



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.

JOURNAL SPRING 2011



DAVID KRICKER

View of Waltham Field Station from the fields of the Waltham Fields Community Farm

AGRICULTURE ALONG THE WESTERN GREENWAY:

THE WALTHAM FIELD STATION

Stepping into the plowed rows of an ancient field, I envision the past. In a bygone era, native tribes planted corn, stalked prey and fished the waterways here. Today, as in centuries past, the fields are plowed, the seeds planted and the bounty harvested. This prime agricultural land has been preserved by the generosity and foresight of Cornelia Lyman Warren. To honor her, is to secure permanent protection of these historic farm fields. Be sure to plant your feet in the fertile ground along the Western Greenway!

Waltham: An Industrial ... A Farming Community!

Dee Kricker

Beginning in the 1630s arable lands scattered within the Western and Middle Precincts of the original Watertown settlement were divided and allocated as farmstalls, pastures and croplands for the expanding population of East Anglican immigrants. Numerous fields and meadows stretching north from the Charles River were well suited for grazing livestock and subsistence farming. Land grants included lots within the Waltham Plain, Beaverbrook Plowlands, the Great Dividend, Remote Meadow and the Hither and Further Plains.

Until its incorporation as the Town of Waltham in 1738, most of its 550 inhabitants lived on farmsteads along the Trapelo Road and Beaver Street sections. Historical farming families included the Stearns, Wellingtons, Sandersons, and Hardys along Trapelo Road, and the many Smith family farms along Lincoln, Smith Street and beyond to the area where the Hobbs Brook Reservoir was built. The large country estates of the prominent Gore and Lyman families were farmed, as were the fields of the Cedar Hill philanthropist and dairy farmer, Cornelia Warren. Predating the Warren family's acquisition of the Beaver Street property in 1854, the farmland was owned by Isaac Mixer, 1730, Ephraim Hammond, 1770, and Frederick Lawrence. At the turn of the century, significant numbers of Italian immigrants moved to Waltham and began farming. At first, they grew fruits and vegetables in their yards or vacant lots, and many worked on the North Waltham farms. Eventually, they acquired land for truck farms and orchards and dominated Waltham's farming in the 1920s-30s. The Casella, Rando, Farese, Ricci, Tortola, Tomao, Pizzi and Chicco families and many more farmed here.¹

Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, local agriculture played a significant role in Waltham's economy as it transitioned from subsistence farming to a market garden economy. The enterprising "truck farms" sold their products to an expanding Boston market. Corn, barley, hay, butter, vegetables and seasonal fruit were the major crops, in addition to processed items, such as wool and apple cider. In the late 1800s, these farmers trucked large quantities of milk, pork, beef and vegetables to the Boston markets.

As industry expanded during the turn of the century, farmland increasingly became a valuable commodity upon which new industries and housing for factory workers were built. For example, the site of the Boston Watch Company (1854) that later became the Waltham Watch Company, was once farmland owned by the Bemis family. Approximately 500 acres, including all or part of forty family farms, were destroyed to build the water supply for Cambridge at the Hobbs and Stony Brook Reservoirs in the late 1880s. Many pig farms were purchased for land to build the Route 128 highway and adjacent industrial parks, including the Waltham

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THE LAND TRUST ENTERS ITS SECOND DECADE THE 2010 ANNUAL MEETING

Susanne Whayne

The Land Trust held its 11th annual meeting on October 26 at the First Parish Church. The well-attended meeting featured engaging speakers who presented our recent accomplishments as well as our future goals, plus a delightful slide show by the Land Trust's newest and youngest member.

The evening opened with a presentation by Maia Boni, a student at the Kennedy Middle School. Her slide show, "Preserving Nature," was created as a school project last year when she was a fifth grader. It was so impressive that it came to the attention of Mayor McCarthy who referred it to the Land Trust. Her slides and narrative took us on a walk through Prospect Hill Park, showing us what's beautiful at this site – the flora, the fauna, the view - and what's not: the on-going spectacle of litter and trash. Maia contrasted these sights with photos of her own lovely garden. She also included Q and A's about trash. Do you know, for example, how long it takes for a glass bottle to break down? (You'll find the answer at end of this article) and concluded with "Do Good Feel Good," her tips for and recycling and reusing.

