



# Citizens for Lexington Conservation

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**Kate Fricker, Editor    April, 2008    Eileen Entin & Keith Ohmart, Co-Presidents**

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**Bluets**

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Citizens for Lexington Conservation is a non-profit organization that relies on dues paid by members to cover its expenses. Look at your mailing label to check your membership status. If it says "Dues paid 2008," you are up to date. If it says "Dues paid 2007" (or earlier), then it is time to renew your membership for 2008. If it says "Complimentary Copy," you are receiving a complimentary copy of our newsletter because you are a Town Meeting member or other public official in Lexington. We hope that those who receive complimentary copies will find our organization of value and will become dues-paying members. To join CLC or renew your membership, please send \$12.00 for a regular membership or \$15.00 for a sustaining membership to CLC, P.O. Box 292, Lexington, MA 02420-0003.

There is an electronic version of the CLC newsletter, sent as a link to the newsletter by e-mail. This version of the newsletter has illustrations in color and live links, it arrives much sooner than the snail mail version, it saves paper, and it costs CLC about \$1 less per copy. If you are currently receiving your newsletter by snail mail, but would like to get it by e-mail, contact Kate Fricker at [kfricker@alum.swarthmore.edu](mailto:kfricker@alum.swarthmore.edu).

### **CLC Publications**

Over the years CLC has encouraged members to write guides to the open spaces in Lexington. These guides have now been scanned and are available at no charge on our web site, <http://www.lexingtonma.org/clc/HomePage.htm>. You may also use the web site to contact us about conservation-related happenings or sightings of unusual birds and wildlife that we can use on our web site and in our newsletter.

### **Memorial Tribute to Deborah Green**

CLC mourns the loss of Deborah Green, a longstanding and active member of CLC, who passed away in January from lung cancer. Deborah was a member of the CLC Board, and was serving as CLC recording secretary at the time of her death.. She had served as recording secretary for several years prior to 1990 when she returned to work full time, and graciously agreed to resume that position last year after she had retired.

Deborah was active in environmental causes. She recognized the importance of recycling early on. She served on the Lexington Recycling Committee, including hands-on support. In a short piece written two years ago, Debby recalled a time in the early 1980's when CLC was overseeing the recycling facility on Hartwell Ave. She and other members of CLC would stop by periodically to check the facility. "All too frequently", she wrote, "we would find non-recyclables in one of the dumpsters, and we would have to reach in or crawl in and throw the non-recyclable material out and pile it up so the town would throw it away." She noted that 'more than once vandals opened the glass recycling dumpsters by removing the metal pins which held them closed. In order to force the dumpsters closed again, we had to move a lot of glass and then, with brute strength by several of us, force the dumpster sides together."

Deborah cherished all of Lexington's conservation lands, but was particularly fond of the Hayden Woods Conservation Land, and always joined in walks in that land led by her husband, Winslow Green. In recognition of and appreciation for her contributions to CLC and her concern for the preservation of our local natural resources and our environment, CLC has made a donation in Deborah's memory to the Hayden Woods Trust Fund.



### **Thank you, Fall Walk Leaders**

Many thanks to the leaders of our fall walks: Bobbie Hodson, Nell Walker, Keith Ohmart, Donald Pfister, Boot Boutwell, and Nancy Nolan.

## Spring Walks 2008

### **Bird Walks at Dunback Meadow**

**Saturday April 19, 7:00-9:00 am    Tuesday May 6, 6:30-8:30 am**

Let's look for the migrating spring birds at Dunback Meadow with the Menotomy Bird Club. Both walks will meet at the Allen St. entrance. Beginners are welcome. The April 19<sup>th</sup> walk will focus on several of the early migrants, such as pine and palm warblers; and on the May 7th trip we'll be searching for a variety of migrating and breeding warblers, swallows, and vireos.

