



NEWS

NEWS FROM THE WAREHAM LAND TRUST • VOLUME 7, NUMBER 1 • SUMMER 2009

A New Day



“We look around and we’re reminded that the most valuable things in this life are those things we already possess. As Americans, we possess fewer blessings greater than the vast and varied landscapes that stretch the breadth of our continent.”

With these words on March 30, 2009, President Barack Obama signed the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 placing more than two million acres of public land under Wilderness Act Protection. Next year the President has proposed increased allocations to the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) reversing a dramatic nearly decade-long decline in funding to that program. He has called for restoration of full funding of the LWCF by 2014 in an effort to revitalize the conservation program which, since 1964, has added millions of acres of protected land to our national forests, seashores, wildlife refuges and national parks as well as state and local preserves. Though our nation is gripped by what may well be the worst financial crisis in nearly three quarters of a century, this president understands that the environment cannot wait for better times. President Obama has made clean energy a cornerstone of his

economic recovery plan as he envisions a greener, more hopeful future for our country and the planet.

“The distinctive character of Massachusetts comes as much from what we preserve as from what we build” so proclaimed Governor Deval Patrick as he signed a major bond bill into law in August of 2008 thereby launching the largest land conservation program in the state’s history and increasing the previous administration’s average annual land protection spending by a full 65%.

In past publications, we’ve often cited Mass Audubon to bring home the enormity of land consumption in our state: By 1999, Massachusetts was losing the equivalent of 44 acres of open space per day to development and suburban sprawl. However, since 1999, the pace of development has slowed by half. We wish we could point to enlightened land use practices as the responsible party, but flat

population growth and more recently, the weakening economy are primarily to blame for the current declines in building. A more encouraging figure is one released earlier this year by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA): In 2008, the EOEEA, along with its many partners including land trusts and other conservation organizations, protected more than 24,000 acres of land across the Commonwealth — the equivalent of 66 acres of land saved per day. **What a change for the better!**

Currently, despite catastrophic shortfalls in the state budget, the Patrick Administration stands firm in its commitment to conservation. In January the governor also approved legislation introducing state tax incentives for land donations that protect drinking water

supplies, wildlife habitat, scenic values and agricultural and forestry production (see story below). While the state's 2009 overall environmental budget was cut mid-cycle and again for 2010, land preservation remains a priority of this pro environment administration.

Over the past decade, Wareham has dramatically refocused its approach to land preservation. In 2000, only 3.6% of Wareham's open space was protected from development. Today, a full 11% of Wareham's land is preserved (though our total is still less than half that of some neighboring communities).

In this newsletter, you will read how Wareham—through the efforts of the Wareham Land Trust and our partners—is fortunate to be on the receiving end of significant environmental funding in 2009 from the Commonwealth and—we hope—soon from the federal government as well.

But clouds mar the horizon: economic recovery looms long and painfully slow before us; governmental spending at all levels remains uncertain in the years to come; and here at home, the town of Wareham is without an approved



With 54 miles of shoreline, Wareham claims some of the most breathtaking landscapes in the Commonwealth.

Open Space Plan and has been for most of the last five years. Absence of such a plan muddies our community's collective vision and hinders our ability to take advantage of additional grant opportunities.

Uniting to preserve our diverse lands and natural resources is the mission of the Wareham Land Trust and *uniting* will continue to be the operative word as we look forward to a future of leaner budgets and fewer governmental dollars to go around. And *uniting* was the watchword as the WLT hosted an Open Space Summit attended by

members of the Wareham Board of Selectmen, Open Space Committee, Finance Committee, Community Preservation Committee and Planning Committee as well as representatives of the MA Department of Fish and Game, Minot Forest Committee, the Sacred Hearts Community, Mass Audubon, Trustees of the Reservation, the office of our state senator, Mark Pacheco and more to share a vision for land protection in our community and present conservation tools and services available from and to local boards, committees and organizations. ☺

SAVING LAND LOWERS TAXES

We've all sported — or at least spotted — this message on car bumpers: the cost of providing municipal services to newly developed neighborhoods typically outweighs potential tax revenues and, on the flip side, *squirrels don't go to school nor will Bambi dial 9-1-1*. But that's just the beginning. For landowners, thanks to recent legislation, conservation just became a whole lot less taxing.

