Bringing invasive plant species under control is the goal on our 30 acres of conservation land

With invasive species now identified, campaign aims for spring 2012 community volunteer effort

In spring 2012 the Weeks Brick House & Gardens – with its 1710 house weather-tight and watched over by caring tenants, and its gardens nurtured by a master – turns attention to its 30 acres of trails and conservation land with a people-powered campaign against invasive plant species.

Dates of the work parties, which aim to draw volunteers from our local and regional community to eradicate two-dozen varieties of invasives, will be announced on the Weeks Brick House web site as soon as they are known.

In summer 2011, an informal survey of the former Weeks family farmstead was arranged by our newest board member, Jean Eno, in preparation for her annual meeting presentation, *Flora & Fauna of the Weeks Conservation Land*. County Forester Fred Borman observed that invasive plant colonization has been choking out native species and altering natural habitats. The troubled areas were flagged for future reference, and the topic of invasive plants and their negative impact became an important part of Ms. Eno’s guided walk on Saturday, August 6.

Fortunately, to address the invasive plant problem, the Weeks Brick House & Gardens has the right person in place at the right time – new board member Jean Eno works at the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Discovery Center and holds a bachelor’s degree in environmental conservation studies from the University of New Hampshire. She has coordinated efforts to eradicate invasive plants in other communities, and has experience with the “weed wrench” approach, in which each volunteer is trained to use a simple, labor-saving, task-specific tool that pulls the toughest weeds out by the roots.

The hiking trails on the 30 acres of Weeks Brick House conservation land offer great potential for connecting to the local community, yet are at risk of being overgrown with a variety of invasive plant species.

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Weeks Brick House & Gardens board approves affiliate membership with Historic New England

The Weeks Brick House & Gardens board of directors voted unanimously at its June meeting to become an Affiliate Member of Historic New England, joining 44 other historical societies, house museums, and preservation organizations in this new membership category.

Historic New England is the largest regional preservation organization in the U.S., with 36 historic properties, plus an archives and collections conservation center. The organization was founded in 1910 as the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA).

Membership benefits for the Weeks Brick House include consultation with HNE’s professional staff, attendance at the Affiliate Forum, public presentations by HNE staff, and promotional support through HNE web and printed materials.

Affiliates retain autonomy while enjoying the benefit of association with one of the most highly-respected organizations in the preservation field.
From the President:

**With stability at the house, attention turns to maintaining our conservation land**

By Tom Ayres, Board President

The Weeks Brick House & Gardens organization experienced a busy year. In May, we were very pleased to welcome new tenants, Ken and Travis, to our brick house. They had an immediate impact, working with Steve Pike and Mary Groebner to spruce up the place, in particular, the Great Room, which any high-class museum would be proud to display. Ken even repaired the grandfather clock.

As usual, Leslie Stevens, our certified Master Gardener, did her usual excellent job of managing our colonial gardens. On Greenland Day in July, a number of local artists produced paintings of the house and gardens, which were later offered for sale. The Victory Garden produce was donated to the Portsmouth food bank.

Reg Bacon provided his leadership and experience as the Weeks Brick House became an affiliate member of Historic New England. Benefits that we can expect include access to best practices for property managers.

At the Annual Meeting in August, we had two changes to the Board of Directors officers. Cynthia Smith, of Greenland, became our new Treasurer and Skip Weeks, of Collinsville, Conn., became our Vice-President.

To reduce expenses, we will remove people from our newsletter mailing list if they have not paid membership dues for the last two years. Of course, Life Members will continue to receive the newsletter.

– Tom Ayres

**Saturday trail walk & Sunday speakers combine to enliven 2011 Annual Meeting**

This year’s Annual Meeting Weekend on August 6 & 7, 2011 aimed to build on the enthusiasm generated at the 2010 300th anniversary event. Attendance was not up to last year’s celebration, but those present were able to renew ties to family & friends, enjoy guided tours of the 1710 house, and tour the magnificently rejuvenated gardens, which have become a showpiece of the property.

On Saturday naturalist Jean Eno reprised her guided walk of the trails on our conservation land. The wine & cheese social was held early Saturday evening in the gardens. Sunday featured two guest speakers and their abundantly illustrated presentations at Great Bay Discovery Center. First, historical archaeologist Dr. Neill DePaoli summarized his years of gathering archaeological evidence at the Weeks farmstead. Next, as part of our own recognition of the 1911 Weeks Act championed by John Wingate Weeks (an accomplished descendant of Leonard Weeks), David Govatski, the secretary of the Weeks Act Centennial Coordinating Committee, spoke about the arduous route to the passage of the Weeks Act and its far-reaching impact.

