

Waltham Land Trust 1999–2009

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

JOURNAL SPRING 2009



WLT Board member Inge Uhler and Mayor Jeannette McCarthy glide across the water during the annual Hardy Pond Association picnic and boating event. The well attended June event, jointly sponsored by the WLT and the Hardy Pond Association, featured good fun, lots of food, and culminated in eagerly anticipated raffle drawings. The lucky winners took home a canoe, a bike, and a REI gift certificate.

THANK YOU, JENNIFER!

Back in July, 2007, long-time WLT member Jennifer Rose agreed to jump in on a temporary basis as the Land Trust's Interim Program Manager. Jennifer worked for the Land Trust for 15 months, contributing to special events and educational programming, as well as membership and fundraising activities.

We asked Jennifer about her Land Trust staff experience. "What I am proudest of," she responded, "is reviving volunteer committees, adding more sponsors to the Jazz/Blues Jam, and helping develop a whole annual plan of monthly events that highlighted different open spaces around the city. In spite of living in Waltham for more than 30 years, I was not familiar with many of the open spaces so I was glad to get to know about them myself! It was a pleasure working with such a knowledgeable and hard-working board, who really make most things at WLT happen, rather than its being a staff-driven organization. Even

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CITY MOVES TO ACQUIRE LOT 1

David Kehs

On January 26, 2009, the City Council voted to approve the acquisition of the Waltham portion of "Lot 1", a 6.45 acre parcel that was formerly part of the Middlesex County Hospital, using funds from the Community Preservation Act. The next step will be for the city to negotiate the terms of the deed with the Division of Capital Asset Management (DCAM).

Open Space Acquisition Scorecard

The purchase of the Waltham portion of Lot 1 represents yet another step in the city's effort to acquire critical parcels of property for the purpose of open space protection. This effort began in 2000 when Mayor David Gately formed the Committee to Study Land Acquisition for the Preservation of Open Space, co-chaired by city councilors Robert Kelly and Ed

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ANNUAL MEETING

WLT's ninth Annual Meeting took place on October 22, 2008 at the Northeast Elementary School.

The meeting began with an engaging talk by Hollie Emery, a UMass student working on the Boston Area Climate Experiment. This project at the UMass Field station is studying the effect of climate change on New England ecosystems. To simulate the atmospheric warming and altered weather patterns we can expect in the future, BACE researchers have created test plots of soil and vegetation which are subjected to varying and controlled amounts of heat and rain.

The most important area the project is looking at is the role that soil "respiration" may play in global warming. The underlying question being explored is the idea of a kind of feedback loop. In this loop, as our soil is increasingly warmed by climate change, its microbes "breathe" out greater amounts of CO₂. This in turn produces further warming of the atmosphere, resulting in even warmer soil – and greater amounts of CO₂.

Some of the effects of atmospheric warming, Hollie reminded us, may be a loss that would be hard for New Englanders to ignore. Indigenous trees, birch and maple for example, can be expected to move further northward as temperatures increase. Even if they stay, without the cold nights that create vivid colors, we would see much more muted fall colors.

The BACE began collecting its baseline data in 2007. Researchers anticipate at least five more years are needed to produce meaningful results.

Susanne Whayne at the Farmers' Market



Environmentalist of the Year

The annual meeting also featured the presentation of the Environmentalist of the Year Award. This award recognizes an individual's outstanding efforts to achieve results and support the goals of the WLT. Past recipients of the award include Mayor Jeannette A. MacCarthy, DCR Planner Dan Driscoll, and citizen activist Jeremy Price. This year's award went to Susanne Whayne who has volunteered in a variety of ways to preserve open space. Her efforts have helped expand appreciation of the Chester Brook Trail, and increased public awareness of the Land Trust by establishing a presence at the Farmers Market, and initiating the marketing of caps, totes, and tees.

Board member elections

The membership re-elected WLT board member and vice-president Diana Young to another three-year term on the board and elected Marjory Forbes as the newest WLT board member. Marjory, a nearly life-long resident of Waltham



Marjory Forbes joins the Board

and recently retired teacher, has a strong interest in conservation and protection of open space. She is an active member of the Brookline and Menotomy Bird Clubs and believes that educating the community, particularly children, about ways to care for our environment is important for its future well being.

