



NEWS

News from the Wareham Land Trust • Volume 5, Number 1 • Spring/Summer 2007

The more things change...

Last November's elections ushered in a new political era both on the national stage and at the state level, and in April, local elections brought new faces to the forefront of Wareham town government. Long term, we hope these changes bode well for the environment. Short-term however, budget trumps best intentions and it looks as though *patience* will be the watchword for 2007.

In Washington, the President's proposed FY2008 budget cuts environmental programs overall by \$1.7 billion or 5.4%. Hit especially hard is the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), slashed to \$59 million which is less than half last year's appropriation and a mere 10% of funding the program was allocated in 1999. *If the LWCF, which is funded by revenues from offshore oil and gas drilling leases, doesn't ring a bell, think 7 million acres of protected open space including the National Seashore and myriad state and local park lands.*

On Capitol Hill, the new House of Representatives is decidedly friendlier to the environment than its predecessor. Global warming, wildlife protection and ocean conservation are priorities in the 110th Congress. Additionally, the now reconfigured U.S. Senate is committed to reducing our national oil dependence and with it, greenhouse gas emissions. Good news for the planet. Let's hope our

newly-minted legislative bodies restore open space spending to last year's levels at the very least.

In Massachusetts, the new administration campaigned on a pro-environment platform calling for, among other initiatives, a \$10 million fix for the Commonwealth's badly neglected parks, state forests and recreation areas. Soon after the election, an inherited almost one billion dollar budgetary deficit emerged laying waste to that plan. Now the governor's proposed environmental appropriations for FY 2008 are roughly level funded at last year's disappointingly low figures. However, a House version of the budget injects an additional \$8 million into environmental spending with more than \$3 million earmarked for state and urban parks. Not quite the stuff of campaign

promises, but steps in the right direction. At this writing, the State Senate has just begun to tackle the budget so final compromise budget figures remain to be seen. Our fingers are crossed.

Locally, the short term municipal budgetary outlook is perhaps bleakest of all. We face the prospect of significant cuts in municipal services in the next fiscal year. But here, on the conservation front, skies are sunny still. Thanks to the foresight of local voters, the environment need not suffer while town government scrambles to make ends meet. The Community Preservation Act, adopted by Wareham in 2001, provides a funding pool from a modest surcharge on real estate taxes that is matched by state funds to pay for open

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The view from Whitlock's Landing

Continued from page 1

The more things change...

space acquisition, historical preservation projects and affordable housing initiatives. The CPA has already preserved more than 100 acres of environmentally sensitive land in our community and is poised to contribute to the conservation of an additional 90 plus acres (see article on page 5).

Some things stay the same

Wareham is indeed fortunate to be the beneficiary of CPA funds for open space purchases. However, across the country, the heartening constant in the land conservation movement has little to do with politics, tax revenues or elections. What remains unwavering is the role of land trusts on the national, state and local levels. More than 37 million acres of open space have been protected from development by land trusts ranging from large organizations like the Trust for Public Land, the Nature Conservancy and the Audubon Society to the regional Coalition for Buzzards Bay and our very own Wareham Land Trust. Bipartisan and even apolitical, these organizations work independently to save local treasures acre by acre and forge partnerships to accomplish astounding feats: One need only consider the Coalition for Buzzards Bay's five-year *Saving Buzzards Bay Lands Campaign* which recently concluded after bringing together national and local land trusts, state and municipal governments, the private sector and corporate sponsors to raise more than \$30 million to protect 3,092 acres of open space. Wareham voters, Wareham land owners, Wareham philanthropists and the Wareham Land Trust were vital contributors to the success of

the campaign. Bottom line? In spite of governmental paralysis, political upheaval and busted budgets, we can and do make a difference.

