



Asiatic Bittersweet
(*Celastrus orbiculatus*)

WEED WARRIORS

By Dave Barnett

The Town of Boxborough has joined the **Weed Warriors**, a program managed by our regional land trust organization, Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT). The goal of the **Weed Warriors** program is “to have a unified force of trained volunteers to tackle invasive species management throughout the Sudbury, Assabet and Concord River (SuAsCo) Watershed.” As an official host organization of the **Weed Warriors**, we now have access to the regional experience and expertise of the staff at SVT - as well as that of the volunteer weed warriors in other regional towns with established **Weed**

Warriors chapters. The Boxborough Conservation Commission and Boxborough Conservation Trust are working closely together to ensure a successful first season for the **Weed Warriors**, as the spread of invasive plant species is becoming an increasingly serious problem in our town.



Burning bush
(*Euonymus alatus*)

According to MassWildlife's **Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program** at Mass.gov, “Invasive plant species are one of the greatest threats to the integrity of natural communities and also a direct threat to the survival of many indigenous species. As a result, we engage in efforts to identify the most problematic species and to manage them when and where it is possible.”

Boxborough Conservation Trust Board of Directors

Rita G. Grossman, President
president@bctrust.org

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

Jim Comolli, Treasurer
treasurer@bctrust.org

Becky Harris, Clerk
bharris@bctrust.org

Karl Malakian
kmalakian@bctrust.org

Liz Caldwell
lcaldwell@bctrust.org

Geoff Osmun
gosmun@bctrust.org

Leah Wofsy
lwofsy@bctrust.org

Editorial Staff

Lynn Horsky
editor/designer

Bradford Gray
editor/writer

Becky Harris
editor/production

Liz Caldwell
editor/production

Common Ground

is published twice a year and mailed free to every residence.

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.



BEFORE



AFTER

Volunteers clear out burning bush, bittersweet vines, and multiflora rose bramble that threaten native species in Patch Hill conservation area



Multiflora Rose (*Rosa multiflora*)

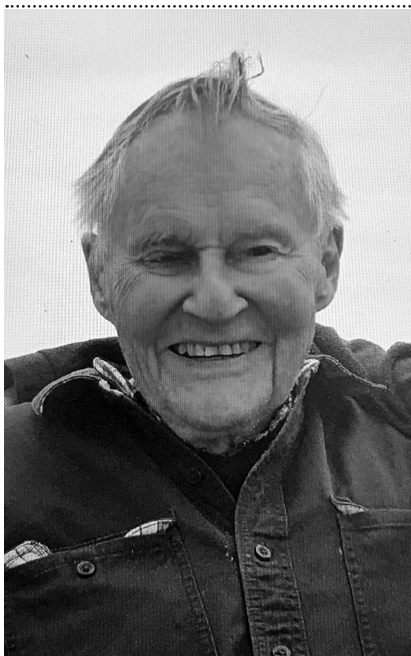
While invasive species have taken hold in many locations around Boxborough, we have chosen the Patch Hill Conservation Land – specifically near the trailhead on Liberty Square Road – as the place to initiate our Weed Warriors volunteer efforts. The Patch Hill Land is one of the Town’s largest conservation properties, comprising nearly 220 acres of woodlands. With vernal pools and streams, Patch Hill has great ecological and wildlife habitat value. An extensive network of trails also provides recreational value and access to this important woodland. The area, however, is being threatened in several locations by invasive plant species. The Conservation Commission is currently working with Oxbow Associates to develop an inventory of plant species and an overall invasive species management plan that will be utilized over the next several years, but the trail leading in from Liberty Square Road has been identified as one of the most threatened locations and of highest priority.

With that in mind, the Weed Warriors program was initiated at this location in late April with a plant identification training walk led by SVT staff member Sam Rogers, followed by two work days on May 2nd and 3rd. In my role as Land Stewards Coordinator

for the Town, I coordinated these work days and will continue to do so through the season. Our initial efforts were focused on removal of the four most dominant and problematic species in this location – Asiatic Bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), Burning Bush (*Euonymus alatus*), Multiflora Rose (*Rosa multiflora*), and Japanese Barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*). With eight hardy volunteers on May 2nd and more on May 3rd, 16th, and 20th, we made great progress digging and pulling up hundreds of these invasive plants, as shown in the before and after photo(s).

