

# Wareham Land Trust



## NEWS

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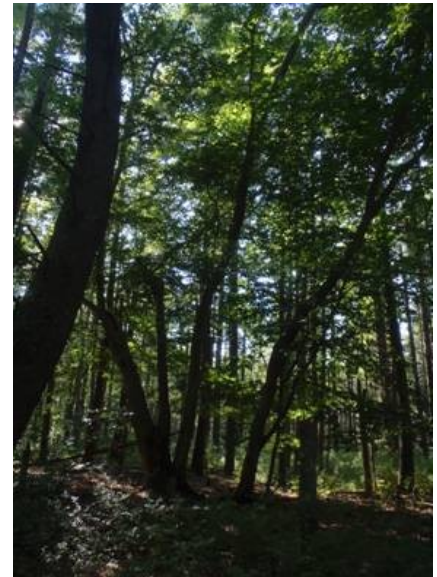


### NATIONAL ACCREDITATION!

**On** December 11, 2013, the Land Trust Accreditation Commission announced eleven land trusts would receive the national distinction of land trust accreditation. The Wareham Land Trust (WLT) is one of the eleven honored. Our President, Kevin Bartsch, was quoted in the Land Trust Alliance's (LTA) national press release stating: "This milestone is the culmination of years of preparation by every member of our volunteer board. The seal of accreditation attests to the organization's ability to successfully run an ethical and sustainable non-profit land trust." What does this mean to our members? Everyone who supports a non-profit has the right—indeed the obligation—to question the validity and viability of an organization. In the case of land trusts, that means knowing properties protected under its name are done so *in perpetuity*. The WLT has established multiple policies and procedures to ensure that land purchases or donations meet strict federal, state and local guidelines in addition to determining if stewardship responsibilities are feasible. Our Board maintains and constantly reaffirms its fiduciary and legal responsibilities. While it is important and comforting to know that these facts are verifiable on a local level, it is even more reassuring to know that an independent assessment has been completed by a nationally recognized committee, and our procedural documentation is solid.

Board member Sue McCombe shared some of the background to the process. It began back in 2005 when the WLT adopted the twelve standards set forth by the LTA. In July 2010, we received an Acceleration Grant from the Open Space Institute that allowed us to pay for consultants and various administrative expenses in preparation for the application. As an example of the time and commitment necessary for accreditation, the Commission's requirements manual is over 100 pages long. 26 "indicator practices" reviewed for compliance are outlined in detail. These practices cover everything from Board governance and auditing to monitoring and stewardship. Founding member Mary McFadden often commented that much larger land trusts with paid staffs spend months of dedicated time working on accreditation. The fact that our small, unpaid cadre of volunteers not only set but achieved this goal is a remarkable achievement. On a lighter note, it was a gift to be included in the flurry of initial email exchanges that circulated when the word was received. Lots of all-cap messages, multiple exclamation points, and calls for champagne. Everyone could relax collectively, knowing countless hours of work had not been in vain. Within a day the emails had returned to land purchase

discussions, meeting dates, and committee updates. Reinvigorated and excited, the *real* work—**conservation**—continued.



*This issue of our newsletter has a theme: **Collaboration**. No man is an island and no conservation effort is achieved in solitude. On the following pages we share lessons learned and goals met through shared experiences with the broader community of members, residents, and other nonprofit agencies.*



## Sharing the Wealth: A Report From the Trust for Public Land

In March, 2013, I attended a talk at the Massachusetts Land Conservation Conference that was led by Jessica Sargent, Senior Economist from the Boston office of the Trust for Public Land. She gave an extremely informative presentation about the national research spearheaded by the Trust to determine return on investment (ROI) for conservation dollars. Reports had already been completed in Colorado, Pennsylvania, and Maine and all showed an impressive range of ROIs. Equally impressive was the variety of ways the data collected could be used for fundraising efforts. The Massachusetts report was due out sometime that summer, and I kept a vigilant watch of their website for any related news. Finally, in early September 2013, the Trust held a joint press conference at the State House to share the excellent findings: ***For every one dollar spent in conservation, the Massachusetts economy receives four dollars back in natural goods and services.***<sup>1</sup> The benefits associated with this figure are difficult to overstate. Some tangible examples of “natural goods and services” include:<sup>2</sup>

\*Water quality protection: When conservation dollars were spent protecting the watershed area around the Quabbin and Wachusett Reservoirs, it saved an estimated \$200 million in filtration plant and operating costs. \*Parks and Outdoor Spaces: A recent survey of college graduates found access to outdoor activities to be their second highest factor when determining whether or not to remain in state. \*Health: Research shows that as access to outdoor space in a child’s neighborhood increases, so does the level of physical activity. Healthier communities equal lower health care costs.



