

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 2022

Green Space Blues Jam 2022 Back In Person!

Scott Shurr, Special Events Committee

Come on out to our 18th annual Green Space Blues Jam for an unforgettable night of live music, snacks, and celebration! After two years of virtual events due to the pandemic, we're delighted about the return to an in person gala at 500 Totten Pond Road on Saturday, July 30, from 7:30 to 10:30 pm. Local swing blues musicians, The Love Dogs, will be our entertainment. This band is a Blues Jam favorite!

Boston Properties will once again generously host the benefit, donating the huge lobby and expansive outdoor space with lots of seating of their 10 CityPoint facility where the last in-person Blues Jam was held in 2019. Unfortunately, they are not able to cover food costs, so we are working with a caterer on that front. We do know that skyrocketing prices have resulted in our decision to not serve a sit-down dinner this year. We will certainly offer a variety of delicious hors d'oeuvres and fantastic desserts, plus Sam Adams beer, Truly hard seltzers, rosé and white wine, and non-alcoholic drinks.

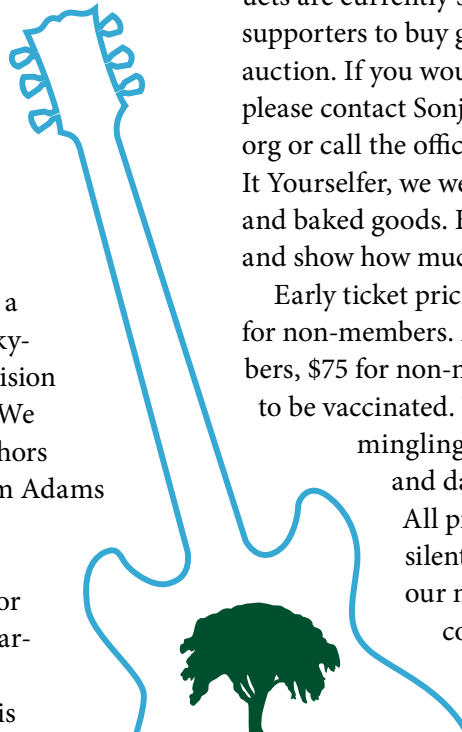
The Love Dogs are back on the stage for the first time since their energizing appearance in 2015 and will play two one-hour, jam-packed sets. Based out of Boston, this hard swinging sextet has been wowing audiences and critics alike for more than 20 years, with their combination of great musicianship and pure fun. The Dogs combine elements of jump blues, New Orleans R&B and early rock 'n' roll into their own powerhouse sound. Check out their website, thelovedogs.com.

A major part of the Blues Jam is the silent auction, which is free to access and will happen again online this year for several days, however a few select items will be on site for viewing the night of gala. Items in the past have included gift certificates to

local restaurants and services; tickets to sporting and cultural events; hand-made jewelry and crafts; and beautiful artwork. The auction will be available for viewing and bidding on Wednesday, July 27, and will close at 6 p.m. on Sunday, July 31.

For the silent auction, we really need your help. Recognizing that many restaurants and local businesses that would normally donate gift cards or products are currently struggling, we are asking Land Trust supporters to buy gift cards and donate them to the auction. If you would like to assist with this effort, please contact Sonja at swadman@walthamlandtrust.org or call the office at 781-893-3355 x101. If you are Do It Yourselfer, we welcome your crafts, homemade items, and baked goods. Be creative! This is the year to shine and show how much you care about open space!

Early ticket pricing for WLT members is \$60 and \$65 for non-members. After July 16, it'll be \$70 for members, \$75 for non-members. Participants are expected to be vaccinated. You're guaranteed a great time mingling with other open space supporters and dancing to tunes from The Love Dogs! All proceeds from this fun event and the silent auction items will directly benefit our mission to create a legacy of land conservation in Waltham. We hope to see you there!



