



**Citizens for  
Lexington  
Conservation**

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

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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 2001," you are up to date. If it says "Dues paid 2000" (or earlier), then it is time to renew your membership for 2002. 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.

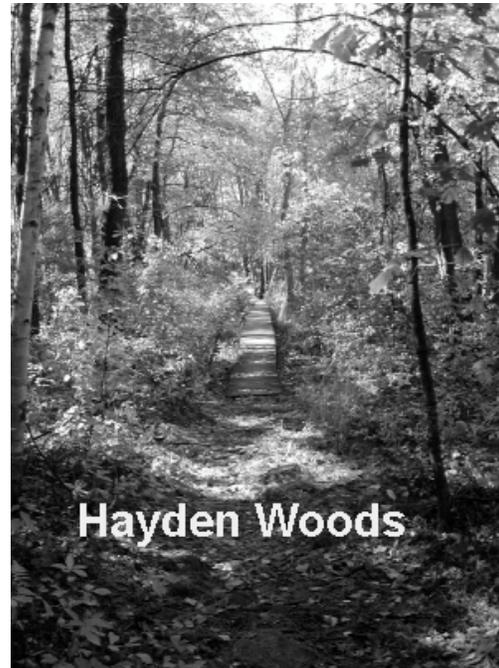
## CLC PUBLICATIONS

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.

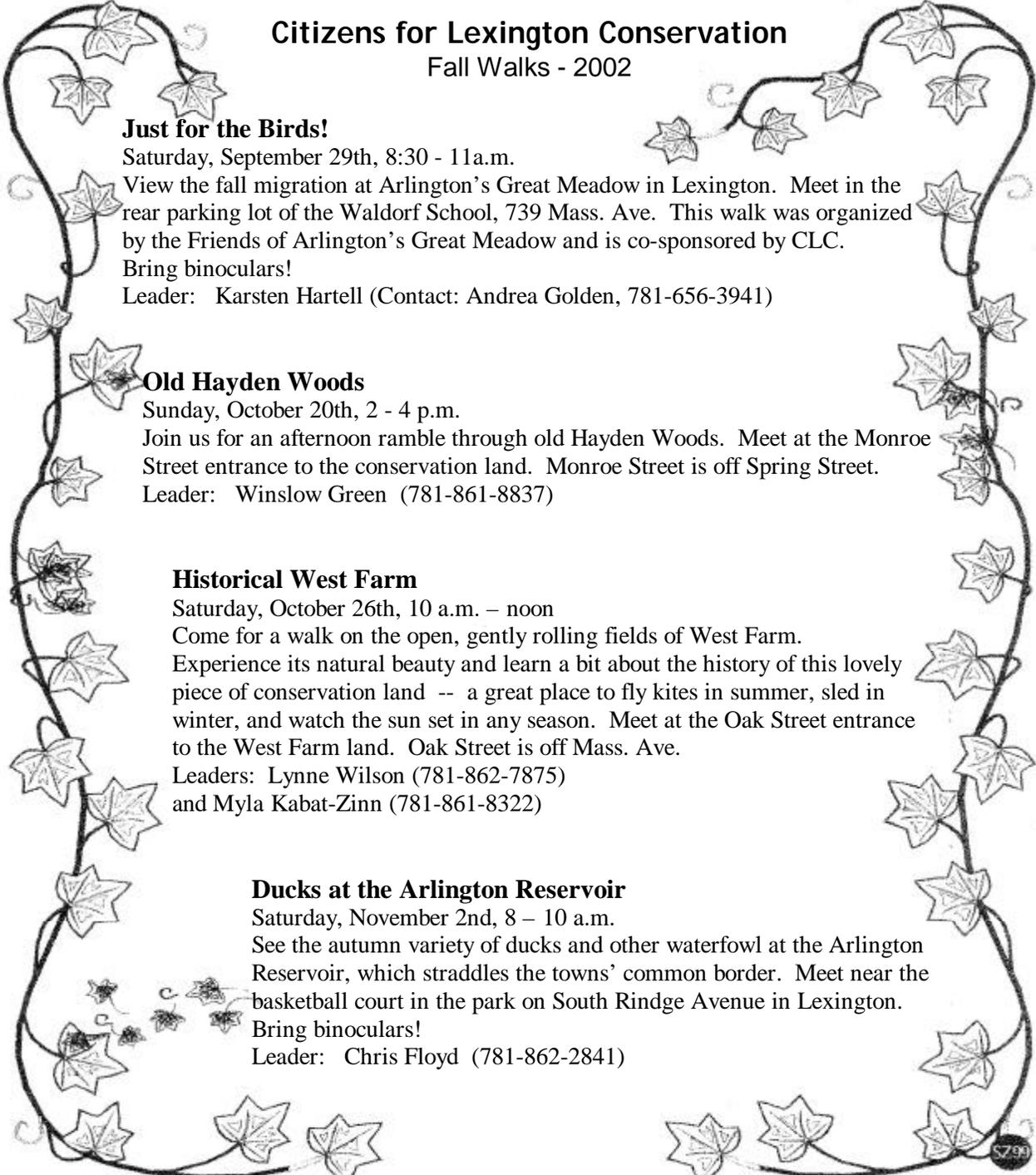
The files are saved as Adobe Acrobat .pdf files, and require the free Acrobat Reader. You can obtain this reader at <http://adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html>.

