

July 2020

ATTLEBORO LAND TRUST NEWS

A Monthly Newsletter on Outdoor Adventure and Conservation



Thirty years ago this month, a group of Attleboro residents met at the Attleboro Public Library to form an organization dedicated to the permanent protection of open space and habitat through advocacy, education, and the acquisition and management of conservation land. This conservation land is valued for its natural environment, passive recreation, and air and water purification health benefits. The Attleboro Land Trust was formed and has succeeded in preserving the property listed on page 2. This shows land actually owned by the land trust and land, owned by others, on which the land trust holds a conservation restriction. A conservation restriction preserves land in perpetuity and gives tax advantages.

Conservation land and open space are critical elements to the quality of life we enjoy in Attleboro. People may say that some of the land is just swamp, but those wetlands purify the water you drink by filtering the rain and the plants there absorb harmful toxins in the water before it goes into our groundwater, rivers and reservoirs. The fields, shrubs and trees absorb CO₂, sequestering it, fighting Global Warming, and absorb airborne toxins, while producing the oxygen we need to breathe. We can notice the difference when we leave the big cities and come to Attleboro. Without this land we would have a miserable sickly existence similar to the old industrial era.

The Land Trust is working with the schools teaching the importance of conservation, farming, and our history. Students provide some of the articles in this newsletter and volunteer on land trust and public properties. The program of "Hike Attleboro" is working to put safe hiking trails throughout Attleboro so everyone can exercise and enjoy nature in our great city.

As a nonprofit, we are always looking for more members, land acquisitions, donations, and volunteers to help with our mission. Read on to learn more.

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Land Protected by the Attleboro Land Trust

Property	Acquisition	Acres
Colman Reservation	10/30/92	77
Anthony Lawrence Wildlife Preserve	11/11/94	48.5
Phil and Ginny Leach Wildlife Sanctuary	12/27/96	19.6
Woodland Lane (part of Phil and Ginny Leach Wildlife Sanctuary)	12/27/96	0.6
Larson Woodland	6/27/97	4
Capital Development Corp (joined to become part of Vaughan Memorial Forest)	12/22/97	20.3
Milton E. Veno Nature Preserve	12/28/98	2.8
Vaughan Memorial Forest	6/28/99	32
Uriah's Marsh	6/20/00	14.9
Nickerson Walking Woods Preserve	6/29/01	47.97
Stephen J. Karol Residence (Deed restriction to ALT)	7/29/02	.75
Peter Halko Nature Preserve (part of Anthony Lawrence Wildlife Preserve)	6/12/08	2.4
Blottman-Kenton Nature Preserve	6/12/09	17.7
Attleboro Springs (Owned by Mass Audubon, CR by ALT/City)	6/10/09	117
David W. Parfitt Nature Preserve (part of Anthony Lawrence Wildlife Preserve)	6/23/09	5.5
Bishop Street (Anonymous Donation)	6/29/11	17
Harold R. Blackburn Nature Preserve	6/5/12	8
John E. Hagerty Jr. Nature Preserve (part of Nickerson Walking Woods Preserve)	3/6/13	5
Shaw-Denham Memorial Forest	10/31/13	27.5
Joseph and Margaret O'Donnell Nature Preserve	1/5/15	14.39
Handy Street Conservation Area (Owned by City, CR by ALT/Mass Audubon)		80.31
Deborah and Roger Richardson Nature Preserve – Frontage Lots	2/24/16	5.28
Deborah and Roger Richardson Nature Preserve – Interior	6/14/16	57.7
Vickery Nature Preserve – Attleboro	11/16/16	17.93
Vickery Nature Preserve – Rehoboth(Owned by Rehoboth Land Trust, CR by ALT)	11/16/16	1.53
Stoneforest Lots (part of Phil and Ginny Leach Wildlife Sanctuary)	2/17/17	7.33
DesVergnes Family Nature Preserve	6/29/17	36.4
Nelson E. Roy Nature Preserve (part of Anthony Lawrence Wildlife Preserve)	6/28/18	<u>2.3</u>
	Total	691.7

Bumping into the Nettles

It is summer and time to reconnect with nature. If you have not already done so, take a walk. Venture out to see what is happening on our local trails. Be cautious as there are always patches of poison ivy, thorny brambles arching high and low, and now watch out for the nettles. Lest we mistake the name for the nice couple down the street, this plant can be very painful to the touch. In July they are at their tallest height and can be encountered from shoulder to toe working in garden edges, walking by or going off trail.



