



Trail Markers

Weston Forest and Trail Association

Dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of open space in Weston

WestonForestTrail.org

Annual Meeting & Celebration

Sunday, May 5, 2019 from 4:00 – 6:30 PM

We will convene at the Weston Scout House at 88 School Street, following the May Sunday 2:00 PM walk. See our website for walk details.

The very brief business meeting will adjourn at 4:30 to be followed by a tribute to former WFTA Treasurer and Conservation Commission member, George P. Bates.

PLEASE JOIN US TO CELEBRATE THE LASTING LEGACY OF GEORGE P. BATES



The Weston Forest and Trail Association Trustees invite the Weston community and others who worked with George to join us from 4:30 – 6:30 at Case Park (next door to the Scout House) under the tent for brief remarks and an informal and casual party in George's honor. This event will be held rain or shine.

George, 2010

Please become a member or renew your membership!

See page 11 for details

In Memoriam



Paul Arkema

Paul Arkema was born in Chicago in 1940 and made his way east to attend Princeton University and then the Medical School of the University of Pennsylvania. From 1973 until 2017 Paul practiced adult, adolescent, and child psychiatry at Westwood Lodge Hospital. Paul was widely known for the insightful and nurturing care of his patients and his quiet way of teaching and mentoring. According to his wife,

Christine Bishop, Paul was happiest when he was outdoors on a trail or on the water with family and friends. In addition to being a devoted WFTA trustee, Paul was active in many aspects of First Parish in Weston, as well as the Spectrum Singers. WFTA is eternally grateful for Paul's steadfast support of our mission and his love of Weston's trails and open spaces.

Harold Hestnes

"Always determined," is how Harold Hestnes is described by his wife, Betsy, and many other acquaintances. Harold was born in Oslo, Norway in 1936 to a politician father and an opera singer mother who fled before the Nazis invaded Norway. Following graduation from Harvard University, Harold earned master's degrees in law and public administration, as well as a law degree from Boston College. In addition to a long and successful law career at Hale and Dorr and involvement in national and state politics, Harold was active in many aspects of the Weston community for more than half a century. Harold served as selectman for 16 years, as president of the Weston Land Trust (WLT), as a member of the Case Estates Review committee, and after WLT merged with WFTA, as a trustee whose counsel was invaluable. Harold passed away on January 19, 2019, but his devotion to the town and advocacy of Weston's open spaces will forever have an impact on our community.



Harold in Norway, age 3

Announcements

Video PSA

You can watch a brief video about our background and mission on our home page: WestonForestTrail.org

Amazon Smile

Spending too much time outdoors and need to do some on-line shopping on the fly? Please consider creating an Amazon Smile account that will donate 0.5% of your purchase price to Weston Forest and Trail Association. For more information, please see smile.amazon.com

TickTalk with TickReport

A FREE live webinar series by Dr. Stephen Rich, Director of the UMass Laboratory of Medical Zoology

Note: Preregistration is required to access each webinar. For the full schedule and the preregistration links, go to ag.umass.edu/landscape/education-events/webinars

Upcoming webinars:

May 8, 2019 | 12:00 – 1:00 PM | Topic: **American Dog Ticks (*Dermacentor variabilis*) and Lonestar Ticks (*Amblyomma americanum*) and Associated Diseases:** While Lyme disease is now a household word and most of us realize that non-deer ticks do not transmit Lyme disease, we should be aware that there are other ticks and other tick-borne diseases of concern. These important diseases will be presented in context of their relative risk and measures to reduce those risks.

October 9, 2019 | 12:00 – 1:00 PM | Topic: **2019 Tick Updates from the UMass Laboratory of Medical Zoology (LMZ):** The LMZ runs a passive surveillance program for tick-borne diseases (TBD) through its TickReport testing service. Passive surveillance is a powerful tool for mapping the geography and chronology of TBD risk. This presentation will provide a semi-annual overview of the passive surveillance and point listeners to resources where they can access this information in real time.

Co-sponsored by UMass Extension and the UMass Laboratory of Medical Zoology.

Weston Joins the Bay Circuit Alliance

On October 27th, Weston officially joined the Bay Circuit Alliance, a partnership of organizations and individuals, both public and private, working to complete the Bay Circuit Trail & Greenway (BCT). The BCT is a permanent recreation trail and greenway extending through 37 towns in eastern Massachusetts, linking parks and open spaces in 57 Boston area communities. It travels more than 230 miles around Boston from Plum Island to Duxbury.

