

A Remarkable Achievement – Preserving October Farm Riverfront



Looking down at the Concord River from the top of Ball's Hill.

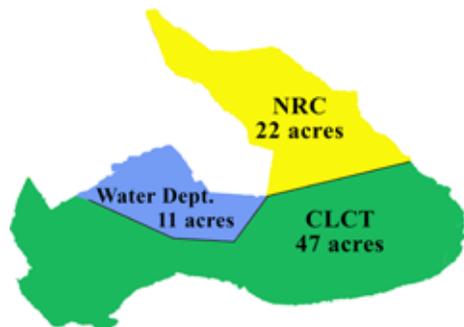
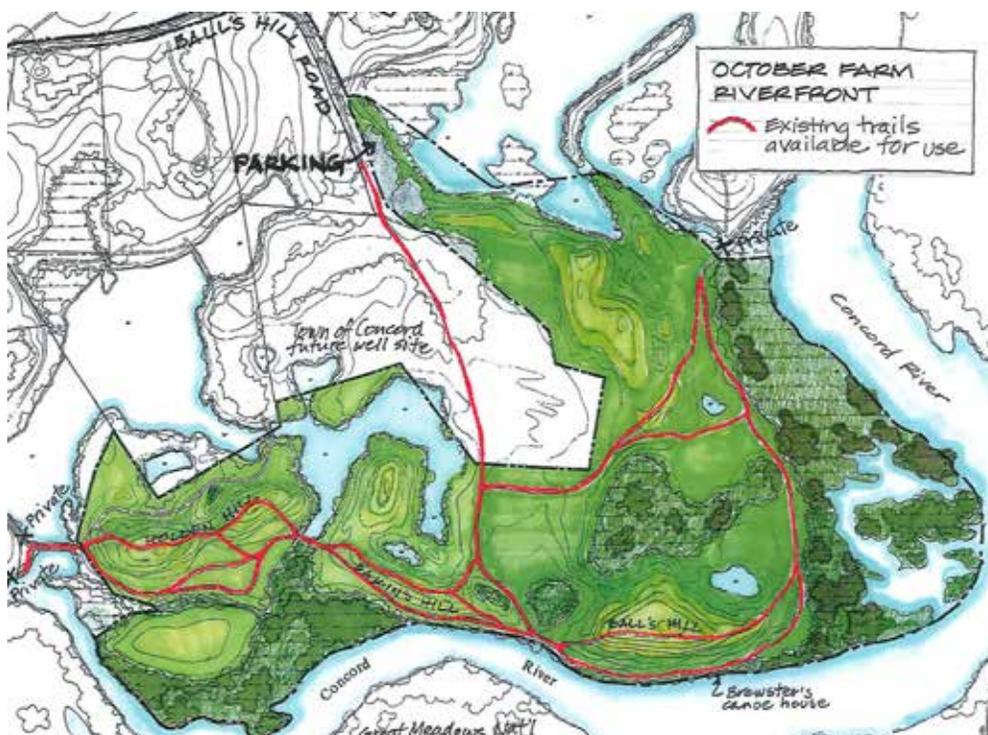
December 15, 2016 marked the successful conclusion of a year-long effort—the acquisition of the 80-acre October Farm Riverfront by CLCT and the Town of Concord. These days, a transfer of ownership like this does not occur with a solemn gathering around a table in a lawyer's office; rather, the sale was marked by a flurry of last-minute emails and wire transfers. The purchase was celebrated in a modest way on the following day, when a small group from our board and the Town removed the chain across the end of Ball's Hill Road at the entrance to the property and officially opened it for use.

The message that we have repeated so often throughout the course of the

campaign bears repeating: the October Farm Riverfront purchase was made possible only through the support of our members, who once again demonstrated their commitment to preserving Concord's natural landscapes. The success of the October Farm Riverfront campaign allowed CLCT and the Town to purchase the property, pay the expenses associated with that purchase, and offset some of our future stewardship needs such as trail maintenance. We are committed to continuing the good management that the property received under the previous ownership, and in sustaining the exceptional natural, historic and recreational resources found there. Our members' generosity will make this commitment a reality.

