



Westborough Community Land Trust

# 2016 Annual Report



WCLT preserves, protects, and promotes Westborough's open space.

# President's Letter



One of my goals as President has been to expand the membership and to get members more engaged in participating in events and carrying out the Westborough Community Land Trust's mission to preserve, protect, and promote open space. I want to share some of the evidence that we are succeeding.

Let's start with several new initiatives. The Westborough Walks Meet-up Group was created in April and within a week of its formation 200 people had joined. A new feature has been added to the WCLT website, so you can now go online to join (tell your friends!), renew your membership (do it now!), and donate to WCLT (do it anytime!). The WCLT Facebook page has been liked 353 times. Busy beavers have sabotaged one of our bridges, so we will soon be replacing the sinking bridge with something bigger, better, and beaver-proof.

Last month EMSEAL, an international business headquartered in Westborough, became WCLT's first Business Partner. We look forward to working with EMSEAL to create a mutually beneficial partnership designed to enhance EMSEAL's commitment to local and global sustainability and employee wellness while increasing the ability of WCLT to protect and promote open space. Our next step is to meet

with more local business leaders and convince them to join us as partners for the environment.

In terms of regular programming, 50 hearty souls followed Marge Fisher on a winter trek into Cedar Swamp. 350 people showed up to see a venomous rattlesnake and hold some less fearsome serpents at WCLT's "Snakes of Massachusetts and The World." A standing-room-only crowd viewed Jill Lapato's stunning bird photographs taken on her year-long sojourn to Ecuador, the Galapagos, Australia, Panama, and Trinidad. A small army of volunteers, including employees from EMSEAL, Heery International, EFI, CCR Consulting, E.L. Harvey, and H&S Environmental, took to the roadsides for Earth Day to pick up trash.

Girl Scouts re-blazed trails, redecorated trailhead kiosks, and added "you are here" maps along the Charm Bracelet. Meanwhile trilliums and marsh marigolds are blooming around Gilmore Pond thanks to Girl Scouts who planted them last year. Boy Scout Eagle projects added new trails across a wet meadow, installed a staircase on a steep slope at Bowman Conservation Area, and cleared invasive

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## WCLT Scholarships Awarded



*Benjamin Anderson*

This year the Westborough Community Land Trust (WCLT) was pleased to award two \$1,000 scholarships and two honorable mentions to graduating Westborough High School seniors. Selections were made on the basis of essays submitted in WCLT's annual Earth Day Essay Contest.

Benjamin Anderson won a scholarship for his essay describing his experience growing up around Lake Chauncy and his commitment to improve the environment and protect open spaces in his adult life. He plans to attend Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

Owen Smallcomb received a scholarship for his essay about the environmental problem created by invasive honeysuckle species and by multiflora rose, a plan to increase public awareness, and his personal efforts to remove invasive species from local areas. He will attend Worcester Polytechnic Institute.



*Owen Smallcomb*

Caroline Reynolds was recognized with an honorable mention for her essay describing her experiences running on Mill Pond's trails and resting at its peninsula, and her involvement with the natural environment as a result.

Nathan Adduci was recognized with an honorable mention for his essay describing the hazards created in the landscape by old barbed wire and creosote-cured fence posts, his work in removing these hazards from the Hidden Meadow area, and his suggestions for follow-up work.

"This year we had the highest-quality group of essays yet. We congratulate all the students who wrote essays," said Annie Reid, acting chair of the WCLT Scholarship Committee. "Also notable were the many different natural areas in Westborough that students mentioned as special to them. These students and their families clearly made good use of the Charm Bracelet trails and its 'charms,' which are the open space areas in town."

# Committee Reports

## Land Preservation Committee

The Land Preservation Committee (LPC) continues its involvement in various support activities to ensure the protection of open space throughout the town. We have worked with the Stewardship Committee on the construction of new trail projects and the maintenance of existing trails, and in support of the protection of our existing open space parcels.

We are working with Sudbury Valley Trustees on several potential land protection projects. We are continuing our effort to protect all the open land in the Orchard Swamp area (between Route 9 and Haskell ballfields). We also have an agreement in place to acquire 22.5 acres of additional property on Otis Street. The committee maintains an amicable relationship with a number of landowners with whom we would like to see their resources protected. We also communicated with builders, developers, and property management firms in our community to evaluate or expand protection and use opportunities. Finally, we are working with various Town boards and committees on a variety of projects.

We continue to work toward finalizing the Charm Bracelet easements in order to establish a 28-mile continuous loop trail, plus a potential 40 miles of side trails, that will connect the various open space areas and neighborhoods throughout the town.

As always, we continue to seek the involvement of other WCLT committees in our work, and we commit to working to further the goals of the land trust and to protect the natural resources of the town for the enjoyment of all. Additionally, we welcome any thoughts or recommendations from WCLT members regarding properties, contacts, or other efforts we should pursue.

*Don Burn, Chair; Adam Last, Marge Fisher (Associate Member), Craig Richov, Scott Shumway (Associate Member), Jim Tashjian, Randy Waterman*



## Stewardship Committee

The role of the Stewardship Committee is to maintain and manage lands owned by WCLT as well as to develop and maintain trails on other town lands, encouraging public enjoyment of our open spaces while preserving habitat for our native plants and animals.

