

North Stonington Citizens Land Alliance NewsBrief

July 2014

Preservation of North Stonington's natural resources, watercourses, open lands, as well as our scenic rural and historic sites

North Stonington is a special place and many of us know that.

We applaud the town's growing desire for its town commissions to recognize and possibly acquire a good amount of North Stonington's natural world for public recreation and passive uses.

Our hope is that any new deeds that the town signs will incorporate-----somewhere, somehow-----convincing land protection language for both the present and the future of its holdings. The past has shown that at times it has been expedient, yet not necessarily to the town's advantage, to accept the offered deed open sesame, with no strings..... as if, time to try for deed changes comes later.

Town Hall land uses, land needs, and desires are open to change over time. There will be different commission members, committees, and leaders as time passes. People change their minds. Leaders change their minds. Referenda can change what residents want. That land deed remains open to the moment and confusion.

Land trust groups like The Land Alliance must continue to be important 501-c-3 preservation players in town. North Stonington and town hall very much require this balance.

Land Alliance Receives Honorary Award From The Wood- Pawcatuck Watershed Association

What a surprise, Madeline Jeffery, as director of The Land Alliance, received a certificate of appreciation for The Land Alliance's 25 years of monitoring Wyassup, Shunock, and Green Falls, as part of URPS Watershed Watch program. Peter Stack, Deb Luz, and Sandy Neuschatz received certificates for their groups also.

The awards were part of a WPWA Annual Meeting, held on their property along The Wood River on Arcadia Road in Hope Valley. It was a joyful event, with short speeches under

a tent, and a knock-out pot luck dinner a mile long at several tables in the new set of rooms of the newly restored set of small buildings. This night was the official opening of the rebuilt and refurbished offices. A huge red ribbon with its bow across the front door was cut with many cheers in this ceremony. Pride in their place, just a few feet away from the Wood River and all the group's water events, was very evident in the crowd, and rightly so on this May night.

"The Wood-Pawcatuck encompasses a 300 square mile area of land in southern RI and southeastern CT. Its seven major drainage basins include the Queen, Wood, Chickasheen, Chipuxet, Shunock, Green Falls, and Pawcatuck Rivers, and their tributaries. It is one of the few remaining relatively pristine natural areas along the northeast corridor between New York and Boston," reads one of their brochures.

Thank you, Wood- Pawcatuck, for all the good work you continue to do within our watershed. And thank you for your considerate appreciation of our work.

All Are Welcome

Laurie Gorham to Lead 2 Mushroom Forays

#1: July 12

#2: September 27

COME RIGHT INTO THE NS WOODS AND GATHER AND LEARN ABOUT THE MANY KINDS OF MUSHROOMS THAT ABOUND

CHILDREN OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AGE AND UP ARE WELCOME, NO PETS

#1 Mushroom foray, JULY 12, SAT, 9-11:30 am,

UPPER TRAIL at Fowler Grindstone Preserve, Fowler Road, NS. No Fee. Look for sign. July 13, Sunday, Rain date., same time and place

#2 Mushroom foray, SEPT 27, SAT, 9-11:30 am,

LOWER TRAIL at Fowler Grindstone Preserve, Fowler Road, NS. No Fee. Look for sign. September 28, Sunday, Rain date, same time and place.

We asked Laurie Gorham to write a few words about herself and here they are:

"I have been a member of The CT Valley Mycological Association for 4 years. I began studying wild edibles when I was 16, following in my naturalist grandfather's foot steps. I progressed to medicinal herbs and organic gardening and studied those for 16 years and added mushrooms in the next 6 years. I work for the New London Public School System."

(Laurie is back to do mushrooms by popular request.)

Consider This: Is It Time For Land Conservation Ideology to Merge Into Land Conservation Big Business

We have heard quite often lately that the day of the one-town, all-volunteer land conservation group may well be a thing of the past.

It is more likely that the latest style is for a group to represent more than one community with paid staff (and often officers) and with a handful of national land conservation groups establishing detailed possibilities for all to follow across the states and the country.

