

Conservation Report

Jill Brody, chairman

I have to admit that this was a down year, in all senses. In the fall we worked with the Blackstone Park Conservancy in clearing bittersweet from around York Pond and along the river opposite the pond. It was, I had hoped, the beginning of Partners for Plants project. However, only three of us showed up, and although there were a couple of others who sent regrets, in general, the turnout was disappointing. And so I talked with the Partners national people and decided to put everything on hold, because it's embarrassing to set these things up and then have no one show up.

In February, once again, only Frances and I attended the NAL meeting in DC.

Considering what we all know about climate change, and what we have learned in the last few days about the western Antarctic ice shelf, it flabbergasts me that everyone doesn't want to beat a path to the corridors of power and speak up for the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, and the very habitability of our planet.

And yet despite all of this, despite my real disappointments, I have once again found something that I hope will capture all of our imaginations. On May 15, Kathleen Leddy took me with her to meet the manager of the Botanical Center in Roger Williams Park, who would love to partner with us in any way, including with the Partners for Plants initiative, to create a milkweed habitat for migrating monarchs. The reason to have this project to go beyond horticulture, or even local conservation, and to be part of Partners for Plants is partly financial—there are grants that we can tap into for basics that might be beyond the budget of Roger Williams Park—but also partly social, both within our club, and also as an opportunity to engage with the wider community, as well as other GCA clubs.

Kathleen will be overseeing the growing the plants themselves, but I also see this as a real opportunity to collaborate in general between the “disciplines” of Horticulture and Conservation. All of which means that rather than feeling discouraged about how little happened this year, I am looking forward to real partnerships—with the GCA, RWP, and most importantly among ourselves.

Respectfully submitted,
Jill Brody
Conservation Chair