



Letter from the President

BY RITA GIBES GROSSMAN

As the new president, I would like to thank our members, past and present, for everything they have done to make this private, non-profit organization so successful. The primary mission of the BCTrust is to preserve open land and maintain the rural beauty and character of Boxborough. Achieving this mission has become a major challenge as landowners are being courted by developers for their valued property. Since its incorporation 8 years ago, the BCTrust has participated in the conservation of over 100 acres on two tracts of land. We also meet privately with landowners to advise them on land preservation options designed to maximize financial returns while providing an alternative to development.

To achieve our goals, the BCTrust must be financially poised to retain the services of professionals, including appraisers, engineers, attorneys, and conservation specialists. Membership dues, in addition to donations, are a steady source of funds that enable us to pursue these activities.

I invite you as a resident of our growing town to get involved in the BCTrust. You'll find a membership form on the center page of this issue. In addition to your financial support, we need your participation. We are looking for volunteers with a background in law or real estate to serve on the board. And we need BCTrust members willing to work with board members at community events, help raise funds, and help with our social and educational programs. Time can vary from a few hours per month to a few hours per year. I became involved when my oldest daughter won the 2002 T-shirt design contest and have found working with the BCTrust to be very rewarding. Please feel free to contact me or a member of the board.

In addition to land acquisition, the BCTrust greatly enjoys educating everyone about the benefits of conservation and nature. Our

newsletter, *Common Ground*, is a great resource mailed free-of-charge to every Boxborough resident. We sponsor two annual events at the Blanchard Memorial Elementary School: a writing competition and the BCTrust T-shirt design contest. Periodically, we sponsor hikes on conservation land and invite you to join BCT board member **Anne Gardulski** on Nov. 19 for a tour of Patch Hill (see details in this issue).

In the end, we conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught.

Baba Dioum, Senegalese poet

I'd like to recognize some of the volunteers that are getting things done:

Thanks to "web wizard" and board member **Eric Tornstrom**, our web site has been re-designed and greatly improved. Check it out at www.bctrust.org.

I am pleased to welcome **Lynn Stahlberg** as the new editor of *Common Ground*. Lynn brings editorial and writing experience as well as enthusiasm to our organization.

I would like to extend a very heartfelt thanks to our past president, **Jeff Fuhrer**, who has expertly kept us "on task" with dedication and vision while maintaining a sense of humor. We look forward to Jeff's continued, valuable contributions as a board member.

On behalf of the board, an enormous thank you to recently resigned board member, **Jeff Glidden**, who has been a long-time supporter of the BCTrust and a key leader in our membership effort. Jeff, you are always welcome to model BCTrust apparel at our community events.

I look forward to working with the board and BCTrust members to preserve our undeveloped land and promote alternatives to development.

Q & A

Burning Bush: Popular But Invasive

BY ANDY COVELL

Q: What are invasive plants?

A: They are highly successful non-native plant species that spread into natural areas and become dominant, displacing native species and disrupting the balance of the ecosystems. They typically grow well in a variety of conditions and produce prolific amounts of fruit or seed, which are often spread by birds, wind, or water current. These plants may also spread in other aggressive ways, such as by vines or underground runners. Once established, they can cause profound environmental damage. The Massachusetts Invasive Plant Advisory Group has created a list of 85 species that are invasive or potentially invasive in Massachusetts. (www.mnla.com/pdf/invasive/MIPAG_final_050325_rev.pdf)

Q: Are any of the plants on the list popular for home gardens and landscaping?

A: Japanese Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) and Burning Bush (*Euonymus alatus*) are both commonly used for landscaping. Burning Bush is particularly popular because of its brilliant scarlet foliage in fall.

Q: What is the current status of Burning Bush?

A: The plant is still sold commercially in Massachusetts. It is likely the state will phase out its sale over the next 1 to 3 years, with importation prohibited after Jan. 1, 2006, and
(continued on page three)

Andy Covell is the owner of The Bird House Garden Center in Boxborough and a member of the Boxborough Conservation Trust. If you have questions about this article, contact him directly at The_Bird_House@comcast.net or (978) 263-1628.



