, including at least **46 Boy Scout Eagle projects and 2 Girl Scout Gold projects**

Continued on next page

WCLT's 15th Anniversary *Continued*

- WCLT's "Nature Notes" in the *Westborough News*, with over 170 nature articles since 2004, all currently available on the WCLT web site
- The annual **WCLT Earth Day Essay Contest** resulting in WCLT scholarship awards to graduating Westborough High School seniors
- **Trail maps** that residents can download and print out to use in exploring the open spaces in town, including three Town conservation areas (Bowman Conservation Area, Headwaters Conservation Area, Libbey Conservation Area), WCLT areas (such as Upper Jackstraw Brook Reservation, WCLT Hidden Meadow), and more
- Numerous **WCLT guided nature walks and talks** each spring and fall that help families discover and appreciate Westborough's wonderful natural environment
- **Environmental initiatives** aimed at removing invasive plants, including work to clear invasive honeysuckle, burning bush, oriental bittersweet, multiflora rose, and Japanese barberry from open spaces and trail sides, and WCLT's purple loosestrife biocontrol project with Westborough High School (WHS) students at Mill Pond and the state's Fish and Wildlife management area.



This spring brought clear examples of how meaningful the open space in town has been to two members of widely spaced generations. Coincidentally, both had homes next to the Bowman (Westborough) Conservation Area surrounding the Sandra Pond reservoir and took inspiration from it. The late Bob Sparks left a generous bequest to WCLT, and WHS senior Jamie Gagliano won one of two WCLT scholarships with her Earth Day essay about the Bowman Conservation Area and its pink lady's-slippers. This area was the Town's first conservation area, established 1969-71.

In the more than 40 years since then, additional land in Westborough has been conserved, but development pressures loom and challenges remain. The disposition of the former Westborough State Hospital land bordering Lake Chauncy remains in question, and town residents are unhappy with the State's plans for selling it for development.

After 15 years, your land trust's work is far from over. Now more than ever, there is good reason to support WCLT and its mission of preserving open space in Westborough. Your land trust also offers many opportunities for volunteer work and community service with its stewardship, education, and outreach committees.



Be On the Lookout this July for Asian Longhorned Beetles

Early detection is an advantage in stopping the spread of invasive species, so WCLT urges members to be on the lookout starting in July for the invasive, tree-eating Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB). It infests maples and many other trees and threatens New England's forests. The beetles are big, black, and shiny, with bright white spots. They are $\frac{3}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches long. They've been found as close to Westborough as Shrewsbury.

In July, the new adult beetles that have developed inside trees begin to bore their way out to mate and lay eggs before they die in November. If you see a beetle that you suspect might be an ALB, report it at <http://massnrc.org/pests/alb/> or call 1-866-702-9938.

Photo courtesy of Jennifer Forman Orth, Mass. Dept. of Agricultural Resources (MDAR)



Robert Bruce Sparks: A Generous Nature

By Kris Allen

Rain patters, creating expanding rings on the pond. Snow invites trails etched with cross country ski tracks. Sun warms a meadow filled with wildflowers and bird song. In all weather a tall figure, solitary or paired with a friend, made his daily hike along the Charm Bracelet trails. Robert “Bob” Sparks loved exploring the wilds of Westborough, right up to his death in 2010 at age 86. He commemorated his love for open space with a most generous bequest of \$112,500 to the Westborough Community Land Trust.

A Westborough resident since 1961, Bob lived on Bowman Street across from the Sandra Pond Reservoir. “People loved going on walks with Bob,” recalls Bob’s friend Skip Ashton. “It was truly educational because Bob knew every bird call and wildflower.” After his hikes, Bob would track the changing seasons and wildlife activity at the pond from his chair by the window.

Bob felt a special affinity for open water. After graduating from high school in Pennsylvania, Bob served three years with U.S. Navy in the Pacific aboard the USS Hale. It was on this destroyer during World War II where he forged his closest friendships. Upon his return from the Navy, Bob enrolled at Purdue University on the G.I. Bill. He graduated in 1950 with a B.S. in metallurgical engineering. Before he could launch his career, Bob was recalled to active duty with the Navy during the Korean conflict.

