

Farmington Land Trust

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Tina Delaney, Executive Director
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Farmington Land Trust

Farmington CT

Fall 2013

Great Things are Happening!



The President's Message

Starting this past January, we undertook a review and update of our ten-year Strategic Plan. Many of you have participated in our focus groups, surveys and/or committees over the past nine months, and we thank you for your input. Throughout this process, we have learned a lot about what you think we should be doing, and what you want to get from us as a Land Trust. We were gratified to find that all of the people we talked to said that the Land Trust is viewed quite positively in town. But there are definitely things we could be doing better, including educating the public about our available trails, being a stronger advocate for open space, and more closely supervising our properties. Our final Board retreat in the strategic planning process occurred a few weeks ago where we brought together all of the excellent input and feedback from the focus groups, surveys and committees to create the final plan that will carry us through the next ten years.

committee members, Board and staff. Now that we have a clear plan, those hours will become even more valuable because they will be used more efficiently and towards a unified goal.

As always, our first jobs are to keep ourselves solvent and to perform the task of maintaining our properties for the benefit of the Town's citizens. But the Strategic Plan will help us go beyond just doing the minimum we need to get by. It will challenge us to improve, grow and continue to be relevant as a protector, educator and advocate for open space. If you want to get a copy of the Strategic Plan, please call us and we will email it to you. Even better, become involved and help us with this important work.

- Doug Pelham, President FLT



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Mark your Calendars

- **Thursday, September 26th, September Stroll on the Land, The Bull Lot, Led by Lisa Johnson, Director of the Stanley Whitman House & Milan Bull, Sr. Director of the Connecticut Audubon Society**
- **Sunday, September 29th, Look for Us at the Unionville Festival**
- **Sunday, October 20th, Come visit our Table at Hill-Stead Market Day**

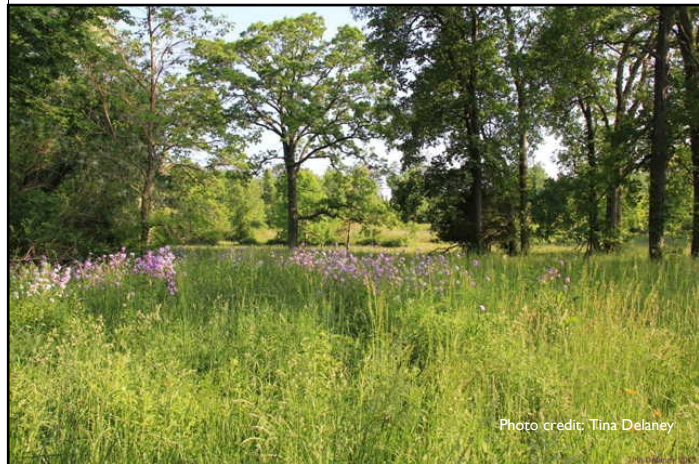
For more information, contact our office or check our page on Facebook.



Guests enjoying the Opening Reception at our First Art Exhibition, 'for the love of the land...' held at the Farmington Main Library on May 9th, 2013.

Taking Action for Wildlife

Our Land Trust is very fortunate to have a rich inventory of parcels containing a variety of habitats. They offer traprock ridgelines, old forest stands, woodland wetlands, vernal pools, riverside acreage as well as sites important to the history of Farmington. The habitats we most actively manage are our old fields and meadows, often referred to as early successional habitats. These habitats are found throughout many of our parcels including the Bancroft, Cowles, Prattling Pond, Pond Lot, Carey, Barney, Yellin, Bull Lot, Schlatter, and West District parcels.



Early successional habitats are typically transitional and require active maintenance on our part to sustain them. A large portion of our income is devoted to maintaining these habitats. Examples of early successional habitats include weedy areas, grassland, old fields, shrub thickets, and young forest. Loss of these habitats is a concern because many species that depend on these habitats are experiencing population declines across our state. This is probably due to a variety of factors but changes in land use and the vegetation succeeding toward mature forest has resulted in less available quality habitat for these species.

From an esthetic viewpoint, old fields and meadows may not be as pleasing to the eye as a manicured lawn or as botanically diverse as a formal garden; but there is no question that old fields and meadows are environmentally and ecologically more valuable to native wildlife. They are vitally important to maintaining the environmental quality of our land, air and water and serve as important buffers to minimize the impact of human activity. Without this type of management, the Land Trust's old fields and meadows would evolve into forest. In addition, non-native invasive plants (such as the Multiflora Rose and Autumn Olive) would

overtake these open areas, displacing native plants. These changes are of concern to the Land Trust because as old fields and meadows disappear from the landscape, so do the plants, birds, and other wildlife that depends on these open areas.

