

Fall 2019

WLCT TIDINGS

PO Box 1124, Westbrook, CT 06498 (860) 399-5224 WestbrookLCT@yahoo.com



The Westbrook Land Conservation Trust Newsletter

President's Message by Tom Elliott

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The fall weather is upon us again! What a wonderful time of year to go outside and enjoy nature, go for a walk, hear the migrating birds, feel the crunch of the leaves under foot, and enjoy the beautiful fall colors.

I want to thank the Residents of Westbrook for their continued support of the Westbrook Land Conservation Trust.

A lot has happened this past year. We transferred a land locked salt marsh parcel to the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, an abutting neighbor, recognizing that they are better equipped to see to its long- term management. Thanks to a donation by the Dauch family, the Land Trust added a 11.42 acre tidal Wetlands parcel on the north side of Seaside Avenue. In July, the Land Trust hosted a "Meet Your Neighbor" event, during which we listened to our new neighbors' concerns about this land and surrounding area. We also gained five new members! Again this year, the Land Trust participated in the International Coastal Cleanup. We are looking forward to another year of service to our community.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom

Annual Meeting with Speaker

Join us on Election Night, November 5th, 2019 at 7pm
in the Mulvey Center, 2nd Floor

Featured Speaker: Jim Nordgren, JN Land Trust Services

Jim will speak about **Native Plants and Pollinator Pathways for Bees, Birds, and Beauty** in Connecticut. Jim is an environmental consultant living in Madison, CT. He holds a Master Degree in Environmental Management from the Yale School of Forestry, an MBA from the Wharton School of Finance, and a BA from St. Lawrence University.

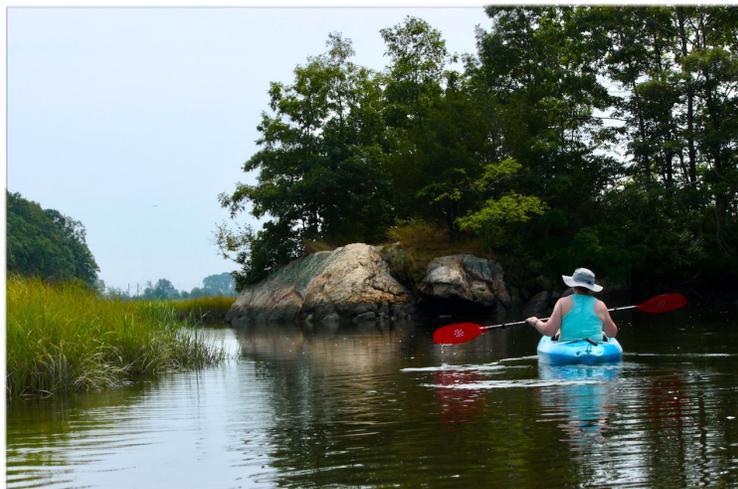
.....What are pollinator pathways?

Pollinators are birds, bees, butterflies, even bats, that visit our flora for nectar and pollen, and quite accidentally, fertilize the blossoms, so as to enable the formation of fruits, berries, nuts and vegetables. Subsequently, birds and other animals then feed on these. There are many obstacles challenging pollinators these days. Fragmentation of habitat, the use of pesticides and herbicides, invasive species, and the planting of non-native species. To promote the resurgence of healthy populations of native pollinators in Connecticut, many organizations, such as

Garden Clubs and Land Trusts in various towns, have encouraged Pollinator Gardens, with local species such as Common Milk Weed and Joe Pie Weed. Recently, these organizations have begun to link their endeavors, creating so-called Pollinator Pathways, which would particularly allow migrating species a healthy trail to follow. An article in the September addition of Connecticut Magazine details current efforts. In addition to connecting wildlife, the pathways are serving to connect organizations and causes and, especially, people from town to town statewide. The list of Pollinator Pathway Towns is growing. Perhaps Westbrook is next.



The natural world provides endless possibilities for recreation and education in our town. From the beaches to estuarial rivers, preserved forests, trails, and inland lakes and watercourses, the resources we can access next door make us question traveling elsewhere for vacations! Our natural environment here is unique in its high percentage and diversity of accessible preserved open space, nicely visible on our Town website with the **MapGeo** system - under the Open Space tab under Themes.



The many fragile ecosystems in Westbrook have been aptly preserved, balancing development, through the action of its voters, and initiatives of Town Commissions, State and Federal entities, and our Land Trust, separately as well as cooperatively. For example, this year the Land Trust conveyed to the US Fish and Wildlife Service a two acre parcel of salt marsh, acquired in 1994, that is contiguous to other Federally protected salt marsh on the Menunketesuk River. On a recent hot day in August, my wife and I embarked in kayaks to find this land. The day was all about the journey - the vistas, the exercise, and wildlife, from blue crabs to egrets to the first kingfishers I've seen in years. Why go anywhere else? Doug White, Board Member

Land Parcel Spotlight: Welcome Seaside Avenue Tidal Wetland!

The WLCT acquired nearly 11.5 acres of tidal marsh by Seaside Avenue through a donation from the heirs of Marilyn A. Dauch. The parcel stretches behind the beach cottages along Seaside Avenue between Old Pent Road and Tarpon Avenue. Marshes are an important ecological asset, providing food, habitat for rare species, nursery areas for many fish and shellfish, and a filter that absorbs nutrients.

