



Land Preservation Society of Norton, Inc.
Post Office Box 204 • Norton, Massachusetts 02766
www.nortonlandpreservation.org

The LPS Insider Autumn 2025

We acknowledge that LPS owns land which was once part of the original Wampanoag territory when explorers and settlers arrived in the 17th century.

Welcome to the LPS Insider Newsletter

The Land Preservation Society of Norton is an all-volunteer organization which owns nearly 1100 acres of land in Norton. We work to protect and preserve natural resources, natural areas and historic sites, and to provide open space and educational opportunities for the public.

We would love some help with publicity, graphic design, fund raising, trail maintenance, and more. If you enjoy walking our trails and/or attending our events you might like to support our efforts by volunteering your skills and talents.

Contact us at nortonlandpreservation.org or by email admin@nortonlandpreservation.org if you would like to help.

Upcoming Events

Friends of the Rail Trail Roll and Stroll Event

Look for our table at the entrance to Henrich Woods along the WWII Veterans Memorial Trail on North Washington Street
Saturday, 10/25/25, from 10 AM to 2 PM. Rain Date 11/1/25

Looking Ahead - Locations and times to be announced.

- January 1, 2026, woods walk to celebrate the New Year
- Bird Walk with naturalist Jean Shea in early spring
- STEAM event with the Norton schools in the spring
- Pride Day or Founder's Day in early summer

Support LPS by Becoming a Member

Donate online at nortonlandpreservation.org or use the QR code.



POWERED BY Givebutter

Or mail a check to
Land Preservation Society of Norton, Inc. PO Box 204 Norton MA
02766

Individual

\$20 for a one-year membership.

Household

\$40 for a one-year membership.

Seniors (65 years and up) and Students

\$10 for a one-year membership

Life Membership

\$300 for an individual and \$500 for a couple gives you a lifetime membership.

Become a Trail Blazer

With a \$500 donation, you can name a trail after yourself, a family member or a friend.

Spotlight on Wild Things & Wild Places

A Butterfly-Killing Invasive: Black Swallow-Wort (*Vincetoxicum nigrum*) - by Kathy Morgan



Readers may wonder why I continue to write about invasive plant species. I am the owner of a property with a history of occupancy and disturbance dating back to the very early 1700's. Along with that disturbance comes over 300 years of opportunity for invasive plant species to move in, and I find myself now in constant battle with over two dozen different species of such invasives. As I learn about them and strive to return my property to its native state, I am motivated to share what I am learning with others and to encourage the restoration of native plant and animal species to Norton.

Black swallow-wort (*Vincetoxicum nigrum*), also known as dog-strangler vine, is a perennial climbing vine native to the Western Mediterranean and considered an aggressive invasive plant in Massachusetts. While it does grow as a vine, it does not pose a threat to dogs unless eaten. Every part of the plant is toxic if eaten, and care should be taken around pets and children to prevent ingestion of this plant. It is also toxic to the larvae of monarch butterflies, who sometimes lay their eggs on it, mistaking it for milkweed which it resembles (*see picture*). If you love butterflies, you should abhor this plant! It has long, oval-shaped leaves opposite to one another along its stem, about 1-2 inches long in a mature plant and up to 1-1.5 inches wide. The shiny leaves are a deep green color. Its flowers are small and star-shaped, appearing in a cluster and of a chocolate color. The plant produces seed pods that resemble milkweed pods. Each seed pod can contain over a thousand seeds, which like milkweed seeds will be dispersed by the wind. This extremely efficient way of reproducing is one of the challenges posed by attempts to control this plant.

Like most non-native invasives, black swallow-wort has no native pests to keep it in check, so it spreads aggressively. Because of its prolific nature and vining habit, it can form dense mats across an area in a short period of time, “strangling” native plants and smothering them. Black swallow-wort is somewhat difficult to remove because of its deep root system. It cannot simply be pulled up but must be dug out, taking care to remove as much of the root crown as possible. As with other aggressive non-natives, do not put the debris in your yard clippings pile, but rather place it carefully in black plastic trash bags and dispose of it before it can release its seeds.

It can be mown to control seed production and release but cannot be eradicated in this way. If you opt to mow it, take care to do so before the seed pods are mature lest you contribute to seed distribution. Some research suggests that mowing in early July and then applying herbicides such as glyphosate or triclopyr in mid to late August may have good results.