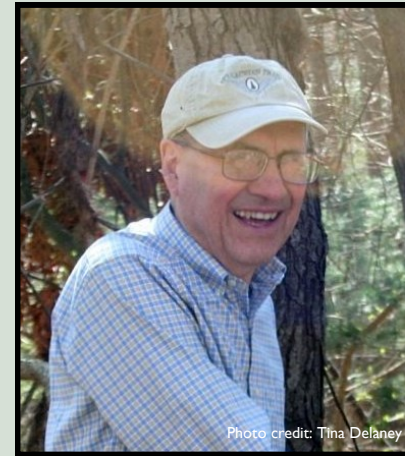
These early succession habitats are important to a variety of other wildlife such as butterflies and bees, cottontail rabbit, deer, turkey, bobcat, snakes, frogs and many other species. Shrubland birds are the focus of many management plans because 22 of the 40 birds associated with shrubland habitats are undergoing significant population declines in eastern North America.

Additionally 139 species of reptiles, amphibians, birds, and mammals either prefer (17 species) or utilize (122 species) shrub and old-field habitats. Shrubland bird species in our state include common or locally common species such as common yellowthroat, white-throated sparrow, field sparrow, Eastern towhee, American woodcock, brown thrasher, and other more rare species such as prairie warbler, golden-winged warbler, and vesper sparrow.



Warm-season grasses that were planted at the West District Wildlife Sanctuary with a 2004 WHIP (Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program) grant, have multiple benefits for wildlife - including food, nesting sites, and inter cover. Grassland birds, hawks, rabbits, and other small mammals all use this warm-season grass habitat. The Land Trust supports active stewardship of our old fields and meadows as a way to ensure these critical habitats do not disappear.

- Tina Delaney



William B. Novoa, PhD

Dr. William B. Novoa, professor emeritus in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at Central Connecticut State University and a member of the Board of Directors of the Farmington Land Trust passed away April 10, 2013 from rapidly progressive metastatic lung cancer.

Bill was born in Havana, Cuba to U.S. parents. The family moved to Florida in 1942. Bill served in the U.S. Army and was active in the Korean War. He earned a B.S. in chemistry from the University of Florida and a PhD in biochemistry from Duke University. He did postdoctoral research with Nobel Prize recipients Edwin Krebs and Edmond Fisher. He taught Biochemistry at Kansas University Medical Center for eight years prior to joining the faculty at CCSU in 1970.

Bill had the reputation of being a wonderful teacher and student mentor. In retirement, Bill became an avid hiker and led many hikes for the CT Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club. He hiked the Appalachian Trail from Maine to Georgia, the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail and all the White Mountain 4Ks. He was a member of the CT 400 Club. Bill was also a master photographer of butterflies, flowers and mountain landscapes. In addition, he was an accomplished classical pianist.

Bill served on the Board of Directors of the Land Trust from 2011 to 2013. He was always willing to lead a hike on Land Trust parcels and had extensive knowledge of the properties' various habitats. With all his accomplishments in life, Bill Novoa considered his service on the Land Trust Board the "highlight of his life's work." He is greatly missed by his colleagues on the Board and by his many friends.

Thank you to our Newest Members and Donors:

Guardian (\$5000 and up) - Estate of Bill Novoa

Protector (\$1000-\$4999) - Mary Crary, Bruce Fernandez, Sallie Norris, Jack Reed, Christopher & Ann Gerard (Sumner Gerard Foundation), Jack & Mary Grace Reed

Forester (\$500- \$999) - Duffield Ashmead, Philip Brencher, Courtenay Crocker, Charlie & Joan Leach

Naturalist (\$250- \$499) - Dr Eric Graydon, JP & Marie Claire Van Rooy, John & Dianne Vibert

Steward (\$100- \$249) - Rich & Toni Berlandy, Sheldon Crosby & Hilary Donald, Shawn Curtis, Eleanor Elkins, Mike & Jean Festa, Don Hammerberg & Kaye Miller Browne, Nina Hayes, Todd & Happy Mauck, Dick & Bea Stockwell, Peter Van Beckum & Cindy Stanley

Members (up to \$99) - Karen Binney, Bruce & Susan Chudwick, Evan Cowles & Brie Quinby, Richard & Lynne Creed, Michael & MaryAnn Fowler, Paul & Marilyn Ingram, Jay & Jean Glasel, Neil Kelsey, Ann Leventhal, Jeffrey Moores, Michael Murrihy, George & Carol Reider Jr., Jennifer Villa

A Thank-you to these Generous Local Companies and Organizations who support us with their Donations and Services: Briarwood Printing, Del Conte, Hyde, Anello & Schuch PC, Farmington Bank Foundation, Farmington Boy Scout Troop #68, Farmington Club, Farmington Garden Club, Intent Design Group, Law Offices of David Morrissey, Meadow, Paneloc Corporation, Unico Farmington Chapter, Wavecrest Technology LLC

A Special Thank-you to the Town of Farmington for its ongoing support!

