



# ACTON CONSERVATION TRUST

# LAND TRUST NEWS

Volume 22, No. 1 March 2020

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### ACT Annual Meeting

7:00 PM, March 15, 2020  
Acton Town Hall  
Room 204

Guest Speaker:

**Ken Warchol**

*The Role of the Honeybee in  
our Environment*

### Clean Up Day: Attacking Invasives at Wright Hill

### Planning for the Future of ACT

### Board Transitions

### Oxen In Act(i)on

### The Year in Review

### ACTivities

### Be Sure to Visit ACT's Website:

[www.actonconservationtrust.org](http://www.actonconservationtrust.org)



or  
Find us on  
**Facebook**

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. We work in concert with the Town of Acton and other local conservation organizations to maximize the amount of protected property. 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](http://ActonConservationTrust.org) or by emailing [info@actonconservationtrust.org](mailto:info@actonconservationtrust.org)

## Acton Conservation Trust

### A Non-Profit Land Trust

#### Board of Trustees

Susan Mitchell-Hardt  
*President*  
Joe Cooney  
*Vice President*  
Hart Millett  
*Treasurer*  
David Hardt  
*Clerk*  
Lana Finn  
Linda McElroy

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

### Did you remember to renew your membership for 2020?

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.

March, 2020

Dear Friends and Acton Conservation Trust Members:

I've been sending "Events of Interest" to ACT Members and others in the environmental and land protection community since January 2001. The original purpose was to make Acton residents aware of the many environmental/land protection issues that were then under the radar and to encourage more people to get involved. I also wanted to inform people about ACT and about our efforts to pass the Community Preservation Act (CPA), which we hoped would be our primary funding source to acquire land in Acton. (And that is exactly what has happened!)

Since then "Events of Interest" has served to remind everyone that we live in an ecologically rich area surrounded by towns with strong land trusts and conservation ethics, and it has also been a great way to pull people together, share these riches with others, and borrow ideas from other land trusts.

It also (weekly) reminds me that we are very fortunate to live in Acton, in the epicenter of environmental awareness, land conservation, and the stomping ground of Henry David Thoreau, the "father of the modern environmental movement." I hope we all appreciate the abundance of educational opportunities out there and the myriad chances we have to get into the natural world - to walk with masters of entomology and botany, world famous birders, and intrepid trackers.

We should all take the opportunity to spread the word to newcomers, to get outside and explore the many wonders of Acton and surrounding towns – and to learn more about our diverse and enchanting flora and fauna. And, of course, to appreciate the open space we work so hard to preserve.

Thanks to your continued support, we look forward to preserving more beautiful land in the coming years. See you on the trails.

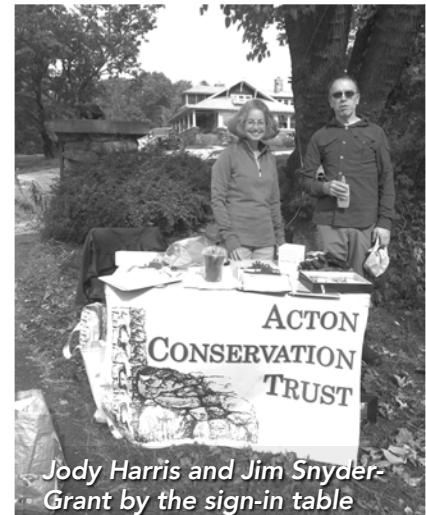
Sincerely,

Susan Mitchell-Hardt

# ACT Service Day

## Attacking Invasives at the Wright Hill Meadows

ACT Trustee Linda McElroy and ACT member and trail steward Jim Salem organized our second ACT Community Service Day held on October 20. Our focus this time was the large meadow at Wright Hill. A group of some 15 volunteers worked to remove large stands of bittersweet, burning bush and other invasives along the edge of this serene location. The work involved a combination of pulling, digging, cutting, piling and collecting these (unfortunately) ubiquitous plants. The reward was the instant gratification of seeing the full extent of the meadow with its surrounding stone walls emerge. It was a great way to spend a mid-fall day in one of Acton's jewels, and to help keep our open spaces open. Thanks to all who helped, and stay tuned for our next one!



