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The Boxborough Conservation Trust is a non-profit, tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) corporation with mailing address at 462 Hill Road, Boxborough, MA, 01719, Telephone: (978) 264-0113 ; Web address: www.bctrust.org

This Newsletter is an infrequent publication of the Boxborough Conservation Trust, Boxborough, Massachusetts

BCT Annual Report - Achievements of 2000-2001

The following summary was distributed at our annual meeting, along with a financial statement, which may be obtained from our Treasurer.

Land Acquisition and Conservation:

- Acquired Grady property
- Collaborated in the acquisition of Guilford property
- Opened discussions with numerous Boxborough land owners
- Joined collaboration of local land trusts to share resources
- Served as liaisons to town land-use committees
- Advocated for conservation at public meetings and in the press
- Attended Land Trust Alliance Conferences

Land Stewardship:

- Organized trail clearing and maintenance work-days on town conservation properties
- Continued on-going process of evaluating and ranking undeveloped properties in Boxborough

Education:

- Organized and led two wildlife tracking programs
- Led land walk of Grady property
- Sponsored Frances Clark lecture on preserving local biodiversity
- Co-sponsored "Keeping Track" program on identifying, documenting, and protecting local wildlife
- Launched web site
- Repeated T-shirt design contest at Blanchard Memorial School
- Mailed newsletters town-wide
- Began monthly e-mail updates to BCT members
- Participated in Fifer's Day with display, educational materials and raffle

Fundraising:

- Wine and cheese neighborhood receptions
- Individual solicitations
- \$5000 grant from Wharton Foundation for Guilford Property
- New program for business/corporate support
- BCT representative at fundraising conference
- Membership renewals mailed on a monthly basis

Plant A Dunkeld Larch Tree!

The Harvard Conservation Trust has generously contributed about fifty Dunkeld Larch seedlings (approximately three feet tall) to the Boxborough Conservation Trust for distribution to our members. Native to Scotland and related to our Eastern Larch, this is a cone-bearing tree with needles, and is deciduous. It is known for vigorous growth reaching to eighty feet tall.

The seedlings will be available to our members at the original town center in front of the North Cemetery on Hill Road on Saturday May 12 (9-11am) and Sunday May 13 (1-2pm) free of charge, on a first-come-first-served basis. Planting instructions will be available.

Frances Clark Lecture on Biodiversity: An Overview

Part 2 of a 3 part series.

Using Biodiversity to Identify Land to Protect . . .

In Part 1 we summarized a plan presented at a lecture in January by Frances Clark, a botanist and environmental consultant, to save biodiversity in the SuAsCo (Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord) Watershed.

Biodiversity is another name for “nature” or the “web of life.” A healthy, intact ecosystem supports a variety of plant and animal organisms over a long period of time. By protecting these habitats, we will ensure a high quality of life for both wildlife and ourselves.

Clark described the problem of habitat fragmentation caused by urban sprawl, and the process that the SuAsCo task force is using to identify lands to protect so as to sustain the current biodiversity in our watershed. The BCT and other local organizations can use these same techniques to identify and prioritize land acquisition in Boxborough.

Step one is to generate a list of “focal species” – both plant and animal – whose presence indicates good quality habitat. Examples include bobcat, fisher, blue spotted salamander, wood frogs, box turtles, American bittern, butterflies, eastern brook trout, wild lupine and trillium. Each species has its own requirements for survival and may need one or more habitats over its lifetime.

Only large tracts of land (> 500 acres, if possible) can support a variety of quality habitats and a large population of focal species. These tracts should be linked together to create a corridor to allow animals to move from one habitat to another. Any land with unique or varied topography/geological characteristics (such as an esker) with a minimum of human disturbance (excavation, dams, etc.) and invasive species (like purple loosestrife) is important to preserve. We should endeavor to include as many types of habitat as possible - such as old forests, rock outcrops, wetlands, meadows, etc. Open land adjacent to existing conversation lands, or surrounded by low-density development and country roads ought to be designated as a high priority.

