

Spring Events



**Professor Scott Edwards:
2016 Richard Taylor
Environmental Lecturer:
May 4th at 7:00pm**

Harvard ornithologist and Concord resident Scott Edwards will speak about how his lab uses genomics to study the conservation and evolution of birds. The lecture will be held in the parish hall of Trinitarian Congregational Church at 54 Walden Street in Concord. Refreshments will be served at 7:00pm; the lecture will begin at 7:30pm.

**CLCT Spring Walk
Sunday, May 1st at 1:00pm**

Upper Spencer Brook Valley - we will see what the beavers have been building and take a walk through a glacial ravine. Park in the field across from 107 Westford Street. Refreshments will be served afterwards.

**Musketaquid Wild Walks
April 22, May 21, & June 12**
To register for a Musketaquid Wild Walk (co-sponsored by CLCT) go to www.theumbrellaarts.org and click on Arts and Environment.

October Farm Riverfront: A Jewel for Everyone

Opportunity is knocking, and we are answering. The Concord Land Conservation Trust is embarking on an ambitious campaign to preserve 80 acres of stunning waterfront along the Concord River. More than 100 years ago, the ornithologist William Brewster purchased this land to save it from the developer's axe. Today we have an opportunity to do the same thing—except that, this time, we can do it once and for all.

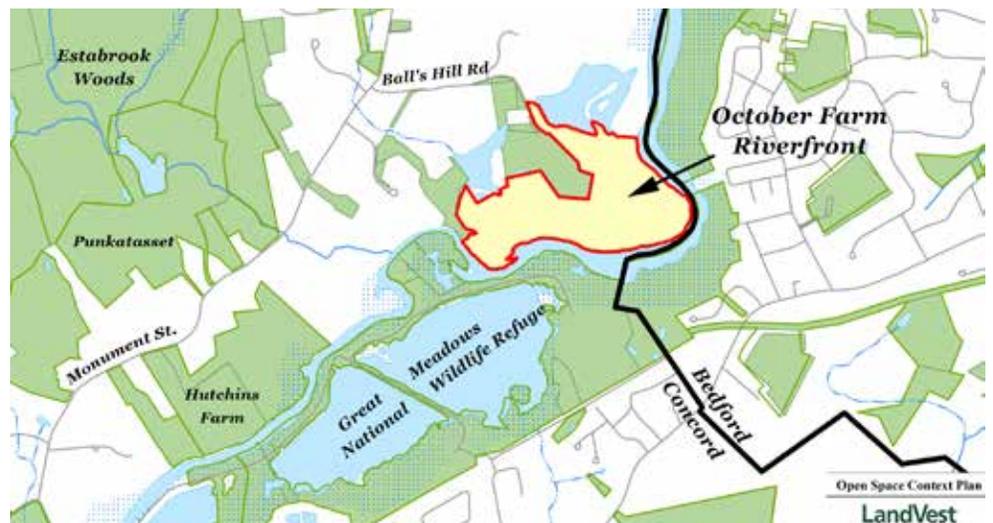
The landowner has offered to make a conservation bargain sale at a price of \$6.4 million. The Land Trust and the Town of Concord are working together to raise the funds necessary to complete the purchase. Because the Town owns abutting land reserved for drinking water wells that would be compromised by development, and because the Town has long viewed the property as a priority for preservation, in April, Town Meeting will be asked to approve the expenditure of funds to secure the property. Even if these public funds are approved, it is anticipated that preserving the land for

conservation will still require at least \$4.4 million in private contributions.

Our fundraising is still in the early phase. As with other large projects at this stage, we are accepting pledges rather than donations because we do not wish to receive gifts for a particular project until we can commit to the purchase. We will of course be asking you, our members, more directly for the support that you have so generously offered on past projects once the campaign is further along. We hope the following preview will get you interested and excited about what we consider one of the most remarkable properties in Concord.

