



Natural Surroundings

WYNDHAM LAND TRUST, INC. • SINCE 1975

Conserving the Natural Resources of Northeastern Connecticut

Summer 2024

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.,
PO Box 302
Pomfret Center, CT 06259
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.**

Wyndham Land Trust Board of Directors

Michael St. Lawrence, President
Michael Green, Vice President
Stephen Adams, Secretary
Penny Foisey, Treasurer
Mary Anthony
Janet Booth
Anouk de Ruiter
Andy Rzeznikiewicz
Jeff Stefanik

SUMMER SOLSTICE GATHERING

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the annual Summer Solstice event at the Duck Marsh Preserve in Pomfret. This year's event will be held on Friday, June 21. Members, family, and friends are invited to spend the evening with their fellow Land Trust members and supporters. Come and ask us about the Hillandale Woods fundraising campaign. 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 pm to 9 pm. Parking is available along Holmes Road, between Modock Road and Wrights Crossing Road. If you'd like, you can bring your own chair and refreshments. We'll provide a firepit and fixings for s'mores.



Land trust members watch the sunset at the 2023 Summer Solstice event.

RIDE FOR OPEN SPACE 2024



The Wyndham Land Trust is hosting the second equestrian Ride for Open Space on our Cabbage Hill and Nightingale Forest preserves on Sunday, July 21 at 8:30 am. The event is expected to draw horseback riders from around New England to the spectacular trails on these preserves. Lunch for the riders will be available from The Rolling Tomato wood-fired pizza truck from Groton, CT between noon and 2 pm. All proceeds from the event will go toward the Land Trust. Registration is \$75 and includes lunch. For more information and a link to the registration page, look under Happenings on our web site (wyndhamlandtrust.org).

Penny Foisey (ride organizer and WLT treasurer) prepares for the 2023 Ride for Open Space.

Welcome

We welcome the following new members:

Morgan Basner, Amanda Chapman, Lynn Davis, Glenn Ellsworth, William Hull, Jacqueline Iglozzi, Susan Lamb, Karen Parlin, Rick Poitras, Willie Pritchard, Alea Wall, William Wheaton, Karen York, Frederick Yost.

POMFRET: FINAL PARCEL ACQUIRED FROM TOWNSHEND FAMILY

The Wyndham Land Trust recently acquired a 227-acre parcel off Ragged Hill Road in Pomfret from the Townshend family. The acquisition completes a 24-year partnership between the Land Trust and the Townshend family that began with the donation of 2.6 acres from Harry and Deb Townshend in 2000. The end result of the collaboration is a 1018-acre block that provides valuable habitat for wildlife, protects the watershed of Nightingale Brook, and provides hiking trails for the community.

"The Townshend family is very pleased with all of our transactions with the Wyndham Land Trust over the past few years," said Nancy Townshend-Vess, speaking on behalf of the family. "Land manager Andy Rzeznikiewicz eased us over the process and took the time to thoroughly explain our options. The family feels that their land has passed into good hands and will be meaningfully sustained for the community for generations."

"I'm glad we were able to fulfill, not only Wyndham's Land Trust's goal, but also our family's wish to memorialize our parents. Our parents loved nature and history, both of which are bountiful on this property. Every person walking along the trails, taking in the beauty and grace of the fern-covered forest and babbling brooks, is paying homage to Harry and Deb Townshend who so loved their land."

The preserve is large enough to provide significant ecological benefits to resident wildlife. Residents of the Town of Pomfret recognized the value of the new parcel and voted to provide funding towards its protection.

One of the many existing trails on the property donated by the Townshend family.

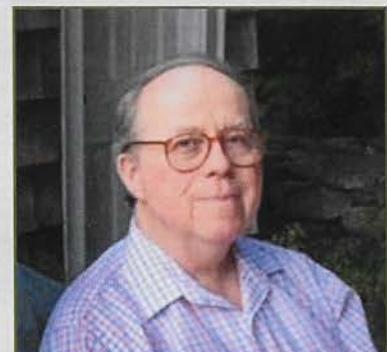
"The Town of Pomfret is fortunate to partner with the Wyndham Land Trust for the acquisition and preservation of our open space," said first-selectman Maureen Nicholson. "Together we have and can continue to make significant progress in keeping Pomfret green, beautiful, and a great place to live. Maintaining the quality of life and our exceptional dedication to preserving the natural environment for generations to come is best accomplished collaborating with the great stewards at Wyndham Land Trust."

