

January 2006



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Editor - Diane Duane

## Annual Meeting Recap - Ted Williams, Guest Speaker



Thanks to our guest speaker, Audubon's Editor-at-Large **Ted Williams** for a wonderful presentation and reading from his latest book, 'Wild Moments'. An avid sportsman, environmentalist and nature writer, Ted read passages from his recently published book of "seasonal meditations".

He enlightened the audience with tidbits of nature's little known insights or 'Wild Moments'. How to attract bluebirds into your yard with winterberry holly and Mealworms, for example, or how starlings and sparrows compete for food and

bluebird nest boxes. A wonderful night full of beautiful pictures and insights!

## Conservation Trustee of the Year - Leslie Thomas



The Westford Conservation Trust is proud to announce that **Leslie Thomas** has been awarded the Conservation Trustee Award for 2005. The award was presented by Dick Emmet, Vice-president, at the Trust's annual meeting on November 3rd. Dick noted that Leslie Thomas has been a tireless champion of land and water conservation in Westford for over 30 years.

Leslie was a member of the Planning Board from 1979 to 1989, much of that time as its Chair. She was a member and Co-chair of the Master Plan Committee from 1993 to 2003, and has been a Water Commissioner from 1994 to the present time. During the 1970's, she worked on writing Westford's Non-zoning Wetlands Bylaw, the Open Space Residential Development Bylaw, and the Wetland Zoning Bylaw. In the 1980's, she helped write the Groundwater Protection Bylaw, and the Edge Zone Bylaw. In the 1990's, she worked to acquire the Farmer's Parcel for the Town, helped write the Water Resource Protection Bylaw, and the Earth Removal Bylaw. She worked on the Picking Gould (Meadowbrook Farm) purchase and preservation for the Town, worked on the Stony Brook Master Plan Committee, and was a member and Chairman of the Master Plan Implementation Committee. In the 2000's, in addition to her work on the Master Plan Implementation Committee and the Water Commission, she worked on the Aquifer Protection Bylaw, and has been a member of the Land Use Priorities Committee, the Community Preservation Act (CPA) Committee, the Steinke Committee, and the East Boston Camps Master Plan Committee.

Leslie did all of this, while carrying on a full time career. She states that when she moved here in the 1970's from a southern city, she was wooed by the rural charm of Westford. She has dedicated herself to trying to preserve as much of Westford's rural character as possible. Westford is fortunate, indeed, to have such a dedicated volunteer working to preserve the beauty of its land and health of its water.

# WCT Annual Summary *by William Harman, Clerk*

During the past year, the Trust has been engaged in a large number of activities. East Boston Camps (EBC) was a major focus for the Trust in the year 2005. In the following listing, the year's activities are summarized in three groups - education, land stewardship and community affairs.

## Education

We believe that education is one of the most important aspects of the Trust's activities. Many of these educational programs have developed and evolved over a number of years.

**Scouting** During the year we have fulfilled several requests for making presentations to Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts. These are excellent opportunities for education about trails, wildlife, and plants.

**Science Fair** This year as in previous years, Trust directors and members participated as judges for the Science Fair, at various grade levels.

**School Bird Feeder Program.** The Trust continues to follow the "Classroom Feeder Watch" program developed by Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Along with classroom instruction for all Westford 4th grades, the students make observations and enter these into a nationwide database. During the current year, we provided the financial support to continue the Cornell program. We also monitor the feeders, supplying birdseed, and making repairs as necessary. We made presentations to all fourth grade classes. Many thanks to members Shelagh Brady, Bill Morton, RoseMarie Koester, Bill and Marian Harman for their participation in this program.

**Spring Walks and Biodiversity Day** This year, as in many previous years, the Trust offered a morning Bird Walk with Dick Emmet, and a Wildflower Walk with Elana Schreiber, both in May. As part of the State Biodiversity Days project in June, we provided a "Stream Critters" walk and a Ponding walk, both led by Peter Severance. These events have been scheduled again for the coming year (check our website).

**Abbott School trail** Trust members Shelagh Brady and Bill Harman rerouted and cleared the Abbott School trail to allow school children to go on educational spring walks.

**Envirothon** The Trust continued to support the MA Envirothon. This year, we donated \$1000 to this program. Westford Academy sends a team of students to compete at the statewide competition

**Scholarships** The Trust has been offering one or more scholarships to graduating seniors at Westford Academy, to those students who show an interest in the cause of conservation. This year scholarships were granted to three students, with a total expenditure of \$3000.

**Living Labs** This year, the Trust donated \$500 to the Living Lab Project at the Day School. The Lab now has a boardwalk and viewing platform along Reed Brook, a unique and important habitat. The project also includes a seismograph located at the Day School. Find out more about Living Lab at [www.westford.mec.edu/day](http://www.westford.mec.edu/day)

## Land Stewardship and Trails

The Trust currently owns 18 parcels of conservation land and also administers another 18 conservation restrictions and trail easements. We participate actively with the joint committee for land stewardship and trails and with the Conservation Commission, clearing and marking a number of trails each year. To volunteer to be a land/trail steward, contact Lenny Palmer at [landstewards@westfordconservationtrust.org](mailto:landstewards@westfordconservationtrust.org)

**Boundaries.** We are working on an ongoing project to identify and mark all of the property boundaries of our lands. Experiences to date have taught us that boundary incursions are not uncommon. This year, we have hired a surveyor for several properties, as well as installing granite posts for a more permanent boundary marker.

**Trail Booklet.** We are continuing to issue a booklet "Westford Trails", with a new version printed this year. (*ed. note:* Thank you to Bill Harman for putting this together and for his wonderful artwork on the cover of the booklet). You can purchase the *Westford Trails* booklet for \$5.00 at Roudenbush Community Center. Proceeds go to the Westford Conservation Trust.

