



NORWALK LAND TRUST NEWS

Fall 2016

Discovery Day 2016

On Saturday, September 24th, Norwalk Land Trust held its sixth "Discovery Day" at Schoendorf Preserve at Farm Creek on a perfect fall day. Government dignitaries, Mayor Harry Rilling and Mrs. Rilling, Bob Duff, Terri Wood, and Tom Livingston, along with well over 500 visitors, enjoyed the festivities. The day was filled with a wide range of performances, games, and activities to entertain one and all.

The day began with a fascinating falconry show called "Skyhunters in Flight," featuring noted falconer Brian Bradley who gave informative descriptions of birds of prey. His hawk, various owls, and a soaring falcon performed for an awed, enthusiastic audience.

The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk donated a "Touch Tank" filled with sea creatures. Visitors to the booth were encouraged to touch crabs, horseshoe crabs, and various marine animals – a thrilling and educational experience!

Norwalk Land Trust displayed a table full of natural specimens from the Farm Creek property, and NLT guides conducted nature tours, pointing out the importance of preserving this particular piece of land in the local tidal estuary. Children were invited to partake in exciting scavenger hunts that required seeking out specific plants and animals as they toured the property.

Musical acts included the African drumming group, "Infinite Roots," and the audiences took part in their rousing performance. Dre Towey, well known for her award-winning "Sugar on Top" CD, sang and invited children of all ages to actively participate in singing and dancing.

Other activities included a fanciful "Fiona the Frog" beanbag toss where lucky winners claimed new Beanie Babies for a prize, a face painting booth where eager faces soon resembled various animal faces, and an art table where kids could color or make origami. Attractions also included hula hoops, burlap sacks for jumping races, and a food truck for hungry visitors. All in all, the community left with smiles (and some with paint!) on their faces after enjoying a day of games, natural fun and wonder sponsored by Fairfield County Bank and Norwalk Land Trust.



Brian Bradley with his trained falcon that is ready to perform its amazing capabilities for an eager audience.



Face painting, one of Discovery Day's many favorite events, turned happy children into very happy animals!



For more than an hour, Dre Towey and her band entertained children as well as adults with some of her favorite songs.

White Barn Cleanup

More than 20 Cranbury neighbors, White Barn Foundation members, and Norwalk Land Trust members participated in a spring cleanup on the White Barn Preserve.

Volunteers collected and filled more than 10 trash bags with litter and removed items illegally dumped on the Preserve, including an old toilet, roofing shingles, duct work, and a truck hood. Some items were difficult to remove because they were partially buried. If you observe dumping on any NLT property, please notify the Norwalk Police and inform NLT via e-mail at info@norwalklandtrust.org.

After the cleanup, many participants attended a meeting at the home of JoAnne Jackson, an NLT Board member and Save Cranbury founder. At the meeting, Waldo Mayo and Gigi Van Deckter, White Barn Foundation founders, spoke about the foundation's plans to save the theater from destruction, and to protect the property that abuts White Barn Preserve from a 15-house development.

Many thanks to all who participated!



▲ Above, Mark Graham pushes a wheelbarrow full of metal found on the property. Below, several of the many energetic participants who spent hours collecting and digging up trash from the property.

NLT's Outstanding 2016 Interns



▲ Interns Sarah Fitzgerald, Lauren Rutledge and Katrina Trentos in front of the pile of invasive Winged Euonymus they harvested in May on Hoyt Island.

For six weeks this Spring, pre-college interns Sarah (UC/Denver), Lauren (Georgetown) and Katrina (Trinity) joined every aspect of NLT's efforts. They attended school presentations and guided at Farm Creek, chopped invasives at White Barn and Big West Cedar, and worked with enthusiasm as a team. They spotted nesting bald eagles, fawns and as much other wildlife as six weeks would allow. "We are grateful for their commitment and unwavering spirit," said President John Moeling. "If anyone is going to make America greater, it is these new friends. Come back soon!"