The Nettle family consists of a large group of diverse plants that range from house plants to forage and fiber crops although most do not have stinging hair structures. The majority of the nettles were introduced to this country and simply got away as most alien plants do. In Europe, some Nettles are used as a vitamin rich food source but since colonial times that practice does not exist here. In our area, we have four common members that can be described as troublesome weeds as they favor a variety of soils and growing conditions so can be seemingly anywhere. In sun, shade, moist or dry areas these plants can be “found” at garden edges or while picking raspberries, elderberries or in a favorite patch of blueberries.

The worst member of this family we encounter, most often by accident, as it seems to be in an unexpected place or that we forget what it looks like from year to year. The Stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) is a tall erect perennial of about five to six feet that has a hollow, square green stem with the stinging hairs positioned on the stem and the underside of the leaf blade. Exotic by stature only, as the flowers are an inconspicuous greenish yellow and produce small unremarkable seeds. The male and female flowers are separate on the plant which reflects its Latin name of *urere*, “to burn” and *dioica* reference to “two houses” – the separation of the sexes. Touching the plant creates a mechanical skin irritant that injects mild toxins into the wound. It is not simply a contact allergen (described as being similar to a jellyfish sting) the itching and numbness of the swelling lasts about an hour.



Large colonies of these and other nettles develop from the rhizomes that can spread six to eight feet in a season. A weed of landscapes, nurseries and vegetable crops, stinging nettle is found in low areas, waste ground and roadsides, though it does poorly in low fertility soils. Even after a killing frost these erect stems turn dark brown and persist through the winter. Though likely far less harmful to the touch – but please do not try it.

The Slender Nettle uncommon in southern New England has a similar look with narrower leaves and far fewer stinging hairs. There are a few more nettles that grow in our area but most are devoid of the stinging hairs. Each would truly test the skills of the botanist in you, as they have very different growth habits, and are usually found in wet or damp shade with no bright flowering feature to attract you. Clearweed and False Nettle (or Bog Hemp) both flower from early July to October, so you may make a discovery on your own, as I never discourage people getting their feet wet.

One more family member that actually has an attractive flower is the Rough Hedge-Nettle (*Stachys tenuifolia* var.). Blooming from July to September, it has a rose-pink flowers clustered in circles around the stem and the hooded appearance does give it an elegance in the damp areas and meadows where you will find it. Be careful however as it can be found growing right beside the Stinging nettle as in the Anthony Lawrence Wildlife Preserve and likely Attleboro Springs.

So be careful out there walking on our lowland trails, in damp meadows, moist woods or even in your own backyards. Learning to recognize it is half the battle. A regional writer once described successful living and getting to old age as “running through the weeds of life, avoiding the thistles” and now we have to add nettles to that list.

Phil Boucher



The Future of the Attleboro Land Trust

These are the plans currently being pursued by the Land Trust:

Education and Outreach:

- Include more children and young adults,
- Attract more people to “Hike Attleboro”
- Discuss Climate Change in our publicity
- Utilize social media
- Reach out to North Attleboro

Land Acquisition:

- Formulate a plan to acquire high-value conservation land, relying less on donations
- Apply for grants for funding

Endowment:

- Create an endowment sufficient to fund a well-qualified staff position

Barrows House:

- Actively seek an outside organization to take on the preservation of the house

Watch for those Bright New Hike Attleboro Signs!

