



***Citizens for
Lexington
Conservation***

PO BOX 292, LEXINGTON, MA 02420-0003

<http://www.clclex.org>

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IN THIS ISSUE:

Thank you, Walk Leaders	p. 2
Photo Credits	p. 2
Fall Walks	p. 2
The Landlocked Forest in Burlington	p. 5
The Buckthorn Menace	p. 5
Conservation Groups Joining Forces	p. 7
Cotton Farm Update	p. 8
ACROSS Lexington	p. 10
Solarizing Lexington	p. 11
Whipple Hill Trail Improvements	p. 12
The Burlington Canyon Problem	p. 13
Lexington Community Farm	p. 14
Answers to photo quizzes	p. 16



Photo Quiz: Name this very invasive plant.

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 2013," you are up to date. If it says "Dues paid 2012" (or earlier), then it is time to renew your membership for 2013. 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 or go to the CLC website (<http://www.clclex.org>) and use the link to PayPal.

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, we urge you to convert to e-mail by contacting Kate Fricker at 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 read past issues of the newsletter, or 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.

Thank you Walk Leaders

CLC is grateful for the people who volunteer to lead our spring and fall walks. Our thanks to Emily Schadler, Bobbie Hodson, Gerry Paul, Bonnie Newman, Bob Hausslein, Karen Longeteig, and Alex Dohan, for leading the walks last spring.

Photo Credits:

p. 1: Kate Fricker
p. 5: www.bio.brandeis.edu
p. 7: Kate Fricker
p. 8: Kate Fricker
p. 9: Jane Warren, Kate Fricker
p. 11: Rick Abrams
p. 12: Keith Ohmart
p. 13: Kate Fricker
p. 16: Kate Fricker

CITIZENS FOR LEXINGTON CONSERVATION 2013 FALL WALKS

All walks are free and open to the public

Thursday, September 19, 2 - 3 PM

Pond Exploration at Parker Meadow

This walk is geared for children in grades K – 5 accompanied by an adult. Join Fran Ludwig for a prowl around Parker Meadow to look for bugs, tadpoles, frogs, snails, and

fish. We'll dip a net into the water to see what kinds of critters are wriggling around below the surface. Bring rain boots if you have them and be prepared to get dirty. If you have a small bug box or magnifier, bring it along. Rain or lightning will cancel the event. Meet at the Revere St. entrance to Parker Meadow. Limited parking is there; additional parking is available on neighborhood streets across Revere St.
Walk Leader: Fran Ludwig (fludwig12@yahoo.com; 781-861-7231)

Saturday, Sept. 21, 10 - 11:30 AM

Slow and Easy Nature Walk

Meet at the trail entrance next to the Employee Parking Lot on the right side of Brookhaven (1010 Waltham St.). Are you worried about going on those walks in the woods that you used to enjoy so much? Here's your chance to take it slow and easy on the Brookhaven Nature Trail, following a winding path through the woods behind Brookhaven. There are six benches where walkers can sit and admire the birds, the flowers, the fall colors and the view over the pond. The surface of the path has been packed with a smooth layer of stone dust to make traveling with a cane or even a walker possible. Bring binoculars if you are a bird watcher. Steady rain or lightning will cancel the walk. Walk Leaders: Kate Fricker and Marie Roberts (kfricker@alum.swarthmore.edu; 781-640-1276).

Wednesday, September 25, 8 – 9 AM Improvements at the Old Res

The Old Res water quality improvements project is specifically for the purpose of improving the water quality of the Old Res. The Old Res receives storm water from three outfalls located along Marrett Road; after storm events the bacteria level is often elevated resulting in beach closures. The project that was recently completed involved the construction of one bio-filtration basin and one detention basin. The basins provide significant bacteria removal to storm water entering the Old Res. The project also includes a porous paved parking lot in the location of the existing gravel lot, a stone retaining wall along the edge of the easterly basin, hydraulic dredging of the existing detention pond with a 3 foot no touch zone to protect and maintain habitat and vegetation. Significant tree plantings include 16 Red Maple, 9 White Oak, 5 Tupelo, 6 Hop Hornbeam, 9 Shad-blow Serviceberry, and 25 columnar evergreens. Rain or lightning will cancel the walk. Meet at the parking lot for the Old Res off Marrett Rd. between Tufts Rd. and Spring Street. Walk Leader: David Pavlik, Lexington DPW – Engineering Division (dpavlik@lexingtonma.gov; 781-274-8309)

