



**Boxborough Conservation Trust
Board of Directors**



Jeff Fuhrer, President
Ruth Zimmerman, Treasurer
Lisa St. Amand, Secretary
Dave Bull
Scott Bundy
Frank Coolidge
Hugh Fortmiller
Mary Fuhrer
Anne Gardulski
Jeff Glidden
Rita Grossman
Jeanne Kangas
David Koonce
Frances Nolde
Eric Tornstrom

Please Welcome Our New Editorial Team

I hope that you enjoy reading **Common Ground** and find its articles informative and interesting. This issue marks the first for our new editorial team, Michelle Brosnahan and Jesse Floyd. We are very excited to have these two seasoned professionals at the helm of our newsletter, and we look forward to working with them in the coming years.

I want to take this opportunity to offer a warm thank you on behalf of the BCTrust to Tara Zantow, who is stepping down as editor of **Common Ground** to spend more time with her growing family. Tara stepped forward to take charge of our newsletter a few years back, bringing to it an abundance of energy and a cohesive vision. The newsletter has benefited tremendously from her hard work and clear focus. We will of course continue to work with Tara on BCTrust projects, but we will greatly miss her contributions to **Common Ground**. Thanks so much, Tara!

Mark your calendars: The BCTrust will sponsor a "Conservation Options Forum" on March 31 at 7:30 PM at Town Hall. Bob Wilber, director of land protection for Mass Audubon, will lead a discussion on some of the many options available to landowners who wish to conserve their land. These options often provide tax advantages to landowners that offer a "two for one." The landowner gets the benefit of knowing their land will be preserved and saves tax dollars in the process! We hope you will come join us for this special evening.

Jeffrey C. Fuhrer

Hager & Blanchard School Land: A Walk on Undeveloped Town Land

BY DAVE BULL, BCTRUST BOARD MEMBER

The wooded land behind Blanchard Memorial School where nature trails are located is diverse in terrain and wildlife. Glacial boulders, large and small, are visible from nearly everywhere – the large ones make for good resting spots during a hike. Traveling along the trail, a hiker will come across the low-lying maple swamp (look for the beaver dams) and in the next moment climb the steep slope to the top of the drumlin named Hagar Hill.

White pines are the dominant trees, some as stout as four feet in diameter and many at least 60 feet tall. Although impressive in every season, during the summer they provide a shady cover where pine needles carpet the ground in many areas, along with ferns, smaller bushes and other shade-loving wildflowers, such as lady slippers, Dutchman's breeches, and partridgeberry. Moss and lichens cover most of the rocks and fallen trees, and a variety of mushrooms are also common, especially in the fall.

Other trees include hickory, cedar, fur, maple, birch and oak, though these varieties are less plentiful than the white pines. Several of the hickories are quite tall, rivaling the tallest pines.

There is at least one very large impressive
(continued on page three)

The Boxborough Conservation Trust (BCTrust) is a nonprofit, tax-exempt, 501(c)(3) corporation. Our mailing address is P.O. Box 626, Acton MA 01720-0626.

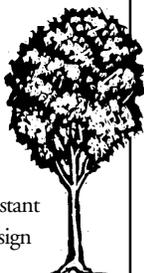
To help us with our programs, please become a member by filling out the New Member Registration form on the back page.

Common Ground is mailed to all Boxborough residents, free of charge, as a quarterly publication of the Boxborough Conservation Trust, Boxborough, Massachusetts.

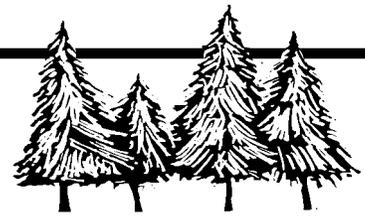
Comments and letters are welcome. Write to: Editor, **Common Ground**, P.O. Box 626, Acton, MA 01720.

Newsletter staff:

Michelle Brosnahan, Co-Editor
Jesse Floyd, Co-Editor
Glynis Hamel, Staff Writer
Pamela DeGemmis, Production
Hugh Fortmiller, Staff & Liaison
Ruth Zimmerman, Production Assistant
Catherine Christensen, Graphic Design



Enjoying the Great Outdoors in Boxborough: Blanchard Writing Contest



Students in 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th grades were invited to "share your short essay or poem with everyone in Boxborough - tell them what you enjoy most about being out-of-doors and in contact with nature . . . on conservation land or private property such as your backyard." Fifty-four entries were submitted in the 3rd annual contest sponsored by the BCTrust.

