

ATTLEBORO LAND TRUST NEWS

March 2021

A Monthly Newsletter on Outdoor Adventure, Conservation, and History

A publication with Attleboro High School collaboration

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Meet Caitlin Bambery

The Attleboro Land Trust welcomes Caitlin Bambery who will be interning with the ALT through the beginning of May. Cait will be working on a variety of activities including site stewardship at the ALT's Lawrence Preserve.

My name is Cait Bambery. I am a senior at Rhode Island College, majoring in environmental studies and minoring in geography. As a kid, I loved being out in the woods. Growing up in Attleboro, I hiked nearly all of the Attleboro Land Trust's (ALT) beautiful properties. I loved walking the family dog at Nickerson, exploring the marsh at Lawrence, and marveling at the giant hemlock at Colman. Each ALT property was a special place where I could be immersed in



nature and experience dozens of different plants and wildlife. That is why I am so excited to be supporting Attleboro Land Trust's mission of "land conservation, education, and advocacy." I look forward to working with the wonderful people at the Attleboro Land Trust and continuing my internship this semester!

Upcoming Events

As of this publication there are no upcoming scheduled events. However, some events and activities are scheduled with just a few weeks' notice such as the snowshoeing event held on February 15th (see page 5). Information on upcoming events will be posted on the Attleboro Land Trust website and Facebook page. Pandemic regulations and restrictions apply at all events.

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NEARLY WILD WINTER WOODS

For a diehard birder, my winter vocabulary does not include “it’s too cold” to go out to see what is happening. After a season of being cooped up and a mild winter, it has been fun to be out to see the activity of our local wildlife. The birding juices really flow faster as the days lengthen and there is a distinct change in the bird songs heard on these outings. Perhaps they are fooled by our warmish winter or that the sweetness of maple sap has been flowing freely from damaged twigs and branches due to our many windstorms.

Spring is not far off and the start of a new birding year. It has the same excitement of seeing old friends and wondering what new specimens I might encounter in the next months. Even though I have a few favorite spots to go where I have had success, I enjoy a change of area as I follow my eyes and ears for new prospects. New sightings are the challenge and the reward. So, tramping through the wetlands looking for the next piece of high ground to stand and listen is all part of the discovery. Depending on the timing, birds can be scarce so a red or gray squirrel can fill in the void with interesting movements. Not a distraction, just another part of the varied stories of the woods.



Black-Billed Cuckoo Audubon

forgetfulness.

Even with my eyes and ears engaged on a pair of woodpeckers working on a dead tree for a meal, I can still hear the sounds and rhythm of Attleboro not far off. The jarring rattle of dog tags announce the end of my silent stand. Occupied by a muddy path, neither the dog owner nor the dog see me in the brush, but the birds have moved and signal for me to do the same. While walking back I could not help but think of the number of times I visit these woods each year. The appreciation of the permanence that this habitat has as a Land Trust property is a boon not only to my own activities but to the Attleboro area as well. It is also a beneficial constant for the birds at the end of their migration to have food and water sources, ample nesting areas and sizeable territory to stake out and patrol. Open space is a benefit to us all.

Since it is really a wooded wetland, the inventory of tree and plant resources it holds by definition was never prime habitat. But as more and more habitat is lost and more land is developed, it will soon receive an upgrade to critical habitat. Where I stood will always be there. That permanence means more to me than the goal of adding to my Life List of birds. I do not think that simply reading this will move many to become avid bird watchers. It is more to mention that there are many things to occupy your eyes and mind while on a walk outdoors. Birds simply give the walk a twist – sometimes an amazing twist.

Phil Boucher



Yellow-Billed Cuckoo Audubon



American Redstart Audubon

Hike Attleboro in the Springtime!



