

Keeping the Bay Open

For many years, invasive water chestnut has been present in the Sudbury River, but for a long time it seemed to be happy to remain upstream from Concord. Then it drifted downstream and, before anyone had paid too much attention, became so established that it choked slow flowing portions of the river like Fairhaven Bay and the impoundments at the Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge (GMNWR). Some summers it was difficult to paddle a canoe across the Bay.

At this point, GMNWR, the Towns of Lincoln and Concord and the Land Trust started a campaign to remove the water chestnut and restore the river to its former state. GMNWR used and made available to the other groups a water chestnut harvester that resembled a small paddle-wheel steamer. Our

property manager, Nat Marden, added an aggressive hand pulling program which reaches those areas the harvester cannot.

This summer the Land Trust hired Jaime Webster, an environmental science major at UMass Amherst, to focus exclusively on battling the water chestnut. Jaime, in turn, enlisted a number of her friends and family (including herself!) as volunteers—Kelsey Erickson, Shannon Dalton, Michael Webster, Ella and Lisa Ciuffetti, and Alyssa and Sarah Huggins. The result was a 100% harvest of the annual plant in the Bay. By getting started earlier in the season, Nat and our volunteers were able to remove the seeds before they could get rooted, so there should be a significant decrease in the number of plants that

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*A view of the Hallenbeck Land.
Photo by Kat Edwards*

Annual Meeting and Fall Walk

Sunday,
November 7th
at 1:30pm

Enjoy a guided walk through CLCT's Hallenbeck Land which includes fields, forest and a vernal pool. After the walk we will gather for a short meeting followed by refreshments.

Park in CLCT's Corey Meadow located just west of 197 Barrett's Mill Road.



Kelsey Erickson(l) and Jaime Webster(r) on the river.

Beetles to the Rescue?



Loosetrife Beetle.
Photo by David Cappaert, Michigan State University, bugwood.org

“Oh, it’s so beautiful!” This is a common reaction upon coming across a field of purple loosetrife in bloom. It may be a pretty color, but it is not a pretty sight; instead it is an alien and

invasive species that is taking over many of our wetlands.

Loosetrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) arrived in eastern North America from Europe in the early to mid-1800s. While there are native beetles and weevils in Europe to keep its growth in check, there are no natural predators here. Purple loosetrife reduces biological diversity by out-competing wetlands vegetation, such as cattails that

provide nesting habitat for birds and food and building material for muskrats. It also pushes out woolgrass, rushes and other wet meadow grasses. Loosetrife itself has low value to wildlife for food.

Last fall CLCT signed on to participate in a purple loosetrife biocontrol project initiated by the Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT) and SuAsCo CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area) partners. The project involved raising *Galerucella* spp. beetles to be released at selected sites; the Land

Trust proposed French’s Meadow as its release site. The use of these beetles for biocontrol efforts was approved by the USDA-APHIS (United States Department of Agriculture – Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) in the early 1990s.

Joan Ferguson, CLCT Trustee, notes: “Concord certainly has its share of purple loosetrife. We felt that this was the type of study where we could help with a research project in the area and hopefully, also control the proliferation of purple loosetrife on one of our properties.”

Gordon Shaw (trustee) assisted SVT

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Gordon Shaw releasing beetles

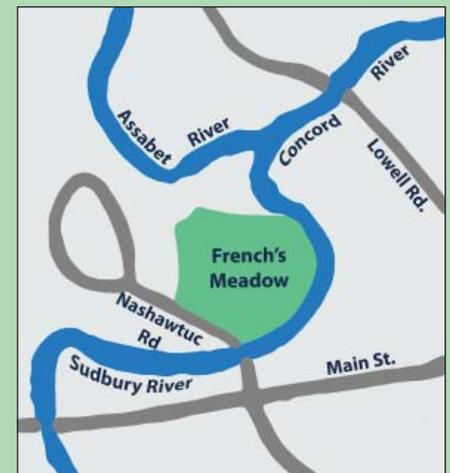
A Brief History of French’s Meadow

CLCT has owned the 29.3 acre French’s Meadow since 1961, when it was purchased for \$1,350 from Aletta French, the widow of an eminent Concord historian and writer, Allen French. It has probably been a river meadow for centuries, including the time of Concord’s founding in 1635 when it was part of a 375 acre parcel granted to Simon Willard. At that time, meadows such as this were valuable sources of fodder for oxen and other livestock. By the late 1700’s, mill dams downstream in Billerica had backed up the Concord and Sudbury Rivers and created wetter conditions in Concord’s river meadows. Even today there

