

Natural Surroundings

WYNDHAM LAND TRUST, INC. • SINCE 1975

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Conserving the Natural Resources of Northeastern Connecticut



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 wild-life 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.

Enquiries 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.

We Seek To Increase Our Membership Base

Presently annual dues are:

- INDIVIDUAL \$20
- FAMILY \$30

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

- \$300 INDIVIDUAL
- \$500 FAMILY

**DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE
UNDER IRS RULES**

A Trust Parcel Grows In Woodstock

The Linda J. Rapoport Memorial Preserve came into being on December 29, 2008, when Pulpit Rock Realty donated 42.59 acres of land at the western end of Pulpit Rock Road in Woodstock to the Wyndham Land Trust.



scope on a car window mount for nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour on June 11 but in spite of repeated efforts has not been seen since.

On December 31, 2009, an additional 12.2 acres formerly belonging to Joel S. Babcock and abutting the original Rapoport Preserve to the east were donated by Kenneth J. Rapoport, Linda's husband. The parcel is characterized by mixed hardwood forest, including a pileated woodpecker hole, and frontage on the beaver impoundment.

The tract contains a significant portion of Taylor Brook and associated wetlands, plus a forest of mixed hardwoods. A network of old cart roads has been recently cleared of fallen limbs, a tree trunk or two, and other woody debris thanks to the generosity of a good friend. Movement about the preserve is now much easier, as is the bird-watching. The usual woodland species, including rose-breasted grosbeak, scarlet tanager, red-eyed warbling vireos, downy and hairy woodpeckers, and yellow-bellied sapsucker, wood thrush, wood pewee and great crested flycatcher have been recorded, as has a ruby-throated hummingbird at the dam. Perhaps the most exciting record of the season so far is that of a male pied-billed grebe in full breeding plumage at the lower end of the beaver impoundment. The bird was observed through a spotting



On December 28, 2010, yet another 40.5 acres some forested but with a significant portion under cultivation, and lying easterly and northerly of the previously protected land were donated. Thank you again, Ken Rapoport, for your foresight and generosity. Thank you too, Joel Babcock and Avis Spaulding, for being such willing and gracious sellers.



THE BOOKWORM'S CORNER

Suppose it's raining!

■ **HOPE FOR ANIMALS AND THEIR WORLD** by Jane Goodall, with Thane Maynard and Gail Hudson, Grand Central Publishing, 2009, 392 pp.

This is an account of how rare and endangered species can be, have been, and are being saved, sometimes from the very brink of extinction and perpetual loss. Examples include the whooping crane, black footed ferret and California condor in the U.S., the Iberian lynx in Spain, the Vancouver Island marmot in British Columbia, the black or Chatham Island wren in New Zealand, the Caspian horse of Iran, and the short-tailed or Steller's Albatross of the North Pacific Ocean, which presently breeds only on Japan's volcanic (active) Torishima Island. Success has been due to determination, extraordinary effort, and refusal to quit, sometimes by individuals working alone, sometimes by small groups, and sometimes by government agencies. Inventiveness, courage and willingness to try have all played their roles. The preceding are found in Parts 1 through 4. Do not omit Parts 5 and 6, The Thrill of Discovery and The Nature of Hope. In the Appendix read "What You Can Do." For example, someone wishing to see Caspian horses or to contribute to their survival would be ill-advised to board the next flight to Iran. Contact the Caspian Horse Society of the Americas at www.caspian.org or the Caspian Horse Society (UK) at www.caspianhorsesociet.org.uk as the case may be. Similarly, see the cahow, or Bermuda petrel, or the Wollemi pine of Australia. One can also learn about Pere David's deer of China and how to see one. For those averse to long distance travel there is always, we hope, the American burying beetle thriving in the Roger Williams Park Zoo in Providence! Enjoy the only home we have and take good care of it. Dr. Goodall's book is pleasant reading and will prove both instructive and helpful.

■ **THE SOUND OF A WILD SNAIL EATING** by ELIZABETH TOVA BAILEY, Alonquin Books, 2010, 190 pp. This title appeared on the shelves of a local bookstore, but never having been especially interested in snails your reviewer paid little attention. But wait! On the dust jacket appeared the comment "Beautiful", E.O. Wilson. If Harvard's E.O. Wilson cared to make such a comment, a second look was called for! The bookstore made a sale! Wait again! The Sound of A Wild Snail Eating won the JOHN BOURGHS MEDAL FOR OUTSTANDING NATURAL HISTORY WRITING in 2011.

The author became dreadfully ill while traveling alone in Europe. Reaching home by dint of extraordinary effort and great good fortune, she underwent an extended period of recovery and convalescence. A friend, seeking some token of regard and encouragement encountered a snail on a woodland path, placed it in a terracotta pot of forest violets and presented the whole as a gift. The snail then became a point of focus for the recovering patient, who was a careful observer with an active and enquiring mind, albeit with a severely challenged body. The book, with quotes going back to Aristotle, is a mine of information about snails and clearly shows that effective therapy can come from unexpected sources. The key here was an active and enquiring mind, an indomitable will, an abundance of time, and a subject animal that could be well cared for in a limited space. The well fed snail was released back into the wild. The patient recovered and, happy to say, has returned to writing.

■ **FIFTY NINE IN '84 OLD HOSS RADBOURN, BARE HANDED BASEBALL AND THE GREATEST SEASON A PITCHER EVER HAD** by Edward Achorn, Harper Collins, 2010, provides a close look at early baseball, with much of the action taking place in Providence. It could be of interest to anyone with even a casual interest in the game or in early Providence. This reviewer, although never an ardent sports fan, enjoyed it very much.