Congratulations go to the top four winning entries:
A Special Memory by Zoë M., Grade 4; *Paradise* by

Chelsea R., Grade 6; *My Favorite Place in the Woods* by Moira H., Grade 4; and *The Beauty of Boxborough* by Neil S., Grade 3.

Honorable mention goes to the following students for their worthy effort: Katherine E. from Grade 6; Madhavi M. and Aneri S. from Grade 5; Adam L. and Julia L. from Grade 4; and Kayla P. and Ianka B. from Grade 3.

A SPECIAL MEMORY

by Zoë M., Grade 4

In Boxborough, Half Moon Trail is my favorite place.
It is peaceful, mossy, and puts a smile on my face.
I hear the birds chirping, "Tweet, tweet, tweet."
Graceful, nice, also very sweet.
I can barely see the sky, the trees are in the way.
I thought it was a touching, beautiful day.
It was kind of like a forest.
We go in summer or spring.
The birds are very stunning, especially their wings.
My mom comes with me. She's always by my side,
And we love watching the water flow.
The stream is very wide.
I see the rocks that we use to get across the swampy river.
I feel the cold air as it makes me shiver and quiver.
I smell the moss.
I feel like I'm in the world, like I am the boss.
I hear the calming air, swish, swish, swish.
It is an experience that no one would want to miss.
I taste the fresh air, as it gently whips my hair.
I feel the fresh rough bark on a tree, so please just let it be!
If you cut down my special place,
it will wipe the smile right off my face.

MY FAVORITE PLACE IN THE WOODS

by Moira H., Grade 4

My favorite place is the stream in the woods in my backyard. I like to go there and sit on the stump that is next to the stream. There is a tiny bridge made of rocks that you can walk across to get to the other side. There are tiny waterfalls in the stream. When I sit on the stump it is very peaceful as I hear the water flowing down the stream. I can smell the pine trees. I can hear the birds chirping. Sometimes if you look very closely, you can see tiny fishes swimming around. I love to sit there and think. That is my favorite place on Boxborough Conservation land, and I think conservation land is very important.

PARADISE

by Chelsea R., Grade 6

Your paradise is probably a toy store, pizza place, or the mall.
But my paradise is right behind my house, the woods.
In spring, animals are everywhere flying, hopping, swimming.
I don't care, it seems that I am everywhere.
In autumn, leaves fall here and there,
While the sun shines bright but it seems like night,
Under the trees playing hide and go seek.
In wintertime, tracks are everywhere, left by deer,
rabbits and birds.
While above us and below us, where we are standing,
chipmunks, squirrels, and skunks sleep in their
warm cozy nests.
While my sister and I have fun skating on the pond,
below us frogs snooze in the ooze.
So now, the seasons change and, yet again, it's spring.
Things might be the same to you,
but everything is different to me, for it's my paradise.
I wouldn't want it any other way.

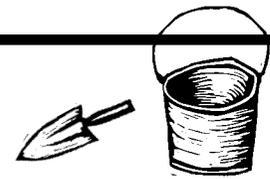
THE BEAUTY OF BOXBOROUGH

by Neil S., Grade 3

Keeping nature beautiful is the best thing we can do. Please don't cut down trees because if you do we will not have as much oxygen. Please keep this wonderful place beautiful. This land is special to us all. I want to see deer running in my yard. I want birds and bees flying and eating berries and seeds off my bushes. I want to see lots of things, and if you rip it down, I won't be able to. I want to grow old living in Boxborough seeing these beautiful things. These are the things that make me strong, that make me feel good, that give me courage. This is the beauty of Boxborough, so please don't take this away. This land is the best there could be, so please listen to me. The woods are one of the only things we have to explore in. I love this land called Boxborough, and I want to grow up and raise my family here. So make the right decision, and keep this land beautiful.

Boxborough Land Stewardship Committee Update

BY LIZ MARKIEWICZ, LANSCOM COORDINATOR



It has been a year since the Boxborough LanSCom was formed in March 2004 with the express purpose of improving and maintaining the accessibility and quality of our conservation lands. Since that time the group has been working diligently at keeping trails cleared and passable despite wind, rain, sleet and poison ivy. Trails have been clearly marked in red, yellow or and kiosks with trail maps have been placed at all the trail heads on each property. We have taken chainsaws to countless downed trees, lopped wayward saplings and tree branches and mowed pathways across acres of meadow. We have added countless yards of fill and wood chips to trails with poor drainage — which seems to be most of them!

