

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

**ANNUAL LETTER 2013**

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Dear Friends—

The intent of this newsletter is always threefold. We want to expose you to the parks and their assets, update you on the ongoing stewardship of our properties and elicit support for the work required to fulfill our mission. We are an all-volunteer organization, completely independent of the town, managing one of the oldest land trusts in the state. Detailed information about our properties, including trail maps for the two parks accessible to the public, the Alice Newton Street Memorial Park in the center of town and Newton Road Park, can be found on our website [www.woodbridgeparks.org](http://www.woodbridgeparks.org).

This has been a truly incredible year with regard to accomplishments in the Alice Newton Street Memorial Park. With a good management plan, you are only limited by your resources, human and financial. We are most fortunate to currently have a wonderful complement of hardworking dedicated board members who have contributed time and know how to execute our plans. Our annual income from donations typically just covers the basic expenses of managing the park. Unfortunately, we've experienced a decline in contributions, with current economic conditions, and because of the scale of these needed projects, have used some of our savings to complete them. By investing in the park, we are maintaining its condition for current and future generations of Woodbridge residents. Our commitment to its maintenance and continued improvements for the visitor is a top priority. Our hope is that when you visit the park, you will have a memorable experience and return frequently. We also hope it inspires you to want to play a part in its continual improvement and enhancement.

We want to thank all of you who have visited the parks this year and taken advantage of these beautiful sites. Additionally, we'd like to thank all those who have contributed financially to our work. We literally couldn't do it without you! Please consider donating to the park today---we need your support!

**Erosion Control Project**

The blue trail, our main train through the Alice Newton Street Memorial Park, leads visitors over hills, meandering over streams and through the meadow toward Wepawaug Falls. It is the widest trail and is designed to make the park accessible to most visitors. It receives a lot of wear and tear and competes with natural topographical drainage. Over the years, roots and rocks had become exposed, creating less than optimal conditions for tree health, as well as the pedestrian experience. In the past, we've used patches of gravel to amend the trail, deferring a large



*Superintendent Mike Walter, Asst. Superintendent. Paul Konwerski, Jr. and Nate Case on new gravel over PVC drains*

scale and more systemic approach until this summer. Most maintenance work in the park is performed by board members, but in the case of this project, we reached out for professional assistance. We used a total of 80 tons of gravel to cover an 8 foot wide section of trail for approximately 1,600 linear feet! Paul Knowerski, along with Nate Case and Mike Walter, supervised the work, sourcing the materials locally from West Rock Materials and using Pete Betkowski of Beacon Falls for the heavy lifting. Three sections of the work included the installation of drainage pipes to facilitate proper drainage without altering the topography. Much work went into the planning and execution of this project and we are grateful to those who spent countless hours making it happen successfully. The proof of success came with the first rain after installation, as well as the positive feedback from the members of the Amity Men's Cross Country Team who were the first to try out the new trails! Over time, natural forest debris will mask the color and texture of the gravel. For a gravel surface, it is remarkable easy on feet. This can be attributed to the choice of gravel size and the quality of the rolling job.

### **Meadow Management**

With the erosion control project coming in under budget, we were able to utilize professional tree services to remove about fifty unhealthy trees and trees whose canopy had created unwanted shade, inhibiting grass growth in the meadow off the blue trail. The meadow is an unexpected oasis in the middle of a wooded walk. It exists as a reminder of the original use of the land as farmland and provides a habitat for different flora and fauna than that found in the woods. We allow the grasses and wildflowers to grow freely all summer to provide this unique habitat. Mulch from the downed trees now carpets the yellow trail which bisects the meadow, providing a soft cedar scented trail. The back section of the meadow is actually a small cedar grove flanked with a natural may apple grove. Maintaining this ecosystem requires careful monitoring of the trees and shrubs, as well as removal of downed branches and leaves every fall.



