

Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust

Fall 2008 Newsletter

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

I hope you all had a wonderful summer even though it's been, up until mid-August, a rainy one.

Despite the rain and run of less-than-summery weather, it's been a busy season with events and planning and progress. The Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust had a presence at both the Concord River Festival and the Lowell Folk Festival, promoting our work, providing flat water rafting excursions (thank you Zoar!) and enlisting new members. It was good to see many of you at Muldoon Park and on Merrimack Street in downtown Lowell. A special thanks to all who helped staff the Trust's booths and for your enthusiasm in promoting our mission.

While we naturally use the seasons as a neat marker of activities, the Trust's efforts and events never end! Construction on the Concord River Greenway has begun – look for progress photos on our website! Coming up in October we'll be working on a city-wide parks cleanup on the 18th and looking forward to a talk by John Hanson Mitchell at the Pollard Memorial Library as part of the *Concord Festival of Authors* on October 21st.

November 2nd brings a Greenway walk (no bugs!) and later in the month our Annual Meeting, always a highlight of the year, and another opportunity to recap the past and preview the coming year. And for our members and friends to meet and share their ideas for ways we can do even more to advance Lowell's quality of life.

If this weather pattern continues into December when temperatures drop, perhaps we will organize a snow-shoeing trek along the Greenway or through the Trust-protected acres of open space and into the State Forest! Enjoy the last days of summer and the coming fall and thanks, once again, for your generous support of and your dedication to the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust!

Kind regards,



VOLUNTEER AWARD—STEPHEN CONANT

Stephen A. Conant, LP&CT's past president, is the recipient of the 2008 Greater Lowell Community Foundation's "*Banker's Volunteer Award for Lifetime Achievement*." Urban land protection may seem like an oxymoron to some, but to Steve it's essential to the quality of life in a city like Lowell. Whether for park, soccer field, or a greenway corridor, open space links our communities, improves public health, reduces crime, and improves property values. Since co-founding the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust in 1990, Steve has helped lead our organization through several significant projects.

Upon receiving the award, Steve commented that his work is really a "selfish activity" for both himself and the community. "I know that this community's changed as a result of our work, when I'm sitting at the intersection of Pawtucket Street and I look to my left and I see the Spalding House, 1760, freshly painted with new windows going in it now, instead of nineteen units of condominiums, which might have stood there. That makes me feel good. When I see people coming from outside the city and from around the world to go whitewater rafting and go through the Lower Locks and experience something that the National Park envisioned ...that makes me feel good about the community and what we've done," said Conant.



Steve dedicated the award to Helen Whiting and donated the award's thousand dollar grant to the Spalding House's endowment fund. Helen died two weeks prior to his receiving the award at the age of ninety-two. "She was a woman who dedicated her life to volunteerism. The reason the Spalding House was preserved today isn't so much because of the LP&CT, but really because of Helen Whiting, who was a regent of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Molly Varnum Chapter. ...We were fortunate that she found us. Because of that, the Spalding House really stands as a real part of her legacy and her volunteerism in this community."

Visit our website to:

- *View program updates,*
- *See our complete calendar of events,*
- *Get Greenway construction progress photos,*
- *Order notecards, or*
- *Renew your membership.*

www.lowelllandtrust.org

Greenway construction began in late August! See pg 2.

CONCORD RIVER GREENWAY



After many years of anticipation, the first section of the Concord River Greenway is **now under construction!**

You'll first notice the resurfacing of the Davidson St. parking lot. Keep an eye out for progress photos on our website, www.lowelllandtrust.org.

The Greenway will include six historic wayside sign panels translated into three languages: Spanish, Portuguese, and Khmer. Executive Director, Jane Calvin, recently made a presentation on the development of the multi-lingual signs at the MA History Conference. This section of the Greenway will also include a public artwork component, designed by artist Wopo Holup, including a 'text fence' with a long Thoreau quote along the edge of the parking lot, as well as cast iron river bird bollards at the gateway to the new park. We're pleased that local artist Jay Hungate will be providing granite carvings of native birds to enhance the southern gateway to the Greenway along Lawrence Street.

