



Land Trust News

The newsletter of the Westborough Community Land Trust

January 2022



WCLT Celebrates 25 Years

Join us in these special events marking 25 years of WCLT preserving and protecting land in Westborough.

25th Anniversary Bash

Celebrate our 25th anniversary with a special gathering in the fall of 2022. Details coming soon. Watch the WCLT web site, Facebook page, and your email for more.

WCLT 25-Mile Trail Challenge

Celebrate our 25th anniversary by hiking 25 miles of Westborough trails between April 1 and September 1, 2022. Follow the WCLT Facebook page for trail suggestions and to post selfies from your favorite trails. Successful 25-milers will earn a special commemorative patch and recognition at our 25th anniversary bash in the fall.

WCLT 25th Special Fundraising

Help us prepare for the next 25 years of land preservation in Westborough

- \$25,000 fundraising goal for 2022
- New memberships start at \$25
- Renewing members requested to donate an additional 25% this year only
- Receive a special WCLT 25th t-shirt for contributions of \$125 and above

Community Preservation Act

During 2022, the Town of Westborough will consider adopting the Community Preservation Act. The CPA allows communities to create a local fund for open space protection, recreational land, affordable housing, and historic preservation. A statewide fund provides yearly distributions to communities that have adopted the CPA.

The Town of Westborough must formally adopt through Town Meeting and a general election. WCLT will voice its support to the Board of Selectmen. Stay tuned for announcements through WCLT emails and WCLT's Facebook page describing how you can engage in the process.

Junior Ranger Program

Girl Scout Gold Award Project

Designed for K-6 grade children, this program incorporates elementary curriculum topics through nature and fun outdoor engagements. Participants work through a booklet of gamified puzzles, activities, and educational environmental events. Upon completion, our new Junior Rangers achieve a badge/patch and Junior Ranger certification from WCLT.

History of WCLT

In the late 1990s, members of Westborough's Open Space Committee realized that, given the rapid development of Westborough's remaining open land, a community land trust would be in critical in preserving open space. As a nonprofit organization, a land trust can receive gifts of land, purchase open space, or secure conservation rights. It can negotiate directly with landowners and developers to achieve balanced growth and undertake creative fundraising for land acquisition as a complement to the efforts of the town government.

Established in 1997, the mission of WCLT was "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." In 1998, WCLT acquired its first parcel of land, a six-acre parcel near the Haskell Street athletic fields in Orchard Swamp, a gift of land from John Hero. Since those early days, through donation or purchase, WCLT has acquired 206 acres and has built or restored more than 35 miles of trails.

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

Gilmore Pond All-Persons Trail Completed



Accompanied by State Senator Jamie Eldridge and special guests Judy and Bruce Gilmore, Keith Martin, chair of the WCLT Stewardship Committee, and Chris Sassetti, WCLT president, cut the ribbon to mark the completion of the nearly two-year project.

By Kristina Nilson Allen, Keith Martin, and Warren Anderson

On October 21, 2021, WCLT held a grand opening for the Gilmore Pond All-Persons Trail.

Through the support of a MassTrails grant and more than 1,000 hours of volunteer time, every inch of this ¼-mile loop has been replaced with firm stone dust, bridging, boardwalks, and a continuous hand rope to create a wheelchair and stroller-friendly graded path. This lovely spot can now be enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities.

“We were inspired by Mass Audubon’s All-Persons Trail at Broadmoor to create a trail that is accessible to people with mobility and vision challenges,” said Martin. “WCLT has long wanted to make it possible for every Westborough resident to enjoy being surrounded by nature.”

As part of the dedication, State Senator Jamie Eldridge recognized the contribution of the Commonwealth toward the project. WCLT was awarded a \$93,000 Mass Trails grant in December, 2019. WCLT funds also covered a portion of the costs.

Volunteers contributed over 1,000 hours of physical labor to the project, not including the many hours spent planning, organizing work sessions, and communicating with contractors. Approximately 60 WCLT stewardship volunteers and family members contributed almost 700 hours to on-site construction. In addition, two Eagle Scout projects led by Riley Clark and Evan Fallon, amounting to 150 hours, cleared brush and invasive plants.

Despite COVID constraints, students at Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School built boardwalk components in their shop.

Assabet Valley carpentry instructor Wayne Coulson and 17 of his students contributed more than 300 volunteer hours.

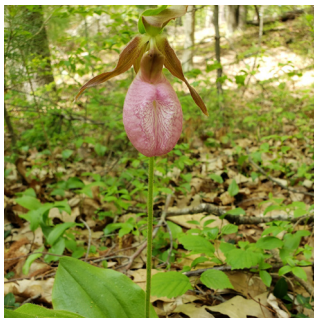
Gilmore Pond is part of the headwaters of Jackstraw Brook, which branches in the surrounding area. The pond itself was part of Fay Mountain Farm on Adams Street, where three generations of Gilmores built the largest orchard in Westborough from 1910 through 1970. At its peak from 1960-1965s, the Gilmores harvested 50,000 bushels of apples each year.

Gilmore family members Richard, Bruce, and Suzanne Gilmore McLaughlin recalled memories of living on Fay Mountain Farm, including that the first Westborough High hockey team started at Gilmore Pond in the 1960s, coached by their dad, Dick Gilmore. In the 1930s their grandfather Howard Pool (H.P.) Gilmore created the 2.6-acre pond for irrigation to improve his orchard and to provide fire protection for his buildings. The pond supplied water to Fay Mountain Farm’s houses and barns via hydrants and an underground pipe that ran from the pond down to the barn complex.

Gilmore Pond and the Fay Mountain Farm were sold to Quick’s Orchard in 1970. Three decades later, on June 26, 2003, a 12.96-acre open space parcel was conveyed to the Westborough Community Land Trust by Stephen Venicasa of Casa Builders. This open-space donation was part of the Orchard Hill development agreement.