During the past year, we have again benefited from a number of Boy Scout Eagle projects that have been completed or are in progress. Projects include yet more steps at Bowman Conservation Area (BCA), invasive removal on the south side of Gilmore Pond, trail reclamation at BCA and bridging at Bowman West, and continued trail reclamation and bog bridging on the Blue Flag Trail. A new trail will also be built on Sudbury Valley Trustee's Sawink Farm property to eliminate a road walk, and a deer "exclosure" will be installed to help monitor regeneration of forest flora where deer cannot browse.

The Girl Scouts, too, continue to work on projects with WCLT. There are two Gold Award projects: one just finished and one pending. And one Silver Award project is in the pipeline. The most recently completed Gold Award is a website describing the flora and fauna of BCA. These projects are intended to have a legacy, different from the Eagle projects which focus on leadership. We are ever grateful for the interest these young men and women show in working with WCLT and for their considerable effort.

We're delighted to announce the very recent launch of our Meet-Up group "Westborough Walks" to encourage more awareness and use of our remarkable trails. Join the group on [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) — a link is on the WCLT home page.

*Marjorie Fisher, Chair; Jerry Breecher, Don Burn, Mark Fox, Keith Martin, John Metzger, Brian O'Keefe, Hank Rauch, Al Sanborn, Scott Shumway, Jim Slack, Carol Zarrow, and new members welcomed this past year, Guido Lonardo and Kelly Reilly.*

# Committee Reports

## Membership Committee

WCLT has more than 340 memberships, including over 500 individual members and 16 new memberships. Membership renewals, in June of each year, are a critical source of funds and human resources. Membership dues totaled over \$7,600, which was a slight increase from last year. Membership continues to grow. The 2015-2016 Annual Appeal raised \$9,600. In addition to those funds, WCLT received a very generous gift in stock of \$15,235.

Active members are crucial to our success in protecting open space and preserving the natural beauty of Westborough. We encourage everyone to participate in WCLT-sponsored events and to get involved in committees and stewardship projects.

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*



## President's Letter continued

plants from the woods around Gilmore Pond. Over 100 scouts participate in WCLT service projects each year. Over Memorial Day weekend all Westborough Boy Scouts gathered for a camporee featuring multiple hikes covering most of the Charm Bracelet.

Scouts and litter removers are not the only volunteers carrying out WCLT's mission. Much of our work is carried out by our Education, Stewardship, Land Preservation, Finance, Membership, and Nominating Committees, Board of Directors, and various other hard-working volunteers. These roughly 40 people are doing 90% of the work of WCLT. I am honored to work with these wonderful folks and greatly appreciate the work that they do. I encourage all members of WCLT to find something that they can do to support the organization and to lend a hand in being part of the Community in WCLT.

*Scott Shumway, President*

## Education Committee

The Education Committee held ten events to heighten the public's awareness of our natural environment. In September was "Bowman Discovery Day." In October our Gilmore Pond fall foliage hike attracted 35 people. Our November glacial geology walk educated 25. Beautiful weather brought 47 hikers to our Cedar Swamp walk in January. In March 65 people attended Jill Lapato's presentation of gorgeous bird photographs taken during her world travels. A wild edibles walk with Dan Jaffe was scheduled for May-June.

Our popular annual live animal program in February featured Snakes of New England and the World, presented by Rick Roth. Two shows drew a total of 350 people delighted in learning about and touching the many snakes presented. Thanks go to Westborough Cultural Council, Newcomers Club, and the Knights of Columbus for their support.

April saw a record-breaking Earth Day Clean-up, coordinated by Bruce Tretter. Over 100 volunteers collected more than 200 bags of trash. We thank volunteers from Explorer Post 85, Westborough Civic and Rotary Clubs, WHS Student Council and National Honor Society, Armstrong School, Heery International, EMSEAL, EFI, CCR Wealth Management, E.L. Harvey, H&S Environmental, McDonald's, and Crossfit Prototype, as well as many individuals and families. Other businesses that contributed were Rt. 9 Dunkin' Donuts, Mugford's Flower Shoppe, and Speedway Stop & Shop. We thank the Department of Public Works for their support.

The Annual Meeting in June featured Christie Palmer Lowrance speaking about early 20th century children's author Thornton Burgess. Later in June, we celebrated National Trails Day with two hikes held jointly with Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT), including one between Fish and Wildlife Headquarters and SVT's Sawink Farm.

*Janet Anderson, Chair; Susan Abladian, Gillian Beamer, Paula Kirk, Kathy Leblanc, Jerry Lyle, Elaine Moore, Rachel Radin, Annie Reid, Christopher Sassetti, Eric Waite*

*WCLT's purpose is to safeguard land to meet the environmental, recreational, agricultural, and scenic needs of the Town of Westborough and to preserve open space and the character of the land.*

*To date WCLT has preserved more than 173 acres of land and acts as stewards for close to 400 acres in Westborough.*