

NLT Annual Meeting

How Will Norwalk Be Affected by Sea Level Rise?

At Norwalk Land Trust's Annual Meeting on April 4th, there was standing room only at The Rowayton Community Center. Over one hundred people gathered to listen to speaker, Dr. Adam Whelchel, Director of Science at The Nature Conservancy of Connecticut. Dr. Whelchel spoke about how Norwalk will be likely be impacted as sea levels rise due to changes in climate.

Dr. Whelchel described his recently completed study for The Nature Conservancy, predicting areas where salt marshes are likely to advance as daily tides move into new areas. Norwalk has over 400 acres of such areas!

The study was very precise and included the entire coast of Connecticut with predictions for more than 29,000 individual parcels of land. People are invited to review the study at www.coastalresilience.org where The Nature Conservancy has provided tools allowing individuals to view the probable effects of daily tides or different categories of hurricanes on their own properties – from the present to the year 2080.

Late in the questioning, Dr. Whelchel stated that the study's models predict sea levels will rise between 52 inches and 6 feet by 2080. He argued that now is the time to start thinking of protected waterfront space as a resource that will work to buffer the effects of sea level rise and to mitigate wave action during storm surge.

Recognizing that it is smart-money to put aside coastal areas as part of our *natural* infrastructure, Dr. Whelchel stressed that coastal communities like ours should get together to develop a resiliency plan that will protect us from future extreme weather events which are predicted to increase dramatically.

Dr. Whelchel offered to lead Norwalk residents and elected officials in a free workshop designed to facilitate the creation of a town-wide resiliency plan. The Land Trust will look into hosting this event.



▲ Concerned residents and NLT members listen as Adam Whelchel discusses how climate change will affect Norwalk's properties and the Connecticut shoreline.



▲ Dr. Whelchel is joined by NLT Board Members Vickie Bennett, John Moeling, and Connie Bennett at the Annual Meeting.

Welcomed Support

Our Far-flung Friends

Scott Byrne, local manager for the Eastern Outdoor Representatives Association, Asheville, NC, is one of a few supporting – and vitally needed – people from outside Norwalk who help the Norwalk Land Trust. Scott is donating \$500 from his organization for Outdoor Classroom. Next time you are at REI or Wilton Outdoor Sports, to whom Scott supplies outdoor gear, think of EORA!



▲ Scott Byrne of Eastern Outdoor Representatives Association presenting John Moeling with a donation for Norwalk Land Trust.

Cleaning up the hazardous materials at Hoyt Island so it can become our next nature preserve is a challenge that many Norwalk residents recognize and want to address. The Newman's Own Foundation supports NLT's Outdoor Classroom, a program through which (so far) thousands of kids have learned to value nature, and The Horizon Foundation of Maine awarded a grant for the Hoyt Island Sanctuary. Individuals from as far away as California have helped this year.

Essential Support

NLT's Norwalk donors and members cover the required day-to-day projects, including stewardship, cleanups, an intern program for teens, our Fodor Farm presence, maintaining the Farm Creek Barn, funding our new acquisitions efforts, protecting White Barn, paying bills for accounting, legal, repairs, even pet-waste bags!

Results

All of the support, donations, contributions, and grants from our local and far-flung friends are vital sources of action for Outdoor Classroom, preserved open space, and nature in Norwalk!

4th Graders Learn about Conservation

Our Outdoor Classroom program is designed to complement the 4th grade science curriculum, and there are two parts to the program.

First, NLT volunteers visit each school to give a power-point presentation to the students that teaches about the mission and role of NLT, about plant and animal life in a tidal estuary and about the natural forces that shape a salt marsh ecosystem. Soon after, the students travel by bus to Schoendorf Preserve at Farm Creek for a field trip. For many of the students, it is their first hands-on experience of a tidal estuary and the wondrous wildlife they observe there—various adaptive grasses, shrubs and trees, crustaceans, egrets, yellow-crowned night herons, great herons, ducks, gulls, chipmunks, and much more.

Last year all 12 Norwalk schools participated, allowing over 800 students to have the mind-expanding, eye-opening experience of learning about and seeing firsthand the importance of preserving open space.