The Farmington Land Trust - CCSU Connection

The Executive Director of the Farmington Land Trust and a biology professor from Central Connecticut State University joined forces on Monday, April 15th, to present an outdoor laboratory experience for a class of introductory ecology students. The Carey and Barney pastures off Mountain Spring Road served as the study site. Introductory remarks by Tina Delaney, Executive Director of the Land Trust and CCSU Ecology Professor Dr. Barbara Nicholson preceded an examination of the properties.

Ms. Delaney provided the class with a general history of land trusts and a specific history of the Farmington Land Trust. She stressed the importance of protecting open spaces in order to provide natural habitats for plant and animal life and for its educational, esthetic and recreational value to the townspeople. In addition, Ms. Delaney described the role and the need for land trust stewards and land trust members not only for the present time but for the future in order to carry forth the maintenance of town owned and land trust owned viable open spaces.

Following the introductory comments, the Carey and Barney parcels were examined with along-the-way instruction provided by Ms. Delaney and Dr. Nicholson. A brief history of the early use of the land was accompanied by an on-the-trail analysis of the various

habitats which ranged from open pasture and wet meadow, to deciduous forest and ridge and slope environments. The students were rewarded at the end of the exercise with the panoramic view at the top of the trail.

Throughout the laboratory exercise, first hand identification of invasive plants and the methods of their eradication were presented along with the identification of native wild flowers and springtime plants used as food sources for resident and transient wildlife. The abodes of various animals and evidences of their existence were also pointed out.

Combined Farmington Land Trust and CCSU Biology Department future class instruction and research endeavors are either already in place or in development stages.

- David DeNuccio



Photo credit: Tina Delaney

Getting Down and Dirty!

In keeping with the mission of the Land Trust to protect its acquired open spaces, the Land Trust and CCSU Biology Department faculty and students are continuing the efforts begun in April to examine the biotic status of the Barney and Carey pastures. Under the direction and supervision of CCSU's Dr. Barbara Nicholson and Land Trust Executive Director Tina Delaney, students in one of Dr. Nicholson's introductory ecology classes identified the various habitats at the properties along with preliminary observations of the positive and negative conditions that were present.

This fall, Dr. Nicholson has scheduled upper level ecology students to determine the species, ages and health of the trees and the types, moisture content and fertility of the soil in addition to the locations and effects of movement of water along the properties. Excluding unforeseen inhibitory conditions, i.e. unfavorable weather, the work to be accomplished will be spread over approximately four weeks and will involve the collection and laboratory analyses of tree and soil

core samples and the identification of leaf and twig samples from strategically selected areas. The species and ages of trees will be determined and the soil samples will be tested to determine pH, texture and available nutrient content. In addition to the positive benefits to the Farmington community and the Land Trust, the CCSU students are provided with hands on, real world research experiences to fortify their scientific backgrounds and increase their appreciation of the requirements involved in order to preserve the integrity of open spaces.

The resultant research reports will be presented in part at a seminar to be held in late October at CCSU. The presentations will include a mapping of the properties and future maintenance requirements such as a screening for potential species replacements.

The Land Trust is especially grateful to the continuing generosity of the Farmington Chapter of UNICO which provided grant money to help support these studies.

- David DeNuccio



Photo credit: Tina Delaney



Photo credit: Tina Delaney

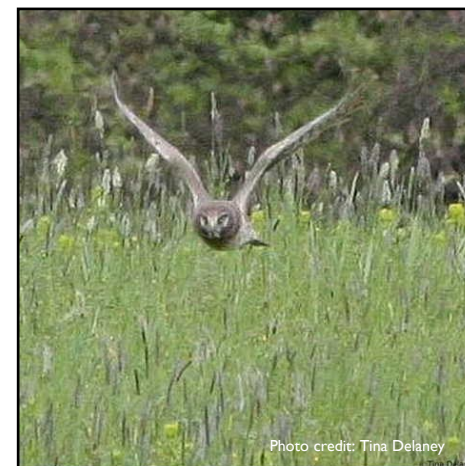


Photo credit: Tina Delaney



Photo credit: Tina Delaney



Photo credit: Tina Delaney



Photo credit: Tina Delaney

Clockwise, from upper left:: Carey Run in Barn, New England Rabbit, Eastern Towhee, Fox Den, Eastern Kingbird, Northern Harrier,

An Introduction to Diamond Glen Brook - Mason-McCook Memorial Woods

The article below on the Mason-McCook/Diamond Glen parcel, written by Paul Ingram, is the second entry in our ongoing series of articles submitted by land donors relating their family relationship to the history of the land.

Paul’s family had owned this land since 1908 when Henry Hall Mason purchased it. However, the history of this area goes back to the beginning of Farmington and played a major role in the town’s early

development. As you will see in the article this was the second time his family has preserved this beautiful parcel for all of us to enjoy.

