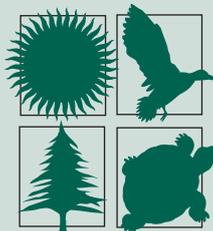


Westborough Community Land Trust

2010 Annual Report





WHS senior Kyle Reed-Edwards received the 2010 WCLT Scholarship

WCLT 2010 Scholarship Awarded

As the winner of WCLT's Earth Day essay contest, Kyle Reed-Edwards of 17 Kay Street received the 2010 Westborough Community Land Trust Scholarship. This award recognizes a deep appreciation and concern for the natural environment on the part of a graduating Westborough High School senior.

Kyle's essay focused on protecting Westborough's natural heritage and highlighted the peaceful area surrounding Gilmore Pond.

Kyle plans to attend the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in the fall.

Two seniors received honorable mention for their essays. Brian Leslie wrote about raising public awareness of storm drain pollution and ways to avoid it. He plans to attend Worcester Polytechnic Institute. Kelly M. Reilly wrote about sustainable living and the importance of local and personal efforts to live sustainably on an everyday basis. Kelly will enroll at the University of Vermont.

Once again the Scholarship Committee was pleased with the entire group of Earth Day essays, especially the level of environmental consciousness expressed in them and the many environmental projects and actions the students undertook. WCLT values the students' thoughts about living sustainably and caring for Westborough's natural environment.



During the 2009 – 2010 season, the Westborough Community Land Trust (WCLT) has continued to provide projects and programs that enrich our community. The climate of general economic uncertainty of the past couple of years has continued and is creating a more challenging environment for our members and donors as well for WCLT. Nevertheless, with the continued commitment of our supporters, we look forward to another year of service to the Westborough community.

As the Charm Bracelet celebrates its tenth anniversary, I'm pleased to report that it is yet nearer completion with the acquisition of multiple new trail easements. The Charm Bracelet and its related trails comprise over 40 miles of well-used, wooded trails, which provide a peaceful break from the rush of suburban life. In addition, the Acquisitions Committee has extended our protection of the local environment to an additional 22 acres along the Assabet River, bringing our total land holdings to 182 acres.

The Gilmore Pond restoration project continues to progress, with a major milestone accomplished last year. WCLT restored the dam, which was failing, threatening the pond and downstream wetlands. The restoration ensures that the pond will be there for Westborough to enjoy for many decades to come. Invasive removal has continued, with most of the shoreline now cleared. Planning can now begin for finishing the trails, re-introducing native plant species, and other amenities.

Our Education Committee continues to field a full calendar of well-received activities. This year's spring program, "Animals in Massachusetts and Beyond", drew over 125 people including scores of young people. Our introduction to nature program is very popular for preschoolers, and walks featuring a variety of topics such as geology, birds, trees, foraging, and tracking attract families interested in local nature.

With a Westborough High School teacher, Anita Lotti, WCLT introduced a new environmental field project to high school students. This multi-year project uses a beetle that the students raise and release to control purple loosestrife, a non-native plant invading our wetlands. The program combines classroom study with practical field experience to raise awareness about local environmental issues and inspire a new generation to action.

Thanks to your enthusiasm, support, and dedicated work, WCLT is strong and making a better Westborough. To continue this work and keep WCLT strong and active, it is especially important during these difficult times that you renew your membership for the next year and continue your involvement in our shared commitment to preserving open space in Westborough. We look forward to seeing you at WCLT events throughout the year.

Garry Kessler, President





WCLT 2010 Committee Reports

Acquisitions Committee

The Acquisitions Committee is pleased to report that it has completed the recording of two additional trail easements. On Belknap Street, a trail easement was granted through the property of Sean Fitzgibbons that connects to the existing open space in the Piccadilly Mill project. At Milk Street, we negotiated and obtained a multiple trail easement agreement with Regal Cinemas Corporation that allows a connection to existing WCLT property and the abutting subdivision. We are currently negotiating additional trail easements in this project from the owner of this commercial property that would provide a complete trail network through this large retail facility.

In addition, we are analyzing the potential to establish a bicycle path on suitable portions of our existing and future trails. We will report back as to the viability of this effort in regards to cost of construction, layout, accessibility, and other critical design factors.

We have also negotiated the receipt of a 22-acre parcel that abuts the Assabet River at the rear of the Tyree property on Otis Street. We have been working with John Schaefer, owner of Otis Street Realty LLC, to obtain this property. This land will link to other WCLT property in the Assabet River Corridor. The owner and the Town are currently reviewing final agreements for the transfer of this property to WCLT. This acquisition would bring the total acreage owned in fee by WCLT to 182 acres.

We have continued our collaboration with other regional land protection organizations such as the Sudbury Valley Trustees and the Grafton Land Trust. We encourage the involvement of other boards and committees, particularly any suggestions and feedback, as we look for more opportunities to protect the natural resources of the town for the enjoyment of all.