Take a Hike with the BCTrust



Anne Gardulski, BCTrust board member and professor of geology at Tufts University, will lead the hike and talk about the geologic meaning of the shape of the land and its geologic history. Anne has planned a leisurely hike with plenty of time for exploring, especially for kids.

“Children are terrific observers of the natural world,” says Anne, “They’re often intrigued with things that adults don’t give a second thought to: a broken tree, or a hole that some animal has burrowed into the ground.” To test their powers of observation, Anne has designed a scavenger hunt with prizes for all. Please leave four-legged family members at home.

Patch Hill at a Glance

At 283 acres, Patch Hill Conservation Area (PHCA) is the town’s largest conservation parcel. It’s also the most biologically diverse. Mature pine and hardwood forests, including several large beeches, provide a habitat for a wide variety of birds and mammals, such as great horned owls, hawks and fishers. There are many vernal pools where reptiles and amphibians breed. Open fields grow grasses and wildflowers that attract butterflies, dragonflies, and other insect species. Patch Hill itself, also known as Goat Hill, is a glacial drumlin. With an elevation of 448 feet, the summit of Patch Hill is either the second or third highest point in Boxborough, depending on the source consulted. It is said that when Boxborough was agricultural and mostly treeless, you could stand at the summit of Patch Hill and see the city of Boston. On a clear day in winter, when the leaves are gone, the view is still quite respectable.

Recreational Uses - Hiking, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, bird watching and other nature study. Liberty Fields on Liberty Square Road is available for organized recreation, including soccer and Little League baseball.

Parking - There are three parking areas. One is located on Liberty Square Road, midway between Waite Road and Benjamin Drive, on the opposite side of the road. The second is located on Hill Road approximately two-tenths of a mile beyond Tokatawan Spring Lane heading toward Littleton. The third is at Liberty Fields; however, the Recreation Commission requests that this parking area not be used for access to conservation land during major sporting events.

Trails - There are several miles of trails within the preserve, all of which are marked and easily accessible. Hikers can travel between widely spaced trailheads on Depot Road, Liberty Square Road, Avebury Circle, Hill Road, and Tokatwan Spring Lane. All trailheads are identified with signs.

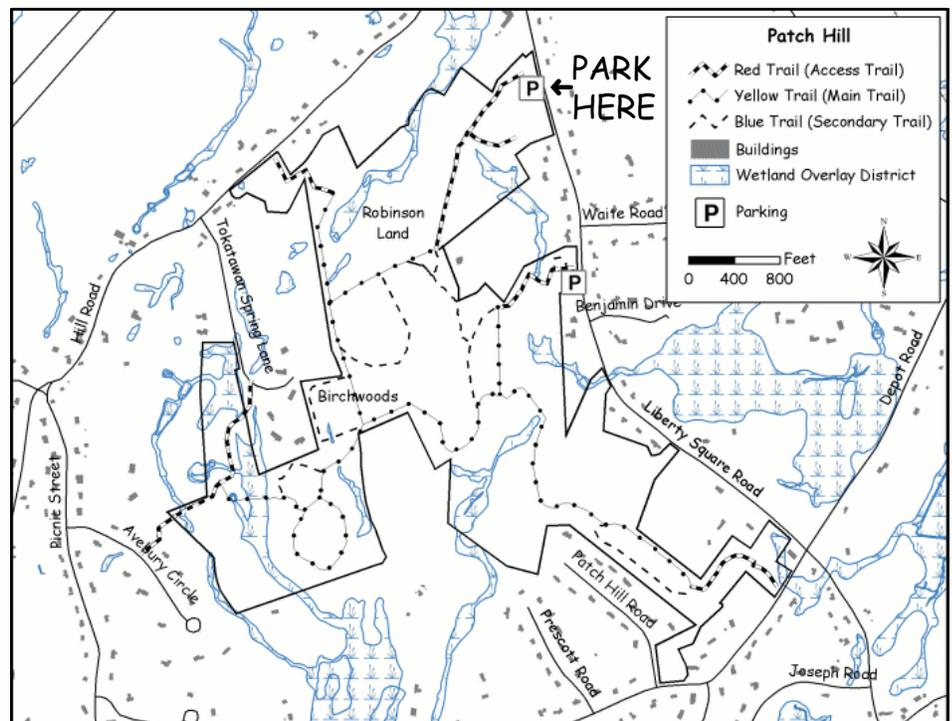
Cautions – Some sections of trails are a bit wet in spring. Poison ivy is common off the trails.