Saturday, September 28, 7:30 - 9:30 AM Bird Walk in Dunback Meadow

Since this is a time when migrants are returning to their more southern winter homes from northern areas, we have the possibility of viewing warblers, vireos, hawks, flycatchers and sparrows that are not usually at Dunback Meadow during the summer months. Our usual feathered residents, such as Downy Woodpecker, Carolina Wren, Black-capped Chickadee, American Goldfinch and Tufted Titmouse, will also be around. Beginners and children are welcome. If it rains the walk will be cancelled. Meet at the entrance on Allen St. where parking is available. Walk Leader: Bobbie Hodson (robertahodson@comcast.net; 781-861-9421).

Saturday, October 5, 9:30 - 10:30 AM**A Walk in the Landlocked Forest**

Take a loop through the Landlocked Forest for an hour or so, looking at foliage and late blooming plants - we may also see various sorts of wildlife or signs that they've passed by. For those who are interested, we can make a quick pass through the Paint Mine at the end. Meet at the parking area on Turning Mill Road, across the street from Mountain Road. Inclement weather will cancel the walk.

Questions? Contact Walk Leader: Alex Dohan (amdohan@gmail.com; 781-863-5882).

Thursday, October 17, 2:30 – 4 PM**Lexington's Autumn Leaves**

This walk is geared for children in grades 2 – 5 accompanied by an adult. Join Karen Longeteig for a walk around the Buckman Tavern 'arboretum' to gather and identify autumn leaves and hear tree stories. Wear boots or be prepared to have muddy shoes. The walk will take place in light drizzle, but will be cancelled if it pours. Call walk leader if in doubt. Meet at the Visitors Center on the Buckman Tavern grounds. Street and municipal lot parking are available. Walk Leader: Karen Longeteig, Lexington Tree Committee member: (karen.longeteig@gmail.com; 781-862-4094).

Sunday, October 20, 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM**Walk ACROSS Lexington**

Take a walk on the second section of the new **ACROSS** Lexington trail system. **ACROSS** Lexington (**A**ccessing **C**onservation land, **R**ecreation areas, **O**pen space, **S**chools and **S**treets in Lexington) will eventually consist of 40 miles of well marked walking, jogging and off-road biking routes connecting all of Lexington. This will be the inaugural walk on a wonderful new 4.5-mile route that will traverse several conservation areas, recreation areas and school property. The route will consist of: Clarke Street, Lincoln Field, Bridge School, the Old Res, Marrett Road, a residential neighborhood, Clarke School, Dunback Meadow, Cotton Farm, Upper Vine Brook, Highland Avenue and back to town along the bikeway. This is a wonderful way to socialize on a quiet Sunday morning and meet people in Lexington that you may not know. Everyone will learn (and share) some Lexington history and interesting town facts and you'll get some excellent exercise. See www.acrosslexington.org for more information. Severe inclement weather will cancel the walk. Meet at the rear of the Depot in Lexington Center. Walk Leader: Rick Abrams (Rickya@me.com; 339-927-4345)

Saturday, November 30, 1 to 3 PM**Post Thanksgiving Holiday Walk**

Work off some of those Thanksgiving calories with CLC's First Annual Post Thanksgiving Walk. We will explore Whipple Hill and the new trail improvement structures built this past summer. Wear sturdy hiking boots and bring a walking stick if you have one, as trails are steep. Meet at the Winchester Drive entrance. Heavy rain or snow cancels the walk. Walk Leader: Keith Ohmart (kohmart@verizon.net; 781-862-6216)

Maps of Lexington conservation lands can be found at
<http://www.lexingtonma.gov/conservation/conland.cfm>

The Landlocked Forest in Burlington

By Alex Dohan

If you've never walked in the Landlocked Forest, don't let the fact that the property is in Burlington deter you. The best access to the area is from Turning Mill Road in Lexington. There is a parking area on Turning Mill, across the street from Mountain Road. Walkers, runners, and mountain bikers as well as deer, coyotes, foxes, red-tailed hawks, barred owls, innumerable songbirds and a plethora of other wildlife enjoy the Forest from Lexington as well as Burlington.

