



Trail Markers

Weston Forest and Trail Association, Inc.

The Weston Land Trust

Dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of open space in Weston

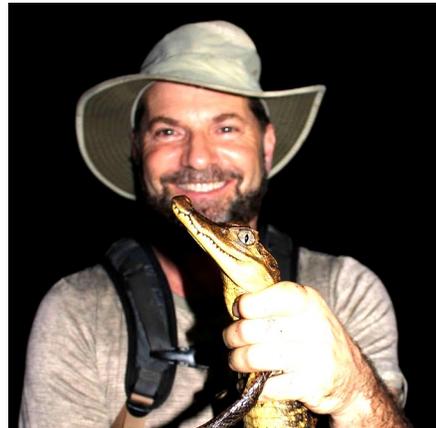
Annual Meeting Sunday May 7, 2017 at 4 p.m.

We will convene at the **Weston Scout House, on School Street** following the regular Sunday 2:00 p.m. walk. See our website for details.

Light refreshments will be served. The brief business meeting will be followed by the presentation below. Trustees are requested to remain after the presentation for a brief meeting to elect officers for the 2016-2017 year.

Featured Speaker: Bryan Windmiller

Bryan is the founder and executive director of Grassroots Wildlife Conservation, an NGO which integrates hands-on educational programs into the conservation of rare animal and plant species. He earned a PhD in biology and a Master's degree in Environmental Policy, both from Tufts University and has worked in various roles as a conservation biologist since 1987. Bryan's wife, Dr. Alison Robbins, is a wildlife veterinarian, and she and Bryan shared an appointment as visiting scholars researching amphibian conservation in Australia in 2006-2007.



Conservation Begins at Home

In our increasingly crowded and busy world, many of the wondrous living treasures that grace our Earth -from rhinos and polar bears to tropical orchids - are at risk of disappearing. Equally threatened are many of the beautiful and little known animals and plants that live in your state, your town, or perhaps your own backyard. Wildlife biologist Bryan Windmiller will discuss Grassroots Wildlife Conservation's mission to help preserve some of our rare and declining species while helping you and your families learn more about the diversity and wonder of the natural world around you, including his work headstarting rare native wildlife, such as Blanding's Turtles, in many Massachusetts schools including Weston's elementary schools and Weston High School.

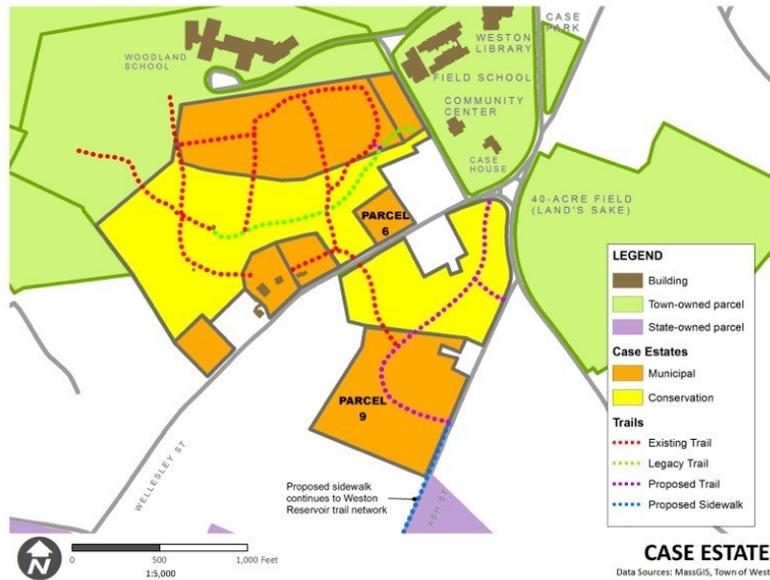


Letter from the President:



Winter came late to Weston this year, but our newsletter is coming early! It is our hope that this will inspire you to put Weston Forest and Trail’s annual meeting on your calendar (see page 1). We also want to highlight a few local open space and/or trails issues:

