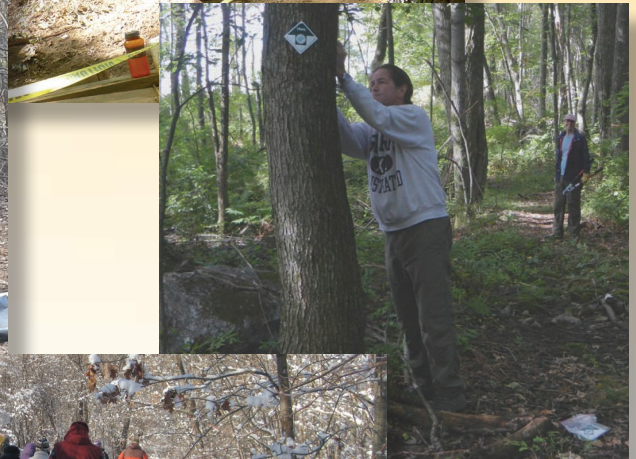
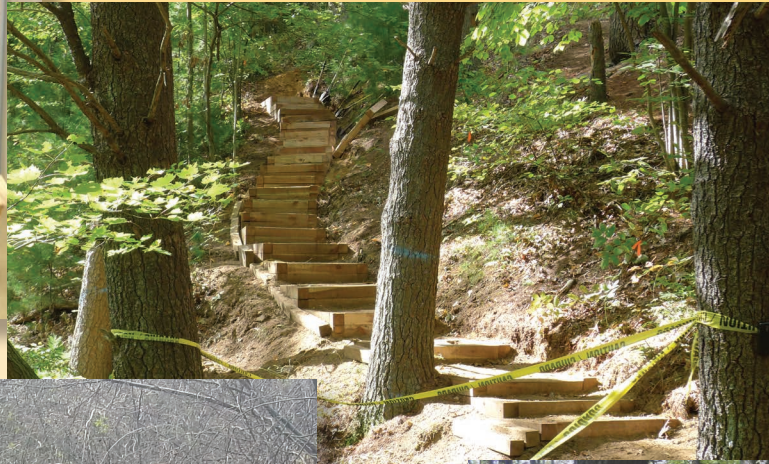


Westborough Community Land Trust 2014 Annual Report





Jeffrey Hannan



Melissa Zhang

WCLT Scholarships Awarded

The Westborough Community Land Trust (WCLT) awarded two \$1,000 scholarships and one honorable mention to graduating Westborough High School (WHS) seniors in 2014. Selections were made on the basis of essays written for WCLT's annual Earth Day essay contest.

Jeffrey Hannan won a scholarship for his essay describing his interest and efforts in ecological conservation involving both long-term projects and personal habits. He will attend Washington University.

"This year's essays show an interest in conservation and sustainability among our high school students."

Melissa Zhang received a scholarship for her essay about her efforts and ideas for cleaning up and preserving a small local pond. She plans to attend the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) in the fall.

Kevin Koenigsberg was recognized with an honorable mention for his essay describing his personal experience in promoting sustainability through recycling, composting, and growing food for the family. He will attend the University of Connecticut.

"This year's essays show an interest in conservation and sustainability among our high school students," said Annie Reid of the WCLT Scholarship Committee. "Their awareness and activities give us hope for a better future for everyone."



President's Letter

We Speak For Open Space

A quote on the gravestone of the great field guide author and bird artist Roger Tory Peterson states, "Birds cannot speak for themselves — I must speak for them." Earlier this year I introduced myself at town meeting by saying, "I am the Lorax and I speak for the trees." Those of us who love nature recognize the need to care for and to speak on behalf of what we love. While open space is pretty good at maintaining itself according to the laws of nature, it is unable to defend itself against changes wrought by the human species.



People sometimes ask me what my vision is for the Westborough Community Land Trust (WCLT). My goal is to let everyone in Westborough know about the good work of WCLT. My top priority is to make significant strides in the race to protect the remaining open space and natural habitats of the town where we live. I want to create a large, actively engaged membership made up of people who readily participate in land trust events, advocate for open space protection, and serve on the committees that carry out the mission of WCLT. We are making progress. Now it's your turn to join us in actively working for positive change and the protection of the natural environment that we hold so dear.

In January WCLT began the second membership drive in the history of the organization.

Sixteen years ago Kate Donahue organized a highly successful membership drive for the fledgling WCLT, so it was only natural to invite her to run our second membership drive. Over 600 letters were mailed to prospective members with help from Maureen Johnson, the Membership Committee, Board of Directors, and other volunteers. Volunteers were inspired to compete for prizes donated by local apiarist Bob Nolan, Emery Family Farms, and Nourse Farm.

We successfully obtained 67 new memberships — an increase of 25 percent — and raised \$3,915. My goal for next year is to create a corporate membership category. Please help us carry out our mission by recruiting your friends and neighbors to join WCLT.

I hope to see you on a trail this summer.

Scott Shumway, President

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 extensively with the Stewardship Committee on the construction of new trails and the maintenance of existing trails. We have also consulted directly with Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT) in situations where their experience and expertise provide a greater opportunity to obtain or protect properties in town.

The LPC has negotiated numerous land transfer agreements with everyone from single-family homeowners to the Massachusetts Electric Company. This year we acquired an easement interest in a 0.4 acre parcel on Haskell Street. After several years of negotiation, we closed on the acquisition of 12 acres of upland in Orchard Swamp from National Grid, bringing the total land owned by WCLT to 172 acres. We are currently in negotiations with several land owners in the Orchard Swamp area (between Route 9 and Haskell ball fields) for an additional 49 acres that would extend our ownership in that one area to more than 120 acres. We also have an agreement in place to acquire the fee interest in 22.5 acres of property on Otis Street. Once all of these acquisitions are completed, our total fee ownership in property in town will exceed 240 acres.

