



Westford Conservation Trust Fall 2013 News

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A Word to our Members from Bill and Marian Harman



Dear Fellow Trust
Members,

Bill and Marian will be retiring from the Trust Board of Directors as of November of this year.

We are so busy now with new family commitments; we are the "sandwich" generation, and

2013 Annual Meeting



Black Bear on Main Street

Please join us for the Westford Conservation Trust's Annual Meeting on Thursday, November 7, 2013 at 7:00 p.m., at Fletcher Library. Sue Ingalls, from the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (MassWildlife), will be our guest speaker, and her topic will be **Black Bears in Suburbia**. In her role as Wildlife Technician, Sue assists the Wildlife Section Project Leaders in the management of black bears, furbearers, deer, moose, turkey, upland game species and waterfowl.

We have seen an increase in black bear sightings in Westford over the last two years. To address many of our questions and concerns, Sue will talk about black bear biology, natural history, re-colonization of native range, current hunting frameworks and management practices, research efforts, suburban bear issues, and the human dimensions regarding such wildlife interactions.

A short business meeting will precede our guest speaker. The Trust will award the **Conservation Trustee Award** for 2013 to **Kate Hollister**. Kate has been extremely active and dedicated in her support of local conservation efforts. Please join us as we recognize Kate as Conservation Trustee for 2013!
Admission to the meeting is free - all are welcome!

sometimes it feels like quite a squeeze! It is a good time for us to retire, because the board is very strong now with young, vibrant board members, combined with older experienced members. They are all led by our new and very able president, Ron Gemma. Together, they are going in some exciting, creative directions. We think the Trust is in very good hands, and will continue to be a strong force for conservation in Westford.

Bill and Marian intend to stay interested and active members of the Trust. Bill will continue leading the popular "Tuesday Trompers", our energetic trail maintenance crew, and lead some Saturday walks. Marian will continue to lead some nature walks and write her column, Westford Wildlife Watch for the Westford Eagle.

See you on the Trail!

Yours in Conservation,
Marian and Bill Harman

**Discover Westford Trails
and More on Guided
Walks**

Refreshments will be provided.



Mile-a-minute vine covering native vegetation

Invasive Plants in Westford: A 10,000-Year History

by Ron Gemma

From the time the glaciers receded from this area over 10,000 years ago, to the first arrival of non-native Americans about 350 years ago, approximately 2,000 plant species evolved here in Massachusetts. Since then, another 1,000 plants have been introduced; an increase of 50 percent in a relatively short period of time.

Many plants were brought by immigrants from many nations around the world. Some of these plants were representative of their culture and were essential to their cuisine or livelihood. As time went on, more plants were brought in for agricultural and landscaping purposes, and some came in uninvited, often piggybacking along with those plants that were intentionally imported.

Not too long ago, some people realized that some of these non-native plants were very invasive. That is, they were crowding out native plants and other wildlife, and changing the "look" of our landscape, which many people find very beautiful. In 2006, an advisory group compiled a list of plants that were considered invasive in our state. Interestingly, the list contains fewer than 70 plants. This is only 2 percent of the total plant population, but this 2% has already had a significant adverse effect on our landscape and it continues to expand.

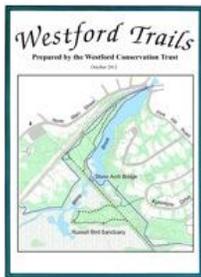
While walking around your yard or on one of the many trails in town, or driving down a street, you can see the most invasive of these plants as they crowd out and take over large sections of our landscape. These plants include multi-flora rose, bittersweet, knotweed,



Walkers on the Sassafra Trail

If you enjoy the natural world, want to learn about Westford trails, wildlife, and history, could use some company, or just need to get out and stretch your legs, consider joining a guided trail walk sponsored by the Trust. Usually held on the first Saturday of the month from 9:00 - 10:30 a.m., these walks are open to all, free of charge, and fun! Additional information and the schedule can be found by clicking [here](#). You may also send us an [email](#).

Westford Trails Booklet Available For Purchase



barberry, burning bush, common reed (Phragmites), purple loosestrife, and glossy buckthorn. You may even see a new arrival like mile-a-minute (MAM) vine.

The Westford Conservation Trust created an Invasive Species Control Program in 2010, the same year it got involved with an eagle scout project to find and remove the newly arrived MAM vines in town. The MAM removal program, which the Trust agreed to take over once the eagle scout project was completed, is in its third year. The results are encouraging, largely due to the efforts of a relatively small, but very dedicated volunteer group. Because the MAM seeds can remain viable in the soil for up to six years, the Trust is committed to continuing this program for another 2 to 3 years. The seeds can also be spread by wildlife, so we are always on the lookout for possible new incursions of the plant.

The MAM program only deals with one species, but what about the other long-established invasive species? The Trust's Invasive Species Control Program and the Westford Conservation Commission have combined efforts to deal with these plants here in town. The goal is to identify locations where one or more of these species is becoming dominant - especially in naturally beautiful and/or sensitive areas - and take measures to control the plant(s). The Trust's program also provides information and guidance to property owners about how to identify and control invasives on their own land.

If you are interested in learning more about how to identify and control invasive plants, how to report a possible sighting of MAM, or if you want to volunteer for MAM or other species control, please send email to invasives@westfordconservationtrust.org

an updated edition of the Westford Trails booklet, which includes several GPS-based topographic maps with accurate renderings of trails, streams, ponds, marshes, roads, and other landmarks. The booklet is available for \$5.00 at Roudenbush and the Town Clerk's office. The maps can also be found on our website by clicking [here](#).



Tuesday Trail Maintenance Crew 10/22/13

Send Us Your Photos!



We love to receive your photos of flora and fauna from around Westford for our [Facebook photo album](#). Send your photos in an [email](#), and be sure to identify the subject and include location, date, and your name.

Find us on Facebook 

Tuesday "Trail Trompers" Update

by Bill Harman

We are standing at a very scenic place on the Stepinski land, overlooking Stony Brook, with East Boston Camps on the other side. This was our 2nd visit to the Stepinski land in recent weeks. It's so big, we needed two visits. We are just getting familiar with this large woodland, planning some nice trails for the future. This woodland is entirely separate from EBC. Currently the only way to walk from EBC to the Stepinski land is to walk along the railroad tracks. We don't do that, but instead we parked on the Graniteville side in the large parking area for the playing fields there.

If you're interested in participating with the Tuesday trail maintenance crew, contact Bill Harman at 692-3907 or harmanwh@verizon.net