

www.bctrust.org

The BCTrust updates its Web pages on a regular basis. Take a look!

- See photos of favorite walking paths
- Print out trail maps before you hike
- Link to other conservation websites

BCTrust announces annual contest winners

Every year the Boxborough Conservation Trust sponsors a writing contest and a design contest at Blanchard Memorial School to encourage students to think about the natural landscapes and wildlife in their community. The writing contest, now in its 8th year, is open to students in Grades 3 to 6. The design contest, in its 12th year, is for Grade 4 students only.



See inside this issue for the names of all winners, runners-up and honorable mentions, plus reprints of the top three writing entries. You can order T-shirts with the winning 2010 design (shown left) by sending email to membership@bctrust.org. Price is \$10. Sizes: S, M, L, XL

Fifer's Day Ticket Raffle

And the winner is...

Boxborough resident Johann Nittmann won two Field Box seats, right behind the Red Sox dugout, in the annual raffle sponsored by the BCTrust on Fifer's Day. This year's raffle raised \$1,340 to help fund the Trust's all-volunteer land conservation work. Thanks once again to board member Scott Bundy for donating these premium tickets...and to all you Sox fans for your support!



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Preserving land at no cost to taxpayers

The BCTrust has embarked on one of the most ambitious land acquisition projects in its 12-year history. In December 2009, the Trust acquired a 35-acre parcel known as the Campbell Family Trust property, which can be accessed off Emanuel Drive and has frontage along Depot Road. This parcel had been in Chapter 61 protection for many years and was close to being sold to a developer.

See the full story inside...

Preserving and Protecting Boxborough's Undeveloped Land

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Common Ground

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Preserving and Protecting Boxborough's Undeveloped Land

BCTrust acquires 35 acres of land along Depot Road

Major step in Trust's efforts to preserve 29 acres for passive recreation

By Rita Gibes Grossman

This past December, the BCTrust acquired a 35-acre parcel that neighboring residents have enjoyed for years as an extended backyard. If the Trust's efforts are successful, most of this acreage will be protected as conservation land, accessible to everyone in Boxborough for hiking and other passive recreation.

Known as the Campbell Family Trust property, this parcel has been in Chapter 61 protection for many years and was very close to being sold to a developer. Since the property was privately owned and received tax benefits as "forest land" under the state's Chapter 61 classification, the town had the "right of first refusal," that is, the right to match the conditions of a signed purchase and sale agreement between the landowner and a prospective buyer.

Town officials must weigh the value of each parcel for which it has "right of first refusal," since Boxborough does not have ready access to funds to assist with the purchase of land. The town has not passed the Community Preservation Act, which would be one source of funding. Some state funding is available, but it is never guaranteed. Given the number of Chapter 61 parcels in Boxborough and current economic conditions, the town cannot act on every parcel that becomes available. In this case, the town assigned its right of first refusal to the BCTrust.

The Trust was able purchase the land with a privately secured loan. To generate the funds needed to repay the loan, taxes, and other associated costs, the Trust is

carving out about six acres (just over 17%) to be sold for the development of four houses. Under the plan, the remaining 29 acres will become conservation land at no cost to taxpayers.

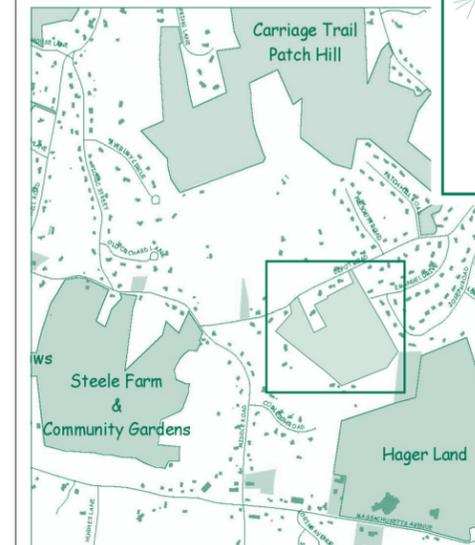
As this issue of Common Ground goes to press, the Trust has received preliminary approval for four house lots. Board member Simon Bunyard is serving as project director, overseeing the subdivision of the property.

