

NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION

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Land Protection Initiatives

Three new Conservation Restrictions covering 9.3 acres were accepted by the NRC and the Board of Selectmen, two at Macone Farm Lane in the Spencer Brook Valley and one off Lowell Rd. with frontage on the Assabet River. All provide significant public benefit through the protection of upland and wetland meadows and woodland, as well as rare species habitat at the Lowell Rd CR.

Natural Resource Management

The Division is responsible for the stewardship of approximately 1,320 acres of Town conservation land (including White Pond Reservation), maintaining 19 miles of trails, and mowing 84 acres to maintain trails and open meadows. Natural resource management also includes staff support to five NRC subcommittees, as well as coordinating with other local and regional stewardship initiatives.

Division staff continued restoration efforts at the recently acquired Rogers land, 4.7 acres of former farmland off Harrington Ave. with frontage on the Assabet River. The farmworker housing and concrete pad were removed, minor site remediation for hazardous materials was completed, volunteers held a site cleanup, and local farmers volunteered services to plow and cover crop the land. Staff had a grading and restoration plan developed to fully understand the site restoration and oversight costs, and submitted a request for Community Preservation Act funds to complete the restoration. The CPA application included a request to purchase land in easement or fee simple across the two parcels between the Rogers land and the Town owned Marshall Farm. An easement or ownership at the rear of these parcels (121 and 131 Harrington Ave.) would provide pedestrian and farm-equipment access along the top of the river bluff from Second Division Brook conservation land to Harrington Park.

Division staff continued oversight of a third year of invasive species control at Old Calf Pasture. Botanist Sally Zielinski conducted violet counts at the meadow over the summer, noting increases in violet populations

from pre-treatment numbers, though not as high as original counts from the 1990s. New England Wildflower Society re-treated previously treated areas of glossy buckthorn, and treated a new section of mature buckthorn along the western treeline. Division staff led a group sponsored by CISMA through the field, giving an overview of the invasive species project done to date, plans for future management, and status of the rare Britton's violet. Division staff submitted a Community Preservation Act funding request to continue invasive species control efforts over the next 3 years in a continued effort to improve the habitat of this ecologically rich area.

Conservation Crew Brigit Arell and Ian Hunter performed trail maintenance, removed invasive exotic vegetation, and conducted general maintenance on conservation lands throughout Town. The Crew removed the invasive aquatic water chestnut from Macone's Pond, Warner's Pond, and Hutchins Pond and continued the cooperative effort with US Fish and Wildlife, the Concord Land Conservation Trust and the Town of Lincoln to remove water chestnut from Fairhaven Bay and the Sudbury River. This summer was the first season since 2001 that the aquatic weed harvester was not needed on the Sudbury River and Fairhaven Bay. CLCT Trustee Gordon Shaw coordinated and led volunteer hand-harvesting efforts, assisted by the Conservation Crew. The Crew also assisted Jim Macone and workers from the Northeast Correctional Facility in the reconstruction of the vandalized bridge along the Emerson-Thoreau Amble, and the construction of a new bridge over the Mill Brook to complete the Emerson Thoreau Amble trail connection from Heywood Meadow through the Town Forest. The Conservation Crew replaced, repaired, and/or repainted conservation land signs at several properties. The Crew, Division staff, and volunteers from OARS removed a portion of two trees that had fallen across the Assabet River and causing a dangerous blockage to kayakers and canoeists navigating the river.

Conservation Land Use Permits: A total of 25 permits were issued to various groups using Town conservation lands for drag hunting, orienteering, and to a variety of groups for field classroom purposes. Permits were issued to Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts for overnight camping

at Scout Island in Warner's Pond, and the Wild Studio Walkabout Tours and Musketaquid Arts and Environment program for an Earth Day celebration. Two educational workshops were held by the Association of Massachusetts Wetland Scientists and the US Army Corps of Engineers at the Town Forest.

Conservation Restriction Stewardship Committee: The CRSC worked with staff and consultant to complete 15 Conservation Restriction Baseline Documentation Reports (BDR's). Members completed the BDR's from the previous consultant. The Committee began monitoring CRs that have completed baseline reports and preparing BDRs on uncomplicated CRs. Members are working on a template to aid in preparing future Conservation Restrictions. Finally, CRSC members attended a presentation by the Trustees of Reservations on Conservation Restriction Monitoring. Members include Kathryn Angell, David Bell, Ann Colony, Peter Farrow, Catherine Perry, Lydia Rogers, and Emily Wheeler.

Heywood Meadow Stewardship Committee: The 400 foot stone wall restoration on the east side of the meadow was completed in the spring and has transformed the meadow. In conjunction with staff, the HMSC submitted an application to the Community Preservation Committee to restore the deteriorating stone wall on the west side of the Meadow. The Committee, with help from inmates from the Northeast Correctional Facility and Division staff, planted daffodil bulbs on the east side of the Meadow, funded by a generous grant from the Garden Club of Concord. Other improvements include the newly refurbished Gun House. Sadly one of the old apple trees fell in Hurricane Sandy which will be replaced in the spring. Members include: Annette Bagley, Lola Chaisson, Susan Clark, Mary Clarke, Joanne Gibson, Marion Grabhorn, Murray Nicolson, Marian Thornton, and Sandy Smith.

Mill Brook Task Force: The MBTF continued its efforts to restore Mill Brook by conducting biannual cleanups and continued public awareness efforts through annual catch basin tagging. Current concerns include potential need for wildlife passages impact studies as part of the current Cambridge Turnpike reconstruction Project. Members include: Carol Gupta, Bruce MacAlpine, Fran and John Neville, and Allan Schmidt.