Leader: Bobbie Hodson (781-861-9421)

### **Bikeway Cleanup**

**Saturday May 3, 9 am – 12 noon**

Join CLC, Friends of the Minuteman Bikeway and others for this annual cleanup of Lexington's portion of the Minuteman Bikeway. Litter pickup, invasive eradication, pruning of encroaching vegetation - this event has something for everyone. Come early, come late, no contribution is too small. Meet at one of the following Bikeway street crossings at 9 where leaders will be stationed or find a work crew later in the morning along the Bikeway itself: Fottler Avenue, Seasons Four Nursery, Maple Street, Woburn Street, behind the Depot Building, Camilla Way / Hancock Avenue (behind the fire station), and Bedford Street. Bring work or gardening gloves.

Leader: Stew Kennedy (781-861-7697)

### **Whipple Hill**

**Saturday May 3, 1:30 - 3:30 pm**

The Whipple Hill Conservation area covers 119.6 acres. Join us for a walk that shows us the many interesting features of this old farmstead, with special attention paid to the geological features. There are vernal pools in the spring, a pond, and a great view at the top. Meet in the small parking lot at the top of Winchester Drive, east of Russell Road.

Leader: Fran Ludwig (781-861-7231)

### **Lincoln Park Garlic Mustard Party**

**Sunday May 4, 2 - 4 pm**

Join CLC for this annual effort to keep the paths at Lincoln Field free of garlic mustard. Join us to admire the gains made from previous years' efforts as well as to admire the growing number of native woodland species that have been planted to re-colonize areas cleared of this invasive pest. Wear gardening gloves and bring a dandelion tool if you have one. Meet where the fitness path meets Worthen Road.

Leader: Keith Ohmart (781-862-6216).

### **West Lexington Greenway South**

**Saturday May 31, 9 – 11:30 am**

Explore the southern end of the West Lexington Greenway on this walk through Lexington Conservation's Cranberry Hill and adjacent property that is part of the City of Cambridge's watershed. Expansive views, beautiful woodland and some fascinating and extensive stone foundations will all be explored. Long sleeves and pants recommended for tick protection on this moderately strenuous walk. Meet at the far end of the parking lot for the One Cranberry Hill office park adjacent to the entrance to Minuteman Vocational School, juncture Marrett Road and Massachusetts Ave, just west of Route 128.

Leader: Mike Tabaczynski (929-8748)

**Shaker Glen    Saturday June 7    Leader: Barbara Sidley**

Check the CLC web site next month for final details of this walk:

<http://www.lexingtonma.org/clc/HomePage.htm>    🌲

## **CLC Annual Meeting Healthy Lawns and Landscapes Workshop, April 29**

You can have a beautiful yard without using chemicals that may harm children, pets and the environment. At the CLC Annual Meeting on April 29, there will be a free Healthy Lawns and Landscapes workshop led by Ann McGovern of the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). CLC members, homeowners and landscapers are welcome.

Ann McGovern is the Consumer Waste Reduction Coordinator and composting outreach specialist for the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). She coordinates Massachusetts' home composting education program and compost bin grant program, through which over 100,000 compost bins have been distributed to the public. She has taught the composting session for the Northeast Organic Farmers Association (NOFA) Organic Landcare Certification Course since 2003, and for the Mass. Horticultural Society's Master Gardener Training program since 1994. In March 2005, the PBS show "Ask This Old House" featured Ann as guest expert in a home composting segment.

Ann became a NOFA-certified Organic Landcare Professional in 2003. She is an avid gardener and enjoys opportunities to share information that helps our environment and our gardens. Ann cowrote the Ecological Landscaping Association's *"Guide to Healthy Landscapes, Vol. 1, From the Ground Up: Site and Soil Preparation,"* May 2003.

This workshop comes at an ideal time to learn about the impacts on human health of pesticides and lawn chemicals on human health by moving through the soil into drinking water supplies, ponds, streams and rivers. Children and pets are especially susceptible to harmful effects of pesticides because of their size. Birds and other wildlife suffer injury and even death from long-term exposure to traces of pesticides in the environment.

Healthy soil helps reduce or eliminate the need for synthetic fertilizers and pesticides in our lawns, gardens and landscapes. Learn how to create healthy soil by using compost, mulch and other practices. Learn what lawns need to grow well and what practices you can use to establish and maintain a healthy lawn with minimal inputs of chemicals, water, time and money.

