

# **Conservation Commissioner of the Year**

## **Charlene Golden**

Charlene has served as a Conservation Commissioner in the Town of Boxborough since 1972. During her 45+ years of service, she has made outstanding contributions toward environmental awareness in Massachusetts and has served her community with honor and distinction. Charlene has steadfastly supported the protection of Boxborough's natural resources, and has been unwavering in her support for the environment. Specifically, Charlene has been a leader in the protection of open space through various acquisitions for conservation, including the very first parcel of 203 acres in 1974. Over the years, Charlene's efforts resulted in the acquisition of approximately 300 additional acres for conservation and recreational use. Additionally, Charlene conducted extensive detailed research for the Boxborough's 2015-2022 Open Space and Recreation Plan, which helped form the foundation for the Town's most recent update to its Master Plan. She also participated in the drafting of the Boxborough Wetland Bylaw in 1981, assisted in three subsequent revisions and drafted the Town's consistent and perpetual Conditions. Her quick guide, "Caring for Your Septic System" is another example of her efforts to educate the public about safeguarding the environment as development expanded in Boxborough.

Prior to her retirement last year from the Acton- Boxborough School System, Charlene frequently used a portion of her summer to mentor high school and college students considering a career in biology or environmental studies. The Commission and the Town benefitted from Charlene's organization of the projects. Simultaneously, students were exposed to the Commission's operations in support of the WPA, Boxborough Wetland Bylaw, and wetland and water resource protection.

Always consistent and fair, Charlene has gained the respect of engineers, specialists, applicants, and adversaries. Boxborough residents have immense respect for the years she has devoted to caring for their environment. The contribution of her time and energy is greatly appreciated by her community.

# **Youth Environmental Service**

## **Annabella Chen**

Annabella Chen is a sophomore at the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School who has been volunteering regularly, and with devotion, for the Friends of the Acton Arboretum, Inc. and the Town of Acton Natural Resources Department since April 2016. In addition to dedicating 100+ hours of her personal time to her volunteer efforts, she has shared her spirit and strong work ethic with all who have the pleasure of working with her. Annabella has assisted in watering, planting, weeding, mulching,

removing invasive plants, pruning trees/shrubs, and other landscaping tasks as well as assisting with fundraising events for the Acton Arboretum, a town owned conservation land. She also absorbed all the heavy lifting for a long-standing member of the Acton Garden Club and volunteer/board member of the Friends of the Acton Arboretum while she was recovering from back surgery.

The Town of Acton Natural Resources Department, Acton Arboretum, and Acton Garden Club agree that Annabella is great role model for other students and volunteers with similar interests. As stated by Bettina D. Abe, Natural Resources Assistant, "I cannot think of another student like this young lady who has ever given such a large commitment to helping us take care of, and cultivate, the Acton Arboretum. She greatly deserves recognition, though she would never expect or ask for it. A true gem... She takes on far more than many her age or physical size, dealing with thorns, bugs, poison ivy and burrs. Annabella has the heart and assiduousness of a lion". Annabella's curiosity, work ethic, and selfless nature will pave the way for many future successes.

## **Conservation Administrator of the Year**

### **Don MacAdam**

Don MacAdam has diligently served as the Conservation Administrator for the Town of Hopkinton Conservation Commission since 2001. During the past 17 years, in addition to his routine responsibilities, Don has consistently made substantive contributions to the Commission and the Town of Hopkinton. Since 2001, he has overseen and assisted with over 496 NOIs, 68 ANRADs, 300 RDAs, 641 COCs, 246 Enforcement Reviews, 55 Emergency Certifications, and 299 Minor Project reviews. Don was also a significant contributor to the update and Town approval of the Wetland Protection Bylaw Regulations in 2013. Don has also been an integral contributor to many significant local projects related to the protection of open space and wetland resources, including: development of a Town-wide GIS database of wetlands and resource areas; digitation of Commission records and files; assisting with developing a comprehensive Town-wide trail guide; encouraging implementation of low-impact development construction techniques in resource areas; and reviewing scores of Conservation Restrictions resulting in many hundreds of acres of sensitive and open space property protected in perpetuity; partnering with local Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts on conservation projects such as trail development and foot bridge construction; and the acquisition and preservation of the 80-acre historically significant Elmwood Farm property. In addition, Don was intimately involved with the largest (730-acre) development of agricultural land in recent history in Metro West, the Weston Nurseries property. Over 500 acres of land were preserved/restored as open space as part of this project.

In working with applicants, Town representatives and the public, he consistently demonstrates professionalism and patience and takes the extra time to help them understand the important work of the

Commission and to assist them with the application process. According to his colleagues, Don “goes above and beyond the call of duty on a regular basis” and they greatly appreciate everything he does for them and for the Town.

## **Conservationist of the Year**

# Robert Clark

As attested by local land trusts (Mount Grace and East Quabbin Land Trust), his fellow commissioners, and other local leaders, Robert A. Clark has been critical to the success of conservation in the Town Petersham. He is approaching his 40th year of continuous service as a conservation commissioner, but many also know him as an activist, teacher, and student. He has volunteered as a museum guide at The Harvard Forest, assisted in annual TerraCorps orientations and organizing the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership peer-to-peer statewide Open Space Conferences, and recruited and mentored college students and others on open space and stewardship projects. Robert is also a lifelong learner who is driven to accumulate knowledge about his natural surroundings. He has documented the natural diversity and history of Petersham in great detail, regularly inviting all interested parties to join him on his expeditions. Robert has also served on the MACC Board of Directors, as the first Environmental Health and Safety Officer for the state college system, a member of the Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee, longtime corporate and Chairman’s Council Member of the Trustees of Reservations, and member of the Petersham Forest and Shade Tree Commission.

As member and longtime Chairman of the Petersham Conservation Commission, Robert has completed four Local Acquisitions for Natural Diversity (LAND) grants through the Massachusetts Division of Conservation Services and assisted with facilitating the protection of hundreds of acres of land in Petersham. Specifically, his leadership on the conservation commission helped Mount Grace secure state funding for a multi-landowner, multi-partner, landscape scale initiative known as the “Quabbin Heritage Conservation Project”, and he was personally involved in landowner outreach when the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership (NQRLP) was spearheading a federal Forest Legacy effort. The Petersham Conservation Commission also holds and actively stewards Forest Legacy conservation restrictions.

Robert is a “living legend” within the local conservation community. His enthusiasm is infectious and he has dedicated his life to engaging and fostering a sense of curiosity about the natural world. His colleagues at the NQRLP state that “Petersham and North Quabbin region are more resilient, more connected, and better off because of his efforts”.