

Stewarding Lexington's Open Space



The Lexington Conservation Stewards

Lexington's Open Space: An invaluable Resource

TOWN OF LEXINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS

PUBLIC OPEN & RECREATION SPACE

Produced by the Town of Lexington
Planning and Conservation Divisions

January 2015

2nd Version (Original: March 2013)

In Lexington, over 15% of the town's area is public open space, an impressive figure for a community so close to Boston. Open space provides the opportunity to experience fresh air, green views, open fields, and the pleasure of a stroll through the woods right here in our own community. Open space also provides many beneficial services that nature performs for us, such as flood protection, nutrient cycling, and the purification of air and water. And because all of Lexington was once farmland, forest, or wetland, open space helps to preserve the historic and cultural character of our town.

Public open space represented on this map includes:

- Conservation land, which is intended for passive recreation, such as walking, bicycling, cross-country skiing, and observing the wild plants and animals that share our natural surroundings with us
- Recreation land, which is intended for active recreational amenities, such as playing fields, swimming areas, and playgrounds for citizens to enjoy throughout their lives
- Other municipal land, such as cemeteries and school properties, that provides green areas or pedestrian connections to other open space
- State and federal land that provides conservation and recreation opportunities

Privately owned open space and other open space that does not provide public access has not been represented on this map. A map showing all of Lexington's open space, including areas that are not publicly accessible, is available on request through the Town's Planning and Conservation Divisions. The Open & Recreation Space map will be updated on an annual basis, as needed.

When exploring Lexington's open space, please consider the hard work that many citizens and friends have contributed toward protecting and caring for these important properties.



Wright Locke Farm in Winchester

Legend

Planning for Open Space
(parking limitations vary by property, please observe posted rules)

School

Road

Trails

Please note that not all trails in Lexington have been mapped. Other trails may be shown at www.openstreetmap.org.

Trail on Conservation Land: detailed trail maps for many conservation areas are available at www.lexingtonma.gov/conservation/consland.htm

ACROSS Lexington Route
(see www.acrosslexington.org for more information)

Minuteman Commuter Bikeway

Trail on Other Land

Water

Stream

Pond

Open Space

Lexington - Conservation

Lexington - Recreation and/or School
(more information on recreation facilities is available at www.lexingtonma.gov/recreation/department.htm)

Lexington - Other Municipal

Other Municipality

State

Federal

Data provided by the Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS), Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs and the Town of Lexington. The information is provided as a reasonably accurate point of reference but is not intended to represent authoritative location. The Town of Lexington shall not be held responsible for the accuracy or misuse of these data.

But how is all that Conservation Land maintained?

- Conservation Division Staff
- Seasonal Land Management Crew
- DPW Assistance

**BUT 90% OF THE
WORK IS DONE BY...**

The Conservation Stewards!!!



How the Stewards Program Works:

Humble Beginnings

- Long-term informal network of neighbors; started in early 80s.
- Bi-annual meeting to share ideas
- Limited town support
- No expectations
- Expanding member database ~ 200 ppl



How the Stewards Program Works:

The Rise of Conservation Stewardship

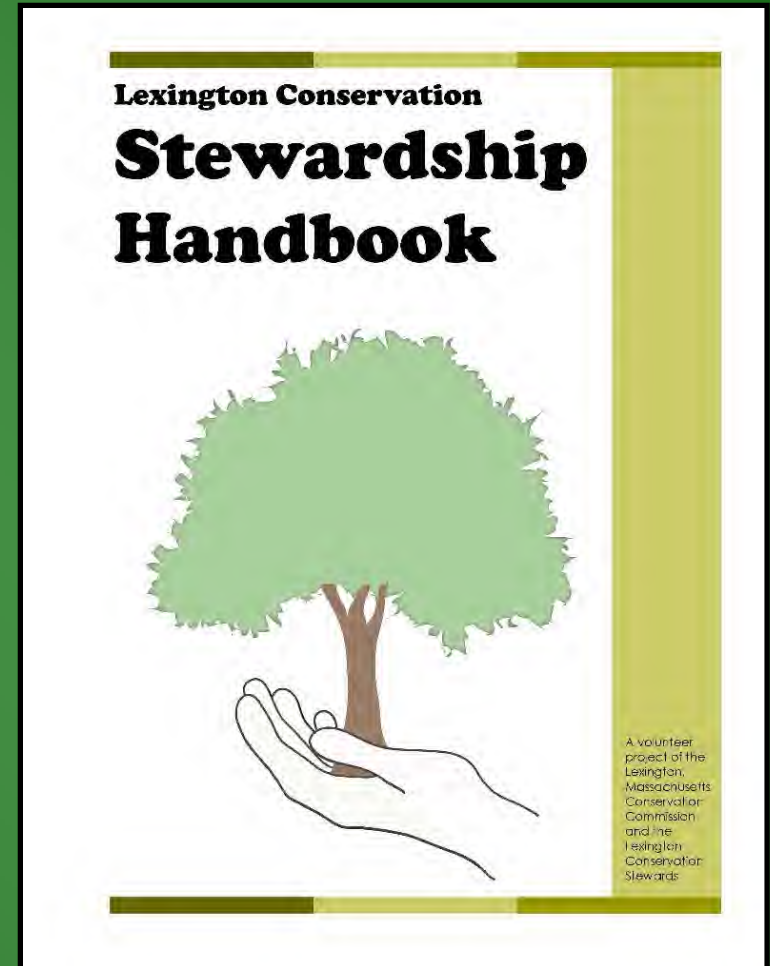
- Clear need for more direction and cohesion
- Stewards Directors Group formed (approx. 20 years ago)
- Town gradually allocates staff support for stewardship



How the Stewards Program Works:

A More Proactive Approach

- NOW full-time stewardship coordinator position
- Monthly Steward Directors meetings staffed by town
- Lead Stewards for every property
- Ongoing partnerships with scouts, local businesses, churches, temples, etc.
- Large-scale projects, grants, trail guide, Steward Handbook, publicity, etc.



