

THE

Oak Leaf

A PUBLICATION OF THE WHITE OAK LAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

SPRING 2013

Introducing White Oak's Lane Property

White Oak is pleased to announce the acquisition of 16 acres within the Winter Hill development, thanks to the generosity of Winter Hill, LLC, Steven Lane, and the Lane family.

This acreage is composed of forest and wetlands, and is within the watershed to Poor Farm Brook. White Oak first became interested in this land several years ago because of its strategic location, not far from land currently conserved by White Oak on Salisbury Street (the Waterman parcel of approximately 8 acres) and Stanjoy Road (the Zimmerman parcel of approximately 11 acres).

There are plans afoot for White Oak to preserve a significant portion of the bank of Poor Farm Brook, with one piece on Newell Road already conserved, and some other pieces which the Lane estate has donated, that White Oak hopes to integrate into an overall plan.

The next step for White Oak is to develop a management plan, which will help us determine how to best provide stewardship for the property. We already know we would like public access to the parcels, and we look forward to working with our new neighbors in Winter Hill. 🌿



X marks the spots of White Oak's newest 16 acres within the Winter Hill subdivision.



(Left) Enjoying the March snow at Porcupine Hill/Potter Sanctuary.



(Top) White Oak president Scott Morrison shown next to the large white oak recently discovered on our Salisbury Street-Waterman property.

Photos by Paul McManus

Wildlife Weekends 2013

The programs are free, open to the public and will be followed by refreshments.

Mountain Lions in the East!

April 6, 1:30 pm

Holden Senior Center

Mountain Lion sightings in the East have been increasing. Come learn about these magnificent creatures and the theories behind their presence in New England. Bill Betty, Mountain Lion Expert, will discuss the life history, behavior, and habits of the Mountain Lion, as well as evidence of New England sightings. He will share his stories of tracking Mountain Lions, and tell about his own encounters in Rhode Island with these mysterious cats. Mr. Betty has presented throughout New England, and been a guest on NPR as well as public-access television.

Open the George Dresser Trail – and the 2013 Hiking Season!

Sunday, April 14, 2:00 pm

Meet at the Camp Kinneywood Lodge for a party in honor of George Dresser, co-founder of White Oak and lifelong Holden resident. Then hike some or all of the new trail at Kinneywoods named for him. The trail follows the outer edge of a 52-acre forest acquired by White Oak and the Greater Worcester Land Trust. To get to Camp Kinneywood from Holden Center, take Route 31 west to Reservoir St. Follow Reservoir to Stone House Hill Rd., a left after the reservoir. Cross the dam on Stone House Hill and turn right at the Camp Kinneywood sign. Co-sponsored by Greater Worcester Land Trust.



Since 1978, White Oak Land Conservation Society has been protecting open space in the Holden area. Currently we preserve 20 properties in all parts of town. Each of these provides natural habitat for families of land and water animals. We invite you to join us in learning more about those creatures who know our open space as their home. You may visit our website, www.whiteoaktrust.org for more information about our programs. The programs are supported in part by a grant from the Holden Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

SAVE THE DATE!

5k Trail Run

White Oak wants you to Run for the Trees! On Sunday, September 15 we will have our first-ever 5k trail run. This is a novice-friendly event, and both serious and newbie runners are welcome. You can even choose to walk, if you prefer! The race will be professionally timed.

Please check out this link to sign up:

<http://www.active.com/5k-race/holden-ma/run-for-the-woods-2013>



WHITE OAK
LAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

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

Beetles + Deer + Drought = Tough Times for Maples

by
ANTHONY COSTELLO

Maple trees in our area are having a hard time. One issue is the invasive Asian long horn beetle, which is still advancing and seems particularly fond of maples. The only bright side is the traps that were set last year caught gratifyingly few, suggesting that perhaps it is only along Route 290 that the beetles are still spreading.

Deer are another issue. With no major predators except man, the deer population is rising, and the number of hunters is falling. Maple seedlings are a favored diet for deer, and in many places stands of maple are no longer regenerating. (The deer also munch on wild flowers. When I first came to Holden 27 years ago I soon found several stands of wood lilies, but of these only one now survives. Other members of the lily family, such as Bellwort and False Solomon's Seal are browsed enthusiastically, though some that are poisonous are avoided.)

