Notes from Walden Woods

The Farm at Walden Woods
By Matthew Burne, Conservation Director

Columbus Day weekend in Walden Woods was stunning: bright sunshine, cool, crisp air, and throngs of people out enjoying the beautiful weather and pouring over rows of pumpkins searching for just the right one...

In recent years it has become increasingly difficult to find local farm stands offering that quintessential New England fall experience of hunting for the perfect pumpkin and going home with some cider and apple pie. Farms have been disappearing and the number of roadside farm stands has been declining precipitously — a story we’ve been hearing repeatedly throughout September and October from visitors to the Farm at Walden Woods’ farm stand.

On Labor Day weekend, we reopened the roadside stand that marked Pine Tree Farm for decades, until it was closed a couple of years ago as the owners began considering selling the property. The Walden Woods Project purchased the farm to help protect the adjacent 50 acres of conservation land that we own and to preserve the picturesque vista that the farm provides at the western gateway to Walden Woods. Shortly after purchasing the land, we realized the importance of keeping the land in active agricultural production, and decided to reopen the farm stand for the fall harvest.

A Writer’s Retreat to Walden Pond for Students at Thoreau School
By Susan Frey, Education Director

After spending the school year teaching about ancient China with a focus on Chinese nature poets, the fourth grade teachers at the Thoreau School in Concord, MA wanted to make a local connection to the nature writer Henry David Thoreau and his experiences at Walden Pond. They asked the Walden Woods Project education staff to create a special program tailored to meet their students’ needs. We organized a Walden Pond field trip and then facilitated a poster project artistically showcasing the students’ poetry, nature observations and nature drawings.

On a beautiful spring day in May, the entire fourth grade from the Thoreau School came to Walden Pond for the nature retreat. The field trip began at the replica of Thoreau’s house at the Walden Pond State Reservation. There, students imagined what life was like for Henry during his two-year stay. Then we walked to Thoreau’s house site. Along the half mile long path by the pond, we asked the students to observe plants in flower, such as the pink lady slipper, the minnows swimming in the water, ripples on the surface of the pond, a hawk soaring above the pond, or whatever caught their eye. Once we arrived at Thoreau’s house site, we shared stories about how Thoreau faithfully kept his journal and how he spent his days and nights while he lived by the pond. Later in the day, the students shifted their focus to writing nature poems under the guidance of Steven Ratiner who spearheaded the Chinese Poet’s Retreat curriculum unit at the school.

“Live in each season as it passes….” — Henry D. Thoreau, Journal, 23 August 1853
write to you today as October is coming to a close and I am reminded of many a pleasant visit to Walden Woods in the autumn. Few places on earth surpass the splendor of New England in the fall. In fact, I’ve just been looking at a few photographs of the Farm at Walden Woods bedecked with pumpkins, gourds, corn stalks and the other accoutrements of the fall harvest. The fields are filled with families choosing their own special pumpkins for their Halloween jack-o’-lanterns, and I can’t help but feel a deep sense of relief and satisfaction knowing that, together, we have saved this iconic farm at the border of historic Walden Woods from the threat of development.

As we all do our part to decrease our carbon footprints, supporting community-based farms is an important step toward reducing the distance our food travels while providing a source of fresh, locally-grown produce. I trust that those of you who live near the Farm at Walden Woods will stop by during the 2009 growing season. All proceeds from the sale of produce will be reinvested in the Farm and in the conservation of land in Thoreau’s Walden Woods. We need your continued support for the operation of the Farm, as well as for the other compelling initiatives of the Walden Woods Project, so I hope you will make a generous year-end donation.

Your gift will also support our organization’s robust education programs designed for high school teachers and students. In this time of unparalleled environmental challenges on a global scale, Thoreau’s message has never been more important or more relevant. The Walden Woods Project is in a unique position to apply Thoreau’s fundamental principles to addressing the worldwide conservation and social reform challenges of the 21st century by equipping the next generation with the background, information and commitment they will need to meet these challenges.