Waltham Land Trust 2021 Annual Meeting

Diana Young, Program Committee Chair

This was our second Annual Meeting on Zoom. Let's hope it's in person for 2022.

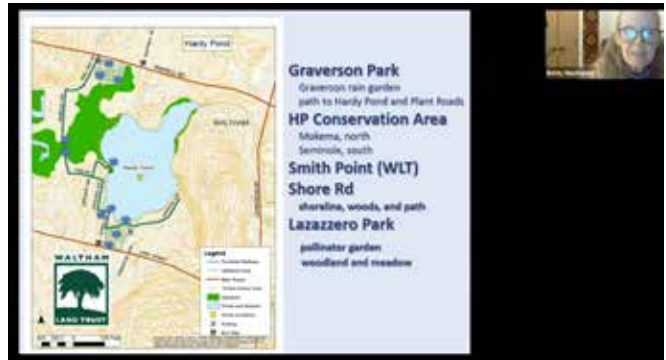


The meeting began when Jarek Reihner was named the *Inge Uhlir Environmentalist of the Year*. Jarek has been the lead on the Woerd Woods project that is detailed in a separate article in this newsletter. Jarek has extensive knowledge of plants and gave a picture filled presentation that explained the project. He was also part of the team that applied for grants to fund the project. As if that wasn't enough, he is also one of our fabulous trail stewards.



Betty MacKenzie, a person of boundless energy, spoke next about two major projects that she leads. Another article in this newsletter explains the Wellington Fields project, but Betty also leads the Hardy Pond activities which is actually five subprojects. Betty has organized a committed group of 17 volunteers that are creating the Graverson Playground rain garden, a path from Graverson to Hardy Pond, the clean-up and new native plantings at the end of Shore Road, trail work and new plantings at Smith Point and the pollinator garden at Lazazzero Park. The team is also working on

developing the Hardy Pond Conservation Area around the western side of Hardy Pond. This is a years' long endeavor.



The presentations were interrupted by a “commercial” for Lesley Sneddon’s gorgeous book on the plant communities at Prospect Hill Park. We still have copies available for sale at \$20. The photographs alone are worth twice the price.

Brian McCormick gave the Land Trust’s financial results for the fiscal year ended in June, 2021. We were able to maintain our profitability with net income of \$1,463 for the year. Brian also had charts to show the sources of our income and the uses to which they are put.

We re-elected two long-term board members, President Nadene Stein and Dan Melnechuk, in the business portion of the meeting. The meeting concluded with a Q&A session about the status of the Field Station, a road extension of Prospect Hill Road and other open space issues.

HELP WLT GO PAPERLESS!

Join the 125 Land Trust members who have selected to have their *Journals* sent to them electronically. By opting out of the mailed hard copy, these supporters are helping WLT reduce our carbon footprint and save on costs associated with printing, postage, and transportation. Please send an email with your name to swadman@waltham-landtrust.org, with the subject header “*Electronic Journal*” if you’d like the next *Journal* emailed to you. **Please remember that receiving the *Journal* is a privilege of membership.** Be sure you are up-to-date with your dues so you don’t miss the Fall 2022 *Journal*!

The Charles River Reservation Habitat Improvement Project in Woerd Woods

Barbara Jacobs, WLT Vice President and Development Team Chair

Have you been wondering what is going on at Woerd Woods between the Woerd Avenue Boat Launch and the Watch Factory buildings? A group of WLT Trail Stewards led by Jarek Reihner have been working in this area over the past year. They are working to improve this one small urban green space in a heavily trafficked area used by both pedestrians and bicyclists from Waltham and abutting communities.

The Charles River Reservation Habitat Improvement Project began as a project of a group of volunteer trail stewards who chose to focus on this small, wooded stretch of a well-loved and well-used riverside trail. The initial funding came from the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) in March of 2021. This year the WLT received a grant from CyberArk (through the organization One Tree Planted) to continue the restoration activities by monitoring the woodland, remove invasive species, plant trees and shrubs, and restore the area to a functional native ecosystem.

