



Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust

Winter 2009 Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

If you like outdoor activities that include snow and cold, you're enjoying a banner year! But it's also a good time to relax and enjoy being winter bound with a good book and friends. For the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust it's a good time to be planning and preparing for when spring and summer finally return and our park development, outdoor education and planting projects resume.

Because of your dedication to the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust, we've been able to sustain the flurry of activities and programs that make us unique and that beautify Lowell's landscape, adding so much to our neighborhoods' quality of life. Looking ahead, we've got a full slate of activities for 2009:

- Winter Programs— Maple Sugaring and Animal Tracking
- construction of the next phase of the Concord River Greenway;
- expansion of our environmental education programming to reach high school age youth;
- completion of the window restoration at the Spalding House;
- development of new city park behind the Spalding House and the former Red Cross, Pawtucket Falls Overlook Park;
- our second annual city-wide parks clean-up; and
- the establishment of our first conservation restriction on a five-acre property off Varnum Avenue, formerly known as Hawk Valley Farm.

These are possible because of your incredible commitment and I want to thank all of you for your new and renewed support of the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust. Like the never-ending snow we've had this season, your membership renewals and annual contributions continue to arrive nearly every day. In these difficult economic times your help is especially important and appreciated.

So, until spring arrives, please keep those renewals and annual contributions coming and enjoy winter's special appeal—indoors or out!

Best,

Through your support as a member, LP&CT accomplished the following in 2008:

- Planted **158 trees** as a part of 38 projects!
- Reached several hundred students at four sites through our **after-school program!**
- Offered **35 events** which over 2,500 people attended!
- Coordinated a City-wide parks clean-up—200 people **impacted 18 parks!**

CONFLUENCE EXHIBIT—ANNUAL MEETING

LP&CT kindly thanks everyone who attended and supported our Confluence Exhibit and 2008 Annual Meeting at the Boott Gallery this past fall. During the exhibit opening, wayside signage that will be exhibited along the Concord River Greenway Park (CRG, currently under construction) and CRG artist Wopo Holup's "Concord River Drawing" were unveiled to the crowd. The wayside signs, to be stationed at several points along the Greenway, depict multiple facets of nature, industry, and community thus telling the story of the Concord River's incredible history in Lowell. Wopo's Concord River Drawing, silver and long and winding, filled the entire length of the wall, captured the artist's view of the journey that the river endures beginning at the confluence of the Sudbury and Assabet Rivers, flowing north through Lowell to where it meets the Merrimack River and finally falls into the sea.

The Concord River is one of the greatest, yet most concealed natural resources that the Lowell region has to offer. Hence the objective of the CRG is to provide access for people to the river, via a multiple-use recreational path. The Trust seeks to connect people to the river and the surrounding land through participation and interpretation. During late fall weekends the Confluence exhibit remained open for the benefit of those who wanted to take a closer look.

Thank you to our volunteers who donated their generous time to make the Confluence Exhibit possible. Without our volunteers we would not be able to offer such programming. Thank you to the following exhibit hosts: Lauris Donovan, Mary Doyle, Kathy Hirbour, Sheila Kirschbaum, Henri Marchand, Kathy McCauley, Kristin McCauley, Fran Nowak, Jack & Michelle Reynolds, Maria Robarge, Mark Romanowsky, Carolyn Snyder, and Deb Sofia. We also thank the **Lowell National Historical Park** and its staff, especially David Blackburn, Greg Chagnon, Phil Lupsiewicz, Enrique Melendez Melendez, and Chris Wirth for their assistance with the exhibit.



Wopo Holup's Concord River Drawing, 2008, featured at the 2008 Annual Meeting and as part of the Confluence Exhibit.
Aluminum leaf and pencil on Denril paper. T' x 24' - 16 panels each 7' x 18".

CITY-WIDE CLEAN-UP

We thank the following groups that volunteered through LP&CT to support the city-wide parks clean-up last October. We made a difference at 18 parks!

Belvidere Neighborhood Council, Christ Church United, Cub Scout Pack 23, Downtown Neighborhood Assoc. Friends of Kittredge Park, Friends of the Reservoir Friends of Rogers Fort Hill Park, Friends of Tyler Park, JAMBRA, Lawrence Community Day Charter School, Lowell Garden Club, Lowell High School (New Horizons, Public Service Academy, ROTC, & Student Council), Lowell Historic Board, Lower Highlands Neighborhood Group, Middlesex Community College, Mill City Moms, UMass Lowell Ballroom Dance Club, Young Professionals of Greater Lowell

LP&CT RECEIVES SIGNIFICANT GRANT SUPPORT FROM:

**Theodore Edson Parker Foundation
City of Lowell CDBG Program
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)
1772 Foundation

