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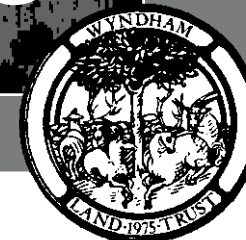
(Gift Memberships Available by Calling: 963-2090)

Natural Surroundings

WYNDHAM LAND TRUST, INC. • SINCE 1975

Conserving the Natural Resources of Northeastern Connecticut

SRING 2006
Volume 3
Number 1



All photos by Dick Booth

THE AICHER HILLTOP PRESERVE

The Aicher Hilltop Preserve consists of 116 acres donated by Joyce T. Aicher in December 2005 plus 44 acres given by Mrs. Aicher and her late husband Paul in 1998. From the high point of the preserve, elevation 505 feet, one has striking views of the surrounding countryside. Below, on the preserve, are a splendid hayfield, cornfields and woodlands. A small lake and an alder shaded stream form the headwaters of Bark Meadow Brook. Bobolinks returning from their winter home in Argentina nest and rear their young in the hayfield (not mowed until later in the season), migrant waterfowl rest and feed on the



lake and Great Crested Flycatchers call in the woodlands.

During this past summer a pair of American Kestrels fledged their brood from one of the nest boxes located on the property. Fortunately the young birds were banded. We wish them well, wonder where they



are now and hope that at some future time their bands will be reported.

A marvelous piece of Windham County has been preserved in perpetuity. It stands in testimony both to the generosity, wisdom, and foresight of the Aicher family and to the fact that agriculture and wildlife conservation can go hand in hand. Thank you again, Joyce Aicher and family.

Note: There will be a guided walk on the preserve beginning at 1 P.M. on Sunday, April 23rd. Meet at the Connecticut Audubon Society Center at Pomfret or see signs on Freedley Road. For more information, please call the Connecticut Audubon Society Center at Pomfret at 860-928-4948.

Special thanks to "Roots and Shoots" for their craftsmanship and labor in providing Bluebird houses and a Kestrel box.

The Littler River Greenway Has Become Greener

The Little River Greenway began in 2001 and has been growing greener ever since.

When completed it will follow the Little River from Roseland Park to the dam at the Town of Putnam's water supply intake. It will protect a Category 1 groundwater recharge area, serve as a wildlife preserve, provide opportunities for nature study and other forms of passive recreation, and have the potential for reducing nutrient loading of the waterway.



WLT's initial acquisition, 15 acres, made possible by a concerned citizen of Woodstock, took place in 2001. Bill Neumann and family donated 12 acres in 2005. That same year the Trust used its acquisition fund (for the first time) to acquire an additional 12 acres. Total: 40 contiguous flood plain acres bounded by Little Pond Road, Route 171 and Little River. Sign Designs by Chace created and supplied the very attractive greenway markers.

We look forward to cooperating with the Woodstock Conservation Commission again and thank all those who have helped to make the greenway grow.



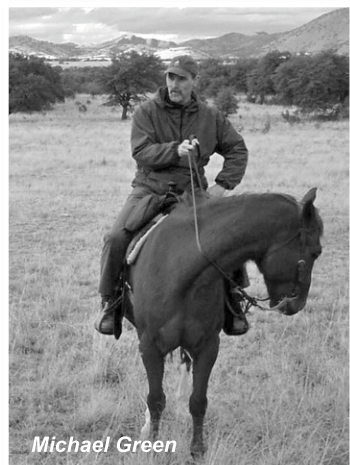


Board Member Profile: Michael Green

Michael Green of East Killingly is a new member of the Board of Directors of the Windham Land Trust. Originally from Somerset, England, Michael came to the US in 1980 to study engineering at the University of Florida. He lived in Maryland for 10 years before moving to the Quiet Corner in 1993 with his wife Carol Auer, a professor in the Department of Plant Science at UCONN. Today, Michael is a technical writer for an engineering software company in Providence.

Michael's home in East Killingly was once owned by the Crystal Water Company and was used as the caretaker's cottage for the Chase Reservoir until the 1960s. The house sits adjacent to the 360-acre open space parcel that is now owned by the Town of Killingly. The Windham Land Trust provides oversight via a conservation easement.