The meeting will be in the Cary Library Meeting Room from 7-9 PM. There will be a short business meeting to elect CLC officers prior to the workshop. Refreshments will be served; garden tools donated by Lexington Gardens and a compost bin from Lexington DPW will be awarded as door prizes.

For more information about this event, please contact Eileen Entin at 781- 862-6418 or go to <http://www.lexingtonma.org/clc/HomePage.htm>

### **Proposed Slate of Officers for 2008**

Co-Chairpersons: Eileen Entin, Keith Ohmart  
Secretary: Open  
Treasurer: Diane Carr

### **Associate Members:**

Newsletter: Kate Fricker  
Website: Open  
Publicity: Nancy Nolan  
Walks Coordinator: Elaine Turano  
Community Outreach: Mike Tabaczynski  
Education: Fran Ludwig  
Legislative Issues: John Andrews, Al Levine

As indicated above, the position of recording secretary is open. The duties for this position involve recording minutes at the bimonthly Board meetings, and insuring that proper records are maintained. If you are interested in serving in this position, please contact Eileen Entin (781 862 6418), [ebe@aptima.com](mailto:ebe@aptima.com) or Keith Ohmart ([kohmart@verizon.net](mailto:kohmart@verizon.net)).

# A Brief History of the North Street Pits Conservation Property

By S. Levi Doran

When asked to write a brief account of the North Street Pits, I immediately turned to the old map collection of the Lexington Historical Society. This is because, while so many of the other neighborhoods in Lexington have written accounts of them by notable historians around the turn of the last century, North Street had none.

What I found were four maps, with (thankfully) names on them, as well as one without. This allows us insight into who owned which properties. From there, research is easier, because it is by person instead of property. Following is a list of the years on the maps, and who owned the property at that time, including brief historical notes on that person (if known).

(It should be noted here that the North Street Pits are comprised of three different 19<sup>th</sup> C. parcels; hence the three owners on some of the lists.)

## 1794:

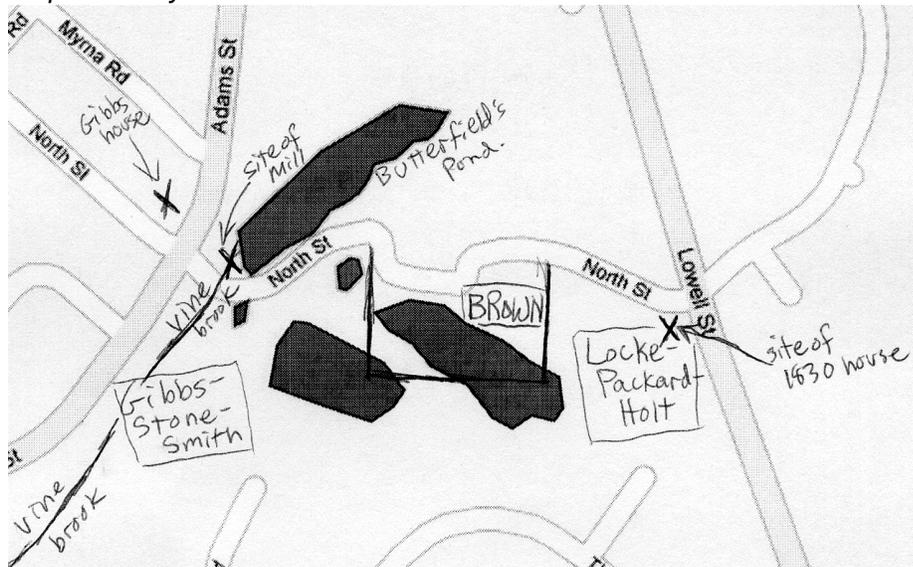
Wyman's Fulling Mill is at Vine Brook at this time, just before it empties into Butterfield's Pond. What is believed to be the foundation of that very structure is still visible today on Vine Brook at North Street (Burlington side). This was the nearest recorded "activity" at that time to the Pits.

Although not on this map, the large Blodgett family owned land around this neighborhood, and it is believed that the Blodgetts owned the Pits (or a section of it) back in the mid-to-late-1700s.

## 1830:

Although there are no names on this map, it does tell us that in 1830 there was a small area of farmland at the Pits property and a house right at the corner of North and Lowell streets. Save that one clearing (which was about half the size of the present parcel), the entire neighborhood was woodlands.