The acquisition was made possible by grants from generous donations by Land Trust members like you and from the State of Connecticut DEEP Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program (OSWA), the Bafflin Foundation, the Summerhill Foundation, the Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) and the Town of Pomfret.



HONORING ANDY TILLINGHAST

Former trustee and longtime Wyndham Land Trust supporter, Andrew Everett Tillinghast, died on January 22, 2024 in Putnam, CT. Andy was a lifelong resident of the Quiet Corner and was a quiet and stalwart supporter of efforts to protect the natural beauty of this area. His thoughtful dedication over 50 years of civic engagement will be missed by all of us at Wyndham Land Trust.



FUNDRAISING DRIVE FOR HILLANDALE WOODS

In early May, the Wyndham Land Trust kicked off a 10-month fundraising drive to raise \$635,000 to acquire "The Hillandale Woods" in Brooklyn. The woods were part of the Hillandale Farm that was operated by Bob and "Jimmie" Booth. They also ran the Golden Lamb restaurant on the site until it closed in 2017. Jimmie Booth loved the rural character of the Quiet Corner, and was the brainchild behind the formation of the Wyndham Land Trust in 1975. What better way to celebrate the formation of the Land Trust than to acquire the property that inspired its founders?

"The property sits at the historic core of the Wyndham Land Trust," said President Mike St. Lawrence, "and we knew we wanted to protect it from development. We're working hard to raise the money; however, we will need the financial support of the people in the Quiet Corner to reach our goal."

"It's adjacent to our Booth Preserve, a Wolf Den Land Trust preserve, and several properties that are protected by conservation easements," explained Andy Rzeznikiewicz. "They all link up to connect with Natchaug State Forest and create a large forested block that supports nesting birds like Scarlet Tanagers, Pileated Woodpeckers, and Ovenbirds."

"It's been on our radar for years, and this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to protect this land in perpetuity. There are already trails on the property, and once we own the land, the trails will be open to the public."

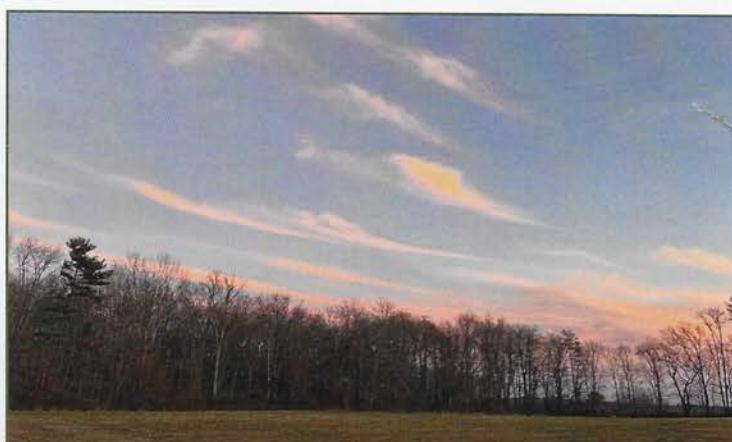
You can support Virginia Booth's vision and help protect Hillandale Woods by donating to our fundraising drive on our secure web site at wyndhamlandtrust.org or by mailing a check to our PO Box and writing "Hillandale Woods" on the memo line. (Mailing a check avoids online processing fees.)



Above Photo: Existing trails on the property will be open to the public if it can be acquired by the land trust.



Above and Below Photo: Janet Booth's photographs capture the beauty of the Hillandale Woods that inspired Jimmie Booth 50 years ago.



BREAKING NEWS: Brooklyn Couple Donate Matching Funds to Boost Hillandale Woods Fundraiser

Keith and Elaine Knowlton have fond memories of Bob and Jimmie Booth, proprietors of Hillandale Farm and the Golden Lamb Butterly in Brooklyn. Keith and Elaine were excited when they heard about the Wyndham Land Trust's fundraising drive to protect Hillandale Woods, and they were prompted to take extraordinary action to help the drive reach its goal.

"Bob usually referred to us as 'his best customers' at the Golden Lamb," said Keith. "To have so much of their treasured land still unspoiled after 80 years is almost a miracle. The opportunity for Wyndham Land Trust to acquire such a large parcel is not to be missed. To help get the Hillandale Woods program going, Elaine and I will donate \$50,000 in the form of a matching funds gift."

The gift from the Knowlton's means that any donations you make to the Land Trust's fundraising drive by mail or through the web site will be doubled, at least up to the \$50,000 limit. To receive matching funds, donations must be received before September 30, 2024. You can help protect these remarkable woods.