



OPACUM

LAND TRUST

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SPRING 2009

From the President's Desk

As the forest transitions from a limited palette of browns and grays to a full spectrum of color, the one hue that catches my eye in early May is green. Everywhere I look, there are thousands of shades of green: the green-blue color of the lichens on rocks and trees, the natural fluorescence of rapidly expanding leaves that will soon fill the canopy, the yellowish-greenish plumage of warblers, the bright thorax of the green darner, the leaves of ephemeral wildflowers, and green algae growing on developing wood frog egg masses in the vernal pools.

Green has come to mean more to us these days. Green energy offsets our use of fossil fuels. Green cleaning makes our homes less toxic. Kermit the Frog once sang, "It's not easy being green." Kermit, you were wrong! This isn't that complicated, although with webbed feet it may be hard to do simple things like turning off lights you are not using. Some of the electricity we use every day is derived from fossil fuels, and burning fossil fuels accounts for 85% of carbon dioxide emissions released. Turning that lamp off does make a difference.

On Saturday afternoons there is usually one monster of a traffic jam on the Mass Pike, westbound and exiting at Sturbridge. All those cars, all those emissions, all that carbon dioxide coming from our own community, but what can we do? Burning a gallon of gas adds about 19 pounds of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. How can we offset that?

Opacum Woods comes to mind, along with nearby Wells State Park. These are two protected areas that are full of trees, green trees. Those trees absorb carbon dioxide as they grow, offsetting some of the carbon released when we burn fossil fuels. If we really want to offset our local emissions, we've got more work to do.

By making a contribution to Opacum you are protecting and taking care of forested land. You are also supporting educational programs, like the upcoming Woods Forum on May 28, for landowners of forested parcels to help them to make good, informed decisions about their woods. Massachusetts is 62% forested. About $\frac{3}{4}$ of that is owned by private landowners. By working cooperatively with these landowners, we can make a difference.

COMING EVENTS

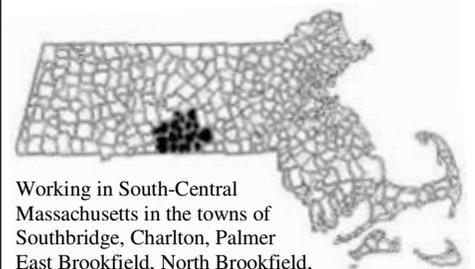
See details inside.

Sunday, May 17, 8:00 am:
Perennial Plant Sale
Southbridge Town Common

Thursday, May 28, 6:00 pm
Woods Forum
West Brookfield Town Hall

Thursday, June 25, 5:30 pm
Wild Edibles Hike
with Russ Cohen
at the Broz & Simon Farm,
Brookfield

It's Spring!
Go for a walk!



Working in South-Central
Massachusetts in the towns of
Southbridge, Charlton, Palmer
East Brookfield, North Brookfield,
West Brookfield, Brookfield, Brimfield,
Monson, Warren, Holland, Sturbridge & Wales.

News & Notes

from 2009 Annual Meeting...

The recipient of Opacum's first "potato and corn" award was **Scott Benoit**. Scott is the eyes and ears at the Claire Birtz Sanctuary. He keeps the trails looking good, fills the kiosk with trail maps, and tries very hard to keep the people who ride their ATV's illegally at the sanctuary at bay. Thanks, Scott!

Thanks to Bill & Nancy Cormier for donating a door prize, a \$25 Gift Certificate to The Bird Store & More in Sturbridge. The lucky winner was **Al Smith**, who immediately cashed in his winnings for bird seed.

The new senior center in Holland is a great location for an event such as our annual meeting. We would like to thank the **Holland Senior Center** and **Paul Gillis** for his great hospitality.

Brimfield Trail Committee's Source to Sea Trail Run ...

Opacum Land Trust was invited to set up our 'wares' at the **Brimfield Trail Committee's** First Annual BTC Source to Sea 5K Trail Run 1 Mile Walk on Saturday, April 25th. This event was part of a larger effort of the Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor and the Source to Sea Expedition project, and all proceeds from registrants went to fund the BTC's reclamation project. The course was a smooth gravel trail along the scenic Quinebaug River, which was enjoyed by more than 60 runners and walkers.

Upcoming Woods Forum

You are invited to attend a Woods Forum for local landowners to discuss issues relating to owning and managing your woods.

