MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Your membership is important to us. It allows us to continue our mission to increase Mansfield’s open space and maintain the many miles of trails on our conservation land. Please renew. Details are on page 6
Thank You

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 47th NRT Annual Meeting
  Thurs, April 26th, 7:00 PM
  Mansfield Historical Society
  Jenny Copeland House
  53 Rumford Avenue
  The public is invited.
  Refreshments will be served.
- Great American Cleanup
  April 28th. See page 4 for details.
- Annual Town Meeting - May 15th
- Family Fun Night - July 10th
  6-9 PM Downtown Mansfield

Check our website or Facebook for upcoming nature walks.

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NRT Report

Natural Resources Trust of Mansfield, Inc.

The public is invited to attend a presentation “Songbirds of the Northeast” featuring both images and recordings of our local songbirds by naturalist John Root at 7:00 PM on Thursday, April 26, at the Mansfield Historical Society, 53 Rumford Ave. in Mansfield.

Perennials for edible landscaping and attracting birds, butterflies, and other beneficials will be offered for sale.

John has presented nature and gardening programs at libraries, senior centers, schools, garden clubs, and other venues throughout New England.

The NRT will hold its annual meeting following the presentation.

Naturalist John Root to present at NRT Annual Meeting

As part of the Town’s new Open Space Plan, the Board of Selectmen established a five member Open Space and Recreation Committee: one member each from the Recreation Commission, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, and two at-large members appointed by the Board of Selectman. The Committee is charged with the following:

- Review new Open Space Recreation Plan (OSRP) goals and objectives and recommend implementation strategies.
- Review and recommend updates as appropriate.
- Maintain and update inventory of Town owned Open Space.
- Develop and maintain a list of target properties for future protection based on OSRP.
- Work with private property owners and non-profits to identify opportunities to preserve priority Open Space.
- Work with Town staff to develop funding mechanisms for future acquisitions and maintenance of existing Open Space.
- Make recommendations to Board of Selectman, Con. Com. Rec. Com. and Town Meeting regarding acquisition and management of Open Space.
- Work with Con. Com. regarding stewardship of existing passive recreation parcels.
- Work with Rec. Com. regarding stewardship of existing Recreation facilities.

The Committee has been authorized for one year.

Town Forms Open Space Committee - by Colin Cauldwell
Stewardship Update—by Colin Cauldwell, Stewardship Director

The following projects were undertaken on NRT and Town Conservation areas last year.

Strese Property: The Strese trails were mapped and cleared. Maps were updated and new signage was installed. All trails were marked. The NRT also coordinated, designed and helped install a new bridge on the Blue Trail as part of an Eagle Scout project (see below).

WWll Vets’ Nature Trail: All trails were cleared with the help of volunteers from Atria Group Distribution Co. and NRT members (see below). Four signs were installed along the bike path delineating our land on the west side of the trail. These signs have slowed but not eliminated the dumping of yard waste on our property.

Sweet-Kalnins Property: I coordinated an Eagle Scout project to remove prodigious amounts of trash which had accumulated on the property. A new loop trail was developed and marked as part of the same project. The NRT installed new signage at the entrance to the property along Otis St. and at the beginning of the Red Trail.

Plymouth St. Property: A new trail was constructed on NRT property adjacent to the soccer fields, with the help of a neighbor, Gary Levine. The trail traverses two private parcels not owned by the NRT as well as recreation land. Signage and trail markings were installed along the trail. The trail could not have been built without the use of this additional land. Thank you to land owners Jeffrey Christian and John Southard!

Finally, four signs were installed along Plymouth St., marking NRT property.

Future projects: We plan to apply for a grant to build a replacement boardwalk on the Plymouth Street yellow trail, and complete trails and markings on new trails at Taylor’s Hill and the Dot York properties.

