



The Heron

SPRING-SUMMER 2011

ISSUE NO. 24

The Newsletter of the Mattapoissett Land Trust, Inc. • www.mattlandtrust.org • E-mail: info@mattlandtrust.org

The Mattapoissett River Valley

Protecting the watershed

by Brendan Annett

Vice President, Watershed Protection

The Coalition for Buzzards Bay

The Mattapoissett River Valley is a critical natural resource to both the Town of Mattapoissett and the region as the aquifer underlying the river and the valley serves as the primary source of drinking water for Mattapoissett and the surrounding towns. The importance of protecting land in the valley is reflected in the Town's Master Plan, Community Preservation Plan and Open Space Plan, all of which specifically identify this area as a priority for land conservation. There has been much success protecting land here with significant efforts underway to continue the trend. This spring Mattapoissett Town Meeting will vote to approve contributing Community Preservation Act funds toward the protection of 33 acres of land along the river immediately adjacent to an existing MLT Preserve west of North Street.

In recent months, The Coalition for Buzzards Bay has made great strides in protecting the important watershed lands of the Mattapoissett River Valley. These lands are part of the organization's Bay-focused conservation plan which identifies several "priority protection areas" across the region. These areas generally surround the primary tributary rivers of the Bay watershed, such as the Mattapoissett, and over the years the Coalition has assisted partners in protecting over 600 acres of the river valley. This year, with help from a variety of partners and funders, the Coalition has acquired, or helped protect, another 220 acres, including about a mile of frontage along the river itself, in Mattapoissett and adjacent towns. Agreements are in place to conserve another 280 acres over the next year including critical parcels in Mattapoissett.

Protecting land along the Mattapoissett River is critical to

Bay health because poorly planned development around this major tributary would certainly lead to increased pollution levels in the harbor and Buzzards Bay. In addition, the river, as well as the woodlands and wetlands that surround it, are important habitat for birds, wildlife, and fish, including the extraordinary run of river herring. Finally, the Mattapoissett River Valley aquifer is a critical source of drinking water for tens of thousands of people in the towns of Mattapoissett, Marion, Fairhaven and Rochester. Vegetation, such as forests, marshes and swamps, along a river's edge are naturally efficient at reducing pollution helping to keep the river and the Bay clean. Protecting watershed lands in these critical areas along the river, directly benefits water quality in the Bay and the important fish runs in this river while ensuring a safe drinking water resource vital to the long term sustainability of our communities.

At Town Meeting, this coming May, voters will be asked to approve \$88,345 (recommended by the Community Preservation Committee) to help the Town Water and Sewer Department acquire 33 acres of forested land along the river adjacent to MLT's Elegancia Estates Preserve and the North Woods neighborhood. CBB has secured an agreement to acquire the property and if funding is approved by Town Meeting will assign its right to purchase the property to the Town. CBB will also direct federal land protection grant funds that it has received to the Town to cover the remainder of the \$300,000 total purchase price.

The property to be acquired is primarily upland forest with wetlands by the river. It contains well rounded conservation values, offering excellent passive outdoor recreation opportunities in addition to benefitting wildlife habitat and water protection. It includes a unique forest including large holly and beech trees and already contains a network of very pleasant trails which lead to a high bank with an interesting overlook of the river. The property contains unusual highlands along the river and is threatened with development of 5 or more home sites. Combined with the adjacent MLT preserve, it will provide 46 acres of contiguous conservation land with opportu-

nities for connecting trails.

This is clearly an exciting and important land conservation project on its own, but when considered in light of adjacent protected property and the larger effort to protect Mattapoisett River Valley lands, it is an opportunity that should not be lost. We hope you will support the project at Town Meeting this spring and encourage your friends and neighbors to do the same.

34 Barstow Unit E

MLT's new digs



After 36 years of hauling records, maps and documents between the homes of various directors and living out of a post office box, the MLT has finally rented a physical space in 34 Barstow Street, the same building that holds Habitat for Humanity.