Map courtesy S.L.D



## 1852:

Marshall Hammond Locke was born April 12, 1822, in Lexington. He was a descendant of the ancient Locke family of this town, members of which stood on the Green, April 19, 1775. He moved to Somerville later in his life, though first he married and had two children here.

William P. Gibbs came to Lexington sometime

around the 1830s, when he built the nearby house at No. 104 North Street (corner of Adams). Also in that timeframe, he acquired a property across Adams Street that extended back beyond the brook, well into the present woods. There was a pre-existing house at that time, standing

right on Adams Street, just down the bikepath from the present parking lot. This house was probably the ancient Blodgett homestead, mentioned in the 1794 narrative. (This old house was demolished around the mid- to late-1840s.)

Gibbs also had a mill that stood on Vine Brook. This was probably either the same one, or built on the foundation of the one that was operated in 1794 by the Wymans. The mill burned in 1841.

In 1849, as the result of a mortgage foreclosure, Gibbs lost all of his Lexington land, including his section of the Pits. For many years afterwards, however, it was referred to as the “old Gibbs place.”

#### **1875:**

E. Stone -- I was unable to track this fellow down, at least at the present time.

John Brown -- a very common name; it is possible that this is the John Brown who was a veteran of the Civil War, and one of two black members of the Grand Army of the Republic organization. However, that is only a possibility, as many “John Browns” drifted through Lexington over the years.

Thomas H. Packard was related only through marriage to a Lexington family, though he apparently owned land here, and therefore probably lived here. He came from Essex, Vermont, where he had a wife and daughter. This child, Alice (born 1846) married George Simonds, as his second wife, in 1875 (the year of this map, coincidentally). George was, of course, of the ancient Simonds family which dates back to some of Lexington’s earliest days.

#### **1906:**

J. Smith -- there are two possibilities for this landholder’s identity: John Smith or James W. Smith.

John Brown, whoever he may be, continued to own the property at this time.

J. Holt -- His name does not appear in Hudson’s Genealogies.

#### **ca. 1935**

Around the 1930s and ‘40s, a large portion of the property was dug out as part of a sand and gravel mine. Hence the name, “the North Street Pits.” Also around this time, though perhaps a few years later, a radio station’s broadcast tower was located here. About the time they filled up with water, the pits were said to still have the mining equipment at the bottom of them. Local hearsay has it that they couldn’t get the large machines and tractors out in time, over the steep sides of the Pits, so there they rest to this day.

#### **2008**

And so, pieces of all the properties and parcels have been formed together to make the wonderful conservation land that we know so well today. It is an interesting place for a walk at any time of year.

You will find a current map and description of the property at the Conservation Commission web site: <http://www.lexingtonma.org/conservation/Lands/NorthSt.html>



## The Lexington Tree Nursery

By Anne Senning

The Lexington Tree Committee will be holding the 2008 Tree Planting Day on Saturday April 26th from 9 AM to 1 PM at the Tree Nursery in the Conservation Land along Maureen Road. This is a Conservation Commission Project carried out by the Tree Committee in cooperation with the Department of Public Works and the Friends of Trees. The Committee is looking for volunteers to help with planting one hundred and twenty bare root trees in Root Control® bags. Holes for the bags will be pre dug by the DPW. The one- to one-and-a-half inch diameter trunk trees will be pre labeled. The following species have been purchased; Kentucky Coffee tree (20), Tulip tree (20), Autumn Spire Maple (10), October Glory Maple (10), Red Sunset Maple (10), Scarlet Oak (10), Red Oak (10), Shumard Oak (10), Japanese Tree Lilac (20). Each tree will be dipped in a slurry of hydro gel before it is planted. This will increase the sapling's ability to retain moisture throughout the four years until it is harvested as a street tree.

This event will occur rain or shine. Planting teams work in twos or threes. Bring a trowel, shovel and a wheelbarrow if you have one. Compost and wood chips will be provided by the DPW. Last year a large group of people worked together and made the morning both go smoothly and be enjoyable.



