

ACTON
CONSERVATION
TRUST

LAND TRUST
NEWS

Volume 15, No. 1 March 2013

In This Issue

ACT Annual Meeting

March 24, 2013

Acton Town Hall

Room 204

7:00 ACT Business Meeting

7:30 Guest Speaker:

Tom Wansleben:
"Owls of New England"

Wood Lane Purchase Completed – Transfer to Arboretum on TM Warrant

Caouette and Gaebel Land Updates

ACT Sponsored Land Walks

Be Sure to Visit ACT's Website:

www.actonconservationtrust.org



Acton Conservation Trust

A Non-Profit Land Trust

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Acton Conservation Trust
P.O. Box 658
Acton, 01720

Dear Friends and Acton Conservation Trust Members:

It has been a very active year in land preservation, and while I cannot report any specific new projects at this time, I hope that we will be able to announce significant proposals for new acquisitions this Spring. You will see in the newsletter that our purchase of 81 Wood Lane, done with the intent to add it to the Acton Arboretum holdings, has moved forward and we expect to formally transfer ownership at April Town Meeting.

ACT is overdue in giving thanks to the many organizations that have helped us fulfill our vision. Through the generosity of the law firm of Mintz Levin we have had the *pro bono* legal assistance of Jonathan Cosco for more than five years. Mintz also provided support of our recent purchase of 81 Wood Lane, through the services of Jennifer Kielly, Esq. We would especially like to thank former ACT Board member Will Hill of Mintz Levin who made it possible to have this extraordinary support of our activities.

Of course we have to thank the Sudbury Valley Trustees (SVT) for their generous help in so many ways, from training us in land stewardship and helping in creating base line documentation for our conservation easements, to providing us with land protection expertise from their professional staff. Thanks also to SVT for co-holding the Caouette and Donald conservation restrictions with ACT and providing invaluable help with crafting these complex agreements.

Many thanks are also due to the Town of Acton Open Space Committee (OSC) and its dedicated members. This committee created an invaluable list of Priority Parcels that ACT has used for landowner outreach. Many of these parcels subsequently were acquired through the use of Community Preservation Act funds, and the OSC performed a valuable vetting process as part of preparing CP proposals.

I want to also personally thank the President of the Boxborough Conservation Trust, Rita Grossman, for meeting with me several times a year for coffee and exchange of information; she has given us many great ideas and recommended resources to use.

Last of all, thank you to all our Members for your continued support. Your financial contributions and participation in our activities helps preserve our scenic views, local farms, and biological diversity for the future.

Susan Mitchell-Hardt

Did you remember to renew your membership for 2013?

To the many who have already done so, thanks for renewing your support. For those who have yet to renew, please use the form on page seven of this newsletter to keep your membership active

The Acton Conservation Trust is a non-profit, non-governmental organization that can hold permanent conservation easements, accept gifts of land, accept tax-deductible gifts to be used for open space preservation and purchase land for conservation purposes. We also provide education to landowners about various options for preservation. ACT is one of more than 130 such organizations in Massachusetts, and is a member of the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition and the national Land Trust Alliance. More information is available at ActonConservationTrust.org or by emailing info@actonconservationtrust.org

