

Upcoming Events - continued from page 1

teachings. Now we have persuaded him to share an early preview of a book he is working on titled *Marblehead's Emerald Necklace - The Origins of the Path* by giving a talk at our Annual Meeting. Dennis' photographs uncover artifacts from the first railroad to service Marblehead. As part of his talk, he will show how to find these artifacts when walking the former rail bed. Being an avid walker himself, and a lover of nature, he will also help us to see the many plants and signs of animals that one might encounter. An excerpt from the book is given in an article below.

Please join us at the Annual Meeting and think about sharing your thoughts and ideas for the future of open space and its use in the coming years.

Earth Day/Arbor Day: Saturday, April 28, 9:00 a.m. Early planning calls for planting native shrubs in Wyman Woods as noted further in this newsletter. A reminder will be published in the *Marblehead Reporter* and posted on *MHTV* as the date draws closer.

Farmers Market opens: Saturday, June 9. Be sure to drop by the Environmental Booth to see what is new and chat with those who can pass along information about Conservancy happenings.

October Event: October 2.

It seems like a long way away, but planning has already begun for an educational event in the Fall. A nature artist returns to share his experiences in roaming many natural sites of the United States.



The October, 2011 Abbot Library Gallery show was a big hit!

Treasurer's Report

Total operating revenues for 2011 were \$23,310 - almost \$3,000 more than budgeted. Members' dues, which have been relatively flat in recent years (perhaps reflecting the state of the economy) increased almost 10% to \$16,950 - an all-time high. We're very thankful for our strong membership. Expenses of \$34,015 were about \$6,000 over budget mainly due to several unplanned projects: a web site upgrade; printing 100 more "Discovering Marblehead" books; and helping to finance a butterfly garden at the Town's Hamond Nature Center.

The fair value of the Marblehead Trails Forever Endowment Fund was \$108,906 at year-end, reflecting a 4.6% decline during the year due to market losses exceeding the \$2,000 of new donations. No funds from the Fund were used for operations during the last year. The Fund is about 75% invested in equity funds and 25% in bond and money market funds.

Our budget for 2012 forecasts an operating deficit of about \$3,000. We are fortunate in that aggregate operating surpluses over the past years allowed us to absorb 2011's unusual operating deficit of more than \$10,000 and still end the year with net operating assets of more than \$40,000. The Conservancy continues to be in a sound financial condition for continuing operations and for facing the unexpected.

Marblehead Conservancy, Inc. Summary Financial Report

Statement of Operations January 1 – December 31, 2011

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Treasurer's Report continued. .

Membership Report

<u>Operating Income</u>	
Membership Dues	\$16,950
Contributions	3,752
Sales (books,t-shirts, etc)	2,417
Transfer from Endowment	-0-
Interest, Dividends, Other	<u>191</u>
Total Operating Revenue	\$23,310
 <u>Operating Expenses</u>	
Trails Projects	\$12,365
Education Projects	5,894
Office & Administration	3,307
Cost of Goods Sold	2,852
Insurance	3,029
Legal	3,071
Miscellaneous	<u>3,497</u>
Total Operating Expense	\$34,015
 <u>Operating Surplus (Loss)</u>	 <u>\$(10,705)</u>

**Statement of Condition
December 31, 2011**

<u>Operating (unrestricted) Assets</u>	
Operating Funds	\$ 40,315
Liabilities	<u>-0-</u>
Net Operating Assets	\$ 40,315
 <u>Restricted Assets:</u>	
Trails Endowment	\$ 108,906
Harbor Glade Grant	<u>15,893</u>
Total Restricted Assets	\$ 124,799
 <u>Total Net Assets</u>	 <u>\$ 165,114</u>

- Don Morgan, Treasurer

	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>
Members	280	269	237
Memberships	\$16,950	\$15,503	\$15,940

In 2011 both the number of members and membership revenue reached new Conservancy records. As conservation grants, both public and private, have become more scarce and the revenue from the sale of Conservancy goods, particularly *the Discovering Marblehead* book, naturally decline, memberships have increased in importance so that they now are more than 70% of the Conservancy's operating revenue. While we are pleased with the growth in membership revenue, the growth in the number of members is even more satisfying because it is the number of people interested and involved in the Conservancy's mission that will determine our long-term success.