Steward's Notes: Farm Creek

We would like to thank the Norwalk Police Department for their attention paid to after-hour "visitors" to the Schoendorf Preserve at Farm Creek during the summer. The neighbors appreciate the lower noise level and reduced disruption. And thanks to our volunteer neighbor who locks and unlocks our gate on a daily basis.

Within the Preserve, board members and volunteers removed brush and invasives from a major stand of beech trees, and tree thinning and planting perennials continued throughout the summer months. Thanks to all.

Farm Creek continues to be a favorite property and is appreciated by many Norwalk residents. Thank you to those visitors who remember to keep their dogs on leash. Otherwise you scare the other residents living in the Preserve.

With Help from Our Many Friends

To the Norwalk Land Trust 2016 Volunteers, a big THANK YOU!

Nature Guides at Farm Creek led 930 Norwalk students, 4th graders from all 12 schools on their visits to Farm Creek Preserve.

Stephanie Close	Nicole Hampton	Rita Phillips
Georgette Diamondis	Cindy Hogan	Steph Sisk
Ann Martin DeLeone	Carol Hooper	Karin Weller
Nicole Hampton	Kim Hyde	Barbara Wright
Lisa Grant	Cathy Nash	
Chuck Green	Jenny Orr	

Volunteers helped in many ways.

Ray Fagan, Jeff Ackerman, Pamela Proctor, and Ed Wright for Discovery Day

George Jackson, Ursula Catterbone, Yuan Liu, and Gary Holda at White Barn cleanups

Dan Verel most everywhere

Amy Verel and Frank Varro, Landscape Architects

Brian Bruni

Farm Creek Stewardship Team works every Friday morning.

Miki Alicastro	Carolyn Chiodo *	Marny Smith
Pippa Bailey	Carol Giunta	Dan Verel

* Carolyn is a **Master Gardner** intern from Bartlett Arboretum.

High school interns:

Wilton High School:	Darien High School:
Sarah Fitzgerald	Lauren Rutledge
Katrina Trentos	

Business and organization partners:

- **Larry Brown, Brown and Co. Tree Specialists** gave wood chips for our trails and performed skilled tree work at an economical cost.

- **The Maritime Aquarium** provided a mobile touch tank for Discovery Day.

- **The Norwalk River Watershed Association** led a Coastal Cleanup on the Norwalk River with Norwalk Land Trust.

- **Save Cranbury** joined our cleanup at White Barn Preserve.

- **West Norwalk Association's** annual spring cleanup again addressed our woodland on Nursery Street.

- **Norwalk Tree Alliance** included our booth in their annual tree festival.

- **Department of Recreation and Parks, City of Norwalk** has opened their restored Fodor Farm farmhouse, with our first-ever office.

- **Fairfield County Bank's** grant underwrote much of Discovery Day.

