



**Citizens for
Lexington
Conservation**

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Kate Fricker, Editor **September, 2003** **Eileen Entin, President**

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Pitcher Plant

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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 2003," you are up to date. If it says "Dues paid 2002" (or earlier), then it is time to renew your membership for 2003. 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 \$7.00 for a regular membership or \$10.00 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



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, now temporarily located at Cary Hall, 1605 Massachusetts Ave.

Citizens for Lexington Conservation Fall Walks, 2003

NEW Conservation Land

Saturday, October 11th, 10:30-12:00

Gerry Paul will lead a walk through the newly designated conservation land at the end of Highland Avenue, contiguous to the established Upper Vine Brook Conservation Land. Gerry, who is a Highland Avenue resident, will talk about how he and his neighbors experience and enjoy this land and will discuss the process that they followed to achieve transfer of this publicly-owned land to conservation status. Meet at the intersection of Highland Avenue and Washington Street. Water-resistant footwear is recommended.

Leader: Gerry Paul (781-861-6279)

Knowledge From Our Rocks

Saturday, October 18th, 10:30-12:00

Jerry Van Hook will share his background in geology in an outdoor presentation (not much walking this time!) on the prehistoric topography of Lexington and the local effects of glaciation. We will gather at the bandstand in Hastings Park (intersection of Worthen Road and Lincoln Street). We are pleased to reschedule this event after last fall's rain-out!

Leader: Jerry Van Hook (781-862-7043)

A Morning in the Great Meadow

Sunday, October 26th, 9:30-12:00

Join Andrea Golden and Betty Wright to enjoy a colorful landscape plus fall wildflowers, birds, and insects (but, we hope, no mosquitoes!), stopping to look at things as they turn up, at Arlington's Great Meadow in Lexington. Binoculars, magnifiers, field guides, and perhaps a camera would be useful items to bring along. Wet spots on the trail are a possibility, so please wear shoes you don't mind getting wet. This walk is jointly sponsored by Friends of Arlington's Great Meadow and CLC. Meet at the back of the parking lot of the East Village Nursing Home nearest the entrance to the Meadow. The nursing home is at the end of Bryant Street, off Summer, east of Maple.

Leaders: Andrea Golden (781-646-3941) and Betty Wright (781-643-6304)

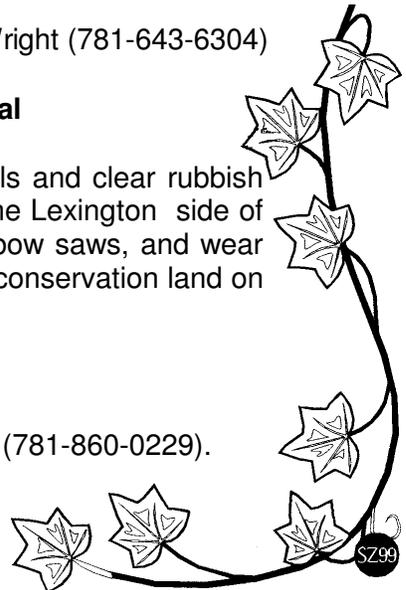
Keep Conservation Land Clean and Natural

Saturday, November 1st, 9:00-11:30

Keith Ohmart will lead us on a service walk to maintain the trails and clear rubbish along the Cataldo Conservation Land between Bow Street and the Lexington side of the Arlington Reservoir. Bring your branch loppers, rakes and bow saws, and wear sturdy boots and gardening gloves! Meet at the entrance to the conservation land on Bow Street just off the intersection with Mass. Ave.

Leader: Keith Ohmart (781-862-6216)

For further information on all walks, contact Maryanne King (781-860-0229).



CLC Annual Meeting

Plans for CLC' s Annual Meeting have not yet been finalized. Please check the CLC web site, <http://www.lexingtonma.org/clc/HomePage.htm> for an update on the speaker, location and date. At the meeting there will be an election of officers; the proposed slate for this year is:

President: Eileen Entin
Vice President: Keith Ohmart
Secretary: Ann Schaffner
Treasurer: open

Associate Members:
John Andrews (Legislative Issues)
Kate Fricker (Newsletter)
Alan Levine ((Legislative Issues)
Maryanne King (Walks)
Sandra Ruggiero (community outreach)
Mike Tabaczynski (community outreach)