We truly appreciate the support and generosity of our members and hope it will continue. If you have not already become a member of the Conservancy, we would very much like to welcome you and your support.

- Dick Marcy, Membership

Do we have your correct email address?

Our electronic newsletters go out about three times a year to those who have provided us with an email address. These publications are in addition to the paper newsletters mailed in February and September and are specifically intended to deliver news more timely to the seasons. Both types of newsletter eventually are added to our web site for all to read, www.marbleheadconservancy.org.

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Membership Report continued. .

Email addresses change from time to time and we need your help to catch up with the changes. If you wish to receive our electronic newsletters, please note your current email address for Conservancy communication on your membership form. As with all personal information provided to us, we promise to use your email address only for Conservancy purposes and will not share it with others.

Trails Committee Report

The Trails Committee continues to sponsor Trail Crews twice a week. A total of over 1,214 hours were expended in 2011, primarily at Seaside Park, but also distributed across all eight of our project areas. Over 550 tree and shrub seedlings were planted, twenty-two bags of trash were removed and nineteen cubic yards of wood chips were spread.

Major accomplishments this year were: 1) completion of the Phase I & II plans at Seaside Park – consisting of invasives removal, rerouting a trail and filling a muddy area; 2) clearing of the curved portion of the old railroad right of way “wye” connecting the Salem and Swampscott branches; 3) installing three new signs at trail entrances so that the public will be more aware of their existence; 4) completing Authors’ Grove – a redesigned entrance to Forest River across from Carna Road designed by landscape architect Larry Simpson to honor the authors of the book *Discovering Marblehead* and featuring six tupelo trees, a natural stone bench, a plaque, and several new shrubs; 5) supporting high school student Kathryn Sullivan in her internship program. We continue to monitor our three trail map dispensers at trail entrances and have decided to expand the total to ten. Each map dispenser has a laminated map showing where you are and a dispenser for letter-size maps printed on waterproof paper.

The Trails Committee’s Earth Day/Arbor Day events every year (Seaside Park in 2011) have contributed to the Town’s earning a “Tree City” designation from the state for nine years in a row.

Special thanks to our Committee member, all of whom contribute leadership to one or more projects enabling the few of us to get a lot done.

- Don Morgan, Trails Committee Chairperson

Mo Ashley, Bob French, Jody Howard, Fred Madio, Dick Marcy-Vice Chair, Joan McDuff, Don Morgan-Chair, Sandi Peaslee, Doug Perkins-Forest Ranger, Rich Thibedeau

Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee will present motions to be voted on by members attending the Annual Meeting regarding:

- 1) The Committee’s nominees for Trustees: incumbents Robert French, Jody Howard, Fred Madio, Richard Marcy, Donald Morgan, and Sandi Peaslee.
- 2) Officer Nominees: Robert French as President, Donald Morgan as Treasurer, and Richard Marcy as Secretary.
- 3) The maximum number of positions on the Conservancy Board of Trustees for the next year to be held at seven, which will allow the addition of one Trustee during the year as circumstances may warrant.

The Nominating Committee asks for those with a serious interest in the Conservancy’s mission to make their interest known. There is a great opportunity here to help set direction.

- The Nominating Committee

Open Space Planning

On January 12, 2012, the Marblehead Selectmen authorized the formation of an Open Space and Recreation Plan Update Committee, beginning a process slated to send a draft of an updated plan to the State for review and acceptance by June 30. Having a plan no more than five years old is a requirement for submitting proposals to the State for financial support of open space and recreation improvements. This will be the fourth update of a plan first filed in 1978. The most recent plan from Marblehead was updated in 1999 and accepted by the State in 2001.

The Open Space and Recreation Plan represents Marblehead's strategy to enhance and expand the existing open and recreational space and programs within the town. During planning, additional land that the town could acquire for open space and recreational purposes is identified. However, recognizing that Marblehead's centuries of development have left little open land subject to traditional open space planning, the plan looks for ways to increase the recreational and conservation value of existing town lands, and for other means of protecting the natural resources of the community

The Marblehead Conservancy supports this planning effort. The 1999 plan, in fact, provided the guidance for all the trails, education, and acquisition activities performed by our many volunteers and supported largely by memberships over the last ten - plus years. The work of volunteers, including scout organizations, students, town employees and private organizations has been a direct response to issues identified in the last plan. But, it is time to hear once again from the residents of Marblehead on their interests for the future of open spaces and recreation.