Aubert J. Fay Charitable Fund
Cultural Organization of Lowell

Richard K. Donahue Sr. Park Maintenance Fund & Alfred H. and Kathryn E. Coburn Park Fund of the Greater Lowell Community Foundation (GLCF)
Demoulas Foundation Dewing Foundation
Joseph P. Donahue Charitable Foundation Trust

Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation
EPA Healthy Communities Grant Program

Fieldstone Foundation
Greater Lowell Community Foundation
Jessie B. Cox Charitable Trust Fund

Lowell Cultural Council

MA Foundation for the Humanities MA Cultural Facilities Fund
Fund for the Arts, a restricted fund of the NE Foundation for the Arts
Philips Medical Systems



MASSACHUSETTS FOUNDATION FOR THE
Humanities
Bringing Ideas to Life

WE THANK THE FOLLOWING FOR SIGNIFICANT IN-KIND SUPPORT:



**Anstiss & Co., P.C.
Eno, Boulay, Martin & Donahue
LDFC/Lowell Plan**

LAND PROTECTION

The Land Protection program involves land conservation of eight LP&CT properties that require consistent monitoring of their health status, appearance, and how they are utilized by the public. To help us achieve this, volunteer land stewards periodically visit the properties and report back to LP&CT with their observations. While the mission of LP&CT is "to improve the quality of life for the people of Lowell", these properties are set aside and protected for various reasons. Not only are the properties protected from development, but they remain as invaluable open, green spaces, habitats for plants and animals, and they provide the community with beautiful places to visit in an otherwise urban area.

The Trust is currently seeking people who would like to become volunteer land stewards. With only two employees and little time to make it out into the field, we are in need of community members to serve as the "eyes and ears" of the Trust, folks who would like to take a pro-active approach to protecting Lowell's natural resources. If you like to be outside in nature, would like to look after a Trust-property, and can offer one half-hour per month, then you are qualified.

LP&CT land stewardship champions, **Nathan Moore** and **Heddi Nieuwsma**, recently gave us some excellent feedback on why land protection and stewardship in Lowell is so important to them. They enjoy the opportunity to monitor their sites (Nicole Drive and the Spalding House), because it allows them "to have a positive impact on the neighborhood where they live." They continue to describe land stewardship, as very important, because they "can protect open space in a dense neighborhood." The knowledge of a destination, such as the historic Spalding House or the wildlife-rich Nicole Drive property, serve as recreational motivation for them to get out of the house and go for a walk in the neighborhood, all the while serving the community.

One of the Trust's New Year's resolutions for 2009 is to take a more pro-active approach to our Land Protection program. We will be kicking off the *warm* season during Earth Day week at our West Meadow property. Earth Day projects will likely include signage posting, trail maintenance, litter clean-up, environmental education activities, a tour of the property and land stewardship training. Similar projects on other properties to follow.

If you would like to become a valued volunteer land steward or have questions regarding our Land Protection program, please contact Project Specialist, Brian Cutler at (978)934-0030. Rewarding opportunity, flexible schedule, a healthy way to give back to the community, no special skills required, short training included.



LP&CT coordinated a city-wide effort to clean our city parks on October 18, 2009. Youth from Lowell High School's New Horizons Program joined Heddi Nieuwsma (center) from the Lower Highlands Neighborhood group and Brian Le (right), a neighborhood volunteer, in cleaning up Armory Park. Thank you!!!

QUALITY OF LIFE CAMPAIGN

WHAT DOES QUALITY OF LIFE MEAN TO YOU?

We thank the following 2008 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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Double your donation through your employer's **Matching Gift Program**. Business participants include: **Aspect, Autodesk, Inc., Bickling Financial, HP, IBM, Juniper Networks, Millipore, National Grid/MA Electric, Polaroid, Sun Microsystems, and Verizon**. Ask your employer about its Matching Gift Program. Remember to submit your matching gift form with your next renewal

EBAY & facebook



Now, you can sell any item on eBay and donate from 10% to 100% of the net proceeds to benefit the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust. Visit www.missionfish.org and search under "Lowell Parks" to start selling!

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Special Places Notecards & Prints



Now available!
Make a great gift!
\$20/set or print

Our new Special Places Notecards and prints include prints of oil paintings by LP&CT Director, Dr. Mark Romanowsky. Images include the Spalding House, Wamesit Falls on the Concord River, and Pawtucket Falls on the Merrimack River.

Call LP&CT to order (978) 934-0030

or see the order form at the back of this newsletter.

UPCOMING EVENTS

PLEASE RSVP (978) 934-0030



Winter Wildlife Tracking
Saturday, February 7, 8-10:00am
*Location: Meet at Lowell Cemetery,
 Lawrence Street entrance, Lowell*

Like winter walks? Do you ever wonder who's tracks those are in the snow?

