



Citizens for Lexington Conservation

PO BOX 292, LEXINGTON, MA 02420-0003

<http://www.lexingtonma.org/clc/HomePage.htm>

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Kate Fricker, Editor

September, 2006

Eileen Entin, President

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Photo Quiz

**Where in Lexington does invasive
bittersweet cover the tree foliage?**



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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 2006," you are up to date. If it says "Dues paid 2005" (or earlier), then it is time to renew your membership for 2006. 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 \$12.00 for a regular membership or \$15.00 for a sustaining membership to CLC, P.O. Box 292, Lexington, MA 02420-0003.

CLC PUBLICATIONS

Over the years CLC has encouraged members to write guides to the open spaces in Lexington. These guides have now been scanned and are available at no charge on our web site, <http://www.lexingtonma.org/clc/HomePage.htm>. 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.

The files are saved as Adobe Acrobat .pdf files, and require the free Acrobat Reader. You can obtain this reader at <http://adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html>.

Available titles are:

A Wildflower Walk at Whipple Hill
A Walk Through Hayden Woods
Birds of Dunback Meadow
Birds of the Great Meadow
Birds of Whipple Hill
Building a Brushpile
Checklist of Lexington Birds
Discovering the Paint Mine
Ferns of Whipple Hill
Flowers and Shrubs of Whipple Hill, 1982
Flowers and Shrubs of Whipple Hill, 2000
Geological History of Lexington
Guide to the Great Meadows: A Walking Tour
Gypsy Moth
Insect Pests of Shade Trees
Introduction to Hayden Woods
The Red Fox in Lexington
Wildflower List for Lexington
Winter Feeder Checklist



Photo Quiz
Where in Lexington are there acres of
invasive Purple Loosestrife?

If you would like copies of the guides and do not have access to the Internet, you will find computers available at Cary Memorial Library.

Thank you, Spring Walk Leaders

Our thanks to Andrea Golden, Sandra Ruggiero, Nell Walker, Keith Ohmart, Eileen Entin, Chris Floyd, Fran Ludwig, Hilary Hopkins and Tom Whelan for their leadership and inspiration on CLC's Spring Walks.

Citizens for Lexington Conservation: Fall Walks, 2006

Tophet Swamp Exploration

Sunday October 1, 1:00-4:00PM

Explore one of Lexington's least known conservation areas. Mature forest, extensive wetlands, perhaps Lexington's widest array of ferns and other wetland species, with fall colors at their peak. This will be a lengthy walk. Wear sturdy hiking shoes, bring water and don't forget your binoculars for hawk watching under the power lines. Park vehicles on either Holton Road or Woodpark Circle immediately off Wood St. Meet at the locked gate at the power line easement on Wood Street.

Walk leader: Keith Ohmart (781-862-6216)

Exploration of Upper Vine Brook

Saturday, October 7, 10:30-11:30AM

Gerry Paul will lead a walk of the Upper Vinebrook conservation land. Gerry is the conservation steward for the land. The walk will include the upland path from the end of Highland Avenue to Cotton Farm on Marrett Road. This path is on the land acquired in 2003 as an addition to the existing conservation land. We will also walk a less well known path which skirts the wetlands, which are the source of the Vine Brook. Meet at the end of Highland Avenue (at the intersection of Highland Avenue and Washington Street). Water-resistant footwear is recommended.

Walk leader: Gerry Paul 781-861-6279, gerryp@bu.edu)

Fall Walk at Arlington's Great Meadow

Sunday October 15, 1:30-4:00PM

Join us for a fall walk around Arlington's Great Meadow. We'll follow the route outlined in the "Guide to Arlington's Great Meadows", available from the CLC website, and look for seasonal changes in the landscape. Bring field guides, binoculars and cameras. Meet in the parking lot behind the East Village Nursing Home, off Bryant Street.

