



The Heron

Winter 2007

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

Support Your Local Grower

By Don Cuddy

The growing season is here at last and while the global economy has kept supermarkets supplied with exotic fare, such as raspberries from Chile in the middle of March, there is something vital missing from produce that is picked before its time and shipped to consumers half a world away.

The flavor of a strawberry picked ripe in the field is not something that agribusiness has yet successfully reproduced for mass consumption. They may grow fruit that is unnaturally large; it may even look appealing but most of the produce that is offered commercially has little real taste. In fact much of it is not even edible. Hard plums and dry peaches belie those jolly, and utterly false, 'ripe and juicy' signs that generally decorate the pile.

But these realities may now be changing. Many customers are fed up. The 'Buy Local' movement is gathering adherents even among those in the mainstream and we can now see the benefits of this backlash locally.

"We are trying to create awareness and new habits," says Margie Baldwin, the driving force behind 'How on Earth' in Mattapoisett. The Route 6 store sells only organic meats, dairy and produce.

"The produce comes from Lucky Field farm in Rochester and whatever else we need we get from surrounding farms within a hundred mile radius. We're about eating locally, eating organically and educating people about their choices," she said.

The response to the store, which opened last year, has been very encouraging, according to Margie.

"A lot of young mothers are making these kinds of choices for their children. They're willing to spend the money. They know that there are certain things, like berries, that

you should only eat organically because they are sprayed so much."

In addition to its retail offerings, How on Earth also operates a program called Community Supported Agriculture which pays the farmer up front for a weekly share of the fresh vegetables available during the growing season. Shares are available in a variety of categories and for varying lengths of time and the benefits are obvious. Family farms are saved. Land is being preserved as open space and used for agriculture that supplies local needs while saving energy by taking long haul trucks off the road.

"It's been very gratifying how people have responded so far," Margie said.

Just down the road at the Spring Meadow farm in Mattapoisett, Monika Weldon has been doing her best to provide the people of Mattapoisett with some alternatives to vegetables and fruit that are trucked from across the continent or shipped from another hemisphere.

Now in its tenth year of operation the fourteen acre farms sits on a hillside, fronted by a strawberry patch and a roadside stand that, even today, operates on the honor system.

'A labor of love' is how Monika describes this family operation, with the emphasis unquestionably on the labor. In addition to her work as a registered nurse, and regular trips to Nantucket where her services as a cranberry biologist are in demand, there are the demands of caring for three children, two dogs, a couple of goats and, at last count, twenty chickens. Monika also serves Mattapoisett as a member of the conservation commission.

With help from husband Dennis Lavoie, and children Evan, 14, Janice, 12, and Brie, 14 Spring Meadow is also supplying its customers with locally grown fresh produce.

While the farm is not certified organic no chemicals are used in growing the strawberries, blackberries, tomatoes, herbs and flowers that grace the farm stand.

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Support Your Local Grower – continued

“We are a real family-friendly place. We love having kids come to visit us and we can show them the farm and teach them things, like the correct way to pick a strawberry.”

A greenhouse heated by propane, gets things started in December and by the end of March the tomato plants are already eighteen inches tall.

“This is a beautiful piece of property and we owe it to the land to do something with it,” Monika said. Every year the family has donated one percent of the farm’s proceeds to a worthy cause and this year it is the Mattapoisett Land Trust that will be the beneficiary.

Down the Neck meantime, Bill Field who is no stranger to MLT members, continues to produce his own honey from a couple of hives on the farm under his own label, Mattapoisett Necktar.

“You get a Spring flow and a Fall flow and we like to blend the two,” Bill said. Bill sells his honey, when he has it, at the Shipyard Galley or in Mahoney’s.

There were three hives on the farm but one has succumbed to hive collapse syndrome.

“I think it’s from the insecticide and chemicals that people are putting on their lawns,” he said. That would certainly be a cruel irony if true and should reinforce our determination to support those who are trying to be good stewards of the Earth.

We need to remember that we are engaged in a struggle that we cannot afford to lose. If we fail it will be those who follow us who will have to pay the price.

Don Cuddy is a freelance writer and member of the MLT Board of Directors

Lend a hand

As the amount of land we own has increased, so have our stewardship responsibilities. In the past we have tried to schedule clean-up dates and arrange to have announcements in *The Wanderer*, or in the newsletter, but these have had mixed success. We’ve decided to try something new.

