

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 FALL 2024

WALTHAM



History of Waltham Land Trust's Hardy Pond Property, Part Three


Marie Daly, WLT Board Member

Editor's Note: This article is the continuation of Marie's piece published in the Spring 2024 Journal.

Luke Fiske died unexpectedly in 1845 at the age of 51 years. Following his death, his son, John T. K. Fiske, lived in the brick mansion, and Luke's wife, Susan (Piper) Fiske lived in the early eighteenth-century Fiske family homestead. The 1860 agricultural census listed Susan (Piper) Fiske as having 40 acres of improved land and 40 acres of unimproved land. In the previous year, she had owned 1 horse, 9 milk cows, and had raised 50 bushels of corn, 50 bushels of potatoes, \$25 worth of orchard produce, \$200 of market garden produce, and 15 tons of hay.¹ Their daughter, Agnes, married Lucius Doolittle Ashley ca. 1847. Lucius Ashley was run over by a train in 1855 when he was just 30 years old, while Agnes was pregnant with their daughter, Edith, who was born in 1856. Agnes (Fiske) Ashley continued to live in the original family homestead on the eastern section of the Fiske land, while her brother, John Thornton Kirkland Fiske, occupied the brick mansion on the western half. The western half was sold in 1855 to Thomas Lincoln, and later to Nathan Smith descendants. Agnes (Fiske) Ashley died in 1892, and her daughter, Edith, continued living in the house until 1909. Edith had married Clarence Wentworth in 1876, but Clarence died also in 1892.²

Edith was the last of the Fiske descendants to live in the house off Lincoln Street. Before Edith's death in 1925, her conservator sold the eastern half of the Fiske estate to the Bay State Realty Exchange in 1919.³ The western half of the Elijah Fiske and Luke Fiske estate eventually went to Elsie B. Sheldon, wife of Herbert Sheldon, who sold the parcel now comprising Smith Point to the Moody Land Trust in 1922.⁴ The two development companies, Bay State Realty Exchange and Moody Land Trust, subdivided the old Fiske farm into lots of less than 5,000 square feet. The subdivisions, called Lakeview Park and Mount Lake Villa, became

FARM IN WALTHAM FOR SALE

 THE excellent farm formerly owned by the late Hon. Luke Fiske, deceased, situated on Lincoln street, in the northerly part of Waltham, two miles from the village, and eleven miles from Boston.

Said farm contains 120 acres of all the varieties of land most desirable for farming purposes; it is well adapted for a milk farm for which it is now used. 15 cows and 4 horses are kept in the summer, 20 cows, 2 oxen and 4 horses in the winter, and is capable of keeping several more. There are extensive orchards from which one thousand bushels of Apples have been sold in a single year.

The buildings are pleasantly located, and consist of a large, two story, brick dwelling house, convenient for one or two families, with an L, and spacious sheds attached; two barns, one 60 x 40, the other 44 x 38, of modern structure, convenient and in good repair, with cellars under the whole, and sheds attached; a large apple, or mill house with a cellar; also an ice house. There is an abundant supply of good water.

N. B.—Four thousand dollars of the purchase money can remain by a mortgage upon the place.

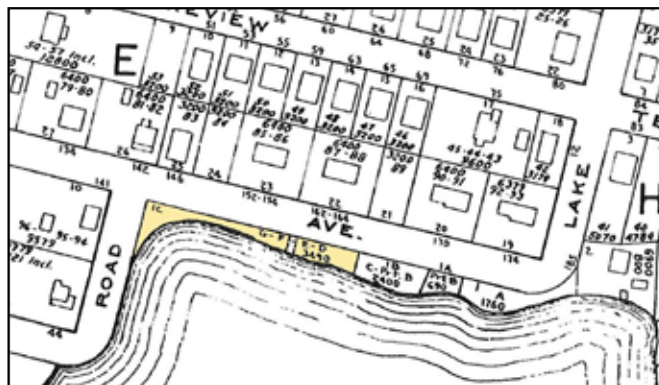
For further particulars inquire of

Wm. P. CHILDS.

Waltham, Jan. 2, 1863.

1—tr

Advertisement describing the western half of the Luke Fiske land, Waltham Sentinel, 16 Jan. 1863



1952 subdivision of the lakefront along Lakeview Avenue. WLT lots are highlighted. (MLR subdivision plan #792 of 1952)

known as the Lakeview neighborhood. They initially advertised the lots as camp sites, but eventually lots were combined and houses built on the small lots.⁵

The Lakeview Avenue lots along Hardy Pond were never subdivided by the Bay State Realty Exchange, as

continued on page 3

Member Spotlight

In each Fall Journal, we highlight a member of the Waltham Land Trust who helps us achieve our mission of creating a legacy of land conservation in Waltham. This time we are shining the light on two members who became part of the WLT Board of Directors last November (2023).

