



***Citizens for  
Lexington  
Conservation***

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<http://www.clclex.org>

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**September, 2009**  
Kate Fricker, Editor

Eileen Entin & Keith Ohmart, Co-Presidents

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**Polypody Fern**

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 2009," you are up to date. If it says "Dues paid 2008" (or earlier), then it is time to renew your membership for 2009. 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 send \$15.00 to CLC, P.O. Box 292, Lexington, MA 02420-0003.

There is an electronic version of the CLC newsletter, sent by email with a link to the newsletter. This 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](mailto: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.



**Ostrich Fern**

## Thank you Walk Leaders

CLC is grateful for the people who volunteer to lead our spring and fall walks, even though some get rained out at the last minute. Our thanks to Bobbie Hodson, Maria Alberti Lubertazzi, Andrea Golden, Nell Walker, Kate Fricker, and Ned Eisner.

## A Picture Key to Ferns of Lexington

There is a new publication on the CLC web site, one that links descriptions of the various characteristics of ferns with photographs of them. You can locate it from the CLC home page, at <http://www.clclex.org>. Once you get to the key, just click on any of the underlined descriptions to bring up a photograph illustrating it. Use your back button to return to the key.

## **Citizens for Lexington Conservation Fall Walks 2009**

### **Bird Walk, Looking for Warblers**

**Saturday, September 12<sup>th</sup>, 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.**

Since September brings back the spring warblers who are now migrating south, we have a chance to view not only the adults but also the first year birds. A variety of birds is possible. Free and children are welcome. Meet at the Allen St. entrance of Dunback Meadow

Leader: Bobbie Hodson [bobbiehodson@alumni.tufts.edu](mailto:bobbiehodson@alumni.tufts.edu)

### **Tree Walk on Meriam Hill**

**Sunday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.**

Meriam Hill is an area which has some unique and lovely trees that you may never have encountered. Join Nell as we walk around this special neighborhood. Meet at the intersection of Meriam St. and Edgewood. This walk is free and open to all.

Leader: Nell Walker (781)862-6943

### **Bird Walk, Looking for Sparrows**

**Sunday, October 4<sup>th</sup>, 7:30-9:30 a.m.**

The sparrows are the migrants which we are looking for on this walk. Meet at the Allen St. entrance of Dunback Meadow.

Leader: Bobbie Hodson [bobbiehodson@alumni.tufts.edu](mailto:bobbiehodson@alumni.tufts.edu)

### **Upper Vine Brook Watershed Walk**

**Saturday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2-4:30 pm**

Explore the upper reaches of Vine Brook. We will search for the source of Vine Brook, see if we can locate where the Vine Brook and Clematis Brook watersheds divide, and enjoy fall colors while circumnavigating the red maple swamp that Vine Brook forms before flowing on through the town. Wear boots as we will be exploring off trail for a good part of the afternoon and conditions may be wet. Meet at the end of Highland Avenue where it intersects with Washington St.

Leaders: Keith Ohmart (781-862-6216) and Gerry Paul (781-861-6279)



**Marginal Wood Fern**



## The Lexington Tree Inventory Identifies Common Species and Locates Potential Planting Areas

by Anne Senning

A tree inventory is an essential element in the conservation of Lexington's tree stock. A central goal of the Tree Inventory project was to focus on trees in the public right-of-way on accepted streets, and trees in certain parks and cemeteries. The 2009 Tree Inventory Project took stock of the species and condition of over 1,743 of Lexington's public trees. It also located 233 potential planting areas for new trees.

At 263, the Norway maple, *Acer platanoides*, was the most common species of tree found in the 2009 summer inventory. The Norway maple is an invasive species. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts banned its importation in July 2006, and its propagation and sale in January 2009. At 253, the Northern red oak, *Quercus rubra* was the second most common species of tree inventoried this summer. It is a native tree with a taproot that prefers uplands and hills. At 126, the third most common group was the 'Mixed grove'. A mixed grove is defined as two or more trees of different species standing either close enough to abut each other or up to 3 feet apart. Mixed groves are often found along minimally managed roadsides. At 120, the Red maple, *Acer rubrum* was the fourth most common species of tree inventoried this summer. This is another native species, provides bright fall color and tolerates wet soils. At 114, the White pine, *Pinus strobus* was the fifth most common tree species found in the 2009 summer inventory. It grows in both upland and lowland areas.

Another goal of the Tree Inventory project was to locate potential sites where new street trees might be planted in an environment that would maximize each tree's chance of survival, while contributing to the beauty of Lexington and the health of its citizens. A suitable planting area is a strip of land in the town right-of-way located between the sidewalk and the curb of the street (i.e., in the grass strip) or, where there is no sidewalk, located in a lawn in the town right-of-way. It must be at least four feet wide and four feet long. A planting area has three restrictions. It may not be located under overhead wires, block the sight lines at the intersection of any streets, or be placed where it will block existing trees in front of a property. The Tree Warden and the Tree Committee will use this information about planting areas for new trees.