Wanted: CLC Treasurer

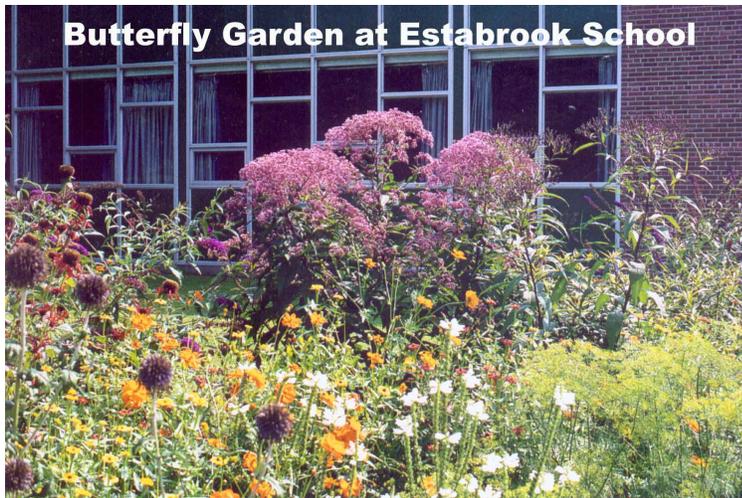
The CLC Board is looking for a person willing to fill the position of treasurer. The duties involve depositing dues, paying bills (about 12/year), doing an annual financial report, and monitoring the financial health of the organization. The treasurer also checks the organization's post office box once every week or two. The treasurer should attend CLC board meetings, which are held in the evening on the first Thursday of the month, 5 times a year (Sept., Nov, Jan., Mar, May),

The incumbent treasurer estimates that on average she spends less than one hour per month on CLC-related duties. If you are willing to consider filling this position, please contact Eileen Entin by phone (781 862 6418) or email (ebe@aptima.com).

Estabrook Butterfly Garden

by Frances Gill, Parent Coordinator, Estabrook Schoolyard Habitats Project.

The inspiration for the Estabrook Butterfly Garden came from a visit I paid to the New England Flower Show in March 2002. It was there that I met a representative from the National Wildlife Federation (which had an informational booth at the show) who described their Schoolyard Habitats program. Basically, this program encourages schools to install wildlife habitats to serve both conservation and education purposes. I thought that this program would be well suited to Estabrook School, especially since the Lexington Schools already have the Big Backyard walks to introduce children to conservation and nature. I thought that the easiest wildlife habitat to start with would be a butterfly garden. I started a new PTA committee appropriately entitled "Schoolyard Habitats" to research and install a butterfly garden and any future habitats. (As an aside, our committee was also asked to take over maintenance of two other school garden plots in front of Estabrook that have now become a fall-flowering perennial garden and an herb garden). We obtained permission to use an area in front of the gym



for the butterfly garden, as it would be viewed by parents, children and visitors in addition to receiving nearly full sun during the day. The ground was tilled, Lexington town compost was added, and the area mulched (the mulch was kindly provided by Eastern Landscaping).

Now came the fun part: planting. We had several resources for choosing plants, especially the New England Wild Flower

Society' s publication on butterfly gardens. Our goals were to provide nectar for adult butterflies and food for caterpillars, trying to concentrate on native plants, and taking into consideration that our garden should be in flower in the spring and fall when the kids were in attendance at school. Adult butterflies will take nectar from a wide variety of plants, so choosing plants for nectar was relatively easy (buddleia, eupatorium, monarda, clethra, verbena, echinacea, rudbeckia, chelone, coreopsis, liatris, sedum, aster, vernonia, pycnanthemum, etc). However butterflies are selective in choosing "host plants" where they will lay eggs, and consequently where caterpillars hatch and feed, so we also needed to include plants to encourage egg-laying. Included in our garden are three varieties of milkweed (host for monarchs), spicebush (spicebush swallowtail), chelone (Baltimore Checkerspot), viola (fritillaries) and malva (hairstreaks). Annuals were added to supplement the perennials: one third grade class grew cosmos and zinnias to plant in the garden, and dill was direct seeded (host for swallowtails). The sources for most of our plants were donations from parents, from members of the Lexington Field and Garden Club, and from Lexington Gardens.

Our butterfly garden has been a great success, considering that it was only installed a year ago. Many butterflies have been observed, plus monarch and spicebush swallowtail caterpillars were seen feeding on their host plants. We hope to have continued success in future years. A bird garden is being planted this year!

Butterfly Gardens and Environmental Education

by Fran Ludwig, K-5 Science Specialist and CLC Education Advisor

Clipboard in hand, children from Joan Cunningham' s third grade class at Bridge School headed out to their butterfly garden to look for plant-animal interactions. "Look! A huge bee just landed on that plant! You can see its mouth go into the flower." Jo Hannah Katz' s second graders visit the garden to gather visual and verbal impressions for their poetry as well as to gather milkweed for their classroom caterpillars. As part of their science study, The Life Cycle of the Butterfly, they are raising monarch butterflies. This class also participates in the University of Kansas monarch-watch program in which fall monarchs are tagged before being released (<http://www.monarchwatch.org>). Students

were thrilled to see some wild migrating monarchs visiting their garden. They follow the progress of these hardy butterflies via the Internet Journey North program (<http://www.learner.org/jnorth>).



