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**Eileen Entin, Chair                      September 2017                      | Elaine Quinlan, Editor**

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## 2017 CLC Dues are Payable Now

The status of your dues payment is shown on the address label of snail-mailed newsletters or near the top of the e-mail announcing this issue. If it says Dues paid April 2016 (or earlier), it is time to renew your membership for 2017. If it says "Complimentary Copy," you are receiving a complimentary copy of our newsletter because you are a Town Meeting member or other public official in Lexington. We hope that those who receive complimentary copies will find our organization of value and will in time become dues-paying members. To join CLC or renew your membership, please send \$20.00 to Citizens for Lexington Conservation, P.O. Box 292, Lexington, MA 02420-0003. Dues can also be paid by credit card through PayPal from a link on our web site, <http://www.clclex.org>.

### Expanding CLC's Board

As CLC celebrates its 50th anniversary, we are looking to expand our outreach and activities. To do this we are looking to expand our Board to include three new roles:

**Walks Publicity Coordinator:** Each spring and fall CLC sponsors a series of walks in conservation and open space. We are looking for someone to focus initially on walks publicity, and eventually to organize and broaden the types of walks we conduct.

**Events Coordinator:** Each year, CLC features a speaker on conservation, resource, or environmental issues. To deepen and enlarge our educational focus, we are seeking a new film/speaker coordinator to take on the tasks of identifying, scheduling, and publicizing videos and speakers. Our plans are to offer 3-4 events per year as an exciting new way for CLC to continue to raise public awareness regarding local, regional and national environmental issues.

**Conservation Restriction Monitors:** CLC is in the process of acquiring conservation restrictions (CRs) on five Town-owned properties that were acquired in whole or in part with Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds. We are seeking individuals who are interested in helping to complete the remaining CR applications for three of the five parcels and/or participating in the annual monitoring of the properties.

In addition to these three roles, CLC is also seeking an individual who will take on the role of **Recording Secretary**. This position involves taking minutes at Board meetings and filing any forms required to maintain our status as a nonprofit organization.

If you would like to know more about any of these positions, please contact Eileen Entin ([eileenhome@gmail.com](mailto:eileenhome@gmail.com), 781-862-6418).

## **CITIZENS FOR LEXINGTON CONSERVATION 2017 FALL WALKS**

**(All walks rain or shine unless otherwise noted.)**

*All walks are free and open to the public*

### **Saturday September 16, 8-10 am, Fall Birding at Dunback Meadow**

Look for seasonal fall migrants including hawks, sparrows and several species of warblers in addition to a full array of our resident bird species in one of Lexington's best and most reliable locations for bird watching. Meet at the Allen Street entrance opposite 23 Allen Street.

Walk Leader: Bobbie Hodson (617-571-5841, [robertahodson@comcast.net](mailto:robertahodson@comcast.net))

### **Sunday September 24, 1-4 pm, Autumn Harvest at Cotton Farm**

(Rain date Sunday, October 1; check the CLC website [www.clclex.org](http://www.clclex.org) for details)

Please join the Lexington Conservation Stewards and Citizens for Lexington Conservation for an afternoon celebrating the beginning of autumn and our local sweets. The Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah, is celebrated each fall with apples and honey, both of which are found at Cotton Farm, one of Lexington's loveliest conservation lands. This event is family friendly, with apple and honey tasting, and bee and tree investigations. The Lexington High School Bee Keeping Club will be on-hand to show-off their Cotton Farm Apiary while Citizens for Lexington Conservation will offer its Junior Ranger Program, from 1-3 pm.

Location: 121 Marrett Road. (Please park on the shoulder of Marrett Road)

### **Tuesday October 3, 10-11:30 am, Senior Sneaker Walk of West Farm and Liberty Heights**

Explore two of Lexington's less traveled Conservation properties (show of hands, how many have ever been to Liberty Heights?) and enjoy early Fall color. Gently graded paths and sidewalks. Meet at the intersection of Oak Street and Massachusetts Avenue with parking along Mass Ave on either side of Oak Street. No registration necessary.

