



Westborough Community Land Trust
2019 ANNUAL REPORT

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



President's Letter



WCLT's June Annual Meeting is one of my favorites. The two best parts (in my humble opinion) are giving out the awards; and listening to beautiful, informative presentations from guest speakers. This year: Scott Chimileski, a microbiologist and photographer fills us in on the secret lives of microbes. We also reflect on accomplishments and projects of our committees, and look forward to changes, challenges, and new tasks.

I would particularly like to applaud Karen Yeowell (Stewardship Committee member and Board member) and Keith Martin (Stewardship Committee chair) for their efforts in completing a grant application to Massachusetts for funding to improve access at Gilmore Pond. As of May, we are awaiting to hear whether it will be funded. Cross your fingers (and toes). Our other committees continue to do great work that is highlighted in their reports in this Annual Report.

Looking forward to changes ... Keep your eyes peeled this coming year for a WCLT updated website. The Board has taken on this task (some might say finally!) and we are currently in the early stages of redesigning visual content and improving functionality for mobile devices. Our two main goals in updating the website are to 1) improve the user interface/experience; and 2) maintain content that we know is important for our members such as calendars, trail maps, archives, etc. If you have website ideas for us, please contact me.

One final note of change. The Town of Westborough asked me to inform you that the Town has changed dog-walking by-laws. The new language is: "Dogs need to be restrained on public lands. A dog is under restraint if it is on a leash or functioning electronic collar while in range and in sight of the owner or keeper." The by-law applies only to Town-owned land, including land on which WCLT maintains trails. The by-law does not apply to privately owned lands on which WCLT has trails, or to Massachusetts state-owned lands.

Gillian Beamer, President



PHOTO BY GILLIAN BEAMER

Chainsawing at Hocomonco

WCLT Scholarships

In 2019 the Westborough Community Land Trust (WCLT) awarded two \$1,000 scholarships and two honorable mentions to graduating Westborough High School (WHS) seniors. Awards were made on the basis of essays written for WCLT's annual Earth Day Essay Contest.

Nicholas Smaldone won a scholarship for his essay describing a special place behind his home and how it inspired him to work on the issue of the availability of water in a sustainable world. He plans to attend George Washington University to study international affairs and to minor in journalism.



Mary McCormack received a scholarship for her essay about water pollution and contamination and her efforts to change Westborough residents' thinking and actions regarding storm drains on the basis of her insight that people tend to think of storm drains as sewers rather than as drains emptying into local rivers and streams. She will attend Boston College to study biology on the pre-med track.

Bethany Woodcock was recognized with an honorable mention for her essay describing her calling to local community service and her work in mobilizing other students to better the local environment through projects such as the OARS Assabet River Clean-up and WHS Rangers Give Back Day. She plans to attend the University of Pittsburg in the college of business.

Lydia O'Connell received an honorable mention for her essay describing her love of hiking and the Charm Bracelet trail system, her work on trails and bog bridging, and how this inspired her to improve the local environment through water bottle fillers at the high school and the recycling of plastic bags and soft plastics. Before attending the University of St. Andrews to study chemistry, she plans to take a gap year to work on conservation in Thailand and then work as an au pair in China.

"It was wonderful to read the very fine group of Earth Day essays we received this year. All the students who participated show a sincere connection to the natural environment in ways that inspire them to be part of an environmentally conscious generation. As always, WCLT thanks families, WHS teachers and clubs, Boy Scout, Girl Scout, and town organizations for helping to develop environmental awareness in our young people."

~ Annie Reid, WCLT Scholarship Committee

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 with the Stewardship Committee on the construction of new trail projects and the maintenance of existing trails, and in support of the protection of the 195 acres of property we currently own.

We are continuing our effort to protect the open land in the 123-acre Orchard Swamp area (between Route 9 and Haskell ballfields). The committee maintains an amicable relationship with a number of landowners who would like to see their resources protected. We also communicate with builders, developers, and property management firms in our community to evaluate or expand protection and use opportunities. Finally, we are working with various Town boards and committees to provide input on the protection of open space.

We continue to work toward finalizing the Charm Bracelet easements in order to establish a 28-mile continuous loop trail, plus a potential 40 miles of side trails that will connect the various open space areas and neighborhoods throughout the town.

As always, we continue to seek the involvement of other WCLT committees in our work and we commit to working to further the goals of WCLT and to protect the natural resources of the town for the enjoyment of all. Additionally, we welcome any thoughts or recommendations WCLT members may have to further the committee's efforts.

Don Burn, Chair; Adam Last, Craig Richov, Jim Tashjian



PHOTO BY COLLEEN MARIE

Daisy troop and Marge Fisher

Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee maintains and manages WCLT lands. We also develop and maintain trails on other town lands, encouraging public enjoyment of our open spaces while preserving habitat for our native plants and animals.