SAVING LAND
LOWERS TAXES
MassLand.org

At the federal level, liberalized guidelines for tax deductions for land protection were enacted in 2006, renewed in 2008 and though

they were set to expire on December 31 of this year, are on track in the 111th Congress to become permanent fixtures. Current legislation raises the charitable deduction limit for qualified conservation contributions of land or development rights from 30 percent of adjusted

gross income to 50 percent and provides a horizon of 15 years for excess contributions to be carried forward.

In Massachusetts, effective January 1, 2011, eligible donations of land or conservation restrictions to land trusts, state or federal conservation agencies or municipal conservation commissions may receive credit equal to 50% of the appraised fair market value of the land up to \$50,000 per gift. The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs will be the arbiter of eligibility though donations that result in the permanent protection of water supplies, wildlife habitat, scenic values and agricultural and forestry production may qualify. For more information about land conservation tax incentives, visit:

http://www.independentsector.org/programs/gr/conservation_contributions.htm,
<http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/seslaw08/sl080509.htm>

A Great Day for the Land

The forecast called for scattered showers and cool temperatures on May 16, but our old friend Mother Nature had something else in mind.

Warm sun and blue skies greeted attendees on Great Neck at the Sacred Hearts Retreat Center for the Wareham Land Trust Open Space Summit. Where better to host the gathering but in spectacular surroundings at the spiritual heart of the Great Neck Conservation Partnership Project?

WLT President John Browning and Vice President Mary McFadden welcomed the gathering by highlighting some of the Wareham Land Trust's significant accomplishments in its very short eight year history.

Bob Wilber of Mass Audubon and the Mass Land Trust Coalition then provided an overview of land protection efforts across the Commonwealth. He described government initiatives as well as the collective work of large conservation organizations and local land trusts and pointed to the Great Neck Conservation Partnership Project as an example of collaboration at its best.

Brendan Annett of the Coalition for Buzzards Bay offered a regional perspective on land protection zeroing in on water quality and the threat of nitrogen pollution to our shared coastal waters.

Joan Pierce of the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game and Robb Johnson of the Nature Conservancy updated the group on the Commonwealth's recent announcement of a 130-acre open space purchase from the

AD Makepeace Company. Both emphasized the collaboration between the cranberry company, the state and local communities and explained how public bylaws, such as the transfer of development rights (TDR), can magnify the value of conservation efforts. (Plymouth and Carver both have adopted TDR bylaws. Wareham has not.)

The meeting concluded with a look ahead to land protection

"Local land trusts play a hugely important role in conservation efforts today. *If you view your community as a painting, you can be proactive, guiding the brush strokes, the color choices and the composition of that painting — as Wareham has been doing.* The alternative is to stand by, do nothing and watch as the future of your community is painted for you."

—Bob Wilber,
Mass Audubon,
Mass Land Trust Coalition, *Chair*



opportunities and challenges and adjourned for a guided tour of the Great Neck Conservation Partnership Project—more than 300 acres of heaven on earth and the largest single testament to the power of collaboration in Wareham's land protection history.

"A tremendous amount of nitrogen is removed from the environment by healthy forest and wetland of the watershed before reaching the estuary. What this means in Wareham is the more green we have in the watershed, the less green we're going to have in our waters."

—Brendan Annett,
Coalition for Buzzards Bay

The Great Neck Conservation Partnership:

Moving forward

Our last newsletter was devoted to the Great Neck Conservation Partnership Project (GNCPP). Though photographs rarely do justice to properties of such varied and exquisite landscapes, we hope our coverage communicated the beauty and ecological import of these 300 acres abutting Widow's Cove. (Open Space Summit attendees got a firsthand look at the property.) Since last we wrote, Wareham Town Meeting definitively approved Community Preservation Funding to purchase development rights for the Barker Property, a key piece of the project. Additionally, a grant application prepared by

the GNCPP partners and submitted to the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) for federal funding of a conservation restriction on the Sacred Hearts property has been ranked third of 53 projects submitted nationwide. We expect to hear about this final critical piece of funding later this summer and hope to have good news to report in our quest to preserve paradise on Great Neck in Wareham.