Our World Wide Waldens program operates on an international scale. It involves high school students throughout the United States and around the globe in a web-based environmental stewardship program that empowers young people to find their Waldens — places in need of care and protection — in their own communities. At a time when global warming and other environmental concerns weigh heavily on the minds of our youth, World Wide Waldens invites them to reflect on their environmental ethic, make a positive difference in the world, and connect to other students and leaders who share the same concerns and convictions. Piloted in the United States, Chile and Pakistan, the World Wide Waldens program will soon launch in other countries across the globe.

This past summer, the Walden Woods Project welcomed 21 high school teachers from 9 states to the Thoreau Institute to engage in a week-long professional development seminar exploring place-based curriculum opportunities in the study of nature and home place. These teachers will develop their own curriculum based on Thoreau’s philosophy, which includes social awareness, environmental literacy and a strong sense of community. They will reach thousands of students during their professional careers. With sufficient funding, we plan to offer this program at various intervals year-round.

Last but not least, your support will help us continue to care for the most comprehensive Thoreau research collection in the world, housed at the Walden Woods Project’s Thoreau Institute. This invaluable public resource (accessible on site and over the Internet) requires the highest level of conservation. It is our objective to build the collection so that it continues to be current and comprehensive. Our recent acquisition of the earliest extant Thoreau letter is an important and exciting addition to our library.

In closing, I want to express my deepest appreciation for your friendship and enduring support, and to convey my warmest wishes to you and yours for a happy and healthy holiday season with peace and prosperity in the New Year.

Sincerely,

Don Henley
Founder/President
The Farm at Walden Woods

(continued from page 1)

The Farm at Walden Woods is located along Route 2, near Sudbury Road, in Concord MA, and is seen by thousands of commuters every day. Our organization purchased 9 acres of farm fields and wetland from the Ammendolia family, who had owned and farmed the land since 1928. This parcel directly abuts the land on Fairhaven Hill that is protected by the Walden Woods Project, including Bear Garden Hill, the first endangered site acquired by our organization in 1990.

As one of the most highly-visible agricultural landscapes in Concord, the Farm at Walden Woods is a valuable asset to the town’s rural character, and a strong reminder of the region’s agricultural history and connection to farming. By keeping this land in agricultural production, the Walden Woods Project is contributing to the growing local food movement and to the larger goals of reducing the carbon footprint of the foods we eat.

We grew a variety of summer crops, including tomatoes, hot and sweet peppers, zucchini and summer squashes, and herbs. While renovations to the farm stand were ongoing, we began selling produce from the Ammendolias’ 1918 Ford Model T wagon that was used to drive the harvest to Boston’s Haymarket in the 1930s. We produced some of the sweetest corn imaginable, which was harvested just as we neared completion of the farm stand. The building was an existing garage in disrepair that was included in the purchase of the farm land. We made a very modest investment in re-siding the building with ship-lap pine that we are letting weather naturally, and built new doors and windows in a classic barn style. As the pumpkins and winter squashes ripened, we transitioned to the fall harvest, and officially opened the farm stand over Labor Day weekend offering decorative gourds, hardy mums, and locally-grown apples, along with cider and apple pies and wild honey produced here in Thoreau Country.

Revenue from the sale of produce is reinvested in the Farm at Walden Woods and also supports the conservation of additional land in historic Walden Woods. We appreciate your generosity and patronage and look forward to seeing many of you during next year’s growing season.

“We noble work is plowing, with the broad and solid earth for material... It comes pretty near to making a world.”
— Henry D. Thoreau, Journal, 28 March 1857

The Farm at Walden Woods was among 20 exhibits in the Homegrown Village at Farm Aid 2008 Presented by Whole Foods Market and Organic Horizons.
First Annual WWP Scholarships Awarded
by Juliet Trofi, Assistant to the Executive Director

This year, the Walden Woods Project established two annual scholarships for local high school students intent on furthering their education for a career that is relevant to the mission of our nonprofit organization. There were over 100 applicants. Working with the scholarship committees in Concord and Lincoln, the WWP gave $2,500 each to Marissa Eve Wiegel of Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School (LSRHS) and Molly DeGuglielmo of Concord-Carlisle High School (CCHS) to pursue their college education.

