



Natural Surroundings

WYNDHAM LAND TRUST, INC. • SINCE 1975

Conserving the Natural Resources of Northeastern Connecticut

Summer 2022

About The Wyndham Land Trust

The Wyndham Land Trust, Inc. is engaged in the preservation of natural resources in Windham County, Connecticut. Its emphasis is on wildlife habitat, especially where unique or particularly fragile assemblages of animals and plants exist or may be expected to exist. Its properties are open to the public for the quiet enjoyment of nature. Land may be acquired by donation or purchase. Since WLT enjoys 501 (c) 3 status donations to it are deductible under IRS rules, a feature which sometimes proves attractive! Our work is supported by dues, donations, grants and a very modest endowment income. Members enjoy an annual potluck supper, generally in the fall.

*Inquiries may be directed to the Wyndham Land Trust, Inc.,
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or to info@wyndhamlandtrust.org
Please see our web site
www.wyndhamlandtrust.org
Phone (860) 963-2090.
Your comments, questions and suggestions are most welcome.*

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NIGHTINGALE FOREST

The land trust continues to focus on protecting properties in the Nightingale Forest. On Saturday, March 26 an informal meeting was held at Pomfret School with neighbors of land trust properties in the Nightingale Forest. The goal of the meeting was to introduce ourselves, explain our mission, and describe our plans for the future in the region. Over 50 neighbors attended the meeting and watched a short presentation on the land trust followed by a Q&A session. It was great to see so many interested people and have an opportunity to share our vision. We have tentative plans to hold a similar meeting for our Bull Hill neighbors in 2023.

Mike St. Lawrence addresses the Nightingale Forest meeting at Pomfret School.



SUMMER SOLSTICE GATHERING

The land trust is holding its ninth annual Summer Solstice event at the Duck Marsh Preserve in Pomfret on Tuesday, June 21. Members, family, and friends are invited to spend the evening with their fellow land trust members and supporters. Watch the sun settle into the western sky from the observation platform while Bobolinks settle into the grassland meadows. What better way to celebrate the longest day of the year!

The event runs from 7 to 9pm. Park along Holmes Road, between Modock Road and Wrights Crossing Road. Bring your own chair and refreshments if you'd like. We'll provide a firepit and fixings for s'mores.



Land trust members watch the sunset at the 2017 Summer Solstice event.

Welcome

We welcome the following new members:

Preston Abbott, Brian Battles, John Doyon, Bob Fellows, Tanya Knowles, Qin Li, Mary Cheyne, Ronald Poitras, Betty Norris, Jane Rutledge, The Strickland Family, Lee Wesler, WINY Radio

WEE WANDER

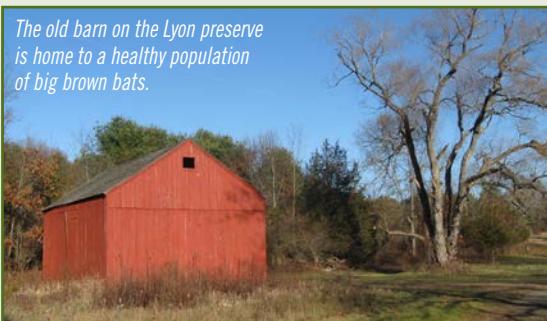
Marcy Dawley is leading another family-friendly Wee Wander walk. This time she'll be looking for bats at the Lyon Preserve. Bats do great work in nature, and twilight is a perfect time to see them flying and catching mosquitoes. Bring a chair, and we'll sit and watch them as they exit the historic barn and head out for the evening; we can also walk the easy loop trails to see what else happens in nature at twilight.

This is an easy visit for all. Snacks are always included!

When: Saturday, August 6th, 7-8pm.

Where: Lyon Preserve, Wrights Crossing Rd., Pomfret Center, CT.

Directions: Rt 101 to Wrights Crossing Road, as soon as you cross the bridge, take a right onto the Lyon Preserve.



The old barn on the Lyon preserve is home to a healthy population of big brown bats.

BIG BROWN BATS AT THE LYON PRESERVE

The big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*) is a species of vesper bat distributed widely throughout North America, the Caribbean, and the northern portion of South America. It was first described as a species in 1796. Compared to other microbats, the big brown bat is relatively large, with a weight 0.5–0.9oz and a wingspan of 12–13in.

Big brown bats are insectivorous, consuming a diverse array of insects, particularly night-flying insects, but especially beetles. Some of the beetles it consumes are serious agricultural pests, including cucumber beetles. They are nocturnal, foraging for prey at night and roosting in sheltered areas during the day such as caves, tunnels, tree cavities, and human structures, such as the barn at the Lyon Preserve. Their breeding season is in the fall, shortly before their annual hibernation. After hibernation ends in the spring, females form maternity colonies for giving birth to young. Oftentimes only one offspring is produced per litter, though twins are common in the Eastern US. Lifespans of 6.5 years are considered average.