BACKYARD ADVENTURES

The city of Lowell is an amazing place to set out on an adventure. Through the Trust's *Stewardship Through Leadership: Backyard Adventures!* after-school environmental education program (BA), led by LP&CT project specialist Brian Cutler, we delve into the depths of all the incredible natural resources that this green city has to offer. Everyday provides an adventure, because of the discovery of everything we encounter right under our noses.

The Trust works in partnership with Mass Audubon to offer *Backyard Adventures*. The program is designed to expose Lowell's youth to the outdoor classroom and create awareness of the city's natural resources. This past school year *Backyard Adventures* directly reached ninety-four Lowell youth at four different sites including Citizen Schools' Wang and Robinson Middle School campuses, Girls Inc. of Greater Lowell, and UMass Lowell Graduate Program's Bartlett School campus. This spring's highlights convey the appreciation our youth have for the opportunity to apply their in-school science and math curricula in a practical setting alongside professionals in the field.

As spring time rolled around, so roared Lowell's two major rivers with winter snowmelt and rain showers. In addition to their favorite activity of collecting worms in the garden, students from Girls Inc. dabbled in the water along the Banks of the Concord River. They learned that in water terms, the *benthic and littoral zones* are the equivalent of the forest floor. This is where they pulled muck samples from to identify positive water quality indicator species, such as the caddisfly nymph. Wang School students carried out an extensive study of several wetland habitats including a vernal pool in their school yard and the confluence of Claypit Brook and the Merrimack River. They took their research to another level by creating a Power Point slideshow, narrated by the students in their own words, and presented to their friends and family during what is known as the Citizen Schools *WOW! Fair*.

Getting our students out into the field is an integral part of the *Backyard Adventures* program—these are *true field trips*. Of the few times we are not physically out in the field, we are utilizing an indoor space as a research lab or for live wildlife presentations with Mass Audubon's raptors and reptiles, among others. As young naturalists our students' studies, analyses and actions of the natural environment allow them to make valuable connections about nature's endless interrelationships and serve as stewards of their community.

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 Cultural Organization of Lowell

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MA Foundation for the Humanities MA Cultural Facilities Fund

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WE THANK THE FOLLOWING FOR SIGNIFICANT IN-KIND SUPPORT:



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



Youth from Girls, Inc. observe a beetle at the Alcott Cemetery, off Alcott Street, where the girls learned how cemeteries can provide unique habitats within an urban setting.

QUALITY OF LIFE CAMPAIGN

WHAT DOES QUALITY OF LIFE MEAN TO YOU?

We thank the following 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.

Butler Bank
James Cooney Real Estate & Ins.
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George & Carol Duncan
Enterprise Bank
Lowell Five
Staff of Dr. Mark Romanowsky
Demoulas Foundation

SPALDING HOUSE

SPALDING HOUSE WINDOW RESTORATION UPDATE



All of the windows on the second floor of the Spalding House's have been restored. Full restoration of the House's 42 windows is being done by Window Woman (Alison Hardy, at left) of Topsfield, MA. 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.

One of the interesting findings in this restoration process is that most of the windows still have their original 18th-century forged catches (stops) that keep the window open at various heights!

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



City-wide Park Clean-up!

Saturday, October 18, 2008 (9-12 am)

Help make your favorite park a more beautiful place. A new city wide parks alliance is collaborating to bring more attention to our city parks. Come spend the morning with us to plant bulbs, take care of planting beds, and clean your park. Groups are welcome to join in. **Please RSVP (978) 934-0030.** Meet at Shedd Park Pavilion at 9am, off Rogers Street, before heading off to your park!