Sometime this summer, watch for the bright green and white signs around the City for over a dozen hiking trails owned and managed by Attleboro Land Trust, Audubon Society of Massachusetts and the City of Attleboro directing everyone looking for a breath of fresh air to escape the COVID-19 virus lockdown! So far, 8 properties of the Attleboro Land Trust are included in the Hike Attleboro system, the Richardson Nature Preserve, the Vaughn Memorial Forest, the Colman Reservation, the O'Donnell Preserve, the Nickerson Walking Woods Preserve, the Lawrence Wildlife Preserve, the Leach Wildlife Sanctuary and the Larson Woodland. Hikers looking for additional trails to discover will be directed also to the Oak Knoll and Attleboro Springs trail network owned by the Audubon Society and the City of Attleboro's Handy Street Conservation area. Downtown Attleboro areas such as Judy Robbins Park, the Kevin J. Dumas Boardwalk, the Balfour Park Riverwalk and Highland Park also will have signs indicating their part of the Hike Attleboro campaign.



Excitement is building particularly as Massachusetts enters the reopening phases of the COVID-19 shutdown and public awareness of the campaign is moving along steadily. City Councilor Todd Kobus, an avid hiker, featured Hike Attleboro on his last Zoom conference on how Attleboro is dealing with COVID-19. Brian Hatch, Vice President of the Attleboro Land Trust and Nick Wyllie, Attleboro Conservation Agent spoke about how the trail network will allow Attleboro to be seen as a green and family friendly city that promotes visitors and residents to enjoy the open space of the city as a healthy asset to be enjoyed by all.

The signs will be a recognizable bright green and white featuring an adult hiker accompanied by a child and are sure to attract the attention of all who visit and reside in the City. Discussions are also underway for putting Hike Attleboro on the Attleboro Attractions signs on Route 95 north and south. Publicizing Hike Attleboro through scavenger contests to find landmarks on trails, geocaching, t-shirts, hats and other ways as well as the new signs have been suggested that will showcase what should be a key feature of the City for years to come! *Brian Hatch*

Attleboro Community Garden in Full Bloom – by Juliet Teixeira

The Attleboro Community Garden is now in its 22nd year. The Garden is in full bloom. Gardeners have planted tomatoes, cucumbers, squash, corn, strawberries, beans, chick peas, many different herbs, garlic, peppers, flowers, and lots more.

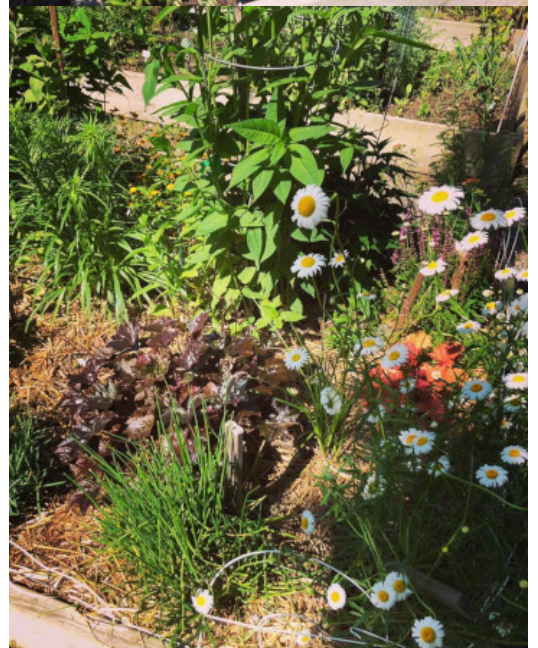
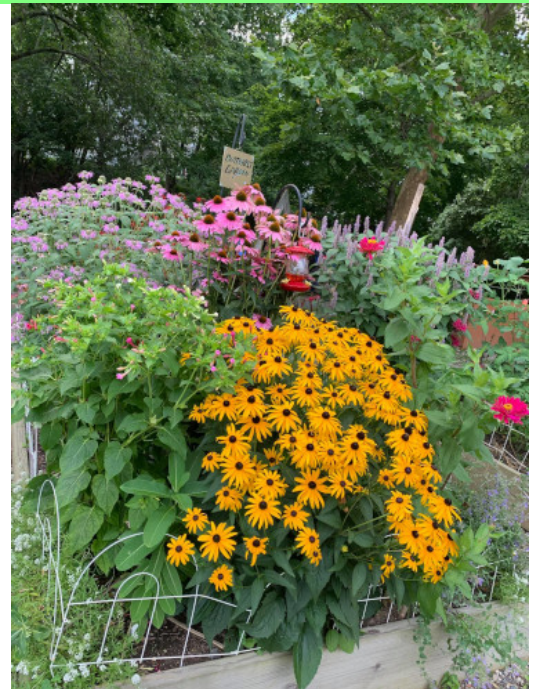
This year is unlike any year we have had since the Garden's existence due to the Covid-19 pandemic. All garden plots were fully reserved by late February. We are very proud that we were able to open the Garden in late March and it became one of the few outdoor places that our gardeners could enjoy during the Spring lockdown. We have developed health and safety guidelines for the gardeners. The guidelines have evolved during the season and have included social distancing, limiting the number of people in the garden and safely using the water supply. We also purchased good quality work gloves that can be washed and can withstand cleaning solutions. The gloves are available to all gardeners.

