

Westborough Community Land Trust Celebrates 15 years!



Westborough Community Land Trust

2012 Annual Report



President's Letter



Kyle Ashworth



Jamie Gagliano

WCLT Awards Two Scholarships

In 2012, the Westborough Community Land Trust (WCLT) marked its 15th anniversary by awarding two \$1,000 scholarships to graduating Westborough High School (WHS) seniors. The awards went to the winners of WCLT's 2012 Earth Day Essay Contest, Jamie Gagliano and Kyle Ashworth, in recognition of their deep appreciation and concern for the natural environment.

"We expanded our scholarship program as one aspect of our increased community presence," said WCLT president John Metzger. "We are pleased to mark our 15th anniversary by giving two scholarships instead of one and by increasing the scholarship amount."

Jamie's essay focused on Sandra Pond and the Westborough Conservation Area with its pink lady's-slippers. She will attend Colgate University in the fall.

Kyle's essay discussed development, conservation, and recycling of houses in Westborough. He plans to study motorcycle technology at WyoTech in Daytona Beach, FL.

Two seniors received honorable mentions for their essays. Elizabeth Anderson, who will attend Tufts University, wrote about the value of Lake Chauncy. Michael Bogoian-Mullen, who will be a student at Northeastern University's Honor College, described the power of his generation to make a difference in favor of sustainability by working together and by finding unexpected personal benefits in many small lifestyle decisions.

"From reading the essays, the Scholarship Committee can tell how important the students' families are in fostering love and respect for the natural environment and in encouraging a sustainable lifestyle," said Annie Reid of the Scholarship Committee. "We also see the valuable role of the schools and scouting organizations in promoting and reinforcing these values."

Dear Members and Friends,

In our 15th anniversary year, I am pleased to note once again that the Westborough Community Land Trust (WCLT) has continued to monitor and improve trails, strengthen relations with students, schedule work projects, and run hikes and educational programs that enriched our community. I want to thank the many, many volunteers who help make all this happen. Some highlights:

The land trust organized a photo contest and exhibit in the fall of 2011 with the theme of "Wild in Westborough." Thirty-two works from many photographers were selected for display over a two week period at Tatnuck Booksellers in October. WCLT celebrated the 15th anniversary of its founding with a wine tasting with appetizers, music and door prizes at Arturo's Ristorante in March. It was good to get together with a number of long-time WCLT members, some traveling back from other places where they now live. Tim Buckalew, WCLT's founding president, spoke at the event. WCLT also sponsored the 14th annual town-wide clean-up for Earth Day in April with strong help from Bruce Tretter as in so many years past. WCLT also continues to coordinate a purple loostribe biocontrol project with Westborough High School for the fourth year in a row. We also increased support for graduating seniors by doubling the awards to two \$1,000 scholarships for the top Earth Day environmental essays.

Our Stewardship Committee had to deal with two major weather events in 2011, a hurricane in August and a surprise snow storm in late October. Both events caused many trails to be blocked or overhung with dangerous limbs, so much unplanned trail work had to be done after each event. Stewardship has begun a process of having trail monitors walk all the trails in town periodically and report back problems that need attention. More volunteers are welcome. WCLT had major help in land stewardship once again during 2011 from eleven Eagle Scout projects involving all the Boy Scout troops in town. A list can be found in the spring 2012 e-newsletter and on our web site.

Our Education Committee once again scheduled a full calendar of events year round, inside and out. There have been talks on earthquakes, snakes and the Asian Longhorn beetle, plus hikes nearly every month of the year to many sections of town.

I hope that each of you is finding a broad set of WCLT endeavors that interest you. And please do not hesitate to contact me or any member of the Board of Directors if you would like to help or believe that there are other projects or activities that we should undertake.

John Metzger, President





Committee Reports

Land Preservation Committee

The Land Preservation Committee (LPC), formerly the Acquisitions Committee, adopted its new name in January 2012 to better convey our core mission. We have continued our involvement in various activities to ensure the protection of property, whether it be for passive open space or active trail/recreational use. We are active in laying out and acquiring trail easements to support the Charm Bracelet growth and, when necessary, we are involved in recommending changes to WCLT policy.

Early this year the LPC recognized a need for a formal policy on the sale or transfer of property currently under WCLT control or ownership. We prepared a draft policy, which was vetted through meetings with the Executive Board and approved by the full Board in May. The LPC also prepared a letter to the Selectmen describing WCLT's position on the disposition of the former State Hospital property off Lyman Street to ensure that the open space/aesthetic qualities of the property are protected.

We have continued to provide guidance on the implementation of the Gilmore Pond Master Plan, being directly involved in the ongoing trail development, and we have begun planning for the possible expansion of the park in the future. We are also reviewing the current protection strategies for all of the large prime development parcels as identified in the Town's Open Space Master Plan.

We have successfully negotiated and executed a Memorandum of Understanding with New England Power Co. (the parent company of NGRID) for the transfer to WCLT of 12.3 acres of wonderful wooded property fronting East Main Street. This property abuts other WCLT property and provides a great location for vehicular access to a new trailhead very close to Route 9.

As always, we continue to seek the involvement of other WCLT committees in our work, and we commit to working tirelessly to further the goals of WCLT as we work to protect the natural resources of the town for the enjoyment of all.

