



Westford Conservation Trust Newsletter

WWW.WESTFORDCONSERVATIONTRUST.ORG

JANUARY 2011

A Letter from the President

Westford's New Conservation Land

I'm sure I join many others here in town in congratulating Bill Turner, the Conservation Commission, and all the others who have recently enabled the Town to preserve dozens of acres of undeveloped land located off of Hildreth Street. It is a testament to all of the citizens of Westford that we care about the quality of life in our town, and realize that undeveloped land is an asset for a number of reasons. It helps preserve wildlife habitat, it contributes to safer drinking water, and it provides chances for residents, young and old alike, to take a refreshing walk down a trail or two. In fact, scientific studies have shown that unstructured outdoor activity is important for children's health, so this land could be considered both conservation land, and public health land! These are just some of the benefits, and I am very proud to live in a community that makes preserving undeveloped land a high priority. May this acquisition serve as a positive reminder of all the benefits which woodlands and wetlands provide to a town and its residents.

Bill Morton



Schwab land - parcel A & B



Tuesday morning group hiking on a beautiful winter's day.

Photo taken on Stepinski land showing 19 hikers - the current max for our Tuesday morning hikes!

Stony Brook is in the background with East Boston Camp on the other side.

Everyday Wilderness *by Bill Morton*

Sometimes, when I walk through the woods along a trail, I'm doing it to take a break from all the things I've been thinking about, and to procrastinate from all the things I need to get done. And what a great excuse it is! I can easily justify my time out-of-doors with the reasoning that I am getting exercise, and fresh air, and perhaps even a glimpse of the moon or an encounter with a previously undiscovered (by me, at least) glacial erratic (a large boulder left behind during the last ice age). You know, every so often I imagine setting in motion an army of – what would we call them? Erratic people? – by initiating a contest to see who could find the largest glacially-placed stone within the boundaries of Westford. I'm con-



Bill Morton's wife Lisa and son Felix visiting the large Shagbark Hickory tree at Prospect Hill Wildlife Sanctuary

vinced that somewhere out there is

one larger than either of the *House and Barn*. In any case, I think the most meaningful benefit for me in getting outdoors, and finding a trail to follow, is experiencing fewer distractions.

Natural features, like a pond or a tall tree, help me to focus. There's a chance to contemplate, or a chance to have nothing in my mind at all, except the notion to continue down the path.

A Quote for the Winter Season...

"You see, Rodya, to my thinking, the great thing for getting on in the world is always to keep to the seasons; if you don't insist on having asparagus in January, you keep your money in your purse."

Dostoevksy, *Crime and Punishment*

Winter Trust Walks

JOIN US FOR 'FIRST SATURDAY' HIKES & MORE!

The Westford Conservation Trust is leading hikes on the first Saturday of each month this winter and into the Spring. All Walks are free of charge and run rain or shine. Check our website for more info and updates!

Saturday, February 5th, 9 - 10:30AM, Grassy Pond, GPS Hike

A Winter Walk with GPS. Hike or snowshoe around Grassy Pond. In winter the woods are quiet, but there's lots to see! And if you got a GPS for the holidays and don't know how to use it, it's time to learn. Join Westford Conservation Trust member Rich Strazdas, for an easy woods walk. Dogs are welcome. Walk is 1-2 miles over potentially slippery trails. Wear layers and good boots. Snowshoes or traction aids are optional. Park in the lot off Plain Road. For more information call Rich at 978-692-2057.

Saturday, February 19th, 9-10:30AM, hike or snowshoe on the Roudenbush Trail to Town Hall, and then continue on to the Tom Paul trail. Distance is 1-2 miles. You can do all or part of the hike. For more information call Bill Harman at 978-692-3907.

Saturday, March 5th, 9-10:30AM, Stony Brook Hike

Hike led by Trust President Bill Morton. About 1 1/2 hrs. Easy to moderate walk, no strollers, dogs on leash only. Meet at end of Beacon Street near entrance to the old Highway Dept. garage. We will walk in along the old trolley line, then along Stony Brook, and loop back through with a quick glimpse of Burges Pond along the way. If deep snow, bring snowshoes. Dress in layers for warmth. For more info, check our website or call Bill at 978-692-7047.

Saturday, April 2nd, 9-10:30AM, Peace Trail

Hike led by Trust President Bill Morton. Park at Drew Circle - check website for more info!

Trust Annual Meeting & 2010 Highlights

We had a wonderful turnout for our Annual Meeting held in November. Dr. Tom French of Mass Wildlife spoke about different bat species and the serious issue of White Nose Syndrome which is depleting large populations of hibernating bats. Congratulations to Steve Smith for his Conservation Trustee award. Thanks to all for supporting us with your membership donations!

Here is a list of some Trust activities/accomplishments for 2010

- Trust's Tuesday morning trail crew, maintaining miles of public trails for Westford residents
- First Saturday guided walks, free of charge
- Scholarships to Westford students
- Funding of Living Lab at Day School
- Funding of Massachusetts Envirothon
- Funding & support of water quality testing in Westford's streams
- Supporting the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail
- Managing jointly held conservation easements
- Preparing baseline documentation of Trust properties
- Annual meeting with guest speaker Dr. Tom French
- Working with National Grid to prevent cutting of 19 trees
- Initiated first joint meeting of 10 local land trusts
- Purchase of 3 Acres of land near Court Road
- Bird Classroom project (Crisafulli School)



Dr. Tom French speaking about bats of New England



Steve Smith receiving Conservation Trustee Award for 2010



Calling All Backyard Birders!

Participate in Mass Audubon's annual **Focus on Feeders Weekend - Feb 5 and 6th, 2011** - note the number and diversity of



birds visiting your feeder. Ask your friends and neighbors to join in the fun. Photos welcome! Mail your observations or report online at www.massaudubon.org/focus



Photo from Bill Harman shows bikers at Calista Lane trail in late November.

"We had George Murphy with us. Seeing that George is so capable, Steve Smith sent him into the most tangled areas to pick up litter.

By the end, Steve had accumulated a large bag of trash. Now the trail is in excellent condition, thanks largely to George and Steve".



Non Profit
Organization
Postage Paid
Permit #86
Westford, MA

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

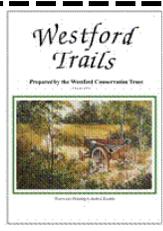
Join the Trust

Name _____
Address _____

Phone (optional)/Email _____
 Check here if interested in volunteering for trail maintenance
 Check here if interested in volunteering for educational efforts
 Contact me about info on land donations

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

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



TRAIL BOOKLET

The Trails Booklet is available for \$5.00 at Roudenbush Community Center.