If you would like to become a
Weed Warrior
or have any questions,
please contact:

dbarnett@boxborough-ma.gov



In Memory of BCTrust’s founder and first president, Frank Coolidge

On November 18, 1997, Frank and 5 others signed the Articles of Incorporation to launch the Boxborough Conservation Trust as a nonprofit organization to “preserve and protect Boxborough’s undeveloped land.” Frank served as the first president (1997 – 2003).

Simon C. Bunyard, a member of the founding board of directors said: “Through his vision and determination, Frank preserved not only open land but also the values of stewardship and civic responsibility that defined his life. He was a deeply honorable man whose quiet leadership, generosity, and integrity earned the respect and trust of all who knew him.” (In 1973, when Frank and his wife Emilie were living in Harvard, Frank was a co-founder of the Harvard Conservation Trust.)

<https://obits.badgerfuneral.com/francis-coolidge>

Annual Meeting Keynote address: ReWilding with Trevor Smith

By Dave Barnett

This year's keynote speaker for our Annual Meeting held at Sargent Memorial Library on March 31st was Trevor Smith, a specialist in regenerative landscape design and founder of ReEarth Solutions. He talked about his passion for the natural world and his commitment to sustainable landscape practices in an era of climate change. Having grown up in Boxborough through his high school years, Trevor was very familiar with our rural town. He spoke extensively about his work as a landscape designer and consultant, emphasizing the importance of planting as many native species in our yards as possible.

There are many benefits to using native plants, as they are better adapted to our climate and soils and thus can reduce the need for external inputs like water and herbicides and fertilizers. In addition, native plants are more ecologically valuable to the pollinator insects and birds and other animals that have co-evolved in our region. Native plants provide increased benefits such as food for pollinators and even nesting material for native birds like hummingbirds.

Trevor spent some time focusing on the common plant terminology in the horticultural trade, clarifying the differences between non-native and native species, as well as “nativars” and “cultivars.” There are many non-native species of trees, shrubs and herbaceous perennials that are not invasive and are great ornamental additions to the garden, but it is important to understand that they do not provide the ecological benefits that native plants do.

- A cultivar, short for cultivated variety, has been selected from a naturally occurring mutation or through plant breeding for a given quality such as dwarf stature, flower and/or fruit color or size, leaf color, etc.



- Cultivars of native species have become known as “nativars.” A “nativar” that has been selected and propagated for its compact growth habit likely has the same or similar ecological benefit as the true species while providing the ornamental benefit of fitting in a small garden space.

“nativar” selected for a new flower color may be desirable for ornamental reasons but will likely not attract the same pollinator insects, and one selected for larger or different color fruits may not be as appealing to birds, thus impacting its ecological value.



A native Wild Geranium (*Geranium macrorrhizum*), common name: Cranesbill

Trevor described various design layouts and combinations of native plant species that provide beautiful color, stability and sustainability to a landscape. To learn more about this topic and all that Trevor has to offer, you can follow his podcast called “Peace, Love and Pollinators” and also his ask-the-expert forum called “Tuesdays with Trevor,” @reearthboston, and follow @ecological.landscape on Instagram.



Geranium (*Pelargonium* × *hortorum*) example of cultivar

Dave's Native Plant Recommendations and Sources

To build on all the great information we heard from our Annual Meeting keynote speaker Trevor Smith, I want to provide some useful sources of information about native plants, including where you can buy them. To start with, I highly recommend checking out the website for Native Plant Trust at <https://www.nativeplanttrust.org> for plant lists, growing recommendations and so much more. The headquarters for **Native Plant Trust** (formerly New England Wildflower Society) is at **Garden-in-the-Woods** in Framingham, a wonderful public garden focused entirely on native trees, shrubs and perennials. An excellent selection of native plants is available for sale there in Framingham, but a much larger selection can be found at Native Plant Trust's "*Nasami Farm*" in Whately, Massachusetts - well worth the trip out there!