And so on. When we protect our natural resources, we are acting wisely from an economic standpoint as well as an altruistic one. Parks, trails, farms, healthy waterways—all of these contribute to jobs in both the private and public sectors. They also translate as dollars spent in the community via a healthy tourism trade. Communities with access to open spaces see increases in their property values. As we move forward and convince other residents to join in our cause, it is helpful to have positive examples of what it all means in the grand scheme of things. The Trust for Public Land made this infinitely easier to achieve. I highly recommend browsing their report linked below for more information.

—Carleen M. Loper

<sup>1-2</sup> *The Return on Investment in Parks and Open Space in Massachusetts*. The Trust for Public Land. September, 2013. Access via: <http://www.tpl.org/return-investment-parks-and-open-space-massachusetts>.

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## In Memoriam



*The Wareham Land Trust was saddened to lose a member this year. Jim Clemmey has been involved since the beginning. He was elected to the Board of Directors in 2003, served as Assistant Treasurer since 2008, and was the steward of the Murphy Freedom Preserve. He was involved with all events the WLT participated in such as the Swan Festivals and Cranberry Harvest Celebrations. The refreshment committee could always count on Jim to bring crackers and cheese to our programs. Jim was volunteering right up until the end, assisting the Board with property inspections and joining the newly formed Outreach Committee. His smile and spirit will be missed.*



## Public Health and the Environment



**At** the American Public Health Association's annual meeting held in Boston this year, 17 new policy statements were adopted by their governing board. What does this have to do with land conservation? One of these statements (20137) specifically addressed the causal relationship between nature and health.

**20137: Nature, health and wellness — To aid in promoting healthy and active lifestyles, encourages land use decisions that prioritize access to natural areas and green spaces for residents of all ages, abilities and income levels. Calls on public health, medical and other health professionals to raise awareness among patients and the public at-large about the health benefits of spending time in nature and of nature**

**-based play and recreation. Also urges such professionals to form partnerships with relevant stakeholders, such as parks departments, school districts and nature centers. Calls for promoting natural landscaping.**

A call to raise awareness about the benefits of nature? Right up our alley! Everything we do on a local level directly impacts the health and well-being of our community. Fresh air, clean water, natural areas, walkable trails. This is a wonderful opportunity to share our mission with health care professionals. Members are encouraged to share this information with their local providers! Drop off the newsletter, ask if they're aware of us and help develop these public health partnerships!

## The Year in Review: Public Events



Osprey program with Gina Purtell from MA Audubon and Mack Phinney.



Endangered sea turtles with Don Lewis and Sue Wieber Nourse.



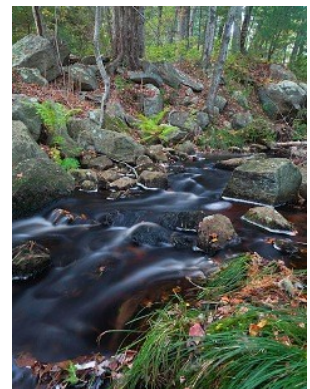
Board members at the LTA Rally in New Orleans.



Raffle ticket volunteer Soleil Benzan and Carleen Loper on the Annual Meeting Canal Cruise.



Volunteers always appreciated for trail maintenance work!



River Restoration with Beth Lambert, MA Fish & Game.

## An Inside Look at Stewardship

You may think that when we close a deal on a new conservation property it is the endpoint of the project. There are often years of negotiations and some moments of anxiety, but the day of closing comes and it's a time for celebration because another open space is protected. This is what excites us at the Wareham Land Trust and garners the wonderful support that we receive. However, the acquisition is not the endpoint but the beginning of our obligation for the **perpetual stewardship** of that property. Let's look at the meaning of the term.

*Perpetual* is not 10 or 20 years or even 100 years, it is forever. Long after our current members and board members are gone, the commitment continues. The perpetual care of natural spaces is a great legacy that we can be proud of, but it is also an undertaking of planning and responsibility. The perpetual part of stewardship adds a tremendous value to the conservation of the land we protect.

Now let's look at *stewardship*. Stewardship includes the familiar trash pick-up and trail maintenance days, which many WLT members help to accomplish. But there is much more to stewardship. It starts with a baseline report. This report carefully describes the condition of the property and an inventory of its conservation values when our stewardship begins. Then every year the property is visited and monitored for anything that might interfere with those values. A volunteer property steward looks for encroachment by neighbors, invasive weeds,

excessive erosion, storm damage, or dumping. The steward creates a monitoring report that is archived with the baseline and other property documents. Our property stewards find this a rewarding and enjoyable experience.

