



Land Trust News

The Newsletter of the Westborough Community Land Trust

"Too much indoors? Are the walls coming closer every day? WCLT Stewardship and I want you to know, in the words of Timothy Egan: 'The cure for Nature Deficit Disorder, for a worldview increasingly shaped by Google-colored glasses, is the quiet riot of the wild, nearby.'"

"In fact, it is as 'nearby' as Mill Pond, Crane Swamp, Upper Jackstraw Brook, Wile/Libbey Forest, the 'reservoir,' and many other places in and around Westborough! WCLT Stewardship works to keep trails through these wild spots open for your use, your inspiration, your peace of mind. So regardless of what might ail you (or not!), step outside, bring your binoculars, bring a friend, especially bring the kids, and take a walk. You may not know the birds, but how many different kinds do you see? Can you find a little yellow mushroom, or a red one, or even a purple one? How many kinds of butterflies? How many dragonflies? It's all waiting for you!"

~Marge Fisher, Stewardship Committee (chair), WCLT Board of Directors (secretary)

"Nature Notes grew out of a suggestion from Kris Allen on the Education Committee. Writing this column is one of the real pleasures in my life."

~ Annie Reid, Education Committee, Outreach Committee

Weeding the Woods



Left photo: Janet Anderson of the Education Committee pulls up invasive garlic mustard at Bowman Conservation Area. Right photo: Volunteer Jerry Lyle carries out a pile of uprooted garlic mustard plants.

A group of volunteers spent a Sunday afternoon in late April weeding the woods near the entrance to the Bowman Conservation Area at the Westborough Community Land Trust's garlic mustard pull. Their work was part of WCLT's ongoing effort to combat invasive plants in town and spread awareness and knowledge of them. Invasive garlic mustard is relatively new in Westborough and still might be stopped in some areas if it is removed as soon as it appears.

On another front, Don Burn reports that Boy Scout volunteers have recently been working hard to remove invasive burning bush at WCLT's Indian Pond property. "Basically, so far, from a hill full of invasive burning bush, we now are down to just a little," Don noted.

Beyond that, *Galerucella* biocontrol beetles and their caterpillar-like larvae have been munching invasive purple loosestrife as it starts to come up near wetlands all over town.



Galerucella biocontrol beetles eating, mating, and laying eggs on purple loosestrife in Westborough in May 2013.

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Committees Are the Lifeblood of WCLT

How do things get done in the Westborough Community Land Trust (WCLT), which is a private, member-supported, nonprofit organization and has no paid staff? The short answer: committees.

Committees are the lifeblood of WCLT.

"Active members are crucial to our success in protecting open space and preserving the natural beauty of Westborough," says long-time Membership Committee chair Maureen Johnson.

Volunteers from WCLT's membership and from the community are also crucial in getting things done. As Stewardship Committee chairs have often said, "Without their support, we could not do our work."

Sometimes people tend to view committees and meetings in a somewhat negative light, especially these days when so many people are "more than busy" with work, family, and other commitments. As a result, individuals may be reluctant to join a committee.

Yet it's possible to put a toe in the water without jumping in. Individuals often help with a committee project or other work without actually joining a committee. Examples include the scores of volunteers who have helped build and maintain Charm Bracelet trails and various individuals who have helped the Outreach Committee put on WCLT's nature photography contests.

So why get involved with a committee?

1. **Contribute:** Committees enable individuals to contribute — in a non-monetary way — to the organization and to the cause of land preservation and stewardship and environmental education in Westborough.
2. **Learn:** Committees offer a way to learn more about the work of WCLT, the town of Westborough, and the issues involved in land preservation, stewardship, and environmental education.
3. **Network:** Committees are a way to join a vital network of environmentally minded people. This network can lead to unexpected personal rewards and make it easy for individuals to share their talents, skills, ideas, and connections with WCLT.

A few people are quoted about their experiences in the boxed quotes featured throughout the newsletter. ■



"The Education Committee meets over breakfast and it feels like social time with friends, so I always look forward to the meetings. But more importantly, I feel like I am making a difference. A few people really can't do too much by themselves to solve environmental problems, which is why it is so important to reach out to the public of all ages and get them excited about the natural spaces we have in Westborough. If an adult learned to identify and remove an invasive species or took a hike on a town trail he didn't know existed, then our committee did its job this year. If a child became inspired to protect natural habitats through learning about life in a tidal pool or meeting an owl face-to-face, then I feel especially good about the work we have done, because that improves the future for all of us."