**New York Fern**

The summer Lexington Tree Inventory project relied on two summer interns: Yianni Laskaris of Northeastern University and Fred MacDonald, of Clark University. They worked in conjunction with members of the Lexington Tree Committee, Lexington Friends of Trees, and David J. Pinsonneault, Superintendent of Public Grounds, Department of Public Works. Peter Karalexis and personnel in the town Engineering Department provided technical support.

In the years 2004-2009 the Tree Inventory located 6,269 trees and 523 planting areas, all in Precincts 1-6. This constitutes an estimated 65% of the tree stock of the Town of Lexington.



## **Summary of Trail Work Done in 2009**

by Keith Ohmart and Mike Tabaczynski

For those of you who were in town this summer, you are no doubt aware of the numerous weekend trail improvement workdays that have been taking place. As of this writing, the final planks are about to be hammered in place on the nearly 2000 feet of boardwalks which have been constructed over the past several months in Dunback Meadow, Hayden Woods and Lexington's portion of the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Beaver Brook North Reservation. This more than doubles the previous record set last year when over 800 feet of boardwalks were constructed in the Lower Vine Brook Conservation area.

Constructing these boardwalks and bridges in areas where trails are wet for long periods during the year is an important means of protecting sensitive wetland areas in addition to making the trails more accessible. Muddy trails contribute to further encroachment in sensitive areas as trail users create side trails to avoid getting wet. Constructing elevated boardwalks not only solves this problem but also provides unimpeded habitat access for all manner of creatures that inhabit our wetland areas.

The boardwalk that is in the final stages of being finished at Hayden Woods begins at the Valleyfield trail entrance and extends for some 976 feet over what has to be one of the longest, wettest sections of trail in Lexington. This particular boardwalk includes one viewing platform where visitors can pause to survey the surrounding wetlands.

Work completed earlier in the season in the Dunback conservation area completes what has been a multi-year effort to improve the trail connecting the Bowman and Clark Schools. Over eighteen tons of crushed stone were spread on one section of this trail while 332 feet of new boardwalk was added to the 800 feet constructed in previous years.



**Bracken Fern**

The largest overall project of the summer is that being undertaken in the DCR Beaver Brook Reservation. This consists of 560 feet of boardwalk across what has been an impassable marsh, along with the construction of 3/4 mile of trail where none presently exists. The purpose of this project is to extend the Western Greenway Trail, which originates at Mass Audubon's Habitat Sanctuary in Belmont, over to Walnut Street opposite Lot 1, which is now part of the Beaver Brook Reser-



vation. Additional work slated for next year will then extend this trail onto Lot 1 to join the existing trail network already in place that will complete the Western Greenway Trail down to Trapelo Road, opposite the Our Lady's church.

The materials to construct these boardwalks have been obtained through grants submitted to the DCR by the New England Mountain Bike Association. Construction labor has been supplied by over 50 volunteers from Lexington, Arlington, Belmont, Waltham, and Watertown who swatted mosquitoes, battled poison ivy, and nursed aching muscles these past several months. Additional workdays are being scheduled through the fall to finish the work remaining to be done. For further information on how you too can join in this regional effort, contact Emily Schadler in the town's Conservation Office either by e-mail ([landstewards@ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:landstewards@ci.lexington.ma.us)) or phone (781-862-0500 ext. 240).



## **Native Plant Species Project**

By Keith Ohmart

Members of Citizens for Lexington Conservation, in collaboration with members of the Tree Committee and the Conservation Commission, have spent the summer assembling a list of plant materials which are native to Massachusetts. This project was undertaken to encourage the Planning Board to include recommendations for the use of native plant materials for landscaping purposes by commercial property owners as part of the proposed zoning changes for the Hartwell Commercial District. The working committee plans to submit the list to the Planning Board later this year.

We hope that the Planning Board will use this list for all of their dealings with commercial developers in Lexington. In addition to presenting our list to the Planning Board, we will be identifying other committees in town to whom we can present our list. We will be exploring ways to publicize the list for use by anyone in town including homeowners.

We are nearing completion of the final draft and will next be presenting this to our respective member committees, i.e. Conservation Commission, Tree Committee, and CLC, for comment and approval before presenting to the Planning Board and other town committees.