The monitoring process may result in the discovery of an issue at a property that the WLT Board of Directors must take action to correct. If the problem can't be resolved easily, the WLT has the responsibility to take legal action. An important part of stewardship is for the WLT to be ready for litigation with a stewardship fund and litigation insurance.

The final part of stewardship is remembering that things in nature constantly change and perpetual conservation does not mean just leaving it alone. Small trees become large trees, rivers change path, storm damage occurs, and sometimes new wildlife arrives. These changes may require maintenance that include a need for outside professional services.

The Wareham Land Trust takes its stewardship responsibilities very seriously. This long-term commitment of land conservation benefits this and all future generations. We look forward to meeting eager individuals stepping up to help carry on our mission of perpetual stewardship. **Contact us if you'd like to be a volunteer property steward and become part of this important process.**

—Kevin Bartsch





## Thoughts From a New Volunteer

My husband and I joined the land trust at one of our town festivals in July of 2012. Why? Because we love the abundant open spaces in Wareham and feel very strongly about preserving that open space for our kids and grandkids and beyond, and we were very impressed with the enthusiasm of the volunteers we met.

We have always had a dog of our own, and often a foster dog, and enjoy taking them on the many paths in our area. We can see everything from the swans on the pond to deer in the woods to egrets in the marshes. It is well known that taking a walk in the woods and enjoying the quiet of nature is very good for you—we all need to take some time away from phones and computers and just breathe deep and listen to nothing but birdsong.

In our time with the Wareham Land Trust, we have made some great friends and learned a lot about the different areas of Wareham, not to mention learned of new locations to walk!

Recently we became land stewards of the Woods at Great Neck property and now I assist with WLT volunteer hour database management. We have also helped clear trails on old and new properties, and definitely feel like we're making a difference in our community while getting some fresh air and exercise! We recommend other members find ways to get involved.

—Roxanne Ellis Raymond



Tim, Sugar, and Roxanne Raymond



## A Bird's Eye View

My love affair with ospreys began in 2009 when I became a nest monitor for MA Audubon. Every spring, I watch for “my pair” of ospreys to return to their nest in Onset. I then record major events in their lives such as when eggs are laid, when they hatch, when the young fledge, and when they migrate. I submit my observations to Audubon in the fall. I also watch for things like damage to the nest, harassment of the birds by man or other ospreys, or chicks in peril.

I'm always thrilled to attend Audubon's annual osprey chick bandings. The chicks are banded when they are about 5 weeks old—old enough to have close-to-full sized “ankles” but still 2-4 weeks from fledging. They are banded so that over a great many years, the few bands that are retrieved will reveal something about the lifespan and locations of the birds. Kayakers in Westport once found an inexperienced fledgling

perched dejectedly on land and were able to place it in its natal nest by checking the band. Banding is not the same as putting a tracking device on an osprey which is also done. For more information about tracking and monitoring osprey check out this website: [http://www.ospreytrax.com/html\\_files/OspreyMainPage.html](http://www.ospreytrax.com/html_files/OspreyMainPage.html)

A special permit is required to handle the chicks but on occasion I have climbed the ladder and peered at them in their nest atop the platform. It's fascinating to get up close and personal with these beautiful birds while their parents are circling and calling not so high overhead! Since ospreys are repeat nesters, Audubon can select nests where pairs are comfortable with human contact. The nest I monitor has never been chosen for banding, but hopefully someday it will be. For now I'll have to be content with observing the nest with my binoculars and chasing the ospreys around town. The Wareham/Buzzards Bay area is an osprey-friendly habitat with at least ten active nests. I hope you'll take the opportunity to discover some of them and enjoy these amazing birds while they're here in their “summer home.”

—Lori Benson



Special thanks to **Linda Fuller** for her gorgeous photos!

The Wareham Land Trust is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization dedicated to protecting and conserving Wareham's open space and natural resources. All gifts and bequests to the WLT are tax-deductible within IRS guidelines. With 54 miles of shoreline, Wareham claims some of the most breathtaking landscapes in the Commonwealth. From bogs to barrier beaches, forests to farmlands, we are surrounded by a diversity of lands and natural resources.

## Membership

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

### Membership Categories

<b>Individual:</b>	<b>\$ 15</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>
<b>Family:</b>	<b>\$ 25</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>
<b>Friend:</b>	<b>\$ 50</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>
<b>Sustaining:</b>	<b>\$ 100</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>
<b>Sponsor:</b>	<b>\$ 250</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>
<b>Benefactor:</b>	<b>\$ 500</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>
<b>Lifetime:</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>

**(or land donation):**

**Other Contribution:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Corporate Membership Opportunities:** Please contact us for more information.

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

**Town/State/Zip** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Email** \_\_\_\_\_

Please send contributions to:  
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