Wareham Land Trust Rewrites History

Just a decade ago, Wareham had the unenviable distinction of ranking least and last of all communities in the Buzzards Bay watershed in land preservation. In 1997, just 3.6% of Wareham's open space was protected. Developers were licking their chops contemplating lower land costs in our town and less-than-stringent zoning laws. Enter the Wareham Land Trust in 2000, the CPA soon after and what a difference a few years can make! We are proud to report that in 2007, a full 9.9% of Wareham's open space is safe from development--nearly a threefold increase! *But, happy as these statistics make us, we're not quite ready to put on our dancing shoes: Wareham now ranks just second from the bottom having only gained ground on Acushnet.*

*I think
that I shall never see
a billboard
lovely as a tree.*

*Indeed,
unless the
billboards fall*

*I'll never see
a tree at all.*

*-Ogden Nash (1902-1971)
from The Ogden Pocket Book, 1943*

There's no pl

In our very first newsletter, we introduced a then-elusive **Gray Fox** living on Fearing Hill. Since then, we've often featured WLT properties, but said little about their inhabitants. Wildlife protection is a major reason for our existence. Our properties are home to members of endangered species and species of critical concern as well as more common critters who, but for conservation efforts, might be battling steam shovels, clear cutting and general habitat destruction rather than living out their days as nature intended. To introduce a few of our residents:

Gray Fox



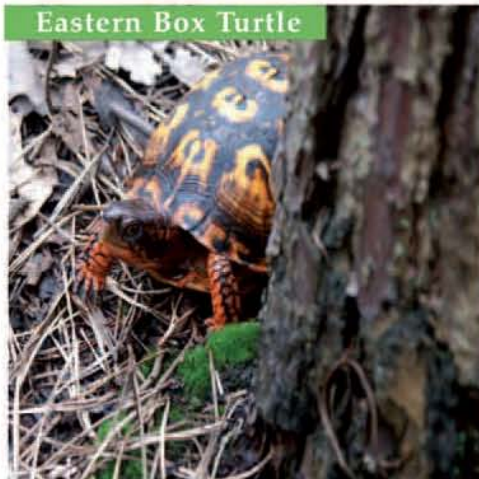
Back by popular demand, the Fearing Hill fox is caught on camera. Unlike his reddish brethren, the **Gray Fox** can climb trees. Though he is also active during the day, the gray fox has elliptical, cat-like pupils for enhanced night vision and his varied diet includes everything from small mammals, fruits and berries to those late summer delicacies, grasshoppers and crickets.

Though the **Eastern Box Turtle** is a "species of special concern," we've spotted them on Fearing Hill, the Agawam River Pine Barrens prop-

ace like home

Home means different things to different species...

Eastern Box Turtle



erty and the HLM Baypoint land where our featured fellow lives now and probably will for many years to come. **The Eastern Box Turtle** can live to 100 and unlike other North American turtles, when threatened, this fellow is able to enclose his entire body—head, legs and tail—within his upper and lower shells or “box.”

(Some days, don't you wish you could too?)

Fresh Water Mussel

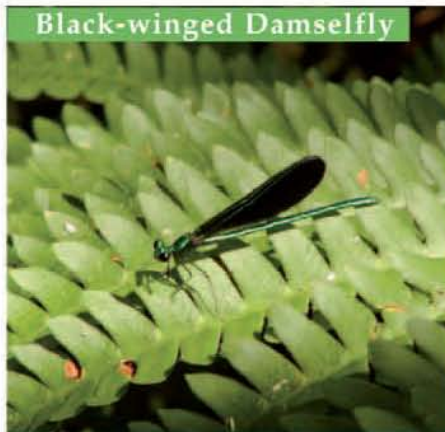


Our **Fresh Water Mussel** on the Agawam River Pine Barrens property seems to have been somebody else's dinner. But that's only one threat this group of species faces. Typically these homebodies won't wander more than a few feet during their adult lives so habitat

degradation of any sort is almost surely a death sentence. No wonder fresh water mussels are among the most endangered organisms in North America.

The male **Black-winged Damselfly** is a shimmering masterpiece with his iridescent green body and elegant black wings. More than just

Black-winged Damselfly



another pretty face, he is a loyal mate and protective father—at least for the seven days it takes his offspring eggs to hatch! Young damselflies spend their first months underwater, hibernating for the winter and emerging landside in the early spring to grow into adulthood. Black winged damselflies have been spotted on both the Agawam River Pine Barrens property and Fearing Hill.

