

**The following excerpt from the Conservation Commission's section of Harvard's 2013 Annual Report summarizes the Land Stewardship Subcommittee's major activities this year.**

The Land Stewardship Subcommittee (LSS) remained active in 2013. The effects of the damaging late October winter storms of 2011 and 2012 were still in evidence in 2013 with abundant slash on the ground and some limbs still dangling from trees. Efforts to keep trails open started in earnest in early February when a major winter storm dubbed "Nemo" brought heavy snow; trailwork continued sporadically through the year. The clearing and remarking of trails on Vesenska to Black Pond was a major effort as was the removal of a half dozen large white pines blown down across a trail in a field at Holy Hill.

Phil Knoettner, working with seniors in the Town's tax credit program, continued the construction and repair of large wooden conservation land signs and Phil repaired the educational signage on the Dancing Grounds of Holy Hill. More of the signage developed in 2011 was put up around town and LSS also helped to update Harvard's trail information for the Montachusets Regional Trail Inventory.

Mowing of the fields on town conservation land went smoothly this year and all fields were hayed or mowed by early October. A special thank you is given to the neighbors of the Holy Hill "White Birch Field" and of the meadows on Powell who have taken on the annual mowing and maintenance of these scenic spots. Researchers from Harvard Forest determined that the population of Baltimore Checkerspot butterflies on the Williams land increased three-fold in the year after a modified protocol of mowing the fields and wet meadows here was put in place.

The invasive plant control project moved into its second year. The clearing of brush and trees infested with invasives on the Powell land was completed and in spring the disturbed portion was raked and seeded with buckwheat. During the summer, invasives on Powell, Clapp-Scorgie, Williams and Great Elms were judiciously treated with herbicide. In May, Ted Elliman of the New England Wildflower Society gave a well-attended talk at Volunteers Hall on managing invasives in your yard. In November, Wendy Sisson gave a talk at the fall conference of the Massachusetts Association of Conservation Commissions on Harvard's invasive plant control project.

We would like to recognize and thank the members of the Land Stewardship Subcommittee: Jim Adelson, Bob Benson, Pam Durrant, Dave Kay, Phil Knoettner and Wendy Sisson and note that the LSS welcomes new members and volunteer assistance.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy Sisson, Chair, Land Stewardship Subcommittee