



Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust

Fall 2009 Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

Are you wondering what I'm wondering—where has summer been and where did it go?! Late in starting, summer, by the school calendar is already over. Weather-wise it seems to be just getting underway. Well, better late than never and no better time to enjoy Lowell's newest addition to riverside paths, the Concord River Greenway.

Recently, Executive Director Jane Calvin took board members for a twilight tour of the nearly complete Concord River Greenway's first section off of East Merrimack Street. Even in the falling light this winding walkway along the Concord River was awesome and provided a clear vision of its potential once fully developed upriver to Lawrence Street. Planted with low-maintenance trees, flowering shrubs, and grasses, the walkway threads a fine line between open and urban spaces, presenting river views and rushing water sounds on one side, cityscapes and buzz on the other.

Like other Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust's projects across the city—Jollene Dubner Park, Coburn Park, Donahue Park—the Concord River Greenway provides a great balance to the urban landscape. Like the Riverwalk, it will provide a nearby refuge to downtown workers, residents and visitors. With just two street crossings—East Merrimack and Bridge Streets—the Greenway connects via Kerouac Park to the Riverwalk and canalways.

The Concord River Greenway is the latest, but surely not the last, example of the types of quality of life projects that the Trust envisions and executes throughout the city. It's another cooperative effort undertaken in partnership with city, state and federal as well as individual and business partners. Underpinning all of these ventures is the support of our members. Nearly 800 strong, your generosity of money, time and talent makes possible our very active and pro-active "to-do" list. As always, thank you for all of your support!

Summer may just be getting underway as the fall cycle of activity begins—school, sports, leaf peeping—but that's fine with us. Our "to-do" list remains long and ambitious!

If you haven't already, I encourage you to check out the Concord River Greenway and to hike along Lowell's other river and canal walkways in the upcoming weeks and months as fall's colors add a new dimension to Lowell's urban landscape.

Kind regards,

Henri Marchand

19th Annual Meeting November 6th, 2009, 7pm

Featuring Author John Wargo, *Green Intelligence*, as part of the Concord Festival of Authors - Lowell. Co-sponsored with TURI.
SAVE THE DATE! See page 3 for details.

YOUTH TAKE THE LEAD



A hard working crew from Spindle City Corps tackled several projects at our West Meadow property.

The impacts of LP&CT's environmental education programming this past spring and summer were felt far and wide, driven by the voices and enthusiasm of Lowell youth. This spring we expanded our programming to work with high school-age youth from Spindle City Corps (SCC) and we experienced, and gained from, their initiative. With an initial focus on the Concord River, youth studied the southern end of the Concord River Greenway Park (just prior to construction) to inventory wildlife and vegetation. They monitored water samples from the river for macroinvertebrates (tiny aquatic animals with no backbone) with results indicating good water quality. In August they carried this knowledge to our West Meadow property where they developed a plan of action to improve conservation efforts at this four-acre hidden gem in Pawtucketville.

West Meadow is home to a scenic fern glade, vernal pool, and a trail, which leads hikers to the Lowell-Dracut-Tyngsboro State Forest. SCC youth were familiar with West Meadow from a spring visit to compare this site to wetland and upland habitats along the Concord River. The youth planned and implemented several action-based projects at West Meadow including extensive trail maintenance, the creation of a new trail, mapping of the property's diverse population of vegetation, and developed an interpretive trail guide to accompany the Trust's newly revised West Meadow trail map. West Meadow has truly become an outdoor classroom for all ages thanks to some help from these empowered youth.

Overall, SCC completed over 450 hours of service to further conserve West Meadow and promote awareness of our local green spaces. These hours included a small service project at Mass Audubon's Drumlin Farm Wildlife Sanctuary (our environmental education program partner). You can find their interpretive trail guide, which includes their original photos and detailed descriptions, in the "Land Protection" section of our web site (www.lowellandtrust.org).

We thank the SCC youth and our partners from Mass Audubon, Lowell National Historical Park, and Community Teamwork, Inc. for their part in a very successful pilot program.