Deb Herman has been a WLT member since 2018 and is an active part of our Program Committee, Stewardship Team, and Special Events Committee.

Nat May has been a WLT member since 2020, and is a member of the Development Committee. His business, Aurora Architect + Builders, is a WLT Business Supporter and was a sponsor of the 2024 Green Space Blues Jam.

WLT: *What is your first memory of enjoying open space and nature?*

DH: As a kid, I loved climbing trees. I felt like I had the world all to myself. I could see people but they never looked up. I'd often bring a book to read and I was never disturbed. It was my secret hiding place.

NM: My family moved onto a sailboat when I was seven years old and we spent the next six years traveling up and down the east coast of the US and the Caribbean, and so being outside and exploring and experiencing the world, especially the coastal tidelands, are all at the root of nearly all my childhood memories.

WLT: *We know you are both very busy. If you've had the opportunity to spend time out in our open spaces, what is the oddest and/or most beautiful thing you've encountered?*

DH: Just recently, at Prospect Hill Park, I encountered a hungry snake. It had one hind leg of a frog in its mouth. It couldn't fit the critter but it wasn't giving up. The struggle was real, with little squeaks coming from the frog. Finally, the snake took off with the frog still struggling. I wonder how it ended.

NM: I really appreciate that the open spaces are so easily accessible, and there are many places whereby after traveling a short distance down a trail, the dense urban fabric quickly fades away and I feel immersed in a nature. I like to just stop and listen and look around long enough that the landscape begins to come alive and I realize how rich and diverse the ecosystem is basically right under my nose even amid all the frenzy and chaos of the urban context.



WLT: *Why should someone consider becoming involved with the WLT?*

DH: WLT gives so many opportunities for a newbie to encounter nature. One can choose a few or many activities. There is something for everyone, no matter age or interest.

NM: It's a great way to get connected to the outdoors which is a benefit to our health as individuals and it's a great way to build connections with and give back to the local community.

WLT: *Do you have a favorite natural place in Waltham that you can share with our readers?*

DH: As a "citizen naturalist," Prospect Hill Park always gives me something special to find—a hawk calling and swooping before me, the first skunk cabbage of the season rising out of the snow, a deer nonchalantly walking up the road.

NM: One of the reasons that I like to hike is the opportunity to climb up to higher elevations to get a different perspective of the world around me, and I really enjoy the view from the top of Prospect Hill Park.

WLT: *Why do you support the Waltham Land Trust?*

DH: I love its mission to acquire land so it will remain forever wild. The WLT offers events that increase my knowledge of nature. I'm meeting and socializing with many like-minded folks. And I thank the WLT for taking care of the trails.

NM: I see my support as doing my little part to contribute to mission of the WLT to preserve and maintain open space which I see as a tremendous benefit to me and my family, and the community both current and future.

Seeking New Board Members

John Dieckmann, current WLT Board Member

The Waltham Land Trust Board of Directors has a few open positions, and we encourage current members and supporters to consider joining our board. The basic qualifications are:

- Being a member of the Waltham Land Trust (if not already a member, it is easy to join as a member, with the basic individual membership costing \$25 per year)
- Being willing to commit to attending 11 board meetings per year (monthly, except for one month in the summer). Meetings are held in the evening, currently remotely via Zoom.
- Being involved in various WLT activities and committees
- Having a commitment to open space conservation in Waltham and beyond

I have been a member of the Board for approximately ten years. I have found the experience to be both rewarding and enjoyable. I like having played a part in conserving and improving the city's natural open spaces and the Western Greenway Trail. And my association with the great people on the Board and our volunteers is a real pleasure. Most of the members of our Board are Waltham residents, but this is not a requirement. For example, I am a Belmont resident, but my long-time involvement in developing the Western Greenway Trail makes me a good fit for the Board.

If you are interested in exploring Board membership, please contact our Executive Director, Sonja Wadman, at swadman@walthamlandtrust.org.

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@walthamlandtrust.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 *Spring 2025 Journal*!

Hardy Pond Property continued from page 1

evidenced in the 1928 Waltham engineering atlas map. In 1952, the sole remaining trustee of the Bay State Realty Exchange sold the shorefront parcel to Emily J. Mosher, wife of Edward Mosher.⁶ Emily Mosher subsequently subdivided the parcel into Lots A-G, shown on the 1952 subdivision plan. In 1966, the heirs of Emily J. Mosher sold Lots D, E, and G to Stephen and Leah Giardina.⁷ Stephen Giardina died in 2005, and Leah died in 2022. The Giardina heirs sold these lots to the Waltham Land Trust in 2023.