Marissa spent this past summer working in the Thoreau Institute library as a Walden Woods Project intern. Jeff Cramer, Curator of Collections, who supervised her work, deemed her to be among the best interns he’s ever worked with. She is now at Smith College. Marissa said, “Working at the Thoreau Institute was definitely a unique experience. I learned more about Thoreau than I had ever learned in school. As the father of the modern environmental movement, Thoreau was, in many ways, far ahead of his time; and I feel that today, more than ever, his life and lessons are pertinent to our consumer-driven society.”

Molly DeGuglielmo, a National Honors Society and honor roll student, went to Clark University in Worcester, MA, where she is pursuing her studies in education and earth sciences. She said she is “grateful . . . lucky to receive this scholarship. It is a great honor and an incredible opportunity.”

The WWP is pleased to support these extraordinary young graduates from Lincoln and Concord, and looks forward to presenting the scholarships annually. Students at CCHS and LSRHS, as well as students at private schools in Concord, who are interested in applying in 2009 should contact their local scholarship committees through their schools.

A Writer’s Retreat to Walden Pond for Students at Thoreau School

(continued from page 1)

Retired Fourth Grade teacher and Walden Woods Project staff member, Christine Conner, who coordinated the program said, “It’s so important for students to make these kinds of local connections when studying distant cultures.” As we developed this program, we focused on making the program relevant to fourth graders.

Back in the classrooms during the last few weeks of the school year, the Walden Woods Project staff helped assemble the students’ nature observations, research, poems and drawings into a final poster project. Each class chose a theme connected to nature along the Assabet River. They chose the Assabet River because the river flows behind the Thoreau School and it has become the school’s outdoor classroom for nature study. The school has also recently opened a nature trail that leads from the school yard down to the river.

The topic for Mrs. Dillon’s class poster was An Alphabet of Animals of the Assabet River. Each student researched, illustrated and wrote a poem about one animal, ranging from common flicker, damselsflies, crayfish, skunk, and water snakes. They then wrote poems about the creatures applying the skills and techniques that they had learned from their study of ancient Chinese poetry.

The topic for Mr. Glenn’s class poster was invasive plants of the Assabet River. Students came up with the clever title of “Bully Plants” because they take over the land, water and sunlight, crowding out the native plants. One goal of the poster was to help people in the community identify the invasive plants, such as Norway maples, garlic mustard, oriental bittersweet, burning bush and common buckthorn, many of which grow in backyards and natural areas throughout town. The students also learned that these plants, becoming common in the river and surrounding woods, come from around the world, including the southeastern United States and as far away as southeast Asia.

The topic of Mrs. Erickson’s poster was to compile excerpts from each student’s nature journal. Students then illustrated their journal entry with a detailed nature drawing. In the spirit of Thoreau, each week the class spent time by the Assabet River recording their thoughts and observations. No matter how cold or rainy it was, the class braved the conditions in order to keep an accurate journal throughout the year. The poster illustrations display the seasonal changes of the fall though the spring and all types of weather conditions.

Once the students’ artwork and writing was complete, it was turned into a large-format poster for each class. The Walden Woods Project provided enough copies of the posters to have them displayed in the classroom, school hallways, and at several locations around the community. This helps redistribute the childrens’ learning, and provide greater impact for the projects that they do in the classroom. At a time when many young people do not have sufficient opportunities to spend time in nature, the students at the Thoreau School had a chance to use the outdoors as their classroom. No doubt, Thoreau would have applauded their work.

“...we are all schoolmasters, and our schoolhouse is the universe. To attend chiefly to the desk or schoolhouse while we neglect the scenery in which it is placed is absurd.” – Henry D. Thoreau, Journal, 15 October 1859
The year has many more seasons than are recognized in the almanac.” – Henry D. Thoreau, Journal, 1850

Thoreau Institute Library News
By Jeffrey S. Cramer, Curator of Collections

Every year brings new people, new questions, and new acquisitions to the Thoreau Institute Library. This year brought an ever-increasing number of visitors from as far away as Norway, France, Sri Lanka, Japan, Australia and the Czech Republic. A man in Iran is using our resources long-distance as he works on the first Farsi translation of Walden.