Walk Leader: Keith Ohmart (781-862-6216, [kohmart@verizon.net](mailto:kohmart@verizon.net))

### **Sunday October 8, 1:30-3:30 pm, ACROSS Lexington Route H Introductory Walk**

Be amongst the first to explore ACROSS Lexington's newest addition, Route H. This 3.8 mile route wends its way around the Old Res, through a wooded portion of the Bridge School property and both the Idylwilde and Hayden Woods Conservation properties, as well as along a newly completed Town trail through the Shire property off of Shade Street. Steady rain cancels. Meet in the Old Res parking lot on Marrett Road.

Walk Leader: Eileen Entin (781-862-6418, [eileenhome@gmail.com](mailto:eileenhome@gmail.com))

### **Saturday October 14, 1-3 pm, Conservation Meadow Preservation in Lexington: An Inside Look**

Join Jordan McCarron, Conservation Stewardship Coordinator for the Lexington Conservation Division, for an inside look at the meadow restoration project currently underway

at Joyce Miller's Meadow followed by an optional walk around a portion of the adjacent Arlington's Great Meadow property. Participants will get an in-depth overview of the Conservation Division's Conservation Meadow Preservation Program, its goals and practices, and what the Division hopes to achieve by reclaiming old meadows in Town. Meet at the Waldorf School parking lot, 739 Massachusetts Avenue.

Walk Contact: Keith Ohmart (781-862-6216, [kohmart@verizon.net](mailto:kohmart@verizon.net))

### **Sunday October 22, 1:30-3 pm, "Walk in My Moccasins" at the Paint Mine**

View the Paint Mine Conservation area through the eyes of Native Americans who lived there before the colonists came. Find out how native people used plants, animals, and minerals from this special place for food, clothing, shelter, medicine, toys and ceremonies. Meet at the parking lot of Estabrook School, 117 Grove St. Children with an adult companion are encouraged to attend.

Walk Leader: Fran Ludwig (781-861-7231, [fludwig12@yahoo.com](mailto:fludwig12@yahoo.com))

### **Saturday October 28, 9-11:30 am, Nature Photography in Whipple Hill**

Late fall is one of the best times to visit the Whipple Hill Conservation property. With the leaves off of the trees the property's magnificent stone walls and rocky features of the landscape really stand out. Sunder Neelakantan will be your guide in how to best capture these and other features of the property in memorable photographs. Meet at the signed entrance to the property at the top of Winchester Drive opposite Berkshire Drive. Steady rain cancels.

Leader: Sunder Neelakantan (781-424-7558, [diadensunder@gmail.com](mailto:diadensunder@gmail.com))

## **Thank You Walk Leaders**

CLC's walk program is entirely dependent on our walk leaders, who are all volunteers, for its continuing success. We express a sincere thank you to Bobbie Hodson, Chris Floyd, Roger Wrubel, Keith Ohmart, Harry West, Judy Mello, Elaine Quinlan, Peggy Enders, Bob Haussein, Russ Cohen, Eileen Entin, Millie Webster and Tom Whelan for their leadership of our Spring 2017 walks and activities.

## **Citizens for Lexington Conservation – 50 Years and Counting**

By Keith Ohmart and Eileen Entin

Citizens for Lexington Conservation is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. In an article in our April, 2017 newsletter (<https://www.clclex.org/pdf-list/newsletters/>), we reflected back on the organization's activities in its early years. In this article we look at how CLC's activities have evolved, building on the successful efforts of its early members in establishing both a strong program of land acquisition for conservation purposes and strong environmental awareness within the Lexington community.

In its early years CLC's primary mission was to promote the acquisition of conservation properties to preserve open space in Lexington, as well as to raise and foster conservation and environmental awareness. As these values became inculcated in Town governance and the Town acquired a number of conservation properties, CLC began to devote more of its focus to educating people about the value and appeal of these conservation properties. As our newsletter readers are aware, CLC has for many years sponsored a series of spring and fall walks on Lexington's Conservation properties that invite people to learn about and enjoy these properties. The purpose of these walks is several fold, ranging from providing an opportunity to learn about the ecological value of these properties to offering folks who are not comfortable going through the properties on their own the opportunity to become familiar with them and the enjoyments they provide.