**Photo Quiz:** Can you identify these trees from their bark?

## The Tree Inventory

By Anne Senning

The Lexington Tree Committee will be looking for volunteers to work on the 2008 Tree Inventory. Beginning when leaves are out on the trees (mid April) we will be working in teams of two, pairing an experienced inventory worker with a volunteer-in-training. Working from a computer generated map, teams will observe, evaluate, take measurements and then record 25 attributes on each street tree and its environment into a hand held computer. Safety and measuring equipment will be provided. Volunteers are asked to consider a regular 2-hour weekly commitment for 4, 6 or 8 weeks. Two summer interns will begin in mid June if a grant from The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation is funded. Last year we found that the summer interns benefited from working with volunteers once they became familiar with the Lexington inventory system. There will be an opportunity to continue volunteering through the summer. If interested or you have questions contact Anne Senning at [asenning@socialaw.com](mailto:asenning@socialaw.com).



## Surfing the Web for Local Environmental Groups

Bedford Conservation Land Stewards <http://www.nemow.net/BedfordStewards.html>

Belmont Citizens Forum <http://www.belmontcitizensforum.org>

Bicycling in Lexington <http://www.hbingham.com/lexbike/index.htm>

Charles River Watershed Association <http://www.crwa.org>

Friends of Arlington's Great Meadow in Lexington <http://www.foagm.org>

[http://www.foagm.org/AGM\\_Inventory/concomGM1001.htm](http://www.foagm.org/AGM_Inventory/concomGM1001.htm)

Lexington Conservation Stewards Fall Newsletter

<http://www.lexingtonma.org/conservation/StewardsNewsFall07.pdf>

Lexington Global Warming Action Coalition <http://www.lexqwac.org>

Maps of Lexington Conservation Areas

<http://www.lexingtonma.org/conservation/Lands/Conslankey.html>

Massachusetts Audubon Society <http://www.massaudubon.org>

Menotomy Bird Club <http://www.mrines.com/menotomy>

Mystic River Watershed Association <http://www.mysticriver.org>

Shawsheen River Watershed association <http://www.Shawsheen.org>

The Nature Conservancy <http://www.nature.org>

## Book Review: The Trees in my Forest, by Bernd Heinrich

Reviewed by Kate Fricker

This book was first published in 1997, but, like Rachel Carson's books, it is timeless. Bernd Heinrich has written a biography of his forest in Maine, filled with memories and vivid descriptions of the sights, sounds and texture of the inhabitants. In this book Heinrich rambles. He also runs through the forest avoiding trails, climbs trees, sits for hours on a stone, always observing, asking questions like a detective and looking for answers.

The web of life is a general theme. All the organisms in the forest are interdependent, from the fungi to the insects, the hummingbirds, the bats, the birds, and the mice and other seed distributors. He asks what determines the schedule of the leafing out, the flowering, and the dropping of leaves. He talks about the sex life of the trees. There is a chapter on seeds and the timing of mast years, with heavy seed production, and lean years, with few or none, as a tree's way of discouraging overpopulation of seed-eaters.

Throughout the book Heinrich emphasizes that a forest is not just the trees. A monoculture of one species planted for lumber is not a forest or a healthy substitute for one. The book ends with a convincing plea for the preservation of intact forests. 🌲



**Photo Quiz:** Can you identify these trees from their bark?

## Whipple Hill

By Nancy Nolan

Climb the highest spot in Lexington this spring, and don't forget your binoculars! Spring is the perfect time to climb to the highest point in Lexington. The Whipple Hill Conservation Area is located in the eastern corner of town, along the town's border with Winchester and Arlington. Paths lead explorers high above sea level, offering the chance to take in a panoramic view of the region on a clear day. The tract includes 119.6 acres of land, making it the second largest conservation area in Lexington. There are only a few designated parking spaces for access to the site, but you can enter from Summer Street or Winchester Drive (just after Russell Road).

Located in the eastern corner of Town, Whipple Hill is 374 feet above mean sea level and offers vistas of the surrounding countryside. From the summit several trails descend among ledge outcroppings and mature stands of northern hardwoods to Locke Pond. Some of the most rugged and varied terrain in the Town can be found in this area. Locke Pond, 145 feet below the summit of Whipple Hill, offers ice skating and a nature study area for Lexington and Winchester schools throughout the seasons.