THE CASE ESTATES: I am happy to confirm that after more than a decade of deliberations, negotiations and clean-up, the town officially owns the Case Estates! At town meeting in 2006 the town voted unanimously to purchase these 62.5 acres from Harvard for \$22.5 million. But it was not until 2016, after years of clean up, that the town actually completed the purchase for \$13.7 million. As the map below illustrates, this scenic and historic property tucks in quite nicely between the Case Campus, the 40-Acre-Field farmed by Land’s Sake, and the existing trail network that surrounds the Weston Reservoir. Most people do not realize that only a portion of the property is currently protected as open space. The “Case Corridor” (seen in yellow on the map) has been set aside for conservation. However, for a variety of reasons (including the initial price tag for the property), several parcels were purchased as “municipal purposes land” (seen in orange on the map), and therefore are



not permanently protected. Two of these parcels (6 & 9) abut the Hillcrest corridor and could potentially be preserved at a future date if the Town so desires. Parcel 6 runs along the northern part of the hen's tooth wall on Wellesley Street and contains mature trees and several old specimens from Harvard’s rhododendron garden. Parcel 9 extends south from the already preserved Hillcrest Corridor on Ash Street; preservation of this parcel would allow for extension of a trail network beginning at the Weston Community Center and connecting via a short section of proposed sidewalk to the Weston Reservoir land.



Continued from preceding page...

THE ABANDONED RAILROAD LINE: The abandoned Central Mass Railroad line is owned by the MBTA. However, Eversource holds a right of way for portions of this old railroad line, allowing them to service the power lines that run along the same route. This spring Eversource plans to remove the old rails and ties along Weston's 3 miles of abandoned railroad track and install a ten foot wide gravel road (with a three foot apron on either side) to allow their large trucks to service the power lines. This project was approved by the state and Weston's only formal role to date has involved the Conservation Commission's review of efforts to protect wetlands along this corridor. Weston's Historical Commission and the selectmen-appointed Rail Trail Advisory Committee (RTAC) have also had informal conversations with Eversource regarding preserving specific aspects of the historic route. (Continued p.3)

In 2011 the state's Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) secured a 99 year lease from the MBTA for 23 miles of the Mass Central line from Waltham to Berlin, and began working with towns along this corridor with the goal of creating a 23 mile long "rail trail." In an effort to piggy-back on the work planned by Eversource in Weston (and Wayland), DCR announced plans to pave and maintain the surface of Weston's and Wayland's portion of the trail as soon as Eversource completes their work. As a community, up to now we have had very little control of this process (including the gravel road and paving), but RTAC has begun a process to determine what our three mile section of this rail trail should look like, how it should be accessed, how it will interface with existing trails, and how we can make it safe. RTAC is presently reaching out to abutters and will engage the broader community in open meetings this spring. For specific questions or concerns, please contact the Weston Rail Trail Advisory Committee (railtrail@westonmass.org).

There is a tremendous amount of activity at town hall these days, with many citizen volunteers hard at work to bring a multitude of warrants to Town Meeting on May 8 (and probably May 10 too). The Weston Forest and Trail Association trustees and I encourage you to educate yourself on these issues and attend town meeting where every vote counts!

Meg C.H. Kelly

President



Tired of seeing this in Weston's scenic open spaces?

At the Town Meeting in May, voters will have the opportunity to determine the fate of most single-use plastic bags used at check-out in Weston.



What is it? Where is it?

Weston trails lead past some unusual and interesting places. Here are three of our favorites. Can you identify what and where they are? (Answers below)



#1 Beach Chairs??



#2 Water Source??



#3 Too easy??

(photo courtesy Peter Wheeler)

Answers:

#1: At Hemlock Pond. To find it, enter the trailhead on Young Road. Erdna Rogers, who lived nearby, and her sister used to swim here in the mid-20th century. Her chairs have been here for more than 40 years.

