

# Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust

Spring 2007 Newsletter

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

*"My Neighborhood" was written for WUML's daily essay feature on the Sunrise program by our very own President, Henri Marchand. "It's a small reflection on aspects of neighborhood life and quality of life over the years—growth, maturity, decline and revival efforts—issues the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust seeks to address as part of our mission. Hope you enjoy."*

Dear Members and Friends,

**"Why would anyone choose to live here?"** asked a colleague about my neighborhood. The question has been bugging me since sometime last summer when "For Rent" signs began popping up throughout the neighborhood. They suddenly appeared at every turn of a corner, on every block. They seem to create a bit of unease wherever and whenever they're displayed, suggesting that the neighborhood had lost its appeal and the quality of life that had prevailed for years. Even during the last slump in the early 90s, a decline thus far steeper than today's, these signs were seldom on display.

**"Why would anyone choose to live here?"** Aside from the question's straight bluntness and hint of snootiness, it seemed loaded with subtext. First was the classic American notion that you wore it out and "moved on," moved westward to greener pastures, moved to the suburbs. Another was that the questioner had neither the interest nor the imagination to consider that this might have once been and might still be a good place to live. Where once the question might have been "Why do you want to leave?" I now heard the unvoiced query, "Why haven't you left?"

In all fairness the questioner had no context other than recent history with which to form a perception of the area. Generally developed from the turn of the century to the 1940s, the area is an interesting mix of architectural styles and lot sizes, typical of traditional areas just beyond the downtown and the urban core that were themselves "streetcar suburbs".

**"Why would anyone choose to live here?"** At one time a variety of people with varied backgrounds made the choice. They built homes and rented apartments and settled in for life. On one block alone there co-existed ample Victorian colonials, roomy two-families and three deckers, solid six-unit tenements. Quite often, owners of the multi-families lived in one of the units. They were homes first, investments second.

Through most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the arc of development was sustainable and, in many ways, diverse for its time. Take for example just a block or two along University Avenue and Riverside Street near Kerouac's "wrinkly tar corner." Professors and (see p 4)

## WHITE WATER RAFTING



Photo courtesy of Zoar Outdoor, Inc.

**RESERVATIONS (800) 532-7483**

**Questions? Call LP&CT at (888) 375-1115**

It's white water rafting season again! We're constantly amazed at the power of 'word of mouth' in getting the word out about this unique adventure that will certainly exhilarate you. Rafting reservations are coming in quickly for this season, so we encourage you to call and make your reservation soon. Rafting trips will run as long as the spring brings enough rain. Last year, as you might recall, we experienced a brief season sandwiched between record drought and devastating floods.

Right now the season's looking great, but instead of keeping an eye on the weather for your trip, keep an eye on the Concord River USGS stream gauge that we monitor on our website (bottom of rafting page: [http://www.lowellandtrust.org/White\\_water\\_rafting.html](http://www.lowellandtrust.org/White_water_rafting.html)). **Trips start April 7th and will run Saturdays and Sundays at 9am & 1pm**, operated by Zoar Outdoor and faithful LP&CT volunteers!

All trips include two trips down the river through three sets of Class III and IV rapids. At the end of the second run, you'll get to experience 'locking out' through the historic lock chambers behind the DoubleTree Hotel (kindly providing space for rafting this year!). Locking out includes maneuvering the boat through a pair of lock chambers built in 1850. **Volunteers are needed for operating the locks** and training will be provided April 7, 2007 at 11am behind the DoubleTree Hotel (call 978-934-0030 to learn more).

If you would like to raft as part of a **group reservation**, we have marketing DVD's that we can mail out to help you learn more about the trips. Please call us for this 3 minute video of an adventure of a lifetime 'right in your own backyard'.

