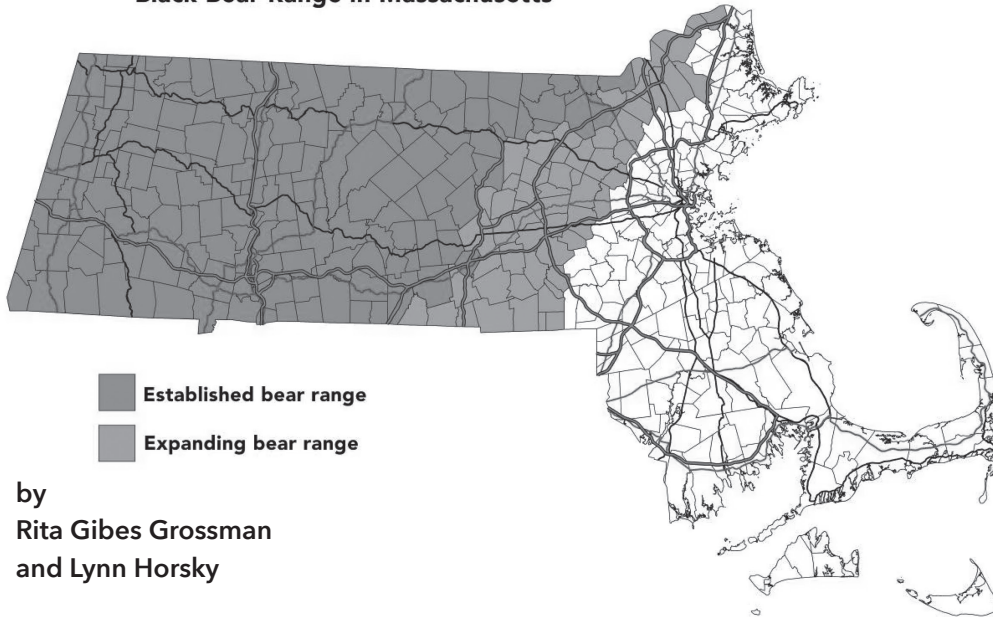




From the Editorial Desk: The Bear Facts

Black Bear Range in Massachusetts



■ Established bear range
■ Expanding bear range

by
Rita Gibes Grossman
and Lynn Horsky

WE BEARLY KNOW YOU

For many years, the black bears in Boxborough were found on the pages of a children's book, made of fabric in a toy chest or seen in a movie. But as of the last few years, this has changed. Move over deer and coyotes, the black bear has returned to the area having been driven westward by colonial development and agriculture during the early 1800s. In the past year, numerous residents have had their bird feeders and beehives knocked over and broken as black bears search for food. With the growing and successful efforts to preserve valuable woodlands and forests, bears have more options and are re-expanding their range from western and central Massachusetts to the communities between I-90 and



I-495 and further eastward to I-95.

What do we need to know about black bears to live harmoniously and avoid human interaction?

THE EASTERN BLACK BEAR (*Ursus americanus*) has black fur with a brown muzzle face and occasionally a white chest patch. Adult males are 150-300 lbs., females weigh in at 100-180 lbs. Bears have 5 toes, curved claws, and long sharp teeth. They are omnivores, dining on plants and small mammals, fish, and reptiles. Though they love wetland plants, foraging for berries, and enjoy feasting in orchards, honey

Boxborough Conservation Trust Board of Directors

Rita G. Grossman, President
president@bctrust.org

Dave Barnett, Vice President
vice-president@bctrust.org

Tom Bieber, Treasurer
treasurer@bctrust.org

Becky Harris, Clerk
bharris@bctrust.org

Karla Briggs
kbriggs@bctrust.org

Scott Bundy
sbundy@bctrust.org

Liz Caldwell
lcaldwell@bctrust.org

Alex Kerin
akerin@bctrust.org

Geoff Osmun
gosmun@bctrust.org

Editorial Staff

Lynn Horsky
editor/designer

Bradford Gray
editor/writer

Becky Harris
editor/production

Common Ground

is published twice a year and mailed free to every residence

Keep up with the BCTrust on Facebook (Like us!):

facebook.com/bctrustorg

Email: We send out periodic emails with updates on events and activities. If you're a BCTrust member, you're already included. If not, please sign up online: bctrust.org/email/

The Boxborough Conservation Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions are fully tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

bee hive raiding is on the top of their list. Bears hibernate in dens from November-December to March-April depending on food sources. A female bears a litter every other year after the age of 3-5. A litter of two-four cubs are born in January. At two years old, bears leave their dens and migrate to establish new territory—males range 120 sq miles, usually in the summertime, while females range 11 sq miles. Bears are active during the day, more so at dawn or dusk; in areas with high human density they can become active at night as well.