On the first Saturday in April we started the “First Saturday Work Party”. On the first Saturday of each month we will meet at Dunseith Gardens (the Seahorse property) at 1:00 p.m. and proceed to one of the properties that need some work. If the weather is inclement, we will cancel for the month – otherwise, we will work for 2 to 3 hours. There might even be some refreshments when we are done.



Members Rick Price (below) and Charlie Radville pitch in at our property adjoining The Friends Meeting House



Our jobs will change from month to month: brush clearing, trail creation, invasive species eradication are just a few examples. We would encourage participants to wear long pants and long sleeves, to bring gloves, and to use insect repellent. Rubber boots might also be helpful. We also encourage you to bring brush cutting tools, especially power tools, if you have them.

We all learned as children that “Many hands make light work”. If you can spare 3 hours a month, you could do a great deal toward making the MLT properties more inviting to both members and the general public. Thanks in advance for pitching in.

Who We Are: Don Cuddy

This season's Member Spotlight Column features MLT Board Member Don Cuddy.

MLT: Where did you grow up?

DC: Dublin, Ireland and Glasgow Scotland.

MLT: What is your educational background (college, degrees, etc.)?

DC: No college, I did not want it to interfere with my education.

MLT: How did you come to live in Mattapoisett (what attracted you to the town)?

DC: There was a woman involved.

MLT: How long have you lived in Mattapoisett?

DC: Since 1992

MLT: Are you retired?

DC: Full time reporter for the Standard Times.

MLT: What are your hobbies or past times?

DC: Running, sailing, growing vegetables, volunteering, making cable shows, listening to music, cooking.

MLT: Tell us a little about your family.

DC: Wife Anne of thirteen years, stepson Alex 18 at Salve Regina and daughter Triona, 12 at OHS going to Junior High next year.

MLT: Why have you chosen to get involved with the

MLT, and to be a board member?

DC: It's important to me what kind of place we will leave for those who come after us. When land is gone it's gone forever. I am seeing it on my street and I'm seeing it across the region.

MLT: How long have you been involved with the MLT?

DC: I have been a member for several years and on the board this past year.

MLT: What are your current roles/responsibilities on the board?

DC: Writing for the newsletter and trying to raise the MLT profile in town which is the way we will attract new members in my view.

MLT: How do you see the MLT contributing to Mattapoisett's future (your vision for the land trust)?

DC: The MLT is us. I believe that we all share the same goals. The primary focus is preserving open space so that Mattapoisett retains the qualities that make it special. We need to protect the woods and the water and the shore for our own well-being and for all of the wildlife that depend on it for survival, now and in the future..

MLT: Other points or issues you would like to highlight or share?

DC: It's important not to get discouraged. It is very difficult to get people to participate in anything these days but those of us involved with the land trust know how important it is, for our children and their children, that our efforts continue.



Brandt Island Cove: Celebrate with Us!

After several years of work and negotiation we were pleased to finally announce to the press on January 4 that we had closed on the purchase of the Brandt Island Cove – West Hill property. We thought it better to have a ceremony commemorating the event when the weather turns a bit warmer, so we have chosen the morning of our Annual Meeting, May 31, at 10:00 a.m. as the time for the formal ceremony. The ceremony will take place along Anchorage Way, but for those of you that would like to car-pool, we will meet at the Friends' Meeting House at 9:45 a.m. before proceeding to the property. Assuming that the weather is decent, we will have an hour or so to walk the property before returning to the Friends' Meeting House for lunch.

We want to thank especially all of our members and friends who contributed to our acquisition campaign – at \$1.15 million this was by far the largest acquisition we have ever attempted. We were able to repay the loan from the Bay Land Revolving Fund by using other unrestricted funds that we had received, some from anonymous donors, but we would still gratefully accept donations toward the acquisition of this property. Finally, we hope to complete the sale of a conservation restriction on the property to Mass Wildlife before June 30 which will help reduce our costs and also provide additional protection to ensure that the property is protected in perpetuity.

If you can't join us May 31, we hope that you will still take the time to visit the property in the spring or summer. We believe that you will be genuinely moved by the beauty of this natural wonderland.

Kids' Corner

Not all plants and animals that take up residence in Mattapoisett are welcome. Many species from other parts of the world enjoy the climate and environment of Mattapoisett as much as we do. Without the natural predators that exist in their native environments these unwelcome guests rapidly expand here. We call these species “**invasives**” and they can be very harmful to native animals and plants that have not evolved to compete with them.

