



Boxborough Conservation Trust
Board of Directors
As of October 2002



Frank Coolidge, President

Sam Fisk, Treasurer

Scott Bundy

Jeff and Mary Fuhrer

Debbie Gray

Glynis Hamel

David Koonce

Lisa St. Amand

Bruce Taylor

Barbara Warren

Tara Zantow

Ruth Zimmerman, Clerk

From the President

The overwhelming votes in favor of the purchase of the Howe, Panek and Richards properties to form the Patch Hill Conservation Area this past May were certainly exciting and gratifying. The BCT Board of Directors is deeply grateful to the members and townspeople who worked so hard both to publicize the wonderful opportunity and to get out the votes. We also want to thank all who supported BCT with generous donations to enable us to contribute \$50,000 to this purchase.

We took in almost \$1,000 in raffle ticket sales at Fifer's Day for the Red Sox/Braves game. The winner was a BCT member, Dave Bull of Joseph Road. Congratulations!

Going forward, we plan to form a Stewardship Team to monitor conservation lands in partnership with the Boxborough Conservation Commission, educate the public on invasive plants, and host various speakers on land conservation issues. As always, we strive to inform landowners of conservation options to enable them to preserve their undeveloped land.

I regret to report that the Board is soon to lose two invaluable members who are leaving town. Please contact any board member to find out how to become more involved or to suggest candidates to serve on our board.

— Frank Coolidge



Patch Hill Area Stewardship

BY TARA ZANTOW

In June, Boxborough purchased 103 acres of prime, upland conservation land for \$630,000 authorized by a unanimous vote at the May 13 Town Meeting. This unique opportunity was made possible by the generous offer of Jon and Jessie Panek of Harvard to sell their 53 acres at 10% of fair market value, a \$500,000 grant from the Commonwealth and a \$50,000 donation from the BCT. These lands are contiguous to other town conservation lands and together form the 208-acre Patch Hill Conservation Area. These lands are accessible from Hill Road, Depot Road, Avebury Circle, Tokatawan Spring Lane and Liberty Square Road, where the town has constructed a small parking area for 6 cars.

continued on page two

Visit Unique Forests, Terrain Forged by Glaciers

Dave Koonce will lead a nature walk on the **Patch Hill Conservation Area** on Sunday, Nov. 3, from 1:00 to 3:00 PM.

Meet at the parking area on Liberty Square Road between Benjamin and Waite Roads. All are welcome. Dress appropriately.

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

Newsletter is a publication of the Boxborough Conservation Trust, Boxborough, Massachusetts.