While some other bat species in its range have experienced dramatic population declines due to the fungal disease white-nose syndrome, the big brown bat is relatively resistant to the effects of the disease, and some populations have even increased since the syndrome arrived in North America.



The big brown bat.

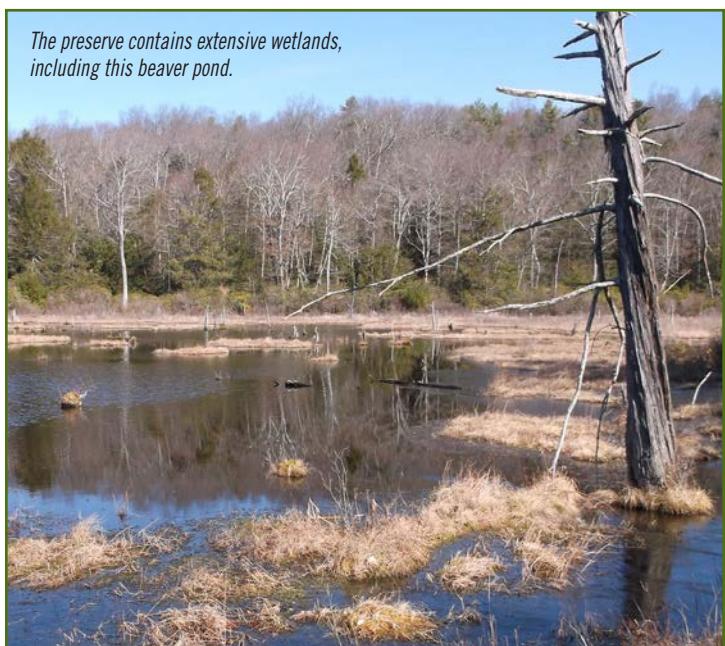
EXPANSION OF THE NIGHTINGALE FOREST

As reported in the December newsletter, the land trust acquired a 364-acre parcel from the Townshend family in Pomfret at the end of 2021. The land—the largest single acquisition by the land trust in its 46-year history—includes a large scenic wetland with open water, marshlands, shrub swamp, and forested swamp that form the headwaters of Nightingale Brook.

It's a great addition to our ongoing Nightingale Forest Project. Here's a couple of pictures to give you a taste of the protected habitat.



The Townshend family used the preserve for dog trials, and it contains a collection of well-maintained trails.



The preserve contains extensive wetlands, including this beaver pond.

INVESTIGATING FOREST FRAGMENTATION ON WLT LAND

As part of his duties at the non-profit foundation Bird Conservation Research, Inc., WLT board member Dr. Robert Craig has been investigating the effects of forest fragmentation on bird communities in southern New England. Among his 147 study sites in Connecticut and Rhode Island are several that are at least in part situated on WLT properties. By analyzing aerial images of each of the sites with geographic information systems technology, he has been identifying the extent and configuration of forest along with the amounts of agricultural land, urban/suburban land, and open water. By comparing the types of habitats at the sites with the kinds and numbers of birds inhabiting them, he hopes to understand better how habitats and birds relate.

One important measure being computed for each study site is that of core forest—the amount of forest at least 100m from a forest edge. Even when a study site is heavily forested, if the forest is highly fragmented the amount of core forest present may be minimal. For bird species classified as forest interior inhabitants, lack of core forest may reduce or even eliminate populations. For example, preliminary analyses have shown that sites with little core forest appear to have few inhabitants of the forest interior that are also ground nesters.

As an example of the types of analyses underway, these two photos show a study site on WLT property in Woodstock, CT. The transparent green area of the photo on the left represents forested habitat, which represents 81% of the entire site. In contrast, in the photo on the right, the solid green area shows the amount of core forest, which amounts to only 42% of the site.



Land Trust Gear - Coming Soon!

Many people have inquired about land trust gear, such as hats, t-shirts, and hoodies. We are hoping to set up an online store from which folks can order items in the quantities, sizes, and colors that they want—all proudly bearing the Wyndham Land Trust logo. We don't aim to make a lot of money from the venture, but we want supporters to be able to show they care about the land trust and our mission when they are out in public. Stay tuned!



Ilsa's Corner

In Connecticut, there are many small, furry, and adorable creatures... like rabbits! Rabbits dig burrows and are most active at dawn and dusk. Did you know: Rabbits sleep most of the day, and can do it with their eyes open? They have a third eyelid which gives them the ability to do so. This helps them in case predators are near.



Artist: Ilsa Reiner



**WYNDHAM
LAND TRUST, INC.**

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