Acquisition - Patch Hill Conservation Area was created through a series of gifts and purchases over the course of nearly three decades, beginning with Anne Steele Atwood’s generous gift of 16.7 acres in 1975. The town’s first purchase was the

Hike: Patch Hill Conservation Area, 2 miles, easy terrain
Date: Saturday, November 19
Time: 1-3:30 PM
Meet: Liberty Field parking lot
Rain/Snow Date: Sunday, November 20
Check www.bctrust.org for weather update.

64.58-acre Wallace A. Robinson Conservation Land in 1976. The largest single purchase was 103 acres in 2002. Both the 1976 and 2002 purchases received financial aid from Self-Help Grants awarded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

History - Patch Hill was named after Nathan Patch and his family, who lived in the immediate area in the 19th century. In the 18th century, the Robinson Land was the site of a limestone quarry and kiln. A portion of a stagecoach route known as the Carriage Road ran through the property to Groton, a frontier town in early colonial times. Boxborough pioneer settler Phineas Whetherbee lived in the Headwaters section of PHCA in the 1700s. The old fieldstone foundation of his homestead is still easily visible next to one of the trails.



Patch Hill Conservation Area

BCTrust & ConsCom: Conservation Is a Team Effort

The town already has a conservation commission. Why do we need a conservation trust?

It's a question BCTrust board members hear often enough. Here's a brief answer.

The BCTrust is a land trust, a private organization incorporated in 1997 and funded by member donations with a mission to preserve and protect Boxborough's undeveloped land. The Boxborough Conservation Commission, ConsCom for short, is a municipal agency with regulatory obligations, such as administering the Wetlands Protection Act, holding public hearings, and monitoring properties for possible wetlands violations.

While BCTrust is very much dependent on the town to provide the capital required to buy conservation land, it plays a key role in facilitating the land acquisition process. When a property becomes available for sale, the BCTrust is often in a better position to prepare a project for presentation at Town Meeting. The BCTrust can act quickly, while the ConsCom is required to seek public bids

for engineering services, appraisals, and other preliminary work. When landowners seek advice, the BCTrust can meet and negotiate with them privately. The ConsCom is bound by law to conduct all business in public.

Not all of the BCTrust's work is as public as its contribution of \$50,000 toward the purchase the Patch Hill Conservation Area or the \$10,000 it provided to help pay preliminary expenses. BCTrust members also offer their expertise behind the scenes, helping the town draft grant proposals for state or federal assistance for land purchases, or advising landowners on the options for conveying or selling their property.

The bottom line is that any work the BCTrust does to acquire conservation land yields a valuable saving to the town.

According to the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition (www.massland.org), "The decision to form a land trust is not easy. Founders need considerable resources in dedicated volunteers and money and a strong, long-term commitment." The BCT has a core group of committed volunteers. What's needed going forward, to achieve the long-term goal of preserving open space in Boxborough, is more volunteers and more money. Fewer than 10% of the households in Boxborough are members of the BCT. Please use the New Member Registration form in this issue to support the BCT in its mission to preserve and protect Boxborough's open spaces.

And LanSCom Makes Three

The Land Stewardship Committee, aka LanSCom, is the newest addition to the town's land conservation ranks. It was formed in March of 2004 as a subcommittee of ConsCom, with a mission to maintain and to improve the accessibility and quality of conservation lands. Projects include keeping trails cleared and passable, building boardwalks, and removing invasives. Currently, LanSCom volunteers are working on rebuilding the bridge across Have-Not Pond to provide dry, year-round access from Hill Road to the trails in the Have-Not Pond Conservation area. The committee hopes to solicit donations from abutters and trail users to help defray the costs of materials.