The overarching goal is to rid the area of invasive plants along with trying to actually improve the biodiversity of this one small urban green space. To do this Parterre Ecological Services helped the WLT develop a management plan for the area with information about the underlying habitat such as native and non-native plantings, what invasive plants can be removed and suggestions for planting native species.



A demonstration garden has been developed to show how native plants can have a natural effect on the trail and river front. The goal is to protect the area for the community and keep it as a key habitat for birds and wildlife living along the Upper Charles River Reservation.

We are hoping that more people in Waltham will understand and appreciate the treasures at their doorstep as they become energized to care for these treasures and help the WLT improve them.

Please check out the area of Woerd Woods close to the boat launch parking lot on Woerd Avenue and if you have time join the WLT Stewards in this important work along our river trails. Volunteers are always needed to keep the area clean and free of invasives along with watering the demonstration garden. Email Jarek at jarek.reihner@gmail.com for information about upcoming work sessions.



Preparing Wellington Fields for Use

M-B Moreton, one of the “Wellington Irregulars”

Anyone who regularly drives northwest on Trapelo Road, toward Route 128, has most likely seen the stately yellow house sitting back behind the tree, bordered by crumbling stone walls. This is the Wellington House, one of the finest examples of Georgian architecture in the area. In 2005 the City of Waltham acquired the house and the nearly six acres of former farm fields to the north and east. These fields had not been cultivated for some 30 years, resulting in an explosion of invasive trees and other plants. During the time the fields were left fallow they were used as a dumping ground for all kinds of trash. Funds granted by the Waltham Community Preservation Committee were used to clear the land, thanks to the efforts of Ward 3 Councillor George Darcy and the Waltham Recreation Department (which has the care and control of the land).



In July of last year, a small group of Waltham Land Trust supporters partnered with the Recreation Department to continue clearing and begin the restoration of the fields. The “Wellington Irregulars” set up workdays and began by creating a 1/3 mile walking path, removing many familiar invasive plants, vines, shrubs and trees. Path surfaces were smoothed, graded, and seeded with a low growing grass.



The volunteers continued similar work in the fields, pulling and hacking invasive plants, and hauling away rocks, branches and debris. Workday after workday generated more trash, including hundreds of golf balls, and enough parts of a car to build a new one. In the fall, the fields were seeded. Ranger Adam Green of the Recreation Department and his staff felled many Ailanthus trees; the smaller ones were chipped. Ailanthus, also known as the Tree of Heaven, is a severely damaging invasive tree, and is host to the Spotted Lantern Fly, an emerging invasive insect.





In November the Wellington Irregulars also welcomed a group of students from Bentley University, on the last workday of the year. They helped spread wood chips around the remaining trees in the fields.



Full speed into 2022

At the end of the year the Wellington Irregulars concluded that clearing nearly six acres of land had been daunting at first sight. Nonetheless, much progress was made and the team was eager to continue into 2022. They continued to meet during the cold winter months to discuss work plans for the coming season.

When April came around the Wellington Irregulars were ready for their mission. The first, second, and third items on the agenda were the manual removal of garlic mustard, destructive to native plants and thus native pollinators and other wildlife. The garlic mustard emerges early in the spring, and its roots release chemicals inhibiting the growth of native trees,



of native trees, etc. Pulling garlic mustard with a vengeance is likely to continue into mid-June.

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Other projects in 2022 are to continue clearing the fields of rocks and debris (to allow for mowing), and to seed them to improve the soil. All volunteer activities are done in concert with the Recreation Department and aim to reduce invasive plants, and maintain informal walking paths, until the Recreation Board decides on a long-term vision and direction for the site (the Wellington Irregulars are developing ideas to submit to this process).

