



Judy Record Conservation Fund

Stewardship of the Natural Landscape

Trustees: Roger Wrubel, *Executive Director* • Eugene Record, *Treasurer* • Andrea Lukens, *Mass Audubon*

Judy Record Conservation Fund 2020 Annual Report-

In 2020, the Judy Record Conservation Fund (JRFund) awarded 5 new grants totaling \$48,806. Three of the projects were at the Lone Tree Hill Conservation Area (LTH) in Belmont, one at Habitat also in Belmont and one project at Wellington Park in Arlington.

The Fund began the year by writing to the conservation commissions in Belmont and neighboring communities as well as to two private non-profit organizations that might have projects that could fulfill the Fund's mission of protecting and improving conservation land. In 2020 we visited and documented progress at each of the project sites, awarded the five grants and installed plaques on 10 benches placed at Clay Pit Pond, in 2019. Below are brief updates on the 5 new projects funded in 2020 and one ongoing project that was postponed in 2020 due to the Covid pandemic.

1. Education and Land Stewardship Internships, Habitat, Belmont (\$16,474): Habitat Education Center and Wildlife Sanctuary internships: In 2020 Mass Audubon's Habitat Education Center and Wildlife Sanctuary was awarded a grant to fund two internships one for environmental education and one for land stewardship at the sanctuary. Since education programming was suspended at Habitat in March 2020, due to Covid restrictions, the education internship was unfilled and those funds (\$8,270) went unspent. Renata Pomponi, Director of Mass Audubon's Metro West Hub, has requested the remaining funds be used for a land stewardship intern in Spring 2021.

The land stewardship internship was split between Adrine Kaligian and Ian Briggs, under the supervision of Sandra Vorce, Habitat Property Manager. The interns learned about all aspects of caring for Habitat's six goats and worked with volunteer goat tenders to browse the goats around the meadows, targeting areas with invasive plants. The interns monitored the sanctuary boundary, replacing signs and reported encroachments, conducted wildlife observation studies, repaired and constructed erosion control berms, and worked on trail and garden maintenance projects. The interns utilized all of the hours allotted in the grant.

Each intern submitted an essay on their experience at Habitat (Appendix A).

2. Wellington Park and Mill Brook Revitalization Project (Phase III), Conservation Commission, Arlington (\$20,000). A 2.7-mile linear park along Mill Brook in Arlington was first proposed in 1977. At one time, there were nine mills and seven millponds along the brook, which flows eastward from the Arlington Reservoir to Lower Mystic Lake and is part of the Mystic River watershed. Wellington Park (1.8 acres) is managed by the Arlington Conservation Commission and is part of the envisioned Mill Brook linear park. A master plan for the project was developed in Phase I. During Phase II a flood retention basin was constructed for flood storage and slow release, invasive weeds blocking the brook from view were removed and the bank stabilized, and a universally accessible boardwalk was constructed. Phase III proposes construction of a permeable, universally accessible path from the boardwalk to a bridge connecting the park to the neighboring community, additional invasive weed removal and native plantings and installation of benches for the boardwalk. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$280,000. Funds were requested from the JRFund and one other private foundation to supplement funding requested from the Arlington Community Preservation Committee. In February

2020 the JRFund approved a \$20,000 request for invasive plant removal, native plantings and benches, with the understanding the money would be released once the CPA funds were approved. The Fund has been notified that the CPA grant was approved for FY2021 and we have now processed the grant check.

3. Ecological Management Plan for Lone Tree Hill, Belmont (\$3,750): The Fund provided one-half the cost of an ecological management plan commissioned by the Land Management Committee for Lone Tree Hill (LMC). In May 2020 Parterre Ecological Services presented the report, *Land Management Plan: A Narrative for Invasive Plant Management and Native Plant Restoration for Lone Tree Hill*, to the LMC. ([Invasive Plant Management and Native Plant Restoration Plan](#)). The Plan includes guidance for managing the invasive species at Lone Tree Hill, and it is hoped will ultimately guide the stewards of the conservation area in creating a healthier, more diverse ecosystem for visitors to enjoy.