Urban Natural History

Tuesday, October 21 at 7:00pm

Pollard Memorial Library
 401 Merrimack St., Lowell

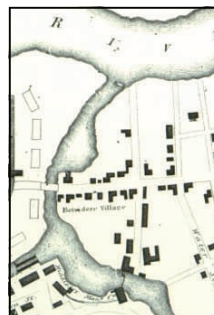
John Hanson Mitchell, author of *The Paradise of All These Parts: A Natural History of Boston*, uses the history of Boston's "Shawmut Peninsula" to explore the themes of time and place and the endurance of nature in urban settings such as Lowell. Offered in partnership with Pollard Memorial Library and the Concord Festival of Authors.



Exploration of the Concord River Greenway Now in Construction!

Sunday, November 2, 2008 (1-3pm)
 Lowell Cemetery, Lawrence St. entrance

Put on your hiking shoes for a late fall hike along the corridor of the Concord River Greenway! See detailed Greenway plans, view the public art plan, and learn about how we'll connect the trail with the Bruce Freeman Trail (now in construction) at CrossPoint. Wear long pants, hiking shoes/socks, and bring water. Rain, snow or shine. You'll also learn about the first section of the Greenway now in construction on the Davidson Street Parking lot. **Please RSVP (978) 934-0030.**



Concord River Greenway Exhibit Opening & Annual Meeting

Wednesday evening, November 19, 2008

Save the date!
 At the Boott Mill Gallery

This event will feature an exhibit of Concord River watershed drawings by Wopo Holup as well as our recently completed multi-lingual historic wayside signs for the Concord River Greenway. Come be inspired and help contribute to the creative process for creating a multi-use recreational trail along the Concord River

PROGRAM UPDATES

CAMBODIAN YOUTH MEET THE MIGHTY CONCORD



Through our place-based education program, Backyard Adventures, fourteen youth from **Light of Cambodia Children, Inc.** joined LP&CT and Mass Audubon staff at Muldoon Park to learn about freshwater ecology and the Concord River ecosystem. The first question we asked the students was, "Do you know what body of water this is?" And as we pointed to the Concord River, alongside the park, a few brave hands were raised, but

none knew the true answer. Some thought a canal, some thought a lake, and one thought perhaps the Merrimack River. Indeed the answer was the Concord River and it was a special opportunity to introduce them to it, "Friends, meet the Concord River!"

Together, we found an incredible abundance of native wildflowers and aquatic invertebrates; there were warblers and mallards, monarchs and milkweeds, all a part of this healthy riverine ecosystem (above, a youth feels the texture of a painted turtle shell). If not simply for the fresh air, these Lowell youth appeared to be truly intrigued and appreciative as they explored the watery wonders of the Concord River.

SUMMER SOLSTICE SOIRÉE



Supporters of the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust gathered for the **Summer Solstice Soiree** party hosted by LP&CT Board member, Dr. Mark Romanowsky & his wife, Renee in their lovely tented garden on Saturday, June 14, 2008.

The event included elegant music by the UML String Project and a special selection of wines donated by Stonehedge Inn. Several original oil paintings of Lowell's *special places*, by Dr. Mark Romanowsky, were displayed throughout the garden. These brilliant paintings depict a variety of the amazing resources that the city of Lowell offers. His painting of the historic Spalding House was auctioned off during the event. We thank the nearly 100 participants and those who donated in lieu of attending!

ASIAN LONGHORNED BEETLE IN WORCESTER!



A new highly invasive insect has been found in Massachusetts, which has the potential to cause widespread damage to a broad spectrum of tree species. The invasive Asian longhorned beetle (ALB), *Anoplophora glabripennis* (Motschulsky), grows and reproduces within healthy and stressed deciduous hardwood tree species, such as maple, birch, horse chestnut, poplar, willow, elm, and ash. The beetle eventually kills the host tree.

