



LAND PRESERVATION SOCIETY of NORTON

Norton's Land Trust - Norton, Massachusetts - www.nortonlandpreservation.org

Spotlight: An Update on the Canoe River Land, Norton

The Canoe River Land consists of 60 acres along the Canoe River, where it flows from Easton into Norton. As one of the jewels in the Norton Land Preservation Society's (LPS) portfolio, this mixed habitat area is the home for a diverse ecosystem that encompasses both riparian and wooded upland zones. It was the first parcel of land acquired by the LPS from Florence Hallett in 1974, with the aid of a loan from the Nature Conservancy.

During the 19th century dams were developed here and elsewhere along the Canoe River, in service of the industrialization of southeastern New England. No longer operational, these dams are slowly being removed, as part of regional efforts to restore the Canoe River to its original free-flowing channel, and the LPS is a participant in these efforts. Only remnants of the mill and its waterwheel remain, and they do not interfere with the flow of the river. However, the river's channel is constrained where it passes under the main trail on LPS land.

Our plan, with funding, is to replace the two narrow conduits under the trail with one significantly larger one. This will allow the Canoe River to flow unimpeded from Easton to Norton and onto Taunton, to the benefit of both the ecosystems and water quality.

A more in-depth discussion of the history of the Canoe River Land, a map, and ongoing efforts to restore the river to its pre-industrialization can be found on the Home Page for the LPS under *Spotlight on Land* at: www.nortonlandpreservation.org

Recently the LPS submitted a proposal to a state environmental agency for funds to carry out work on the Canoe River as it flows through the LPS land. On the next page is an excerpt from that proposal, which summarizes the geologic setting, as a basis for discussion of the importance of the proposed work.



The Canoe River at Red Mill



There are no bedrock exposures in the area, and glacial sediments related to the retreat of the Wisconsin ice sheet dominate this region. Specifically, the Canoe River drains till, sand, and gravel deposits in the Red Mill area, and until recently the sand and gravel were quarried from lands adjacent to the Red Mill property. Moreover, unconfined aquifers associated with the Canoe River occur primarily in these deposits, and are a major source for potable water for the towns in the region. Through removal of dams and other impediments to the natural flow of the Canoe River in the Rd Mill area, our proposed work will help to restore the natural hydrologic flow for the region. This should in turn increase the ability of Canoe River aquifers to meet the increasing water needs of Norton and other towns along the river.

The accompanying pictures were taken this summer, when the water table was unusually low. This is a wonderful place for a family to walk (it's flat) on wide trails. It's dog friendly (though on a leash please, and tidy-up), and a good place to launch a kayak. Enjoy!!

By Dan Murray, Geologist and Vice President of the LPS Board of Directors



Red Mill Photos by Dan Murray



Valentine Family Land Preserve Recognized with a Sign

Thanks to LPS board member Jonathan Rowe for making the sign designating the entrance to the Valentine Land Preserve on Pleasant Street, and to board member Phil Zawasky who helped him install the sign. This is a short, but lovely walk through mixed forest.

**Another Short Walk
Winthrop Dahl Nature Preserve**

This land is accessed just north of the I-495 overpass. LPS has opened up a small parking area and widened the short path through woods and a field. This is a lovely path to use to walk in to meet the old train bed. At the end of the Dahl path, to the left there is a four mile walk in Norton and to the right the path eventually connects to the Mansfield Rail Trail. If the Norton Rail Trail is approved, it will run along the old train bed in Norton.

How to Make a Land Donation

LPS will accept open and uncontaminated land.

-  Donations are tax deductible at the full assessment of the land at the time of the donation, as allowed by law.
-  LPS will pay the expenses associated with drawing up a new deed.
-  If the donation is significant, the donor may have the option of naming the property.



Membership and Dues Information

LPS is a registered 501(c)(3) exempt non-profit organization. Dues and other donations are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. Join us if you can!

To all members: if you are able, please consider making an additional donation to help support the mission of LPS.

If you haven't already filled out this form, please do so now and return it so that we can update our records.

Also, please consider receiving our newsletters via email to help reduce printing and mailing costs.