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 - 2002

#### **Just for the Birds!**

Saturday, September 29th, 8:30 - 11a.m.

View the fall migration at Arlington's Great Meadow in Lexington. Meet in the rear parking lot of the Waldorf School, 739 Mass. Ave. This walk was organized by the Friends of Arlington's Great Meadow and is co-sponsored by CLC.

Bring binoculars!

Leader: Karsten Hartell (Contact: Andrea Golden, 781-656-3941)

#### **Old Hayden Woods**

Sunday, October 20th, 2 - 4 p.m.

Join us for an afternoon ramble through old Hayden Woods. Meet at the Monroe Street entrance to the conservation land. Monroe Street is off Spring Street.

Leader: Winslow Green (781-861-8837)

#### **Historical West Farm**

Saturday, October 26th, 10 a.m. - noon

Come for a walk on the open, gently rolling fields of West Farm.

Experience its natural beauty and learn a bit about the history of this lovely piece of conservation land -- a great place to fly kites in summer, sled in winter, and watch the sun set in any season. Meet at the Oak Street entrance to the West Farm land. Oak Street is off Mass. Ave.

Leaders: Lynne Wilson (781-862-7875)

and Myla Kabat-Zinn (781-861-8322)

#### **Ducks at the Arlington Reservoir**

Saturday, November 2nd, 8 - 10 a.m.

See the autumn variety of ducks and other waterfowl at the Arlington Reservoir, which straddles the towns' common border. Meet near the basketball court in the park on South Rindge Avenue in Lexington.

Bring binoculars!

Leader: Chris Floyd (781-862-2841)

Walks are held rain or shine For further information on all walks, contact Maryanne King (781-860-0229) or Keith Ohmart (781-862-6216)

## CLC Annual Meeting

Plans for CLC's Annual Meeting have not yet been finalized. It should take place before Thanksgiving, the exact date being determined by the speaker. Please check the CLC web site, <http://www.lexingtonma.org/clc/HomePage.htm> for an update. At that time 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: Rosemary Green

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

### Lincoln Fields and Parking Lot

By Kate Fricker

In a referendum last March the town of Lexington voted funds to restore the three soccer fields at Lincoln Park. Although "artificial turf" was not actually mentioned in the warrant article, the understanding of the backers that the three fields (5.7 acres) would be rebuilt with an impervious surface covered with crushed rock with drainage pipes imbedded in it and with artificial plastic turf placed on top. In addition, a paved parking lot (1.5 acres) would be added. This would make a total of 7.2 acres of instantly-draining impervious surface. There doesn't seem to be any plan for taking care of the runoff from all this space when it rains. If we had, for example, a one inch rainfall, about 200,000 gallons of water would have to go somewhere right away. It can't go into the wetlands on the property, because wetlands are protected by law. It can't go into the Vine Brook in the culvert at the bottom of the gully, because that would cause flooding of the property further down. It would seem that the only thing to do would be to convert much of the rest of Lincoln Park into mitigation ponds, destroying the park's present value as part of the nature path and endangering Pat's Meadow, which was established by CLC in memory of long-time board member, Pat Doherty.

