

Acton WildAware Beacon article

August 25, 2016

By Paula Goodwin

Acton WildAware Environmental Education Program Encourages Community Participation

Save the Date! **September 11, 2016 2pm to 4pm**

Acton WildAware will celebrate its first year and kick off its second year with a party at NARA Park! Come meet a Mass Audubon Drumlin Farm wildlife visitor, play games, have a slice of delicious cake and see our large map of Acton showing the locations and observations of our June, 2016 Bioblitz participants!

In our second year, The Beacon will continue to publish our WildAware articles, which are archived on the Acton Land Stewards website:

<http://www.actontrails.org/index.php/wild-aware-articles/>. Click on Educational Articles.

2015-2016 article topics:

Nov 2015 Common Wildlife Road Crossings in Acton

Dec 2015 Be Wild Aware! Fall to Winter Transition

Jan 2016 Wetlands Protection for Wildlife Habitat

Jan 28, 2016 Mice, Woodchucks and Skunks, Oh My!

Feb 11, 2016 Be ready for the Bioblitz in June!

Feb 26, 2016 Successful Reintroduction of Wild Turkeys and Fisher

March 10, 2016 Opposums and Striped Skunks – Nocturnal Wildlife Neighbors

March 3, 2016 Salamanders

April 24, 2016 Acton Bioblitz 2016 planned for June 17th – 18th

April 28, 2016 Have a Healthy Respect for Coyotes and Foxes

May 12, 2016 Getting Ready for Acton Bioblitz 2016

May 26, 2016 Snakes and Turtles Commonly Seen in Acton

June 9, 2016 Acton WildAware Bioblitz 2016

June 23, 2016 Bees, Butterflies and Hummingbirds

July 28, 2016 Little Brown Bats

August 11, 2016 Beavers

Our Acton WildAware Facebook page posts photos of wildlife species seen in Acton, and shares links to stories and events sponsored by local conservation organizations such as OARS and Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife. Residents are encouraged to comment on posts and submit their own wildlife photos. Acton WildAware is on Instagram, too!

Many thanks to A-B PIP STEM for donating a Browning Trail Camera which will be employed at various conservation lands to capture wildlife images both day and night. The photos will be posted on our Facebook page and included in our seasonal photo collage posters that are displayed at the Memorial, Citizen's and Sargent public libraries. Acton-Boxborough PIP STEM sponsors fall and spring walks on led by Natural Resources staff. During the Nature Walks, they refer to the resource Acton, Naturally Nature Guide to Indigenous Species to find local, seasonal flora and fauna. AB PIP STEM sells the nature guides as a fundraiser for \$6.00. To purchase, contact www.actonpip@gmail.com.

Wildlife Habitat Protection is one of the interests of the Wetland Protections Act, administered by the Conservation Commission. From the Town of Acton website: The Conservation Commission promotes and develops the natural resources and seeks to protect the watershed resources of the Town. Its primary work consists of review of the site plans which are in or within 100 feet of wetlands. The Commission makes a decision on such a development based on compliance with State and local wetland laws. The Conservation Commission also develops bylaws, rules, and regulations regarding conservation issues for the Town. When necessary, it works in conjunction with other Town boards and neighboring town boards to coordinate efforts that are of a broader or regional nature. The Commission is also in charge of a conservation and passive outdoor recreation plan consistent with the town Master Plan. When possible, it purchases and manages land for passive recreation and informs the public about these through maps and brochures.

The Acton Land Stewardship Committee, sponsored by the Acton Conservation Commission are a group of volunteers who work to maintain trails on Acton Conservation parcels. Residents of all ages and abilities who would like to join in and contribute their time will find the contact information, volunteer form and current opportunities on the website. Students who enjoy spending time outdoors and are planning volunteer hours for the upcoming school year will find more information on the ABRHS Volunteer website.

The Acton Open Space and Recreation Plan (2014-2021) can be found at: <http://doc.acton-ma.gov/dsweb/Get/Document-50377/2015%20Acton%20OpenSpace.pdf>. This guide is an inventory of Acton's natural resources and includes relevant maps and plans. Open Space and Recreation Plans are coordinated by the Conservation Commission and is a prerequisite for securing Self-Help monies for open space acquisition. Opportunities for the Town to purchase open space are presented and voted on at Town Meetings.

We are looking forward to seeing you at the Acton WildAware Party on Sunday, September 11, 2016, 2pm to 4pm!

Paula Goodwin is a member of the Acton Conservation Commission who introduced WildAware with Acton Natural Resource Assistant Bettina Abe. WildAware is a program sponsored by the Town of Acton Natural Resources Department that began in September, 2015 and will continue through the summer of 2017. The purpose of WildAware is to educate the community about the existence and habits of wild creatures, and the goal is increased community awareness of shared habitats. For information, call 978-929-6634 or send email to nr@acton-ma.gov.