



NEWS

News from the Wareham Land Trust • Volume 5, Number 1 • Spring/Summer 2006

Affairs of the State ...*State of affairs*

The Audubon Society recently warned that “*actions taken and not taken over the next decade by public agencies, private nonprofit organizations and the private sector will permanently shape the future of the Commonwealth’s landscapes.*” For Southeastern Massachusetts, the nature of those actions will mean the difference between our beloved fields, forests, meadows, and marshes and urban sprawl as far as the eye can see. The challenge is huge.

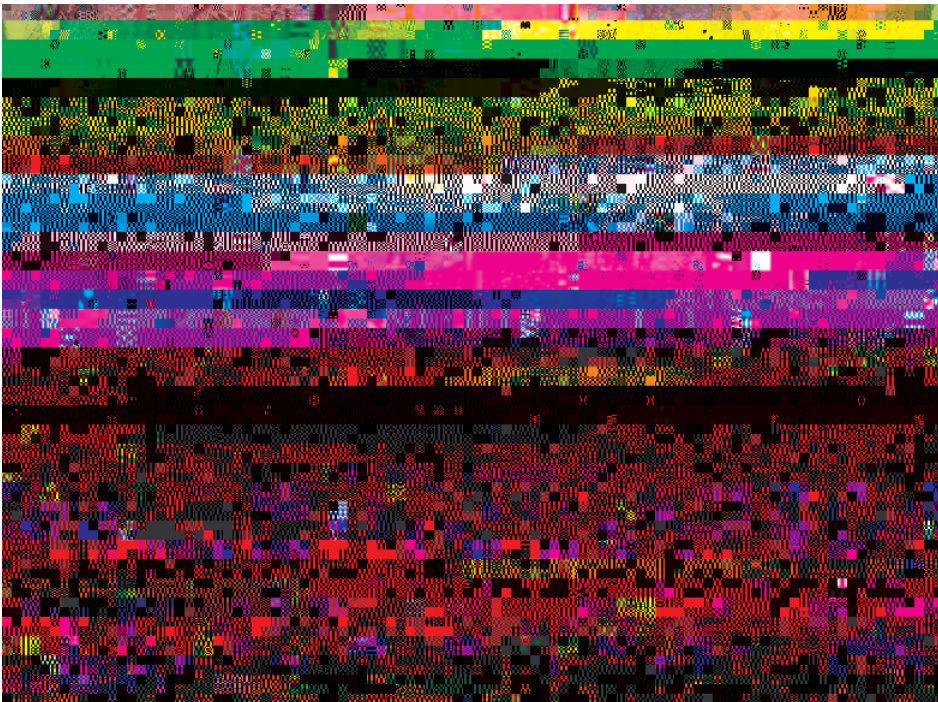
Last year, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts ranked 48th of 50 states in per capita spending on the environment. Appropriations for land protection within the state

budget are up to \$34 million in 2006 from last year’s \$27 million though that figure still lags spending by previous administrations and is less than half the \$70 million in state funds committed to open space as recently as fiscal year 2003.

And now for the better news: The Community Preservation Act, a state-envisioned though community-based initiative celebrates its sixth anniversary later this year. One hundred and four communities across Massachusetts have elected to increase real estate taxes in order to generate funds for affordable housing, open space and historic preservation. A state fund generated from various deed and filing fees matches local funds raised by participating cities and towns. To-date, CPA funds have

protected 5,770 acres of land for conservation across the state. Good news, but with 2.4 million acres of open space still unprotected and up for grabs in Massachusetts, not good enough.