A new trail and a beautiful 300-foot long boardwalk were built earlier this summer. This moves Forest traffic away from Route 3 and makes the outer-circuit traverse of the property much more pleasant. The boardwalk goes through a beautiful wetland area. A second, shorter boardwalk was also constructed this summer, and a third is in the works for this fall. Also planned for this fall is re-marking the trails to clarify the changes, and updating the maps of the Forest to show the new and re-routed trails.

Owned by the Town of Burlington, the Landlocked Forest is presently zoned "general industrial." A recent vote to get the designation changed to "open space" failed by a very narrow margin, showing how support has grown for preserving the Forest.

One fact to note is that bow-hunting is now allowed in the Landlocked Forest. The regulations have not been finalized by the Burlington Board of Selectmen, but once they are, information will be posted at the kiosk by the Forest entrance.

The Buckthorn Menace

by Karen Longeteig



Have you noticed the small black berries, about half the size of a pea, scattered on sidewalks during August and September? Look around, and learn to identify the small tree/large shrub they come from. These may well be the fruits of a Buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica* or *Rhamnus frangula*). Buckthorn leaves are roundish, and are arranged on the dark brown stem alternately. The fruit is borne all over the plant either singly or in small bunches.

Buckthorn seems to specialize in imitating other trees. Its leaves can look like Flowering Dogwood leaves, but they are alternate, not oppositely arranged as is Dogwood. Buckthorn is often mistaken for a Black Cherry because of the reddish, shiny bark with horizontal lines and small white dots, and by the similar leaves, but can be easily identified by turning the leaf over. Cherry leaves are longer and slimmer, and have pale green undersides, and Buckthorn leaves are dark green underneath, with prominent leaf veins. You can also identify Buckthorn by the “scratch and sniff” test. Scratch through the thin bark on a twig, and discover Buckthorn’s distinctive unpleasant smell. Buckthorn also usually tops out at about 15 feet whereas Black Cherries can reach 70 feet.

What a harmful nuisance this large shrub is! A European/West Asian native, it follows the usual pattern of invasive species: a longer-leaved summer that shades out native plants, and a lack of natural enemies or constraints. This leads to a forest or roadside thick with Buckthorn, which not only takes up space otherwise filled by native beneficial plants, but is actually harmful. Both types of Buckthorn are toxic in their fruits, twigs, and leaves. The name *R. cathartica* hints at the effects of eating it: stomach upset and diarrhea. Parents, teach your children to identify this bush and avoid eating the berries, which, helpfully, have a foul taste.

Birds that eat the berries are negatively affected and will defecate the seeds prematurely, causing the seeds to be undigested and therefore quite viable. The plant is also toxic to other sorts of wildlife, such as salamanders and turtles. Thin-skinned salamander populations decline when they absorb the toxin from fallen leaves, and Buckthorn’s sturdy-stemmed, stiff brush can be so thick on the edge of a pond that turtles have difficulty leaving the pond to lay eggs. The CLC 2013 annual meeting speaker, Bryan Windmiller, who is a reptile researcher specializing in turtles, made this case quite clear in his talk last April.

Buckthorn sounds like a good thing to get rid of, right? There are a few complications, however. Lexington being the swampy place it is, there is a lot of buckthorn under the jurisdiction of our Conservation Commission.

If you would like to do your part and get rid of Buckthorn on your land, you first need to take into account exactly where it is: on wetland or not, on private property or not.