Black bear caught by night camera clawing tree near Brigid Bieber's beehives December, 2023

A BEAR REMEMBERS WHERE YOU LIVE

Bears have good eyesight and hearing, but their keener sense smell can locate a food source or sense danger easily. Since scent is so prominent they have acute memories. They remember where they had a good meal provided by humans, and want to return to dine as an uninvited guest. There are a number of actions you can take to keep bears away from residences:

- Remove bird feeders at the first sign of bear activity. Support local birds by growing native plants, shrubs, and trees, and by adding a water feature
- Protect chickens, bees, and small livestock with a properly installed electric fencing
- Use bear resistant trash receptacles or place trash barrels inside garages or outbuildings. If you have a pick-up service, put receptacles out in the morning, do not leave out overnight
- Clean outdoor grills and remove any foodstuffs from outdoor entertaining areas. Don't throw meat scraps, bones or greasy, oily, or sweet things in the compost pile
- Feed pets indoors

WALK DON'T RUN

- If you see a bear in your yard, open a window, or step out by an open door, yell or bang a pot at the bear
- Wait for it to leave, and then eliminate any food source in the yard
- Leash dogs when outside and don't let dogs chase or interact with bears
- Climbing a tree is not an option. Black bears are better tree climbers than you
- NEVER come between a mother bear and her cubs
- If you meet a bear in the woods, say "Hey, bear" in a calm low voice and slowly back away
- If bear is aggressive and comes towards you, put your arms over your head to make yourself look bigger and yell and shout for the bear to go away. Walk slowly backwards
- In unlikely event the bear attacks, fight back with everything you have: backpacks, sticks, waterbottles, fists, kicks
- Report depredations by bears of livestock or property to the nearest District Office of the Massachusetts Division of Fish and Wildlife.



Original tree huggers, black bear cubs lounge on a fallen tree trunk

For more information: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/learn-about-black-bears>

Recommended Reading Benjamin Kilham's books:

Among the Bears: Raising Orphan Cubs in the Wild

In the Company of Bears: What Black Bears Have Taught Me about Intelligence and Intuition

Letter from the President

by Rita Gibes Grossman

“The goal of life is living in agreement with nature.” —Zeno

It’s finally spring and time to enjoy the Town’s many trails and scenic views of flora and fauna, especially the return of breeding migrant birds like the killdeer. This species of plover has chosen the Blanchard Memorial School campus as its spring and summer home.

The board is updating our strategic plan which included adding a new Vice-president officer position. The VP will work collaboratively, as a member of the Executive team with the president and will assume the leadership role as needed when the president is not available. We are grateful to Dave Barnett who agreed to run and was elected as our first. Thank you Dave!

While the Trust and the Town have been successful in preserving important land for wildlife habitat, water protection and public enjoyment, there are still more acres that meet those criteria, in addition to the acres with agricultural value. The BCTrust is committed to working with land owners, the Town, and our regional land trust, The Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT) to achieve the protection of these parcels. On Fifer’s Day at our booth, our new map, based on the BioMap developed by the Commonwealth’s MassWildlife and The Nature Conservancy, was reviewed with great interest. Using the latest research informed by a warming and changing climate, our “Nature” map shows the Town of Boxborough from that perspective identifying areas of importance for the nature-based, eco-services they provide and need for preservation.

Congratulations to all of the winners of the BCTrust sponsored art contest at the Blanchard Memorial School whose entries are featured in this issue. Thank you to all of the students who participated! My daughter won in 2000 and that helped advance my interest in the BCTrust.

In gratitude

Stewardship: Thank you the volunteer stewards who work with Karla Briggs and Dave Barnett to specifically monitor and steward each of the BCTrust’s five properties:

- Elizabeth Brook Knoll: Dr. Tim Foster, DVM
- Inches Woods: Tom Bieber
- Grady Preserve: Rich Grady (no relation)
- Beaver Brook Valley Preserve: Bob Levesque
- Shurtleff Woods: Mike Parato

Blanchard Contests: Thank you to Nicole Bouchard Tejeiro for coordinating this year’s art contest and to Kate Bell, Stephanie Weichens, Wendy Marley, and Becky Harris for judging the entries and to art teacher Brittany Martinez, whose support enables these contests to be a success.

BCTrust Members: Thank you to all of our members who are making a difference with their support of our work.

And, thank you to editor, Lynn Horsky, editor, Brad Gray, editor and writer, and to editor/production manager Becky Harris. Their volunteer time make this publication possible.



