



***Citizens for
Lexington
Conservation***

PO BOX 292, LEXINGTON, MA 02420-0003

<http://www.clclex.org>

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Kate Fricker, Editor April, 2010 Eileen Entin & Keith Ohmart, Co-Presidents

IN THIS ISSUE


Page

Community Farms	5
New Trails in the Western Greenway	7
Photo Credits	7
The Oldest Tree in Lexington?	8
Book Review: Following the Water	9
A New Piece of Conservation Land	9
Five Easy Walks	11
Lexington's Native Plant Project	12
Burlington's Unprotected Forest	13
Mary Cummings Park	15



Swamp Azalea

Photo Credits: Pictures of native flowers on p. 1,2,3,4,6,9,10,12,13,and 16 are by Jane Warren.

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Citizens for Lexington Conservation is a non-profit organization that relies on dues paid by members to cover its expenses. Look at your mailing label to check your membership status. If it says "Dues paid 2010," you are up to date. If it says "Dues paid 2009" (or earlier), then it is time to renew your membership for 2010. If it says "Complimentary Copy," you are receiving a complimentary copy of our newsletter because you are a Town Meeting member or other public official in Lexington. We hope that those who receive complimentary copies will find our organization of value and will become dues-paying members. To join CLC or renew your membership, please send \$15.00 to CLC, P.O. Box 292, Lexington, MA 02420-0003.

There is an electronic version of the CLC newsletter, sent as a link to the newsletter by e-mail. The e-mail version of the newsletter has illustrations in color and live links, it arrives much sooner than the snail mail version, it saves paper, and it costs CLC about \$1 less per copy. If you are currently receiving your newsletter by snail mail, but would like to get it by e-mail, contact Kate Fricker at kfricker@alum.swarthmore.edu.

CLC Publications

Over the years CLC has encouraged members to write guides to the open spaces in Lexington. These guides have been scanned and are available at no charge on our web site, <http://www.clclex.org/>. You may also use the web site to contact us about conservation-related happenings or sightings of unusual birds and wildlife that we can use on our web site and in our newsletter.

Thank you, Fall Walk Leaders

Many thanks to the leaders of our fall walks: Bobbie Hodson, Keith Ohmart, Gerry Paul and Nell Walker.

Web Sites Featuring Walks and Events in our Area:

Charles River Watershed Association:

www.crwa.org/events.html

Waltham Land Trust:

www.walthamlandtrust.org

Friends of Arlington's Great Meadow:

www.foagm.org

Lexington Global Warming Action Coalition:

www.lexgwac.org

Marj Rines' Birding site:

www.mrines.com/menotomy/trips.htm

Citizens for Lexington Conservation:

<http://www.clclex.org>

Maps of Lexington Conservation Areas:

<http://www.lexingtonma.org/conservation/Lands/Conslandkey.html>

Friends of Fresh Pond:

www.friendsoffreshpond.org/upcomingprograms.htm

Lexington Conservation Stewards:

<http://www.lexingtonma.gov/conservation/events.cfm>

Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge:

<http://www.fws.gov/northeast/greatmeadows>



Rue Anemone

CLC Annual Meeting, April 27
Co-sponsored by Brookhaven at Lexington
7:30 pm in the Auditorium at Brookhaven, 1010 Waltham St.

Speaker: **Scott LaFleur**

**Listening to the Landscape:
Using Nature's Clues to Design a Garden That Works**

Natural ecosystems provide us with information on native plants and how they grow. Looking into the symbiotic relationships these ecosystems make use of leads us in the choices we make when designing sustainable landscapes. Natural ecosystems can also provide us with the framework we need to attract birds, bees, butterflies and a diversity of life in our landscapes.



As the Horticulture & Botanic Garden Director at the New England Wild Flower Society and Garden in the Woods, Scott LaFleur oversees one of America's great botanical gardens. He curates and manages an extensive public collection of 1,500 native plant species - including 200 rare and endangered species - presented in their natural habitats throughout the living museum's 45 acres in Framingham, Massachusetts.

There will be a short business meeting prior to Scott LaFleur's presentation, to elect the Board of Directors for the upcoming year. The proposed CLC Board of Directors for April 2010-March 2011 is as follows:

Officers

Co-Presidents: Eileen Entin, Keith Ohmart
Secretary: Barbara Sidley
Treasurer: Deb Mauger

Associate Members:

Newsletter: Kate Fricker
Website: Chris Engstrom
Publicity: Nancy Nolan
Walks Coordinator: Elaine Turano
Community Outreach: Mike Tabaczynski
Education: Fran Ludwig
Legislative Issues: Al Levine

Additional nominations will be accepted at the meeting.

