

West Boylston Land Trust



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www.wblt.org

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October is membership month, time to join or renew

Visit our website for information pertaining to West Boylston Land Trust, and links to many sites of interest.

Fall Cleanup

The fall cleanup of the Girouard property is November 15th at 9:00 a.m. (raindate November 16th, same time). Bring work gloves, rakes, clippers and pruning saws. Interested parties needing more information may contact Mike Peckar at 508-835-2959.

Free Firewood

Is available to volunteers at the fall cleanup. People can choose from an accumulation of fallen trees and large branches to take home to their fireplaces.

Presidents Perspective

This has been a very busy year for the West Boylston Land Trust. We have continued our efforts to develop a long-range management plan for the Girouard property on Goodale Street, which was donated to us late in 2001. In addition to bringing invasive plants under control and enhancing the natural beauty of the land, we plan to develop an educational program so that young people can better understand and appreciate the natural features of our local environment.

Tax Exemption Granted

After we received the donation of the Girouard land, we took the steps necessary to establish its tax exempt status, as permitted in Chapter 59, section 5, clause 3 of the Massachusetts General Laws. Our Treasurer, Mike Peckar, did a great job organizing our application, and presenting it to the Board of Assessors. We are pleased to report that the Board granted an exemption on this parcel on March 20, 2003.

Joint Effort with Malden Brook Farm

As you may have read in the local press, the WBLT has decided to work together with Malden Brook Farm in developing opportunities for local townspeople to learn about tree identification and maintenance, the impact of soils, and similar matters. Bob Tashjian, who is one of our trustees, has provided outstanding leadership in preserving the Farm (located on Prospect Street on 250 acres of breathtaking fields, woods and streams). It is great for the town to have this farm preserved, and we look forward to working closely with Bob's organization in the years to come.

We All Benefit From Land Donations

We have not received any other land donations this year, but we have been approached by a landowner in the southern section of town who has plans to donate eight

Presidents Perspective, cont.

acres to the WBLT, after some necessary engineering work has been completed. We hope this will be completed in the coming months.

Find Out More

If any of you are interested in learning more about making donations of land to the Land Trust—or know someone who might be interested in doing so, please contact one of the Trustees. There are numerous ways to protect property without giving it away by creating conservation restrictions. We have a great deal of information on this subject and have access to experts who can answer any specific questions that may arise. Learn about the tax incentives and other advantages in making such a gift, or creating a conservation restriction.

*By George Bernardin
President
October 2003*

In the Thick of It with Dave Sweetman

On Saturday, September 20th, WBLT member Mike Mulryan led several Land Trust members on a walking tour of the Land Trust parcel on Goodale Street. The property was donated to WBLT by Jim and Janice Girouard and is our first land acquisition to be held as open space. The purpose of the walk-through was to inspect trees and plants on the lot and to start planning for clearing of unwanted plants and debris. Mike Mulryan is a Massachusetts Certified Arborist, and member of the Massachusetts Arborist Association. He is Landscape Foreman for the Mass Turnpike Authority with landscaping responsibility for the entire length of the "pike", from Boston to the

New York state line. He has also served the town as Selectman, and Tree Warden.

The Lay of the Land

George Bernardin, Ted Gallagher and Dave Sweetman accompanied Mike, who inspected both the terrain and plant growth and pointed out many interesting plants and features. The lot is quite attractive, although its condition is typical for an area that has been let go for a period of time. It



George Bernardin, Ted Gallagher and Mike Mulryan

is significantly overgrown with numerous down limbs and a few down trees. The land, which falls away steeply from Goodale Street, is bisected by an intermittent stream. A few yards from the roadway the terrain forms a natural amphitheater

opening onto a broad flat area.

Resident Poison Ivy Balm

There are a number of invasive plant species including Bittersweet, Japanese Barberry, Norway Maple and Bush Honeysuckle. Interesting and attractive plants including Jack-in-the-



Jewel Weed

Pulpit, Ferns, Ash and several stately White Pines. Of particular interest is the Jewel Weed, the juice of which was used by native people and early European settlers to relieve the itching caused by poison ivy. Unfortunately, the parcel boasts an ample crop of Poison Ivy. There is also

a small and ancient volunteer apple tree, spare, gnarled, and bent struggling to survive in the deep shade of giants. The ground is covered with duff, a thick layer of decomposed organic material, which provides good erosion protection.

Fall Maintenance

This fall we will do limited clearing of downed trees and limbs, accumulated litter and undesirable plants. We also expect to cut some small trees. The cleared material will be stacked in manageable piles in preparation for burning on site. Burning is allowed by permit from January through April, and requires authorization from the Fire Department for each day's burn, as conditions allow. The fall cleanup will take place in November after foliage has fallen and the poison ivy has died back.

The Eyes of Ignorance are Blind



Mike Mulryan inspects a Jack-in-the-Pulpit Spadix

Mike Mulryan's knowledgeable guidance and commentary helped to open my eyes to the fascinating natural world we have in microcosm, right on Goodale street. In its present state, the site is both interesting and naturally attractive.

Now, in late summer, the Jack-in-the-pulpits sports a cluster of shiny red berries on the spadix.

The Jewel Weed flaunts its glory of small pale yellow cones. The plants and trees are in various stages of natural life, from seedlings to robust mature trees and shrubs. There are a few aged giants, showing the scars of storm damage and

now struggling against the onslaughts of bark insects and carpenter ants. Fungi steadily consume dead timber, closing the cycle and preparing more duff to protect the land and support new life. Stop for a visit, it's a wonderful spot.

*By Dave Sweetman
October 2003*

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