1. If you have no wetlands, you can remove Buckthorn at will, even on the perimeter of your property. It is regarded by the Town Tree Committee as an “unprotected” species. The trunks or stems rarely reach the diameter of 6” required to be regarded as a protected tree.
2. If your property’s boundaries include a wetland within it, this private wetland nevertheless is subject to Conservation Commission regulation regarding plant removals. The first stop would be the Community Development office, with its Director Karen Mullins, where the owner will be guided through the next steps. Karen might ask for specific methods of removal, such as hand-pulling, or require certain techniques, such as painting a cut stump rather than spraying foliage. If the work is very minor, it MAY not have to go to Conservation Commission hear-

ing, at the Director's discretion. A replanting might include such beautiful native plants as Blueberry, Clethra, Winterberry, or Buttonbush, all of which like wet feet.

3. If your property is dry but abuts a Town-owned wetland where you see a significant invasion of Buckthorn, you still may have an interest in getting Buckthorn removed (along with its thuggish friends, Barberry, Multiflora Rose, and Burning Bush.) For one thing, the seeds and plants will continually migrate to your own property. But a Conservation Commission hearing is called for. Any town-owned wetland may not be worked on without plan approval from this Commission. Approval will most likely include replacing any removed plants with native plants. The Commission would like to hear from people interested in restoring wetlands, and may be amenable to work out something mutually agreeable.

For more information, a useful website is

<http://www.removebadplants.com/index.php/buckthorn>.

Conservation Groups Joining Forces

By Cynthia John

On behalf of the Middlesex Greenway Coalition

<http://www.middlesexgreenway.org>

Most of our neighboring communities have conservation, biking and walking groups. Until recently, however, there has been no organized way for them to coordinate their



Photo Quiz: I hope everyone gets this one right

efforts. In March, the Middlesex Greenway Coalition (MGC) was established to fill this need. The first three meetings were filled with energy as groups shared ideas, strategized and discussed issues with guest speakers from MAPC (Metropolitan Area Planning Council) and other organizations.

The MGC concept is also right on track in terms of helping regional and state agencies fill in pieces of their vision for a network of pedestrian/bicycle routes and the coalition can provide resources to aid in this effort. MAPC is working on a pro-

posed circumferential trail around Boston inside of Route 128. MGC members are helping to provide the necessary local input.

A critical link in the greenway that connects Lexington and Burlington is the Burlington Canyon. (See Burlington Canyon article in this newsletter). We are seeking out coalitions with various elements in Burlington and at the regional and state level that might succeed in protecting a portion of the canyon, and in creating a trail network. The MGC's success will depend on the strength of its member community-based organizations. Groups currently making up the coalition are located in but not limited to the communities of Burlington, Lexington, Winchester and Woburn. Invitations are being extended to all possible groups and lists from these core communities. Eventually, our goal is to create a greenway that spans Middlesex County. The first leg of this trail will be the Minuteman-Fells Greenway, which will connect Lexington, Burlington, Woburn and Winchester. The Minuteman-Fells Chapter of the MGC currently includes Friends of Burlington Canyon, Friends of Mary Cummings Park, GoWREN, Tri-Community Greenway, Friends of the Landlocked Forest, Wright-Locke Farm, Burlington Bike Committee, Across Lexington, Citizens for Lexington Conservation and Livable Streets. Plans are in the works for a Big Walk (50 miles) in conjunction with MAPC that will include the new Minuteman-Fells Greenway.

Creating a strong MGC is the key to helping create a future statewide network of inter-connecting pedestrian/bicycle trails and protecting properties, or portions thereof, that are crucial elements to these trail networks. Meetings will resume this Fall, with time and location posted to our website, <http://www.middlesexgreenway.org>.

Cotton Farm Update

By Bob Hausslein



Blue Heron at Cotton Farm

Cotton Farm is synonymous with open vistas, slow strolls, and quiet contemplation. We are pleased to announce yet more improvements since our initial coverage in the April 2012 CLC Newsletter.

Entering from Marrett Road, the first thing that strikes you is the open view of the pond created by removal of the old arbor. The picnic table has been relocated to the shade of a big maple. Walking to the edge of the pond triggers abundant frogs jumping from the shore and perhaps an alarmed blue heron. This spring the pond was home to a family of ducks.