Weston Forest and Trail Association, in association with the Conservation Commission, planned and marked a spur trail, approximately 3.3 miles long, off the main BCT. This spur offers an alternate option for BCT hikers following the Concord/Lincoln/ Wayland section of the BCT (known as Section 7). The “Weston Spur” starts after the boardwalk at Old Sudbury Road in Lincoln and travels through Ogilvie and Jericho Town forests in Weston before entering Wayland on the Mass Central Rail Trail. See baycircuit.org/maps-guides for trail maps and descriptions.

On June 8, the Appalachian Mountain Club, the steward of the Bay Circuit Alliance, will be having a work day on the BCT in Weston. Interested parties should sign up through the AMC page — go to baycircuit.org/events, scroll down to the June 8 event, and click on the event title for more info.



Rhoda Cohen Donates New 4.85-Acre Parcel to WFTA

by Emily Schadler



The Cohens' newly donated parcel is outlined here in yellow. The purple parcels are WFTA land and restrictions, and the orange parcels are Town of Weston Conservation. Red lines show trails.

Thanks to the generosity of Rhoda and Lee Cohen, WFTA is now the proud owner of a beautiful 4.85-acre parcel located adjacent to other protected open space off of Fields Pond Road (see map at left). The Cohens have long been devoted friends of local conservation efforts, dating to back to the 1960's, when they first moved to Weston. Over their many years in town, they placed Conservation Restrictions on parcels along Trailside Road, Ash Street, and South Avenue, sold a 31-acre parcel to the Conservation Commission, and previously donated another 6.6-acre parcel to WFTA. Lee served as an officer of WFTA, and the Cohens hosted many a WFTA trail walk and post-walk tea on their property on Fields Pond Road. When Lee passed away in 2011, Rhoda gifted \$50,000 to WFTA in his memory to be used for the acquisition of conservation land and the construction of new walking trails. In addition, the Lee Cohen family trust (Fields Pond Foundation) also contributed \$20,000 for the construction of the Lee Cohen memorial bridge located on the Sears Conservation Land (see photo below left).



In 2018, Rhoda worked with WFTA board members to complete her most recent contribution, the generous donation of this 4.85-acre parcel. Rhoda and her son Russell both accompanied WFTA representatives on walks of the property shortly after the donation was complete, sharing stories and memories of their time as custodians of the land.

The donated parcel features a quiet forest canopied by black birch, red and white oaks, red maple, white pine, and a variety of hickories. A walk here may reveal traces of the land's agricultural past, including overgrown farm roads, wolf trees, old cedars, and stone walls that hint at former farm fields. The site of an old cabin, which the Cohens called "the Honeymoon Cabin," is marked by artifacts that remain even though the cabin is long gone — a bathtub, a chimney, a rusted bedframe, bits of tile and metal. A small informal parking area is available at the end of Fields Pond Road. Trails connect to adjacent WFTA and Town of Weston Conservation Commission parcels and eventually to the Weston Reservoir (owned by the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority), as well as to Pine Brook Country Club on several trail easements.

We hope that WFTA members will enjoy exploring our newest parcel. If you run into Rhoda at the trailhead or out and about in the woods, please offer her a hearty thanks for the generous gift of her land.

Preserving Wellington Farm

by Laurie Bent • photos by Michele Grzenda



At May Town Meeting, the Conservation Commission will ask Weston residents to support the purchase of 13 acres of farmland, part of Wellington Farm, so that it can be permanently protected as open space.

Why This Land — Preserving Our Past

This land, located northeast of the corner of Wellesley Street and Glen Road, has been in continuous agricultural use since at least the 1760's. The first farmstead here was built circa 1760 by early settlers; the earliest section of the large, two-family house that now stands at 500 Wellesley Street—known as “The Gateways” for its white gates—dates back to that period. The original working farm of the 18th and 19th centuries became a summer home and gentleman's farm around the turn of the 20th century.



