



Natural Surroundings

WYNDHAM LAND TRUST, INC. • SINCE 1975

Conserving the Natural Resources of Northeastern Connecticut

Winter 2021

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.*

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ANNUAL APPEAL/MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

You should have received our annual appeal in the mail a few weeks ago. The land trust depends on the support of its members to survive. Please renew your membership for 2022 and consider a donation to support our Annual Appeal. An anonymous donor has offered to match your donation and your membership at the Supporter level (\$100) or above, but you have to renew before the end of the year.

The Wyndham Land Trust is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, and your donation may be tax deductible.

If you have already renewed your membership for 2022, thanks. We love ya!

CABBAGE HILL PRESERVE

In July an anonymous donor gave 112 acres of forest and hayfield on Cabbage Hill Road in Woodstock to the Wyndham Land Trust.

"The hayfield sits on a hill that rises to an elevation of 750 feet," said Andy Rzeznikiewicz, "and older maps of Woodstock refer to it as Mathewson Hill. Threatened grassland birds, such as Bobolinks, nest in the hayfield, and it's a great asset for us. Most of the rest of the property is forested. Bosworth Brook flows through the southern portion, and a beaver impoundment blocks the brook on the western edge. The resulting combination of forested stream and open swamp provides diverse wetland habitats for both plants and animals."

"The donated property sits in remote sections of Woodstock and Pomfret that we're actively working to protect," explained Mike St. Lawrence. "We've christened the project 'Nightingale Forest' because it lies in the watershed of Nightingale Brook. Our preserves in the Nightingale Forest, together with open space protected by the town of Woodstock, are big enough to provide a corridor for the movement of wildlife and a buffer to protect water quality.



The historic Mathewson cemetery on Cabbage Hill

Welcome

We welcome the following new members:

Kathleen Atwood, Carol Auger, Wanda Ben, Marilyn Boland, Judy Cockerton, Jamie Flaherty, Maria Gandy-Winslow, David Gaudreau, Susan Haran, Cynthia Johnston, Margaret Johnston, Keith Kirkland, Peter Leclair, Ilse McCarthy, Anne Milliard, Richard Neal, George O'Neill III, Mike Orofino, Daniel Santos, Shirley Thompson, Kevin & Lucinda Trudeau, James Vance.

In Memory – John Christopher Cartier-Johnston (39) of Brooklyn, CT passed away in September 2020. In lieu of flowers, his family requested that donations be made to the Wyndham Land Trust Cartier Preserve. The response was very generous, and we thank the Cartier-Johnston family and the donors for their support.

WINTER SOLSTICE GATHERING

Please join us at the Lyon Preserve in Pomfret on the afternoon of Tuesday, December 21, to watch the sun set on the shortest day of the year. Warm up by the fire pit with some hot chocolate and a tasty treat. The event will run from 3–5pm. The Lyon Preserve is on Wright's Crossing Road in Pomfret, just north of the intersection with 101—look for the gate and the land trust sign.



Hardy souls at the 2017 Winter Solstice Gathering at the Lyon Preserve in Pomfret

SEASONAL FAMILY-FRIENDLY WEE WANDER WALKS SET FOR 2022

Marcy Dawley is bringing back her seasonal, family-friendly Wee Wander Walks in 2022. Here's the schedule:

Saturday, February 19, 2022, 10-11:30 am.

Animal Tracking at the Robbins Preserve-Thompson.

Take a walk to the Five Mile River while looking for animal tracks.

Saturday, May 7, 2022, 10-11:30 am.

Salamander Search at the 3 B's- Pomfret. We'll be sticking to the trail as we make our way to a nice vernal pool.

There is a good chance we will spot a salamander looking up from under logs and leaves.