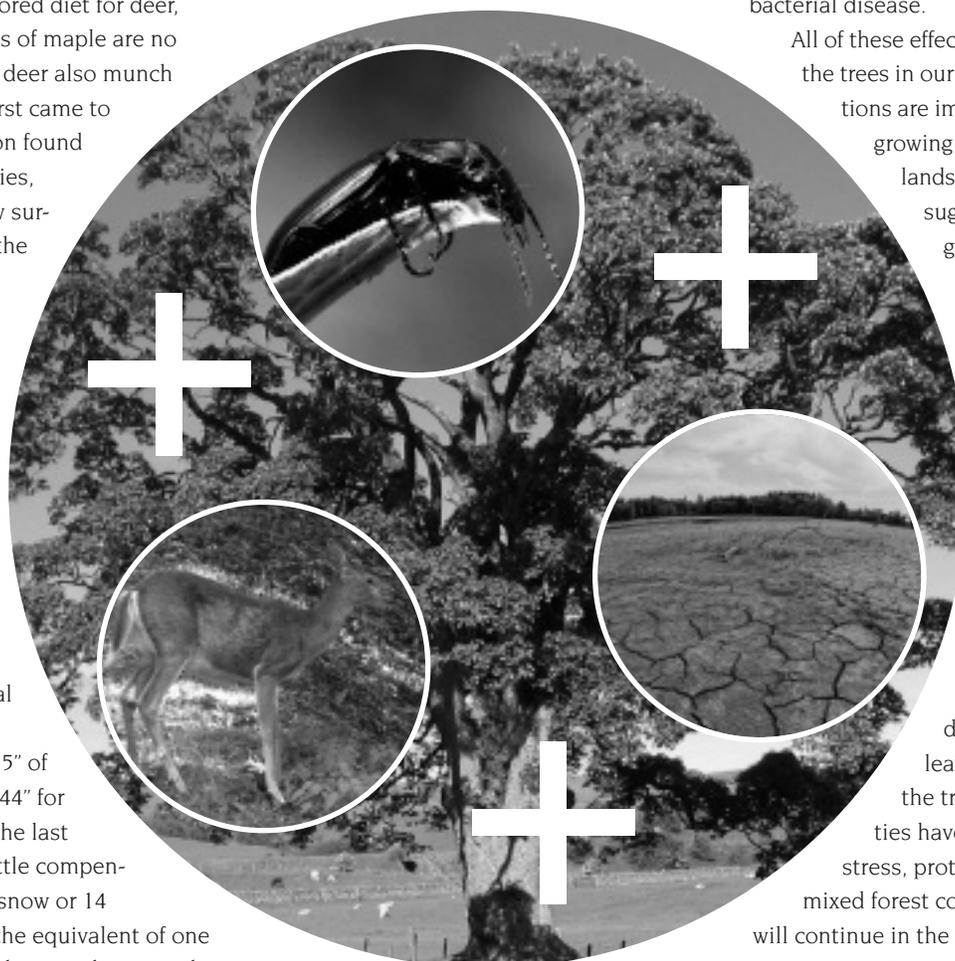
To add to the trees' problems, the water supply is falling. Throughout most of 2012, precipitation was below average, and central Massachusetts ended the year with a deficit of over 5" of rainfall, normally around 44" for the year. The snowfall in the last three months has been little compensation; 8 inches of heavy snow or 14 inches of powder is only the equivalent of one inch of rain. Moreover, so long as the ground

is frozen, what melt there is may be lost in runoff, though the slow melt we have experienced so far may be helpful.

The very small tree roots which lie close to the surface supply their owners with water, minerals and a variety of chemicals. When the temperature rises, and there is more evaporation from the soil, the tree may suffer even if the big structural roots deep in the earth, which anchor it against the wind, are still moist.

Trees protect themselves from water loss by closing tiny openings in their leaves, which slows or stops growth. The leaves may brown at the edges, or fall early. As a tree grows in diameter, each year it produces a growth ring. Lack of water affects the width of the tree's growth ring and the overall growth of the tree. During dry years, there is little increase in diameter and the annual growth ring will be narrow. In the worst conditions branches may die back, and the reduced sap flow may make the tree more vulnerable to insects, fungi and bacterial disease.

All of these effects can be seen in some of the trees in our area, though local conditions are important. The red maples, growing mainly in damp bottom lands, may do well even when sugar maples on higher ground are suffering. In my own yard, the maples next to the road, which were seedlings when the road was dirt, have done poorly since blacktop was laid down forty or fifty years ago. Another tree, on the edge of the septic field, continues to grow vigorously. But in 2012, trees in less favorable positions developed brown-fringed leaves which fell early. So far, the trees on White Oak properties have shown few signs of stress, protected by growing in mixed forest conditions. How long this will continue in the face of rising average temperatures is uncertain. 🌿



The first day of spring is one thing, and the first spring day is another.

The difference between them is sometimes as great as a month."

—Henry Van Dyke



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P.O. BOX 346

HOLDEN, MA 01520



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UPCOMING EVENTS!

See inside for more details.

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