



# Trail Markers

Weston Forest and Trail Association

*Dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of open space in Weston*

[WestonForestTrail.org](http://WestonForestTrail.org)

## WFTA Annual Meeting – Sunday May 1, 2022 4pm – Via Zoom

We hope you will join us for our 66th Annual Meeting and a special presentation on the Dark-Sky Movement. Information on how to attend the virtual meeting may be found on our website at [WestonForestTrail.org](http://WestonForestTrail.org).

### James Lowenthal      *It's Nighttime — It's Supposed to be Dark!*

Humans may be diurnal, but we need darkness at night for good health, and for connecting to wonder and ancient heritage through the starry sky. And so do all other species; a naturally dark night is an essential part of their ecosystem. It may seem harmless, but light pollution has far-reaching consequences, from increased rates of serious illnesses in humans, to negative impacts on migration, reproduction, and foraging of virtually every species of flora and fauna that's been studied. Fortunately, there are simple fixes for light pollution, and it goes away as soon as we turn the lights down or off, unlike most other kinds of pollution. The Dark-Sky Movement is gaining momentum around the world, including across Massachusetts, where dozens of cities and towns are working to protect the night and where the Dark-Sky Bills are progressing in the state legislature.



*James Lowenthal is the Mary Elizabeth Moses Professor of Astronomy at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. He received his BS in Physics and Astronomy from Yale University and his PhD in Astronomy from the University of Arizona. He studies the formation and evolution of galaxies, especially actively star-forming galaxies. He served as Vice President of the American Astronomical Society (AAS) from 2016–2019 and serves on the AAS Sustainability Committee and the AAS Committee on Light Pollution, Radio Interference, and Space Debris. He is the Massachusetts Chapter Leader for the International Dark-Sky Association. Lowenthal is active locally, nationally, and internationally in the movement to fight light pollution and protect the naturally dark night sky. He also works to promote action to stop climate change.*

Weston Forest and Trail Association has been looking after the town's trails and open spaces since 1955. In the last two years, we have been particularly grateful for the legacy of fields and forests left to us by previous generations of land stewards. Please join us today ([WestonForestTrail.org](http://WestonForestTrail.org)) to ensure that this gift endures for those who will follow us on Weston's trails. Your support is critical to our mission.

*If you are in a bad mood, go for a walk.  
If you are still in a bad mood, go for another walk. — Hippocrates*

## Land Stewardship

During 2021, Weston's Stewardship team had much work to do. Our trails are busier than ever, and with a wet summer season, bog walks and bridges were in high demand. A new bridge, nicknamed the Beaver Bridge, was built by Rees Tulloss, Conservation Commissioner. New bog bridges were constructed on the green corridor behind Westerly Road, and various other projects small and large were completed by our trails manager Lynn Atkins, WFTA volunteers, and Boy Scouts during our joint Stewardship Saturdays with Weston's Conservation Department. Without volunteers, these projects would not have been achievable. Thank you to all who come out and work with us.

We also proudly showed our value as a guardian of Open Spaces in two unusual projects this year. The first was the approval of and creation of the Marian Case Nature Classroom at Case Estates. This woodland nature classroom has tree stumps to sit on, and wood chips donated by Weston Landscape, and has already been the site of wonder and learning by the elementary school classes that border its location. One child immediately dubbed it "stumptastic!"

The second project was supporting Eagle Scout Holden Langenhagen on his project to clear the ruins of Merriam Barn, which in the late 1800s was one of the largest barns in Middlesex County. WFTA now maintains a short trail that allows hikers to enter the old stone walls and marvel at the remains of this three story-structure. WFTA and Conservation volunteers further cleared invasives from the ramp later in the year.

And as always, a giant thank you to our trails manager, Lynn Atkins, who keeps our trails beautiful. She also is the architect behind the new wayfinding signs in Weston's larger Conservation properties.



Laying new water bars



Marian Case Nature Classroom



Merriam Barn



"You Are Here" signs



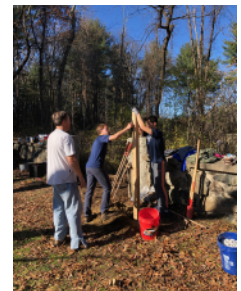
New bogwalk



Lynn chainsawing



Beaver Bridge



Boy Scouts at work

## Get Involved!



Join us and the Weston Conservation Department on the third Saturday of every month for **Stewardship Saturdays** as we clear a trail, build a bog walk, remove invasives, beautify a stone wall, or otherwise improve our wonderful 100 mile network of trails on 2000 acres of protected land. No experience necessary.

There are other ways you can get involved as well: Co-lead a Council on Aging trail walk, help promote new trail easements in your neighborhood, draft articles for our website and social media channels, organize activities for families, "adopt" a trail in your neighborhood, and more.

Contact [WestonForestTrail@gmail.com](mailto:WestonForestTrail@gmail.com) to be added to our email list of volunteers.



## 2021 Treasurer's Report

CASH (and EQUIVALENTS) INCOME		EXPENSES		MEMBERS	
Dues	\$35,833	Land Stewardship	\$49,061	Naturalist (\$35)	113
Gifts	\$3,500	Office	\$8,007	Explorer (\$70)	40
Book/Map Sales, Misc	\$1,176	Insurance & Accounting	\$5,141	Guardian (\$100)	184
Investment Income	\$(310)	Map Printing	\$415	Steward (\$250)	56
Weston Reservoir Fund	\$3,440	Weston Reservoir Fund	\$2,460	Trailblazer (\$500)	25
				George Bates Society (\$1000)	18
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$43,639</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$65,084</b>	<b>TOTAL MEMBERS</b>	<b>436</b>

Membership numbers and dues paid were relatively unchanged from last year; of interest is that 35% of donations were made online, a new high. Donations to the George Bates Endowment were up 30%, and we are grateful for investment income from this fund to help cover our main expense — Land Stewardship. This primarily includes our Trails Manager, Lynn Atkins, who clears trails of fallen trees, makes other routine improvements, and undertakes a number of special projects. The full Treasurer's Report is available at [WestonForestTrail.org](http://WestonForestTrail.org). The **WFTA Board of Trustees** thanks you for your support.

Joel Angiolillo — President	Ted Cavan	Meg Kelly — Past President	Tom Seeman
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## Keep in Touch with Weston Forest & Trail!

- Follow us on [Instagram](#) (westonforestandtrail) and [Facebook](#) (Weston Forest and Trail Association – WFTA)
- Sign up for our monthly newsletter (send a request to [WestonForestTrail@gmail.com](mailto:WestonForestTrail@gmail.com))
- Check out what we are up to by visiting [WestonForestTrail.org](http://WestonForestTrail.org)
- Volunteer — we welcome both short- and long-term commitments
- And, of course, become a member!

### Weston Forest and Trail Association, Inc. — Annual Membership Dues

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Select a membership level: ☐ \$35 Naturalist ☐ \$250 Steward ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ \$70 Explorer ☐ \$500 Trailblazer  
☐ \$100 Guardian ☐ \$1000 George Bates Society

### Find yourself in Nature





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you and hope you'll join us!