Michael has been the land steward since 2003. Carol is a member of the Killingly Conservation Commission which wrote the management plan for Chase Reservoir. One of the first action items was to determine the boundaries of the property, and Michael "tromped through the woods" with trust President Dick Booth and conservation commission members to install markers around the six-mile periphery.



Michael Green

Michael is currently working on the project to restore woodcock habitat in an old meadow on the site.

Michael and Carol have been volunteering their time for conservation in the Quiet Corner for many years. They have participated in the Storrs Christmas Bird Count for over 10 years and are responsible for an area in Ashford. They are Plant Conservation Volunteers (PCV) with the New England Wildflower Society and survey sites in the region with historical records of rare and endangered plants. More recently, they have been studying amphibian populations in an area of Killingly

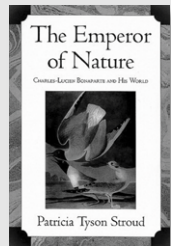
as part of the Connecticut Amphibian Monitoring Program (CAMP).

Michael developed a website for the Killingly Conservation Commission in 2004, and has volunteered to do the same for Windham Land Trust.

"Living in the Quiet Corner has made me aware of the beauty all around us," said Michael. "I love to walk in the woods, but I want to understand everything that's around me—the plants, the birds, the geology, the history. I feel like I'm more aware of my surroundings, but there's always more to learn."

"The beauty of the area is something worth fighting for, and I was honored to be invited on to the board of the land trust." *The trust is delighted to have him as a board member.*

The Bookworm's Corner



Readers may recall an article, *The Names of Birds 1*, Who Put the "Cooper" in Cooper's Hawk and Why? which appeared in Vol. 2, Number

2 of *Natural Surroundings*. Part of the answer is Charles Bonaparte, nephew of the Emperor Napoleon. Those interested in the life of this extraordinary man might wish to see *The Emperor of Nature*, Charles – Lucien Bonaparte and His World, by Patricia Tyson Stroud, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 2000. By the same author, *Thomas Say*, New World Naturalist, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992.

The Ivory-Billed Woodpecker, and Others

Works of timely interest include the following:

The Grail Bird by Tim Gallagher, Houghton Mifflin, Boston and New York, 2005. *Hope is the Thing with Feathers* by Christopher Cokinos, Time Warner, New York, 2001, and *The Ghost With Trembling Wings* by Scott Weidensaul, North Point, New York, 2002.



The Windham Land Trust will have office hours on Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:00-4:00 p.m. at the Old Town House in Pomfret. Our phone number is 963-2090. wynndhamlandtrust@sbcglobal.net

BOOTH PRESERVE GROWS

The Booth preserve came into being in late December of 1986 when Virginia W. Booth (Jimmie) presented WLT with a deed to 7.2 acres on the east side of Wolf Den Road in Brooklyn. In December, 2004 Dick and Nancy Booth donated an additional 3.8 acres.

Vernal pools, their surfaces dusted with the air-borne pollen of early spring fairly shine on forest floor. White swamp honeysuckle, pink azalea and mountain laurel bring color most welcome after the browns and blacks of winter.

Birds include such forest species as Great Crested Flycatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, Black and White Warbler (seen carrying nesting material) and Veery. A Canada Warbler sang persistently for two seasons; but nesting, although suspected was never confirmed.

This parcel may be seen to best advantage in early spring. Start at the intersection of Bush Hill and Wolf Den Roads, proceed north on Wolf Den Road for 0.6 miles. The parcel partially envelopes the site of a former communications tower.



ACTIVE YEARS HAVE COME

Our Acquisition Fund began in April 2004 in response to a very generous donation by two of our most ardent supporters. It is a dedicated fund, monies to be applied only to the purchase price in land protection transactions. The fund has been met with hearty enthusiasm and great generosity by our many friends and members. **Your responses have done two things: they have made possible what otherwise would be impossible and they have told us that we are not alone! We thank you all very much. R.A.B.**

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