

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

ANNUAL LETTER 2012

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P.O. Box 3883
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www.woodbridgeparks.org

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EDWARD MAUM SHEEHY

Dear Friends—

It is a great honor to begin my work as WPA President following the successful tenure of Dr. Carrie Swigart. We greatly appreciate the tireless effort, dedication and enthusiasm she brought to the job. We will work to sustain the momentum she created as we approach our future goals.

This year has been a busy one for the WPA and we are proud to share the following information with you.

Storm Impact

It was quite surprising for the unusual weather patterns to dominate our fall conversations again this year. Unlike last year's fall storm, the Alice Newton Street Park felt the wrath of Sandy's winds and experienced substantial tree damage. Three huge downed trees blocked the main entrance to the park, but luckily left the entrance in the back of the church parking lot unscathed. We were able to quickly assess the damage, and began the clean-

up process by removing over 17 trees, ranging from 12-30 inches in diameter, throughout our extensive trail system. Most of our tree work was addressed by our core group of volunteers, our directors and their families, led by Superintendent Mike Walter. However, we did engage professionals to handle the damage at the entrance because of the size of the trees and scope of

the work involved. We also held a clean-up day to focus on removal of branches from the trails and were thrilled to have garnered support from Amity High School and regular park users. We thank you for your support that day and every day you take the time to remove debris from the trails making them clearer for other visitors. We appreciate you sharing in the role of stewards of the land.

Renovated Entrance to Alice Newton Street Park

When you walked the park this summer, you probably noticed how nature had taken over the entrance area between Town Hall and the church. Board member, Becky Daymon, volunteered to undertake the daunting task of ridding the path and area of invasive interloping plant material. She, along with her husband, Jay,



Renovated entrance with tree damage from storm, Sandy



Becky & Jay Daymon clearing park entrance

and other family members successfully tackled this project with the help of Jay's professional equipment. We are thrilled with the results which streamlined and widened the entry, highlighting the native shrubs along the tree canopy line. Our plan for the spring includes the addition of more native shrubs and limited perennials to both enhance the entrance and help screen the town maintenance facilities. Complementing these plans, the Garden Club of Woodbridge graciously donated and planted 300 daffodil bulbs in the recently tilled area along the edge of the woods. Our thanks to Becky's team and the Garden Club volunteers!



Garden Club members planting bulbs in November

Harvest Hike



Harvest Hike participants rest on rocks at Wepawaug Falls

This October, the weather cooperated for the 9th Annual Harvest Hike, organized by board member, Suzanne Werth, and assisted by other board members. Our combination scavenger hunt and hike to Wepawaug Falls is both an adventure and lesson in observation. With over 60 Beecher Road School students, faculty and administrators participating, it was a tremendous success. At the end of the hike, students and their families enjoyed cider, apples and other treats. This educational outreach program, partnering with Beecher Road School and BRS PTO, is targeted at fostering children's interest in and familiarity with the park and developing a lifelong interest in nature.

Dedication of Win Hubbard Memorial

This spring, we planted a beautiful Kousa Dogwood at the entrance to the meadow to celebrate Winchester "Win" Hubbard's service to the park. Win served as park superintendent for 35 years. He and his wife, Katie, have been board members and strong supporters of the park. Their children, along with Win, helped to create trails within the park and grew up knowing and loving the park like it was their own backyard. A memorial stone, from the park, located at the base of the tree honors Win's service to the park. It was exciting to have so many members of the Hubbard family present to pay tribute to Win and share in remembrances offered by Carrie Swigart and Rich Forselius. We can look forward to the tree's blooming bracts in early June, annually.



The Hubbard family remembers Win at tree planting in the meadow

New Park Land

The Woodbridge Park Association owns other properties beyond the boundaries of the Alice Newton Street Park. In our role as one of the oldest land trusts in the state, we have purchased, partnered to purchase and received gifts of other land. We have recently received a beautiful historically significant 3.81 acre parcel of land as a gift from Barbara Hagan-Smith. The land abuts her family property on Northrop Road at the bottom of what is known as "roller coaster hill." A beautiful stream with a nineteenth century dam runs through the property. At one time the dam was the site of a mill. We are thrilled with Barbara's generous gift and will work over the winter to prepare the property for visitors in 2013.

85th Anniversary of the Woodbridge Park Association

Readying this new acquisition serendipitously coincides with the WPA's 85th Anniversary in 2013. We will be finalizing our celebratory plans over the winter and will host community events to mark this exciting landmark. We look forward to your participation!

Ongoing Park Maintenance

The most important task for us is not a glamorous one, and if we're doing it well, will go unnoticed! Mike Walter leads us in, easily, over 100 hours of maintenance annually. He makes decisions about the need for professional assistance versus volunteer labor and organizes our numerous work parties held throughout the year. We are grateful for all community participation and our long standing relationship with the local Boy Scout troops.

While there are many uncontrollable influences, the maintenance process is carefully planned work. Over the winter, a subcommittee of the board will be working on both a short-term and long-term maintenance plan in order to best plan for our resources, financial and labor, and to more clearly articulate and manage goals for the park.

Hail and Farewell

We are thrilled to welcome new board member, Nate Case. Nate can be found walking his dog daily in the park and has already proved most valuable in alerting us to park maintenance needs. Nate and his family, including two Eagle Scout sons, have spent much time working in and enjoying the park. When not walking the park, Nate can be found teaching Special Education in the Naugatuck school system and coaching crew at Hopkins School. We were saddened by the loss, this year, of Bob Hitchcock. He was a long-time friend of the WPA and with his help we were able to partner with the Woodbridge Historical Society to acquire a development easement at the old Hitchcock Farm property at the corner of Center and Pease Roads.

You Can Help

As an independent land trust in Woodbridge, we are continually looking for volunteers to help maintain our park land. In addition to volunteers we also welcome financial contributions. Our work in the park knows no end. When dealing with nature, everything is in a constant state of change. Additionally, we work hard to protect our open space holdings and to advocate for new space, as appropriate. Our biggest hope is that you enjoy the park-----as often as possible. As always, thank you for your support.

We welcome your ideas and efforts to both maintain park properties and improve their ability to serve the public and ecosystems they support. Please feel free to contact us at any time using the contact information in the newsletter and visit our website www.woodbridgeparks.org regularly for the latest on park news and events.

See you on the trails,

Leslie Martino
President
Woodbridge Park Association

Contributors to the Woodbridge Park Association in the past year – Thank you.

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