Co-sponsored by Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows

Leader: Andrea Golden (781-646-3941)

Pre-Christmas Bird Count Walk at Lower Vine Brook

Saturday, December 9, 9:00-11:00AM

Survey Lexington's wintering bird species in preparation for the annual Christmas Bird Count. We will walk the bike path along Lower Vine Brook noting winter habitats and feeding patterns while keeping an eye out for late season vagrants that add spice to the mix of our local winter resident species. Meet at Hayes Lane and Grant Street.

Leader - Keith Ohmart, 781-862-6216.

For further information on all walks, contact Andrea Golden at 781-646-3941.

Other Talks and Events

1. October 18, Views of the Urban Forest

The Lexington Tree Committee has scheduled the final lecture in the series *Six Views of the Urban Forest*, on Wednesday, October 18, 2006 at 7:30 p.m. It will feature David Pinsonneault, Lexington's Superintendent of Public Grounds and Tree Warden, who will be discussing ramifications of the Town's 2001 tree bylaw and the challenging job of maintaining a tree canopy in times of fiscal and environmental stress. This lecture series is sponsored by the Lexington Tree Committee and funded by a grant from the Commonwealth of



Photo quiz: Where in Lexington is this beautiful Elm Tree?

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. The lectures are free to the public and are held at Cary Library, 1874 Massachusetts Ave., in Lexington Center on the ground floor lecture room at 7:30 pm. You and your friends are invited. Call John Frey 781-862-2104 or Nell Walker 781-862-6943 if you have questions.

2. October 19, Conservation Stewards Meeting

The Lexington Stewardship Program is a group of volunteers formed under the joint sponsorship of the Lexington Conservation Commission and Citizens for Lexington Conservation to help protect conservation lands in Lexington. The stewards assist the Conservation Commission by regularly visiting conservation sites and reporting problems such as trail erosion or litter accumulations to the Conservation Office. Some stewards volunteer for additional activities such as keeping trails open and guiding walks for the public.

The next meeting of the Stewards will be on Thursday, October 19 at 7:30pm in the Town Office Building. The meeting will provide an opportunity for stewards to discuss accomplishments and identify major concerns/issues at the conservation areas where they are active. Anyone interested in becoming a steward for a particular area can obtain more information by calling the Conservation Commission office at (781)862-0500 extension 226 or sending a note to landstewards@ci.lexington.ma.us.

3. October 29, Greenways Talk

Paul Hellmund, noted greenways expert and author, will be the guest speaker at the Waltham Land Trust Annual Meeting, to be held on October 29, 7 p.m., at the Waltham Public Library, 735 Main Street, Waltham. This will be an excellent opportunity to learn more about greenways, their importance in land conservation efforts and what lessons we might learn, as CLC members continue their work with the Friends of the Western Greenway in promoting our own greenway, the Western Greenway.

4. November 1, Deadline for submitting applications for CPA projects

The Community Preservation Act, adopted by Lexington voters last March, will generate over \$2 million this year for affordable housing, open space, recreation and historic

preservation projects in Lexington. If you have a project in mind, you can check the guidelines and download the application form at the CPC website:

<http://ci.lexington.ma.us/Committees/CommunityPreservationCommittee/CPC.htm>.

Links to Interesting Sites

1. Follow this link to a list of all the conservation sites in Lexington acquired between 1964 and 2005, with the years they were acquired, acreage, cost, federal reimbursement, state reimbursement and net cost to the town:

<http://www.lexingtonma.org/clc/ConservationLand.doc>

2. An interesting article in the Harvard Gazette tells how Garlic Mustard damages trees by killing the fungi they need for growth:

<http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2006/04.27/15-invasive.html>

Mike Tabaczynski Honored at Town Meeting

The following commendation was given at Town Meeting by Stewart Kennedy:

“The Lexington Bicycle Advisory Committee and the Lexington Friends of the Bikeway (FOB) are delighted at this opportunity to publicly thank and acknowledge the extraordinary contributions to the town of one of our members, Mike Tabaczynski, master trail builder. Some of the other organizations he also serves and helps lead, including the Lexington Conservation Stewards, Friends of Arlington’s Great Meadow, and Citizens for Lexington Conservation, would applaud this recognition. When Mike joined the Bike Committee in 2001, it was turning its attention to promoting safe routes to schools and to expanding and improving the network of trails connecting neighborhoods to schools and to each other. Mike led this effort, attending trail-building workshops, reading books on the subject, researching sources of grant money, and all else that followed. Today Mike is recognized as a regional expert on trails and trail building.

