



Natural Surroundings

WYNDHAM LAND TRUST, INC. • SINCE 1975

Conserving the Natural Resources of Northeastern Connecticut

December 2014

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.

Inquiries 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 \$25
- FAMILY \$35

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

- \$350 INDIVIDUAL
- \$5500 FAMILY

We now accept 

DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE UNDER IRS RULES

A Message From The President

By Ben Williams

The Wyndham Land Trust will have been in existence for forty years in April 2015. It has been an eventful four decades, and there is much to celebrate as well as much yet to accomplish. We are in the early stages of planning an event which will gather the faithful to acknowledge, with appropriate fanfare, our increasingly recognized footprint on the landscape. We all know that "counting chickens before they hatch" is risky business, but I have every confidence that I will be able to announce, at our birthday celebration, that the land trust will have preserved in excess of 2000 acres. I am equally confident that the pat on the back which we will give ourselves will further inspire us to advance the mission.

We are a membership organization, yet certain individuals, as is always the case, deserve special recognition for their leadership and commitment over the years. Three of these, Jimmie Booth, Phil James, and Lois Orswell, are no longer with us. It was at their initiative that the Wyndham Land Trust came into existence. Our torch bearer in recent years, President Emeritus Richard Booth, took the land trust to a new level and though he would deny it, deserves more credit than we could possibly bestow. Fortunately, we continue to benefit from Dick's wisdom, humor, and dedication to the cause.

There is strength in numbers, and as members there is much that all of us can do to strengthen the land trust. Encourage a friend or neighbor who shares your priorities to become a member. If you are a land owner who has donated land or granted an easement take the opportunity to suggest to abutters that they consider likewise. Volunteer to become a steward on one of our parcels of protected land as all of these properties need to be monitored and appropriately maintained. If you learn of a property which might be attractive to the land trust, please let us know about it.

We wouldn't be where we are today without your support, and for that I thank you. The challenges we face will only become greater; consequently, it is our responsibility to be as proactive as possible. The fact that our membership is spread over a large geographical area within the county is to our advantage. Members may serve as the eyes and ears of the land trust and as such communicate, communicate, communicate.

Stop Press:

As the newsletter was going to the printer we received notification of the donation of 138 acres in Thompson and Putnam from Julie Tamler. The property is located off Elm Hill Road and Border Trail Road and abuts some existing state land in both Connecticut and Rhode Island. Most of the acreage is in Thompson but a small portion extends into Putnam. We look forward to exploring the habitat and thank Julie Tamler for her generosity.

END OF YEAR CHARITABLE DONATIONS

If you are planning to make end-of-the-year donations to your favorite charities, please consider the Wyndham Land Trust. Every year we protect more valuable land in the Quiet Corner and help preserve the rural charm we treasure. It took the land trust 28 years (1977 to 2005) to acquire our first 1000 acres, but only 10 years to protect the second 1000 acres (2005 to 2015).

The pace at which we acquire land is increasing, and our operating costs are rising accordingly. We are grateful for all the help we get from our volunteers, but we couldn't do it without the support of our membership.

The Wyndham Land Trust is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, and your contributions are fully tax-deductible to the amount allowed by law.

Hayden Family Donates Land In Putnam

The Wyndham Land Trust recently received a 33-acre woodland parcel in East Putnam from the Hayden family. The family has a century-long connection with the land, and we are honored that they partnered with the land trust to protect the property for future generations.

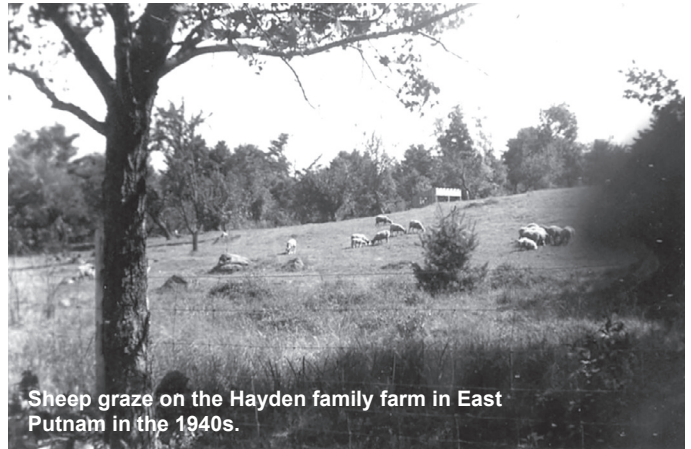
Walter Burrill Hayden was born across the road from the parcel in a circa-1740 farmhouse on East Putnam Road in Putnam in 1915. Thirty-one years later he married Ethel Pitkin, and together they raised five children on their small farm. They tended a large vegetable garden every summer, selling strawberries and sweet corn at a roadside stand, canning and freezing much of the harvest and stocking the local food pantry with surplus produce.