The Attleboro Area Community Garden has been a joint project between the Attleboro Land Trust and the City of Attleboro. The Attleboro Land Trust manages the Community Garden which is housed on City-owned land. The Garden was founded in 1998 with the following goals:

- To promote diversity by encouraging people from all walks of life to work side by side and together in the pursuit of community gardening.
- To address the social problems of hunger and poverty by enabling families to grow food for their own consumption.
- To encourage civic pride and identity.
- To promote and create appreciation for organic agriculture.

The Garden's goals have evolved over the years yet the founding goals still resonate in our interactions at the Garden. The Garden has continued to be enhanced each year – all of this made possible by support from gardeners, local businesses, members of the community, contributors, grants and several Eagle Scout projects. A few of the Garden's accomplishments over the past 6 years include:

- Gutting and re-building the Garden with 62 plots including 8 accessible plots.
- Installing a shed, a kiosk and a work table



- Beautification improvements to the border and butterfly gardens.
- Holding an annual harvest day event where gardeners contribute their produce to a local food pantry
- Popular ladybug release which in 2019 drew over 100 people
- Gardening workshops which have included Seed Starting, Managing Pests and Disease in the Garden and Preserving Your Harvest.
- The building and installation of a Little Free Library.



Although many of our planned programs have been put on hold this season, work still continues on enhancing our border gardens and we hope to have a Little Free Pantry built and installed later this season. For more information on the Attleboro Community Garden contact Danielle Cournoyer at ellecour@gmail.com



The Attleboro Land Trust is looking for Supporters by becoming a member, making a Tax-Deductible Contribution and/or as a Conservation Volunteer. Membership, contributions or volunteering can be done securely at Attleborolandtrust.org or by mail at Attleboro Land Trust, P .o. Box 453, Attleboro, MA 02703. Thank you for your support.

Updates, Comments, and Interesting Reading

Iceland is taking the CO₂ releases from the smelting of aluminum and their geothermal power plant and injecting it, with water, into the Icelandic volcanic basalt, turning it permanently into stone.

Researchers at the University of Maryland, College Park have developed a method of densifying wood to make it as hard as steel. It is not quite as hard but costs only 5% of Kevlar. Another team at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm have injected the densified wood with Lucite to make transparent windows. Using wood this way sequesters CO₂.

The Trump administration has rejected the Obama drinking water limits on perchlorates, which are used in fireworks and explosives, that cause brain damage in newborns and infants.

An abnormally large dust cloud is making its way from the Sahara across the Atlantic toward Texas. Though it will suppress hurricanes, the dust will destroy coral reefs and cause breathing problems in Texas and the south. Global warming contributes to these large dust clouds.

May 2020 tied the worlds hottest record for May from 2016. The last 12 months have been the hottest average temperatures.