The space is small, 10' by 10', but it offers space for a desk with a printer and shelving for all of our records. We even have a parcel map of Mattapoisett on the wall to aid our preservation discussions.

During the spring we will have office hours on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., or by appointment. Office hours during the summer are uncertain at this time.

When you come to visit, enter from the north end of the building, the side facing the Fire House. Then follow the signs to the end of the hall. We'll show you what we're doing but might ask for your help to do more. Welcome.

Mattapoisett River Valley Land Protection



Why Native Plants should be a part of our Garden Landscapes

By Sandy Hering

Gardening with native plants has advocates for many reasons:

- We have become aware of the dangers of invasive plants.
- Many gardeners want 'roots into the ground' to reflect the plants that grew locally long before the land was 'settled'.
- Some gardeners are aware of the nitrogen and pesticide demands of traditional lawns and exotic plants and try to move away from such pollution-generating practices which and environmentally damage green space.
- Some alert biologists are acutely aware of the need for biodiversity on the planet.
- Some gardeners are aware that native plants are often less demanding in terms of water, fertilizers, fungicides and pesticides.



Asclepias tuberosa (Butterfly Weed),
Photo William Cullina, copyright New
England Wild Flower Society

Dr. Tallamy, Newark, DE is an entomologist, studying insects and their role in our world. He is not a gardener or horticulturist by trade. His main premise as to why we should be using fewer imported and exotic species in our gardens is that the insects that feed on plants and support the next chain of life, such as birds and small animals, cannot feed on 'exotic' species that now dominate much of our suburban landscapes. Because of this, we are losing a critical link in maintaining the ecosystems of our planet.

The book documents that over 95% of the land in the contiguous 48 states is considered 'disturbed land', and shows how this has affected the many birds that we see and hear, or don't see and hear today. He

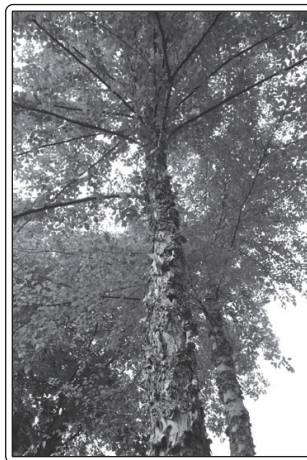


Asclepias tuberosa seeds, Photo John
Lynch, copyright New England Wild
Flower Society

A new approach to why we should plant more native species is an easy read for any of us, in Doug Tallamy's new book. Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants. Dr. Tallamy, University of Dela-

cites a reduction of 50% of bird populations in America today compared to 50 years ago.

To quote the book, "There simply are not enough native plants left in 'the wild'—that is, not enough undisturbed habitat remaining in the United States—to support the diversity of wildlife most of us would like to see survive into the distant future."

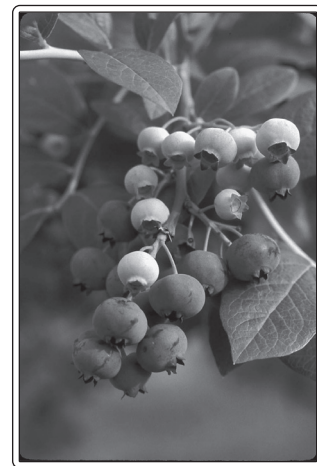


Betula nigra (River Birch),
Photo Steven Ziglar,
copyright New England
Wild Flower Society

elsewhere in the remaining wild areas such as land trusts, preserves and parks. The cost to eliminate such invasive species is often beyond the scope of our park department and land conservation trust budgets. Your single step of committing to the removal of any plants on your property that are on the invasive list is a great first step.

The next step is also easy. Tallamy doesn't ask us to rip out our current plantings, but simply to plant more native species. His book has lists of native plants to help us choose the varieties, but, importantly, it is not about stripping the landscape barren, but about planting more diversity which will lead to a diversity of insect, bird and small animal populations. It is exactly the diversity of populations which help keep major infestations controlled, according to entomologist Tallamy.

