

Waltham Land Trust

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

WALTHAM



JOURNAL SPRING 2006

WLT ACQUIRES ITS FIRST PROPERTY: Why Smith Point?

Marc Rudnick

The Waltham Land Trust is delighted to announce to our members and the Waltham community our first land acquisition – a fifth of an acre wooded promontory on the shore of Hardy Pond. This small but important open space resource will become the Smith Point Conservation Area.

Since its inception the Waltham Land Trust has worked tirelessly to protect the 50 or so largest and most ecologically valuable open space parcels remaining in the city. While we recognize the importance of encouraging and supporting pocket parks and other small green islands throughout the city, we know that the most important work we can do is to protect the resources that provide the acreage, biomass and connectivity needed to support wildlife, biodiversity and recreational opportunities.

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ERICA ZISSMAN

Several hardy souls joined Jenn Dean for duck watching on a cold January Day.

WLT members and friends hike to Boston Rock in Prospect Hill Park on New Year's Day.



INGE UHLIR

LAND TRUST ELECTS A NEW PRESIDENT

Karen Patterson

Current Land Trust Board member Kate Buttolph was unanimously elected President of the Board at the Director's January meeting. Kate brings a wealth of experience in land conservation and non-profit management gained through her service as a Board member and legal counsel for the Delaware & Raritan Greenway Land Trust in New Jersey. Kate has worked in land acquisition and conservation for the D&R Greenway Land Trust, the Massachusetts Department of Fisheries, Wildlife and Environmental

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THE HISTORY OF SMITH POINT ON HARDY POND

Marie Daly

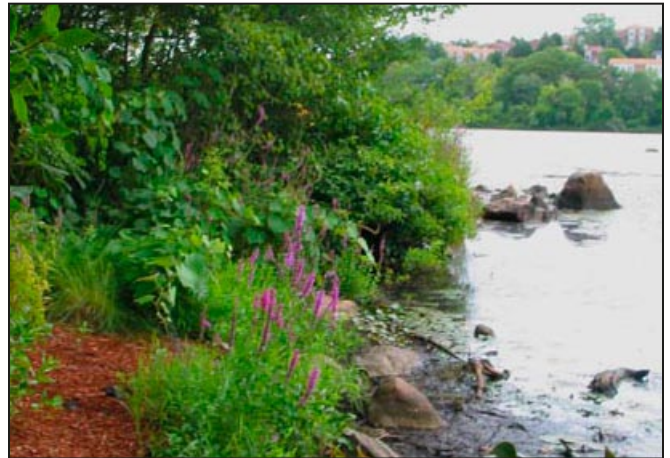
Underlying the modern landscape of Waltham are layers of history, reminders of the peoples who lived here in the past. The history of land around the Great Pond (aka Hardy Pond) is typical for North Waltham. For 10,000 years the land was trekked by native people, who came to its shores to camp and fish. From the 17th through the 19th centuries, the extensive wetlands around the pond were valued by Waltham farmers for its marsh grass – inexpensive winter fodder for their cattle. Although mitigated by the large grounds of state and county hospitals, the trend toward suburban development in Waltham began in the early 20th century. At that time the urban populace of Boston was expanding into formerly farming towns such as Belmont and North Waltham. Also Waltham's south-side factories had attracted industrial workers since the first large-scale mill was opened in 1814. By 1915 developers (and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts) were buying large tracts of old Waltham farms and creating subdivisions, or institutions. The land around the Great Pond was purchased and subdivided in the period from 1919 to 1922 to form the neighborhood now known as Lakeview.

The parcel of land the Waltham Land Trust has just purchased is a small point of land on the western edge of the Great Pond. (The pond was originally called the Great Pond in the Woods, then Mr. Samuel's Pond – after its first abutting landowner, Samuel Saltonstall – Smith Pond, Fiske Pond, Mead's Pond and Hardy Pond.) The point of land is apparent on several historic maps, and one of its most prominent features is a large rock near its tip. For two hundred years, this land was part of a farm owned by the Smith family. In 1716, Jonas Smith purchased the land, and built a house on Lincoln Street, next to

the Fiske farm. The historic Elijah Fiske house built in 1801 still stands at 457 Lincoln Street today. Smith was prominent in Waltham affairs and for years, Lincoln Street, one of the oldest streets in Waltham, was called “the road to Jonas Smith's.” The Smiths were descended from Thomas Smith, who immigrated to Watertown in 1630. By 1650, Thomas Smith had built a house on Trapelo Road near Beaver Brook. The next generation of Smiths moved west along Trapelo Road to the area near Woburn Street. The third generation moved to the vicinity of the Great Pond. By the 18th century there were several Smith farms along the western end of Trapelo Road, Lincoln Street, and what was later to be named Smith Street.