## Planning for the Future

### ACT Begins a Strategic Planning Process

With an eye to the sustainability of our mission for continued land preservation in Acton, the Trustees undertook a formal strategic planning process during 2019. Using the services of a professional facilitator (Steve Sloan, formerly of TTOR and now principal at Open Space Results LLC), we held a series of meetings to develop a 5-year plan. This plan focuses on five main areas: Stewardship, Land Protection, Membership, Outreach and Governance. In each category we developed 5-year goals such as building capacity for increased land care, better tracking of priority parcels and contacts with landowners, doubling ACT's membership, connecting more with the school system and increasing the number of Trustees up to 12.

We are also forming an advisory council comprised of former ACT Trustees to provide long term guidance to the Board.

## Transitions: Good Bye, Hello, Hello, Hello

After serving as Trustee for 6 years, Lana Finn will be leaving at the end of her term (at the 2020 Annual Meeting). Lana has been an energetic contributor, not only with her sharp financial expertise, but also with setting up and using our first formal membership database. We wish her well as her young family has doubled in size this past year, and her work has drawn her to exciting new (time consuming!) challenges.

At the same time, we have two new candidates for Board membership, Jody Harris and Carol Dombrowski. Both have been active contributors to ACT and have been attending board meetings over the past few months. They will be nominated for election to the Board at the Annual Meeting.

Finally, picking up from Lana's brilliant membership work, we have hired Andy Dodge as a part time membership guru, and he has already put his extensive database knowledge to good use.

## Oxen in Act(i)on!

On a picture perfect October Sunday, some 50 ACT members and friends gathered at the Wetherbee Conservation Land for a special event. Natalie and Norm Delorey gave a lesson and demonstration in the use of oxen to perform pulling chores. The pictures below show the crowd learning about and then watching the team of Randall oxen (Phil and Kent) as they easily maneuvered in a tight trail in the Wetherbee Woods just to the north of the open farmland. (Although Natalie and Norm now live in Shirley, Natalie grew up on this land and knows it very well.)



*Phil and Kent are Ready to Pull*



*Susan talks about the history of the Wetherbee Conservation Land*



*Norm and Natalie show off their team and tell us the history of Randall oxen*



*Norm has Phil and Kent do their thing hauling logs*



*Off to birdwatching with Al Sgroi*

It was a great day on a beautiful piece of land, and was capped off by a walk of the Wetherbee trails led by Al Sgroi, who treated us not just to bird sighting, but also to lessons in how to identify the many different trees in the area. We can't wait to do this again!

# Acton Conservation Trust Business

## 2019 in Review

It was another very active year for the Trust. Here are some of the highlights:

Feb 3: ACT coordinated Winter Wildlife Tracking and Nature Walk event at Nashoba Brook led by expert tracker Paul Wanta – 35 attended.

Feb 5: ACT participated in Landowner Meeting Event, coordinated by SVT.

Mar 17: ACT Annual Meeting, Mike Callahan, owner of Beaver Solutions and founder of non-profit Beaver Institute presented “Beavers and How to Manage Them.”

Mar 23: ACT Vice President Joe Cooney attended the Massachusetts Land Trust Conference.

Apr: ACT monitored 7 Conservation Restrictions and filed reports.

Apr 2: Acton Town Meeting: The CPA slate passed including the \$450,000 appropriation to the Open Space Set Aside, bringing the total to \$2.4M. Town Meeting also approved the warrant articles to establish an Agriculture Commission and Right to Farm Bylaw.

Apr 3: ACT sponsored its first woodcock walk at Stoneymeade Conservation Land. Twenty-nine people attended and they were treated to a spectacular mating dance.

Apr 27: ACT Strategic Planning Meeting (with a professional facilitator) reviewed our Mission, Vision and Values. We evaluated our progress across five major land trust objectives and brainstormed goals for 2019-2024 across the same five objectives.