Tara Zantow, Editor

Catherine Christensen, Graphic Design

Pamela DeGemmis, Production

Patch Hill Area Stewardship

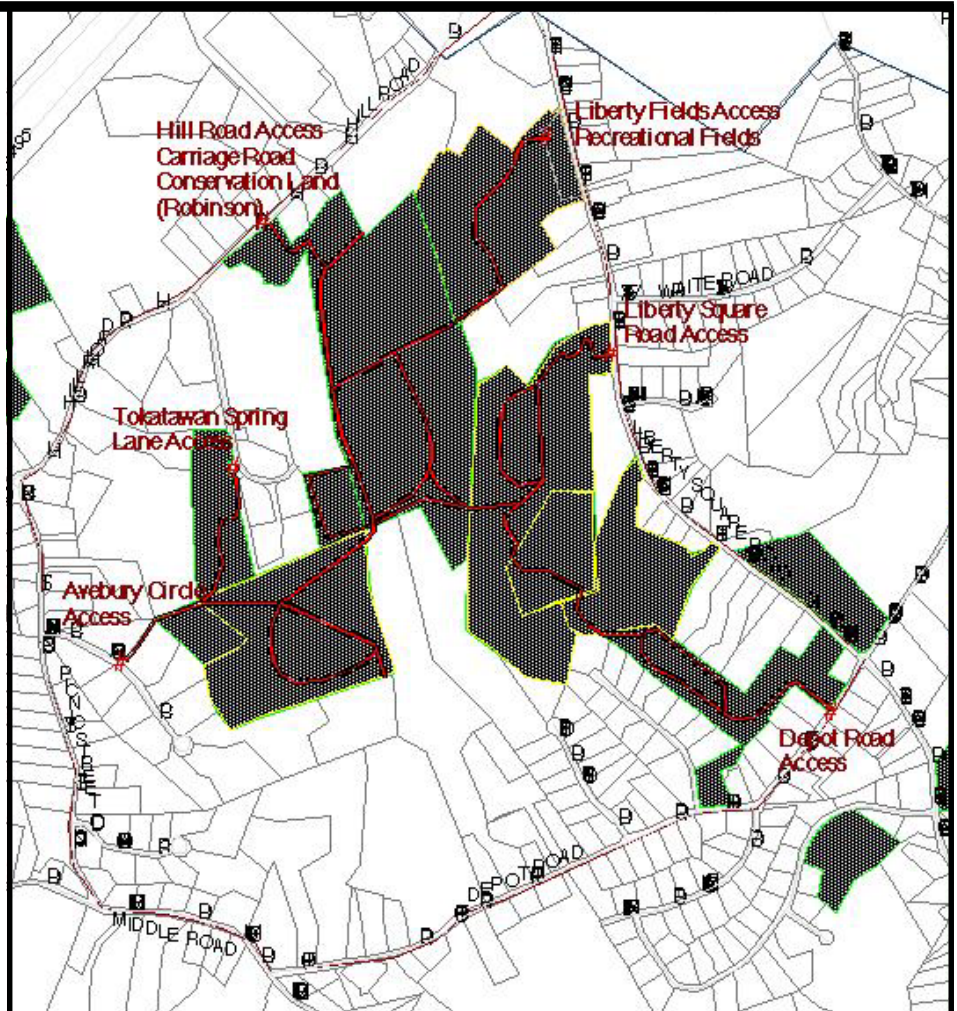
Continued from page one

The BCT holds a conservation restriction (CR) jointly with the Harvard Conservation Trust on the portion of land formerly owned by the Panek's. What does this mean? A CR is a legal deed restriction on the property typically "granted" to a non-profit organization for the purpose of limiting development and/or protecting natural resources. The holder of the deed is required to initiate an on-going stewardship program to monitor the property and enforce the restrictions specified in the deed.

What are some of the specific terms of this restriction? The CR "grants to the general public the right to enter the premises . . . for passive, outdoor recreational purposes such as hiking, walking, bird watching, horseback riding, cross-country skiing . . ." See the sidebar for a non-inclusive list of prohibited activities.

As this newsletter goes to press, a maintenance day is scheduled for October 19 to re-route a trail away from sensitive wetland habitat, remove invasive bittersweet plants, and to interconnect trails between the various parcels to make it one contiguous conservation area. There will also be a public walk on Sunday, November 3 from 1:00 – 3:00 PM led by Dave Koonce, a life-long Boxborough resident, a member of the Conservation Commission and the BCT Board, and a land protection advocate.

Look for a detailed management plan in the next issue of *Newsletter* (to be renamed) planned for mid-February. If you are interested in participating on a stewardship team, contact Dave Koonce.



*Boxborough Conservation Land Patch Hill Land Purchase, May 2002
Adapted from a map prepared by B. Warren*

Prohibited Activities at Patch Hill Conservation Area:

- construction of buildings and other structures (some exceptions such as boardwalks to protect wetlands);
- removal of soil, wildlife, vegetation or trees (except invasives, or for the purpose of trail maintenance and safety);
- dumping waste on the premises;
- use of motorcycles, snowmobiles, and other motor vehicles, and mountain or trail bicycles

What's In a Name?

We would like to adopt a new name for our newsletter. Suggestions to date include: *Naturally Speaking*, *Down to Earth*, *Boxborough Dirt*, *Off the Beaten Track*, and *Common Ground*. Let us know if you like one of the above or if you have an additional suggestion. Send your ideas to: The BCT, 462 Hill Road. Look for our new name in February.

WANTED!

Web Master to maintain the BCT website, www.bctrust.org by making periodic updates. Ideal candidate is creative, committed to land conservation and has experience with web technology. Contact Barbara Warren for additional information . . .

Alien Invaders!

BY GLYNIS HAMEL

No, I'm not talking about extra-terrestrials. But these invaders are no less exotic and no less frightening – they are the non-native plants that wreak havoc on ecosystems, reduce biodiversity, and threaten the very existence of some of our most treasured flora and fauna. In this first of a series of articles, I will present some background information on non-native invasive plants, and then focus the discussion on a local invader, Oriental bittersweet.

A native plant is one that is indigenous to a particular area; the generally accepted definition for a native plant is that it existed here (in the U.S.) prior to the advent of the Europeans. All other plants are considered non-native, or exotic, having been introduced either intentionally or accidentally by humans. An invasive plant is one that grows with such vigor and in so large an area that it forms dense, one-species stands. The environment becomes homogenized; biodiversity is reduced; other species can't compete and are eliminated. Indeed, the proliferation of non-native species is considered by some scientists to be the second most important threat to biodiversity after habitat destruction.