This year we benefited from several Boy Scout Eagle projects, including a refurbished trailhead into the Libbey Conservation Area from Adams Street, new bridging on the Fox Hill Trail, and improvements to the Malley Trail. Planned and in-progress projects include improvements to the Upper Jackstraw trailhead on Adams Street, new bridging in Wile Forest, and invasive plant management at Gilmore Pond. We continue to be grateful for the incredible support we receive from Westborough's scouting community.

Last summer, our volunteers installed several additional reclaimed bog bridges along the Malley Trail near the Mill Road boat ramp. This spring we performed basic maintenance on all of the 50-plus miles of trail in Westborough. We are currently in the process of installing new weatherproof property signs at our properties around town.

We continue to plan a major multi-year renovation of the trails at Gilmore Pond, where our goal is to create a universal-access All Persons loop trail. The proposed design includes extensive boardwalk sections and a wider, flatter treadway to make the trail fully accessible to wheelchairs (and, incidentally, perfect for strollers). We have applied for a grant that will cover the materials and professional labor, but we will also need hundreds of volunteer hours to complete the construction. If the grant is approved, we intend to break ground this summer.

The Westborough Walks Meetup group remains active and has grown to nearly 1500 members. To join, follow the link on the WCLT home page www.westboroughlandtrust.org.

If you are interested in adopting a trail, would like to pitch in on occasional weekend work sessions, or have noticed a section of trail that needs attention, please send an email to stewardship@westboroughlandtrust.org.

Keith Martin, Chair; Jerry Breecher, Don Burn, Marjorie Fisher, Mark Fox, Guido Lonardo, Brian O'Keefe, Hank Rauch, Scott Shumway, Karen Yeowell



Committee Reports

Membership Committee

From May 2018 through April 2019, WCLT collected 155 memberships and membership renewals. Responses to the WCLT membership drive and annual appeal are a critical source of funds. Membership and annual appeal contributions totaled over \$16,000 for the preceding 12 months ending April 30, 2019.

This year we continued a strong relationship with our business partners EMSEAL Corporation, Pearson Advisory Investor Relations, Thomas Financial Associates, Arturo's Ristorante, and Julio's Liquors. We thank them for their support.

Active members — individuals, families, and businesses — 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.

Several WCLT committees have requested supplementing their present make-up with fresh members: Education, Nominating, and Membership. Any WCLT member can serve on these committees. Time commitment is minimal, often fewer than one meeting and one other event per month. To get involved, contact the appropriate committee chair at www.westboroughlandtrust.org contact or www.westboroughlandtrust.org/volunteer. Please volunteer!

Warren Anderson, Chair

WCLT values our business partners

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

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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**ARTURO'S
RISTORANTE**



**Julio's
LIQUORS**

Education Committee

The Education Committee continued to expand its outreach into the community in 2018–2019 by trying some new programs and increasing attendance at old favorites. October saw two well-received new programs: a Family Scavenger Hunt which drew 75 people from 31 families, and a Twilight to Moonlight Walk attended by 54 people. Our November Glacial Geology walk fascinated 36 people. In January, 51 folks enjoyed our Tracking Walk. Garry Kessler's Birds of Maine talk in February entertained and informed 32 people.

Our March live animal program featured Tom Ricardi presenting "Raptors, Masters of the Sky." Two shows drew 375 children and adults, smashing our previous record of 290 attendees. They met and handled hawks, falcons, owls, a vulture, and an eagle. Thank you to the Cultural Council, Newcomers Club, and Knights of Columbus.

April saw our annual Earth Day Clean-up and Volunteer Picnic at Bay State Commons Green. A record 320 volunteers filled 410 bags with litter, then enjoyed lunch in lovely weather. Thanks to all individual volunteers and those from Westborough Connects; Westborough Gurdwara Sahib; Westborough Civic Club; Westborough Rotary Club; Fales and Mill Pond Schools; Cumberland Farms; Crossfit Prototype; E.L. Harvey; EMSEAL; Explorer Post 85; and several Cub, Boy, and Girl Scout troops. Thanks also to our donating businesses: Arturo's Ristorante, Tavolino Italian Gourmet, Roche Bros., both Westborough Stop & Shops, and Mugford's Flower Shoppe. Big thanks go to the Westborough Department of Public Works.

We had a special Family Hike in April as part of Westborough Unplugged week, attended by 24. On May 18 people enjoyed our Spring Wildflower Walk at Gilmore Pond and the Libbey/Wile forest. The Annual Meeting in June featured "Invisible Worlds" by microbiologist Scott Chimileski. We continue to offer "Nature Notes" in the *Westborough News* and the annual Earth Day Essay Contest leading to two WCLT Scholarships.

Janet Anderson, Chair; Kris Allen, Gillian Beamer, Paula Kirk, Kathy Leblanc, Rachel Radin, Annie Reid, Nancy Wright



PHOTO BY RON SMITH