

# Waltham Land Trust



*Waltham Land Trust, Inc. is a non-profit corporation dedicated to preserving our community's natural resources for the future through education, open space acquisition and protection.*

## QUARTERLY

SPRING 2002

by Allison Mooney

### Nature Education

In early March the Massachusetts Environmental Education Society gathered for its annual conference. One group focused on "How to Teach MCAS and Get Our Students Back Outdoors." The leader summarized three trends observed among children over the past thirty years:

1. Most children are spending less time out-of-doors.
2. Children who are taught to observe can acquire basic environmental information.
3. Children demonstrate a need for connectedness.

Learners who lack direct, personal experience in natural settings can, at best, grasp basics. Experiences out of doors, with memorable, guided observations in all seasons, night and day, can counteract the absence of informal encounters.

Environmental education can satisfy a need for connectedness. Soil, light and water conditions affect plant

### Grant for Greenway

The Waltham Land Trust received a \$4,000 grant from the DEM Greenways Grants Program to raise public awareness about the value of the regional greenway in Waltham, Lexington and Belmont. The grant will be used to produce a brochure, map and presentation.

communities and therefore affect the food available to consumers. The water cycle extends from glacial melt-water to evaporation from tropical seas. Granite eroding on mountaintops travels to form ocean beaches. A sleeping infant's breath provides carbon dioxide to the tree outside the window, which returns oxygen to the infant. Interdependence and connectedness characterize the natural world. Learners can view themselves as part of a vast networks whose cycles support their lives.

Many environmentalists trace their commitment to their own childhood. Two qualities characterize the early experiences: fond memories of a natural place,



photographs by Inge Uhlir

and an adult who shared and reinforced the pleasure. The inspiration of informal experience (ie., bird watching in the back yard with granddad) sustains environmentalists' direction.

We hope that the children in our lives will become caring stewards of our environment. How can we lay the foundation for this concern? *With children, we can facilitate recurring, positive experiences outside.* Consider the following guidelines:

1. Accept individualized ways of learning and observing.
2. Respect the child's way of knowing.
3. Intermingle fun and learning.
4. Expose your genuine fascination.

Each of us arrives in life with aptitudes and inclinations. Temperament, personality, physiological, and perceptual systems influence pursuits. One child may show talent in imitating the motions of animals. Another may be interested in taking apart a cattail stalk to find rainbows reflected off the lining. Poems or pictures of their favorite places will suit others. Nature certainly provides food for thought.

What is thought for a child? Many researchers suggest that children's way of knowing is distinct from an adult's way of knowing. Ruth A. Wilson, Ph. D., author of *The Wonders of Nature: Honoring Children's Ways of Knowing*, describes research in this field. Nature, full of sensory stimulation, excites thought. Many children, when involved in experiences out of doors, express joyful abandon, the result of satisfaction of a child's way of knowing.

For children, one can not safely separate knowing from feeling. According to *The Ecology of Imagination in Children* by Edith Cobb, an "early awareness of some primary relatedness to earth and universe" has been traced to healthy imagination in highly creative adults. Rachel L. Carson believed the corresponding **wonder** could serve as sustenance and motivation throughout life.

Each breath, each step, our water and our food are derived from Nature. An affinity for Nature has been noted by many; E.O. Wilson coined the term *biophilia* in a book by the same name (Knopf, 1984) to describe the trait. However, the love of Nature needs **nurture** to flourish. Shared experiences in natural settings and respect for learning styles and children's ways of knowing cultivate biophilia and, hence, respect for the environment. Avoid the adult world's pitfalls of over-emphasis on global threats to the environment, commercial pressures favoring resource consumption and over-reliance on facts separate from personal observation.

Learning and pleasure are mutually reinforcing. Pleasure, then, is a firm foundation for learning. The challenge is to affirm and enjoy the children's experi-



ence without succumbing to pressure to fit their knowledge into a set framework. Lasting lessons arise within the child.

As a child, I sought earthworms among composting grass in the back yard. As an adult, I have studied them with fourth graders and continue to rescue worms stranded after rain. Vivid memories of feeding Mary the turtle with my mother excite me viscerally. Now, my daughter and I feed her turtle. You could tell your own stories. Have you shared them with the child or children in your life?

What are ways adults can be leaders? Set the stage!

