



A Favorite Place Preserved Forever

Many of our members know of the generous gift of land that CLCT received from Mary Seton Abele in October of last year. The 33 acres of oak and pine woods are located on the north side of Fairhaven Hill and connect land donated by Mary's father to our other Wright Woods properties.

Mary lived on Fairhaven Hill for almost her entire childhood and remembers spending endless hours walking the area. When her father Henry Seton began purchasing property on Fairhaven Hill in the 1940s, it was an open landscape that included orchards, a vineyard and fields, largely owned by the Thompson family. From her home, Mary would slide and scramble down the south side of the hill—today this looks perilously steep—to paths and farm roads on the south and west slopes. Favorite places were her father's garden, where she could find arrowheads, and the Fairhaven cliffs.

Mary's father was an outdoors person who spent time walking in the woods and was curious about the natural world. She writes that "[H]e recognized the special beauty of the Fairhaven woods and determined to help preserve it." In 1967, Henry donated seven acres to CLCT. Upon his death, he left his remaining Fairhaven Hill property to Mary, including these 33 acres. Mary continued to be an active steward of the woods,

managing them for aesthetics and to maintain a healthy forest. For years, she allowed visitors to the Wright Woods to use the trails on her land. We are enormously grateful to Mary for preserving these paths and woods through her gift.

Included in this newsletter is a map that can be inserted into your Trail Guide showing the revised trail markings and the extent of this, our newest property. The map highlights the importance of Mary's gift in its own right and as the gateway to CLCT's other Wright Woods properties. Her gift insures the continuity of the loop trail system and enables walkers to move more quickly from the Arena Terrace parking into the woods themselves and the peace and beauty that they provide.



Land Trust members enjoying a walk along the Abele Trail

Reflections on Wright Woods

Mary Seton Abele's remarkable gift of 33 acres on Fairhaven Hill prompts us to step back and think about the "Wright Woods" and our other properties around Fairhaven Hill in their entirety. What are the attributes that should inform our decisions about how best to manage and use this land? What is our vision for this, our largest and one of our most beautiful properties?

First and foremost, the Land Trust's 278 acres at Fairhaven Hill are surrounded by an even larger area—more than 2,000 acres—of protected and wooded open space. To the south is Fairhaven Bay and Lincoln's Mt. Misery reservation; to the east, the Massachusetts Walden Pond reservation and Concord's Hapgood Wright Town Forest; to the north, land preserved by the Walden Woods Project; and to the west, the Sudbury River and, across the river, the Conantum common land. In this case, size does matter: the ecological and conservation value of CLCT's Fairhaven Hill properties is greatly enhanced as an integral part of

a much larger natural landscape, and we believe that decisions about how to manage and use these properties must be made with this in mind.

One reason why the Wright Woods provides good opportunities for study



Fairhaven Bay at Sunset

and education is the history of human use that is evident within the natural landscape. For example, visitors can discover the ghost of a race track (part of the fairgrounds that operated nearby on Walden Pond many years ago) and a stone boat house that was used by the Robinson/Wright families on Fairhaven Bay. Over the years, the

forests have been cleared for wood and burned by wildfires, devastated by the 1938 hurricane and by gypsy moths, and have subsequently succeeded to a pine and oak woods that are adapted to the droughty, infertile soils. Thoreau himself inadvertently set fire to a large portion of the woods. Unusual and specimen trees that escaped being harvested can be found on steeper slopes and in ravines.

For Thoreau, the area around Walden Pond and Fairhaven Hill was one of the 'wild tracts' of Concord, a solitary and remote place of water and woodlands. It remains much the same today. Situated at the heart of a vast tract of conservation land,

Wright Woods provides an experience of exceptional quietude and peace. Perhaps the solitude and tranquility of these woods more than any other attribute defines what is special about them. The opportunity and challenge for the stewards of this land will be to enhance the unique experience that our Fairhaven Hill properties provide.

Hallenbeck Trail Open for Walking

After the town built a new sidewalk along Lowell Road, the Land Trust realized that this created an opportunity to improve access to our Hallenbeck Land. The Hallenbeck Land was acquired in 1995 with an oddly-configured 'tail' from Lowell Road back to the bulk of the 18 acres. We thought that if we built a path within the 'tail', then pedestrians could use it to visit this particularly varied and scenic property.