Osprey



The formerly threatened **Osprey** population has recovered along

with that of the bald eagle since the US banned the use of the pesticide DDT in 1972. Indeed, ospreys are found on every continent but Antarctica. This pair calls utility poles home at the WLT-protected Bryant's Farm property—at least for the summer. Typically ospreys return to Massachusetts in late March after wintering as far away as Paraguay.

*A bog, deciduous forest, river or stream.
Or, office space at
219 Main Street in
Wareham Center...*

Home does indeed means different things to different species. At long last, WLT files are moving out of spare bedrooms, car trunks and basements to a central location. The new office accommodates board and committee meetings and will

be the local digs of a newly hired Coalition for Buzzards Bay staffer assigned part time to land protection in Wareham. Drop by an executive board meeting on the second Tuesday of every month at 7:00 PM and check out our new home!



All work and no play? Not a chance

"There is nothing—absolutely nothing—half so much worth doing as simply messing about in boats."

-The Wind in the Willows

Ratty had it right on a sunny morning last October when members of the Wareham Land Trust loaded into kayaks, canoes and a pleasure boat and set out from the WLT Whitlock's Landing property to explore the Agawam Mill Pond and river. Mother Nature provided an awning of deep blue skies and a magnificent backdrop of autumn crimson, orange and golden leaves. After a full morning's paddle, boaters returned to the property for a cookout and celebration. WLT First Vice President John Browning



WLT Treasurer Nancy McHale

organized the event. His comment: "We all know why we work so hard to save land--to protect water supplies, wildlife--the whole environ-

ment. Days like today are such gifts: they showcase the value of our work, they're fun and they're all the thanks we'll ever need."

Excerpt of a letter on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the Land Trust Alliance

...I would like to thank all of the land trusts that have supported the Alliance over the years and to celebrate every individual—volunteer, staff, board member, professional and government partner—who helped to advance land conservation in America. Today, we celebrate how much land trusts have accomplished over the past 25 years. Back in 1982, there were only 400 land trusts and today there are over 1,600; and, over the past 25 years, local land trusts increased their holdings from 670,000 acres to almost 12 million.

But numbers never tell the full story. Conserving this land has helped to ensure clean drinking water, wildlife habitat, natural beauty and healthy communities throughout America. Together our work touches the lives of millions of people—kids playing in urban parks, farmers able to keep their land in the family, and communities preserving their scenic beauty. But our most important work lies ahead of us. With increasing pressure from development, we only have 20 years to protect the places people most love in America. Each day, I am inspired by the dedication, creativity and passion of land trusts, and it is an honor for the Land Trust Alliance to be a partner in their great work.

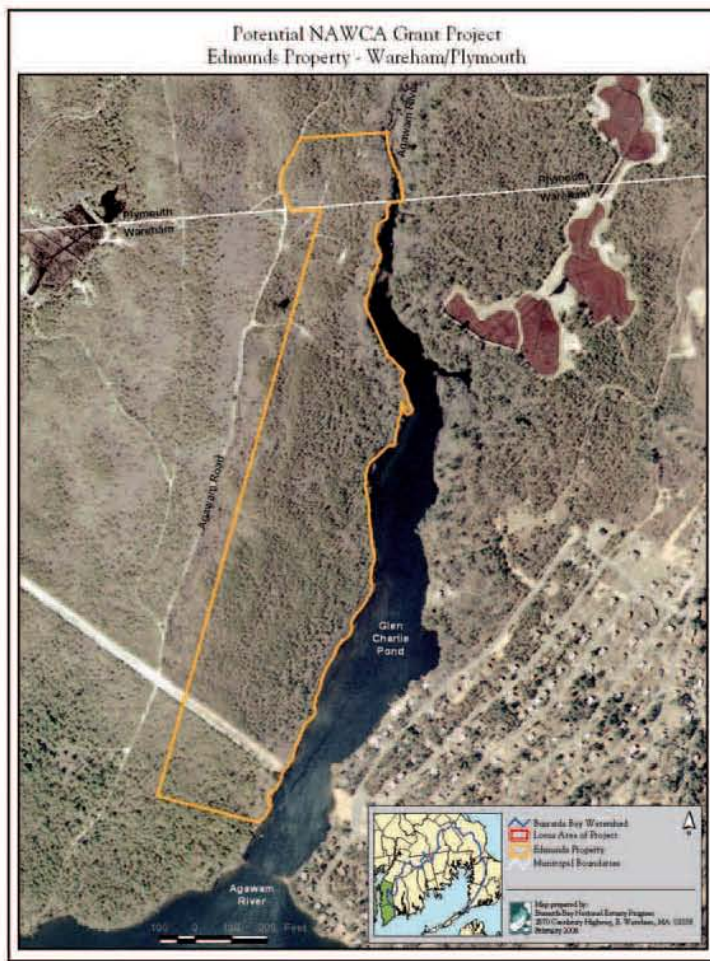
*Rand Wentworth, President,
The Land Trust Alliance*