Jonas Smith's farm came down in the Smith family to Nathan Smith, and then his son, Everett Smith. In 1914,

Two views of Smith Point on Hardy Pond



MARIE DALY



DAVID KEHS

Everett Smith's widow Georgiana sold the 120-acre farm to Herbert Prescott Sheldon, a young lawyer from Newton. Sheldon and his wife Elsie lived in the historic Smith homestead until 1921, when they sold the land to Everett Milner, who within two months "flipped" the parcel to the Moody Land Trust. (The Moody Land Trust was a for-profit, real-estate development business, and is the polar opposite of the Waltham Land Trust, which is a non-profit, land-conservation organization. The Moody Land Trust had nothing to do with Moody Street in Waltham.) The principal owner was Henry S. Moody, who was born in 1864 in Illinois of New England parents. By 1880 after the death of his father, young Henry moved back to Boston with his mother, who worked as a dressmaker to support her family. By 1915, Henry S. Moody was living in Milton, was engaged in the real estate business and specialized in purchasing large waterfront properties and subdividing them into small lots. He intended to develop these subdivisions as inexpensive camps and second-home summer bungalows for working class families. In 1920, Moody was living in Palm Beach, Florida, where he was developing a 15-mile stretch of ocean-front property. In the early 1920s, Moody purchased the Smith, Umbrello and Hardy farms along Lake Street, College Farm Road and Lincoln Street, and called the subdivision Mount Lake Villa. (Another real estate developer, the Bay State Realty Exchange, had already purchased in 1919 the historic Fiske farm, and created the subdivision Lakeview Park, a name that has since been applied to the entire area.) In 1922, the *Boston Globe* newspaper described Mount Lake Villa as having one-mile of lake frontage, and covered with a large growth of pine, shade and fruit trees.

The Moody Land Trust did not sell all of the lots in Mount Lake Villa. Among various unsold parcels were Lots 370 and 371, which formed a point of land that juts into the Great Pond on its west side near Hibiscus Avenue and Lake Road. In the Great Depression of the 1930s, the City of Waltham took the land from the Moody Land Trust for non-payment of taxes. The property was later sold by the City and has had several owners since. The penultimate owner, Ken Kasabian, inheriting a long backlog of unpaid taxes and having moved away from Waltham, donated it as a conservation gift to the Hardy Pond Association. The Association, also unable to clear the tax title, recognized that the Waltham Land Trust was in the best position to protect "Smith Point." The history of this land typifies the transformation of natural areas into farm land and then into suburban subdivisions, albeit in this rare case, an undeveloped parcel. The Waltham Land Trust intends to retain the land as a natural area to be enjoyed by all.



WLT President Kate Buttolph

New President *from page 1*

Law Enforcement, and now the U.S. Department of the Interior. She has handled land preservation conveyances involving conservation easements and fee purchases, and her expertise was instrumental in the Land Trust's recent acquisition of Smith Point.

Founding member and original President Stephen Rourke will continue to serve on the Board of Directors of the Land Trust and give voice to the goals of the Land Trust in municipal government. Stephen's deep concern for land preservation in Waltham and his experience in municipal governance as a City Council member combine to make him a highly effective part of the Land Trust's efforts to preserve open space in the City. Last year Stephen worked tirelessly to help pass the Community Preservation Act, and will now be instrumental in establishing the Community Preservation Committee that will implement the Act.

The Board regrettably bids farewell to Board members Scott Siderman (elected in 2003) and Jenn Dean (elected in October 2005) who are relocating from Waltham to Seattle, Washington. Scott was Chair of the Development Committee and implemented many new ideas and projects, including the Green Space Blues Jam fundraiser, a new full-color membership brochure, and the Land Trust's new Business Partnership. Jenn served as Co-Chair of the first Green Space Blues Jam and lead many informative bird walks for our members. We will miss their expertise, enthusiasm and energy, but wish them well in their new endeavors.