4. Forest & Meadow Restoration at Lone Tree Hill, Belmont (\$4,962.50)

In June 2020, the JRFund agreed to pay one-half the cost of an invasive species remediation project to be conducted by Parterre Ecological Services beginning in 2020 and continuing at least through 2021. The target parcel at Lone Tree Hill, designated A1 (inside the red-dotted area on photo, below), is 2.4 acres of forest and shrubland, on the west side of the Great Meadow extending towards the LTH parking lot on Mill Street. The LMC considered clearing and treatment of A1 a priority because it contains the densest patches of invasive species and because it sits in the middle of a primary viewshed.



In Fall, 2020 the area was mowed and mulched using a forestry mower. Asiatic bittersweet vines crawling up the trunks of trees were cut by hand. Native trees — ash, hickory, black cherry, hazelnut, sugar maple, dogwood, bigtooth aspen, sumac and catalpa — were flagged for preservation and possible seed collection for a subsequent replanting effort. In December 2020 Parterre invoiced \$6,525 of the contracted total of \$9,925. The rest of the contract will be completed in 2021. (Photo below: Parterre, LMC and JRFund working meeting at LTH, winter 2020 in cleared area A1. Note the stone wall in the background, which was previously hidden by invasive weeds.)



5. Great Meadow Management, Lone Tree Hill, Belmont (\$3,619.50)

The JRFund agreed to share half the \$7,239 cost of remove of woody invasive low value volunteer trees from the Great Meadow. The contractor is Tree Specialist who will also prune, and cable stabilize the “lone” hickory in the center of the meadow and large aged maple to the west. Tree Specialists has invoiced and received payment of \$3,481 (JRFund share \$1,740.50) with the remaining \$3,758 to be completed in 2021.

Ongoing Projects: Lone Tree Hill (LTH), Belmont Tree Planting: The JRFund was prepared to fund the fourth year of planting white pine trees in the Pine Allee at Lone Tree Hill. However, the project was suspended in 2020 because of the Covid pandemic. On positive note, the trees planted between 2016-2019 are generally doing well, with the exception of some deer browsing on the growing tips of some saplings.

Financial Report January-December 2020

Activity:	Amount
Beginning Balance 1/1/2020	\$1,012,573
Gifts Transferred to Endowment :	\$875
Dividends & Interest :	\$5,059
Endowment Management Fees:	\$811
Transfer for Expenses: (see list)	-\$26,024
Market Change:	\$122,614
Ending Balance 12/31/2020	\$1,115,908

Total for Judith K. Record Endowment	
Endowment	1097083
Fund 3	18825
Ending Balance 12/31/2020	1115908

**Payments made on Behalf of the Judith K. Record Fund
From 1/1/20 to 12/31/20**

Date	Vendor	Amount
2/29/20	Grant from JKR for Habitat internshi	\$ 16,474
5/26/20	TOWN OF BELMONT-LAND MANA	\$ 3,750
6/30/20	TREE SPECIALISTS INC.-CUST 36	\$ 1,741
9/1/20	TREE SPECIALISTS INC.-CUST 45	\$ 1,213
10/31/20	TREE SPECIALISTS INC.-CUST 45	\$ 346
12/31/20	ROGER P. WRUBEL*-STIPEND	\$ 2,500
TOTAL EXPENSES thru 12/31/20		\$ 26,024

The Judy Record Conservation Fund began 2020 with a balance of \$1,012,573, on January 1. The Fund had expenses of \$26,024 as follows: The Fund transferred \$16,474 to Habitat for internships; paid the Town of Belmont \$3,750 for the Ecological Management Plan completed by Parterre Ecological and \$3,300 for work ecological management work completed at Lone Tree Hill in 2020. Roger Wrubel received a stipend of \$2,500 for administration of the Fund June-December 2020. The Fund received gifts of \$875 during 2020. With dividends, interest and market gains from investments the Fund ended the year with a balance of \$1,115,908, on December 31. The Fund has outstanding payments of \$20,000 due to the Arlington Conservation Commission for the *Wellington Park and Mill Brook Revitalization Project (Phase III)* and a \$3,313 payment to the Town of Belmont,

for work completed but not invoiced by Parterre Ecological on the *Forest & Meadow Restoration Project at Lone Tree Hill.*

