



Springtime Botany Walks at Horse Meadows Knoll

Join HCT and the Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT) for three guided walks through the quiet woods and alongside the historic reservoir and wetlands of HCT’s newest property. See what plants are emerging from their long winter dormancy. Check out the work of Harvard’s industrious beavers. Scan the treetops and sky for bats and birds.

All walks are free for current HCT and SVT members (\$10 for non-members). Please register at <https://www.svtweb.org/programs/calendar>

- Spring Botany Walk at Horse Meadows Knoll
Sunday, April 29, 10 am-12 pm
- Morning Bird Walk at Horse Meadows Knoll
Friday, May 11, 7 am-9 am
- Evening Beaver and Bat Walk at Horse Meadows Knoll
Wednesday, May 23, 7:30 pm-9 pm

Standing Up for Our Constitutional Rights

Did you know that in Massachusetts clean air and water, and freedom from excessive and unnecessary noise are more than just administrative rules? They are constitutional rights! In 1972, the people of the Commonwealth voted to approve a constitutional amendment, Article 97, which states:

“The people shall have the right to clean air and water, freedom from excessive and unnecessary noise, and the natural, scenic, historic, and esthetic qualities of their environment; ... Lands and easements taken or acquired for such purposes shall not be used for other purposes or otherwise disposed of except by laws enacted by a two thirds vote, taken by yeas and nays, of each branch of the general court.”

Massachusetts is among only a handful of states to elevate environmental protections to a constitutional level, and unique in requiring a 2/3 roll call vote of the legislature to dispose of land acquired for environmental purposes. Unfortunately, this procedural burden has not proved to be the barrier it was intended to be in preventing Massachusetts towns from converting conservation lands to other uses. The Massachusetts Audubon Society notes that Article 97 disposition votes had become “routine business” of the legislature. In fact, over 20% of all roll call votes in preceding years were for Article 97 land transfer or dispositions.

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Become a Member or Renew Today!

☐ YES! I want to preserve the unique character of the town of Harvard by joining the Harvard Conservation Trust.

Membership is on a calendar-year basis and is tax deductible. Make check payable to "Harvard Conservation Trust" and send to PO Box 31, Harvard, MA 01451, or save a stamp and renew or join online at www.HarvardConservationTrust.org.

☐ \$25 Individual ☐ \$50 Family ☐ \$100 Friend ☐ \$250 Associate ☐ \$500 Sustaining ☐ Other _____

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If your employer will match your contribution, please enclose the application form.

☐ YES! I would like to learn more about making a legacy contribution to the Harvard Conservation Trust through a bequest.

☐ Please contact me with more information about volunteer opportunities relating to: event planning, trail maintenance, landscaping



A Generous Gift Of Open Space

It was roughly one year ago when Theodore “Ted” Maxant approached the Harvard Conservation Trust (HCT) with an idea for how he could help preserve the rural character of Still River Village. Born and raised in Still River, it is a place Ted knows by heart. In 2007, his father, William T. Maxant, conserved the family home- stead through the gift of a conservation restriction (CR) to HCT. William also took steps to ensure the property would someday benefit the Town’s Conservation Commission and Historical Society. Ted’s idea was to build on his family’s conservation legacy by purchasing a key abutting parcel of land, and then extinguishing the development rights to that land through the gift of a new CR to HCT. As Ted explained, this would

preserve the scenic and open character of this part of Still River Village, as well as create the possibility for the Historical Society property to serve as a gateway into the extensive network of conservation lands that lie beyond (see map). With trail linkages being an important part of both HCT’s strategic land protection efforts, as well as the Town’s recently updated Open Space & Recreation Plan, HCT requested that a public access clause be included in the CR. Thankfully, Ted agreed. Given that land put under a CR by a private landowner generally remains private property, the right to public trail access was an exceptional addition to this already generous conservation gift. The CR gift was completed in December, and HCT is looking forward to working with Ted to realize his vision for a connecting trail in the months ahead.



Above: New Maxant CR outlined in red; existing conservation lands shown in green; Historical Society roughly located with yellow star

Left: View across the newly conserved field towards the Historical Society and Still River Village



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Gioiosa Design

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Notes from the Executive Director

Longer daylight brings spring's annual awakening and a sense of renewal. At a time when the news of the day often reflects narrow interests and a volatile future, it is nice to share a few notes that reflect an interest in the greater good and a promising future. In these pages lie the seeds of possibility—young people studying how microorganisms can be used to clean hazardous oil spills and save wildlife; organizations uniting to ensure our common rights to clean air and water are not frittered away; a landowner giving away private property rights so that everyone may come to enjoy the solace of open space on his land. These stories are indeed seeds of possibility, because when people and organizations act to protect and care for our common natural heritage, they inspire the best in each of us. I invite you to get outside, breathe in the fresh spring air, and imagine the possibilities!