There are currently 30 stewards on the committee. To participate, contact **Liz Markiewicz** at ainslie78@comcast.net or 978-264-4626.

Q&A (continued from front page)

sale of any remaining plant stock prohibited after Jan. 1, 2009.

Q: Most garden centers continue to sell Burning Bush, including The Bird House. Do you caution customers when they buy it?

A: Bill Brumbach, Director of the New England Wildflower Society, referred to the horticulture industry as "the stewards of the landscape." With this stewardship comes an enormous responsibility, and garden centers must promote environmental awareness and good practices. At The Bird House, we inform our customers that Burning Bush is invasive, we discuss the meaning of invasiveness, and we recommend alternative plants. If a customer is still determined to buy it, we tell them how to prevent their Burning Bush from spreading to natural areas.

Q: What steps can a homeowner take to prevent Burning Bush from spreading, or to remove an unwanted plant entirely?

A: It spreads primarily by producing seeds that are eaten and dispersed by birds. To prevent the production of seeds, shear the entire bush in the spring after it flowers. This method is not foolproof and the homeowner should check the plant frequently, and remove and destroy any seeds. Shearing the plant will not diminish its brilliant fall color. Unwanted plants can be removed by cutting the main stem near the ground, and digging up the stump and roots. Chemical brush and stump killers can be used if necessary.

Q: What alternative plants do you recommend to customers who like the visual appeal of Burning Bush?

A: There are many excellent alternatives. Each of these natives is easy to grow and produces bright fall foliage:

Sweetspire (*Itea virginica*)
Chokeberry (*Aronia*)
Summersweet (*Clethra alnifolia*)
Dogwood shrubs (*Cornus*)
Winterberry Holly (*Ilex*)
Swamp Azalea (*Azalea viscosum*)
Highbush Blueberry (*Vaccinium*)

Q: Where can people get more information on invasive plant species in Massachusetts?

A: We are happy to answer questions about invasive plants at The Bird House. Also, the Massachusetts Nursery & Landscape Association (www.mnla.com) and New England Wildflower Society (www.newfs.org) provide lots of information on their web sites.

Boxborough Conservation Trust Board of Directors

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For email contact information, go to www.bctrust.org/DirectorsBylaws.html

Common Ground is mailed quarterly to all Boxborough residents, free of charge.

Editorial Staff:

Lynn Stahlberg, editor

Tara Zantow, special projects

Glynis Hamel, staff writer

Catherine Christensen, design

Hugh Fortmiller, Board liaison

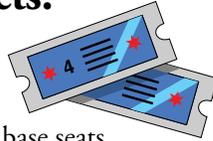
The BCTrust Needs Volunteers!

Your annual membership dues are important. We also need your skills and time. We are looking for new volunteers with a background in law or real estate to serve on the BCTrust board. We also need volunteers to help with publicity, event planning, educational programming, and fund-raising. Time can vary from a few hours per month to a few hours per year. Contact any board member for more information.



Who Won the Red Sox Tickets?

Dell Smart of Liberty Square Road won the front-row, behind first base seats and then very generously gave them to his wife, **Patricia**, and her friend, Laurie. "We had the most incredible time," said Patricia. "We could see into the Red Sox dugout. The Sox beat the Chicago White Sox on a beautiful, hot August night." The BCTrust thanks board member **Scott Bundy** for donating the tickets that generated \$1,390 in revenue.



www.bctrust.org

Take a look at our redesigned website, www.bctrust.org

- Color photos of Boxborough's conservation lands
- Back issues of *Common Ground*
- Links to a variety of conservation websites
- New member registration

Open Space in Boxborough as of Oct. 2005

887.5 acres Town-owned conservation land
 Including two new donations:
 4.5 acres abutting Flagg Hill Conservation Area
 donated by **Thomas Morey**
 9 acres abutting Wolf Swamp Conservation Area
 donated by **Glen Kaufmann**

235 acres Private land with conservation restrictions
 102 acres Semi-public land held for conservation purposes
 74.5 acres State-owned conservation land
 47 acres Private land with agricultural restrictions



Take a Hike with the BCTrust

Patch Hill Conservation Area



Saturday, November 19

1:00-3:30 PM

Meet at Liberty Field parking lot.