Over the years, the Gilmore Pond Trail has become the best-known and most traveled part of the 67-acre Upper Jackstraw Brook Reservation. As of October’s grand opening, the new All-Person Trail can now engage an even wider range of visitors.

87% of Wildflowers Found in “Wonderful Westborough Wildflower Hunt”



Pink Lady's-Slipper by Janet Anderson



Pokeweed by Warren Rogers



Common evening primrose by Sharon Dankward

By Anne Reid

From spring through fall of 2021, WCLT ran the “Wonderful Westborough Wildflower Hunt,” a scavenger hunt conducted through the WCLT Facebook page by inviting members each month to search for and post photos of wildflowers that had been documented in Westborough 20 years ago.

The results? Participants found 65 of the 75 flowers targeted, or 87%, showing that these wildflowers still grow in Westborough.

Of the 75 flowers, 9 were found more often than others: Common Blue Violet, Quaker Ladies (Bluets), Wild (Red) Columbine, Daisy (Annual) Fleabane, Deptford Pink, Purple Loosestrife (an invasive plant), Common Evening Primrose, Pokeweed, and Asters (various species).

Two flowers appeared to generate the most interest: Pink Lady's-Slipper and Pokeweed.

The 10 flowers NOT found (13%) were: Lance-leaved Violet, Nodding Trillium, Canada Lily, Downy Rattlesnake-Plantain, Orange Hawkweed, Virginia Meadow-Beauty, Nodding Ladies-Tresses, Turtlehead, Boneset, and Marsh Speedwell. Does this mean that they're no longer in Westborough? Not necessarily. It just means that nobody reported finding them. Perhaps they're harder to find.

The Wildflower Hunt was not a contest, but congratulations and many thanks go to Sharon Dankwardt and Warren Rogers, who found the most flowers.

“I really enjoyed the hunt as it combined my love for flowers and photography,” said Sharon. “I really enjoyed learning new details about some of our wildflowers from the WCLT website and sharing my photos with others. Searching for new (to me) and known flowers really added an extra dimension onto my hikes with my husband, John. We found some flowers that we've never seen or really noticed before, as well as some that were not part of the hunt.”

Many thanks also to these people who took part in the hunt, providing useful crowd-sourced information about Westborough's natural environment in 2021: Kristina Allen, Janet Anderson, Nancy Burke, Stacey Coleman, Rane Duncan, Christine Goldschneider, Carol Swindell Hoyt, Paula Kirk, Seena Nair, Annie Reid, Jon Tidman, Nancy Szostak Wright.

What comes next? In 2022 we'll re-post the 10 wildflowers that weren't found and see if they can still be documented in Westborough.

WCLT values our business partners

We thank our business partners for helping WCLT preserve and protect more land and offer trails and educational programs:

Servello CPA, EMSEAL Corporation, Pearson Advisory Investor Relations, Thomas Financial Associates, Arturo's Ristorante, and Julio's Liquors.

How can your organization join WCLT as a business partner? Find out by contacting bizpartners@westboroughlandtrust.org.



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2022 Events • For more information, go to westboroughlandtrust.org

Winter Walk into History

Sunday, January 23, 2022, 1-3 pm

This walk begins at the new pavilion on the shore of Lake Chauncy. Meet at the pavilion by the parking area. No reservation needed.

Making Maple Syrup at Home

Sunday, February 13, 2022, 1:30-3:30 pm

Do you think you have a sugar maple tree in your yard? Have you ever wondered if you could make your own natural maple syrup, but didn't know how to get started? Location: Tatnuck Bookseller meeting room, No reservation needed.

Snakes of New England and the World

**Saturday, March 26, 2022,
TWO SHOWS: 9 and 11 am**

Bring the family and join us for our always-popular spring free live animal show! Meet some fascinating harmless reptiles you may find while out walking in Westborough, as well as some impressive specimens from around the world. Location: Knights of Columbus Hall,

17 Willow St., Westborough MA; parking lot in rear. Presented by Rick Roth of the Cape Ann Vernal Pond Team. No reservation required. Free; donations gratefully accepted at the door. This program is supported in part by a grant from the Westborough Cultural Council and the Westborough Newcomers Club.

Earth Day Town-Wide Cleanup and Cleanup Volunteers' Picnic

Group/Club/Business Sign-up: February 1-March 15, 2022

Family/Individual Sign-up: Week of April 1-8, 2022

Cleanup: Week of April 9-16, 2022
Drop-In Volunteers' Picnic Lunch Saturday, April 16, 11:30-12:30
(Online Signup Only—No Walk-In Registration)

Join the annual town-wide litter clean-up sponsored by WCLT, and enjoy a drop-in Earth Day Volunteers' picnic lunch afterwards! Come on your own, or rally your family, co-workers, or neighbors and form a team to beautify our town! Trash bags will be dropped off at participants' homes by the 9th. Clean your

chosen area any day or time before noon on April 16. Then head over to Bay State Commons for an appreciation picnic of pizza with all the sides! For the cleanup, wear gloves, long pants, long sleeves, and sturdy shoes.

Geology Walk: The Making of Westborough

Sunday, May 22, 2022, 1:30-3:30 pm

Learn about Westborough's landscape and how it was shaped by glaciers. 2.5-mile round-trip hike, No reservation needed.

Monday, June 13, 2022, 7:00-9:00 pm

Owls of New England and WCLT Annual Meeting

**June 13, 2022, 7-9pm
St. Luke's Parish Hall, 1 Ruggles St.
Westborough MA**

Wildlife photographer Peter Christoph delivers stunning photographs of his favorite owls combined with stories that entertain, educate and inspire. Reception and Annual Meeting to follow.

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