Monarch Caterpillar

The simple concept that "monarchs need milkweed" is one that many K-5 students will retain from their elementary years. And although that seems a small morsel of information, it has much wider ecological implications. That such an insignificant and maligned plant should be critical to the existence of the beautiful monarchs helps children to think about the value of plants in their neighborhoods. In addition, as they gather milkweed for the monarchs, they notice the world within the milkweed plant as they see orange aphids, red spotted

ladybugs eating aphids, and crab spiders lying in wait. So, as you travel around Lexington schools don't be surprised at the wild habitats that have been cultivated to teach the next generation. (Bridge, Estabrook, Fiske, and Hastings all have gardens that provide habitats for wild butterflies. Thanks to the many parent and community volunteers who have made this possible.)

"In the end we will conserve only what we love. We will love only what we understand. And we will understand only what we are taught." Baba Dhoum--Senegal

What Will You Do With Your Yard Wastes?

By Kate Fricker

If you do not already have a compost pile, now is a good time to start one. Your yard wastes will no longer be picked up at curbside as a result of the failure of the override, and taking your leaves to the Hartwell Avenue Compost Facility is both messy and inconvenient.

You can make a very simple compost pile at the last minute. Select a spot out of sight of the driveway and the doorway, surrounded by bushes and trees. Then pile all the non-woody lawn and garden debris on it. That is all there is to it. You can follow complicated instructions to turn the pile, to add water and so on, but unless you are in a hurry to get the compost, don't bother. This fall just pile the leaves on the heap (Invite the children or grandchildren to jump on them. Try it yourself, too.). By next fall the compost pile is reduced to almost nothing. If you need good soil for a gardening project, shovel part of the pile aside and dig out the rich, black stuff from the bottom layer.

Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows Update

By Mike Tabaczynski

Since our first meeting in March, 2002, the Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows (FoAGM) have been quite busy working on the preservation, stewardship, and public awareness of the largest natural open space in Lexington, owned by Arlington.

Some highlights of the past year:

- Met in November, 2002, with the Arlington Board of Selectmen to gain approval for various projects in AGM, including installation of entrance and information signs, trail maintenance, bird habitat enhancement such as birdhouses, invasive plant control, school field trips, and vernal pool documentation.
- Began exploring ways to obtain non-profit status or fiscal sponsorship of FoAGM, possibly by the Arlington Land Trust.
- Communicated with and developed relationships with organizations such as the Arlington Public Schools, the Mystic River Watershed Association, Citizens for Lexington Conservation, the Menotomy Bird Club, the Lexington Land Acquisition Committee, the Arlington Land Trust, the Trustees of Reservations, the Arlington Open Space Committee, the Lexington Bicycle Advisory Committee, and the Arlington Conservation Commission.
- Created a basic plan to control invasive plant species that are choking out native plants in AGM, and organized several volunteer events to remove and destroy garlic mustard, black swallowwort, and Japanese knotweed. Groups of Lexington High School students joined FoAGM members in these events.
- Installed an information kiosk near the bikeway across from the Waldorf School. Coaches from the Lexington Christian Academy and students from Lexington High School assisted in this project.
- Created a large map that details over 500 natural and man made features in AGM. Appeared in articles about AGM in the Boston Globe, the Arlington Advocate, and the Lexington Minuteman.
- Sponsored a number of educational nature excursions in AGM including a botany walk, an evening walk to see woodcock courting rituals, a walk to track animals in winter (coyote, fisher, weasel, and many other tracks were seen), and an insect identification walk. Some of these walks were conducted in conjunction with other conservation organizations.
- Successfully carried out the first Arlington public school visit to AGM. In May, 2003, first graders from Brackett School with their teacher, Mrs. Pope, made a field trip to AGM with help from FoAGM members and other volunteers.
- Organized an educational display and staffed information tables about AGM at Arlington Town Day, Lexington Discovery Day, Lexington's East Village Fair, and the Mystic River Herring Run.
- Established a relationship with the Waldorf High School whose students are attempting to certify Peat Pond as a vernal pool. The students have received a grant to offer vernal pool presentations and field trips in elementary schools in Arlington. They began this project with a pilot presentation at the Waldorf elementary school.

- Obtained the unanimous approval of the Lexington Board of Selectmen for the installation of an AGM entrance sign on the bikeway.

