

THE

Oak Leaf

A PUBLICATION OF THE WHITE OAK LAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

SUMMER 2013

A is for . . . Accreditation!

This spring, White Oak received news that, after a 10-year effort, we were awarded accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. While we first committed to the idea of accreditation long ago, it wasn't until we received an Accreditation Acceleration Grant sponsored by the Open Space Institute and The Trustees of Reservations that the application process went into high gear. We submitted our application in August 2012, with the positive response in April 2013.

The following press release went out to local newspapers in May, and we wanted to make sure you, our supporters, heard the news as well.

White Oak Land Conservation Society Earns National Recognition

Accreditation Awarded by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission

Holden, MA –White Oak Land Conservation Society has achieved land trust accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance.

"We're thrilled by this wonderful news. White Oak has been led by dedicated volunteers for thirty-five years, and accreditation is recognition of our strong commitment to land conservation. Our achievement will ultimately benefit the entire community," said Scott Morrison, White Oak's president. "White Oak is a stronger organization today having gone through the accreditation process."

White Oak Conservation Society is one of 159 land trusts in Massachusetts, and only the sixth in the Commonwealth to achieve ac-

creditation. Founded in 1978, White Oak is dedicated to preserving open space in Holden and the surrounding towns. To date, White Oak has preserved a total of 475 acres of land and has provided numerous public educational programs on the environment. Its most recent project conserved 17 acres along Poor Farm Brook, in Holden.

White Oak Land Conservation Society was awarded accreditation this April and is one of only 207 land trusts from across the country that has been awarded accreditation since the fall of 2008. Accredited land trusts are authorized to display a seal indicating to the public that they meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent. The seal is a mark of distinction in land conservation.

"This round of accreditation decisions represents another significant milestone for the accreditation program; the 207 accredited land trusts account for half of the 20,645,165 acres currently owned in fee or protected by a conservation easement held by a land trust," said Commission Executive Director Tammara Van Ryn. "Accreditation provides the public with an assurance that, at the time of accreditation, land trusts meet high standards for quality and that the results of their conservation work are permanent."

Each accredited land trust submitted extensive documentation and underwent a rigorous review. "Through accreditation land

trusts conduct important planning and make their operations more efficient and strategic," said Van Ryn. "Accredited organizations have engaged and trained citizen conservation leaders and improved systems for ensuring that their conservation work is permanent."

According to the Land Trust Alliance, con-

serving land helps ensure clean air and drinking water; safe, healthy food; scenic landscapes and views; recreational places; and habitat for the diversity of life on earth. In addition to health and food benefits, conserving land increases property values near greenbelts, saves tax dollars by encouraging more efficient development, and reduces the

need for expensive water filtration facilities. Across the country, local citizens and communities have come together to form more than 1,700 land trusts to save the places they love. Community leaders in land trusts throughout the country have worked with willing landowners to save over 47 million acres of farms, forests, parks and places people care about, including land transferred to public agencies and protected via other means. Strong, well-managed land trusts provide local communities with effective champions and caretakers of their critical land resources, and safeguard the land through the generations.

White Oak President Scott Morrison added: "We are proud to display the accreditation seal as a symbol of the hard work by our board and volunteers."



"Summertime is always the best of what might be." —Charles Bowden

Do You Have A Favorite Piece of Land?

Once upon a time, one of our board members mused about how nice it would be if White Oak could purchase a piece of property adjacent to Porcupine Hill, which we acquired in 2008. In 2012, this dream became a reality with the official opening of Potter Sanctuary.

If you've spotted a nice property, including farmland, that you dream of seeing preserved as open space, please let us know. We'd love to hear ideas from our members about where we should next focus our energies—especially if it's a parcel slated for development. While we aren't always able to acquire all the acreage we want, it is helpful to have extra eyes around town seeking conservation opportunities.



Active Board Seeks Active Members

White Oak currently has eight volunteer board members who work hard to conserve land here in our community. Our backgrounds are varied, as are our contributions to the organization. We have an attorney building walking trails, a teacher attending vernal pool identification training, a psychiatrist wielding a chain saw, and other wonderful members who contribute their time and effort.

How can you help? If you think you would like to join our fun group of like-minded people, contact info@whiteoaktrust.org, and we can discuss how your background and interests will fit with our needs. We welcome anyone to attend our monthly board meetings, so you can come for a trial run before committing.



