



Natural Surroundings

WYNDHAM LAND TRUST, INC. • SINCE 1975

Conserving the Natural Resources of Northeastern Connecticut

Summer 2023

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 wildlife 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.**

Wyndham Land Trust Board of Directors

Michael St. Lawrence, President
Michael Green, Vice President
Stephen Adams, Secretary
Penny Foisey, Treasurer
Mary Anthony
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SUMMER SOLSTICE GATHERING

The Land Trust is holding its ninth annual Summer Solstice event at the Duck Marsh Preserve in Pomfret on Wednesday, June 21. Members, family, and friends are invited to spend the evening with their fellow Land Trust members and supporters. Watch the sun settle into the western sky from the observation platform while Bobolinks settle into the grassland meadows. What better way to celebrate the longest day of the year!

The event runs from 7 pm to 9 pm. Parking is available along Holmes Road, between Modock Road and Wrights Crossing Road. If you'd like, you can bring your own chair and refreshments. We'll provide a firepit and fixings for s'mores.



Land trust members watch the sunset at the 2017 Summer Solstice event.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Wyndham Land Trust is very busy these days as we reach for our goal of protecting 10,000 acres by 2030. Most of the work is done by our nine board members and one part-time staff person. We would like to have a small number of members whom we could call on to help us out with newsletter and membership mailings, event preparation, preserve cleanup, and trail maintenance. Ideally, we'd even have a volunteer coordinator to liaise with the board and manage a small group of volunteers.

If you think you could help us out as a volunteer, email us at info@wyndhamlandtrust.org or leave us a message at 860-963-2090.

Thanks!

Welcome

We welcome the following new members:

Kyle Borner, Cameron Burns, Elizabeth Coville, Caitlin Cunningham, Suzanne Dawley, Ellen Delpapa, Darin Leeman, Karl & Lisa Lieder, Robert Loring Stephen Perry, John Szamocki, Elizabeth Totten

DUNN PRESERVE CLEANUP

Board member Janet Booth, preserve steward Paul Gazzola, and volunteer Stewart Chute spent Earth Day removing the remains of an old camp from our Dunn Preserve in Killingly. The 32-acre Dunn Preserve was one of the first preserves purchased by the Land Trust and includes a nice trail down to the Quinebaug River. Trash had accumulated over the years, and Janet decided it was time for a cleanup.

The crew carried up an old car seat from the water front, as well as two rusty old metal cabinets, piles of foam insulation, lots of pipe, and other miscellaneous trash. Paul was really generous with his time and the use of his tractor which allowed them to remove a lot of refuse in a short amount of time. The trash was hauled away, and the metal was taken to a neighbor who sent it to recycling. Paul has offered to knock down the old cabin that sits by the river later this year. Thanks also to members Peter Joyce and Tricia McAnany for letting us borrow their pick up.



Stewart Chute and Paul Gazzola gathering trash from the Dunn Preserve.

RARE BIRD LANDS AT AICHER PRESERVE

A rare Trumpeter Swan was found at the Aicher Preserve in Pomfret in early April—only the second recorded sighting of a Trumpeter in Connecticut. Avid birders from around New England headed to Aicher to add the swan to their lists. Many were exposed to the bird-friendly habitat in the Wyndham Land Trust preserves for the first time and vowed to return in the future.

Trumpeter Swans once nested over most of North America, but disappeared rapidly as civilization advanced westward; by the 1930s, fewer than 100 remained south of Canada. Today they are mostly found on the West coast and in the Mid-west, but



Trumpeter Swan

a few occasionally drift eastwards. Unfortunately, the bird appeared to be sick when it arrived at Aicher. It died shortly after and was diagnosed with lead poisoning, possibly the result of ingesting fishing weights or gun shot during its journey.

THE BEN WILLIAMS LEGACY CONSERVATION FUND

By now, most of you will have heard of the passing of trustee emeritus and long-time champion, Benjamin D. Williams III on March 7, 2023.

Few others can match Ben's legacy, who led the Wyndham Land Trust for decades with passion, good humor, and steadfast dedication. His years of commitment to land protection are readily apparent in the quiet woodland trails and unspoiled landscapes that are so beloved by our community today.

To recognize his incredible contribution to conservation work in Windham County, we have established the Ben Williams Legacy Conservation Fund, which will be used to protect space for people and wildlife to grow and thrive—the places that mattered so much to Ben. To date, members have contributed over \$6,000 to the fund, and it is earmarked for land protection.

A celebration of Ben's life will be held on August 27, 2023 at the Connecticut Audubon Society in Pomfret.

You can contribute to the Ben Williams Legacy Conservation Fund on our web site or by sending a check made out to the Wyndham Land Trust to PO Box 302, Pomfret Center, CT 06259. Write "Ben Williams Fund" on the check's memo line.



