Corporal Robert Francis Hardy
Conservation Area

The parking area for this beautiful space is on Maple Street. In an hour’s walk you’ll see two ponds, and an overlook to the northern end of the Mansfield Canoe River Greenbelt, as you walk on a variety of old forest roads and woodsy paths.

Dorothy L. York Conservation Area

On Branch Street near Ware Street, this area has a short loop trail loop, with an offshoot that has a beautiful bridge over a stream.

We are inviting you to “Into the Woods Open House” with the NRT on Saturday, May 16th, from 11 am to 3 pm. Volunteers with trail maps and information about our green spaces and the Natural Resources Trust will be at the entrances of various conservation areas. Please take this moment to discover one or more of our green gems. Traveling across Mansfield, east to west, here are the places we’ll be.

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Dorothy L. York Conservation Area

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The NRT formally dedicated the WWII Veterans’ Memorial Trails on May 24th, 2014. Over twenty members, town officials, and residents attended the formal ribbon cutting. Refreshments were served, followed by a guided tour of the property.

The 17 acre parcel is secluded and peaceful for a casual walk. The new trails complement the paved rails-to-trails bike path. The main trail is about 0.6 miles and runs along Back Bay Brook, then circumvents wetlands.

The entrance is off the rails-to-trails bike path, between Fruit and Branch Streets. Parking is available at either end of the bike path. The shortest route is from Branch Street, about ¼ mile. From Fruit Street, it’s about ¾ of a mile.

The trails have been marked, with the exception of the northern portion of the red trail. The red trail is scheduled to be relocated and marked this spring.

Trail maps are available on the NRT web site and at the entrance to the trail system.

(Continued on page 2)
This year we lost a long time director and past president of the NRT. Steve Holford succumbed to his ten year fight with melanoma. He was 68.

In memory of Steve the NRT will be dedicating the main trail in the Plymouth Street Conservation Area in his honor.

The date for the dedication is set for May 2nd, 11:30 AM at the Plymouth Street trail entrance.

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Into the Woods Open House

(Continued from page 1)

Marie Strese Memorial Conservation Area

In a short distance from the York Area, on Ware Street, is the Strese Area, a part of the Mansfield Canoe River Greenbelt. There are one and a half miles of trails.

WWII Veterans Memorial Nature Trail

Off our Rails to Trails (the bike path) near Branch Street is a 17 acre nature area with a path loop, (maybe taking an hour) that overlooks a Back Bay brook and meanders through a nice wooded area.

Great Woods Conservation Area

This is Mansfield’s largest conservation area, with 5 major and 2 minor trails. The southern portion is accessed from the parking lot on Oak Street, off Elm Street; the northern portion from Judy’s Lane, off Willow Street. There is a lovely mix of meadows, brooks, woods and more.

Truly a delightful place for an afternoon’s walk.

Please check our website for further information about this walk, www.nrtma.org.

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In Memoriam

The 8th Annual Great American Cleanup of Mansfield will be held on May 2, 2015. Each year students, parents, business owners, and other residents gather to give the town of Mansfield a thorough spring cleaning. Volunteers fan out across town to pick up trash that litters our roadsides, parks, schools, and other public areas. The day concludes with a free picnic lunch at the Xfinity Center VIP tent.

Once again the NRT will be helping by cleaning up the Corporal Hardy Conservation Area. Volunteers should meet at the Maple Street entrance at 9:00 AM.

Contact Michele White at info@nrtma.org to volunteer.
Town officials, volunteers, and NRT members gather to dedicate the new WWII Vets’ Memorial Trail system.

About 30 people attended the Geocaching event held on November 9th in the Mansfield Great Woods.

NRT display at the Downtown Family Fun Night

Michele White presents the prize to Griffin Davey, age 7, “Name the Critters” contest winner.

“Edible Wild Plant & Mushroom Walk” in the Great Woods with Russ Cohn.

President Lou Andrews presents Director Emeritus certificate to Bill Flannery to honor his wife Pegge who was a founding member, secretary and director.

The Natural Resources Trust conferred the Directors’ Award to Carole Matthew. Carole served on the Conservation Commission for 16 years.
I am sick of snow! I am sick of seeing it. I am sick of moving it. I am sick of seeing pictures in the newspaper. What can we do about it? As this is being written, there is more than two feet of the lovely white stuff still in my back yard. By the time you read this, in April, hopefully all of it will be gone!

Now is the time to look toward the trails we have here in Mansfield. No, I am not going to request that you invest in snow shoes. What we can do is research and plan hikes so that when good weather and free time coincide, you are prepared to go and enjoy the outdoors without hesitation.

Let’s start by digging out the trail maps you got at Family Night, or at some other NRT event, buried who knows where. Better still, go on the NRT website and print them out. If you cannot do this, contact the NRT and we will figure out a way to supply them. These maps display adjacent streets, parking, and access as well as the trails. Now that the roads in Mansfield are passable (thank you MDPW), it is a good time to reconnoiter and become familiar with these locations. Once armed with the length of the trails, you can plan hikes of appropriate durations to accommodate the amount of time and energy available to you. It is best to start out with short hikes, and, by August, you will be ready to take on all the trails of The Great Woods. There are fewer better means of stress relief than an impromptu hike, if only for half an hour or so. We can all use a little stress relief after this winter.

