



SPRING 2012

# THE Spruce NEWSLETTER

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

## LAND TRUST SEEKS DONATIONS TOWARDS RESTORATION OF HISTORICAL FERGUSON TRACTOR

The Shelton Land Conservation Trust announced today that it is seeking donations to help restore its 1958 Ferguson Tractor that has been used for over 10 years to maintain the trails and fields of the Nicholdale Farm open space parcel off Route 110. "This (the tractor) is a piece of history that we want to ensure continues a long and useful working life here in Shelton, helping to keep open space accessible to all", said Joe Welsh, Land Trust President.

The tractor worked on Shelton farms for many years before coming into the possession of the late Bob Stockmal, one of the original founders of the Land Trust. Stockmal used it for many years to voluntarily mow the Nicholdale fields across from his home after the parcel was acquired through a generous grant from Iroquois Gas. Eventually, through the continued generosity of Stockmal, and Al Preston's Garage, the Land Trust became the little red tractor's owner, along with a shiny new brush hog to mow the fields. Since then, the tractor has been working tirelessly each summer, often under the guidance of Bruce Nichols, the grandson of the original farmer of Nicholdale. "But it is time for a freshening up" according to Welsh. "The paint has worn off and it is starting to rust. Lights were lost when a barn roof collapsed from the snow last winter, and its tires are thread bear." "We're lucky however that mechanically it runs like a top", said Bruce Nichols, seen here driving the tractor to its restoration spot.

Land Trust member Ed McCreery and his son Conner, a college student who works part time at Dragone's Classic Cars, have agreed to donate their time and labor over the winter to restore the tractor. "It's a fine old tractor made right here in the USA, and is built like a tank," says McCreery. "I was pleased to learn that almost all the parts needed to breathe new life into the tractor are available, but they're not cheap, so we're looking for donations." Ferguson was a very

popular brand, and famous for developing the three-point hitch that is still in use on today's farm equipment. "Eventually, the company merged to form the current Massey-Ferguson Tractor Company," noted McCreery who estimates the cost of the restoration between \$2,000 to \$3,000 for parts and paint. He hopes to have the tractor done in time for the annual Shelton-Derby Memorial Day parade, and expects the tractor to look like new when it completed.



Welsh said the Land Trust is soliciting tax-deductible donations of money or in-kind services to help defray the expense of the restoration. Donations can be mailed to: SLCT Tractor Restoration Fund - PO Box 2276 - Huntington Station Shelton, CT 06484 and will be duly noted on the Land Trust's web site and on a placard displayed during the parade. Anyone wishing to offer an in-kind donation may email Welsh, at [slctjoew@sbcglobal.net](mailto:slctjoew@sbcglobal.net) or McCreery, at [mccreery@sbcglobal.net](mailto:mccreery@sbcglobal.net). Welsh says "When the restoration is done, the tractor will be good for another 10 - 20 years of work on Land Trust property here in Shelton."

Since starting the project, member Ed McCreery commented, "I never realized what a big hobby the antique tractor restoration scene is. Not only are there web sites devoted to the hobbyist, but entire businesses have sprung up to supply the demand." Luckily for the Land Trust, the Ferguson tractor sold well in the 50's, and is a popular model to restore. "I have been able to find almost all the parts I need for this job on-line," said Ed McCreery. Replicas of the missing headlights, decals, and even a replacement seat and lower front panel were procured from Restoration Supply Tractor Parts of Hopedale, MA. McCreery said that the restoration will include original parts as well. He was able to locate a gentleman in Vermont who sells original parts off dismantled tractors and who was in the process of breaking down the same model Ferguson. Ed was able to procure a replacement battery tray, and the rear tires and rims off that machine, and they were sent via UPS to CT on a wood pallet. "With the garage freed up, the disassembling will start in earnest this month," Ed reports. Then, the parts will be sent out to be stripped, and repainted.



# Will the 21st Century be remembered by historians as a time when countless numbers of species became extinct?

In Connecticut, 584 plants and animals are listed on the endangered, threatened and special concern species list. Endangered plants and animals are in danger of becoming extinct in Connecticut and have no more than five occurrences of their population in the state. Threatened species are those that could become endangered, and have no more than nine occurrences in the state. Special concern species include those with a naturally restricted range or habitat and a low or declining population level. Some special concern species, including many plants, are listed because overcollecting could be detrimental to their conservation.

The plants and animals on Connecticut's endangered, threatened and special concern list are diverse. Here is just a sample of some of them. Twelve different mammals are on Connecticut's list and five of them are bats. Little is known about several of the bats. Wildlife biologists in Connecticut are currently studying tree-roosting bats such as this hoary bat, a special concern species, in an effort to determine their habitat requirements.