**Trail Signs** The Trust funded land and trail signs for Lakeside Meadows, Stony Brook Trail and the MacQuarrie Land.

**Sudbury Valley Trustees** The Trust has plans to partner with the Sudbury Valley Trustees to put conservation restrictions on two of our properties in order to increase the level of protection on the land.

**Eagle Scout Projects.** The Trust is continuing to work with Eagle Scout candidates whose projects involve trails or wildlife. We continue to help coordinate and support these projects. This year, Eagle Scout candidate **Steve Edwards** from Troop 591, built 2 trail bridges, installed an entrance sign on Lowell Rd and did boundary markings for the Francis Hill trail. The trust supplied boundary plates and the trailhead sign. Scout candidate **Mike Vegeto** from Troop 591, installed a new trail sign at the entrance to the MacQuarrie land on Patten Road, created a new trail through the interior portion of the land, and placed boundary markings around the perimeter.

## **Community Affairs**

**East Boston Camps** The Trust was quite active in supporting the East Boston Camp issue in 2005. The Trust donated \$15,000 towards the purchase of East Boston Camps. Trust members also led winter walks at EBC each weekend prior to Town Meeting, as well leading hikes during the EBC Winterfest. The Trust provided trail maps, postage for town wide mailing, trail signs and attended meetings of the original planning committee and the current planning committee.

**Newspaper** For many years, the Westford Eagle has been publishing monthly articles called "Wildlife Watch" written by Trust president Marian Harman. Each article includes, among other things, reports of wildlife sightings around town, contributed by many observers. Marian continued to publish these articles in 2005, and it appears that the readership following is steadily growing as well as the number of contributing observers.

**Web Site.** Our webmaster, Mike D'Antuono, has updated our website, making it even easier to access and providing even more information on upcoming events and links to other sites.

**Calendar** Our first WCT calendar project produced a beautiful calendar for 2006 for all to enjoy! This project was designed, photographed and developed by photographer and trust member Frank Winters and supported by the Trust. So far, this has been quite a success, and plans are now in the making for our next calendar for 2007!

**Brochure** A new WCT brochure was designed by trust member and graphic designer Carol Wing. This well designed brochure was sent out in a town wide mailing.

**Water Quality Testing** The Trust contributed \$891 for water quality measurements at 10 sites in Westford. Dissolved oxygen and other characteristics were measured. Data was compiled and shared with other town departments.

**Coordination with other Organizations** Many other organizations in Westford have activities that overlap or interact with our Trust. We are working to coordinate our interactions with the Conservation Commission, and the Land and Trail Stewardship Committee, which was jointly created by the Conservation Commission and the Conservation Trust.

We also support the **Bay Circuit Alliance** (which has initiated the Bay Circuit Trail). We are regular members of the **Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition**, attend the annual conference in Worcester, and have benefited from their legal advice on several occasions. We are regular members of the nationwide **Land Trust Alliance (LTA)**, and have recently voted to support their new standards and practices. We already follow the majority of these standards and have identified several issues where we plan to make changes as suggested.

**Land/Trails Stewardship Report** Kate Hollister described activities of this committee. She noted that part of Trailside land has been donated to Audubon by the developer Mark White (thanks also to Dick Emmet). Some CPA monies have been voted to the Conservation Commission and approx. 8 acres from the Brookside mill of land has been gained as conservation land. The Committee continues to support Scout projects from trail clearing to bog walks. She encouraged all to communicate to her any ideas for projects that will help our trails.

**Flora/Fauna Report** Marian Harman presented a summary of the year's sightings of birds and other wildlife as well as plants. For the year 2005, there were 94 reporters and 1,743 reports. Some interesting sightings included a young black bear near Providence Rd, a bobcat captured on a remote site camera near Dunstable Rd. A long tail weasel near rte 110, Eagle sighted at Shipley swamp and EBC. Trout documented at Reed Brook, porcupines at Kissacook Hill, 2 rare turtles in Graniteville, a Loon at Long-Sought-for-Pond and a Bull Moose off of Tad-muck Rd. To report a sighting, send your email to MarianHarman@aol.com

# Annual Meeting - Elections

Ron Deschenes, representing the Nominating Committee, presented nominations for the open positions of Directors and officers. The following were elected:

**Directors:** Leonard Palmer, Peter Severance, Marian Harman, Shelagh Brady. **Associate Directors:** Paul Cully, Michael D'Antuono, Rose Marie Koester, Elizabeth McGuire, William Morton, Carol Wing, Frank Winters.

**Clerk:** William Harman. **Treasurer:** Shelagh Brady was elected to replace Mark Tincknell, who retired.

## Trail Walk—MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**Saturday, April 22, 10 a.m. to noon, East Boston Camps:  
Marian Harman, leader**

Explore woods and trails on Earth Day, at Westford's newest land purchase. Fun for the whole family. Dogs on leash invited, bring binoculars if you have them. Meet at the East Boston Camps parking area across from Stony Brook.



## MIDDLESEX CONSERVATION DISTRICT SPRING TREE, SHRUB and PERENNIAL SALE

The Middlesex Conservation District will be holding its annual Spring Tree, Shrub and Perennial Sale on Friday April 28 from 3-6pm and Saturday April 29 from 8a-12noon. The Sale will be held at the 4H Fairgrounds on South Chelmsford Road in Westford, MA. All items can be pre-ordered through March 24 and picked up on the sale days. To place an order, go to [www.middlesexconservation.org](http://www.middlesexconservation.org) or call 978-692-9395 to request a brochure.



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Do you know who made these tracks? Go to our website to find out!