#2: In the Highland Street Forest. General Paine's cistern, said to have been built in the late 1800s by the Boston gentleman farmer who owned 700 acres in the southwest corner of town. To find it, start at the intersection of Highland St. and Love Lane and walk east on the fire road. At the water tank, take the trail on its north side, descend into the woods, cross a stone wall and look for a sharp right trail junction, where you'll turn right and keep going for a short distance.

#3: College Pond on Concord Road. To reach this view from the east shore, follow the trail that leaves the northeast corner of the parking lot and circles the pond.

For more history about these sites and others, see *Walks on Weston Conservation Land* by Elmer E. Jones, available at Town Hall



10 GOOD REASONS

We're in your backyard. If you live in Weston, conservation lands crisscrossed with trails are within walking distance of your home.

We work for you. The Weston Forest and Trail Association, Inc., is a non-profit organization founded to maintain open space and promote the development of all of Weston's conservation land with trails for walking, horseback riding, and cross-country skiing. We're dedicated to promoting the enjoyment and appreciation of the land by the residents of Weston.

We're trailblazers. Weston has 90 miles of trails, open to hikers, skiers, and horses, but not to motorized vehicles. Our trail map (\$10) can be purchased at Town Hall.

We offer free guided walks. We meet in a different part of town and explore different trails the first Sunday of each month from October through May. All the walks start at 2:00 p.m., and we have socializing and snacks afterwards. There is always a notice of the meeting place in the Town Crier on the Thursday before each Sunday walk and on our website at www.westonforesttrail.org



We prevent you from tripping. We maintain the trails on all of the Town's conservation land. This means that we make sure blowdown trees and debris from snow and ice storms are cleared away to maintain safe access. Your dues help pay for this work.

We plan ahead. The Weston Forest and Trail Association was formed in 1955 by twelve founders who understood that the sprawl of suburban development after World War II would put immense pressures on semi-rural towns like Weston. The heart of the organization for many years was the late Dr. William Elliston, physician, gentleman farmer and amateur naturalist. A part of the conservation land (Elliston Woods) is named in his honor.



We keep you connected. We obtain easements - access ways across private property to link up trails and tracts of conservation land. We keep track of where they are, and enforce them if needed. If subsequent owners block them in any way, we get them opened again.

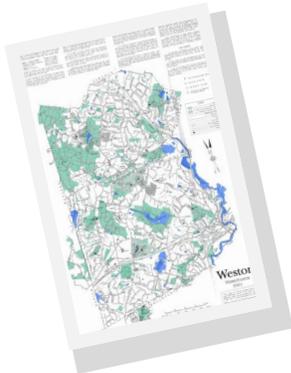
We enhance your property's value. We see ourselves as protecting and enhancing the character of the town by maintaining and augmenting the beauties of its open land. This benefits us all.

We need your support. We need membership income to cover operating expenses and to insure Weston's special and unique asset is preserved for future generations. Your membership is critical to help us pursue this important mission.



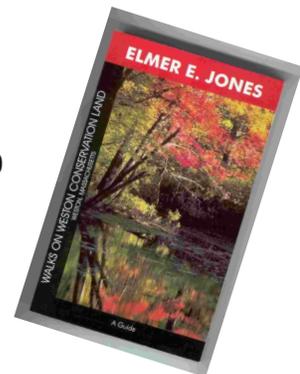
We know you care. So, please join us as a member of the Weston Forest and Trail Association (we are a non-profit organization, so your contribution is fully tax deductible).

Go to www.westonforesttrail.org and click on "Membership"



Trail Maps and Elmer's Book

Don't miss the new Tricentennial edition of the **Weston Forest and Trail Association trail map!** Frame it or fold it up and put it in your backpack. Either way, it shows Weston's 2000 acres of conservation land and 90 miles of trails. And Elmer Jones' ***Walks on Weston Conservation Land*** is the ideal companion to the town's trail map. Lovingly compiled and written by a noted naturalist and former



WFTA trustee, this primer on our trails and special places is not to be missed! Both the map and the book are available at Town Hall (upstairs) for \$10 and \$15, respectively.



