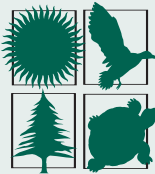
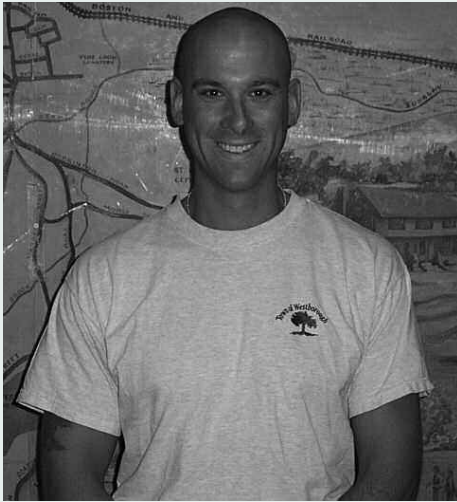


Westborough Community Land Trust
2005 Annual Report



Derek Saari Receives Jack and Ellie Pepper Award



“Derek has been a great help in facilitating the creation of trails along the Charm Bracelet ... Derek has given us his expert opinion and professional advice. He has shared his knowledge of forest management, led a WCLT walk, and joined WCLT work parties. In addition, Derek is a valued advisor and liaison for WCLT with Town boards, particularly the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission.”

Don Burn
WCLT Stewardship Chairman

The Westborough Community Land Trust has selected Assistant Conservation Officer Derek Saari as the 2005 recipient of the Jack and Ellie Pepper Award. The Pepper Award recognizes an individual in the community who has done outstanding work in land conservation and preservation and advances the WCLT mission.

Derek has served Westborough since 2001 as assistant conservation officer and assistant planner. In this role, he is responsible for administering the Wetlands Protection Act, reviewing all conservation applications, writing and enforcing Orders of Conditions, educating the public on the permitting process, and conducting environmental educational site walks. His planning duties include site inspections to ensure compliance with all approved written decisions, work with the Department of Public Works and their inspectors during subdivision construction, service as the Planning Board's tree inspector, and also monitoring compliance with town management plans for all open space parcels.

Derek brings impressive specialized training to his position. In 2001 he received a master's degree in regional planning with a concentration in environmental law and policy from the University of Massachusetts. He also holds a bachelor's degree in urban forestry from the University of Massachusetts with associate's degrees in arboriculture and park management from UMass's Stockbridge School of Agriculture. He had previously earned an associate's degree in applied science from New Hampshire Technical College.

“Derek has been a great help in facilitating the creation of trails along the Charm Bracelet,” says WCLT Stewardship Chairman Don Burn. “Through an innovative approach of providing a blanket Notice of Intent for the Charm Bracelet construction, he reduced cost and time required for administering trail construction. After walking every new and altered trail to be built, Derek has given us his expert opinion and professional advice. He has shared his knowledge of forest management, led a WCLT walk, and joined WCLT work parties. In addition, Derek is a valued advisor and liaison for WCLT with Town boards, particularly the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission.”

WCLT is proud to give the 2005 Pepper Award to Derek Saari, who has generously contributed his time, energy, and expertise to the Westborough Community Land Trust and its mission of conserving open space.



WCLT 2005 Committee Reports

Education Committee

The Education Committee took on the ambitious task of getting the message out to more audiences on many topics of importance to the Westborough Community Land Trust, including preserving open space, protecting habitats, and cleaning up our environment.

The Committee organized a monthly series of walks and talks to help deliver this message. Members were treated to a winter trek by Diane Boretos highlighting animal tracks and signs of life in the snowy landscape. Tim Buckalew took the public on a first-ever spring walk around Lake Hoccomocco and spoke about the clean-up efforts at this town landmark. Al Sanborn led an enthusiastic group of canoeists up river to Cedar Swamp. Charm Bracelet volunteers worked to clean up trails and even “make a meadow” where invasive species had taken over. Community members joined WCLT in a storm drain stenciling project that highlighted the dangers of dumping waste into our water supply.

“Nature Notes”, the WCLT-sponsored biweekly column in the *Westborough News*, brought environmental education and great photographs to the doorsteps our citizens. This impressive series of articles by Annie Reid and Garry Kessler found its way into the curriculum at Gibbons School as students read the articles and used them as an inspiration for further research into the native plants they might find in their hometown. Students at the Mill Pond School competed in the second annual “4P’s for the Environment” – a poster, poetry, project or photograph contest in celebration of the Earth and biodiversity.

Continuing a long tradition, Earth Day in Westborough was coordinated by WCLT. We were able to clean up more sites and fill over 50 yellow trash bags, thanks to the help of local Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts, dedicated community volunteers, and a couple of hardy WCLT members who volunteered to lead.