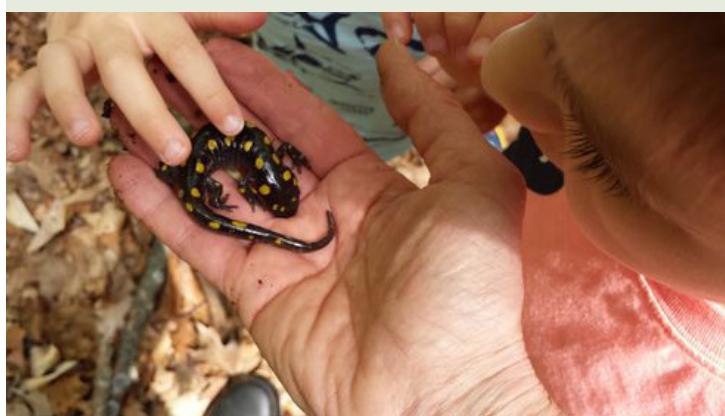
Saturday, August 6, 2022, 7-8 pm.

Bats at Lyon Preserve- Pomfret bats do great work in nature, and twilight is a perfect time to see them flying and catching mosquitoes.

Saturday, October 1, 2022, 10-11:30 am.

Leaves & Mushrooms at Rapoport Preserve-Woodstock.

Celebrate fall and see how many leaves and mushrooms can be identified along Taylor Brook.



Search for salamanders with the Wee Wanders in May



NIGHTINGALE FOREST EXPANDS

Just as the newsletter was being written, the land trust finalized the acquisition of an additional 364 acres in the Nightingale Forest. The land is a combination of forest and wetlands and expands our Nightingale Forest to 1230 acres of protected land. The new property is south of Quarry Road and east of Swedetown Road and abuts both our Cartier and Potrzeba Preserves. Funding for the acquisition came from the State of Connecticut Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition grant program, the Bafflin Foundation, the Town of Pomfret, the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, the Summerhill Foundation, and Wyndham Land Trust members and supporters.

SOCIAL JUSTICE AWARENESS PROJECT BY JANEL BOOTH

In 2018 the Connecticut Land Conservation Council and The Last Green Valley kicked off a three-year program, the Northeast Land Trust Advancement Initiative, funded by a grant from the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut. The program guided land trusts on how to strengthen their individual and collective capacity to save and enhance the region's natural habitats. The initiative changed its focus each year: phase one -community engagement and communications; phase two -strategic conservation planning; and phase three - social justice and inclusion as a crucial facet of success in conservation.

We were pleased to be approved for a grant for our phase three project: Out of the Shadows: Honoring Un-Named African Americans of the Randall/Higginbotham Cemetery. Our project was a partnership with Donna Dufresne in her ongoing research to learn more about the colonial settlers on the land trust preserve in Pomfret that today we call Nightingale Forest. Donna's research, along with stories passed down through generations, indicate that local enslaved Americans may have been buried on the preserve. We plan to honor them with a memorial stone placed at the entrance to the cemetery in recognition that slavery was not just a Southern phenomenon. The northern states were deeply entwined in an economy that was driven by slave labor and, though not as numerous as in the South, slave owners are documented in 18th and 19th century New England. Because the enslaved were regarded as property, not as people, it is difficult to find records of their lives and to know their names.

Please consider making a contribution to the memorial. We are excited to work with Karin Sprague Stone Carvers whose workshop carries on the ancient craft of hand stone carving. You can help us bring awareness to the history of slavery in New England.

Visit www.wyndhamlandtrust.org for details on how to contribute.

A LETTER FROM RON TILLEN

Ten years on the Board has been a delight, and I am sorry to go. We have grown from 1,500 acres in 2011 to 4,500 acres in 2021. The need for land conservation was clear 10 years ago, but today it is absolutely urgent.

My love of wildlife, especially birds, is rooted in a boyhood spent roaming woodlands and fields in wartime England. Today, suburban housing booms in England and the US have eliminated many of those vital wildlife habitats, and the pressure is always on for more development. The COVID virus has shown us how many more people can work from home, and there is no denying the attraction of living and working in a rural environment. On the other hand, climate change--due to proliferation of carbon dioxide, methane, and other pollutants--means we need trees and vegetation to help dilute and absorb the poison. The support of people much younger than I is essential.

