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**Eileen Entin, Chair**                      **September 2021**                      **Elaine Quinlan, Editor**

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**2021 CLC dues are payable now.** The status of your dues payment can be found on the address label of snail-mailed newsletters, or near the top of the email announcing this issue. If it says Dues Paid Through July 2021 (or earlier), it is time to renew your membership for 2021.

Annual membership to CLC is \$20.00. Suggested membership levels are:

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ 20 (Twig)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ 50 (Branch)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$100 (Tree)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$(Other)

You may pay your dues using PayPal on the CLC Website (<https://www.clclex.org>).

If you prefer to contribute by mail, please send your name and the other information requested on the form below, along with your check, to:

Citizens for Lexington Conservation  
P.O. Box 292  
Lexington, MA 02420-0003

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

New Member       Renewal

Go Green. Check here if you would like to have your newsletter in color with live links, using a download link from an email, instead of the paper snail mail.

Membership fees support our organization. CLC is a registered 501(c)(3) organization and all contributions are tax deductible.

## **CITIZENS FOR LEXINGTON CONSERVATION 2021 FALL WALKS**

*All walks are free and open to the public.  
See each event description for specific requirements.*

### **Sunday, September 19, 8-10 am: Fall Bird Walk in Dunback Meadow**

We will be looking for returning fall migrants such as warblers, vireos, and fly catchers on their trip south. And, of course, we'll search for our resident birds, such as woodpeckers, titmice, and hawks. Meet at the Allen Street trail entrance opposite 23 Allen Street. Heavy rain cancels.

Walk Leader: Bobbie Hodson (781-861-9421, [robertahodson@comcast.net](mailto:robertahodson@comcast.net))

### **Sunday, September 19, 1-4 pm: Apple Picking at Cotton Farm**

Rain date Sunday, September 26, 1-4 pm.

Join the Lexington Conservation Stewards for an afternoon of apple picking and outdoor fun at our Cotton Farm Orchard. Apple picking, cider pressing, Lexington Junior Ranger Activities and more at this family friendly event. (Apple supply limited: one small bring-your-own bag per household). Cotton Farm is located on Marrett Road, across from Bacon Street. Park on the shoulder of Marrett Road.

For More Information: [landstewards@lexingtonma.gov](mailto:landstewards@lexingtonma.gov), or 781-698-4532

### **Friday, October 1: Leisurely Friday Walk Series (see details on page 4)**

### **Saturday, October 2, noon – 2 pm: Goat Walk at Chiesa Farm**

Rain date Sunday, October 3, noon – 2 pm.

Come join the local Lexington goats for their daily pasture walk through the fields and woodlands at Chiesa Farm. Each season the land provides them with diverse plant life. The goats are very specific to what they need to eat depending on many factors. We will have two Lexington herds, totaling twelve female dairy goats. Learn how the goats in our town are working to keep the invasive plants from taking over. All adults and children are welcome. No dogs please. Parking is at the Diamond Middle School parking lot at the end of Sedge Road off of Hathaway Road. Follow the signed trail entrance and meet us in the pasture.

Walk Leader: Laurene Beaudette ([laurene@iwebinsight.com](mailto:laurene@iwebinsight.com))

### **Friday, October 8: Leisurely Friday Walk Series (see details on page 4)**

### **Friday, October 15: Leisurely Friday Walk Series (see details on page 4)**

### **Sunday, October 17, 1:30 – 3:30 pm – iNaturalist Walk in Dunback Meadow**

This exploratory walk of Dunback Meadow will provide an opportunity to use iNaturalist to see what can be learned using this handy smart phone resource. Plants will be the focus (since they are easiest to photograph) but we'll look at other organisms as available. Prerequisite: Bring your phone with iNaturalist installed and ready to use. Please try it out: take a few sample photos and have your phone enabled for cellular data. The usefulness of iNaturalist depends on taking good photos. The app can be found at <https://www.inaturalist.org> . It's free, but may require registration on the iNaturalist web site. Heavy rain cancels.

Walk Leader: Barbara Katzenberg ([barbara.katzenberg@gmail.com](mailto:barbara.katzenberg@gmail.com))

### **Saturday, October 23, 9-11 am: Nature Photography in Whipple Hill**

Late fall is one of the best times to visit the Whipple Hill Conservation property. With the leaves off the trees the property's magnificent stone walls and rocky features of the landscape really stand out. Sunder Neelakantan will be your guide in how to best capture these and other features of the property in memorable photographs. Meet at the signed entrance to the property at the top of Winchester Drive opposite Berkshire Drive. Steady rain cancels.