1. Plant a child's favorite vegetable in your yard or on your porch. Tend it together and share the harvest with others.
2. Grow a hideaway! In a sunny spot scratch a 2" deep, 6'x 9' rectangle leaving a 2' gap in one side. There, plant sunflowers and morning glories alternately. As sunflower heads form, weave string between; morning glories will complete the roof.
3. With permission, plant a variety of gardens (herb, shade, wildflower) at local playgrounds and schools.
4. Follow the example of *Roxaboxen* by Barbara Cooney, which illustrates children's use of natural materials in play.
5. Make stationery using pressed flowers and leaves picked by children.
6. Choose a favorite story about Nature and act it out.

The examples above fall into three categories enumerated by Ruth Wilson: (1) Provide frequent access to natural places, (2) Foster 'natural play' activities, and (3) Encourage aesthetic representations of



children's ways of knowing. The bibliography includes additional resources.

If you provide opportunities for children from infancy on to **experience Nature directly** you will help create a lifelong concern for Nature, build foundations for lessons in school, and satisfy the need for connect- edness—yours and the child's.

Allison Mooney, a WLT Board member, currently teaches "Nursery School Naturalists" at Habitat, a Massachusetts Audubon Sanctuary. Her parents fos- tered her Nature experiences through gardening, sail- ing, camps and museums. Allison extends special thanks to Clare Walker Lesley and Fran Hutchinson for their inspiration and encouragement.

For an extensive bibliography on related topics see [www.walthamlandtrust.org](http://www.walthamlandtrust.org) or send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to WLT bibliography, P.O. Box 1120, Waltham, MA 02454-1120. 🌿

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*Marc Rudnick*

## Notes from the field

One of the most enjoyable parts of the work for the Waltham Land Trust is getting out and walking the land. Many of us have been exploring sections of the city's open space and particularly segments of the Greenway proposed by the Waltham Land Trust and other organizations in Waltham, Belmont and Lexington. The proposed network of trails includes a walk from Mass Audubon's Habitat in Belmont to the Paine Estate in Waltham in a continuous corridor of open space, with only 7 road crossings.

Here are my trail notes for one such Greenway seg- ment—from the YMCA road off Lexington Street to the Lyman Estate, about 2 miles, one way.

Start this segment at the YMCA road, just below the old garage across Chester Brook from Lexington Street. Heading south, the trail is clear, well developed and pleasant, with Chester Brook in a broad marsh to the west, keeping Lexington street at a good distance. This well-traveled section terminates at the north end of the Kennedy School, but head uphill to the left before the end to find a web of trails that eventually funnel down to one or two trails heading east and uphill. The trails make their way around "the Pit," Kennedy's athletic field on a high ridge, then drop down along some rocky slopes. Cross a stream on one established trail that rises into the narrow wooded strip between the High School and the Pit. This terribly littered section has well- defined trails to the HS road. Cross the road and turn left (east) and walk to the end of the guardrail to the trailhead of a path which heads back west, dropping below the built up roadway.

The trail soon makes a sharp left turn and heads south into the heart of Chester Brook Woods, the 26 acre parcel recently acquired for protection by the city. This trail is blazed with white paint and is known as Pine Springs Trail. Cross Chester Brook Woods and enter the Storer Conservation Land deep in the woods near the intersection of Paine Pass on the left. Bear left at the Storer Path intersection, remaining on Pine Springs. The next right is the Hemlock Trail which bends to the left almost immediately and continues southwest, intersecting most of Storer's trails. Pass by the ruins of an old foundation and enjoy nice views of Stonehurst, Robert Treat Paine's mansion.

The trail ends at the northwest corner of the parking lot for Stonehurst. Cross to the southwest corner to continue on the Morrison Trail, which winds its way through piney woods and down the hill. At the Cart Road, the trail winds around the abandoned tennis courts and turns southwest to join the historic Meeting House Walk.

Continue west to the end of the walk, at Gentleman's Way. Carefully cross Beaver Street, continue in the same direction and approach the spur road coming from the entrance to the Lyman Estate. Where the spur joins Beaver Street, step over the stone wall and walk along the perpendicular wall up the hill. As you keep the impressive wall on the left, the greenhouses come into view on the right. The trail curves right around the greenhouses and drops to the Lyman parking lot. Cross the lot, stay on the edge of the lawn, keep the woods on the left and walk in a big counterclockwise curve around the mansion. As you reach Lyman Street turn left and walk a short way to the bridge. Enjoy some time at Chester Brook, or turn right to return to Beaver Street and the walk back. 🌿

Inge Uhlir

## Mass Land Trust Conference a Big Success

This year seven members of WLT attended the day-long Mass Land Trust Coalition Conference in Worcester. Over 350 participants registered for extensive choices of topics covered in talks, seminars, roundtables and informal sessions. The Trustees of Reservations once more co-sponsored the annual event held this year on the campus of Worcester Academy.