To supplement the outreach provided by its walks program, CLC has recently developed a visual introduction to Lexington's Conservation properties. The topics covered include an overview of the extent of Lexington's Conservation property system which now totals 26 properties encompassing over 1300 acres; the ecological and environmental importance of these properties, as well as the variety of activities that these properties provide to Lexington's residents. This presentation is available for screening to interested groups by contacting CLC through its web site, [www.clclex.org](http://www.clclex.org).

Yet another initiative in CLC's ongoing expansion of its educational and outreach activities has been to increase our efforts to introduce children to the wonders of open space. In years past, children played outside in nearby open spaces, but now parents are reluctant to let their children wander unsupervised and the children themselves are taken up with their electronic gadgets. CLC is working to bring kids into the outdoors through support of the school system's Big Backyard Program and contributions to teacher curriculum development, through our family-focused walks, through cooperative efforts with the children's department at Cary Library, and through the dissemination of our Junior Ranger Booklet, which provides questions to answer and activities that kids can do when visiting a Conservation property.

The most recent addition to CLC's list of activities has been to take on the task of holding and monitoring Conservation Restrictions (CRs) on five of the Town's Conservation properties that were purchased using Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds. A Conservation Restriction is a legal agreement between the property owner and the holder of the restriction to protect the property's conservation values in perpetuity. The state has required that municipalities purchasing open space using CPA funds arrange to place CRs on each property to be held by a third party organization as a further means of protecting each property's conservation values and open space status. The Town's Conservation Department approached CLC a few years ago inquiring as to whether CLC would be willing to hold these CRs and an agreement was worked out to put this in place. CLC has formed a task group to complete the work involved in preparing and filing each of the five CR applications. Once these have been finished CLC will need to perform an annual site inspection of each property to ensure that the terms of the CR agreements remain in effect. The tasks involved for both the application and monitoring phases of this program require both site visits to gather and record information regarding physical features of the

properties as well as completing forms recording the observations made. CLC is actively looking for volunteers with an interest in the outdoors who would like the opportunity to learn new skills and take a more active part in helping to preserve Lexington's natural heritage through this program. (See open positions, page 2).

In addition to these newer ventures, CLC continues its original and core mission of advocating for the acquisition of open space for preservation as Conservation land when the right opportunities present themselves. This task has become ever more challenging over the 50 year history of the organization. The amount of undeveloped land remaining in Lexington has been steadily reduced, while the relative price for acquiring open space has steadily increased, as have the competing needs for continuing to invest in the Town's overall infrastructure.

Fortunately, thanks in no small part to the role that CLC has played over these 50 years, the Town's inventory of municipally-owned open space is the envy of our fellow communities inside the Route 128 beltway. Over the last several years the Town has been presented with the opportunity to acquire several key parcels to preserve as open space, which it has done in each instance. The acquisition of the Cotton Farm property connected the existing Upper Vine Brook and Dunback Meadow Conservation properties. The Leary property on Vine Street connected the two halves of the Lower Vine Brook property, while the Wright Farm property provided a direct connection to the Town of Burlington's large Landlocked Forest property. In each instance the Town was offered the opportunity to purchase the property and, through the availability of CPA funds, had the means to complete the purchase.

The recently concluded development permitting for the Carchia property on Grove Street has presented a different outcome in terms of the possibilities for open space preservation. In this particular case the Town was not presented with the opportunity to acquire the property by the owner with the result that preservation of open space was dependent on the Town's zoning by-laws regarding special permit development. In this particularly controversial case CLC took the position of supporting the permit option that would result in the preservation of a portion of the property as open space through creation of a Conservation Restriction in exchange for a denser housing development rather than losing the entire property to the creation of private house lots.