New signs pointing the way towards Hike Attleboro venues will greet spring hikers driving down Park Street! The first series of many signs for the Hike Attleboro program are now attracting outdoor enthusiasts towards the Richardson Preserve, Attleboro Springs, the Handy Street Conservation Area, and the Colman Reservation and Vaughan Forest. Other signs will soon go up to show the way to the Lawrence Preserve, Leach Wildlife Sanctuary, O'Donnell Preserve, and Larson Woodland. A walk on Attleboro's many trails allows us to celebrate the arrival of spring when March brings us longer and warmer days and brings nature out of its winter doldrums.



With Hike Attleboro, the Attleboro Land Trust, the City of Attleboro and the Audubon Society are continuing the push towards making Attleboro a "green" city which highlights nature as an attraction for residents and outsiders to a city with healthy ways to relax away from busy everyday life. After directional signs are put up towards the existing trails on open space wooded areas of the City, downtown hikes, connecting Robbins Park, the Kevin Dumas Boardwalk, and Balfour Park will also be part of the network. Kiosks and maps will guide hikers and explain the unique aspects of each site both historically and



about the wildlife and plants that now are features of areas where once farmland and factories were the prevalent landmarks.

An official opening of the trail network, with events such as scavenger hunts or guided walks that bring attention to the entire system of trails that Attleboro has to offer, is tentatively planned to take place this summer. More trails are still being explored and mapped on open space that are already owned by the City of Attleboro or managed by the Attleboro Land Trust on donated or preserved land. So get your hiking shoes on and plan to enjoy the wonders that nature brings to those adventurous enough to enjoy it!



Article by Brian Hatch

Photos by Massachusetts State Representative Jim Hawkins

Support the Attleboro Land Trust by becoming a member, making a tax-deductible contribution and/or becoming a conservation volunteer. Membership, contributions and volunteer sign-up 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.

Our Neighbor the Coywolf by Caitlin Bambery



Forest Wander

There is an animal that lives in Attleboro you may be hearing and seeing more of: the coywolf. Pat Saumweber, Attleboro Land Trust (ALT) member and inspiration for this piece, sometimes hears the coywolf's distinct "yip-yowl" howls from her home which abuts the Colman Reservation. No strangers to Attleboro, these mysterious creatures have been spotted on trail cameras and even seen strolling around suburban neighborhoods. Residents in the Steere St. area report seeing coywolves early in the morning and late at night. However, Pat notes that no one seems to be frightened.

Instead, residents are curious about their new canine neighbors.

Sometimes called coydogs, coywolves are a genetically different subspecies of the western coyote. After the eradication of wolves in the Northeast, western coyotes migrated into the wolves' former territories. There, they interbred with remnant wolf populations and feral dogs. Today, coywolves found in Massachusetts consist of about "60% coyote, 30% wolf, and 10% domestic dog," according to Massachusetts wildlife biologist Dr. Jonathan Way PhD. Larger and more muscular than their western cousins but smaller than the eastern wolf, coywolves can weigh up to 55 pounds. Wiley but faithful, coywolves live in small family groups consisting of a long-term bonded pair and their offspring. Their striking and unique coloring varies between blonde, reddish, dark-brown and, gray-brown.

Extremely adaptable, the coywolf range extends from Virginia to Quebec. From dens in the forest to the streets of New York City, coywolves thrive in rural, suburban, and urban environments. Their widespread success can be attributed to their opportunistic, omnivorous diet. Wild berries, grapes, apples, beechnuts, and even your garden vegetables, plus small mammals like rodents, rabbits, and cats are all on the coywolf's menu. With their larger teeth, stronger jaws, and more robust muscular bodies, coywolves hunting in packs can take down larger game like deer. Plus, these cunning creatures are not above eating roadkill or dumpster diving for choice items.

Coywolves are mostly nocturnal, prefer to keep a low profile, and pose an extremely low risk. Pat, who hikes the Colman Reservation frequently, reports that there's never been an incident and that it's "wonderful to be able to live with such wonderful creatures." This winter,

when you're out enjoying ALT trails, why not look for coywolf prints in the snow? Coywolf prints look similar to dog tracks, but there are some easy ways to differentiate the two. A coywolf print will be more oblong, oval-shaped, and compact. While less prominent, the two middle claws will be closer together and more forward than the rear toes. Finally, coywolf tracks tend to go in a straight line, while fido's will wander a bit more aimlessly.



