



THE Spruce

SPRING 2014 NEWSLETTER

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

Latest Land Trust Acquisition

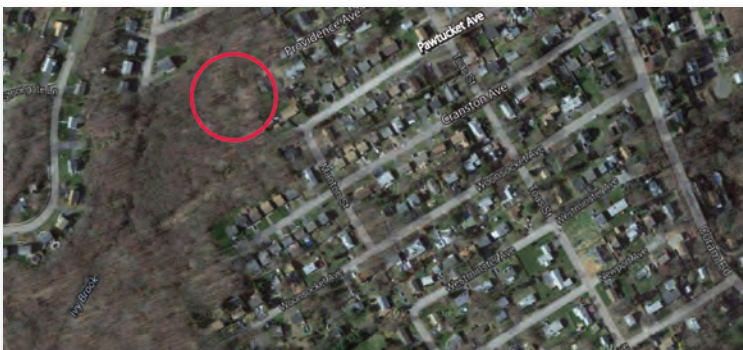
With the start of the new year, the Land Trust has acquired yet another parcel of land to preserve. The new parcel is off Providence Drive. It consists of approximately two and a half acres, and includes much of the headwaters of the Ivy Brook.

Ivy Brook parallels Constitution Boulevard, forming a pleasant greenway on its way to the Housatonic River. At one time, this parcel of mostly wetlands had a map, recorded years ago, proposing to split it up into eight tiny lots. Recent development in the neighborhood has put great strain on these key wetlands, with some of them being filled in for development.

The Land Trust was approached by a family member, who was concerned with preserving the property. Known as the DeFilippo property, it had been passed down through the years, and was owned by 2 generations, and several siblings. "Several board members walked the parcel last fall, and immediately appreciated its environmental significance," said Joe Welsh, Land Trust president.

It took several months to get all the family members lined up to sign the necessary deeds, but by January the deal was completed. "The Trust greatly appreciates this generous gift from the family," said Joe Welsh. "They too, recognized its significance as one of the last pieces of the headwaters that could be protected, and they did not want to see it filled in and developed."

Some of the specimens observed on the property included Jack in the Pulpit, ferns, mature hardwoods, and some unwanted invasive plant species. Although the parcel is not easily accessible, (It is down a steep embankment at the end of Providence Drive) you can get to it if you're careful. If you prefer, you can view a video of the site walk on Youtube: <http://youtu.be/RrMLp73KftY>



Approximate area of acquisition



Trust Sets Annual Meeting Date

The Shelton Land Conservation Trust will hold its annual meeting on Wednesday, April 9. The meeting will be held at the Plum Memorial Library beginning at 7 p.m. In addition to the business portion of the meeting, that includes the election of Officers and Board members, the agenda will feature guest Speaker, Felicia Ortner, a Connecticut Master Wildlife Conservationist, and bear enthusiast.

Felicia has been studying about bears for over 25 years. In the mid 1990's she turned her passion for learning about bears into a passion for teaching about them. She's developed an education program called "The Bear Reality."

Felicia notes, "With the number of bears increasing in the state, it is important for residents to learn the facts about black bears, and how to coexist with them." Black bear sightings have increased in Connecticut since the 1980s when the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Wildlife Division first had evidence of a resident bear population.

Says Felicia, "Black bears are rarely aggressive but it is important to 'Be Bear Aware,' and know how to prevent problems, and unpleasant encounters with bears.

So, to learn more about Bears in Connecticut, the Trust, and its activities, be sure to mark your calendar, and join your neighbors and friends on April 9. Light refreshments will be served.

Ferguson Tractor Put To Bed For Winter

Snug for the winter, the Land Trust tractor restored last year sleeps away the snowstorms, cozy in its new Tent-Barn. The Land Trust purchased the portable storage unit last summer, and several volunteers arrived at member Bruce Nichol's house to help erect it.

With the assembled muscle power, the shelter went up relatively easily and quickly. "It reminded me of my old Gilbert Erector set," said one volunteer. But certainly not a toy, it has multiple metal arched frames, that should withstand the heaviest of snowfalls.

In preparation for its winter hibernation, the tractor's battery was removed, the cylinders oiled, a gas stabilizer added to the fuel, and mouse repellent strategically placed. Come Spring time, it will be power-washed, greased, and ready for a new season of mowing on Nicholdale's paths and fields.



Setting up the tent



Shhh It's sleeping..



Plowing Nicholdale

Nicholdale Winter Access

Certainly, this has been an above average snow season this winter, and with a constant snow pack, and plowed mounds of snow along the highways, access to our parcels has been inhibited this year more so than in the past.

Recently, the Board discussed the lack of access, and a board member responded by volunteering to try and keep the Nicholdale parking lot plowed so it can be accessed for snowshoeing or cross country skiing. (Photo attached) "The snow is frankly too deep for normal walking or hiking," President Joe Welsh said. "And, it's been a battle to keep up with the weather this year." There have already been two plowings of approximately 12 inch-deep snow, and while a warm period is predicted soon, another cold spell is expected to follow that will likely result in more snow.

Joe says, "We know that Nicholdale is our most heavily used parcel, and we will try our best to keep the parking lot open, but please be patient if you can't access it at times this season." If you are lucky enough to get out to Nicholdale despite the snow cover, you will find a most tranquil and inviting solitude. Enjoy!