Land Preservation 2012

Wood Lane Parcel Purchase Completed

Transfer to Arboretum to Occur at Spring 2013 Town Meeting

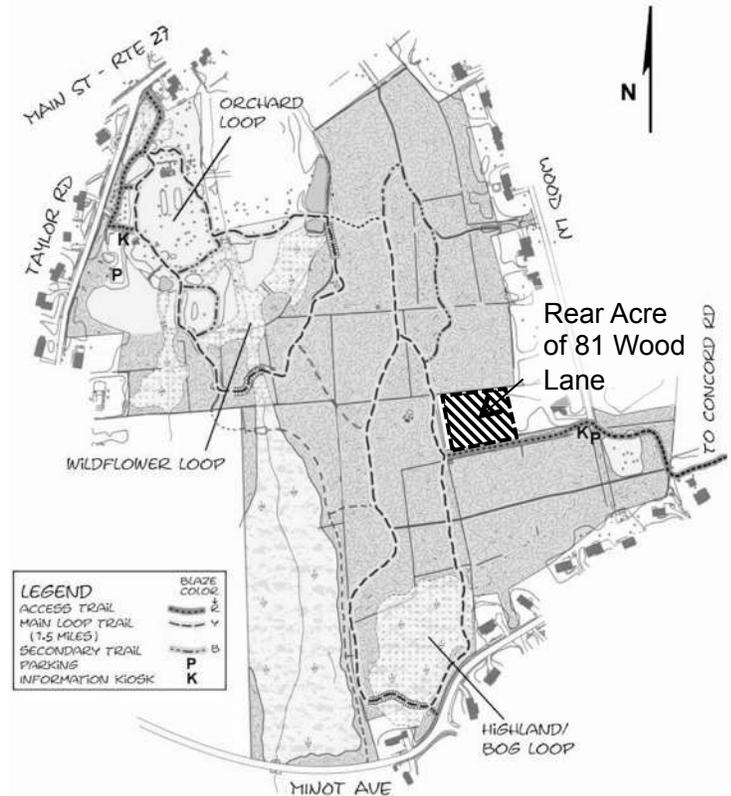
Last year, ACT moved to purchase the rear one acre of the house lot at 81 Wood Lane, with the intent of transferring this parcel to the Town of Acton to add to the Acton Arboretum. (See Land Trust News, 2012). As the map to the right shows, this parcel, though small, is in a critical location and its preservation was considered a high priority.

We are happy to report that in August, 2012, ACT became owner of this land, completing the subdivision and sale of the lot from the owner, Mac Harring. Mac is a long time ACT member and conservationist, and was extremely supportive and patient during this year long process.

We would also like to acknowledge the participation of the Friends of the Arboretum in this purchase. Not only did they provide strong support for this action, they provided significant funding for due diligence and subdivision costs prior to the purchase. We also acknowledge the support and encouragement from the Board of Selectmen in this project and its subsequent pending transfer to the Arboretum.

As expected, the Town of Acton will propose to purchase this parcel from ACT and add it to the Arboretum. An article to this effect will be presented at Spring Town Meeting in April 2013. We urge all ACT members to attend this meeting and vote to support this purchase.

ACTON ARBORETUM



Donation of the Gustin Land in North Acton Completed

In 2010 Mary Gustin contacted ACT for our help in donating her 1.5 acre parcel in North Acton to the Town. This land, which was listed as a Priority Parcel in the Open Space and Recreation Plan, provides a vital link to lands near the Town Forest. ACT worked with the Town and the Open Space Committee (OSC) to bring this donation to the 2012 Spring TM, where it was approved unanimously.

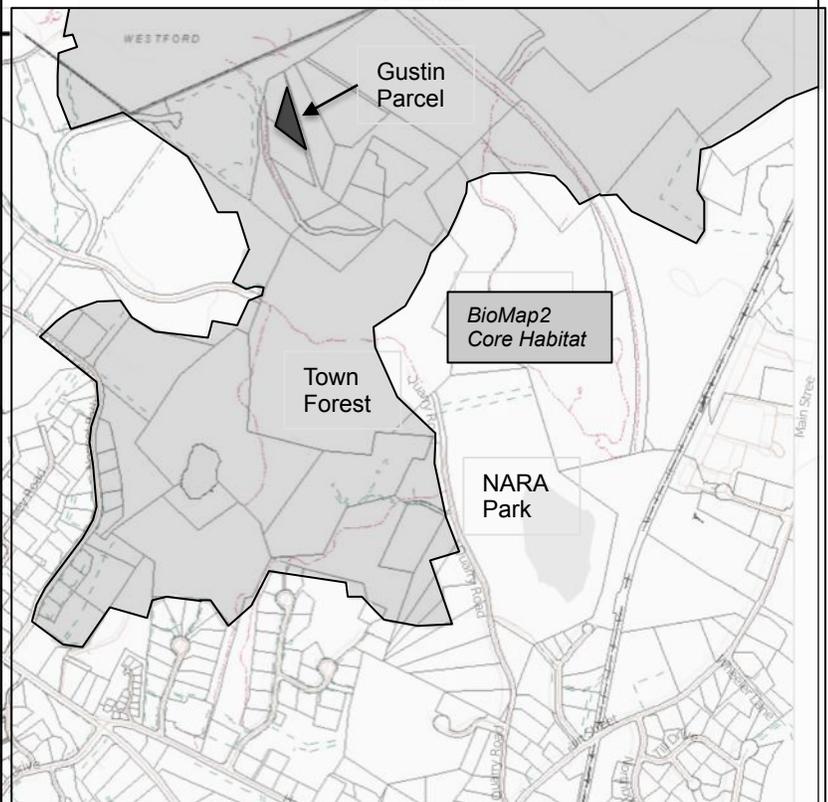
Why is this parcel important? The Gustin parcel and adjacent land in this area are designated "Core Habitat" (highest priority for protection) on Town of Acton Natural Heritage BioMap 2. (<http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/dfg/biomap2.htm>) This map is intended to guide strategic bio-diversity protection in Massachusetts over the next decade. "Core Habitat" is important to protect because its conservation promotes long term survivability of :

- 1) Endangered Species and others
- 2) Natural Habitat Communities and
- 3) Intact Ecosystems.