In Lexington, Mike has planned, designed, and supervised six projects so far, with two more scheduled for this spring and summer. These projects have improved access for all-season use, while protecting fragile wetlands, in the Willard’s Woods, Parker Meadow, and Dunback Meadow conservation areas; in town land near Bridge and Harrington Schools; and in Arlington’s Great Meadow. On all these projects Mike has done the brainwork and a lot of the grunt work. Besides planning and designing the actual trail construction: he applied for and won three separate grants; got the necessary ConComm, Selectmen, and School Board approvals; ordered the lumber and hardware; enlisted volunteers from Lexington High School and the public; arranged to borrow the necessary tools and equipment; often coordinated lunch and refreshments for the volunteers; coordinated when necessary with DPW; and trained all participants in safe use of tools, in responsible environmental practices and in construction techniques.

The results are impressive: over 2000 linear feet of new bridges and boardwalks (totaling 20 separate structures); additionally, over 2000 feet of new or relocated trail; \$25,500 of state grant money (for materials); more than 120 volunteers; and more than

2500 volunteer-hours (not including Mike's own time, which must number in the several hundreds of hours).

The direct and indirect benefits from these trail projects are many. Besides an improved and expanding trail system – at no added expense to the town budget, we have a growing cadre of experienced future trail-project leaders, a re-energized Conservation Stewardship program, and many high school students with new-found appreciation for environmental stewardship. The social capital gained from Mike's work is enormous. As



Pitch Pine Cones

an added bonus, these projects have been fun to work on.

So Mike, as a small token of our thanks, we'd like to give you a brick.... Let me explain. This is an IOU. As the Lexington Historical Society is making available engraved bricks to pave the back patio of the Depot building adjacent to the Bikeway, the FOB has purchased one in your honor. It will be inscribed: Mike Tabaczynski, Master Trail Builder. In all seriousness, Mike, we all thank you for your wonderful work for the town, and we hope you never stop."

Divine Wind, The Science and History of Hurricanes, by Kerry Emanuel

Reviewed by Eric J. Olson

If there is one must-learn phrase in Kerry Emanuel's magnificent book, it is this: hurricane amnesia. This is not what victims of hurricanes suffer after being struck by flying debris, this is the more widespread drift and denial that our seacoast culture slips into soon after the storm surge has receded and the insurance adjusters have written their reports. We stand witness to the tragedy of New Orleans – for now. We point fingers at the government – for now. We speculate on the role of global warming in all this, as if insanely powerful hurricanes were some new phenomenon on the scene. All of this diverts our attention from the real tough question, which is what should New Orleans become? And what about Florida, that vast low-lying peninsula with one of the higher growth rates of any state in the US? Do we really want to put so many families and dreams and treasure in harm's way over and over again? This is the essence of hurricane amnesia: when a nation has such a profound attachment to place and growth and warm sandy beaches that we *must* forget just so we can move on. Addicts have their relatives as enablers, and we have...Uncle Sam's flood insurance program?

Thankfully, Kerry Emanuel has written an antidote to hurricane amnesia, and in spite of his recent fame as herald of global warming (more on that below), his book also serves as a rebuttal to the notion that Katrina is retribution for the fact we've heated up the globe. What we get from *Divine Wind* is a very different image of these storms – one that we could relish if we would just pull our cities back from our subtropical coasts and watch the sea and the sun and swirling tropical air perform their ancient dance. People travel the world over to see a full eclipse of the sun or improve their look at a passing comet; why not be spectators (via satellite and pilotless planes) of the hurricane?