Rain/snow date: Sunday, Nov. 20

For more details, see page two

Boxborough
 Conservation
 Trust



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Resident
 Boxborough, MA 01719

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 Acton, MA 01720



Boxborough
Conservation
Trust

P.O. Box 626, Acton, MA 01720-0626

Preserving & Protecting Boxborough's Undeveloped Land

New Member Registration

The Boxborough Conservation Trust is actively recruiting 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 must be residents in the Town of Boxborough. All others are honorary members. Membership is renewed on an annual basis.

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 _____

Telephone _____

E-mail _____

Please indicate how you would like your name(s) to appear in our membership listings, such as "Jones Family", or "John and Jane Jones", or if you prefer, you can just say "anonymous":

Membership Listing: _____

Please make your check payable to **The Boxborough Conservation Trust**, and mail, with this form, to:

Treasurer, Boxborough Conservation Trust

110 Barteau Lane

Boxborough, MA 01719

An acknowledgment of your tax-deductible contribution will be mailed to you.

Please check to see if your employer will match your contribution.

Your comments and suggestions are very much appreciated:

Thank you for your support!

Active BCT memberships with donations in the last 12 months, as of 10/9/05

Peter S. Alling
Apgar Family
Alana and Russ Askey
Awiszus Family
John and Audrey Ball #
Bieber Family
Anna and Andrew Bohachewsky
Wilfred T. Bouffard #
Barbara L. Braden
Brophy/Zakheim
Brown Family
David Bull
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Mrs. Ronald Carvalho
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Todd and Patty Davis
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Dionne-Loughlin Family
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Anne Gardulski
Jack Geissert
* Glidden Family
Charlene and Dick Golden
Betty and Bill Graham
Bruce and Deborah Gray
Susan and Martin Green

Larry and Rita Grossman
* Mark and Glynis Hamel
Doug and Kathi Haney
Norm and Flo Hanover
Brad and Sue Hardie
Harsip Family
Virginia Haskins
Held Family
Muriel V Henderson
Cliff Hendrick and Rosemary Balfour
Neal and Leigh Hesler
Hinds Family
Hoff Family
Hood Family
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Jim and Teresa Howie
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Dan MacPhail and Pat Flanagan
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D.R. Mani and Lakshmi Kaja
Liz and John Markiewicz
Mike and Cindy Matchett
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* Suzanne R. Morse
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John and Carol Neville
Nichols Family
Frances Nolde and Hugh Fortmiller
John Northrup Family
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Greg Paris and Joanne Williamson
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Raoul and Beth Plutchak
Eleonora Pontoriero
Karim Raad
Mr. and Mrs. Malcolm P. Reid
David & Annelies Reilly
Dennis W. Reip
Janice Rejto and Stephen Rejto #
Carolyn Richards
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Sears Family
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Pat Sordill and Jeff Kenyon
Spalding Family
* David and Lisa St. Amand
Ronald B. Steese and Jennie L. Rawski
Sundstrom Family
Symancyk Family
* Dan and Kathy Tappan
Tikku Family
Eric and Barbara Tornstrom
Torres Family
Art Utz and Deborah Campbell
Arden and Nina Veley
Cindy Warwick
Webber Family
Lonnie Weil
Janet Weisenberger and John Pullerits
Westlin Family
Winsor Family
Tara Zantow and Tim Blankenship

Anonymous (5)

* = charter member

= non-voting member

Number of current memberships: 139

If you don't see your name, please join today!

To correct any misspellings, omissions, etc., contact Ruth Zimmerman, ruth@simonbunyard.com or 978/263-3139, or write: Treasurer, Boxborough Conservation Trust, 110 Barteau Lane, Boxborough, MA 01719.