It may be that volunteerism, in order for it to work, must perform like a corporation, like a business, both internally and outside the security of the Board Meetings. A land trust has all the makings of a business and can do it.

There can be room both for the corporate structure to raise money, hire educated staff and recruit good leaders, and learn how to raise thousands and thousands of dollars to buy an endangered piece of land and still remain faithful to the conservation ideals of yesteryear.

Do You Compost? If you do, you know that you save yourself \$\$\$ in gas runs to the land fill. because you are producing so much less waste each week by placing your fruit and vegetable wastes into the compost heap.

If you already compost, you also help the town save \$\$ from having to pay for the transport of the compostable materials out of town.

If you already compost, you are helping to slow down the use of lands across the state for land fills.

If you already compost, and the hope is that you do, you are enriching your North Stonington gardens with really good stuff!

Speaking of Land Fills, Household Hazardous Wastes in September

SCRARRA (Southeastern CT Regional Resources Recovery Authority) www.SCRARRA.org will be set up at the North Stonington Public Works Building on September 6, Saturday, 9am-1pm

It is now accepting Latex Paint for the first time, as well as many other items from our basements and bathrooms, sheds and garages, and garden sheds.

Residents' experiences taking hazardous materials to this special collection event have only good things to say!

Q: What is one of the most constant questions Land Alliance is asked?

A: Believe it or not, phone calls come in asking about how to stop someone in the neighborhood from making repeated and constant noise and is there any rule about noise. (Leaf and snow blowers come in first, SUV'S, and gun range shooting.)

Q: What is the second most constant question that comes in?

A: What can someone do to get the neighbor to turn off outside all- night spot lights on house, barn, and gates? And, as part of this conversation, do outside lights deter crime or are they only for looks?

Both concepts have great importance to what many residents equate with living in North Stonington:

Quiet and Noise Making
and
Loss of Dark Skies

It comes down to being more aware of our personal role to keep our activities less noisy and to be more considerate about when a noisy event takes place. And it comes down to each of us turning off at least one light bulb or string of light bulbs each night to help find more of that dark sky again.

We Are Asking For Your Help To Run The Land Alliance Both Outdoors and Indoors

outdoors

There are paths to clear, signs to be repaired and hung, path markers to be repainted, trimming of all kinds, invasives removal to continue, stone steps to be restored.

Guides and event leaders are always welcome to help.

indoors

Our WEB site is looking for a new person for set up and use it for the group.

Our Board is looking for interested members to join us, 3rd Monday each month at 7 pm.

There are interesting opportunities if you write, take photographs, are an artist.
Call 860 -599-5517 or email landallianceinc@gmail.com.

CT Trails Day for 2014 across the entire

state had good, sunny weather. Our walk was led by Doug Schwartz and Joe DiBrino. Here are a few notes that came in from Doug Schwartz:

“We had a pleasant hike down along the west side of Yawbux Brook in Patchaug State Forest, and returned along the east side of the brook along the Narragansett Trail. We saw fresh beaver activity from recent months, in which they had dammed a new section of the brook, expanding upon the existing flooding of the watershed at the main beaver pond, which is almost out to Cossaduck Hill Road. We also visited a very distinct bedrock rift, with associated ancient ceremonial stone constructions, including cairns, small stone chambers and horseshoes. On the way out and back we also saw several stone serpents, all constructed in a geologically jumbled environment, a couple of miles east of what was once the tectonic plate margin several hundred million years ago when Pangea was assembled.

No beavers were out during the afternoon, but we did see some nice wild blue flags (irises) blooming in the pond. There were about 20 of us, including 3 dogs, and most or all of the participants apparently survived and returned.”

Now, here is optimism!