Following Maia was the keynote speaker, Gloria Champion. Gloria led us back in time to the founding of the Land Trust and its beginnings as an umbrella organization for several environmental groups already in existence. Our early goals may have seemed grandiose at the time, but, she reminded us, most have been achieved.

Increased access to the River Walk. Years ago, it would have taken great imagination to envision the scenic walk we enjoy today, along a cleaner, fresher Charles, beginning in Waltham and ending at the Esplanade.

A master plan for the 250 acres of Prospect Hill Park. After its first cleanup in 1988, the need for an overall plan, "one acre at a time" was clear. After five years of lobbying, a consultant was hired and a master plan created.

Hundreds of acres placed under protected status. Especially notable among them is Berry's Farm. This parcel is only 20 acres but contains a vernal pool and acts as a crucial buffer between Prospect Hill Park and the Polaroid campus.



DAN MELNECHUK

Keynote speaker, Gloria Champion

Gloria concluded with her vision of the future, a time when the Prospect Hill area is an integral part of environmental and science studies for elementary school children in Waltham. Her invitation to all of us: "Take a hike! And as you do, think of the many who worked to make this area such a treasure."

Marc Rudnick followed with the presentation of the Environmentalist of the Year award to Mike Tabaczynski. Mike was recognized for his impressive skills and generosity, especially in the area of trail building in the Western Greenway. This year

alone, under his direction, hard working volunteers have created over a mile of new trails in the Shady's Pond conservation area. Numerous walks as well as four beautifully designed bridges have been constructed across wetlands and sensitive areas, and old ones have been reinforced.

Mike's acceptance talk focused on the steps involved in the creation of a trail, from the early discussions that formulate the concept through the leg work that defines the route, finds funding for it and recruits workers, to the final accomplishment. It's a journey that can take up to two years. If the completed project is success (as his certainly is!) the result is a trail you *don't* notice – a pathway so integral to its surroundings that it may

seem as if it's always been there. Mike rounded out his talk with slides showing the trail building accomplishments at Shady's Pond this summer.

Following Mike's talk sincere thanks were given to Mayor McCarthy for her role in obtaining and maintaining the all-important funding to enhance passive recreation in the city.

The meeting concluded with the unanimous election of board members. Elected were: Maureen Bagge Fowler, Cindy Hutchison, David Kehs, Dee Kricker, and Dan Taylor.

How long does it take a glass bottle to break down?

Answer: It can take as long as a million years!



CINDY HUTCHISON

2010 Environmentalist of the Year, Mike Tabaczynski

7th ANNUAL GREEN SPACE BLUES JAM APRIL 29

Maureen Fowler

Please consider attending the 7th Annual Green Space Blues Jam, to be held on Friday, April 29 at Stonehurst – the Robert Treat Paine Estate. This year, we will be entertained by a new band, The Love Dogs. They look to be a fun group – you can preview their musical style at www.thelovedogs.com.

We are hoping for great spring weather as we celebrate our annual event on the lovely Waltham

grounds. We'll be having wonderful food from Gracie's Kitchen and Tacqueria Mexico; Gordon's Fine Wines and Liquors and others will be providing the wine, beer and soft drinks. Lizzy's Ice Cream will follow the meal.

Of course, we'll be having our silent auction. If you would like to contribute to the auction, please contact our program manager, Sonja Wadman. We welcome contributions from our valued members and friends.

The cost of the tickets is the same as last year \$45 for members and \$55 for non-members. You can purchase tickets on the website, www.walthamlandtrust.org, or by calling the office at 781-893-3355.



Stonehurst beckons you to party on April 29!

Storm Drains

Whatever's left on the street today will wash into the Charles River tomorrow. You may have noticed that storm drains near Hardy Pond carry the cautionary message "No Dumping; Drains to River." This is a reminder to residents not to dump toxins into the storm drains. To protect the river, keep in mind:

- Storm drains are designed for collecting storm water run-off only; never use them for dumping automotive or household wastes.
- Never spill oil or leave residue from solvents or chemicals on your street or driveway.
- Check for any oil leaks under your car or truck.
- To eliminate the possibility of detergents or toxins in water run-off, wash the car at a carwash.
- Leaves, sand, litter, and other street debris should be thrown away or recycled, not swept into the storm drains, which is illegal.
- Try to educate your neighbors on this issue if you notice improper practices.