Walk Leader: Sunder Neelakantan (781-424-7558, [diadensunder@gmail.com](mailto:diadensunder@gmail.com))

### **Saturday, November 27, 1-3 pm, Turkey Trot Walk at Whipple Hill**

Work off the excesses of your Thanksgiving dinner by joining CLC as it revives its annual Turkey Trot walk. Whipple Hill is especially scenic when the trees have lost their leaves revealing Whipple Hill's rugged landscape features and extensive stone walls. Befitting the highest spot in Lexington, there are extensive views in all directions from the bare summit. The trails are rugged with many ups and downs so hiking boots and walking sticks recommended. Meet at the Johnson Road entrance on Winchester Drive. Park on Johnson Road as the parking lot is small. Heavy rain or snow cancels.

Walk Leader: Keith Ohmart (781-862-6216, [kohmart@verizon.net](mailto:kohmart@verizon.net))

### **Saturday, January 22, 2022, 8-10 am: Winter Birding at Dunback Meadow**

Dunback Meadow offers some of Lexington's best winter birding opportunities. We will be looking for our usual winter woodpecker species, chickadees, titmice, etc., plus the possibilities of overwintering species not usually resident at this time of the year including any irruptive winter finch species. Cosponsored with the Brookline Bird Club. Meet at the Allen Street trail entrance opposite 23 Allen Street. Heavy rain or snow cancels.

Walk Leader: Bobbie Hodson (781-861-9421, [robertahodson@comcast.net](mailto:robertahodson@comcast.net))

## Leisurely Friday Walk Series:

Explore three of Lexington's favorite Conservation areas in a more leisurely fashion this fall. The pace will be measured, the grades gentle and the distances moderate. All walks will begin at 10 am and finish in an hour and a half or less. Walking surfaces will be off-pavement walking trails. Wear sturdy footwear and bring water. Walking sticks recommended if balance is an issue. Steady rain cancels, no rain dates. Group limit – 20. **Pre-registration required at:** <https://lexrecma.myrec.com>, or call the Recreation line at 781-862-0500 if you experience difficulties registering on line.

Walk Leaders: Keith Ohmart (781-862-6216, [kohmart@verizon.net](mailto:kohmart@verizon.net)) and Eileen Entin (781-862-6418, [eileenhome@gmail.com](mailto:eileenhome@gmail.com))

### **Friday, October 1: 10 – 11:30 am – Lower Vine Brook Conservation Area**

Meet at the signed entrance to Lower Vine Brook. Park on Vine Street opposite 121 Vine Street.

### **Friday, October 8: 10-11:30 am – Meagherville Conservation Area**

Meet at the Garfield Street playground entrance. Park on Garfield Street.

### **Friday, October 15: 10-11:30 am – Hayden Woods Conservation Area**

Meet at the signed entrance to Hayden Woods behind 45/65 Hayden Avenue. Park in signed Trail User spots behind 45/65 Hayden Avenue office building or signed Visitor spots.

## Thank You Walk Leaders

CLC's walks program is entirely dependent on our walk leaders, who are all volunteers, for its continuing success. We wish to express a sincere thank you to John Andrews, Harry West, Keith Ohmart, Andrea Golden, and Barbara Katzenberg for their leadership of our Spring 2021 walks and activities.

## Website Redesign

By Keith Ohmart

Those of you who receive our newsletter online may have already noticed that the CLC website has been redesigned. If you haven't noticed or are one of our mail subscribers, log in and take a look. The internet address is still the same, [www.clclex.org](http://www.clclex.org), so there is no need to change your internet address book.

Board members Rita Pandey and Keith Ohmart, with editorial and proofreading assistance from our president, Eileen Entin, have spent the summer working with web designer Jon Sachs in creating the new look. The contents of the old website have been reorganized into what we hope is a more usable format for all users regardless of device used, be it laptop, tablet or mobile phone.

Content pertaining to current activities has been brought to the fore, with dated and archival materials filed away in separate but accessible folders. Guides to Lexington's conservation areas as well as on specific subjects such as bird watching, plant identification, etc., have been gathered together and organized by topic.

After you have had a look around, please do share your comments and suggestions. Some ideas that have already been suggested include creating a section dedicated to information and images of specific open space properties in town. We welcome the participation of anyone who is interested in helping us create additional content. We also welcome the donation of photographs of our open spaces that can be added to our photo library and used for increasing the visual content of our website.