May 5: ACT held a Spring Birding and Nature Walk at Stoneymeade Conservation Land and 29 attended. Our purpose was to see the spring migrants and to show off this little known conservation land and the privately owned 32-acre agricultural land nearby.

May 9: ACT co-sponsored (along with Friends of Pine Hawk (FoPH), Littleton and Boxborough Conservation Trusts) a Doug Harris presentation on “Let the Landscape Speak for Itself” at the Discovery Museum, to promote awareness of local Native American ceremonial stone landscapes.

Sep 1: ACT offered free ACT logo baseball caps to members, and to others for \$15, which comes with a free membership.

Sep 14: Follow-up facilitated strategic planning meeting. What we've done, new topics, and where we go next.

Oct: ACT hired new part-time Administrative Assistant, Andy Dodge, to manage our membership database.

Oct 13: ACT sponsored an Oxen Logging Demonstration at Wetherbee Woods and a Birding and Nature Walk at Wetherbee Conservation Land. The Beacon wrote a feature story.

Oct 20: ACT held a Service Day at Wright Hill Conservation Land to free trees and expose stone walls that are threatened by invasive bittersweet vines.

Nov 22: ACT monitored the Grassy Pond West (159 and 165 Newtown Road) CR for first time.

## Holley Conservation Volunteer of the Year

The ACT Board voted unanimously to present the 2020 Carol Holley Conservation Volunteer award to Laurie Ullmann. The award is given each year to the person who best exemplifies the late Carol Holley's shining example for getting involved in one's community to protect the environment. Laurie is the longest serving Acton Land Steward and has worked with Bob Guba in building many Stewardship infrastructure projects. As keeper of the Nashoba Brook parcel, he has assisted with many Trail Through Time projects, provided the research for "Mills Along the Nashoba" and the bio of Ebenezer Wood, the Pencil Factory owner.



Laurie also helped start Acton Clean Up Day (now Clean Up Week) and has been the town's representative to the Bay Circuit Trail's consortium, defining and maintaining Acton's portion of the Trail from its inception. He has also had a long term association with OARS, taking weekly water samples and helping with water chestnut cleanups.

## Notice of 2020 Annual Meeting of Members

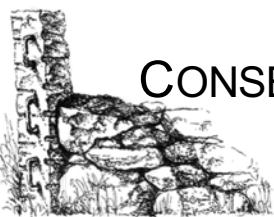
Please note that the 2020 Annual Meeting of members of the Acton Conservation Trust (ACT), a Massachusetts non-profit corporation, will be held on Sunday, March 15 at 7:00 PM at the Acton Town Hall, Room 204. We will convene the brief business portion of the meeting, where members will be asked to:

- Vote to re-elect Joe Cooney, David Hardt, Linda McElroy, Susan Mitchell-Hardt and Hart Millett as Trustees, and vote to elect new Trustees Carol Domblewski and Jody Harris, each to serve until the 2021 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 2021 Annual Meeting.
- Hear and comment on the Treasurer's Report and committee reports of 2019 activities, and to act upon such other business as may come before the meeting.



2018-2019 Financial Statements		FY 2018	FY 2019
Statement of Income and Expenses			
INCOME			
ACT Membership Dues	\$21,280	\$18,418	
Donations to ACT	\$4,204	\$1,130	
Interest Income	\$57	\$70	
Miscellaneous Income	\$8,615	\$1,800	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$34,156</b>	<b>\$21,418</b>	
EXPENSES			
Operating Expenses			
Software Licenses	\$451	\$421	
Mass Mailing	\$2,362	\$1,423	
Grants	\$1,000	\$0	
Misc. Fees	\$420	\$2,942	
Services	\$1,425	\$1,452	
Organization Memberships	\$500	\$550	
Insurance	\$973	\$4,709	
Miscellaneous Expenses	\$880	\$538	
<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$8,011</b>	<b>\$12,034</b>	
Other Expenses			
Misc. Fees		\$60	
Land Acquisition (CRs, BDRs)	\$4,455	\$0	
Legal Services	\$700	\$0	
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>\$5,155</b>	<b>\$60</b>	
		<b>\$13,166</b>	<b>\$12,094</b>
<b>NET INCOME</b>		<b>\$20,990</b>	<b>\$9,324</b>
Balance Sheet			
ASSETS			
Checking/Savings/Investment*	\$237,515	\$274,064	
Land	\$19,777	\$19,777	
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$257,292</b>	<b>\$293,841</b>	
LIABILITIES & EQUITY			
Liabilities	\$0	\$0	
Equity	\$257,292	\$293,841	
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; EQUITY</b>	<b>\$257,292</b>	<b>\$293,841</b>	