With deepest sympathy to our columnist Brad Gray who could not participate in this issue due to the passing of his wife Rev. Virginia (Ginny) Adams Gray.



Look up: an eastern black bear snoozes on a broken tree limb




Annual Lecture Series: *Beaver Deceivers* report by Becky Harris

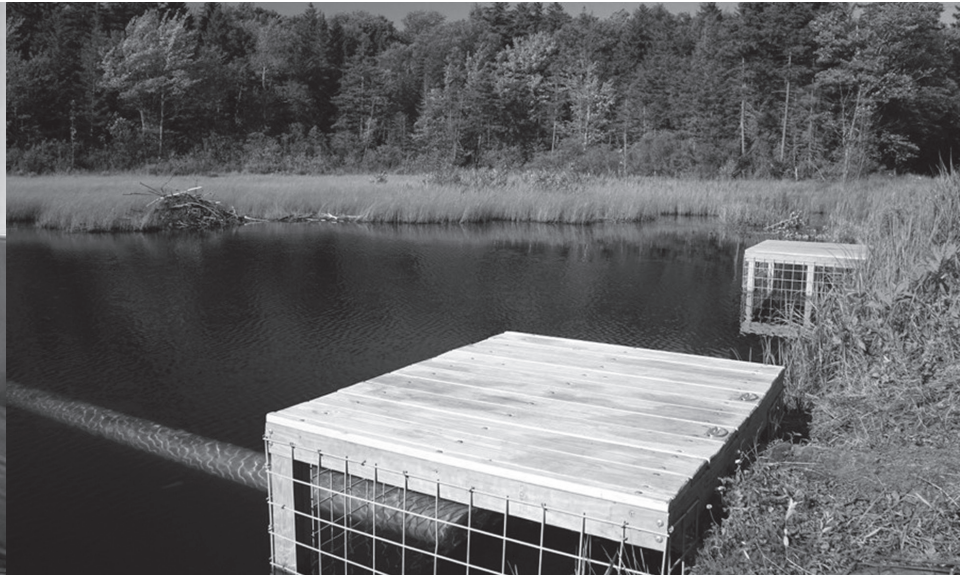
When I introduced this year's Annual Meeting speaker, Skip Lisle, I told a story about one of my earliest memories involving beavers. Every year of my childhood I was lucky enough to visit a place in the Adirondacks called Beaversprite. It was the home of Dorothy Richards, who was known as the beaver lady because she took in orphaned beaver kits and adapted her home into a beaver sanctuary. The basement was a pond, and the rest of the house was open to the beavers who would come and go up from the basement, waddling through the living room, waving their wet tails across the floorboards, chewing on everything wooden that wasn't covered in metal. It was quite an experience, and I distinctly remember Nicky the beaver (with a nick in her tail) pushing 4-year-old me around the room because I had the audacity to sit in her favorite chair. I also remember her pulling coats from the closet and piling them up in front of the picture window so she could see out.

Fast forward to March 27, 2024: I was thrilled when Skip Lisle, the founder and President of Beaver Deceivers, LLC, agreed to speak at our Annual Meeting. He seemed to be a natural choice during this period of intense rain and flooding throughout town. Every time someone complained about a road or basement flooding, it seemed beavers were to blame.

I was anticipating how Skip would talk about how clever beavers are, and how they are essential to restoring wetland habitats and maintaining the ecological integrity of freshwater marshes and how they contribute nutrients to agricultural land. Indeed, he expounded upon the beautiful wetlands that have been created and maintained now that beavers have returned to the northeastern US after nearly complete elimination over 100 years ago. He showed beautiful photos of his



Signs of beaver activity in wetland off Depot Road



L: Becky Harris, Rita Grossman, Skip Lisle photo courtesy of the Boxborough News; R: Beaver Deceivers installed over culverts

home state of Vermont, with lovely flowing rivers and small wetlands in valleys surrounded by mountains. He showed the evolution of the various flow devices he has invented, patented, and developed over the years, and how effective and long-lasting these devices are. If installed correctly (and we came to learn that there are a lot of incorrectly installed Beaver Deceivers out there), these devices that restrict beaver activity at very specific conflict points for decades (such as culverts under roads that are at risk from being blocked by beaver damming).

He did not expound on how clever beavers are, however (much to the slight dismay of my 4-year-old self, who

partially formed her love of beavers for their brilliance). But as I listened to his reasoning, I came to see that his dismissal of beavers' cleverness was much more of a practical matter.