If so, please join us on this winter wildlife tracking walk through Lowell Cemetery and along the Concord River Greenway. Learn about tracking techniques to help you recognize different prints, animal behaviors, and signs. The 2008 tracking walk was a remarkable success with identification of thirteen different wildlife species, including fox, fisher, and otter. With all the snow of late, we are hoping for yet another stellar tracking adventure. This program is offered in partnership with Mass Audubon Society-Drumlin Farm.

Space is limited, so please RSVP.



Maple Sugaring:
From Sap to Syrup
Sunday, February 22, 1-3:00pm
*Location: Rogers Fort Hill Park, Rogers
 Street entrance, Lowell*

Can you tell the real stuff from the imitation brands?

Maple sugaring is an age-old tradition, unique to northeastern North America, New England in particular. Come on out to test your senses and learn about what it takes to tap a sugar maple and create a tasty delight. Learn how to identify a sugar maple tree, how to tap it, and how to turn the sap into syrup. This is a fun activity for the whole family. Wear warm clothes and boots (we'll meet rain, snow or shine). This program is offered in partnership with Mass Audubon Society-Drumlin Farm and The Friends of Rogers Fort Hill Park.

Space is limited, so please RSVP.



Whitewater Rafting
Season begins April 4, 2009
Saturdays and Sundays, April & May,
Trips run at 9:00 am and 1:00 pm
*and raft Class III & IV rapids of the
 Concord River, Lowell*

It's not too early to sign up for the Spring 2009 Concord River Whitewater Rafting season. Beginning in early April, the Concord River offers excellent all-around rafting conditions. Whitewater rafting in Lowell is indeed a thrilling and unique experience. Get a whole new look at Lowell from the river and experience history.

For further information, visit www.lowellandtrust.org or you can make your early reservations now by calling 800-532-7483.

If you would like to volunteer as a "lock tender", operating the historic canal locks of the Pawtucket Canal, we'll be offering a Lock Tender Training on April 4, 2009 at 9 am.

CONCORD RIVER GREENWAY NEWS

As you may have noticed, construction is underway at the Davidson Street section of the Concord River Greenway—what we’re calling Phase 1 (of three phases). The city will be putting Phase 2 out to bid soon to pave the section at the Lawrence Street end of the Greenway, near Lowell Cemetery. The Greenway is unique in that it will feature public art which will be *intergrated into the infrastructure* of the Greenway. What does that mean? We want the art to be subtle and let the beauty of the river speak for itself, yet make the Greenway journey still be an interesting path to wander along. The public art theme for the Greenway will be native birds and text. Birds will be seen carved in granite or as the cast tops of bollards at a gateway; text will be found carved in granite or running along the top of an ornamental fence. A small committee worked with Wopo Holup to select quotes which will be featured on the Greenway (LP&CT Board Member Stephen A. Conant, Paul Marion and LP&CT Executive Director Jane Calvin). *As always, we thank the City of Lowell for their support, in countless ways, as this project progresses.* Here are the four text selections:

Davidson Park Fence Text (currently in fabrication)

There are earth, air, fire and water - very well, this is water, and down it comes. Falling the way, and yet not discouraged by the lowest fall. By the law of its birth never to become stagnant, for it has come out of the clouds, and down the sides of precipices worn in the flood, through beaver-dams broke loose, not splitting but splicing and mending itself, until it found a breathing place in this low land. There is no danger now that the sun will steal it back to heaven again before it reached the sea, for it has a warrant even to recover its own dew into its bosom again with interest at every eve.
Henry David Thoreau, 1873

Rogers Street Gateway Text

. . . something had broken and mushroomed in the wet winter earth of Lowell, ice was cracking on the Concord, winds blew with a greeny freight of hope over excited trees - it seemed the earth was being reborn -
Jack Kerouac, Maggie Cassidy, 1959

Church Street Gateway Text

A little homesick and a continent removed,
Our dropped r's still clinging to us like burrs,
We shared only the Concord River when we met.
You knew its meadows, and I its final fall.
Tom Sexton, Forsythia, 2007

Lawrence Street Text Carved on Stacked Granite Gateway Stones

Generational responsibility must include leaving behind a global environment that is in equilibrium ...
Paul Tsongas, Journey of Purpose, 1995

SPALDING HOUSE

Restoration of the Trust-owned Spalding House’s windows began last April (2008). The importance of preserving the amazing history of the house is clear, as we view the progress made by window restoration expert, Alison Hardy and her “Window Woman” company crew of five. The old windows had become more or less fixed in place over time via natural swelling and multiple applications of paint and caulking, which rendered them as *difficult to open* to say the least. Despite their worn appearance, all that paint and caulking has actually preserved most of the windows to a great extent. With a delicate touch and a surgical procedure, each window is removed and brought to the Window Woman workshop. There they are stripped down carefully and repaired through a very skilled woodworking process (without the use of nails, screws, or metal braces, believe it or not). Once each window reaches a high standard of craftsmanship, it is re-glazed and painted to look like new, smooth and crystal clear and ready to go home.