Shelton Trails Committee Sponsored Hike

Be sure to mark your calendar on March 9th, 2014! That's the day for "The Annual Marshmallow March at Nicholdale.

One of our most popular hikes - sometimes on snowshoes, always in boots - this year we may need sled dogs. Meet at the Shelton Land Conservation Trust Parking Lot, off Rt. 110, near Nichols Road. It's a great time to see winter wildlife just before Spring pops out. Bring the hungry kids, and enjoy marshmallows at the fire pit mid-way through the hike. Dress in layers. The snow and rain date is March 16, (just before St. Patrick's Day).at 1:00 PM.

Monitoring Wild Turkey Populations in Connecticut

Written by Mike Gregonis, DEEP Wildlife Division

As with any wildlife population, wild turkey populations have years of good and bad productivity. Changes in Connecticut's wild turkey population are monitored through several annual surveys, including a brood survey and hunter survey.



Brood surveys are conducted by DEEP staff and volunteers during June, July, and August. All participants are instructed to report wild turkey sightings, categorized by total hens, total poults, total number of hens with poults, and geographic location of the sighting. These observations are analyzed to obtain an annual productivity index and to evaluate recruitment into the fall population.

In total, the Wildlife Division received 200 wild turkey observations from 57 cooperators in 2013. These turkey observers reported sightings of 1,180 individual turkeys comprised of 337 hens and 843 poults. The mean statewide brood index (total number of poults/total number of hens) was 2.5 poults per hen. June 2013 was the wettest June on record. It has been documented that in years with a cold and wet spring, turkey productivity decreases because these conditions lead to higher mortality of poults and hens. Researchers suggest that a productive wild turkey population should have a brood index of 3.0 or greater. Connecticut has fallen short of this mark in all years except one since the survey began. This suggests that Connecticut's wild turkey population has been on a decline.

All spring turkey hunters who provide the Wildlife Division with an email address receive a hunter survey. The survey is primarily designed to determine the recreational and economic benefits of spring turkey

hunting. It also includes a question that generates a relative index of statewide turkey population growth. Hunters are asked to rank the turkey population in the area they did the majority of their hunting as increasing, stable, or decreasing. These rankings are assigned a numeric value from 0 for decreasing to 6 for increasing.

In 2013, 42% of spring turkey hunters responding to the survey believed the turkey population was stable, 41% believed it was decreasing, and 17% believed it was increasing. The mean rank of Connecticut's turkey population growth index for 2013 was 2.4, which indicates a slightly decreasing population. Since 2007, this index has indicated a downward trend.

Data in the brood and hunter surveys correlate well. For example, in 2009, the brood index was the lowest recorded since the survey began. The following spring, hunters indicated on their surveys that the population declined. Additionally, in 2010, the highest brood index was recorded and, the following spring, hunters indicated an increase in population growth. The positive correlation of the two data sets indicates that the surveys provide a good trend index for the statewide wild turkey population.

The Wildlife Division has been asked that if a wildlife population is in decline how can we continue to hunt that species. Although hunters take individual animals out of the population, season and bag limits are set in such a way that hunter harvests do not impact the overall population. During the 2012 turkey hunting seasons, a total of 1,450 wild turkeys were harvested statewide. This equates to the harvest of one turkey per three square miles of land in Connecticut. At this level of harvest, Connecticut's statewide turkey population is not being impacted by hunting. Research also has shown that spring weather is the most important factor that influences fluctuations in the overall population across the wild turkey's range.

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Getting to Know Our Parcels:

Shelton Land Conservation Trust

Parcel #9



The City of Shelton has labeled this parcel LT 10, and the Land Trust knows it as Parcel #9. It is located off Lane Street. The parcel is 17.15 acres and known as “The Lane Street Parcel” or the “Guila G. Hawley Parcel”, and is depicted on Map number 1533 in the Shelton Land Records. Guila G. Hawley granted this Parcel to the Shelton Land Trust on December 28, 1979.

Access to the parcel is from Lane Street either from the Recreation Path or from an entrance further down the street. This entrance has a cable to keep out unwanted motor vehicles, but when removed, allows access for Rudy Hudak, to hay the field.

The Recreation Path runs from Lane Street, through City Open Space Parcel OS 100, which is adjacent to another Land Trust Parcel No. 37 or LT 30. The path is on top of a wooden walkway, constructed with the help of SLCT volunteers and The Shelton Trails Committee. It then continues

through the parcel along the westerly edge of the field. The Recreation Path then continues through three more Open Space Parcels OS 90.01, 90.02 and 90.03, then back on to Lane Street, and continuing North for 4.1 Miles and ending at Pine Lake Reservoir #2.

This Parcel is one of the Land Trust's premiere pieces of property which is essential for the Recreation Path while also providing a field habitat for native wildlife.

Would you like to become a land monitor? It's easy and rewarding. Just send a quick email to Bob Liddel:

rliddel@aol.com

We're on FACEBOOK!



Please “like” our page and you can keep informed about upcoming events and Land Trust news. Search Shelton Land Trust.

Shelton Land Conservation Trust, Inc.

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**Have you paid
your 2014 dues
yet?**

2014 General Meetings:

Feb 19
March 12
April 9 (Annual Meeting at Plum Library)
June 11
Aug 16
Sept 10
Oct 8
Nov 12

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