The ALB hitchhiked to the United States nestled deep within hardwoods cut into crates and pallets and used to import goods from Asian countries. There are currently ALB infestations being eradicated in New York, Chicago and New Jersey. LP&CT staff are being trained in the identification of this insect and infected trees so that we can keep an eye out for it on our own properties. Look for 1/4-1/2" exit holes in the trunk of preferred species. The beetle also has distinctive markings. Please keep an eye out for this beetle and report any sighting to 1-508-929-1300. (Source: USDA APHIS)

RIVER FEST 2008

The "Wild and Scenic" Sudbury, Assabet, and Concord Rivers are vital to the existence of people and wildlife along their shores. Through River Fest we seek out adventure and awareness of these natural resources, as we appreciate everything they offer from drinking water to natural esthetics to recreational activities. The city of Lowell is fortunate to be home to two major rivers, one being the Concord River. This year was the fourth annual River Fest – Lowell event, hosted by the LP&CT at Muldoon Park off Lawrence Street. The LP&CT along with nine other local organizations attracted a few hundred people from the Lowell area to help us celebrate the Concord River, by enjoying the waterfront and advertising our ongoing projects and programs surrounding this river community.

Kids enjoyed nature printing with the LP&CT, textile history activities with the American Textile History Museum and the N.E. Quilt Museum, and the opportunity to meet local wildlife (spotted turtle, painted turtle, mallard duck) with our *Backyard Adventures!* partner, Mass Audubon. Meanwhile, our *whitewater rafting* partner, Zoar Outdoor, offered float trips on the river during the event. We also greatly appreciate the participation of local organizations including presentations by the Greater Lowell Indian Cultural Association, outdoor adventure advice from REI, news and updates from the Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail, vermicompost and recycling demonstrations from Lowell Solid Waste and Recycling, and banjo music by Alex Demas from Lowell National Historical Park. Thank you to all who attended the day's events and we hope to celebrate the Concord River with you again next year!

WATER CHESTNUTS EVERYWHERE!

The Trust recently partnered with the Organization for the Assabet River (OAR) to remove the invasive aquatic plant, water chestnut (*Trapa natans*), from an area near the Billerica Dam on the Concord River. The Trust is grateful to our volunteers who participated in the effort (Lorraine Smith in photo, below). In late June, a dozen volunteers ventured out to the middle of the impoundment, paddling their canoes and kayaks to hand-pull as many plants as could be fit into their buckets and baskets. Water chestnut is thought to have been introduced to the United States from Europe during the 1800's as a decorative pond plant. From a distance water chestnut may appear to be a colony of water lilies, whereas a closer look will show how easily it can overtake such critical wetland habitats. Though we only removed a fraction of the residing water chestnut, we did make a noticeable dent in its population. This project was a pilot effort to explore a larger scale water chestnut removal to restore this section of the Concord River.



PLEASE NOTE: ALL DONATIONS LISTED BELOW WERE RECEIVED BETWEEN **April 8—August 25, 2008**

SUSTAINING "GREEN" MEMBERS

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

Sustaining Members (\$250+)

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Stephen A. Conant
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Sustaining Members (\$100-249)

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Cynthia & Charles Calvin
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Jollene Dubner Park Maintenance Fund

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Harvey & Gail Klain

Spalding House Maintenance Fund

Stephen A. Conant, GLCF Volunteer Award

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* = New members

Renewing Members (\$500+)

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James N. Calvin & Kamala Madhu

Renewing Members (\$100-250)

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I had the chance to do the [rafting] trip on the Concord River this weekend. What a great experience, so close to home. The crew from Zoar was fantastic. I took my 16 year old nephew and we had a ball. It was great to see the natural resources providing a playground for us. Keep up the good work in show casing and preserving the natural assets that make Lowell, such a special place!