South of Locke Pond is a dense oak-hickory woods, and still farther, a mature stand of white pine. Varied bird species can be found here, particularly during migration; bird watchers flock here to look for migrating hawks, swallows, swifts and towhees.

Whipple Hill is well known among Lexington 4th grade students, many of whom had their first geology lesson on field trips there. This is the perfect walk for a group of students or as a family outing to learn more about geology. It is especially pleasant to visit this site on an early spring day, before the trees are full of leaves. It is easy to spot bird nests in the tallest trees, find animal tracks on the ground, and enjoy the splendid panorama. Walking through the area offers the chance to observe bedrock and find glacial boulders, some of which may have traveled here from New Hampshire or further north. The exposed rock surface toward the top of the hill is ideal for identifying rocks (granite, diorite, gabbro) and small mineral crystals (quartz, mica, feldspar). As you climb to the summit from the Winchester Drive entrance, you will observe many ways that rocks change over time, due to erosion, weathering, and the effects of plants.

At the top of Whipple Hill you are greeted by a massive rock formation. You may observe and develop a theory for how the rock was made, and why it is here. Students on field trips are encouraged to trace the history of the rock, beginning millions of years ago.

For parents or teachers bringing elementary students to tour Whipple Hill, there is a printable guide written by Fran Ludwig for Lexington's Big Backyard program:

[http://bowman.lexingtonma.org/bigbackyard/grade\\_4/4OverviewWhipple%20Hill.pdf](http://bowman.lexingtonma.org/bigbackyard/grade_4/4OverviewWhipple%20Hill.pdf)

Two other Lexington geology publications are available on the CLC web site:

*The Last Billion Years of the Geological History of the Town of Lexington*, by Robert Schrock, and *Lexington and the Ice Age*, by Arthur Latham and Winston Yelland. You can find them at:

<http://www.lexingtonma.org/clc/pdfFiles.htm>.



## Boardwalk Construction 2008

By Keith Ohmart

The Conservation Stewards have again been awarded a state grant from the Recreational Trails program for purchase of materials to construct boardwalks for Lexington's conservation areas. This year's money will fund boardwalks in several seasonably wet locations in the Lower Vine Brook conservation area and one bridge replacement in the Meagherville conservation area.

The program that provides these grants requires that the community supply volunteer labor equivalent in value to the amount of material to be purchased for the actual construction. This is



where the participation in these projects by volunteers from the community becomes all-important. The number of volunteer hours is closely tracked and submitted following the completion of each project for auditing by the state Department of Conservation and Recreation. Future success in continuing to qualify for these grants is directly contingent on our continuing ability to field enough volunteers to complete each project.

The following dates have been scheduled for this work, so mark them on your calendars now:

May 10 – Meagherville bridge replacement, Meet at the playground at the end of Garfield St at 8:30am

May 24 – Lower Vine Brook, Meet at Hayes Lane near Grant St at 8:30 am

June 7 – Lower Vine Brook, Meet at Hayes Lane near Grant St at 8:30 am

June 14 – Optional rain date, Meet 8:30 am location TBD

Aug 2 – Lower Vine Brook, Meet at the Fairfield Dr cul-de-sac at 8:30 am

Aug 9 – Lower Vine Brook, Meet at the Fairfield Dr cul-de-sac at 8:30 am

Prior experience is not required, just a willingness to devote a weekend day or part thereof to joining with fellow Lexingtonians in a worthy cause. Instruction, tools, water, and lunch will be provided. Wear boots suitable for working in muddy conditions. For further questions and the latest information, contact either Keith Ohmart (781-862-6216) or Mike Tabaczynski (781-929-8748). 🌲

### Answers to Photo Quizzes:

**p. 7:** White Birch, White Ash, White Pine

**p. 8:** Pitch Pine, Red Oak, American Beech

**p. 11:** The mile marker is along the Battle Road Trail, Minuteman National Historical Park, and the old foundation is in the Paint Mine area.