**All rafting proceeds support our work to establish the Concord River Greenway!**

**THE CITY OF LOWELL'S CONSERVATION COMMISSION  
HAS THREE POSITIONS AVAILABLE  
FOR COMMISSIONERS.**

**IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN APPLYING PLEASE SEE**  
<http://www.lowellma.gov/depts/hr/board-postings-or>  
CALL CHRISTINE THOMAS AT 978-446-7200 x1446

## GREENWAY - FINAL DESIGN

This past fall, the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust completed the **25% design** of the Concord River Greenway with funding from MA DCR's Recreational Trails Program. Funding for staff time to support our work on the Greenway came from numerous other sources. Please visit our Concord River Greenway web page to download our report on the process of getting to conceptual design, our partners, and funders.

As we reported in the last newsletter, the **public art plan** was also completed in December by reknowned artists Mags Harries and Lajos Heder. A local team of esteemed public art professionals (Carole Ann Meehan, Rosemary Noon, LZ Nunn, and Charles Tracy) assisted with review of the plan and suggested steps for moving forward with the plan. We're inspired by the plan's focus on ensuring that the Greenway's public art is subtle and does not detract from the natural beauty of the Concord River.

Finally, the selection of a **final design** team is now underway. Design teams responded to the City of Lowell's RFP process with proposals by March 23rd. Now a team of LP&CT, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, and City of Lowell Planning & Development staff have the task of choosing the design team for the project. We'll keep you posted! See you on the Greenway!

## BACKYARD ADVENTURES!

Our spring backyard adventures have begun! The youth at the Citizen Schools program at the Dr. An Wang Middle School have begun their explorations of the nearby pond, meadow, and forest. The students have enjoyed trekking through the snow and mud to discover tracks of fox, skunks, birds, and deer. Visits with several animals native to Massachusetts have offered up close experiences with mice, turtles, an Eastern screech owl, and a broad wing hawk.

A visit with Eagle Rising, Chief of the Greater Lowell Indian Cultural Association, engaged the students. They were awed by the hand-made baskets, corn husk dolls, and musical instruments. Eagle Rising will return later in the spring to share more about the special places the Native Americans have in the State Forest.

As the snow and ice melts away, we'll head to the pond to discuss vernal pools. Salamanders, wood frogs, and caddis flies oh my!

Backyard Adventures! at Girls Incorporated of Greater Lowell kicks off April 4<sup>th</sup>. Amongst the adventures will be a return to Rogers Fort Hill Park to see the seasonal changes since their visit in the fall; a visit to the Lowell Dracut Tyngsboro State Forest; and a tour along the Concord River to visit the fish ladder, to hear about the industry along the banks, and to conduct water quality tests. The girls may also lend their creative energies to Donahue Park with ideas and a day of planting.

**Adventures and enthusiastic learners await you too if you are interested in being a "guest" at one of our classes. Give Kristin a call at 978-934-0030 to discuss your ideas.**

### UPDATE

The team of students who attended last summer's Gulf of Maine Summer Institute will continue their clean-up efforts this spring by participating in the Earth Day and Great American clean-ups. They will also lend their help at the Earth Day Fest and Riverfest events with fish and nature printing. After meeting Jollene Dubner's 2nd grade teacher, Roberta "Bobby" Gordon at the park, they also remain committed to spending some time at the park to weed, trim, and plant – especially the lilacs!

## WAYS OF GIVING

### CHARITABLE IRA DISTRIBUTIONS

*If you're over 70 1/2, please consider taking advantage of a rare opportunity to contribute directly to the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust via your IRA without incurring any taxes. As explained by LP&CT Board Member Dorothy Bickling, of Bickling Financial Services:*

"The new tax law gives older IRA participants the opportunity to help out their favorite charity **at no tax cost**. In the past when donors wanted to give a charity funds that were in their retirement accounts, they had to first take a distribution from the IRA account, pay taxes on that amount and then give the remainder to a charity. Now, for taxpayers who are **70 1/2 or older**, the new law creates an exclusion from gross income of up to \$100,000 annually for qualified charitable distributions from an IRA. Qualified distributions are neither included in income nor deducted as a charitable donation. However, the distributions are taken into account for purposes of meeting the minimum distribution requirements for IRAs. The new exclusion is available only for IRA distributions that would otherwise be includible in gross income and only if the IRA trustee makes the distribution **directly to a qualifying charity**, such as LP&CT."

### CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITIES

LP&CT has partnered with the Greater Lowell Community Foundation to offer charitable gift annuities as part of our palate of charitable gift options. Through a gift annuity the donor makes an irrevocable gift of cash, stocks, or other qualified asset in exchange for fixed payments for life. These types of gifts can be used to offset taxable income from other sources and/or satisfy a retiree's concern of "can I outlive my money?" Look for a mailing this spring.

### LP&CT GENERAL ENDOWMENT

We thank a very generous **Martha Mayo** for surprising us with a donation after our success with the Red Cross project. This donation will be put toward LP&CT's new general endowment, to be held at the Greater Lowell Community Foundation. All gifts, large and small, will ensure the sustainability of the Trust!



**Eagle Rising, Chief of the Greater Lowell Indian Cultural Association, shows the hand-made items including baskets of birch bark and reeds, beaded suspenders, and musical instruments.**

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

**Backyard Adventures!**  
 Be our guest for an afternoon and share your knowledge of Lowell's history, your passion for a special place, or your outdoor hobby experiences (**April - June**).

**Concord River Greenway Signage Committee**  
 Monthly meetings (**April - Dec**).

**Lock Tending** for White Water Rafting (**Training**: 4/7 11am)

**Gardening**: Planting, weeding, and your skills at Jollene Dubner, Donahue, and Coburn Parks; and Spalding Hs.


**Alewife Monitoring**: Help keep an eye out for returning adults, monitoring as needed (**April-June**; **Training**: 4/14 9am).

**Land Stewardship**: Share your love of nature by walking a Trust property periodically and letting us know what you observed. On-line monitoring reports make stewardship easy! (**monthly, year round**)


**TO SHARE YOUR TIME & SKILLS, CALL (978) 934-0030**

## LP&CT RECEIVES SIGNIFICANT GRANT SUPPORT FROM:

**Theodore Edson Parker Foundation**  
**City of Lowell CDBG Program**  
**Massachusetts Cultural Council**




Baldwin Foundation  
 Joseph & Eileen Donahue Foundation  
 The Entrust Fund      Aubert J. Fay Foundation  
 Fields Pond Foundation  
 Fieldstone Foundation   Green Leaf Foundation  
 Greater Lowell Community Foundation  
 Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities  
 New England Foundation for the Arts/Fund for the Arts  
 Nathaniel & Elizabeth P. Stevens Foundation  
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 Richard K. Donahue Sr. Park Maintenance Fund &  
 Alfred H. and Kathryn E. Coburn Park Fund  
 of the Greater Lowell Community Foundation (GLCF)  
 Women Working Wonders Fund, GLCF



MASSACHUSETTS FOUNDATION FOR THE  
**Humanities**  
*Bringing Ideas to Life*

## WE THANK THE FOLLOWING FOR SIGNIFICANT IN-KIND SUPPORT:




**Anstiss & Co., P.C.**  
**Eno, Boulay, Martin & Donahue**  
**LDFC/Lowell Plan**

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS—APRIL

*Please RSVP (978) 934-0030*



**White Water Rafting**  
 Weekends in April & May  
*Make your reservations early!*  
**800-532-7483**  
[www.zoaroutdoor.com/concordrafting.htm](http://www.zoaroutdoor.com/concordrafting.htm)  
*Lock Tender Training—April 7, 2007 11 am @ the locks!*



**Alewife Monitoring Training**  
**Saturday, April 14, 2007 9am - 11am**  
 Join us at Wamesit Falls on Centennial Island. We'll review the process & procedures for monitoring/equipment. Volunteers will take air/water temperatures, note the weather, and look for adult spawning fish migrating upstream. Directions provided at sign-up.


## Earth Week Events




**Celebrate Earth Day**  
 at the Community Gardens Open Greenhouse  
**Sunday, April 22, 2007 12-4pm**  
 LNHP maintenance yard, 220 Aiken St.  
 Learn about the greenhouse, container gardening, recycling, garden design, soil condition. Hands on fun for kids, too! LP&CT will host a booth at the event, so stop on by!