Thanks to everyone for carrying the torch and making our future a little brighter — and cleaner.

Respectfully submitted,

Leslie Leslie, Chair
Sue Lippett

Acquisitions Committee

The Acquisitions Committee met regularly this past year. It continues to pursue easements that will extend the Charm Bracelet. Additionally, it has sought critical land areas for protection by acquiring ownership interests, focusing on the area north of Maynard Street, as well as the Orchard Swamp area north of Route 9 and west of Route 30.

A 10-acre parcel north of Route 9 was donated by Gregory Chase of North Grafton as part of Orchard Swamp Preserve. This acquisition will add to the permanent protection of water and wetlands resources in the swamp and enhances the nearby Hero Parcel owned by WCLT off Haskell Street. Tony Abu, through Abu Construction, donated 1.8 acres associated with Wheelock Estates off Maynard Street, including a trail easement useful for future trail developments. This donation was accompanied by a \$10,000 contribution for stewardship.

Where appropriate, we will make recommendations concerning the holding of conservation easements on parcels which may continue to be owned and maintained by private parties who wish to permanently restrict their development capability. The Committee has continued to monitor several other critical open space parcels to determine their availability.

The Committee has established one- and three-year goals which it intends to review on an annual basis. It recently reviewed and updated its Land Protection Policies and Acquisition Criteria. One of its critical goals is to compile a central record file of the several parcels and easements now held by WCLT. We expect to be able to present this to the Board during the coming year.

The Committee welcomes any suggestions and ideas the membership may wish to provide.

Respectfully submitted,

Tim Buckalew

Don Burn

Jon Nourse

Craig Richov

Jim Tashjian

Randy Waterman



WCLT 2005 Committee Reports

Membership Committee

Westborough Community Land Trust membership is open to anyone committed to protecting open space in Westborough. We welcome all residents from Westborough and surrounding towns who share a deep commitment to the preservation of Westborough's natural resources.

Membership is crucial to our success in protecting open space and preserving the natural beauty of Westborough. The mission of the Membership Committee is to attract and maintain WCLT members while promoting and advocating for land preservation in Westborough.

In support of that role, the committee is working to recruit new members through membership drives and other ways. We encourage members to participate in WCLT sponsored events, such as trail walks, and to get involved in committees to support WCLT initiatives.

There are currently over 200 memberships, with more than 300 individual members. Membership has grown by 10% over the past year; twenty-three new members have joined this year. Membership renewals, in June of each year, are a critical source of funds. We are thrilled to report that members continue to provide financial support and increase their giving amounts. In addition, over \$10,000 was raised through the Annual Appeal conducted at the end of the year. Special thanks to everyone who contributed throughout the year.

Membership renewal letters have been mailed. Memberships will run through June 2006. The Annual Appeal will take place again in November to coincide with year-end giving. Thank you very much for your continued loyal support.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Johnson, Chair

Ellen Bishop O'Brien

John Gareri

Allison Johnson Hall

Walter Pierson

Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee is responsible for the care of Westborough Community Land Trust properties. In addition, the Committee is responsible for designing and maintaining trails and developing infrastructure to encourage public access to the outdoors.

With the expanding number of properties owned by WCLT, the Committee started this year a major effort on property improvement. This effort included surveying the current condition of the properties, adding WCLT usage signs, and identifying major projects for the tracts. Our first major project, currently underway, is to bring back the grassland area at WCLT's Valley View parcel. This effort is being enthusiastically supported by local volunteers, including Cub Scouts.

At present, we are beginning several other projects. They include a study of Gilmore Pond to stop the eutrophication, putting up boundary markers on the properties, and investigating signage to identify the parcels.

Last year we extended the Charm Bracelet onto the Hoccomocco Pond property. This former Superfund site will soon be released to the Town with the long-term goal of becoming a conservation area. In November, we relocated a section of trail on the Town's Libbey property to drier land. This spring we returned to this area to upgrade the trail blazes there and on the adjacent Wile Forest of the New England Forestry Foundation. Looking forward, we will be working on trails in the northern part of town to prepare for the reopening of the trail link from Sudbury Valley Trustees' Cedar Hill to Sawink Farm. WCLT has worked with SVT and the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority to restore this link, which will include a seven-mile contiguous section of the Charm Bracelet, and links to Southborough and Marlborough.

We would like to thank all the volunteers who come out to work on projects and maintain trails. Without their support, we could not do our work.

Respectfully submitted,

Don Burn, Chair

Ellen Bishop O'Brien

John Gareri

Mark Fox

Susie Wells

Tim Bukalew

Garry Kessler

Al Sandborn