The Campaign for Agawam River Conservation Project:

We need your help



It's an opportunity not to be missed. Five acres of undeveloped riverfront property on the Agawam in Wareham. Just a block or two from Depot Street, yet light years away from civilization. A multitude of extremely rare flora and fauna is dependent upon this land including three species that are considered globally rare. The property is strategically located from a conservation standpoint: we hope one day it will connect a mile-long riverside corridor to Bryant's Farm thereby linking more than 300 acres of protected open space. Additionally the parcel provides ideal public access for launching a canoe or kayak.

The Agawam River Project was awarded 50% funding by the Massachusetts Executive Office Energy and Environmental Affairs under its 2009 Conservation Partnership Grant Program. Additionally, the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game

and the AD Makepeace Neighborhood Fund have awarded the project funding as has the Sheehan Family Foundation and, as we go to press, the Fields Pond Foundation. (Thank you!) Now comes the hard part: the WLT is committed to raising the remaining \$27,000 to purchase the property. Said President John Browning, "We have an exceptional opportunity to protect this natural gem. Otherwise it will be sold to a developer. We ask our members and friends to contribute today."



To see a world in a grain of sand And a heaven in a wildflower...

Against the verdant landscape, surprising spots of color—a tiny blossom, dramatic spike or carpet of subtle hue--wildflowers punctuate the forests, meadows and marshes of our protected properties. While none of the flowers featured here are particularly rare or unusual, they caught our fancy, on account of

their singular beauty, unusual name or anecdotal histories. However, other plants living on our protected properties are endangered or “species of special concern.” Next time you’re walking a WLT property, keep your eyes peeled for unusual flora and if you spot some, please snap a photo to share with us.



Sea lavender or marsh rosemary
(*statice caroliniana*)

By late summer, sea lavender blankets marshland on Great Neck dappling the coast line with flecks of light indigo and violet. Up close, its delicate and delightful tracery of stem and flowers belies a large and heavy root with astringent properties and medicinal uses ranging from the treatment of dysentery, gonorrhea and dyspepsia to laryngitis and pulmonary hemorrhage. From beauty, the cure...



Rough-stemmed goldenrod, “fireworks”
(*solidago rugosa*)

Providing late summer “fireworks” on Fearing Hill, this goldenrod is a veritable insect magnet: bees, wasps, butterflies, moths and flies vie for nectar and pollen; others visit to munch on leaves and stems, and larger bugs, beetles and birds prey on the insects goldenrod attracts. Much maligned by allergy-sufferers, goldenrod is mistakenly blamed for autumnal attacks of wheezing and sneezing when, in fact, the far drabber ragweed plant is the culprit.



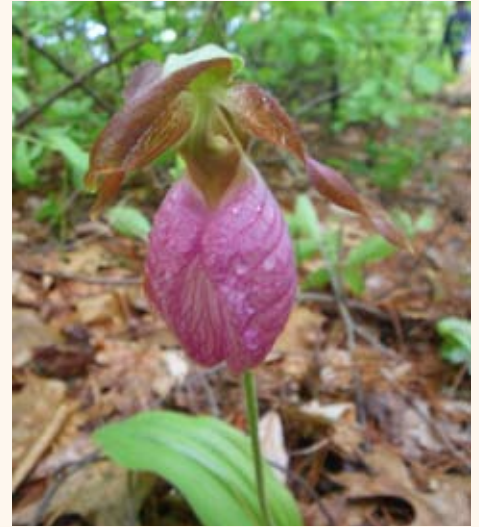
Cardinal Flower (*lobelia cardinalis*)

A member of the bellflower family, the showy cardinal flower blooms from July to September along the Sippican River at our Tweedy and Barnes Property. Popular among both hummingbirds and deer, the cardinal flower is found across the eastern US and was widely used by Native Americans as medicine to treat fever sores, cramps and even typhoid. The Meskwaki tribe used the plant as ceremonial tobacco and tossed it to the wind to ward off storms while the Pawnee ground its roots and flower as ingredients of a love charm.