The recently published Long Range Master Plan of Lincoln Park, commissioned by the Lincoln Park Committee, deals with the whole park, not just the playing fields. It considers the nature trails, the fitness path, the ball fields, the wetlands and the parking lots. It calls for irrigated grass turf, with all the benefits of natural air conditioning, soil with living root systems, erosion control, and absorption of carbon dioxide, water and air pollutants. Why was this plan not consulted, and if not, why not? Why are we rushing into a plan that seems to have so many long-term problems? Do we have the option of a second expert, who will not be involved in construction, to give us the advantages and disadvantages of artificial turf? Is there time to step back and reconsider? Perhaps, if we are already committed to artificial turf, we could have only one of the fields covered with it this year, giving us time to evaluate the effects before deciding how to deal with the other fields.

## **The Lexington Tree Committee: History, Current Status and Future Plans**

By John Frey

Lexington has had a tree committee in one form or another for at least 11 years. Initially it was a volunteer tree committee, a spin-off of the Design Advisory Committee, formed to review and develop a policy for Battle Green tree planting. Concerned citizens were questioning the planting of a blue spruce on the Green, especially when they heard that more were being planned by the then-current tree warden. In June 1991, the committee recommended keeping the center of the Green open, planting only tall deciduous canopy trees on the periphery and removing a newly planted English Beech and Blue Spruce. The recommendation was submitted to and approved by the Board of Selectmen.

A second tree committee was formed, under the wing of the Lexington Field and Garden Club, in response to the loss of public street trees and the clear-cutting of trees on private lots to build large houses. The new tree warden served on this committee. This group recommended to the Board of Selectmen on May 22, 2000 the appointment of an ad hoc Tree Committee to draft a Tree Bylaw for submission to the Selectmen and Town Meeting for approval and funding.

The Selectmen appointed the ad hoc Tree Committee in June 2000. This ad hoc committee prepared two articles for the Town Warrant, and Town Meeting passed them both in the spring of 2001. One was the Tree Bylaw and the other was to appropriate \$50,000 for public tree planting. The Tree Bylaw reinforces Massachusetts General Law 87 in preserving and protecting public trees in public rights-of-way. It also protects existing trees on private property if they are over 8 inches in diameter, but only when someone wants to build a structure on a vacant lot or increase the total footprint of an existing structure by more than 50%.

After the approval of the Tree Bylaw by the State Attorney General October 1, 2001, the Selectmen appointed a new Tree Committee. This Committee prepared an article for the 2002 Town Warrant to appropriate \$20,000 to retain a consultant to do a computerized tree inventory for town trees, so that the Tree Warden could better develop a long range comprehensive management plan for trees, which are an important part of the Town's infrastructure. This article and another one for more tree planting were defeated by the 2002 Town Meeting.

Currently the Tree Committee and Tree Warden are working on a revised warrant article for a town tree inventory for the 2003 Town Meeting. We will address more specifically a consultant's scope of services, compatibility with the Town's future GIS capability, and possible volunteer involvement. About 80 new public trees have been planted this past year as a result of the \$50,000 appropriation in 2001. Any that die will be replaced under the guarantee. Protection of private trees under the new Tree Bylaw is working well. The Tree Warden reports that as of September 9, 2002 they have had 64 applicant calls for a total of 113 tree removals since the Bylaw went into effect last October 1. Applicants have agreed to plant a total of 240 replacement trees as mitigation.

In the future, the Tree Committee hopes to get a street tree inventory appropriation approved by Town Meeting, promote a line item for tree planting every year in the Town budget, finalize a Tree Manual for citizens, developers, builders and Town personnel, and develop public awareness of the value of trees.

## Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows Update (9/11/02)

By Mike Tabakzini

It's been almost a year since the idea of forming an advocacy and stewardship group for Arlington's Great Meadows in East Lexington came about, and much has happened during that time. The Friends of Arlington's Great Meadows (FoAGM) now has about 70 regular members, a 7 member steering committee, a web site (<http://www.foagm.org/>), and a public email list. A number of well-attended public meetings were held at the Waldorf School in Lexington to make plans and share ideas.