The Judy Record Conservation Fund (JRFund) was established in 2001 by family, friends, and members of the McLean Open Space Alliance and the Belmont Land Trust, who wished to honor Judy's contributions to land conservation. The JRFund provides grants to support protecting, maintaining, restoring, and acquiring conservation lands in the Town of Belmont and the neighboring communities of Lexington, Cambridge, Waltham, Watertown and Arlington. In addition, the Fund considers projects, within conservation lands, that further the development of multi-use paths, off road hiking and biking trails and universally-accessible trails. The JRFund will also provide support for internships and fellowships, with recognized conservation organizations, fostering the next generation of land conservation leaders.

This Annual Report was prepared by Roger Wrubel, Executive Director and reviewed and approved by fellow trustees of the JRFund, Eugene Record and Andrea Lukens.

Appendix A: Habitat Internship Reflections, Summer 2020



Internship Reflection - Ian Briggs

It has been an enriching experience to spend the past three months at Habitat Education Center and Wildlife Sanctuary in the role of Land Steward Intern. After just several hiking visits in the fall of 2019, I felt a connection that inspired me to want to get involved as a volunteer. Volunteering acquainted me with staff and encouraged me to want to learn more about Habitat's objectives, and that eventually led to applying for this role.

As Sandy told me when I first started, baseline priorities would be to make sure that goats, guests, and trails are cared for. On the surface, this seemed straightforward, but what I learned over time is that these three categories are all intricately connected. Goat care included leading volunteers to cull and work alongside our companions in the meadows. Habitat's most renowned team members also served as a good segue into educating the public about our meadow restoration efforts, which included, but are not limited to, controlling invasive plants, protecting desirable shrubs and trees, maintaining a diverse and graded vegetation height to erase a hard line between the meadow and surrounding woodland, sowing new, native grass and flower seed into soil cavities, and making observations about areas "mowed" by goats versus those that were not. And then the trails, which serve as the vessels through Habitat for both animal and human movement, required attention in the form of signage and fencing, managing overgrowth, identifying and controlling erosion, compaction, and root surfacing, and preserving trailside (or sometimes on-trail) wildlife habitat. This work had the ultimate goal of creating trail accessibility and safety for all.

I was lucky to work with and learn from four outstanding team members: Sandy Vorce, Erika Harimoto, Becky Nesnevich, and Adrine Kaligian with Sandy educating us on the best ecological management practices and the reasons for those practices. I was humbled at being selected and trusted to fulfill the expectations of this grant-funded position, and I am grateful to the Judy Record Conservation Fund for sponsoring this opportunity.

Internship Reflection - Adrine Kaligian

I have been incredibly fortunate to return to Habitat as a Land Steward Intern for a second summer, especially considering the events of the past six months.

Beginning work in late June, it was clear that things were going to be extremely different compared to last summer, but I was looking forward to seeing the changes. Without summer camp taking place, a usual day on property staff looked vastly different - no preparing the building and stocking the bathrooms, no educational activities with the goats in their playpen, and no fluorescent parking vests in the afternoon. While the change in the status quo was strange at first, time was quickly filled due to the lack of volunteers and reduced staff. Every morning, the goat herd went to the meadow and ate fresh vegetation for at least an hour or two – sometimes more -- which improved their diets and overall health. To cope with fewer volunteers and social distancing guidelines, goat “pods” were formed to work with staff in keeping the goats healthy and safe in the mornings. Leading pods most mornings meant delegating tasks and deciding what jobs could be done based on the number of volunteers and their skill levels, which made every day a little different.

Despite the incredibly strange circumstances of the summer, my time at Habitat has been wonderful. I enjoyed leading new projects, working with and teaching new volunteers, and solving problems when they arose. Most of all, I loved spending my summer outside, with a community of people who love Habitat as much as I do.