Invasives arrive here in a number of ways. Some arrived as unwelcome cargo on ships; others were imported for decorative purposes and then escaped into the wild. One of the most common invasive birds is the European Starling, which was brought to New York City so that Central Park could have all of the birds that are mentioned in William Shakespeare’s plays.

We are featuring two invasive plants that can be found in Mattapoisett. The information came from [A Guide to Invasive Plants in Massachusetts](#) published by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife in 2006. You may want to get a copy to help you find invasives in your garden and elsewhere in town and to help us start to eradicate these pests.

Black Swallow-wort (*Cynanchum nigrum*)



This is a vine that you will see climbing through other plants in town. It can be up to 6 feet long with shiny, pointed leaves that are heart-shaped at the base. It produces a cluster of flowers each having five purple-black lobes. These flowers produce a pod that looks like a small milkweed pod with the same kind of air-borne seeds. Because the plant multiplies both through the root system and through seeds, it can be very difficult to eradicate.

Black-Swallow-wort is actually a member of the milkweed family, but it is poisonous to monarch butterflies that feed on it. Perhaps this is one reason that we don’t see as many monarchs butterflies as we did in the past.

Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*)



“Phrag”, as it is known, is a type of grass that grows 6-13 feet high. The plant has a feathery, purplish top that turns straw colored at maturity. It multiplies through the root system by sending out rhizomes creating a thick mat of plants. The plants are found in wetlands and frequently in roadside ditches.

While “phrag” may look pretty, the dense mat it creates by can drive out native species of reeds such as cattails. These other reeds provide food and shelter for native species of animals such as red-winged blackbirds.

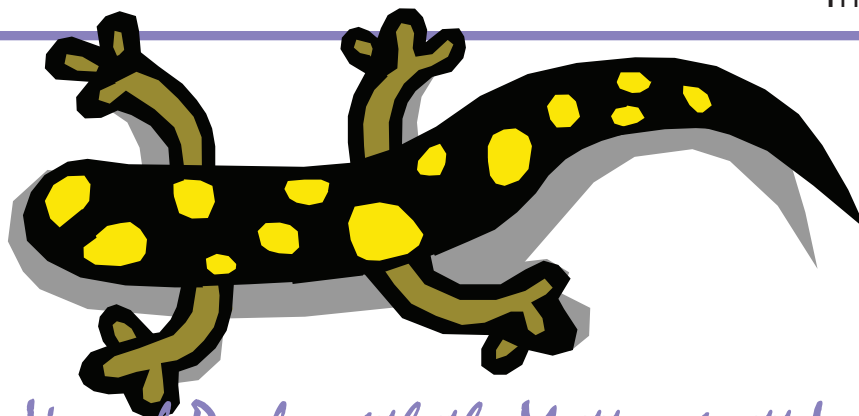
Please join us in our battle against these unwanted residents of our town.

Harbor Days, Volunteers Welcome

At Harbor Days this year, Mattapoisett Land Trust (MLT) is scheduled for Saturday July 19th and Sunday July 20th. The MLT will have a larger tent this year but like last year, all of the activities will be confined to the Ship Yard Park area. The larger tent will provide more room to showcase all the activities and growth of the MLT over the past year. The acquisition of the West Hill Property in the Brandt Island Cover area is another major step forward for the MLT and the Harbor Days booth will contain pictures and information about the acquisition. Hope everyone will have an opportunity to stop by the tent at Harbor Days and chat about the newest developments taking place within the MLT. The land trust will be selling shirts, hats and Salty pins as usual and may have a few more items for sale to help with global warming and the environmental sensitivity.

The MLT tent will be staffed with MLT members and board members, but more staffing would be greatly appreciated. Volunteers to man the MLT tent will be assigned in two hour segments starting at 9:00 AM on Saturday and going to 4:00 PM on Sunday. Anyone who has a little time and would like to help staff the MLT booth is welcome. For those that are interested, please contact the land trust (e-mail, mhudis@mandghroup.com or phone 508-728-0755) and leave a message. Please indicate which day and window of time you are available and how you can be contacted.

See you all at Harbor Days.



Exploring Vernal Pools with the Mattapoisett Land Trust

Vernal pools are unique and vulnerable kinds of wetlands. They are usually temporary pools that fill with snow-melt and spring run-off, and then dry sometime during the summer. Many of these pools are vital breeding habitat for certain amphibians and invertebrates such as wood frogs, spotted and blue spotted salamanders, and fairy shrimp. What makes vernal pools such excellent breeding habitat is the seasonal nature of the pools that excludes fish populations that would prey on the offspring.