SUMMER SOLSTICE SOIREE



Supporters of the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust gathered for a Summer Solstice Soirée hosted by Trust Board member, Dr. Mark Romanowsky & his wife, Renee in their lovely tented garden on Saturday, June 13, 2009.

The event included elegant music by violinist, Erin Dubinski, a special selection of wines donated by Stonehedge Inn, a festive tent donated by Martha Mayo, and catering services provided by youth from Fresh Roots of the United Teen Equality Center. Several original oil paintings of Lowell's *Special Places*, by Dr. Mark Romanowsky were displayed throughout the garden (see Calendar of Events).

During the event LP&CT recognized several guests, including Jay Hungate for his sculptural work on the Greenway and Louisa Varnum and John Hamblet for their persistence in protecting the historic Hawk Valley Farm off Varnum Avenue (see, right).

LP&CT RECEIVES SIGNIFICANT GRANT SUPPORT FROM:

Theodore Edson Parker Fdn.
City of Lowell CDBG Program
Massachusetts Cultural Council



Massachusetts Cultural Council

Art and Community Landscapes
(a partnership of the National Endowment for the Arts,
the National Park Service and the New England Foundation for the Arts)

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Greater Lowell Community Foundation

Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust Fund

Lowell Cultural Council

MA Cultural Facilities Fund

NLT Foundation

Fund for the Arts, a restricted fund of the NE Foundation for the Arts

Philips Medical Systems

MAKING AN IMPACT

The Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust relies on significant in-kind support in many ways. Our office space is supported by the **Lowell Plan/LDFC**. Even though we are not required to submit to a full audit, we do with support from **Anstiss & Co.** We have a full audit to ensure that donors like you and other funders can have great confidence in financial systems. We're fortunate to also have legal assistance at the tip of our fingers with in-kind support from **Eno, Boulay, Martin & Donahue**.

This year a few new partners have stepped up to provide significant assistance in helping us reach our mission. Our new website, to be launched soon after you receive this newsletter, has been redesigned with the design expertise of **Jericho Road Project** volunteer **Charles Frean** and intern **Andrew Cheng**. The changes are a significant improvement over our ability to manage the site internally. Their work represents hundreds of hours that means our two part-time staff can otherwise focus on our education, land protection, and urban forestry programs, and projects as comprehensive as the Concord River Greenway. We eagerly await your feedback, though please be patient as it's a work in progress!

Another **Jericho Road** volunteer **Alan Hurvitz** will be shepherding our board of directors through a one-day strategic planning retreat this fall. We'll share our re-visioning effort with you later this fall. To learn more about the Jericho Road Project, visit them at www.jerichoroadproject.org.

Our new corporate partner in caring for our city's special places is **Motorola**. During their Global Day of Service, a team of volunteers from Motorola will be working with us at both Jollene Dubner Park and the Spalding House on October 14th. You can join us for our City-wide Parks Beautification Day on October 24th to make your impact! See the Calendar of Events.

HAWK VALLEY FARM CR



This spring LP&CT celebrated our first conservation restriction (CR) in the city. In partnership with The Trustees of Reservations, LP&CT now co-holds a conservation restriction on nearly five acres off Varnum Avenue, near the intersection of West Meadow Street. In driving by this intersection, you might notice several large boulders on the right as you drive toward the

Merrimack River. These denote the entrance to the CR property and what was once the large Hawk Valley Farm, owned by the Varnum Family. The original Varnum homestead (c. 1740) still stands and abuts the property.

Louisa Varnum, an abutter to the property, acquired the property with the conservation restriction through a City of Lowell RFP process. LP&CT and TTOR worked closely with the city to ensure the perpetual protection of the property through generations of future landowners. Ms. Varnum hopes to bring back a historic barn structure and renew the once active farm fields abutting Clay Pit Brook. The property was protected through a conservation restriction to conserve its unique history, scenic vista over the Merrimack River, rare soils, flood retention capacity, and wildlife habitat. We applaud the City of Lowell for its vision in protecting this property in perpetuity, the neighborhood for its persistence, and The Trustees of Reservations for their technical guidance.

QUALITY OF LIFE CAMPAIGN

WHAT DOES QUALITY OF LIFE MEAN TO YOU?