**CLC members and nonmembers are welcome.
Please join us.**

Citizens for Lexington Conservation

Spring Walks 2010

Saturday, April 17, 2 - 4 pm Garlic Mustard Pull

Meet at the bike path entrance on Worthen Road to clear garlic mustard plants from the area. Garlic mustard is an aggressive non-native species which not only crowds out natives, but also releases a chemical which suppresses the growth of competing plants. This is an annual event which has helped to slow the advance of garlic mustard in Lincoln Park. Leader: Keith Ohmart (781-862-6216)

Saturday, May 8, 10 - 11:30 am Mounds Trail, Lincoln Park

Explore a new trail! It is the only park path that did not suffer from the record-breaking rains of March. The "Mounds" area, hidden from sight for decades, has been liberated from its jungle of vines, dead trees and invasives. The new plantings of native trees, azaleas and rhodies along the path will be at their height of bloom. Meet at the paved bike path entrance off of Worthen Rd. across from the High School football field. This is Oriole country. Leader: Nell Walker (781-674-8184)

Sunday, May 16th, 2:00 - 3:30 pm Leary Property Walk

Come explore this recently purchased property and the adjacent Lower Vine Brook conservation area, and learn a bit about its history. Sturdy shoes and long pants recommended for some off trail walking. Meet at the Hayes Lane entrance to the Lower Vine Brook property (near the intersection of Hayes Lane and Grant Street). Leaders: Keith Ohmart (781-862-6216) and Sam L. Doran

Friday, June 4th, 10:00 - 11:00 am Wetland Plants at Brookhaven

Join us to take a leisurely stroll around the detention pond in front of Brookhaven, which was planted with native plants after it was installed. The pond offers us a sneak peak at a wide range of native wetland plants in a very convenient location. We'll talk about plant identification tips, the importance of these plants in their wetland ecosystems, and cultural uses of these plants as well. If we see any invasive plants, we'll take a look at those, too, to see what competition our natives face. We'll meet just outside the front door of Brookhaven at 10 am and begin our exploration from there.

Leader: Emily Schadler (781-862-0500 ext 240) or eschadler@lexingtonma.gov

Saturday June 19th, 9:30 - 11:30 am

Spiders at Willards Woods

Come look for spiders and other arthropods in Willards Woods. The varied habitats available, including meadow, wetlands, and forest, usually host a diverse array of spiders, from charismatic jumping spiders to orb-weaving spiders.

We'll meet at the North St. parking lot entrance to Willards Woods (the gravel parking lot, not the pull-off by the bike path). Long pants are suggested as well as boots if it is soggy. A magnifying glass can be useful. We will postpone in the event of rain.

Leader: Ned Eisner Edward.eisner@verizon.net



Sharp-lobed Hepatica

Community Farms

By Meg Muckenhaupt

The Lexington Community Farm Coalition (LexFarm) is working to establish a community farm in our town. Many people who care about the environment have an intuitive sense that local farms can be a vital part of a sustainable, ecologically sound community. But community farms are more than just good ideas; they're real, working farms in towns all over Massachusetts. One of LexFarm's goals is to help Lexington residents understand what community farms actually are and how they function.

Below are some questions and answers the Lexington Community Farm Coalition has put together about community farms in general and in Lexington in particular. We welcome more questions at any time; just check <http://lexfarm.org> for more information or e-mail info@lexfarm.org if you can't find your answer there. To join our e-mail list, visit <http://lexfarm.org/newsletter-sign-up/>. We are eager to collaborate with people who share our vision for sustainable land use as we develop our proposal for the Busa Land Use Planning Committee.

What is the difference between a community farm and a community garden?

A **community garden** is a site where individuals can rent small plots of land for their personal use.

A **community farm** is a farm that serves the needs and desires of the community. The farm is open to participation and enjoyment by anyone in the community, but the bulk of the day-to-day labor, and important decisions about what to grow and when to harvest, is handled by an experienced farmer. Community farms often have other missions besides growing food, including leading educational programs for children and adults, providing food for hunger relief, demonstrating sustainable land use, preserving historic structures and local traditions, and maintaining open space.

Who runs community farms?

In our area, most community farms are overseen by nonprofit organizations and governed by a board of directors who provide leadership and oversight needed to ensure that the community is served. The day-to-day farming operations are managed by a professional farm manager, and usually with a group of regular volunteers from the community.

How are community farms different from private farms?

Community farms are different from privately owned family farms in a number of ways. First, there is no debt, and the cost for use of the land - the greatest expense for many farmers in suburban communities - is minimal. Second, community farms are often run by non-profit organizations and so their business has oversight by a board of directors, who are community members. Finally, the farm's mission is to respond to the needs of the community, not just to provide income to a particular person or family. Wilson Farms, for instance, and the Lexington Community Farm would be complementary institutions, serving different, complementary needs – much as bookstores and libraries serve communities in different ways.