LAND TRUST AT THE MARKET

Last summer for the first time the WLT was a weekly presence at the Waltham Farmers' Market. Our table provided information on our activities and offered logo caps and totes for sale. We plan to continue next summer and are looking for volunteers. Consider helping out; it's a great way to spread the word - and there's time for your weekly vegetable shopping, too!

HAWKS AND RAPTORS AND OWLS – OH MY!

Susanne Whayne

Without a doubt, a highlight of February school vacation had to be Natasha Hawke's captivating presentation on hawks and raptors. Natasha, a licensed falconer and vice-president of the Mass. Falconry and Hawk Trust, was accompanied by Cupid, a barred owl, and Brady, a red-tailed hawk. As the crowded room at the Prospect Hill Lodge watched in rapt (and raptor) attention, Natasha described the unique characteristics of these amazing creatures. Did you know, for example, that raptors use their night vision to follow a mouse's urine trail to capture their prey? Or that one of the owl's ears is higher on its head than the other, which helps it triangulate the sound? She also described how she hunts with them, not for her dinner – the high rabies rate discourages that – but for theirs.

Typically, Natasha will trap a young hawk in the wild. As "hunger will win over fear," the "manning" process uses food to accustom the bird to the human presence. Eventually he will eat from her hand (she wears the heaviest welder's gloves), respond to a whistle and is ready for hunting. But after the hunting season, Natasha, who sees raptors as wonderful wild creatures rather than pets, releases them in the spring, at the end of the hunting season. We share the earth, she reminds us, with birds like these. Look up to the sky to see your neighbors!



AMY ROTHSTEIN

Natasha Hawke holds Cupid. The barred owl was rehabilitated after being hit by a car, although he is unable to fly well enough to hunt successfully.



AMY ROTHSTEIN

Natasha with Brady, a red-tailed hawk she trained for hunting. The red you see on his head is his hood, which keeps him calm.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Warm-Up To Earth Day

Saturday, April 11 9:30a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
240 Beaver Street

Support green space while having a great time. Local products and crafts, raffles and fun activities

Kids' River Walk

Wednesday, April 22 at 1 p.m.

Moody Street River Walk

A guided walk along the river. Story telling and refreshments.

Mystery Walk

Sunday, April 26, 9 a.m. to noon

Join us for a walk to ...sorry, we can't tell you!

Meeting place to be revealed when you sign up at lsturz@walthamlandtrust.org

Wild Flower Walk with Cornelia Warren

Sunday, May 17, at 1 p.m.

A walk at Cedar hill followed by refreshments.

RSVP by May 14.

For full information on these and more events, check our website www.walthamlandtrust.org or call 781.893.3355.

Thank You Jennifer *from page 1*

though my professional interests run more to 'filled' (in particular urban downtowns), rather than open spaces, I am honored to have spent this time as interim program manager."

Jennifer has returned to consulting work. Her memorably named business, *Downtown Diva*, provides start-up services as well as marketing, promotional, and technical expertise to towns and small businesses. Her current work includes a project that will improve Waltham's downtown. Thank you, Jennifer, for all your contributions to making Waltham a great place to live!

WELCOME, CINDY!

In October, 2008, Cindy Hutchison, as the Land Trust's new Program Manager, jumped enthusiastically into the preparations for the 5th Annual Green Space Blues Jam. Surviving that activity, Cindy is now a part of all the activities of the Land Trust and is learning the ways of the group.

In July, Cindy retired from 30+ years as a librarian, most recently as Director of Library Services at the New England College of Optometry. Over the years Cindy has worked with many environmental groups. As a Maynard resident she enjoyed water-monitoring activities with the Organization of the Assabet River. After moving to Waltham she participated in stream work with the Charles River Watershed Association, as well as WLT activities.

We all welcome Cindy to the Land Trust office!

If anyone doubts the hardiness of New Englanders, here's proof positive! On New Year's Day, a cheerful crowd assembled for the now-traditional walk at Prospect Hill Park.