Bellwort

## The West Lexington Greenway – an Update

By Keith Ohmart

The West Lexington Greenway Task Force has been hard at work since last fall working in close coordination with consultants from the firm of Vanesse, Hangen & Brustlin who were hired to complete the master plan for this Town CPA-funded project. To recap, this project is seeking to plan for a trail network linking all town-owned open space immediately west of Route 128, with the centerpiece of the project to consist of a universally accessible trail linking the Minuteman Bikeway with the Battle Road Trail in the Minuteman National Historical Park.

The first phase of the project which culminated with a public meeting in mid-January, was focused primarily on creating a comprehensive site inventory database for the study area. This includes information on the various ecosystems present, mapping of the existing trail network, and compiling an inventory of property ownership, to name but a few areas covered.

The second phase of the project generated a set of preliminary analyses which were presented at a second public meeting held at the end of February. All results to date including several detailed maps are available for viewing either on the project's web site at <http://www.lexingtongreenways.org/>, or by visiting the Conservation office in the basement of Town Hall (8:30 am – 4:30 pm) and asking for Adam Bossi.

The next and final public meeting will be held on May 13 at Cary Library where a draft of the preliminary master plan will be presented for public review and comment. Doors will open at 6:30 for map viewing with the presentation starting at 7 pm. The master planning process will then conclude over the summer months with the completion of the 25% design phase of the project for the central trail connection linking the Minuteman Bikeway to the Battle Road Trail.

The completion of this master plan will then allow the task force to pursue construction funding from state and federal sources for actual implementation of the planned trails in a phased manner subject to the success of this future funding effort.



**Photo Quiz: Where in Lexington were these photos taken?**

## **Walk & Shop** Thanks to Lexington's **Stop & Shop**

Marjorie Nickles reports that the Lexington Stop & Shop is now selling personal shopping carts that make it possible for anyone within a mile or so of a supermarket to walk to the store and return with their groceries without using a car. While shopping, people can hang their carts from the side of the supermarket cart, using the hook provided for that purpose. Assembly is easy. The carts weigh about ten pounds, have four wheels, and can be folded up when not in use. Costing only \$20, they can enable owners to do all the good environmental things at once: lower gas costs, reduce air pollution and global warming, and get exercise to improve their health.

### **Photo Credits:**

- p. 1 & bottom of 10, Ellen Edersheim
- p. 7 & 8, Kate Fricker
- p. 10, top, Mike Tabaczynski
- p. 11, Vanesse, Hangen, Brustlin, Inc.
- p. 12, Marjorie Nickles



## **The Trail Count Program** By Stew Kennedy

Last year the state decided to collect information on usage of the various bicycle trails throughout the state. Cathy Buckley Lewis of the Boston Metropolitan Planning Office took on the task of setting up and coordinating the program. When she asked for volunteers, the Lexington Bicycle Advisory Committee agreed to coordinate counting for the Lexington portion of the Minuteman Bikeway. The result of that hastily formed program was a one-day count done on September 6, with nine trails covered for at least part of the day. In Lexington we had complete coverage of the full 12 hours - 7 AM to 7 PM - of the count, with volunteers covering each of the one-hour slots. (Anyone interested in the count results may request it by email to me (Stu Kennedy) – [sgkbigguy@aol.com](mailto:sgkbigguy@aol.com), 781-861-7697). This year Cathy is getting started earlier and wants better coverage, with more of the dozens of trails to be counted, several counts to be done over the good-weather season, and separate counts in the same week on a weekend day and a week day. So this year we'll need a larger pool of volunteers to handle the counting locally. I have volunteered to coordinate the schedule for the Minuteman Bikeway in Lexington and could really use your help for an hour.

The actual counting is very easy and in fact surprisingly rewarding and fun. Those who have never just sat for an hour and watched the interesting variety of bikeway users are in for a treat. And we in Lexington have an especially good reason to collect this data: it will prove helpful as we move forward in seeking state and federal transportation and recreation money to build the West Lexington Greenway, which will eventually connect the Minuteman Bikeway and the Battle Road Trail in the National Park. Anyone who would like to help for an hour on either May 3 or May 6 should send me an email or phone message (email is preferable), letting me know your hours of availability and preferred hours on either or both of those dates. I will set up the schedule and provide the (simple) instructions.