The Waltham Land Trust is a member of the MLTC. That organization is increasingly helpful to land trusts big and small, old and new. Organizational guidance, updates on current hot topics and professional expertise in many fields are among the valued services provided by MLTC to the 150 land trusts in our state.

WLT Board member Chris Rodstrom participated in a presentation about fund raising. Chris described our recent efforts coordinated by the Development Committee to establish a Land Preservation Fund. Land trusts from Williamstown and Barnstable also shared their successful efforts to raise funds.

WLT members focused on varied topics that included Conservation Restrictions, Smart Growth, Tax Incentives for Conservation Easements and Common Land Management Challenges. A highlight of the conference was a plenary session featuring congressman Jim McGovern (a graduate of Worcester Academy) who has sparked a land preservation effort over many years in Worcester. He now takes that challenge to the federal level through his commitment to restore funding in the Department of the Interior budget for the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

To demonstrate the urgent need for all levels of government to support preservation of remaining natural land and water, Secretary of Environmental Affairs Bob Durand warned that development consumes 2 acres an hour in Massachusetts. According to recent data some 44 acres are developed per day. Durand warned that there is another "land grab" to be concerned about: the oceans have risen eleven inches over the past hundred years. Sea levels are predicted to rise 21 inches over the next hundred years.

During informal gatherings at the conference there was a lot of praise for the current campaign sponsored by the Nature Conservancy. In nationally televised ads that feature the voice of Paul Newman, the Nature Conservancy's goal to "Save the Last Great Places" is forcefully presented. The Waltham Land Trust seeks the same end. 🌿

## Invitation to a Guided Walk May 29, 2002

*Explore Nature's bounty with a knowledgeable guide to edible plants.*

On Wednesday May 29, WLT member Russ Cohen will lead a walk in Waltham's Prospect Hill Park to identify plants that are edible by humans. Come join us at 6 P.M. in the parking area on the south side of Totten Pond Road, one third of a mile east of Route 128. CitiBus # 12 can take you there in ten minutes from Waltham Center.

Russ works in the Riverways Program of the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Wildlife. He volunteers his time to help interested people get to know and value vegetation that provides forage possibilities. He has scheduled over twenty walks all over the state from now through September.

Russ became a wild foods enthusiast through a high school mini-course, Edible Botany. Within two years Russ had learned enough on his own to teach the course in his senior year. After a trip to the Soviet Union in 1989, Russ added mushrooms to his repertoire.

The Greater Boston Area is home to over 150 species of edible plants, many of which are more nutritious and/or flavorful than their cultivated counterparts according to Russ. We expect to find two dozen or more species during the PHP walk in May. We will learn keys to identification of each species, which parts are edible, seasonal availability and even recipes. The goal is to enlarge the group of people who can practice safe and responsible foraging.

To learn more details visit Russ' web site at [www.ultranet.com/~mulberry](http://www.ultranet.com/~mulberry).

The walk on May 29 is free and open to WLT members and non-members. It is expected to conclude at dusk. Wear comfortable shoes and bring a notebook and pencil to help recall details for identification. Cameras are optional. The walk will take place rain or shine, so dress according to the weather. 🌿

Councillor Robert G. Logan, a member of WLT, sent us a clarification about a name that was used in a Quarterly article by Elisabeth Carter.

He explained that the Veterans Memorial Mall is only that area between the "Striker Monument" (Spanish American War) and Main Street. The park as a whole around City Hall is simply the Waltham Common.



## Statehouse Lobby Day

The Waltham Land Trust participated in a day of lobbying for the Environmental Bond Bill (H4909) in March. Over 180 organizations with statewide membership of more than 260,000 participated by sending 175 individuals to the State House. The united message was: State funds are needed to preserve valued open spaces, natural resources and recreation areas all across Massachusetts.

The interests of WLT that can be furthered by passage of this legislation include agricultural preservation, biodiversity protection, open space acquisition and aquatic vegetation control. Rep. Tom Stanley is focusing his efforts on funding for flood control in Waltham and other communities after securing \$900,000 from prior appropriations for the continued dredging project at Hardy Pond.

Rep. Marie Parente, chairman of the Committee on Long Term Capital Debt recommended favorable action for \$650 million of the \$725 million sought by Acting Governor Jane Swift. Steven Crosby, Chief of Staff for Gov. Swift, applauded the grassroots efforts in support of the Bond Bill. This legislation now awaits action in the House Ways and Means Committee.