In 1907, the farm was purchased by Arthur Wellington as a country retreat, exemplifying the changes happening across Weston during the 20th century. The farm has been owned by one family since 1907; it is currently owned by Nick Danforth, Arthur Wellington's grandson. The Wellingtons and their Danforth descendants have preserved the farming history of this land into the present, operating a small-scale dairy farm until about 1950, as well as growing hay and vegetables. In recent years, Waltham Fields Community Farm has leased the farmland to grow organic vegetables for local markets. (See “Farm Town to Suburb”, by Pamela Fox, for more on the history of Gateways/Wellington Farm.)

The Wellesley Street view of the historic house, open fields, and stone walls provide an all-too-rare vista reminiscent of Weston's past. The property is the only farm in Weston listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and is one the few privately owned farms remaining in Weston.

History of Preservation Efforts

For 20 years, Wellington Farm has been at the very top of Weston's wish list for land preservation. In 1999, when, after a protracted process, the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority (MWRA) and the Town agreed to transfer conservation land for the MWRA covered storage tank (land the Danforths had given to the Town), part of the \$3 million settlement from the MWRA was earmarked to purchase this





farmland. In 2000, the Committee to Advise on Land Acquisitions (CALA) created a list of 11 priority parcels which included Wellington Farm as its number two priority, second only to the Case Estates. Weston adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA) in May 2001, in part with the intent that CPA funds would be used to acquire Wellington Farm. Finally, the Town's 2017 Open Space and Recreation Plan put Wellington Farm on the short list for acquisition. Preserving this parcel will be the culmination of a long-term effort led by the late George Bates to save this farmland, as well as the walking trails, wetlands, and surrounding open space.

Cost

The negotiated price of the 13-acre parcel is \$3.375M. Mr. Danforth has discounted the price by \$125,000 from its appraised value; in addition, he has agreed to donate a preservation restriction on the two facades of the historic house that are visible from Glen Road and Wellesley Street. Accounting for the MWRA funds earmarked for this parcel (approximately \$877,000), and including transaction costs, the Conservation Commission is requesting just over \$2.5 million in CPA funds for this purchase. The Town will be voting on the request at May Town Meeting; a 2/3 vote will be required for passage.



Preserving Our Future

The purchase of Wellington Farm will keep Weston's agrarian past visible for current and future residents. More important, saving this farm will help preserve our future. Food for local markets will continue to be grown here. Future generations will walk this land, nourished in body and spirit by these fields, forests, and vistas.



Photos by Lynn Atkins along the WFTA trails:



A Forester's Perspective on Why Wild Places Matter

by Lynn Atkins

My first memorable childhood encounter with deep forest, before I could even walk, was in a field very much like French Field in Jericho Forest.

The first summer I spent in Cape Breton in a farm house on the ocean, two miles from the nearest neighbor, I was petrified. I was afraid of the silence, space, of the deep, quiet forest, and dark skies. It took all summer to realize there was nothing to fear. By August, my siblings and I were happily lying on blankets in the field, watching stars at night and very comfortable walking down to the beach by ourselves.



Years later when I moved to Missoula to attend the University I was startled by the way people would approach me on the street, make eye contact, smile, and ask how I was doing. People were friendly and seemed to vibrate at a more peaceful frequency. It was a cultural difference that took some time getting used to. Wilderness has that effect on people: Big Sky country in Montana, Idaho, and the wilds of Alaska — tall mountains, grasslands, bison, large expanses of forest, rivers with salmon, bald eagles, brown bears, and wolves. And the First Peoples are still there, participating in pow wows and living their amazingly beautiful culture.

Looking over a mountain range toward Canada with no sign of modern human development, or watching up and down a beach where at any moment a brown bear may exit the tree line, gives one a particular feeling hard to describe. Breathtaking. Thrilling. Glorious. Beautiful. For me it was intensely relaxing to be alone in those environments, as if in that space everything was right in the world. Every human needs this experience, I believe, to connect in solitude with the landscape that our physical body, brain, and mind, evolved with and depend upon. For some people this is a deeply spiritual experience. In my humble opinion, there should almost be a separation of Church and State when speaking about land stewardship of these open spaces: caring for the land should be a sacred task.

All of North America was once like this; and not very long ago, evolutionarily speaking. Quincy, Boston, and Everett were all pristine environments: clean water, air, and soils, HUGE old trees, plenty of fish and wildlife to sustain the human population.