Some key accomplishments:

- \* Andrea Golden instituted an ongoing series of nature themed walks, which have been held monthly since spring, including a Biodiversity Day walk on 6/2. Check the web site for walk schedules.
- \* Bob Morse and Mike Tabaczynski completed a GPS survey of every trail and Bob acquired high resolution topographic maps from the Lexington town engineer.
- \* Don Miller organized a cleanup in conjunction with the Lexington Christian Academy (LCA) to remove heavy junk such as engine blocks, car parts, snowmobile, and water heater.
- \* Don Miller contacted the manager of the East Village Nursing Home and received permission for Great Meadows visitors to continue to park in the nursing home overflow lot, which is adjacent to Great Meadows.
- \* Brendan Cooney, head coach of the LCA cross country running team, met with the Arlington Selectmen and obtained permission to continue using the Great Meadows trail system for training and competition. FoAGM, present at this meeting to provide support and information, was recognized by the Selectmen as the group LCA should work with to coordinate their activities in Great Meadows.
- \* Under the supervision of David White and Don Miller, the LCA cross country team did trail maintenance and graffiti removal.
- \* Various people created displays for and staffed tables at Lexington Discovery Day in May and Arlington Town Day on September 14.

Future projects and work in progress:

- \* Sandra Ruggiero is working on a new self-guiding trail booklet with her students.

- \* The Steering Committee is planning on meeting with the Arlington Selectmen early this fall to seek permission to begin making some “permanent” modifications like erecting signs and marking trails.

- \* Sandra Ruggiero is working with her students to register Peat Pond as a vernal pool.

- \* Various people will be working to increase youth involvement in Great Meadows by arranging field trips from public schools and providing conservation-based community service for students and scout groups.

- \* Mike Tabaczynski will be creating a detailed map of natural and historic resources and trails.

The next FoAGM meeting is Tuesday September 24 at 7:30 pm at the Waldorf School on Mass. Ave. in East Lexington. For more information, please visit <http://www.foagm.org/> or contact Mike Tabaczynski at [mjt1@rcn.com](mailto:mjt1@rcn.com) or 781-861-1537. To join the FoAGM email list, please visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/foagm>.

### **Massachusetts Climate Change Action Project**

By Kate Fricker

The CLC Board has joined with MassPIRG, Clean Water Action, and other environmental organizations in endorsing the Massachusetts Climate Change Action Project, which seeks the reduction of greenhouse gases. The group's platform calls for a long-term goal of reducing emission of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases by 75-85% by creating timelines, drawing up schedules, setting up mandatory reporting, making strict plans, reducing energy use, increasing energy efficiency, and increasing the use of renewable sources.

### **Lexington's Trash after PAYT**

By Kate Fricker

In the past July and August, after the end of PAYT, Lexington residents sent 251 tons more trash to the incinerator than in July and August of the previous year, when PAYT was in operation. The recycling tonnage for the same period this year was 26 tons more than last year, for a total extra trash disposal of 277 tons. We should be able to do better, even without PAYT. Read "Let's Talk Trash" by Laura Dickerson in the Lexington Minuteman every other week for more information on trash disposal and recycling. Past articles can be found at the SWAT web site, <http://www.lexingtonma.org/swat/HomePage>. There is a search program at the site, where one can search for key words, such as "batteries", within the articles.

## **Vine Brook Study Underway**

By Nell Walker

Two years ago CLC published a history of Lincoln Park in which much of the story was related to the ups and downs of the north branch of the Vine Brook, part of the headwaters of the Shawsheen River. Recent events warrant a report on what may be an exciting development.

In olden days the brook flowed through a wet meadow bordering the farm road from Lincoln to Lexington. Continuing in a northeasterly direction the water flowed through Lexington to eventually join the Shawsheen River and the Merrimack River.

The first effort to control this part of the Vine Brook in 1849 was an attempt to channel it below Massachusetts Avenue. In the 20th century more and more of the brook was culverted. In 1962 a half mile was 'lowered' into a large diameter concrete pipe running from Middleby to Worthen Road. The 42 inch diameter pipe skirted the southern edge of the town dump (which was located at the present-day Lincoln Fields and had just been closed), eventually joining the south branch of the Vine Brook at Vinebrook Road. After the dump closure the town pursued various piecemeal plans for this disturbed dump site, but it was not until 1987 that there was a general plan in which the Vine Brook was an element. However the idea of letting the stream flow in the open was only a dream, considered too costly and complicated.

In 2001 the State of Massachusetts published a Shawsheen Draft Watershed Restoration Plan which listed Lexington with 9 priority sites. The purpose of the plan was to use watershed restoration to improve water quality, address flooding, provide open space and improve stream base flow. Since pre-colonial times, 30 per cent of the watershed wetlands have been lost, according to the director of the State program, Christy Foote-Smith. The report introduced the Shawsheen watershed community to the wetlands initiative and requested public input. The Lincoln Park Committee responded after gaining support from various town boards and the funds to open the Hayden Recreation Centre. The result was an application to fund the opening of the Vine Brook for a short section near the Hayden Pond and the Lee Fitness/Nature Trail boardwalk section.