How the Stewards Program Works:

Project Identification and Planning

- Conservation Staff and Commissioners
- Steward Directors Group

Boots on the Ground

- Steward Volunteers—Core Crew
- Eagle Candidates and Scout Groups
- Corporate Volunteer Groups
- Local Churches, Temples, and Other Organizations



How the Stewards Program Works:

Funding

- Town budget
- Community Preservation Act
- Grants
- Lexington Nature Trust (fundraising)

Recruitment and Retention:

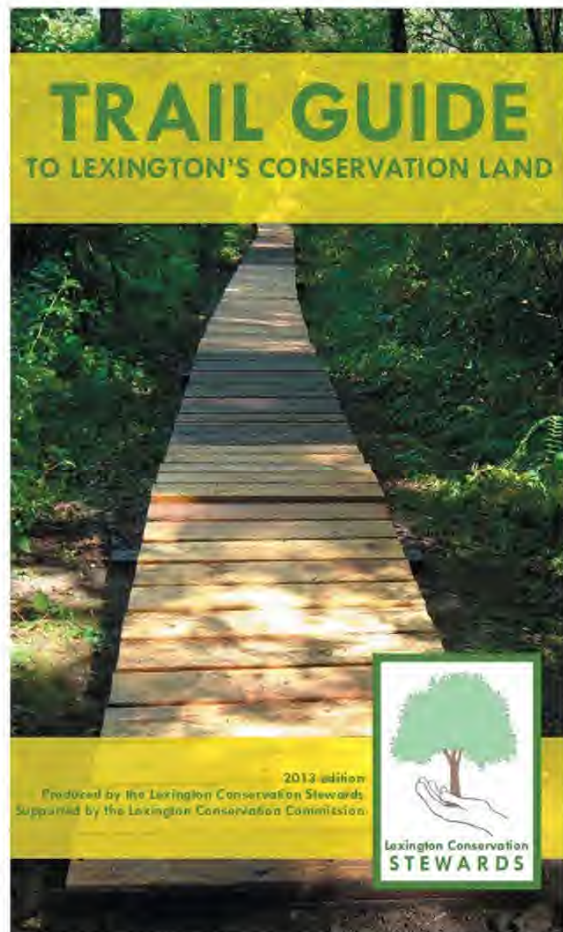
Outreach & Recruitment

- Monthly E-Newsletter
- 4-5 articles in local paper each year
- Online and print calendars
- Guided hikes
- Open House Event



How the Stewards Program Works:

Outreach & Recruitment



CONSERVATION

Dunback Meadow blooms this season

Lexington Conservation Stewards busy at work this summer

By Jordan McCarron
Special to the Minuteman

The Lexington Conservation Stewards, an all-volunteer group coordinated by the Lexington Conservation Division and dedicated to maintaining and improving Lexington's conservation land, was busy at work this summer repairing boardwalks and building a new footbridge in the Dunback Meadow Conservation Area.

Dunback Meadow, the largest conservation property in Lexington, is 370.5 acres and includes 3 miles of trails. The area includes an extensive wet meadow, a pine grove, a red maple swamp, and a community garden.

Several members of the Conservation Stewards, including Don Grant, David Hoadley, Mal Crawford, Bob Hausstein and Eliot Eaton, spearheaded the repairs.

The project included the design and construction of a 27-foot bridge over Clematis Brook in Dunback Meadow and approximately 120 feet of new and renovated boardwalks between Bowman Elementary School and Clarke Middle School.

The trail is now in good shape for the school year, and upcoming winter," said Hoadley. Hoadley was the lead steward on the project.

The Conservation Stewards program was founded to help maintain the town's conservation trails, trailhead kiosks and other signage, build and repair trail infrastructure like boardwalks and bridges, and assist the Lexington Conservation Commission on special projects.

The Stewards work closely with staff from the Conservation Division, Lexington Department of Public Works, and Engineering Division while partnering



A new boardwalk and bridge winds its way over Clematis Brook at the Dunback Meadow Conservation Area. COURTESY PHOTOS

Information on the Conservation Stewards

The Conservation Stewards welcome new members to assist with project design, grant writing, publicity and upcoming weekday and weekend projects. The Lexington Conservation Division can also provide meaningful volunteer service projects for local



Recruitment and Retention:

Retention

- Trainings
- Regular communication and appreciation
- Town staff at work days



A Year In Review....

Workshops & Trainings



Game of Logging Training

November 2014



Sustainable Trail Design
Workshop

June 2015

A Year In Review....

Whipple Hill Trail Improvement Project

- DCR Recreational Trails Program Grant Completed
- Sustainable Trail Construction Ongoing
- Wayfinding sign system COMING SOON!!!



A Year In Review....

Boardwalk and Bridge Construction



A Year In Review....

Conservation Meadow Preservation Hennessey Field



Before



After

A Year In Review....

Neighborhood Cleanups

Daisy Wilson Meadow



Challenges & Next Steps

- Steward Directors aging out—need future leaders!
- Building Stewards skills
- Reigning-in rogue stewardship
- Balancing enthusiasm and priorities
- Building neighborhood caretaker groups



Challenges & Next Steps

Current Steward Projects→

- Boardwalks & Bridges
- Meadow Restoration
- Invasive Species Management
- Trail improvements
- Wayfinding signage



Thanks!

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