

**THE WOODBRIDGE PARK ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
WOODBRIDGE, CONNECTICUT  
FOUNDED IN 1928

**ANNUAL LETTER 2007**

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EDWARD MAUM SHEEHY

Dear Friends,

2007 was another watershed year for the Woodbridge Park Association, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Our 21-member Board of Directors teamed with The Woodbridge Land Trust, The Trust for Public Lands, The State of Connecticut, the Regional Water Authority, the Town of Woodbridge and scores of residents to assist in purchasing and protecting 36 acres formerly part of Fred Shepherd's farm on Litchfield Turnpike in Woodbridge. Fred's daughter, Joan Eicher was generous enough to work with all these entities to preserve an important part of her father's farm for open space and conservation. This property, now known as Shepherd Farm Park, is a crucial link in the Blue Trail from Clark Road to Dillon Road and beyond to Sperry Falls. The potential for development of this land was high and this unprecedented partnership with so many groups demonstrates how important this particular property is to the town of Woodbridge. Former Woodbridge Park Association President Rich Forselius and WPA member Frank D'Ostilio deserve much credit for spending almost three years working to acquire this property.



The Regional Water Authority acquired 22.7 acres of this ridge parcel in 2005. After reaching a tentative agreement, the Woodbridge Park Association quickly partnered with the Woodbridge Land Trust to develop a fundraising strategy to offset the need for Woodbridge taxpayer dollars. As open space in Woodbridge becomes increasingly scarce and therefore more expensive, the taxpayers cannot be expected to bear the whole burden of preserving land. The Woodbridge Park Association's role as a private, non-profit landowning entity is becoming more important to preserve what little open space is left in our town.

The purchase of the Shepherd Farm ridge property was truly a team effort in so many ways. Initially, the WPA and the Woodbridge Land Trust each agreed to contribute \$30,000 of their own privately raised funds toward the purchase, with the goal of raising a matching amount from private donations. Peter Cooper and Jim Bilotta from the Land Trust were instrumental in accomplishing this goal. The WPA and Land Trust then turned to Tim Northrop from the Trust For Public Land to assist us in applying for an open space grant from the State of Connecticut and to help with our fundraising efforts. Tim's grant writing expertise and fundraising prowess enabled us to secure \$264,000 in State funds as well as raise nearly \$60,000 from individuals in less than 5 months! We received so many generous donations from residents committed to preserving open space.

On behalf of the WPA, the Land Trust and the town of Woodbridge, I thank all of you for your support. I must mention two of our large donations whose generosity was the cornerstone of our campaign. Susan Matheson & Jerome Pollitt donated \$5,000 to start off our fundraising efforts. Susan, a WPA member and past president, literally paved the way for so many other donations. Soon after, we received a donation of \$10,000 from the Rothberg family, owners of Laticrete International. These major donations clearly encouraged so many others to support this cause. In the end, 60% of the cost of this property was paid by either private donations or a state grant. By supporting the WPA efforts, residents free up town tax dollars for other uses, including additional open space purchases. Your support of our efforts is vital to our maintaining current open space holdings and acquiring future land as open space.

On that note, I would like to follow up on what was reported in last years Annual Letter. In late 2006, the WPA finalized our acceptance of 9.4 acres of land so generously donated by Elaine Glass in memory of her late husband, attorney Joe Glass. This property is adjacent to our Alice Newton Street Memorial Park. Over the years, donations like Mrs. Glass' have enhanced the park in the center of our town. We greatly appreciate this memorial donation.

Maintenance activities in park properties continued throughout the year. We conducted another successful workday at our Alice Newton Street Memorial Park property this spring. This workday occurs annually near Earth Day, so please let us know if you are interested in assisting us with future workdays. Park Superintendent Win Hubbard, Assistant Superintendent Michael Walter and Director Bob Fries have overseen maintenance throughout the park. We have also been re-blazing trails where necessary. The Alice Newton Street Memorial Park is the preminent hiking area in the town of Woodbridge.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank my fellow Officers and Directors for their dedicated stewardship of the Alice Newton Street Memorial Park and the generous vision of the Park Association's founders, as well as their energetic efforts in moving toward preservation goals. I am also grateful to attorney David W. Schneider for his wise and expert guidance in the increasingly complex issues surrounding open space preservation. As per the bylaws of the

WPA, we elected new officers to serve for 2007. Our new Vice President is Dr. Carrie Swigart and our new Treasurer is Michael Burt. Sarah Davison will continue as Secretary and I will continue as President. I want to thank our outgoing officers, Ron Hedberg and Karen Hluchan for their commitment and dedication to the WPA. I will sadly note that Karen Hluchan has stepped down from the Park Association Board after serving for 25 years. Karen's presence will surely be missed. I am happy to welcome three new officers to our Board. We welcome Jim Urbano, Jack Rochette and Craig Percy, who bring many valuable skills as well as great enthusiasm to our Board.

