



The Warren Conservator

Fall 2021

**WARREN
LAND TRUST**



Warren Land Trust Trails:

Coords Preserve:

Angevine Road

IMPORTANT UPDATE - The trail is flooded 1/3 mile in from Angevine Road - it is impassible with no viable work-around. You can access the far side of the trail and its connection to the blue-blazed Mattatuck Trail from the Wyantnock State Forest parking area on Rte. 341.

Dorothy Maier Preserve:

Sackett Hill Road

1.5-mile loop. Moderate terrain with seasonal streams and vernal pools. Mountain laurel stand at the summit. Look for the old saw embedded in the tree on the way down!

Eel Pond Preserve:

Kent Road/Rte. 341

Wheelchair-accessible viewing platform - see waterfowl and other wildlife at this scenic wetland preserve. Perfect spot for a quiet coffee break (please take your trash out with you).

Skidmore Preserve:

Blue Swamp Road

Easy-to-moderate 1.25 mile loop with short spur trail. Secluded preserve with stream, scenic and substantial rock outcroppings, and pine grove.

Strong Preserve:

Above All Road

Easy-to-moderate 1-mile loop on land donated by one of Warren's oldest families. Winding stone walls throughout; chimney ruin off the trail. Nearby is Above All State Park - the (not maintained) site of a Cold War military radar installation.

President's Letter



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

I am so happy to report that we have been able to resume in-person events in recent months... and they were every bit as gratifying and enjoyable as we knew they would be.

We are always proud to work for the benefit of our community, environmentally (by conserving forests and watershed) agriculturally (by protecting farmland), and recreationally (by building trails on our preserves). But it is our programs that allow us to engage directly with you, sharing first-hand the importance of our land conservation mission. And there is no better way to get to know neighbors and make new friends than being out in the woods and fields of our beautiful town.

We annually organize a regular set of events • Town Clean-up around Earth Day in April • CT Trails Day Hike in June • Housatonic Heritage Walk in September • Fall Festival in October • Holiday on the Hill in December. These are supplemented with other popular gatherings, such as volunteer trail-clearing sessions, donor thank-you events and other occasions (like 2019's 30th anniversary picnic and next year's planned Harvest Moon Walk). All of these activities not only showcase our work, but they weave the land trust into the fabric of the community, in part because in a small town like Warren, partnering with local and regional organizations is a great way to get things done while building and strengthening valuable and rewarding connections.

Take our Fall Housatonic Heritage Walk, for example. Housatonic Heritage, a regional organization seeking to promote the historical, cultural, and natural resources of the Upper Housatonic River Valley, provides a loose organizational framework. We partner with the Warren Historical Society (WHS) annually to determine a site and theme for a walk in Warren. This year, the event (about which you can read more about on page 4) was generously hosted by longtime supporters and conservation easement donors on their property. WHS Curator Heather Forstmann provided her expertise in local history, our host pointed out natural and environmental points of interest, and a board member who is a skilled amateur archaeologist appealed to the CT State Archaeologist to join us. Similar partnerships underlie our other events.

It takes a village, but we wouldn't have it any other way. So if you're interested in helping organize any of our existing programs, or have ideas for something new, in line with our land conservation mission, please get in touch and let us know!

Sincerely,

Rebecca Neary

CT Trails Day 2021 Draws Hikers to Skidmore Preserve

June's CT Trails Day Hike marked our first community event since the pandemic began, and what a perfect day it was to reconvene with our friends and supporters! The Skidmore Preserve is tucked away on the Litchfield border – a hidden gem, remote even for Warren! Thanks to dedicated WLT Board members and volunteers, and community generosity during the April 2021 "Give Local!" online fundraising campaign, it now sports new trails and a small parking area off Blue Swamp Road.



Top: CT Trails Day Hikers.

Bottom: A Beautiful Scene In Skidmore Preserve

The preserve features an exceptional landscape with a stream running between mossy banks, impressive table rock formations, large Eastern white pine groves, a great variety of wildlife habitat types and diverse flora and fauna. We hope you'll check it out for yourself!



Curious About Preserving Land Through Bequest?

If you are wondering how to conserve land through a bequest, here is some helpful information courtesy of the CT Land Conservation Council (www.ctconservation.org).

There are many ways to conserve your land for the enjoyment of future generations. Every family is different, as is every piece of land. Your land conservation plan should reflect your family's unique values, desires, and financial situation. That's why there are so many conservation options for you to choose from. Options to donate land by bequest include the following:

Life Estate, with Conveyance of a Remainder Interest

Conveyance of land in a way that allows you and other named persons (called life tenants) to continue living or using the land during your and their lifetimes. You assume full responsibility for taxes and maintenance during your life, but after your passing, the land trust takes over the full title of the property. This option is beneficial because it:

- Allows you and other life tenants to enjoy the land for a lifetime
- May qualify for a charitable gift income tax deduction
- Can be joined with a conservation easement donated to another organization

Donation of Title or Conservation Easement by Will

You retain title to your land during your lifetime and then transfer it to a land trust through your will (this is termed as a "devise" or a "donation by devise"). This option is beneficial because it:

- Allows you to use your land as is for the remainder of your life
- May protect your land from being taxed as part of your estate

Donation with Lifetime Income

Donation of your land, stocks, or other assets to a land trust in exchange for a life income agreement (also known as an annuity). This option is most useful for highly appreciated land in which the sale would incur high capital gains tax. This option is beneficial because it:

- Provides you with a stable source of income
- May qualify for a charitable gift annuity

Questions? Contact us at info@warrenlandtrust.org.

