

# 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 2012

## Trail Stewards Take Control!

*Dee Kricker and Sonja Wadman*

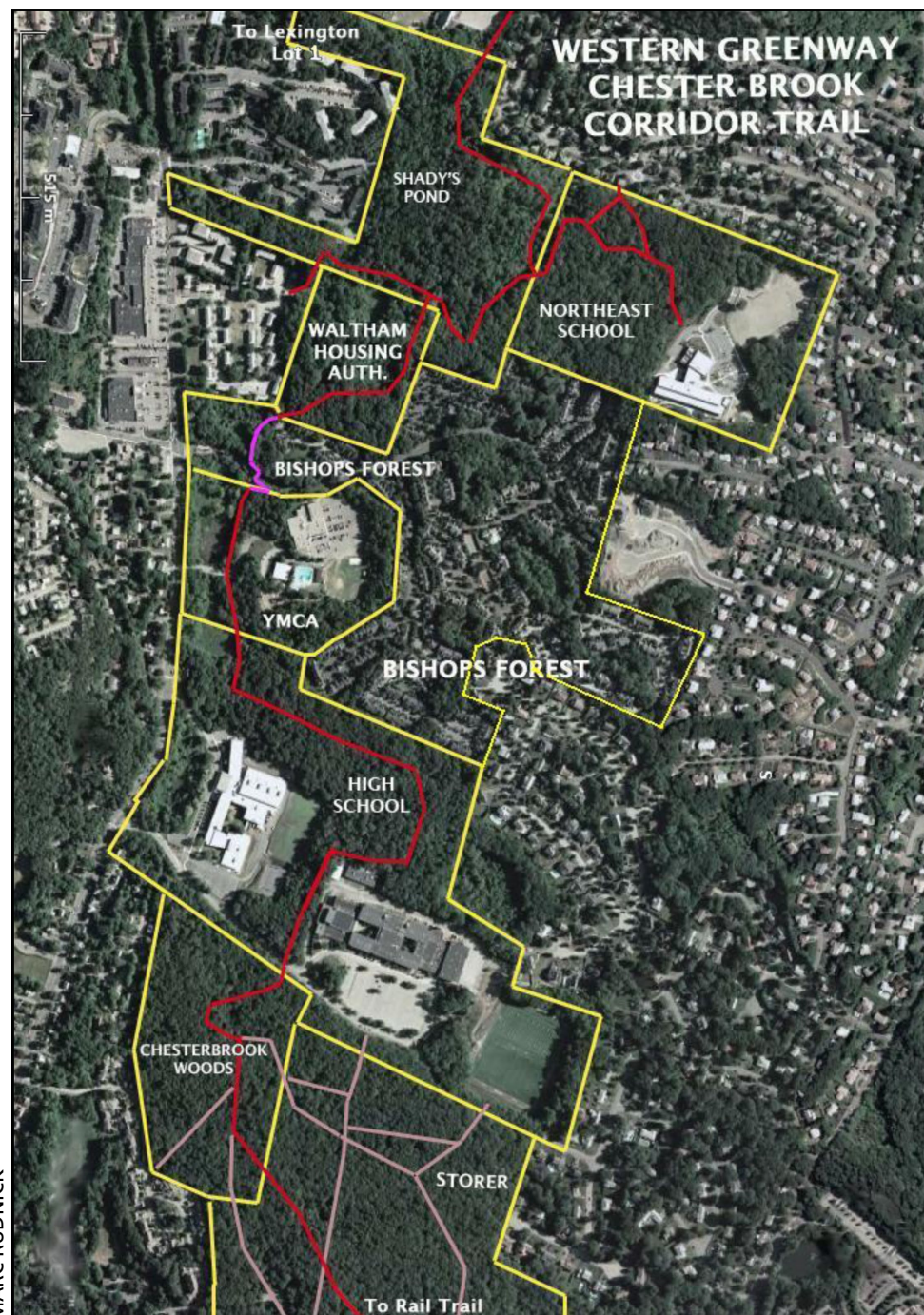
Having invested a significant amount of time and resources over the past decade designing and building

out the Western Greenway, the Waltham Land Trust is now developing a sustainable trail maintenance plan to enhance passive recreation, protect natural and historic resources, and promote forest and watershed stewardship. To these ends, the Land Trust will be graduating this

spring the inaugural group of **Chester Brook Greenway Stewards** to protect and maintain the 3-mile trail segment of the Western Greenway along Lexington Street south of Trapelo Road and north of Beaver Street. This project will be the model for future stewardship groups to be employed along the entire 20-mile looped Western Greenway and elsewhere on Waltham trails.