CLCT and the Town have been partners in preserving open space many times in the past, most recently

at the Rogers Land and Hubbard Brook Farmfield. For the October Farm Riverfront, this partnership ultimately took the form of the division of the property into three ownership parcels proportionate to each party's contribution, as shown on the plan below. We and the town's Natural Resources Commission look forward to cooperatively managing the property, including the marking and mapping of the extensive trail system. We have already placed stakes and roping to define an interim five-car parking area and are monitoring its use—making sure that no parking is occurring on the very narrow Ball's Hill Road—before a more permanent area is created this summer. We are glad to hear from many members that they have already been enjoying our newest property; trail information can be found on our website and at the trailhead.



Plant List for Wright Woods

From the inventory conducted within the deer exclosures by the Sustainable Working Landscapes program at the Harvard Forest.

Sedges and grasses
 Wood anemone
 Jack-in-the-pulpit
 Pink lady's slipper
 Bugleweed
 Starflower
 Canada mayflower
 Feathery false Solomon's-seal
 Carrion-flower
 Skunk cabbage
 Violet
 Hayscented fern
 Sensitive fern
 Cinnamon fern
 Red maple
 Glossy buckthorn
 Black gum
 White pine
 White oak
 Red oak
 Sassafras
 Alternate-leaved dogwood
 Smooth serviceberry
 Japanese barberry
 Spotted wintergreen
 Sweet pepperbush
 American hazelnut
 Beaked hazelnut
 Eastern wintergreen
 Black huckleberry
 Witch-hazel
 Smooth winterberry
 Sheep laurel
 Northern spicebush
 Partridge-berry
 Virginia creeper
 Rhododendron species
 Swamp azalea
 Lowbush blueberry
 Highbush blueberry
 Maple-leaved viburnum
 Fox grape

The State of the Woods

*This winter, the Land Trust office received a report from UMass Amherst titled Increasing Forest Resiliency for an Uncertain Future. * Rarely has a publication stated so succinctly and clearly how an organization like CLCT—one that is not in the business of managing its woodlands for traditional purposes—might plan for the future of our forested properties, particularly for our almost 300 acre Wright Woods.*



Fortunately, CLCT has help in implementing such a plan from John Robbins, a forester on whom we have long depended for advice and management of the Wright Woods. He offers the following insights.

Wright Woods has proven itself to be a resilient forest. During the past century, the forest has recovered from several catastrophic events – an uncontrollable forest fire that burned a large part of Wright Woods more than 80 years ago, severe gypsy moth infestations in the 1930s and 1980s, and the devastating hurricane of 1938. Most of the trees now growing in Wright Woods originated following those events. Despite its historic resiliency, the threats facing the forest from climate change may pose the most serious challenge in the years ahead for the ability of the forest to adapt and continue to thrive.

What can we do, as stewards of Wright Woods, to enhance its resiliency and lessen its vulnerability to the likely stresses caused by drought, severe rain and windstorms, insect and disease infestations, invasive plant proliferation, and devastating forest fires?

1. Foster a diverse forest community.

A forest with a well-balanced distribution of trees in several age-classes, and a wide variety of tree, shrub, and plant species will be better able to recover from damaging events than a more homogeneous forest. Standing dead trees and downed woody material on the ground also add to the complexity of the forest ecosystem. Silvicultural practices such as thinning and selection harvesting can play an important role in fostering a more diverse forest, as can planting additional native tree and shrub species.

2. Promote the health and vigor of trees in the forest.

Healthy trees with access to ample growing space, sunlight, water, and nutrients are far more likely to withstand stresses. A thinning program to reduce competition among overcrowded patches of young trees has been underway in Wright Woods for the past three years to increase tree vigor.

3. Monitor Wright Woods for threats to the forest and respond if possible.

We can all be on the lookout for threats to the forest such as the spread of invasive plants, tree damage from insects or disease, and overbrowsing by deer. Maintaining good fire roads for access in the event of forest fire is also of critical importance.

