NEW TRAIL EASEMENT ON THE TAM
MALT would like to extend our thanks to Linda Johnson, who has granted MALT a trail easement for the Johnson section of the TAM. Previously this section was held as a license agreement, but an easement makes it permanent. This trail is 0.8 miles, and begins at the junction of Hamilton Rd. & Sheep Farm Road in Weybridge. The trail follows the edge of a field up to a pond and restored wetland favored by various waterfowl, muskrats, and a variety of birds. The trail then meanders through a forested section and ends at Morgan Horse Farm Road. This is a very pleasant section of the TAM and is a favorite for hikers, dog walkers, runners, and mountain bikers. To continue on the TAM, cross Morgan Horse Farm Road to the parking area. The TAM then enters the Otter Creek Gorge Preserve.

Linda has been an important contributor and huge supporter of MALT and the TAM for many years, and we appreciate this new trail easement. If you know Linda or see her out on the trail, make sure to say Thank You!

REMINDER: The Wild, or Poison, Parsnip is up, so be careful when you are hiking around, or walking along the roadsides. If the sap gets on your skin, then is exposed to light, it can cause a nasty burn that might leave a long term scar. If you want to dig it up or weed whack it, we recommend doing that in the very early morning or in the evening, then a shower afterwards will remove all residue. No need to fear the parsnip!

View along the trail and one of the bridges on the Johnson section.

Wild Parsnip, Pastinaca sativa
HELLO TO OUR 2016 SUMMER INTERN!

We are excited to welcome our 2016 summer intern! Mariah Neilsen is a Sophomore Environmental Studies and Geography joint major at Middlebury College from Dallas, TX who recently moved to Vermont. Outside of class she is a member of the Environmental Council and enjoys visual arts, cooking, gardening, and getting outside. One of her favorite things to do during the summer when she was younger was to get outside and explore, and she is excited to get to know the trail better and to work with everyone this summer! Be sure to say hello when you see her on the trail this summer.

TWO MALT BOARD MEMBERS SAY GOODBYE

The MALT board says goodbye for now to Will Amidon and Laura Asermily. Will joined the MALT board last year, but is unable to stay on due to an overloaded schedule. Laura has decided to resign as well, as MALT only needs one representative from Town of Middlebury to serve on the board, and Kathleen Ramsay would continue her tenure. We wish you well!

Sign up for monthly MALT email newsletters on our website! www.maltvt.org
Interested in volunteering? Contact us for opportunities!
TAM TREK 2016
Sunday, September 18
Wright Park
Seymour Street Extension
Middlebury

Save the date for this year’s Trek! The format will be the same as last year, with the 18 mile race starting at 8am, and the 6 mile, 2 mile fun run and the hike all starting at 10am.

For those new to the TAM Trek, it is a race to raise money for the Trail Around Middlebury, the 18 mile hiking trail with some side trails and spots for mountain bikes and jogging strollers. This trail winds around the town center, heads down along the Middlebury River, crosses over on pedestrian bridges, wanders through parks and natural preserves, and has a few hilly areas while maintaining a gentle feel.

The Trek has several options, one race is the entire loop of 18 miles. Another race is a loop of 6 miles, and a third is a 2 mile fun run. And finally, there is a hike option of about 3 miles. We start and finish all runs and hikes at Wright Park at the end of Seymour St Extension in Middlebury. There is a small parking lot, parking is available all up the street, and the ACTR bus comes up to Pinewood Rd.

We have many sponsors for this year’s Trek already, thanks to:
Addison Independent
Carrara & Sons
Drop-In Brewing Co
Fire & Ice Restaurant
Green Peppers Restaurant
IPJ Real Estate
Middlebury Fitness
Middlebury Natural Foods Coop
National Bank of Middlebury
Neuse, Duprey & Putnam
Vermont Sun
Whistlepig
PROPERTY HIGHLIGHTS—WRIGHT PARK

HISTORY (excerpts by Gioia Kuss and Clare O'Reilly)

Middlebury’s Wright Park began like much of New England; forested, then intensely farmed, then left to forest regrowth and dense shrub cover. The mixed land cover presently in the park reflects its agricultural past and historical influences.

The Wright Park parcel was formerly owned by Col. William Sumner, who fought in the war of 1812. The first dated occupancy of the homestead is 1786, and the farm was occupied by the Sumner family until its sale in 1882 to Joseph Battell.

Joseph Battell purchased an additional 6 ½ acres to expand the parcel. Upon his death in 1916, he left a substantial portion of his real estate, including Wright Park, to Middlebury College. The College sold the land, and it transferred several more times before being purchased by Willard Jackson, in three separate parcels.

LAND DONATION

Will Jackson donated this property to the Town to provide rustic recreation experiences for residents in proximity to the village. While he allowed for the possibility of a Route 7 bypass and the water treatment pipe crossing the land, his wishes were that it be kept undeveloped. His desire to maintain several of the viewsheds on the property as well as managing the property for a diversity of species, especially those of birds, were considered. Wright Park was dedicated in 1982 in the name of Charles Wright, a friend of Jackson’s and outdoor enthusiast.