History Mystery in the Woods: Housatonic Heritage Hike

2021's Housatonic Heritage Walk drew an enthusiastic crowd of nature-lovers and history buffs to explore the woods behind the home of gracious hosts Adil and Zarinna Mulla. Organized jointly by the Warren Historical Society and the Warren Land Trust, we were joined by CT State Archaeologist Sarah Sportman. An expert amateur forester, Adil led the group along woodland trails, pointing out areas of natural and historical interest. The walk culminated with a visit to a homesite including stone-walled areas that may have been used for grazing, multiple well sites, and a stone foundation. Dr. Sportman was able to venture educated guesses about the site's vintage (18th century) and function, but hopes to return to do more research. Historical Society Curator Heather Forstmann undertook deed research into ownership of the property in the decades and centuries prior to its acquisition by the Mullas. Hungry hikers enjoyed a delicious lunch prepared by Zarinna Mulla and continued to speculate on the property's "history mystery" and comment on its many natural attractions.



Right: Host Adil Mulla in foreground demonstrating the depth of a well; Historical Society Curator Heather Forstmann in hat with notebook.

Above: Housatonic Heritage Hike at Mullas'.

Left: Stone Foundation at the Homesite.

Warren Land Trust Board Members

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Warren Land Trust Mission Statement

The Warren Land Trust is a conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of the rural character of Warren. Its mission is to preserve farmland, open space, natural and endangered resources such as wetlands, forests and wildlife habitats, to encourage outright gifting of land for permanent protection and the use of conservation easements to preserve open space.

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Clearing the Trails

Heading into the colder weather, we will have to see what Mother Nature and Old Man Winter have in store for our preserves and trails. But come spring, we'll be headed into the woods to clean it all up! Like to be outdoors? Enjoy wielding a saw or a pair of loppers? Come join us! Email us at info@warrenlandtrust.org to be added to our trail clean-up crew, and we'll let you know when we are planning a clean-up. Meanwhile, if you're out on the trail and see trees or branches down, or litter or other debris, please let us know! Feel free to move small branches and debris from the trail, but save the tools for our official outings!



Volunteers on a trail clearing mission!

The Birds, the Bees, and Your Unraked Leaves

You've seen the headlines: "A Sharp Spike in Honeybee Deaths Deepens a Worrisome Trend" (NYT, 2015), "The Insect Apocalypse: Our World Will Grind to a Halt Without Them" (The Guardian, 2021), "Ivory-billed Woodpecker, 22 Other Species Declared Extinct by US Government" (CBS News, 2021). Even with some debate around numbers and causes, the trend is alarming, and it's hard to know how to make a difference. But how about a headline like this that addresses the issue?: "Leave the leaves: How doing less yard work helps the environment" (Christian Science Monitor, 2015). How's that for a win-win?



Moderate levels of tree leaves can easily be mulched into a lawn canopy, as shown here. Photo: Sam Bauer

You might already guess that putting leaves in plastic bags to be sent to a landfill isn't an environmentally friendly option: The EPA estimates that nearly 11 million tons of yard waste ended up in landfills, where it takes many years to decompose, generating methane along the way. And you could assume that blowing leaves into storm drains or narrow watercourses like streams can clog them. Disposing of them in the lake is not a good solution either. A lake can handle leaves that regularly blow into it, but in large quantities, decomposing leaves generate phosphorus and other fertilizer-like compounds that can negatively affect a waterbody's environmental health.

So pile those leaves in the woods or compost them if you like. But you might also consider leaving at least some of them on your lawn, maybe to mow/mulch them in place. Not only would you save time that you could then use to enjoy, say, a hike in the woods or a bike ride through the countryside, but you would also be doing something good for your lawn and the environment alike, notably those endangered pollinators and beneficial insects. Environmental organizations and lawn care companies agree that some leaf decomposition will help fertilize your lawn, while affording cover and protection for beneficial insects, which in turn provide food for local avian life and migrating birds.

Want to learn more? Check out the following resources:

National Wildlife Foundation: <https://blog.nwf.org/2014/11/what-to-do-with-fallen-leaves/>

The University of Minnesota: <https://turf.umn.edu/news/good-question-do-you-really-need-rake-all-those-leaves>

The WLT currently holds nearly 800 acres under permanent protection.

