



Westford Conservation Trust Newsletter

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FALL 2010

**Join Us for the Trust's Annual Meeting
Thursday, November 4th**

**7:00pm Business Mtg 7:30pm Guest Speaker
Parish Center for the Arts—Westford Common**



Guest Speaker Dr. Thomas French 'Bats of New England'

Dr. Thomas French will be this year's annual meeting speaker. Come join us as Dr. French presents an interesting and informative talk on New England bats. Dr. French is a zoologist, instructor-naturalist and field biologist. Since 1984 he has been an Assistant Director of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, where he serves as Director of the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. Dr. French will talk about White-Nose Syndrome (WNS), which has "spread rapidly and has caused the catastrophic mortality of bats that spend the winter in New England caves and mines".

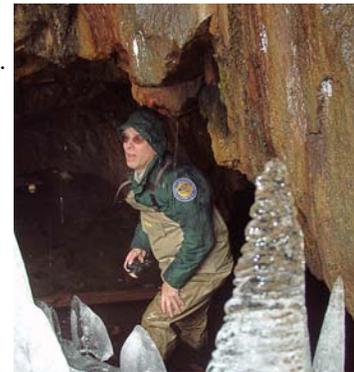
Meeting is free of charge. Refreshments will be served. For more information call Marian Harman at 978-692-3907. We will also have a slide show of 'Westford Wildlife Watch' photos from our many local wildlife reporters!

Conservation Trustee Award

This year, the Trust will be awarding the **Conservation Trustee Award for 2010** to **Steve Smith**. Steve is a business consultant who also enjoys a leadership role in management of the Appalachian Trail in MA, is involved with the Appalachian Mountain Club, and is currently responsible for stewarding a 1000 acre corridor of the AT in the Berkshires. After retiring in 2005, Steve took up an active role in the Westford Conservation Trust as part of the Tuesday morning trail crew. Steve has been an invaluable resource for maintenance and trail building expertise, mentoring Eagle Scout candidates, creating new trails and networks, as well as advising the Trust on trail stewardship standards. Please join us as we thank Steve for his many accomplishments!

Business

New this year! A short Trust yearly business meeting will be held from **7:00-7:20pm**. Our bylaws state that elections for Directors, Associate Directors, Clerk, and Treasurer be held at the annual meeting. Our guest speaker will start his presentation at **7:30pm**. Refreshments will also be served. For more information, call Marian Harman at 692-3907. Hope to see you there!



Dr. Tom French exiting a mine after a bat survey

Baseline Documentation *by Bill Morton*

In the spring of 2009 the Trust invited **Laura Mattei** to visit us. Laura is the Director of Stewardship for the **Sudbury Valley Trustees**. Laura talked to us about **Baseline Documentation** of Trust properties. Baseline documentation is a method for recording the condition of a parcel of land and usually includes a narrative description of the property, a survey of its borders, a map, and photos. Ideally, the property should be visited and notes taken once a year. It is an excellent way to care for the property, especially over a long period of time, since changes can be tracked, by whom-

ever walks the property with the documentation. The Trust has a goal of creating baseline documentation for approximately 25 properties, including land the Trust owns, and land on which the Trust holds a Conservation Restriction. It is a big task, but an important one so that we can be good stewards of our wonderful Trust land. If you are interested in helping the Trust accomplish this project, we would welcome volunteers who could lend a hand.

You can contact Bill at - wmorton@westfordconservationtrust.org

Congratulations!



A Life Membership will be awarded to **Marion and Bill Harman** of Westford on October 24th at the annual Sudbury Valley Trustee Annual Meeting. "These community leaders truly exemplify the spirit of the Sudbury Valley Trustee awards," said Ron McAdow, Executive Director of **Sudbury Valley Trustees**. "They each have dedicated many hours of hard work in support of land conservation in our region, and we welcome this opportunity to recognize their contributions."

Fall and Winter Trust Walks

All Walks are free of charge and run rain or shine.

Check our website for more info and updates!



Saturday, November 6, 9-10:00 a.m.- Mystery Spring Walk. A member of the Westford Conservation Trust will lead a walk to a mysterious spring in Westford which seems to emerge from nowhere. On the way, you will walk along a beautiful woods path to admire the fall foliage. Easy walking and fun for the whole family. Park at the cul-de-sac at the end of Dana Drive. For more information call Bill Morton at 978-692-7047.

Saturday, December 4, 9-10:30 a.m.- A Winter Walk on Kissacook Hill. Trust President Bill Morton will lead you on a steep hike up Kissacook Hill. Walk is rigorous and fun for the whole family. You will walk through a beautiful, rocky forest, to a rest spot on benches at the top of the world. Park at Day School on N. Main St. For more information call Bill Morton at 978-692-7047.

Saturday, January 8, 2011 –Winter Hike - Check our website for more info & updates on location and time!