For example, five species of concern have been found in this area: Toothcup, Blue-spotted Salamander, Four-toed Salamander, Blanding's Turtle & Eastern Ribbon Snake.

It is ACT's hope that protecting this land will give us leverage to protect contiguous parcels that connect with the Acton Town Forest and to the Core Habitat over the boundary with Westford.

ACT wants to thank the OSC, Town Manager, and Town Meeting for actively supporting the use of Town resources that resulted in the acquisition of this special parcel of land.



South Acton Lands: Caouette and Gaebel

2nd Annual ACT Sponsored Walking Tour May, 2012

The Caouette farmland was purchased by the Town in December of 2010 thanks to an overwhelming vote at Fall 2010 Town Meeting. Since that time ACT has sponsored a May walk of the land to highlight it's beauty and show the progress made on its conservation. In May 2011 Selectman Mike Gowing led the inaugural walk and shared with us the history of the land.

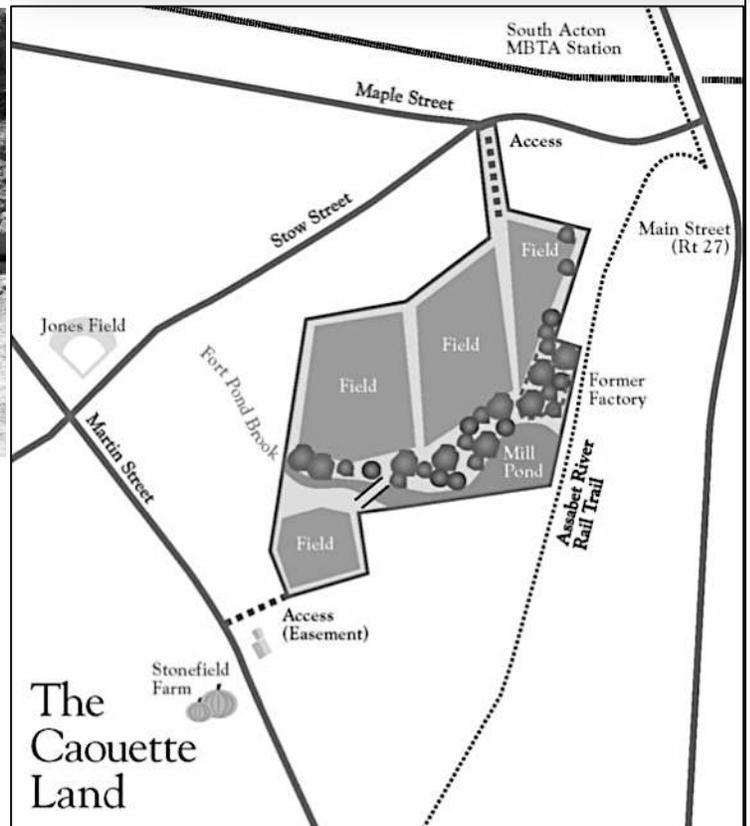
This May, ACT member Clare Siska led the group on a tour that included the historic farmhouse at the end of Martin street owned by ACT members Terry and Sima Maitland. Clare then guided us past the farm fields (which were in the process of being plowed by Stonefield Farm) to the remediation site near the former industrial site to the east of the farm fields, and we ended with a walk to the entrance on Maple Street that may soon provide access to the Assabet River Rail Trail.



Clare Siska
Explains the Remediation Process at the Former Factory Site

Update on the Caouette Farmland Conservation Restriction

The Caouette Farmland must allow for construction of the Assabet River Rail Trail and parking (ARRT) according to state regulations. In order to not be in conflict during the construction the Town and MassDOT have worked out a compromise – a building envelope that will not be part of the CR, which will give DOT the necessary flexibility to construct the Assabet River Rail Trail (ARRT) and associated Parking according to State regulations. Once the ARRT/Parking are completed ACT and SVT (as co-holders of the CR) may exercise the option of coming in with an amendment expanding the amount of land in agricultural use under the CR.