The land along Hardy Pond and Lakeview Avenue had been in possession of the Fiske family for over two hundred years, during which they raised award-winning livestock, vegetables and fruit. The shores and adjacent wetlands of Hardy Pond were an important source of water and hay for their farm. In the twentieth century, the refreshing waters of the pond and its bordering pines and other trees provided a much-needed respite for the urban dwellers of Waltham. Over several decades, their campsites evolved into permanent structures, mostly small bungalows, that afforded families their first chance at home ownership. In purchasing the shorefront of the old Fiske farm, the Waltham Land Trust has helped preserve public access to this important, multi-faceted resource now called Hardy Pond for both wildlife and humans.

- 1 1860 agricultural census, Waltham, Massachusetts, p. 21, U.S., Selected Federal Census Non-Population Schedules, 1850-1880, ancestry.com.
- 2 Massachusetts Vital Records, Births, Marriages, Deaths, 1841 – 1925, www.familysearch.org.
- 3 MLR 4318:264.
- 4 MLR 4453:274.
- 5 Wesley P. Wiers, *Development Plan for the Hardy Pond Area, Waltham, Massachusetts, Master's Thesis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1953).
- 6 MLR 7866:114.
- 7 MLR 11020:194.

Take the Spring Music Fundraiser Survey!

Members of our Special Events Committee request that you take three minutes to complete a very short survey about our major Spring fundraiser, what has been the Green Space Blues Jam, and when you'd like to see of this type of event happen before November 1. Please find the survey at walthamlandtrust.org/gsbj-survey. Thank you!

Wellington Fields - Visiting the Site and Welcoming Groups of Volunteers

*Betty MacKenzie and Maj-Britt Moreton,
Wellington Fields Stewards*

We know you have been hearing about the Wellington Fields and the Wellington House, but have you had a chance to visit? The Wellington Fields' almost six acres are an open meadow, sprinkled with trees. They are owned by the City of Waltham and managed by the Waltham Recreation Department.

WLT volunteers and local groups have worked with the Recreation Department since 2021 to restore the Fields. Volunteers have also worked to restore the area around the house. The Wellington House is managed by the Waltham Historical Commission.

Upon arriving at Wellington, volunteers are greeted by a constantly changing natural landscape and wildlife. WLT Stewards often say that they feel fortunate to work in such a spot. We want everyone else to be able to enjoy it! And, to know that it is open for walking, photography, exploring for insects or birds, and enjoying the sights and sounds in this vibrant meadow. The paths are regularly mowed this year, woohoo! MANY THANKS to the amazing Rick Oxner for this feat; Rick mows the paths every few weeks. He added a new path up the hill, and one can enjoy the view from the top on Sitting Rock. Near the house, or on the lawn, people can practice Tai Chi, set up lawn games, bring a chair and favorite drink and enjoy an e-book or newspaper, or contemplate the beautiful meadows and house, perhaps as they knit or crochet.

This has been the year of the Goldenrod! The fields have been a sea of waving yellows, now yellows and browns, as the season changes. Many types of Goldenrods are present and thriving, a direct result of

the thousands of hours volunteers have spent to keep invasive plants at bay. Though some Goldenrods are aggressive spreaders (so plenty of room for them is important), all are top beneficial plants for pollinators and other insects. A reminder, Goldenrods do not trigger allergies. Ragweed pollen is usually the culprit, which develops at the same time.



For every year of the Wellington Fields' effort, several groups from high schools, colleges, and local businesses have joined WLT Stewards in restoration projects. These groups have jumped into special projects ranging from pulling garlic mustard and moving rocks and branches, to spreading mulch around trees. When a team of 10, 20 to even 30 people show up to lend a hand, it's a huge boost for the work.

Hosting a group takes a bit of organizing, but it's also a fun endeavor. We meet new people and hear about their lives and what brought them to Wellington Fields. We hear new ideas about the restoration work. We see the land and environment through their eyes. We'll never forget the excitement of volunteers from a local company, Boston Panasonic, one fall afternoon. Several people had grown up in countries with Black walnut trees, common trees at Wellington. One woman told her story. She excitedly described her grandmother's farm and fields on the Black Sea. She said they harvested walnuts from the trees with their green husks, and then the walnut meat was extracted and pickled in salt water.