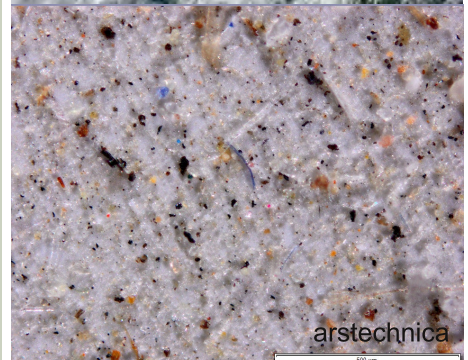
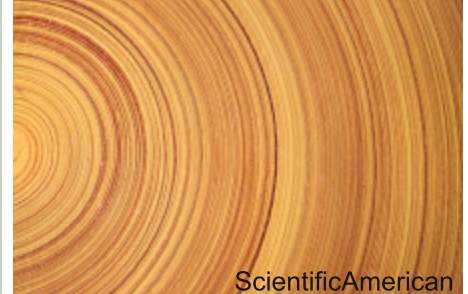
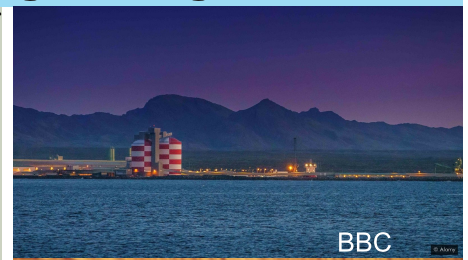
Microplastic rain is the new acid rain. It is falling everywhere on earth, even the most pristine areas. It comes from all things plastic from clothing to water bottles. Preserves in the west that encompass only 6% of the country accumulated the equivalent of 120 million plastic water bottles.

Major groups of investors and companies are requiring climate change to be factored into their investment decisions.

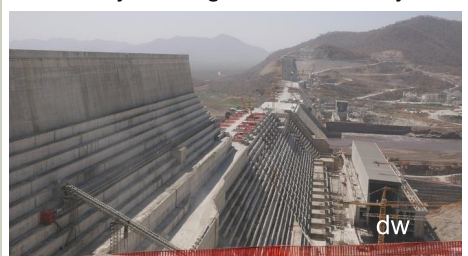
Environmental, social and governance (ERG) ratings are increasingly getting “Greenwashed” as companies try to get investments by saying they are sustainable.

Numerous news agencies and a \$1.5 billion class action law suit declare corruption and mismanagement in Australia’s Murray Darling Basin Authority is causing a loss of fish and irrigation water in the Darling River system causing crop loss and killing 100 million Golden Perch and Murray Cod.

The filling of the Grand Ethiopian \$4.6 billion Renaissance Dam on the Blue Nile’s preliminary agreement between Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia broke down after the US administration, who was supposed to be a mediator, decided to write their own agreement that sided heavily for Egypt. The flooding of the Nile during the rainy season contributes to the fertility of the Nile valley. Just like the dams on many rivers in the US, this dam will affect the aquatic life in the river. There are environmental drives to remove many US dams.



Murray Darling Basin Authority



What's Happening on the Barrows' Farm in 1720

The crops are now growing and require constant weeding, removal of insects, and deterrence of animals including the Barrows animals. Once crops were high enough, the chickens, ducks, and geese were let go in the fields. They would eat the weeds and any insects they could find but of course that meant someone had to be around to protect them from predators.

July is normally the hottest month of the year in Massachusetts but in the 1720's the summers were cooler. Maize corn requires a hot and dry climate but not too dry or the corn would wither. The cooler temperatures and wetter soil in the 1720's could promote mildew and caused a longer growing time to harvest. The Barrows had to watch the crops carefully. If mildew started to appear on their crops they could try to dust it off with bristle brushes they made with hog hair or use vinegar. With large fields of crops this could be difficult or impossible. During this time they were trying to diversify their crops as the wheat from England wouldn't grow here but they found that rye, oats, and barley could. Pumpkins and squashes could also rot if the blossoms on beginning fruits remained wet.



During the warmer months, water was critical for both the household and the animals. Initially water was hauled from the brook. Later a couple of wells were dug near the house. Then a hand pump was installed in the kitchen for the house. This prevented freezeups. The first pumps were made of wood with a wood or leather valve weighted with a rock. Hard cider was still what was drunk most as it killed the bacteria. For the animals, the children could lead them down to the pond behind the mill dam. Then the children could swim.