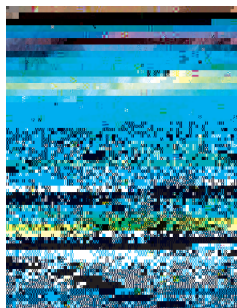
In five short years, the Wareham Land Trust—its members and friends—has changed the way our community thinks about open space and considers development. In five years, the Wareham Land Trust has protected more than 230 acres of ocean beach, bog, river front, pond-side, upland, forest and meadow property from development. Members of the WLT worked tirelessly to bring the CPA to Wareham in 2002 (and were rewarded by a resounding “yes” vote at the polls—passed in our community by the largest percentage of voters to approve the measure anywhere in the state). However, the clock ticks on. While we can hope and indeed, should lobby for a return to previous conservation funding levels by the Commonwealth, there are other things we can and must do now: We must increase our efforts to reach out to landowners and offer alternatives to development or at least, provide conservation-friendly development alternatives for open space and former agricultural holdings; we can push for legislative action on the state level to introduce income tax incentives for contributions of conservation land or easements. But most importantly, we must dig even deeper into our own pockets as we give even more of our time to support land protection initiatives in our community and across Massachusetts. But time is short. **Will you help?**



Kayaking at Fearing Hill

Meet the president: Jim Munise

As a kid, his was the last house on a cul de sac in Bridgewater, Massachusetts. Surrounded by fields and forests,



Jim Munise whiled away his summer days and weekends happily exploring the world around him. He hiked, fished in nearby streams and ponds, tracked local flora and fauna and began his lifelong love affair with the great outdoors. But things began to change in his young world: colonial and ranch houses sprouted where woods used to be, replacing trees, bracken, vines, and tall grasses with manicured lawns and blacktop driveways and chasing wildlife further and further away. Jim was still pretty young when he began to worry about the environment and disappearing open space.

Jim studied biology in college (no surprise there) and today, he is an administrator in the Physics and Earth Science Department of Bridgewater State College.

But twenty-six years ago, Jim left Bridgewater and moved to Wareham where today he laments our current, but to him all-too-familiar, rapid loss of open space to epidemic residential development. In his free time, he is still likely to be found mucking about in swamps and bogs or passing a quiet afternoon alone with his fishing pole and Mother Nature. And Jim still worries about the environment and disappearing open space.

Lucky for us, now he does more than just worry: A water tester for the Coalition for Buzzards Bay, Jim climbs out of bed at dawn during the summer months to sample and monitor nitrogen levels in local estuaries of Buzzards Bay. A member of the

Weweantic "Stream Team," he knows more about the ecosystems of that river as well as every other body of fresh or salt water in Wareham than most natives or many a professional environmentalist. Most evenings, his is a familiar face in the audience at zoning bylaw rewrite, planning board, conservation, and ZBA meetings.

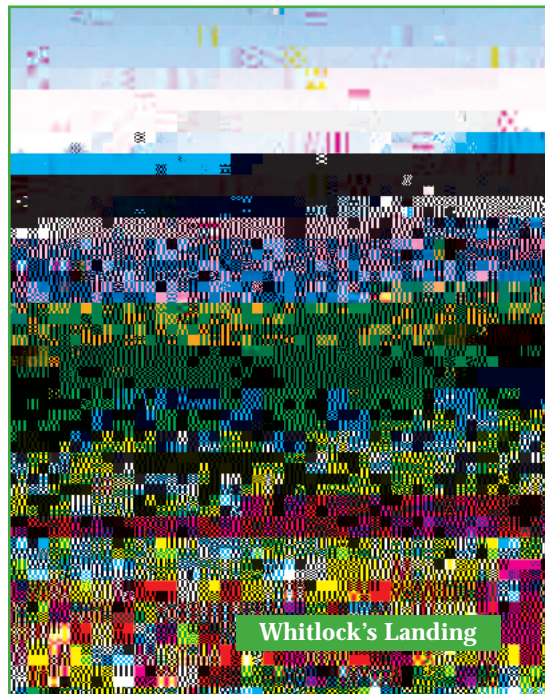
A dedicated Wareham Land Trust member for years, Jim became WLT president in 2004 and has guided the organization through important land acquisitions and purchases. He is responsible for launching the land trust's outreach program to land owners which has resulted in a number of significant open space donations and pending gifts. Jim is leading the WLT through the Land Trust Alliance's organizational assessment process and he also serves on the steering committee of Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition. A true friend of the earth, he is also the proud Dad of a college-age daughter, a devoted son, popular colleague, president of his union and a tireless and inspiring leader of the Wareham Land Trust.

