



Norwalk Land Trust NEWS

Spring 2013



Hoyt Island as seen from Village Creek.



Remains and foundation of the wooden house.



Anthony Zemba, ecologist with the CT Audubon Society, NLT's partner in the habitat restoration on Hoyt Island, investigating the ruins at the island's north end.

Hoyt Island Sanctuary to Commemorate NLT 40th!

2013 is the Norwalk Land Trust's 40th Anniversary, and to celebrate, there is a year-long, cooperative effort with the Connecticut Audubon Society, to restore Hoyt Island and establish a sanctuary there for threatened species. It is a lengthy and costly project, but with your help the result will be a major contribution to the restoration of an important Long Island Sound habitat.

Hoyt is a 3-acre, wooded island at the mouth of Village Creek. For many years, until a fire consumed it, a wooden house stood near the northerly end of the island; it is now an empty foundation under a standing chimney (see photo). Plans call for the demolition of the ruined foundation and planting of native vines on the chimney to create a habitat for migratory bats. The addition of native ground cover shrubs will help attract a threatened bird species: the wood thrush.

Some readers may have had the good fortune to hear a wood thrush's flute-like call, one of the loveliest in New England. To quote Henry David Thoreau: "Whenever a man hears it he is young, and Nature is in her spring; whenever he hears it, it is a new world and a free country, and the gates of heaven are not shut against him."

Total cost of the project: about \$15,000, for surveying, transportation, materials, and an ongoing management plan prepared by Audubon. By year-end the sanctuary at Hoyt Island will be a fitting event to celebrate the Norwalk Land Trust's 40th anniversary!

Undertaking this project will be difficult and expensive, but your donations will make this important restoration happen.

Please give generously.

Changing Climate, Changing Landscape

Heather Crawford was the featured speaker at the Norwalk Land Trust Annual Meeting, January 27, 2013. She is an Environmental Educator and Chair, Madison Conservation Commission.

Highlights of Ms. Crawford's recommendations to deal with today's changing climate follow. A complete summary is at www.norwalklandtrust.org.

How do climate changes impact us?

The infrastructure of our cities is not designed for the volumes of water generated by many big storms: storm drains are too small or not separated from sanitary sewers; river banks are too low; sewage treatment ponds are too small and poorly located. Rainwater carries chemicals (fertilizers, etc.) into bodies of water.

The ocean level is rising: The Nature Conservancy has recently completed a mapping analysis of the US coastlines showing land areas that will be submerged for a given rise in the ocean level. See www.coastalresilience.org.

The eco-regions are shifting north: microorganisms once found in Long Island Sound are being replaced by different species identical to those found in Chesapeake Bay.

Both Sugar Maples and White Pines are stressed by climate change. New England berries such as cranberries, low-bush blueberries, and Concord grapes, increasingly lack the cold winters needed to set good fruit.

Tree strength decreases with the faster growth stimulated by increased CO₂, making trees vulnerable to the high winds of stronger storms.

Health risks increase as more days reach temperatures over 100 degrees. Asthma becomes more frequent. Toxic vines (such as poison ivy) become more potent.

Invasive plants (non-natives) such as bittersweet, honeysuckle, mile-a-minute vine and kudzu, grow faster in the warming climate and increased CO₂. They leaf-out earlier than native plants, choking them out. See Invasive Plant Web site: CIPWG.uconn.edu.

Things to do:

- Avoid disturbing natural areas.
- Don't purchase exotic species for your landscape designs and projects.
- Remove invasive plants and seeds.
- Use fine fescue or a fescue mix for your lawn.
- Reduce lawn area, and replace with native groundcovers or gardens.
- Choose drought tolerant tree species that do well in New Jersey now.
- Slow down storm water runoff with a rain garden. See www.nemo.uconn.edu.
- Reduce tall, top-heavy trees to make them less vulnerable to strong winds

For municipal governments:

- Identify hazards in the infrastructure and develop risk management plans to address them.
- Use the recent FEMA studies revising the flood zones to set building and zoning standards for higher water levels and more flooding.
- Department of Public Works should ensure plants used on streets will survive the climate changes. Eliminate, as much as possible, the use of salt on streets as the runoff hurts both street trees and stream vegetation.



Board members Seeley Hubbard and Marny Smith with Heather Crawford, center, at the NLT Annual Meeting.

President's Letter

I'm very proud to address you as the new President of the Norwalk Land Trust. It is humbling to follow a succession of such strong leaders, particularly Seeley Hubbard and Marny Smith, who have helped build a strong culture of community service, integrity, and a creative approach to acquiring and preserving land in its natural state.

On behalf of the NLT Board of Directors, I thank all of you who have volunteered your time and resources to help us acquire and preserve our properties.

I became an avid NLT volunteer in 2009. NLT has given me the opportunity to learn and grow in the roles of fundraiser, trail guide, event planner, recording secretary, carpenter, web master, gardener, trash-hauler and now President. I have learned that without volunteers, NLT properties would be thick with invasive growth and trash, or developed into building lots; Norwalk school children would not have experienced the wonders of a tidal estuary, or learned how owls roost in cedar groves during the full moon in October. If not for volunteers, the newsletter you are now reading, and the news in it, would not exist.

If you want to make new friends, have the rewarding experience of using your skills to further a worthy cause, and learn about conservation, please consider volunteering. We have an immediate need for volunteers for clean-up projects, as trail guides for school field trips, mailings and financial management, and records archiving.

I look forward to volunteering with you!

Sincerely,
Kathy Siever,
President



2nd Annual NLT Art Exhibit

Art works donated by artists and featuring six NLT properties will be exhibited and sold in the "Seasons of the Norwalk Land Trust" exhibit to benefit NLT and Rowayton Arts Center. The juried show will be held in the Portside Gallery at the Rowayton Arts Center June 9-30.

Artists are invited to visit the properties, and will find entry details, maps and directions at www.norwalklandtrust.org. For questions or further information, contact Marny Smith at twentyhats@optonline.net.

NLT Contributes to Science Fair Awards

Norwalk Land Trust participated in the Norwalk District Science Fair and contributed to the funding for the competition. The NLT's monetary contribution was applied to the "Norwalk Land Trust Outstanding Biology Awards." Winners included Casey Keenan and Sara Wink from Ponus, Donnell Young from Jefferson, and Olivia Bartilucci from Rowayton.

NLT also contributed to the following awards: Devon Gagstetter (1st) and Reagan Mullins (2nd) from Norwalk High for "Experimental Biology," Trinity McFadden (1st) from Ponus for "Illustrative Biology," Jordan Davey (1st) from West Rocks and Rebecca Dickson (2nd) from Ponus for "Experimental Biology."

Diane Lauricella, a NLT Board member and a judge for the fair, remarked that the experiments reflected great creativity and potential in our future scientists!



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Norwalk Land Trust

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Our Mission

The Norwalk Land Trust seeks to balance nature and development by acquiring land and preserving it in its natural state for the benefit of Norwalk residents and future generations.

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

Please join the Norwalk Land Trust for 2013.

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

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

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Norwalk Land Trust does not share member information.

All membership contributions are tax deductible.

_____ \$30 Individual

_____ \$50 Family

_____ \$100-\$249 Supporting

_____ \$250+ Trees and Trails

_____ Other

Check _____ PayPal _____ Matching Gift _____

Please use my donation for:

_____ Greatest Need

_____ Farm Creek Preserve

_____ Hoyt Island Bird Sanctuary

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

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