With its ample water and topographic and vegetative diversity, the land is outstanding wildlife habitat and is a part of a larger natural vegetative area that has long been identified by the Town as a priority for protection. Spotted salamanders, wood frogs, spring peepers, and blue spotted salamanders breed in the ponds and vernal pools. A wide variety of waterfowl, shore birds, birds of prey,

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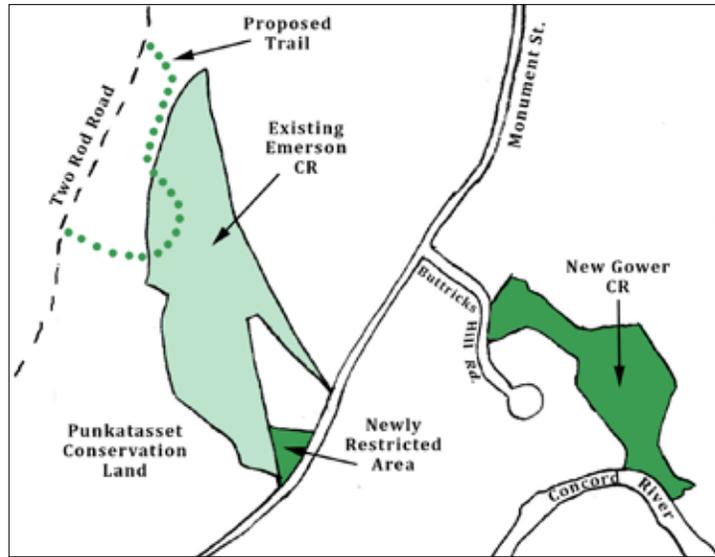


Two Families With the Same Goal — Preserving the Character of Their Land in Perpetuity

The end of 2015 saw the successful completion of two new Conservation Restrictions (CRs) that together protect 14 acres in the larger Estabrook Woods area. The first CR was donated by Jeffrey and Belinda Gower and restricts 12.7 acres; a building envelope surrounds their existing residence on Buttricks Hill Road while the rest of the property is restricted to open space uses. The CR protects wildlife habitats and wetlands systems that are recognized as ecologically significant by both the State and the Town, including 380 feet of frontage on the Concord River, across from Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. At the southern end of the property, an existing trail crosses the causeway that impounds Buttricks Hill Pond and continues to the Concord River. Although this trail does not currently connect to other publicly-accessible trails, the CR provides for public access at the time that

such connections are made.

The second conservation restriction (CR) is an Amendment to an existing



Sketch showing the new conservation restrictions and the proposed location of a new trail in the area.

CR that was donated to CLCT by David and Mary Emerson in 1987. Carrying on the family legacy, the Emerson's daughter Ellen and her husband Bruce Kohler who currently reside at the family property have added another 1.4

acres of land along Monument Street to the 22 acres already protected. The restriction also further limits the density of residential development that would be possible outside of the restricted area. The Land Trust is particularly excited by a provision in the Amendment that provides for public trail access to the woods on the north part of the property. A new trail, to be constructed this year, will create a small loop off Two Rod Road just north of Punkatasset that will take hikers through our Hutchins Land and the Emerson CR. We will be soliciting volunteer help from

our members as the trail-building season approaches!

Our thanks to the Gowers and the Emerson-Kohlers for stepping forward to protect and provide stewardship of these beautiful, natural landscapes.

December 18, 2015 – a Red Letter Day for Conservation Restrictions

A major incentive for donors of conservation restrictions is the ability to deduct the value of the restriction from their federal taxes (i.e. the value of the development opportunities that are given up when a property is restricted). These charitable deductions were first made available in 2006 but Congress had not made them permanent until they were signed into law on December 18, 2015.

For donations of conservation restrictions, an individual may deduct up to 50% of his or her income in any year (and up to 100% for qualifying farmers) and may carry forward any unused contribution for another 15 years. The Internal Revenue Code regulates CRs as 'qualified conservation contributions.' The IRS provides for generous deductions and requires that the CR meets specific conservation purposes and demonstrates public benefit; the value of the CR generally needs to be substantiated by a qualified appraisal.

Conservation restrictions represent an important tool for protecting Concord's fields and forests. Since 1984, CLCT has been granted 35 permanent restrictions covering over 325 acres.

Understanding the Impact of Deer on Forest Health

If you take a walk in the Wright Woods this summer, you may be surprised to come across fenced areas in the middle of nowhere. Called deer exclosures, these will be part of a research effort to assess the impacts of deer browse on woodland vegetation.

In our own yards, many of us can clearly see the signs of deer – yews reduced to twigs and tulips eaten to the ground. In our woods the signs are more subtle – the absence of an understory of hardwood saplings or of shrubs such as maple leaf viburnum or sweet pepperbush or a preponderance of hay scented ferns. Yet these too result from the selective browsing of deer and are evident in many areas of the Wright Woods.