Trails Committee: The Trails Committee continued to update Town trail maps and identify areas in need of trail blazing. Three new Town parcels were investigated: Mattison Field, where it was decided no blazing should occur because posts for blazes would interfere with mowing; Domino-Nocella land off Conant St. that will be blazed in the coming year; and the Reformatory Branch, which runs from Lowell Rd. to the Bedford town line along the former Reformatory Branch railroad. When all the maps are up to date and posted, the committee plans to make a "booklet" containing all the Town trail maps with descriptions. Other initiatives included creating an "assessed" trail at Brister's Hill with help from Matt Burne of the Walden Woods Project and discussion of specially designed blazes for the Emerson-Thoreau Amble. Members include: Harry Beyer, Spence Borden, David Clarke, Jonathan Keyes, Ken Miller, Murray Nicolson, Peter Siebert, and Ross Roberts.

Warner's Pond Stewardship Committee: The Warner's Pond Stewardship Committee was disbanded this year as their charge has been fulfilled.

Wildlife Passages Task Force: The WPTF completed monitoring the four wildlife tunnels under Route 2. Lydia Rogers presented the results from 2005 to 2010 at the fifth Northeastern Transportation and Wildlife Conference in South Portland, ME. Member include: Dave Kay, Ron McAdow, Bob Metcalfe, Lydia Rogers, Dan Stimson, and Bryan Windmiller.

Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area: The Division worked with other towns, organizations, and individuals in the Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Rivers (SuAsCo) watershed to develop a strategic regional plan for invasive species management in the watershed, and to promote collaborative approaches to achieve these priorities. The SuAsCo Cisma was awarded nearly \$1.5 million as part of the Nyanza Superfund Settlement for Sudbury and Assabet River restoration projects: mapping and control of water chestnut and purple loosestrife, and restoration of wild rice.

Blanding's Turtle: The NRC continues to support Dr. Bryan Windmiller's research and headstarting efforts on the Blanding's Turtle, a threatened species with a population at Great Meadows.

Agricultural Leases and Community Gardens

Agricultural Leases: The Division continued to work with local farmers to retain land in agriculture, managing 13 agricultural leases covering 211 acres of farmland, and supporting three community gardens. With the unexpected passing of Patrick McGrath earlier this year, Division staff began evaluating the McGrath farmland to continue the centuries old legacy of farming this land. Approximately 39 acres of Town-owned land along Barrett's Mill Rd. are under consideration for agricultural leases.

Community Gardens: The long standing tradition of organic community gardening continues to thrive under the helpful guidance of coordinators Ray Andrews, Jim Catterton, Dale Clutter, Elisabeth Elden, Rebecca Sheehan Purcell, Tracy Sharakan, and Kitty Smith.

Cousin's Field Community Garden (CFCG) completed the season with 30 gardeners in 22.5 plots. The small perennial area was expanded to include strawberries and herbs along with the perennial raspberry and blueberry co-ops. CFCG is delighted to collaborate with the coordinators at the Hugh Cargill and East Quarters locations and looks forward to continued benefit from this collective wisdom and community spirit. CFCG is delighted to have connections with other Concord groups such as Gardens for Life and Conantum Gardening Club who generously share their knowledge by inviting CFCG gardeners to their events.

East Quarter Farms community garden has grown to be a large and thriving community of passionate gardeners of every level of ability from beginner to expert. Besides individual plots, small and large, there are common areas with blueberries, raspberries, herbs, and a beehive.

The Hugh Cargill Community Garden is on rich farmland bequeathed to the Town by Hugh Cargill in 1793 for the benefit of the poor in Concord. The HCCG has grown over the years, and is now about 60 families and individuals working 80 garden plots. The HCCG hosts a midwinter gardeners' meeting, an annual spring sign-up meeting and a late summer pot luck supper; guests are welcome. This was a very good growing season for most gardeners, and vegetables were again donated to Open Table and flowers to the Town House and Stone Soup Dinner.

The garden lost good friends this year with the deaths of Bronco Elliott in February and Nat Marden in June.

Environmental and Educational Activities

The Division sponsors the longstanding tradition of early morning Conservation Coffees held on the first Tuesday morning of most months at 7:30 a.m. These lively and stimulating gatherings of citizens, federal, State, and local officials provide an interesting and effective forum to exchange information, ideas, and concerns about conservation and the environment.

Division staff prepared and distributed a Homeowners Guide to Working Near Wetlands and Streams to all Concord residents. This well received brochure was developed to inform residents about wetland regulations and permitting requirements.

Division staff, in conjunction with the Council on Aging, developed a Senior Walking Program in response to an overwhelming desire from seniors to enjoy the wonderful trail systems that Concord has to offer in a safe communal environment. This program has been very successful with two walks scheduled each week.

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The Planning Board's authority is contained in MGL Ch. 41 "Improved Methods of Municipal Planning" and MGL Ch. 40A "The Zoning Act". Additional responsibilities are found in the Town Bylaws and the Town Charter.

The Board held 24 public meetings; 1 joint meeting with the Historic Districts Commission, Natural Resources Commission, Public Works Commission, and Historical Commission (see Millbrook Tarry Design Planning Workshop below); and 5 public hearings. The hearings were for the following: zoning amendments to be considered by the Annual and Special Town Meetings; an