Vernal pools are not only used for reproduction. Other species such as spring peepers, gray tree frogs, and

a number of bird species use pools for feeding and resting. These important wetlands are some of the most vulnerable because they are small, isolated, and often dry, therefore unrecognizable. They are easily destroyed, frequently because they small or are dry.



Let's take a closer look at some of the animals that rely on vernal pools to survive during a slide show to be hosted by the Mattapoisett Land Trust at the Mattapoisett Library on April 30th from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Then Saturday May 3rd at 9:00 am we'll take a walk through the Nasketucket State Park and see if we can identify some of these animals that have adapted to rely on these pools.

Honor Your Loved Ones

For several years many individuals have chosen to memorialize their loved ones through gifts to the MLT; others have chosen to honor a friend or relative with a similar gift. While the directors have gratefully acknowledged these gifts in the past, we made no public acknowledgement of the gifts. We wish to correct this oversight by reserving a space in each newsletter where we will list the contributions we have received since our previous acknowledgement.

To that end we wish to thank the following individuals who have made memorial or honorary contributions in the past year:

In memory of H. Potter Trainer, Jr.:

Jane L. Abbott, Rochester, MA
Judy & Nate Barry, Palm Beach Gardens, FL
Ann Briggs, Mattapoisett, MA
Duncan & Susan Brown, Williamstown, MA
Marje & Bill Bullock, Juno Beach, FL
Anne Coggins, Mattapoisett, MA
Robert Coquillette, Lexington, MA
Bob & Esther Eisner, Mattapoisett, MA
Lenore S. Henderson, Mattapoisett, MA
Barbara & Sidney Kaplan, North Dartmouth, MA

Thomas & Susan Lee, Mililani, HI
Jane & Adrian Lonsdale, Mattapoisett, MA
Phoebe T. Meehan, Vero Beach, FL
Lois A. Murray, Mattapoisett, MA
Katherine Myers, Williamstown, MA
Nancy Trainer Ramsden & George Ramsden, Wilmington, NC
Madeline J. Reid, Mattapoisett, MA
Walter & Raye Sawyer, Rochester, MA
Mr. & Mrs. Martin A Smith, Mattapoisett, MA
Barbara Thommen, Mattapoisett, MA
Paulette Wein, North Adams, MA
Laurie M. Werner, Pittsfield, MA
Martha & Alfredo Xavier, Mattapoisett, MA

For Brandt Island Cove in honor of:

Karen Browning
Modafferi Family Charitable Fund, Hope ID
John & Carol Field
Anonymous
David & Margaret Olney
Katherine Olney & David Kleinschmidt, Natick, MA

Thank you for your generous contributions. We hope that others will follow your example so that we may continue our work in preserving the land and the environment of Mattapoisett for the generations to come.

Land Protection Then...and Now

By Gary Johnson, MLT President

In the afterglow of the first Earth Day in April, 1970, a small group of Mattapoisett residents began talking about what they could do to preserve the quality of life in Mattapoisett. They were concerned with the nature of the development in towns such as Fairhaven which was changing from a village surrounded by a rural landscape into the commercial and suburban sprawl that we know today. Convinced that the most effective way to protect land from development, independent of political pressure, was through a non-profit corporation, they founded the Mattapoisett Land Trust in 1974.

The timing of the formation was largely driven by the need to create an entity to hold property such as the waterfront property that we now call Munro Waterfront Park, a property which Ruth Bowditch Munro wished to have protected. There were many in town who thought that the parcel next to the boat launch at Long Wharf could better be used as a parking lot. It was Mrs. Munro's wish that the property with its beach roses should be kept green for the public's enjoyment. The MLT provided the vehicle to keep it safe.

Our first twenty-five years were spent talking to landowners about the benefits of conservation and trying to raise the public's awareness. While we raised funds to rebuild the Munro seawall and to assist the Commonwealth in the acquisition of Nasketucket Bay State Reservation, we were not very aggressive in our fundraising efforts. Our passive land acquisition strategy did pay some dividends, however, and by 1999 we owned in fee 331 acres including the 80-acre Old Field Farm in Rochester, donated by Edith and Eliot Shoolman in 1984 before the Rochester Land Trust existed.