Upcoming and ongoing activities:

- Continue invasive plant control and develop a more detailed program to accomplish this.
- Continue regular collection of litter and trash.
- Install entrance signs and boundary markers as a volunteer project of a Lexington eagle scout.
- Devise a way to better utilize and supervise high school students doing community service, and proactively recruit them to work in AGM.
- Hold the first organized trail maintenance day on October 18, 2003.
- Further develop the use of AGM by Arlington Schools and others for nature and environmental education.

FoAGM would like to thank the following groups for the guidance, physical labor, encouragement, and other assistance they provided in the past year:

- Arlington Board of Selectmen
- Arlington Conservation Commission
- Arlington Land Trust
- Lexington DPW
- The Waldorf School, high school students and faculty
- Lexington Christian Academy, coaches and students
- Students of Lexington High School
- Beverly Healthcare East Village
- Citizens for Lexington Conservation
- Friends of Robbins Farm
- Lexington Board of Selectmen
- The unnamed members who, when expenses occurred such as equipment rental, refreshments for meetings, and purchase of various supplies and services, generously paid for these items out of their own pockets.



For more information, please visit <http://www.foagm.org/> or contact Mike Tabaczynski at mjt1@rcn.com or 781-861-1537.

Environmental Impact of the Failed Override

By Eileen Entin

There has been much discussion about implications of the failed override on safety and education. Another major negative impact of the failed override has been on conservation and the environment in Lexington, including:

- **Less attention to Town conservation areas.** The Town is entrusted to preserve and maintain the areas we have purchased and designated for conservation. The summer work crew that has been hired in past years to clear trails in Lexington's conservation areas was eliminated because of the failed override. As a result, many of the trails have become impassable due to overgrown vegetation and downed trees. Some meadows are being left unmowed. If this continues for several years, forest will replace these meadows. The cutbacks in the Dept. of Public Works have also resulted in less time available to tend to the conservation areas. As a result, any clearing that is done will have to be volunteer efforts on the part of citizens.
- **Elimination of yard waste pickup.** The option of putting out yard waste for pickup several times in the spring and the fall has been eliminated. All yard waste must now either be brought to the leaf composting facility on Hartwell Avenue or composted or hauled away by yard services. It is illegal to put yard waste out for trash pickup, but some may succeed in doing this, thereby increasing the Town's trash disposal costs. Some may even try to dump their yard waste illegally in conservation areas and other Town open space. Carting the waste to the dump may also be a hardship for some elderly citizens and for anyone without a car. (See p. 6 for a suggestion on what to do with yard waste.)
- **Expanded duties of conservation administrator.** The conservation administrator has also taken on a role as Assistant Director for Community Development and thereby expanded her responsibilities. There has been approval to hire a conservation assistant to support the conservation administrator, but this position may not be filled because of budgetary shortfall.
- **Reduced public transportation service.** Many Lexington residents, especially students, senior citizens, and those who cannot drive, have depended upon Lexpress. Others use public transportation to minimize car trips. Thanks to a combination of Transportation Demand Management funds that were earmarked for Lexpress, MBTA grant money, and contributions from businesses and individuals, there has been a partial resumption of the local bus service. But these funding sources are tenuous. Reduction or elimination of public transportation means more car trips and therefore more pollution.

CLC wants to bring these problems to the forefront, so that Lexington citizens are aware of the full scope of the negative consequences of the failed override, and factors that need to be taken into account in future Town budget considerations.

Poor Farm Reclamation Day

There will be a Poor Farm cleanup on Sunday, October 11 from 11:00 to 3:00. Rain date is Sunday, October 12. Because of the failed override and other budgetary cuts there has been no summer maintenance crew this year, and we are dependent on volunteer work to help with trail work and clearing of downed trees and branches. Join with other friends of the Poor Farm in contributing to the beauty of this piece of Lexington conservation land. Bring loppers, bow saws and work gloves. Volunteers are welcome to come for part of the time, in case they also wish to attend the CLC sponsored walk at Highland Avenue. RSVP to Lisbeth Bornhofft, lbornhofft@neaq.org, 781-861-8330.

Web Sites of Local Conservation Groups that Sponsor Walks and Lectures

by Kate Fricker

<http://www.friendsofalewifereservation.org>, a stewardship and advocacy group for Alewife Reservation. It sponsors walks and events. There is a task force schedule and sign-up information.

<http://www.walthamlandtrust.org>, dedicated to preserving open space in Waltham. Land trusts hold land or land easements and help landowners to manage land in such a way that natural, recreational, scenic, historical and/or productive value is preserved. This site has an excellent map and article on the Western Greenway.