Vernal Pool Update

Last year in this space, we showed a photo of a tiny fairy shrimp. This year, we're happy to report, that little critter, along with a box turtle or two, are helping to add a second layer of protection (on top our own) to the HLM Baypoint property in Onset. The presence of these species along with other criteria set the stage for certification of a seasonal body of water on the site as a vernal pool which is protected under state environmental laws. Mack Phinney reports that the necessary paperwork has been submitted to the Massachusetts Fish and Wildlife Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. And, he adds, he's checking out a couple of other potential vernal pools on WLT land as well. Dig out those waders! We'll keep you posted.

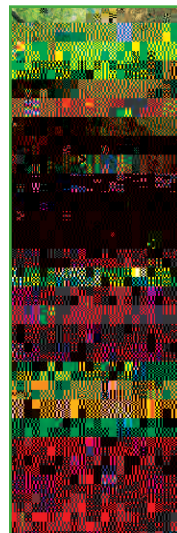
A River runs through it

In town documents, including Wareham's 1998 Master Plan and more recent Open Space Plan, preservation of open space along the water

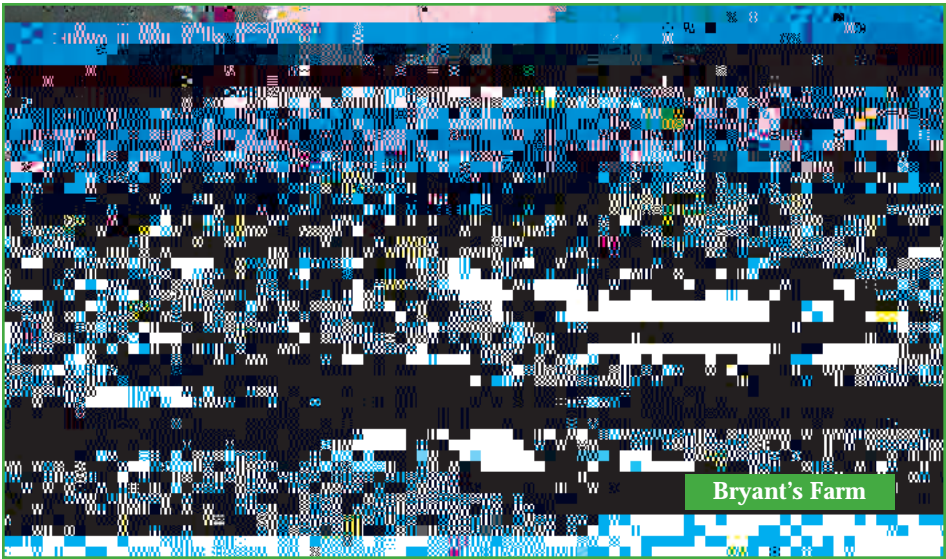


consistently emerges as a town priority. A Community Preservation Act survey at Town Meeting in 2002 resoundingly reinforced protection of our waterfront properties as a primary goal. Since inception, the Wareham Land Trust has considered protection of land along our bays, rivers and streams of paramount importance. Currently, the WLT owns or protects land with frontage on the Agawam, Sippican, Weweantic and Wareham rivers, the East River of Onset Bay, the Agawam Mill Pond, and various babbling brooks and vernal pools.

In his book, *On the Road with Charles Kuralt*, the author wrote: "I started thinking of America as highways and state lines. As I got to know it better,



With 54 miles of coastline, Wareham holds claim to more waterfront property than any other town in Massachusetts.



I began to think of it as rivers. America is a great story and there is a river on every page of it.” And now for a few pages of our own:

The Agawam River

The Wareham Land Trust protects not one, but two properties on the Agawam River. Named for a friendly, local Native American tribe of the Wampanoag Federation, Agawam also means “place where the fish are loaded.” The Wareham Land Trust owns the **Whitlock’s Landing** property which skirts the Agawam Mill Pond of the Agawam River and, as

you might expect, offers great freshwater fishing as well as canoeing and kayaking.