Earliest Thoreau Letter Purchased

The Thoreau Institute Library is pleased to make available, and to publish for the first time, the earliest extant note or letter written by Henry David Thoreau. It had once been in the private collection of the late Eric Parkman Smith, Concord resident, historian and collector of Thoreaviana.

Prior to this document being made public, the earliest Thoreau correspondence dated from July 1836. This newly-discovered letter dates from Thoreau’s sophomore year at Harvard, 1834, when he was seventeen years old. It was written with James Richardson with whom Thoreau shared room 32 in Hollis Hall. Richardson and Thoreau stayed in contact for several years after Harvard, with Richardson asking Thoreau’s assistance in finding a teaching job, and Thoreau inviting Richardson to speak before the Concord Lyceum.

The following is a transcription of the letter:

Mr Sparhawk
Sir
The occupants of Hollis 32 would like to have that room painted and whitewashed, also if possible to have a new hearth put in.

yours respectfully
Thoreau & Richardson

Oliver Sparhawk, to whom Thoreau addressed the letter, was a steward of Harvard, appointed to that position in 1831 and remaining in it until his death in 1835. At that time the steward did the work which now belongs to the bursar. The position had been held earlier by Stephen Higginson, Jr., uncle of Henry Lee Higginson who built an estate in Walden Woods (Lincoln, MA). The former Higginson Estate is now the headquarters of the Walden Woods Project.

H.G.O. Blake’s Phi Beta Kappa Pin

The Walden Woods Project wishes to thank Jane Dewey for her recent gift of the Phi Beta Kappa pin of Thoreau’s friend, H.G.O. Blake. Blake, a graduate of Harvard Divinity School, was one of the persons responsible for inviting Ralph Waldo Emerson to speak before the 1838 graduating class at which time Emerson delivered his controversial “Divinity School Address.” All of Thoreau’s manuscripts were bequeathed to Blake after the death of Thoreau’s sister Sophia.

Electronic Publications

The Thoreau Institute Library is committed to presenting new scholarship and writings through electronic publication, offering on-line versions of work previously unpublished or not widely disseminated. Recent additions include twenty-four papers presented at the 2008 New-CUE Environmental Writers’ Conference in Honor of Rachel Carson, as well as Jill Morgan Clark’s 2005 thesis, Henry David Thoreau: The Darwinian Naturalist.

Collecting Thoreau’s Sources

Part of our mission is to acquire all the books Thoreau is known to have read, in order to truly understand what Thoreau knew: what he read, what he noted, what he quoted, what he choose not to quote. There are copies of many of Thoreau’s sources in the many collections housed here but as we systematically compare our holdings to bibliographies of Thoreau’s reading, small but inevitable gaps appear which we are working toward filling. Recently we added to the Walden Woods Project Collection the 1833 Memoirs of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences to which Thoreau referred in The Maine Woods, his Journal, and in what is known as the Indian Notebooks.

Check our website often for new additions or sign-up for the library’s e-newsletter at http://www.walden.org/institute/ so you don’t miss a thing.

“[The year has many more seasons than are recognized in the almanac.”” – Henry D. Thoreau, Journal, 1850
Eagles Autographed Takamine Guitar to Benefit the Walden Woods Project

A limited number of Takamine acoustic guitars have been hand-signed by the Eagles — Glenn Frey, Don Henley, Joe Walsh and Timothy B. Schmit — and are now available for purchase at $2,500/ea plus shipping and handling. The guitars come in Natural (Model G340) and Black (Model G320 BL). Net sales proceeds will benefit the Walden Woods Project. To purchase the guitars, go to http://eagles.shop.musictoday.com or call 1-877-MUSIC77 (687-4277)

