

Laurel Leaves

Laurel Hill Association ∞ Fall 2024



Laurel Hill Legacy: Stewardship, Sustainability, and Community

Enhancing Environmental Stewardship: Preserving Laurel Hill Association's Lands and Ecosystems

By *Kate Fletcher*

As the Laurel Hill Association (LHA) continues its traditional work of beautifying public spaces and maintaining its flagship trails, we have also increased our focus on environmental stewardship of LHA's 450 acres of land. Much of this land is either forested, bordering waterways, or encompassing wetlands. While many of these lands provide lovely views, equally important is their role in the larger ecosystem. For instance, trees (mostly native) provide habitats for a vast interconnection of animals and plants while also sequestering and storing carbon. Our wetlands are amazing habitats in their own right but also serve as filters for pollutants that otherwise make their way to streams, rivers, and eventually oceans.

Deforestation is a major cause of habitat loss. In the United States, 17% of forest cover has been lost since 2001. A current topic in land-use management addressing this loss includes the need for connecting corridors that support the movement and needs of wildlife and promote biodiversity. Using technology and mapping ser-



PHOTO BY KATE FLETCHER

Red fox out mousing on a winter afternoon on Laurel Hill property.

vices, many organizations have joined together nationally, even globally, to track land-use patterns and thus more effectively promote these wildlife corridors so important to our future. Invasive species are an ongoing challenge as are impacts that can compromise fragile woodland areas and contribute to erosion. Finally, connecting the stewardship of all LHA lands are their complex histories and our mis-

sion to promote their historical integrity based on current archeological best-practices and consultations with the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians.

If you would like to learn more about our land stewardship work, please contact us at properties@laurelhillsassociation.org. 🌿

Have you visited us online?

We invite you to visit us online at laurelhillsassociation.org and discover a wealth of resources. Whether you're looking for informative articles, guides, or news and events, there's information to be found!

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Remembering George Wislocki 1935-2024

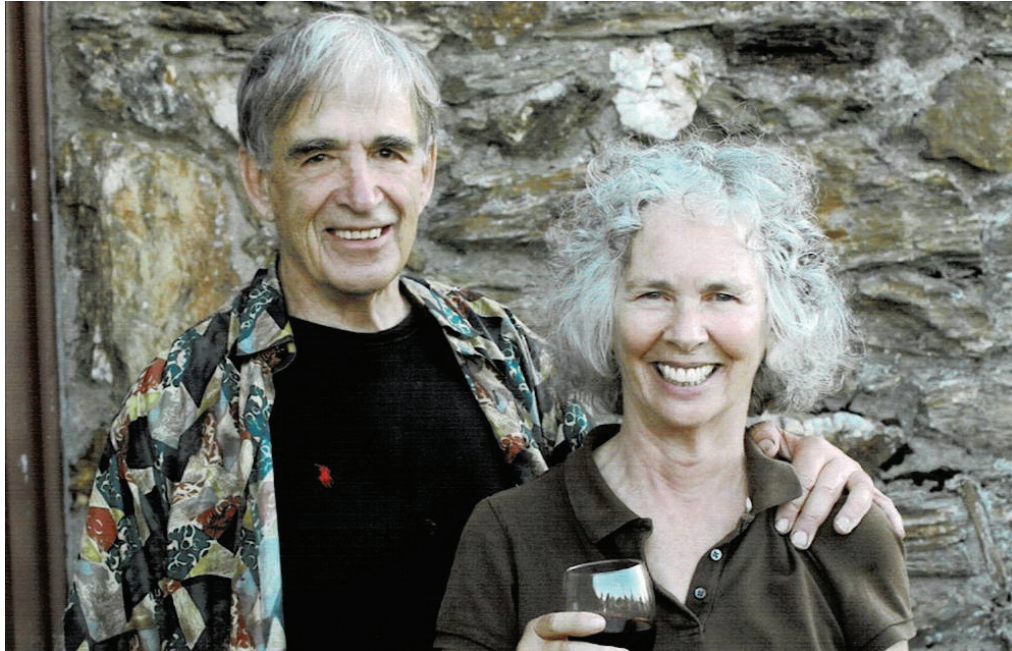


PHOTO PROVIDED BY ALICE WISLOCKI

“Visionary conservation giant”
“Alliance builder”
“Canny politician and skilled negotiator”