To your right is the old apple orchard (Macouns), which is gradually being rehabili-

tated. Neglected for many years, it has been culled of dead and dying trees, then heavily pruned and mowed. Now it is possible to walk between the rows of trees. Additional pruning and mulching is in progress. The apple yield for this season is very modest - only 28 of the 86 trees are productive in the sense of bearing at least one apple, and no tree bears more than two dozen. Most of the apples are already sizable and good to eat as this is written in late August. We clearly hope to increase the yield in the years ahead. All the trees have been tagged in order to track each one's maintenance and yield.

Expert advice on how to rehabilitate the orchard has been provided by Mark Richardson, Director of Horticulture at the New England Wild Flower Society, but we would also like to benefit from the experience of other people who have worked with apple trees, even if only as backyard gardeners. If you know of someone in the Lexington area who might be willing to have a look at the orchard and share their thoughts, please contact Bob Haussein, rhaussein@rcn.com; 781-862-9102.



Apple Blossoms at Cotton Farm

A little further up the driveway at the parking area is the new informational kiosk - an Eagle Scout project. The kiosk has both a detailed map of Cotton Farm itself plus one that shows its relation to the adjoining Upper Vine Brook area and the nearby Dunback Meadow area.



Macoun Apple at Cotton Farm

The little red shed next to the pond has a new roof. This former pump house may also have been repainted by the time you read this. It is now being used to store tools for maintaining the orchard.

Exiting Cotton Farm uphill via the trail to Highland Avenue through the Upper Vine Brook area, you will pass over the new boardwalk bridge - another Eagle Scout project. Further up is a spur trail to the left that eventually passes over private land on its way to Sherburne Ave. As the main trail approaches Highland Avenue, note the newly installed big entrance sign on your left.

Unlike most of the town's conservation

land, which is kept substantially in a naturalized condition, Cotton Farm is intended to be more park-like. We want to keep the open areas, the views of the pond, the gladed woods, and the apple orchard. But we also want to naturalize many of the landscaped portions, particularly after the existing driveway easement expires. At that time, we can relocate the parking area and the trails. To this end, the Conservation Division is in the process of engaging a consulting firm for the conceptual design of Cotton Farm. Comments from others are always welcome.

Finally, it pleases us to report that the second ACROSS Lexington Trail will pass through Cotton Farm and Upper Vinebrook.

ACROSS Lexington- An Update

By Rick Abrams

We are making great progress with the ACROSS Lexington initiative and look forward to publicizing our second route this fall.

For those who aren't familiar, **ACROSS** Lexington stands for **A**ccessing **C**onservation land, **R**ecreation areas, **O**pen space, **S**chools and **S**treets in Lexington. It will be a 40-mile network of well marked walking, running and off-road biking trails connecting the entire town.

Two primary goals exist for the network. The first is to create another excellent recreational asset for the town. Extremely hard work by groups such as CLC over many years has insured that Lexington has a wealth of conservation land. The Greenways Corridor Committee, the sponsors of ACROSS Lexington, would like to provide an opportunity for more people to get out and enjoy these great areas. Many residents and visitors are unfamiliar with the properties, and may not venture onto them without help and guidance. By marking the routes well, this initiative will allow people of all ages an easy way to get excellent exercise and be outside in nature. More and more research is showing the enormous health benefits of walking, particularly walking in natural environments.

The second goal is to create a new transportation system for the town. With well-marked trails connecting virtually the entire town, there will be many more opportunities for people to get out of their cars and walk to the town center, to shops in their section of town, to schools, sports practices, meetings and much more.

There is a growing national trend to combine health and transportation issues together to create healthier and more sustainable communities. ACROSS Lexington will be an excellent model of this trend.



The “Pilot” route created in the fall of 2012 has been an impressive success. That route traverses the bikeway, Parker Meadow, Diamond Middle School, Chiesa Farm, Willards Woods and Lower Vine Brook for a beautiful 5.5 mile loop. Many people have commented that they never knew you could connect these great areas together in a single trail. Chiesa Farm is a favorite for most walkers who can’t believe such a space exists in Lexington. Everyone feels as though they are going back in time.