<http://www.belmontcitizensforum.org>. This group aims to preserve natural and historical resources in and around Belmont. The site contains archived issues of the Belmont Citizens Forum newsletter, an excellent source of local conservation information.

<http://www.foagm.org>. Friends of Arlington's Great Meadow is devoted to the preservation of the natural landscape of the Great Meadow, which is owned by Arlington but located in Lexington. The web site contains photos, history and many nature walks.

<http://www.arlington2020.org/reservoir>. The Arlington Reservoir Committee works to preserve the reservoir, which is on the Lexington border at the mouth of Munroe Brook. One can join their list-serve and receive notices of meetings, discussions of reservoir problems, cleanup activities and walks.

<http://www.mysticriver.org>. The Mystic River Waterway Association's aim is to raise awareness of the Mystic River and help to protect and restore it.

<http://www.crwa.org>. The Charles River Watershed Association is very active in its efforts to preserve and restore the Charles River. There are frequent appeals for help in restoring damaged sections of the river. The web site lists many interesting tours and discovery events.

<http://www.massaudubon.org>. Mass Audubon' s web site contains information about all the Audubon sanctuaries in Massachusetts. There are also lists of programs offered to the public, bird sightings, and discussion of political issues affecting conservation.

<http://www.winchestermass.org/oldwoodguid.html>. This url takes you to an excellent guide to trails and open space in Winchester.

<http://www.fells.org>. This is the web site of the Friends of Middlesex Fells, which is a group that works to preserve the natural and historic resources of the Middlesex Fells Reservation. The site lists many interesting organized hikes with leaders.

<http://www.friendsoffreshpond.org/> The Friends of Fresh Pond Reservation is a group whose purpose is to enhance and protect the natural environment of Fresh Pond Reservation. The site lists many nature walks, events and clean-up sessions.

<http://mrines.com/menotomy/Trips.htm>. This is the web site of the Menotomy Bird Club, devoted to birding in and around Arlington. Many bird walks are listed, some of which take place in Lexington. Lectures and social events are also listed on the site.

<http://www.lexingtonma.org/swat/HomePage.htm>.
Lexington' s Solid Waste Action Team deals with solid waste issues in Lexington. There has been little new activity since the demise of PAYT, but the site still posts the Let' s Talk Trash articles by Laura Dickerson.

<http://www.shawsheen.org/> The Shawsheen River Watershed Association is concerned with the health of the Shawsheen River. The web site contains information about river issues, cleanup campaigns, and walks. There are photos, too.

Lexington Hills and the Western Greenway

by Roger Wrubel, Director of Mass Audubon's Habitat Wildlife Sanctuary
and member of the Western Greenway Committee

The Western Greenway (see map) contains over 1000 acres of undeveloped land in Lexington, Belmont and Waltham. It includes at least 14 different properties with a variety of owners. Some of the properties such as the Mass Audubon Habitat Sanctuary in Belmont and the Division of Urban Parks and Recreation (formerly the MDC) Beaver Brook Reservation are protected from development, but a number of properties are unprotected. For example, there is now a proposal before the Lexington Planning Board for a 27-unit condominium development, to be called Lexington Hills, on the Lexington portion of the campus of the former Middlesex County Hospital, more recently Olympus Specialty Hospital. The development would eliminate a trail that connects the former Metropolitan State Hospital through the Olympus campus to the surrounding undeveloped State and City of Waltham lands to the west.

When I discovered that the development was well along in the planning process, I wrote to the Lexington Planning Board, providing them with information about the Western Greenway and describing how this development would eliminate public access from this

part of the greenway. I suggested that a trail be included in the development plan that would maintain the greenway connections for the residents of the condos and the public. The planning board was very supportive of the idea and at their meeting in July 2003 instructed the developers to come to an agreement with Mass Audubon on a public access trail through the Lexington Hills development.

Since then I have been in communications with the developers. We are in general agreement on the location and structure of the trail. The sticking point is the type of access. The developers would like to issue a license for the public to use the trail, while Mass Audubon believes that to ensure public access an easement is required. The issuer of a license can at any point revoke it, whereas an easement could be in force forever or for a specified period of time. One can imagine the possibility that the condominium residents could, in the future, want to restrict access, which would thwart the goal of maintaining public access to the greenway. Hopefully, through negotiation this difference will be resolved.

I recently learned that there is a request for a special permit to develop 27 acres on the Waltham side of the Olympus campus. The developer proposes building 290 apartments, 30% of them for age 55+, 10% of them affordable. Included in the proposal is about 10 acres of "Conservation Set Aside" land that would be protected from future development.