Next we should gather some essentials that will make our short journeys more carefree and enjoyable. There are others who are far more qualified to make this list, but for now, I will suggest:

1) Bug spray. I’m told sprays and lotions with Deet are best. Beyond that, you are on your own. I also suggest long pants and long sleeves.

2) Hiking shoes or boots. You know if you have weak ankles. These are trails through the woods with roots and stones and all manner of things that can contribute to sprained ankles.

3) Field glasses, nature guides, and camera. You might just learn something if you are not careful. Remember to look down once in a while for those roots and such.

4) A walking stick is optional. So are trail mix and other provisions that will keep for a season.

5) A small pack to keep the above in, all but the stick. These are not major expeditions! We only want to take advantage of planned or unplanned opportunities.

Having said that, if you hike up the trail from the parking area on Maple Street at the Corporal Hardy Conservation Area, you will come to a couple of ponds that are suitable locations for a picnic lunch or perhaps even supper. Be mindful that the bugs are more active after dusk, and there are time restrictions as well. There are places in The Great Woods that qualify under my low standards. If these do not suit you, the field by the parking lot will do after a hike.

Do not look upon this exercise of trail research and assembling appropriate equipment as a chore. A little preparation now, a little at a time, will contribute to many enjoyable times when the weather does break. You will be far more likely to enjoy those unexpected opportunities when they are available. And when you can steal more than an hour or two, you will be better prepared to venture to some of the other conservation areas in the state. There is a bonus for those of us who have not taken advantage of all our conservation areas in our town. You will get to see new sights and experience nature. Remember the Boy Scout motto: be prepared!

Conservation History — April 1972

From the 1972 Annual Report.

“The board voted to adopt as our symbol the logo found on the cover of this report. It was designed by NRT member Nancy Bielan and was produced by David L. Pimental. The board felt the deer was a symbol of ecological balance and a fitting representation of our purpose”
Acquisitions Update

The NRT added 13.3 acres to its inventory of protected land in 2014 by the acquisition of two properties within the Plymouth Street conservation area. The properties abut our existing land and brings our Plymouth Street total to over 131 acres.

Thank you to John Zecher; and Hayes, Favazzo, Clancy, and Hines for their generous donations. Plans are to add signage and mark the trails this spring and summer.

We hope to acquire properties off South Main Street and Otis Street in the coming year.

The NRT now owns 379 acres and has conservation restrictions on another 403 acres.

Stewardship Update - Colin Cauldwell, Stewardship Director

Twenty-fourteen was a busy year for the Stewardship Committee. Our main focus was readying the World War II Veterans’ Memorial nature trails for public use. To that end several projects were undertaken on that property. All existing trails were cleared marked and mapped, a sign was installed along the rails to trails at the entrance of our property, a small bridge was built over a ditch at the entrance to facilitate access, a large informational sign was constructed and placed along the Red Trail just inside the entrance to the property providing maps and other information about the property and the NRT. A small portion of the Red Trail remains to be completed. A tentative route has been flagged after meeting with neighbors to ensure that the trail avoided their property. This portion of the trail should be ready this spring.

The Strese property also received quite a bit of attention. All trails were cleared and marked, a new entrance sign was erected along Ware St. and a new informational sign was installed in the parking area. Two Eagle Scout projects proposed for the property remain to be completed. They included a small bridge and a short board walk. There completion is problematic at this point but they still need to be under taken at some point.

The Corporal Hardy property also received some much needed attention. Michele White organized a cleanup of the property in conjunction with the Keep Mansfield Beautiful (as she does every year). We used this as an opportunity to also mark all the trails on the property, install maps and directional signage at trail intersections and to update other signage on the property.

At the York property a truck load of metal debris was removed although more needs to be removed.

Much was accomplished during the past year. Much remains to be done.

Thank you to everyone who volunteered.
2014 Officers and Board of Directors

Officers

President: Lou Andrews  
Vice-President: Gerry Huiskamp  
Secretary: Meredith Holford  
Treasurer: Deborah Snyder

Board of Directors

Colin Cauldwell, Stewardship Director  
Leonard Flynn, Acquisitions Director  
Lisa Dye  
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Janice Meszoely  
Steve Pyne  
John Russo  
Jane Sheehan (Life member)  
Tod Snyder  
John Southard  
Michele White

Director Emeritus: Harry Chase; Pegge Flannery

The NRT welcomes new members!

Your membership is important to help us maintain our quest to protect Mansfield’s natural resources.

Individual or Family Membership is only $25.00 per year.  
Lifetime membership is $500.00

Mail your dues to:  
The NRT  
255 Fruit Street  
Mansfield, MA 02048

or pay online with PayPal at  
our web site: www.nrtma.org.

The NRT is a 501(C)(3)  
Corporation. Your dues and donations are tax-deductible.

Thank you for your support.

A color version of this newsletter is available on our website.