Acknowledging our Volunteers

Alnylam Pharmaceutical Volunteers Work at LPS Canoe River Trails and Offer a \$3,000 Donation – by Deb Cato

On Tuesday morning, September 16, members of LPS and 15 volunteers from Alnylam Pharmaceuticals worked on trail maintenance at our LPS Canoe River lands off Red Mill Rd. The effort was coordinated by LPS President Dan Murray and Mike Rainville, a member of the LPS Board of Directors.



The Canoe River lands hold the status of a Massachusetts ACEC (Area of Critical Environmental Concern). The Canoe River aquifer is a crucial resource, supplying drinking water to residents in five surrounding towns. The area consists of many acres of regrown forest and wilderness. See more about the aquifer below.

With permission from John Thomas, Norton's Conservation Commission director, work included clearing vegetation, laying wood

chips, building a short boardwalk over a wet area of a trail, and building a riverside bench.

The enthusiastic help of Alnylam volunteers has been tremendous this year and in the past, aiding in trail maintenance, the construction of benches and other structures. In addition, this year Alnylam announced a \$3000 donation to LPS in support of our land preservation efforts. Dan Murray, LPS President, expressed our sincere appreciation of Alnylam's continued support of the organization.

Alnylam, located in Norton, is a leading independent biopharmaceutical company and the pioneer in RNA interference (RNAi) therapeutics. It has encouraged employees to volunteer in many capacities in our Norton community and has helped LPS with trail maintenance and donations for many years.

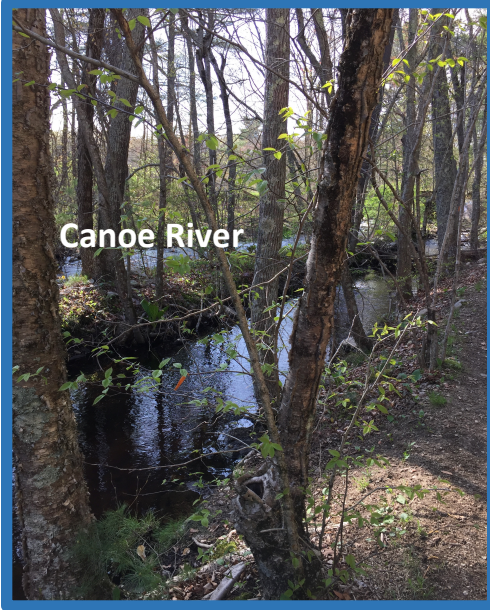
Founded in 2002 by a group of distinguished researchers and biotech leaders, Alnylam's work over more than two decades has yielded the critical breakthroughs and advancements that have made the field of RNAi therapeutics possible. In 2018, the world's first RNAi therapeutic was approved. Since then, five more Alnylam-developed medicines have been approved to treat both rare and prevalent diseases. To learn more about Alnylam go to

<https://www.pbs.org/video/cracking-the-code-phil-sha-rp-and-the-biotech-revolution-brqy08/>

The Canoe River Aquifer – by Linda Kollett

About 390 million years ago vertebrates began the amazing transition from living in the water to living on land. This opened a whole new world of biodiversity but carried with it some challenges. One of the challenges was the need for water to sustain life on land.

Humans depend on water to, among other things, help regulate body temperature, transport oxygen, nutrients and other molecules throughout our bodies, and maintain functioning cells. Human infants are about 75% water. As we grow older that reduces to about 55%, but adequate water remains essential for life. Without water, we can live only a few days, so it is understandable that we should be concerned about our water supply.



Norton's source of drinking water is the Canoe River Aquifer. It supplies drinking water to about 50,000 people in Easton, Foxborough, Mansfield, Norton, and Sharon. Groundwater from the river floodplain and other permeable surfaces all over town seeps underground and collects in spaces between rocks and soil, creating the aquifer, which provides natural filtration as water moves through small pores and sediments.

In 1987, representatives from these towns formed the Canoe River Aquifer Advisory Committee (CRAAC) to educate citizens about the aquifer and protect it from development and contamination. Since it provides at least 50% of the drinking water to these communities via town and private wells, and there are no viable alternative sources, in part due to their hard work it has been declared a sole-source aquifer by the EPA and has also been designated an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The ACEC includes a network of surface waters, wetlands, floodplains, the 16-mile-long Canoe River and its tributaries. The importance of the floodplains, and especially the wetlands cannot be overstated. The aquifer underlies this area.

What we need to keep in mind is that water sources are interconnected and they are at risk for environmental contamination by inappropriate use of land, increased development, use of pesticides and herbicides, septic tank leaks, and toxic spills. In addition, pressure on the aquifer is increased during drought. The Canoe River Aquifer is our lifeline, and it is our responsibility to see that our wetlands are protected, and it is maintained as a reliable source of water for our town.