He expressed frustration with people who say they just can't outsmart beavers, whose persistence in building dams has definitely thwarted many an engineering project. As someone who has devoted his life to outsmarting beavers, he's well aware that it's not easy, but he has done it, time and time again and it has taken a deep understanding of flow devices, beavers, their habitat, hydrology, stream ecology, and aquatic construction. His dismissal of beavers'



Beaver Lodge in Winter

cleverness is not so much a judgement against beavers as it is a judgement of the people who try to outsmart them and fail, only to resort to killing them... over and over and over. The bottom line is that beaver killing doesn't work. It's not cost effective, it invites more beavers to fill the empty habitat, and leads to frustration and more killing.

His talk was inspiring, hopeful, and seemed to capture the attention of the over 50 attendees at our Annual Meeting.

The sound of running water is torture to a beaver.

Father beaver at the dinner table to young pup: Did you patch up that leak on the southwest corner today?

Pup beaver: I stuffed some leaves and twigs in.

Father: I think I hear a drip, drip, drip! Get back down there and slap some mud on the joint—pronto—before I go nuts. I need some downtime!

(Aside: Where's grand dad? he needs to get gnawing before his teeth curl and grow into his skull!)

Grand dad beaver (looking at his reflection in the water): Those saplings with fresh tannins I've been gnawing on sure are making my teeth a bright shiny orange.

Perhaps even more exciting to me was his generous offer of a site visit the next morning. Conservation Commission member, Liz Markiewicz and Chair, Sam Anderson, Town Planner, Alec Wade and I showed him two of the spots in town that might need Skip's resourcefulness the most: the Hager land behind Blanchard Memorial School and the wetlands adjacent to the Commuter Rail tracks off of Depot Rd. across from the Wildlife Management Area. While we were at this visit, a river otter galumphed across the tracks right in front of us, reminding us of the value of the wetlands that beavers have created.

Perhaps my favorite moment of the site visit was witnessing Skip's awe at the quality and quantity of the wetlands in town. He marveled at the beauty of the wetlands behind Blanchard, and expressed how different this habitat is from what he's used to in rural Vermont. There, he's lucky to see wetlands every so often surrounded by mountains, but here, we are surrounded by wetlands. Much to the dismay of the flooded basement owner, perhaps, but in this bounty of wetlands, Skip sees opportunity. A chance to protect wetlands, protect property, and protect beavers. The cost is not high, and there is great interest in town in this reasonable investment in a few places in town in the near future.

INTRODUCING The Winners of the BCTrust 2024 Annual Fourth Grade Art Contest >>>

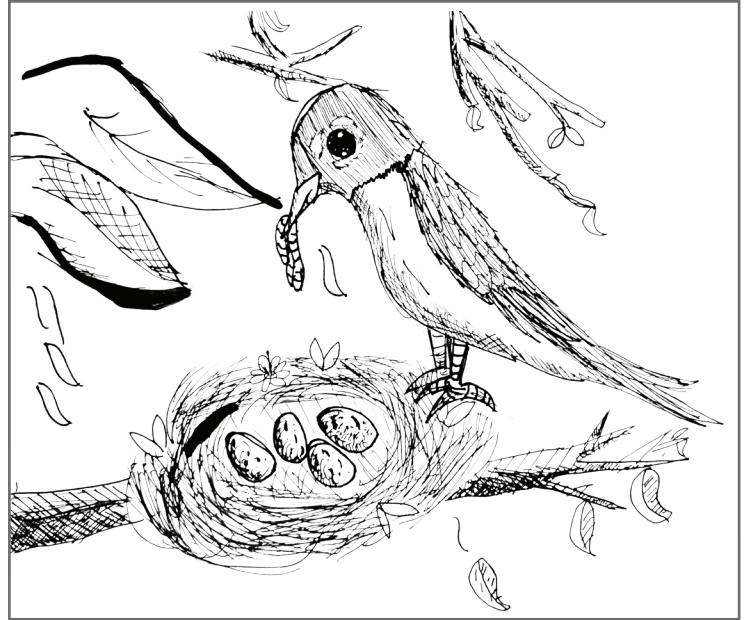


L-R: Alisa Kalenderski, Lucy Campbell, Zoe Li, Jingran Meng, Lisa Chen (photo by Kelly Sturniolo)

The Challenge: Create your own original artwork in pen and ink or another single color media, reflecting upon this year's theme. Note that images need to be able to be reproduced in single color. Each entry will be judged for artistic merit, originality and how well it reflects the theme: *"Birds around Blanchard Memorial: Nested or on the Wing"*