The WLT is steward to the 101-acre town-owned **Bryant’s Farm** property which is an unusual tapestry of differing landforms and is home to a wide variety of plant and animal species best explored by kayak, canoe or, with sturdy shoes, on foot.

Whitlock’s Landing is located at 150 Glen Charlie Road and Bryant’s Farm can be reached either from Minot Avenue or Sandwich Road.

The Sippican River

The latest addition to the WLT’s own portfolio of properties, the twenty-five acre **Tweedy and Barnes** parcel includes upland as well as wetland and dead ends with a breathtaking view of the Sippican, or translated from Native American dialect, “long” River. A spectacular destination any time of the year, look for WLT signs on Blackmore Pond Road (just off County Road) to direct you to our newest treasure.

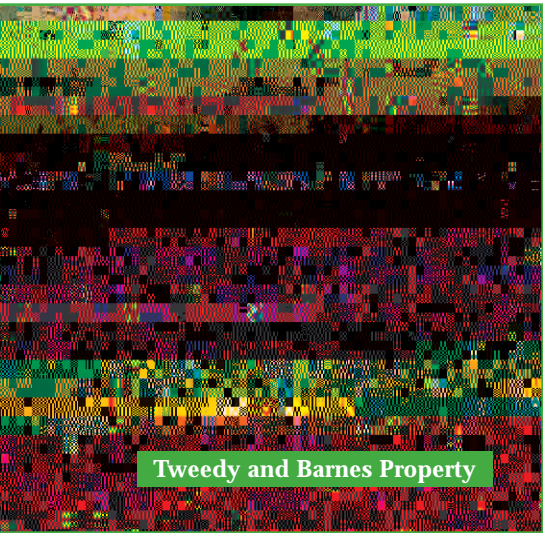
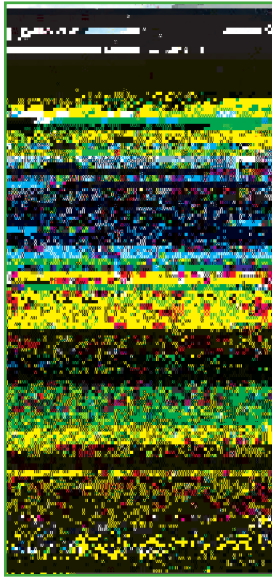
The Weweantic River

The town-owned **Fearing Hill Conservation Area**, our very first

land preservation project, includes frontage on the Weweantic. With two Native American definitions for the word—“young bucks” and “crooked river”—the river’s name is as apropos today as in earlier times. In summer, the property is lush and overgrown and great for hiking, kayaking, or a picnic. In the fall and winter, keep your eyes peeled for grey foxes, raccoons and lots of deer—young bucks and otherwise! Entrance to the property is on your right as you head up Fearing Hill Road, approximately one-half mile from the Main Street turn-off.

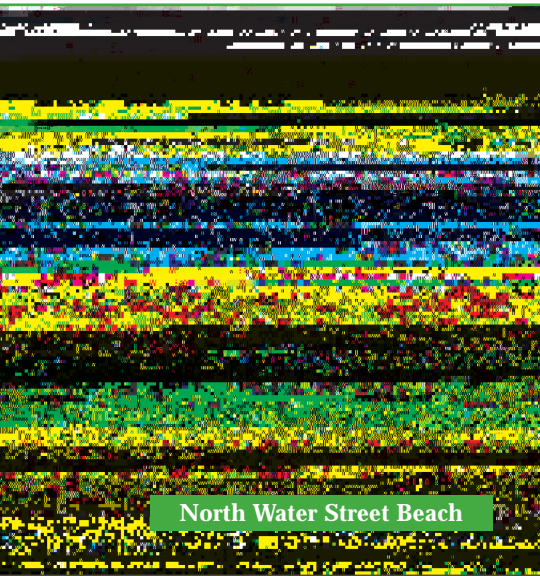
The East River

Grab your suntan lotion as you head for the WLT’s very own 1.3 acre Riviera on Onset Bay. Our **North Water Street Beach** property abuts the bay estuary called the East River until that body of water opens into Broad Cove. Enjoy sand between your toes in the summer or the wide



er South Coast community.

