

Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge

Through drought, rain, mud and occasional sunny skies the Charlotte Park and Wildlife Refuge (CPWR) welcomed many visitors this year from far and wide, and provided sanctuary to numerous deer, a few bears, bobcats and foxes, many varieties of grassland, shrubland, forest and wetland birds and, for the first part of the year, two healthy colonies of beavers.

Sustained by a modest but committed community of volunteers, contractors and Oversight Committee members, invasive plants were culled, trails repaired, new signage installed, bog bridges strengthened, 100 acres of hayfields mowed, new trees planted and select trees protected. Among the trees protected were select male and female green and black ash trees threatened by the emerald ash borer. The black ash has special cultural importance to the Abenaki people who used them to make ash baskets.

This year the Cornell Lab of Ornithology awarded a \$25,000 Land Trust Bird Conservation Initiative grant to the Vermont Land Trust (VLT) to improve bird habitat in the CPWR. The grant application was prepared by VLT and CPWR and the grant funds are held by the VLT. The grant facilitates the clearing of six acres of invasive plants and restoration of native plants and early successional habitat for golden-winged warblers and other bird species. Lovers of the CPWR will be invited and educated on invasive plants and the restoration process. This follows on a grant received some 10 years ago which permitted the growing of native shrub habitat over three acres.



Volunteers controlling invasive plants

A special event conducted this year was a talk given by Skip Lisle, a noted Vermont expert on wildlife management and ecology, to a group of some 20 local road commissioners from surrounding towns. The subject matter was focused on how to achieve successful coexistence with beavers. Charlotte Road Commissioner Junior Lewis was instrumental in bringing the many road commissioners together for this event. Held at the Charlotte Town Hall, participants moved on to two sites in the area where successful Beaver Deceivers had been installed.



Young volunteers hard at work

Two other special projects this year were the preparation of a quarter acre pollinator garden by two Oversight Committee members who are participating in a Vermont Master Naturalist program and the planting of eight oak and birch trees donated by Branch Out Burlington. And, as of this year, fully 80 acres of CPWR land is now managed for bobolink and other grassland-nesting birds. The CPWR and its protected wildlife and habitat will benefit for years to come from each of these projects and the other work noted above.

CPWR Oversight Committee Members: Jessie Bradley (Co-Chair), Sue Smith (Co-Chair), Dorothy Hill, Julian Kulski, Cathy Marshall, Andrew Milliken, Claudia Mucklow, Peter Richardson, Gregory Smith