In July of this past summer, WLCT held a 'Meet and Greet' at West Beach to introduce ourselves to our new neighbors, who share with us an interest in protecting and preserving this tidal marsh. Several people were concerned about our potential plan to build a boardwalk. We heard these concerns, and the WLCT board has agreed not to pursue this idea. We do plan to develop a management plan for our new property, and we welcome feedback from neighbors.



WLCT Mission Statement: *The Westbrook Land Conservation Trust acquires, preserves, and actively stewards its own real property, including wetlands and woodlands, to conserve natural resources and to promote the scientific, educational, and passive recreational uses of open space, all for the benefit of the public. In addition, the Trust supports the town of Westbrook in its endeavors to conserve and educate the public regarding the value of its natural environment.*

Board of Directors: • Tom Elliott, *President*; • Barbara Helander, *Vice President* • Kate Gilstad, *Treasurer* t, *properties*
• Doug White and John Cotton • Bill Neale, *Membership Chair*; • Kristin Elliott Leas, *Alternate*; • Sarah Greaves, *Counselor*

International Coastal Cleanup - 3rd Year of WLCT Participation

For the third year, the Land Trust participated in the *Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup*.

In partnership with volunteer organizations and individuals around the globe, Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup engages people to remove trash from the world's beaches and waterways, identify the sources of debris and potentially change the behaviors that cause marine debris in the first place. Ocean trash affects the health of wildlife, people, and local economies. Trash in the water and on shore can be mistaken as food by wildlife, or entangle animals with lethal consequences. Plastic in the sea is especially harmful, as it degrades very slowly, and it attracts and concentrates other pollutants from surrounding seawater, posing a contamination risk to those species that then eat it. Plastic impacts more than 800 species of marine life, and is now found in places as remote as the Arctic.

Last year, the Land Trust joined nearly 1 million volunteers all over the world in the Ocean Conservancy's 33rd annual Cleanup. Approximately 23 million pounds of trash were removed world wide. This year, we had 24 volunteers, our largest turnout ever, and we cleaned about a mile of beaches. The beaches were in pretty good shape thanks to the effort of the Council of Beaches along with the town. But we still managed to pick up a lot of trash.

Here are the tallies:

- 604 Cigarette butts
- 65 Food Wrappers
- 48 Bottle Caps
- 48 Beverage Bottles
- 37 Food utensils (plates, straws, forks)
- Fishing Gear- 42 yards of line/rope
+ 5 pieces of fishing net
- 27 Fireworks
- 5 Dead fish
- 2 Shoes (not a matching pair)
- Packaging Materials- 34
- Other misc. pieces of trash-63
- Burned wood
- Window Blind- part of 1
- Steel Cable-15 feet
- Smaller trash pieces included:
 - 27 foam pieces
 - 41 glass pieces
 - 365 plastic pieces



Tackling the problem of garbage in the ocean begins on land. Reduction in plastics use, especially of single-use disposable products, and the collection and recycling of plastics can help to reduce the amount of plastic waste that enters the ocean. Other suggestions for tackling the problems of cigarettes butts and fishing gear are needed and welcomed! We will return our data to Save the Sound, which will be part of the 2020 ICC report that comes out sometime next year.



Westbrook Land Conservation Trust Membership Form

P. O. Box 1124, Westbrook, CT 06498 (860) 399-5224 email: WestbrookLCT@yahoo.com

Names: (Please list all family members)

- _____ Individual \$15/yr
- _____ Family \$25/yr
- _____ Patron \$50/yr
- _____ Donor \$100/yr
- _____ Life Membership \$300
- _____ Additional contribution for land acquisitions

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

By providing your email address, members will receive notification of special activities including nature walks, property clean ups and a newsletter highlighting annual accomplishments.

Please make checks payable to "Westbrook Land Conservation Trust"
Dues and contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

Circle one

- Yes No Please contact me about volunteering
- Yes No Please contact me about stewarding
- Yes No Please have a director call me to discuss land acquisitions.

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Westbrook Land Conservation Trust can be proud of its 51-year history and its part in the protection of approximately 20% of Westbrook's land area as open space. Our responsibility to manage it prudently involves



insurance, the majority of the annual expense of the organization. Please join and make your contribution to the continuation of responsible stewardship.

Membership involves as little as paying the \$15 individual membership fee, but there are plenty of opportunities for more involvement including helping with the newsletter, stewarding one of our parcels or becoming aboard member. You will receive our newsletter, be invited to help with special events - including hikes, displays on the Town Green and programs with speakers - and get updates on important environmental issues such as land use and issues in Westbrook. The success of our Land Trust depends upon an active membership, for financial support, and to better understand and meet local needs for conserving and enjoying open space in Westbrook. Please show your support by returning the form below. Your support will help sustain WLCT for another 51 years!

Calendar of Events

Tuesday November 5, 7pm: Annual Meeting at Town Hall, 2nd floor

Jim Nordgren, of JN Land Trust Services. Directors meeting, followed by a talk: Native Plants and Pollinator Pathways in Connecticut

Sunday November 10: 1 - 3 pm: Properties Clean-Up

Visit some of our parcels of land! Help clean up bottles and litter. Bring work gloves and a can-do attitude! Meet at the town hall parking lot.

February: Open House with Speaker, TBA

Board Meetings are held on the 2nd Wednesday of most months at 7pm in the Town Hall. All are welcome! For questions about these activities, e-mail WestbrookLCT@yahoo.com or call 860-339-5279



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