Mosquito Bite Home Remedies

Well it is that season again. Undoubtedly you will get mosquito bites. Here are some helpful hints from Prevention magazine to cure the itch.

Your first line of defense should be rubbing alcohol as it denatures the proteins in the bite to minimize the itching and swelling. Do not use denatured or methyl alcohol as they are poisonous and will get in the wound. A mosquito researcher always carries alcohol wipes with him for quick relief.



Ice or cold packs will temporarily reduce the itching for the time it is cold.

Zinc oxide in Calamine lotion will relieve the itch if you don't mind being pink.

Take an oral antihistamine such as benadryl, but remember that antihistamines can make you drowsy so don't drive or use machinery after taking.

Use aloe vera gel to sooth the bite but it might take several days for it to go away.

Just like with bee or other stings and ant bites, a paste of baking soda will help neutralize the bite. For those allergic to bee stings, baking soda on a sting can slow down the reaction to provide more time to get emergency care.

1% hydrocortisone cream has steroidal hormone qualities to minimize the itch without the drowsy effect of antihistamines. Oral steroids are not recommended.

The baking soda, aloe vera, local antihistimine, and hydrocortizone will also work on the stinging nettles described in an earlier article.

Food Marketing Creates Obesity and Medical Problems

How can food producers continue to grow and make more profit? Right now the population is only increasing by less than 1% a year as birthrates decrease and death rates increase in the US. An increasing elderly population that eats less also contributes to lower food sales. This is a problem for the food industry. So the only way to make more money is to get more of a share of the market, raise prices, or reduce the cost of a product by getting cheaper materials, faster production, or less labor. The other way is to get people to eat more. That is the marketing trend today and contributes to our obesity epidemic.

“Supersize it”!!! If I can get one burger for \$4 or two for \$6 “That’s a deal!” but more than I need to eat. Popcorn at the theater is small \$4, medium \$5 or large \$5.50. Fast food burger joints make their money on fries and soda not the burgers. Coffee shops make money on the coffee, not the snacks or meals.

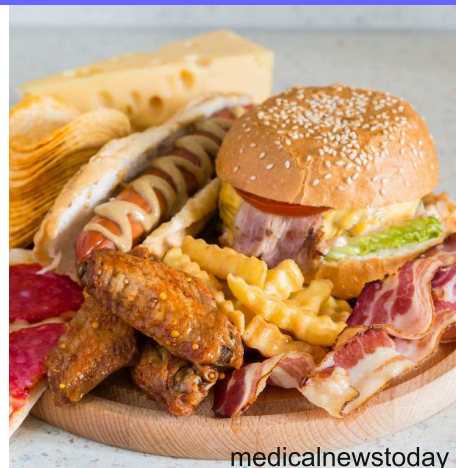
Grocery stores make their money not on the sale “loss leaders” they use to bring people in, but on everything else people buy while there. Impulse items are on endcaps and by the registers to catch your eye even if you don’t go down an aisle, but necessities like milk, meats, bread and eggs are in the back or at the end so you have to go by everything else to get to them. There are planning teams for store layout to maximize sales. Food companies actually pay for their products’ placement on shelves, sweetest at children’s eye level, most expensive at adult eye level, and biggest company at the beginning of the aisle.

All this, plus sweetened and salty items make people eat more. The marketing idea is: “Get people to spend more while keeping overhead the same.” This makes more profit since actual product costs are low. All this contributes to obesity. In children from 5 – 19, obesity has increased from 4% in 1975 to 18% in 2016. For adults obesity has increased from 14% in 1975 to 42.7% in 2018. According to UN statistics the United States population has a more obese population than any country other than the South Pacific islands. Is this a top position for which we want to be noted?

Marketing to children is intense for relatively inexpensive, flavor and sweetener enhanced, energy packed but nutritionally deficient foods and beverages. Children see more than 10 food commercials every day, particularly just before and during mealtimes. Manufacturers know that by hooking children on their products now, it will carry on in later life.

These products though lead to medical problems such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes 2 in later life, and developmental and cognitive problems in their present life.

We need to demand more from our food producers, government departments, and our educators to change this trend and stop 14.71% of US deaths.



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