For the past few seasons, a “special-event warm-up” at the Weeks Brick House has been the annual town celebration in mid-July. Greenland Day, the main event of which is the 5k Jason Hussey Race that raises funds for local charities, centers the activities of the annual celebration at the town green. This year on Greenland Day (July 16) the Weeks Brick House Gardens featured barnyard buddies in the garden, an “Ask a Master Gardener” table with our own garden expert Leslie Stevens, Art-in-the Garden with a group of plein air artists in action, and a trail walk led by naturalist Jean Eno. A volunteer-staffed display table at the town green directed interested folks to the activities at the Weeks Brick House.

For the latest news on special events at the Weeks Brick House, visit our web site at www.WeeksBrickHouse.org.
Audio tour of Weeks Brick House hiking trails aims to dovetail with latest technology in mobile phone ‘apps’

By R.W. Bacon

Late in our 2010 tercentennial year, new board member Nicola Astles began brainstorming the creation of a digital audio tour of the Weeks Brick House hiking trails as a way to engage visitors with the history of the early farmstead. The project became part of her graduate studies at the University of New Hampshire. As the project and script developed for existing cell phone technologies, new technologies emerged. Your editor caught up with Nicola, still our board secretary, with graduate degree complete, but now residing in Vermont, for an update on the audio tour.

Recently Nicola was selected to attend The Humanities and Technology Unconference at Brandeis University, a gathering of historians, librarians, and museum professionals convening to discuss how to use technology to teach history.

“The take-home for me was that creating personalized learning experiences, or creating personal connections to history, can increase the engagement of learners,” Nicola reported recently via e-mail. “This is one of the goals of the audio tour for the WBH. I would like our visitors to connect with the landscape and to feel a connection with the Weeks family by walking in their footsteps. They can begin to imagine life in the past by walking through the forest shaped by the Weeks family and seeing a similar view of the Winnicutt river. This is a form of experiential learning I became familiar through my anthropology studies as an undergrad, but I believe it can work for history as well.”

Following up that conference, Nicola attended the Museums and Mobile third online conference, in which museum professionals convening to discuss new members and broaden our audience,” she wrote. “I believe that the Weeks Brick House is a valuable asset to both Greenland and the New Hampshire seacoast community, but it is up to us to prove it, and I look forward to being part of this process.”

“Compared to art museums, very few historic sites offer digital content to their visitors. I think this is because history is an inherently conservative field. It is more focused on looking backwards than forwards.”

– Nicola Astles

Inherently conservative field. It is more focused on looking backwards than forwards. This is not a bad thing, but it does mean that we have to adapt in order to continue attracting visitors to history museums. Historians are accustomed to thinking that all the information we need can be found in paper archives, and it is true that a wealth of information is and will continue to be found in these sources. However, technological advances have given us new ways of sharing the information we learn from the past. The educational aspect is evolving, and this is where museums can take advantage of technology. The Weeks Brick House has a lot to offer its visitors. We have information for those curious about architecture, New Hampshire history, Weeks family genealogy, gardening, environmental history, and more. And we need to make that information accessible. My hope is that by offering digital audio tours, the Weeks Brick House grounds will become an active learning site year round.

If our visitors can download a tour to the mobile device of their choice, they can explore the aspects of history that interest them, whenever they want to.”

At present the goal is to introduce the audio tour in spring 2012. “My idea for the future of the tour is to get feedback from visitors, both on content and format,” she wrote in a recent e-mail. “I’d like to know what topics are interesting to our visitors, and if they have smartphones, and what kind: iPhone, Android, Blackberry? In the future, I would like to offer a selection of audio tours, exploring different themes and topics. I’d also like to create interactive apps that will include images, maps, and links to further information to create a more immersive learning experience. Since there are no-cost and low-cost options for developing digital content, I believe the WBH can only gain from offering digital content to our visitors, in addition to our current programming.”