Lisa Chen

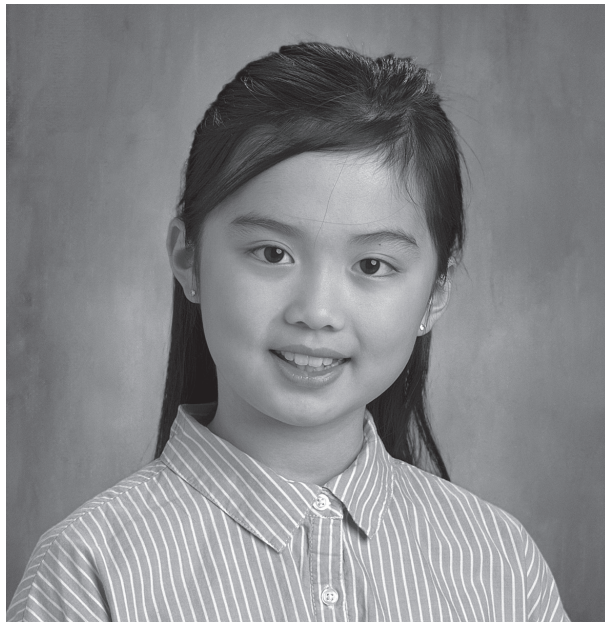


First Place

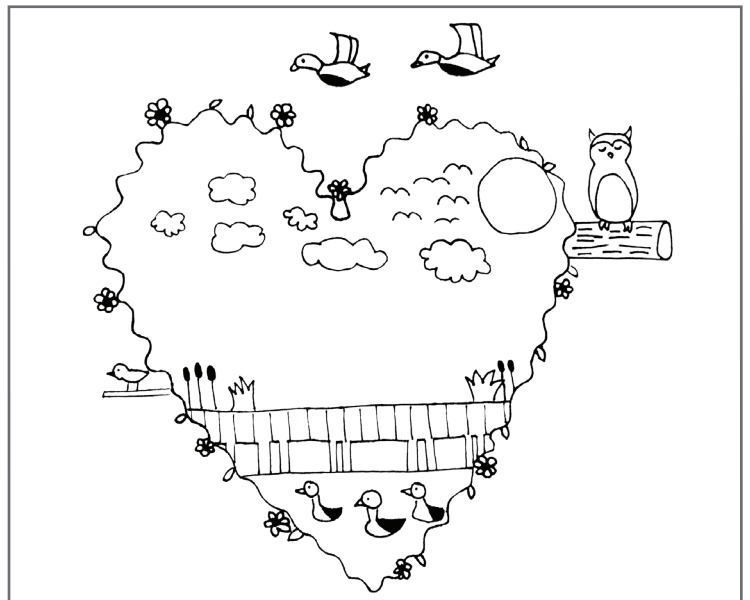
Boxborough Conservation Trust &
Blanchard Elementary School's
Annual Art Contest
2024 Theme:

*"Birds around Blanchard Memorial:
Nestled or on the Wing"*

No matter where you live you have almost certainly had a chance to observe birds in nature. Birds have so many important roles in our ecosystem as seed dispersers, habitat builders, their predation helps manage insect populations and of course their song and sight bring so many people delight through all the seasons. Here's original art that reflects on what the students have observed and especially appreciated about the birds in our region.