Geology Walk a Rocking Success

This winter, Geologist Britt Argow led an HCT-sponsored field walk around the iconic Round Hill drumlin on the Williams Land in Harvard. Dr. Argow's lively, accessible and fascinating talk addressed a range of topics related to the drumlin, including its glacial formation, changes over time, current landmarks, relationship to other geological features in New England, and the science behind how geologists discover this. Sixty participants attended the field walk and extracted a promise from Dr. Argow to offer more geology talks in the future.

Walking the Round Hill Drumlin with a geologist on a cold and beautiful



day is the kind of experience that makes clear the importance of protecting our undeveloped land.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Orla Baxter
Fred & Christina Cowles
J. Stanley Edwards
Robert Fernandez
Gary & Nancy Gasser
Susan Greenleaf &
Michael Wilson
Susan Hughes
Peggy Liversidge
Marilyn Mayhew

John McQuade
Thomas Monsour
Dorothy Quimby
Laura Ricci
Andrew Sadler
Matt Solar
Marijke & Patrick Vallaey
Eric Welsh
Danielle Woodman

HCT Praises Bromfield Science Fair Award Winners

Every year the Trust sends representatives to the Bromfield Science Fair to enjoy and examine the projects and select a choice few to receive an HCT award. Our judges have noticed a change in tone over the years, as students grow more passionate about their selected topics. The projects we visit are those relating to the environment, land preservation and social issues with environmental implications. Every year the quality of research and presentation is excellent; this year many of the students spoke about the urgency of solving problems resulting from climate change, pollution and limited natural resources. And, as student scientists, they see roles for themselves in working on these issues one day. It is a joy to learn from this young generation who are bound to make a difference in our future.

THIS YEAR'S HCT AWARD WINNERS ARE...

MIDDLE SCHOOL

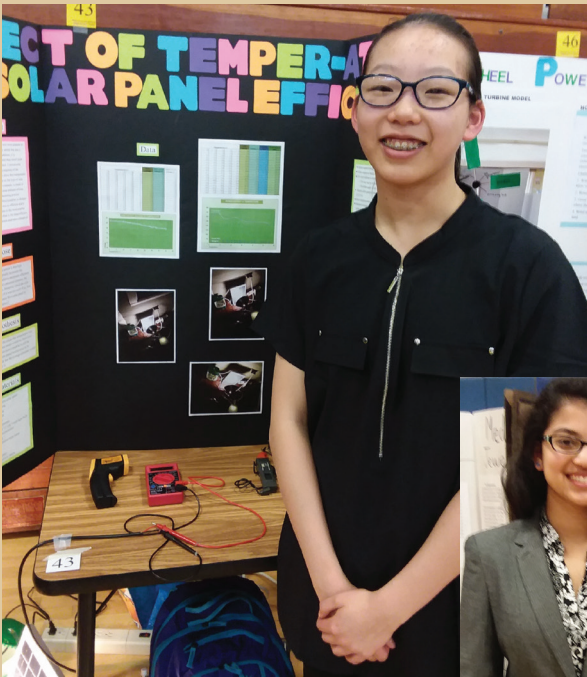
Catherine Zhou—"Temperature's Effects on Solar Panel Efficiency"

HIGH SCHOOL

Liza Toll and Rachel Shrives—"Bioremediation of an Oil Spill"

Shreya Kumar and Raiya Suliman—"Desalination of Water"

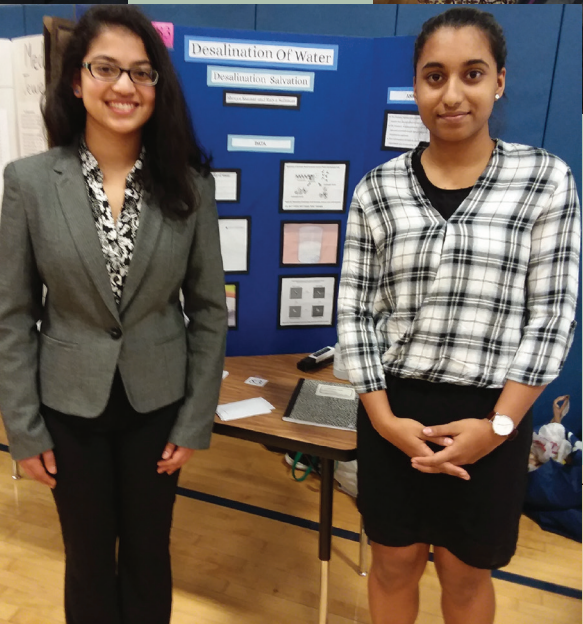
Congratulations to them, and to all the Bromfield Science Fair participants.



