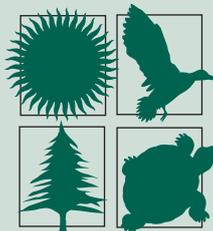


Westborough Community Land Trust

2008 Annual Report



President's Letter



Evan Gross, Westborough High School senior, received the 2008 WCLT Scholarship.

WCLT 2008 Scholarship Awarded

The winner of WCLT's Earth Day Essay Contest, Evan Gross of 1 Jefferson Road, received the 2008 Westborough Community Land Trust Scholarship. The award recognizes a deep appreciation and concern for the natural environment by a graduating Westborough High School senior.

Evan's essay emphasized the importance of stewardship and land preservation and suggested ways of encouraging adults, teenagers, and children to become involved in stewardship of the natural environment for the benefit of future generations. Evan plans to attend Michigan State University in the fall.

Receiving honorable mention for their essays were Eric Chang, who will attend the California Institute of Technology, and Matt Feresten, who will enroll at the College of William and Mary.

WCLT encourages young people to develop a strong connection with nature as the basis for responsible, thoughtful decisions about the environment.



As the Westborough Community Land Trust (WCLT) enters its second decade, I'm pleased to report that it remains a vibrant and capable organization. While this past year has been a time of economic uncertainty, our membership and donations have remained strong. This has allowed us to continue to deliver projects and programs to enrich our community's environment.

The Gilmore Pond restoration project has cleared over an acre of invasive shrubs from the property. One-third of the shoreline has been cleared, opening views of the pond, its wildlife, and its spectacular fall foliage. This project is a joint effort, drawing both funding and energetic volunteers from the Westborough Civic Club as well as WCLT. The collaboration continues this year, with more invasive clearing, trail work, and aquatic studies to be done. The area is open to the public during this time, so feel free to come up to take a look or contact the Stewardship Committee if you are interested in more information or helping out.

Each year the Education Committee sponsors a full calendar of events. Among them last year were our first Photo Contest and "Raptors' Struggle to Survive," a talk about local raptors where attendees could see several of the birds at the talk. These two events alone brought WCLT to about 150 members of our community and resulted in requests that we continue to provide such events to Westborough.

As the impact of human activity on our planet becomes an increasing concern, the idea of sustainable living becomes more attractive. The Public Outreach Committee is forming new initiatives to bring the idea of sustainable living to our community. Watch for more on sustainability and what you can do from our Public Outreach Committee over the coming year.

WCLT continues to protect over 125 acres of open space in Westborough. Volunteers maintain over 100 additional acres of municipal open space and over 40 miles of trails. The Acquisitions Committee continues to work with property owners to protect additional lands in town. They've made good progress toward protecting a number of additional parcels as well as obtaining easements for additional trails. You will hear more about these initiatives in the year ahead.

Thanks to your enthusiasm, support, and dedicated work, WCLT is strong and making a better Westborough. I hope that you will renew your membership for the next year and continue your involvement in our shared commitment to preserve open space in Westborough. We look forward to seeing you at WCLT events throughout the year.

Garry Kessler, President



WCLT 2008

Committee Reports



Acquisitions Committee

The Acquisitions Committee has been busy this year with its work to identify, locate, and acquire various parcels and trail easements that are critical to the overall goals of the organization. Although the intensity of development in Westborough has recently diminished, we realize that this change is only temporary, and we remain diligent in our efforts to protect our valuable open space.

This year the majority of our effort has been invested in the acquisition of properties that have been identified as meeting our criteria for acceptance and are deserving of permanent protection. These properties include the planned open space parcels in the Indian Meadows and Pheasant Hill residential subdivisions, two new development projects on Arch Street and Otis Street, and several of the remaining parcels in the Orchard Swamp area near Route 9 where we already have numerous land holdings. In addition, we have continued to pursue the acquisition of trail easements throughout town, and we are negotiating a conservation restriction for a unique parcel at the edge of the Cedar Swamp Area of Critical Environmental Concern.

In order to be most effective we encourage the involvement and input of other boards and committees in our work. To further this approach we have already begun to partner with other regional land protection organizations such as the Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT). We are currently working with SVT to develop an option for the joint ownership or management of several desirable properties in town.

We welcome suggestions, ideas, or participation as we look for more opportunities to protect the natural resources of our town for the enjoyment of all.

*Randy Waterman, Jon Nourse, Craig Richov, Jim Tashjian,
Don Burn*

Education Committee

This year the Education Committee broadened its outreach with new programs.

Celebrating WCLT's 10th Anniversary, our first photography contest, "Westborough's Natural Treasures," featured 149 photographs from 43 participants. Winners included: 1st prize: Robin Fleming for "After the Storm"; 2nd prize: Barry Hall for "Wile Forest"; 3rd prize: Paul Weisbach for "White-breasted Nuthatch."