White Barn Major Loan Approved



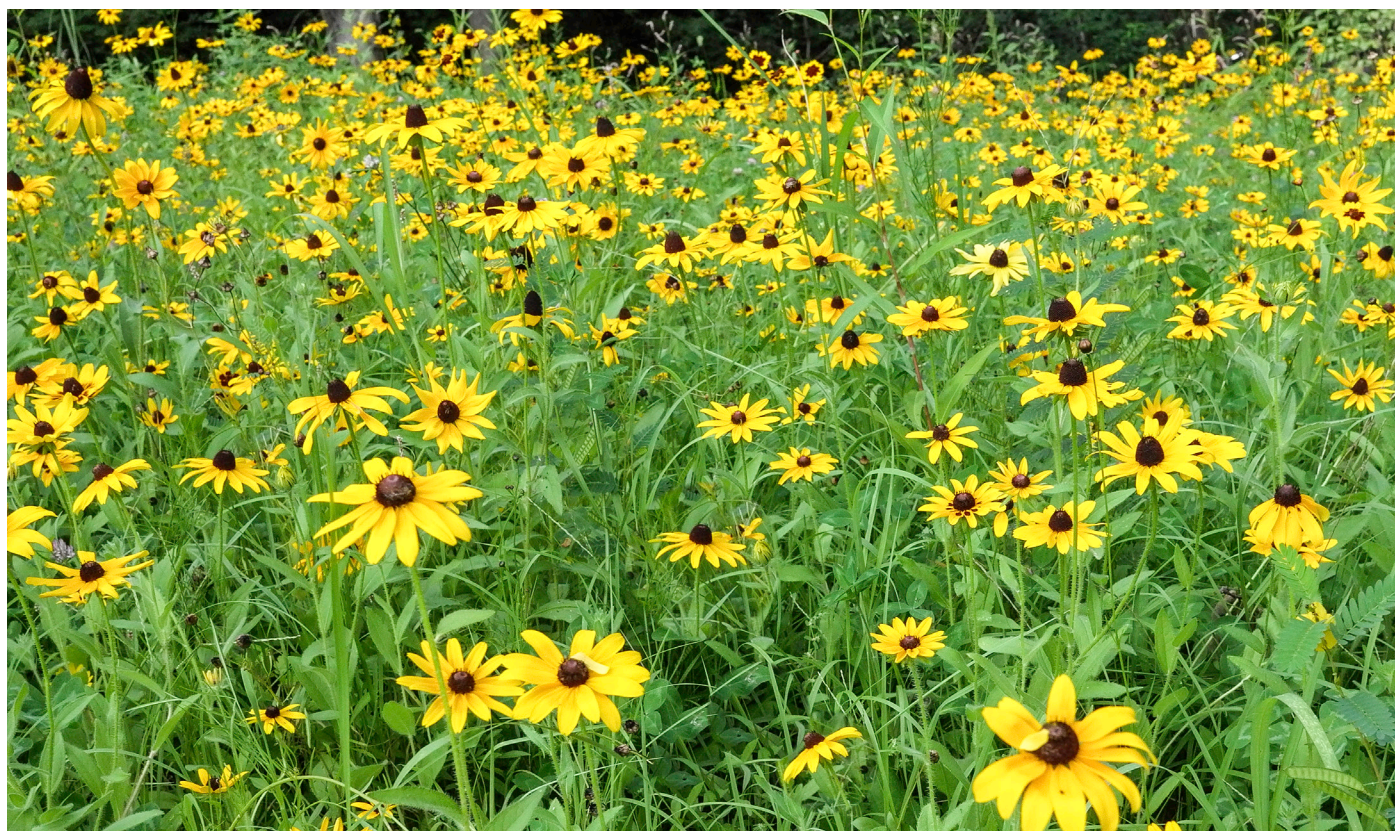
The fundraising for purchase of the White Barn property by the Lucille Lortel and Waldo Mayo White Barn Foundation has received a major boost from a \$3.4 million loan approved by The Conservation Fund. This purchase will add at least 6.5 acres to the area protected by conservation easement with Norwalk Land Trust.

"The Conservation Fund is pleased to partner with the Foundation by providing bridge financing for the purchase and conservation of a place that inspired many artists for decades. Preserving the Barn's natural setting, the tranquil pond, and forested land will once again arouse a new generation of performers."

The closing date is in February 2017. Additional funds are still needed. To pledge or donate please visit: www.whitebartheatre.org

▲ A painted turtle sunning on White Barn pond.

Featured Property: 9 Wood Acre



▲ Wildflower meadow in bloom at 9 Wood Acre.

The soft rolling meadow of Norwalk Land Trust's newest property is filled with yellow black-eyed susans, clover in purple and pink, baby blue eyes, queen anne's lace and swaying grasses. The parcel is located next to Norwalk's newest adult care facility, Brightview on New Canaan.

Brightview opened in June on the former Sons of Italy property on New Canaan Avenue not far from the Land Trust's Nursery Street protected site. A conservation easement, pursuant to the City's Plan of Conservation and Development (PCD), deeded preservation of about 1.4 acres at the site to the Land Trust's care. Our intention: build a meadow where once was a dump. Early this year the property was carefully graded and fenced, the soil aerated and an irrigation system installed.