We have created a priority list of additional trails and easements that we would like to obtain to finalize a contiguous loop of nearly 28 miles of trail connecting open space areas and neighborhoods throughout town.

Finally, we have continued our support role on the design and construction of various components of Gilmore Pond Park, a 14 acre open space preserve off Quick Farm Road and Gilmore Farm Road. This year we will assist the Stewardship Committee with the installation of shrub plantings, ground covers, and a gate to complete the entry to the preserve.

As always, we seek the involvement of other WCLT committees in our work to further the goals of WCLT and to protect the natural resources of Westborough for the enjoyment of all.

Randy Waterman, Chair; Don Burn, Darcy Lane, Craig Richov, Carolyn Spring, Jim Tashjian

Stewardship Report

The Stewardship Committee maintains and manages land owned by WCLT and develops and maintains trails on WCLT land and other town land, encouraging public enjoyment of local open space. To accomplish these activities, we collaborate with scout troops, school groups, and other local organizations.

Gilmore Pond, the “jewel” of WCLT’s Upper Jackstraw Brook Reservation, was a major focus this past year. The cleanup efforts around the pond are opening up more vistas. A memorial bench from the Gilmore family has been placed near the northwest corner.

The pond itself was the subject of an intensive year-long water quality study to determine whether treatment to prevent eutrophication would be warranted. Conducted by two of Professor Scott Shumway’s Wheaton College honors students, Annie Bennett and Sarah Moore, the study looked at Gilmore and two similarly-sized ponds for comparison. The conclusion was that Gilmore Pond is not in imminent danger, and although runoff from nearby construction is of concern, chemical intervention is not needed at this time. Many thanks to Jerry Breecher, Scott, Annie, and Sarah for their work.

In April, the Mitzvah Day of service, sponsored by the synagogues in town, brought more volunteers from the community and more scouts from Troop 100 to clear invasive honeysuckle and multiflora rose from the pond edge.

Westborough High School student Riley Taylor rerouted part of the Malley Trail for a civics class project and organized a work party to do painting and clean-up at Gilmore Pond for a National Honor Society community work day.

During the past year, we benefitted from ten Eagle Scout projects that have been completed or are in progress. They included work at Bowman Conservation Area, Headwaters Conservation Area, Hidden Meadow, Indian Pond, Upper Jackstraw Brook, and the Marty Newark Legacy Birdhouse Project. (See WCLT’s June newsletter and the Eagle Scout Project Hall of Fame on WCLT’s web site.)

Special thanks to Al Sanborn for his yeoman service in regularly mowing our trails and trailheads.

Marjorie Fisher, Chair; Warren Anderson, Jerry Breecher, Don Burn, Mark Fox, John Metzger, Brian O’Keefe, Hank Rauch, Al Sanborn, Scott Shumway

Committee Reports



Membership Committee

WCLT now has more than 330 memberships, including over 425 individual members and 70 new memberships. Membership significantly increased from last year due to a very successful New Membership Drive. Membership renewals, in June of each year, are a critical source of funds and human resources. Membership dues totaled over \$10,900. The 2013–2014 Annual Appeal raised \$5,200.

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



*Marty Newark Legacy Birdhouse Project
(photos by Garry Kessler)*

Education Committee

In all seasons, WCLT's educational programs encourage the public to explore, appreciate, and protect local natural resources.

The Education Committee's 2013–2014 Walks and Talks drew hikers onto different trails to enjoy the wild side of Westborough. Marge Fisher led a foliage hike on Crane Swamp Trail, followed by a walk with Mark Fox in November to the hidden meadow at Bowman Conservation Area West. Mycologist Larry Millman, author of *Fascinating Fungi of New England*, explained the ecology of mushrooms and identified the fungi in Wile Forest. January brought a hike through the wintry landscape around Lake Chauncy led by Janet Anderson. Scott Shumway in February presented a virtual tour of the biodiversity of Costa Rica to warm the winter weary. In the spring Wilderness Treasure Hunt, families used GPS devices and treasure maps to discover caches hidden in the Headwaters Conservation Area. A 10-mile hike celebrated the Charm Bracelet trails. At the Annual Meeting, Dr. Mark Pokras of Tufts University Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine described how the cases coming to the Wildlife Clinic reflect local environmental issues.

The 2014 live animal program "The Nature of My Backyard" gave families the opportunity to meet up close some of the wildlife of our New England environment. Naturalist Rick Roth of Creature Teachers introduced a fisher, groundhog, snapping turtle, skunk, and flying squirrel to an audience of more than 200. This program was made possible by a grant from the Westborough Cultural Council and the generosity of the Knights of Columbus.

Westborough's roadsides and parks were cleared of more than 100 bags of trash, thanks to volunteers at WCLT's Earth Day Town-wide Clean-up. Once again Bruce Tretter chaired the event and recruited teams from local businesses, the Civic Club, and Explorer Post 85. The cooperation of Westborough's Department of Public Works was essential to the success of the clean-up.

Kristina Allen and Vivian Kimball, co-chairs; Janet Anderson, Stephanie Garrett, Kathy Leblanc, Leslie Leslie, Elaine Moore, Debbie Okita, Annie Reid, Christopher Sassetti