Public input began with an open meeting in the Abbot Public Library on January 23. The gathering of interest and ideas will continue, with much of this activity taking place during February. Survey

questionnaires have been mailed to interested organizations and Town Departments. Individuals wishing to speak to their use of Marblehead's open spaces and recreational services can do so by filling out and returning a personal survey form. These forms are available at the Abbot Library, the Community Center, and Abbot Hall. Forms may be returned at these sites or dropped in the red mailboxes at Abbot Hall or the Widger Road town offices. An electronic copy of the form is also available on Marblehead's web site home page (www.marblehead.org/).

In March, all of the collected information will be compiled and turned into lists of goals, objectives and action plans by the Recreation and Park Commission and the Conservation Commission. A first rough draft of the plan will then be shared with residents in an open public meeting near the end of March. April is given to finalizing a preliminary draft for a quick review by a state official. The final draft will be presented to the State by June 30.

We ask for everyone's support in providing input to this process.

- *The Trustees*

Earth/Arbor Day

While the remediation project at the site of the former Lead Mills off Layayette Street primarily involved privately-owned land, it also included a small portion of the town-owned Wyman woods Conservation Area. At the insistence of the Conservation Commission, the contractor restored the town-owned portion of the remediated area, to some extent, with the planting of two-dozen young trees. Walking along the old railroad bed, this town-owned area is easily identified by the newly-planted trees and their wire supports.

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Earth / Arbor Day continued. .



Remediation of the Lead Mills site followed alongside the old railroad bed into the Wyman Woods Conservation Area. Note the planting of young trees to the left of center in the photograph

The Trails Committee of the Marblehead Conservancy is working with the Conservation Commission to plant native shrubs as understory to the new trees in this area as part of an Earth/Arbor Day project. The shrubs were obtained in the spring of 2011 and first planted in the Conservancy's tree farm in order to let their roots develop. At this writing they are doing well and will be ready for transplanting by the end of April. Please join us on our celebration of Earth/Arbor Day!

- For the Trails Committee

Marblehead's Emerald Necklace

Excerpted from *Marblehead's Emerald Necklace - The Origins of the Path*, by Dennis Curtin:

“The ‘old abandoned railroad right-of-way’ through Marblehead is now a wonderful nature, hiking, biking, jogging, skiing, dog-walking trail commonly referred to simply as ‘The Path’. It meanders almost four miles through a large portion of Marblehead and

didn't just happen. It first came into being in 1839 when the first train connected Marblehead to Salem and expanded in 1873 when the Swampscott branch opened so riders could go directly to and from Boston without a detour through Salem. On its meanders through town it links some of our most beautiful conservation lands including Ware Pond, Wye Pond, Hawthorn Pond, Wyman Woods, The Pines and the Forest River. Because these natural areas are like jewels, the people who obtained them as forever wild conservation areas in the 1960s referred to them and their connecting path as Marblehead's Emerald Necklace (with all due credit to Frederick Law Olmsted). Thanks to those people we have one of the most interesting and enjoyable urban nature trails in New England.”



Winter on the Marblehead to Salem branch of the old railroad bed

- Author, Dennis Curtin

Seaside Park Work Continues

In January, the Recreation and Parks Commission agreed to a proposal for continuing the work of the Trails Committee at Seaside Park. Next steps are principally at the harbor end of the park. The work will include the addition of stepping stones and gravel on a particularly muddy length of trail near the harbor end of the park, grading and seeding with a hardy grass in areas prone to erosion, filling low

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Seaside Park Work Continues. .



A muddy section of trail at Seaside Park was reworked and improved by the Chris Pedersen Eagle Scout project

spots, and adding a sign and map dispenser at an entrance to the trails up slope from the ball field. As always, we welcome all volunteers who wish to contribute their labor to these jobs.