are vestiges of drainage ditches in French’s Meadow, of more recent vintage of course, but still testimony to both its wetness and its long term agricultural usage.

The Willard parcel remained largely intact through the late 1800’s even as farming declined in Concord, and then it was purchased by William Wheeler. As he wrote to his father in 1879, he had in mind dividing it “into a few liberally spacious estates—two to ten acres or more, to be disposed of ... to reliable parties of the requisite character and responsibility,” today’s Nashawtuc Hill neighborhood. The Nashawtuc Road bridge was built in 1883 and the French family

house—the first house on the right after crossing the bridge—in 1908. The Land Trust has continued mowing French’s Meadow once a year to keep it open (and skatable) and to maintain it as a wet meadow.



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with the raising of the beetles, and Wick Doggett, a CLCT member and volunteer, and Joan Ferguson attended a workshop to learn how to monitor the beetles and their larvae. Then in June, four monitoring plots were established at French's Meadow. (It was interesting to see that there were already beetles

eating the loosestrife there; no doubt they migrated from Great Meadows where a similar program was started about 10 years ago.) In July we took delivery of the beetles. The next step will be to periodically monitor the plots for number of beetles and amount of damage to the loosestrife.

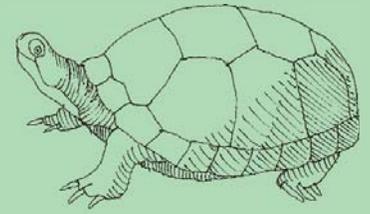


Wick Doggett, Joan Ferguson and Gordon Shaw inventory a test plot in order to create a baseline for monitoring.

Nat Marden Receives 2010 River Stewardship Award

CLCT's Property Manager, Nat Marden, received a 2010 River Stewardship Award at the Riverfest celebration hosted by SVT on June 11th. Collaborating with town governments as well as other local non-profits, Nat has devoted countless hours of his professional and personal time to combating the invasive water chestnut in the Sudbury River (see story on page 1).

In addition to this award, Nat's efforts were recognized when CLCT received a grant from the River Stewardship Council (RSC) of \$750 to help support our water chestnut harvesting in the Sudbury River. The RSC is a regional advisory group that coordinates conservation of the SuAsCo Wild & Scenic River.



Blanding's Turtle Support

In June, the Land Trust voted to continue to support the work of Bryan Windmiller in trying to halt and reverse the decline in the Blanding's turtle population in Great Meadows National Wildlife Refuge - the third largest population of this threatened species in New England. His strategies include nest protection, radiotracking of turtles for monitoring purposes and headstarting hatchling turtles. This past year he successfully raised hatchlings in classes in all three Concord elementary schools and CCHS. An experienced and inspiring teacher, Bryan gave classroom and field presentations to students on turtle ecology and rare species conservation.



Hannah Tremblay (l) and Bryan Windmiller (r) check turtle traps.



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“sprout” next year. We hope to bring Jaime back to manage an intensive volunteer hand-pulling effort in the critical months of May and June and anticipate undertaking some additional fundraising to this end. We would like to identify the river users and abutters who appreciate the beauty of this open waterway and who might support the project by contributing money or time. This extra effort has its rewards. As Jaime says, “pulling water chestnuts was dirty work, but to see the results at the end of the summer made it more than worth it. Hearing from locals on what a great job we were doing made us feel good about what we were accomplishing.”



*River shoreline before harvesting.
Photo by John Schalow*



*River shoreline after harvesting.
Photo by Jaime Webster.*