As the last remaining large parcels of undeveloped land in Lexington become available for development, tradeoffs, such as those that were on the table in the Grove Street situation, may become more common in the challenge of continuing to preserve undeveloped land as open space.

Equally challenging as CLC contemplates its next 50 years is the need for introducing the treasures of Lexington's open space resources to its newer residents. As Lexington's population grows and changes in character, we are striving to introduce newcomers to our organization. As we head into our next 50 years, we are working to increase our membership and encourage interested volunteers to serve on our Board. Several of our present board members have served in their positions for many years, and we are actively

seeking new people, perhaps empty-nesters or the newly retired, who would be willing to join our board and continue CLC's heritage of conservation advocacy and education. As we have outlined in this recap of the more recent history of our organization, the opportunities are many to continue our outreach efforts on behalf of conservation in the Lexington community. We are limited only by the number of active volunteers who choose to join us in the work begun 50 years ago by our conservation-minded predecessors.

## **Conservation Meadow Preservation in Lexington: An In-Depth View**

By Jordan McCarron, Conservation Stewardship Program Coordinator  
for the Lexington Conservation Division

In the summer of 2015, the Conservation Division began an ambitious multi-year *Conservation Meadow Preservation Program* aimed at restoring and preserving the ecological integrity and recreational value of Lexington's approximately 75-acres of upland conservation meadow. Hennessey Field at Paint Mine Conservation Area and Joyce Miller's Meadow were first-up on the list of 15 meadows to receive restoration work through this program over the next ten years or so. Restoration work began at Hennessey Field in August of 2015 and concluded in the fall of 2016; work at Joyce Miller's Meadow is currently in-progress.

When conservation meadows are healthy and intact (dominated by a diversity of native grasses and wildflowers) they provide important habitat for a wide variety of bird species in addition to invertebrates like butterflies and dragonflies, honey bees and native pollinators. Additionally, the edge habitat that is created by the transition from forest to open field, often rich in seeds, berries, and herbaceous growth, provides a vital food source for deer and small mammals. In Lexington, our conservation meadows also provide popular recreational opportunities like cross-country skiing, picnicking, and bird watching while contributing greatly to the Town's historic character and scenic beauty.

Maintaining these meadows for these varied uses, however, presents a real challenge for land management organizations like ours because they require both seasonal and annual maintenance measures to remain open and free of invasive species and other woody growth. When left untended for even short periods of time, they can quickly revert to shrub-land and forest. Additionally, meadow edges are particularly difficult to manage due to the challenge of mowing close to fences, stone walls, and tree lines. This is particularly true in Lexington, where many of our fields are surrounded by old stone walls and unmanaged forest.

To combat this encroachment at both Hennessey Field and Joyce Miller's Meadow, the Conservation Division worked with Bruce Scherer of Heritage Fields in Orange, MA to do the larger-scale mechanical tree and brush clearing while engaging a core group of Conservation Steward volunteers to assist with the more detail-oriented hand-tool work required to clean up along stone walls and tree lines; selective herbicide treatments were

also used in both meadows to gain control of invasive asiatic bittersweet, glossy buckthorn, bush honeysuckle, and winged euonymus (burning bush).

At Hennessey Field, the result of this work has been dramatic with a newly exposed stone wall along the western side of the property providing sweeping views across the meadow. At Joyce Miller's Meadow—classified as sandplain grassland or shrubland by the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program—the Conservation Division has partnered with Grassroots Wildlife Conservation in Concord to re-introduce several declining species of sandplain wildflowers to the site. One of these wildflowers, New England Blazing Star, is a state-listed species of special concern that was once common in Middlesex County but is now only present in several locations around the state. These wildflowers, in addition to abundant populations of little blue stem grass, scrub oak, haircap moss and lowbush blueberry, evolved through a regime of periodic fire. In an effort to preserve this habitat and specific assemblage of species, the Conservation Division is currently researching the practicality and potential for using prescribed fire to manage the site in the future.