Call for volunteers

Working in the fields brings an almost serene sense of calm, whether pulling garlic mustard or removing rocks and dead branches. On the other hand, counting the bags full of invasive plants or seeing the stacks of wood waiting to be mulched or removed, brings a great sense of accomplishment.

The Wellington Irregulars come from all walks of life, some are retired and have perhaps downsized to condo living, others work full time, some live within walking distance and others far enough to drive. Some are very experienced in native and invasive plants; others enjoy the learning process. Many Irregulars bring their own gloves and hand tools but these will be provided for whatever tasks are at hand.

There is still a lot of work to be done, of all types and levels! The Wellington Irregulars would like to welcome more volunteers, every hand, or two, helps. The next few scheduled workdays are on Saturdays starting at 10 AM - June 18 and July 9. For further information or questions, contact WLT Steward, Betty MacKenzie at betty@lucketfamily.net.

Involving Stewards in the Mass Land Conservation Conference

On March 23-26, 2022, the annual conference focused on land conservation in Massachusetts was held virtually for the third year in a row, with a handful of in-person walks. Members of the Waltham Land Trust Board and its Executive Director Sonja Wadman participated, as did several volunteer trail stewards—whose registration fees were reimbursed by the WLT to encourage their development and increase their exposure to others in the preservation field.

This reimbursement was one example of many ways the WLT nurtures its trail volunteers, a subject Sonja spoke about as one of four presenters in the session entitled *Nurturing Trail Volunteers*. The Waltham Land Trust started its stewardship program in 2012, and in the decade since, has trained hundreds of people and maintained/restored thousands of acres of open space and trails. After Sonja explained the WLT's extensive yet flexible program and its numerous means of encouragement, representatives from Weston, Wellesley, and Lincoln described experiences they have been encour-

leaving some of the root to regrow, they excavate the root using a tool to make sure none of the root gets left behind. The walk was a nice opportunity to meet with folks who deal with the same problems and learn how they handle them. It was also nice being outside.”

Emily participated additionally in the Zoom session *Will Being Outdoors Make You Smarter, Healthier & Happier?* She says “Studies have found that ‘Green Space’ reduced future disease; more trees equal more health. Forests buffer air pollutants. In urban areas, green space lowered crime by 50% when vacant lots were converted into green spaces. Conversely, there may be a correlation between less green space and sudden, unexpected cardiac death. Urbanization with less green space may play a role in obesity, therefore increasing health care expenditure.”

WLT Lead steward, Betty MacKenzie, joined numerous workshops, including the Littleton invasives walk that Emily reported on above. Betty summarizes *Forest Stewardship Program: New Priorities and Technical Sup-*



port for Landowners this way “Michael Downey, Program Coordinator, MDCR, said (land) issues have changed in the last 100 years, but the values remain the same. He quoted Aldo Leopold: ‘Health is the capacity of the land for self-renewal. Conservation is our effort to understand and preserve this capacity.’ Forest Stewardship Plans are an effective intervention point, moving incidental actions (to improve the forest) into a more in-

teresting as they begin their stewardship programs. Many resources and lessons learned were shared.

Emily Szczypek, a WLT steward often seen maintaining the paths along to the Charles River with a camera around her neck, found the convention “very worthwhile” and joined a group walk in Littleton (photo above) about invasive plants led by the Sudbury Valley of Trustees. Emily reports “I found the Sudbury Valley Trustees method of excavating bittersweet very interesting: rather than just pull it up with the possibility of

tentional plan. They are for forests of 10 acres or more.” Betty notes that Prospect Hill Park has such a plan; with a plan, developed with a forester, a landowner can apply for partial funding from the Forest Stewardship Plan for specific projects identified in said plan.