“We used to sled down the hill to the road when there was a clearing for pasturing sheep, and we used to draw all our water from a spring a few hundred feet up in the woods,” said Mary Hayden the eldest of the five Hayden siblings, who with her partner Carla Tomaso of Pasadena, CA, donated the parcel to the land trust after purchasing it from the Hayden estate. “Our parents could see the sheep grazing on the hill across the street in the 1950s-60s when our father raised a flock for wool and mutton. We all roamed the woods and the fields as children, cutting Christmas

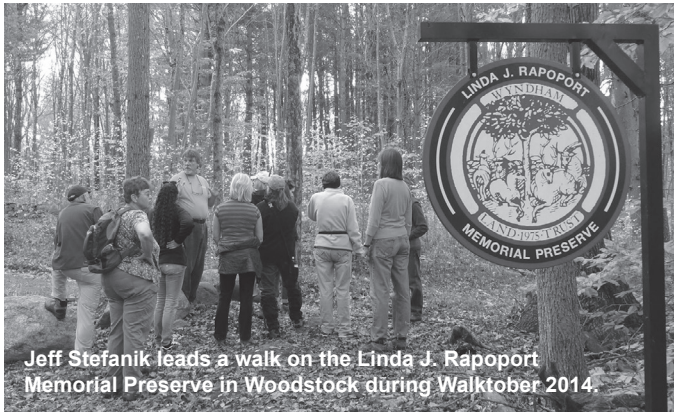
trees, gathering greenery for wreaths, and helping harvest hay, crops, and firewood.”

“For me, the permanent conservation of this piece of our family’s land is a fitting legacy of our roots in East Putnam, and an honor to our parents, who loved living in this place,” said Lisa Hayden of Sturbridge.

The new Hayden Preserve is close to our Tamler and Lower Pond Preserves in Thompson and will protect a part of Putnam that is still rural and natural. We are forever grateful for their generosity.



Sheep graze on the Hayden family farm in East Putnam in the 1940s.



Jeff Stefanik leads a walk on the Linda J. Rapoport Memorial Preserve in Woodstock during Walktober 2014.

WALKTOBER 2014

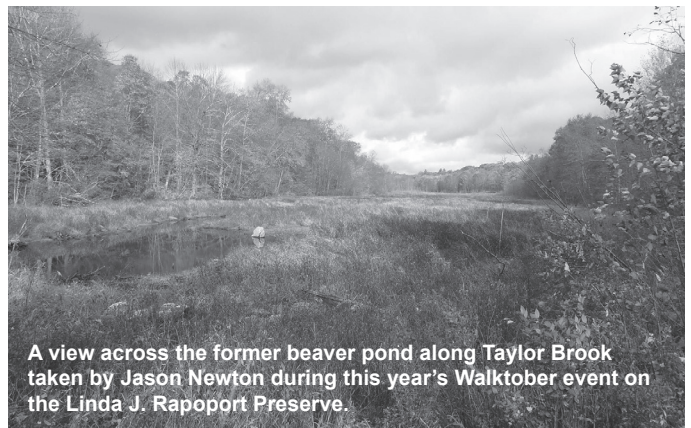
The land trust offered two walks to the public during The Last Green Valley’s Walktober event. Andy Rzeznikiewicz led a walk at the Robbins Preserve in Thompson and Jeff Stefanik led a walk at the Rapoport/Spalding Preserve in Woodstock. Both events were well attended and helped raise awareness of the mission of the land trust for both the local and out-of-town attendees.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

Ken Rapoport has been a strong supporter of the Wyndham Land Trust for many years and has partnered with the land trust to donate over 100 acres in an area north of Pulpit Rock Road in Woodstock. Ken donated the land in memory of his late wife, and it is known as the Linda J. Rapoport Memorial Preserve.

In conjunction with the adjacent Spalding Preserve, the area is now one of the largest contiguous pieces of properties owned by the land trust, making it especially valuable for wildlife and habitat protection. In addition, the preserves contain easily accessible trail systems that have made them attractive for hosting walks for the public, such as Walktober and Connecticut Trials Day.

The land trust recognized Ken during the Pot Luck Supper in September with the 2014 Conservation Award.



A view across the former beaver pond along Taylor Brook taken by Jason Newton during this year’s Walktober event on the Linda J. Rapoport Preserve.

