

Reflections on Fairhaven Bay

The Land Trust hired four interns this summer to hand pull water chestnut plants from Fairhaven Bay and the Sudbury River. The following is an account of time spent on the river by one of the interns - Gaetan L-B. Dupont, a Concord resident in his senior year at Concord Academy and an avid birder.

I am not a morning person. If the early bird gets the worm, I'm always stuck pecking for leftover seed shells in the lawn, long after the morning dew has evaporated into the late spring humidity. Three weeks this summer on the river were different, though. I was hired to help remove the invasive water chestnuts from Fairhaven Bay and the Sudbury River. For this, I was happy to get up early. While the time-lapse imagery in my mind of the water chestnuts disappearing is quite the sight, there were many other things to see on the river.

A typical day consisted of arriving at the boathouse on Fairhaven Bay after fighting Concord center and Route 2 traffic. The peace, quiet and stillness of the water were calming. Having a particular dislike for arachnids, each morning before launching we would

sweep off any and all unwelcome hitchhikers aboard our kayaks. A few birds took to the air overhead: an Eastern Wood Peewee heard singing almost every morning, a banditry of Black-capped Chickadees mobbing some recent intruder, stands of Barn and Tree Swallows filling up for the day on invertebrates, and (a personal favorite of mine) a Pileated Woodpecker whose rattling "wuk" calls echoed through the surrounding canopy.

Once out on the water, we would hunt for the water chestnut plants and pull them up carefully in order to capture the seed. At the same time, looking for their morning catch, the Great Blue Herons would hunt slowly along the river shallows, keeping their heads in place until each step was complete, at which time they would snap into a newfound stillness. A bevy of Mourning Doves, perched in dead trees, would stretch their lazy wings and call out in their eerie tone, not quite that of an Owl or Loon, but a similar spooky sound. Common Grackles (which a coworker of mine affectionately called "white-eyes") manned the highest limbs in clusters of the same dead trees, while below them the Red-winged Blackbirds fluttered territorially from reed to reed, displaying their nearly incandescent epaulets, "conk-la-REE!" On the outskirts of the "forest" of marsh shrubs,

the Eastern Kingbirds made their nests. I learned this quickly when one day I found myself under the dive of an attacking Kingbird. I had come too close



Gaetan's daily view over his water chestnut bin and across Fairhaven Bay

for comfort. Upon closer attention to the waters around me, I noticed little, yellow-spotted black objects floating on the surface. While keeping my sights on one for a longer amount of time, I was surprised that it disappeared. I soon realized there were Painted Turtles all around us for the majority of the day. Watching these shelled vertebrates swim alongside my kayak was breathtaking as their command of the water is greater than one could imagine. Their size varied greatly, from smaller ones measuring less than five inches, to larger ones that were close to 10 inches in length.

There were also quite a few migrants traveling through the area. On the first day I was surprised to see a Rose-breasted Grosbeak in plain sight. While this was not a lifer for me, it was



CLCT interns l to r: Erin Duffy, Margaret O'Brien, Katharine Murphy, Gaetan L-B Dupont.

Enjoying CLCT Properties

Upcoming Events

Annual Meeting and Fall Walk

**Sunday, Nov. 2nd
at 1pm**

A postcard with details about this event will be mailed to members at the beginning of October.

Orienteering

Sunday, Oct. 19th

1:30 - 4:00pm

Musketaquid Arts and Environment, in partnership with CLCT, is offering an outing in the Simon Willard Woods that is a fun and playful introduction to orienteering.

To register go to:

www.emersonumbrella.org



Spring Walk

As a special treat for our Spring Walkers, biologist Bryan Windmiller accompanied the group on a walk on the Mattison Field loop trail, including CLCT's Hosmer Land. Along the way, we stopped at Brown's Pond, the most productive vernal pool in town. Here Bryan captured pond organisms for a highly informative show-and-tell: wood frog tadpoles, the twiggy tubes of caddisfly cases, predaceous diving beetles (one of which was ingesting a tadpole), and a water scorpion.



Peter Alden on the Riverfest Walk holding up an example of the invasive celandine.



Left (above): Charlie and Anne Irza-Leggat with Carol Dwyer; Above: investigating what we netted at Brown's Pond; Below: a water scorpion with its snorkel reaching for the air above.



Riverfest Walk

CLCT hosted a walk along the Assabet and Concord Rivers as part of the Riverfest Celebration in June. Naturalist and teacher Peter Alden was in attendance and generously shared his deep knowledge of the flora and fauna, while John Stevens spoke of the history of the area – the railroad and William Wheeler's 'subdivision'. This was an enjoyable stroll where we explored the many layers of this riverine landscape.

Thank You To...

The Garden Club of Concord for a grant of \$750 to clear a path so walkers can travel from ORNAC to CLCT's Hosmer Land.

Bryan Windmiller, Executive Director of Grassroots Wildlife Conservation, for

accompanying us on our spring walk on the Hosmer Land.

J. Walter Brain and Peter Alden for sharing their extensive knowledge of the natural world during the Spring and Riverfest Walks.

The Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) and

the River Stewardship Council for supporting CLCT's efforts to control a stand of phragmites on our Bigelow Woods property. CISMA awarded us \$500 and the RSC awarded us \$2,000.

The Cedar Tree Foundation for a grant of \$15,000 in support of the Land Trust's work in Concord.

Reflections on Fairhaven Bay

continued from page 1

still stirring to see such a bright male foraging for food along the treetops of the forest. Also, I heard the beautiful, flute-like song of another migrant - the Wood Thrush. His song weaved through trees, between branches and leaves, like sunlight finding the forest floor. I hoped to get a look at one near the river, but they were always too far away.

On the last day I was able to add one more bird to my Fairhaven Bay list, a Belted Kingfisher. We were on the eastern shore of the bay when I noticed a bird hovering about 30 feet in the air, looking into the water for around 10 seconds then suddenly diving down, full speed, straight through the surface. Seconds later he circled the bay just inches above the surface and went upriver. I saw him a few more times that

day and marveled at the bird's agility and hunting skills.

A long day's work led to buckets of water chestnuts, a thorough sunburn (my shoulders were almost as red as the epaulets of the Red-winged Blackbirds), and an empty water bottle. Afterwards I would retire home to go owling at night, wondering who really does cook for owls and what I would witness during my next day on the river. Growing up here in Concord, I have been constantly surrounded by a love for the natural world as I follow in the footsteps of so many local, famed naturalists. And as I wake to another day of work on the river, I continue to dream of putting my name along with the likes of Henry David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and David Sibley.



1. On July 12th a group of volunteers joined us to create a new trail on the Miller Farm property off of Powder Mill Road. It is shown

in the revised Trail Guide.

2. Thanks to a grant from The Garden Club of Concord, we were able to hire a contractor to clear the thicket of multi-flora rose, bittersweet, and honeysuckle that had encroached on the access trail for the Hosmer Land. Thanks to this work, it was smooth sailing for the attendees of the spring walk as shown in the picture at right.

3. It was another successful year on the river removing water chestnut plants. Once again we teamed up with the Town

of Concord, Town of Lincoln, and Mass Audubon in order to have many hands at work. There seemed to be fewer plants again this year so we plan to continue the strategy.

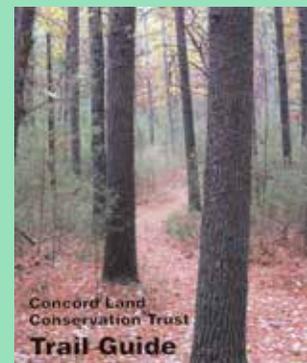
4. We applied to Concord's Natural Resources Commission and received approval to create a trail off of Lowell Road that will lead to our Hallenbeck property. We hope to complete this by the end of the year.



Spring Walk along cleared access trail to Hosmer Land.

A Message from the Chair:

We were very pleased to mail the new Trail Guide to all our members this summer. Revisions to the 2005 Guide have been in the works for a while now, and it feels good to finally finish! We hope that our members feel rewarded when they help preserve the open spaces of Concord, but we are glad to offer this very concrete benefit of membership as well. Please let us know if you would like another



copy. Non-members may purchase copies for \$10 each by stopping by our Sudbury Road office on a weekday morning.

You may have noted a change in the chairmanship of the Land Trust. After 14 years of strong and capable leadership, John Stevens has chosen to step down from being chairman (happily, he will continue serving as a trustee). I as chairman and Polly Reeve as vice chairman have together assumed the chair responsibilities. We look forward to exploring how we can insure that CLCT continues to be an active and effective organization.

Joan D. Ferguson

Joan D. Ferguson, Chairman



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Say Hello to Our New Land Manager

On April 11th Rich Vautour became the Land Trust's new part-time land manager. Rich is a graduate of the forestry program at University of Vermont and is the tree warden for the Town of Millis.

What is your favorite part of the job?

The diversity! Every day I get to spend time on a variety of properties, doing all kinds of work that I love to do. You might say I have a revolving office of beautiful surroundings!

What is your favorite property so far and why?

It's a tie, and I have given this some serious thought - the Newbury Land and the Wright Woods. Both properties have elements that I love: varied terrain, plenty of deep diversified woods loaded with wildlife, and a water feature. They each also give me a distinct feeling of relief and relaxation as I enter them.

How did you become interested in doing this type of work? I did outdoor chores at home from an early age and a friend of my Dad's who had a landscaping business gave me my first summer job when I was 13. I guess my love of working outdoors, caring for the land, and everything that comes with it started right around then.

What do you think is the biggest challenge the Land Trust faces in caring for these lands? With the caveat that I have only had a few months to get acquainted with the properties, a common concern I have for all of them is invasive species. By this I mean both their unrelenting encroachment and the amount of time it takes to wrestle them under control to the point where a regular maintenance program can be used to keep it from being a Sisyphean task every year.

I know you've only been on the job a short time, but have you encountered any interesting wildlife so far? Yes, all the time! I saw a large Northern Water Snake in the Upper Spencer Brook not too long ago and it was a sobering experience indeed! Every day is an adventure and it never gets old to watch a Red Tail Hawk rip something apart for lunch.