New Boardwalk on the Strese Conservation Area

The NRT sponsored Dennis Burke’s Eagle Scout project to replace a battered boardwalk on the Marie Strese Memorial Conservation Area. The new boardwalk crosses wetlands on the northern part of blue trail.

NRT Stewardship Chairman Colin Cauldwell coordinated the project. Dennis required approval of the Conservation Commission. Helping Dennis build the boardwalk were Paul Plisinski, Matt Griffin, Harrison Kipp, and Dan O’Connell.

Entrance to the Strese property is on Ware Street near the corner of Branch Street. Trail maps are available on the NRT web site.

WWll Veterans’ Memorial Nature Trails Cleared

Volunteers from the Altria Group Distribution Company did a great job clearing trails.

(l-r) Robert Sears, Liz Silva, Alexis Strack, Sara Secondi, Fred Ebenau, and Eric Sturgeon

Sharon Freeman with her heavy duty weed whacker, and John Southard with his DR brush cutter.

A special thanks to Mairead Shannon (right) and Meredith Cowen from St. Mary's for lending a hand in clearing the trails.
“Name the Critters’ Contest Winner

Madeline McGee is 7 years old and headed to second grade in Mansfield this fall. She's an avid reader, especially when it comes to stories about animals. Each week she gets out to hike the local trails or fish a local pond with family. She came in second place in the Mansfield youth fishing derby this past spring and still likes to practice casting lures to eager fish during the summer. She's a big fan of blue herons, blue birds, orioles, rabbits, mice, and deer. While not a huge fan of bugs, she once had a pet ant named “Peanut.” The prize was a bird book for beginners and bird quick reference guide.

NRT donates to town projects

The NRT donated $5,000.00 for trees and benches at Fulton Pond and two elm trees for the South Common. The town’s Fulton Pond project is scheduled for this spring. A special thanks to Anthony Cogliano of Blueview Nursery for providing the South Common elm trees at greatly reduced cost.

“This Old Town” books still available

At first glance Mansfield does not seem a remarkable town. Located in southeastern Massachusetts, 45 minutes drive from Boston, 30 from Providence, in recent years it has become an outer suburb, a bedroom community of 23,000 (2010 census).

Once it was farmland, later industrial. Changes in the past 50 years have been so rapid that many of its earlier features no longer exist. Change from the 1640’s to the 1960’s progressed at a slower pace.

This collection of Harry Chase’s articles, mostly from The Mansfield News from 1967-2016, includes stories from its earliest settlement and history, its people and how they lived, its geography, natural features, climate and weather, its early coal mines and railroads, and Harry’s own memories of growing up in “This Old Town.”

There is much to enjoy in reading Harry Chase’s stories. Information on how to order is on our web site www.nrtma.org.
If you get lost in the woods today...

If you get lost in the woods today it may be because of this.

John Russo found an article on the BBC news website. It reported that a group of hikers got lost because they were following their compass. Apparently the compass had been in a pocket next to a cell phone case that had a magnetic clasp. The magnet had reversed the polarity of the needle!

Mountaineering Scotland warned that an increasing amount of outdoor clothing and equipment is now available with magnetic latches for pockets. These also have the potential for permanently altering a compass.

The phenomenon of reversed polarity has been publicized previously in mountaineering circles. People are advised to keep their compasses well away from magnets and mobile phones.

Evidence of Old Bridge

For years we have attempted to find the abutments for the old bridge that forged the Rumford River at South Main Street. We tried by walking along the shoreline. It took Tod Snyder, by walking down the river, to find them.

We hope that some day we will be able to build a new bridge so there is access to the Taylor’s Hill parcel from South Main Street.

Great American Cleanup

Once again Michele White will organize the NRT clean-up of the Corporal Hardy Conservation Area. Volunteers are needed. Thanks Michele.

For more information e-mail info@nrtma.org or just meet at the Maple Street entrance at 9:00 AM sharp, on April 29th. See you there.

