



Outdoor Classroom for Fourth Graders

Our Outdoor Classroom program is designed to complement the 4th-grade science curriculum and to teach 9- and 10-year-old students about the importance of preserving open space. From late April to early June, the program is open to all 12 Norwalk elementary schools.

There are two parts to the program. First, NLT volunteers visit each school to give a PowerPoint presentation to the students that teaches about the mission and role of the 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.

NLT began the program in 2009 with a few schools participating. It has caught on with 4th-grade teachers who recognize the value of our conservation message that dovetails with their science curriculum, and the importance of the field trip experience. In 2017, 12 Norwalk schools participated, giving over 800 students the mind-expanding, eye-opening experience of learning about and seeing first-hand the importance of open space preservation.

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.

If you would like to volunteer to guide field trips, please contact Tammis Lazarus at tammislaz@gmail.com

You are welcome to visit the preserve at Farm Creek (34 Sammis St. in Rowayton) where we have made trails allowing visitors to enjoy vistas of the estuary and the abundant wildlife there. Please come visit!



Intern Emma Kauffeld, a senior from Wilton High School, guiding a 4th grade field trip around the Farm Creek Preserve.



4th graders have a hands-on experience at the touch-me table in the barn at the Farm Creek Preserve.



Norwalk Land Trust Vice President, Midge Kennedy, with 4th grade field trippers.

Fall Equinox Celebration

On the beautiful evening of the Fall Equinox, Friday, September 22nd, Norwalk Land Trust's board gathered with Norwalk community residents at the Schoendorf Preserve at Farm Creek to celebrate the seasonal transition. The wine and cheese event was well attended by over 150 people who watched the sunset over the creek while listening to live acoustic guitar music by Matt Fernandez.

In the future, Norwalk Land Trust plans to host celebrations each year on the Friday nights closest to the seasonal Spring Equinox and the Fall Equinox as a way of thanking the many volunteers, donors, and members who support NLT's efforts. Together and as a community, we help to preserve and protect 29 open-space properties that include a total of nearly 100 acres throughout the city of Norwalk.



Above: The crowd as Vickie Bennett, NLT Event Coordinator, greets some of the guests. Below: Matt Fernandez adding his music to the festivities.

Roger Willcox Remembered



Norwalk Land Trust lost an important colleague and friend when Village Creek resident Roger Willcox died in late August at the age of 97. Roger was a member of the Board of Directors for thirty-five years, and served as our corporate secretary until he retired in 2010.

As a sailor and resident of a waterfront property in Village Creek, he knew the Connecticut coast of Long Island Sound and understood the many environmental threats coming from over-development. While serving as a board member, he oversaw many of the land acquisitions Norwalk Land Trust made in its early years.

His work life was involved with creating affordable and barrier-free cooperative housing throughout the country, and Roger was always making sure our properties were available for all to enjoy. He brought a thoughtful, meticulous analysis to every problem encountered by our all-volunteer organization, and his understanding of municipal government requirements resulted in many successful projects to save open space in Norwalk.

When he retired in 2010, a plaque was created to honor his long-time service to the Norwalk Land Trust. It faces Hoyt Island — the Land Trust's first property — and a favorite of Roger's.

Norwalk Land Trust is forever in his debt and honored to have been one of his many passions in life.

Thank you, Roger.

With Help from Our Many Friends

To the Norwalk Land Trust 2017 Volunteers, a big THANK YOU!

Nature Guides:

Twenty-four nature guides at Farm Creek led Norwalk students from 11 Norwalk elementary schools and one Roton Middle School sixth grade class on their visits to Farm Creek Preserve. Over 800 students experienced the classroom presentation and field trip.

Betsy Bain	Carol Hooper	Rita Phillips
Penny Carroll	Emily Kauffeld	Linda Scull
Ann DeLione	Grace Kaufman	Stephanie Sisk
Michael Diamond	Samantha Lamb	Marny Smith
Georgette Diamandis	Lynn Massey	Andy Thompson
Jane Graham	Kerry Mc Farlin	Lucia Thompson
Carol Guinta	John Moeling	Karin Weller
Cindy Hogan	Jenny Orr	

NLT Event Volunteers:

Jeff Ackerman and Gloria Miller - Fall Equinox Sunset Celebration.