The Land Trust would be interested in hearing from others who may have ties to or memories of any of our properties they would like to share with our membership.

- Michael Delaney

Mason-McCook Memorial Woods



Photo credit: Tina Delaney

The woods south of Diamond Glen Road comprise almost 10 acres of woodland (hemlock, oak, ash, birch, maple and others). The land also includes trap rock ledges and a glen (ravine), and contains or borders on a brook. At various times throughout Farmington’s history, the brook has been known as the Saw Mill Brook, Fulling Mill Brook, Gin Still Mill Brook and, most recently, as Diamond Glen Brook.

From the town’s founding days until the early 19th century, much of Farmington’s industry was located along this brook. The first mill (probably a saw mill) was sold in the 1650s and became the only grist mill in town until about 1682. 1712 saw the construction of a fulling mill, and at some point a Dyer lived nearby.

In 1778 the town approved construction of a dam and a

grist mill, stonework some of which can still be seen along the brook. Below the mill’s tail race, another fulling mill operated until 1807, and a blacksmith had a shop in the vicinity.

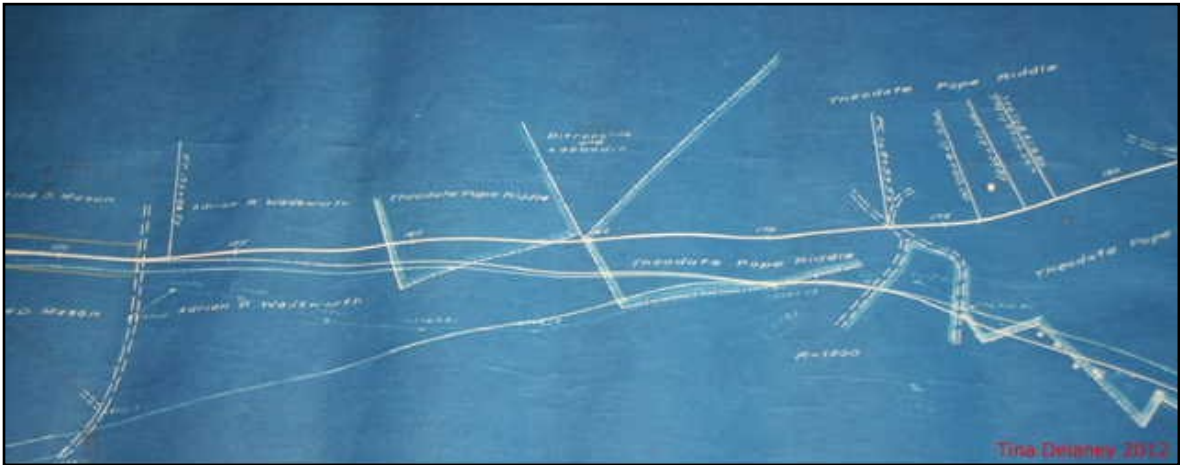
In the early 1800s the town’s industries moved to Unionville where water power was more abundant, but for many years the first mill building housed a gin still which provided spirits to the local taverns. By 1864, the property was known as the “Old Still Place.”.

In 1908 Henry Hall Mason, a naturalist among other things (cabinet maker, architect and builder of St James Episcopal Church), acquired the land and the still house. Because of his wisdom and foresight, the land along Diamond Glen Brook remained intact and undeveloped.

(cont.)



Photo credit: Tina Delaney



Tina Delaney 2012

In 1936 the Connecticut Highway Department proposed to build Route 6 from Bristol to West Hartford. The Survey Route ran up Diamond Glen, across the mill ponds and over Hill-Stead land to join Route 4 at the Willows.

In addition to destroying Diamond Glen and surrounding areas, it would have traversed a substantial part of the Pope-Riddle estate. Fortunately, Otilie Dickson Mason (HH Mason’s widow) knew Theodate Pope Riddle (both were graduates of Miss Porter’s School) and they both shared the desire to preserve their property and protect their interests.

Together they enlisted the help of Anson T. McCook, a well-known Hartford Attorney (who had recently won his own case against the highway department), to challenge the state’s claim of eminent domain. He prevailed, the court found for the plaintiffs and the Highway Department relocated Route 6 farther south.



Photo credit: Tina Delaney

So thanks to Henry and Otilie Mason and Anson McCook, part of Farmington’s history escaped the uncaring cultures of the state, and the woods along Diamond Glen remain much as they had been in years past. Hence the name - Mason-McCook Memorial Woods.

Respectfully submitted - Paul Ingram



Photo credit: Tina Delaney



Photo credit: Tina Delaney

Paul Ingram and Doug Pelham walk Diamond Glen - Mason McCook Parcel