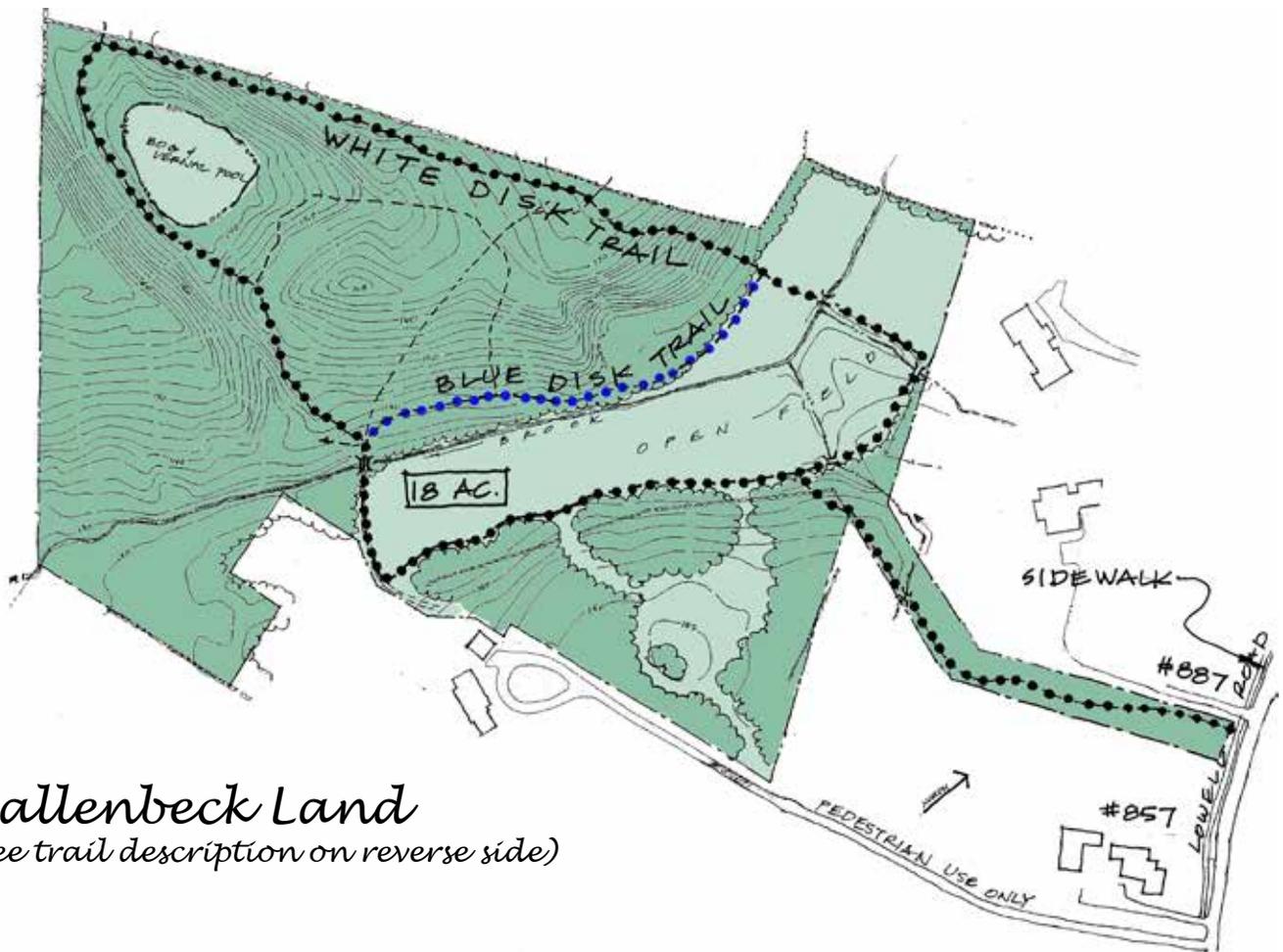
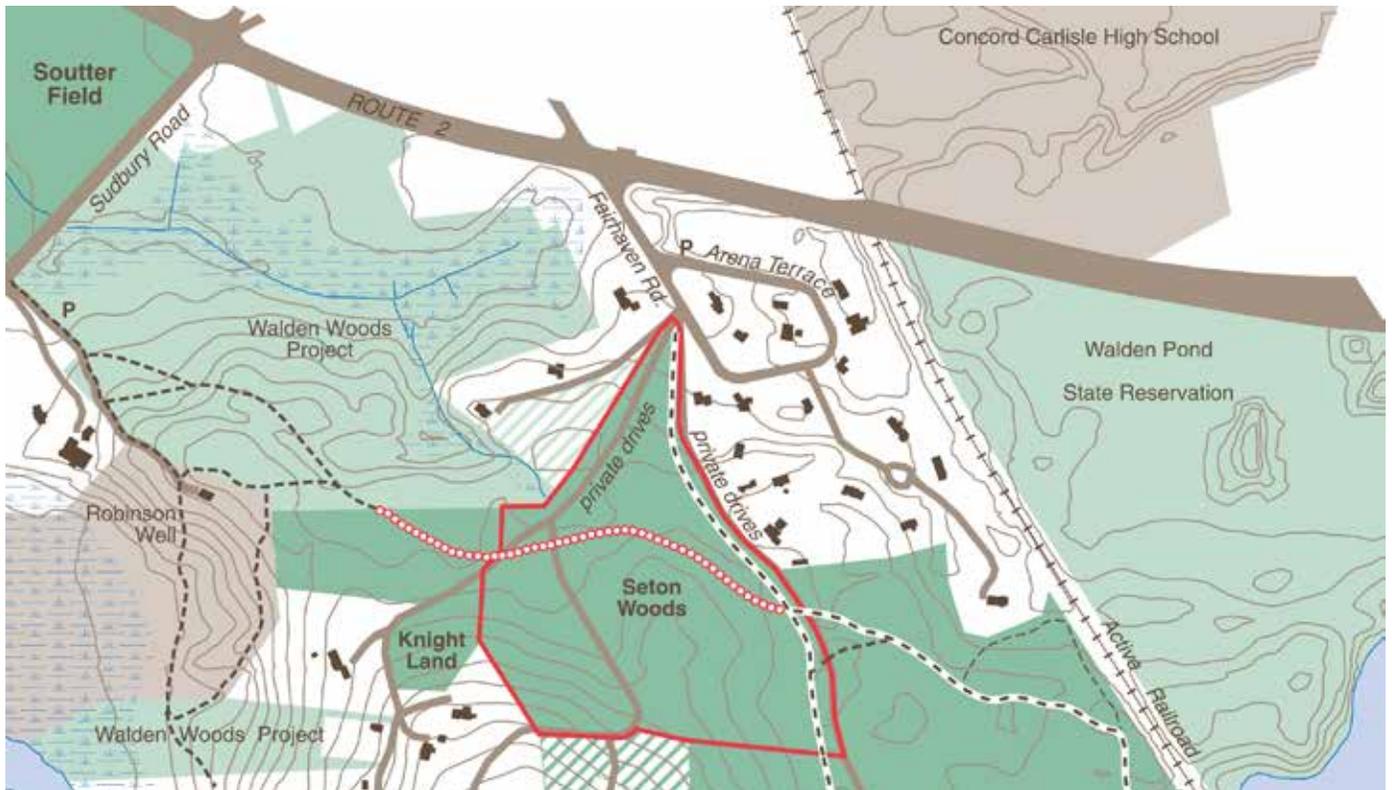
A plan was developed, we received approval from the town's Natural Resources Commission for wetlands work, and the trail was built over the summer and fall. Many thanks to the member volunteers who helped cut brush, move logs, build a plank walkway and nail up trail disks.