Randy Waterman, Chair; Don Burn, Craig Richov, Jim Tashjian, Sharon Williams



Education Committee

Generations of Westborough residents were united by their love of nature at this year's Education programs. Highlights included:

- Hiking a new trail at Hoccomocco Pond built by Eagle Scout Jake Sanders, and a tour of the Hoccomocco Superfund site with Jim DiLorenzo (EPA)
- Learning about New England earthquakes with Andy Koenigsberg
- Finding muskrat and raccoon skulls and signs of deer, beavers, otters, coyotes, and foxes at Little Chauncy Pond with Janet Pesaturo and Bob Moore
- Hiking the new 2-mile Oak Bluffs trail built by Eagle Scout Josh Saari
- A rare opportunity to canoe Cedar Swamp and the winding headwaters of the Sudbury River with Janet and Warren Anderson
- Looking for plants, vernal pools, and traces of historic logging at Wile Forest with professor Scott Shumway
- Learning the history, habits, and hazards of the Asian longhorned beetle with Jennifer Forman Orth (MA Dept. of Agricultural Resources)
- Discovering "The Wild and Wonderful World of Insects" with the Northern Naturalists, with lively stories and photographs of exquisite objects from beetle origami to the portable houses of caddisfly larvae
- Seeing, touching, and learning about live snakes from New England and around the world with Rick Roth and the Cape Ann Vernal Pool Team
- Collecting a record-breaking 150 bags of trash during our annual Earth Day town-wide clean-up, with help from coordinator Bruce Tretter, the Department of Public Works, teams from local companies, Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops, and local families
- Awarding scholarships to two graduating seniors in celebration of WCLT's 15th anniversary
- Continuing to raise beetles for the purple loosestrife biocontrol project

Thanks to all who helped with and participated in our programs.

Kristina Allen and Vivian Kimball, Co-chairs; Janet Anderson, Kathy Leblanc, Leslie Leslie, Elaine Moore, Barbara Muise, Debbie Okita, Annie Reid

Committee Reports

Membership Committee

WCLT has more than 250 memberships, including 375 individual members and ten new memberships. Membership renewals, in June of each year, are a critical source of funds and human resources. Membership dues totaled over \$6,500. Membership renewals significantly increased from the previous year. The 2011-2012 Annual Appeal raised \$8,300. Over 70 members and some new members enjoyed the 15th Anniversary Wine Tasting Gala!

Membership renewal letters have been mailed. The Annual Appeal will take place in November to coincide with year-end giving. Thanks to all WCLT members and friends for their loyal support.

Maureen Johnson, Chair

Outreach Committee

Our mission includes stimulating community awareness of the educational programs, stewardship work plans, and benefits of joining WCLT. We welcome the community to take part in WCLT's work.

In October we ran "Wild in Westborough," WCLT's second nature photo contest. Photos were exhibited at Tatnuck Bookseller for the community to view. Experienced judges determined first, second, and third place, and exhibit visitors picked a People's Choice Award. Awards were made at an open house.

At our request, a donation was made to the Good Scout Dinner in appreciation of work done through multiple Boy Scout projects to rid WCLT's Gilmore Pond area of invasive plants and through Eagle Scout projects.

We had a table at all Town meetings offering information about joining WCLT, making contributions, and printing and using our trail maps. Don Burn supplied a large aerial photo poster of the town with current trails marked.

We joined with the Membership Committee to keep members informed by email about what's happening. Appropriate activity information is also available in the Virtual Backpack for schools. We are making ongoing improvements to WCLT's web site so that information is easy to find and trail maps are available to print out. Check out WCLT news on Facebook, too, and let us know what you think.

In March we arranged a wine tasting party at Arturo's Ristorante to celebrate WCLT's 15th anniversary. Julio's Liquors provided the wine. Guests took home commemorative wine glasses, which may still be purchased. All proceeds benefit land preservation and stewardship.

At the Westborough Spring Festival, we held a Cedar Swamp hike, featuring Don Burn as the guide talking about how the swamp and the trails have evolved over the years. Most residents have never seen Cedar Swamp even though it covers 10 percent of our town area.

Sue Abladian, Chair; Kris Allen, Ellen Bishop, Maureen Johnson, Vivian Kimball, Rickey Lopatin, Rachel Radin, Annie Reid, Sharon Williams

Stewardship Committee

Hurricane Irene and the October snowstorm caused great damage to trees and trails throughout town. We launched a clean-up with help from the WHS Environmental Club that continued into the spring. Last winter the Conservation Commission did timber harvesting at the Bowman Conversation Area which obliterated many frequently used trails. Hank Rauch from WCLT is working with the Conservation Commission to develop a plan to re-establish trails.

Don Burn from WCLT worked with Sudbury Valley Trustees and the state Department of Conservation and Recreation to create a new trail loop over Walnut Hill adjacent to Sawink Farm which connects to trails in the Crane Swamp area. The committee also began an adopt-a-trail program where volunteers walk trail segments, fixing small problems and reporting back bigger ones for attention.

WCLT sponsored several more Eagle Scout projects:

- Alex Barnhart (Troop 100) cleared an overgrown 0.7-mile trail at Westborough Wildlife Management Area.
- Mouli Ghandi (Troop 100) contributed to the multi-year effort to eradicate invasive species from the WCLT property surrounding Gilmore Pond.
- Jake Sanders (Troop 4) cleared trails around scenic Hoccomocco Pond, a Superfund Site owned by the Town, which is ready for recreation along its shoreline after extensive cleanup.
- Josh Saari (Troop 4) created new trails at WCLT's Oak Bluffs property.
- David Zingher (Troop 100) rerouted the Fox Hill Trail near Fisher Street.

In all, over 2.5 miles of trails are newly available for hiking from these efforts.

We thank all volunteers who work on projects and maintain trails. Without their support, we could not do our work.

John Metzger, Acting Chair; Don Burn, Marge Fisher, Mark Fox, Hank Rauch, Al Sanborn, Scott Shumway, Sharon Williams