When the news of George Wislocki’s death began to circulate around the Berkshires, friends and acquaintances, politicians and conservationists, editors and reporters, all paid attention. From South to North, George led the charge to preserve land for enjoyment today and future generations. Everyone in the environmental field knew him and joined in his recognition as recipient of the Berkshire Award.

In Stockbridge, George collaborated on initiatives important to the Laurel Hill Association and engaged with Peter Berle, President of the Stockbridge Land Trust, Mary Flynn, community leader, and many others. Arguably George’s most visible and important contribution to the Berkshires was his foundation of the Berkshire Natural Resource Council.

On a personal note, in 1972 I saw

firsthand George’s tenacity in action as he built an alliance of neighbors against an ill-considered road project in the village of Monterey. George’s efforts coordinated the preservation of acreage in the village that was my summer home. I came into the Wislocki orbit through his wife, Alice. She was my supportive dance teacher at my alma mater, Simon’s Rock.

The last time I saw George and Alice was at a special event in support of Pleasant Valley Bird Sanctuary’s 90th Celebration. This gala event raised money for educational programming and was sponsored with the support of Mass Audubon and the Lenox Garden Club. George valued collaboration and youth engagement during his career. George was a forceful advocate for environmental values and his legacy is remembered as we all contemplate Berkshire County’s green and lovely hills.

Hilary Somers Deely
President, Laurel Hill Association.



Looking Ahead

By Bruce Blair

There is an urgency these days about meeting the challenges ahead for Stockbridge. We have long worked to preserve the beauty and character of the town, but now more than ever we face new and sometimes complex challenges. For Laurel Hill, the vision is unchanged. Natural beauty, along with our cultural and historical heritage, are the heart of our identity as a special place and are all part of the legacy we strive to preserve.

The land cannot be replaced. Every new building project brings change to the natural environment, the aesthetics, the character of the town. Population changes, attractions and visitors also have impacts. Balancing all of these things with conservation, preservation, and character is the challenge. With your help we can continue to maintain and enhance our properties and raise awareness about our community and its natural riches.

Supporting Laurel Hill is a way to help ensure that the beauty of Stockbridge will remain a hallmark of who we are. From flowers to trails, wildlife preservation and community commitment, we have always been a resource for keeping the gift of Stockbridge alive for future generations. 🌿



PHOTO BY BRUCE BLAIR

Larrywaug Brook and the Four Corners.

Bowker Woods

By Cheryl Resetarits

I live fairly close to Bowker's Woods, Upper and Lower. I visit frequently. It's a lovely mix of yellow and pinkish hues right now. I knew that R. R. Bowker, the man who left the means for The Laurel Hill Association to acquire the land after his wife's death, was one of the founders of the American Library Association, President of the Stockbridge Library Association, and Honorary Vice President of the Laurel Hill Association, but as I walk on what was once his land, I have often wanted to know more. More I have recently found and I'd like to share. Consider this New York Times headline, September 2, 1928, from the *Notes of Social Activities in New York and Elsewhere* page:

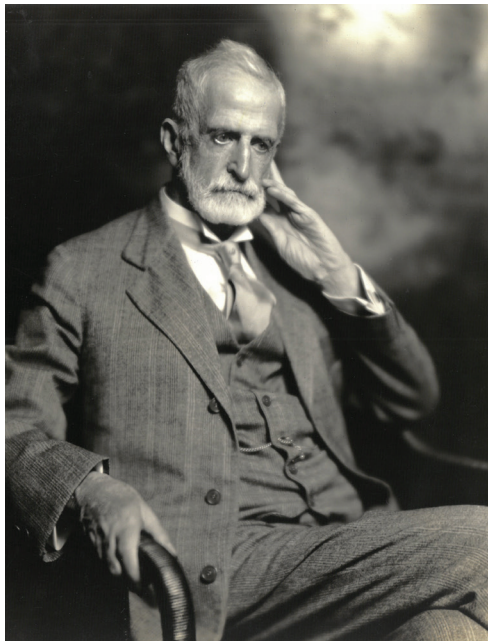
R.R. BOWKER AT 80 KEEPS UP ACTIVITIES

Editor, Publisher and Industrial
Director Refuses to Submit
to Growing Blindness.