### What will the Chester Brook Greenway Stewards do?

The Chester Brook Greenway Stewards (CBGS) will participate in a mandatory three-hour training which features a brief classroom lesson followed by in the field applications. Leaders of the Western Greenway Trail Crew will be our instructors, the Northeast Elementary School and its surrounding trails will serve as our orientation site. After satisfactorily completing the training, each Steward will receive WLT's Trail Stewardship Handbook and the *Trail Construction and Maintenance Notebook* produced by the USDA Forest Service. They will also have access to tools purchased expressly for CBGS use. Each Steward will "adopt" a portion of the Chester Brook



Map of the Chester Brook Corridor

continued on page 5



## 12th Annual Meeting Recap

*Diana Young*

The Waltham Land Trust held its twelfth Annual Meeting on Tuesday, October 25, 2011 at the First Parish Church. The first item was to celebrate departing board members Inge Uhler who was retiring from the Board and Cindy Hutchison who was moving to Florida. Cindy was given the Environmentalist of the Year Award, which will now be known as the Inge Uhler Environmental Award.

To celebrate Inge, Mayor Jeannette McCarthy read a proclamation of congratulations from the City and George Darcy read a proclamation from the City Council. Inge was one of the original founders of the Land Trust and has been a director since the Land Trust was formed.

Lesya Struz gave a very informative presentation about invasive species in our midst.

Kevin Hollenbeck, the West District Manager of the Department of Conservation and Recreation, presented plans for the Rail Trail. Marc Rudnick updated folks on the Western Greenway. Susy King announced upcoming special events and Sonja Wadman, the Program Director, discussed volunteer opportunities.

The last official part of the Annual Meeting was the election of directors. Two new members, Joyce Nett and Betsy Lewenberg, were elected to the Board. Kate Buttolph, Marjory Forbes and Diana Young, whose terms were expiring, were re-elected. On completion of the formal activities, the group enjoyed good fellowship and various treats including ice cream donated by Toscanini's Ice Cream.



*Cindy Hutchison receives the Inge Uhler Environmental Award from WLT Vice President Diana Young.*

## Thanks and Praise for Inge Uhler

*From George Darcy, co-founder of the Waltham Land Trust: "Ingeborg Uhler" is a name one would never forget. And for many many decades "Inge," as she is known, has been a citizen activist both in the town of*

*Weston as well as in the city of Waltham. Although 1.43 acres of Inge's home lie in Weston and a smaller 0.47872 acres lie in Waltham, the acreage difference certainly never lessened Inge's impact on Waltham politics and issues related to conservation and environmental protection.*

*As a paper boy for approximately ten years in my youth in Waltham, I distinctly remember reading articles in our then *Daily News Tribune* about an Ingeborg Uhler. In the 1970s Inge was frequently interviewed by news reporters concerning proposed development projects and proposed re-zonings, and their environmental impacts.*

*News reporters were always*

*interested in her knowledge, perspective, and opinion of the important matters at hand. As always, Inge's comments were well prepared, blunt, and pointed, concerning environmental impacts of the projects to the community.*

*As a Waltham Land Trust co-founder Inge has contributed immeasurably to all facets of the organization. While her decision to step aside is a great loss for us, her dedication and hard work over many years stands as a legacy and serves as an example in efforts to further protect our environment and our community.*