IF YOU AREN'T A MEMBER OF THE WARREN LAND TRUST, WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN NOW!!

Becoming a Member of The Warren Land Trust is easy. To join or donate online, visit www.warrenlandtrust.org or cut off this page and send it to our mailing address below, along with your check. We will send you a receipt with our thanks for your generous, 100% tax deductible contribution. Please include your name, address and email so that we may include you in our email updates. Choose the type of membership you would like:

| | | | |
|---|---------|--|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Guardian | \$5,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Caretaker | \$ 300 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Grantor | \$2,500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Land Protector | \$ 100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Steward | \$1,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership | \$ 25 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land Conservator | \$ 500 | <input type="checkbox"/> Other | \$ _____ |

Email: _____

Please make your check payable to: The Warren Land Trust
 MAIL THIS FORM AND CHECK TO: The Warren Land Trust
 50 Cemetery Road, Warren, CT 06754

To join or donate online, visit www.warrenlandtrust.org

Please make any necessary corrections to your name and address on the mailing panel and submit to the WLT.

Joyce Keith and the Keith Family Preserve

We were saddened to learn in October 2020 that Joyce Keith, a beloved mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother, and an active citizen who served the Town of Warren, the Volunteer Fire Department, and the Warren Congregational Church, had passed away. We were honored to learn shortly afterward that Mrs. Keith – who loved Warren's rural character and open spaces – had left to the Warren Land Trust some 64 beautiful wooded acres off of Keith Road, abutting open space owned by the Town of Warren. The Keith Family Preserve will now be protected in perpetuity as a site for enjoying the beauty and peace of nature – a lasting family legacy that will provide enjoyment to so many. Our sincerest thanks to Joyce Keith and the Keith Family!



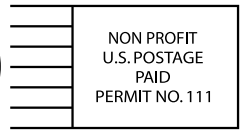
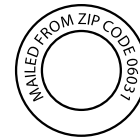
The Warren Conservator



50 Cemetery Road
Warren, CT 06754

Email: info@warrenlandtrust.org

www.warrenlandtrust.org



NOTICE of ANNUAL MEETING

The Warren Land Trust's 2021 Annual Meeting will take place on **Saturday, November 20, at 10am in the Warren Town Hall Lower Level Conference Room**. We encourage all members to attend, as well as anyone interested in what we've been up to over the course of the past year, and what our plans for 2022 include (hint: a lot!). The business meeting will be followed by a brief program and, weather permitting, a hike on one of our preserves. Details forthcoming on our website and in email blasts. Refreshments provided. **We hope to see you there!**

As events approach, check our website for the most up-to-date information www.warrenlandtrust.org and be sure you're signed up to receive our email blasts.

www.warrenlandtrust.org

2021-2022 Events Calendar

Please check our website regularly and join our email list for updated information and added events.

- **2021 Annual Meeting, Program, and Hike:** November 20, 10am
Town Hall Lower Level Conference Room
- **Holiday on the Hill:** December 4, 5pm
- **"Spring Cleaning" Volunteer Trail Maintenance:** late March/early April
- **Earth Day Town Clean-Up and Program:** April 23, 10am
- **CT Trails Day Hike:** June 4, 10am, location TBD
- **Angevine Farm Half-Marathon Trail Race:** Summer date TBD
- **Housatonic Heritage Walk:** September date TBD

Want all the details? Make sure we have your **email address** so you can receive our email blasts – we will only contact you when we have news to report! Just reach out to us at info@warrenlandtrust.org

For up to date information: www.warrenlandtrust.org

We Want You! (Yes, you!)

Do you love spending time in the great outdoors? Are you passionate about preserving open space, forests, fields, and farmland? If so, why not get more involved with WLT? We welcome all new members (family memberships begin at \$25), and are always looking for volunteers and future leaders. Learn more by attending our annual meeting (see notice in this newsletter), checking out our website, or by emailing us at info@warrenlandtrust.org. We would love to have you join us!



Do Your Holiday Shopping with the Warren Land Trust!

Looking for something unique and meaningful for the person who has everything? Want to support a local organization while treating a loved one to a great gift? Want to visibly share your support for WLT and its mission? Do it with some stylish WLT swag! We have cozy zip-up sweatshirts, tech t-shirts for working out, hats, t-shirts, tote bags, water bottles and mugs, all with our distinctive WLT logo – perfect for holiday giving or for treating yourself. You can find our logo merchandise at the Warren General Store, select items at the Hopkins Vineyard, and...very soon at our online store! Look for the online store at www.warrenlandtrust.org to go live just in time for holiday shopping. And did you know that you can also make a donation to WLT in honor or celebration of a friend or loved one? Just make your donation (online or by sending a check to 50 Cemetery Road, Warren CT 06754) and let us know with a note or by email at info@warrenlandtrust.org that your donation is a gift, and for whom. Provide us with their contact information, and we can send a card to notify the recipient of your generous gift in their name.