The impact of climate change on Wright Woods is unpredictable, but by being vigilant and proactive in promoting the diversity and vigor of the forest we will have the greatest chance of success in keeping Wright Woods healthy and resilient.

*Find the pdf at MassWoods.net

Members Enjoy Time Outside at CLCT Events



November 6, 2016. Annual Meeting and Fall Walk: (Top) Gathering in the Huyett's barn for refreshments before the meeting. Photo by William Huyett.

(Bottom) Making our way one at a time through a turnstile. The walk took us across the Gifford Land, along the new Hutchins trail, down Two Rod Road, around Hutchins Pond, and through the Emerson conservation restriction by special permission.



November 5, 2016. Bay House Site Restoration Field Trip. Volunteers interested in creating a plan for the area above Fairhaven Bay gathered for their first meeting at the site of the old summer house taken down last year. The goal is to come up with a design for the site that includes native plants, an area to gather and enjoy the view, and a way to give people historical information about the setting.



September 17, 2016. Full Moon Rising Picnic. Tim Swanson talks about wildlife with a few aspiring naturalists. As part of the Musketaquid Wild Walks series, which CLCT sponsors, a group of children and their families explored the open field habitat of the Newbury Land.



February 5, 2017. Winter Walk. Enjoying hot cider and brownies after looping through the Hallenbeck Land and Corey-Bourquin Field. Unfortunately we were a few days shy of being able to snowshoe or ski through the area, but everyone still enjoyed the opportunity to get outside and explore.



October 7, 2016. Walk at October Farm Riverfront. A group poses in front of Brewster's canoe house during one of the three walks CLCT held in October to introduce people to this amazing property.

Thank You

To *William and Lauren Huyett* for hosting our Annual Meeting.

To the following organizations that gave grants to the October Farm Riverfront Campaign:

- Sudbury, Assabet and Concord Wild & Scenic River Stewardship Council*
- Bafflin Foundation*
- Grantham Group*
- Middlesex Bank*
- Black Birch Development*

To the *many volunteers* who helped us with projects such as:

- clearing the Hutchins Trail Loop
- planning Bay House site restoration
- pulling water chestnuts
- removing brush at Corey-Bourquin
- pulling and bagging buckthorn

To the *Emerson Family* and the *Indian Spring Trust* for giving us permission to lead walks across their lands.

To *The Garden Club of Concord* for funds to help us build an information kiosk (photo below) in the Wright Woods.





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Volunteer Days

This past year many members joined our land manager, Rich Vautour, to help on a variety of projects. Rich will continue to offer volunteer

opportunities this coming year and hopes to have even more people take part. Emails are sent out to CLCT members



Volunteers finish the clearing of the Hutchins Loop off of Two Rod Road.

about a month in advance of the date, so if you aren't receiving these and want to participate, be sure to send us an email at info@concordland.org and we will add you to our list.

New Property Signs

Thanks in part to a grant from the Cedar Tree Foundation, CLCT has installed five new property signs-Shaw Land, Hallenbeck Land, Seton Woods, Kazmaier Field, and French's Meadow. We hope that these signs will make people more aware of the conservation land in Concord that has been protected thanks to generous donors.

Buckthorn Baggies

On a cold day in December, volunteers came out to use an innovative method for controlling Glossy Buckthorn in the Gowing's Swamp area. The larger specimens were cut and then covered with "Buckthorn Baggies" that prevent regrowth. Developed by an engineering student at the University of Wisconsin, these bags have shown promising results

so far. They are made of a special heavy weight plastic that does not tear easily or allow light to penetrate. They need to be left in place for a year after which they may be removed and reused. This method provides an alternative to herbicide use and does not disturb the soil around the plant which can release the seed bed of



A job well done evidenced by many buckthorn plants cut and covered.

invasives. The project was organized and led by the Sudbury Valley Trustees's MassLIFT Americorps service member Lisa Long.