To contact us with your comments, offers of help and forwarding of photo material, please visit the *Contact Us* page on the website to send in your information. All of us at CLC look forward to growing the content of the website and its ability to contribute to the appreciation and enjoyment of Lexington's extensive open space resources in the years to come.

## **Position as CLC Newsletter Editor Is Open**

By Elaine Quinlan

For five years I have been the editor of the CLC newsletter. As we come out of the pandemic, many organizations and individuals are making changes. I have decided to resign as editor after the fall newsletter is published. My hope is that someone will volunteer to become the new editor, and make it their own. We will provide guidance to the person who assumes the position.

CLC publishes three newsletters each year. The February issue is the Candidates' Forum issue. Candidates for Town Meeting are invited to respond to an environmental issue and their responses are printed in the newsletter. The April and September newsletters contain information on walks and activities, conservation news, and other topics such as birding, photography, and nature. The editor is responsible for organizing the articles into the newsletter format. There is no requirement for the editor to author articles.

If you are interested in this position and would like more information about it, please contact Eileen Entin ([eileenhome@gmail.com](mailto:eileenhome@gmail.com), 781-862-6418) or send a query to the CLC website ([CLClex.org](http://CLClex.org)) using the *Contact Us* tab.

## Leave the Leaves

By Pamela Lyons

*“Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness ...”*

*Ode to Autumn, John Keats*

We're a long way from the nature-rich world of John Keats' "Ode to Autumn." Instead, fall has become the season of noise, habitat destruction and environmental degradation. Leaf-blowing, cutting down of stems and seedheads, leaf and debris removal: much of this is entirely unnecessary and turns your yard into a wasteland that can't support the pollinators and local wildlife.

Many beneficial insects such as butterflies, fireflies, moths and beetles overwinter in leaf litter or brush piles. Many insects overwinter in dead stems. About 70% of native bees overwinter in the top layer of soil. Leaf blowing literally blows away this valuable habitat. In turn, these small creatures are prey for birds, turtles, frogs and small mammals.

Leaf litter provides free organic material, enriching your soil and providing protection from the freeze-thaw cycle in the spring. Visually, seedheads and stems are a ghostly and sculptural presence in winter.

So, what to do? Leaf litter tends to collect naturally under shrubs, in perennial beds and around trees. Just leave it. If you must move fallen leaves, deposit them in these areas. As for debris, create a brush pile in an unobtrusive location. All kinds of beneficial insects and other small wildlife overwinter in brush piles. A lot of leaf litter and some debris will literally disappear over the winter. Leaf litter that remains in spring will provide free mulch over the summer.

Leaving the leaves is a simple and effective way to bring back the pollinators, and support other beneficial insects that in turn provide food for birds, chipmunks, turtles, frogs and other small creatures.

For additional information about the benefits and uses of leaf litter, go to the Xerces Society's website at:

<https://www.xerces.org/sites/default/files/publications/18-014.pdf>



## What's Next for the Ashley Property?

By Charlie Wyman and Amber Carr

Last fall Town Meeting overwhelmingly approved purchase of the 4.5-acre Ashley property located at the end of Highland Avenue off Kendall Road, adjacent to the Upper Vine Brook Conservation Area. The property was once owned by George Norris, who built the house at 39 Highland Avenue and ran a dairy farm there in the late 1800's. Ownership has stayed in the Norris-Ashley family ever since.

The purchase was completed this year on April 2. As part of the "due diligence" phase leading up to the purchase, the Conservation Department contracted for a title search, land survey, and hazardous waste reconnaissance, all standard procedures as part of any conservation land purchase. As part of the survey process, the survey crew installed iron rod monuments at key corners so staff can locate and monitor the boundaries.



What happens next? Since the town used Community Preservation Act funds for the purchase, a permanent conservation restriction (CR) must be imposed and will be conveyed to CLC, which has agreed to hold it along with CRs for other conservation purchases in recent years. In conjunction with the transfer, a baseline documentation report will be prepared. This is a document that attempts to record the current condition of the property through maps, photos, and written observations, and which can serve as a permanent baseline against which changes in the property can be measured.



The baseline report also serves as a foundation for management planning. Management of the property will be guided by the Conservation Department's **Principles and Policies for Management of Lexington Conservation Land**, which covers a wide range of topics, including habitat management, invasives control, appropriate types of recreation, boundary encroachment, and more.