*From Marc Rudnick, co-founder of the Waltham Land Trust: I first ran into Inge when she was politely chiding the Waltham City Council about one of the many concerns she had about affordable housing, or Bear Hill development or Polaroid's environmental contamination. Her tone was, as always, friendly and respectful, but she was clearly a powerful foe, armed with both knowledge and wit and an unshakable drive to hold decision-makers responsible for their rhetoric. She mentioned, as was her wont, that she was blessed (or cursed) to live in a home with a front yard in Weston and a back yard in Waltham. I remember thinking how much effort it must take to single-handedly bring progressive change to two hugely different communities while being labeled a breezer in both of them. I have been on her team ever since.*



*Inge pauses while canoeing on Hardy Pond, September 2011.*

SONJA WADMAN

SONJA WADMAN

## Get Ready for Green Space Blues Jam 2012!

*Susy King*

For anyone who has ever attended the Green Space Blues Jam (GSBJ), WLT's major annual fundraising event, you know that it's a night to look forward to: delicious food, spectacular music, unique silent auction items, and great company. This year we continue to offer all of those things, but at a wonderful new venue. On **May 18**, we will host the 2012 GSBJ at the **Charles River Museum of Industry and Innovation**. The Museum is located on the banks of the Charles River in America's first factory, the Boston Manufacturing Company textile mill. While attending the GSBJ, guests will have the opportunity to explore the museum's hands-on exhibits that depict American Innovation and Invention from 1812 to the present. Also, displays from the Steampunk Festival the weekend before will still be

up. As for the evening's band, we are very excited to have secured internationally recognized blues and swing singer-guitarist Duke Robillard. Tickets are on sale now. We hope to see you there!



DAVID KRICKER

Folks "cut rug" at last year's GSBJ at the Paine Estate.



*Duke Robillard*

JOSEPH A. ROSEN

## WORD SEARCH: Animals found in Waltham

B	R	K	C	B	K	C	O	Y	O	T	E	Y
V	Q	Q	G	U	R	G	L	C	U	T	M	L
Y	E	K	R	U	T	D	L	I	W	C	Z	E
F	P	J	T	R	L	W	O	M	L	H	C	R
M	O	F	I	S	H	E	R	C	A	T	I	R
M	P	X	Q	X	K	B	D	H	R	X	H	I
T	M	Z	E	R	U	U	N	K	E	A	S	U
C	K	B	H	Y	I	A	N	R	E	S	O	Q
N	O	O	C	C	A	R	I	K	D	O	K	S
H	S	F	O	P	O	S	S	U	M	P	L	Y
J	E	K	D	I	O	N	Z	P	H	B	R	A
K	W	A	H	F	E	L	I	A	T	D	E	R
T	U	Q	B	A	L	D	E	A	G	L	E	G

bald eagle  
owl  
coyote  
raccoon  
deer  
red tailed hawk  
fisher cat  
skunk  
fox  
wild turkey  
opossum  
gray squirrel



## Rail Trail Update

David Kehs

For the past 15-20 years, efforts have been underway to convert the abandoned Central Massachusetts Railroad line into a rail trail. Advocates of the trail have faced numerous roadblocks, not the least of which was negotiation with the MBTA, which controls the land. In early 2011, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) signed a 99-year lease with the MBTA for a 26-mile rail corridor beginning at the Waltham-Belmont border and extending to Berlin, MA. Construction of the trail is now in the hands of the DCR.

Kevin Hollenbeck is the Urban Parks West District Manager for the DCR. The land that he oversees includes the rail trail corridor in Waltham. Mr. Hollenbeck spoke at the Waltham Land Trust Annual Meeting and described the latest rail trail activities. As might be expected, a fairly elaborate and therefore time-



*Lisa Purdy from Brandeis helps clear the Rail Trail.*

consuming and expensive process will be required to plan, design and construct a trail similar to the popular Minuteman Trail that extends through Cambridge, Arlington, Lexington, and Bedford. Mindful of this long-term view, the DCR has established short-term goals for the Mass Central Rail Trail corridor. These include clearing the trails of excess vegetation that has grown up over the 40 or so years since the trains ceased operating, cleaning up the trash that has accumulated, and generally opening the trail corridor for visitors. With the rails and railroad ties still in place, walking conditions may not be ideal, but parts of the trail can be made useable with a relatively small effort using mostly volunteer labor.

