



Westford Conservation Trust Spring 2014 Newsletter

www.westfordconservationtrust.org

Highlights

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Bay Circuit Trail Walkers Visit Westford



The [Bay Circuit Trail](#) (BCT) extends for 200 miles, through 34 towns, in eastern Massachusetts. This recreational trail and greenway corridor circles greater Boston, linking park and open spaces from Plum Island on the north shore, to the Duxbury/Kingston shore to the south. Videographers Marilyn and Dan Briemann walked the entire BCT

The Westford Conservation Trust was incorporated 30 years ago, on March 11, 1984. The Board of Directors wishes to acknowledge our founders, donors, members, and volunteers - past and present - for all you've done to preserve and protect open space, natural resources, and wildlife in Westford over the past 30 years - THANK YOU!

Please celebrate with us by attending our special anniversary events in the coming months (visit our [Facebook page](#) and check Westford Eagle listings for details). All are welcome to attend our monthly board meetings every 3rd Thursday at Roudenbush (note: no meetings in July or August, and the November meeting is our Annual Meeting on the 1st Thursday). Come learn more about us, and share your vision for the Trust as we move into our fourth decade. Happy 30th Anniversary!

A Brief History of the Westford Conservation Trust

by Rich Strazdas



Trust Meeting 2001

"... to acquire and preserve natural resources to include land, water, wetland, woodland and open spaces, and the plant and animal life therein for the benefit of the inhabitants of Westford, ... for the purpose of establishing trails, to preserve and protect historic sites, to educate the public about the wise use of natural resources, and to work with other organizations having

in 2013, taking side trips along the way to document local conservationists. On July 14th, they walked the Westford and Acton portion of the trail (in Westford, the Bruce Freeman Trail is part of the BCT), taking a side trip to interview and visit the Stone Arch Bridge with **Bill and Marian Harman**. To view their wonderful video of Bill and Marian discussing conservation in Westford, visit the Brielmann's website, scroll down, and [watch the "Day 9" segment here](#).

Greystone Pond by Rich Strazdas



The weather was perfect for this loop hike around Greystone Pond on February 1, 2014. Several days of below-freezing temperatures preceded an equally brisk morning with no new snow. Why was this cold weather an advantage? There are beavers busy in the area to the northeast of the pond, and the trail nearby is often flooded. This presents a problem

similar purposes."

The by-laws of the Trust declare the lofty goals established 30 years ago during the flourishing land trust movement of the 80s. While March 11, 1984 is the date of record, the organization did not spring fully formed from the soils of Westford... ([read full article and see more historical photos](#))

Land and Trails Spotlight:

Prospect Hill Wildlife Sanctuary

by Lenny Palmer



The Prospect Hill Wildlife Sanctuary was acquired by the Trust in 1999 as a generous donation by Priscilla Elliot, who owned the property since the late 1930's. It is comprised of 8 acres of open field and a wooded slope that ascends the southeastern side of Prospect Hill.

Eagle Scout Project at the Prospect Hill Wildlife Sanctuary

David Gillette, a senior at Westford Academy, has completed his community project requirement for his Eagle Scout award by making improvements at the Sanctuary. His major emphasis was the installation and renovation of steps/water bars leading up a steep slope of the hill. These are four feet long, 4 x 4 in. timbers that act as both foot supports and water erosion controls. David also extended the existing trail to pass by the field that the Trust has been actively developing for wild flowers and pollinators. Additional work included installing a kiosk at the entrance, replacing signage on a state champion shagbark hickory and general trail renewal.

in the warmer months, but with proper traction on your feet, it's no problem at all walking on ice... ([full article and more photos](#))

Black Bears in Suburbia



Thanks to all who attended our 2013 Annual Meeting in November. If you missed it, check out this excellent [Westford CAT video](#) of our keynote speaker, Sue Ingalls, of the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, talking about Black Bears in Suburbia.

Discover Westford Trails and More on Guided Walks



Learning about Ferns on the Tom Paul Trail

If you enjoy the natural



David has now completed all the requirements and will receive his Eagle Scout award this spring.