Walden: 150th Anniversary Illustrated Edition of the American Classic

The most beautiful edition ever published of one of the most important books in American history! In August 1852, Houghton Mifflin’s predecessor, Ticknor and Fields, published a book called Walden; or, Life in the Woods, by a little-known writer named Henry David Thoreau. In August 2004, Houghton Mifflin, in association with the Walden Woods Project, proudly published a special 150th anniversary edition, beautifully illustrated with Scot Miller’s spectacular color photographs, which capture Walden as vividly in images as Thoreau captured it in words. In the spirit of Thoreau, the book is priced at half a cent less than he spent building his cabin at Walden Pond.


Cape Cod: Illustrated Edition of the American Classic

Originally published in 1865 by Houghton Mifflin’s predecessor, Ticknor and Fields, Henry David Thoreau’s Cape Cod is a wonderfully written, surprisingly funny account of 19th century life on the Cape, well before it became a major tourist attraction. To this day, many people consider it to be the best book ever written about Cape Cod. This new illustrated edition features the complete 1906 Houghton Mifflin edition text of Thoreau’s classic work, the stunning photography of Scot Miller, and a foreword from preeminent biographer of Thoreau and Emerson, Robert D. Richardson.

Hardcover book - $35

To order books, call 1-800-554-3569 x703. Major credit cards accepted. MA residents add 5% sales tax to book orders.

“In winter, nature is a cabinet of curiosities….” – Henry D. Thoreau, A Winter Walk
Walden and The March. Mr. Doctorow was one of the first award-winning author E.L. Doctorow to the Walden Woods Project. He called Walden “one of a handful of books that makes us who we are. We would not exist, be, as a people, quite in the same way without this book.” He noted the importance not only of Walden, the book, but Walden, the place. “All great literature connects the visible and the invisible; finding the ideas, the patterns of meanings, the hidden life, and the observable daily happenings and events; the significant secrets of places and things. We are made from these invincible truths. We know who we are from these connections of the visible and the invisible. Walden is the visible, the hard, the stone.”

Scot Miller
On October 22nd, photographer Scot Miller gave a lecture at the Thoreau Institute as part of the Walden Woods Project’s Stewardship Lecture Series and also as part of the Concord Festival of Authors. He discussed the profound influence Thoreau’s writings have had on his photography and life. At the conclusion of his lecture, Scot screened his video, *Illustrating Thoreau’s “Cape Cod”*: *A Photographer’s Story*, documenting his experiences photographing the outer Cape for *Cape Cod: Illustrated Edition of the American Classic*. Scot and the publisher, Houghton Mifflin, are donating a percentage of sales proceeds to the Walden Woods Project. The WWP also collaborated Scot and Houghton Mifflin on *Walden: 150th Anniversary Edition the American Classic*, which was published in 2004. Both books, note cards with Scot’s Walden images, and a poster of Walden Pond, can be purchased by calling the Walden Woods Project at 1-800-554-3569.

Scot and his wife, Marilyn, are longtime supporters of the Walden Woods Project. They recently donated a lovely framed print of sun-lit lily pads from Cape Cod, which is on display at the Thoreau Institute. Come by to see it!

**ART AND NATURE SUPPORT WWP**

On April 17th, the Thos. Moser Cabinetmakers’ showroom in Boston’s Back Bay was the setting for a reception supporting the Walden Woods Project and featuring the work of two Massachusetts artists whose paintings and sculpture celebrate nature. Thos. Moser is a world-renowned, Maine-based furniture company that created much of the beautiful furniture at the Thoreau Institute.

The evening showcased the artistry of Lynn Avery of Lincoln – a painter whose bold use of color emphasizes the sculpture-like outlines of trees, and Linda Hoffman – a sculptor who uses materials from the New England landscape to re-envision the environment. A percentage of sales proceeds was donated to the WWP. We are very grateful to Suzanne Schultz of Canvas Fine Arts Gallery in Acton, MA for coordinating this special evening.