Acquisition of Lot 1 *from page 1*

Tarallo. The committee's first five recommendations were submitted on May 29, 2001. These five parcels are now owned by the city. They are:

1. Chesterbrook Woods. 25.5 acres adjacent to the Storer Conservation Land were purchased for \$2,750,000 in June 2001. After accounting for a gift from the owners with a value of \$550,000, the net cost to the city was \$2,200,000.
2. Bemis Spur. 34,897 sq ft (.80 acres) in south Waltham, the site of the planned Chemistry Station Park, was purchased in September 2001 for \$589,798.
3. Jericho Hill. Two parcels totaling 6.49 acres on the summit of Jericho Hill were purchased in December 2001 for \$750,000.
4. Shady's Pond Conservation Area. 35.56 acres behind Our Lady's church on Trapelo Road were purchased in May, 2005 for \$4,457,000.
5. Sanderson Woods. 26.34 acres formerly referred to as Lincoln Woods were taken by eminent domain in September 2007. \$1,800,000 in damage compensation was awarded to the property owner.

In January 2002, the committee recommended that five more parcels be acquired by the city:

6. The 11 acres of former Middlesex County Hospital land that wrap around Falzone Field. This includes the Waltham portion of Lot 1, plus Lot 3.
7. The Berry Farm parcel adjacent to Prospect Hill Park.
8. The UMass Field Station on Beaver Street.
9. The 5-acre Antico property adjacent to Prospect Hill Park
10. The Fernald Center

To date, none of these properties are owned by the city.

COMING IN THE FALL...

Look for a special *Journal* issue commemorating our 10th anniversary. Revisit our past, see what's happening in the present, and share our vision for the future.



A PERFECT DAY, A PERFECT PLACE

Inge Uhler

Way back in time when Native Americans needed grass for their animals they let them graze at a place we now know as Rock Meadow. More recently it was the farm area that provided food and water for the people at McLean Hospital across the street. In the 1960's McLean omitted agriculture from its program and sold the acreage to Belmont.

That was most fortunate for the large, enthusiastic crowd from several communities who enjoyed an afternoon of looking and learning at Rock Meadow, an important part of the Western Greenway. The August day could not have been more photogenic (and indeed an artist was at work capturing the scene) and the variety of life forms we encountered was breathtaking. Thanks to the guidance from Roger Wrubel and Jason Forbes we saw three kinds of bees, more than four species of butterflies, several goldfinches, and an osprey.

And that's not all. Now we know where woodcocks come for their bizarre mating ritual and which flowers attract Monarch butterflies or ladybird beetles. Having the right equipment helped. With Jason's good binoculars we identified the distant-soaring osprey and Roger's butterfly nets and viewing containers with magnifiers gave us a close up views of insects.

These photos only hint at the delights of that perfect day.



LAWN CARE THAT SUSTAINS: A DISCUSSION WITH DEE KRICKER

Susanne Whayne

Spring arrives with tulips and robins, but it also brings something many of us may not be looking forward to: dealing with the lawn. If you missed Dee Kricker's talk last June on sustainable lawn care, here are some questions we asked Dee. Her information should not only make your yard work better for the environment but easier and less time-consuming for you. Definitely a win-win!

Q. What do you mean by "sustainable lawn care"?

A. Simply put, it's caring for your lawn in ways that enhance the soil and support plant life. In contrast, synthetic fertilizers and pesticides harm the living organisms beneath the lawn. In a healthy soil, worms, fungi, bacteria and other microorganisms maintain a delicate balance that builds the soil structure and allows plant roots to better absorb nutrients. But if these beneficial critters disappear, the biological balance is disrupted and the soil effectively "dies." As a result, the soil loses its air pockets, and water either drains too rapidly or pools up and doesn't drain at all. The turf is now even more vulnerable to diseases and weeds – so the homeowner applies even more pesticides, continuing and escalating this harmful cycle. It doesn't have to be this way, though. We can care for our lawns in ways that will sustain the living soil food web and produce a healthy, attractive lawn.