The question asked most was, “But how big will it grow?” (this in our NS landscape of woodchucks and deer browsing)

Thank you, Wheeler Library, for letting us use one of your big display tables to offer 125 evergreen tree seedlings during Earth Day week, April 22. This year we had ordered 25 each of 5 different trees: White Pine, Norway Spruce, Colorado Spruce, Balsam Fir, and Fraser Fir. Adults and children had looked at the information on the table and chosen a tree to take home.

We order and then pick up the saplings from Eastern CT Conservation District, ECCD, a non-profit 501-c-3,

in Norwich. ECCD is one of the five CT regional watershed areas dedicated to helping towns and their citizens with their conservation needs. Whoever picks up its plant order is tempted by the many other plants for sale, which Kate Johnston of ECCD calls “impulse plant buying”. (Who can resist! That tiny bundle of 25 strawberry plants bought impulsively on that April pick-up day are thriving in a local NS garden.)

With thanks to the many wet newspaper sapling wrappers, especially Wheeler High Tyler DiBrino, your help was the best.

We have begun another year of testing certain North Stonington lakes and streams.

It is a Tri-Season plan, with 3 separate testings in 2014: May/July/October

The testing areas this year have been chosen to be:

---- (1) site @ Blue Lake, by Bill Hixson

----(3) sites @ Green Falls: @ Route 216, @ Puttker

(1) site @ Pendleton Hill Road and 216, by Joe DiBrino

There is a fee for between \$220 and \$300 which Land Alliance pays for each site as part of the URI Watershed Watch program. Records of the testing are created and kept by URI and can be found on our WEB site.

Over the years we have worked with a group of dedicated volunteers. Early on, we worked with high school students from Wheeler High and contemplate the possibility of bringing in students again.

If you or a friend is interested in joining this project, we would be happy to find a spot for you. DiBrino and Hixson have been exceptionally serious about their testing and are interested in introducing fresh volunteers. Let us know by telephone or e-mail.

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Alliance is happy to let you know that it has contributed \$1000.00 to The Avalonia Land Conservancy's effort to purchase Babcock Ridge Woodlands. The money has come from our Land Fund, which is used to purchase lands outright for conservation as Land Alliance preserves, or, in this case, to support another group's land purchase efforts in North Stonington. Our Land Fund is also used for the myriad of costs involved in holding land, such as surveys, signs, special upkeep, and repair of walls, fences, and bridges.

Avalonia's 74-acre Babcock Ridge property, with Erisman Woods abutting it to the north, connects cross Babcock Road with The Don Henne Memorial Tract of Avalonia's Shunock River Preserve. By Betty Perkowski

North Stonington Citizens Land Alliance

PO Box 327, North Stonington, CT 06359

We Invite You to Join Us!

Name-----

Address-----

Town, state, zip-----

Telephone-----

E-mail-----

Yearly Dues, \$15.00 each person-----

Open Land Fund \$-----

Contribution \$-----

NSCLA., non-profit 501-C-3 since 1987. All contributions and dues are tax deductible. We receive and appreciate matching grants.

Telephone: 860-599-5517

E-mail: landallianceinc@gmail.com

WEB www.nslanalliance.org or landalliance.org

Board Meetings are held on the third Monday of each month, September through June at the Elementary School and July and August at members' homes.

Board Members: Madeline Jeffery, William Hixson, Belinda Learned, Elizabeth Perkonski, Helen Lauterio, Julie Lanier

Members: CT Land Conservation Commission (CLCC)
Watershed Watch Program, University of Rhode Island
The Wood- Pawcatuck Watershed Association

Land Alliance Mission

...Conservation and maintenance of North Stonington's rural character

...Preservation of North Stonington's natural resources, water courses, farmlands, as well as our scenic rural and historic sites

...Care of open lands with a balance of agriculture, housing, and businesses

...land for conservation and preservation to be acquired and to be held in trust

...to be advocates for educational and scientific studies that guide and support the group's mission

**North Stonington
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Land Alliance**

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*If You Like to Forage for Wild Foods
You won't Miss Laurie Gorham's
Coming Mushroom Forays
At Fowler Grindstone Preserve
Soon!*

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