Over 50 birds are on the state list and many have declined due to habitat loss. Certain grassland and shrubland birds can no longer find habitat in a state that is now close to 60 percent woodlands and where remaining open habitats are being lost to development. DEP's habitat managers try to maintain grasslands and keep them from reverting to forest by either burning or mowing them at appropriate times. Egrets and terns were once killed for use in the millinery trade. Feathers, and sometimes whole birds, were used to adorn lady's hats during the early 1900s. Some of the first wildlife laws, including the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, were enacted to protect these birds. The roseate tern nests on offshore islands in Long Island Sound. It is endangered federally and in Connecticut, but is being assisted in its recovery with the use of artificial nest sites. Both the threatened least tern and piping plover nest on sandy beaches along Connecticut's coastline. Coastal development, however, leaves little natural habitat. This, coupled with human disturbances and predation, limits their nesting success. Each year the Wildlife Division and volunteers erect signs and fencing to protect sensitive nesting sites along the shore. Many popular beaches are also monitored to help minimize disturbance to the nests. Wetlands and surrounding habitats have been developed or degraded throughout Connecticut. Many wetland birds, including bitterns, rails and the northern harrier, are on Connecticut's endangered, threatened and special concern list.



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Bald eagle populations declined nationally in the 1940s and 1950s due to widespread use of the pesticide DDT. Although 100 or more eagles winter here, only a few pairs nest in the state. Bald eagles are endangered in Connecticut but their outlook is improving. Peregrine falcons, a state endangered species, have recently been discovered nesting in both Hartford and Bridgeport. These birds like cities because tall building ledges mimic natural cliff habitat. The state endangered sharp-shinned hawk and state threatened Cooper's hawk were once heavily persecuted. People considered them vermin and a threat to poultry and gamebird populations. Now, of course, we realize that hawks and other predators are important components of healthy ecosystems.



Eleven reptiles are listed on Connecticut's endangered, threatened and special concern species list. Timber rattlesnakes have been highly persecuted over the years. Wildlife researchers are currently studying their habitat requirements. Bog turtles have been impacted by illegal wildlife (pet) trade and the loss of its wetland habitat. Each year, biologists attempt to find new populations of this small turtle. Radio transmitters adhered to the shells of bog turtles have led to the understanding of its habitat requirements. Connecticut's only lizard, the five-lined skink, is a threatened species in the state. Although uncommon and at the fringe of its range, this lizard can sometimes be seen along traprock ridges and other rocky areas.

About 350 plants are included in Connecticut's listing of endangered, threatened and special concern species. Most are in danger due to habitat loss and invasive species but some have been overcollected. The Connecticut DEP maintains a database that maps the location of known sites for all of the listed species. Before an area is developed, the database should be consulted to ensure that there is no threat to any listed plant or animal species. Reprinted from the Connecticut DEP website <http://www.ct.gov/dep/site/default.asp>

**Please don't forget Earth Day! The SLCT decided to work on Nicholdale Brook and roadway and across the street. SLCT will meet 4/22/12 at 10am to 1pm.**

# The Great Marshmallow Hike

It was an idyllic day for a long hike in the woods. The snow was fresh and clean, the air crisp and beautiful. It was a perfect replacement for the day before, when an 8-inch snowfall forced the hike's postponement. And so, on Sunday, January 22, a surprising number of people came out for what the Shelton Trails Committee called The Marshmallow "March 'til you drop and are revived with hot chocolate and burnt marshmallows" hike. It was held on The Land Trust's Nicholdale Farm that proved to be the perfect spot.

The hike lured an impressive group of hikers decked out in all kinds of gear. Some wore serious snowshoes, and others sported ski poles to make walking in the snow a less arduous task. The hike began from the parking area just off route 110, over a stream and through the woods, to "grandma's" fire-pit at Nicholdale. It was the trail created by the boy scouts last year, featuring a well-crafted bridge that everyone crossed.

As they hiked the trail, the fire crew was busy starting the fire, and dusting off the picnic tables. Soon the hikers, one after another, and another, and another made their way to the warmth of the fire, until at last there was some 29 hikers roasting



marshmallows to a toasty molten goodness. The hot chocolate kept everyone warm for the return trip. Appetites sated, bellies warmed, mittens and gloves steaming, everyone headed back to the parking area, having enjoyed a relaxing walk in the winter woods, and a warm ending to an idyllic day.