Now we find ourselves part of the next generation of the environmental movement. Now we realize that humans can affect the entire climate. We realize that forests and wetlands are not only pleasant visually but that they provide the filtering of air and water that keeps our environment livable. We realize that we cannot protect endangered species without protecting the habitat they need to survive. We realize that trees can help absorb the carbon dioxide that continues to spew from our smokestacks and tailpipes. And we realize that our efforts will only be in vain unless we educate the next generation to appreciate the beauty and wonder of nature.

We believe that we can no longer wait for land to be donated to the MLT; we must actively seek a way to protect the most environmentally sensitive parts of town. To this end we have become more persistent in our fund-raising efforts for new acquisitions (we hope not irritatingly so) and more creative in seeking out appropriate grants. We have sought to add to existing holdings in order to improve their capacity to support diverse flora and fauna and to make them more interesting for the visiting public. While we will joyfully accept donations of land that meet our strategic goals, we understand that many landowners are not able to give away land. For those landowners we must find a way to raise the funds to pay them an acceptable price, although frequently not the full market value.

While we recognize that our job is far from done, we

have made significant progress. Since 1999 we have increased our land held in fee by 214 acres, the latest acquisition the 107 acre Brandt Island Cove property acquired in January of this year with the help of a grant from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). In 2004 we completed our first conservation restriction on the Field Farm permanently protecting an additional 64 acres on Brandt Island Cove. Our effort to protect land in the eastern portion of the town continues, and we now own a protected crescent of 178 acres extending from the Martocci Preserve on Route 6 to Aucoot Road.

We want to do much more; but we need your support both financially and through your voluntary participation. All that the MLT has accomplished to date has been through the selfless contributions of concerned residents and visitors. If we are going to maintain our existing properties, add to them, and keep the MLT viable into the future, we need a broad base of public support. The contribution of your talents will be greatly appreciated now and by future generations.

Wolfgang von Goethe, the famous scientist/philosopher/author had a motto that seems appropriate for the MLT: *Ohne Hast, aber ohne Rast* – "Without haste, but without rest." With your help and support we can continue our unceasing, but unhurried, efforts to improve the environmental landscape of Mattapoisett for generations to come.

MLT Annual Meeting on Saturday, May 31

Following the Brant Island Cove property dedication and tour (see page 2), and lunch at the Friends' Meeting House, MLT will hold its annual meeting. Board members and officers will be elected at this time.

Plan to stay after the annual meeting. Dr. Jonathan Way will make a presentation entitled "Ecology and Education of Eastern Coyotes in Eastern Massachusetts"

Very little is known about coyotes in suburban and urban settings, but Jonathan Way's research has provided insight into these fascinating, highly successful predators. Way obtained his M.S. degree at UConn Storrs and Ph.D. degree at Boston College where he combined science and educational issues associated with these creatures. He has also hand-raised a group of coyotes, which were a valuable asset to both the science and educational components of his work. He also continues to radio-collar and follow coyotes on Cape Cod and in Boston to learn about their behavioral and dispersal patterns. His book, *Suburban Howls*, explains his research experience and results over the past 10 years and is intended for the laymen.

Jonathan G. (Jon) Way, Ph.D., is the leader of the eastern coyote ecology project in eastern Massachusetts, which he began while at Barnstable High School on Cape Cod (1993). He received his B.S. from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst (1997), M.S. from the University of Connecticut at Storrs (2000), and Ph.D. from Boston College (2005). His research comprised four studies: free ranging studies on Cape Cod and in Boston, a captive study at the Stone Zoo, and an educational component where he assessed student learning of a coyote-based curriculum. He hand-reared the wild-born litter of eastern coyote pups (born on Cape Cod) that are currently on display at the Stone Zoo in order to conduct a behavioral and morphological study. His main interest concerns the study of predators inhabiting urbanized ecosystems. More information on these coyote projects, including being able to purchase his book *Suburban Howls*, can be found by visiting his homepage: <http://www.easterncoyoteresearch.com>.

Hikes, Ambles and Strolls In Mattapoisett

By Jenny Mello

Whether you want to explore, exercise, enjoy the tranquility or let the kids (or dogs!) blow off steam, we would like to introduce you to some special, local places where you can enjoy the open spaces our town has to offer.