**Earth Day Canals & Riverwalk Clean-up**  
 Meet at Middlesex Community College, cafeteria  
**Saturday, April 28, 2007 8:30 am-12pm**  
 Come dressed to get dirty and make a difference along our waterways! Call the National Park volunteer office to register, (978) 275-1740.



**Earth Fest**  
 at the Rogers School on South Common  
**Saturday, April 28, 2007 12-3pm**  
 Enjoy an afternoon of earth-themed educational fun with live music and lots of hands-on activities for families. Co-sponsored by the Greater Lowell Environmental Education Alliance. Come make fish prints with the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust.



**Arbor Day**  
 at Rogers Fort Hill Park (Rogers Street, Lowell)  
 Early May—look for an email announcement  
 Join us in celebrating Arbor Day in partnership with RARA, Friends of Rogers Fort Hill Park, the City of Lowell's Parks & Recreation Department, and CTI's Youthbuild. RARA will be honoring Nancy Donahue with a tree planting; an additional Arbor Day planting of 16 trees will enhance the park.

## EVENTS — MAY & JUNE



### Concord River Clean-Up

At Rogers Street crossing over Concord River

**Saturday, May 5, 2007 9 am-12pm**

Refreshments and t-shirts for all volunteers! Join us for a clean-up along the Concord River. In partnership with Keep Lowell Beautiful and the City of Lowell's city-wide clean-up. Please wear appropriate clothing and footwear.



### Jollene Dubner Park

At the corner of Rogers & Merrill Streets

**Friday, May 11, 2007 3-5pm**

This hidden jewel of a park needs a little TLC—trimming the wisteria on the pergola, pruning the shrubs, and moving around some perennials. Come enjoy the lilacs in bloom—and a pizza picnic afterwards!

### DOORS O-P-E-N Spalding House Open House

383 Pawtucket St., Lowell

**Saturday, May 19, 2007 3-6pm**

LOWELL  
MAY 17-19 2007  
National Preservation Month

Enjoy a tour of the third oldest home (c 1760) in Lowell and explore Lowell's pre-industrial history! Doorsopenlowell.org—in celebration of National Preservation Week.



### Riverfest on the Concord!

At the Muldoon Park Boat Launch

**Saturday, June 16, 2007 10 am-1pm**

Join us for flatwater raft trips (first come, first served) for the entire family (ages 5 and up). Kids can create fish prints, learn about water quality testing. Co-sponsored by Zoar Outdoor, REI, and Lowell National Historical Park.

## LAND TRUST ACCREDITATION

As one of the few and one of the oldest urban land trusts in the country, LP&CT is looking toward the new voluntary requirement of land trust accreditation as an opportunity to ensure that our operations and land protection programs are of the highest quality. The Land Trust Accreditation Commission was established within the past few months in response to IRS concerns about the abuse of certain tax deductible land protection mechanisms. While the Trust only holds land in fee, our ability to hold conservation restrictions in the future may require us to be accredited.

LP&CT was fortunate to be involved in the accreditation process early when chosen as one of a handful of organizations asked to review the accreditation application. While we don't intend to apply for accreditation until 2009, given the extensive process, the opportunity to review the application gave us insights into the value of accreditation.

Accreditation is seen by some in the land trust community, especially all volunteer land trusts, as a burden, but we see it as an opportunity to receive a 'seal of approval' for the work that you as members support us to do. We'll keep you updated as the process of accreditation moves forward. You can read about accreditation at [www.lta.org](http://www.lta.org).

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER (cont. from p. 1)

students, a bank president and self-employed tradesmen, a judge, a shoe store owner, an attorney and a grocer, retirees, teens and toddlers all called these streets home. Some of those who lived here were members of country clubs and bank boards, others of the local social club and church bingo committee. Louis Olney, dean of the Textile School's chemistry department, president of the Sterling Mills and of the Lowell Institution for Savings lived on one corner; on the diagonally opposite corner, Jack Kerouac contemplated his closet in a top floor tenement over a diner. Around the corner lived a doctor, two doors up from him, an auto mechanic. By my informal research, this stable pattern held for some seven decades.