Get Set for the Third Annual Green Space Blues Jam

Jenn Dean

Get ready to dance your winter blues away on Friday, April 21, 2006, at the Third Annual Green Space Blues Jam to be held once again at Stonehurst. The fixed-price tickets will include live blues from the acclaimed Mike Williams and the Greenspace Jam Allstars with special guest Michelle “Evil Gal” Willson; a finger-lickin’ good dinner courtesy of Jake’s Dixie Barbecue and, new this year, a vegetarian alternative from our friends at The Skellig; desert from our favorite Lizzie’s Ice Cream; and wine, beer and soft drinks from Gordon’s Fine Wine and Spirits. Tickets for Waltham Land Trust Members are \$45; \$55 for non-members. (Nonmembers can apply for membership on the order form and purchase tickets at the reduced member rate.)

This popular Land Trust event is a chance to mingle with friends, sample great food and drink, and boogie away those extra pounds acquired since winter solstice. And if you’ve never been to Stonehurst at the Paine Estate, you’re in for a treat. The former home of Robert Treat Paine, the unique 19th century mansion is nestled on 134 acres of woodlands and meadows. Inside the house, while the band plays in the Great Hall, you can wander among the paneled rooms and marvel at the magnificent carved woodwork and marble and tile fireplaces. Or wander out to the terrace and look over the grounds designed by Frederick Law Olmstead. Between the buffet, the open bar, and the band, you’re sure to meet old friends and make new ones. Whether you come alone or with friends, you’re guaranteed a great time. And your ticket price will be supporting a great cause to boot. This is our only fundraising event of the year, and we do our best to make sure everyone has a blast while supporting the Land Trust’s important land preservation efforts throughout Waltham. Tickets are limited due to restrictions on attendance at Stonehurst, and the event has sold out, or come very close, since its inception 3 years ago. So mark your calendars now and keep an eye out for your invitation in the mail, or contact Karen Patterson at 781.893.3355 for more information.

The cover photo from Waltham Rediscovered entitled “Waltham from the summit of Prospect Hill. Clarence Hemingway and the Pratt girls.” Circa 1893. Photo courtesy of the Waltham Historical Society.

Why Smith Point *from page 1*

So why have we chosen to invest in tiny Smith Point? Beyond the obviously difficult dynamic of a young organization seeking protection for parcels worth many millions of dollars, Smith Point has natural and strategic features that give it an importance unrelated to its small size. Smith Point lies in the center of one of the most ecologically diverse and yet highly developed areas in Waltham. The conversion of the pastoral Great Pond in the Woods to a densely developed suburban neighborhood started with the Moody Land Trust (see the accompanying article by Marie Daly), continued with the blasting and denuding of Stearns Hill to build Windsor Village, and continues today with the construction of the Ridge apartments and the persistent squeezing of ever more homes on the small lots of Lakeview. Smith Point is part of a precious strip of pond frontage that has escaped the onslaught of development.

Under ownership and protection of the Land Trust, Smith Point will be one of the few natural spots that the public can enjoy at Hardy Pond, either viewed from Lazazero Playground along Lake Street, or through visiting the point by boat or on foot. More significantly, abutting Smith Point to the west lies some 25 acres of undeveloped upland, wetlands and red maple swamp providing habitat for deer, fox, opossum, raccoon and muskrat as well as nesting sites for wood ducks, herons, mute swans, and other bird species. This land is a patchwork of public and private parcels, eroded along its edges by development—still largely intact but vulnerable. Ownership of Smith Point makes the Waltham Land Trust a stakeholder in these environs, and will help us achieve our greater goal of protecting this entire ecosystem as the Great Pond Conservation Area. From a tiny acorn...



UPCOMING EVENTS

Editor's note: Please check our web-site calendar at www.walthamlandtrust.org for any changes to the events and additional programs of interest. For more information about any of these events, please contact Karen Patterson at 781.893.3355 or kpatters@walthamlandtrust.org unless another contact is noted in the description.