Clearing the new Hallenbeck Trail. From left to right: Janet Miller, Joan Ferguson, Amanda von Weise, Peter Siebert, Rich Vautour.

The Seton Woods

(Insert for page 12 of Trail Guide)



Hallenbeck Land

(See trail description on reverse side)

Behold the Wolf Tree!



Who brings a measuring tape when they go out snowshoeing? Cherrie Corey does! She is pictured at left measuring the circumference of an old oak during CLCT’s winter walk in the upper Spencer Brook Valley. Its diameter was 63.5 inches - over five feet! The gnarled and spreading limbs of the tree suggest that it was a pasture oak in past centuries. With the decline in farming in the late 1800s, pasture land reverted to woods and trees grew up around the wolf trees. The origin of the term “wolf tree” is somewhat murky (a lone wolf?), but the description is not. They all have a large diameter trunk and a widely spreading crown. It is a joy to come across one of these

old trees on a walk, and to understand what an important role they play in the forest ecosystem – producing seed and supporting birds, insects and mammals in their furrows and cavities.



CLCT Contributes to Rogers Land Easements

When the town purchased the Rogers Land in West Concord in 2012 (with the essential support of CLCT members), the only thing separating this land from the town’s

Marshall Farm were the back yards of two narrow house lots. This past fall, the town successfully negotiated with the owners to acquire an easement for walkers and farm vehicles. Again,

CLCT was able to contribute to the purchase price. The easement will allow residents to walk a continuous path along and above the Assabet River.