Please visit the Mattapoisett Land Trust web site blog for a complete list of the plants that are determined to be invasive in Massachusetts. In addition, the following books are excellent references for more information: Leopold, Donald J. Native Plants of the Northeast: A Guide for Gardening & Conservation, 2005; and Tallamy, Doug. Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants, 2009.



Vaccinium corymbosum
(High Bush Blueberry),
Photo John Lynch, copyright
New England Wild Flower
Society

Tax Help for Landowners

by Gary P. Johnson

Since the revaluation of property values a couple of years ago, we have heard a number of stories about landowners who are having a hard time paying their greatly increased tax bills on undeveloped land. It appears that many of them may be unaware that the Commonwealth does have programs that can reduce a taxpayers obligation by 75% or more. We hope that our members and friends will become aware of these programs and pass along the information to friends who may be affected.

Land that receives this tax deduction is generally called "Chapter Land" and includes three different categories:

- Chapter 61 - Forestry, requires a minimum of 10 acres and a registered forestry plan
- Chapter 61A - Agriculture/Horticulture, requires a minimum of 5 acres and annual income of \$500 from agriculture or horticulture
- Chapter 61B - Recreation, requires a minimum of 5 acres in an open and natural state

Most landowners that are eligible for Chapter 61 or 61A are probably already aware of these programs, but other landowners may wish to consider Chapter 61B. In order to enroll in the program the land must either have special environmental characteristics, for example provide habitat for threatened or endangered species, or the landowner must allow passive recreation for the public. Passive recreation would include activities such as hiking, hunting, horseback riding, or other non-destructive activities, the kinds of activities that the MLT allows on its land. After enrolling in the program the tax bill for the land must be reduced by at least 75%.

Of course a tax reduction comes with restrictions. If one wishes to change the use of the property (other than putting it into another Chapter program), the owner must either wait 5 years, while paying the full tax rate, or pay back taxes and interest. Also, the town would have the right to acquire the land if it were going to be sold.

We believe that the Chapter 61 programs are a great way to

keep undeveloped land in private hands to the benefit of the public. If you're interested in the program, however, you must file your application by October 1st for the fiscal year beginning the following July 1st. While we are not experts in tax law or the assessor's procedures, we would welcome the chance to discuss the Chapter 61 programs with any landowner and try to put the landowner in contact with the appropriate experts. It would be a shame if more sensitive land were developed in Mattapoisett simply because landowners didn't know of the help that is available.

MLT walks the Brownell Parcel

Your support is critical

The Mattapoisett Land Trust invited the public to join members and friends on Saturday, February 12 as we visited the Brownell parcel, the property that the MLT hopes to acquire in June of this year. Gary Johnson led us as we examined the current condition of the blueberry orchard and proceeded along the existing trails to the stone wall on the southern boundary. A video is available on You Tube (ZyLhdobokW0).



Gary Johnson led MLT members and friends on a visit to the Brownell parcel off Route 6 (photo by Peter Mello)

The walk demonstrated why the Brownell parcel is an important addition to the holdings of the Land Trust.

To support this acquisition, contact the MLT at 774-377-9191, or visit our website WWW.MATTLANDTRUST.ORG and click on CONNECT/DONATE.

MattLandTrust.org is Designed for Action!

Our website has been fully redesigned. We are making it easier for you to learn about what we do and why it's important.

You will find a calendar of MLT activities that take place throughout the year.

Comment on your visits to the MLT properties in the Stewardship Log.

Join our Flickr and YouTube groups and submit photos and videos of the properties.

Stay up to date on MLT news and events in our Blog.

We encourage you to experience our properties and appreciate their biodiversity.

We hope you will consider supporting our mission by becoming a member or volunteering.

The MLT Education Commitment

"Education is no longer just a pathway to opportunity and success, it's a prerequisite for success."

President Barack Obama's Education Speech Delivered on March 10, 2009.