Update on the Gaebel land at Great Hill

A Special Town Meeting on Oct. 2, 2008 voted to allocate \$730,000 from the Community Preservation Open Space Set Aside Fund toward the purchase of the Gaebel home on 5.51 acres adjacent to Great Hill. The property was sold to the Town with the caveat that a small conforming lot would be created for the historic house so that it could be sold and the remaining backland would be used to augment the Great Hill Conservation Area.

However, the house lot did not have separate access to a public road, and resale had proven

difficult. Subsequently ACT identified an adjoining 1/2 acre at 6 Piper Road that could be purchased to provide driveway access and frontage on Piper Road. Not only would this make the property more marketable but an easement could be created from Piper Road to the Great Hill Area giving the public greater access to this conservation land. The Town voted at Spring 2010 Meeting to allocate monies from General Funds to purchase the lot and to fund the improvements necessary to prepare the property for sale.

In May 2012, the Gaebel home sold, and both the CP Open Space Set Aside Fund and Town General Fund were reimbursed.



Acton Conservation Trust Business

Notice of 2013 Annual Meeting of Members

Please note that the 2013 Annual Meeting of Members of the Acton Conservation Trust (ACT), a Massachusetts non-profit corporation, will be held on Sunday, March 24, at 7:00 PM at the Acton Town Hall, Room 204. We will convene the brief business portion of the meeting, where members will be asked to:

- Vote to re-elect *Susan Mitchell-Hardt, David Cochrane, Hart Millett, David Hardt, Brewster Conant, Sue Kennedy, John Longden, Linda McElroy and Karim Kovacevic as Trustees, each to serve until the 2014 Annual Meeting and as otherwise provided in ACT's Bylaws.*
- Vote to re-elect *David Hardt as Clerk and re-elect Hart Millett as Treasurer of ACT, each to serve until the 2014 Annual Meeting in accordance with ACT's Bylaws.*
- Hear and comment on the *Treasurer's Report and committee reports of 2012 activities, and to act upon such other business as may come before the meeting.*

Immediately following the business meeting we will hear from our guest speaker Tom Wansleben

Farewell Jim!

It is with a heavy heart that we say "Goodbye" to Board Member Extraordinaire, Jim Snyder-Grant. Jim joined the Board in 2003. He came with many skills born from his love for the land and from the many hats that he wears including Chair of the Land Stewardship Committee. He proved invaluable on ACT's Land Protection Committee, CR Committee and ACT's Technical Committee. Jim has left to give more focus to his other strong interests including Land Stewardship Committee, Green Acton, Invasive Species Management, New View Co-Housing, and many, many more.

Conservation Volunteer of the Year

2012 Award to Andy Magee.

Andy was recognized at the Acton Conservation Trust's 2012 Annual Meeting as recipient of the 2011 Carol Holley Conservation Volunteer of the Year award for his outstanding contributions to land preservation in Acton. He is a long time ACT Member, a Trustee from 2006-08 and an Acton Selectman for several years beginning in 2006. Andy continues to serve on the Conservation Commission, the Open Space Committee and the Community Preservation Committee. In this position he supported the Joint effort of SVT, ACT and the Concord Land Conservation Trust to protect the 200+ Acres of Route 2 farmlands in

Acton and Concord owned by the Department of Correction. He also championed the Town purchase of the Gaebel land abutting Great Hill.

In his profession he has applied his expertise in geology, hydrogeology and water supply to a host of challenging projects. In 2003, as a member of the Acton Conservation Commission, he drafted a more restrictive wetlands protection bylaw for the Town which was adopted at Town Meeting

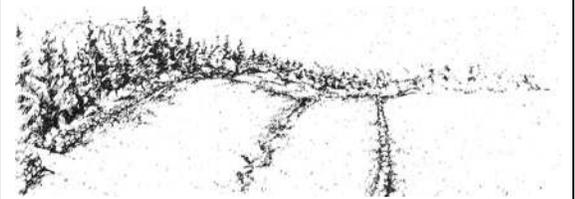
2013 Award to Peter Aston

Peter Ashton has been awarded the 2013 Conservation Volunteer of the Year Award. Peter has played a key role in advocating for protection of open space for over ten years. As Selectman he advocated for purchase of RMPL in 2000. The following year he chaired the Community Preservation Act (CPA) Study Committee, a pre-cursor to adopting it in 2002. CP funds have become the primary funding source for open space acquisition. He spear-headed two town-wide Open Space and Recreation Surveys. He played a key role in establishing the Open Space Committee whose job it is to submit to the CPC proposals for open space acquisition



