



CONSERVATION COMMISSION NEWSLETTER

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MAINSTONE FARM

The Town of Wayland and SVT have finished the trails at Mainstone Farm and have opened a small parking area at a new trail head on Rice Road.

The Hamlen Family, which owns the farm, agreed to put trails on the property when they sold a conservation restriction to the Town and SVT in April 2017. The new trails meander through the forested portion of Mainstone Farm and connect with trails on adjacent conservation lands, creating a network of more than 11 miles of trails in the heart of Wayland.

When you visit, please remember that the farm is a privately owned, active farm, and large portions of the land are not open to the public.

Please stay on marked trails.

For directions and a trail map, visit the Conservation Department's website or stop by the office.



CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT

On December 30, 2017 Brian Harris performed the Wayland Christmas Bird Count.

During this census, thousands of volunteers across the U.S., Canada, and other Western Hemisphere countries count birds over a 24-hour period. Their counts help researchers understand how the birds of the Americas are faring over time. Results will be posted on the National Audubon Society's website.



RIVER CONSERVATION PLAN

In 1999, Congress designated 29 miles of the Sudbury, Assabet and Concord (SUASCO) Rivers as Wild and Scenic, recognizing their outstanding scenic beauty, ecology, and recreational opportunities, and their special place in American history and literature. The River Stewardship Council (RSC), manager of the SUASCO Wild and Scenic River, is working to update the River Conservation Plan. This document laid out the issues facing the rivers over 20 years ago and strategies to protect this special resource for generations to come.

The RSC is seeking input to improve the revisions to the management plan. What is your vision for these rivers and their community? What do you see as threats to the rivers? What do you see as opportunities? To find out more, visit www.Sudbury-assabet-concord.org or to share your thoughts, contact Wayland's RSC representative, Tom Sciacca, tsciacca@comcast.net.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Saturday, January 20, 2018 at 10:00am

Sedge Meadow Nature Walk

Brian Harris Town of Wayland Conservation Land Manager is going to be at Sedge Meadow Conservation Land on Saturday, January 20, 2018 at 10:00AM for a winter nature walk. The meeting location will be at the trail directly across from 31 Sedge Meadow

Road. The walk will be a minimum of an hour over a distance of one mile or more. There will likely be ice or snow on trails; please dress appropriately and wear proper footwear. As always, everyone is welcome to join free of charge, no registration required.

WEATHER DATE: Sunday, January 21st@10:00AM (Meet at the same location)

COMMUNITY GARDENS

The Wayland Community Gardens provide a beautiful and active public space for community members to grow produce and flowers. The garden is a wonderful place to meet fellow gardeners and provides a true sense of community.

Applications will be available online starting mid-March and can be found on the Conservation Department's website, or drop by the office for a copy.

Any new gardener is encouraged to visit our website to learn more about the garden rules and guidelines.



SNOW REMOVAL

This time of year when the snow falls and begins to melt, road salt and other pollutants are transported into surface water or through the soil where they may eventually reach the groundwater. These chemicals can contaminate water supplies and are toxic to aquatic life at certain levels. Sand washed into water bodies can create sand bars or fill in wetlands and ponds, impacting aquatic life, causing flooding, and affecting our use of these resources.

If you live in a resource sensitive area, the snow should be removed if possible and placed in upland area locations where it is less likely to impact sensitive environmental resources.

CASTLE HILL



Castle Hill is located off Alpine Road and consists of 25.7 acres of land. To access the trail head, park in the Alpine Road lot that is along the road, cross the ball field and on the left edge of the woods is a sign labeled Castle Hill. From the entrance, there is a .7 mile, single loop trail that is easy to moderate difficulty. The trail does split off in a few locations but will always connect back onto the main trail (ultimately ending at a gas line easement and private residence.)

Castle Hill was originally part of the old road to Concord, dating back to the 17th century. The name was given by its early settlers that reference the long ridge following along school house pond. This long ridge is called an esker, a geological feature primarily composed of gravel and other sediments deposited by melt water from a retreating glacier or ice sheet. School house pond received its name due to its proximity to the North District school house.

To date 62 species of birds have been observed at the property including three species of owls, which include the Great Horned, Barred, and Eastern Screech Owl. Other species of birds observed at Castle Hill include waterfowl, which congregate in small numbers during spring and fall migration in the SSE portion of the property; and shorebirds are reliable in small numbers during the summer and early fall months, especially during drought years when the water is low enough to allow for suitable habitat.

Most of the regularly occurring mammals of eastern Massachusetts can be found at this property, such as red and gray squirrels and the eastern chipmunk. But mammals, such as the river otter, are occasional visitors to the pond, as are beavers and muskrats, the latter being much more likely. Though rarely seen the fisher are around, though more typically encountered in winter.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Linda Hansen

Conservation Administrator
lhansen@wayland.ma.us

Nicole Thomson

Department Assistant
nthomson@wayland.ma.us

Brian Harris

Land Manager
bharris@wayland.ma.us

**41 Cochituate Road
Wayland, Ma 01778
508-358-3669**