By Ellen P. Flynn



In the year 2011, what are the significant priorities for the role of education within the Mattapoisett Land Trust, and how do these priorities play out in the lives of our community's children, whether they are in early childhood, pre-teens, or upper classmen looking at colleges? When the Land Trust offers support through scholarship or sponsoring, and/or participating in events for children, its priority is to help provide and connect with the lives of Mattapoisett residents and to help prepare them to compete ultimately on a global level. We offer that extra bit of assistance to determine and instill a conscious awareness toward a career path. The Land Trust is about placing light in the paths of our children so that they can achieve long-range goals, those goals that lead to success.

Here is a list of significant priorities with opportunities that the Land Trust has added to its fundamental philosophy on education during this year.

1. Offer stewardship to students, while they assume an active role in Land Trust activities, whether it be designing to build a bridge over a river, clearing trails, or working closely with board members to plan out strategies for future land.
2. Vigorously support education with financial assistance:
 - a. Award a \$1000.00 Scholarship to a graduating senior of Mattapoisett
 - b. On April 8, 2011 we will provide bus transportation for the third grades at Center School to attend the Richard Wheeler Educational Center at the Coalition for Buzzards Bay.
 - c. Provide funds for high school students for the study of vernal pools, and evaluate scientific materials found on Land Trust sites.
3. Take an active role in school events and fairs and expositions.
4. Provide educational walks on our properties to highlight data about natural resources and the environment.
5. Offer free entertainment for families, with an educational flair about wildlife and preservation.

During the pursuit of our priorities we examine dreams for our children and for their future and with this task we have the understanding that the Land Trust holds dear to its mission, of "preserving land in order to enrich the quality of life for present and future generations, of Mattapoisett residents and visitors" which adds to the ability to see the world with a new vision, a clear, clean new environment, one with new growth alongside of new partners, our children, who will help become guardians of the land and sea.

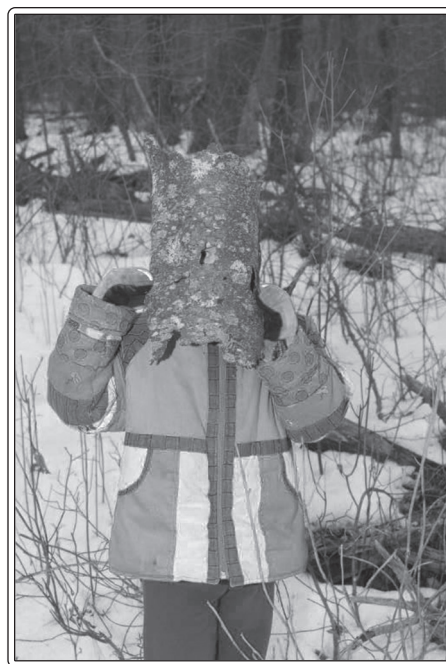
To assist the Land Trust's responsibility for educational priorities a bequest left to the organization by Edith Glick Shoolman, for children in the community, is our means of available funding. We are always looking for volunteers, students, teachers, or retired educators to join us in our challenges to attain success for our children.



The Mattapoisett Land Trust is partnering with Old Hammondtown school for upcoming events. First event planned is a tour of the school garden lead by fifth grade science teacher Kevin Tavares, date TBA, on our web site. Watch for all our upcoming future activities!

To join our commitment you can contact, Ellen P. Flynn, Chairman of Education, elflynn@vassar.edu, or call the MLT at 774-377-9191

Photos by Peter Mello



MLT members attend convocation

Organized by The Compact of Cape Cod Conservation Trusts



Brendan Annett (far left) from the Coalition for Buzzard's Bay pictured with MLT board members (from left) Kathy Bohan, Elizabeth Leidhold, Jenny Mello, Luana Josvold, Ellen Flynn and Gary Johnson attending The Southeastern Massachusetts Land Trusts Convocation.

The Southeastern Massachusetts Land Trusts Convocation was held on Saturday, February 5, 2011 in Bourne.