Many of us don't think about our woods on a day-to-day basis, except to enjoy the privacy, scenery, and the tranquil environment to live in and raise a family. However, at some point in every landowner's life, questions about what to do with our woods arise, such as: *Should I harvest the woods on my land? How much are my woods worth? How do I address ice storm damage on my property? What will happen to my land in the future?*

The Woods Forum will be held in the Great Room located in the West Brookfield Town Hall, located at 2 East Main Street (Route 9) in West Brookfield, on **Thursday, May 28th, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.** Please let us know if you plan to attend by calling Jay at 978-248-2118 or emailing info@nqpartnership.org. A light dinner will be provided. For more information, visit www.opacumlt.org/events.html

Wild Edibles Hike with Russ Cohen, Thursday, June 25th 5:30 - 8:00 pm at the Broz & Simon Farm on Rice Corner Road, Brookfield

Join Russ Cohen, expert forager and author of *Wild Plants I Have Known...and Eaten*, on an early evening ramble over the Broz & Simon Farm to learn about at least two dozen wild edible plant species. Pending favorable weather conditions, several wild edible mushroom species may be encountered as well. Keys to the identification of each species will be provided, along with information on edible portion(s), season(s) of availability and preparation method(s), as well as general guidelines for safe and environmentally-responsible foraging.



2009 – 2010 Directors & Officers

Jennifer Ohop	<i>President</i>
Leslie A. Duthie	<i>Vice President & Clerk Pro Tempore</i>
Jennifer V. Morrison	<i>Treasurer</i>
Alan F. Smith	<i>Director</i>
Howie Fife	<i>Director</i>



2009 Perennial Plant Sale Sunday, May 17th

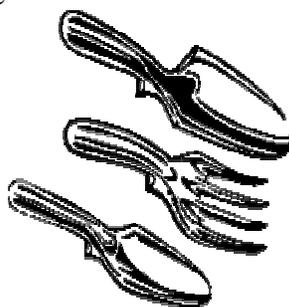
8:00 am – Noon, Southbridge Town Common

May is the month that all gardeners adore, even those who don't spend all winter huddled up with the

plant catalogs. Each year the Land Trust has knowledgeable volunteers, landscape designers, growers, and professional gardeners on hand to answer your gardening questions. This year's special focus is edible plants. Not only will there be heirloom tomatoes, eggplant, peppers and squash, but we will have a variety of berry plants and even grapes for wine-making!

The plant sale will feature a variety of plants for wildlife as well, including the beautiful American cranberry (*Viburnum trilobum*), and scarlet elderberry (*Sambucus pubens*) with lustrous leaves and red berries; it is a native shrub that is under-used in the garden. As always, there will be plenty of native and

garden perennials for sale. "We have the right plants for your garden at a great price and for a great cause" according to Jen Ohop, president of the Opacum Land Trust.



"We try to focus on native plants for the home gardener," says Leslie Duthie, plant sale coordinator for Opacum. "Native plants are easier to grow, tolerate our unusual weather, and attract native birds and butterflies." Butterfly bush, lavender, columbine, and ferns will be on sale as well.

The plant sale is called "perennial" because Opacum tries to offer perennial plants that come back year after year, much like our plant sale, and also our friends and supporters who come back to shop each year. All proceeds benefit the Opacum Land Trust.

**Contact: Leslie Duthie 413-267-4859
or e-mail lduthie@opacumlt.org**

Help Wanted:

Opacum is looking for a trustworthy, organized and responsible volunteer with access to a computer to be our clerk. Responsibilities include attending monthly board meetings, typically held the 4th Thursday of each month from 6:30 – 8:30 pm, taking minutes, and distributing them to the directors. No knowledge of conservation is necessary, but this is a great learning opportunity.

Lost Village of East Brimfield

Our February presentation on the **Lost Village of East Brimfield** was extremely well attended, in fact, it was a standing-room only crowd of about 70, and some folks had to be turned away! Special thanks to Larry Lowenthal and Merl Bassett for a great show; to the Hitchcock Academy for once again hosting our program; to the Army Corps of Engineers for allowing Opacum to reproduce the DVD about East Brimfield; and to ARF Video for a job well done. The East Brimfield DVD was a big hit. Almost immediately the 50 copies we had were sold (thanks to Bob Clark and County Line Hardware for helping with that).

The Lost Village has piqued the interest of the community, and we do not want to disappoint, so Opacum is currently working on two programs which will be offered during The Last Green Valley's Walktober celebration: An encore presentation of **The Lost Village**, and a chance to tour what remains at the site (above water). Stay tuned, more details will be available soon.



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Opacum Land Trust is a non-profit conservation organization. Founded in 2000, our mission is to conserve, protect and preserve, in their natural condition, the lands and waters of South Central Massachusetts for the benefit of present and future generations. All donations are fully tax deductible, annual memberships start at \$25.

For more information, please visit our website:
www.opacumlt.org



2009 Perennial Plant Sale
Sunday, May 17th
8:00 am – Noon
Southbridge Town Common
at the rotary intersection of routes 131 & 169.

**Come early for the
best selection.**

This year the special focus is on edible plants -- heirloom tomatoes, eggplant, peppers and squash, and a variety of berry plants and even grapes for wine-making! Other selections include native wildflowers, grasses, shrubs and perennials.

Landscape designers, growers, and professional gardeners will be on hand to answer all your gardening questions.

**Contact: Leslie Duthie at 413-267-4859
or e-mail lduthie@opacumlt.org**