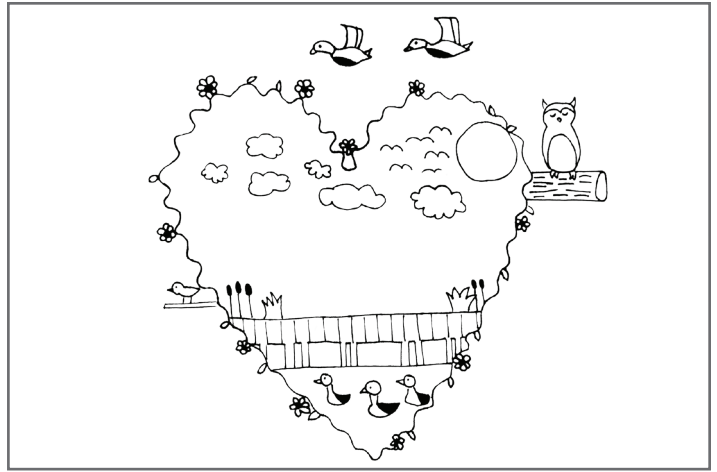
Zoe Li



Second Place



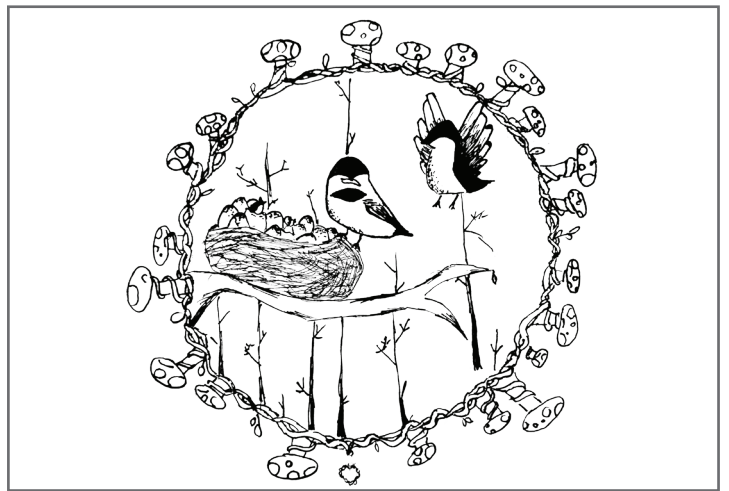
Jingran Meng



Second Place



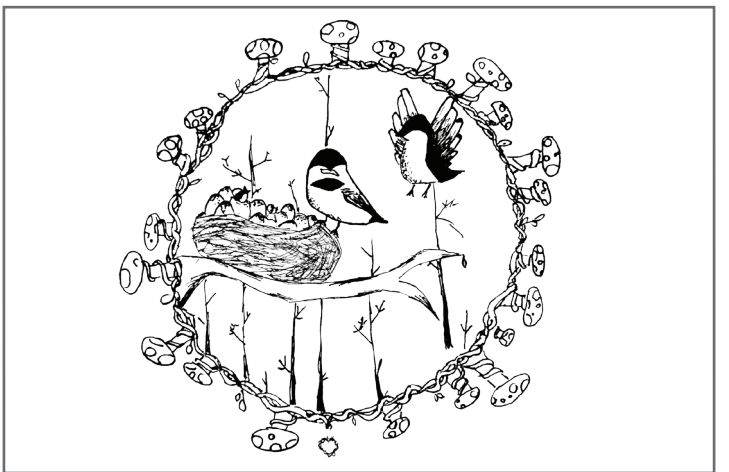
Alisa Kalenderski



Third Place



Lucy Campbell



Third Place

Boxborough Conservation Trust Membership List 2024

Thank you for your participation and contributions

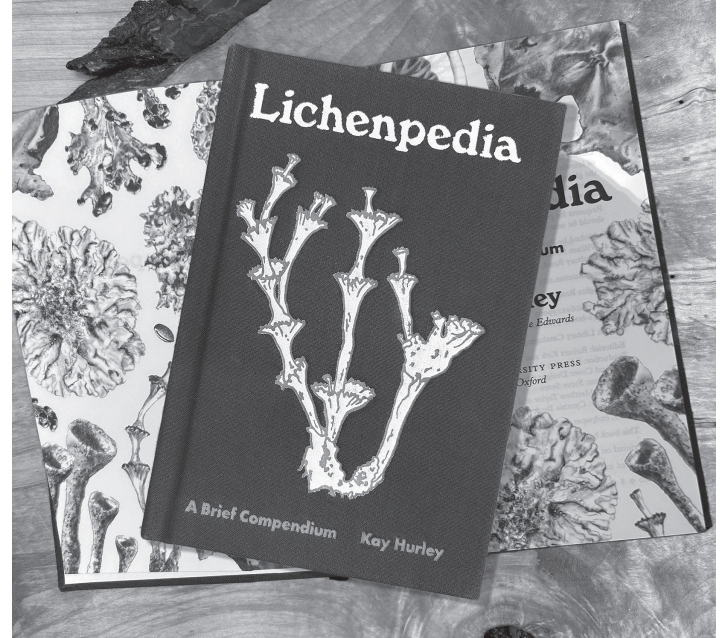
Anonymous (2)	Sharon Duquette	Alex Kerin
Alana and Russ Askey	Becca Edson and Jimmy Cooley	Adam Parker and Lee Ketelsen
Francis and Sarah Bacon	The Fabian Family	Lila Koskinen
JoEllen Baird and Hal Rosenstock	John Fallon	Andrew Krammen
Audrey Ball	Stan and Alida Felton	George C. Krusen II
David and Eileen Barnett	Les and Gladys Fox	Cassie LaRussa
Dave and Maureen Barr	Gerry Gaebel	The Levesque Family
Katherine and Robert Becker	Anne Gardulski	Greg Little
Mark White/Pascale Belin-White	Kristine Gatesman	Dan MacPhail
Berkley Family	Jack and Karen Geissert	Liz and John Markiewicz
The Bieber Family	Zoe Germain	Cindy Markowitz and Family
Barbara Birt	Laura Hartigan Giles	David and Kathy Mayo
Reeves and Karla Briggs	The Glidden Family	The McCarthy Family
The Brolin Family	Rich Grady	Brant and Susan McDougall
The Reg Brown Family	Betty and Bill Graham	Rob and Anne McNeece
David Bull and Laurel Dickson-Bull	Brad and Ginny Gray	Susan Mitchell-Hardt and David Hardt
Scott & Pam Bundy	Erik Gregory and Rictor Noren	Palmer Moore and Melissa MacGillvray
Simon Bunyard	John Grosjean	Pat and Mimi Moran
Kristine Burgess and Jim Comolli	Larry & Rita Grossman	Suzanne R. Morse
Rebecca Busby	Loretta Grushecky	Sheila Murphy
The Caldwell Family	Rich and Karen Guzzardi	Brian Myrick
The Campbell Family	Bruce Hager	Chips and David Naparstek
Anne K. Canfield	Tom Haggerty	The Nelson Family
Caprara Family	Brad and Sue Hardie	Lynn and Vernon Nixon
Christine Casebolt	The Harris Family	Peter and Elizabeth Norton
The Cedrone Family	Sandra Haupt	Geoff Osmun
The Colley Family	Michael Healy	Lisa and Tim Owen
Pam Collins and Jim Moss	Ferdinand and Marijke Hendriks	Jonathan and Jessie Panek
Janet Connolly	The Hinds Family	Janet Weisenberger and John Pullerits
Karen Coopriider	Michael and Diane Hoff	Brent Ranalli
Margaret and Andrew Covell	Linda Hoffman & Blase Provitola	William and Hanna Ray
Zhenqian Cui	Tom and Lynn Horsky	Cynthia Regan
Joyce and Robert DeMattia	The Hughes Family	Mr and Mrs Malcolm P. Reid
Heidi and James Dempsey	Ross and Catherine Hunter	Dennis and Abby Reip
Paul and Diane Dingle	Martha Ikerd and Paul Desrochers	Scott and Judy Reiter
Cheryl and Paul DiPaolo	George and Susan Johnson	Paul and Sue Rey and Family
Dorsey/Lukas Family	Karen Johnson	Gloria Roe
Dresser Family	Thomas and Patricia Johnson	Christie Romeo