WHITE OAK
LAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

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Board of Directors

Scott Morrison, *President*

Erich Mierzejewski, *Vice President*

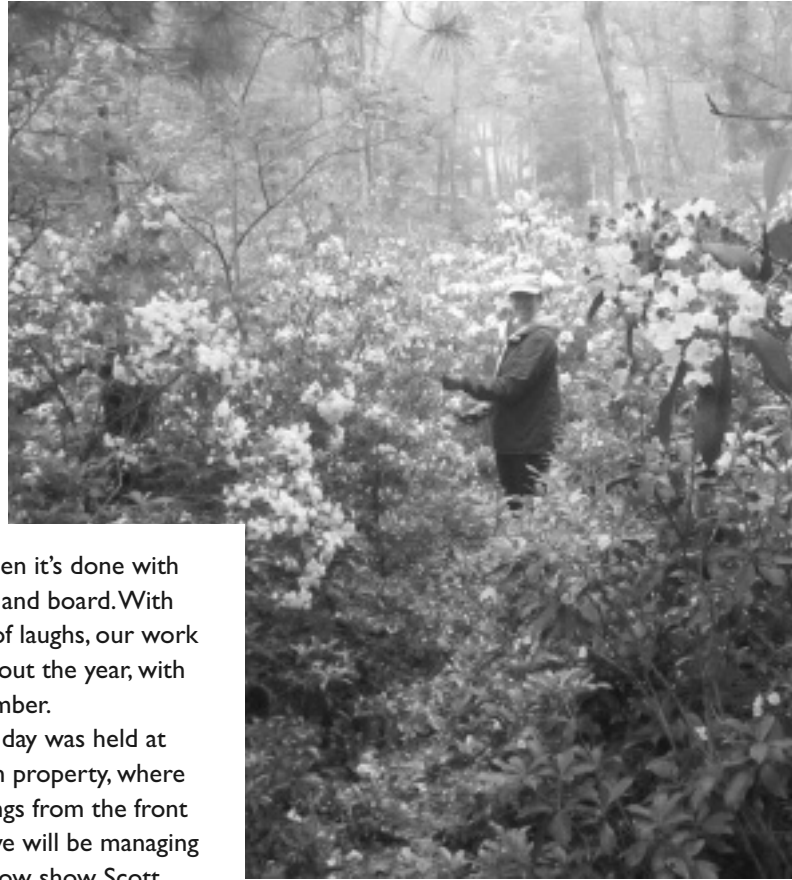
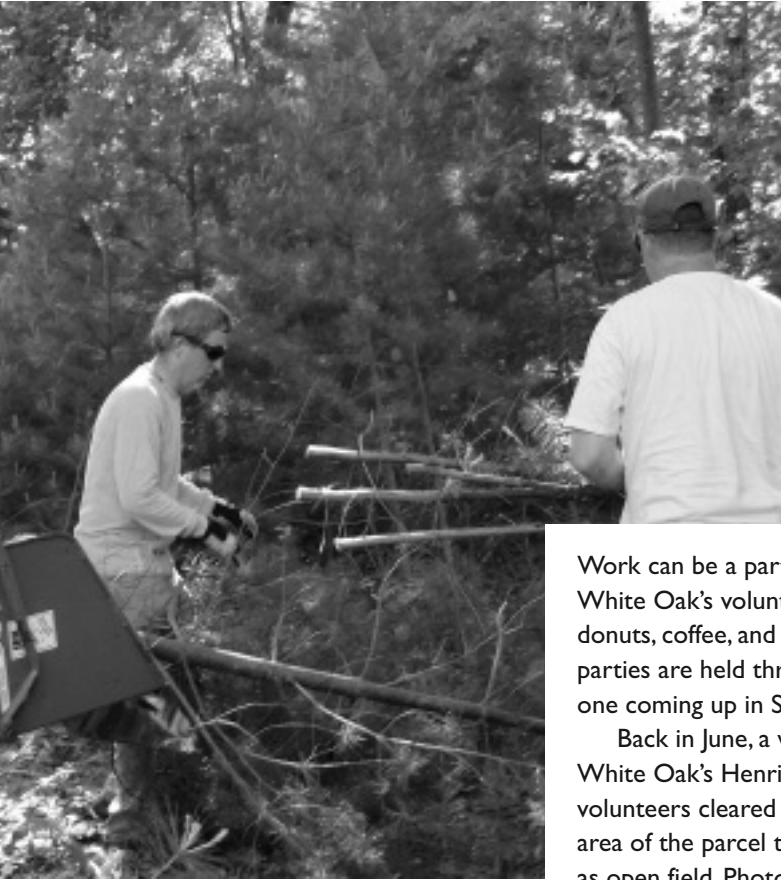
Marci Driscoll and Jennifer Leith,
Secretary/Clerk

Anthony Costello, *Treasurer* Paul McManus

Karen Eisenhauer Ralph Peck

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

Work Is Not A Four-Letter Word



Work can be a party when it's done with White Oak's volunteers and board. With donuts, coffee, and lots of laughs, our work parties are held throughout the year, with one coming up in September.

Back in June, a work day was held at White Oak's Henrickson property, where volunteers cleared saplings from the front area of the parcel that we will be managing as open field. Photos below show Scott Morrison, White Oak's president, and board member Paul McManus staffing the wood chipper, while board member Ralph Peck drags out cut pines.

Another work day took place in early July at Porcupine Hill. Those who attended had a chance to enjoy the beautiful mountain laurel, which was still in bloom. Photos below show board members Anthony Costello and Karen Eisenhauer trimming laurel branches along the trail.





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LAND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

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Run for White Oak!

Sunday, September 15 marks White Oak's first-ever 5k trail run or walk. This professionally-timed, novice-friendly event welcomes serious and new runners or walkers. Visit this link to register <http://www.active.com/5k-race/holden-ma/run-for-the-woods-2013>. Members can use the code RunForWhiteOak2013 for a registration discount.

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