Janet Anderson, Education Committee

"I originally joined a WCLT committee when I moved to town because I was looking for ways to get involved in local environmental activities while I waited for my master's program to start. I stuck around because I discovered I'd met a really great bunch of people who were excited about nature, knew all the best places — natural and otherwise — in town and beyond, and were putting together fantastic hikes and programs about butterflies, bugs, rocks, snakes, flowers, and birds for the residents of Westborough."

"I've learned so much since I started! My experience on our purple loosestrife biocontrol project may have even helped me to get a great internship which in turn helped me to get job after job. It's been fun and rewarding to come up with ideas for events and help make them happen, and to know that my contributions are helping WCLT grow and touch the lives of more and more people."

~ Vivian Kimball, Outreach Committee, Education Committee (co-chair), Board of Directors

2013 Earth Day Clean-up



Roadsides cleaner, lake shores more scenic, the environment greener – all resulted from the Earth Day Town-wide Clean-up sponsored by WCLT. The 85 public-spirited volunteers of all ages set a new record by collecting 150 bags of trash. Families, youth groups, scouts, and individuals joined in to protect our local resources and make Westborough more attractive. Teams from Explorer Post 85, H&S Environmental, Energy Federation, Inc., B'nai Shalom, and Mugford's Flower Shop proved an important part of the effort.

On his bike rides around town, clean-up coordinator Bruce Tretter identified 36 litter-strewn sites. He deserves special thanks for his outstanding work in identifying these areas, publicizing the event, and recruiting new volunteers. Elaine Moore, Janet Anderson, Kathy Leblanc, Sue Abladian, Vivian Kimball, Walter Leslie, and Kris Allen helped with assigning volunteers to sites.

Areas picked up included Bellows Road, Route 30/9 underpass, Route 135/Westmeadow Plaza intersection, Flanders Road, Connector Road, Otis Street, Lyman Street, Oak Street, Lake Chauncy, Haskell Street, Sandra Pond, and Ruggles Street.

WCLT thanks the Westborough Department of Public Works, particularly Don Gale and his crew, for collecting the trash bags. The annual WCLT Town-wide Clean-up has become a family event where many parents teach their children about community service. WCLT is grateful to the clean-up volunteers who tangibly demonstrated their commitment to protect local resources. ■

Everyone Loves Owls

Six owls drew a standing-room-only audience of more than 200 at this spring's WCLT live animal program for families. The event featured naturalist and photojournalist Mark Wilson of Eyes on Owls, who presented the live owls and their stories. WCLT provided children and adults with this personal encounter with native wildlife to build their understanding and respect for the natural world.

The audience learned about the habitat, field markings, and behavior of owls through a slide show with beautiful wildlife photography. Then Mark introduced the six owls and gave a "hooting lesson" for each one. The audience also found out how to identify the owls by their size, color, markings, and call. Children were especially delighted with the smallest bird, the saw-whet owl, and the largest, the Eurasian eagle owl. Also spotlighted were owls common to New England, including the great horned owl and barred owl, and those from colder climates, such as the snowy owl.

Mark emphasized the critical importance of preserving open land and forests to protect the wild habitat of these amazing raptors. ■



WCLT Nature Sightings

Check or contribute to WCLT's 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

Wednesday, July 10 • 6:45 pm

Willows Concert to Benefit WCLT

The Wolverines

Sunday, September 22 • 1:30 - 3:30 pm

Autumn Vistas Hike

Enjoy impressive vistas of Westborough and fall foliage from the top of Cedar Hill on a 2.5-mile loop hike on Crane Swamp Trail.

Sunday, October 27 • 1:30 - 3:30 pm

More Fascinating Fungi

Wile Forest • Larry Millman, author of *Fascinating Fungi of New England*, returns to lead a mushroom walk at Wile Forest.
Limit: 18 people

Saturday, November 9 • 1:30 - 3:30 pm

Hidden Meadow Walk

Bowman Conservation Area West • Join a loop hike through forests and a hidden meadow on the Bowman West trail.

Weeding the Woods, continued from page 1

Today the shoreline of WCLT's Gilmore Pond is remarkably free of invasive honeysuckle shrubs and oriental bittersweet vines, thanks to major efforts in years past by the Boy Scout troops in town and other volunteer groups.

WCLT continues to combat invasive plants so that Westborough residents will be able to enjoy native plants and experience a few open space areas where the landscape is not dominated by invasive plants. ■

2013 – 2014 Board of Directors

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