



Norwalk Land Trust

NEWS

Fall 2014

Saving Monarch Butterflies

A 90% monarch butterfly population decline has taken place in under 20 years. The once common, iconic butterflies of summer have lost over 165 million acres of habitat! The decline is driven by massive spraying of herbicides such as Roundup and neonicotinoids (insecticides) on commercial and genetically engineered crops. This loss of habitat from poisoning along with global climate change, has adversely affected all of our pollinators, including bees, insects, bats, birds, moths and butterflies.

Partnering with the Xerces Society and the Monarch Recovery Initiative, NLT has broadcast milkweed seed and other native, nectar bearing plants in our meadow at the Schoendorf Preserve at Farm Creek (see milkweed field below), and at our various properties.

We call on all gardeners to:

- Plant native milkweed and other native nectar and larval plants. To help you, NLT offers free milkweed pods and literature on pollinator conservation and a primer on neonicotinoids. To receive the materials, email info@norwalklandtrust.org or check the box on 2015 membership form.

- Avoid herbicides and insecticides and use ecologically sound gardening methods. When buying plants, ask your nursery specialist if the plants have been treated with systemic neonicotinoids. Buy only plants that have not been treated with these insecticides as they persist and kill the very bees and butterflies that we want to encourage.

- Actively engage in the national dialogue to protect our pollinators. The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, an international nonprofit organization, is a good place to begin (www.xerces.org).



Progress on Hoyts Island

Thanks to plans by ecologist Anthony Zemba, Board members and volunteers were able to begin restoration of habitat on Hoyts Island early this past summer. Years-old winged euonymus were cut down and organized into a series of six-foot-high piles. These piles will help create ground cover for ground-dwelling birds and protect new growth of native plant species from browsing deer. Lower branches on waterside trees were trimmed back to admit more light and create better growing conditions for native flora, which in turn offer more food and nesting spots for songbirds. The usual pickup of wind- and tide-born trash continued as it always will.

Still to finish: restoration of the house ruins, and addition of nesting boxes. Stay tuned!



NLT Board members, Blanca Paccha, Charlie Taney and John Moeling remove and cut away the winged euonymus to clear the area and provide new habitats for songbirds and indigenous plants.

Farm Creek Stewardship

What do volunteers do on Norwalk Land Trust properties? A good example is the Farm Creek stewards who meet on Friday mornings to “garden” together at the Schoendorf Preserve at Farm Creek. Five or six volunteers gather to maintain trails, seed and tend the meadow, control the poison ivy and cut out non-native invasive plants. We watch the birds in the estuary and debate the amount of invasive plant control that is appropriate and possible on this 16-acre property. Farm Creek is open to the public to enjoy its beauty and observe the flora and fauna that inhabit the surrounding salt marshes. They come away with a greater understanding of the importance of having this open space bordering a tidal estuary in a suburban environment.

The Norwalk Land Trust’s mission is to seek to preserve the 27 open space properties in its care (including Farm Creek) in their natural state for Norwalk residents now and in the future. Trail maintenance and trash cleanup are some of the duties, but conservation entails much, much more, as evidenced by what the Farm Creek stewards do. Invasive control, encouragement of native plants both for their resiliency and for their value to the resident birds and animals, and education, using the site as an outdoor classroom, are among the conservation activities at Farm Creek.

Farm Creek is lovely and is a classroom for us too. The volunteer group is great, and we learn from each other. There is so much to learn.



Farm Creek stewards, Mary Verel, Carol Guinta and Sarah Graber, check and identify the growth of various species of plants on the Farm Creek property.

With Help from Our Many Friends

The all-volunteer Board of The Norwalk Land Trust gratefully recognizes the many volunteers and groups who gave their time and efforts during the past 12 months to protect and maintain open space in Norwalk for the public good. THANK YOU and WELL DONE to everyone!

Organizations Offered Groups of Stewardship Volunteers

BuildOn (Supachart Tauthong, Norwalk Director): Cleanups and stewardship

Connecticut Friends School (Kim Tsocanos, Director): White Barn Preserve stewardship

Save Carnbury: White Barn cleanup

West Norwalk Association: Nursery Street cleanup

Businesses and Organizations Donated Their Services

Department of Recreation and Parks, City of Norwalk: Fodor Farm Office

Fat Cat Pie Company: Provided meeting space for NLT Board

RiverWatch/HarborWatch at Earthplace: Co-sponsored coastal cleanup

Live Green: Event booth

Norwalk River Watershed Association: Co-sponsor, Coastal Cleanup

Norwalk Tree Alliance: Tree Festival booth

Individuals Gave Their Time and Skills

Farm Creek Preserve Outdoor Classroom: Marny Smith and John Moeling, NLT Board members, gave talks in Norwalk's 4th grade classrooms to introduce the students to a salt marsh ecosystem and tidal estuary at the Farm Creek Preserve, and guided the trail walks that followed. In addition to Mary Verel, another NLT Board member, the volunteer the guides at the preserve were:

Mindy Green
Cindy Hogan
Carol Hooper
Tammis Lazarus
Poppy Luchars
Rita Phillips
Michael Richardson

Linda Scull
Pete Scull
Karin Weller
Tory Woodruff
Barbara Wright
Carol Wrigley

Stewardship Volunteers:

Carol Giunta
Roger Klein
Jeff Nixon
Phyllis Padro
Ty Tan

Operations Volunteer:

Elise Avallon

2015 Norwalk Land Trust Desk Calendar



Once again, the 2015 Norwalk Land Trust desk calendar is offered as a gift with membership donations of \$100 or more. The calendar includes photos by NLT Board member Laure Dunne who, along with her fine art and interior photography, takes photos as she explores NLT properties. According to Laure, "It is an adventure to walk through the properties during various times of the year to see and capture the fascinating seasonal changes."

The calendar is for sale for \$17 (\$2 shipping included) and makes a wonderful holiday gift, teacher appreciation gift, hostess gift or stocking stuffer! Please contact Laure directly at ldunne@photo-communications.net to place your orders.

Featured Property: White Barn



South of Cranbury Park, at the corner of Newtown Avenue and Cranbury Road, lies the 5.6 acre White Barn Nature Preserve. A joint effort by the City of Norwalk, the CT DEEP, and NLT established a 5.6 easement on the property in 2006. The remaining ten acres of meadow and woodland stretch east to the Westport city line. The entire property was formerly part of the estate of theater impresario Lucille Lortel and contains the deteriorating White Barn Theater.

A special feature of the property is a lovely pond fed by Stony Brook, a tributary of the Saugatuck River. The pond attracts migratory waterfowl and is a habitat for turtles, frogs, and freshwater fish. The pond is surrounded mostly by pine woods. Although many of the trees were hit hard by superstorm Sandy, they are recovering.

In 2013, NLT/Save Cranbury volunteers cleared much invasive euonymous (burning bush), opening the woods to sunlight and native plants. The euony-

mous was chipped and spread across the recently-removed macadam tennis court which dated back to Mrs. Lortel's time.

At this writing, the status of the other ten acres north of the easement is unclear. NLT is monitoring the situation, and updates will appear on the Web site as appropriate.



President's Letter

For openers, my sincere appreciation to my predecessor, Kathy Siever, with six long, hard, goodhearted, generous years of service to Norwalk Land Trust – and many friends made and kept.

At press time NLT has ended its contract to purchase 2 Nearwater Road. The contract would have protected the entire former trolleyway and added to the Farm Creek Preserve – but NLT faced opposition, including threats of legal action, from some members of the Pine Point Association, where boundaries of the land fell. Compromise was sought, unsuccessfully.

NLT's mission, to protect and preserve important open space in Norwalk, continues, while wetlands/saltmarsh properties and habitats will always command our efforts.

Hundreds of Norwalkers, in and out of Rowayton, supported our efforts to protect 2 Nearwater – some by donating money, others by demanding more support from City sources, and more by encouraging all of us. To you all – many thanks.

Connecticut's Governors have for years called for "open space" to constitute 21% of the state's land area. "Open space" in that definition includes schoolyards, public parks, even cemeteries. But Norwalk's "open space" aggregates just 3 1/2% of the City's area. Clean land, water and air – and the health of all species, including human – matter. Improvement is possible. We're working on it.



Sincerely,
John Moeling,
President

Oyster Shell Park Cleanup

On September 20, a beautiful Saturday, and in cooperation with the Norwalk River Watershed Association, HarborWatch, and Save the Sound, we collected a full truckload of water's-edge debris in Oyster Shell Park. The folks at the 33 North Water Street condos provided lunch and facilities. Scores of students, including Norwalk's own hard-working BuildOn high school team (below), joined members and residents in clearing the land and riverbank.

The work was NLT's part of the International Coastal Cleanup; we were among thousands doing similar jobs around the world!



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Fall 2014

Please join the Norwalk Land Trust for 2015

You are supporting continuing preservation of Norwalk open spaces! Thank you.

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

E-mail

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_____ \$30 Individual

_____ \$50 Family

_____ \$100-\$249 Supporting*

_____ \$250+ Trees and Trails*

_____ Other (all gifts appreciated)

_____ My company will match my gift

_____ Please send me milkweed seeds to plant for the monarch butterflies

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

* Memberships of \$100 or more by year-end 2014 will be recognized with a gift of the 2015 NLT desk calendar.

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

I am interested in: Volunteering _____ Property Donation _____ Other _____

Please use my e-mail address to send me electronic newsletters and other communications: Yes _____ No _____

Please clip this form and mail membership donations to: Norwalk Land Trust, P.O. Box 34, Norwalk CT 06853.