

THE

Oak Leaf

A PUBLICATION OF THE WHITE OAK LAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

SUMMER 2010

Finding Your Thrills at Porcupine Hill

Porcupine Hill will have its official grand opening celebration on Sunday, October 3, at 2:00 p.m. However, the work of reviewing this parcel as a potential White Oak property began several years ago, when a close examination of Porcupine Hill's 50 undeveloped acres revealed the numerous special features of the property.

This site contains some of Holden's highest land property, providing some distant views of the reservoirs during the late fall, winter, and spring, before the trees leaf out. The property is directly connected to other undeveloped land, and therefore forms part of an expansive open space tract of many acres.

Porcupine Hill has a wide range of habitats, including forests and wetlands, with a variety of vegetation, intermittent streams, and a probable vernal pool. Large stands of mountain laurel dominate the entrance to the hiking trail, though white oak, northern red oak, red maple, and yellow and gray birch can also be found throughout the property.

The stone walls throughout the property provide a delightful surprise to the wandering hiker, serving as a reminder of past human uses of the land. In addition to their aesthetic appeal, these stone walls provide a significant habitat cover feature that is often utilized by a variety of native animals, including snakes and small mammals.

Several ledge outcroppings and rocky areas in the northern part of the property contain significant crevices and other openings, which offer cover and den areas for a variety of



Photo courtesy the National Park Service

North American Porcupine.

wildlife species. These species include an actual porcupine, sited there several years ago.

Salamanders and other animals make use of the intermittent streams found throughout the area, while a likely vernal pond in the northwestern portion of the site provides unique breeding habitat for a variety of am-

phibians and invertebrates. The amphibians that utilize vernal pools rely on the pools for breeding, but spend the majority of the year in nearby dry forest.

We encourage our members to do their own exploring at Porcupine Hill. Perhaps there are more features as yet to be discovered! 🌿

“Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land.” - Aldo Leopold

White Oak Shows Its Appreciation

Porcupine Hill would not belong to White Oak and its members were it not for the efforts of donors and dedicated volunteers. Chief among the volunteers was Anthony Costello, who worked tirelessly for years on White Oak's board of directors, and subsequent to his board "retirement" last fall, has continued to improve Porcupine Hill's appearance. Most recently, Anthony designed and built the new information kiosk just installed near the parking area. In gratitude, the White Oak board of directors will be installing a new bench along the Porcupine Hill trails (a trail which Anthony built!) in Anthony's name.

In addition, we will be naming the trails in honor of our most generous donors to this project. "Wilson Way" and the "Peabody Family Path" acknowledge the beneficence of Nancy Wilson and the Peabody family. We are grateful for their support and that of all our members, donors, and volunteers.

Thank you!



Photo by Paul McManus

Volunteer Anthony Costello and White Oak Board President Scott Morrison installing the new Porcupine Hill information kiosk.

White Oak's First Ever Photo Contest

Shutterbugs, start your fingers! White Oak's first annual photo contest will be held this summer, with winning photographs to be displayed at our November annual meeting and at the Gale Free Library in December.

1. All contest entries must be submitted digitally to info@whiteoaktrust.org, and should include the following information:

- Photographer's full name, address, telephone number, and email address;
- Name of the photo file and category to which the submission belongs;
- And identification of where the photo was taken.

2. Photos must be taken at a property owned by White Oak (not a Conservation Restriction, which are not open to the public), at any time prior to or during the photo contest, through October 1, 2010.



3. There will be categories for ages 10 and under; 11 to 17; 18 and up; and Professional.
4. Entries are due no later than October 15, 2010.
5. One Grand Prize will be awarded. First prizes will be awarded in each category. All participants will receive a White Oak T-shirt.

Full rules are posted on our website, www.whiteoaktrust.org. We look forward to seeing your works of art!



WHITE OAK
LAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

Address

P.O. Box 346, Holden, MA 01520

Telephone

774-345-9658

Email

info@whiteoaktrust.org

Website

www.whiteoaktrust.org

Board of Directors

Scott Morrison, President
Erich Mierzejewski, Vice President
Nancy Rocheleau, Secretary/Clerk
David Sabourin, Treasurer
Jo-Anne Crystoff
Karen Eisenhauer
Jennifer Leith
Paul McManus
Ralph Peck
Nancy Wilson

White Oak is a member of the Land Trust Alliance and the Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition.