Once a meadow's restoration work is complete, the Conservation Division works with both the Lexington DPW and the Conservation Stewards to mow each field and maintain its edges on an annual basis in order to retain a grass- and wildflower-dominated cover and keep the surrounding forest at bay. Annual monitoring for and removal of new invasive plant growth is also necessary.

It should be noted that permanently protected open meadows are in decline throughout New England as old agricultural land reverts back to forest or is converted to other uses. The Town of Lexington is joining many local and regional conservation organizations who are prioritizing the reclamation and preservation of these important wildlife and recreation areas.

The overall concept of the Conservation Meadow Preservation Program was presented to Town Meeting in 2015 and is being funded through the Community Preservation Act. Hennessey Field and Joyce Miller's Meadow were funded in 2015. Next up for restoration work are the meadows at Wright Farm and Willard's Woods; both received funding at Town Meeting 2017. Work is scheduled to commence at Wright Farm later this fall.

For more information on this project and other Conservation Division initiatives, please visit: <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/conservation/pages/current-conservation-projects>.

(Jordan will be leading a CLC sponsored walk on October 14 from 1-3pm that will review work being done to restore Joyce Miller's Meadow. Please see the notice for this activity on the CLC Fall Walks schedule on page 3 of this newsletter.)

## **Go Green Summit Lexington Forms the Lexington Green Network**

By Mary Hutton

Submitted by Lexington Green Network: Marcia Gens, Ricki Pappo, and, Fran Ludwig of the Lexington Global Warming Action Coalition (LexGWAC) working with Mary Hutton and Madelyn Atwood of the Progressive Democrats of Massachusetts (PDM) Energy and Environment Committee.

On June 6, representatives of close to 20 of the Lexington's organizations whose mission involves energy, the environment and/or climate change met to discuss the benefits of joining forces—how to make the whole stronger than the sum of its parts. The result was the creation of an umbrella organization—the Lexington Green Network.

The Lexington Green Network is still in its formative stage in terms of how active it will be as an organization in its own right. However, the groups at the meeting were unanimous in the decision that the first order of business should be creating a means of communication among them. Ideally, this would involve building a website that could generate a monthly newsletter that would contain articles by members of the network and a calendar of events of all the member groups. Importantly, action items—issues that come up unexpectedly will be communicated to the group as they arise so that, just as the Minutemen mustered to Lexington Green when the alarm sounded on April 19, 1775, the members of the Lexington Green Network can also respond in a timely way to the situation at hand.

A representative of the Board of Selectmen and the chairman of Sustainable Lexington, a Town committee appointed by the Board of Selectmen to enhance Lexington's long-term sustainability and resilience in response to environmental resource and energy challenges, were invited to the meeting and fully supported the creation of the new network.

Numerous benefits of joining forces were cited at the meeting: the sharing of ideas and resources; helping to raise awareness of environmental issues; making work on issues more efficient and effective, as there is strength in numbers and in the support of multiple groups; sharing a joint calendar of events, avoiding a duplication of efforts and the double booking of events while enabling the shared planning of joint efforts.

The groups in attendance at the meeting, while sharing an overall interest in energy and the environment, differ in many important respects. For instance, Citizens for Lexington Conservation, one of the oldest local conservation groups, has been in existence for about 50 years while Mothers Out Front was created only four years ago. Lexington Global Warming Action Coalition has education as its primary focus, while the Lexington chapter of Indivisible and the Energy and Environment Working Group of Progressive Democrats of Massachusetts, Lexington are more focused on political activism. The Sierra Club has a wealth of experience with and resources on many issues concerning the environment and climate change not available to the newer organizations. Organizations like the Green Teams at Lexington's Elementary Schools and the Bike Committee and

LexFarm have a much narrower focus. However, what became clear during the discussion at the meeting was that each of the different organizations represented at the meeting, with its own unique perspective, would both benefit from and benefit the group as a whole.