Another valuable source of information is Grow Native Massachusetts. Check out their website at <https://gownativemass.org>. In addition to information about their annual plant sale and excellent lecture series, you can find Plant Lists and Landscape Guides for a variety of situations ranging from "**Landscape Uses for Northeast Native Shrubs**" to "**Native Perennials for Pollinators**" to "**Ten Tough Native Shrub Alternatives for Barberry and Burning Bush**."

Mass Audubon Society (<https://www.massaudubon.org>) is another excellent source of information about native plants, with recommended plants lists with photos and so much more on their website. And of course visiting any of Mass Audubon's wildlife sanctuaries is always a great experience and a chance to see native plants in their natural habitats. As for other places to purchase native plants, fortunately there are far more choices than we had just 10 or 15 years ago, thanks to the increased interest in and

demand for native plants. Most garden centers, including the "big box" stores, offer some natives but you have to really read the labels and/or know what you are looking for. One of my favorite places to shop for good quality plants is Weston Nurseries, with their two closest retail garden centers being in Chelmsford and Hopkinton. While they do not focus exclusively on native species as Native Plant Trust does, in recent years they have significantly increased their offering of native species and "nativars" and have knowledgeable staff to steer you in the right direction and answer all of your questions.

SOME NATIVE PLANTS TO REPLACE INVASIVES WITH:

- 1) **Buttonbush** (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*)
White flowers attract butterflies, reddish fruits, up to 6 ft, wet to dry soil
- 2) **Silky dogwood** (*Cornus amomum*),
copious blue fruits, adaptable, full sun/part shade
- 3) **Northern bush honeysuckle** (*Diervilla lonicera*), low, dense mounds, 3 ft., reddish new growth, works in dry shade, bunches of small yellow flowers June-October
- 4) **Sweet fern** (*Comptonia peregrina*),
scented foliage, 3 ft mounds, dry, sun, or part shade, colonizing, bank stabilizing
- 5) **Creeping sand cherry** (*Prunus pumila* var. *depressa*), ground cover habit, adaptable to full sun sites, white flowers, orange fall color
- 6) **Maple leaf viburnum** (*Viburnum acerifolium*), Maple like leaves, white flowers, black fruits, salmon to burgundy fall color, dry shade, colonizing

.....
From: *Ten Tough New Native Shrub Alternatives for Barberry and Burning Bush*, by Jessica Lubell for Northeast SARE, UConn Agricultural and Natural Resource Division



Garlic Mustard Pesto

Pull the youngest plants you can find (they can become bitter as they are older; the older plants also need to be cooked thoroughly, as they contain cyanide!)

To prevent spread:

- Harvest the entire plant, roots and all
- Bag the roots and stem and throw away
- Clean boots and clothes

Ingredients:

One generous bunch of leaves, flowers, and seeds, pulled from stems
A few handfuls of arugula
1/3 cup salted roasted pistachios
1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
Juice of 1/2 a lemon
1 t salt or more to taste
1 T maple syrup or more to taste

Directions:

In food processor or blender, blend all together thoroughly and serve with pasta and parmesan cheese.

President's Letter

By Rita Gibes Grossman

"Current literature supports a positive relationship between nature contact and children's health, especially for physical activity and mental health."

— "Nature and Children's Health: A Systematic Review"
Pediatrics Volume 148, Issue 4, October 2021

"Nature and Health: A Pediatrician's Perspective" was the keynote presentation given by Dr. Pooja Sarin Tandon, not at a medical conference, but at the annual Massachusetts Land Conservation Conference held this past March. Dr. Tandon was the senior author of the article I referenced in the quote I chose for this issue. As we look to the future with conserved land being threatened with development nationwide, Massachusetts continues to embrace the critical services provided by land, rivers, lakes, marshes, farms and forests not only for those of us here now, but for the future and our children.