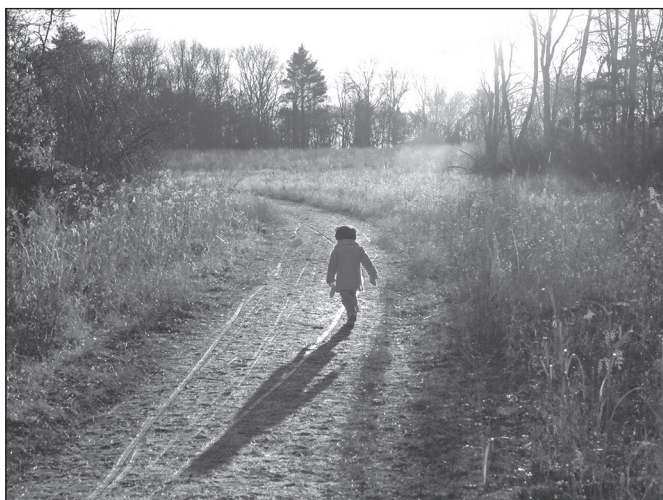


Nasketucket Bay State Reservation

This extensive and beautiful reservation covers 209 acres and reaches from Brandt Island Road to the shore. The property was acquired by the state in 1999 and offers wooded trails, open fields and rocky shoreline.

There are several vernal pools in the area and the Mattapoisett Land Trust helps fund field trips for students from Old Hammondtown School to gather information to aid the certification process for these pools.

Trails



The main trail leads directly from the parking lot and is an easy, relatively flat walk. Off the main trail branch smaller, sign-posted trails – Meadow, Holly and Saltmarsh Trails.

Following Meadow Trail leads you along a narrow, wooded path and then through a meadow with high grass. It loops back to rejoin the main trail further on. Holly Trail takes you



through the woods, by some of the largest holly trees in the state.

Further down the main path is the Saltmarsh Trail which leads to a rocky beach, after crossing a stone culvert. From the shore you look out to West Island in Fairhaven.



The round trip is about 2 miles, and the trails can be accessed in all seasons. Mosquito repellent is recommended for the woodland areas in the summer.

Directions:

Starting at the junction of Route 6 and North Street, travel west on Route 6 for 1.8 miles. Turn left onto Brandt Island Road (Opposite Denise's Pet Care). After 1.4 miles, take a slight right onto Brant Beach Avenue. Immediately after you turn you will see a large parking lot on your right. There is a large sign just off Brandt Island Road announcing "Nasketucket Bay State Reservation."

Education Update

The MLT is probably unique among small all-volunteer land trusts in having funds available on an annual basis to support environmental education for children. The funds were made available to us in 2004 through the bequest of long-time MLT supporter Edith Shoolman, a lover of children and of the natural world. The Education Committee of the MLT has distributed grant application forms at Center and Old Hammondtown Schools, but it is also willing to consider grant applications not affiliated directly with the schools.

If you would like to learn more about the grants, please contact us by email at info@mattlandtrust.org or call 508-758-9063. We welcome all ideas that will get children away from video screens to experience the wonderful world around us.

Calendar — Spring & Summer Activities

Saturday, April 26, 2008 10:00 AM Dedication of Grace Pond Property Grace property - We will car pool from the park-and-ride lot on North Street. Meet there at 9:45 AM

Saturday, May 03, 2008 9:00 AM Vernal Pool & Woodland Exploration for Families Nasketucket Bay State Reservation - Meet in the parking lot off Brandt Island Road

Saturday, May 03, 2008 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM First Saturday Clean-up To be determined - Meet at Dunseith Gardens (the Seahorse)

Monday, May 26, 2008 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM Visit our display table at the Memorial Day Boat Race Herring Run Gate at River Road and Route 6

Saturday, May 31, 2008 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM MLT Annual Gathering

10:00 AM Dedication and tour of the Brandt Island Cove - West Hill Property Anchorage Way - Meet at the Friends' Meeting House on Route 6 at 9:45 AM and we will carpool from there

Noon Pot luck lunch Friends' Meeting House

01:00 PM Annual Meeting, election of board members and officers

01:15 PM Guest speaker Dr. Jonathan Way. "Ecology and Education of Eastern Coyotes in Eastern Massachusetts" Friends' Meeting House

Saturday, June 07, 2008 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM First Saturday Clean-up To be determined - Meet at Dunseith Gardens (the Seahorse)

Saturday, July 19, 2008 Visit our booth at Harbor Days Shipyard Park

Sunday, July 20, 2008 Visit our booth at Harbor Days Shipyard Park

Saturday, August 02, 2008 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM First Saturday Clean-up To be determined - Meet at Dunseith Gardens (the Seahorse)

Saturday, September 06, 2008 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM First Saturday Clean-up To be determined - Meet at Dunseith Gardens (the Seahorse)