Here's a pity of our modern age: we so dread these mighty winds we can't enjoy them more. Dr. Emanuel shows the way: he is a storm-meister, a wind fanatic, a reveler in the power and the glory and the beauty of the hurricane. Read him -- you will be won over. Fond of literature? Interspersed throughout are poems, ballads, excerpts from *The Tempest*, snippets of great storm prose. Enjoy paintings? He has tracked down the world's best storm-wracked work and here they are, rendered in superb color. Relish a good disaster tale? Every third or so chapter tells the story of one of the truly great storms of the past several centuries. Or perhaps you're an engineer, or appreciate fine science writing? Dr. Emanuel, the MIT professor, patiently explains in words, with just a touch of algebra, how a hurricane is the closest thing nature offers to the ideal heat engine first described by Carnot. He even turns chaos theory into a human interest story by telling the tale of its serendipitous discovery.

So great hurricanes have always been with us, and by building in their path we're just asking for trouble. But there is something new, so new it is scarcely mentioned in the book: humans are decisively fanning the flames that feed these storms. Dr. Emanuel was launched to fame this year on the basis of his August report in the prestigious journal *Nature* showing that hurricane intensity and duration are both increasing, in lock step with the warming of the oceans. Coming out just two weeks before Katrina, the report naturally led to a media surge on his office throughout the fall. That was when I first heard of him, interviewed on NPR, then again this January profiled in the *NY Times*. Sadly, the splendor of his book is lost in the intense focus on the conclusions of his *Nature* paper. But denial about climate change is perhaps even deeper than denial about hurricanes. Just maybe Kerry Emanuel will help us come to terms with both. We need more centrist scientists to come forward, now that the data are in. Here, listen: "There is no doubt that in the last 20 years, the earth has been warming up. And it's warming up much too fast to ascribe to any natural process we know about." (Kerry Emanuel, *NY Times*, January 10, 2006).

Hurricanes have indeed always been with us, they have always been born from hot tropical seas, and they have often slammed into land. But thanks to Dr. Emanuel we can all learn more about their savage beauty. And now he has shown us there is something new about them: that hurricane power in the Atlantic has more than doubled in the past 30 years. He and his colleagues are still working out how things could have gotten so much worse so fast, but Dr. Emanuel regretfully concludes that we humans are partly to blame. We warmed the seas, and that has changed the hurricane. Let's not forget.