Nicola stressed that the audio tours would not be a substitute for tours led by a knowledgeable guide, but as a complementary experience. “My hope is that by increasing the type of learning experiences we can offer, we can attract new members and broaden our audience,” she wrote. “I believe that the Weeks Brick House is a valuable asset to both Greenland and the New Hampshire seacoast community, but it is up to us to prove it, and I look forward to being part of this process.”

House & Garden Report:

Gardens yield bountiful harvest for food bank;

Weeks Brick House awaits west chimney work

Board member Steve Pike, our longtime historic house preservation specialist, reports that the Weeks Brick House is in fine shape going into the New England winter season.

The house weathered Hurricane Irene in late August with just a few leaks through mortar joints in the west chimney. The unusual pre-Halloween snowfall caused no problems.

The west chimney is scheduled to be repaired in spring 2012 by restoration mason Richard Irons and his crew, who rebuilt the top of the east chimney in 2010. Touched by the expertise of Richard Irons, the Weeks Brick House joins the company of hundreds of notable historic structures in the eastern U.S. The West Chimney Fund is still open for donations.
Nathan Weeks, anonymous tough-as-nails quarryman, gets national press in Scribner’s Magazine, May 1905

Editor’s Note: Recent issues featured articles on accomplished Weeks family members. This issue gives equal notice to a humble, relatively anonymous descendant. The following excerpt provides a glimpse into Vermont quarry work a century ago.

The Marble Mountains in Vermont by Edwin B. Child, (excerpt only) with Illustrations by the Author

... Nearly all of the men at this quarry are Yankees, men whose skill and intelligence are varied and who do not need overmuch bossing; who can, and often do, turn from quarrying to farming or house-building or plumbing or running a river-boat on the Hudson, or even managing a hotel for the unwary summer boarder. Among the young and husky quarrymen old Nathan Weeks looked misplaced. His close-cropped chin-whisker was white, his shoulders narrow, and his movements slow. It seemed that a restful sunny front porch would be a more fitting place for him than a quarry-pit.

"He does move tarnation slow," said the blacksmith, "but he's the best man in the quarry yet. He don't need no talkin' to nuther. He's alwuz thar an' knows what he's up to, and he can do more'n the best man next, whatever it is. There ain't a man in the county can chop as many trees in a day as he can, and every stump he leaves is as slick and smooth as if he'd planed it. It don't make no difference how fast the rest of 'em start, he's alwuz the fist to the top of the mountain, and he never stops to breathe himself before he puts his axe in. I remember seein' him once pullin' a big stone for the underpinnin' of his barn. He'd yoked up a big pair, weighin' a ton apiece, to the stone, with 'bout fifty-foot of chain, and the oxen down in a mess of brush in a gully, and he'd swing his gad and throw them oxen inter the yoke and stop 'em when she'd slid jest an inch-and-a-quarter. Another quarter would 'a ripped the whole inside stuffin' out of everything. By gum, you couldn't put a leaf between the stone and the sill he'd drew to! And he's jest as good anywhere in the quarry. He looks sort of peaked and old, but he's awful tough. Did you ever go to one of his meetins!

You'd oughter have. His father was an old Methody exhorter, an' he kinder inherited it. He used to have meetins in the schoolhouse over in Spanktown Holler, regular. But it got so' folks would go to laff jest hearin' him pray and he give it up ..."

The blacksmith threw down the last of the bunch of drills he had been sharpening, settled down on a bench near the door, filled his pipe, and went on. "Way up in the end of the Holler, near where them big pot-holes is that you've heared about, Uncle Nate's father used to have a quarry where he an' Nate used to git out a few small blocks the best they could in winter.

... They didn't have no sech tools as we have nowadays, but they'd manage to split 'em up and smooth 'em down with old pieces of grin'stone and sech like, and bimeby they'd git a bunch of pretty likely lookin' headstones. Sometimes the old man would set to work and fix up one or two off extra. He'd cut a bunch of leaves with the stems stickin' right out so' you could see 'em jest as plain as a harp with strings to it. I tell you they was awful slick and neat. Then he'd load 'em up in his wagon and go peddlin'. Sometimes when folks was real healthy he'd git a good ways off, clear to Ohio, 'fore he'd get sold out.

"Well, one day they found a new vein of marble in the quarry. You know they didn't have no way of corein' the way we do now, an' 'twasn't easy to tell what was under you. Anyhow, he'd found enough to make him think he was fixed. He wouldn't have to git rich, he could jest sit down an' be rich. So when he got home that night he sez to his wife, 'Miss Weeks,' sez he, 'yer needn't to wear caliker no more. Yer can wear bombazine fer every day now.' Well, the next mornin' he went back to the quarry an' he found that there'd been a 'slide' and his quarry an' his tools were under about twenty thousand tons of mountain." ... 