Speakers covered a range of subjects from trail construction, fund-raising, land preservation and "Undevelopment" of damaged lands back to their original, natural state. The convocation was both educational and inspiring and left all board members with a renewed energy and commitment to the importance of preserving open space in Mattapoisett for future generations to enjoy.

We would like to hear from you!

Whether your contributions come in the form of tax-deductible financial gifts or through volunteer services, your support matters! Your annual membership contributions support the operating expenses of the MLT. Mowing, inspections, forestry services, trash pick-up, legal and accounting advice are all part of what keeps the organization vital and growing. In addition, whether you are concerned about preserving the scenic beauty of Mattapoisett, maintaining its biodiversity, or fear the degradation of Buzzards Bay waters from septic systems and chemical run-off, there are many ways you can volunteer your time and services, allowing for the enjoyment and education of future generations.

To become a member of the MLT, renew your membership, or learn more about upcoming events and volunteer opportunities, check out our website: mattlandtrust.org, or e-mail us at info@mattlandtrust.org. We would like to hear from you and welcome any suggestions or comments!



The Mattapoisett Land Trust

Blanche B. Perry Scholarship

for a resident graduating from secondary school pursuing an education in environmental studies or a related field.

Land Trust seeks scholarship applicants

The Mattapoisett Land Trust is pleased to announce its annual \$1,000.00 "Blanche B. Perry Scholarship Award" to a Mattapoisett senior graduating by June 2011, from secondary school pursuing an education in scientific, environmental studies or a related field.

The scholarship is made available through the Edith Glick Shoolman fund, a bequest left to provide support for children in the community. The scholarship is consistent with the MLT mission of preserving land in order to enrich the quality of life for present and future generations of Mattapoisett residents and visitors and of furthering environmental education in the community.

Along with the application, the following additional information is required:

1. A Personal Statement about career goals as they relate to the mission of the MLT, past and present.
2. A signed Community Service Form documenting a minimum of 20 hours of community service.
3. Professional letter of reference (teacher or guidance counselor)
4. A Character letter of reference (such as employer, Scout leader, community leader, and or neighbor).
5. Official school transcript including credits and class rank.

The application forms will be found in guidance offices at the local public and private schools or at the MLT website, WWW.MATTLANDTRUST.ORG after March 1, 2011

The deadline for submitting the forms will be April 25, 2011.

Honor Your Loved Ones

The following individuals or groups have chosen in the last six months to honor their loved ones through donations to the Mattapoissett Land Trust.

In memory of Cyrus Cady:

Donna Sawyer
Delmar, NY

In memory of Barry N. Lindia:

Thom Miller & Ann Buckley
Mission Viejo, CA

In memory of Earle Barrett Holden

Theresa Gomes
North Dartmouth, MA

In memory of Sally Ainsworth:

Victor & Rosamond Pierce
Felton, DE

In honor of the Birthday of Bill Cantor:

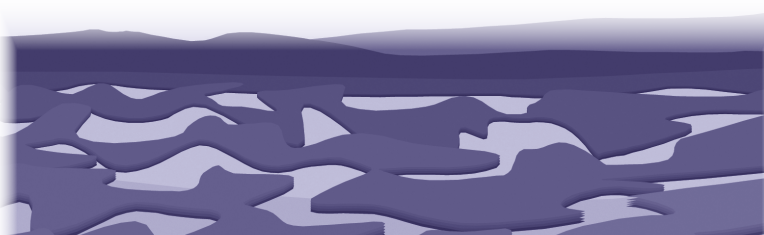
Sheldon & Elizabeth Hill
Mattapoissett, MA

Thank you for your generous contributions which will be used to further our mission of protecting the land and environment of Mattapoissett for generations to come.

Wetlands Bylaw at Town Meeting

Town voters who attended Special Town Meeting in the fall will remember that the Meeting was faced with two proposed wetlands bylaws, one proposed by the Conservation Commission and a second proposed by a founding member of the MLT, Brad Hathaway. Brad's proposal had been written with the help of the Coalition for Buzzards Bay. The two proposals were similar except for the setback provision creating a buffer around wetlands. The Commission proposed a 10-foot setback while Brad proposed 50 feet. Since the bylaws were the last articles to be considered and there had been little public information about the proposed bylaw, both bylaws were tabled with the understanding that more public input would be encouraged and a new proposal for a wetlands bylaw would be brought to regular Town Meeting in the spring.