When I moved back to Massachusetts to take care of my father after being out west for about 10 years, I was shocked by the amount of land that had been developed for housing and commercial buildings. It felt to me that there were 60 percent more buildings on the South Shore than when I lived there as a child; farmland was becoming suburban at a breakneck speed. I had no time to get used to one subdivision here or shopping mall there. No time to forget the feeling of open space and slowly acclimate to the buildings, traffic, night lights, and people. I clearly remember the green forests and open farmland of my childhood. My question has always been: When does it stop? And what are we losing in this process of expansion? I think my age, forestry/farming education, and having lived in farm country and wilderness all give me a valuable perspective. I am keenly aware of how 10 acres developed here and there will bring pollution of water, soil, air, silence, and dark starry skies, and will have negative impact on wildlife habitat; on native ecological communities... on the larger landscape. I know what future generations will not get to experience, because I lived and worked intimately in the exact opposite of what the outskirts of Boston are today: the wilderness of Alaska.

That wild presence does exist where the trees are tall, streams run clean, and wildlife habituates — the more the better. Immortality for me means helping to make sure wild spaces, like we have in Weston, are available forever for future generations of children to draw inner strength from.

* * *

From my poem/essay notebook of an experience I had on a trail in Weston:

May 31

- bone-relaxing heat,
- intoxicating fragrance of a hundred black locust trees in bloom,
- fireflies drawing soft glowing lines above the meadow grass,
- barely pink horizon of a slow declining sun,
- bats wobbly flight overhead, probably snacking on fireflies,
- I turn off the headlamp and hold my face to the sky — Clifford is leashed to my belt and pulling me gently forward,
- I watch the stars beyond the dark silhouette of the pine / oak canopy,
- and hear the ever-lovely breath-of-wilderness of a pack of coyotes singing.



Sunset at College Pond, by Nikolas Tsekeris

Out on the Rail Trail

by Paul Penfield

During the past year Weston has been given a brand new recreational resource, the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT). After years of planning and design, the Weston portion of this trail is almost complete. It's already in constant use.

This trail follows the route of the old Central Massachusetts Railroad through town, a distance of 3.02 miles. Except for 500 feet leading to the Waltham border and a short length under Conant Road, it is paved and has bicycle safety fences where needed.

To the west this trail continues to Cochituate Road (Route 27) in Wayland, and then past the Wayland Depot and through a historical presentation, being developed, of what was a hundred years ago a bustling major rail yard. Then it crosses Route 20. There are plans to extend it over the Sudbury River and through the National Wildlife Refuge into Sudbury. From there it will eventually go to Hudson, Berlin, and points west as far as Northampton.



The eastern end of Weston's part of the rail trail, showing the trestle in the distance and fencing in progress, November 2018



Trestle over the Fitchburg Line

To the east the trail through Waltham to the Belmont border is currently being designed. The route for the Belmont segment has been decided but the trail along it is not yet designed. Eventually the trail will get to North Station in Boston. Going 104 miles between Boston and Northampton, MCRT will be the longest rail trail in Massachusetts.

The trail through Weston was designed and constructed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). In 2019 DCR will close the gap at Conant Road by building an underpass. Then the last remaining unbuilt section will be the short length near Waltham, containing a bridge across Stony Brook and the steel trestle bridge across the MBTA Fitchburg commuter line. It may make sense to build this short section along with the adjacent segment in Waltham.

Weston loves its open space, its history, and its semi-rural town character. Knowing that, in 2016 the Selectmen formed the Rail Trail Advisory Committee (RTAC) to make sure the trail serves the town residents well. Since then RTAC worked with the Weston Historical Commission to identify historical assets along the route and advocate for their preservation; it designed trailheads with modest parking at Church Street and Concord Road; it worked with DCR to design trail signage; it developed a program for plantings within the right-of-way to hide or at least soften the view of abutting properties; and with the Recreational Commission it identified places along the trail where benches could let trail users rest, enjoy a scenic view, or socialize. Since its beginning RTAC has had liaison members with other town committees, including Weston Forest and Trail Association.

Most of Weston's existing trails through forested areas are unpaved. Their focus is on nature, conservation, ecology, and recreation. The rail trail, paved and running through a state-owned park, has a focus on transportation, recreation, and education about both town and railroad history. Wheelchair accessible, it will serve Weston's elderly or disabled residents well.