This program would not be possible without the generosity of an anonymous donor who covers the buses and printed materials for the students. And there are many volunteers who donate their time to guide the field trips.

Volunteer one hour or more in May to guide Norwalk Land Trust's Outdoor Classroom at Farm Creek Preserve. It's fun and training is provided! Contact Tammis Lazaris at tammislaz@gmail.com for more information.



▲ Be a hero to kids like these!

You are always welcome to visit the preserve at Farm Creek (34 Sammis Street in Rowayton) where we have made trails that provide an opportunity for visitors to enjoy vistas of the estuary and the abundant wildlife there.

President's Letter

Resiliency

Every city the size of Norwalk compiles planning documents that help guide decision makers, developers, and citizens. On July 3, 2008, Norwalk's Plan of Conservation & Development went into effect. By law it is a document that is updated every ten years, and that process is under way. We encourage you to spend some time reviewing the 2008 Plan to see how you can contribute to this renewal. It will be an important blueprint for Norwalk's conservation future. To review the document please visit norwalkct.org/DocumentCenter/View/389.

Much in the 2008 Plan worked to our benefit, and credit goes to its developers and reviewers, several of whom still serve the City in the Common Council, the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Conservation Office.

Critical to the update of Section B, "Environment and Infrastructure," will be the incorporation of specific actions including more resilient protections for all of Norwalk's water-edged properties. In 2008, sea-level rise and storm surge were less of a planning issue than they are now, and new technologies, specific to Norwalk, are available. Please see Dr. Adam Whelchel's website, www.adamwhelchel.com, for information on current scientific research.

It's easier to improve an already-strong product than to spend a decade wishing we had done so. Certainly Norwalk Land Trust can and will support and contribute to the 2018 Plan. Please dig in and weigh in as the work progresses!

Best regards,
John Moeling,
President



Hoyt Island

Help Bridge the Gap!

Norwalk Land Trust has made progress in clearing invasive plant species, significantly improving Hoyt Island's capacity for nesting and foraging birds. However, the remains of a house that burned down in 2008 presents a serious challenge. NLT invested \$12,000 with a licensed environmental firm to identify potential hazardous material in the remains of the burned structure. Asbestos was identified as the primary contaminate in the burned out structure, along with some minor PBC contamination.

The estimate for the work is \$113,000, and NLT expects grants and in-kind contributions of \$67,000. **The gap in funding needed for the remediation is \$46,000.**

NLT is seeking individuals, foundations, and companies to close the \$46,000 gap, allowing remediation in the fall of 2017.

For information, contact Charlie Taney at ctaney3@gmail.com, or 203-536-5618.

Join us for fun and/or a little work:

Earth Day Clean up:

April 22, 10 am-12 pm, White Barn, 78 Cranbury Road

April 22, 10 am-12pm, Shoendorf Preserve at Farm Creek, 34 Sammis Street

NLT/Fodor Farm Open House:

July 16, 3-5 pm, 328 Flax Hill Road. At 3:30 pm, Naturalist, Bill Burt will present photos and a discussion of "Water Babies"

National Estuary Week:

September 23-30, Check website for information about events and activities

For directions and updates, on all events visit www.norwalklandtrust.org



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For more information and volunteer opportunities, please visit our website:
www.norwalklandtrust.org

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Please donate and become a member!

Please clip and mail to Norwalk Land Trust, PO Box 34, Norwalk CT 06853, or donate on our website, www.norwalklandtrust.org.

Your donations support the continuing conservation
of Norwalk open spaces. Thank you!

Name

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_____ \$30

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_____ Other (All donations appreciated!)

_____ Matching gift form enclosed

Please let us know if you have a preference for your donation:

_____ Hoyt Island restoration _____ Science education

_____ Open-space land acquisition _____ General NLT needs

**Norwalk Land Trust does not share member information.
All membership contributions are tax deductible.**

For corporate/professional donations, please email
info@norwalklandtrust.org or visit www.norwalklandtrust.org.

I am interested in: Volunteering as a nature guide _____ Volunteering for cleanup work _____ Property Donation _____ Other _____

Please use my email address to receive NLT communications and to save paper and postage: Yes ___ No ___

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