

# 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

SUMMER 2003

### TRANSFORMATION, THEN AND NOW

*Jenn Dean*

“Nature is rude and incomprehensible at first” wrote Walt Whitman in 1856, in his *Song of the Open Road*, adding “be not discouraged, keep on, there are divine things well envelop’d...” Whitman comes to mind often, as do the telling observations of Emily Dickinson, one of Massachusetts’s most famous poets, when I frequent the Riverwalk:

Nature rarer uses yellow  
Than another hue;  
Saves she all of that for sunsets, —  
Prodigal of blue,  
Spending scarlet like a woman,  
Yellow she affords  
Only scantily and selectively,  
Like a lover’s words.

Though Dickinson rarely left Amherst until she died at the age of 55, and Whitman traveled widely in comparison, both found creative impulse (some would say genius) in nature. In Whitman’s extended paeans I’m reminded of a certain transformative Romanticism inherent in 19th-century visions of nature. A vision we can still glimpse today, save for the fact that our sight too often is clouded by the detritus of 21st century life: cigarette butts, Styrofoam cups, and plastic bags.

And, in one recent and memorable instance, a life-sized stuffed bear cub.

The bear cub, as well as four shopping carts, four bags of recyclables, two railroad ties, two suitcases, several sleeping bags, and one large rusty oil drum, were pulled from the Charles River and its banks during the Fourth Annual Charles River Cleanup, in the area between Newton Street and the Watertown line. A half-

### WLT COMMITTEES CAN USE YOUR HELP

The Waltham Land Trust encourages all members to become active in furthering its mission. The best way to do this is to become active in one of the WLT committees. The following articles describe the activities of the four major committees.

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dozen Waltham Land Trust members, neighbors of the Riverwalk, and a Troop of Boy Scouts led by George Bryant, Bill Vanderclock, and Ward Nine City Councilor Robert Logan gathered on the river bank on Sunday April 13th, to find, as Whitman said, “divine things well envelop’d.”

Unlike Whitman’s divine things, our birches, oaks and maples were surrounded by every sort of rubbish one could imagine. The day’s first find, a life-sized stuffed bear cub which soon became the unofficial cleanup mascot, was fished from the river by several Boy Scouts. Taken to the entrance of the Riverwalk, it elicited attention from passersby on Newton Street as it sat on its dripping haunches next to several garbage bags. One elderly Italian woman walking by assumed it was alive, and in need of dire veterinary help. She spoke

*continued on page 3*



INGE UHLIR

*Trash collected at the Charles River Cleanup*

## MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

*Inge Uhlir*

This committee has a long name and a long agenda. The name can be shortened to MOE and our agenda is broken down into manageable parts.

First, of course, is Membership Growth and Development. We try to find ways to bring WLT to the attention of a wider circle of friends. For example, our very successful Gift Membership program last year allowed reduced dues for a membership given by another WLT member. We also seek to involve more members in the active work of WLT. The explanation of committee work you are reading here is aimed at accomplishing that goal.

Another important part of Membership is keeping track of our member lists and updating addresses, e-mails, phone numbers and other relevant information. *We do not share these lists with other organizations.*

For WLT members who like to meet and greet the public, we invite you to become a part of our Outreach team. Outreach plans public presentations at community-wide events like Fall Festival, Historic Waltham Weeks, and perhaps Concerts on the Common if we have enough willing volunteers. Our web site <[www.walthamlandtrust.org](http://www.walthamlandtrust.org)> is a 24/7 global outreach tool that links us to many other interested groups or individuals. Take a look and make some suggestions.

Our Quarterly newsletter bridges both Outreach and Education. We welcome your suggestions for future articles. Any expertise that you can bring to WLT that fits in with the protection, preservation and enjoyment of open spaces in Waltham will enrich us all. Our Education mission was a major component of our Earth Day exhibit in May and will be part of our fourth Annual Meeting on October 22, 2003. Please help with the plans.

Members of WLT helped with a series of walks for third graders in May and June through the Storer Conservation Land, a new WLT effort to bring our support of outdoor enjoyment to school children. With your help we can develop new educational initiatives.

Your ideas are needed to make our organization strong and productive. Thank you for being an active member.

Inge Uhlir may be contacted at 781-899-2844

## THE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

*Kate Buttolph*

The Development Committee is striving to raise funds to support the Waltham Land Trust, a rewarding effort. Funds are used for publication of this quarterly, creation of the Western Greenway brochure, promoting the City of Waltham's natural places, renting a simple office space, and other expenses of a small nonprofit land trust. In 2002 the Waltham Land Trust began actively seeking large donations and grants to be used to acquire some of the last remaining green places in Waltham, some of which still provide "homes" for rare or endangered species of plants, birds, amphibians, and reptiles. Part of what makes Waltham, and all cities livable, with a high quality of life, is its parks. Preservation of unpaved areas protects drinking water, provides land for local farming, and provides recreation areas for residents and families. The Development Committee needs volunteers to write grant proposals, put on events, lead walks, and generally promote the WLT.

A generous donor has offered to match new memberships dollar for dollar and every dollar over \$15 for both new and renewing memberships, up to a \$5,000 maximum.

A second donor will give WLT \$50 for every \$50 gift, up to a total of \$1,000. That is only for the first 20 people. Thus, WLT will gain \$2000 if we receive \$1000 in donations from supporters. A gift to WLT is a gift to a healthy quality of life in Waltham for you and your family.