Members of the Greenways Corridor Committee and the DPW staff look on as Chris Filadoro, DPW Tree Warden and Supervisor of Public Grounds, marks the site for a signpost for the second ACROSS Lexington route.

In early fall, the 2nd ACROSS Lexington route will be announced. It will also begin on the bikeway and will head out of town on Clarke Street to Lincoln Park. From there it will traverse Bridge School, the Old Res, Clarke School, Dunback Meadow, Cotton Farm, Upper Vinebrook, then back to town on some residential streets and the bikeway. This route will be 4.5 miles in length.

The hope is to create the entire 40 mile network in the next 3 years and to connect

the ACROSS Lexington routes to routes in our neighboring towns. In addition to maps and other information at www.acrosslexington.org, an iPhone app exists that can be downloaded from the App store (search ACROSS Lexington). Great plans exist to continually enhance the app with audio histories, photos, maps, additional routes and much more.

Solarize Lexington

By Marcia Gens and Fran Ludwig

Would you like to find a way to install rooftop solar panels to reduce your electric bill, and help the environment?

With the support of the Town of Lexington, a grant is being written to "Solarize" Lexington. The grant program, called "Solarize Mass," is co-sponsored by the Massachusetts Dept. of Energy Resources and the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center. It is aimed at making solar photovoltaic (PV) panels less expensive to install through localized mar-

keting and installation and community-based, group purchasing power in towns selected to receive the grant.

The grant provides funding for marketing materials, and a list of pre-vetted solar panel installers for each community to choose from. Once a community chooses an installer homeowners are able to benefit from economies of scale for each tier of purchasing achieved. The more neighbors that sign up, the less expensive solar power is for all. The more solar power we install, the more sustainable and resilient our community becomes.

To date the "Solarize Mass" grant program has been awarded to 21 communities who have installed over 900 clean renewable energy panel systems on the roofs of their homes, small businesses and houses of worship. (See the website at <http://www.masscec.com/solarizemass>.) In the second half of 2013, 8 more communities will be selected. To make our "Solarize Lexington" grant application stronger, we are planning on applying with a team in the town of Bedford MA. Together, we will more easily attain the number of installations needed to reach the least expensive tier of pricing per panel. If we are successful in our grant, the "Solarize Lexington" challenge will begin in January.

As part of our grant process we would like to document interest in this program. Please take a minute to take our brief, confidential, survey. Thanks in advance!

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/J5HCBB5>

Want to get involved? Would you like more information? Feel free to contact the grant team at solarizelexington@google.com.

Whipple Hill Trail Improvements

By Keith Ohmart

Those of our readers who have ventured through the Whipple Hill Conservation property this summer have no doubt come across either stacks of lumber or newly finished boardwalk sections in various locations throughout the property. All this is evidence of the Conservation Stewards' latest efforts to improve trail conditions throughout the town.

The work in Whipple Hill began this spring, when 60 - some members of Lexington High's Boys Track and Field teams turned out on a Saturday morning under the guidance of Coach Aaron Ladd and members of the Conservation Stewards to move many tons of lumber to a total of five locations within the property. Nothing gladdens the heart of a Conservation Steward more than the sight of six teenagers striding down



New Boardwalk

the trail with a 150 lb 16' stringer on their shoulders and then seemingly effortlessly raising it over their heads to switch shoulders, all without breaking stride.

The Stewards have continued working over the summer months constructing the various individual boardwalk sections ranging in length from 32' to the largest, which totals some 190' in a Y shaped configuration where two trails meet just south of the pond at the north end of the property. The purpose of these improvements is to create a dry walking surface where perennially muddy sections of trail exist or where trails cross a stream. This not only improves access to the property, but also reduces adverse impact on the environment caused by widening of the trail in wet areas by users attempting to skirt muddy trail sections.

This season's work will be continued next year to complete construction of several additional boardwalk sections on the remaining trails in the property. In some instances, sections of trail will be relocated where space permits instead of resorting to the construction of boardwalks.