\* Includes funding for CR stewardship



# ACTON CONSERVATION TRUST

## 2020 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 2020), please join us!
- If you are already a Member for 2020 please pass this newsletter on to a friend who might be interested.

To join please visit: [actonconservationtrust.org](http://actonconservationtrust.org)

### Suggested levels of support:

Or mail this form to: Acton Conservation Trust  
P.O. Box 658  
Acton, MA 01720

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

Address:

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

Please make your check payable to  
**Acton Conservation Trust**

Your gift to ACT is tax-deductible

Please contact me about how I can get more involved!

### ACTivities, 2019

#### February 3

#### Winter Tracking Walk in the North Acton Conservation Lands

Some 30 intrepid folks came out on a snowy day to enjoy a winter tracking walk led by Paul Wanta. A tracker for 35 years, Paul found numerous tracks and scat, and identified lots of winter activity in this special corner of Acton.



#### April 3

#### American Woodcock Walk at Stoneymeade Conservation Land

On a cool early spring night we introduced a group of about 30 ACT members and friends to the unique behavior of the American Woodcock. We heard more than saw this amazing mating ritual that involves distinct "buzzing" on the ground followed by steep dives from great heights.



#### May 5

#### Spring Birdwatching at Stoneymeade

After a great walk here in the fall, led by Rita Grossman, we had the pleasure of returning in the spring with Al Sgroi. We saw a rich variety of returning species and followed the open field viewing with a walk of adjacent woods in Acton and Concord.



Acton Conservation Trust  
PO Box 658  
Acton, MA 01720

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**ACT Annual Meeting Guest Speaker:**

**Ken Warchol**

"The Bee Whisperer"

**The Role of the Honeybee in our Environment**



Kenneth Warchol, a veteran beekeeper, will share his knowledge in a narrated visual presentation. You will travel right inside a beehive to better understand the mysterious social insect and the role that it plays in humanity's survival on Earth. Learn about the challenges honeybees face in our environment and find out how we can help this insect that is essential to our own survival. Ken brings samples of a variety of honey for everyone to taste. Ken Warchol became involved with the Massachusetts Federation of Beekeepers in the 1970s.

Because of his unique talent with bees he is considered by many as the bee whisperer. He is a 6th generation caretaker of bees; his family's practice originated in Poland in the 1840s. In 1999, Ken was chair of the 100th Anniversary Celebration of the Worcester County Bee Association, the oldest county beekeeping association in the country. He has continued to speak to a wide variety of interest groups and beekeeping associations throughout New England mostly about honeybee abnormalities and disease and has published several articles in the American Bee Journal.

## Save The Date

### ACT Annual Meeting

Sunday, March 15, 2020

7:00 PM

Acton Town Hall

**ACTION CONSERVATION TRUST, Inc.  
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Susan Mitchell-Hardt	978-369-9264	mitchellhardt@gmail.com
<i>President</i>		
Joe Cooney	978-369-1410	cooney.joe@gmail.com
<i>Vice President</i>		
Hart Millett	978-621-8478	hart.millett@verizon.net
<i>Treasurer</i>		
David Hardt	978-369-9264	hardt@mit.edu
<i>Clerk</i>		
Lana Finn	617-429-5445	lana.g.finn@gmail.com
Linda McElroy	978-429-8000	meadowpond1@comcast.net