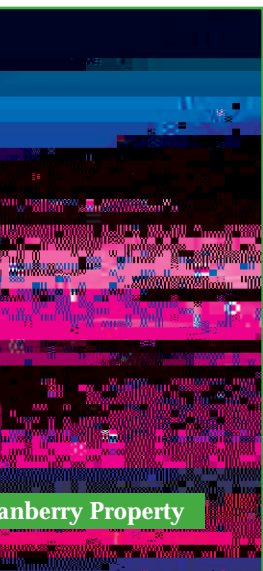
array of visiting winter waterfowl, including buffleheads, mergansers, wood ducks, Canada geese and swans. The property lies along side North Water Street off Onset Avenue in Onset at the Stone Bridge.



North Water Street Beach

The Wareham River

The WLT monitors the town-owned **Murphy Freedom Cranberry Property** which noses ever so slightly into the Wareham River's Crab Cove. The property is marked by overgrown bogs, a brook, swamp land and forest and adjoins the town forest as part of a greenway that extends from the waterfront all the way to Route 6. Entrance to the property is from either side of Indian Neck Road heading east just before the sign to Parkwood Beach.



anberry Property



To wind like our rivers A bike path for Wareham

By Dale Scott

Henry David Thoreau wrote that "a river touching the back of a town is like a wing. River towns are winged towns." By that definition Wareham is a most favored place for we have not one, but many, vital rivers "at our backs." The metaphor is engaging because of the happy visions it inspires. Flying towns? Indeed! Of course, rivers and town boundaries are earthbound, but the people in the town are like the rivers - on the move, always changing, reaching, seeking new ground. People can soar on wings and have big dreams, so why not dream of a BIKE PATH for Wareham - and then build one - a sliver of land to wend and wind like our rivers? Well, yes!

Wareham is serious about creating a scenic and safe bicycle path. Ken Pottel, Director of the Community Service Learning Program in the Wareham Public Schools, has been working with a small band of interested residents, including students and teachers, promoting and sharing his vision of a recreational trail for Wareham. With the appointment of a formal Committee in February 2006, the Selectmen have authorized implementation of the Wareham segment of the South Coast Bike Path and Greenway.

The Committee's immediate goal is to create a path running from Fairhaven (complete) through Mattapoisett to Marion (under construction), to Wareham (a gleam!), and finally, in the future, to Buzzards Bay, Bourne and the Cape Cod Canal. (The ultimate vision is to connect all the towns stretching from RI to Cape Cod.)

The path will run along old railway beds and pass through scenic countryside whenever possible and will be reserved for recreational cyclists, joggers, walkers, birders, roller-bladers,

Moms and Dads/Gramps and Grams pushing baby strollers, etc.

Rome wasn't built in a day nor will be our bike path. But rewards for our patience will be myriad! Exercise for better health, sociability for better relationships, recreation for sheer fun, heightened appreciation of our natural surroundings, green spaces and wildlife corridors, economic gain for small businesses along the trails and increased tax revenues for the Town. Surely, a recreational ribbon of open space will enhance the quality of life for folks who love the sweet salt air of a seaside town.

The Big Night

Spots not spats are in order for the "big night." Imagine an amphibian prom: on a particular night (or often, nights) in the spring--*date determined by ground temperature, air temperature, humidity, barometric pressure and darkness*--spotted salamanders migrate, often traveling distances and crossing dangerous roads while heading for an aquatic breeding ground, usually a vernal pool. Upon arrival, the boy salamanders at the front of the line--*not unlike males of another species*--congregate on one side of the pond. Then, tentatively, they take the first steps of a courtship dance and so begins a rite of spring as old as time.