- For the Trails Committee

A New School Sign

With the mounting of one new sign, Marblehead tied an interest of the School Committee to one of the Conservation Commission. This all began with a request to both organizations from the Marblehead Conservancy's Trails Committee in 2006. The request was to allow a parcel of the former Jermyn Farm adjacent to the Village School to be used for the construction of a looping trails system that would include the conservation area known as Robinson Farm.

Students from the surrounding neighborhood had worn paths through both lands over many years. The request, then was simply to clean up and link these

paths, adding short sections to make two loops. The Village School was interested as the result would not only service those who used the paths to get to school, but also because it provided an opportunity to engage students with their natural surroundings. The School Committee approved the venture, asking that the Conservation Commission oversee any activity involving wetlands.



A sign goes up announcing part of the former Jermyn Farm as a Marblehead Public School conservation area.

The project was completed by this sign installation at the end of Byors Road. Many thanks to both Town organizations!

- For the Trails Committee

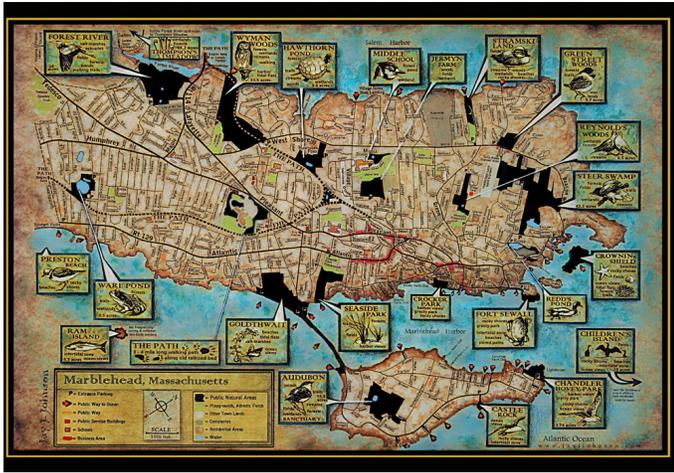
Education Committee Report

The Education Committee is planning another stellar event in 2012 as a follow up to our joint sponsorship with the Abbot Public Library of the wonderful talk on *Bringing Nature Home* by Professor Douglas Tallamy last October. This year, on Tuesday, October 2, the Conservancy will again collaborate with Abbot Library to offer a talk by Jay Johnson,

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Education Committee Report continued. .

familiar to many Marbleheaders for his beautiful artistic renderings of the maps in the book *Discovering Marblehead*.



Jay Johnson's map of Marblehead showing locations of spaces open to the public.

Jay's talk and slide show will include references to his 10,000 mile trip around the Natural spaces in the U.S., images of his paintings, photos of the Trail Crews in Marblehead and the importance of spending time in the natural environment. This talk will appeal to all ages, so mark your calendars and save the date. More details will appear in future newsletters and articles in the *Marblehead Reporter*.

- Sandi Peaslee, Education Chairperson

Help Needed

In 2011 the Marblehead Conservancy web pages (www.marbleheadconservancy.org) were re-formatted to allow access and site roaming to anyone with a smart phone or computer tablet. As a part of this change, a Google map was added to help users locate Marblehead's conservation areas.

What's next? We would like to locate or develop and offer an "ap" that could give users a means of

identifying the many trees and shrubs found in the town conservation areas. So far we have found no "aps" sufficiently specific to New England, let alone Massachusetts or Marblehead. We may be missing something. If anyone has an idea, please let us know. Our web site has contact information in the upper right corner of the home page. We would be most appreciative!

What is it?



Examples of this object are readily found in winter time when the leaves are off the trees. Do you know what it is? (answer below)

Identifying what is found in the woods is something we can all do. Recently we ran across a way for anyone who can connect to on-line "blogs" to receive occasional tidbits of information of nature in New England. If interested, visit <http://naturallycuriouswithmaryholland.wordpress.com/author/naturallycuriouswithmaryholland/> and sign up.

Answer: The growth around the twig is a gall. It is caused by a fungus introduced, in this case by a parasite. The small round holes in the surface of the gall just above center and toward the upper left of center is the escape hole of the parasite.