Speaking as a supporter of the efforts of the Coalition for the Environmental Bond, Senator Tom Birmingham pressed for action by the House “sooner rather than later.” He vowed to file similar legislation in the Senate if delays in the House make that necessary.

The organizations that played a key role in this joint effort included Massachusetts Audubon Society, the Trust for Public Lands, the Environmental Lobby of Massachusetts and the Mass Land Trust Coalition (MLTC) of which WLT is a member.

Updates on the status of this important initiative can be found on the web site of the MLTC at [www.Massland.org](http://www.Massland.org), including information on how to contact your representative and senator and urge him or her to support the Environmental Bond Bill. 🌿



Stephen Rourke, WLT President, accepts a \$3500 grant from Crossroads Community Foundation Program Officer Rebecca Donham

## Biography

This continues our series about Waltham Land Trust Board of Directors members.

**Chris Rodstrom** was elected to the WLT Board of Directors in October 2000. Chris has worked professionally as a land protection specialist for The Trustees of Reservations since 1997. His work with The Trustees is focused on protecting land in central Massachusetts, Cape Cod, and Martha’s Vineyard, and involves handling gifts of property, negotiating conservation restrictions, and purchasing land. His professional experience also includes work for Conservation International in Washington, DC, the U.S. Forest Service in Idaho, and the MDC Belle Isle Reservation in East Boston.

Chris and his wife Jennifer enjoy hiking, skiing, and riding through many of the local parks and trails, particularly the Storer Conservation Area. Chris was drawn to the mission of the Waltham Land Trust at an early public meeting, and saw the chance to serve on the board—and work on land conservation in Waltham—as a natural compliment to his day job.

Chris has been active on the Development Committee, leading two hikes on Jericho Hill in September 2001, and helping to organize a capital fundraising campaign to create a Land Preservation Fund. Chris also serves on the Board of Governors of Gore Place. 🌿

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## Coming Events

### Earth Day

Saturday May 4 Waltham celebrates Earth Day at Prospect Hill Park, 10:00–3:00 P.M. Look for the WLT exhibit to test your recognition of our local treasures.

### International Migratory Bird Day

Saturday May 11, International Migratory Bird Day, Museum of Science. Special one-hour presentations with live owls are scheduled at 12:30 P.M. and 3:00 P.M. in Wright Theatre. For more information please call Sue Wythe Stoessel at 617-589-0349.

### Rivers Month

Rivers Month in Massachusetts May 11 through July 7: Events will be posted on the WLT web site.

### Waltham Land Trust Guided Walks

1. Wednesday May 29, Prospect Hill Park, 6:00 P.M. to dusk. Learn about edible wild plants.  
(see story on page 4)
2. Saturday June 8, 10:00 A.M. Meet at the Cedar Hills Girl Scout Reservation, 241 Beaver Street.

### Historic Waltham Days

Saturdays June 1–15, Waltham Common, other locations.

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### *Waltham Land Trust Officers and Directors:*

Stephen Rourke (President)     Marie Daly (Vice President)

Laura Cannon-Ordile (Clerk)     Marc Rudnick (Treasurer)

*Members:* Lela Chiavaras, George Darcy III, Dave Kehs,

Daniel Melnechuk, Allison Mooney, Joris Naiman,

Chris Rodstrom, Inge Uhler, Roger Wrubel, Eileen Zubrowski.

## Waltham Land Trust's Mission

We are a group of Waltham citizens who want to save open  
space in our city. Our mission is to acquire, preserve or restore  
land in a way that:

- balances conservation and access,
- maximizes the natural value of land,
- reduces habitat fragmentation, and
- permanently protects and conserves natural resources;

So that

- public appreciation of natural resources grows,
- native habitat is preserved and restored, environmental  
quality of life is improved (air, water, noise and light  
pollution are reduced),
- biodiversity is increased, and
- a legacy of conservation is perpetuated in Waltham.

Please send any comments to the return address on the mailing  
panel, or email to <[memberlink@walthamlandtrust.org](mailto:memberlink@walthamlandtrust.org)>.

Waltham Land Trust  
PO Box 54-1120  
Waltham MA 02454-1120

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## Waltham Land Trust Membership Application

I wish to  join    renew   at \$15 per year.

I wish to make an additional donation:

\$15    \$25    \$50    Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in donating land or establishing  
a conservation easement. Please contact me with  
more information.

I wish to help by volunteering. I have skills in:

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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