



Judy Record Conservation Fund

Stewardship of the Natural Landscape

Trustees: Roger Wrubel, *Executive Director* • Eugene Record, *Treasurer* • David O'Neill, *President*,
Mass Audubon

Judy Record Conservation Fund 2024 Annual Report

The Judy Record Conservation Fund (JRFund) awarded four grants in 2024 totaling \$64,590. Projects included conservation properties in Belmont, Lexington, Arlington and Cambridge. In addition, the JRFund made a \$25,000 donation to Mass Audubon's 30X30 Catalyst Fund, which is raising \$75 million to permanently protect 100,000 additional acres in Massachusetts. The Fund also made a \$2,000 donation to the Belmont Citizens Forum to support their unique monthly newsletter, which informs the public on land use and quality of life issues.

Below are updates on the four grant funded projects:

1. Biodiversity Builders Internship Program (\$18,520):

In its third year, Biodiversity Builders expanded from 8 internships in 2022 to 15 in 2023 and now 18 internships in 2024. High School student interns are drawn from



Arlington, Belmont, and Cambridge to learn about: biodiversity; landscape restoration; native plant landscaping; invasive plant identification and removal and business and entrepreneurship.

In 2024 the JRFund paid the salaries of the 11 students as well as supported a field trip to the Belle Island Marsh,

Boston's last remaining salt marsh.

Interns work 20 hours per week for 6 weeks at locations including Alewife Reservation, MAS Habitat, Mt Auburn Cemetery, Rock Meadow and Spy Pond. Activities include designing and planting native gardens, maintaining existing gardens, and removing invasive plants. They also research and present independent projects and organize a native plant sale.



2. Lexington Greenways Corridor Committee: Land Management Plan for Concord Avenue Conservation Area (\$9,700)

This grant funded a contractor to conduct on-site investigations and create a land management plan for the Concord Ave Conservation Area in the Town of Lexington. The plan was required before the Corridor Committee could build a trail through the conservation area to connect to the Western Greenway Trail in DCR's Beaver Brook North Reservation. Multiple site visits were conducted. Public meetings were held on July 29, 2024, and September 30, 2024, to invite public comments on the draft plan. The revised plan, incorporating public comments from the second public meeting, was presented to the Lexington Conservation Commission in October and November 2024. The Commission requested that additional site-specific information be added to the draft before voting to accept said plan.



Due to an ongoing staff vacancy in the Lexington Conservation Department dating from July 2024 the remaining work by the contractor and subsequent final review by the Conservation Commission has not yet taken place. The contractor has not submitted an invoice for payment in 2024, due to the delay. The Corridor Committee requested a six-month extension to allow for the remaining work to be completed before the final report is filed. The request was granted by the JRFund.

3. Land Stewardship Internships, Habitat Education Center and Wildlife Sanctuary, Belmont (\$10,384)



Luca Scola, a rising senior at Tufts University and Avery Walsh a rising sophomore at UMass Amherst were the Habitat Interns during the summer 2024. One of the internships was supported with funds remaining from 2023. The interns participated in ecological restoration projects, removing invasive plants and planting natives as well and restoring a staff garden in the Habitat Community Garden. The interns learned how to care for Habitat's goats and supervised the group of goat volunteers. They also introduced the goats to Habitat campers, aged 4-14, on regular visits to the animals. They assisted with multi-generational volunteer groups in a variety of stewardship projects

including tending Habitat's gardens and trail maintenance. Both Luca and Avery played integral roles in the Habitat community, acquiring valuable skills and connections, and affirming their long-term interest in conservation and environmental education. Please read their reflections on their Habitat experiences in Appendix A.

4. Meadow and Pine Allee Restoration at Lone Tree Hill, Belmont (\$25,986)

In Year 5 of this ecological restoration project, the JRFund continues to provide a 1:1 match for expenditures made by the Land Management Committee for Lone Tree Hill (LTH). In 2024, Parterre Ecological Services performed the necessary follow-up invasive plant treatment in the project areas.



Now that the dominance of invasives species has been relieved, native species including Pennsylvania sedge, tall, Canada and rough goldenrods, chokecherry, Virginia creeper, false Solomon's seal, common wood sedge, blackberry, wild sarsaparilla, Jack in the pulpit, Solomon's seal, and staghorn sumac are making a comeback.

The Fund paid all the expense for the removal of a substantial branch from a mature white pine in the Pine Allee at Lone Tree Hill. The branch, fell during a storm and was blocking the trail.