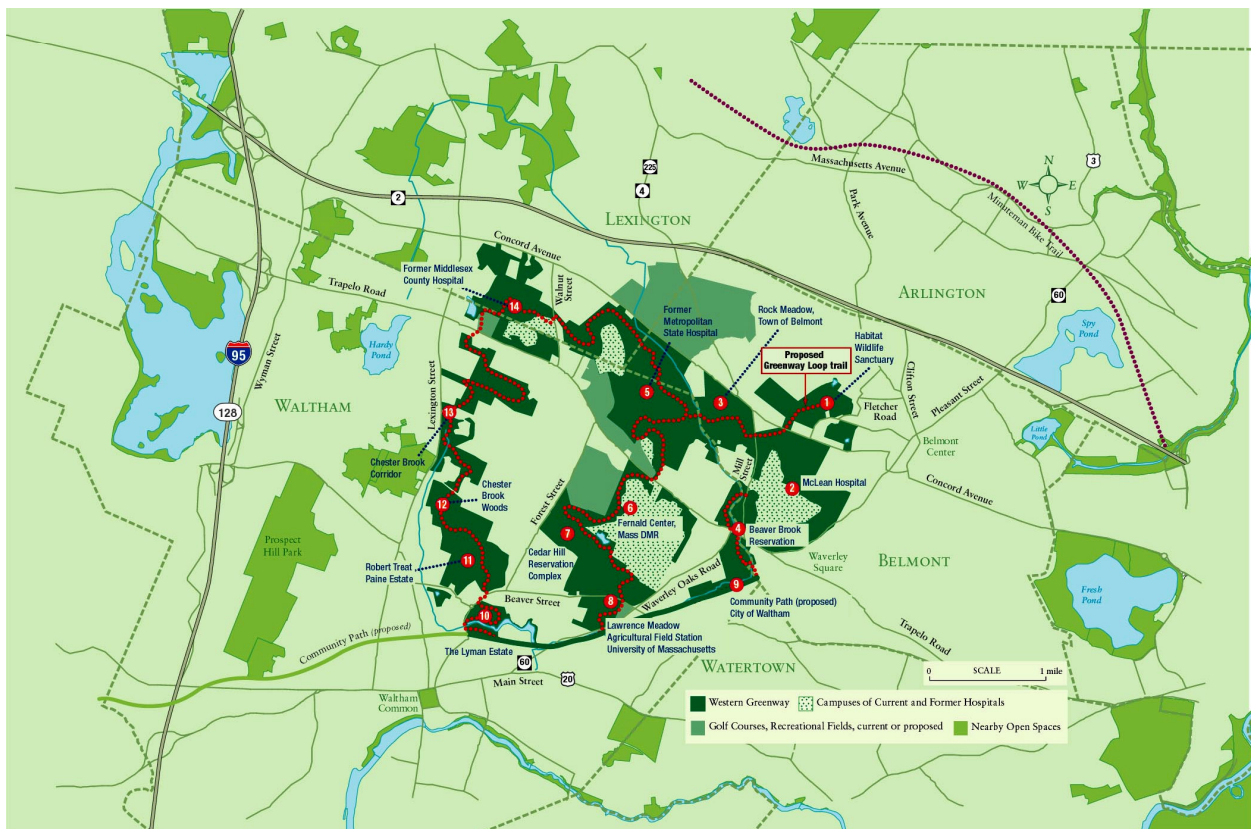
Friends of the Western Greenway – An Update

By Keith Ohmart

CLC members are continuing their active involvement with our region's newest conservation group, the Friends of the Western Greenway (FoWG). FoWG was formed approximately two years ago by representatives of CLC, the Waltham Land Trust, the Belmont Citizens Forum, and Mass Audubon's Habitat Sanctuary, and dedicated to preserving, protecting, and enhancing the Western Greenway. The Western Greenway is a necklace of more or less contiguous open space parcels in public and private hands totaling over 1000 acres in the communities of Lexington, Waltham and Belmont.

FoWG members have been actively engaged in two major efforts during this past year, the first being a planning effort to begin blazing a hiking trail that will eventually traverse the entire Western Greenway. The resulting trail will create a loop that will total over 10 miles in length through the three Greenway communities, and will also have the potential for future connections to the Bay Circuit Trail system.

Initial efforts to date have included ongoing negotiations with public and private owners of the various parcels to secure permissions for the trail, as well as several field trips to identify the most appropriate route for the planned trail. It is hoped that the first trail section, extending from Mass Audubon's Habitat Sanctuary in Belmont over to the new DCR Beaverbrook North property (the former Metropolitan State Hospital), will be blazed with trail markers this fall, with additional sections to be added through Waltham next spring.



The second major activity of FoWG during the past year has been efforts to preserve Lot 1 of the former Middlesex County Hospital from possible development. Lot 1 was under threat of public auction for development in 2005, but, thanks to a vigorous outpouring of public support, this threat was defeated when the enabling legislation known as Outside Section 548 was allowed to expire at the end of the 2005 legislative session in June of that year. No further action to auction Lot 1 for development has been taken by the Department of Capital Asset Management (DCAM) pending passage of new legislation pertaining to the sale of the state's surplus lands.