Wednesday, March 15th, 7 PM

Waltham Land Trust Presents "Two Historical Farms in Waltham and Weston." Land Trust Board member Lesya Struz and Waltham resident George Gallitano will give a talk about two farms, Cornelia Warren's in Waltham and Marion Case's Hillcrest Farm in Weston that played an important role in both communities. Waltham Public Library Lecture Hall. Co-sponsored by Community Farms Outreach. Please contact Inge Uhlir for more information at (781) 899-2844 or 75122.1245@compuserve.com

Friday, April 21st, 7:30-11 PM

Waltham Land Trust Third Annual Green Space Blues Jam!

The Third Annual Green Space Blues Jam will once again be held at the historic Robert Treat Paine Estate, Stonehurst and feature music by Mike Williams and the Greenspace Jam Allstars with special guest Michelle "Evil Gal" Willson. This is a fun, exciting event that also raises important funds to support the work of the Land Trust.

Saturday, April 29th, 9 AM-12 PM

Charles River Watershed Association Riverwalk Cleanup. Starting place will be at the west end of the Shaws parking lot, near the Mary T. Early Bridge (where Willow Street meets River Street). Gloves, T-shirts and trash bags will be provided by CRWA.

Sunday, May 7th, 1 PM

Waltham Land Trust Jericho Hill Cleanup. Put on your long work pants and shirt and join us for some much needed cleanup and maintenance of Jericho Hill. The site has long been used as an out of the way party place and has lots of broken glass that needs to be cleaned up. For directions to the meeting place, contact Karen Patterson at 781.893.3355.

Saturday, May 20th, 2 PM

Exploration of the Girl Scouts Cedar Hill Campus. Meet in the lower parking lot, 265 Beaver St.

Saturday, June 3rd

Turtle Walk Along the Central Division Rail Line in Weston to look for turtle nests. An added feature nearby is an old cranberry bog with pitcher plants in bloom. For time and meeting place please contact Inge Uhlir at (781) 899-2844 or 75122.1245@compuserve.com

Wednesday, June 21st, 6 PM

Eat Wild Walk with Russ Cohen in Prospect Hill Park. Waltham is home to over one hundred species of edible wild plants. Join foraging expert Russ Cohen, author of the book *Wild Plants I Have Known and Eaten*, who will provide keys to the identification of each species, information on edible portion(s), season(s) of availability and preparation method(s), and guidelines for safe and environmentally-responsible foraging. Meet at the Totten Pond Road entrance to the Park.



INGE UHLIR

Waltham Land Trust members re-enact the 1893 photo of Boston Rock that is now the cover of Waltham Rediscovered, New Year's Day 2006.



DAVID KEHS

Outgoing WLT President Stephen Rourke chairs the Annual Meeting.

THE COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT IN WALTHAM – NEXT STEPS

Stephen Rourke

Thanks in large part to the efforts of a diverse coalition of land and historic preservationists and affordable housing advocates, Waltham voted to adopt the Community Preservation Act (CPA) back in November. Now its time to turn our attention to the implementation of the Act, first through the establishment of a Community Preservation Committee and then through the selection of projects to support with the first year's funds.

The next step in the process is for the City Council to adopt an ordinance establishing the Community Preservation Committee. The CPC will administer the Act and make recommendations for funding to the City Council. The CPC consists of between 5 and 9 members, including representative from each of the following local boards: conservation commission, historical commission, planning board, board of park commissioners, and housing authority. Up to four additional members may be selected.

The CPC is charged with several important responsibilities:

- Studying the needs, possibilities and resources of the city regarding community preservation
- Consulting with existing municipal boards in conducting such studies
- Holding one or more public informational hearings
- Publishing an annual report which includes the results of its studies
- Making recommendations to the City Council for acquisition, preservation, rehabilitation and restoration projects that will benefit open space, historic preservation, community housing and recreation.

The Land Trust will be a strong advocate for the adoption of a thorough, deliberative, fair and transparent process of implementing the Community Preservation Act in Waltham.