On Saturday, April 27, a glorious sunny day, the Belmont Citizens Forum (BCF), in conjunction with the Judy Record Conservation Fund, held its tenth annual Lone Tree Hill Volunteer Day. The volunteers included Girl Scouts Troop 82339, Cityside Subaru employees, volunteers from Habitat and citizens from Belmont and the surrounding communities. Many hands made light work. At the Meadow Edge Trail, volunteers removed garlic mustard and planted forty white pine saplings. In a few years these trees will be a green screen for the houses bordering the meadow and add to the green border planted over 20 years ago by the developer of the Woodlands condominiums.



Financial Report: Judy Record Conservation Fund 2024

	Amount		Expenses (Credits)	
		Date	Vendor	Amount
Beginning Balance 1/1/24	\$957,564	3/31/2024	FY 24 JKR Internship grant to Habitat	10,384.00
		4/3/2024	T of Belmont 50% of Parterre Invoice	4,960.00
Gifts Transferred to Endowment	\$925	4/30/2024	T of BELMONT-volunteer day 2023	6,375.00
		5/23/2024	ROGER P. WRUBEL-DIRECTOR STIPEND	5,000.00
Dividends & Interest :	\$7,185	5/31/2024	Tiny Seeds Project for Biodiversity Builders	18,520.00
		5/31/2024	T of BELMONT-Volunteer Day 2024	8,400.64
Endowment Management Fees:	-\$1,122	5/31/2024	REIMB FROM ARLINGTON unspent grant funds	(1,255.00)
		8/27/2024	BELMONT CITIZENS FORUM-DONATION	2,000.00
Transfer for Expenses: (see list)	-\$90,635	10/31/2024	JKR to Catalyst Fund	25,000.00
		11/18/2024	T OF BELMONT- 50% Parterre Invoice	4,137.50
Market Change:	\$91,984	12/9/2024	ROGER WRUBEL- DIRECTOR'S STIPEND	5,000.00
		12/11/2024	T OF BELMONT-50% Parterre Inv, #21438	900.00
Ending Balance 12/31/24	\$965,902	12/11/2024	T OF BELMONT-50% Parterre INV. #20328	1,212.50
			TOTAL EXPENSES thru 12/31/24	90,634.64

The Judy Record Conservation Fund began 2024 with a balance of \$957,564. The Fund had income from donations, interest, and dividends, investments of \$100,094 and grant award and management expenses of \$91,756, which included endowment management fees of \$1,122. The Fund recorded a credit from the return of unspent grant funds from the Town of Arlington of \$1,255.00. The ending balance was \$965,902 on December 31, 2024.

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 and the Town of Belmont. The JRFund provides grants to support maintaining, restoring, or 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 also supports environmental education programs, internships, and fellowships. Visit our website: <https://www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/wildlife-sanctuaries/habitat/judy-record-conservation-fund>.

To apply for a grant, submit a one-page letter of inquiry, describing the project, to the Fund's Executive Director, Roger Wrubel (roger_wrubel@msn.com). Applicants will be notified whether

the Directors feel the proposal merits further consideration and invite you to submit a full proposal. You may email Roger to discuss your proposal ideas.

This Annual Report was prepared by Roger Wrubel, Executive Director, and reviewed and approved by the Trustees of the JRFund, Eugene Record and David O'Neill.

Appendix A:

1. Habitat Internship Reflection, Summer 2024: Luca Scola, now a Senior at Tuft University



On June 3, 2024, I walked up the Habitat driveway for the first time. The giant oaks stood by my side and the dogwoods ahead were just beginning to bloom. I could hear the gentle hum of insects and bird songs in the trees – the little pleasures that became a little less present when camp started in the coming weeks. I was greeted near the main house by Hannah, the Habitat Property Manager and my boss for what came to be the next 6 months. She was the first of so many warm, engaging, and caring people that I met at Habitat. She introduced me to my coworkers, the house, the property, Habitat’s peculiarities and quirks, and, of course, the goats. It was clear that this was a special place.

Have you heard the icebreaker: are you an onion or an avocado? An onion has many layers, with a concentrated but still penetrable core. An avocado has soft flesh that is easy to get through, but a nearly stone core. It’s become one of my favorites.

A woman stopped me once while I was raking the Spanish Steps. She asked me how I got this job – more than just the ADP portal that I found the position through, but what drew me to the environment. We talked for a while. She mentioned a personal experience that got her to care more deeply about nature. In her late teenage years, she went on a tour at Habitat. They taught her the skill to observe and to notice. From patterns, differences, and changes in natural elements, she loved the questions that observation brought her to. For her, that experience was an essential part of becoming the person that she is and having the worldview that she holds today.