FoWG members spent part of this spring actively working with our local legislators, Representative Tom Stanley and Senator Susan Fargo, in efforts to transfer Lot 1 to the Department of Conservation and Recreation where it would be permanently preserved as open space. This year's legislative session closed on July 31 with no further action on this effort taking place. FoWG members will continue to work with our local legislators in the months ahead in our ongoing effort to preserve this critical link in the Western Greenway. Watch the CLC web site for additional updates as events unfold.

For more information about Friends of the Greenway, contact Keith Ohmart at kohmart@verizon.net

Suburban Safari: A Year on the Lawn, by Hannah Holmes

Reviewed by Nancy Nolan

I bought this book because of the charming little squirrel on the cover. I am happy to say the book was one of the best books I read this summer.

Ms. Holmes is a science writer and keen observer who wrote about the biodiversity of her 2/10 of an acre front lawn in suburban Portland, Maine over the course of a year. The book is sometimes serious and scientific, but is also humorous and lighthearted. She tempted her favorite chipmunk, named "Cheeky", with seeds until he regularly climbed into her hand, and tamed him enough to gently pet him. She regularly left her front door open for any and all creatures to investigate her home as she was investigating theirs.

The neighborhood family of crows provided her with endless opportunities to learn about their quirky personalities and habits. She was amazed with the everyday lives of common critters -- her tiny yard was teeming with life. From lowly slugs to colorful hummingbirds, Ms. Holmes' research revealed the thousands of interactions going on right outside her door -- something most Americans forget about in their haste. She is an environmentalist, concerned about how America's love affair with perfect chemically-treated lawns is affecting the natural life on our earth.

This book is easy to read and a delight for anyone who smiles when they watch a little chipmunk race along a log or who sits by a hummingbird feeder in the summer waiting to get buzzed. I highly recommend *Suburban Safari* and believe readers will never look at their front yard in the same way again.



The New Visible Recycling Ban

By Kate Fricker

In order to stay within the Town budget and also to help the environment, the Selectmen have requested that the Town of Lexington no longer pick up visible recyclables in the trash. Anything that can be recycled--such as clean paper, cardboard, bottles, cans, and plastic containers--now must be put out with the recyclable items. Since the cost of disposing of these recyclables is considerably less than the cost of disposing of ordinary trash, it is hoped that there will be significant savings for the Town.

For more information you will find everything you might want to know about the Town's recycling and trash program on the following two web sites:

<http://ci.lexington.ma.us/dpw/TrashHHW/VRB/recycling%20ban.htm>

<http://ci.lexington.ma.us/dpw/TrashHHW/trashhhw.htm>

Even if you already recycle, you will find it useful to check them out. There will be a new recycling calendar sent to all households in late September. Those without computers can call the Lexington Department of Public Works at 781-861-2757.

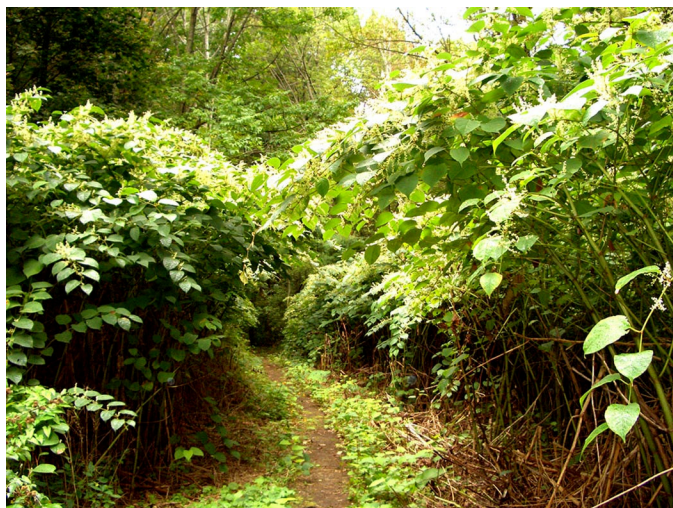


Photo Quiz
Where in Lexington does invasive knotweed tower over the entrance to a conservation site?