Weeks Kin - Notable & Humble:
Did you know?: N.H. Chief Justice Charles Doe was a ‘double-descendant’ of Leonard Weeks

By R.W. Bacon

In 1967, John Phillip Reid, early in his 40-plus years as a law professor at New York University, completed his biography of Charles Cogswell Doe (1830-1896), for 20 years the Chief Justice of the N.H. Supreme Court. One chapter of Chief Justice: The Judicial World of Charles Doe, is devoted to the judge’s roots among the early families of coastal New Hampshire. But it took a genealogist and Weeks descendant — our board president Tom Ayres — to point out the connection to the Weeks family, which was not referenced in the book. One grandmother of Charles Doe was Martha Weeks (1744-1812), daughter of Walter Weeks (1706-1774), who inherited the Weeks Brick House from his father, Samuel Weeks (1670-1746). Since Walter Weeks married his first-cousin, Comfort Weeks (1708-1786), Judge Doe continued on page 5

At right is Charles C. Doe (1830-1896), who served as Chief Justice of the New Hampshire Supreme Court from 1876 to 1896. He was a 3rd-great-grandson of Leonard Weeks (1635-1707) — twice. He lived most of his adult life in Rollinsford, N.H.
house & garden report …

continued from page 4

Also scheduled for 2012 is restoration and painting of some exterior trim, and the staining of the back porch. In the meantime, the current tenants are maintain vigilance and keeping the house in good order.

From Master Gardener Leslie Stevens comes the following report:

"It has been a rough fall for gardens in New England. Between Hurricane Irene and the very early-season snowstorm we had several days before Halloween, we found ourselves putting our gardens to bed a little early this year. But fortunately, the Weeks Brick House gardens suffered no permanent damage and will be back next spring as good as new.

"This summer was my third summer taking care of the gardens and it was the most successful year yet. Last fall I added lots of organic material to the soil to amend it, and this season I saw the benefits. One of the highlights in July was the first blooming of the many hollyhocks I started from seed several years ago. They were beautiful and bloomed for over a month. There were five different colors, and many visitors to the gardens commented on them. Another highlight was Greenland Day in July when a group of local artists joined us and painted different aspects of the gardens and house over the course of the day. We auctioned the paintings at the annual meeting, and the artists graciously donated a portion of their proceeds to the Weeks Brick House & Gardens. One of the artists actually painted the hollyhocks, and I am happy to say that painting hangs in my dining room now.

"The Victory Gardens were very healthy this season and produced many pounds of vegetables for the local food pantry. I took several loads of potatoes, summer squash, tomatoes, onions, cucumbers, and winter squash to the Seacoast Food Pantry, which serves the city of Portsmouth as well as surrounding towns including Greenland. My plan to grow vegetables that were easy to grow and appealing to many worked very well, and the Weeks Brick House was able to contribute many pounds of organic, healthy produce to the food stream.

"For next year I am working on using organic materials from our grounds (like grass clippings and leaves) as mulch to eliminate weeds. I spend way too much time weeding, so I am researching different ways to naturally cut down weed growth. I will let you know what I come up with.

"Thanks for everyone’s support and encouragement over the year. Have a great winter, and I’ll see you in the spring with seedlings in hand.”

Judge Charles C. Doe …

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therefore was a 3rd-great-grandson of Leonard Weeks (1633-1707) – twice.

Charles Doe graduated from Dartmouth College and then attended Harvard Law School before going into law practice. He was appointed Associate Justice to the N.H. Supreme Court in 1859, and Chief Justice in 1876. In his tenure he secured a lasting reputation in judicial history as a tireless reformer in the use of evidence.

Crawford Henning, in Great American Lawyers (1909), described him thusly:

“Justice Doe’s approach to the law was simple in principle and supported by brilliant legal reasoning and boldness of thought. His approach to life was very unassuming and occasionally eccentric. A visitor to Concord, N.H., in the early 1890s could easily mistake the chief justice for a farmer or country storekeeper. He wore a sort of brown frock coat, coarse pants, and heavy boots which had seldom seen bootblack. In the summer he would top off his person with a battered straw hat; in the winter he would don a cloth cap with ear flaps. By his dress and habits, he tried to demonstrate that the attributes of plain living and high thinking were quite compatible.”