**Maidenhair Fern**



**Photo Credit:** Photos of ferns are by Kate Fricker

# Trail Maps for Lexington Conservation Areas

By Kate Fricker

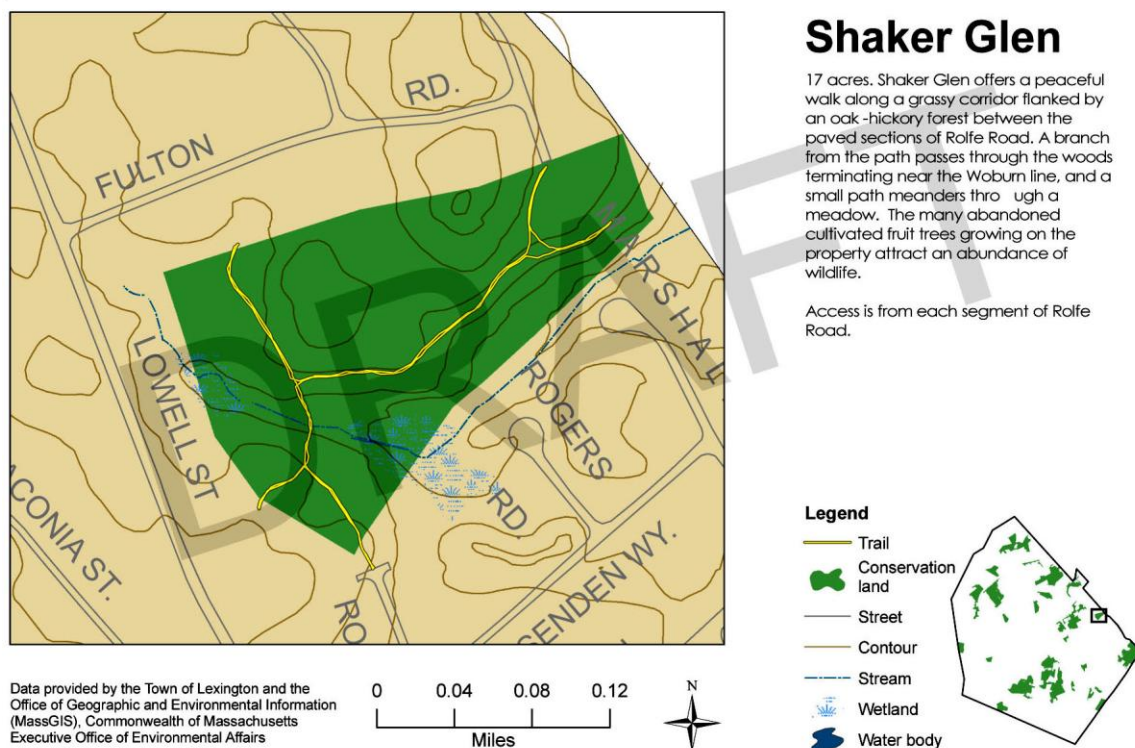
The Lexington Conservation Division and the Lexington Conservation Stewards are now working on draft maps of 24 conservation areas in Lexington. Each participating steward will print a copy of a map, then take the map for a test drive of the trails, marking on the map such items as trails that should be closed, trails that have poison ivy, trails needing signage, obstructions on the trails, trash, invasive species, and points of interest. Some conservation areas, such as Whipple Hill and Willard's Woods have so many trails that vegetation is trampled. Others are overrun with bittersweet and poison ivy. When all the marked maps are returned, at the end of September, the Conservation Division will edit them. The final product will enable the Conservation Division and the Conservation Stewards to pinpoint areas that need attention and to take action where needed. In the final maps duplicate trails will be eliminated and existing ones will be simplified. Walks on conservation land in Lexington will be easier to plan. When all the editing work is finished these maps will be posted on a web site where they will be available to all.

Anyone wishing to participate in this effort can download draft maps and instructions at <http://www.lexingtonma.gov/conservation/newmapdrafts.cfm>

Below is a sample of one of the draft maps.

## Lexington Conservation Lands

Town of Lexington Conservation Division • 1625 Massachusetts Avenue • Lexington, MA 02420 • 781.862.0500



## **New Web Address; New Website!**

Be sure to visit the new CLC website at [www.clclex.org](http://www.clclex.org), constructed by CLC web master, Chris Engstrom. The site has been completely redesigned and is brimming with information about Lexington's natural environment, volunteer opportunities with CLC and other town environmental organizations, plus listings of current CLC activities.

Get the details on our guided spring and fall walks, find all the contact information for our state legislators, and learn more about your very local environment through a variety of flora and fauna guides. There is also a link to the most current CLC newsletter and a complete archive of newsletters going back to 1999.

Remember to check the site regularly as we will be adding new features, photos and information. Any suggestions you have to improve the site are welcome! 🌲

## **Kill-A-Watt Meters Available at Library**

By Stew Kennedy

If, like me, you have taken steps to reduce your carbon footprint and are looking around your house for additional energy savings, the Kill-A-Watt meters now available at the circulation desk of Cary Memorial Library may be just the ticket. These easy to use devices – a pair were donated by the Lexington Global Warming Action Coalition – measure and display electrical energy usage. Simply plug one into a wall outlet, and then plug an appliance into it, and you can see how much power the appliance is using. The meter has a feature that allows you to record total energy used over time. This allowed me to satisfy my curiosity about the amount of electrical energy being wasted by devices that although turned off still draw power – the TV, VCR, computers, toaster, and bread maker are examples in our house. The news gave motivation to unplug devices (or simply switch off power strips.)

If what you need to fine-tune your home energy conservation practices is more information about where the energy is being used, give a Kill-A-Watt meter a try. It's free, simple, and it may be illuminating. 🌲



**Christmas Fern**

## **Thank You Diane**

Citizens for Lexington Conservation is grateful to Diane Carr for her service as CLC treasurer. For more than six years, Diane has capably processed all new and renewed memberships, made sure our accounts were up to date, took care of all the incoming mail, and prepared an annual treasurer's report that informed us of our financial status. She has been a careful monitor of CLC's financial health. Thank you, Diane, for your dedication to the position.