While management planning for the property is just getting underway, a few initial observations are possible. The property was acquired primarily for protection of its forest habitat, its protection of the headwaters of Vine Brook, and its contribution to adjacent conservation land, and to protect the major trail (part of the ACROSS Lexington system) that runs from the end of Highland Avenue into Upper Vine Brook Conservation Area. There are some invasives on the property (bittersweet, burning bush) that we'd like to reduce or eliminate. There is also considerable interest in the informal trail that crosses the property and connects Sherburne Road to Upper Vine Brook, and which was used by the neighborhood for many years. While much of that trail has now been secured with this purchase, another critical segment crosses other private land and the owner, out of concern for privacy and safety, no longer permits public access. We hope at some point to find a way to reopen that trail, on the current route or another, to reestablish access from Sherburne Road.

If you are interested in commenting during the management planning process or in participating in any invasives-cutting workdays on the property, please contact Amber at [acarr@lexingtonma.gov](mailto:acarr@lexingtonma.gov).

## Photo Credits

Page 8: Map of Ashley property, provided by Amber Carr.

Pages 11 and 12: Lexington Plant Nursery, provided by Holly Samuels.

## The New Lexington Plant Nursery

By Holly Samuels, Lexington Conservation Steward

For a few years an idea has been brewing to create a nursery area to grow small native herbaceous plants and shrubs for the purpose of restoring Lexington conservation areas and perhaps for sale to the public for residential yards. That idea is in the process of being realized this year at Lower Vine Brook conservation area. A tree nursery had already been established in this area, and there is a water source at the site. With Lexington Conservation Commission's permission to develop a small plant nursery at this site, planning began in earnest in winter 2020-21.

Due to the heavy pressure in this area from rabbits and other herbivores who would find a nice banquet with tender new plants, the growing area had to be enclosed. A hoop house was envisioned to keep out larger animals such as deer, and large birds such as wild turkeys that also like to browse on tender plants. We were fortunate to receive a donation from Lexington residents Meg and John Himmel of ten large hoops that had originally been salvaged from the old Lexington Gardens Nursery. With that donation we could really begin to envision the possibilities.

Preliminary work to prepare the site began with a workday on April 10, 2021, the first Stewardship Saturday of the season. Boy Scouts and LHS Conservation Club members, as well as some adults, for a total of 21 people came together to clear weeds and brush, lay out cardboard covered with wood chips to suppress future weed growth, move some small trees, and lay out the footprint of the hoop house with landscape fabric. Thank you to the Lexington DPW for bringing a dumpster loaded with wood chips and for carting off the collected brush to the composting facility. Further work was done on another Stewardship Saturday in May with families from Temple Isaiah to clear invasive Garlic Mustard from the area. The area will require ongoing work into the foreseeable future with annual removal of Garlic Mustard and invasive Bittersweet vine but the hoop house area is clear.

In June, proceeds from the sale of pollinator plants to the public in Spring 2021 were made available and, after researching and acquiring all of the supplies needed to install the hoops, work was begun on July 17, 2021 to erect the structure. Many thanks to volunteer Conservation Stewards Don Grant, Stephen Perkins, and Barbara Katzenberg, volunteer Jim Constantine (a willing husband, bless him), LHS students, and the Conservation Summer Work Crew members who helped with the 'barn raising'. It was very exciting to see it all come together into an actual structure. In subsequent weeks the hoop house was enclosed with poultry wire and shade netting, given a custom-made door, and an enclosed 'backyard' for establishing some in-ground plantings to use for seed stock. There is also an area fully shaded with a tarp for both sun and rain protection. The need for protection became clear while the structure was being erected. We discovered both how hot it gets in there and how important rain shelter is during a sudden downpour!

Seed planting will begin in January for seed that requires overwintering before it will sprout, in a process called *cold stratification*. Those seed flats will be stored at the nursery overwinter. The hoop house will remain open to the elements so the plants are grown in

natural conditions, supplemented by water only during the summer months as needed, which will cut down on the need for supplemental watering. Young plants will be protected over winter and grown to resilient sizes for a better chance of survival in the wild, and plant selection will include many varieties that are less likely to be browsed by deer and rabbits. Plants will be grown from seed sourced from New England eco-types as much as possible, with the aim of diversifying the plantings in our conservation areas with pollinator-friendly plants and especially for restoring areas that are being reclaimed from invasive plant growth. Future pre-order sales to the public for residential planting are also planned. Thank you, again, to all who helped make this initial nursery establishment a success and we look forward to what it will grow into in the future!

Anyone interested in volunteering to work in the nursery learning how to sow seed or transplant seedlings into larger pots can contact Holly Samuels at [lexplant-nursery@gmail.com](mailto:lexplant-nursery@gmail.com).