**Weston Forest & Trail Association, Inc.
Operations – 2016**

Cash & Cash Equivalents 1/1/16		107,606.45
<u>Receipts:</u>		
Dues	\$ 23,206.65	
Endowment Fund	38,555.16	
Gifts	21,250.00	
Map sales	890.00	
Book sales	606.22	
Investment Income (loss)	433.16	
Weston Reservoir Fund	<u>4,042.00</u>	
	Total Receipts	88,983.19
<u>Disbursements:</u>		
Office Expense	\$ 9,445.86	
Insurance Expense	2,427.36	
Accounting	1,850.00	
<u>Maintenance:</u>		
Contract Services	\$38,416.24	
Other	<u>22,347.61</u>	60,763.85
Weston Reservoir Fund	3,377.90	
Map Expense	695.00	
Surveying	<u>3,592.00</u>	
	Total Disbursements	<u>(82,151.97)</u>
<u>Cash and Cash Equivalents 12/31/16</u>		
Checking Account	\$44,041.42	
Vanguard Short Term Corp. Bond Fund	11,154.69	
Cambridge Trust Co. Savings Account	<u>59,241.56</u>	
	Total Cash and Cash Equivalents	<u>\$114,437.67*</u>

*This total includes Restricted Funds as follows:

<u>Restricted:</u>		
Weston Reservoir Fund	\$ 6,989.95	
Cohen Fund	33,029.45	
Weston Land Trust Fund	<u>14,735.28</u>	
	Total Restricted	<u>\$54,754.68</u>



Weston Forest & Trail Association, Inc.

Endowment Fund - 2016

Balance 1/1/16	\$1,597,466.49
Income and Capital Gains	<u>124,906.28</u>
Balance 12/31/16	<u><u>\$1,722,372.77</u></u>

The average market value of the Fund in 2016 was \$1,659,919.63. The Cost of Living Index for all Urban Consumers in the Boston Area increased 1.3% during the year ended November 2016. 1.3% of \$1,659,919.63 is \$21,578.96. Real income from the Fund in 2016 is calculated as follows:

Income and Capital Gains	\$ 124,906.28
Less inflation adjustment	<u>(21,578.96)</u>
Real Income or (loss)	<u><u>\$ 103,327.32</u></u>

\$103,327.32 is 6.22% of the average market value of the Fund in 2016. The average real rate of return on the Fund starting in 1989 is 3.76%.



Join the Association...make us stronger than ever

- Individual membership \$ 25
- Family membership \$ 50
- Supporting membership* \$ 100 * (recommended)**
- Leadership Support \$ 1000*
- Life Membership** \$ 2,000 or more**
- Other amount _____

Note that all membership contributions are fully tax-deductible

* If you wish to receive the exclusive, **unique WF&T coffee mug**, please check here

** Life Members will receive a framed certificate of appreciation, unless checked here

Also, please send me copies of **“Walks on Weston Conservation Land”** by Elmer E. Jones @ \$ 15.00 each, plus \$ 2.00 for postage and handling. This book and the map of the Weston Trail System (\$ 10.00) are available at the Conservation Commission office in the Town Hall.

All these items can also be purchased on the WF&TA website at www.westonforesttrail.org

CHECK HERE () TO GET IT ALL:

Supporting Membership + Trail Map + Trail Guide + coffee mug for \$ 125.00

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail address: _____

Please make checks payable to the **Weston Forest and Trail Association, Inc.** and mail, together with the above form, to Mr. George Bates, Treasurer, 266 Glen Road, Weston, MA 02493. **You can also join at www.westonforesttrail.org**

WFTA Board of Trustees

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The Weston Land Trust
266 Glen Road, Weston, MA 02493

Non-Profit
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COME TO THE ANNUAL MEETING
May 7, 2017
4-6 p.m.
Weston Scout House on School Street

November 2016 Trail Walk