We anticipate completion of the window restoration process this spring 2009. This will enable the Trust to move forward with planning, fundraising and implementation of future restoration processes.

Window restoration funds are generously provided by The 1772 Foundation and the MA Cultural Facilities Fund, co-administered through Mass Development and the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

It was a busy fall 2008 semester for LP&CT’s environmental education program, known as *Stewardship Through Leadership: Backyard Adventures!* (STL). The goal of STL is to expose Lowell youth to the outdoor classroom. Fall semester programming served Lowell youth at four sites including Citizen Schools—Robinson Middle School, UMass Graduate Program—Bartlett School, United Teen Equality Center, and Girls Inc.

“It is truly a pleasure having such a smart and empowering role model in our [after-school] program. Both the girls and the program benefit so much from your wonderful [environmental education] programs!”

Jennifer Demers, Girls, Inc. referring the Project Specialist Brian Cutler and his Backyard Adventures after-school program.

Highlights from this fall included field studies carried out by Robinson and Bartlett students, as they created ecological inventories of the vernal pool at the LP&CT-owned West Meadow property and along the Merrimack River. The students used a “Bioblitz” field form to collect data, which can be used for vernal pool certification and to study the effects of river dams. During the vernal pool analysis the students identified several macro invertebrates which revealed the delicate nature of this ecosystem; similar data from the Merrimack River

concluded good water quality.

Future plans for STL are to continue working with middle school-age youth, as well as expanding programming with high school-age youth from Spindle City Corps (SSC), as piloted last summer. Future work with SCC will likely include greater use of technology and implementation of self-guided management plans to improve the status of health of local ecosystems.

Funding for *Stewardship Through Leadership: Backyard Adventures!* (STL) is partially provided by the MCC Youthreach Initiative, the Dewing Foundation, Philips Medical Systems, GLCF, and the Patrick J. Mogan Cultural Center.

PLEASE NOTE: ALL DONATIONS LISTED BELOW WERE RECEIVED BETWEEN **August 26, 2008—Dec. 31, 2008**

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

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*Please support those businesses that support our work (in bold).
 New member = bold*

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"Why I'm supporting you has to do with my feelings for Lowell and the wonderful work you're doing... **what you're doing is integral to the community.**"

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"It was the right thing to do, to contribute locally."

Comment from an anonymous member after doubling their monthly giving.

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Support the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust. Become a member or renew today!

The **Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust** relies on membership dues for continuing our **mission** to protect the parks and open spaces of Lowell. If you haven't already, please consider joining the Trust today or renewing your membership.

Is your membership current?
Please see your address label.

Yes, I want to support the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust!

\$250 \$100 \$50 \$25 \$15 \$ _____

Notecards: # _____ sets (\$20/set + \$2/shipping)

- I've enclosed a **matching gift** form from my/my spouse's employer.
 I'd like to become a **sustaining 'green' member** and donate \$ _____ monthly through my credit card
 Please call or email me about **volunteering**— _____ (mailings, land stewards, lock tending, etc.).

Payment method: Check enclosed **Charge my credit card:** Visa MasterCard AmEx
Account # _____ **Exp.** _____ **Signature** _____

Name & address: _____

(For new e-news!) EMAIL: _____

Would you like to make a special donation?

We have established separate funds to support these projects, *above and beyond* membership dues:

- LP&CT Endowment Fund
 Spalding House Maintenance Fund
 Jollene Dubner Park Maintenance Fund

Please mail to: LP&CT, PO Box 7162, Lowell, MA 01852

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Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust
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Winter 2009 NEWSLETTER

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Our new Special Places Notecards include prints of oil paintings by LP&CT Director, Dr. Mark Romanowsky. Order above, **call LP&CT (978) 934-0030** or see the order form at www.lowelllandtrust.org

Upcoming Events

Please RSVP (978)934-0030

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Saturday, February 7, 8-10:00am
Meet at Lowell Cemetery, Lawrence St.

Maple Sugaring:
From Sap to Syrup
Sunday, February 22, 1-3:00pm
Rogers Fort Hill Park, Rogers St.

Whitewater Rafting
Season begins April 4, 2009
Weekends, April & May, 9:00 am & 1:00 pm

Lock Tender Training
Saturday, April 4, 2009, 9am
Meet at Lower Locks behind DoubleTree Hotel

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