The proposed exclosures will keep deer out with a high welded wire fence;

a sample plot inside and a control plot outside will provide quantifiable data over the five year research period with which to assess the impact of the deer population. The exclosures are being installed and monitored this spring as part of the Harvard Forest’s Sustainable Working Landscapes Program. This program is a collaboration between Harvard Forest and Brandeis University. Our three exclosures are being proposed for wetland edges, a habitat that is underrepresented across the exclosure network that spans Massachusetts and Connecticut.

We’re excited about the prospect of observing these exclosures and of learning in a very tangible way about the effects of deer on our woods.

Member Events

Winter Walk: Snowshoes and skis were not required when members enjoyed a sunny day walking along the Sudbury River and through our Bigelow Woods on January 31st. Normally too wet to traverse, this was a first for most people



Gordon Shaw pointing to beaver activity. Photo by Bill Huyett.

and our bushwacking was rewarded with a glimpse into the ambitious work of our local beaver population (see photo below left).

Annual Meeting: On November 1st members gathered for CLCT’s annual meeting following our fall walk around Nashawtuc Hill. We celebrated the successful acquisition of the 5.6 acre North Corner property on Sudbury Road, reelected Gordon Shaw to a three year term on the board, and discussed the conversations with members we held earlier in the year. One result of these conversations is that the land trust trail maps are now published on our website. So if you are out on the land and forgot your Trail Guide you can use your smartphone to find a map.



Ellie Horwitz at the CLCT Annual Meeting this past fall. Photo by Terri Ackerman.

Thank You, Ellie!

For the past 27 years, the Land Trust benefited from the personal commitment of Ellie Horwitz to land conservation in Concord. First elected to the CLCT board in 1988, Ellie recently decided it was time to focus more on other areas in her life including grandchildren and a new found love for Tai Chi.

Ellie’s signature program during her tenure with the Land Trust was deer management. After being approached by several abutters to Wright Woods who allowed deer hunting on their land, Ellie led the effort to create a hunting program that would make it possible for hunters on these abutting lands to pursue deer onto CLCT land.

In addition to the hunting program, Ellie organized our Taylor Environmental Lecture Series for many years in conjunction with the three high schools in town. A logistical miracle every year! The Land Trust will miss Ellie’s expert knowledge of wildlife in Massachusetts, her valuable opinion on all matters before the board, and her graphic expertise - Ellie helped design our logo! Thank you, Ellie.



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October Farm Riverfront

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and warblers and other songbirds abound there during the summer and the spring and fall migrations.

The forested landscape of hills, ponds, and riverfront we see today was formed fifteen thousand years ago when a retreating glacier left its mark on this land along the river. Deposits from glacial streams formed a line of hills. At the southwestern edge, Holden Hill rises sharply from the river with two saddleback summits. Next in line is Dakins Hill—lower and with four distinct summits. Ball’s Hill, the highest and last of the hills, ascends steeply from the riverbank where the Concord River makes its turn to the north.

A network of trails, suited variously for walking, running, cross-country skiing, and horseback riding, extends throughout the property. A broad trail with gentle contours runs along the river frontage. Narrower paths with short, steep ascents

and descents that would be an adventure on cross-country skis follow the ridge line of the hills and wind around their flanks.

There are fine views from many points throughout the area. The summits of the hills offer vistas of the river, the forested far bank, and the large impoundments of the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge. From a boat on the Concord River the view is of the hills rising from the water’s edge, unbroken by houses or other structures. Thoreau made note of the landscape’s distinctiveness in a journal entry for March 1859. He wrote of sailing on the river toward these “shining russet hills . . .” with “Ball’s Hill on the verge of this undulating blue plain, like some glorious new created island of the spring,” a sight that affected him “as something altogether ethereal.”

We who live in and appreciate Concord today benefit from the foresight and generosity of those who came



View of the Concord River from the trail running below Ball’s Hill.

before us and permanently protected the landscapes that add so much to the town’s character and are now part of our community’s common wealth. Thanks to them, many of Concord’s most valuable lands remain open and green for us and future generations. Today we have a rare opportunity to add significantly to this legacy, preserving forever one of the most important remaining unprotected natural areas in Concord.