The initial grant for \$20,000 was awarded in April 2002. It will fund a feasibility study to provide the surveys that are necessary preliminaries to removing the pipe and redirecting the brook's natural flow. This exciting and important study is expected to take 8 months. The scope of work includes field surveys leading to a conceptual wetland restoration plan with a cost estimate for the proposed restoration. It is expected that implementation of the plan will involve exposing a portion of the Vine Brook to daylight, enhancement of riparian wetland vegetation, invasive plant management and selected removal of fill to restore naturally-occurring wetland hydrology and native plant communities.

### **Friends of Arlington's Great Meadow Sponsor a Photography Walk**

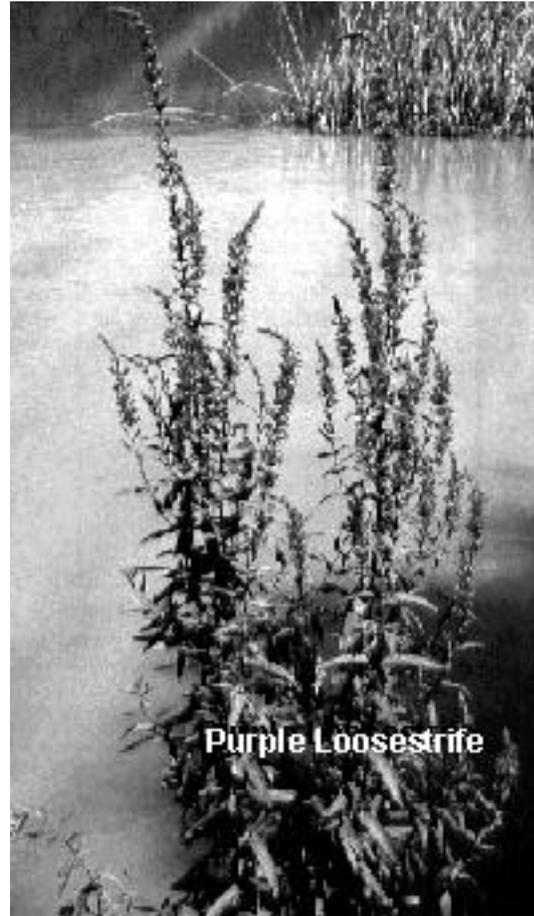
On Saturday, October 26 from 8:30 to 11:30 AM there will be a photography walk with Harvey Cote, sponsored by the Friends of Arlington's Great Meadow. Meet at the rear parking lot behind East Village Nursing Home.

## Lexington's Diamond School Helps Curb Purple Loosestrife

By Kate Fricker

The Association of Massachusetts Wetland Scientists (AMWS), a non-profit partner of the Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership (CWRP), teamed up with the Massachusetts Wetlands Restoration Program (MWRP) to develop a pilot control program for Purple Loosestrife in Massachusetts.

Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) is an invasive alien plant. Although considered by some to be an attractive plant, it displaces native plants and forms dense stands that fill wetlands and drainage ditches. It has little value as food or shelter for wildlife. Conventional means of control, such as water level management, burning, herbicides, digging and cutting are extremely difficult, costly and impractical on a large scale. One alternative for control of Purple Loosestrife is the introduction of natural enemies from its native range in Asia and Europe: two species of plant-feeding beetles (*Galerucella calmariensis* and *G. pusilla*).



The pilot program included propagation of *Galerucella* beetles and long-term field monitoring. Training was provided to 20 volunteers, including wetland scientists from AMWS, entomologists from three county mosquito control programs, and teachers from two schools (Diamond Middle School in Lexington and the Waring School in Beverly). Teachers were provided with a curriculum, designed in Michigan, to educate their students about the importance of wetlands and to help them play an active part in the project as propagators and as host release sites.

Volunteers raised the beetles at their homes from April through July 2001. Beetles were then released in four sites (Acton, Beverly, Lexington and Woburn) in August 2001. These sites will be monitored for a minimum of three years for the establishment of a continuing beetle population and for determining the effectiveness of the beetles in Purple Loosestrife control. In the future the program may be expanded to include additional release sites.