Could You Help CLC?

Would you like to organize the CLC Fall and Spring Walks?

Would you like to take charge of the CLC web site?

Contact Eileen Entin at

ebe@aptima.com

Beaver Brook North Reservation

By Eileen Entin

After all the hard work done by citizens in Lexington, Waltham, and Belmont to save open space on the Metropolitan State Hospital (MSH) property, we finally have a reservation! Now administered by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the newly transferred 254 acre portion of the former MSH property is referred to as the Beaver Brook North Reservation. The newly expanded Beaver Brook Reservation now consists of the historic Beaver Brook Reservation (the first Reservation in the Metropolitan Park System) plus the 254 acre Beaver Brook North. The expanded reservation is strategically located amidst a series of open space parcels including Belmont's Rock Meadow conservation land, Massachusetts Audubon Society's Highland Farm, Waltham's Waltham Woods, Middlesex County Hospital open

space, and Lexington's Concord Avenue Conservation Land, which together comprise the Western Greenway (see Greenway article, page 8). In combination with the open space resources of DCR's new park, these properties provide an important network of wildlife habitat and public recreation opportunities within the metropolitan region. The MSH site has extensive wetlands and woodlands which provide prime wildlife habitat.



Amanita Mushrooms

DCR has prepared a reservation management plan (RMP) and is soliciting public comments. The primary objective of the RMP is to develop short and long-term development, programming, and management strategies that will enhance the recreational, ecological, cultural, and visual resources within the expanded Beaver Brook Reservation. Some of the objectives of the RMP include determining areas most suitable and desirable for recreation, education, and preservation; assessing the potential environmental impacts to the Reservation and DCR's conservation easement area of the proposed nine

hole golf course; identifying opportunities for strengthening the open space network and greenway corridor around the Reservation; preparing guidelines, procedures, and techniques for maintenance, management, and operation of the Reservation; identifying opportunities to obtain private funding for capital improvements, maintenance, and operation (i.e., partnerships); and developing a phasing strategy with cost estimates for RMP implementation. There will be a public meeting to discuss the plan sometime in the early fall.

For more information, or to download a copy of the plan, go to <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/.rmp-beaverBrk.htm>.



***The Singing Life of Birds*, by Donald Kroodsma**

Reviewed by Kate Fricker

Read this book and birds will never sound the same. Donald Kroodsma expands our understanding of birdsongs in so many different directions: we begin to appreciate local dialects; we find that many birds have multiple songs, learned from their parents and neighbors; we learn the factors that influence which song they will sing at a particular time. Kroodsma, with all the skill of a novelist and a poet, also takes us along on field trips full of real life adventure and discovery.

There are some excellent drawings of birds, but most of the illustrations are sonograms, graphic representations of bird songs, where frequency is plotted against time. This

sounds technical, but very shortly you will read them as easily as the notes in a hymnal. The sonograms illustrate details in bird songs that our ears cannot hear.

An appendix describes the equipment Kroodsma uses to make his recordings. In it he cautions the reader that recording birdsong can become addictive. As he says, “Don’t tell me I didn’t warn you. Read on if you dare.” This reader dared, and before long a digital voice recorder, a microphone, and a parabolic antenna were added to the toys at our house. The world of sound expanded, extending even to frogs and crickets. You really should try it too.



Monarch Butterfly

Answers to Photo Quizzes

Page 1: On exit ramp from I-95 to Route 2A

Page 2: Off Bedford St. next to I-95

Page 4: On Mass. Ave. at St. Brigid’s Church

Page 10: Munroe Rd Entrance to Hayden Woods.

Page 12: Marrett Rd. at Bacon St.

Photo Credits:

Kate Fricker, pages 1, 2, 6, 10, 11, 12

Nell Walker, page 3



Monarch chrysalis



Monarch caterpillar