The Lexington Green Network is the result of a partnership of representatives of GWAC and the Energy and Environment working group of PDM, who were independently discussing the benefits of growing the movement by joining forces with other groups. This coupled with the lucky coincidence that these like-minded people were introduced to each other and the fact that PDM had reserved a room for a meeting on another subject that had been cancelled gave birth to the idea whose time had apparently come!

For more information or to contact the Lexington Green Network, write Marcia Gens at [LexingtonGreenNetwork@gmail.com](mailto:LexingtonGreenNetwork@gmail.com).

## **Presentation on Lexington's Conservation Land**

By Eileen Entin

One of CLC's goals is to help everyone in our community appreciate the beauty and values of our conservation land. To foster this goal, CLC has prepared a slide show that explains the "what, where, and why" of Lexington's Conservation Parcels. The presentation explains where the parcels are located, ways in which people can enjoy them, and the ecological and health benefits they provide. It is available for presentation to any local group or organization that is interested. If desired, the presentation can be tied to one or more walks in specific conservation parcels. If your group or organization is interested in seeing this presentation, please contact Eileen Entin by email ([eileenhome@gmail.com](mailto:eileenhome@gmail.com)) or leave a message on our website ([clclex.org](http://clclex.org)) with your contact information.

## **ACROSS Lexington's Newest Route - H**

By Keith Ohmart

Route H, ACROSS Lexington's newest route, incorporates nearly all of the many types of properties to be found in Lexington that lend themselves to the creation of shared common pathways through our community. Over the course of its nearly 4 mile length, it traverses 2 Conservation properties (Hayden Woods and Idylwilde), 1 school property (Bridge School), 1 Town Recreation property (Old Res), 2 trail easements on private property (Shire Pharmaceutical and Coppersmyth Way), in addition to Town streets and sidewalks.

The Greenways Corridor Committee was founded on the premise that the Town should create a system of walking and bicycling routes throughout the community connecting its open spaces. The challenge lies in discovering the connecting pieces that minimizes the need to use busy streets to achieve this goal. Route H is a textbook example of how many of these pieces can come together to create a safe and relaxing way to appreciate the extensive open space resources to be found throughout our community.

Users can access the H loop at multiple points. Beginning at the parking lot for the Old Res, which is a convenient place to leave a car if arriving by automobile, the route traverses a forested section of the Bridge School property before exiting on to Marrett Road via a trail easement through Coppersmyth Way. This easement was incorporated into the planning and permitting of the Coppersmyth Way development as a neighborhood connection for students to reach the Bridge School.

Crossing Marrett Road via a crosswalk at Lincoln Street, the route follows the shoulder of Lincoln Street for a short distance before entering the Idylwilde Conservation/Community Garden property. The route crosses the property exiting on to Middle Street, then follows the sidewalk down to the intersection with Lincoln Street. The route crosses this intersection and in quick succession at the intersection with Weston Street to reach Shade Street and the fire road entrance to the Shire property.

The route follows the fire road on the Shire property to the rear parking lot where it then follows a newly completed half-mile trail maintained by the Town's Conservation Department through the wooded portion of the Shire property to reach Spring Street. Additional public trails on this portion of the Shire property are in the process of being completed by the Town's Conservation Stewards.

Exiting onto Spring Street, the route follows the sidewalk to the intersection with Woodcliffe Road where there is a crosswalk across Spring Street. The route then turns onto Munroe Street where it enters the Hayden Woods Conservation property at the end of this street. Highlights along the Hayden Woods portion of the route include walking a section of old Shade Street dating to Colonial times and the opportunity to stop and rest on a seldom visited lovely stone bench in a forested glade.

After traversing one of the longest boardwalks in Lexington, the route exits the Hayden Woods property onto Valleyfield Street and then follows Grassland Street back to the intersection of Spring Street and Marrett Road. From there it is a short walk back to the parking lot at the Old Res.

There will be a guided walk of this new route on October 8th departing from the Old Res parking lot at 1:30 p.m. Estimated walking time is approximately 2 hours. Please see the notice for this walk on the CLC Fall Walks schedule on page 4 of this newsletter.