Who would benefit from the Lexington Community Farm?

A community farm would benefit a wide swath of our community: children who would learn about nutrition and ecology, Lexington's less privileged residents who could be offered free or discounted farm produce, students seeking community service opportunities, adults looking to share and learn hands-on from gardeners and farmers, local nature-lovers, and lovers of fresh, nutritious produce—all would benefit from a community farm. Further, with its accessible location in eastern Massachusetts, a Lexington Community Farm could benefit area farmers, providing a convenient gathering place for both new and experienced farmers to exchange knowledge and pass on their skills to future generations.

Lexington and many surrounding towns already have farmers markets and Community Supported Agriculture programs (CSAs) that supply local food for those who want it. Why do we need a community farm too? Wouldn't a community farm compete with the Lexington Farmers' Market?

The LCF will do much more than provide produce for purchase. It will be a center for farm-based, hands-on education for people of all ages and backgrounds and it will make a working farm accessible to the community. There will be opportunities to work with the Lexington schools and health and human services departments to provide fresh food to people in need. And the growing demand for local produce is increasing. There simply are not enough farms to fill the demand for fresh, locally-grown food—through CSAs, at farmers markets, or anywhere else.



Barren Strawberry (endangered)

The Busa Farm Land: Last year, the town of Lexington spent \$4.5 million to buy the 7.8 acre former Busa property, a site that has been continuously farmed for more than 300 years. It is located on Lowell Street at the Arlington border; the Arlington Reservoir borders the farm's eastern edge. On the first Saturday of the month, see the site for yourself. Join LexFarm for tours of the Busa property from 12:45-2 pm April 3, May 1, or June 5. Busa land walks are free, but limited to 20 people; to register, visit

<http://tinyurl.com/Lexfarmtours>. Registrants will be sent the meeting location.

Other Farms: On the second Saturday of the month, you can see nearby community farms at work. Local farmers will host tours of their operations and talk about the business of managing self-sustaining community farms. Tours will cover:

April 10, 10:45am-noon: Newton Community Farm

May 8, 10:45am-noon: Stearns Community Farm, Framingham

June 12, 9:45am-11am: Waltham Fields Community Farm

Farm tours are free, but limited to 25 people; to register, go to

<http://tinyurl.com/Lexfarmtours> Registrants will be sent the meeting location.

Since the Busa land was purchased with Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds, the land is restricted to one of three uses: historic preservation, open space and recreation, and affordable housing. According to state regulations, farming is considered an open space use. Lexington had no official plans for the property when it bought the Busa farm, although the town did pay consultants to draw up sketches of recreation fields for the site before Town Meeting approved funding for the purchase in May 2009. In March 2010, the Selectmen approved a charge for a Busa Land Use Proposal Committee to evaluate plans for the land. That committee, which had not yet been appointed at press time, is supposed to report to the Selectmen by December 31, 2010. The full text of the charge is on the web at

<http://www.lexingtonma.gov/Selectmen/BLUCPCharge-Final0310.pdf>



New Trails in the Western Greenway

By Roger Wrubel

The Western Greenway is a twelve-mile green ring through Belmont, Lexington and Waltham, containing over 1200 acres of connected undeveloped land. Friends of the Western Greenway, a volunteer organization devoted to preserving the open space, is constructing a trail system through it. This process involves choosing the most suitable route for the trails, obtaining permissions and easements from the various landowners, performing the work of actually clearing, building bridges and boardwalks where needed, and marking and maintaining the trails. Two new sections have recently been added to the greenway and are now open to the public. They are marked with Western Greenway (WG) blazes

1. This past summer 30+ volunteers constructed a 560 foot boardwalk across a striking marsh connecting the Metropolitan Parkway, which is the entrance to the Avalon at Lexington Hills development off Concord Avenue, to Walnut Street in Lexington. To locate it, start on the paved community trail running along the Metropolitan Parkway between the Avalon development and Concord Avenue. Look for a WG blaze on the west side of the street, marking the trail through the woods to the boardwalk. This new trail adds $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile to the Western Greenway Trail section that starts at Habitat and now ends at Walnut Street. Plans are being developed to continue the trail westward in 2010.

2. There is also a new trail between Waltham High School and the Waltham YMCA east of Lexington Street. Start at the parking lot at the Robert Treat Paine Estate off Beaver Street in Waltham. Take the Hemlock Trail and follow the WG markers to the high school drive. Look for a blaze in the wooded area directly across the drive. The trail to the Y is about a mile and goes through some beautiful woodland with very impressive trees.

A map of the Western Greenway can be found by following this link:

<http://jkrfund.org/images/westerngreenwaymap.jpg>.



The Oldest Tree in Lexington?