February 22, 2007

Through the year with the Wareham Land Trust

Keeping a close eye on development of a new mall in West Wareham, networking with other environmental organizations to broker critical land protection deals, joining other like-minded volunteers for a town-wide clean up on Earth Day, fanning out across the country, the state and the region to attend conferences sponsored by organizations ranging from the Land Trust Alliance to the Coalition of Massachusetts Land Trusts and the Cape Cod Canal Region Chamber of Commerce—these are just some of the activities that occupy our members winter, spring, summer and fall. Our stewards keep an eagle eye on Wareham Land Trust protected-properties throughout the year, scouting more than 300 acres for disturbances—from man, animal, high tides or the North wind. Add to the list of WLT activities, a presence at local festivals and the back-each-year-by-popular-demand annual meeting aboard the Viking canal cruiser each August. A full schedule to be sure!

Together we can! Together we can! Together we can! Together we can!



Together we can! More than a slightly-used campaign tagline, these words describe the immense power of cooperation in the land preservation arena. Consider the Buzzards Bay Land Project mentioned on page two that, over five years, protected almost 3,100 acres of open space.

Or, the Wareham Land Trust's most recently completed project, the **Agawam River Pine Barrens Property**, a 68 acre parcel of, as the name suggests, pine barrens with more than a mile of wetlands along the Agawam River. The land's previous owner, Mr. Alfred Edmunds, was an agreeable seller who wanted very much to see this important parcel of land protected. The property was purchased with Wareham Land Trust funds as well as pro-

ceeds from a North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant administered by the Coalition for Buzzards Bay. The grant was awarded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services from Bouchard Oil Spill penalty monies that were earmarked for the protection of sensitive habitats and to limit a further decline in water quality in Buzzards Bay. Our project was part of the "Inner Bay Restoration

and Acquisition Proposal," one of a half dozen proposals that constituted a larger regional project that is helping to protect 1,150 acres of coastal land. Assisting the WLT were representatives of U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Ducks Unlimited, the Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences and the Buzzards Bay Project though altogether 25 local, state and national partners were represented on the project.