Leonard F. Flynn Environmental Scholarship

The NRT selected Julie Romano as the winner of the Leonard Flynn Environmental Scholarship for 2017.

Julie will be majoring in conservation biology at State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry. The award was given by Mary Kate Flynn at the scholarship ceremonies on May 30th.

Congratulations and best of luck to Julie.

Deadline for applications for this year’s scholarship is April 30th.

Visit the NRT website www.nrtma.org for details.
Acquisitions Update – Tod Snyder, Acquisitions Director

In 2017, we acquired a 16.6 acre parcel of land located off Gilbert Street, in an area which was declared a Habitat of Potential Regional and Statewide Importance by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection. We considered this a desirable acquisition not only because of its important location and need for protection, but also because the ownership gives us standing in the area and therefore the ability to speak on any issue that could arise which would adversely affect the area.

With this acquisition, the NRT owns 37 parcels for a total of 423 acres, plus 404 acres of conservation restrictions.

The Acquisitions Committee continues to target properties that meet our criteria of preservation of open space for public use, the preservation and protection of wildlife areas and historic sites, or are located in important protection areas.

Trails Hit Hard

The winter storms wreaked havoc with our trails. Virtually every trail has fallen trees. We ask for your patience, as it will take many weeks to return the trails to a walkable condition. During this time we urge you to take extra care when walking.

Green Community

Town Manager Kevin Dumas would like Mansfield to a become a Green Community.

The Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources Green Communities Act provides grants to municipalities that adopt a series of energy efficiency policies and set a goal of reducing their energy consumption by 20 percent within five years.

The NRT supports this effort to join the other 185 Green Communities in the Commonwealth.

For more information visit the Mass.gov web site at www.mass.gov/orgs/green-communities-division

On a similar topic –There is an article at the year’s Annual Town Meeting to limit the use of plastic bags. We encourage you at attend and vote in favor of the article.

Outreach Committee Report - by Sally Fehervari, Outreach Chairperson

This year’s Outreach efforts saw an expansion of the information tables, as seen at Family Fun Night last July, to include the Park and Recreation Dept.’s Holiday Craft Fair November 18th, and soon, the Relay for Life in Foxboro. The latter will be the first combined event for Mansfield, Sharon, and Foxboro, and many organizations will have tables. If you are going to Relay for Life, please contact me if you are able to help at the table from 4 to 6 pm, Saturday June 16th.

These information tables continue to be a most effective way to reach Mansfield residents, and a huge debt of gratitude to those who assisted in these efforts. The November Crafts Fair turned out to be a huge success, since between Mary Kate Flynn, Lou Andrews, and me, we sold over $400 of books! Thank you everyone for your help. If you would like to join in our outreach efforts, please contact me at sgfehervari@gmail.com.

Did you know?

Earth Day is an annual event celebrated on April 22. Worldwide, various events are held to demonstrate support for environmental protection. First celebrated in 1970, Earth Day events in more than 193 countries are now coordinated globally by the Earth Day Network.

Mansfield Conservation History

Environmental Affairs Secretary Trudy Coxe delivered a $60,610 grant toward the purchase of the 71 acre Scott/Goyea Farm. The check was for a self help grant under the Scenic and Natural Diversity program.

At last, the town has formed an Open Space Committee! The NRT has been advocating for the committee for many years. I hope the committee will meet its objectives (see article on page 1) and that the town will follow its recommendations. Thanks to NRT Directors Colin Cauldwell and Sharon Freidman for volunteering to serve on the committee.

As this newsletter shows, we had another great year. I want to thank our members and especially committee chairs for all their good work.

In the coming year, in addition to our normal activities, I hope to expand our trails at the Dot York and Taylor’s Hill properties, build a new boardwalk at Plymouth Street, and acquire more critical parcels.

Again, we are fortunate we live in Massachusetts where protecting our environment is a high priority.

Don’t forget to attend our annual meeting on April 26th.

Lou