

THE WOODBRIDGE PARK ASSOCIATION, INC.
WOODBRIDGE, CONNECTICUT
FOUNDED IN 1928

ANNUAL LETTER 2008

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c/o Woodbridge Park Association
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Dear Friends,

Mirroring the rest of the world, 2008 was a year of highs and lows for the Woodbridge Park Association, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. We experienced some important losses to our Board, but on a brighter note have some great additions as well.

Win and Katie Hubbard retired from the WPA Board of Directors in May. On behalf of all the directors, I would like to thank Win and Katie for their decades of service and support. Win and Katie cited advancing years as the reason for their retirement, although I have observed both of them working recently with the strength and enthusiasm of people half their age. Win quietly went about his responsibilities as our Superintendent, diligently keeping our trails clear, while Katie remained steadfast in her desire to keep our private organization viable and focused on our important mission to protect our open space holdings. Win and Katie were cornerstones of the WPA and will be missed.

We also lost Director Ron Hedberg, who passed away on September 24th, and former Director and long-time supporter Winifred Daniell, who passed on July 7th. Ginny Schneider has written a brief obituary for Ron in this letter.

We are excited to welcome two new members to our Board. Nan Birdwhistell and Suzanne Werth will fill the large shoes left by Win and Katie. Becky Daymon has written a brief introduction of our new directors below.

We were the recipient of a truly unique gift by James Verinis and Shayna Cohen. James and Shayna asked that the WPA be listed on their wedding registry. James and Shayna were married on June 15th, 2008 on a wooded piece of property that they own in South Kingstown, RI. They have both lived and worked in New York for many years and are currently doing so in Greece, but they have long considered the Verinis house on Tulip Tree Lane where James' mother Marie lives a second home, from which they walk the many trails of the Woodbridge Greenway System. In fact, James has been running, walking, cross-country skiing, and bicycling along these trails since the day his family moved to Woodbridge in 1976. They would all like to help them remain as beautiful as they

are and to increase the presence and strength of the Woodbridge Park Association. Consequently the thought of putting the WPA on their wedding registry came to both James and Shayna simultaneously. It proved to be a great idea, as \$1025 was raised to benefit the WPA. We appreciate such a thoughtful way to celebrate their marriage and support our efforts.

Finally, we are happy to report the sale of the Hitchcock Farm on Center Road to a local family and they have already begun restoration and farming activities. As you may remember, in 2006 the Woodbridge Park Association teamed with the Amity & Woodbridge Historical Society and the Town of Woodbridge to purchase a conservation easement from the Hitchcock family. This easement will keep the property intact and safe from development. Marc and Lisa Santoro are moving steadily forward in transforming this homestead into a jewel for our town. We wish them the best of luck and support in their efforts.

The Life of Ron Hedberg – Ginny Schneider

We are deeply saddened by the loss of long time director Ron Hedberg, who passed away on September 24th. During his 28 years as a member of the Woodbridge Park Association Board, he was active in doing title searches, researching town data, creating extensive mapping, and working with Boy Scout projects, land acquisition, and park maintenance.

The WPA benefited from Ron's most impressive background. He received a BS from Penn State University, a Master's in geology from the University of Kansas, and a doctorate from Harvard University in geological sciences. He was a member of Sigma Xi, a very prestigious science honorary, and Sigma Gamma Epsilon, an earth science honorary, as well as several professional associations. He worked as a geologist and oceanographer in the United States, Africa, Burma, India, the Netherlands, Greece, Spain, and Latin America. He authored at least 14 publications as well.

Although Ron's "laboratory" covered the globe, he focused much of his attention on Woodbridge, especially in the past 28 years. In addition to his leadership as Vice-President of the WPA, he was a member of the Woodbridge Conservation Trust, the Woodbridge Land Trust, the Regional Council of Governments, the Woodbridge Inland Wetlands Committee, and the Committee on the Use of Publicly Owned Properties.

In addition to Ron's technical and scientific expertise, he also had a love of nature, including the smallest creatures. An example of this was his decision to eliminate mice intruders in his house by catching them in a Havahart trap and releasing them alive into the outdoors, rather than killing them. Woodbridge has benefited from Ron's extensive contributions to open space and stewardship of the earth. We are thankful for his dedicated service and extend our sincere sympathy to his family.