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid invades the Prospect Hill Wildlife Sanctuary



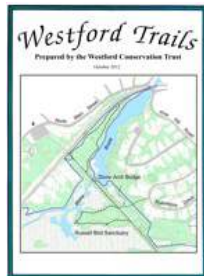
Woolly Adelgid on Hemlock

The hemlock woolly adelgid (*Adelges tsugae* - HWA) was first reported in the eastern United States in 1951, near Richmond, VA. The insect originated from Japan, where it does little damage to the hemlocks it feeds on, as natural enemies and possible tree resistance have evolved with the invasive pest. This introduced insect attacks eastern (Canadian) hemlock which are often damaged and killed within a few years of becoming infested.

HWA was first noticed at the Sanctuary several years ago, infecting a magnificent stand of mature hemlocks on the slope leading up the hill. The Trust has monitored

world, want to learn about Westford trails, wildlife, and history, could use some company, or just need to get out and stretch your legs, consider joining a guided trail walk sponsored by the Trust. If you have a favorite trail that you know well, consider being a walk leader. Usually held on the first Saturday of the month from 9:00 - 10:30 a.m., these walks are open to all, free of charge, and fun! Additional information and the schedule can be found by clicking [here](#). You may also send us an [email](#).

Westford Trails Booklet Available For Purchase



Our Westford Trails booklet includes several GPS-based topographic maps with accurate renderings of trails, streams, ponds, marshes, roads, and other landmarks. The booklet is available for \$5.00 at Roudenbush

the spread of the adelgid and, sadly, the decline and death of many trees. It is likely that all the hemlocks will eventually succumb. There is currently no effective control for the pest although much research is being conducted. (If you have a hemlock on your property it is possible to use an insecticide to save the tree).

As the trees have died and fallen large areas of woodland is now exposed. The Trust is considering a restoration effort with various native species to increase diversity and prevent invasive plant species from getting a foothold.

The Mysterious Stone Chamber

by Alden Wood

With Halloween still in the air, 28 adults, 2 children, and 4 dogs trekked thru the woods of Graniteville in search of the mysterious Stone Chamber. The Westford Conservation Trust "First Saturday Walk" on November 2, 2013 was led by Bill Harman on an unusually warm, sunny morning.



The Stone Chamber

The group started out from the parking lot at the Stony Brook Middle School, and climbed a steep slope to a clearing that provided a view of the countryside all the way to a church steeple in the center of town.



Ancient Lintel Bridge

Midway in the walk, the hikers stopped for a group picture on an ancient lintel bridge, the origin of which may date back to early Scottish explorers.

Passing a thick stand of white pine, the trail eventually arrived at the Stone Chamber. The elaborate stone structure was built from large slabs of granite forming not only the walls, but the roof as well. Alongside the chamber are the remains of an old stone foundation, probably dating back to the same period. The origin and function of the chamber is a mystery; however, it

office. The maps can also be found on our website by clicking [here](#).

Send Us Your Photos!



We love to receive your photos of flora and fauna from around Westford for our [Facebook photo album](#). Send your photos in an [email](#), and be sure to identify the subject and include location, date, and your name.

[Find us on Facebook](#) 

appears on some old maps of the area dating back to the early 1800's. Many guesses were offered as to its use including a root cellar, stable, and storage area for dynamite used in the quarrying operation known to occur in the area.

If anyone can solve the mystery, please contact the Westford Conservation Trust.

Kate Hollister Receives 2013 Trustee Award



Photo by Andrew Sylvia

Each year the Trust recognizes an individual who tirelessly volunteers his or her time and effort in support of open space and conservation of Westford's natural resources. Kate Hollister was the recipient of our Conservation Trustee Award for 2013.

Kate has been an active resident and member of the Trust for many years. After coming to town in 1996, she has served on many boards and committees, including the Open Space and Recreation Planning committee, the Westford Trail Stewards Steering Committee, & the Comprehensive Master Plan Committee.

Kate is currently a Trail Steward for the Emmet Conservation Land; leads the January Trust walk; co-leads the Stream Team; volunteers for WA Community Service Day, Friends of EBC, and Trust-sponsored mile-a-minute (invasive plant) pulls; and is on the Town of Westford Planning Board and serves as planning board rep on the Community Preservation Committee and the Pedestrian Safety Committee.

Please join us as we congratulate Kate on receiving this award!