Wildflowers and native grasses were sown in the meadow, and border evergreens, arbor vitae and rhododendrons dot the meadow edges. Thanks to Lifetime Landscaping of Norwalk for their help with the final shrubby plantings.

Native flowers provide food for bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. These sources dwindle when open space is paved, or is transmuted into lawns or non-native species gardens. While it will take at least a year for the land to fully settle, for now there is a grand late-summer show, with bees and butterflies feeding just as we hoped.

The Brightview people are helping; the complex provides water and irrigation. Concerned neighbors met with us and offered ideas and suggestions, most of which were adopted in the final planting design. Brightview's environmental site specialists met with neighbors and included all of us in their planning and planting. That's the way the PCD is supposed to work, and it has worked.

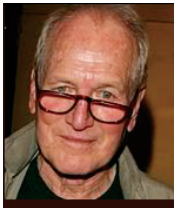
Norwalk Land Trust property #28 in the City of Norwalk becomes one more natural open space to coexist with development, one more level of habitat support, and that much more clean land and air.

President's Letter

As you read this, "Discovery Day 2016" at Schoendorf Preserve at Farm Creek will be history, and thanks are due to Board member Vickie Bennett and her team who made it a success. Our intent was to give new Norwalk residents a special introduction to the preserve and to renew our close connection to so many of you who made the preserve possible with your generous donations.

Not far away Hoyt Island, a Norwalk Land Trust property, is a major concern. While investigating the possibility of building a nature sanctuary there, scientific research uncovered hazardous materials including asbestos, and worse — small but significant PCB residue. It is not immediately dangerous, but we have to clean it up. Apart from the labor, it will cost over \$100,000 to remove those materials. A section of our website, www.norwalklandtrust.org, describes the problem and publishes the work of our remediation specialists.

So, with respect and regret for the bad luck, you'll be hearing from us as we work on funding this essential work and get back to completing the sanctuary, which safely hosts several diamondback terrapins in Village Creek. Thank you in advance.



No, Paul Newman isn't our president, I am. But the foundation he began, funded in part from profits from his food company, has for the past several years donated many thousands of dollars to Norwalk Land Trust's general fund. Those dollars have gone into acquisitions, projects, and kids' education, and I wish Mr. Newman were with us so we could say "Thanks."

Sincerely,
John Moeling,
President

Affordable Housing



▲ New construction - hoping for a tenant.

Ospreys are creatures of habit. Usually mating for life, they may live 25-30 years and often return to the same nest and renovate as required. There are reports of 70-year-old nests!

Looking for sites high above tidal marshes seems very attractive, and power line pole junctures often look perfect, but they are not. A summer storm can ignite a wood-filled nest and set fire to an osprey nest, and cause a power outage to residents. Eversource Energy designed a nesting platform that was built close to their power lines on Longshore Avenue with hopes of enticing nesting osprey to try this new housing alternative.

We all have our fingers crossed that this new housing will prove irresistible. The osprey were circling above during the building, checking out the activity, but we won't know until next spring. Norwalk Land Trust owns several parcels of land in that tidal estuary area, and we will keep you posted.

Norwalk Land Trust's New Home:

NLT is now leasing space at the restored Fodor Farm Farmhouse on Flax Hill Road. On September 6, the Board held its first meeting in the farmhouse. From now on, important docs like deeds, easements and surveys will be safely housed in our Fodor offices, and we will have space for Land Trust events – so stay tuned!



NORWALK LAND TRUST

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Norwalk Land Trust
News is published
twice a year by
Norwalk Land Trust.

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For more information and volunteer
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Fall 2016

Please Join Norwalk Land Trust for 2017

Please clip and mail to: Norwalk Land Trust, PO Box 34, Norwalk CT 06853

2017 Annual Membership

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

Name _____

Address _____

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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 use my donation for remediation
of Hoyt Island.

* _____ Do send the 2017 NLT Desk Calendar. They are
\$15, or complimentary with memberships of \$100 or more.

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

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

I am interested in: Volunteering as a nature guide _____ Volunteering for stewardship work on Norwalk Land Trust property _____
Property donation _____ Contact me _____

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