Note: We now accept dues payments and donations via PayPal, at our web site www.nortonlandpreservation.org. If you decide to use that payment method, we would appreciate your filling out the form below and mailing it to us so that we may update our records and learn if you want to receive our newsletter by email in the future.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel: _____ Email: _____

*** IMPORTANT:**

I prefer to receive the newsletter by email: ___Yes ___No

Please check any of the following selections:

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$5	<input type="checkbox"/> Life \$100
<input type="checkbox"/> Family \$10	<input type="checkbox"/> I'm already a Life Member
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Donation: \$ _____

Please return this form with your check payable to Land Preservation Society of Norton (or LPS) and mail to:

LPS of Norton,
PO Box 204,

Crane Farm Info Here

LPS Mission

The Land Preservation Society was founded in 1970 "to protect natural resources, to preserve natural areas and historic sites, and provide open space for the benefit of the general public; to educate the public about the wise use of natural resources; and to work with other organizations having similar purposes."

We are a registered non-profit 501(c)3 organization and all contributions of money and land are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

We have formally subscribed to the Standards and Practices set out by the Land Trust Alliance to assure that land trusts act ethically and abide by the best rules of governance.

Officers

President: Kathleen Ebert-Zawasky

Vice President: Daniel Murray

Secretary: Linda Kollett

Treasurer: Jonathan Rowe

Past Presidents: Ann Sears and Frances Shirley



Norton Nature Notes

Buck Moths on the Medeiros Land

By Linda Kollett

One of the unexpected pleasures of maintaining the Land Preservation of Norton website is that I occasionally get emails from folks who have walked our land. Often they have interesting things to report, and they help us as stewards of the land.



This fall I received an email from Greg Dysart of Natick, MA, who was out walking on our Medeiros property. Greg reported seeing at least 40 Buck Moths (*Hemileuca maia*) on his walk. Buck Moths are a Massachusetts “species of special concern”, so he was glad to see so many of them in one area. Here they are primarily restricted to the southeast coast, Nantucket and Martha’s Vineyard, so these moths were a bit far afield from their prime feeding area, although on the southern part of the Medeiros land they certainly found their preferred dry open habitat.

The Medeiros Preserves are on both sides of Richardson Avenue at the Attleboro line. The power line service roads lead through the preserve on the north side and beside it on the south. The north has more wetland, with orchids, lilies, many shrubs and pools with waterfowl nests. The south is higher and drier. Both roads have many birds (over 100 species) that like the mix of open area and woods.

Hemileuca maia, sometimes called the Barrens Buck Moth is a day flying moth of the Saturniidae family. These moths love scrub oak, and the females lay their eggs on oak twigs in May. When the caterpillars hatch they feed on the new leaves, often in groups, and they grow quickly if the tender young leaves are plentiful. As they grow in size they become more solitary and vary their diet. In late July or early August they make their way to the ground where they pupate in the leaf litter. During this time their internal structures reorganize into adult parts. They normally delay their development (diapause) until the fall. If the weather turns dry, they can remain in this state for up to four years.

One thing a bit unusual about these moths is that they fly during the day. They are easy to recognize by their striped wing pattern – two bands of black separated by a band of grayish white. The wing spots are yellow and elongated, rather than the large circular or triangular patterns of some other Saturniid moths. Male adults can be distinguished from females by a bright orange thorax. Typically for moths, the male has feather-like antennae, which help it locate female moths by scent.

The larvae (caterpillars) are black with yellow stripes or speckles. They look deceptively fuzzy, but actually have sharp hollow spines connected to poison glands. These are called urticating spines and they release irritating protein toxins on contact. If you happen to get “stung”, wash and dry the area and apply scotch tape to remove the spines. Then apply an ice pack, followed by a baking soda paste. Contact a physician if other symptoms develop.

Buck moths are threatened by the usual problems of habitat loss, exotic plant invasion, generalist parasitoids, insecticide spraying, fire suppression and off-road vehicles.

One last thing. Why are they called Buck Moths? Apparently they appear at the onset of hunting season in some areas and early hunters thought that they developed in deer brains and were breathed out through their nostrils. The arrival of the Buck Moth meant it was time to go buck hunting.

Florida Poison Information Center <http://www.poisoncentertampa.org>

Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program www.nhesp.org

Buck Moth http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buck_Moth

Bug of the Week <http://www4.uwm.edu/fieldstation/naturalhistory/bugoftheweek/buckmoth.cfm>

Photo with permission by Greg Dysart <http://dysart.zenfolio.com>