**"Why would anyone choose to live here?"** On the surface the comment is understandable. Around the late 70s the pattern began to change to short term ownership along with a steady deterioration of physical conditions and perceptions. Today, condos have gobbled up open space, squatting heavily and awkwardly with their bulk and blandness. Once meticulously kept homes and tidy yards are showing their age and neglect—retaining walls are falling down, front yards have been paved over, architecturally interesting homes have been torn down; a church closed; litter and trash day debris remains un-swept until the next stiff breeze or the next community cleanup.

Thirty-plus baby-boomers grew up on just one block. Today one remains while three live within three and five blocks. The reasons are many, too many for a five minute essay to analyze, however, here's a likely list: cars—the mobility they allow, the traffic they create and the parking spaces they demand; career choices; the appeal of suburban and niche developments and the revulsion of next door teardowns; loss of neighborhood institutions and what urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg calls, "great, good places"; increasing absentee ownership and off-campus student housing; escalating maintenance costs.

The city recently finalized a two-and-a-half year master plan for Pawtucketville which discusses many of these issues. It is a great, cooperative project with input from a range of residents and institutions. It has been shepherded by talented and committed planning professionals who take pride in their work. It is in some ways a sad commentary that today so much effort needs to be put into re-creating what once developed naturally, with grace and an appeal that held so many for so long.

**"Why would anyone choose to live here?"** Not long ago people were asking the same thing of the downtown area. Today, downtown Lowell is being transformed, attracting hundreds of new residents drawn to the buzz of core-city living, to the nightlife and the multi-faceted views of a glowing brick skyline at sunset. Perhaps traditional neighborhoods just beyond the downtown, with their own unique mix of architecture, their sense of place and history, and people will experience a small revival of their own. And the question we'll be asking is, **"Who wouldn't choose to live here?"**

Kind regards,

## MATCHING GIFTS

**We welcome the following new matching gift companies:**

CA, HP, & LPL Financial Services

**Other recent matching gifts have been received from:**

JP Morgan Chase, Millipore, Polaroid, & Sun Microsystems

**Please let us know if your company provides matching gifts.**

# Thank you members...

**PLEASE NOTE:** ALL DONATIONS LISTED BELOW WERE RECEIVED BETWEEN December 23, 2006—March 15, 2007

## ANNUAL FUND DONATIONS

We thank the following Annual Fund donors whose support above and beyond membership dues provides critical discretionary funding for our diverse programs and projects.

### Annual Fund Donors (\$250+)

Bickling Financial Services  
Joncas Associates

### Annual Fund Donors (\$100-249)

Charles & Phyllis Cutler  
Ellen Harde  
Rene Marchand  
Mark and Virginia Meyer  
Martha & Rod Owen  
Doug Preble

### Annual Fund Donors (\$1-99)

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Curtis & Patsy Siller  
Naomi Title

***"Art connects, deeply. So often in our efforts to protect trails, rivers or parks, public support is key to success. Working with artists is one of the best ways to connect with communities."***  
- Charles Tracy, National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (working with LP&CT on the Concord River Greenway and the Public Art Plan for the Greenway)

### Renewing Members (\$100-249)

**Businesses:**

Friends of the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail

**Individuals:**

Nancy Bump  
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Nancy Dubner  
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Sally Seaver  
Drew Kissinger & Emily Stewart

### Renewing Members (\$1-99)

**Businesses:**

Evan Coravos D.M.D., P. C.  
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Lenzi's Catering  
Proprietors of the Lowell Cemetery  
Shaw Farm Dairy, Inc.

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# Quality of Life Campaign

WHAT DOES QUALITY OF LIFE MEAN TO YOU?