Winter Solstice

The land trust has been making an effort to increase support for our mission by providing members and the public with the opportunity to experience the beauty of our preserves first hand. The Summer Solstice evening at the Duck Marsh is one example.

This celebration of the longest day of the year in combination with the spectacular vistas across the Connecticut countryside has become a regular event on the calendar.



This year we will host a Winter Solstice event for the first time and continue the tradition of honoring the change in the seasons. We invite members and friends to celebrate the shortest day of the year with us at the Lyon Preserve in Pomfret. The event is scheduled for Sunday December 21st and runs from 2pm to 4pm. Get off the couch and enjoy this magical afternoon with your fellow land trust members. Warm drinks and light

refreshments will be served around a toasty fire to keep us warm.

Directions: From the intersection of Route 101 and 169 in Pomfret, travel 1.4 miles east (towards Killingly). Turn left on Wright's Crossing Road and look for the gate to the Lyon Preserve on your right after crossing Mashamoquet Brook.

HOW DO I DONATE LAND?

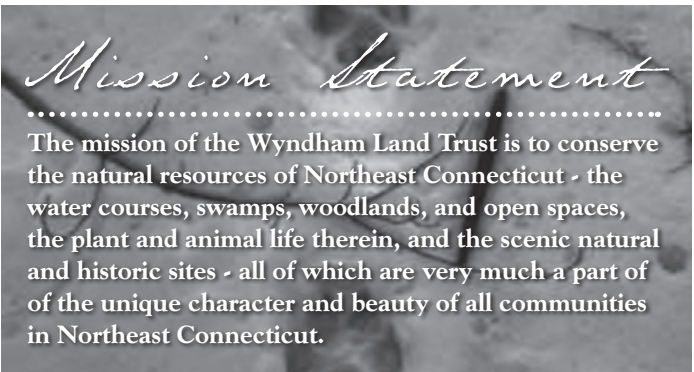
Families and individuals in the community often express a desire to protect the land they love but are unsure how to proceed and how to start a conversation with the land trust. This article describes some of the methods landowners use to protect their land in partnership with the Wyndham Land Trust. Feel free to pass this on to your friends neighbors if you think they have an interest in pursuing land protection.

• **Fee Simple:** Fee simple is legalese for simply donating the land to the land trust at no cost. The majority of our land acquisitions are fee simple. You can add restrictions to the donation, such as the desire to continue hunting on the land or cutting firewood for personal use. You can claim the appraised value as a tax deduction on your tax return. For example, if the land is valued at \$40,000, you can claim a tax deduction of \$40,000.

• **Bargain Sale:** In most cases, the land trust does not maintain funds to buy land for conservation. However, a bargain sale, in which you sell your land at less than its fair market value, may make your land affordable to the land trust and provide the protection you are seeking. The difference between the land's appraised fair market value and its sale price is considered a charitable donation to the land trust and can be claimed as an income tax deduction. For example, if the land is valued at \$40,000, and you sell it to us for \$10,000, you can claim a tax deduction of \$30,000.

• **Life Estate:** A life estate allows you to retain an interest in your property that lasts for your lifetime. For example, a life estate can be used if you want to retain the right to live on and use your property for the rest of your life. Certain duties remain with the holder of the life estate, such as maintaining the property, paying taxes and paying mortgage interest. The Wyndham Land Trust becomes the owner of your property upon your death (or that of any specified beneficiaries), and your estate receives a charitable deduction equal to the value of the property.

• **Conservation Easements:** A conservation easement is a legal document between you and the Wyndham Land Trust that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values, such as prohibiting construction. An easement remains an encumbrance on the property title and allows you to conserve your land without relinquishing your right to pass it on to your heirs. In addition, you may receive significant estate, income and/or property tax benefits based on the reduction in the value of the property because it can no longer be developed. Conservation easements place a long-term burden on the land trust to enforce the wording of the easement, even though the property may change hands many times. In general, we do not seek out conservation easements. Flexibility is the key to a successful land donation. We can work with you to arrive at a solution that is acceptable to all parties. If you are interested in making a land donation, we suggest that you contact the land trust to explore your options. Once the conversation becomes serious, we recommend that you retain an attorney who will represent your interests during discussions with the land trust.



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Wyndham Land Trust

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WYNDHAM
LAND TRUST, INC.

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THANK YOU

THE WYNDHAM LAND TRUST, INC.

Individual annual membership \$25
Family annual membership \$35
Individual life membership \$350
Family life membership \$550
Donation to Land Acquisition Fund \$ _____

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Address: _____

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E-mail: _____

Checks payable to:

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P. O. Box 302

Pomfret Center, CT 06259

(Gift Memberships Available by Calling: 860-963-2090)