



The Wyndham Land Trust, Inc.

Winter 1994

Reflections

Benjamin Williams

Those of us who live in Windham County have much to be thankful for. Acknowledging the fact that we "can't have everything", among the blessings at our doorstep is a relatively unspoiled natural environment. It is an asset readily apparent to those who visit the area from other places; yet there is an understandable tendency to take our countryside for granted. Fortunately many area residents do not; which is a second blessing. Whether a plant is a weed or a wildflower is largely for the eye of the beholder to determine. Those who see a wildflower may also recognize the bluebirds' song, the drumming of a grouse, or the track of an otter in the snow.

Once our awareness of the sights, sounds, scents, and serenity of the natural world develops, our appetite tends to grow. The more knowledge and understanding we possess, the greater is the wonder and appreciation for the extraordinary interrelationships among plants, animals and the changing seasons. The myriad parts of the natural mechanism function beautifully when allowed to do so. The clog in the wheel is man who has become the steward of the natural world. Clearly we are not fully in charge; rivers do flood, forest fires do get out of control, droughts do occur with often times disastrous consequences, but these major happenings aside, man is the determiner of the environment of the future.



L. R., Benjamin G. Williams, Phillip G. James, Richard A. Booth, George Jackson III, Esq., Virginia Booth, Lois Orswell. Missing from picture, James A. Weiss.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Phillip G. James, *President*
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Any organism functions best when it is healthy. What we must come to understand is that there is an interrelationship among all living organisms and the habitats which support them. Whenever and wherever the interrelationships are in harmony, the environment is in good health. An unspoiled environment is a healthy environment and the creatures within it function up to their fullest capabilities.

If mankind is to function up to his fullest capabilities, if we are to develop the understandings, sensitivities, curiosities and appreciations which are so important to our relationships with each other, we need to have access to unspoiled places. The Land Trust, with the cooperation and support of its membership, is committed to the preservation of those very special places within Windham County where one may go to experience a sense of peace and tranquility, to hear an owl call, to see a gentian in bloom and to rejoice in the diversity of life which surrounds us.



Featured Parcel for 1994

The Wright parcel consists of 37 acres lying in the triangle formed by Routes 101, 44 and 169. The gift of Ann Averill Wright, it came to the Trust by bequest in 1983. A reverter interest is held by The Nature Conservancy.

Mashamoquet Brook, in a series of pools, riffles and quiet reaches, flows for about 1,000 feet through the southern portion of the parcel. Long-nosed dace inhabit the riffles, black-nosed dace and common shiners are plentiful in the quiet water, while Johnny darters inhabit the sandy bottoms. A belted kingfisher can often be found along open portions of the brook in winter. There are frequent signs of beaver and otter. American redstarts and least flycatchers are among the summer resident birds inhabiting the band of woodland lying between the brook and the "lower field" immediately to the north.

Just north of the lower field there is an area of red maples, grass tussocks and muck which is extremely difficult to traverse. The upland portion of the parcel rises abruptly from the red maple swamp, and is composed of glacial till which has been extensively mined for gravel, leaving huge trenches and bowl-shaped depressions now covered by trees and brush. Deer often drink water collected in the bottoms of these old gravel pits while green-backed herons sometimes forage there.

The "western old field" lies between the abandoned gravel pits and Route 44. It is covered by underbrush and very difficult to negotiate, ticks abound. Determined birders can usually find a white-eyed vireo, although this bird is sometimes more easily seen along the margins of the lower field. A ruby-throated hummingbird often perches on a small dead tree.



Recent Acquisitions

Elinor Bauer, Evelyn Murdock and Mary Page have recently donated a 7.9 acre woodland parcel in memory of their parents, the late Ada S. and Arthur M. Cullen. Known as the "Storm Woodlot" since about 1942, this tract lies between

The "long field" runs parallel to Route 169. Like the lower field it is an excellent place to look for animal tracks in the snow.

Among the more exciting finds on the Wright parcel were two solitary sandpipers on the cart road leading to the lower field on 5/19/93 and nesting green-backed herons in '92 and '93.

Persons traveling south on Route 169 can often park just north of the bridge over Mashamoquet Brook. Care is advised due to heavy, fast moving traffic. The Parcel can be entered on foot via a muddy cart road leading to the lower field or a barway at the lower end of the long field.

NOTES OF INTEREST

Audubon - WLT Joint Working Effort

The Trust has entered into a joint sharing agreement with the Audubon Society in Pomfret. The Trust lands are available to the society for its various nature activities.

WLT Tours and Bird Walks

Those interested in hiking on Trust properties or participating in guided bird walks are welcome. Simply call 774-3493 and arrangements can be made.

For the Traveler

Travelers often like to take along field guides appropriate to the area being visited. WLT is fortunate to have the kindly proffered services of a zoologist, bibliophile and traveler who has agreed to furnish citations for WLT members and their friends. Queries may be sent to Prof. A. L. Andtruster c/o R. A. Booth, Wyndham Land Trust, Pomfret Center, CT 06259. Since Prof. Andtruster is often out of the country and unavailable please allow a lead time of 6 to 8 weeks.

Confirmed Nestings

The following birds were found nesting on Trust parcels in 1994: Great horned owl, least flycatcher, eastern kingbird, tree swallow, northern rough-winged swallow, blue jay, eastern bluebird, American robin, gray catbird, yellow warbler, prairie warbler, American redstart, ovenbird, scarlet tanager, northern cardinal and rufous-sided towhee. Persons may obtain a copy of the WLT bird list by writing to the Trust at P.O. Box 33, Pomfret Center, CT 06259.

Gallup. Known as the "Storrs Woodlot" since about 1843, this tract lies between Route 44 and Dennis Road in Pomfret.

The Trust has recently been given a 46.4 acre tract lying between the bridge at Pomfret Landing and the Quinebaug River and bounded on the south by Mashamoquet Brook. The parcel is about equally divided between flood plain and upland.

With donor assistance the Trust has acquired a 29.5 acre portion of an Atlantic white cedar swamp in Thompson.

No living thing can survive the loss of its habitat. We thank the donors whose kindness, generosity and foresight have made acquisition of the above parcels possible.

1994 Green-Up Protection Award

The Wyndham Land Trust has received the 1994 Green-Up Protection Award in recognition of its endeavors to preserve critical habitat in Thompson, CT. The award was presented by Carolie Evans, Director of the Connecticut Land Trust Service Bureau to Richard Booth in October.



Quinebaug Rivers Association Acknowledges WLT

The Quinebaug Rivers Association, Inc. presented a Resolution of Appreciation to the Trust in November. The resolution reads as follows:

"We, the members of Quinebaug Rivers Association, Inc., congratulate and applaud Wyndham Land Trust, and all who participated in or contributed to the effort, for being alert to a sudden opportunity, and for acting promptly, to acquire a 43-acre riverfront parcel in Pomfret, at the junction of Mashamoquet Brook and Quinebaug River, and not far from the 30-acre riverfront parcel in Killingly acquired by Wyndham Land Trust two years ago. We are greatly pleased that a second highly significant portion of the Quinebaug River Greenway along this outstanding reach of the river is now successfully perpetuated. Well done again!"