Randy Waterman, Craig Richov, Jim Tashjian, Don Burn, Kris Allen, Jon Nourse



Education Committee

The Education Committee welcomed families to the fall 2009 Family Nature Hikes, including “Tree Tales” with retired forester Bill Carr, “Fall Foraging” with botanist Arthur Haines, and “Rock It – Westborough’s Stone Age” with geologist Andy Koenigsberg. Winter 2010 programs featured “Tracking Mammals” with Dr. Martha Gach from Broad Meadow Brook Audubon Sanctuary, presentations on nearby nature centers, and the “Trees of Downtown Westborough” walk with Wheaton biology professor Scott Shumway. Our August field trip to Garden in the Woods focused on meadow butterflies.

The major public event was our live animal Earth Awareness Program, “Animals in Massachusetts and Beyond,” by Animal Adventures of Bolton. This popular April 10 event attracted more than 125 people and was made possible by a grant from the Westborough Cultural Council and the generosity of the Knights of Columbus. On Earth Awareness Weekend, April 24 – 26, Bruce Tretter again coordinated the Town-wide Litter Clean-up, aided by Kris Allen and the Department of Public Works. About 110 individuals picked up a record-breaking 125 bags of trash from roadsides. The weekend also featured a “Spring Migrants” bird walk with Vivian Kimball and Sharon Williams and a presentation by Wheaton College ecology students about invasive species.

Spring programs spotlighted backyard nature at a Wildlife Pelts program for a nursery school, coordinated by Kathy Leblanc, and at WCLT’s insect activity for the 2010 Spring Festival’s Fishing Challenge.

WCLT’s main educational action is the purple loosestrife biocontrol project, spearheaded by Annie Reid with a Staples education grant. High school students in Anita Lotti’s classes raised *Galerucella* beetles that eat purple loosestrife leaves, especially during their caterpillar stage. Janet Anderson’s family tended the insects during the summer. Beetles were released in 2009 at selected wetland sites, where they overwintered successfully.

WCLT’s educational programs are geared to inform the public about the importance of protecting local natural resources.

Kristina Allen, Chair

Janet Anderson, Susan Barnhart, Vivian Kimball, Kathy Leblanc, Leslie Leslie, Elaine Moore, Doug Mosher, Barbara Muise, Annie Reid



WCLT 2010 Committee Reports

Membership Committee

There are currently more than 250 memberships, including 375 individual members. Membership has remained fairly constant over the past year, with four new members joining. We are happy to report that during this difficult economy, members continue to provide financial support, although total contributions have decreased. Membership renewals, in June of each year, are a critical source of funds and human resources. Membership dues totaled over \$7,000. In addition, the 2009 – 2010 Annual Appeal raised \$5,900. Special thanks to everyone who contributes throughout the year.

Active members are crucial to our success in protecting open space and preserving the natural beauty of Westborough. We encourage members from Westborough and surrounding towns who share a deep commitment to the preservation of Westborough's natural resources to participate in WCLT-sponsored events and to get involved in committees to support WCLT initiatives. WCLT-sponsored events such as walks, bird watching, stewardship projects, Earth Day events, and other special events have been well attended. Over 125 people attended the "Animals of New England" special event in April. Membership renewal letters have been mailed. Memberships will run through June 2011. 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



Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee is responsible for the care of Westborough Community Land Trust properties and for designing and maintaining trails to encourage public enjoyment of local open space.

We continue our multi-year effort to turn the Gilmore Pond area of our Upper Jackstraw Brook reservation off Gilmore Farm Road into a woodland park. Through the continuing support of the Civic Club, Congregation B'nai Shalom, and other local groups and enthusiastic volunteers, we have now cleared invasive plants about two thirds of the way around the pond. The work will continue in the summer and fall of this year. We also completed the project to rebuild the dam and make the walking path across it much more accessible in all seasons. This was largest capital project in WCLT's history, with costs approaching \$20,000.

The committee began efforts at the new Indian Pond parcel off Maynard Street to create public access and build a bridge to straddle a ravine across the trail.

WCLT has also benefited recently from many Eagle Scout projects from Troop 100 and Troop 382, including trail improvement (Noah Rhein, Nathan Askew, and Tom Whalen), invasive removal (Kyle Reed-Edwards, Ben Roth, and Sam Pierce) and mapping (David Lamont, James Murray, and Sam Bryan).

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

Don Burn, Past Chair

John Metzger, Acting Chair

Marge Fisher, Mark Fox, Scott Henderson, Garry Kessler, Steve Rowell, Sharon Williams

Associate members: Kris Allen, Ellen Bishop, Barry Hall, Andy Koenigsberg, Doug Mosher, Harry Newell, Hank Rauch, Al Sanborn, Scott Shumway, Kim Simpson, Sue Wells