

The following excerpt from the Conservation Commission's section of Harvard's 2014 Annual Report summarizes the Land Stewardship Subcommittee's major activities this year.

The Land Stewardship Subcommittee (LSS) remained active in 2014. While the effects of damaging winter storms in the past 6 years were still in evidence, the winter of 2013/14 did not take such a toll on the town's forests in spite of delivering a good quantity of snow. Consequently, the work of keeping trails open was greatly reduced compared to recent years. The major trail project of the year was preparing the town's newest conservation property, Hoch, for use. Two bridges were built under the leadership of Phil Knoettner and trails were cleared and blazed. Assistance from DPW staff who delivered construction materials to the site and helped with chainsaw work was greatly appreciated. The property was introduced to the public in November with an ambitious 5 mile hike from Bolton's Bowers Springs led by Jim Adelson and enjoyed by some 30 hikers from Harvard and Bolton.

Mowing of the fields on town conservation land went smoothly this year and all fields were hayed or mowed by early October. Researchers from Harvard Forest determined that the population of Baltimore Checkerspot butterflies on the Williams land has increased three-fold since a modified protocol of mowing the fields and wet meadows here was put in place.

The invasive plant control project moved into its third year, and results have been very encouraging. Work continued on Clapp-Scorgie where swallowwort and Japanese barberry were treated in the spring and summer and a dozen common buckthorns, posing as apple trees in the orchard there were removed in October. Follow-up work, predominantly to control Asiatic bittersweet, was conducted on the Williams land and the field off Murray Lane.

We would like to 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