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See ALT's new Instagram (@attleborolandtrust) for more useful tips and pictures!

Snowshoes, Smiles and Salamanders!

By: Evan Foster

Twelve snowshoes all set and ready to go just behind the Barrows' house on the Deborah and Roger Richardson Nature Preserve on Monday, February 15, 2021. Excitement and energy were emanating from the car of the Aaronson-Reynolds family as they pulled into the parking lot. The family of three girls, Ben, and Rachel were geared up for the winter weather and ready for the trek through the woods on their snowshoes. As quickly as they piled out of their car, they were ready with their snowshoes on. The excitement filled the air and carried them off on an exploration of the property that they had never visited before. The beauty of this natural area and the enjoyment in exploring it would soon become very apparent to them all.



Aaronson-Reynolds family getting ready to snowshoe on the Richardson Preserve

As the groups came and went, all of us had the overwhelming sense of appreciation for the area that we were occupying. Great memories were being created because of this protected area. One of the best parts of the Richardson Nature Preserve is the vernal pool that is located in the northeastern part of the property. These vernal



Spotted salamander spotted during the snowshoe event at the Richardson Nature Preserve

poools are essential for organisms like spotted salamanders that use it as a seasonal refuge. These are viable places during the spring and summer when many organisms occupy the pools. However, on this very special snowshoe walk, Alan Henry and his granddaughter found a spotted salamander while walking the trail. It is an unusual sighting as spotted salamanders are usually in brumation during the winter. What a great find that will stay with them as they remember their excitement through their newly obtained photos of the salamander.



Bella, Michelle, Jaymi, and Alan enjoying the snowshoe event

The importance of getting kids outside and experiencing nature cannot be over emphasized in conservation work. Nowadays, we hear the word “sustainable” a lot, and usually it is in the context of sustainable energies and/or practices. Sustainability is also at the core of conservation. When we think about the work that we need to do in Attleboro, we also need to think about how to ensure this work will continue when we are not here. How do we pass on our knowledge to the next generation to sustain the work that we are doing today? Well, this is how! We need to show the next generation the importance of these protected and natural areas by allowing for exploration. The only way to overcome climate change is by working together through a common interest. In order to establish that common interest, we need everyone to be invested in sustaining the one planet that we have. I certainly have hope because when I saw these kids smiling and laughing

as they worked to take a step in their heavy snowshoes, I knew that they were developing an appreciation for the natural world around them. So, let's all hold on to that hope by getting outside and exploring with the next generation of leaders!

Texas Weather Disaster

In mid February Texas was hit by a weather disaster that has resulted in the loss of life, frozen pipes, water boiling orders, huge electrical bills in the thousands, and much suffering. Warming in the Pacific due to climate change caused a northerly bulge in the jet stream that brought a massive cold front, snow, and freezing temperatures to Texas. Texas's power producing facilities, coal, gas, wind, and nuclear, are not built to work in this cold. Natural gas producing and pumping facilities were shutting down. Though Texas is a major fossil fuel producer, more than half of residential homes are heated with electricity and those heated with gas require electricity to operate. The huge demand for heat during the cold temperatures had caused the independent Texas electrical grid to fail, leaving over 4 million without electricity. Attempts to rotate electrical service through areas of Texas resulted in limited success since many power plants were out and Texas cannot get any power from the national grid. Though the weather has moderated, many are still suffering due to the damage to their homes and lack of potable water. FEMA has been activated and the area designated as a national disaster site.



