



THE Spruce

Fall 2009

NEWSLETTER

P.O. Box 2276 ▪ Huntington Station ▪ Shelton, Connecticut 06484

NRCS Awards Trust \$50,000 Grant

This past spring the trust applied for funding made available through the 2008 Farm Bill. Administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the Bill provides for several conservation programs for farmers, private landowners, and land trusts. Based on our past success, we decided to apply for funding offered through the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP).

The Trust proposal calls for additional removal, and management of invasive plant species at the Nicholdale farm parcel. The application process was similar to a previous application for funding to restore and mow the farm fields. Trust representatives met with the staff of the NRCS' Torrington Branch the week prior to the application deadline, and submitted all the required information.

Good news arrived in July, when we were awarded the funding. The new program is a 5-year contract for upland habitat management at Nicholdale. The funding amounts to over \$50,000 that is to be used for invasive plant removal, and native vegetation restoration. It allows for Trust volunteers to work with contractors to clear many invasive species such as Barberry and Bittersweet from the parcel's wooded areas. The grant specifies a set amount of acreage to be worked each year. Upon satisfactory completion of the work, the USDA staff will review the progress, and reimburse the Trust for the expenses incurred (up to the allowed amount for that year).

The Trust sincerely appreciates the help and guidance provided by the USDA staff at both the Torrington and Tolland offices. Stay tuned for updates as work continues. For more information on all that the Farm bill has to offer, visit www.ct.nrcs.usda.gov or call the state NRCS office at 860-871-4011.

Tractor Show

This past September, Shelton Dairy, also known locally as the Hudak farm, was bustling with antique farm and construction equipment, as folks from all over arrived with their machinery. They were participating in a two-day exposition, featuring trucks, farm tractors, construction equipment, and stationary engines from bygone years.

This year's event, the 10th Annual Exposition, was sponsored by the King Hiram Lodge No.12. Being so close to home, the Trust brought its one and only Massey Ferguson 35 tractor to put in the lineup of old tractors. It was great to see so many farm vehicles restored to showroom-like condition. Like the Massey, many of the machines are still used to work the lands today.

The event featured fun for the whole family, with food and snacks available throughout the day, a raffle, live demonstrations of equipment, and an area for the kids to play and dig. Best of all was the location – after all, what better spot to see old farm equipment than on a farm. It was great to be a part of the event.

If you enjoy antique equipment, and would enjoy an afternoon on the farm, at little cost to your pocketbook, think about attending the 2010 event. Mark your calendars for next year's Expo: September 11th and 12th.



Jones' Red White and Blue Fest

Celebrating the reds and blues of the summer crops, as well as the colors of American independence, Jones Family Farms recently hosted its first Red, White and Blue Festival on July 3rd to help benefit the ACT Spooner House of Shelton.

Shannon Murray, Education Manager for the farm said; "We didn't know what to expect, but our courtyard and the winery tasting room were filled with visitors all day long. The kids seemed to love all of our activities and the crowds really responded to the performances from Fran Scarpa and the Youth CONNECTION as well as our own

Jones Farmer Band."

Jones Family Farms was ecstatic to see guests bringing bag loads of canned food items to donate to the Valley Food Bank. The farm also reports that through the special activities and wine tastings that they were able to donate \$2000 to the ACT Spooner House Charity.



Nicholdale House — A Purchase Opportunity?

The Trust would like to acquire a house located at 322 Leavenworth Road. The house that has been put up for sale is surrounded on three sides by the Land Trust's Nichodale preserve. Acquisition of the property by the Trust would complete the green corridor of Trust property along Rt110.

The house, which sits on about a 1-acre parcel, would need extensive renovations to meet the needs of the Land Trust. Future use suggestions have ranged from demolition, to return the site to nature, to possible use as a barn to house our equipment, or as a potential nature center and outdoor classroom. However, step one remains...ACQUISITION.

As is usually the case with most not for profit organizations like the Trust, the stumbling block is money, or more specifically, the lack of same. Currently, the Trust has about \$50,000 in its Land Acquisition fund, well below the current \$200,000 asking price. In an attempt to secure additional funding, the Trust recently submitted a proposal to the City and other Valley Agencies seeking their support.

Several supporters have already come forward, and pledged \$2,000. That is a step in the right direction, but still far short of what we will need. If you are interested in this fundraising effort, or to make a contribution to our land acquisition fund, please email, or call our fundraising chair, Joe Palmucci at palmucci@yahoo.com or 203-215-5562.



A Certified Wildlife Habitat Site

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) has designated the Trust's Lane St. property as a Certified Wildlife Habitat Site. NWF began its wildlife certification program in 1973, and opened it to all property owners whose properties meet certain habitat criteria.

The basic elements needed to meet the criteria includes, land that provides a source of food, water, and protection from the elements, affording wildlife a place in which to raise their young. In addition, landowners should utilize sustainable gardening practices, and promote conservation of natural resources by eliminating or reducing the need for fertilizers, and pesticides.

Recognizing that the Lane St. parcel met all of NWF's criteria, Land Monitor Lynn Todd Reid, earlier this year registered the

property on behalf of the Trust, with National Wildlife. A short time later, she received a certificate from NWF, officially recognizing the parcel as a "Certified Wildlife Habitat Site."

The 17.5-acre, Lane St. parcel is located just off Huntington Rd. (below the Green), and is supervised and maintained by the Trust. About a year ago, Trust volunteers working hand-in-hand with Shelton Trails Committee Volunteers, completed extensive trail renovations, complete with an extensive boardwalk through a marshy area. It was designed to become part of the Recreation Path extending from Route 108 near downtown, and up into Huntington Center.

The parcel is "home" to a number of wildlife critters including, beaver, fox, coyote, rabbits, squirrels, chipmunks, opossums, mice, hedgehogs, and many others. It is also home to a variety of bird species, and offers

visitors and hikers a wonderful opportunity to enjoy nature at its best.

For additional information about the National Wildlife Federation or its Wildlife Habitat Certification program, contact them at: www.nwf.org.

Land Monitors: Please Note

In an attempt to facilitate reporting procedures, and possibly reduce or eliminate our paper forms, we would like to have reports either phoned or emailed to us. Reports should be emailed to: tblauriat@snet.net. Thanks for your cooperation.

– Hank & Jacke Lauriat

Shelton Land Conservation Trust, Inc.

P.O. Box 2276 • Huntington Station • Shelton, Connecticut 06484

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2009 General Meetings:

Wed. Nov. 11 - 7 pm

Additional meetings to be announced.
All general meetings will take place at the Shelton Community Center.

To be better informed about Land Trust Activities, and local conservation issues, why not join the Trust's Email Alert list. To be added, simply send an email to slctjoew@sbcglobal.net