Pamela Proctor, Dan Verel, and John Verel - Rowayton Memorial Day Parade.

Dr. Adam Whelchel - Norwalk Land Trust annual meeting

Property Stewardship:

Carolyn Chiodo	Jalna Jaeger	Kevin Tepas
Marti Coleman	Susan Lovejoy	Dan Verel
Carol Giunta	Diane Lauricella	John Verel
Gary Holda	Barbara Lencheck	
Julian Henkin	Stephanie Sisk	

High school interns:

Wilton High School:

Emily Kauffeld

Grace Kaufman

Norwalk High School:

Samantha Lamb

Business and organization supporters:

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

- **Craftworks Construction (Rolandas Reciuga, Owner)** continues to handle the Farm Creek stone repairs on the Farm Creek barn structure.

- **Lifetime Landscaping (Raffaele Cenatiempo, Owner)** volunteered help at White Barn Preserve.

- **Rowayton Market** provided various snacks for the Fall Equinox Sunset Celebration.

- **Rowayton Wine Shop** provided wine for the Fall Equinox Sunset Celebration.

- **Save Cranbury** joined the NLT trash removal and cleanup at White Barn Preserve.

- **Total Printing (David Jaycox, President)** provides quality printing and mailing services.

"Water Babies" with William Burt



▲ William Burt with one of his water baby photos.

It takes tremendous patience and talent to take a good wildlife photograph. Just ask William Burt of Lyme, CT, who delivered a wonderful photographic presentation based on his new book, "Water Babies: The Hidden Lives of Baby Wetland Birds." NLT friends gathered Fodor Farm on Flax Hill Road on July 16th and were delighted and amazed by the many birds Burt has managed to find and photograph. With multiple 'oohs' and 'ahhs' from the audience, Burt presented pairs of photographs – beautiful babies, who grow up to be odd- or strange-looking adults; or odd-looking babies who grow up to be stunningly beautiful adult birds.

It was an amazing display of photographs and the audience learned a great deal about these hard-to-photograph creatures and their habitats.

Featured Property: Yost Street Marsh



▲ Swans on the Yost Street Marsh. Inset: Osprey nest from Manressa entrance.

The tidal grasses across the road from the entrance to the Manressa Power Plant mesmerize observers when the tide is high. Dozens of birds feed there while herons and egrets stand guard, ever vigilant for their next meal. Osprey fly overhead, fish, and then head home to one of the numerous nesting sites in this area. Gulls dive for mussels and clams. Visiting birds join resident birds in these areas, and visiting marine life joins resident marine life in the form of small shellfish, fish, and crustaceans.

The nutrient content of the grasses of an estuary break down in the tides and provide sustenance far and wide in the ecosystem. Tide marsh ecosystems produce about 10 tons of organic matter per acre per year. The shoreline along south Norwalk contains many acres of tidal estuary grasses. It is a nursery and a home for many in this important Long Island Sound food chain.

In 1979 and again in 1996 a few neighbors on Yost Street donated their tidal backyards to the Norwalk Land Trust. Thanks to the Earle Hughes, John Hughes, and Frank Scallion families, we preserve three acres of this beautiful area.

Facing the estuary land across the street from the entrance of Manressa Power Plant, you will see an osprey platform, built by Eversource Energy in early fall of 2016. The platform provides a safe home for one pair of osprey. These magnificent birds are now prevalent in this area, as are egrets, blue herons, and numerous gull species. Not far away, an American eagle's nest has been spotted, and this is wonderful news for birders in the area.

Another real benefit of tidal estuaries is their ability to lessen impacts of hurricanes and storms. Fifty years ago we did not understand the importance of these marshes. Now we know that they act as giant sponges, mitigating the damage of tide water and rain. They are worthy of saving and preserving. Development has resulted in the destruction of many miles of estuary coastline and Connecticut now encourages the preservation of these buffers.

Norwalk Land Trust stewards several properties that abut Long Island Sound and encourages everyone trusted with such property to protect the natural grasses and to guard against pesticides running into such water bodies.

Letter

For openers, my sincere appreciation to John Moeling who generously served for many years as an NLT Board member and President. John is a passionate advocate for open space and tirelessly pursued the NLT mission – *balance nature and development by acquiring land and preserving it in its natural state for the benefit of Norwalk residents and future generations*. Thank you John!