By Nell Walker



The Mulliken White Oak, located at 225 Waltham St. on a knoll to the northwest of the intersection of Waltham Street and Winthrop Road, is one of Lexington's most distinguished trees, noted by tree lovers for at least 200 years. It is on private grounds, so Lexington residents may not know about the history of this grand old oak. It first came to my attention in a 1956 tree survey by William Roger Greeley. This survey was an update of an older list compiled by David Doran.

An early 1896 photograph showed the growth typical of a White Oak when there is no other arboreal competition. A Greeley photograph taken sixty years later showed much more lateral growth than vertical. Sometime in the 1950's or 60's lightning hit the top of the trunk, resulting in a vertical crease extending to the trunk flare.

The oak is significant in at least two ways: it has extensive recorded history and it has had the good fortune to be cared for by the early farmers who built on the property. The Mullikens were prominent dairy farmers who built their farmhouse in 1857. Generations of Mullikens and others gathered under the oak for celebrations. The 1896 photograph shows 67 people in its shade. It is an interesting coincidence that the Emery Mulliken who owned this property in 1981 was the son of Nathaniel Mulliken, who owned the Leary property described in Sam Doran's article below.

For over 30 years I have been recording the girth of Lexington's trees including some of the very old ones. Many are on public streets while some are on private grounds. The former are registered by the Tree Committee and are part of the official Tree Inventory compiled in the last six years. In 1972, when I first took a slide photo of the Mullikan Oak, the girth of the tree was 15' 6". In 2008, thirty seven years later, the girth was 17' 6", an expansion of two feet in 37 years. Oak growth is very slow, unlike English Beech, such as the one in front of the Visitors' Center. The author of an 1891 book estimated that the tree was 300 to 400 years old at the time. This Waltham Street oak was probably growing before Paul Revere took his famous ride.



Following the Water: A Hydromancer's Notebook

By David M. Carroll. Reviewed by Keith Ohmart

For your next choice in reading material let McArthur “genius” award winner David Carroll take you on a journey through the seasons of a fresh water marsh. His latest book is a heartfelt recounting of ramblings over many seasons through a beloved wetland area near his home.

His narrative unfolds from ice-out in the spring through first freeze in the fall, tracing throughout the role that water plays in sustaining life forms of many kinds. Carroll’s accounting of the delicate web of life that constitutes our wetlands brings to vivid life many of its inhabitants. Living as we do in a community where wetlands constitute an important portion of our preserved open space, I know I will be observing these areas with new appreciation on my own ramblings about town this spring.

Illustrated throughout with Carroll’s exquisitely detailed sketches, this volume will lift the curtain for the reader on a corner of our natural world that we often pass through, or pass by, without really noticing what we are missing. Written with a poet’s art but based on a lifetime of observation by a trained naturalist, this is one volume that stays with the reader long after the last page is turned.



A New Piece of Conservation Land: The Leary Farm

by S. Levi Doran



Mountain Laurel

Through Article 12 in the 2009 Town Meeting, the “Leary Property” at 116 Vine Street was purchased by the Town. The variety of wildlife habitats is quite diverse on this fourteen-acre parcel – and the history of the place is interesting too.

We have copies of old deeds that trace the Leary Property back to the Russell family in the 18th Century. In the 1790s, the Russells sold it to Jonathan Mulliken, who lived on Mass. Ave. in the Munroe District. It then passed from Mulliken to a relative of his (probably his son), Nathaniel, who had many properties around town. As was

the custom at the time, each parcel of land served a different purpose. The Leary Property was his hay meadow, and he had woodland and pasturage on Granny Hill opposite Hayes Lane, including a part of today’s Granny Pond.

In 1857, Mulliken sold his hay meadow to William Leary, who was born in Ireland in 1829. There is some question as to when the house now standing on the property was

built. The Historical Commission's survey has it as circa 1840s. The Assessors say it was built 1848, though their dates are often incorrect. Historian Edwin B. Worthen, however, has the construction as just after the sale in 1857. In any case, at the time of the sale, there was a hay barn standing on the property. That would probably be one of the three foundations to be seen on the property today. On New Years' Day 1877, William Leary was found dead on the floor of his barn.

Another of the foundations was the old Howard School, also called Scotland School, which was the district schoolhouse for northeast Lexington, and stood at "Countryside." Around 1902, the schoolhouse was purchased by William Leary's daughter-in-law, Bridget, who had it moved to behind the house. It was in her barn, in 1903 through 1905, that Bridget carried on illegal liquor operations during the Prohibition movement. She was fined \$100 for this by the District Court in 1905 – a lot of money in those days.