*WPA directors and family members removing branches and leaves from the meadow*

### **Fall and Spring Clean-Ups**

Our trail maintenance is ongoing and is performed and monitored by our maintenance committee. We are also quite aware of the removal of branches and debris by regular visitors and we thank you. We invite you to join us semi-annually, the fourth Saturday of April and the third Saturday of November, for our seasonal clean-ups. We meet at 9 a.m. in the church parking lot.

### **Renovated Entrance to Alice Newton Street Memorial Park**

Last year we worked hard to recreate an aesthetically welcoming entrance to the Alice Newton Street Memorial Park. This year we built on that work by planting three new native shrubs, *Rhododendron maximum* 'Roseum,' near the large park map sign. They, along with existing mountain laurel, will eventually create a natural screen to hide the town maintenance facilities. Additionally we planted over fifty donated hostas at the church parking lot entrance. Deer have left the plants relatively unscathed because of all the other options safely in the woods! In an effort to diminish the voracity of the "weeds" and invasives at the entrance, we have mulched the edge of the parking lot and the area around the blueberry shrubs and weeded regularly.

### **Newton Road Park**



We continue to assess the wet and wild park on Newton Road. This park can be accessed just south of Penny Lane from Newton Road or from Hampton Drive and contains a wonderful wetland habitat. There are trails, raised plank walkways and a picnic area, much created as part of a recent Eagle Scout project. This park is much more rustic and wet in character and is not for the faint of heart! Boots are a must and the park should not be accessed during rainy periods, due to slippery conditions.

*WPA directors Rich Forselius, Mike Walter, Nate Case, Barbara Fabiani, Paul Acampora and Carrie Swiggart relax in park clearing*

## 85th Anniversary Photo Exhibition

To celebrate our 85th anniversary, we wanted to find a way to celebrate not only the beauty of WPA properties, but all the green space in town. This is especially fitting given upcoming significant anniversaries of the Land Trust and Garden Club. We will be hosting a photo exhibition in the library's community room and along the hallway to the Friends' bookstore. Photos can be submitted by any town resident of any green space in Woodbridge. These photos will illuminate the beauty of things and spots in Woodbridge landscapes that we may not be aware of or take for granted. Photos will be mounted and hung for all to enjoy for the entire month of September, 2014, with an opening reception to be held on Saturday, September 6th from 2:00-4:00 p.m.

Submissions can be dropped off at Town Hall or mail c/o Leslie Martino, 70 Penny Lane, Woodbridge, CT 06525. Photos need to be printed, either black and white or color, 8 inches by 10 inches in size. Please include the name and contact information of the photographer and the location or site of the photo. Because we are mounting the photos to display them, we will be unable to return photos. Photos will be accepted from now through June 15, 2014 so that different seasons can be represented! Photos will not be judged, just admired!



*Falls at dam at Northrop Road Park (not open to public)*

## Harvest Hike

Our partnership with the Beecher Road School community allows us to expose school age children to nature in a way that many of us grew up with, but we find differs with this generation's busy schedule commitments and technology that keep many from just "being" outdoors. The Harvest Hike builds curiosity and interest in nature. This year's hike was well received and attended by students, their families and school administrators. It was the inaugural event for our newest board member, Tim Kelley, who will serve as Harvest Hike Chair. He takes over from Suzanne Werth, who has lead the hike and activities for many years. Tim, a stay at home dad, joins the board with a love of the outdoors. He's active at Massaro Farm and in the PTO at Beecher Road School, where his two children are students. We welcome his business and administrative skills, organizational abilities and enthusiasm for the parks.



*Beecher Road School student enjoys a rest on a chair created from a downed tree*

As we welcome Tim, we say good-bye to



*New director, Tim Kelley, with Suzanne Werth*

Sarah Davison who initiated the Harvest Hike 10 years ago. Sarah leaves the board having made significant contributions during her tenure and we're glad that we can still see her regularly walking her dog on the trails. Board member Paul Konwerski has changed roles, from board member to Assistant Park Superintendent.

See you on the trails,

Leslie Martino  
President, Woodbridge Park Association

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