Two local companies, Mimecast and ServiceNow, volunteered this past spring, a time when "all hands on deck" are needed to remove Garlic mustard. A little later in the season, ServiceNow volunteers cleared a shrubby, overgrown area under the large pine tree, plus learned of the advantages of Buckthorn bags and





implemented them in controlling invasives along the driveway stonewall.

In the early years, a co-ed fraternity from Bentley University, Alpha Kappa Psi, provided invaluable help in preparing the fields for mowing, removing hundreds and hundreds of rocks and logs from the fields. A young team from the Cambridge School of Weston helped remove A LOT of vegetation along one of the fields' borders. Several students found the weed whacker, used in a motion somewhat like a golf swing, to be a terrific discovery.

This summer the WLT volunteers were delighted to host a group of 15 youngsters and three leaders from the Hanh Phuc Viet Summer Camp based in Hanoi, Vietnam. The group spent some three weeks in Canada and the US this past summer. The Hanh Phuc Viet Summer Camp was based in Quincy while in the Boston area and bravely took public transportation to 775 Trapelo Rd, the Wellington Fields, in Waltham.

They arrived late, but got a lot done! Virginia creeper vines were removed from a long stone wall, new plantings were well watered, and piles and piles of wood and

vegetation were cleared from above the barn foundation. Some of the students were fascinated by an electric chain saw, which of course they could not use.

It was a surprise to discover that on that day, August 1st, they thought Waltham was hotter than Vietnam. The students worked hard, and although in shady areas, it was hot. The cold lemonade was much enjoyed at quitting time.

The Wellington House and Fields complement and support each other, but are managed by separate city departments. What's next for the Fields? The Recreation Department plans to have them mowed short this fall and will spread wildflower seeds. Some of these will be native plants. A splash of other colors will be nice, but we will see what happens, as the Goldenrods and other now established plants won't easily give up their space. It's a meadow mystery that we can watch unfold over the next several years.

A lot of interest has been expressed over the years in seeing the Wellington House restored and used. Almost every visitor asks, "What's next for the Wellington House?" Not much has happened in the four to five years since the Wellington Fields restoration began, but that may be changing. The Waltham Historical Commission, and its chair Mort Isaacson and member Charles Egiros, as well as Ward 3 Councillor Bill Hanley, are working on it. We are hopeful that in the next year or two it will be opened to the public.

What do you need to know to visit Wellington Fields? We suggest bringing water, a hat, sunscreen, and bug spray. One can park at Wellington House during the day, or park on the streets across Trapelo Road. If you park across Trapelo, use the crosswalk at the end of Sherwood Lane by the Fire Station to walk back to the Wellington House, and follow the path in the fields to wherever your feet and interest take you to visit and explore.

Please follow and like us on our FaceBook Page.



It's Western Greenway 5K Time!

*Nadene Stein, WLT Board President,
Special Events Committee Chair*

Dust off your running and walking shoes and start stretching! The Western Greenway 5K is a few weeks away and you'll want to make sure you are in good shape to take on our course!

The 2024 Western Greenway 5K is Sunday, October 27, 2024 at 12:00 p.m. We'll be meeting across from the McLaughlin Building on Metropolitan Parkway North for a noon time start. Our 5K (3.1 mile) course winds through and around a variety of habitats in Beaver Brook North Reservation and Rock Meadow, including cattail marshes, forests, vernal pools and open meadows.

Whether you are a runner and are looking to place in your age group or a walker who wants to take in the beautiful autumn sights and sounds on a Sunday afternoon, this opportunity will not disappoint. And the best part is that all funds raised from your registration of this race go directly to support the Waltham Land Trust's mission to create a legacy of land conservation in Waltham by promoting, protecting, restoring, and acquiring open space.

If you are unable to run, we would love for you to support our race as a sponsor. With four levels of Sponsorship, there are multiple ways for you show your appreciation of open space while getting some recognition for you as an individual or for your company/organization. Pledge \$250 by October 11 to get your name on the very popular race t-shirt that's worn by participants well after the event ends.



A few important details:

Advance bib pickup details will follow.
T-shirts for the first 100 runners to register!

You can also pick up your bib on race day at the registration tent near the McLaughlin Building on Metropolitan Parkway North. Please arrive early if you intend to pick up your bib the day of the race.

Online registration will close at midnight on the Thursday before the race (10/24/24). Additional registrations are always welcome - PLEASE NOTE that there will be additional \$5 fee to register at bib pickup, or the morning of the race.

Because WLT relies on the proceeds from the race to fund its work and we expend certain costs, race registrations are not refundable.