Meadow beauty or Handsome Harry
(*rhoxia virginica*)

The meadow beauty thrives in wet places such as damp Pine Barrens and on sandy pond banks and is a common component of cranberry bog vegetation. We spotted this summer bloomer on Great Neck where it holds court from July through September. Nectar feeding insects such as honey bees and certain butterflies visit the deep blossoms and deer browse as well. The plant produces a distinctive urn shaped fruit described by Thoreau as a “little cream pitcher” and a brew made from its leaves and stems was favored by the Micmac and Algonquin tribes to cleanse the throat.



Pink Lady's Slipper (*cyripedium acaule*)

The pink lady's slipper typically hides at the woodland's edge which is precisely where we found this beauty during last year's Earth Day clean up at Mark's Cove. A member of the orchid family, the pink lady's slipper is finicky, requiring a combination of special conditions to grow. Reputed to soothe tooth pain and muscle spasms, the plant is unfortunately difficult to maintain, nearly impossible to transplant and should be admired only from afar.



Bird's-foot violet (*viola pedata*)

Named for its unusually shaped leaves, this violet blooms in May and June and occasionally will return for an August or September encore on Bryant's Farm. Mourning doves, bobwhites, wild turkeys, juncos and white footed mice are drawn to its seeds while rabbits nibble leaves and stems and butterflies and bees visit the flowers for nectar. Two-legged critters have been known to consume the fresh plant as a remedy for irritability or nervousness.

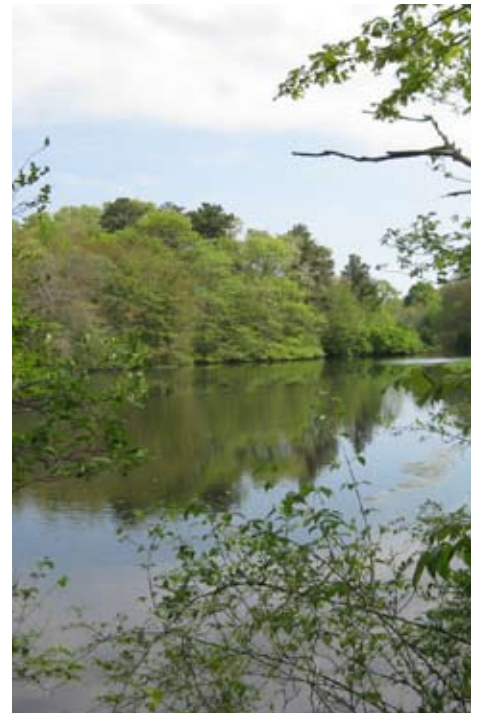
Contribute

to the Campaign for Agawam River Conservation Project

Your gift...	<i>will protect:</i>	<i>or provide a home to:</i>
	1 acre = \$10,000	Parker's Pipewort = \$1,000
	1/2 acre = \$5,000	Drunk Apamea Moth = \$750
	1/4 acre = \$2,500	Great Blue Heron = \$250
	1/8 acre = \$1,250	Salt Reedgrass = \$250
		Oak tree = \$100
		Chipmunk = \$50

Please make your check payable to the Wareham Land Trust, Inc. and indicate "Agawam River Conservation Fund." Mail to the Wareham Land Trust, P.O. Box 718, Wareham, MA 02571

Thank you!



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 _____

Email _____

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.

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

Wareham Land Trust Meetings

Wareham Land Trust public meetings are generally held four times a year. Please watch local papers for announcements of dates, times, and locations. 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.

The Wareham Land Trust

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