The next step involves organizing a group of people – both amateurs and professionals – to study existing maps, geological surveys, and other environmental impact reports that include Boxborough in order to characterize existing open areas and potential wildlife communities. Team members visit these areas over a period of time to inventory the specified focal species. Information gathering should include interviews with individuals – such as trackers, bird watchers, conservation commission members, fisherman, hunters, hikers, garden club members, etc. – who know the land and know “what’s on the ground.” They can significantly contribute to the compilation of the inventory.

Next, the collected information is then evaluated in order to rank the sites based on biodiversity. This information is recorded on the maps and a progress report is forwarded to other members and groups in the community to be used to help prioritize the purchase and protection of land. Other considerations such as the quality and flow of water and streams, aesthetics, and recreational use can be included as well, although they can sometimes be incompatible.

This project will require dedication, hard work and cooperation among town residents and local organizations. Inventories conducted over time will be a measure of our success or failure to save biodiversity and our own *human* habitat. Contact the BCT to volunteer your time on this project.

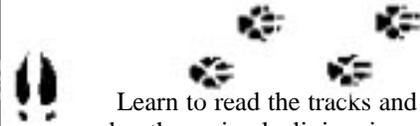
- Tara Zantow

Coming Next Issue: Part 3: Stewardship of Boxborough Land

“Earth does not belong to man.. Man belongs to the earth . . .Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth.. Man did not weave the web of life; he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself.”

- Screenwriter Ted Perry on what Chief Seattle might have said

Would You Like to Be Part of a Wildlife Tracking Team in Boxborough?



Learn to read the tracks and signs left by the animals living in our woods and wetlands. Help monitor the presence and absence of fisher, mink, otter, gray fox, and other target species. On March 13th, 65 people braved the rainy weather to hear Susan Morse, founder of Keeping Track Inc., a nonprofit organization based in Vermont. Everyone left with more knowledge of the wild animals that live around us and the importance of leaving space for them to continue living here. Keeping Track assists communities all over the United States to set up volunteer wildlife habitat monitoring teams. The team will have six days of training, three in the woods of Jericho, VT and three in their community. Several people have already expressed an interest. Our goal is to get a team together for training next fall or winter. If you have questions or want to sign up, email or call Barbara Warren, 978-635-9428.



Boxborough Conservation Tidbits

Ken Fabian has generously contributed a handsome bowl he made from cherry wood which has beautiful grain and finish. His hope is that this gift will inspire other local artisans and artists to do the same. The BCT could then hold an auction to raise funds from sale of these works to further its land preservation efforts. The donors get the benefit of a charitable tax deduction and favorable publicity for their artistry and creativity.

The BCT board was strengthened by the election at the March annual meeting of Deborah Gray, Tara Zantow and Scott Bundy, bringing the total to 12 directors. We are fortunate to have their time, energy and capabilities devoted to the objectives of the trust.

Come visit our booth at Fifer's Day on June 23rd! We'll be raffling off a kayak, selling BCT T-shirts, and providing lots of conservation information.

