

Natural Surroundings

WYNDHAM LAND TRUST, INC. • SINCE 1975

SPRING 2003

Volume 1

Number 2

Conserving the Natural Resources of Northeastern Connecticut



Our Newest Acquisition: The Tillinghast Preserve In Plainfield

On December 31 of 2002, the Wyndham Land Trust acquired its 23rd wildlife preserve, its first in Plainfield. Donated by Harriet T. Fuller and Alice S. Tillinghast, this 34 acre preserve follows the centerline of Sugar Brook for 1,720 feet, its easterly boundary. To the west it abuts the state's 1,618 acre Quinebaug River Wildlife Management Area. Part of the preserve is formed by an esker, a gravel ridge deposited in a melt water channel beneath a stagnant or retreating glacier. Rich sources of gravel, eskers might be classified as endangered land forms! Fortunately, this one is preserved. We anticipate a biological inventory, along the esker and in the moist bottomlands bordering the brook. **We are most grateful to Harriet Fuller and Alice Tillinghast for arranging for the protection of this important parcel.**

A Bird's Nest in Winter

Birds' nests vary in size, shape, materials and placement. They range from underground nests of Kingfishers and Bank Swallows to the pendant nests of Baltimore Orioles placed high in trees, the dead stick platform nests of Great Blue Herons, to the cunningly hidden ground nests of Ovenbirds and to the mud cup nests of Phoebes and Barn Swallows which are sheltered underneath bridges, within our barns and even on our porches. One should not forget the grass cup nests of Blue Birds built in old woodpecker holes as well as in the boxes we place for them.

It is an interesting fact that most species exhibit a high degree of site fidelity. The Orioles which nest in one Maple tree this year will be very likely to be those that nested there last year. It is also likely that they themselves were hatched not very far away.

The Orioles which nest in one Maple tree this year will be very likely to be those that nested there last year.

Birds' nests are seldom easy but always fun to find. In winter those of tree and shrub nesting species are starkly revealed



and can be examined closely and at the finder's leisure. The Yellow Warbler nest shown here was found on WLT's one-hundred acre Duck Marsh Preserve in Pomfret on a clear, cold, December day.

The thought train of the finder went about as follows:

The yellow warblers which nested here were at least one year old. Therefore, flying at night, guided by star patterns, they had completed at least one round-trip migratory flight of between three and four thousand miles.

Question: Where are they now, right now on this cold December day? This question assumes that they successfully completed the south bound leg of this year's migratory flight and are on their wintering grounds. Will they continue to survive the hazards of long distance travel, hazards both natural and man made, and return north to their accustomed breeding ground? If they do, the Duck Marsh Preserve will still be there and it will still be user-friendly for Yellow Warblers and other species as well. No one hundred acres of asphalt here.

Our preserves are open to the public for the quiet enjoyment of nature. There are many interesting things to see.

Future Home of the Wyndham Land Trust

As many of you already know, the Wyndham Land Trust has been working with the Pomfret Historical Society to restore the Pomfret Town House, which will be used as the Trust's office beginning in the spring of this year. The plans include re-painting, refinishing the floors, installing insulation, storm windows and rewiring. Most of the work will be completed by the end of March. The next phase will include the addition of bathrooms, a kitchenette, and hand-capped accessibility.



The Town House, built in 1841, is one of the few intact meeting houses in the state. In order to respect the integrity of the building, WLT will occupy only the back third of the building, and no permanent interior structural changes will be made.

The cooperative effort to raise the needed funds for the building has been very successful. Many are to thank for their early support of this project: The Pomfret Historical Society, especially Anne Hennen and Liz Cartier, Tom Pahl of Heritage Building and Design in Pomfret, Land Trust Directors,

especially Andy Tillinghast, Cy and Rebecca Harvey, and Mike Kiernan of the Land Trust Service Bureau. A very special thank you goes out to Stan Geary of Pomfret and other board members of the 1772 Foundation, who generously provided the Historical Society with a \$13,000 restoration grant.