When I joined the board, I looked at the trust from the point of view of a sometime Thompson wetlands and conservation commissioner, and WLT seemed to be a rather private but well-intentioned club.

My perception has changed. The Wyndham Land Trust is now a legally accredited, well-organized, well-directed, and thriving enterprise. It must continue to be so.

People like the late Carolyn Werge, who devoted her land-use understanding and mapping expertise to conservation, are especially important. She was an exemplary guardian of the land and its history. I cannot say enough about the need for members at large like Carolyn to actively support the mission of the Wyndham Land Trust. I am privileged to have been a small part of it.

Best regards, Ron Tellen

CHESTNUT UPDATE

Jack Swatt and other members of the CT Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation, explored Bull Hill in October looking for viable fruits. "We found six trees producing burrs this year," said Swatt, "two of which produced burrs for the first time. Some of the trees that we had collected nuts from last year had succumbed to the blight, but are continuing to resprout. We collected a total of 229 nuts from the trees at Bull Hill, some of which will be planted in our Germplasm Conservation Orchards, including one started in Pomfret last year by Wyndham Land Trust board member, Robert Craig."



A nut-bearing American Chestnut tree on Bull Hill

STAFF CHANGES



Joyce Fountain
is our new office
manager

After four years of dedicated work, including guiding us through the accreditation process, Marcy Dawley stepped down as our part-time office manager last summer. Joyce Fountain, a longtime resident of Brooklyn, is our new office manager. Joyce has a background in financial management and also works part-time for Joshua's Trust in Mansfield, CT. Welcome, Joyce!

Airline Trail Master Plan by Janet Booth

A team working on the Twelve-Town Airline Trail State Park Master Plan recently visited our Gellert Preserve in Pomfret. The group is headed by Jeanne Davies, Executive Director of the Connecticut Resource Conservation & Development Area organization (CT RC&D), who bring us the wonderful Tour Des Farms annual cycling event and other excellent programs. The work is funded by a grant from CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Recreational Trails program with matching funds from CT RC&D's Environmental Review Team Program.



The Master Plan will propose how the state can best promote and protect the Airline Trail. The study is looking at over 50 miles of the trail that winds through Portland, East Hampton, Colchester, Hampton, Hebron, Columbia, Chaplin, Lebanon, Windham, Pomfret, Putnam, and Thompson. Properties and landscapes adjacent to the trail, such as town centers, hiking trails, businesses, state parks, and land trust preserves, are being inventoried to help connect trail users to surrounding resources. Signage would help hikers, bikers, and horseback riders find other places of recreation that are close to the trail.

The study is looking at the kind of additional infrastructure that would support and encourage eco-tourism, while also considering ways to protect the scenic beauty and ecological integrity that make the trail corridor so important. Signage about local history and ecology could engage and inform visitors. For example, members of the team at the Gellert Preserve recognized an opportunity for an interpretive sign about forest regeneration.

The Wyndham Land Trust is among the organizations that are contributing to the study. You can find out more by visiting www.ctrcd.org/airlinetrail.

FALL EVENTS



Tackle the Trail runners exit our Gellert Preserve onto the Airline Trail



Jeff Stefanik led a Walktober walk on the Tamler Preserve in Thompson



Celebrating Ag at the Woodstock Fairgrounds



About 30 people attended our Annual Meeting at CT Audubon



**WYNDHAM
LAND TRUST, INC.**

The Wyndham Land Trust, Inc.
P.O. Box 302
Pomfret Center, CT 06259-0302

The mailing label indicates the date your membership expired.

Mail in the form below to renew or go to www.wyndhamlandtrust.org and renew online (Ways to Give->Join).

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