## THE GREENWAY COMMITTEE

*Roger Wrubel*

The Subcommittee for the Western Greenway is pleased to welcome new members: Mike Tabaczynski, Andrea Golden, Magnus Snorrason, Michael Burns, John Dieckmann, Sheila FitzPatrick, and Philip and Christy Lawrence. Along with Marie Daly, Roger Wrubel and Allison Mooney, these volunteers have begun work in committees, focussing on presentations to organizations, distribution of brochures, trail development and website information.

Presentations have been delivered to; First Church, Belmont, Women's Alliance, W.C.O.N.A. (Waltham Council of Neighborhood Advocates); Citizens for Lexington Conservation; Belmont Citizen's Forum; The Waltham Rotary; and the Winter Open House of the Waltham Land Trust.

Further publicity was garnered through an article in the Boston Globe (3/27/03) as well as local newspapers.

Committee members also take every opportunity to voice their wish to include a stretch of land on the Fernald Center grounds in the Western Greenway loop.

The brochure is currently available through local public libraries and Conservation Commissions. Copies of the brochure were also sent to organizations such as The Appalachian Mountain Club and sites included in the Western Greenway loop, such as the Lyman Estate.

The Lexington Planning Board is considering a proposal to build a 27 unit condominium development on their portion of the Olympus Hospital property. The Greenway committee has sent a letter to the Lexington Planning Board, requesting that a trail linking the Met State Hospital to the state land around Olympus be included in the plan. We intend to appear at the Board's next meeting to argue for the trail link.

The Waltham Land Trust's website will soon feature a landing page about the Western Greenway, with a link to a "downloadable" version of a map of the proposed Greenway loop along with site names and guidelines as well as an overview of the Western Greenway and contact information. Site specific maps and other details provided by landowners will follow.

The Trail Development Committee is going to bicycle a complete proposed loop, which will later be recorded onto Global Positioning Devices and translated into computer files and subsequent maps.

All involved bring many talents and affiliations to their work on the Western Greenway. It truly is a regional effort!

## THE LAND COMMITTEE

The Land Committee maintains an inventory of the open space parcels in the city and keeps track of the status of each parcel. Land Committee members are also involved in WLT-sponsored walks, sometimes looking for trails and clearing poison ivy.

Volunteers can help in this effort, in both indoor and outdoor activities. Anyone with skills in researching property records and deeds could be most helpful. We would also like WLT representatives to attend various public meetings and take note of discussions involving open space parcels.

Moving outdoors, volunteers with GPS skills might help map trails in various segments of the Greenway and help and planning a proposed nature walk trail for the Forest Street Park.

## Transformation *from page 1*

little English, and after great effort I convinced her that the bear was not real.

From then on, the day unspooled smoothly, and by the time we finished, the sun had come out. That Sunday, nature was returned to its "rude and incomprehensible" glory, thanks in no small part to the support of the Charles River Watershed Association and Senator Warren Tolman's office.

As it did in Whitman's day, the watershed provides nesting and feeding territory for a startling array of migratory and resident birds. Perhaps you've noticed the dipping flight of Yellow-rumped Warblers, or Tree Swallows with their florescent blue heads and napes skimming across the river in summer. Or Hooded Mergansers, pulsing across the water's icy surface in winter, displaying their dramatic puffed hoods of black and white feathers. Abandoned fishing line, plastic rings from six-packs of soda or beer, and other trash pose strangulation hazards for all of these radiant creatures (to borrow a romantic bent of my own).

The Romanticism that colored Whitman and carried forward as a literary and artistic movement died out thoroughly by the 1960s in America. But the romantic's belief, that the "divine things" in nature awaken in us our desires and dreams, can still be glimpsed. Stroll the Riverwalk for yourself, and see if it isn't true.



DAVE KEHS

*The open spaces of the Fernald Center will be featured in the WLT Fall Greenway walk (See Upcoming Events)*

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An electronic file (pdf) of this newsletter is available on our website. <[www.walthamlandtrust.org](http://www.walthamlandtrust.org)>

*Editor:* Dave Kehs *Design/Layout:* Amy Rothstein

*Officers:* Stephen Rourke (President), Marie Daly (Vice Pres.), Laura Cannon-Ordile (Clerk), Marc Rudnick (Treasurer)

*Directors:* Katherine Buttolph, Lela Chiavaras, George Darcy III, Dave Kehs, Daniel Melnechuk, Allison Mooney, Joris Naiman, Robert Stanton, Inge Uhler, Roger Wrubel, Diana Young

## 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 below, or email to <[memberlink@walthamlandtrust.org](mailto:memberlink@walthamlandtrust.org)>.

Waltham Land Trust  
PO Box 541120  
Waltham MA 02454-1120

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Time to renew? Your membership renewal date is on the label. If there is no date, please consider joining today!

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Fall Greenway Walk

Sunday, Sept 28, 2003, 2:00 PM Walk through the grounds of the Fernald Center, 200 Trapelo Rd. Meet at the parking lot on the left, inside the Trapelo Rd. entrance.

### Fourth Annual Meeting\*

Wednesday, October 22, 2003. 7 to 9:30 PM  
Waltham Public Library Lecture Hall.

\*Our by-laws state that the annual meeting is to take place on the third Wednesday of October. This is an official notice that the date has changed for this year's meeting.

## TIME TO RENEW?

Please check the date on the mailing label of this issue of the Quarterly. This is the date that your membership expires. To renew your membership, please use the enclosed membership application and return to:

Waltham Land Trust  
PO Box 541120  
Waltham MA 02454-1220



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