ACT Vice President Dave Cochrane Presented the Holley Award to Andy Magee at the 2012 Annual Meeting

2011-2012		
Financial Statements	Jan - Dec 2011	Jan - Dec 2012
Statement of Income and Expenses		
Income		
Membership Dues	\$15,673	13,180
Donations	200	8,761
Miscellaneous Income	5	44
Total Income	\$15,878	\$21,985
Expenses		
Operating Expenses		
Mailings and Supplies	1,522	827
Organization Memberships	350	350
Fees	277	301
Insurance	1,912	1,935
Grants	50	250
Miscellaneous Expenses	245	568
Total Operating Expenses	4,356	4,231
Total Expenses	\$4,356	\$4,231
Net Income	\$11,522	\$17,754
Balance Sheet		
	Dec 31, 2011	Dec 31, 2012
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Checking/Savings/Investment	\$76,968	76,971
Land	19,777	19,777
TOTAL ASSETS	\$96,745	\$96,748
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Liabilities		
	0	0
Equity		
General Fund Balance	16,943	16,938
Retained Earnings	68,895	81,420
Net Income	10,907	-1,611
Total Equity	\$96,745	\$96,748
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$96,745	\$96,748





ACTON CONSERVATION TRUST

2013 Membership & Renewal Application

Join the many other townspeople who support our efforts to preserve open space in Acton.

Among other uses, your donations help ACT pursue opportunities to acquire land and conservation easements, and provide stewardship of these lands. Your support also helps us stay current on Land Trust developments through key publications and workshops.

- If you are not yet a Member of ACT (or have not yet renewed your membership for 2013), please join us!
- If you are already a Member for 2013, please pass this newsletter on to a friend who might be interested!

To join please visit: actonconservationtrust.org

Or mail this form to: Acton Conservation Trust
P.O. Box 658
Acton, MA 01720
Your gift to ACT is tax-deductible

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Your email address lets ACT keep you informed about news & local meetings related to conservation & open space preservation.

- Please contact me about how I can get more involved!
- Please send the ACT Newsletter Electronically in the future.

Suggested levels of support :

___ Individual \$25	___ Protector \$250
___ Family \$50	___ Supporter \$500
___ Friend \$100	___ Patron \$1,000
___ Seniors \$15	___ Other \$_____
& Students	

*Please make your check payable to
Acton Conservation Trust*

Your gift to ACT is tax-deductible

A Trail Through Time Part II: Fall Walk Sponsored by ACT October 28, 2012

On a drizzly Fall Day, Linda McElroy led a group of 12 hearty ACT members and friends on a walk of the Nashoba Brook area. Linda is the originator of "Trail Through Time", a project to highlight the rich history of Nashoba Brook in Acton. Last Fall Linda inspired a large group with the history of the Robbins Mill area, and this year concentrated on the recently restored 'Stone Chamber' south of the Wheeler Farm site. The rain held off as the group visited the chamber and the Indian stone piles site on the southern side of the brook



**Sunday March 24, 2013, 7:00 PM Town Hall
Tom Wansleben: Owls of New England**



Come join us for an evening of owls galore. Tom Wansleben has spent a career as a wildlife biologist working with avian species from the Grand Tetons in Wyoming to the forests of New England. He is currently the Stewardship Biologist for Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust in Athol where his current focus is on the management of forests and wildlife habitat in a climate change era.

The night will feature a visual and audio tour all about owls. Tom will provide some context as to why owls are so interesting and how they have been embedded in human myths, religion and pop culture. We will learn about their natural history such as how they achieve silent flight and capture prey at night with a high degree of accuracy. We will also learn the various species we can expect to see in this area, and what is critical to their survival.

Save The Date

ACT Annual Meeting

Sunday March 24, 2013

Acton Town Hall

ACTON CONSERVATION TRUST, Inc BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Susan Mitchell-Hardt, 369-9264		mitchellhardt@gmail.com
<i>President</i>		
David Cochrane 263-0215		dcochrane@comcast.net
<i>Vice President</i>		
Hart Millett 621-8478		hart.millett@verizon.net
<i>Treasurer</i>		
David Hardt 369-9264		hardt@mit.edu
<i>Clerk</i>		
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