On the Leary Property is a fascinating remnant of ancient Lexington. The Fiske family, of whom we've all heard, began their residence in Lexington on East Street about 1672. In order to reach the "main road" or Mass. Ave., they would take what is now Ridge Road (then the County Turnpike) to Woburn Street, and Woburn Street to Mass. Ave. However, when Lexington built its first meeting-house in 1692, this became a round-about way of traveling. Adams Street was not yet built. And while the details are not entirely known, we do know that it was about this time that the Fiskes entered into some sort of an agreement with the owners of the current Leary Property, and secured a right-of-way from East street to what we now call Vine street (then part of the original Woburn Street).

Later, when it was easier to reach the Centre by Adams street, the Fiskes continued to use this right-of-way, thus angering the Mulliken family. Worthen writes that the road was a "bone of contention" between the two families. The cart path, as it runs through the Leary Property, is still visible and walkable to this day. (It can be matched to a map drawn by E. B. Worthen around the 1940s.)

This piece of land includes meadow, marsh, and forest. It is supposed to be one of the best bird-watching areas in the entire town.



Foam Flower

Today, the Leary Property holds extreme significance to both history and the natural world. And thankfully, having been purchased by the Town this year, it shall be preserved for future generations to enjoy.

"If you go"....

Directions through the property, and a map of the old cart path, are available online at the author's website. <http://tinyurl.com/learytour>.



Five Easy Walks for the Elderly and those with Mobility Concerns

By Keith Ohmart

The first walk that comes to mind is the trail network in Lincoln Park. This is nearly all boardwalk, and where it isn't, the trail is flat. This is a loop trail, so returning to the starting point is easy. Park along Worthen Road opposite the high school, near Baskin Road. There is a map of the trails at

<http://ci.lexington.ma.us/recreation/Theresa%20and%20Roberta%20lee%20Fitness%20path.pdf>.

The next suggestion is the paved bike path along Lower Vine Brook. This is not a loop trail, but it is paved. The best place to park would be at the path entrance off Fairfield Drive (Turn off Mass Ave. onto Grant Street, then right onto Saddleclub Rd. to Brookwood Rd. to Fairfield Dr.). This is a quiet cul-de-sac, making parking safe. The path crosses East Street, Emerson Road and ends at North Street. You will find a map at

http://www.lexingtonma.gov/conservation/Draft%20conservation%20area%20maps/Lower_Vine_Brook.pdf.

Arlington's Great Meadow has a nice board walk section that can be reached off the Minuteman Bikeway. Park at the Four Seasons parking lot. Head east (away from the Center) on the Bikeway and take the foot trail on the left marked "Joyce Miller Meadow". Follow this up over a small hill and down to the boardwalk section, which has a nice view over the marsh. A map showing all of Arlington's Great Meadow is at

http://www.lexingtonma.gov/conservation/Draft%20conservation%20area%20maps/JM_M_AGM.pdf.

Hayden Woods has a new 900 foot boardwalk from the Valleyfield entrance. The trail then continues on a fairly level course beyond this boardwalk. Most of the trails in Hayden Woods are old roads and are fairly easy to negotiate, except for occasional rocks under foot. To get to the Valleyfield entrance, take Waltham St. to Bridge St. and turn left on Valleyfield St. There is a map of Hayden Woods at

http://www.lexingtonma.gov/conservation/Draft%20conservation%20area%20maps/Hayden_Woods.pdf.

The trail into Dunback Meadow from either the Clark School end or the Bowman School end are both boardwalk for a way and then pretty level between the boardwalks. The boardwalk on the Bowman School end is new. The trail from Clark is very nice, with open views across the meadow and fairly easy walking along an old road, once past the initial boardwalk section. You can park at Clark School or at Bowman. You will find a map at

http://www.lexingtonma.gov/conservation/Draft%20conservation%20area%20maps/Dunback_Meadow.pdf.



Lexington's Native Plant Project

By Jane Warren

Over the past year, representatives of Citizens for Lexington Conservation, in collaboration with members of the Lexington Tree Committee and Conservation Commission, have developed information for using native plants for landscaping in Lexington. This project was taken on to support the Planning Board's revision of zoning amendments for the Hartwell Avenue Commercial District, which will require commercial property owners to use native plants in their landscaping and to remove, to the



Partridge Berry

extent possible, invasive exotic plants that displace native plants and disrupt ecosystems. Although this project was undertaken specifically for the Hartwell District, it is hoped that the information developed will be used for landscaping on other commercial, municipal, and residential land in Lexington. In addition to inclusion as a zoning requirement for the Hartwell Avenue overlay district, both the Conservation Commission and the Tree Committee have approved adoption of this plant list as a guide in their work on behalf of the Town.

The published guide includes the following information:

- A list of more than 250 plants native to Massachusetts, with a focus on species native to Middlesex County
- A list of the most common invasive exotic plant species in the Lexington area, most of which are included in a list of plants that Massachusetts has prohibited for sale, trade, purchase, or distribution
- A list of nurseries that sell a large variety of native plants

The guide can be downloaded from the CLC website; paper copies at no cost will be available at Cary Library and the Conservation Department.

