

MCLEAN LAND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The committee is comprised of nine members, four from the Town, Ellen O'Brien Cushman (Chairman), Martha Moore, Carla Moynihan and Richard Pichette and four from McLean Hospital, Michele Gougeon, Steve Kidder, Andy Healy and Frank Keefe. In addition, The Trustees of Reservations, holders of the Conservation Restrictions, is represented by Wesley Ward.

A truly cooperative partnership between public and private stakeholders is unusual enough in Belmont, but our situation is even more exceptional. For our basic funding, the McLean deal included the creation of an open space maintenance fund of \$100K by gift of the Cosman family. We also benefit from the extraordinary generosity and commitment of the Judith K. Record Memorial Conservation Foundation, known as the JKR Fund. Led by Judy's husband Gene, the JKR Fund has labored hand in hand with the members of the committee to guarantee we are making wise choices and even helping to fund our work. We also have many active community members from Audubon and the Belmont Land Trust, the Belmont Neighborhood Association, the New England Mountain Bike Association and others who contribute ideas.

Fall of 2005, the Land Management Committee engaged the services of a land clearing company to mow the great and the small meadows on the property. These meadows had not been mowed for decades and had become overgrown and invaded by undesirable plants to a height of some twelve feet, leaving only small corridors of access for walkers and runners. The land clearing was nothing short of magnificent! It looked like a war zone for a while but then the vegetation bounced back. A second mowing for the fall season occurred in November of 2006, further opening the Great Meadow and main trails to it. Our goal is to preserve these beautiful meadows, preventing their natural succession into woodland. A bench donated by the JKR Fund as a memorial to Judy Record has been installed at the summit of the Great Meadow on One Tree Hill so all can enjoy the views. In 2007 we will develop and begin to implement an annual maintenance plan for the property, especially the meadows, and target areas for volunteer labor and support.

We have made these informed decisions by procuring the expertise of such entities as the BSC Group and the Mass. Audubon Extension Service and Heritage Fields. Beginning in January, we will begin the evaluation of the trail system to determine the trails to save, to close, to renovate and to decide whether to allow bicycle access and if so, where. This is a major undertaking for 2007. We have received generous funding offers from the JKR Fund and the Belmont Neighborhood Association and look forward to completing this work over the winter months along with setting policies and regulations for the property. In 2007, we hope to formally coordinate our land planning activities with the Conservation Commission and other groups to make even smarter choices and economize our spending decisions.

In 2007 the Land Management Committee will work closely with the representatives of National Grid to guarantee the buffer plantings at the new telecommunications tower are installed properly, and in remain good health.

McLean Hospital initiated, managed and paid for the removal of the former farmhouse on the McLean Farm, the 4.6 acre parcel immediately adjacent to Rock Meadow revealing yet another lovely meadow. This work totaled some \$25K, paid entirely by McLean.

There are many old time Belmontians who have never ventured onto the McLean land. They always appreciated that its natural openness added to their small-town sense of Belmont but never walked the trails. That's a pretty common experience. Now that nearly 100 acres of this magnificent land is owned by the people of the Town of Belmont, the Land Management Committee hopes residents will take the opportunity to wander around and enjoy its wildness and appreciate the fruits of these successful public/private partnerships.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellen O'Brien Cushman, Chairman