It is with great sadness that I must report the passing of Paul Konwerski. Paul lost a valiant battle with cancer on July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2007. Paul served as a director for many years and was past President of the Woodbridge Park Association. Paul's courage was visible in his participation in the Relay for Life held at Amity High School June 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>. Paul was out there walking to support the American Cancer Society's efforts just a few weeks before his passing. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family.

#### Boy Scout Update

We continue to work closely with the Boy Scout Troops in Woodbridge and would like to thank Scout Anthony Minnitti for his tremendous effort in completing his Eagle Project early this year. Anthony constructed a boardwalk along our Eastern Boundary trail over 120' in length. This boardwalk was necessary to get through some rough and wet areas along this trail. Anthony reused a great deal of existing lumber to extend the boardwalk and make this trail much more accessible. We greatly appreciate his hard work and that of his fellow scouts and scout leaders.





### Harvest Hike

Park Secretary Sarah Davison led the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Harvest Hike last October 18th. More than 60 members of the Beecher Road School community attended, including Superintendent Guy Stella and Principals Carol Bequary and MaryLou Torre, along with Park Association members, parents and a multitude of Beecher Road students. Special thanks go out to Sarah who put in so much time organizing the Hike.



### Racebrook Tract

The WPA supports the town's acquisition of the Regional Water Authority's 181-acre Race Brook Tract properties in the town of Woodbridge. The Town of Woodbridge is accomplishing this acquisition in three phases. The Woodbridge Park Association is on record as supporting additional funds allocated in the annual town budget proposals for fiscal years 2005, 2007, and 2009. The Town of Woodbridge concluded its purchase of Phase II of the Racebrook Tract property located on the Woodbridge/Orange town line last December. This parcel, formerly owned by the Regional Water Authority, consists of 66.5 acres of open space land in Woodbridge. The third and final phase of the purchase should be concluded by December 2009. Phase III consists of 52.6 acres and the town has already secured a state open space grant in excess of \$450,000 to help offset the cost of this last phase. The Woodbridge Park Association strongly supports the town's purchase to preserve this large, unique parcel adjacent to 230 acres of open space preserved by the town of Orange. Open space is essential for passive recreation, for conservation, for preserving natural forestland, for ecological study and for quality of life issues for residents.

### Other Grant Initiatives

We continue to be active in joining other supporters of open space initiatives in Woodbridge to encourage the Town to devote additional funds to the acquisition and preservation of open space.

We have increased our grant writing knowledge and applications to attempt to obtain funds from sources outside your generous donations.

Director Virginia Schneider has been working diligently in assessing grant opportunities and applying for government and foundation grants. We have received our first independent small grant from the state of Connecticut to enhance educational and recreation activities at the Alice Newton Street Memorial Park. The Trust for Public Land is also assisting us; we are grateful for the help provided by Tim Northrop, State Director. I personally want to thank Jinny for all her hard work in pursuing potential grants for the WPA. We need your assistance and especially generous donations to help us continue to preserve open space in Woodbridge, while there remains undeveloped land in private hands. Please support the need to preserve open space and donate generously to us this year. Please also consider us in your estate planning; we are ready to assist with this. We have a finite period of time to acquire additional properties; as there are very few parcels remaining in Woodbridge. Keep this in mind when you consider your tax-deductible donation in the enclosed donation envelope; remember we function solely on the voluntary contributions from Woodbridge residents and a few corporations. The Park Association also gratefully wishes to acknowledge the essential support through donations of in-kind assistance from several companies. We encourage all company matching gifts; please provide details about your company's gift program.

The Woodbridge Park Association was incorporated on October 4, 1928 and on January 14, 1929, the Board of Directors, consisting of eight members, was elected. Records indicate that the latter date has since been viewed as the founding date for the purpose of marking anniversaries. We believe the Woodbridge Park Association is the fourth oldest land trust in Connecticut according to the listing maintained at the Convocation of Connecticut Land Trusts. From our Articles of Association recorded in the Woodbridge Land Records on November 21, 1928, the Park Association has the following purposes:

“To acquire by gift or purchase lands within the town of Woodbridge and to hold the same for any or all of the following purposes: to establish such lands as a bird refuge and for the preservation of birds, fish and other animal life, and of trees, shrubs and plants; for the planting and care of trees in accordance with the principles of scientific forestry; to build roads and paths therein and to make accessible to the public any historic locations therein; to establish its holdings as a park for public use and recreation, in accordance with such rules and regulations as it may adopt...”