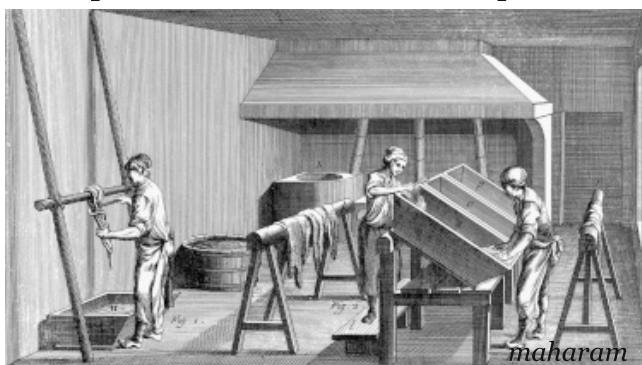
If you would like to donate to Texas relief efforts, one of the safest places to donate is at <https://www.redcross.org/>.

What's Happening on the Barrows' Farm in 1721

Winter is winding down and the last of the cold weather is upon them and food supplies are running low. They had been burning hardwood in the house to keep warm while in the saw/shingle mill they had been burning the softwood scraps. They have kept barrels of ashes. Benajah and the boys now spread the softwood ashes on the extensive "kitchen garden". This would raise the pH while the minerals would act as fertilizer and the darker color absorbed heat from the sun thereby warming the soil to allow for earlier planting. The kitchen garden would produce the first vegetables to replenish their food supplies while the fields would not produce a large crop until fall. They would welcome the fresh produce. The men and boys would start the "rock harvest" (June 2019 issue) before plowing.



Though the hardwood ash contains more lye and potash, the hardwood ash was reserved for making lye which was combined with animal fat to produce soap as well as other uses. Hardwood ash had many more uses such as flea, ant, and garden pest removal, sanitizing and deodorizing, presoak for tanning hides to make the hair come off easier, and even to help wounds heal. Bronze age man used wood ash tattooing to heal injuries. The colonists continued to use wood ash as an antiseptic for wounds. Science has proven that it does help wounds heal faster. Colonists



sometimes used it for leavening of baked goods where it would give a smoky flavor.

For Lydia and the girls, it was time to work on the flax to make linen thread. This was the last of the very labor intensive eight-step process. They spun the linen and tow fibers into thread. It was noted that by 1738 the Barrows had spinning wheels and looms in the house.

Flax: Food, Cloth and Paint from One Plant

Flax seed, linen, tow, and linseed oil all come from the flax plant. Today there are two main species of flax, one for seed and one for fiber. However, back in colonial times there was one common flax plant. From it would come the flax seeds that were pressed to make linseed oil, tow (the shorter broken fibers) used for coarser fabric, and the longer flax fibers that were used to make linen cloth. Linseed oil combined with chalk would make window putty and the oil combined with pigments would



become paint or if mixed with solvents would become a wood finish. While not normally eaten in colonial times, today, flaxseed is often used as both an animal and people food additive due to its omega-3 fatty acids.

The flax is planted and grown. Harvesting in colonial times was done by pulling out the whole plant by hand while today the taller hybrid plants are normally either pulled or cut with a special combine. Either way, you

wanted to get the longest fibers for spinning into thread. After harvesting it is rippled (after drying the flax was pulled through coarse combs to separate the seed), retted (soaked in a pond or stream to decompose the unwanted fibers), and dried. Then it is scutched (beating with a blunt wooden knife on a board or stump to break up the non-fibrous material) and then hackled by pulling it through successively finer metal combs to separate the fibers from the waste. The long strands were the best linen, while



short or broken strands, which were called "tow", were made into thread that was used for undergarments, work clothes, towels, and other ordinary cloth. The thread is stronger when wet than dry, dries quickly, has the highest tensile strength of any natural fiber and is cooler than other fabrics hence it is used in suits for hot climates. Today it is mostly replaced by cheap synthetics while most paper currency still has a certain percentage of linen, 25% in the U.S.

Cloning of a Black-Footed Ferret to Preserve Endangered Species

As part of a seven-year project, scientists at Viagen, a company that clones pet cats and dogs, working with Revive & Restore, a wildlife conservation organization, have successfully cloned an endangered Black-Footed ferret. They have also cloned another endangered species, a Mongolian Przewalski's horse. The Black-Footed ferret was cloned from the genes of Willa who died in 1988 and had cells frozen and stored at the "Frozen Zoo" run by San Diego Global. They have cells of over 1,100 species.

