

Fall 2004



www.westfordconservationtrust.org



Stony Brook at East Boston Camps

Editor - Diane Duane

Join us for the Trust's Annual Meeting

Celebrating our 20th year in Conservation!

When: Thursday, November 4th at 7:30pm

Where: Parish Center for the Arts, Westford Common

Speaker

John Hanson Mitchell is the Editor of Sanctuary Magazine, published by the Massachusetts Audubon Society. He is the author of many books, all of which deal in some way with natural and human history and a sense of place. Mitchell is a Littleton resident.

Walking Towards Walden takes us along on a walk the author and friends took starting on Prospect Hill in Westford, and ending at the tomb of Henry David Thoreau in Concord. He writes about the Westford Knight, a sacred shaking hill in Acton, and many other sites of local historical interest. The jacket cover states "On each mile of this quintessentially American pilgrimage the author and his friends explore not only the natural landscape before them but also certain timeless themes: they wonder at the force that drew pilgrims to certain sacred sites, ... and that deep abiding allegiance to place that binds each of us, if we are lucky, to a particular beloved spot." John Hanson Mitchell will be reading from his book, ***Walking Towards Walden***, and will be available for book signing after the presentation. Admission is free.



Conservation Trustee Awards

This year, the Trust will be awarding the Conservation Trustee Award to two wonderful Westford residents, **Priscilla Elliott** and **Mary Lambert**. In 1994, Mary Lambert donated 18 acres of beautiful wooded land to the Westford Conservation Trust. The land is located across from her house on Lowell Rd. Because of its attractive appearance when entering Westford from Chelmsford, it has been termed one of the Gateways of Westford. In 1999, Priscilla Elliott donated 8 acres of land on Hildreth St. to the Westford Conservation Trust. This land, which she named Prospect Hill Wildlife Sanctuary, comprises a flat agricultural field on Hildreth St., now farmed by George Fletcher, and a beautiful forest which rises to the top of Prospect Hill, where it abuts Water department land and a Town of Westford water tower. Come join us on this magical night to celebrate this generosity as we award both Priscilla Elliott and Mary Lambert the Conservation Trustee Award for 2004.



Northern water snake eating an 8-inch bass at Nashoba Pond.



Baby Spotted Turtle in Westford

Business

The meeting will begin with the Trust's yearly business. It will be presented by the Treasurer, Secretary, and the Land/Trail Stewardship Committee. Our bylaws state that elections for Directors, Associate Directors, Clerk, and Treasurer be held at the Annual meeting as well.

Enjoy and Celebrate our 20th year!



This year is our **20th year** as a trust! We plan to have some music before and at the very beginning of the meeting to mark this wonderful occasion. We are pleased to have **Westford Academy** senior **Aubrey Tieman**, a talented musician and composer, to help us celebrate our 20 years as a conservation land trust. Refreshments will also be served. The new edition of Westford's Trail booklet will be available at the meeting. Come and celebrate this special occasion. Hope to see you there!

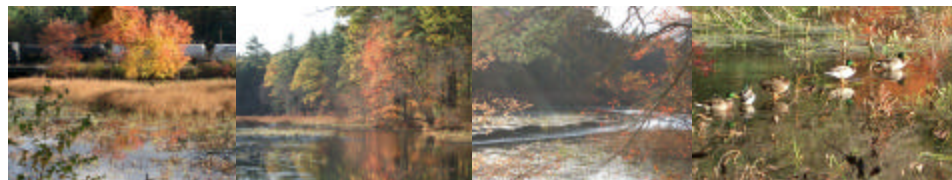
Education

The Trust continues to support our successful **birdfeeder program** at each of the three elementary schools as part of the classroom feeder watch. This is our 4th year supporting and working with Westford school librarians and 4th grade teachers to implement and monitor a Cornell program where fourth graders use bird feeders outside their school to learn more about science and nature. Bird sighting reports go to Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology and to Marian and are published in the Westford Eagle in her Flora and Fauna report. The Trust agreed to renew its support with a donation for supplies and related material. If you would like to support this program by volunteering to take over the management of the **feeders at Abbot School**, please contact Marian Harman at 978-692-3907 or email at MarianHarman@aol.com.

Classroom Volunteers - We need volunteers who are willing to help present to the 4th grade classes about our Cornell bird feeder program. Please contact Marian at 978-692-3907 if interested in helping out with the Classroom Feeder Watch presentations or to find out more about this wonderful opportunity.