Kristen Lutz, a Hardy Pond area mom often found helping Betty's Tuesday morning crew restoring the watershed, participated in a number of sessions, including *Land Trusts as Partners in Building Pollinator Corridors* and *BioMap3: A Modern Vision for a*

Upcoming Events with the Waltham Land Trust

Waltham Riverfest Walk

Saturday, June 18, 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Meet by benches on Riverwalk path by 147 Moody Street

Celebrate and learn about the mighty Charles at the annual Waltham Riverfest with an easy stroll along the Charles. Traveling on the paved Blue Heron pathway, we'll head upstream from Moody Street and hear how what was once an ugly industrial area became the beautiful Upper Charles River Reservation. As we cross over the Prospect Street bridge, we'll discuss famous residents of the Mt Feake cemetery, the popular canoeing and entertainment venues along the river of bygone times, and contributions Waltham made to the American Industrial Revolution. All day long, Riverfest attendees can soak up live music, check out local art, enjoy kids activities, buy crafts from vendors and visit outreach tables from groups like the WLT on a closed-to-traffic Moody Street Bridge, and rent canoes, kayaks and stand-up paddle boards.

Solstice Sunset Yoga at Little Prospect

Tuesday, June 21, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Meet at south gate to Prospect Hill Park, near 186 Prospect Hill Road

Registration required, fee is \$20 for WLT members, \$25 for non-members

After warming up with a steep hike up the path/road to the base of Little Prospect in Prospect Hill Park, local yoga instructor and WLT member Jeanne Kelly will lead participants through easy movements and breathing exercises with an amazing view during the magical hour of dusk on the longest day of the year.

Wellington Fields Work Party

Saturday, July 9, 10 a.m. start time

Park on Sherwood, Abbott or Temple and walk one block to 775 Trapelo Road

Help prepare the historic Wellington field for use. Tasks for all ages and abilities. Tools and instruction provided. Wear closed-toe shoes, long sleeves/pants, sunscreen and bug spray.

Prospect Hill Park Plant Communities Walk

Saturday, July 16, 10-noon, meeting location tbd

Registration required

Join WLT Board member Lesley Sneddon for a trek in Waltham's oldest and biggest park to learn about plant communities documented in her book, *A Walk in Prospect Hill Park*, which will be for sale. Lesley will highlight areas of interest in the park where threatened or special vegetation exists and should be protected.

Green Space Blues Jam

Online auction Wednesday, July 27, through Sunday, July 31

In-person live event Saturday, July 30, 7:30 – 10:30 p.m., 500 Totten Pond Road

Attend the Land Trust's major annual fundraiser, happening in person for the first time in two years! We welcome local blues, jump-and-jive party band The Love Dogs back for two one-hour sets. When not dancing, attendees can enjoy hors d'oeuvres, desserts, beer, wine, hard seltzer, and non-alcoholic drinks while checking out select items from the online auction on site. The online auction will be free to access; the benefit gala will be a ticketed event.

Changing Massachusetts. Her observations include “There was a strong encouragement to look at data and best practices when making decisions from marketing strategies to creating pollinator corridors. A key component to this is using your human resources as effectively as you can. When engaging with current members and potential members, find out what skill sets each of them possess in their careers and hobbies, and put that to good use. You can combine their strengths with these data-driven efforts.”

Christine O'Neil, a new steward who spends time at the Beaver Brook reservations, joined many workshops and found the “most enlightening talk was on land trust standards and practices. The speakers focused on what is involved in land acquisition, but they also addressed other board needs and responsibilities. This helped me appreciate the complexity of land trust work and again made me wonder what opportunities there are for further land conservation in Waltham.”

WALTHAM



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*Protecting Waltham's land...
forever.*

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Waltham Land Trust Journal

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

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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.

• SPECIAL GIFT MEMBERSHIP •

Have a friend, neighbor, or relative you think would enjoy being part of the Waltham Land Trust? Why not give them a gift membership? **We are offering a special promotion for a limited time: 6 months for only \$10!** (The normal price of an individual membership is 12 months for \$25). **Support open space for a birthday or special occasion!**

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walthamlandtrust.org
or call 781-893-3355

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

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