Spotted salamanders are common to Wareham. The nocturnal creatures can live twenty years and grow as long as nine inches. Their blackish hue is marked with distinctive yellow spots in patterns unique to each salamander. Spotted salamanders spend their infancy in egg sacs under water and upon hatching, remain in the water sporting tails, fins and breathing through gills in their early months. By mid-summer, the salamanders have shed their fish-like appurtenances and developed lungs and limbs for the climb up and out of the pond. Then, it's off to a rodent hole or under a log for the summer and a subterranean home for the colder

continued on page 5

>>>> *Thank you* <<<<

To the Tweedy and Barnes Cranberry Company
for their generous donation of 25 acres of open space with Sippican River frontage
and to

David Eldridge and Mary Eldridge Brown
for their gift of 5.76 acres of family property at Mark's Cove

We pledge to preserve and protect the land for generations to come.

The Wareham Land Trust

continued from page 4

months. At age two or three, the young salamanders are ready for their own first dance, mostly likely migrating to the very pool where their own lives began.

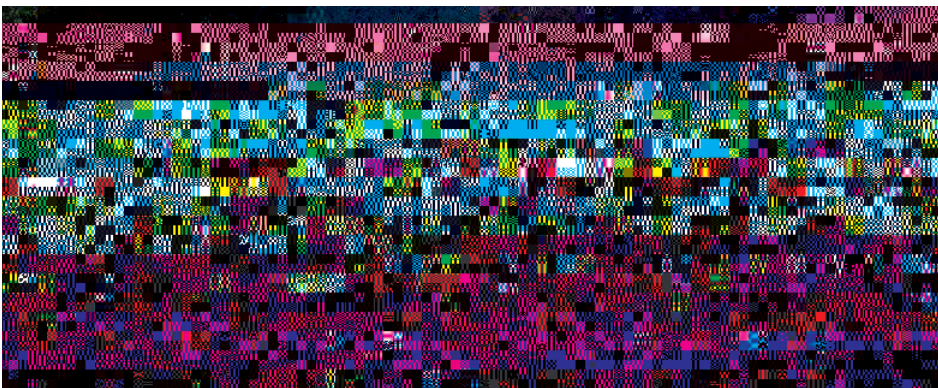


"Big Night" festivities were late this year in many communities. With road casualties providing the greatest risk to spotted salamanders during this ritual, on the night or nights when conditions are just right, many environmentalists and salamander enthusiasts kept a sharp eye on dark, wet country roads to see that partygoers made it to the dance safely and in one piece.

Looking back *The year in review*

WLT members come from all walks of life which is handy when you real-

ize just how many different things we do over the course of a year. Since the spring of 2005, we replaced a roof at our Whitlock's Landing property, picked up nearly one ton of garbage at various WLT locations, spread the land preservation gospel while basking in the sun at the Swan Festival and dodging raindrops at the AD Makepeace Harvest Celebration. We learned how to be more effective at what we do by attending conferences hosted by state and national organizations and in August, we met for our annual recap and celebratory canal cruise aboard the Viking. We began an intensive organizational assessment process with the Land Trust Alliance and along the way, we monitored 230 acres of open space and added more than 30 acres to our portfolio of protected land. Never a dull moment!



Paul Cavanagh, Dan Williams and John Browning fixing the roof at Whitlock's Landing

Looking ahead *for a little help from our friends*

The Wareham Land Trust now boasts a membership of more than 220, a dedicated phone line (508-295-0211), and a newly expanded website www.WarehamLand.org. What we don't have is an office (if you can help us out with space, please let us know) or enough dedicated volunteers.

In the months ahead, we plan to submit a grant application to the Wareham Community Preservation Committee for an exciting land acquisition project. Stand by for more information and do plan to attend fall Town Meeting to support our important work.