New members of the board – Becky Daymon

With Win and Katie Hubbard stepping down from being active board members we had 2 sets of very large shoes to fill. We are pleased to announce our new members of the Board, Nan Birdwhistell and Suzanne Werth. Most everyone knows Nan, not only from

being a past First Selectman but also from her active role in the preservation of open space. The Alice Newton Street Park has been a special place for Nan and her family for many years. She has logged "countless happy hours in the park, hiking, mountain biking, running, and cross-country skiing." Nan appreciates that the Park is an amazing and important gem of Woodbridge and is looking forward in helping with its stewardship.

Suzanne had her first introduction to the Park last year at the Fall Harvest Hike. She immediately saw the beauty of the Park and was extremely interested in learning about the WPA. Having summered in New Hampshire as a child, Suzanne developed an appreciation of open space and its importance at an early age. She has been living in Woodbridge for the past 15 years and has had a great interest in the Woodbridge Land Trust as well as the Bethany Historical Society.

We welcome both Nan and Suzanne as Board Members and we are looking forward to working with them on the Mission of the WPA for the preservation on open space.

What is a "Land Trust"- David Schneider, Esq.

The term "land trust" is a generic reference that can apply to a number of different types of entities. However, it generally refers to a not-for-profit, private (as opposed to public) corporation whose primary purpose is to preserve open space land. Usually the corporation does this by acquiring full ownership of land or an "interest" in a parcel of land (often referred to as a conservation easement). Most likely, a land trust will be set up to guarantee that land it acquires will be kept for open space and not developed. A land trust will often permit passive recreation on its property (such as hiking), sponsor educational programs on environmental issues and the like.

The words "land trust" can be in the corporation's name, but they need not be. The Woodbridge Park Association, Inc. (WPA) is a land trust, even though those words do not appear in its official name. In fact, the WPA, established in 1928, is either the third or fourth oldest land trust in Connecticut.

The WPA owns a number of parcels of land in Woodbridge, including the Alice Newton Street Park, which was its initial holding. It also has a conservation easement (along with the Town and the Amity-Woodbridge Historical Society) on the Hitchcock property on Center Road. The WPA is in the process of negotiating other conservation easements on several parcels of open space in Woodbridge.

The WPA usually acquires property or interests in property as gifts, although it has also made purchases. A donor, in addition to having the satisfaction of helping to preserve open space, may also be able to obtain a significant income tax deduction.

The WPA is governed by twenty-one active volunteer directors, all of whom reside in Woodbridge. For more information on the WPA, to discuss the possibility of a donation of land, or to obtain information about land donation tax deductions, please contact the WPA president, Chris Dickerson at 203-430-0034.

Harvest Hike – Sarah Davison

In our efforts to introduce the Alice Newton Street Memorial Park to the Beecher Road School Community, the Woodbridge Park Association sponsors an annual “Harvest Hike” during the third week of October. Beecher Road School principals, teachers and staff join Woodbridge Park Association trail guides and Beecher Road School children and their families on a 1-hour walk through the Alice Newton Street Memorial Park. We are pleased that the hike has become a yearly welcomed event on Beecher Road School’s calendar, and we hope to develop more collaborative programs with the elementary school and other community groups. The Harvest Hike has become an important public relations event for the WPA, and a popular event for families who have recently moved to Woodbridge.

This year’s Fifth Annual Harvest Hike was held on October 23rd, an absolutely glorious day with the leaves still at their height. A group of more than 60 hikers “leaf-peeped” as they looped through three different trails in the Park, learning about local flora and fauna from WPA directors who accompanied the hikers. We always spend a few minutes at the famous Wepawaug Falls, a highlight for the children, and the event is completed with post-hike refreshments provided by the Beecher Road School PTO.

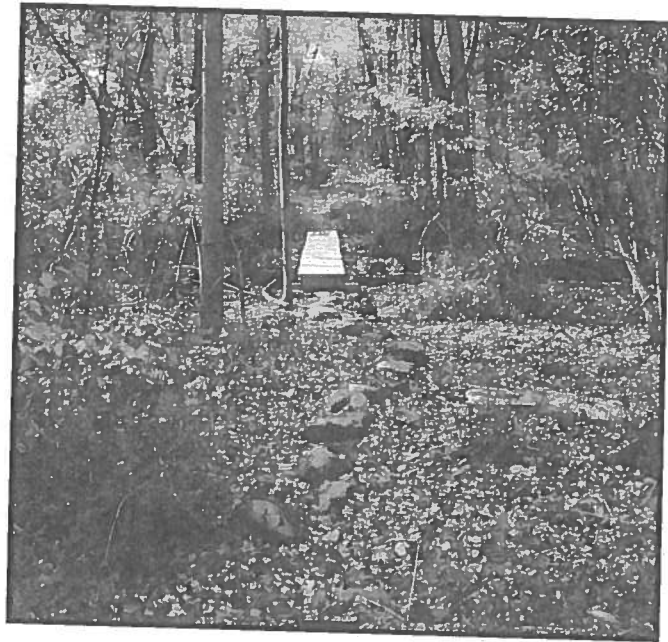
The Woodbridge Park Association encourages the greater Amity community to join us at one of our annual events, and if you are interested in developing a club or community program with us, contact Director Sarah Davison at 389-8843.