We thank the following 2009 donors to our Quality of Life Campaign, which will provide important discretionary funds to expand our diverse programs and projects. Please let us know if you would like to invest in Lowell's "Quality of Life"; we can send you information or meet with you in person.

James Calvin & Kamala Madhu
James Cooney Real Estate & Ins.
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Lowell Five

WE THANK the following volunteers for their incredible efforts over the spring and summer at Dubner Park, as white water rafting lock tenders, and as dedicated new land stewards! **CHEERS!**

JOLLENE DUBNER PARK ENHANCEMENTS

Beverly Barry, Charlie Cutler, Andrew Donahue, Jacob Durant, Bill Foss, John Haven, Jennifer Loher, Carina & Chris Lowry, Martha McGowan, Jack Moynihan, Frances Nowak, Steven Sheppard

2009 LOCK TENDERS

John Bain, Judy and Alan Blackburn, Charlie Cutler, Jodi DeLibertis, Karen Doherty, Richard Donovan, Bill Gerber, Steve Hattan, Rachel Hervieux, Chris Laughton, The Marino Family, John Nerden, Owen O'Reilly, Jack Reynolds, Bill Rousseau, Robert Smith, Deb Sofia, Heather Szafran, Dave & Peter Tardiff, Christopher Williams

NEW LAND STEWARDS

John Bain (Concord River Greenway – southern end), Jennifer and Phillippe Loher (Concord River Greenway – northern end), Carole Biewner (Nicole Drive), and Jamie O'Hearn and Steve Looney (West Meadow)

DOUBLE YOUR DONATION

Ask your employer about its Matching Gift Program.

Current business participants include:

Arbella, Aspect, Autodesk, Inc., Bickling Financial, ca, HP, IBM, Juniper Networks, Millipore, National Grid/MA Electric, Polaroid, Sun Microsystems, and Verizon.

Please remember to submit your **matching gift form** with your next donation to LP&CT.

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WE THANK THE FOLLOWING FOR SIGNIFICANT IN-KIND SUPPORT:

Anstiss & Co., P.C.
Eno, Boulay, Martin & Donahue
LDFC/Lowell Plan
Jericho Road/Charles Fren

UPCOMING EVENTS—FALL 2009

PLEASE RSVP (978) 934-0030

Volunteer Appreciation Night

Thursday, September 24th, 7:00-8:30pm
Spalding House, 383 Pawtucket Street, Lowell

Our volunteers are invaluable! If you've volunteered for us or are interested in learning more, join us as we recognize and thank our volunteers who share their time and skills!



Special Places: Mark Romanowsky Exhibit

Sat., September 26th, 1-5 pm,
Spalding House
383 Pawtucket Street, Lowell

Please join us at the Spalding House for a special exhibit of Trust board member, Dr. Mark Romanowsky's oil paintings. The collection includes images of Lowell, the surrounding area and the eastern seaboard, including Nova Scotia. Many of Mark's paintings feature properties protected through LP&CT's urban land protection program. Professional prints (signed and numbered) will be available for advance purchase or can be ordered online:

www.myprints.biz/LPCT (client #492).



City-wide Parks Beautification Day

Saturday, October 24, 2009, 9am-12pm
Location - at the Lowell park of your choice!

Last year over 200 volunteers tackled 18 parks! Volunteers and site leaders are needed. Groups welcome! Meet at and beautify your favorite Lowell park—you pick your project or we'll provide you with one.

LP&CT Annual Meeting Featuring John Wargo

November 6, 2009, 7:00pm
Wannalancit Mills, UMass Lowell



Featuring John Wargo, author of *Green Intelligence: Creating Environments That Protect Human Health*. This event is part of the Concord Festival of Authors—Lowell and is being co-hosted by TURI and LP&CT. Books will be available for purchase.

CONCORD RIVER GREENWAY NEWS

Two sections of the Concord River Greenway are nearing completion! The City of Lowell is overseeing construction of two sections of the Greenway, including the northern-most end at the Davidson Street parking lot and at the southern-most end near Lawrence Street and the Lowell Cemetery.