Next hike is scheduled for 2/19 at Abbey Wright parking area at 1pm. All are welcome to attend

## Membership Chairperson(s) Needed

In anticipation of a vacancy in one of its most important positions, that of Membership Chairman, the Trust is appealing to its membership base, for a volunteer(s) to take on the duties and responsibilities of the Membership Chair. Among other things, the position is responsible for maintaining the membership roster, the annual mailing of dues renewals, periodic mailing labels, and for organizing and participating in any other membership events and activities. Computer skill with word processing, spreadsheet, and email applications, while desirable, is not necessarily required.

At the Board's February meeting, current co-Chairs Pat and Rudy Gajdosik announced their intention to step down after

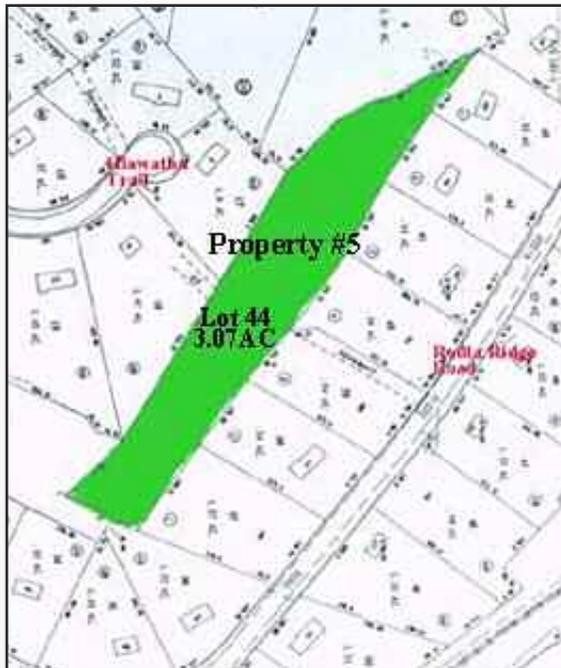
having served for some half-dozen years. "The Trust is indeed fortunate to have had Pat and Rudy oversee the membership activities over this time period," says Trust President Joe Welsh. "They not only executed their responsibilities with enthusiasm, efficiency, and thoroughness, but also contributed their time and talents, in so many of the other Trust activities," he continued. "Although," he noted, "they are relinquishing their Membership responsibilities, we look forward to their continued participation in Trust affairs."

If you are interested in becoming more active with the Trust, or would like more information about the Membership Chair, please contact Trust President Joe Welsh – 203 0768, Secretary Mary Jane Liddel 203 7269, or any of the other Board members that you may personally know. No experience is required. The Board has experienced members willing to assist and guide you as needed.

# Getting to know our parcels:

## Parcels #5 and #23

These two Parcels which were acquired separately in 1978 and 1990 are called LT-



21 by the City of Shelton. The Shelton Land Conservation Trust, Inc. was deeded Parcel 5 from John A. Rodia and Fay Louise Rodia in 1977. The 3.07 Acre Parcel is part of Rodia Ridge Estates, Section 5 and is located between Rodia Ridge Road and Hiawatha Trail and is only accessible through the adjoining Parcel 23 which is located between Hiawatha Trail and Princess Wenonah Drive. Parcel 23 was deeded to the Land Trust by the City of Shelton in June of 1990, comprised of Parcels A and B of Section One, Indian Springs Estates containing 8 1/2 acres by deed, or 5.14 acres by the City Assessor Map. Access to this piece of property is along Princess Wenonah Drive opposite Boulder Path between Houses 32 and 36.

As with most "Open Space" parcels, they are either wetlands, very steep, or rocky. These two pieces of property are of the latter. The Paugussett or Blue Dot trail runs through these two properties from Princess Wenonah Drive to Thoreau Drive. After finding the trail markers, you will climb roughly 110 feet in elevation in the

first 300 feet of trail. Then the trail runs northerly through the parcels on along a more level path and continues behind the houses, crossing a watercourse about half way through Parcel 5. This watercourse is part of a Drainage Easement which cuts through the parcel taking the storm drain runoff from Hiawatha Trail. The Blue Dot trail continues through the Land Trust Parcels and behind neighboring properties out on to Thoreau Drive.

These two pieces of the Shelton Land Conservation Trust serve as both Open Space and Recreation. Benefiting those in the neighborhood as well as those hiking the Paugussett Trail.

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## Shelton Land Conservation Trust, Inc.

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

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Robert Stockmal  
Lise Olsen

**Have you paid  
your 2012 dues  
yet?**

### 2012 General Meetings:

3/6
4/11 (Annual Meeting at Plumb Memorial Library)
5/9
6/13
9/12
11/14

Additional meetings to be announced. All general meetings will take place at the Shelton Community Center at 7pm.

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](mailto:slctjoew@sbcglobal.net)