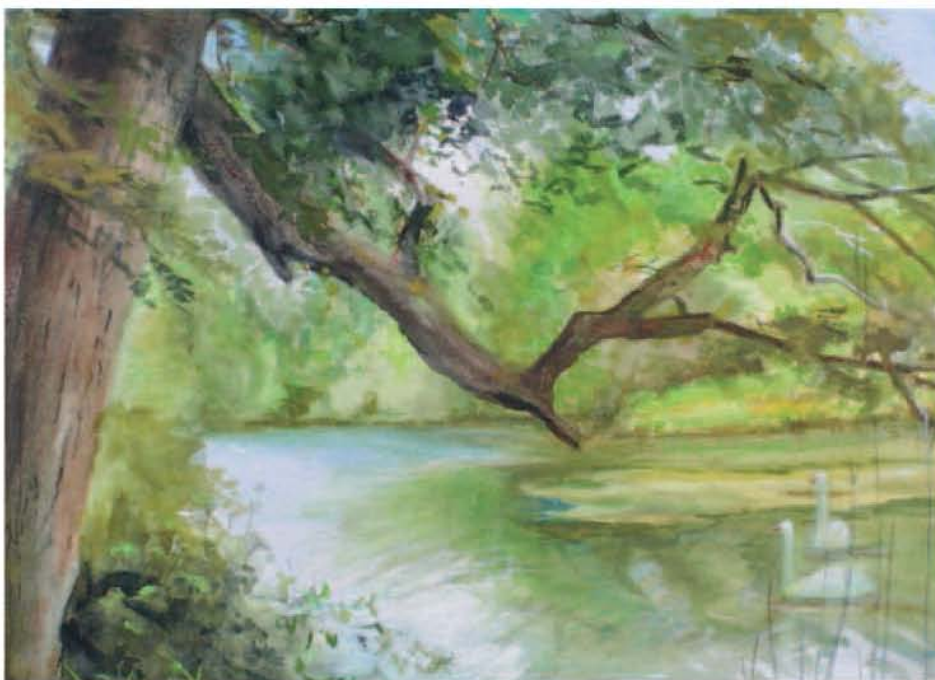
Looking ahead, the Wareham Land Trust has embarked on an ambitious project to preserve roughly 90 acres of saltwater beach, wetlands, vernal pools and forested upland on Widow's Cove at the tip of Great Neck in Wareham. Currently owned by the Congregation of Sacred Hearts, the parcel would be protected by the **Great Neck**

Conservation Partnership, a consortium of organizations including the WLT, the Massachusetts Audubon Society, the Coalition for Buzzards Bay and the town of Wareham. The goal of the partnership is to purchase a conservation restriction on the undeveloped lion's share of the property which supports a variety of threatened and endangered wildlife species.

WLT President Jim Munise explained: "This project demonstrates the power of partnerships as well as the incredible value of conservation restrictions. To purchase this land outright would cost more than we or our combined organizations could afford. With a conservation restriction, for just over \$2 million, we can protect the land from development in perpetuity and the Sacred Hearts Community can continue to live on the land and operate retreats, offering a quiet natural sanctuary. We are proud to be part of a project that is so clearly a win for the environment, a win for Sacred Hearts and a win for Wareham."

On May 8, 2007, Wareham Town Meeting appropriated \$500,000 in Community Preservation Act funds towards the project which will serve as seed money for a matching Federal grant. The town of Wareham will ultimately hold the conservation restriction. Upon approval of the project from the Sacred Hearts Community, the Audubon Society will grant conservation restrictions on currently unprotected parcels it owns that are adjacent to the property for a total of 200 contiguous acres of breathtaking vistas and environmentally important lands protected forever.

Together we can!



Enjoy the WLT's newest property--in your own home!

A summer's day at the river's edge beneath lush green leaves, a pair of swans glides by... This tranquil scene is from the WLT's new Agawam River Pine Barrens property and has been captured forever by Onset artist, Josephine Thoms. The original watercolor was donated to the Land Trust by the artist for fundraising purposes to help offset the WLT portion of the property purchase price. Raffle tickets are \$5.00 each or 5 for \$20 and are available by contacting the WLT office. The winner will be drawn later this summer.

Late Breaking News:
Late Breaking News:
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On May 31, 2007, the Sacred Hearts Community voted in favor of protecting its land on Widow's Cove by easement.

Though the project is far from over, congratulations are in order for the Great Neck Conservation Partnership and special thanks to WLT president Jim Munise for his hard work.

Together we can!



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 second Tuesday of all other months at 7:00 PM at the WLT office at 219 Main Street, Suite E, Wareham.

Membership

Join our efforts to preserve Wareham's open space and natural resources – today!

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 Land Trust are tax-deductible within IRS guidelines.

The Wareham Land Trust Officers and Board of Directors

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

Photography by: Nancy McHale, Kathy Pappalardo, Jim Munise, Martha Maguire