Bruce Robinson

Arnold Hansen, Shirley and Raymond Hardy, William & Eleanor Harrington, Donald & Joan Hearn, Marcia & Joseph Herlihy, Kathy Hirbour, Tom & Barbie Hogan, Kate Hollister, Anthony & Martha Iarrapino, Stephen and Mary Kandrotas, Catherine & Gerard Keane, Richard Kinnal, Harvey & Gail Klain, Sr. Lillian Lamoureux, Claudine Langlois, Connie Lanseigne-Case, Judith Larter, Jim & Kyra Leary, Priscille LeBlanc, Timothy Little, Helen Littlefield, Michael Lumenello, Margaret Low & Donald MacIver*, George & Joan Mahoney, Pauline & Bill McCarthy, Ruth Messer, Ray & Trudy Michel, Sidney Mizner, Emile & Rachel Montminy, David Moorehouse, Janet Mulligan, Paul Nagle, Nathan Moore & Heddi Nieuwsma, Yildiray Erdener & Martha Norkunas, Carolyn & Bill Norris, Karen Norton, Maurice Comtois & Marian O'Brien, Jean O'Neil, Joanne Pacella, Anyta Pich, Thomas Raphael, Susan & Bill Rivers, R. Edward Roach, Bruce Robinson, Nicholas Rubino, John Rummel, Charles & Bessie Sadlier, Violet Santamaria, Thomas Sheehan Jr., Earl Sidelinker, Joseph & Donna Smith, Mary & John Splaine, Thomas & Carol St. Germain, Thomas Stupakewicz, Mrs. Robert Styman, Diane Swift, Vernon Thornton, Thomas & Deborah Thornton, Katherine Van Greenby, Reginald & Ruby Walker, Angela & Robert Walsh, Becky Warren, Hongwen Zhang

SOIRÉE DONORS

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

Kathleen & Brian Barry, Eleanor Belanger, Dorothy Bickling, David Blackburn, Judy Blackburn, Dawn & Levant Bozkurt, Dr. & Mrs. John Burke, Eileen and Charles Byrne, Richard & Anne Cavanaugh, John Clarity, DPM, Christine Cole, Nancy Rourke & Stephen Conant, Mr. & Mrs. James L. Cooney, John & Ellen Coppinger, Andrew & Thelma Coravos, Brenda & John Costello, Andy & Michelle Costello, Steven & Jan Demetriou, Richard & Nancy Donahue, John O'Connor & Eileen Donoghue, Lauris Donovan, Kay & William Doyle, Nancy & Jim Doyle, F.J. Duggan, Rodney & Laurie Elliott, Gray Fitzsimons, Janet & David Frawley, Joyce Frazee, Ms. Colleen Fuller, Terrence & Mary Gormley, Margaret & Robert Hartwell, Brian & Carol Holbrook, Anthony & Martha Iarrapino, Steven Joncas, Sheila Kirschbaum, George & Donna Leahey, Brian Leahey, William Lipchitz, Dr. Roy and Linda Maletz, Henri & Nancy Marchand, Rosemary Noon & Paul Marion, Bill & Martha Martin, Martha Mayo, Kristin & Bill McCauley, Marjorie Miller, Leslie Morin, John Moynihan, Robert Moynihan, Martha Sullivan & Ted Nicholas, Frances Nowak, James & Patricia O'Donnell, Catherine O'Donnell, Martha & Rod Owen, Sen. Steven Panagiotakos, Joseph & Beverly Parent, Edward Parsons, Ed & Priscille Partyka, Cecile Provencher, Norma Ricci, Richard & Virginia Roberto, Anne & Sandra Romanowsky, Erica Romanowsky, Mike Romanowsky, Sean McKay & Erin Rourke, Ellen Scannell, Deborah Sofia, Karin Theodoros, Esq., Germaine & Ed Trudel

MATCHING GIFTS

Double your donation through your employer's **Matching Gift Program**. Business participants include: **Aspect, 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 to LP&CT. We thank **Hongwen Zhang** for helping us initiate a matching gift program with Juniper Networks!

EBAY GIVING WORKS



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!

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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Fall 2008 NEWSLETTER

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Special Places Notecards & Prints



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

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

City-wide Park Clean-up!
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Urban Natural History
Tuesday, October 21 at 7:00pm

Explore the Concord River Greenway
Sunday, November 2, 2008 (1-3pm)

Concord River Greenway Exhibit & Annual Meeting
Wednesday, November 19, 2008

Save the date!

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