The list of native species includes plants for diverse landscaping needs (groundcovers, trees, shrubs, herbaceous perennials, vines) and for different growing conditions. Because groundcovers are an important part of landscaping, our list has a good selection of groundcovers that could replace aggressive groundcovers commonly in use such as English ivy, Japanese pachysandra, periwinkle, or bugleweed. In the realm of flowering shrubs, there are several native species of viburnums, dogwoods, and azaleas, plus rosebay, summersweet, pussy willow, mountain laurel, and more.

Removing invasive plants is crucial to maintaining balanced ecosystems. There appears to be an "epidemic" of invasive plants in Lexington and surrounding areas (and nationally) that are crowding out native plants. Seeds from these invasive plant species can spread to rural areas and conservation land, including national forests and national parks. Some invasive plants have been used in landscaping by residents, commercial

property owners, and town government without knowledge of the damage they do to ecosystems.

In his book *Bringing Home Nature*, Professor Douglas Tallamy, an entomologist at the University of Delaware, explains the importance of insect herbivores to the health of terrestrial ecosystems. Insects access the energy in plants and pass it on to other animals that eat insects. Insects are fussy about what they eat, however, and most insist on eating native plants and would die without them. Most terrestrial bird species rely on insects and other arthropods to feed their young. Some adult birds and many species of mammals include insects in their diet. Typical lawns do not support native insects—and are especially problematic because so much land is covered by non-native grass in large suburban yards, golf courses and schoolyards, along highways, and in industrial parks. Adding strips of native plants around such areas, and around parking lots, would provide more food and shelter for the local fauna. We would expect to have butterfly and bird populations increase as well as other fauna that are less visible.

Tallamy noted in his book that ecologists have determined that a very small portion (3 to 5%) of the land area in the lower 48 states consists of undisturbed habitats—and many of those are small, scattered “islands”. Such habitat fragmentation leads to extinction of plant and animal species. Tallamy believes that the decline of nature can be redressed by reintroducing native species of plants in our yards and public spaces, as described above.



Burlington's Unprotected Forest

By Wendy Gabrenya

The Burlington Landlocked Forest, owned by the Town of Burlington, has 250 acres of meadows, paths, wetlands, vernal pools, and forested land. It was taken by eminent domain by the Town of Burlington 20 years ago under Article 97 of the State constitution to protect Burlington's water supply (they do not use MWRA water), and provide open space and natural resources. It is called "landlocked" because it was cut off from the town of Burlington when Route 3 was created. It is bordered by Rt. 3 on the East, I-95 on the South, Lexington on the West and Bedford on the North. Last year, despite being Article 97 land, there was an extensive proposal put forth by a developer to turn the forest into a very large bio-technology office park and a luxury senior retirement community. After much work by the Friends of the Landlocked Forest, the proposal was



Mayapple

voted down. This year the Friends of the Landlocked Forest received approval from the Burlington Selectmen to mark the trails. They have also been leading guided walks to show the residents of Burlington the importance of protecting this area. To visit the forest, use the parking area on Turning Mill Road in Lexington under the power lines. There is more information, a detailed trail map, directions for parking, etc at