Catherine Zhou



Rachel Shrives and Liza Toll



Shreya Kumar and Raiya Suliman

SCIENCE FAIR WINNERS

Annual Spring Tree-for-All Distribution

A small tree of the understory, the alternate-leaved dogwood is often as wide as it is tall. It is the only species in the genus that has alternate leaves. It is a striking specimen in the landscape, with its strongly tiered, horizontal branching, providing unusual visual interest in all seasons. Beautiful dark blue fruits are savored by many bird species. It is native to this area and thrives in a landscape or garden in partial shade, in soil with plenty of leafy mulch.

The flowers of alternate-leaved dogwood are showy creamy white above the shrub's glossy green, and deeply veined leaves. Its smooth bark and branching structure are simply elegant. The distinctive layers or tiers of branches have given Swida alternifolia its more familiar common name, pagoda dogwood.

When grown in partial, not deep shade, its flowers are abundant and their sweet scent attracts a raft of pollinators. Beautiful fruit follows the pollinated flowers. Green at first, then pink and finally bluish black when ripe, the fruits are held aloft by blood-red stems. The deeply-colored fruit stems are part of alternate-leaved dogwood's autumnal display when the leaves turn burgundy.

The list of mammals and birds who consume the dogwood's sugary fruit is lengthy. In fact, when the fruit ripens in August its usually abundant crop is quickly gone, devoured by at least eleven species of birds.

Harvard Conservation Trust members will distribute seedlings at the Transfer Station Saturday, April 28, from 8:00 am to noon, and on the Common across from the General Store Sunday, April 29, from 9:30am-noon. The seedlings are a Harvard Conservation Trust membership benefit and are also available to non-members for \$5.00 each while supplies last. Please stop by the Transfer Station or Town Center to let us say thank you for your support!

This article is a modified condensed version of one written by Pamela Johnson in August 2015, for the WILD SEED PROJECT [http://wildseedproject.net/] in Portland, Maine. The Wild Seed Project is a non-profit organization that sells seeds of locally grown native plants and educates the public on seed sowing so that a wide range of citizens can participate in increasing native plant populations. It publishes Wild Seed, an annual magazine, available through the website.



Swida alternifolia – Pagoda Dogwood
Photo: Lisa Looke and Heather McCargo, Wild Seed Project

Standing Up for Our Constitutional Rights continued from page 3

Over the past several years, a coalition of Massachusetts conservation organizations has been working on a legislative fix to this flouting of constitutional intent. The new law would create a framework for guiding legislators' decisions on proposed Article 97 transfers and dispositions. It would also require that any transfers or dispositions be offset, such that there is no net loss of conservation lands. Recent attempts at passing this legislation into law have fallen short. But it is once again working its way towards a vote as the Public Lands Preservation Act (PLPA), Bill S.2181.

Whereas HCT was previously silent on this matter, this time around, we added our voice to the chorus of conservation organizations calling for the passage of the PLPA. In a letter dated 2/22/18, to Senator Karen Spilka, Chair of Senate Ways and Means, HCT Trustees called for Ways and Means to move the Bill out of Committee and to support passage the PLPA into law.

Strict prohibitions in our organizational by-laws prevented HCT from actively supporting previous efforts. These prohibitions against "carrying on propaganda or otherwise attempting to influence legislation" were related to the Trust's gaining nonprofit status in 1973, but did not reflect current law and best practices for land trusts. At the 2016 Annual Meeting, HCT members voted unanimously to approve a by-law amendment allowing for some degree of advocacy. Taking a clear position on public issues pertinent to a land trust's conservation mission is both acceptable and common today. Now HCT is able to publicly endorse funding for open space, or support or oppose legislation on the local, state or national level which may threaten or promote open space protection. Issue-based advocacy is simply another means by which HCT is working to preserve the rural character and natural resources of Harvard.