Exotic invasives share a number of characteristics. First and foremost, invasive plants produce copious amounts of seed. The plants come to maturity quickly, and are often successful in reproducing under adverse conditions (dense shade, for example). Non-native invasive plants thrive in many habitats, are easily established, and are able to spread quickly over large areas. Towns like Boxborough, which have undergone tremendous growth in recent years, are particularly

susceptible to invasions from non-native plants. These plants are opportunists; they take advantage of “disturbed areas”, such as those found at building sites. Once established, exotic invasives are extremely difficult to eradicate. Most alien invasives have few known pests and are susceptible to few diseases.



Source: *The Nature Conservancy*

A native of Japan, China, and Korea, Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatis*) was first introduced to North America as an ornamental landscape plant in the 1860's. It is a twining, woody vine that can kill nearby plants by strangulation and by preventing photosynthesis. The plant is easily identified this time of year by its yellow fruits that split open to reveal bright red seed coverings. It is popular for use in dried floral arrangements and holiday wreaths; indeed, the plant is still sold locally as a decoration. You can hardly take a walk in Boxborough without encountering Oriental bittersweet in the landscape - look for it girdling the tallest trees and smothering native shrubs on the roadside.

Oriental bittersweet is easily confused with native American bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*). The former produces flowers and fruits all along the stems; our native bittersweet flowers at the tips of the stems only. In the northeast, Oriental bittersweet has

pretty much displaced its native counterpart through hybridization and competition.

Oriental bittersweet is difficult to control once it takes hold. The plant produces prodigious amounts of seed, which are dispersed by birds and small mammals. It also has the ability to send shoots up from the roots. If the infestation is in its early stages, severing the vine and hand-pulling the roots can be effective. If seeds are present, the vines must be bagged and disposed of in a landfill, or left in the bag and allowed to bake in the sun long enough to kill the seeds. Unless the entire root is extracted, the vines will resprout and be stimulated to grow more vigorously. As with most exotic invasives, prevention is the best method of control. Do not discard bittersweet berries in the landscape. Voice your concerns about non-native invasive plants wherever you find them for sale. Remove Oriental bittersweet from your property before it has the chance to escape to other areas. Let's try to control this invader one backyard at a time.

Sources:

Brumbeck, William, “New England's Green Invasion”, *Conservation Notes of the New England Wild Flower Society*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1998

Clark, Frances H., and Chris Matrick and Sarah Shonbrun, “Rogues Gallery: New England's Notable Invasives”, *Conservation Notes of the New England Wild Flower Society*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1998

Invasive Plant Council of New York State: <http://www.ipcnys.org>

Plant Conservation Alliance – Alien Plant Working Group: <http://www.nps.gov/plants/alien/>

*The Boxborough Garden Club
invites you to hear more about this subject:*

Alien Invasion: New England's Invasive Exotic Species

featuring Chris Matrick
from the New England Wildflower Society



Feb. 11, 2003 at 10 A.M. Town Hall

New Member Registration



BCT welcomes new members to join in the effort of preserving and protecting Boxborough's undeveloped land. Anyone may join. Voting members must be 18 years of age or older and residents of Boxborough. All others are non-voting members. Membership is on an annual basis. There are several giving levels. Please indicate the level of your tax-deductible contribution.

Name(s) _____ Date _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

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

Please make your check payable to: The Boxborough Conservation Trust, and mail, with this form to: Treasurer, BCT, 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 matching funds are available.

The BCT does not release information about members to third parties.

It's Never Too Late . . .

BY BARBARA WARREN



It's never too late to join the **Keeping Track Team**. We have been developing our tracking and wildlife habitat skills with training workshops led by Sue Morse of Wolf Run in Jericho, Vermont. We spent a September weekend in Boxborough exploring the heron rookery along Route 2 where we observed a mink hunting along a rock wall. We also found otter sign along stream banks there and at Half Moon Meadow conservation land. The presence of otter is an indicator of

good, clean water quality.

We were surprised by the size and contents of a Great Horned Owl pellet. It contained the skull and bones of a muskrat. We are looking forward to tracking in the snow this winter. In November we will have a workshop on mapping, GPS, and designing tracking transects. If you are interested in joining us or learning more about **Keeping Track**, call me or Karen Smolin.

FOR SALE To Benefit BCT

- John Deere model 214 tractor with mower and steel trailer
- Mighty Mac model 9-PT shredder-chipper
- Simplicity model 724 snow blower

These were given to the BCT by Tom and Jenny Michaels who have moved to Atlanta. All were used by the Michaels for some years but were well maintained and are in good running condition. All come with owners' manuals. They can be seen at Coolidge's, 462 Hill Road. Make us an offer we can't refuse!



462 Hill Road, Boxborough, MA 01719

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 156
Acton, MA 01720

Resident
Boxborough, MA 01719