Limited development will fund costs of conservation

Why would the BCTrust develop pristine land that we would rather protect? In this case, the Trust had no other financial options. The board weighed alternatives and then moved forward, believing that four houses are a reasonable price to pay for permanent protection of the remaining acres, certainly a better

outcome than development of the entire parcel with eight or more houses and no public access.

When the subdivision of the property is completed, the Trust will begin the stewardship phase for the conserved parcel. The plan is to develop trails that link the parcel to the Hager land behind Sargent Memorial Library and to create access from both Depot Road and Emanuel Drive. The Trust will create additional protection for the conserved portion of the property, as required by law, with a conservation restriction to be held by another non-profit or municipal organization.



Yes, you can help!

More funds are needed to preserve this land in Boxborough—as well as other undeveloped land—for conservation, agriculture, and recreation. Make your tax-deductible gift today to BCTrust, P.O. Box 626, Acton, MA 01720. Any amount—\$10, \$15, \$20—will be put to good use!

Rachel Marie Toups, Grade 6, wins first prize



Winners: Rachel Toups (right), Jack Walsh, and Haley Greico-Page with framed reprints of their essays.

Every spring since 2003, the BCTrust has invited Blanchard students to think and write creatively about Boxborough's natural landscapes. This year, a record number of students participated: 92 in all from grades 3, 4, 5, and 6. The Trust asked students to choose their favorite natural habitat, such as a woodland, meadow, or pond, and to reflect on what makes it special: the shape of the land, geologic formations, the plants and animals who live there, the aromas, sights and sounds. The Trust was delighted by the variety of favorite places Blanchard students chose to write about and by their creativity! Trust members Tara Zantow and Jessica Eichelburg announced the results at an all-school meeting in early June.

Congratulations to these students for their winning entries:

First Prize: Rachel Marie Toups, Grade 6

Second Prize: Jack Walsh, Grade 4

Third Prize: Haley Greico-Page, Grade 4

Honorable mentions were awarded to Sapna Peruvemba, Nina Prakash, Carter Terranova, Grade 6; Sam Fleming and Jimmy Connor, Grade 4; and Elizabeth Yang, Grade 3.

The BCTrust thanks Principal Maryellen Driscoll and school administrators for their generous support of the contests each year, and is especially grateful for the efforts of teachers in Grades 3 through 6.

Seasons at Boxborough Ponds

By Haley Greico-Page, Grade 4

As I walked through the woods on a cool autumn day, I noticed the pond was sprinkled with dots of yellow, orange and red leaves. A cold wind gave me a chill, as leaves crunched under my feet. The last frogs hopped past me as I walked home shivering.

Winter's snow fell as I returned to the pond. It was frozen and blanketed with snow. The snow-covered trees stood peaceful and quiet, lifeless and leafless. After we shoveled for what seemed like hours, the pond was transformed into an ice skating rink as we pulled on our skates and slid across the bumpy ice.

It's warm again – spring!! Heading to the pond, I already saw green plants blooming. Ducklings followed their mother trying to learn how to swim on the glimmering water. Birds sang and crickets chirped. A cool refreshing breeze blew in my hair, smelling like after rain.

Summer heat made the pond like a mirror reflecting sunlight. Lily pads floated without a sound in the shimmering water. Moss sat on the shore in little clumps. Crickets began their evening song. Come see the beautiful ponds and landscapes in Boxborough and help protect them.