Boardwalk Under Constuction

Funds to purchase the materials required are provided by a grant from the state's Department of Conservation and Recreation's Recreational Trails Program, which in turn is funded by Federal Department of Transportation monies set aside for non-vehicular transportation improvements. Communities awarded these grants must supply a matching amount of volunteer labor, which in Lexington's case is organized and directed by our Conservation Stewards. Planning and application to this program is a multi-year effort to first determine need and then to provide documentation for consideration by the administrators of this program. Lexington is fortunate in having a well developed and experienced cadre of Conservation Steward volunteers who undertake all of the work involved in participating in this program.

So what are you waiting for? Take yourself over to Whipple Hill one of these nice fall days and admire the work done to date, and then return a year from now to survey the completion of this two year project.

The Burlington Canyon Problem

By Joe Desmond

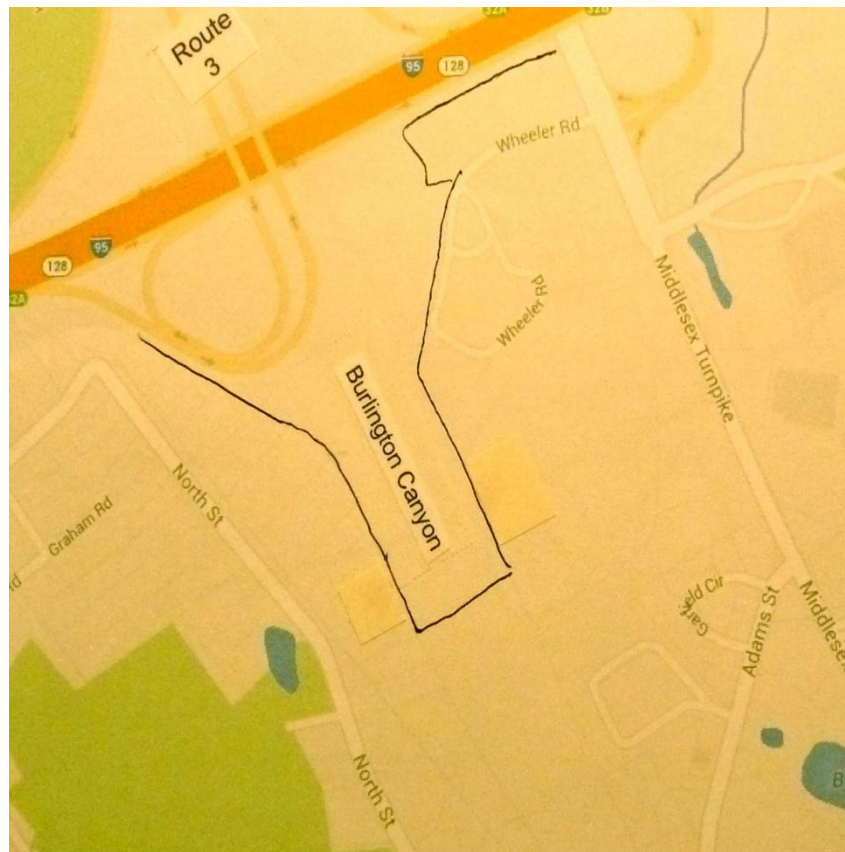
Burlington Canyon is the beautiful 15.27 acre parcel of open land that you see straight ahead as you drive south toward Route 128 on Route 3. This property was obtained by the Commonwealth in 1953 by eminent domain from 24 Burlington/Lexington landowners, many of whom were residents of North Street in Lexington. Most of the land is a sloping forest, but there is a rocky canyon running south that abruptly ends in 70 foot,

90 degree rock walls, created as part of an original plan to extend Route 3 to meet Route 2, giving it access to Alewife and Boston. Thanks to a grassroots coalition of opposition, Governor Sargent called for a moratorium on highway construction inside Route 128. The canyon property has not been changed since.

In 2010 the Gutierrez Company tried to purchase the property, intending to develop a retail Target store, but Burlington Town Meeting members voted down the necessary zoning change.

