

WEST NEWBURY OPEN SPACE COMMITTEE

West Newbury, Massachusetts 01985

To the Honorable Board of Selectmen:

The Open Space Committee (OSC) met regularly during Fiscal Year 2014. This report summarizes our accomplishments from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015:

- **Riverbend Trail Projects:** In the summer of 2014, OSC hired Service Corps of America/AmeriCorps (SCA) to construct three bridges in Riverbend West below the Page School. Town CPA funds were used to finance the project. A winner of SCA's Annual Trail Award, our project finished \$10,000 below budget with a 25% cost savings to the Town.

- **Priority Parcels Properties:** With Essex County Greenbelt Association and various town committees, the OSC explored the possibility of acquiring land for conservation and public trails in connection with two properties on the Priority Parcels List in the Open Space & Recreation Plan. They are the Sullivan North site at Sullivan's Court (13 acres) and the Beaucher land on Coffin Street (80 acres). Sullivan North has been permitted for house lots, subject to trail easements for which the OSC advocated with the Planning Board. The Beaucher property remains for sale.

- **Trail Easement Inventory List:** This list was updated to include all easements and Town right of ways, where current or future trails exist and what they connect to. The list was featured in our Trail Easements library exhibit.

- **Fall Trail Hike:** In October 2014, the OSC held its 5th annual trail hike showcasing the new bridges and boardwalks in the Riverbend Conservation Area. Over fifty people enjoyed the hike on a crisp, autumn day.

- **Open Space Library Exhibit:** As part of our community outreach efforts, the OSC continued its exhibits in the library. These featured key information on trails within our growing trail system and educated the public on trail easements – what they are, why they are important, and how to establish one. Special thanks to the G.A.R. Library for hosting our exhibits.

- **Website Improvements for WestNewburyOpenSpace.Net:** The OSC website includes extensive information and resources such as trail information and photographs, printable trail maps, news and updates, the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan, meeting minutes, and links to other conservation-related websites.

- **Collaboration on Open Space Issues:** The OSC consulted with various groups, primarily town boards and committees, on a broad range of open space-related topics. These groups included the Board of Selectmen, Conservation Commission, Town Counsel, Community Preservation Committee, Page School teachers, Pentucket Regional School District staff, Mass Dept. of Conservation and Recreation, SCA AmeriCorps, Essex County Greenbelt Association and Essex County Trails Association.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee,

Patricia Reuser and *Jean Lambert* Co-Chairs, November 9, 2015

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SCA AmeriCorps and bridge contractor, Bob Weatherall, construct the bridge crossing the Indian River dam ruins.



Bridges, boardwalks and other trail improvements have made Riverbend more accessible for hikers, horses and students from the nearby Page School.



OSC Chair Steve Greason prepares the group for the 5th Annual Open Space Trail Hike at Riverbend. (October, 2014)



Visit: westnewburyopenspace.net