East Boston Camp Fundraiser

On June 26-27, East Boston Camps held a weekend fundraiser with help from the Trust. On Sunday, June 27th, Nature walks were led by several Trust members. **Shelagh Brady** led a Wildflower walk, **Peter Severance** led a Ponding walk, and **Lisa Morton** led a Geology walk. Over \$3,000 was raised during this fundraiser, of which \$1000 was donated by the Westford Conservation Trust.



Did you know?

Conservation Restriction (CR) land is conservation land which is owned by a private owner or owners' association and on which no future building is allowed. The holder of the restriction (Town or Trust) enforces the boundaries and conservation provisions. Most CRs allow public access on marked trails.

Trust Activities

Turtle Project Update *by Lenny Palmer*

The **Blanding's Turtle**, *Emydoidea blandingii*, is a rare and threatened species that has a small but thriving population in Westford. In the last few months the turtle has been trapped, picked up crossing roads and viewed through binoculars in several locations. A study last spring in the Emmet Conservation area off Texas road yielded 7 adults, 5 in one trap, a state record! The turtles were trapped using sardines as bait. David Hastings, Umass graduate student and Julie Liske were supported by a grant from Natural Heritage to survey the water bodies in the area. The turtles were marked and released. One juvenile was also observed during the summer. A juvenile Blanding's was picked up crossing Concord Rd. near the Robinson School and another juvenile was identified crossing Rt. 40. A dead Blanding's turtle also was identified on Rte. 110 not far from Kimball's. The Average adult size is from 5 to 8 inches carapace length. The shell is high domed and helmet shaped. The most distinguishing characteristic of this species is the bright yellow throat clearly visible when the turtle has its neck extended. If you picked up a dark turtle, with a domed back that hisses strongly, it is likely a Blandings. The Blandings world range is limited to the mid-west around the Great Lakes, a small population near Quebec (100 individuals), another small population in Nova Scotia, and Eastern Massachusetts, Southern New Hampshire and Southern Maine. Every population is listed as either threatened, endangered or on a watch list. It's slow rate of reproduction, habitat loss, and habit of crossing roads as it looks for nesting areas has much reduced the Blanding's numbers. Westford is indeed lucky to have this Turtle as a resident.

The information for this article was compiled for the Turtle Project, supported by WCT and WENAC. All turtle sightings should be reported to Lenny Palmer, 978-392-9876.



Turtle Project Funding

The Turtle monitoring project which was started last year, has been actively supported by the Trust. According to members Peter Severance and Lenny Palmer, there have been some major successes in tracking Wood Turtles and Spotted Turtles. A request for funding of up to \$1000 for the next phase of this project, the need for a receiver and one or more transponders, was approved at our May meeting.



Email Updates

If you have changed your email address, please send this info to Marian Harman at MarianHarman@aol.com so she can update her e-mail list. Please note that you will only get a few messages a year, and we do not distribute your address to other organizations. Thanks!

Land/Trail Stewardship Steering Committee

The Land/Trail Stewardship Committee is pleased to announce that Trust member **Lenny Palmer** has volunteered to join the committee and has been appointed to represent the Trust. This committee is responsible for keeping track of properties, dealing with land steward issues, acting as liaison for the Trust and/or Conservation Commission on trail issues and organizing meetings for land trail stewards.

Join the Trust

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (optional)/
Email _____

Check here if interested in volunteering for trail maintenance



Check here if interested in volunteering for educational efforts



Please make tax deductible check payable to : **Westford Conservation Trust**

Please mail to : **Westford Conservation Trust P.O. Box 255**

Westford, Ma. 01886

Or join online at www.westfordconservationtrust.org

___ \$15 Individual

___ \$35 Family

___ \$100 Friend

___ \$250 Patron

___ \$500+ Supporter

___ Other

Trust Meetings—Please join us for our monthly meetings. All members and other interested individuals are invited to attend the Westford Conservation Trust monthly meetings. Meetings are held on the third Thursday of each month (except November where it will be the annual meeting on the 4th at the PCA) and begin at 7:30 P.M. at the Rogers Fire Station. You can contact us at info@westfordconservationtrust.org or 978-692-3907 .



Westford Conservation Trust
10 Chamberlain Road
Westford, Massachusetts 01886

Non Profit
Organization
Postage Paid
Permit #86
Westford, Ma

Do you know who made these tracks? Go to our website to find out and check out one wacky sound bite!!