Q. In other words, pesticides harm lawns more than help them?

A. Not just the lawns! Millions of tons of pesticides and synthetic fertilizers go into maintaining lush, green lawns. Unfortunately, these poisons also soak into the ground water, are absorbed by plants and insects, and end up in the food chain of wild animals – and us. Young children are particularly vulnerable as they routinely play on lawns. Rainfall also washes pesticides into storm drains that carry them to rivers, streams, and wetlands. And don't forget that pesticides don't stay outdoors, feet carry them into your households.

Q. What about fertilizers?

A. The bad news is that because of their excessive nitrogen and liming, commercial fertilizers can cause diseases such as leaf spot, brown patch, and snow mold. A comprehensive soil test will tell you whether a chemical imbalance exists. The test will determine the major and minor nutrients available in the soil, the

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2008 GREEN SPACE BLUES JAM: A SUCCESS!

Susannah King

On November 7, 2008, Waltham Land Trust held its fourth annual Green Space Blues Jam (GSBJ) at the Robert Treat Paine Estate. A great time was had by all who attended thanks to great food, music, and company! Although the GBSJ always proves to be a good time, it is also the Land Trust's major annual fundraising event and its success helps us to run our programs and fulfill our mission.

This year's musical entertainment was provided by Waltham's own Mike Williams and the Green Space Blues Jam All-Stars. A fantastic show was put on by Rockin' George Leh on vocals, Parker Wheeler on vocals and harmonica, Amadee Castenell on saxophone, Steve Brown on drums, Wolf Ginandes on bass, and Mike Williams on guitar. The band's lively tunes kept guests out on the dance floor until the very last song.

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An autumn walk in the woods: In October a large group led by Frank Fitzgerald and Gloria Champion, explored the trails through the Berry Farm. The 20 acre plot, part of the former Polaroid Campus, contains a varied terrain of woods, wet lands, and vernal pools.

Sustainable Lawn Care *from page 5*

level of soil acidity (pH), and to what extent the soil is capable of supporting the uptake of plant nutrients. You can purchase soil tests, for a nominal fee, from UMass at: <http://www.umass.edu/soiltest/order.htm>

The good news is that once you have identified which nutrients have been depleted, you have many options for improving soil fertility. Periodic applications of composted cow manure and/or organic compost will eventually restore the soil nutrients and organic materials needed for healthy root systems. Depending on the need, you might also use seaweed, bone meal, soybean meal, fish emulsion, greensand, kelp or compost tea. Many companies now produce slow-release organic fertilizers specifically formulated for lawns, vegetable gardens and flower beds. Earth-friendly lawn and garden products include: Neptune's Harvest, Cockadoodle Doo, Coast of Maine, Anti-Pest-O, Pharm Solutions, Vermont Natural Ag Products (Moo Doo). Check out www.purebarnyard.com for a sample 4-step 100% organic weed and feed lawn care program that has been certified by NOFA - Northeast Organic Farmers Association.

Q. What alternatives to pesticides and fertilizers do we have?

A. Lots! First, consider this: do you really need a picture perfect green lawn without a single dandelion or violet poking through? What about breaking up

your lawn with shrubs and perennials? How about establishing pocket gardens with ground covers, wild flowers, or native grasses? Or creating a rain garden or perhaps a quiet contemplative sitting area? In short, by limiting your lawn area and maintaining it with ecological lawn care practices, you will be better able to prevent outbreaks of disease, weeds and pests. For more information and specific ways to deal with specific pest and diseases, go to our website, www.walthamlandtrust.com



DAVID KEHS

Q. Cutting back on water usage is important to all of us. What are some of the least water-demanding grasses or grass alternatives?