Park Maintenance Report – Michael Walter, Superintendent

Park maintenance is an on-going process through-out the year. A few of these activities include our annual spring cleanup, brush cutting along trails, checking for erosion, picking up fallen branches after storms, litter control, and cutting and removal of unsafe or dead trees that have fallen on trails or impose a threat to hikers.

The newest item added to the park is a raised boardwalk. It is located on the North Boundary Trail. The boardwalk is the result of Troop 907 Eagle Scouts Aaron Altman and Greg Wirak. The project was completed in late fall of 2007. The boardwalk is raised off the ground to keep hikers out of an area that has a few intermittent streams. It was built in two sections. The first section is approximately 110 feet long and the other about 25 feet. I have attached two photos for your enjoyment. One is from Nov. 2007 and the other from Oct. 23, 2008. This was also the date of our 5th Annual Harvest Hike.



We are continuing our efforts to re-mark the trails so hikers can easily tell if they are on the trail and which trail they are on. The new map on our website (see below) should help you as well. Look for some new changes to the map in 2009 as we continue to upgrade trails and markings.

With Fall and Winter here again, the Meadow area of the park has just been mowed, and the leaves will soon be cleaned up there, at the Park's front entrance off Meetinghouse Lane, and at the rear parking lot area behind the First Church of Christ. The leaves are removed to allow the continued growth of grasses in these areas. Some deciduous trees in the Meadow will be cut to promote more growth of the meadow grasses and to help sustain the inventory of cedar trees located there.

Our Association is fortunate to have many individuals who volunteer their time to help with maintenance items. I want to express my thanks to all of them at this time. More people are encouraged to get involved. Please visit our website and send the WPA an email if you are interested in helping. We hope to see you on the trails!

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The Woodbridge Park Association was incorporated on October 4, 1928. On January 14, 1929, the Board of Directors, consisting of eight members, was elected. Records indicate that the latter date has since been viewed as the "founding" date for the purpose of marking anniversaries. We believe the Woodbridge Park Association is the third or fourth oldest land trust in Connecticut according to the listing maintained at the Convocation of Connecticut Land Trusts. From our Articles of Association recorded in the Woodbridge Land Records on November 21, 1928, the Park Association has the following purposes:

"To acquire by gift or purchase lands within the town of Woodbridge and to hold the same for any or all of the following purposes: to establish such lands as a bird refuge and for the preservation of birds, fish and other animal life, and of trees, shrubs and plants; for the planting and care of trees in accordance with the principles of scientific forestry; to build roads and paths therein and to make accessible to the public any historic locations therein; to establish its holdings as a park for public use and recreation, in accordance with such rules and regulations as it may adopt..."

While there remains undeveloped land in private hands, we need your assistance and especially generous donations to help us continue to preserve open space in Woodbridge. Please consider the need to preserve open space and donate generously to us this year. Please also consider us in your estate planning: We are able to assist with this. We have a finite period of time to acquire additional properties because there are very few parcels remaining in Woodbridge. Please keep this in mind when you consider your tax-deductible donation in the enclosed donation envelope and remember that we function solely on the voluntary contributions from Woodbridge residents and a few corporations. The WPA gratefully acknowledges the essential support through donations of in-kind assistance from several local companies. We encourage all company-matching gifts, so please feel free to provide details about your company's gift program, if available

We encourage you to visit our website at www.woodbridgeparks.org. We provide trail maps there for downloading and other items of current interest.

Please walk in the Alice Newton Street Memorial Park frequently and encourage others to enjoy all the fabulous forestland in Woodbridge. I especially invite you to hike some of the lesser-used trails. Please also feel free to contact me at any point at president@woodbridgeparks.org. We sincerely welcome your support and active involvement in the dedicated work of the Woodbridge Park Association.

Best wishes,

Chris Dickerson
President 2008