CALLED ORIGINAL MUGWUMP

With Two Others, He Founded the
Republican Independents of 1879

That's a lot to unpack. Let's take his editorships — city editor and literary editor for *New York Evening Mail*, columnist for the *New York Tribune*, manager of *The New York Times* and then there was that two year stint when he managed the British edition of *Harper's Magazine*. As a publisher he started and kept solvent *Publishers Weekly*, perhaps the most important book-trade journal in the U.S. He founded the *Library Journal* and edited or published the *Annual Library Index* and the *American Catalog*. Part of his success as an editor and publisher was due to his excellent management skills. Little wonder then that Thomas A. Edison made him vice-president



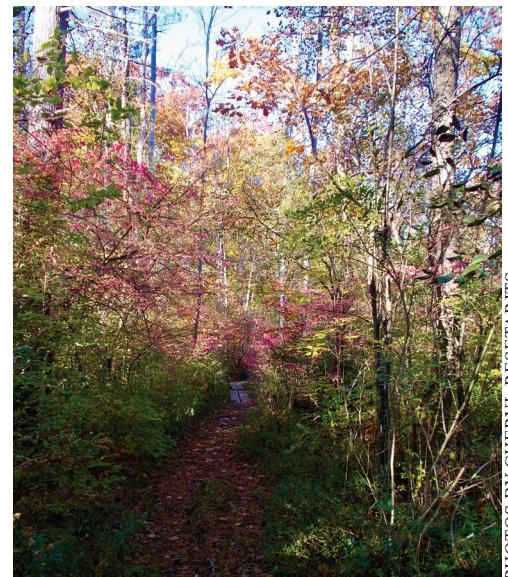
Richard Rogers Bowker. Born Salem, Mass. 1848. Died Stockbridge, Mass. 1933.

COURTESY OF THE STOCKBRIDGE LIBRARY, MUSEUM & ARCHIVES

of The Edison Electric Illuminating Co. of New York in 1890. He stayed until 1899 and remained a lifelong friend of Edison's. And then there was the civil and political activism, which started early. In 1879 while a student at City College he helped start the "Mugwump" movement that worked to defeat the nomination of Grant for a third term because of the scandals during Grant's presidency.

Tired yet? Really, there is so much more but I'm spent. Maybe a walk in Bowker's Woods to ease the stress of all this Bowker activity. The 1928 NYT's article actually does just that. The dateline is Stockbridge, Mass., and the story is about a gathering to celebrate R. R. Bowker's eightieth birthday at his country home, Glendale Outlook. Bowker preferred to call the place his "log cabin in the woods." All summer long he had hosted "Log Cabin Conferences" on Saturday mornings. From the NYT: "These gatherings have been called by Mr. Bowker "The Leg It Club," so named from the fact that for a num-

ber of years its members walked for a mile or more through the pines and then met at the Log Cabin for a discussion of national and international subjects." The list of likely attendees is impressive, from Daniel Chester French to the provost of Columbia University to the former ambassador to Italy (to name a few), all legging it through the woods. Bowker was nearly blind by this birthday, but he would know his woods well and perhaps he walked with a guide still. Or maybe on this end of summer morning, after such a full life, he preferred to just sit and walk the woods by heart. I like to imagine him waiting at the "cabin" for his birthday celebration, listening to the woodsy sounds of his friends walking and talking through the pines, headed his way. 🌿



PHOTOS BY CHERYL RESEARITS

Pictured: Upper and Lower Bowker Woods

Sustainable Support: How Your Environmentally Friendly Giving Makes a Difference

By Robert Flower

Environmentally friendly giving offers numerous benefits that make your contribution more meaningful and impactful. By giving electronically, you help lower the carbon footprint associated with paper production and mailing, directly supporting environmental conservation. It reduces waste by eliminating the need for printed materials, which helps preserve trees and other valuable resources. Additionally, environmentally giving reduces costs, allowing more of your donation to go directly towards the causes you care about. Ultimately, this approach amplifies the positive effect of your contribution, aligning it with the goal of sustainability.