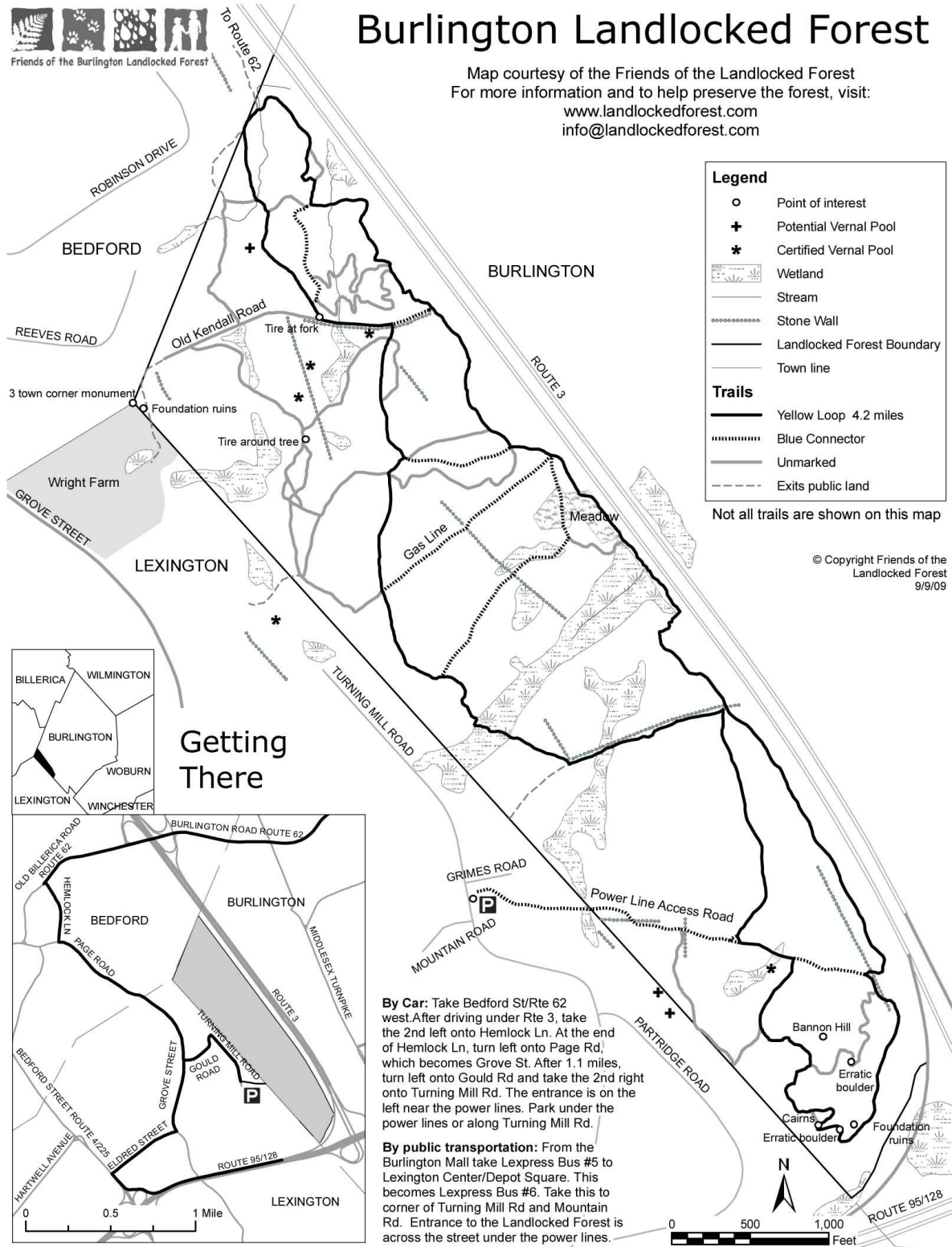
<http://www.landlockedforest.com>. If you would like to receive email updates about the work being done to protect this forest email landlockedforest@aol.com.





Burlington Landlocked Forest

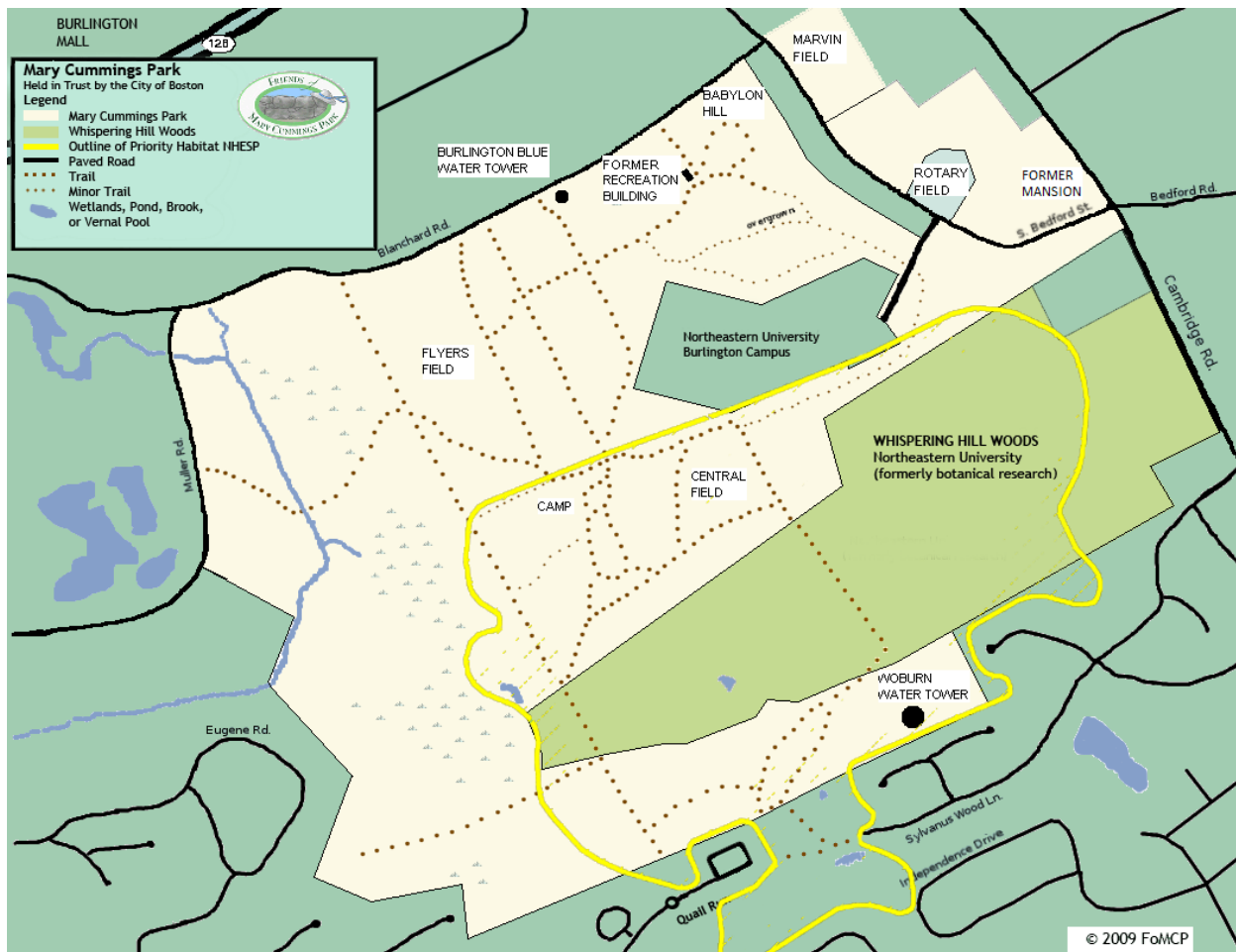
Map courtesy of the Friends of the Landlocked Forest
For more information and to help preserve the forest, visit:
www.landlockedforest.com
info@landlockedforest.com