Fortunately, we have had plenty of support for all this. In addition to the 31 official land stewards, the DPW and the

ConsCom, we have also gotten help from other members of the community. For example, this fall, a group of R.J. Grey eighth-graders armed with handsaws and loppers, helped widen the old ATT easement trail at Patch Hill, which will make it easier for horseback riders and cross-country skiers to use. Boy Scout Troop 1 helped widen an opening in a rock wall to improve access into the Head Waters portion of the Patch Hill property. Last spring AB high school seniors spent a morning spreading wood chips at Steele Farm as part of their Community Service Day activities.

While our main focus has been on trail upkeep, we have also tapped into community resources for special projects. Working with ninth- and 10th grade honors biology students, we tackled invasive species such as oriental

bittersweet, multiflora rose and Japanese knotweed at Rolling Meadow, Steele Farm, Have-Not Pond and Patch Hill. Because of the extent of the problem, we expect battling invasives will be an ongoing task for the foreseeable future! Boy Scout Troop 1 put together a dozen bluebird boxes which they are going to mount on poles for installation this spring. A Brownie troop is interested in following up with a monitoring project to see how many of the boxes are adopted by blue birds.

We have accomplished a fair amount in the last year and are looking forward to continuing our efforts at improving our conservation lands. If this kind of activity appeals to you and you would like to get involved, please contact Liz Markiewicz . We are always looking for new members!

Hager & Blanchard School Land: A Walk on Undeveloped Town Land

(continued from page one)

oak near the northeast side of the Hager Land - perhaps a descendant of the mighty oaks of Inches Woods described by Thoreau during a visit to Boxborough in 1860: "The handsomest thing I saw in Boxborough was this noble stand of oak wood. I doubt if there is a finer one in Massachusetts." (For more on Thoreau's visit to Boxborough, see the following Web site: <http://www.multimgmt.com/BHSociety/Thoreauvists.htm>.)

Some interesting animals have been seen and heard on the land as well – porcupines, white tailed deer, fishers, fox, owls and woodpeckers.

Two trails lead to the top of a small drumlin on the Hager Land: a nature trail starting behind the school that is available for school and public use; and a dirt road that begins along the access road to the new Boxborough Library, now under construction, which is located

off Massachusetts Avenue. Please note that access to the trail from the dirt road is currently restricted due to the construction in the area. Hikers are advised not to use the trail entrance from the new library site until construction is completed, expected to be sometime after March 2005.

At the top of the drumlin, the trail continues to Boxmill Road. (The trail is also accessible to the public at Boxmill Road.) The main trail loops around the Hager Hill drumlin.

The trails were marked last October by members of the Boxborough Land Stewardship Committee (LanSCom), a subcommittee of the Boxborough Conservation Commission. The LanSCom is committed to the maintenance and improvement of the Town's conservation areas. The main trail is marked in yellow. Access and secondary trails are marked in red and blue respectively.

Some trail areas are rocky, so tread carefully in those locations.

PARKING

Parking is currently available at Blanchard School and will eventually be available in the future at the new Boxborough Library when construction is finished.

LAND AREA

Blanchard School Land - 20.22 acres
Hager Land - 94.43 acres
Smith, Flagg & Foster - 5.31 acres

HISTORY

The Blanchard School land was given to the town by the Boxborough Grange. The deed for the property was acquired in 1948. In 1968, the town purchased the parcel of land surrounding the school parcel for general municipal purposes. An adjacent parcel of land was donated to the town by Roy Smith, Peter Flagg, and Craig Foster in 1976.



New Member Registration

BCTrust 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 nonvoting 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, BCTrust, 110 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 BCTrust does not release information about members to third parties.

Conservation Options Forum

The BCTrust is hosting a Conservation Options Forum on Thursday, March 31, at 7:30 PM in Town Hall's upstairs Grange Room. The forum will be led by Bob Wilber, who is both the director of land protection for the Massachusetts Audubon Society and a member of the Stow Conservation Trust Board of Directors. Panel members will set forth various conservation techniques and discuss examples of successful local conservation projects. The evening is intended for those interested in exploring available means of preserving open space, and the related tax and other financial implications of different conservation options. Join us for an informative and entertaining evening.

Annual Meeting/Members' Event

The Boxborough Conservation Trust's Annual Meeting/ Members' Event will be held on Saturday, April 2, 7:30 PM, at the home of Ruth Zimmerman and Simon Bunyard. Members are invited to enjoy a social evening, accompanied by a bit of business and a special treat -- Board member Anne Gardulski, a professor of geology at Tufts University, will be educating us on "The Geology of Boxborough." Now you can ask a professional about all of those rocks in your yard. Save the date and look for further details in your mailbox as the date nears.



P.O. Box 626, Acton, MA 01720

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

Resident
Boxborough, MA 01719