We encourage you to visit our website at [www.woodbridgeparks.org](http://www.woodbridgeparks.org). We provide downloadable trail maps and other items of current interest.

Please walk in the Alice Newton Street Memorial Park frequently and encourage others to enjoy all the fabulous forestland in Woodbridge. I especially invite you to hike some of the lesser-used trails. Feel free to contact me at any point at [president@woodbridgeparks.org](mailto:president@woodbridgeparks.org). We sincerely welcome your support and active involvement in the dedicated work of the Woodbridge Park Association.

Best wishes,

Chris Dickerson  
President 2007

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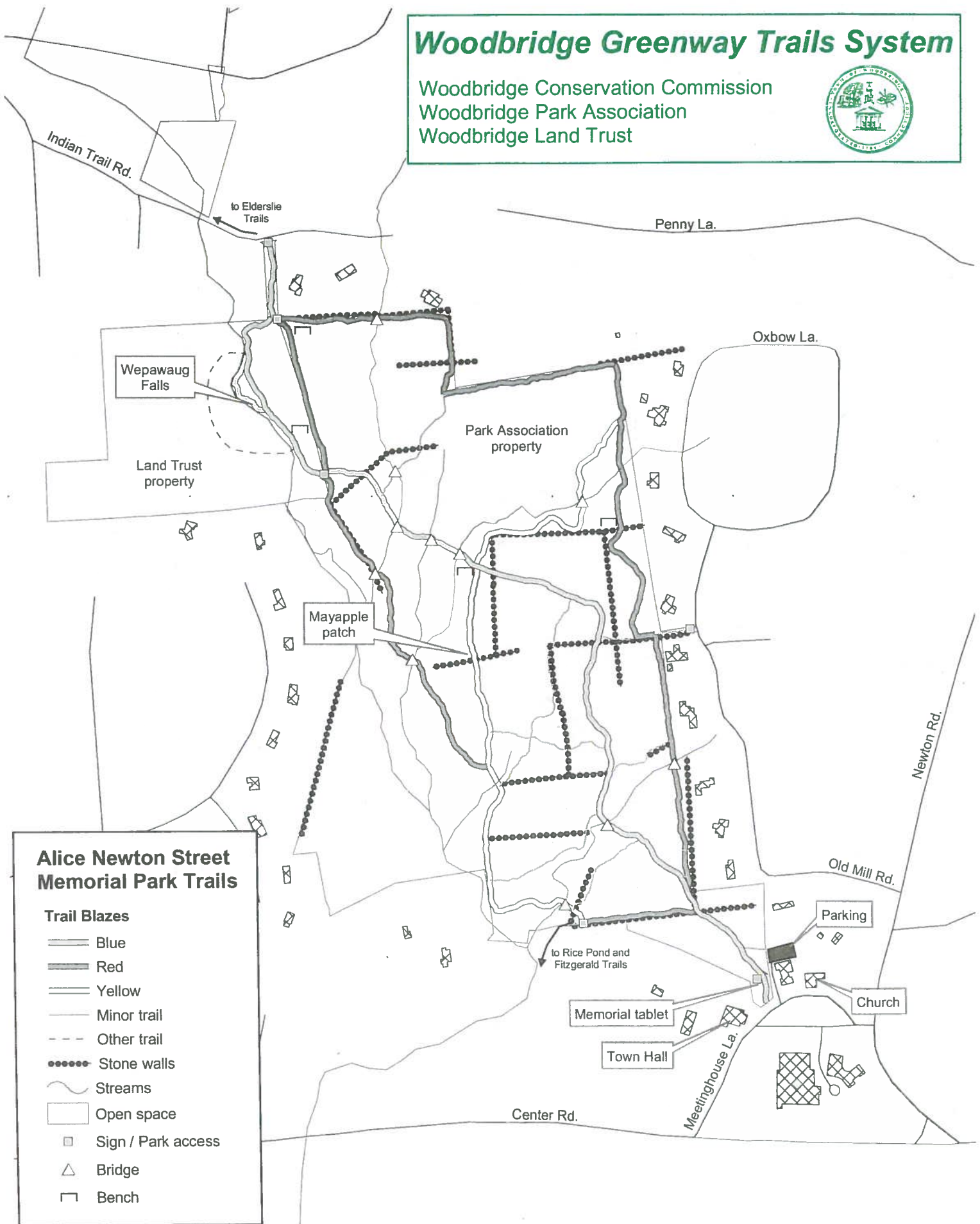
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# Woodbridge Greenway Trails System

Woodbridge Conservation Commission  
 Woodbridge Park Association  
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Trail delineations compiled by Regional Water Authority - May 2006  
 Parcel lines provided by Town of Woodbridge  
 Other data compiled with 2006 digital orthophotos provided by SBC