If you aren't a member of the Wareham Land Trust, please join today. If you are already a member, would you consider serving on a committee? Perhaps, Stewardship, Membership, Fundraising, or Communications? Or, can you help other WLT volunteers by offering some of your time and particular skills? We are always looking for computer help as well as experience in accounting, graphic design, trail planning, botany or public relations. Do you have a great idea for public meeting, a speaker or a community project? Please let us know. And, please encourage your family, friends and neighbors to support our efforts to preserve Wareham's open space and natural resources by becoming a member of the Wareham Land Trust today!

**"I say if your knees
aren't green by the end of
the day, you ought to seriously
re-examine your life."**

— Calvin from Bill Watterson's
Calvin and Hobbes

Five Years Young



Clockwise from top left: Kathy Pappalardo, Cathy Phinney and Dale Scott; Happy Birthday to us; David Stone; Secretary Claire Smith, Vice President Mary McFadden, President Jim Munise, and Treasurer Nancy McHale; Betty and Sherm Gleason.

Wareham Land Trust

On February 4, 2006 the Wareham Land Trust officially celebrated its 5th anniversary with a brunch and presentation at the old Methodist Meeting House on Main Street in Wareham. After feasting on quiches, ham, pastries, coffee cakes and muffins, the crowd was welcomed by President Jim Munise. WLT founding president Mary McFadden then reminded the audience just how much the land trust has accomplished in five short years. Bob Conway presented "Hidden Treasures," a glorious photo tour of local flora and fauna and board members Sandra Wheeler, Dr. Sherm Gleason, Mary McFadden and Larry Stifler were honored for their generous contributions of time, energy and resources to the organization. Jim Munise closed the proceedings with a challenge to keep up the often hard, but important work (though it was actually some time before the party finally broke up). What finer acknowledgement of five years of steady and impressive accomplishments (not to mention a good time had by all) than the glowing tributes that appeared in local newspapers in the weeks that followed.

Wareham Land Trust

Meetings

Wareham Land Trust public meetings are generally held four times a year, typically on the second Tuesday of a month. Please watch local papers for announcements of dates, times, and locations. Executive board meetings are open to the public and are held on the sec-

ond Tuesday of all other months at 7:00 PM on the second floor of the Multi-service Center, Marion Road, Wareham.

MISSION

The Wareham Land Trust (WLT) is a private, non-profit corporation dedicated to protect and conserve Wareham's open space and natural resources.

Membership Categories

Individual	\$10	—
Family	\$20	—
Supporting	\$25	—
Friend	\$50	—
Sustaining	\$100	—
Sponsor	\$250	—
Benefactor	\$500	—
Lifetime	\$1,000	—
Incorporator	\$5,000	—
Conservation Leader (or land donation)	\$10,000	—
Other contribution	\$_____	

Name _____

Address _____

Town/State/Zip _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Please send contributions to:
The Wareham Land Trust, Inc.
P.O. Box 718
Wareham, MA 02571

The Wareham Land Trust is a 501(C) (3) charitable organization. All gifts and bequests to the WLT are tax-deductible within IRS guidelines.

The Wareham Land Trust Officers and Board of Directors

President: Jim Munise
Vice President: Mary McFadden
First Vice President: John Browning
Treasurer: Nancy McHale
Clerk: Claire Smith

Directors:

James Clemmey, Charles Gleason, Lauren Griffith, Kathleen Pappalardo, Malcolm Phinney, Dale Scott, Lawrence Stifler, Peter Tamagini, Sandra Wheeler

Board of Advisors:

Robert Scott, Mary Crowley, David Stone, Martha Maguire, Martin Himmelfarb, Sam Corbitt and David Warr

Please visit us online at
www.WarehamLand.org
or call 508-295-0211.

Newsletter design:
www.coughlindesign.com

Photo Credits: Nancy McHale, Lauren Griffith, Jim Clemmey, Martha Maguire and Kathy Pappalardo

Special thanks to Nancy McHale, Kathy Pappalardo, Mack Phinney and Dale Scott