Thanks to these wonderful people, the Town House will be preserved and will in turn provide space to launch many land preservation projects in our area. There is much to celebrate in this cooperative effort. Look for an invitation in June to the Pomfret Historical Society's Town House Warming!

| List of preserved land by Town | | | |
|--|-----------------|------------------|------------|
| Town | Name | Preserve Acreage | Town total |
| Brooklyn | Booth | 7.2 | 9.2 |
| | Sherman | 2.0 | |
| Canterbury | Levonius | 11.5 | 11.5 |
| Killingly | Dunn | 32 | 42.7 |
| | Schneider | 10.7 | |
| Plainfield | Tillinghast | 34.1 | 34.1 |
| Pomfret | Aicher | 73.8 | 452.4 |
| | Bosworth | 69.6 | |
| | Duck Marsh | 101.2 | |
| | Gallup | 7.9 | |
| | Holzer | 20.5 | |
| | Lyon | 46.4 | |
| | Townshend | 2.6 | |
| | Tucker | 93.4 | |
| | Wright | 37 | |
| Putnam | Chaffee | 29 | 29 |
| Sterling | Laasko | 5 | 5 |
| Thompson | Barker | 41 | 120.4 |
| | Tamler | 79.4 | |
| Woodstock | Gosnell | 63.4 | 96.7 |
| | Harvey | 15 | |
| | Williamson | 16.3 | |
| | Williamson | 2 | |
| TOTAL ACREAGE OWNED | | | 801 |
| Conservation Easements: | | | |
| Canterbury | Gaines | 94 | |
| | Hart | 100 | |
| Killingly | Chase Reservoir | 232 | |
| TOTAL ACREAGE PROTECTED VIA EASEMENTS | | | 426 |

Marge Hoskin

The Windham Land Trust's newest board member is Marge Hoskin, a resident of Plainfield. Marge brings years of conservation service to the Trust. She served on the Connecticut



Audubon Society's Regional Advisory Board, and still serves as treasurer for the Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor and as a member of the

Conservation Commission for Plainfield as well as the Northeast Connecticut Visitors District, which she helped to found. One of her many successful regional initiatives was Walking Weekend, which she helped to develop as an opportunity for local people to discover nearby treasures and for visitors to get to know our lovely part of the state. This event has expanded to two weekends and attracts thousands of walkers.

Marge was brought up in Central Village and graduated from the University of Connecticut before joining the Navy. She served in the Navy from 1955-1976 and returned to the area from Alexandria, Virginia as a retired naval officer. It was during this time, in the late 1970's, that Marge began directing her considerable talents to various public-service organizations in the area. After her time away, she had a new appreciation for the area which, combined with her organizational strengths, has made her one of our area's most valuable advocates. Marge recently added "columnist" to her list of accomplishments; she writes "Quiet Corner Whispers" which appears every Tuesday in the *Norwich Bulletin* and reflects her love of nature and history. Marge will be invaluable to the Trust's activities in the coming years, as we strive to meet the many conservation challenges ahead. **Welcome, Marge!**

BLACK GOLD COMPOST can be ordered by calling Sarah Heminway, 928-4041! This is a terrific fund raiser for the trust and your garden will love it!

Serious Advance Planning

OCTOBER 12, 2003

2ND Annual Benefit Concert for Local Land Preservation / Maria Sangiolo and Friends

NOVEMBER 6, 2003

Members' Pot Luck Supper, Tyrone Farm

The WLT's New Phone#: 860-963-2090

The Wright Preserve Pomfret

This 37-acre parcel was the second piece donated to the trust after our incorporation in 1975. The parcel was donated via a bequest from Ann A. Wright. It is located in Pomfret in the triangle of land between Routes 101, 44, and 169, adjacent to the 667-acre Bafflin Sanctuary. This preserve has varied habitats including flooded forest, a hay field, and an old field full of wildflowers. Young forest has reclaimed an old gravel operation. The hay field is mowed after July 15 each year to allow grassland birds time to finish nesting. Two wildlife food plots, sunflower and sorghum, are planted in the old field each spring. They provide food and cover for numerous birds from August through December. Bobolinks, indigo buntings, goldfinch, and numerous sparrow species utilize the food plots. Mashamoquet Brook forms the southern boundary, where many people enjoy fishing. A short loop trail traverses the young forest and goes around the two food plots. Plans are being explored to provide the teachers and students from Pomfret Community School access to the trails via a bridge across the Mashamoquet. The best access is located off Route 169; you can park at the Connecticut Audubon Society's barn where another trail system is located.





The Wyndham Land Trust, Inc.
P.O. Box 302
Pomfret Center, CT 06259-0302



The Wyndham Land Trust, Inc.

Individual annual membership \$20
Family annual membership \$30
Individual life membership \$300
Family life membership \$500
Additional Donation \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Checks payable to:
Wyndham Land Trust
P. O. Box 302
Pomfret Center, CT 06259