In July 2013 The Gutierrez Company submitted another plan to combine two office buildings they already own (at 400 and 600 Wheeler Road) with the Canyon property to construct a mega Summit Office Park compound. The traffic flow from this development would all flow through Wheeler Road onto the Middlesex Turnpike, which is already heavily congested. Gutierrez has proposed some traffic remedies, but they seem grossly inadequate even for handling present businesses and those currently approved.

The Friends of Burlington Canyon are opposed to Gutierrez's proposals, and hope that the necessary rezoning will be defeated in the September 23 Town Meeting. They would like to see a future Burlington Canyon with space for public transportation options, such as shuttle buses, greenways for bicyclists and pedestrians, and recreation space.



Location of Burlington Canyon

Lexington Community Farm: A Farm for Good

by Ken Karnofsky and Janet Kern

Many readers know by now that the Town of Lexington has selected LexFarm to lease the Busa farmland for a community farm starting in 2014.

This is the culmination of over four years of work that began in 2009 when the town purchased the Busa Farm with plans for using it for a soccer field. At that time, the Lexington Community Farm Coalition, known now as LexFarm, formed as a grassroots group of concerned residents who had a vision of keeping the land as a working farm for the benefit of the community. The vision was shared and supported immediately by members of Citizens for Lexington Conservation many other citizens who had already been working tirelessly for years to preserve and steward conservation land in Lexington.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank members and supporters of CLC for both their support and example of what a small group of citizens committed to principles of protecting land and our environment for the public good can do. Thanks to the fiscal sponsorship of CLC for over two years, we were able to collect funds as a nonprofit until we received our own 501(c)(3) status in 2012. Thanks also to CLC, our ideas and progress were featured in CLC newsletters, including the 2011 election edition when candidates for public office were asked directly about their support for a community farm and their reasons for supporting it (or not!). The CLC board wrote letters of support, spoke at public meetings and lent credibility to LexFarm's ideas every step of the way.

Finally, in March 2012, responding to widespread community support, the Board of Selectmen decided that the majority of the 7.9 acre land would be dedicated to a community farm with approximately 1/2 acre devoted to affordable housing. With the selection of [LexFarm's community farm proposal](#) by the Town in July, we now begin a new chapter for our organization and the Town of Lexington: Lexington Community Farm, opening Spring 2014.

What is a Community Farm?

Like privately managed farms, a community farm is managed by professional farmers who make the decisions about what to grow and when to harvest, and perform the bulk of the labor. While a Community Farm is in the business of growing food, unlike a privately owned farm, a Community Farm is operated for the **benefit of the public**. That public benefit will take many forms, as managed by LexFarm:

- Farm-based educational programs for all ages on agriculture, local food, nutrition, and sustainable land use
- Food donations to the food pantry and discounted CSA shares for low-income members
- Stewardship of the farmland and its impact on the neighboring watershed and wildlife
- Passive recreation, such as walking trails and a connection to the Across Lexington network
- A wide range of volunteer opportunities

How will the Community Farm be managed?

LexFarm is pleased to be working with <http://communityfarms.org>, who will be managing the Community Farm's production and food distribution. CFO is a nonprofit that has had long-running success in operating the Waltham Fields Community Farm for many years.

Food produced at the farm will be grown using only organic practices and will be available through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares as well as retail sales at the farm stand on the property.

What's next?

Starting Lexington Community Farm is an exciting and challenging adventure...for all of us! While LexFarm is committed to launching the farm and providing a broad range of farm-based programs and opportunities for all ages, its success will be thanks to all those in Lexington and beyond who commit themselves to a vision of a "Farm for Good."

There is much work to do and money to raise! We hope all readers will support LexFarm in every way they can: by becoming a member and offering your time and skills, or by making a financial contribution. You can also stay informed about our progress and work by subscribing to our newsletter and following on Facebook and Twitter. Please visit lexfarm.org soon!

Again, we extend our thanks to all those involved with Citizens for Lexington Conservation for all their work on behalf of the land, LexFarm and the community.

Answers to photo quizzes:

p. 1: Japanese Knotweed

p. 7: Poison Ivy



Jack in the Pulpit Berries