Please join us as we embark on an ambitious campaign to raise important discretionary funds to expand our diverse programs and projects. Please let us know if you would like to invest in Lowell's "Quality of Life". We can send you information or meet with you in person. We thank the following early donors in our Campaign:

- Butler Bank
- James Cooney Real Estate & Insurance
- Gururaj Deshpande
- George & Carol Duncan
- Enterprise Bank
- Staff of Dr. Mark Romanowsky

## We thank the following:

*LP&CT's mission is made possible by those that go out of their way to help make Lowell a better place to live.*

### Spalding House cleaning

*Thank you for getting on your hands and knees for this much needed cleaning!*

Christine Brown, Veronica Brown, Steve Conant, Brian Cutler, A'ndrea Cutler, Lauris Donovan, Sheila Kirschbaum, Kim Malinosky, Deb Sofia, and Marti Spalding

### Concord River Signage Committee

*Thank you for your insights in sorting lots of information into concise meaningful signage!*

Chuck Griffiths, Sheila Kirschbaum, Chad Montrie, Maria Robarge, Michelle Todd, and Cindi Zorokong

### Concord River Greenway Public Art Plan Review

*Thank you for helping to carry our vision forward for a trail that subtly integrates art into the Greenway design!*

Carole Anne Meehan, Rosemary Noon, LZ Nunn, Charles Tracy, Tom 'Eagle Rising' Libby

### Backyard Adventures! Guests

*Your personal insights into places you care about mean a lot to the youth in this program!*

Anne Cavanaugh, Sandy Green, Chuck Griffiths, and Tom 'Eagle Rising' Libby

### Marti Spalding donated several of her books to the LP&CT library:

*Diary of Ebenezer Bridge, 1749-1792*  
*Spalding Memorial*  
*Touring the Forefathers Burying Ground*  
**These books are available to members to borrow, just call the office at 978-934-0030.**

## RENEWING MEMBERS

### Renewing Members (\$250+)

**Businesses:**

Watermark Environmental, Inc.  
Centennial Island Hydroelectric Company  
Coppinger Company

**Individuals:**

Mrs. Richard Emmet  
Martha Mayo

# Support the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust. Become a member or renew today!

The **Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust** relies on membership dues for continuing our **mission** to protect the parks and open spaces of Lowell. If you haven't already, please consider joining the Trust today or renewing your membership.

## Yes, I want to support the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust!

\$250  \$100  \$50  \$25  \$15  \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Is your membership current?**  
Please see your address label.

- I've enclosed a **matching gift** form from my/my spouse's employer.  
 I'd like to become a **tree free member** and donate \$ \_\_\_\_ monthly through my credit card  
 My membership is current, this donation is to the **Annual Fund**.

**Payment method:**  Check enclosed **Charge my credit card:**  Visa  MasterCard  
**Account #** \_\_\_\_\_ **Exp.** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

Name & address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

### Would you like to make a special donation?

We have established separate funds to support these projects, *above and beyond* membership dues:

- LP&CT Endowment Fund  
 Spalding House Maintenance Fund  
 Jollene Dubner Park Maintenance Fund

Please mail to: LP&CT, PO Box 7162, Lowell, MA 01852

✂ ----- ✂ ----- ✂ ----- Spring 2007 -----

Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust  
PO Box 7162  
Lowell, MA 01852

Address service requested

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Spring 2007 NEWSLETTER

Printed on recycled paper

 CATALOGUE FOR  
PHILANTHROPY

### LP&CT

*is honored to be featured in the  
Catalogue for Philanthropy:  
Massachusetts 2006*

*"In modest circumstances, this vital  
organization is setting a fine example of  
urban environmental protection and  
enhancement."*

LP&CT was one of six Lowell area  
charities chosen for the 2006 edition of  
the Catalogue for Philanthropy

[www.catalogueforphilanthropy.org](http://www.catalogueforphilanthropy.org)

## Upcoming Events

(see Calendar of Events pp. 3&4)



### White Water Rafting

Rafting season starts April 7th!  
Reserve your trip early!

1-800-532-7483

### April Events

**Alewife Monitoring Training**—April 14

**Earth Week events**—April 22-28

(including a clean-up, Arbor Day event,  
an EarthFest, and a greenhouse tour!)

### May & June Events

**Concord River Clean-Up**—May 5

**Jollene Dubner Park**—May 11

**Spalding House/Doors Open**—May 19

**Riverfest**—June 16

## LP&CT Board of Directors

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[www.lowelllandtrust.org](http://www.lowelllandtrust.org)