Waltham: A Farming Community *from page 1*

Polaroid 120 acre complex built in the mid-1950s. The last Waltham pig farm was sold to become the 58-acre Bay Colony Corporate Center in 1985. By the 1990s, the last of Waltham's family farms, including DeVincent's, Pizzi, Ricci and Arrigo farms had closed, much to the dismay of loyal patrons.

Cornelia Warren - Philanthropist, Dairy Farmer

Ninety years ago this June, philanthropist and farmer Cornelia Lyman Warren died at the age of sixty-four. Cornelia lived at and later inherited her family's Beaver Street Cedar Hill property that included a 200-acre working farm complete with pastures, cultivated fields, livestock, barns and farmhouses. A woman of wealth and privilege, she was recognized for her devotion to educational and charitable causes, especially, with respect to youth. In Westbrook, Maine, where her father, Samuel D. Warren built a highly prosperous paper mill company, Cornelia's interest in improving the welfare of the mill employees and their families is commemorated by the many structures bearing her name, including a school, fountain, pool, river walk and a well-endowed charitable fund for recreation and athletic programs. A novelist, horseback rider and Trustee of Wellesley College, she took over the management of the family dairy business at the age of 31, when her father died. Cornelia, "has a milk farm at Waltham, 148 acres, with 200 head of stock; farm certified by Cambridge Medical Improvement Soc., supplies milk to Boston, Cambridge, Brookline, and Waltham."²

Cedar Hill Farm to Market Garden Field Station to Waltham Field Station

Upon the death of Cornelia Warren, the Cedar Hill property was divided by the Trustees of her Estate in accordance with the intent of her will. The parcel conveyed to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to be used by the Massachusetts Agricultural College (Amherst) is the current site of the UMass Waltham Field Station that consists of 56 acres bisected by Beaver Street. On the north side of Beaver Street adjacent to the Girl Scouts property, the parcel included several barns, the housing dormitory for the dairy hands, and an extensive 22-acre wetland adjacent to Lawrence Meadow. The wetland area collects water from Clematis Brook, Owl and Cedar Hills and acts as flood retention site during peak water flows. The southerly parcel includes Warren's former corn and hay fields and several acres of prime farmland soil types classified as Haven silt loam, Narragansett-Hollis, and Scio very fine sandy loam.

About the time that Cornelia began managing her father's farm, Boston area growers formed the Boston Market Gardeners Association during a harvest emergency. They successfully petitioned the Massachusetts legislature in 1916 for an extension of the Amherst based Massachusetts Agricultural College to service the needs of market or "truck gardeners" located in the eastern part of the state. The first land acquired was in Lexington, but with the Warren Estate bequest of Cedar Hill parcels the enterprise was transferred to the Waltham site. The Legislature allocated \$25,000. for the construction of buildings and a greenhouse that were completed in 1925.

Originally named the Waltham Market Garden Field Station in 1925, it was renamed the Waltham Field Station in 1930, the (Suburban) Waltham Experiment Station in 1961, and more recently the UMass Waltham Center. It is still commonly referred to as the Waltham Field Station (WFS). Of note, according to the requirements of the Cedar Hill Trustees deed, the premises were to be known by some descriptive title including the name Cornelia Warren, but this has yet to occur.

The field station became a popular meeting place for many commodity groups and a source of specialized service for crop problems as part of the college's Extension work. It quickly grew into a comprehensive technological center serving horticultural industries by conducting academic research and scientific inquiry relating to agricultural products. Plant engineering methods were tested in the laboratories and in the fields surrounding the buildings. Established departments included programs in Vegetable Gardening, Entomology, Floriculture, Nursery Culture, Plant Pathology and a Poultry Diagnostic Laboratory. Famous among the new varieties of vegetables developed at the center was the Waltham Butternut Squash which won an All America





Current view of the Cornelia Warren property

Award as a crook-free crop of great uniformity, high yields, good storage, and flavor.

Today, the W. E. DuBois Library at UMass Amherst has a large repository of publications, newsletters, and documents related to the work done at the center over its history. Specialized research conducted at the site was routinely published in academic journals. For example, the article: *Male gametophyte in maize: Influences of the gametophytic genotype*, authored by Claire M. Johnson, D. L. Mulcahy, W.C.Galinat, was published in *Theoretical and Applied Genetics*, 1976. Another article: *The effect of snowcover on an American dog tick population under a harsh winter environment*, authored by Dr. W. D. McEnroe, was published in the *Journal of Applied Entomology*, January-December, 1984. To chronicle, catalogue and display the nearly sixty year period of this fascinating research era would be a fruitful undertaking.