Fairy Houses Inspire Love of Nature

by **DEBORAH
KREISER-FRANCIS**

As a mother of two, I can personally attest to the magical properties of fairy houses. I am not referring to the plastic Tinkerbell houses which can be bought at a toy store; rather, these fairy houses are constructed entirely from items found in nature. Their magical properties work to engage children in the outside world, and to make use of down time that might otherwise be labeled “booo-ring, Mom.”



Based on the *Fairy Houses* book series by Tracy Kane and friends (see www.fairy-houses.com), children are encouraged to spend time in any outside space, looking for purely natural materials that they can scav-

enge (without removing living materials) to create their own fairy houses. At the beach, we have built mermaid fairy houses, from dried seaweed, shells, and small stones. Our

yard has several fairy nooks, made with grass clippings, leaves, and wildflowers. Forests we have visited now have little fairy palaces, usually built at the bases of trees and incorporating twigs, acorn caps, and pinecones. These small dwellings help my kids to look more closely at nature, and inspire them to use their imaginations—providing two big checkmarks for my “I’m a good parent” list!

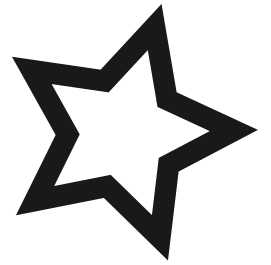
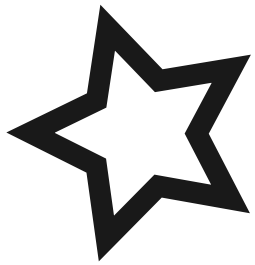
I will be helping kids create their own fairy houses at White Oak’s Porcupine Hill grand opening event on Sunday, October 3 at 2:00 p.m. We encourage kids to bring their imaginations and sharp eyes. Younger kids should have a parent to help as well. We hope to see you then! 🌿

Kids Korner

Summer is all about enjoying nature. Find these words in the puzzle, then go outside to find your own fun!

O I C M H A T G C I D G N I E E S W N S A H H
 E S O O S R O K D R S K C O R T W N I A K R S
 E U E R S M G O I U U Y S O S C E E E I T T N
 B N L S N H A B G K I R G E R E E P L I O S E
 X S C L T I I E N G T I R I R N R T M I S R B
 E H I G E R S K I M F O S G O O R H M R S R S
 L I S S E R A U I G F C R H M O S S T E R E S
 B N P E I O R W L N L R H S S E S R H L S W E
 M E O F U R T M B O G S T R E A M R R I E O C
 U W P P H E S N U E M O C E N I S H A D E L E
 B R R T L N B D T O R I C E I P I B I R O F M
 S W G R O W I N G T T R I R N S T O H E H I E
 G N I M M I W S A W P E Y N S B G E E O N W M
 B T R A I L O N B W D Y T G O S B R O O E E G
 I R D N N W H M B D H S L C T S G O M I S A M
 N O E C E S O S T H S S U B I G S F A W E O T

STREAM
STRAWBERRY
GROWING
ROCKS
GREEN
SHADE
POPSICLE
FLOWER
SUNSHINE
HOT
BIRD
CORN
SWIMMING
MOSS
HIKING
HAT
BUMBLE BEE
FOREST
TRAIL
CLOUD



**PORCUPINE HILL
GRAND
OPENING
CELEBRATION**

Sunday, October 3, 2010, 2:00 p.m.

FREE!



At long last, White Oak will be holding our "official" grand opening to one of our newest properties, Porcupine Hill, located off Rt. 31 near the Holden/Paxton line. Come celebrate the grand opening at this new neighborhood trail and open space. Family-friendly activities are expected to include a GPS clinic, nature walks, a fairy house building workshop for kids, light refreshments, and more!

Look for blue balloons marking the parking area on the north side of Rt. 31.

Printed on recycled paper with soy ink



HOLDEN, MA 01520

P.O. BOX 346

LAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

WHITE OAK