Thank you all who attended the Fall Equinox celebration at the Schoendorf Preserve at Farm Creek. Our intent was to thank Norwalk residents and Farm Creek neighbors who made the preserve possible. And a special thanks goes to Board member Vickie Bennett and her team who made the event a success.

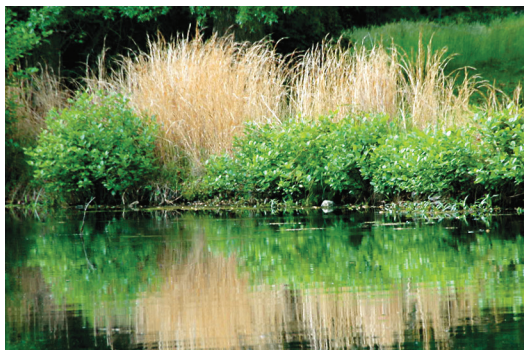
In a very exciting development, the NLT Board has unanimously voted to move forward with the purchase of the entire 15.4 acre White Barn Property. (Please see the adjacent article.) The funds to repay The Conservation Fund loan and costs must be raised to successfully purchase the property. Of course *your* donations to help repay the loan will be necessary and instrumental to ensure the protection of this open space.

The plan to clean up the contamination on Hoyt Island, scheduled for the 2017/2018 winter season, has been delayed due to a deficit in the funding needed for the cleanup. Apart from the volunteer labor, it will cost over \$100,000 to remove the contaminants on the Island. A description of the problem and the plans of our remediation specialists can be found on the NLT website, norwalklandtrust.org.

You can donate to either or both of these important projects by filling out and mailing the form on the back of this newsletter, or by visiting the NLT website, norwalklandtrust.org, where you will have an opportunity to direct your donation.

Sincerely,
Rich Baskin
Acting President

White Barn Update



NLT Goal: Purchase White Barn Property

Norwalk Land Trust is excited to announce its effort to purchase the entire 15.4 acre White Barn Property from 78 Cranbury Road II LLC. We are applying for a multi-million dollar loan from The Conservation Fund (TCF) to finance the bulk of the purchase. The funds to repay the loan and remaining expense must come from donations and grants.

The property is mostly wooded open space and wetlands, along with a 1-acre pond. It is home to extensive wildlife, including nesting owls and turtles. Over 5 acres are currently protected in perpetuity via NLT-held easement. The Cranbury neighbors are instrumental in this purchase effort. In addition, NLT is exploring joint fund-raising efforts with other organizations such as the White Barn Theater Foundation.

Your donations to help repay the TCF loan will be greatly appreciated.

Additional Donations Urgently Needed for Hoyt Island Remediation:

The plan to clean up the contamination on Hoyt Island was scheduled for the 2017/2018 winter season but delayed due to a funding shortfall. NLT is aiming to close the funding gap and conduct the cleanup next year. *Please donate to help close the funding gap for the remediation of this significant NLT property.*



NORWALK LAND TRUST

Directors

Rich Baskin
Acting President

Peggy Holton
Midge Kennedy
Charles Taney
Vice Presidents

Louise Flax
Secretary

Rich Baskin
Treasurer

D. Seeley Hubbard
President Emeritus

Connie Bennett
Victoria Bennett
Laure Dunne
Sarah Graber
Joanne Jackson
Tammis Lazarus
Mary Verel
Bob Welsh

Advisory Board

Miki Alicastro
Lawrence F. Cafero Jr.
Bob Duff
Diane Keefe
Chris Perone
Michael Poler
Amy Rowe-Smith
David Shockley
Marny Smith
Terrie Wood

For more information and volunteer opportunities, please visit our Web site:
norwalklandtrust.org

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

Laure Dunne
Editor



P.O. Box 34 Norwalk CT 06853

Non-profit Org.
US Postage Paid
Permit No 207
Norwalk CT 06856

Address Service Requested



Fall 2017

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 _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

E-mail _____

Phone _____

_____ \$30

_____ \$50

_____ \$100

_____ \$250

_____ Other (All donations appreciated!)

_____ Matching gift form enclosed

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

_____ Hoyt Island remediation

_____ White Barn Preserve purchase

_____ General purposes

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 _____

F17