The Russo Family
 Steve and Sue Schmitt
 Gary and Kathie Schwarting
 Rosemary Sedgwick
 Karen Shea
 Kevin Shea
 Shepherd Veterinary Clinic
 Manjul Shukla
 The Sidwell Family
 John and Karen Sonner
 The Spalding Family
 David and Lisa St. Amand
 Rosania-Stahlberg Family
 Ronald B. Steese and Jennie L. Rawski
 Symancyk Family
 Dan and Kathy Tappan
 The Thompson Family
 Art Utz and Deborah Campbell
 Janyce Vicik
 F. Channing Wagg
 The Waligory Family
 Warwick Family
 Weaver Family
 The Westlin Family
 Ed and Colleen Whitcomb
 Adam White
 Carol White
 Wendy and Jonathan White
 Wilfert Family
 Williams Silverio Family
 Georgia Winfrey
 Tara Zantow and Tim Blankenship
 Carol Zimmet

The Boxborough Conservation Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions are fully tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

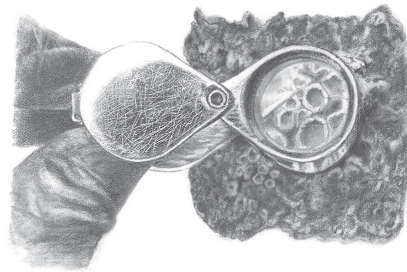
Book Review

LOCAL WRITER AND ILLUSTRATOR ILLUMINATES LICHEN OF THE FOREST



Here's an interesting book for amateur naturalists and curious people, *Lichenpedia: A Brief Compendium*. Written by Carlisle resident Kay Hurley and with 50 illustrations by Pepperell artist Susan Edwards, *Lichenpedia* is an A to Z collection of 100 bite-sized pieces about lichens offering

an introduction to a weird and obscure part of nature.



Hand Lens

Now available through your favorite bookstore, via Amazon, the MIT Press Bookstore and, of course, the publisher, Princeton University Press:

<https://press.princeton.edu/books/ebook/9780691239897/lichenpedia#preview.....continued p 12>



Basidioliches



Preserving and Protecting Boxborough's Undeveloped Land

New Member Registration Form

The **Boxborough Conservation Trust** is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. We are actively seeking 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 Boxborough residents. All others are honorary members. Membership is on an annual basis.