Kevin's efforts to improve the trail corridor have already yielded visible results. On two separate work days in 2011, a group of volunteers cleared the .3 mile section from Lexington Street (right next to Demo's Restaurant) to Bacon Street (next to Planet Self-



*A member of the Student Conservation Association gives the thumbs up before loading the DCR chipper.*

Storage). And on two other work days, volunteers cleared a wide trail from Lyman Street to Middlesex Circle. This part of the trail is just across Lyman Pond from the Lyman Estate. More significantly, this portion of the rail trail coincides with the proposed and partially-completed Western Greenway Trail.

The rail trail corridor passes by the former Polaroid site before crossing Main Street (near the octagonal Rockland Trust bank building). In 2004, Polaroid purchased the section of the rail corridor adjacent to its property. Therefore, developer Sam Park now owns that portion of the trail. Mr. Park's development plans for the former Polaroid site include the construction of the rail trail on the development site. The current plans call for the main entrance driveway to have an overpass that will separate vehicular traffic from trail traffic.

Opening further segments of the trail involves additional challenges. A trestle bridge crosses Chester Brook just beyond the now-opened trail to Middlesex Circle. The structural integrity of that bridge will have to be evaluated before it can be used as part of the trail. Similarly, the bridge that crosses Linden Street will have to be studied.

In other sections of the trail, there have been significant encroachments by abutters, including the City of Waltham. These land use issues will need to be resolved before the trail can be completed. The most difficult portion of the rail trail in Waltham will almost certainly be the connection between Beaver Street and the Belmont line. In this stretch, the old Mass Central rail corridor runs right beside the active commuter rail of the Fitchburg line. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MACP) has recently completed an extensive study of the options that might be pursued in this area. The entire report can be found online at <http://www.mapc.org/resources/bike-transport>.

Area residents are encouraged to check out the recently-cleared trail segments. And be sure to look out for more rail trail work days so that we can all make this happen.



## Trail Stewards Take Control! *from page 1*

Greenway to walk on a regular basis and perform simple maintenance tasks such as pruning and trash removal when necessary. The Steward will complete a simple field report describing conditions of the trail and recommended follow-up actions. These actions include 1) took care of issue him/herself; 2) will contact other CBGS to assist; 3) will organize a bigger “trail event” involving on-call volunteers including student groups, scouts, etc; or 4) will contact WLT/City to address larger and hazardous conditions.

The results of the project will be to keep natural areas free of trash, debris, and obstacles; to minimize the impact of invasive plants and to check that trail routes are easily identified. In addition, the CBGS will advise WLT on the condition of structures along the trail, including bridges, informational kiosks, trail maps and signage.

## Who Will the Chester Brook Greenway Stewards Be?

The Waltham Land Trust has recruited ten adults who live or work along the Chester Brook Greenway to be Stewards for a two-year stewardship term. Residents and staff of abutting properties including Bishops Forest and the Waltham High School have also committed to



*Volunteers of all ages create the Western Greenway.*



*A path in the woods of Lot 1 is made.*



SONJA WADMAN (ALL PHOTOS THIS PAGE)

being CBGS. WLT plans to engage the other schools and community organizations housed along the Chester Brook Corridor who are natural candidates for stewardship, such as Our Lady's Academy, Waltham's Northeast Elementary School, Waltham Junior High School, Waltham Housing Authority, and Waltham Family YMCA. If these groups are unable to commit a representative to be a Steward, they will be asked to provide volunteers for bigger trail work parties.

## How Can You Help?

By the time this newsletter comes out, the CBGS will have completed their training and be in full monitoring mode. However, if you are interested in being a volunteer for Chester Brook Greenway work parties or in being part of WLT's next Stewardship project, please email [swadman@walthamlandtrust.org](mailto:swadman@walthamlandtrust.org) or call 781-893-3355. See you on the trail!