Tom Ayres recently donated a copy of the Reid biography of Judge Charles Doe – his great-grandfather – to the Weeks Brick House archives.

www.WeeksBrickHouse.org

Membership dues categories:

- $15 Student/Senior
- $25 Individual
- $250 Sustaining
- $50 Family
- $100 Contributing
- $500 Leader
- $250 to the Chimney Fund
- $ to the Garden Fund

Please return this form with payment to: Weeks Brick House & Gardens, P.O. Box 93, Greenland, NH 03840. Thank You!

[Membership Form]

E-mail newsletter option begins with Spring 2012 issue!

Please indicate your preference: □ E-mail newsletter in PDF format □ Hard-copy postal mail newsletter
Invasive plant species …

Jean offered more information in response to a recent e-mail interview:

**News of the WBH&G:** How did you first learn about the Weeks Brick House?

**Jean Eno:** I came to know about the WBH&G very shortly after the trails were established, when friend and fellow Greenlander, Marie Hussey, introduced them to me.

**WBH&G:** We’re lucky to have someone with your background on our board. Tell us about your relevant experience.

**J.E.:** At UNH my concentrations were conservation biology, and environmental education, communication, & public leadership. During an internship with the N.H. Fish & Game Dept., I was asked to join the education program at Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve Discovery Center. Wanting to devote more time to river conservation and “smart growth” principles, I began a multi-year investment of various land-use planning and conservation workshops and conferences. Many of these workshops discussed invasive plants in N.H. I eventually began work for the New Hampshire Rivers Council as director of the Winnicut River Watershed Coalition initiative, which I continue today. I recently rejoined the seasonal staff at GBNERR, and just concluded teaching the fall Cultural History program for grade 1-5 students. I have a blast; it’s a lot of fun!

**WBH&G:** What are specific problems with invasive plant faced on our land?

**J.E.:** A few species of invasive plants have taken good hold in several areas, which will certainly require ample sweat-equity in removing them. Fortunately these areas are limited, and there are solid tools available – free of charge.

**WBH&G:** What are the negative consequences of not addressing the problem strategically and correctly?

**J.E.:** Invasive plants eventually displace native plants, thereby disrupting the ecosystems that depend on natives. This in turn causes a decline in the richness of the wildlife that depend on those ecosystems. While some animals, birds, and fish have adapted to using certain invasive plants for food and shelter, many species are not capable of adapting, and suffer in fitness if they do. With the diverse flora, particularly the trees, on the WBH&G conservation land, it would be heartbreaking to see invasive plants take over, and ultimately, turn the land into a monotonous landscape devoid of plant and wildlife diversity.

**WBH&G:** What is the priority of action for next spring? What needs to be done first? And what about long-term vigilance?

**J.E.:** A “clean-up” day (or two!) needs to be coordinated, in which we utilize free tools and volunteers. A more problematic aspect of invasives is that they aren’t necessarily gone once pulled or cut the first time. Many species require several rounds of yanking and cutting, and some require precise treatment with herbicides which, on shoreland properties like WBH&G, may only be applied by licensed professionals.

**WBH&G:** The campaign against invasive plants could be an ideal way to introduce WBH&G to local residents who never even notice the house while speeding by on Rte. 33. What are your plans to “light a fire” under environmentally-conscious locals to join us in discovering our 30-plus acres of conservation land?

**J.E.:** My main plan was to light a fire under the WBH&G board – which, I did, and it landed me on the board! I will coordinate a clean-up day, but it is my experience that, in addition to needing a serious go-getter, at least three other things are needed to get people involved: food, entertainment, and money for outreach expenses.

I have a small volunteer base that I could solicit, and I have direct contact with the Conservation Commission in Greenland and nearby towns. I know the contacts for local scout troops, and am a new board member of the Great Bay Stewards. Lastly, I have excellent rapport with experts on invasives that I fully expect to beg, borrow, and steal from. From all these groups, WBH&G members, and general outreach, we can gain plenty of help.

**Editor’s note:** As soon as the dates for invasive plant clean-up are determined, they will be announced for potential volunteers on the Weeks Brick House & Gardens website: www.WeeksBrickHouse.org.