Hallenbeck Trail Description (see map on reverse side)

Entrance

The trailhead is accessed from the sidewalk on the west side of Lowell Road, between house #857 and #887.

The Trail

The trail runs within a 50 foot wide strip of land for approximately 700 feet to a loop trail. Parts of this segment of the trail are seasonally wet; there is a plank boardwalk and a small bridge.

The loop trail begins on a mowed path that follows the perimeter of a 1 ¼ acre meadow; note the large flat stones that were set by early farmers to bridge the ditches and brooks. At the far side of the meadow, the trail enters an oak and pine woods and rises and falls with the glaciated terrain. The far western corner of the property surrounds a kettlehole bog. While this is slowly becoming a shrub wetland, the sphagnum moss at its perimeter is growing over water and peat; for your safety, do not attempt to walk into the bog.

A side trail marked with blue disks runs along the west side of the meadow. It passes by an extensive myrtle patch and an old foundation that mark the site of a farm worker’s house. Both are a reminder of the chicken farming that occurred in the vicinity. Note also the nearby ‘borrow pit’ that was a source for sand and gravel used on the farm; reputedly, this was where people gathered to watch and wager on cockfights.

Jeff Wieand (Re)Joins CLCT Board of Trustees

Jeff Wieand was elected to the Board of Trustees at the annual meeting on November 2, 2014. Jeff interrupted his tenure as a CLCT trustee to serve as a Selectman between 2008 and 2014, and we are glad to welcome back his enthusiasm, legal expertise and, now, his in-depth knowledge of town affairs. With regard to returning to the Land Trust, Jeff says, "I am excited about the opportunity to help protect Concord's natural resources and rural environment, and honored to serve on such a distinguished board."

Jeff is a graduate of Middlebury College and Harvard Law School (plus he has a PhD in philosophy from the University of Chicago), and he has practiced law in Massachusetts for 30 years, specializing in business and



aviation transactions. His past service to the Town includes the Public Works Commission, the Historic Districts Commission and the Board of Appeals. Jeff is also a director of the Concord Art Association and Concord Chamber Music Society. Jeff and his wife, Janet, have lived in Concord for 27 years.



Volunteers from Boy Scout Troop 132 left to right: Jake Dionne, Bill Duggan, Luke Paulter, Aiden Ernesti (cap), Will Duggan (red shirt), Henry Dionne, Nick Rankin Higgins, Rich Higgins

Upcoming Events

Richard Taylor Environmental Lecture

An annual lecture in partnership with Harvard University and in memory of Professor Richard Taylor who was a leading force in protecting the Estabrook Woods.

"Animal Movement That Inspires Biorobotics: From Terrestrial Locomotion to Raptors Pursing Prey"
by Andrew Biewener,
Harvard Professor of Biology.
Tuesday, April 7th at 7pm.
Harvey Wheeler Community Center

Concord Environmental Consortium

A cooperative venture of Concord's three high schools — CCHS, Concord Academy, and Middlesex School. The Consortium is sponsored by CLCT.

"Land Restoration - Fire as a Management Tool"
by Tim Simmons,
Restoration Ecologist.
Wednesday, April 1st at 7pm
Theater Building at Middlesex School

"Bald Eagle Restoration"
by Andrew Vitz,
State Ornithologist.
Wednesday, April 15th at 7pm
Ransome Room at Concord Academy

Musketaquid Wild Walks

A partnership between CLCT and Musketaquid Arts and the Environment to get more people, especially kids, out on the land.

Scavenger Hunt. Wednesday, April 22, 10am -12pm, Miller Farm

Birding. Saturday, June 13, 7-9am, Hosmer Land

Register for Musketaquid classes at:
www.theumbrellaarts.org



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CCHS Rivers and Revolutions Students Delve into the Newbury Land

This fall, as their stewardship project, students in the CCHS Rivers and Revolutions program created an interpretive trail through CLCT's Newbury Field. Directed primarily at younger children, the trail leads visitors through the landscape, highlighting natural and manmade features. The Rivers students have installed several wooden boxes (or "fairy houses"), each with a quote on the outside. Their hope is that passersby (kids of all ages) will see the boxes as an invitation to leave something they've found, starting a kind of silent, ongoing conversation among visitors. The Rivers students are deeply indebted to help from CLCT volunteers, as well as their correspondence with William Newbury, whose recollection of the land inspired the installation.



Pictured from left to right: Brian Dalton, Nick Yelle, Noah Swanson, Will Kemeza, Audrey Hunt. Not pictured: Keagan Pasco, Cassidy Hale, Sachi Ward