Elizabeth Ann will be kept at the Fish and Wildlife Service Black-Footed breeding facility at Fort Collins, CO for study. This successful cloning presents an opportunity to bring back extinct or endangered species. Maybe one day we will be able to go to a zoo and see a clone of a woolly mammoth or mastodon.



Updates, Comments, and Interesting Reading

Atmospheric tests in 2018 uncovered illegal CFC production in Eastern China. This production has now been shut down. The ozone layer has begun to heal itself.

From 1999 to 2019 the percentage of adult vegetarians has decreased from 6 to 5%. A vegetarian diet can help those with coronary risk factors and help prevent climate change. With a vegetarian diet it is more difficult to maintain balanced protein and mineral nutrition requirements than with a meat-based diet. Vegetarian meat substitutes, particularly fast-food options, are not necessarily better as they can contain higher amounts of sodium and saturated fat.

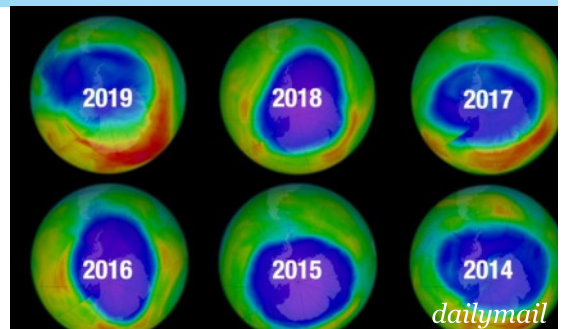
The new Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020 – 2025 has come out. Many scientists and organizations are disputing the recommendations as too political and not following the recommendations of the USDA scientific panel's over 800 page report.

The UK has achieved 60% of their entire energy production with wind power in August 2020.

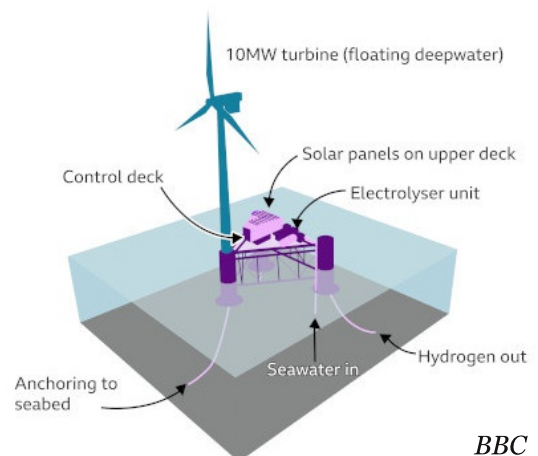
Thawing permafrost is releasing large amounts of ice forming particles. These particles cause ice to form in clouds, causing snow and rain to fall, prematurely dissipating the clouds. These clouds reflect the sun's rays to keep down global warming.

During the beginning of the pandemic, energy usage in the UK went down so much that the wind power generated exceeded demand. Now several companies in the UK and EU are planning to make offshore floating wind and solar powered facilities to produce hydrogen for vehicles and power plants. Hydrogen burns without releasing any CO₂. First salt water is desalinated with reverse osmosis and then an electrolyzer splits the fresh water into hydrogen and oxygen where the hydrogen is pumped to shore.

The Trump-era rule blocking California from setting emissions standards litigation is over. Auto manufacturers withdrew and accepted the California standards which are lower than the Obama-era regulations that Biden might impose. The Trump-era rule was 1.5% reduction per year. California standards are a 3.7% reduction per year until getting to 50 mpg. Obama-era reductions, which were originally prepared by Vice-President Biden, were a 5% reduction per year. General Motors has also said they will only be producing electric vehicles by 2035.



Plan for offshore production of hydrogen



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