

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 2013. This report summarizes our accomplishments from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014:

- **Riverbend Bridge Project:** With a budget of \$40,100 using Town CPA funds, OSC hired SCA AmeriCorps to construct three bridges in Riverbend West below the Page School. We hired Weatherall Design, Inc. to provide engineering services and purchased materials from a lumber yard and steel fabricator. OSC also worked with Essex County Trails Association to complete the necessary wetland permits. Local volunteers and over 50 seniors from Pentucket High School hauled all the lumber to the bridge sites. Construction started the last week of June. Total project cost was \$30,099.44.

- **Fall Trail Hike:** In October 2013, the OSC held its 4th annual trail hike showcasing a new trail network in Withers Conservation Area, a 24 acre forest located on Middle Street next to the Upper Artichoke Reservoir. A group of 35 enjoyed the hike. This site is accessed using a town right-of-way which is shared with Insight Mediation Center of Newburyport.

- **Open Space Library Exhibit:** As part of our community outreach efforts, the OSC continued exhibits featuring open space and land usage in West Newbury as well as our growing trail system. Special thanks to the G.A.R. Library for hosting our seasonal exhibits.

- **Website Improvements for WestNewburyOpenSpace.Net:**

The OSC website includes extensive information and resources such as meeting minutes, maps, photographs and the Town's Open Space and Recreation Plan.

- **Collaboration on Open Space Issues:** The OSC consulted with various groups, primarily town boards and committees, on a broad range of 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 ECTA.

- **Atherton Property Acquisition:** In May 2013, the town voted to spend \$25,000 in CPA funds to help purchase and protect 23 acres of conservation land in partnership with Greenbelt. Trails in Atherton connect to Pikes Bridge Road and Indian Hill Reservation.

- **Ferry Landing Project:** The OSC led fact-finding efforts related to improvements to the boat ramp site located near the Rocks Village Bridge. The River Access Committee, appointed by the Board of Selectmen, continues this effort. The shoreline is owned by the State. Massachusetts Fish & Game is currently developing an alternative car-top plan for kayaks and skiffs.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee,

Steve Greason Steve Greason, Chair, November 24, 2014

ANNUAL REPORT

2014



Hikers attend the Open Space Committee's 4th Annual Trail Hike on October 19th, 2013, featuring a new trail network in the Withers Conservation Area with access to the Upper Artichoke Reservoir shoreline.



Hot Topic: The boat ramp located on the Merrimack River near the Rocks Village Bridge is in poor condition.

Plans provided by the state to construct a new boat ramp, dock and parking lot, using town municipal land across Church Street where Ferry Park is located, were rejected. At the annual May Town Meeting, the Town voted to make Ferry Lane Park a permanent park, thereby nullifying plans which included improvements for motor boat and trailer access.



Visit: wnewbury.org/open-space-committee