



# Westford Conservation Trust Newsletter

WWW.WESTFORDCONSERVATIONTRUST.ORG

WINTER 2010

## A Letter from the President

For six years I have been a member of the Trust board of directors. During that time I have been able to watch as **Marian Harman** quietly guided the Trust and kept us focused on our mission.

In late November of last year, she stepped down as President of the board. I'm sure many Trust members join with me in thanking her for her years dedicated to the Trust, and to how she exemplified true leadership with the way she inspired us all. I am reassured by her tireless commitment to continue to serve the Trust as Vice President. Her continuing involvement will be appreciated for many decades to come.

Hi, I'm **Bill Morton**, the new Trust president. I grew up here in Westford and my wife Lisa and I now live in Graniteville, with our son Felix. I joined the Trust seven years ago after taking a look at the website, which remains an excellent way to find out about every aspect of all the activities the Trust is involved in. Just check out one or two of the archived newsletters, and you will be amazed at all the energy and fun that Trust members give to the organization.



*The Trust welcomes new President  
Bill Morton*

Currently, I work as a Park Ranger in Lowell, Mass. It's a great job that allows me the chance to educate students about environmental issues and the enormous effect the Industrial Revolution had on American life.

All my life I have walked trails in Westford, and some of my earliest memories are times I spent enjoying the forests, wetlands, and streams of my hometown. My greatest sense of urgency comes from wanting to pass those experiences, and that enjoyment, to younger generations of children.



*Early January hike on the Emmett Conservation Land with Trust Land & Trails Stewardship Committee member Kate Hollister (far left) along with hikers Gina, Mary, David, Molly & Kelly (l to r)*

## Harman's Donate Land to SVT for "double protection"

Trust members **Marian and Bill Harman** have donated 8 acres of forest land, which straddles Westford and Chelmsford, to the Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT). The property has been protected and managed since the mid 1980's by the Westford Conservation Trust under a conservation restriction (CR) donated by the Harmans. Since this land was already under CR to the WCT, the Harmans could not donate the land to the Trust, as the same organization cannot own the land and administer the CR. By donating this land to Sudbury Valley Trustees, it now creates a 'double protection' for this beautiful upland forest with the Trust continuing to hold and enforce the restriction to further protect the land.

## Everyday Wilderness *by Bill Morton*

How many of you have a white pine growing in your yard or your neighborhood? I would be willing to guess that all of us do. White pines are so common in Westford that we hardly pay attention to them, unless they seem to be blocking our view of something else.

Aldo Leopold considered the white pine his favorite tree. In Sand County Almanac, he wrote of how in mid-winter, they seemed courageous in the tall, straight stature that they were able to maintain, even under a heavy snowfall.

Every Spring, the white pine develops new growth at the end of its branches, and this addi-

tion is called the Candle. These candles can grow up to 18 or 24 inches a year. Even more remarkable, the white pine can thrive even in nutrient-poor, sandy soil. It seems to be telling us, “look what I can do, even on a limited budget!”



Still, the white pine for me is also a reminder of New England's history. One of the most valuable crops ever harvested by

New Englanders were the tens of thousands of white pines used for innumerable purposes by the colonists of this area. White pines, with their tall, straight habits (some of the tallest reach 170-180 feet), were especially valued for use as ship's masts.

My favorite white pines are located right along the bank of the Stony Brook in East Boston Camps. They have stood quietly for many decades, patiently watching seasons come and go. If you haven't made the acquaintance of a white pine in your neighborhood, head out on a clear, sunny day in winter and find one – you won't have to walk very far!

## Winter Trust Walks

### ***JOIN US FOR 'FIRST SATURDAY' HIKES & MORE!***

*The Westford Conservation Trust is leading hikes on the first Saturday of each month this winter and into the Spring. All Walks are free of charge and run rain or shine. Check our website for more info and updates!*

#### **Saturday, February 6th, 9AM, Grassy Pond Hike**

Hike led by Trust President Bill Morton. Come and join us for a short hike around Grassy Pond lasting no more than 1 hour. If it is snowy, please bring snowshoes if possible. Dress in layers for warmth. Please park at Grassy Pond parking area. For more info, call Bill at 978-692-7047.

#### **Saturday, February 27th, 5 PM, Full Moon Walk**

Join Trust Director, Kate Hollister, for a peaceful walk under a full moon. We will listen for sounds of insects and animals, and maybe even spy a nocturnal creature or two. No strollers, but appropriate for families. Bring a flashlight. Meet at the Trailside Way parking lot. For more information contact Kate at 978-392-6802.