Saw-Whet Owls

The Saw-whet is Connecticut's smallest owl, length 8", wing span 17". Its voice is neither a "hoot" nor a "haw" but is said to resemble the sound made when a saw blade is sharpened, hence "saw-whet".



How many of us are familiar with the sound of a saw being whetted? No matter! Use your imagination. "Saw-whet" it is. Adults are heavily streaked with light chocolate brown on the breast, and show rows of conspicuous white spots on wing coverts and primaries. Fledglings have a prominent white triangle on the forehead and plain buff-colored under parts.

Coniferous woodlands or mixed conifers and hardwoods, generally near water, appear to be the preferred habitat. There are few confirmed breeding records in Connecticut, most being in Litchfield County. Nesting may be in natural tee cavities, old woodpecker holes, or in nest boxes. In migration, Saw-whets tend to follow ridge lines, especially those associated with river valleys.

The first Saw-whet seen by this writer flew from a red cedar tree carrying the remains of a white-footed mouse and alighted in a gray birch at the edge of an old field in the town of Monroe. The cold was penetrating and very soon a fine snow began falling, gently at first, then with authority. There was no wind and the world was very still. That was a long time ago!

In 2007 the Connecticut Audubon Society began participating in a cooperative Saw-whet Owl banding program. Initial efforts were on the WLT's Tucker Preserve which lies between River Road and the Quinebaug River in Pomfret. **Results are as follows: 2007-25 birds banded, 2008-3, 2009-4, 2007-7. Total to date 39.** Banding success trends were consistent with those of other cooperators and are unexplained. We wonder where these banded birds are at the moment and hope for recoveries, ideally from recaptures.

If you wish to enjoy the ambience of a winter's night, the company of like-minded companions, and the privilege of seeing a bird banding operation expertly run, contact CAS early in October. Dress warmly, bring a thermos of hot chocolate if you wish, and look forward to a splendid evening.



IN MEMORIAM ~ CYRUS I. HARVEY, JR.

With great sadness we report the death of Cyrus I. Harvey, Jr., good friend and distinguished Board member of the Wyndham Land Trust, Inc. He was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1925 and died April 14, 2011. Cy and his wife, Rebecca, had been residents of Woodstock since the early 1970's. He graduated from Harvard and went to Paris as a Fulbright Scholar. He entered business and with partner Bryant Haliday founded Janus Films in 1956. Some years later another business was formed. With beginnings in the Harvey's Woodstock home, it grew apace and became somewhat well known as Crabtree and Evelyn. Prior to entering Harvard, Cy served as a navigator in the U.S. Army Air Force. Thank you, Cy! Cy's interests included music, gardening, and his beloved Welsh Corgi dogs. He was a productive and valued member of society, a highly respected member of our Board, and a valued friend who is and will remain sorely missed.

IN MEMORIAM ~ VIRGINIA WAGGONER BOOTH

We mourn the passing of Virginia Waggoner Booth known affectionately to all as Jimmie Booth. She was born in Bronxville, New York in 1922 and passed away a distinguished resident of Brooklyn, Connecticut on January 9, 2011. Jimmie studied printing and fine arts at Syracuse University and during World War II was employed in the engineering department at Pratt and Whitney. Subsequently she began a distinguished career in the fashion industry and in 1963 with her husband Bob, whom she married in 1956, opened the Golden Lamb Buttery, one of Connecticut's finest restaurants. The Golden Lamb thrives today under the skillful management of their granddaughter.

Jimmie foresaw the need for open space protection long ago. She assembled friends and associates in the barn at Hillandale, they took counsel together, and on April 22, 1975, the Wyndham Land Trust, Inc. was born. The first land acquisition came on September 7, 1977, when Joseph E. Chaffee donated 27 wooded acres in Putnam. The Wyndham Land Trust now protects over 1,500 acres of wildlife habitat owned in fee and the end is not in sight. Jimmie Booth, neighbor, friend, originator and faithful Board member of the Wyndham Land Trust, Inc., we thank you as will generations yet unborn.



Congratulations, TNC

The year 2011 marks the 60th anniversary of The Nature Conservancy, Inc.

Focus and professionalism have characterized this splendid organization from the very beginning. Add gifted people and hard work, also present from the very beginning, and you have the world's premier land and bio-diversity conservation organization. We take pleasure in recognizing TNC's role in protecting critical wildlife habitats, worldwide, over U.S. generally and here in Connecticut. We extend our most particular thanks for their role in protecting over one hundred acres at Lower Pond in Thompson, including one of the finest Atlantic white cedar swamps in the state. Again, acting through one of their representatives they were of great assistance in our acquisition of a significant portion of another Atlantic white cedar swamp in Plainfield. Presently we are working together to protect 123 ecologically significant acres, again in Thompson. Congratulations TNC and many thanks for it all. As they say in baseball, KEEP PITCHING.

Le Clair Preserve, Thompson

On January 19, 2011, the Wyndham Land Trust received 76 acres in Thompson as a gift from Marie P. Le Clair, to whom our most heartfelt thanks are extended. Forest cover is predominately mixed hardwoods although logging has favored an area of early successional vegetation, a feature which can be expected to increase the variety of bird life. A small stream is a welcome feature. Also of importance is the fact that the Le Clair Preserve is strategically located relative to other WLT interests, notably our 79.4 acre Tumbler Preserve, also in Thompson.

Birds recently recorded are as follows:

- Wild Turkey
- Barred Owl
- Red Bellied Woodpecker
- Downy Woodpecker
- Northern Hacker
- Pleated Woodpecker
- Blue Jay
- Black Capped Chickadee
- Blue-Gray Gnatcatcher
- Northern Paula Warbler
- Yellow-Rumped Warbler
- Pine Warbler & La Water

(Bird data courtesy of Andy Rzeznikiewicz)





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