A. Grasses native to New England include: Buffalo Grass (*Buchloe dactyloides*), Big Bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*), Northern Sea Oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*), Broad-leaf sedge (*Carex platyphylla*) Hairy wood-rush (*Lusula acuminata*), Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), Hairgrass (*Muhlenbergia capillaris*),

Q. Suppose we're ready to make the break – no lawn at all. What can take its place?

A. Consider replacing it with sustainable plantings, such as wildflowers or native grasses. Ground covers that will form dense mats of low-growing plants can be also be planted in place of lawns or in pocket areas carved out within lawns. Or you might replace your lawn with garden areas that are both functional and aesthetically pleasing. Whichever you choose, keep in mind that most properties range from dry, sunny open areas to shady tree canopied areas and everything in between. Whether you're creating a shade garden, a kitchen or herb garden, a cut flower garden, or a mixed shrub and perennial bed, the key is to plant the "right plant in the right location." In other words, For the best results and the least maintenance, choose plants that match your yard's light and moisture conditions.

Q. Do you have some suggestions for ground covers?

A. Several! Here are several durable, flowering perennials: Vinca (Periwinkle/Myrtle), Pachysandra, Waldsteinia (barren strawberry), Euonymus, Stonecrop (Creeping Sedum), creeping phlox (*Phlox Subulata*), Ginger (*Asarum*), Sweet woodruff (*Galium oderatum*) English Violets, *Ajuga reptans* (Bugleweed) and low-growing Thymes.

You can also cover your ground beautifully with ground hugging shrubs and a variety of ferns. What ever you choose, planting different types of ground covers in adjacent areas will give your yard lovely contrasting patterns of texture, color and form. And all of this beauty for the less upkeep than a water-consuming, pesticide loaded turf!

Looking for even more information?
Try these websites:

www.umassgreeninfo.org
www.organiclawncare.net
www.beyondpesticides.org

Green Space Blues Jam from page 6

A diverse and delicious array of food was offered from three of Waltham's excellent restaurants. Guests dined on selections from Beijing Star, Little India, and Taqueria Mexico. And what better way to end a meal than with a serving of Lizzy's ice cream?

As the GBSJ is a fundraiser, the silent auction was a focal point of the event. This year marked the second time a silent auction was held and we were grateful to be able to significantly increase the number of items for sale this year. The wide selection of auction items included a weekend at a Maine lakefront home, placemats from India, a handknit baby blanket, and a flying trapeze lesson. The silent auction was definitely a success and the generosity of donors and event guests helped us to meet our fundraising goal.

The Land Trust is thankful for the many sponsors and volunteers who help make this event happen each year. This year's sponsors, in alphabetical order, included Ben Franklin Bank, Capitol Waste Services, Hobbs Brook Office Park, JFF Design Architects and Planners, Johnson Compounding and Wellness Center, Marcou Jewelers, Jeannette A. McCarthy, Myofascial Pain Treatment Center, RTN Federal Credit Union, Representative Thomas Stanley, Superior Shoe Repair, Waltham/West Suburban Chamber of Commerce, and Watertown Savings Bank. Special thanks go to the City of Waltham Planning Department and the Waltham Board of License Commissioners for helping make the event possible.

As 2009 is our 10th anniversary year, we will be holding special events throughout the year. To make this happen, the next GBSJ will be postponed until the Spring of 2010. Stay tuned for our information on our exciting anniversary events – we hope to see you there!

Mike Williams and the Green Space Blues Jam All-Stars



PETER HOLLINGER

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

Officers: Nadene Stein (President), Diana Young (Vice Pres.), David Kehs (Clerk), Marc Rudnick (Treasurer)

Directors: Kate Buttolph, Marie Daly, George Darcy, Marjorie Forbes, Maureen Fowler, Susanna King, Dee Kricker, Daniel Melnechuk, Stephen Rourke, Mike Squillante, Lesya Struz, Dan Taylor, 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!

BUY A RAFFLE TICKET FOR THE WALTHAM LAND TRUST'S TENTH ANNIVERSARY!

Celebrate and support ten years of working to preserve open space in Waltham with a Treasuring Environment and Nature Tenth Anniversary raffle ticket. Tickets are available at walthamlandtrust.org. Three cash prizes range from \$100 to 10% of overall ticket sales (\$500 minimum). The drawing will be at the November 6th at "Laugh So We Don't Cry," an evening with political comedian Jimmy Tingle to benefit the WLT.

PLEASE RENEW OR JOIN

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

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