Please support our environmentally friendly initiative by switching to digital donations. Together, we can protect Stockbridge's natural beauty while reducing our environmental impact.

To stay connected, there are two simple choices: you can give online by clicking the green "Support Us" button at the top of our website or by scanning the QR code provided below with your phone. However, if you still prefer to send a check, please include

your email address in the designated area on the envelope provided. This way, we can keep you updated on how your contributions are making a difference, all while minimizing paper

usage and waste. Your support, combined with sustainable practices, helps us create a greener, more beautiful future for generations to come. 🌿



Pictured above: Field arboretum; below: Upper Bowker



PHOTOS BY ROBERT FLOWER



Thank you to our donors!

Laurel Hill Association gratefully acknowledges the following donors for their contributions between Oct. 1, 2023 and Sept. 30, 2024.

If your name has been misspelled or inadvertently omitted, please contact us at info@laurelhillassociation.org

Planned giving

“The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit.”

Over the past 171 years Laurel Hill Association has benefited from the generosity of our friends and neighbors. Planned gifts enable us to preserve the legacy bequeathed to us by generous supporters. You can help ensure that generations to come will know the pleasure of hiking our trails, strolling along the Housatonic or relaxing in our glens.

Bequests: Often the easiest. Simply designate Laurel Hill Association as a beneficiary in your will or living trust.

Life Insurance Policies: If you name LHA as a beneficiary of your life insurance policy, you can convert a modest investment into a significant gift.

Retirement Plans: Designate LHA as a beneficiary of your IRA, 401(k), or other retirement plan, and enjoy estate tax benefits.

Charitable Gift Annuities: Create a charitable gift annuity that provides you with a steady income during your lifetime, while supporting LHA with remaining funds.

To learn more, please contact:
Tim O’Brien Laurel Hill Association
PO Box 24 Stockbridge, MA 01262
treasurer@laurelhillassociation.org

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With much appreciation, we thank you!

In the course of a year, Laurel Hill Association receives donations of goods and services which help our budget and are appreciated deeply. Our thanks go to:

LHA Trustee Brian Cruely and Naumkeag for their donation of tulip bulbs that blossomed this spring in front of the Town Post Office.

The Town of Stockbridge, Highway and Police Departments for all their support of LHA throughout the year!

The Town Fire/Rescue/EMS and the Parks & Recreation Committee for hosting the moonlit Ice Glen Walk!

The Stockbridge Library for hosting the annual meeting.

Laurel Hill Day supporters:

Rabbi Barbara J. Cohen for the words of wisdom; **Kate Maguire, Eric Hill and Douglas Schmolze** for the presentation of Mary Hopkins Goodrich; **The Stockbridge Festival Chorus** for the musical performance;

Julie Love Edmonds and Carl Sprague for Art in the Woods; **Gary Johnston** for the reading of "The Doe, The Fox and The Lamb"; **The Red Lion Inn, Tim Eustis** who delivered a batch of brownies as a gift; **Guidos Fresh Marketplace**, for the healthy and delicious snacks; **Joan Gallo** arranged magnificent Flowers for the rostrum; and

Whinny Walsh for the great pictures! **Arcadian Shop** for the welcome repellent for Laurel Hill Day.

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John Graziano for his legal counsel

Lori Robbins and **Rick Wilcox** for their counsel on a preservation restriction.



Laurel Hill foliage
Cover photo: Laurel Hill Rostrum
by Robert Flower