A kid's teepee fort of fallen branches (adobe stock photo)

So what can we do right now in Massachusetts? The **Protect Water and Nature Initiative** has launched a campaign to generate funding for conservation of land and water using a portion of existing state sales taxes on sporting goods. This initiative, if passed, will generate about \$100 million dollars each year to conserve natural areas, farms forests and protect the quality of drinking water through the conservation of natural land resources. To get this on the November ballot, two rounds of signatures are required with more than

100,000 already submitted and another 21,000 needed by July 1st. **You can sign this initiative here:**

- <https://www.svtweb.org/news/protect-water-and-nature-initiative-seeks-signatures>

- <https://www.massaudubon.org/take-action/advocate/nature-for-ma>

- <https://www.natureforma.org/about-ballot-initiative>

Once on the ballot, vote in November. To learn more, see: [natureforma.org](https://www.natureforma.org). The Sudbury Valley Trustees, the Mass Audubon Society, and the Nature for Mass websites above have information.

The Town of Boxborough still has land to protect that has both natural resource and agricultural value and knowing that funding is secure enables the BCTrust's and the town's work. Both Elizabeth Brook Knoll and Perkins Woods were preserved with State funding assistance. The BCTrust received a state Conservation Partnership Grant to acquire Elizabeth Knoll and the Town received a state Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) Grant to acquire Perkins Woods. Our local taxes were not raised by the conservation of these two parcels thanks to not only our BCTrust donors, but, to these grants and for Perkin's Woods, the town's Community Preservation Act funding.

IN GRATITUDE

Blanchard Contests: Thank you to art contest coordinators Nicole Bouchard-Tejiero and Becky Harris, and the Blanchard Memorial School art teacher, Brittany Martinez. Thank you to the judges Megan Connor, Nicole Melnik, Liz Caldwell, Courtney Apuna, and Becky Harris. Thank you to all of the 4th graders for participating and to all of the 4th grade teachers.

Common Ground: Thank you to Lynn Horsky who has been the editor of *Common Ground* for the past nine years and is now retiring. Her guidance, skills, and creative talent have enabled the design and composition of *Common Ground*.

Thank you to Brad Gray, editor and writer, and to the editor/production manager for this issue, Becky Harris. Featured contributor this issue is Dave Barnett, who covers Weed Warriors and native plants. Their volunteer time makes this publication possible.

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

BCTrust's Annual Fourth Grade Art Contest

Thanks to Blanchard's art teacher, Brittany Martinez

Every spring the Boxborough Conservation Trust invites 4th graders at Blanchard to participate in an art contest to explore, celebrate and get inspired by the plant and animal life surrounding us. Each year we offer a theme for Blanchard's artists.

Our Theme for 2026 is: "Patterns in Nature"

From tree rings, to bark, to honeycomb, patterns appear, large and small, all over the natural world. This year we encourage you to step outside, observe these patterns and then incorporate the ones that intrigue you into your own original design.



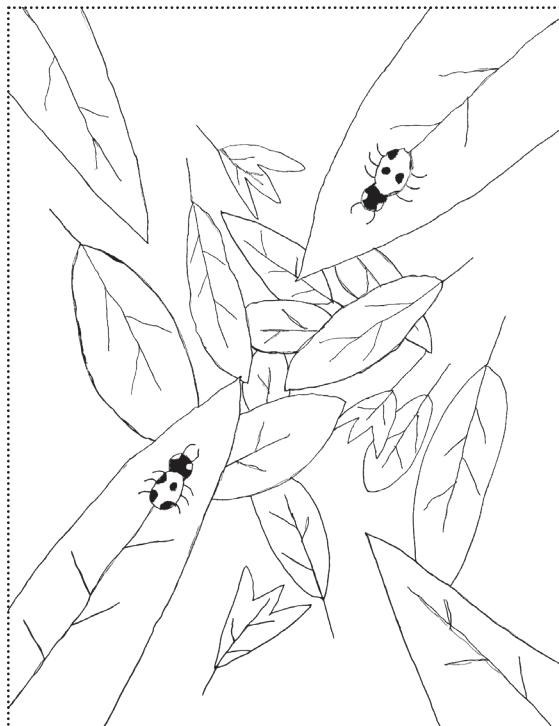
1st Place:

Casey
Rodger
&
Lucie
Johnson

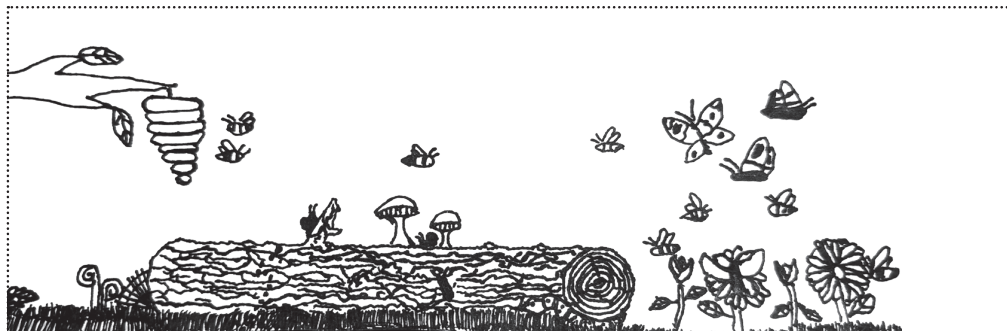


2nd place:

Aarav Vemula



3rd place: Ava Thompson & Reyna Patel





3rd Place:

Mila Scherck

UPDATE ON SGARS

By Becky Harris

To follow up on our article about Second-generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs), at this past Annual Town Meeting on May 19th, the Town overwhelmingly approved an article to submit a Home Rule Petition to the state to allow the ban of these substances within the town of Boxborough. There are at least 34 towns in Massachusetts that have now petitioned the state to implement bans of these chemicals in their jurisdictions, so there is a

groundswell of support for removing these harmful chemicals from our environment. They contribute to the deaths of the natural predators of rodents such as foxes, hawks, eagles, and owls and are becoming less effective as house mice become resistant to them. The MA Senate passed a bill in April to allow towns and cities local option to restrict anticoagulant rodent poisons on ALL property within their municipal borders, including private property. The bill now is in the House Ways and Means Committee and Mass Audubon is asking advocates to call

their state representative today to request they ask Chair Aaron Michlewitz and the House Ways & Means Committee to strengthen Sections 74 and 75 of the Mass Ready Act (S3064) by including the language from H5217 (sponsored by Rep. Hawkins) which would phase out the use of anticoagulant rodenticides statewide.



Boxborough Conservation Trust Membership List 2025

Thank you for your participation and contributions

Anonymous (7)	The Fabian Family
Alana and Russ Askey	John Fallon
Francis and Sarah Bacon	Stanton and Alida Felton
JoEllen Baird and Hal Rosenstock	Les and Gladys Fox
David and Eileen Barnett	Gerry Gaebel
Mark White/Pascale Belin-White	Cesar and Sharon Garde
Kendra Bence & Kurt Sjoblom Family	Grant Garven
Berkley Family	Michael Gayowski
The Bieber Family	Larry & Rita Grossman
Barbara Birt	Laura Hartigan Giles
Joan Blaustein	The Glidden Family
The Nelson Family	Rich Grady
Daniel & Kathi Breuer	The Seymour/Grape Family
Reeves and Karla Briggs	Brad Gray
The Brolin Family	Susan and Martin Green
The Reg Brown Family	Loretta Grushecky
Patricia and Tim Brunker	Rich and Karen Guzzardi
David Bull and Laurel Dickson-Bull	Tom Haggerty
Scott & Pam Bundy	Hanover Insurance Company
Kristine Burgess and Jim Comolli	Brad and Sue Hardie
Rebecca Busby	The Harris Family
The Caldwell Family	Scott and Jody Harris
The Campbell Family	The Hatch Family
The Cedrone Family	Sandra Haupt
The Colley Family	Michael Healy
Pam Collins and Jim Moss	Robert Hendrie and Janace Wambolat
Bob and Diane Cooke	Ferdinand and Marijke Hendriks
Karen Coopridger	The Hinds Family
Margaret and Andrew Covell	Linda Hoffman & Blase Provitola
Zhenqian Cui	Tom and Lynn Horsky
The Toy/Cummings Family	Ross and Catherine Hunter
Todd & Patty Davis	Gregory Hurlbut
Joyce and Robert DeMattia	Ian Hurst
James and Heidi Dempsey	Martha Ikerd and Paul Desrochers
Dionne/Loughlin Family	Karen Johnson
Cheryl DiPaolo	Thomas and Patricia Johnson
Dresser Family	Marjorie Kamp
Sharon Duquette	Janet Keating-Connolly
Becca Edson and Jimmy Cooley	Adam Parker and Lee Ketelsen
Jessica Eichelburg and Fred Waugh & Family	David M. Koonce
Susan Evans	Lila Koskinen