WRIGHT PARK TRAILS (Easy access point, Bike and Jog Stroller accessible)

The trails here have many variations and a total network of approximately 3.8 miles. Begin either at the Belden Dam area north of the park or at the southern entrance off of Seymour St. in Middlebury. There are three main trails running north/south through the park. The White Circle trail runs next to Otter Creek and past a small bay near a thirty foot cliff, and past a marsh. The White Triangle trail runs along the eastern boundary near railroad tracks, and the TAM/White Square trail goes through the central part of the park. There are several other cross trails that connect to these main trails and form loops. Detailed maps are posted at the north and south entrances.
USFWS PARTNERS PROGRAM

MALT and the Town of Middlebury are working on a proposal with Vermont Audubon and Department of Fish and Wildlife to receive funds for habitat management. Wright Park contains shrublands, white pine stands, mature hardwood forest and riparian environments. These habitats support a number of important bird species, like the Golden-winged Warbler. This species is a priority due to its declining numbers. Since the type of shrubland in the Park is temporary and inclined to turn into forest, regular management must be undertaken to maintain this habitat type. The 2004 Wright Park Management Plan designated a portion of the park for this type of habitat management.

To date, some management activities have occurred, but there has been much forest regrowth. In 2015, staff of Audubon Vermont, MALT and USFWS Partners Program as well as Allie Aiello, our intern from Middlebury College, met at the park to discuss management needs. A map was designed to address the management needs and prioritize management efforts. Also, Audubon Vermont met with a local forester to discuss management of the more forested portions of the project area that would require mechanized management activities.

The goal of this project is to manage for this shrubland type by methods like manual clearing, as well as managing against invasives and promoting native shrubs. Partners include MALT, Audubon Vermont and Middlebury College. MALT manages the park while Audubon and Middlebury College have provided technical assistance. This includes surveying the park for priority species (Audubon) and map development (Middlebury College). Funding from private and public foundations is being sought to cover the technical assistance component of the work. Funding from the USFWS Partners Program will allow on the ground management activities to be successfully completed.

OTHER PROJECTS

We are currently fixing several of the small bridges on the white circle trail, fixing some wet areas with a gravel overlay, and ditching. The areas will soon grow over and have a more natural look.
WILDLIFE WEEK EVENT, JULY 30

Join us at 8pm at the Ilsley Public Library in Middlebury for an informational presentation on the huge diversity and abundance of moths in Vermont, followed by an outdoor black light session at Otter View Park and Wright Park at 9pm to see what moths are active in mid-summer. Local moth experts will be on hand to help us with moth identification and biology. Bring a camera to "capture" your finds.

BEGINNER’S BIRD WALK / FAMILY QUEST WALK—SATURDAY, JUNE 25

Wright Park, 9-11am

Join MALT and Otter Creek Audubon Society for a two-hour guided walk for beginning birders and nature lovers of all ages along the Quest Trail, a spur off the Trail Around Middlebury. Bring binoculars or borrow ours. There will be snacks provided at one of the nature stations. This event is family-friendly, but the trail is not good for strollers. For weather questions, call 989-7115.

WILD EDIBLES—SUMMER

Fun fact: The American Linden or Basswood tree (*Tilia americana*) has leaves that are edible right from the branch. These leaves can go into a salad when young, and while the older leaves are edible, they can have a texture that is less than optimal. The flowers (late June or early July) can be used fresh or dried for tea. So look for your local Basswood and see what you find for dinner!
TRAILWORK UPDATE:

Wright Park has seen some improvements already this spring. The trail entering from Seymour St Extension had moved downhill from the water in the soil, so a different layer of gravel was laid down, that should pack better. Trails have been partially clipped back, and the bridges are in process of repair on the White Circle Trail. We owe thanks to the students at the Diversified Occupations Program and the 7th and 8th graders of North Branch School for their help with these projects.

We’ve replaced some signage that has been damaged or gone missing, but more is still needed. This is the case every year, as weather and tree growth takes a toll. We do have trouble with people taking the signs, though, so please do consider leaving them for more hikers! They cost money to replace and people sometimes get lost.

Thank you!

The ‘97 Trail, most of the Wright Park white triangle trail and part of the Wright Park main trail is clipped and cleared. The white circle trail still needs some trimming and bridge work, although a couple of the small bridges have been repaired.

The Jackson section has been clipped back, and some clipping and signs replaced along the athletic fields at the College. The Diversified Occupations Program has also helped with fixing this section of trail.

The TAM is also mowed regularly to keep the grass short and the wild parsnip to a somewhat safe level for hikers.

If you are out on the trail and see people working, make sure to say hi! And if you see any trees down, please let us know by emailing: info@maltvt.org, or calling the office: 388-1007.

TAM ENDOWMENT UPDATE:

Our endowment to fund the TAM is growing slowly but surely, and is now up to $80,000. Our goal is $125,000, so MALT is over halfway there! Thank you to our donors!

If you are interested in contributing to the TAM, make sure to direct any donations to “TAM Endowment”.

North Branch School students clearing the TAM in the rain, with teachers at 3rd and 4th from right. MALT staffer Joni Osterhaudt is third from left.
**Upcoming Outings**

I want to help preserve the natural beauty of the Middlebury Area and maintenance of the TAM!

I would like to contribute at the following membership level:

- Benefactor $2,500
- Friend $100
- Supporter $1,000
- Contributor $50
- Sustaining $500
- Other $__________

Please provide the following information and mail with your check to MALT, PO Box 804, Middlebury, VT 05753.

Name:
Address:
City/State/Zip:
Phone:
Email:

If you would like to remain anonymous, check here.

**MARSH, MEADOW, AND GRASSLAND WILDLIFE WALKS**

Middlebury Area Land Trust and Otter Creek Audubon Society invite you to join us as we survey birds and wildlife of Otter View Park and the Hurd Grassland.

All walks start at Otter View Park parking lot in Middlebury. Shorter and longer routes possible. The primary walking path at OVP is universally accessible. Summer walks start at 7:00am.

Saturday, June 11
Saturday, July 9
Saturday, August 13
Saturday, September 10