For additional information on the beetles and the pilot program, see the web site [www.amws.org](http://www.amws.org).

### Thank You, Walk Leaders

Thank you, Nell Walker, Maryanne King, Betty Wright, Arlayne Peterson, and Karsten Hartel, for your leadership and inspiration in leading CLC's spring walks.

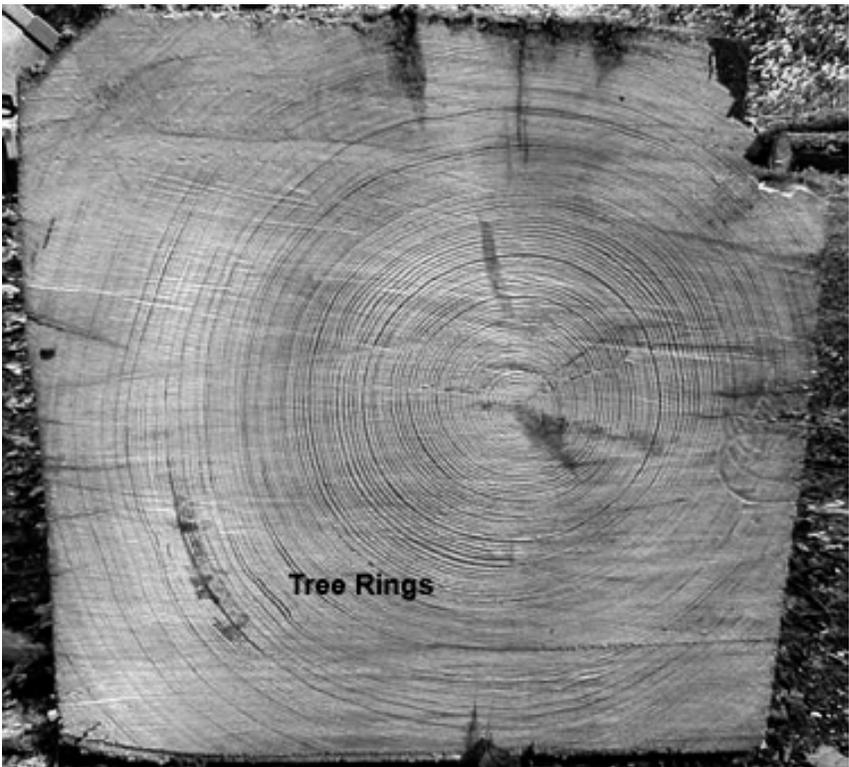
## Tree Rings on Whipple Hill

By Andrea Golden

On a walk to Whipple Hill I decided to count the tree rings on the large black oak that fell near the pond back in the fall of 2000. I got an approximate age of 120-130 years. I counted two different trunk sections, which varied considerably from each other. The oak was the biggest tree in the area, so perhaps it was an early colonizer of what I presume had been open farmland. About 40% of its growth was in its first 30 years, only about 10% in the last 30. Maybe that's standard, but I was curious what environmental influences might be involved.

In looking for more information about how best to count tree rings, I've discovered there's a ton of resources available for tree ring research, including an international Tree-ring Society, <http://www.treeringsociety.org/>, and a database maintained by NOAA's paleoclimatology program, <http://www.ngdc.noaa.gov/paleo/treering.html>. It includes climate and tree-ring information for Massachusetts. Another site, <http://web.utk.edu/~grissino/>, is devoted to all aspects of the study of tree rings, including a tree ring tip of the week.

Tree rings are a tool for measuring climate change (the site says) and potentially, you can cross reference tree rings from progressively older or younger trees to get a chain going back centuries. If someone were willing to cut a few cross sections from the base of the tree at Whipple Hill the cross sections could be sanded down so a precise tree ring count is possible. You do need a good clean section to count the rings accurately. The cross sections could then be available for high school science projects, etc. It seems to me there would be a lot of raw material for science projects starting with this tree.



What can the tree tell us about the earlier use of that land? How do the rings on this tree compare with rings on other trees in the area? Given Lexington's long, well-documented history, we could probably find out lots of interesting things.

Does anyone have the means to cut sections from this large tree? If so, maybe we can request permission from the Conservation Commission to look into these questions. You can contact me at [andgold@attbi.com](mailto:andgold@attbi.com).