In 1961 Bob began working as a metallurgist at Wyman-Gordon of North Grafton. His specialty was working on military castings, such as the landing gear for Boeing jets. Bob loved his work of crafting parts for some of the largest airplanes in the world. After retiring in 1987, he remained active for many years with consulting work.

The Westborough community benefitted greatly from his intellect and

talents. Bob served on the Town’s Finance Committee and Open Space Preservation Committee, as well as other committees throughout the years. A skilled woodworker, Bob enjoyed building bookshelves and cabinets for family and friends.

Skip Ashton and his wife Margy were great friends with Bob and remember

him fondly. “He was an exceptionally active man,” says Skip, “but a very reserved man with a dry sense of humor. Bob especially enjoyed traveling across the United States and Europe with his wife Nancy. He even crossed the Arctic Circle aboard the Royal Viking Star. His other loves were Chesapeake retrievers and cars.”

“His donations to charities he valued were very important to him,” adds Margy Ashton. “He wanted to leave a legacy that was substantial.”

“We are honored that Bob Sparks wanted to remember the Westborough Community Land Trust in this way,” says WCLT president John Metzger. “With his bequest, we will be able to further our mission of preserving and stewarding open space in Westborough.”

A memorial bench is planned for Bob’s favorite spot overlooking Sandra Pond.



Bob Sparks with Jonathan Ashton in 2009

Earth Awareness Snake Show Wows Audience

WCLT’s annual Earth Awareness Program builds children’s knowledge and appreciation of the natural world through encounters with live animals. This year Rick Roth and the Cape Ann Vernal Pool Team introduced colorful snakes from New England and around the world. Children in the audience, as well as their grandparents and parents, were fascinated to see and touch these amazing reptiles. Rick Roth discussed the habits and range of the snakes, including the timber rattlesnake and copperhead (neither found in Westborough) and 9 other Massachusetts snakes, to underscore the importance of keeping their habitats intact.

Children in the audience were wide-eyed to see snake after snake brought out. WCLT’s Kris Allen gets comfortable with a large live snake.



Earth Day 2012 Breaks Records

This year's Earth Day Town-wide Clean-up sponsored by WCLT removed more than 150 bags of trash along town streets, the greatest number ever for Westborough. Explorer Post 85, Cub Scouts, Cadette Girl Scouts, a work team from H&R Environmental, as well as local families joined in to pick up trash.

Bruce Tretter, coordinator of the Town-wide Clean-up, deserves special thanks for his outstanding work in running the clean-up effort. Before the event, Bruce biked around town to identify areas needing clean-up, and then on Earth Day he assigned teams to specific sites. WCLT volunteers, including Elaine Moore, Janet Anderson, Kathy Leblanc, Allison Johnson Hall, Barbara Muise, Vivian Kimball, and Kris Allen also worked to make the event a success. The Department of Public Works cooperated with WCLT once again to pick up all the collected trash.

The annual Earth Day Town-wide Clean up results in much more than litter-free streets. Many families participate to give children their first involvement in community service.



WCLT nature sightings page

Check or contribute to WCLT's new wildlife sightings page at:

www.westboroughlandtrust.org/sightings.php

Calendar of Upcoming WCLT Events

For details and updates, visit us on the web at www.westboroughlandtrust.org or www.facebook.com/westboroughlandtrust.

For questions contact:

events@westboroughlandtrust.org

Sunday, September 30 • 1 – 4 pm Fascinating Fungi

Headwaters Conservation Area

Enjoy a mushroom talk and walk with mycologist Larry Millman, author of *Fascinating Fungi of New England*. Limit: 18 people

Sunday, October 14 • 1:30 – 3 pm Stewardship and Forestry

Bowman Conservation Area

Walk with Derek Saari, Westborough's Conservation Officer, to learn about forest management around the reservoir.

Sunday, November 4 • 1:30 – 3 pm Autumn Hike

Veterans Freedom Park

Explore the John Malley trail from Veterans Freedom Park along Mill Pond

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