#### **Saturday, March 6th, 9AM, Spring Walk**

Hike led by Trust President Bill Morton. About 1 1/2 hrs. Easy to moderate walk, no strollers, dogs on leash only. Meet at end of Beacon Street near entrance to the old Highway Dept. garage. We will walk in along the old trolley line, then along Stony Brook, and loop back through with a quick glimpse of Burges Pond along the way. If deep snow, bring snowshoes. Dress in layers for warmth. For more info, check our website or call Bill at 978-692-7047.

## Trust Annual Meeting Recap by Bill Harman

Our 25th anniversary Annual Meeting was very well received with over 90 people in attendance!

**Welcome.** Bill Morton welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave an overview of the agenda for this meeting

**Reading.** Frank Winters gave a reading of "Mending Wall" by Robert Frost.

**Twenty Five Years with the Westford Conservation Trust.** Former Trust President Tom Paul reviewed the history of the Trust, focusing on its origination 25 years ago.

### Year-end Review.

The Trust is currently active in a number of projects. Land protection includes acquiring land (either owned by the Trust or protected by a Conservation Restriction administered by the Trust), and stewardship of that land. Coordination includes keeping track of the work of the Conservation Commission, the Planning Board, and other committees such as the Tax Title committee. We also are regular members of the statewide organization of Land Trusts (**The Massachusetts Land Coalition**) and the nationwide organization (**The Land Trust Exchange**), from which we have learned a lot.

### Expenses and Finances

Some major expenses during this year include:

*Envirothon*, a statewide program at the high school level (\$1000);

*Scholarships*, at Westford Academy graduation (3 students for a total of \$2000);

*Boy Scout projects*, \$200 this year for

a trail bridge project.

### New Activities

Our major activities have changed somewhat over the years. Currently we are more involved in land stewardship. Following the advice from the two land trust organizations, we are setting up double protection for our lands. We have arranged partnerships with **Mass Audubon** and **The Sudbury Valley Trustees**, and together we have now provided double protection for the Prospect Hill land, the Lambert land, the Wilson land, and the Frances Hill land. We have also started a program of keeping written records on our land. We will have a baseline document and also yearly update reports on each property. That process is just beginning, and will be a major activity in the coming year. We are also studying invasive plants. We have found that bittersweet and other alien plants are causing serious degradation to the native plants and the diversity of plants on our lands. We are now taking steps to control bittersweet as well as other invasives.

**Trails Report.** Kate Hollister described the trails and land stewardship program.

**Flora/Fauna Report.** Marian Harman presented a summary of flora/fauna reporting this year. There were 99 reporters this year, a new high, and a total of 2459 reports, which is much higher than every before. She highlighted certain interesting sightings. For example, there were 33 coyote reports this year.

**Elections.** The following were elected:

*Treasurer:* Shelagh Brady *Clerk:* Bill Harman

*Directors:* Bill Morton, Bill Harman, Frank Winters.

*Associate Directors:* Rosemarie Koester, Lenny Palmer, Nancy Eberiel, Emily King.

**Commendation.** Ron Deschenes, who is retiring from the board of directors, was honored for many years on the board.

### Conservation Trustee Award for 2009.



*Frank Winters and Marian Harman presented the Conservation Trustee Award for 2009 to **Emily Teller**.*

It was during 2009 that the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, phase 1, was completed and opened. Emily Teller has been the representative from Westford. Afterward, Emily made a presentation to **Bill Harman** to honor his work on the Rail Trail in previous years.

**The Secret Life of the Eastern Coyote.** Dr. Jonathan Way made a presentation based on his research about Coyotes in this area.

**2009 Slide Show of Westford Flora & Fauna.** The meeting ended with a slide show made up of photos submitted during the year from town residents and trust members.



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Westford, MA

## Join the Trust

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (optional)/Email \_\_\_\_\_

Check here if interested in volunteering for trail maintenance

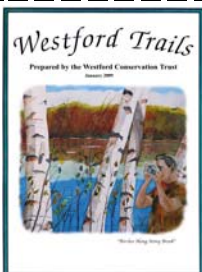
Check here if interested in volunteering for educational efforts

Please make tax deductible check payable to : **Westford Conservation Trust**

Please mail to : **Westford Conservation Trust P.O. Box 255  
Westford, Ma. 01886**

Or join online at [www.westfordconservationtrust.org](http://www.westfordconservationtrust.org)

- \$25 Individual
- \$40 Family
- \$100-500 Friend
- \$500-1000 Patron
- \$1000 Supporter
- Other



## TRAIL BOOKLET

The Trails Booklet is available for \$5.00 at Roudenbush Community Center.