To get your Land Trust member discount, your membership must be up to date and you must login to your account when you go to register for the event. If you forgot your login name or your password, go to iforgot.walthamlandtrust.org.

Every year we need volunteers to help with tasks like checking the race route and handing out water and snacks. Interested in volunteering? Email Anna at arichardson@walthamlandtrust.org

I look forward to seeing you there!



Upcoming Events with the Waltham Land Trust

Waltham Farm Day

Saturday, October 19, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Waltham Fields Community Farm, 240 Beaver Street

Learn about and celebrate Waltham's only community supported agriculture (CSA) and our last operating produce farm! Enjoy agricultural demonstrations, fun activities, and games for all ages. Groove to live music while strolling through the farm fields, picking carrots of all colors/sizes, and visiting outreach tables from various non-profit groups like the WLT.

Western Greenway 5K Trail Run/Walk

Sunday, October 27, 12 p.m. start time

Start/end at McLaughlin Building, Metropolitan Parkway, off Trapelo Road opposite Forest Street

Be part of our 11th annual fall Race for Open Space fundraiser as a walker, runner, or sponsor! Following more-or-less the same course since 2013 with the start/finish line and staging area at the atmospheric McLaughlin Building in the Met State property, the route travels through various habitats in Beaver Brook North Reservation and Rock Meadow along the Western Greenway and other trails. Registration fees (\$25 for WLT members before October 25) and race sponsorships help raise money to keep building this community path and outfit our volunteer stewards. Walkers will begin shortly after the runners depart. Families welcome!

Mindfulness and Stress-Reduction Workshop

November date and time tbd

Stonehurst, 100 Robert Treat Paine Drive

Mindfulness fills a great need to find physical, mental, and emotional calm in these busy, often overwhelming times while promoting non-judgmental awareness of the present moment. Participants will learn how to be kinder to ourselves and others, more confident, and less judgmental from Rev. Matt Carriker, Spiritual Director at Agape Spiritual Community of Waltham. Time will include a mindful walk, weather permitting.

Waltham Land Trust 25th Annual Meeting

Tuesday, November 19, 7:00 – 8:30 p.m.

First Parish Church of Waltham, 50 Church Street

Help celebrate our 25th anniversary by attending our annual meeting. Our guest speaker will be Michael Barnett, a professor of Science Education and Technology with Boston College who is 2024 Finalist Presidential Award for Excellence in STEM Mentoring (<https://paesmem.nsf.gov/>), CASE/Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, and Professor of the Year for Massachusetts, and who has been a visiting scholar at American Forests and Visiting Research Professor at National Geographic. Professor Barnett works with youth who are historically excluded from STEM around the nation and the world (mostly in India) and has been working with Waltham youth for the past 20 years where much of the work is piloted and tested. He and his team in collaboration with the Charles River Museum of Industry have created the flagship Charles River Collaboratory and will share the work that the youth are working around environmental and scientific data through making and designing tools and resources here in Waltham. At the meeting, we'll also provide updates on the projects we're tackling, celebrate our *Inge Uhler Environmentalist of the Year*, and vote on new/returning WLT Directors.

#GIVING TUESDAY

Tuesday, December 3, all day

Online at walthamlandtrust.org

Reclaim the true meaning of "the giving season" by joining people worldwide donating online the local charities like the WLT on the Tuesday after Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Give through our website: walthamlandtrust.org.

WALTHAM



Waltham Land Trust
PO Box 541120
Waltham MA 02454-1120
www.walthamlandtrust.org
*Protecting Waltham's land...
forever.*

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Waltham Land Trust Journal © 2024 Waltham

Land Trust is published in Spring and Fall 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.

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

Officers: Nadene Stein (President), Barbara Jacobs (Vice Pres.), Anna Richardson (Clerk), Marc Rudnick (Treasurer)

Directors: Marie Daly, John Dieckmann, Deb Herman, Nat May, Daniel Melnechuk, Debbie von Rechenberg, Diana Young

Executive Director: Sonja Wadman

Published material represents the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the Waltham Land Trust.

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!**

To renew or join, visit our web site:
walthamlandtrust.org
or call 781-893-3355

*Like Waltham Land Trust on Facebook.
Like [walthamlandtrust](https://www.instagram.com/walthamlandtrust) on Instagram
See videos at [youtube.walthamlandtrust.org](https://www.youtube.com/walthamlandtrust.org)
See photos at [flickr.walthamlandtrust.org](https://www.flickr.com/photos/walthamlandtrust.org)*

Please send any comments to the return address, or email to
<info@walthamlandtrust.org>.

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

 Printed on recycled paper.