In the Woods

By Rachel Marie Toups, Grade 6

*Through the woods, down the hill
I come to the swamp
Its little islands begging
To be explored
Filled with birdsong
It fills me with joy
As I jump, climb, and step
To each piece of land
Making me feel adventurous
I avoid the dark murky water
As I step across
Clinging to the smooth branches
Of a young tree
The foul smell of skunk cabbage
Explodes though the air
I realize too late
The purple and red plant
Is crushed under my shoe
I soon forget the stench, however,
As I spot a fallen tree
stretching across
What would have been impossible
to cross
Grabbing hold of the branches,
I step across.
Suddenly, I slip, nearly falling
Into the black pool
Grasping a branch at the last second
Making it across I pause
Resting for a moment
To listen to the birds
Soon it is time to leave
Reluctantly, I trace my steps
Back to the hill
My adventure playing in my mind
The peacefulness of nature
Calling me back . . . but I cannot stay*

The Stream

By Jack Walsh, Grade 4

*In the spring as the raindrops fall
And the song birds begin to call,
I rush to open my back door
And then hear the flowing stream roar.
As my feet carry me across the lawn
Even before the break of dawn,
The stream sparkles in the morning light
And I think to myself, what a beautiful sight.
I find leaves and sticks to build a small boat
And place it in the stream to float.
A bridge is formed by a fallen tree
That wobbles and turns as it carries me.
The stream works its way over each stone
And from the other side I stand alone.*

Joshua Koslow has winning entry



The BCTrust's annual T-shirt design contest drew 74 entries from fourth graders at Blanchard this spring. Joshua Koslow (left) won with his illustration of a skunk. Runners-up: George Awiszus, Kathryn Lundquist, and Aiden Holt (not in photo).

Letter from the President

By Rita Gibes Grossman

Internationally recognized naturalist and speaker Peter Alden presented one of his more popular lectures, "The Changes in Flora and Fauna from Thoreau's Time to Today," at our annual meeting in April. Punctuating his slides with humorous and often provocative observations, Peter

documented how New England's topography has changed from open fields and farms to a reforested landscape. Moose, deer, turkey and beavers would have been unlikely for Thoreau to see in his lifetime.

During the business part of our meeting, we welcomed two new board members: **Lisa and Barry Harsip**, residents of Boxborough for the past 18 years. Lisa has worked as writer, editor, and small business owner. Barry has been an attorney in Acton for the past 28 years. We also welcomed **Karen Berkley**, another 18-year Boxborough resident, who will provide bookkeeping services.

On behalf of my fellow board members, I thank our outgoing board members:

Eric Tornstrom, who in his six years on the board also managed our web site.

Diane Torres, who served four years and completed all the legal documentation for the conservation restriction the Trust holds on the former Panek land, which is part of the Patch Hill conservation area.

Hugh Fortmiller, who served seven years and oversaw our publications and press releases, and edited almost everything written on behalf of the Trust.

Special thanks to **Mitzi Weil**, who once again coordinated our annual senior luncheon to rave reviews!

Enjoy the woods, but beware of the ticks

By Jim Comolli

Rising deer populations have increased the risk for Lyme disease for anyone who spends time in the woods this summer, especially in Massachusetts where the risk is relatively high: 36.3 cases per 100,000 people were reported in 2005. Lyme disease can be contracted at any time of year as long as the temperatures are above freezing, but May to July is when young deer ticks (nymphs) are most active. It's the bite of an infected nymphal stage tick that can spread the disease to humans and animals.

Luckily, preventing Lyme disease is relatively simple. Ticks are mostly found in brushy, wooded, or grassy areas clinging to vegetation. To protect yourself and others when going into such an area, take precautions: stay on cleared trails, wear a long-sleeved shirt and long pants, tuck pants into your boots, and use a tick repellent. Upon your return, check yourself, family members, and pets thoroughly. If you find an attached tick, grasp it close to your body and pull it straight out with steady pressure, without squeezing or twisting. Ticks usually have to remain attached for 24 hours to transmit the Lyme-causing bacterium.

Symptoms of Lyme disease usually appear 3 to 30 days after infection. The most common early symptom is the appearance of a ring-like rash that spreads outward from the site of the tick bite. Other early symptoms are flu-like and include fever, headache, and aching muscles or joints. See a health-care provider immediately if you begin to develop these symptoms. Although early symptoms may subside, more serious problems such as arthritis, nervous disorders, or cardiac issues may arise without treatment. Once detected, Lyme disease is readily treatable with antibiotics, especially if caught early.

For more information, see the Mass. Department of Public Health website: www.state.ma.us/dph

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