

# 2021 Open Space Annual Report



Brake Hill

Fiscal year 2021 was a busy one for the West Newbury Open Space Committee (OSC). Here are the highlights.

**The OSC cosponsored two land acquisition requests** for \$175,000 in Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds with Essex County Greenbelt. One was for preserving 50 acres on Coffin St. This acreage is key to the goal of connecting Riverbend with several parcels to the west, creating a much larger network of trails. Thirty acres will be owned and managed by Greenbelt and 20 will be permanently preserved as open space but privately owned. The town unanimously voted to approve this request at town meeting in May 22, 2021.

**The other request helped fund Greenbelt's acquisition** of the Artichoke River Woods conservation area. The transaction closed on March 31, 2021. These 38 pristine acres on the Artichoke Reservoir will help protect West Newbury's wells, link to the Withers Conservation Area, and could eventually connect to Maudsley. The purchase price was \$985,000 and required multiple funding sources including \$530,000 from the state.

**The OSC lecture series** included presentations by renown entomologist Doug Tallemey in May called "Nature's Best Hope" and a field walk in June by pollinator specialist and biologist Hannah Mullally.

**In his webinar, Tallemey** makes his strong case for native species and a "grassroots approach" to conservation. More than 500 signed up for the May webinar and 281 attended. The presentation can be found on at [https://youtu.be/k\\_JRm\\_j72ik](https://youtu.be/k_JRm_j72ik). Also visit West Newbury Wild and Native ([wnwildnative.org](http://wnwildnative.org)) for more about the critical importance of native species.

**The OSC worked with Wild and Native** to bring Mullally to narrate a walk on several town fields. The idea was to advise the town on how to develop

management and mowing strategies for town-owned fields and meadows. The goal is to balance ecological concerns with the demand for passive recreation. Many constituencies made the walk, including DPW Director Wayne Amaral and representatives from the Select Board, ConCom, OSC, Riding and Driving Club and Essex County Greenbelt. After the walk, the Select Board approved creation of a group to develop management strategies for the fields.

**At town meeting on May 22, 2021, residents voted** to authorize a \$30,000 request in CPA funds from the OSC for the engineering and permitting for an All Access trail at Mill Pond. Unfortunately, we did not receive a matching grant from MassTrails, but we can reapply for it and pursue other grants. The project is proceeding under the leadership of former OSC member and current Parks & Rec chair Brad Buschur.

**In June, we welcomed** Graham Bacheller and Kathy Feehery as OSC associate members and said goodbye to Wendy Reed who assumed her position as a member of the Select Board.

Visit:  
[wnewbury.org/open-space-committee](http://wnewbury.org/open-space-committee)



Respectfully submitted,

*John Dodge*

John Dodge, chair