All across America organized groups of volunteers help maintain rail trails, run events, create maps and informational material, lead hikes and bike rides, and generally keep things running smoothly. Weston is organizing a "friends" group to do such things for the rail trail, just as Weston Forest and Trail Association does for Weston's current trail network.



The route of the Mass Central Rail Trail through Weston

**Weston Forest & Trail Association, Inc.
Operations – 2018**

Cash and Cash Equivalents 1/1/18 96,178.44

Receipts:

Dues	\$	23,833.90
Endowment Fund		37,217.05
Gifts		9,280.00
Map sales		860.00
Book sales		260.00
Bag sales		120.00
Investment Income (loss)		278.99
Weston Reservoir Fund		2,865.00
Miscellaneous		<u>43.85</u>

Total Receipts 74,758.79

Disbursements:

Office Expense	\$	16,056.31
Insurance Expense		2,477.36
Accounting		1,184.50

Maintenance:

Contract Services	\$47,703.83	
Other	<u>9,850.00</u>	57,553.83
Weston Reservoir Fund		3,491.92
Map Expense		300.00
Endowment Fund		37,217.05
Stewardship		<u>585.00</u>

Total Disbursements (118,865.97)

Cash and Cash Equivalents 12/31/18

Checking Account	\$27,469.13
Vanguard Short Term Corp. Bond Fund	<u>24,602.13</u>

Total Cash and Cash Equivalents \$52,071.26*

*This total includes Restricted Funds as follows:

Restricted:

Weston Reservoir Fund	\$	5,492.14
Cohen Fund		33,029.45
Weston Land Trust Fund		<u>12,602.84</u>
Total Restricted		<u><u>\$51,124.43</u></u>

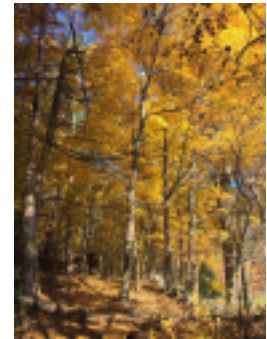
**Weston Forest & Trail Association, Inc.
Endowment Fund – 2018**

Balance 1/1/18	\$2,012,527.79
Income and Capital Gains (losses)	(75,862.67)
Year End Contribution	<u>37,217.05</u>
Balance 12/31/18	<u>\$1,973,882.17</u>

The average market value of the Fund in 2018 was \$1,974,596.46. The Cost of Living Index for all Urban Consumers in the Boston Area increased 3.2% during the year ended November 2018. 3.2% of \$1,974,596.46 is \$63,187.09. Real income from the Fund in 2018 is calculated as follows:

Income and Capital Gains (losses)	\$(75,862.67)
Less inflation adjustment	(63,187.09)
Real Income (loss)	<u>\$(139,049.76)</u>

\$(139,049.76) is -7.04% of the average market value of the Fund in 2018. The average real rate of return on the Fund starting in 1989 is 3.64%.



Trail Maps and Elmer's Book

Get the latest and most current 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's **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. You can also download trail maps from the Town website at weston.org/489/Weston-Trail-Maps or view an interactive town trail map at mapsonline.net/westonma/trails.html

Did you miss getting a membership renewal form earlier in the year? **Please JOIN or RENEW your membership** by returning the following form to Weston Forest & Trail Association, P.O. Box 665, Weston, MA 02493. Or save a stamp and **join or renew online at WestonForestTrail.org**.

WESTON FOREST & TRAIL ASSOCIATION, INC.

P.O. BOX 665, WESTON, MA 02493

Annual Dues for 2019

Member's Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Naturalist Membership at \$35	\$ _____
Explorer Membership at \$70	\$ _____
Guardian Membership at \$100	\$ _____
Steward Membership at \$250	\$ _____
Trailblazer Membership at \$500	\$ _____
George P. Bates Society at \$1000	\$ _____
Additional Gift to our George P. Bates Endowment	\$ _____
TOTAL ENCLOSED	\$ _____

Your membership dues are tax deductible.

WFTA Board of Trustees

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Weston Forest and Trail Association, Inc.
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COME TO THE ANNUAL MEETING
AND CELEBRATION
Sunday, May 5, 2019
Beginning at 4:00 PM
Weston Scout House & Case Park



A multispecies crowd turned out for the January Rail Trail and Jericho Forest walk!

Check out our website at WestonForestTrail.org