Educational training and skill development for both the public and professional trades has been a

major focus of UMass Extension's mission at Waltham. Workshops in pesticide training, weed identification, safety for arborists, turf management, and wetlands protection issues are a few of the topics offered by Mass Tree Wardens and Foresters Association, New England Pest Control Association and New England Vegetable and Berry Growers Association among others. For decades, regional chapters of horticultural societies including the New England Rose Society, the Daylily Society, the American Gloxinia & Gesneriad Society, the Bay State African Violet Society, the New England Hosta Society and Ikebana International have held meetings, exhibitions, tended display gardens and enjoyed social camaraderie around their plant interests at the site.

Gradually, in the 1980s, as local farming activity declined, most of the academic research study at the field station was transferred to the UMass Amherst campus, as were faculty and staff. UMass Extension and Outreach programs continued to be offered at the center, but on a limited scale and state funding for infrastructure improvements at the aging site have not kept up with the needs. Even the very popular Soil Test laboratory services ceased to be offered at the site. Though the regional horticultural associations and professional green industry trade groups continued utilizing the station, it was no longer the busy hive of production it had been.

In the next issue of the Waltham Land Trust Journal, we will describe a renaissance at the Waltham Field Station that has transformed the site into a model of sustainable agriculture and environmental stewardship for the twenty-first century. We will also detail a vision for the Cornelia Warren Agriculture Center that will serve the public's interest in local agriculture for generations to come. In the meantime, take a walk over to the farm and volunteer to get down and dirty!

Footnotes

1. Peterson, Kristen A., Murphy, Thomas J. *Waltham Rediscovered, An Ethnic History of Waltham, Massachusetts*. Portsmouth, NH: Peter E. Randall, 1988.
2. *Woman's Who's Who of America: A Biographical Dictionary of Contemporary Women of the United States and Canada, 1914-1915*, edited by John William Leonard, 1914.

Other references

MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report, Waltham [Online]. Boston: Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1980. <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcpdf/townreports/Boston/wlt.pdf>.

Sanderson, Edmund L., Waltham Historical Society. *Waltham as a Precinct of Watertown and as a Town, 1630-1884*. Rutland, VT: Tuttle Publishing Company, Inc., 1936.



ANDREW BONI

KIDS HAVE FUN AT ART IS FOR THE BIRDS

Sonja Wadman

On Thursday February 24 eleven children took part in the Waltham Land Trust’s vacation school activity, *Art Is For The Birds*. The program was held at the Northeast Elementary School and was supported with a grant from the Waltham Cultural Council.

Six girls and five boys from Waltham, Newton, Wellesley and Lexington learned how different physical attributes of birds help them adapt to life in different habitats. WLT Board Member Margie Forbes, a former Waltham elementary school teacher and avid birder, lead the activity. She explained that forest birds such as woodpeckers have strong, chisel-like beaks to drill holes deep into trees for nests and food, while hawks and eagles that soar over meadows looking for food tear prey into bite-sized pieces with their strong, hooked bills. Ducks have webbed feet, which allows them to paddle through the waters of the Charles River and walk on its muddy banks. Herons and egrets, often seen at Hardy Pond, have long toes that support walking on mucky stream and pond bottoms.

While reviewing handouts entitled “Beaks and Feet,” the kids then split up for the art activity. One group made cut-outs of imaginary birds comprised of mixed beaks and feet, while the other painted habitats. After 40 minutes, the groups traded places. In the end, two forests, one river, and one meadow panels were drawn, and a dozen colorful birds were crafted. Satisfied artists reviewed their work as it dried while snacking on oranges and Teddy Grams. They informed Margie and

The 84 participants of the 6th Annual New Year’s Day Walk crowd in for a photo at the South Gate to Prospect Hill Park.

her helpers which habitat their bird should be applied to later.

The vacationing students, ranging in grades first through fifth, stayed late to chat with a reporter from the Daily News Tribune, pose for photographs, and help clean up. It was clear fun was had by all, adults included. One future scientist told organizers she can’t wait for the next Waltham Land Trust vacation activity. We can’t wait, either!



SONJA WADMAN

Shiv Sawhney of Auburndale, Victor Lu of Lexington, and Liam Reardon of Waltham paint a forest scene at the February vacation activity “Art Is For The Birds.”

