



Trail Markers

Weston Forest and Trail Association

Dedicated to the preservation and enjoyment of open space in Weston

WestonForestTrail.org

WFTA Annual Meeting — Sunday May 4, 2025, 4 PM

Join us for our 69th Annual Meeting and a special presentation by Francie Von Mertens on *“In the Midst of Nature: Intimate looks at the wild world around us.”* The meeting will be held at the Scout House on School Street. More information is available at WestonForestTrail.org.

Based on her “Nature Almanac & Calendar,” Francie Von Mertens will share insights into the wild ones around us, plants and animals, and the wonders awaiting out the window, out the door, and farther afield.

During decades writing about the natural world, offering field trips and workshops, some questions recurred: What do we need to know about the natural community of plants and animals that we not-so-wild ones share? And, how best to do the learning?

Her answer: A basic literacy delivered through a daily turn of an almanac page.

We’re learning that immersion in nature is good for us, which leads to another question: How can we give back to the wild world in return? Von Mertens will explore that question, too, along with many stories of mutualism — plants and animals interconnected for mutual benefit.

Beguiled by the wild ones, she is eager to lure others into their world and its care.



Francie (Hunt) Von Mertens grew up on the Boston Post Road in Weston, exploring old roads through the woods and the railroad tracks that now are a paved Rail Trail, skating on Foote’s Pond, fishing Hobbs Brook before it was dammed to become Hobbs Pond. A wonderfully “free range” childhood.

She is active in land conservation and stewardship with the Harris Center land trust (Hancock, NH), NH Audubon, and her hometown, Peterborough, NH, conserving exceptional habitat for the wild ones. As she often writes, “We’re all in this together.”

Weston Forest and Trail Association has been looking after Weston’s trails and open spaces since 1955. We are grateful for the legacy of fields and forests left to us by previous generations of generous land stewards. Please continue this legacy by [joining us today \(WestonForestTrail.org\)](http://WestonForestTrail.org) to ensure that this gift of natural spaces endures for those who will follow us on Weston’s trails.

Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.

— Albert Einstein

Land Stewardship

Does it seem like a few more trees fall across our Weston Trails each year than the year before? Kudos to the WFTA Chainsaw Brigade (the “Red Vests”), a hardworking group of volunteers, for keeping our trails clear.

In 2024 Weston hired two college students, Alexa and Gillon Lim, to keep our trails in good shape over the summer growing season. Each member of the crew is supplied with a cordless string trimmer, saws, loppers, bug repellent and a blue vest. If you see a blue vest on the trails this summer, stop by to say hello.

Working with the Weston Conservation Department, WFTA has been hosting monthly Stewardship Saturdays. We build boardwalks, remove invasives, reroute trails, spread mulch and socialize. If you are interested in being on the email list, drop us a line at WestonForestTrail@gmail.com. WFTA also partners with local schools, colleges and the Boy Scouts to tackle trail improvement projects.



Volunteers on a completed bogwalk



A Red Vest clearing a blockage



Our summer crew clearing invasives from Hobbs Pond

Walks, Talks and More

Since the 1950s WFTA has hosted a walk on the first Sunday of the month to a different park in Weston. In 2024 we also hosted special walks with the Council on Aging and the Junior Rangers. Mark your calendars for December 21st for our next dawn Winter Solstice walk. We also sponsored talks by Michael Pappone, local birder extraordinaire, and Jane Newhouse, founder of Newhouse Wildlife Rescue. We held our first spring party at Green Power farm and our second fall party at the Josiah Smith Tavern. Our hope is to grow our educational and social programs in 2025 and beyond.



Fall COA walk at College Pond



A Junior Ranger crew



Highland Forest walk with Brian Donahue

Get Involved!



Are you interested in helping out with trail maintenance? There are several ways you can contribute. One is to join WFTA and the Weston Conservation Department on the third Saturday of every month for Stewardship Saturdays. No experience necessary. Another is to “adopt a trail” in your neighborhood.

Other volunteer opportunities include: co-leading trail walks, drafting articles for our website and social media channels, organizing activities for families, and helping to organize talks and events.

Contact us at WestonForestTrail@gmail.com to find out more about how you can help maintain Weston’s 100 miles of trails and 2000 acres of conservation land.

2024 Treasurer's Report

Cash (and Equivalents) Income		Expenses		Donations	
Donations	\$139,747	Trail Maintenance	\$8,027	Naturalist (\$35)	76
Miscellaneous	\$4,291	Office and Office Admin	\$12,359	Explorer (\$70)	38
		Insurance & Accounting	\$2,716	Guardian (\$100)	174
		Stewardship	\$15,360	Steward (\$250)	55
		Outreach	\$11,919	Trailblazer (\$500)	32
		Miscellaneous	\$5,154	George Bates Society (\$1000+)	36
				Other	8
Total Income	\$144,038	Total Expenses	\$55,535	Total Donors	419

Approximately 10% of the 4200 households in Weston are members, closely matching previous years. As in 2023, our trail maintenance expenses are lower as we moved from paid maintenance support to relying more on volunteers. At the same time, we have increased our expenses on administration and property monitoring as we move in the other direction, from volunteers to paid support. The George Bates Investment Fund did well in 2024. Surplus operating income was transferred to the Fund as in previous years. The Fund can be used to cover expenditures, for example land purchases. The full Treasurer's Report is available at WestonForestTrail.org. The Board of Trustees continues to be very appreciative of the generous financial support given by the WFTA community.

Kristin Barbieri	Victoria Gifford	Bill Stevenson	President: Joel Angiolillo
Nancy Bates	Samantha Kirby	Craig Tanny	Secretary: Gail Palmer
Ted Cavan	Mary Ann Pappanikou	Jenna Vettel	Treasurer & VP Stewardship: David Banks
Diana Chaplin	Jennifer Potter	Peter Wheeler	VP Trail Maintenance: Chris Jylkka
John Connolly	Bernie Scozzafava	Ann Wiedie	VP Programming: BJ Grattan
Lelia Elliston	Tom Seeman		VP Outreach: Eli Mather
			Former President: Meg Kelly

Weston Forest and Trail Association, Inc. — Annual Membership Dues

Name: _____

Address: _____

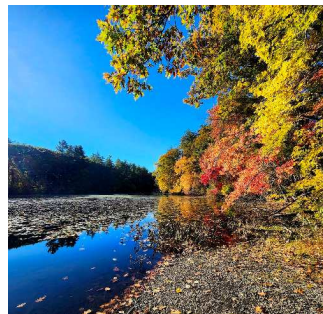
Email: _____

Select a membership level: \$35 Naturalist \$250 Steward Other _____

\$70 Explorer \$500 Trailblazer

\$100 Guardian \$1000 George Bates Society

Find yourself in Nature



One touch of nature makes the whole world kin. — Shakespeare



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We love hearing from you and hope you'll join us!