With a grant from the Westborough Cultural Council, WCLT offered the Earth Day event, "Raptors' Struggle to Survive." More than 100 people came to see raptors belonging to raptor expert and environmental science teacher Larry Keating from Rulers of the Wind. He described the challenges that raptors face from a changing environment and diminishing habitats and praised WCLT's work in preserving open land.

WCLT participated in Westborough's Spring Festival in April as a complement to the Fishing Festival. Sue Bush expertly directed a WCLT Nature Crafts table at Sandra Pond, while Carol Borglund encouraged youngsters to paint a "Fish of Sandra Pond" mural.

Coordinating the annual WCLT Town-wide Clean-up was Bruce Tretter, along with site directors George Barrette, Jerry Lyle, Mimi and Kevin Cronin, and Warren and Janet Anderson. Volunteers removed more than 45 bags of trash. Teams from businesses and religious groups, as well as individuals, adopted streets to clear of litter on their own schedules. Special thanks goes to Don Gale and the Westborough DPW for their ongoing cooperation.

For the first time, WCLT Nature Educators presented "Native Animals" programs for two preschools. Kathy Leblanc coordinated the program's different stations for children to learn about familiar wildlife in New England. Other WCLT programs included a wildflower talk and walk by Annie Reid and Garry Kessler with the Westborough Garden Club, a Nature Photography Roundtable, and an introduction to dragonflies.

The Education Committee programs focus on bringing the wonders of nature to all ages.

Kris Allen, Chair

Susan Barnhart, Carol Borglund, Susan Bush, Joan Erler, Rosemary Johnson, Kathy Leblanc, Leslie Leslie, Sue Lippitt, Rickey Lopatin, Barbara Muise, Annie Reid



WCLT 2008

Committee Reports

Membership Committee

There are currently more than 270 memberships, including 400 individual members. Our membership has remained stable over the past year. This year 13 new members have joined, while a few members have moved out of town. Membership renewals, in June of each year, are a critical source of funds and human resources.

We are delighted to report that members continue to provide financial support and increase their giving amounts. In addition, the 2007-08 Annual Appeal raised more than \$13,000 and successfully reached out to a small number of corporate donors. Special thanks to everyone who contributed throughout the year.

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

Membership renewal letters have been mailed. Memberships will run through June 2009. The Annual Appeal will take place again in November to coincide with year-end giving. Thanks very much to all WCLT members and friends for their continued loyal support.

Maureen Johnson, *Chair*

Public Outreach Committee

The Public Outreach Committee was formed in 2008. The goals of this evolving committee include growing the image of WCLT, bringing the activities and mission of WCLT to a wider audience, communicating more effectively with our membership about WCLT events and issues relevant to the mission of WCLT, increasing member involvement, and promoting green initiatives. This last goal supports the belief among WCLT members that we should live in a more sustainable way and actively work to decrease our footprint on the Earth.

The committee helped publicize the rain barrel program and the raptor event, created a listserv for disseminating information about events and issues, and began a monthly events emailing. In May the committee hosted a joint meeting with the Board of Directors in which Bob Amey presented information about the Community Preservation Act.

Scott Shumway, *Chair*

Kris Allen, Willy Dupres, Scott Henderson, Rosemary Johnson, Tim Koehler, Doug Mosher, Rachel Radin, Annie Reid

Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee is responsible for the care of Westborough Community Land Trust (WCLT) properties, as well as for designing and maintaining trails and developing infrastructure to encourage public enjoyment of local open space.

This year we are continuing our multi-year effort to improve Gilmore Pond, the headwaters of Jackstraw Brook. Through the wonderful support of the Westborough Civic Club in both financial and volunteer efforts, we are working to turn the area into a woodland park. In the last year we cleared over an acre of invasive shrubs and had them chipped and hauled away. The entrance trail to the property was rerouted and a new trail constructed to move walkers away from residences. We worked with the developer in the area to reopen the access road so equipment could be brought in as needed.

This year we started an effort to place property signs on streets where our land lies along public ways. These hanging signs are similar to those that other land trusts in the area use to identify their properties.

We are preparing to add trails connecting Mill Pond School with Nourse Farm and Sudbury Valley Trustees' Walkup Robinson Reservation with Cedar Swamp. Both projects will take place in 2008.

We will also be releasing the first of a new set of maps of the walking trails in town. These maps will be color PDF files that can be downloaded from the WCLT/Charm Bracelet website.

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

Don Burn, *Chair*

Mark Fox, Garry Kessler, John Metzger, Steve Rowell, Ken Slater

Associate members: Kris Allen, Tim Buckalew, Marge Fisher, Barry Hall, Scott Henderson, Harry Newell, Ellen Bishop O'Brien, Al Sanborn, Kim Simpson, Sue Wells