Bob Wilber Speaks At BCT Annual Meeting

At BCT's annual meeting on March 25th, Bob Wilber, Director of Land Protection for Massachusetts Audubon Society and our neighbor from Stow, generously shared insights gleaned from his 18 years working in land conservation. Bob focused on a variety of tools a land trust can and should use to further its goals of protecting open space. These tools included: **Visioning**, encouraging the Trust to "think big" and, set its own protection priorities (such as viewshed protection, linkage of trails, wildlife corridors) and then work with the town to clarify and achieve its vision of what it wants to be; The **Conservation Buyer Technique**, which links land purchasers who want a lot of acreage for one or two houses with owners of key large parcels who want to see part of their land protected and also realize a return, thereby creating estate-sized lots with conservation restrictions on them; Informing town residents interested in **Conservation-based Estate Planning** on the benefits provided by the Taxpayer Relief Act, which helps families reduce high estate tax bills by lowering the value of the land to be passed on with a conservation restriction; and **Bargain Sales of Land** for the seller in a high tax bracket faced with a large capital gain on the sale of a highly appreciated piece of land. Sellers can often realize almost as great a return by selling their land at a reduced price to a nonprofit organization, such as a land trust. Bob has developed spreadsheets which land trusts can use to demonstrate these savings to an interested seller. Bob also championed the **Community Preservation Act**, which he helped create, as a positive tool to assist towns with the purchase of open space. Unfortunately Boxborough's town meeting recently voted against participating in the Act, but we will all observe how it works for other towns in the coming year and perhaps have a chance to reconsider our participation. Bob concluded with several case studies of successful land protection around the state with the common themes of think big, never give up, constantly forge new alliances, and make sure town residents know all the possible advantages of protecting land, from tax savings to the knowledge that one has saved an invaluable and irreplaceable natural resource.

-Linda Coe

Value of Wetlands Brought Home

During the heavy storm on March 22, the Boxborough area received as much as 5 inches of rain within 48 hours. Although some Boxborough residents had wet basements, the total damage in Boxborough could have been much worse. The fire department received fewer than 12 calls from residents with water in their cellars. Littlefield Road was the only street closed because of high water.

The omnipresence of wetlands in Boxborough is one of the primary reasons that the storm impact was not greater. Wetlands provide an important method for rainfall and runoff to be returned to the ground. Wetlands have tremendous water absorption capacity, although that capacity is diminished by impermeable roadways and buildings placed within the wetland. Because of the state Wetlands Protection Act and the Boxborough Wetlands Bylaw, the amount of development within 100 feet of wetlands is much less than in other areas of the state and country.

The Boxborough Conservation Commission urges you to continue your support of the Town and Commission to protect our valuable wetlands resources.

- Norman Hanover

Boxborough Conservation Commission

Considering Estate Planning? Consider the tax advantages of a gift of land to the Boxborough Conservation Trust.

T-Shirt Design Contest 2001: We Have a Winner!

The BCT is pleased to announce the winner of our T-shirt design contest for 2001: Conor Waligory, a fourth-grader at Blanchard Memorial School. Conor's winning design depicts a rattlesnake, a rare but not unknown inhabitant of New England. The bold graphic of the rattlesnake makes a fearsome statement on the T-shirt, printed in black on a red background. We would also like to acknowledge the contributions of four runners-up, whose designs are pictured below: Juliet Bull, Justin Burack, Lauren O'Brien, and Katelynn Walter. Thank you to Mrs. Dian Hosmer and to all the fourth graders at Blanchard School for making our decision such a difficult one! T-shirts will be on sale for \$15 at our Fifer's Day booth, or may be ordered by calling Glynis Hamel at 263-6456.

Juliet



The Winning Design
by Conor Waligory

Lauren



Justin



Katelynn



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New Member Registration Form

BCT welcomes new members to join in the effort of preserving and protecting Boxborough's undeveloped land. Anyone may join. Regular (voting) members must be 18 years of age or older and residents of Boxborough. All others are honorary members. Membership is on an annual basis.

There are several giving levels. Please indicate the level of your tax deductible contribution:

\$ 25 Individual \$ 50 Family \$ 75 Friend \$100 Associate \$ 250 Patron
 \$ 500 Sustaining \$ 1000 Sponsor \$ 2500 Preservationist \$ _Other

Name(s) _____ / / _____
(date)
Address _____
(street) (town) (zip)
_____ (phone) (e-mail)

Please make your check payable to: **The Boxborough Conservation Trust**, and mail, with this form, to:
Treasurer, Boxborough Conservation Trust, 60 Barteau Lane, Boxborough, MA 01719

An acknowledgement of your tax-deductible contribution will be mailed to you. Please contact your employer to see if it may be willing to match your contribution.

BCT Board of Directors

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Call or e-mail any time with your questions or comments.



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Preserving and Protecting Boxborough's Undeveloped Land