IN HONOR AND IN MEMORY

Donations have been made in memory of the following persons who cared deeply about Land Preservation in Waltham:

- John B. Musetti
- Douglas Needles
- George Randel

Donations have been made in honor of the following persons who care deeply about Land Preservation in Waltham:

- Kit Burstein
- Norm Hirschfeld
- Stephen Rourke
- Susan Weddig

WALTHAM LAND TRUST WELCOMES BUSINESS PARTNERS

Karen Patterson

Since its inception in 1999, the Waltham Land Trust has energetically worked to protect rapidly diminishing open space resources in the city of Waltham. Our work is dedicated to protecting the environment, educating the public, and preserving and enhancing the quality of life in Waltham. Last summer the Waltham Land Trust inaugurated its new Business Partnership Program as one way to make Waltham an even better place to live, work and do business.

Most business people realize that a healthy, vibrant community is necessary to attract a good work force and sustain a successful business. Businesses that join our new Business Partnership provide financial support for the Land Trust's Programs and display the Land Trust logo and membership brochures in their place of business. In return, the Land Trust will publicize our Business Partners' support to our members and the public through listings in our newsletter and on our web-site. As the Land Trust's membership grows and the number of our Business Partners increase, we believe this will be a mutually beneficial program for both our members and our Business Partners.

Since the beginning of the Partnership Program we have welcomed six businesses into the Partnership Program. If you are a Waltham business owner, or know someone who is, and would like to work with the Land Trust to make Waltham a better place to live, work, and do business, please contact us at 781.893.3355 or

WLT BUSINESS PARTNERS

Citizens Bank, Waltham Hannaford branch
55 Russell St
781-894-3004

FastSigns
922 Main St
781-642-7446

Myofascial Pain Treatment Center
1275 Main St
781.894.9430

**Park Lodge Hotel Group (Marriott Courtyard/
Holiday Inn Express/ Home Suites Inn) of
Waltham**
455 Totten Pond Rd
781-890-3000

Stanton Insurance Company
230 2nd Ave
781-893-3200

Superior Shoe & Boot Service
839A Main St
(781) 893-6930

kpatters@walthamlandtrust.org for more information about the Business Partnership Program.

THINK GLOBALLY, ACT LOCALLY!

Karen Patterson

Whether you've volunteered for the Land Trust in the past, or have always meant to but never quite got around to it, now is the time to get involved! Below we've highlighted several volunteer opportunities, but if you have skills not mentioned here that you would like to offer please do so as well. Karen can be reached at 781.893.3355 or via email at kpatters@walthamlandtrust.org.

Office Assistance needed – The Land Trust has a new membership management software program, and we have lots of work to do to get historical and current data entered into it, so that we can provide timely communications with our members about Land Trust events, advocacy and membership dues. If you have a few hours a week, or even a month, to come in during

business hours and help Karen out with this, please let her know.

Development Committee Members needed! – The Development Committee just lost its energetic and enthusiastic Chair, Scott Siderman, who is relocating to the West Coast. Now more than ever, we need to get people involved with the Development and Membership committee. Without funding, we cannot do the important land preservation work that our members value. We particularly need people with grant writing, membership development, and marketing experience, but the only real prerequisite is a love for Waltham's open spaces and the desire to protect them. So please consider getting involved in this important aspect of the Land Trust's work. Contact Karen to let her know of your interest.

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An electronic file (pdf) of this newsletter is available on our web site, <www.walthamlandtrust.org>.

Officers: Katherine Buttolph (President), David Kehs (Vice Pres.), Marie Daly (Clerk), Diana Young (Treasurer)

Directors: George Darcy III, Daniel Melnechuk, Joris Naiman, Stephen Rourke, Marc Rudnick, Lesya Struz, Inge Uhler.

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>.

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If you're not already a WLT member and have received this complimentary copy, please consider joining today!

WLT LAND PRESERVATION FUND NEEDS TO BE REPLENISHED

As you may know, the Land Trust has a Land Preservation Fund that can be used to support the acquisition of land for preservation as open space. The Land Trust used about \$11,000 of this fund in the acquisition of Smith Point. We need to replenish this fund so we will have the financial resources the next time such an opportunity comes along. To make a donation to the Land Preservation Fund, please return the enclosed membership application form and check off the Land Preservation Fund box. And thank you!

Please renew or join

To renew or join please use the enclosed membership application and return to:

Waltham Land Trust
PO Box 541120
Waltham MA 02454-1220

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