As you can see below, the northern end of the Greenway, across from the Lowell Memorial Auditorium, along the edge of the Davidson parking lot has added significant greenspace to this once barren site. Soon, you'll see the addition of our multi-lingual signage, granite benches (donated by the Lowell Cemetery), and picnic tables. What makes this site more than just a trail is its integration of public art designed by Wopo Holup, including a text fence featuring a long quote by Thoreau and bollards with cast iron native bird caps greeting you as you enter the new park. Look for notice of a ribbon cutting celebration soon!



Colin Novick of the Greater Worcester Land Trust, explores the Greenway and takes lessons home to share with his own organization.

AS HEARD ON THE BLOGS...



As written by Paul Marion on the blog www.richardhowe.com:

"Freshly planted flowers border a wide paved walkway with a black steel fence along the riverbank. The fence is still under construction, but the most recently completed stretch includes a section in which is embedded a long quote about the river by Henry David Thoreau from, I believe, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (1849). The new path makes it easier to get close to Lowell's lesser-known and -appreciated waterway and its associated wildlife.

Congratulations to the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust, City planners, state legislators and planners, artist, architects, foundations, and private donors who have contributed mightily to the building of the Greenway."

And commented on by Lauren Johnston of NEFA:

"As an initial funder of public art on the Concord River Greenway, the New England Foundation for the Arts (NEFA) is so pleased to see this piece making an impact. The project exemplifies the goals of our public art program: to engage community members with professional artists for the creation of site-specific artwork that benefits the community. Thank you for highlighting this work!

10TH ANNUAL RIVERFEST



This year marked the 10th Annual RiverFest, a watershed-wide summer event held in honor of the Concord River and its tributaries, being the Sudbury River and Assabet River. Programs this year were held on and around the three rivers, bringing people out to recreate and learn about the watershed. For many the Concord River is a quiet oasis within the City of Lowell. It's a great place to go fishing or relax riverside with a picnic. For others it provides scenic beauty, as a natural resource. It even

provides exhilarating whitewater rafting adventures right through the City of Lowell.

This year's event, held at Muldoon Park along the Concord River in Lowell, brought in our largest RiverFest crowd yet. Throughout the day attendees enjoyed nature painting with LP&CT, textile history activities with the American Textile History Museum, and the opportunity to meet local wildlife (spotted turtle, painted turtle, mallard duck) with our environmental education partner, Mass Audubon. One of the more popular activities was the fishing clinic offered by the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation. The photo above is of a 6 year old names Tyler. His mother noted:

"[Tyler] had never held a fishing rod before, this was his first time. He and his brothers got their first lesson at the festival on Saturday before going out to fish."

Meanwhile, our *whitewater rafting* partner, Zoar Outdoor, offered float trips on the river during the event. Adding to the event's ambience were Native American history presentations by the Greater Lowell Indian Cultural Association, and banjo music by Alex Demas from Lowell National Historical Park.

Thank you to all who attended the day's events, including our sponsor UMass Lowell. We'll see you next year at RiverFest!



Jollene Dubner's 2nd grade (!) classmates (and their families) visited Jollene Dubner Park (off Rogers Street) in August as a part of a reunion celebrating their 50th birthdays. Their teacher, Roberta Gordon (center left in black), organized the reunion and gathers the class annually.

PLEASE NOTE: ALL DONATIONS LISTED BELOW WERE RECEIVED BETWEEN **April 1– August 31, 2009**

SUSTAINING MEMBERS

Sustaining members provide ongoing monthly support. Donations noted below are annualized.

We've now made it easier for you to become a sustaining member (monthly donor)!

Click Donate Now on our website!

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NEW MEMBERS

Please support those businesses that support our work (in bold).

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*The Lowell Highlands Neighborhood Group thank[s] LP&CT for organizing the **City-wide Parks Beautification Day**... thank you for supporting our group in working to make lasting and positive impact on our community.*
Heddi Nieuwsma, LNHP
After Fall 2008 event

"In modest circumstances, this vital organization is setting a fine example of urban environmental protection and enhancement."
Catalogue For Philanthropy

SOIREE DONORS 2009

Thank You

To the following donors for attending, or contributing in lieu of attendance to, our June Summer Solstice Soirée:

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