## Your Neck of the Woods

Joyce Nett

*"You can't stay in your corner of the Forest waiting for others to come to you. You have to go to them sometimes." —A.A.Milne*

Perhaps due to the unusually warm winter, I've been out in the woods weekly this winter. I start behind my condo in Bishops Forest and walk about 50 yards down the hill until I get to a huge fallen pine tree with a 3-foot diameter. Most of the tree, about 12 feet is lying on the ground, starting to decompose and about 10 feet of tree is still standing.

In the summer of 2000 there was an amazing lightening storm with multiple rounds that lit up the woods. We watched the storm from our house. One spark cracked loudly enough that my young daughters raced downstairs into our bed. In addition to shorting the power, the bolt also left the distinct smell of ozone in the air.

Looking over the peaceful woods the next morning, it was hard to believe there had been such drama the night before. My husband was certain that the one huge bolt had struck something, so we decided to walk into the woods. We searched around for a while then it occurred to us that we should move to the highest point. We went up a small ridge and there we found what we were looking for; the tallest pine tree in the area, standing about 20 feet tall.

We peered up at the massive pine and could easily trace the trail of the lightning. The bark on one side of the tree was sheered off as if it had passed through a lumber yard debarker. On that same side, all of the limbs were reduced to three or four inches long and lay around the base of the trunk like a crown. Our daughters noticed a perfectly round hole in the ground that went down about 8 inches. They remembered from a movie that this was the point where the lightning entered the ground and wondered aloud if glass might have formed in the dirt under the hole.

### HELP WLT GO PAPERLESS!

Join the 120 Land Trust members who have selected to have *The Journal* and *Upcoming Events* postcards sent to them electronically. Please send an email with your name to [swadman@walthamlandtrust.org](mailto:swadman@walthamlandtrust.org) with the subject "Electronic Journal and/or Postcard."

**Please remember that receiving *The Journal* is a privilege of membership.** Be sure your dues are up-to-date so you don't miss the Fall 2012 Journal!

*Hooded mergansers on the Charles River*



ERICA ZISSMAN

*Bald eagle flying over Hardy Pond*



ROBERT HENDRICK

A few years later, trying to diffuse her pre-college nerves, I took my younger daughter into the woods again. We started by finding the pine tree; to our surprise the top half had fallen off and now lay on the small ridge. We were able to look closely at the bark, noticing the long crack that the lightning had created down the length of the tree top and were easily able to match it to the continuation of the crack in the still-standing trunk. Later the same year, we spent an afternoon photographing the grain that was becoming exposed as the grounded half of the tree decomposed.

I've taken several friends into the woods and we always start the walk at "my tree." The bottom layers of the fallen portion are now soft and easily pulled apart, the work of insects and larvae. The southern side of the trunk now hosts a colony of mushrooms that dangle like scales. The lightning hole is starting to fill in with dirt, pine needles and bark. In fact, you might not even know it is there as you walk by. The standing half of the tree shows signs of degeneration with more bark falling away and the crack growing in size. I'm surprised that it is still standing and wonder how many more years it will remain.

If you haven't already created a relationship with the woods in Waltham, now's your time! Find a path, find some time and visit regularly. Notice the changes in trees, the pattern of wildlife and the difference in seasons. Take notes either mentally, visually or actually. Create your own story that you can tell to your friends when you walk into your woods.

## UPCOMING WALTHAM LAND TRUST EVENTS

### 13th Annual Charles River Earth Day Clean Up

Saturday, April 21, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.  
Drop-in location: Shaw's parking lot, 130 River Street  
Be a part of one of the largest clean ups in Massachusetts, the annual event organized by the Charles River Watershed Association and local groups. WLT joins the party this year as organizers of the drop-in, barbeque, and t-shirt location for MetroWest volunteers.

### Earth Day Work Day In Storer Conservation Lands

Saturday, April 21, 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.  
Park/meet at Stonehurst, 100 Robert Treat Paine Drive  
WLT, Friends of Stonehurst, and Brandeis come together to remove the highly invasive garlic mustard from the Western Greenway and trails in the Storer Conservation Lands. Instruction and tools provided. If time allows, we will also work on establishing the next stretch of the Western Greenway heading south towards Beaver Street.