Mary Cummings Park in Burlington and Woburn

By Steven Keleti, President, Friends of Mary Cummings Park

Mary Cummings Park was created in 1930 to be “forever open as a public pleasure ground.” At 210 acres, spanning the Burlington and Woburn line, it is the 12th-largest public park inside Route 128, and less than a mile from Lexington. Held in trust by the City of Boston, it was transferred from the Boston Parks Department to the Boston Treasury Department in the late 1980s. The park is not well known because it was left unmarked by the City of Boston, at one point having “No Trespassing” signs. It is now marked with small “Mary Cummings Estate” signs. Although the signs are ambiguous, it is a public park. Parking is available along Blanchard Road (which is Wheeler Road at the Middlesex Turnpike). See www.cummingspark.org for more information and directions.



The Friends of Mary Cummings Park were incorporated in 2007 as a non-profit organization to actively work toward ensuring that the park remains the public pleasure ground envisioned by Mary Cummings, and to conserve the surrounding environment. If people continue to use this regional park, then the trust is maintained and the park remains a park. The Friends are helping others know about the park. By encouraging

others to use the park, we help protect it from being developed. Below are some of the things being done to preserve the park:

Trail Walks: L.L.Bean now conducts trail walks at Mary Cummings Parks most Saturdays from 9-11am. To be notified of the location, please contact Walter Mears, wmears@llbean.com, or check the calendar on www.cummingspark.org.



Bloodroot

Land Conservation: The Friends are working with the City of Woburn to conserve the remaining woodlands and wetlands which abut Mary Cummings Park. The most important piece is the 74.5-acre Whispering Hill Woods, which juts deeply into the park on the Woburn side. Northeastern University owns Whispering Hill Woods. In the recent past, Whispering Hill Woods has been under agreement for a residential subdivision, and there are currently seven bids on the woodland from developers. The City of Woburn is now pursuing buying the land.

Community Agriculture: In spite of the demolition in January, 2009 by the City of Boston of the 80-foot by 40-foot recreation building at Babylon Hill Field, the Friends are continuing work toward creating community gardens at Babylon Hill Field, which is on Blanchard Road on the north side of the park. The City of Boston declined the Friend's gardening proposal for this spring, which had letters of support by regional non-profits, gardening groups, and state legislators (see <http://www.cummingspark.org/documents/MaryCummingsParkVision2009.pdf>).

If you are interested in being involved in community gardens at Mary Cummings, please contact Rob Truslow at 781-935-9328 or gardening@cummingspark.org.

Breach of Trust: The Office of the Attorney General sent a letter to the City of Boston, informing them of the difficulty in attempting to sell the park. State Reps Jay Kaufman and Charley Murphy, and Senator Kenneth Donnelly have been supportive of having the park better managed. A copy of the complaint of breach of trust is at



Dutchman's Breeches

<http://cummingspark.org/news/agletter20080723.pdf>. Letters to the Attorney General supporting the complaint are helpful (Attorney General Martha Coakley, One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108). The City of Boston has still not made any substantive changes in marking or managing the park. Regardless, the Friends are holding activities to maintain and promote the park. Any involvement will help.