Donations of Land to the Trust - If you are wondering about options for preserving land, including donations of land, Conservation Restrictions which reduce tax burden for the landowner, and a number of organizations, including the Trust, that are eager to preserve precious undeveloped property in Westford, then consider contacting the Trust to further explore these options. There is no property too small for us to at least consider the options for open space preservation. For more info, feel free to contact **Bill Morton** at wmorton@westfordconservationtrust.org or **Bill and Marian Harman** at 978-692-3907.



Tuesday morning hiker Rose O'Donnell photographing a porcupine above the Gagnon trail behind the Day School.

Water Quality Testing 2010 *by Peter Severance*

The Water Quality Monitoring volunteers from the Westford Conservation Trust entered their fifth year sampling Westford streams. Many thanks to Valerie Wormell, Matt Wormell, Michael & John Gallucci, Kate Hollister, Diane & Bill Duane & Denise Brunelle, for all their dedication and hard work!



Peter Severance and Trust member Kate Hollister at Reed Brook in Westford.

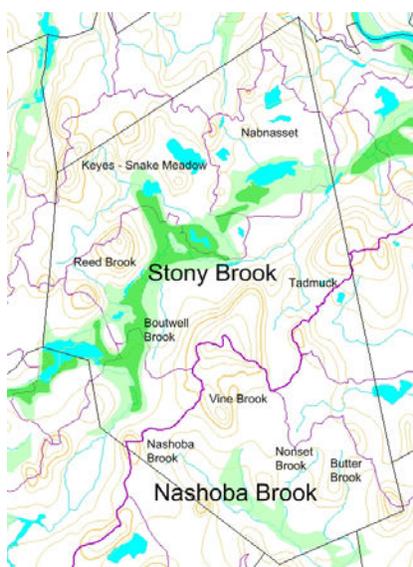
The ongoing study focuses on Westford's two main rivers – **Nashoba Brook** and **Stony Brook** – and their tributaries. **Stony Brook** is the source of Westford's municipal water supply. It flows from Harvard and Littleton eastward to Chelmsford where it joins the Merrimack River. **Nashoba Brook** provides water for some of Acton's municipal wells as it flows south to join the Assabet River in Concord.

Point sources of pollution – the pollution of the 1960's and 1970's that came from factories and sewage treatment plants -- are regulated by the Clean Water Act. Today, it is runoff from our streets and lawns, termed "non-point" pollution sources, which are causing the most problems for our riv-

ers. Fertilizers from our lawns cause excess algae and plant growth, which can rob a stream of its oxygen, making it unsuitable for fish and other wildlife.

The study shows Stony Brook is the cleaner of Westford's streams, but it picks up nitrate and phosphate nutrients as it flows through town. As one might expect, it is Stony Brook's Westford tributaries **Reed Brook, Tad-muck Brook, Keyes Brook and Gilson Brook** -- flowing from our neighborhoods, that are the source of these chemicals.

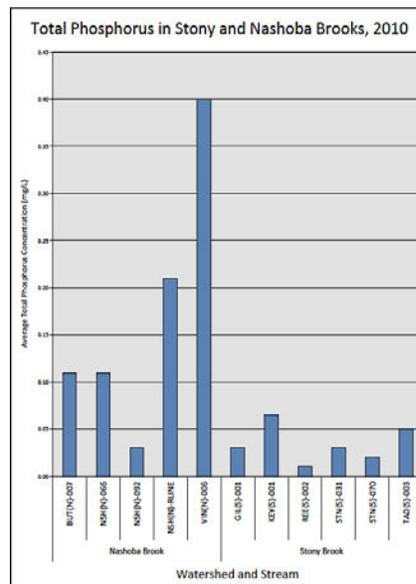
Nashoba Brook originates mostly in Westford. Vine Brook has a serious problem of excess phosphates and other chemicals, and recent sampling has suggested that there is an identifiable source of this pollution in the vicinity of Rte. 110.



We need volunteers to help with sample collections. We collect once a month in the early morning hours. Please email Peter at pseverance@verizon.net if you would like to join us and come to our next meeting!



Matt Wormell checks out some measurements at Vine Brook in Westford





Non Profit
Organization
Postage Paid
Permit #86
Westford, MA

Westford Conservation Trust, Inc.
P.O. Box 255
Westford, MA 01886



Check our website for a quick video & more info on bats!

Join the Trust

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (optional)/Email _____

Check here if interested in volunteering for trail maintenance

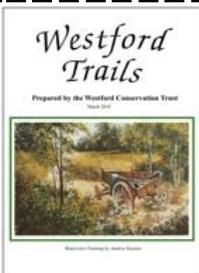
Check here if interested in volunteering for educational efforts

Please make tax deductible check payable to : **Westford Conservation Trust**

Please mail to : **Westford Conservation Trust P.O. Box 255
Westford, Ma. 01886**

Or join online at www.westfordconservationtrust.org

- \$25 Individual
- \$40 Family
- \$100-500 Friend
- \$500-1000 Patron
- \$1000 Supporter
- Other



TRAIL BOOKLET

The newest version of the Trails Booklet is available for \$5.00 at Roudenbush and Town Clerk's office. This version features a beautiful water color painting by local artist Andrew Kusmin.