**WWP GRATEFUL TO VOLUNTEERS**

Henry David Thoreau said “do not hire a man who does your work for money, but him who does it for love of it.” We are very fortunate to have a number of committed volunteers who generously donate their time and energy to our organization in a variety of capacities. Our staff is indebted to the following for helping at the Farm, scanning materials in the library Collections, and assisting at our lectures/programs this year:

Elaine Adams, Joan Campbell, Kathy Comer, Mark Gallagher, Betsy Griffin, Kenzie Grubitz, Natalie Hall, Matt Lamkin, Jane Quinn, Kathy Somach, Mariel Wolfson, and Luba Zhaurova

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact us!

**LOCAL FARM COMMUNITY HELPS NEIGHBOR**

The very afternoon that Farm Aid was taking place less than fifty miles away, the farm stand at Concord’s beloved Verrill Farm went up in flames. The fast-moving fire destroyed a local icon many hold dear. Thankfully, no one was hurt and the Farm’s fields weren’t impacted. The Verrill Family is rebuilding and has enjoyed the support of the community as it recovers from this devastating loss. The Farm at Walden Woods was pleased to contribute to a Verrill Farm fundraiser held in the fall.

**WORLD WIDE WALDENS UPDATE**

*World Wide Waldens: Putting Thoreau’s Words into Action* is a new web-based environmental education program that empowers young people around the globe to find a Walden – a place needing care and protection – in their own community. *World Wide Waldens* invites young people to reflect on their environmental ethic, make a positive difference in the world, and connect to other young people. Please visit [www.worldwidewaldens.org](http://www.worldwidewaldens.org) to view the stewardship projects, read about how the program works and help us spread the word to teachers and middle school, high school and college students.

In 2008, the Walden Woods Project continued to extend the reach of *World Wide Waldens*. On a local level, students from NashobaBrooks School in Concord, MA rooted out the invasive plant garlic mustard, in the Hapgood Wright Town Forest, while, other students worked on the RiverWalk Project along the Assabet River behind the Thoreau School in Concord, MA. These projects, along with projects from across the United States, Chile and Pakistan, can be viewed in the project gallery which showcases participants’ stewardship efforts.

In February 2009, *World Wide Waldens* will continue its national and international expansion when version 2.0 of the website is launched. Thanks to all the students and teachers who helped build this program.

In March 2009, Susan Frey, Education Director, and Polly Vanasse, a science teacher from NashobaBrooks School, will lead a workshop on *World Wide Waldens* at the National Science Teachers Association in New Orleans sponsored by the National Geographic Society’s Professional Development Teacher Workshop.
The Walden Woods Project

preserves the land, literature and legacy of Henry David Thoreau to foster an ethic of environmental stewardship and social responsibility. The Project achieves this mission through the integration of conservation, education and research.

Conservation: Preserving and protecting the landscapes of Walden Woods and Thoreau Country in recognition of their worldwide literary, historical and environmental significance, and their capacity to motivate others to identify, study and protect the Waldens that exist in their own communities.

Education: Providing innovative programs built on the philosophy of Henry David Thoreau and grounded in the land and historic resources of Walden Woods and Thoreau Country; programs that foster environmental literacy and social responsibility among students, educators and lifelong learners in the United States and around the world.

Research: Maintaining the rich collections housed in the archives and library at the Walden Woods Project’s Thoreau Institute for scholars, educators, students and life-long learners to advance their understanding of the literature and legacy of Henry David Thoreau.

We hope you will support The Walden Woods Project, a nonprofit organization. Look for the enclosed envelope to make a donation or to become a member.

You can help us prevent waste by passing this publication on to a friend, recycling it when you’re finished or letting us know if you would prefer not to receive it. Thank you.

Our newsletters and quarterly departmental e-newsletters are posted on our web site.

We invite you to visit us.
The Thoreau Institute is open Monday — Friday, 10 am — 4 pm.
To schedule a visit, please call Jeff Cramer, Curator of Collections: 781-259-4730.

For further information:
Phone: 781-259-4700 or 800-554-3569
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