The Conservation Commission has held public meetings this winter to draft a new bylaw for the annual Town Meeting in May. (At the time of this



writing the final version has not been drafted.) The setback provision will likely remain 10 feet (15 feet for new construction) which is less than what other towns in the area have done. For example, Rochester has a 25-foot setback requirement. But the bylaw will make it more difficult for developers to overturn a Commission ruling by appealing to the Commonwealth.

We are impressed with the Commission's willingness to listen to ideas for making the bylaw workable for landowners in town (we have offered a few) while at the same time providing the Commission with the tools it needs to protect the wetlands that filter our fresh and salt water. We hope that our members will become familiar with the final draft of the bylaw and then attend Town Meeting to let their voices be heard.

Our mission statement proclaims: "We preserve land in order to enrich the quality of life for present and future generations of Mattapoissett residents and visitors." The new wetlands bylaw will help preserve the water for those same generations. Please consider giving it your support.

THE HERON is published bi-annually by the Mattapoissett Land Trust.

The MLT, formed in 1974, is a non-profit, tax-exempt charitable organization incorporated under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Its purpose is to preserve open space for the enjoyment of current and future residents of Mattapoissett, as well as to educate the public about the sound use of natural resources, and to work with other organizations having the same goals.

Our membership consists of annual contributors—our primary source of revenue—and a volunteer Board of Directors: Kathy Bohan, Don Cuddy, Sandra Dawson, Ellen Flynn, Sandra Hering, Luana Josvold, Elizabeth Liedhold, Lou Martin, Jenny Mello, Paul Osenkowski, Charles Radville, and Gary P. Johnson, President.

The MLT is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization. All contributions are fully tax deductible.

Mattapoissett Land Trust, Inc.

P.O. Box 31

Mattapoissett, MA 02739

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Layout and Design by Charles Radville

MLT Merchandise is now available online

You can now order Tee shirts (short and long sleeve), hats, and other MLT branded merchandise in our secure online store.

Just go to the MLT website, www.mattlandtrust.org, and click on the "SHOP" link at the top of the page.

Browse through our organic cotton Tee shirts, a tote made from recycled materials, aluminum water bottles and more.

Checkout through PayPal and choose shipping or pickup at the Mattapoissett Free Public Library.



Mattapoisett Land Trust, Inc.
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Calendar — 2011 Spring and Summer Activities

All Mattapoisett Land Trust events are free and open to the public

check www.mattlandtrust.org/calendar for up-to-date information

Vernal Pool Certification Workshop

Part 1: Talk by Elizabeth Liedhold

Wed. April 13, 2011

6:30 - 8:00 PM

Mattapoisett Library

Part 2: Field trip. Meet at Dunseith Gardens at Route 6 and North Street

Sat. April 16, 2011

9:00 AM

Mattapoisett Town Meeting

May 9, 2011

Article on Wetlands By-Law (see page 7)

Article for CBB acquisition (see page 1)

Beach Cleanup, in cooperation with Conservation

Commission, Old Rochester Little League, Tree Committee

Meet at Mattapoisett Town Beach

May 14, 2011

12:00

MLT Annual Meeting

May 21, 2011

Friends Meeting House, Route 6

10:00 Optional walk on local MLT properties

12:00 Join us for a pot-luck lunch

1:00 MLT Annual Meeting and elections

1:15 "Ospreys of the Southcoast"

Becky Cushing, Mass Audubon

Mass Audubon Osprey Project Manager

South Coast Sanctuaries

Allens Pond Wildlife Sanctuary

Visit the MLT booth at the herring run

Morning of the Memorial Day Boat Race

May 30, 2011

Mattapoisett Harbor Days

Shipyards Park

July 16-17, 2011