I asked her after this story, “Have you heard of the question: are you an onion or an avocado?”, and told her the botanical basis behind the two sides. She immediately said, “I’m an onion!”, to which I responded, “Me too! I always say that I’m an onion.” For her, that experience at Habitat was a layer of her onion, and an important one. For me, she said, my experience at Habitat is a layer of my onion, a layer of me.

In many ways, I resonate with her experience. My time at Habitat, alongside my coworkers, has further opened my eyes to the world. The people that I worked hand-in-hand with every day brought so many interests and specialties to conversation that have stuck with me. I have honed my skills of noticing natural phenomena and identifying plants, native and non-native. I have learned about the Habitat property, our stewardship practices, local natural cycles, and goats, and have shared that information with friends, family, classmates, and volunteers. I find this last part so important – education, sharing information, and practice are central to how we, as a society, construct our view of the environment.

As I look ahead, I hope to become a landscape architect. My role as a land steward taught me both practical and ideological aspects that are central to this future career. For one, I have learned how to steward and maintain land. The practical moves of gardening, trail maintenance, cleanup, etc. will impact how I understand the processes involved in the landscapes that I hope to create. The

opportunity to spend 6 months at Habitat has also given me a view into natural lifecycles, another essential consideration of landscape depending on locality. But perhaps more importantly, I feel a greater connection to the land itself. I have practiced how to be conscious in nature, how to make space, and how to have a relationship with land, rather than some dominant hierarchy. Dually, the traceable history of Habitat adds to its soul, and I am honored to be a part of it. As I think about the spaces that I will design one day, I can only hope that they will be as impactful, to individuals, communities, and the environment, as Habitat is.

2. Habitat Internship Reflection, Summer 2024: Avery Walsh, now a Sophomore at UMass Amherst



This summer has been an incredible experience for me. I grew up with Habitat Camps and this sanctuary has always held a special place in my heart. Last time I visited the sanctuary, I was volunteering with property staff during summer of 2020. It had a lasting impact, and when looking for a summer job after my first year of college I decided I wanted a closer look at this familiar place.

Starting in June, I assisted with volunteer groups, trail and building maintenance, goat care and was introduced to the various practices we use to keep the sanctuary functioning. Regular trail patrols, plant identification, and miscellaneous projects across the sanctuary were the main focus of my first month. One of our bigger ongoing projects was revitalizing the staff plot in the community garden. This plot was allowed to go wild for the past few seasons with no one renting out the plot, and because it needed so much work, it was decided to be a staff plot. After a volunteer group removed the garlic that had taken over, our 3 main objectives were planting, weeding, and pest management. The first was managed with relative ease because another gardener donated many plants for our plot. We weeded when it was cool enough and were able to buy a few plants from a local nursery. Unfortunately, the pests were a larger problem due to the type of fencing on the plot door. We suspect rabbits were able to crawl under the door's fencing and eat all our tomato plants, half of our peppers, an eggplant, and potato plants. Later in the summer we were able to build and install a gated door to the fence and we haven't had problems since.

In July, the start of camp brought boisterous energy to the sanctuary. Though it was no longer the calm atmosphere Habitat has the rest of the year. I quickly learned there is never a dull moment during camp season. Especially during camp visits to the goats, one of my favorite tasks this summer. I've never worked with kids before, so I was a little nervous, but it became something I look forward to every week. The kids range from age 4 to 14, but regardless of age the goats elicit the same excitement they do in all visitors. Our herd of 7 are like celebrities to the kids and once rules are laid out the goat visits often go off without a hitch. It was interesting to see each goat come out of their shell a bit with the groups and learn to spot the changes in mood from different actions, especially with some of the pickier goats such as Penelope and Scarlet.

With camp also came the job of camp parking, by far the most hectic part of the day but I feel like I learned a lot from it. Our job during parking is to direct cars and prevent car accidents in the tiny parking lot, which increased my spatial awareness, reaction time and self-confidence.

August, though it's still camp season, started to slow down a bit. I learned a great bit more about time management this month because it was a constant fight against weather. The beginning of August was hectic with a few goat health scares. Mainly, our youngest and most curious goat, Scarlett, developed a taste for plastic bags. Fortunately, although she ate half of an empty plastic bag, there has been no deterioration to her health, and we now just have to fend her off every time she is in the presence of another bag. Between the earlier heat wave and goat antics, August has been a good closing on an amazing summer.

This sanctuary will always have a place in my heart and I'm so grateful to have had the opportunity to give back this summer.