Boxborough Conservation Trust Membership List 2025

LaRussa-LaBrosse Family	John P. and Lynn Skinner
The Levesque Family	Dan Smith
Bill and Michele Litant	Fran Spayne
Rick and Mikki MacDonald	Wendy and David Spears
Dr. Daniel D. MacPhail	David and Lisa St. Amand
Heather and Karl Malakian	Rosania-Stahlberg Family
Liz and John Markiewicz	Melinda Strauss
Cindy Markowitz and Family	The Sundstrom Family
Paige Martin	Symancyk Family
David and Kathy Mayo	Dan and Kathy Tappan
The McCarthy Family	The Thomas Family
Lee McKinnon	Art Utz and Deborah Campbell
Robert McNeece	F. Channing Wagg
Susan Mitchell-Hardt and David Hardt	The Waligory Family
Pat and Mimi Moran	Warwick Family
Sheila Murphy	Roger and Cathy Watson
Chips and David Naparstek	Ed and Colleen Whitcomb
Francie Nolde and Hugh Fortmiller	Carol White
Maya Norton	Jonathan White
Peter and Elizabeth Norton	Wilfert Family
John Grosjean	The Wofsy/Rowe Family
Anne Marie and Bruce Osler	Tara Zantow and Tim Blankenship
Geoff Osmun	Carol Zimmet
Lisa and Tim Owen	
Jonathan and Jessie Panek	
Janet Weisenberger and John Pullerits	
William and Hanna Ray	
Dennis and Abby Reip	
Scott and Judy Reiter	
Paul and Sue Rey and Family	
Bill Rodgers and Karen Gillespie	
Christie Romeo	
The Russo Family	
The Santoro Family	
Steve and Sue Schmitt	
Gary and Kathie Schwarting	
The Seger Family	
Peng Shao and Shaoyan Sun	
Kevin Shea	
Shepherd Veterinary Clinic	
Manjul Shukla	



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.

☐	\$30	Member	☐	\$250	Patron	☐	\$2500	Preservationist
☐	\$60	Family	☐	\$500	Sustaining			
☐	\$100	Associate	☐	\$1000	Sponsor	☐	\$	_____ Other

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



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/



Brake for Wildlife

Get to Know Your Neighbors: BCT Board member Jim Comolli

Q. What makes BCTrust's mission powerful/meaningful to you?

A. I spend a lot of time outdoors in Boxborough walking and hiking. It is a wonderful place to explore the outdoors, and our open spaces are a big part of that. BCTrust's mission is meaningful to me because it helps to protect these areas for use now and for future generations. I'm excited to help the Trust in expanding awareness of the importance of preserving open space and ensuring residents can enjoy these areas as much as I do.

Q. What interests you the most/what is your special interest in the work of the BCTrust?

A. I stepped into the Treasurer role when I joined the board, so I'm especially focused on ensuring BCT's finances remain strong, transparent, and easy for the board and members to understand. I'm excited to help the Trust make informed decisions that support our long-term conservation goals.

Q. What are some of your gifts/prior leadership skills that you feel you bring to the board/greater community?

A. My background in biology gives me some understanding of conservation principles and how natural systems function, which can help inform board decisions. I also have good analytical and communication skills, thanks to my experience in research and development, which can help support the board in our mission.



Jim Comolli

Q. What does success for the BCTrust look like to you?

A. Success means greater community awareness of the value of land conservation in Boxborough and increased engagement with the outdoors—especially among younger generations. It also includes strengthening our ability to protect open spaces long-term so that residents can continue to enjoy the natural surroundings that define Boxborough.

Q. What motivates you to continue the work in your community?

A. Boxborough is what it is thanks to a long tradition of committed volunteers, and I'm motivated by the desire to keep that going. By serving on the BCTrust board I'm able to do that while contributing to a mission that is very important to me.

**Support your Town conservation efforts:
Join or renew your BCTrust's membership.
Mail in your check with the form included on page
11, or join online at: bctrust.org/join/**