Ben at the Wyndham Land Trust stand at Woodstock's Celebrating Ag event

RIDE FOR OPEN SPACE

The Wyndham Land Trust is hosting the inaugural equestrian Ride for Open Space on our Cabbage Hill and Nightingale Forest preserves on Saturday, September 16 at 8 am. The event is expected to draw 125 horseback riders from around New England to the spectacular



Riders on the Nightingale Forest preserve in 2022

trails on these preserves. Lunch for the riders will be available from The Rolling Tomato wood-fired pizza truck from Groton, CT. All proceeds from the event will go toward the Land Trust.

STATE GRANT TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO BULL HILL

On May 15, Governor Ned Lamont and Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Commissioner Katie Dykes announced that approximately \$9 million in state grants are being released through the Connecticut Recreational Trails Program to plan, build, expand, and improve a total of 50 multi-use trails across Connecticut.

As part of that program, the Wyndham Land Trust will receive \$24,000 to design and build a parking lot on Bull Hill Road that will be accessible from the Thompson side of Bull Hill.

“I am thrilled to announce funding for these 50 projects, which will improve and expand recreational trail opportunities around Connecticut,” Governor Lamont said. “The incredible response to this grant round shows the high demand for outdoor recreation in our state. Our residents and visitors continue to explore state parks, forests, and municipal open spaces and land trust preserves at record levels.”

“This project will significantly improve access to the Wyndham Land Trust’s 1100-acre Bull Hill Preserve,” explained Mike St. Lawrence. “The current parking lot for Bull Hill can be reached only via a challenging gravel road from Woodstock. This project will simplify access to our preserve from the east and will allow vehicles and visitors with special needs to access parking. We are tremendously grateful for the State of Connecticut for supporting this project and look forward to more folks using the trails on Wyndham’s Bull Hill Preserve.”

BOOTH PRESERVE EXPANDS

The Booth preserve in Brooklyn, one of the first parcels under Wyndham Land Trust stewardship, started as a gift of seven acres from Virginia Booth in 1986 and has been slowly expanding with additional donations in 2004 and 2007. Today it has grown to encompass 35 acres with a gift of seven acres from Janet Booth in December of 2021 and a gift of six acres from Nancy Booth in May of this year. Nancy’s gift honors the late Dr. Richard A. Booth, a former Land Trust President and dedicated conservationist.

GIFT OF SECURITIES

The Wyndham Land Trust now has the capability to accept the gift of securities. Securities are usually assets that have a marketable financial value and can range from simple stock in a publicly traded company, to mortgages or life insurance policies. Donors of these assets usually receive a tax deduction equivalent to the market value of the asset upon donating. Donors do not have to pay capital gains tax on the asset appreciation, and the full value goes to the Land Trust (which, as a non-profit, does not pay any tax). Please consider a gift of securities in your future financial planning.

GRANTS TO IMPROVE POMFRET PRESERVE

On May 10, Governor Ned Lamont announced that his administration is awarding approximately \$3.7 million in state funding to aid in the purchase and protection of more than 1,025 acres of open space in 14 communities throughout Connecticut. The Wyndham Land Trust received \$354,120 from the state to purchase a 227-acre property from the Townshend family in the Nightingale Forest Preserve in Pomfret. The new property will expand our Nightingale Forest Preserve to over 1,000 acres of protected wetland, grassland, and upland forest – critical habitat for flora and fauna that is threatened by the impact of climate change.

“These state grants will increase the availability of open space and protect our natural resources, moving us closer to meeting our overall goal of permanently protecting 21% of Connecticut’s land base,” said Governor Lamont.

“This parcel connects 434 acres in the south of the Nightingale Forest Preserve to 355 acres in the north forming over 1,000 acres of contiguous protected forest,” said Andy Rzeznikiewicz. “It’s great habitat, and we’re very thankful for the Townshend family for patiently working with us on this project. Nine vernal pools have been identified on the new property. We expect to find many birds that need large unbroken forests to survive, such as Scarlet Tanager, Veery, Broad-winged Hawk, Barred Owls and Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers.”

The Wyndham Land Trust also received a \$100,000 donation from the Summerhill Foundation that will be used toward purchasing this property in Pomfret. The Summerhill Foundation, based in Madison, CT, has been a committed supporter of the Land Trust for many years. The Foundation donates primarily to land trusts and other organizations that are dedicated to protecting the environment, especially in ecologically sensitive areas. We thank them for their continued support.



A beaver pond in the Nightingale Forest



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

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Mail in the form below to renew or go to www.wyndhamlandtrust.org and renew online (Ways to Give → Join).

THANK YOU

The Wyndham Land Trust, Inc.

Individual Membership \$25

Family Membership \$35

Supporter \$100

Patron \$500

Benefactor \$1,000

Donation to Land Acquisition Fund: \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Make checks payable to:

Wyndham Land Trust

PO Box 302, Pomfret Center, CT 06259

(Gift memberships available by calling 860-963-2090)