WELCOME WLT'S NEW PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Sonja Wadman joined the Waltham Land Trust as Program Director in October 2010. She follows up the work of Cindy Hutchison, Program Manager from 2008 until 2010. Cindy has now retired to focus on home and family, but while she was here memberships increased, a regular schedule of programs was offered, and more miles were added to the Western Greenway. She became a member of the Board of Directors in November.

Sonja continues Cindy's progress and has already made lots of changes. She comes to the Waltham Land Trust with a Master's in City and Regional Planning that she earned in 2001 from Cal Poly University in San Luis Obispo, California. Prior to moving back East in 2008, Sonja was a Program Manager for five years at CirclePoint in Sacramento, California. Her duties there involved writing and implementing Public Involvement



Sonja Wadman

Plans for government entities like the US Department of the Interior and the California Department of Water Resources. Sonja also has great work experience at the local level; after working as an AmeriCorps member when the federal program first began, Sonja formed what has become one of the largest creek groups in the San Francisco Bay Area, Friends of Five Creeks.

When asked about her experience at WLT so far, Sonja commented that "I really enjoy planning and being a part of the program events, like the annual New Year's Day and Duck Walks. I love to get outside and talk with our members about the beautiful open spaces of Waltham." Her connection here goes way back. "I grew up in Sudbury, my parents grew up in Auburndale, and their parents grew up in Waltham. Even though I spent almost 20 years living in various parts of California and elsewhere, I am a New Englander and often came home for long vacations. Family walks along the Charles were regular activities for us, regardless of the season and weather."

UPCOMING EVENTS

BIRD WALK

Saturday, April 16, at 9:00 a.m.

Charles River Walk @ Watch Factory

Celebrate Earth Day a little early with a bird walk along the Charles River. This event is co-sponsored with our neighboring nature lovers, the Newton Conservators. Park behind the Watch Factory on Crescent Street and meet us on the Riverwalk.

7th ANNUAL GREEN SPACE BLUES JAM

Friday, April 29, at 7:30 p.m.

Stonehurst, 100 Robert Treat Paine Drive

Buy your tickets for this fun evening of blues, food, drinks, and a silent auction filled with items for every budget. Get tickets now at www.walthamlandtrust.org.

HEALTHY KIDS DAY

Saturday, May 7, Noon to 3 p.m.

Waltham YMCA, Lexington Street.

WLT will join other local groups at the for a day promoting active living. WLT plans to show families where to access trails in their neighborhoods and will have objects on display one might find in Waltham's open spaces.

NATIONAL TRAILS DAY

Saturday, June 4, Details TBA

WLT will celebrate with a work party or clean-up event in the Shady's Pond Conservation Area, where last summer volunteers built bridges and boardwalks to improve over a mile of trail on the Western Greenway. Check walthamlandtrust.org for details.

WALTHAM RIVERFEST

Saturday, June 11, details TBA

In this annual Waltham event, we will offer different walks along the Charles that highlight the flora, fauna, history, and future of this amazing river.

CHATEAU RESTAURANT FUNDRAISER

Tuesday, June 14, 5-8 p.m.

195 School Street, Waltham

Bring your appetites and help support the Waltham Land Trust. It's simple, just bring a copy of the official coupon provided by WLT and then dine in or take-out between 5 and 8 pm, and the Chateau will donate 20% of the proceeds to WLT. The coupon can be found at www.walthamlandtrust.org. Great food for a great cause; it's a no-brainer!

EDIBLE FOODS WALK WITH RUSS COHEN

Wednesday, June 29, 6-8 p.m.

240 Beaver Street, Waltham

Russ Cohen is famous for his books and lectures on collecting edible plants in the outdoors. Russ will share his knowledge of edible plants with us and folks from Waltham Fields Community Farm. This will be an entire evening of fun with WFCF; a potluck featuring our finds and a night of stargazing, lead by an astronomy professor from BU, are scheduled to follow the walk. Come for the foraging, stay for the food and stars with our friends on the Farm.

As always, check www.walthamlandtrust.org for full details.

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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, Marjory Forbes, Maureen Fowler, Cindy Hutchison, Susannah King, Dee Kricker, Daniel Melnechuk, Stephen Rourke, Mike Squillante, 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>.

Please renew or join

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