There are several membership levels. All donations are tax deductible, to the extent allowed by law.

<input type="checkbox"/>	\$30	Member	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$250	Patron	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$2500	Preservationist
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$60	Family	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$500	Sustaining	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$_____	Other
<input type="checkbox"/>	\$100	Associate	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$1000	Sponsor			

Name(s) _____
(please print)

Address _____ (street) (____) _____ - _____ (telephone)

_____ (town) _____ (state) _____ (zip)

Date ____/____/____ e-mail _____

Please indicate how you would like your name(s) to appear in our membership listings, such as 'The 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 it with this form to:

**Treasurer
Boxborough Conservation Trust
650 Massachusetts Ave.
Boxborough, MA 01719**

We will mail you a donation acknowledgment suitable for tax reporting purposes. Please contact your employer to see if they will match your contribution.

Your comments and suggestions would be very much appreciated:

Thank you for your support!
You can find BCTrust at **bctrust.org** or on Facebook.
650 Massachusetts Ave. Boxborough, MA 01719; email: president@bctrust.org


The Boxborough Conservation Trust is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Contributions are fully tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.



650 Massachusetts Ave.
Boxborough, MA 01719

Non-profit org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit no. 156
Acton, MA 01720

Postal Patron
Boxborough, MA 01719

 Latest news on Facebook: facebook.com/bctrustorg
Like Us!
Email updates: bctrust.org/email/
Renew your membership online: bctrust.org/join/



We Hiked the Boxborough 30!

If you walk every mile of trail in Boxborough, including all Town land and Boxborough Conservation Trust trails, it's over 30 miles of trails! Challenge yourself and earn a patch or a button and bragging rights! Fill out the form here:

<https://bctrust.org/2021/08/06/i-hiked-boxboroughs-30/>.

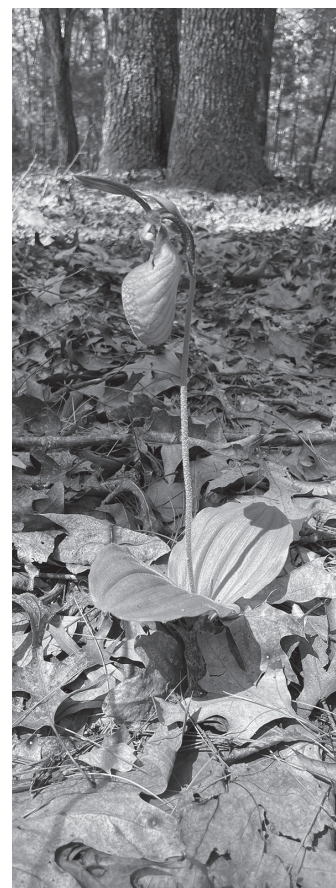
Forms are available at the Sargent Memorial Library. Return filled out form to the library to receive your patch or button.

We started this challenge in 2021 and the following hikers have completed the challenge to date (note: new hikers since winter 2023 are in bold at end of list):

Michael Campbell, Boxborough
Lisa St. Amand, Boxborough
Liz Markiewicz, Boxborough
John Markiewicz, Boxborough

Susan Kenney, Somerset
Brian Kenney, Somerset
Stephen Kiley, Somerset
Janel Paquin, Somerset
Marjorie Kamp, Boxborough
Mary Sullivan, Boxborough
David Oliva, Boxborough
Jeff Barrus, Boxborough
Karen Coopriider, Boxborough
Anthony Cuoco, Boxborough
Alicia Colley, Boxborough
Tom Colley, Boxborough
Sharon Garde, Boxborough
Sarah Donovan, Littleton
Michael Harrison, Boxborough
Patricia Harrison, Boxborough

NEW Hikers as of 06.24
Melinda Strauss, Boxborough
Cathy Winsor, Boxborough
Kitty Lee, Boxborough
Darrell Loverin, Boxborough
Kyoko Loverin, Boxborough
Dave Barnett, Boxborough

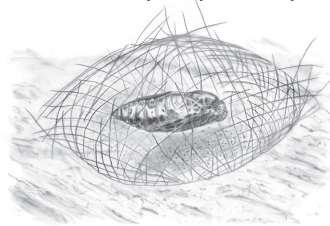


Lady slipper, native orchid

Continued: Lichenpedia. A Compendium, written by Kay Hurley with illustrations by Susan Edwards



Hummingbird on Lichen Nest



Lichen Moth Hairy Cocoon

Take a peek at Princeton University Press:
<https://press.princeton.edu/books/ebook/9780691239897/lichenpedia#preview>



Pixie Cups