### Spring Migrants Bird Walk

Saturday, April 28, 10 a.m.  
Meet at Waltham Watch Factory, 183-241 Crescent Street  
Along the Charles, we'll look for early spring migrants (red winged blackbirds, tree swallows, eastern phoebes, yellow rumped, palm and yellow warblers), our resident species (cardinals, downy woodpeckers, blue jays, chickadees and tufted titmice), carolina wrens, red bellied woodpeckers, and red tailed and coopers hawks. Bring binoculars!

### Save the dates

Tuesday July 3, Thursday August 2, Friday August 31, and Sunday September 30  
FULL MOON MADNESS at Margarita's: WLT gets 5% of all lounge sales between 4pm-1am.

### 8th Annual Green Space Blues Jam

Friday, May 18, 7:30 p.m.  
Charles River Museum of Industry and Innovation, 154 Moody Street  
This year our annual spring fundraiser will be at an exciting, new location! Plus we've secured the internationally recognized *Duke Robillard Band* to provide swing and blues tunes for dancing. Enjoy hands-on exhibits and delicious food while reviewing silent auction items for every budget. Tickets on sale now at the Land Trust website.

### National Trails Day

Saturday, June 2  
Details to follow

### 4th Annual Waltham Riverfest

Friday June 15 through Sunday June 17, hours vary  
Locations along the Charles Riverwalk and Moody Street  
WLT co-sponsors this fun family festival that highlights the Charles River. We will lead a guided walk along the river leaving from Landry Park at noon Sunday. All weekend long canoe and kayak rentals will be available; local and "big name" bands will jam at outdoor/indoor venues; artists will "paint the river"; vendors will be on the Moody Street Bridge; and restaurants will offer discounts to folks wearing Riverfest wristbands. Stay tuned for details!

## Answers to the puzzle on page 3.

B	R	K	C	B	K	C	O	Y	O	T	E	Y
V	Q	Q	G	U	R	G	L	C	U	T	M	L
Y	E	K	R	U	T	D	L	I	W	C	Z	E
F	P	J	T	R	L	W	O	M	L	H	C	R
M	O	F	I	S	H	E	R	C	A	T	I	R
M	P	X	Q	X	K	B	D	H	R	X	H	I
T	M	Z	E	R	U	U	N	K	E	A	S	U
C	K	B	H	Y	I	A	N	R	E	S	O	Q
N	O	O	C	C	A	R	I	K	D	O	K	S
H	S	F	O	P	O	S	S	U	M	P	L	Y
J	E	K	D	I	O	N	Z	P	H	B	R	A
K	W	A	H	F	E	L	I	A	T	D	E	R
T	U	Q	B	A	L	D	E	A	G	L	E	G

bald eagle  
owl  
coyote  
raccoon  
deer  
red tailed hawk  
fisher cat  
skunk  
fox  
wild turkey  
opossum  
gray squirrel

**WALTHAM**



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**Waltham Land Trust Journal** © 2012 Waltham Land Trust  
is published by Waltham Land Trust, Inc.  
PO Box 541120, Waltham MA 02454-1120.

Waltham Land Trust, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) charitable corporation, and is a member of the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition.

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*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, Susannah King, Dee Kricker, Betsy Lewenberg, Daniel Melnechuk, Joyce Nett, Stephen Rourke, Mike Squillante, Lesya Struz

### **Waltham Land Trust's Mission**

To create a legacy of land conservation in Waltham by promoting, protecting, restoring, and acquiring open space.

We envision growth in public appreciation of natural resources, preservation and restoration of native habitat, and increased biodiversity to foster a healthier environment.




*This QR code links to the page on our web site to buy your tickets for the Green Space Blues Jam featuring special internationally known jazz performer **Duke Robillard**.*

### **Please renew or join**

To renew or join please use the enclosed membership application and send to the address below.

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