



The Lyme Land Conservation Trust

2018 Spring Newsletter

The New Thach Preserve: A Beautiful Spot for a Picnic

Anthony Irving
Land Trust Director

Thanks to a generous contribution from a lead donor, and additional funding from local community members, the Lyme Land Trust was recently able to purchase a 10.9-acre building lot off Brush Hill Road from Evelyn Foster. Evelyn was delighted by the idea of seeing the land protected in perpetuity

as open space. With this purchase, the former four-lot, 91-acre, subdivision now supports just three homes, with over 65 acres in protected open space.

The credit for this preservation effort goes in large part to Jim and Margaret Thach, who placed a conservation easement on part of the subdivision when they originally divided the property. In the ensuing years, neighbors conserved additional acreage, greatly expanding the overall protected land area. The Land Trust will name this new open space the Thach Preserve in honor of Jim and Margaret.

Jim Thach was a strong advocate for open space conservation in Lyme and was a primary mover in the town's acquisition of the 250-acre Mount Archer Woods Preserve.

From a conservation perspective, the value of any property is based not simply on size and quality of habitat. Its location within the larger landscape is also important. As shown on the map, this newest acquisition lies nearly 2,000 feet from Brush Hill Road. A house built here would fragment the surrounding woodland and its habitat,



Photo: Anthony Irving

**The outcrop that overlooks the beaver pond.
Picnic anyone?**

particularly because it's close to a beaver pond and extensive wetlands to the south. This system forms the headwaters of a small watershed draining north to Roaring Brook.

The heart of the property—at the top of an outcrop overlooking the beaver pond and the surrounding woodlands—is beautiful, remote, quiet, and easily enjoyed, the perfect spot for a picnic.

A future dedication for the Thach Preserve is planned.

See map of the Thach property on page 4.

Fan Favorite!



Ashley Holt's photo "Phragmites on the Shore" was voted Fan Favorite by the attendees at the 12th Annual Land Trusts Photo Contest reception.
See story on page 5.

In This Issue:

- Canine Adventures in Land Trust Preserves
- Brockway-Hawthorne Preserve: An Intimate History
- Turtles
- Land Trusts Photo Contest Winners
- The Thach Preserve: The Land Trust's Newest Acquisition
-

Turtles in Connecticut: Losing the Race?

By Douglas Nielson
Amateur Naturalist

When I was a kid, I loved reading *Aesop's Fables*; parables about animals and forces of nature. I particularly liked "The Tortoise and the Hare," in which the slower tortoise beats the hare in a footrace because he's persistent and doesn't stop to rest.

Turtles have been around since dinosaurs first appeared about 220 million years ago, but they're losing the race against a newer opponent: man. Worldwide, turtles are endangered, threatened or of special concern. Nine of Connecticut's twelve native species, including all of the sea turtles, fall into one of these categories.

The chief culprits: climate change; habitat loss; overharvesting for food, traditional medicine and pets; being killed by cars, farm and fishing equipment, lawn mowers, motor boats, jet skis, and pollution; predation, especially of eggs and hatchlings, often by dogs; invasive species and diseases; and loss of unique genetic makeup due to hybridization.

The United States has more native turtle species than any other country, and Lyme's rural quality and variety of habitats are ideal for them. The most common turtles in this area are the eastern painted turtle which can often be seen in ponds basking in the sun, the snapping turtle, which is more often found in deeper water, the eastern box turtle, which prefers moist forestland, and the wood turtle, which favors upland habitats.

Turtles can live up to 40 or 50 years, the eastern box turtle (and possibly the wood turtle) up to 100 years, but it takes a while for them to reach sexual maturity—more than ten years for some species—and only a fraction of hatchlings survive to reach adulthood.

Turtles have a very strong homing instinct and, much like us, have a very specific idea of home. That's why it's important to rehome a turtle to the proper spot. If released elsewhere, it might cross and recross roads—risking being crushed—or starve to death.

As we head into egg-laying season, be aware of these do's and don'ts on how best to protect these beautiful animals: Never take a wild turtle from the wild. It requires a complex diet, can be difficult to care for, and there's a good chance it will outlive you *if* it survives. You will also be removing a breeding animal from the population. If you must have a turtle as a pet, there are many available for adoption. (See information in Resources section.)

Never release pet turtles into the wild. They probably won't survive, and they can introduce diseases that can wipe out native populations in days.

Never disturb nesting turtles or nests. If you find eggs that can't remain where they are, contact a turtle rehabilitator who can remove the eggs safely and incubate them. If you must move them, carefully maintain their orientation (don't turn them upside down) and place them in a box with some of the earth you found them in.

As you drive, do look out for turtles crossing the road. (They might be hard to see). If you can do so safely, stop and move the turtle to the side it was heading toward. Don't pick it up by the tail—that can injure it—but with your hands between the front and back legs, supporting the underside of the shell. Don't move it to a spot far away, even if it might be safer.

Don't attempt to drive over a turtle, straddling it with your tires; countless turtles have been injured this way.

If you find a dead turtle, contact a turtle rehabilitator at once. It may be carrying viable eggs that can be removed and incubated.

If you find a turtle with an injury, no matter how minor, contact a turtle rehabilitator. Turtles heal slowly, but they can survive fairly catastrophic injuries.

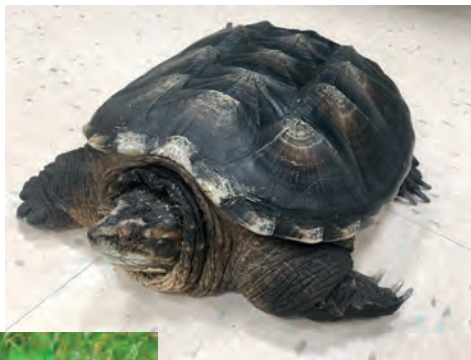
If you must move a turtle, don't place it in water—it can drown.

Most land turtles are omnivorous, eating slugs, snails, and insects, as well as aquatic plants and algae. Some eat fruit and fungi. The snapping turtle, a docile animal that just wants to be left alone, also eats fish, birds and small mammals.

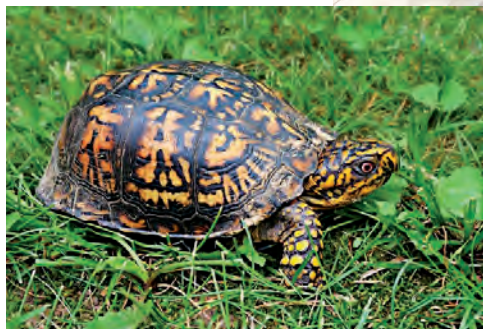
Land turtles generally live both on land and in water, such as ponds, slow-moving streams with muddy bottoms, wetlands, and vernal pools. The diamondback terrapin is an exception and spends most of its time in brackish water, such as salt marshes and tidal estuaries.

To encourage reptiles (which include turtles) and amphibians on your property, keep cats inside, keep an eye on your dogs (who will dig up and eat turtle eggs if they find them), plant native species, minimize the use of pesticides and herbicides, and allow at least part of your land to remain in a natural state, with rocks, fallen leaves, and rotting logs.

Continued on page 4



Above: Shy and nonaggressive, this young snapping turtle was rescued by rehabilitator Pam Meier. With her at a recent talk, he let himself be picked up.
Left: Eastern box turtle, Creative Commons.



The Lyme Land Conservation Trust Newsletter

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Exploring Our Glacial Past in Nehantic State Forest

On April 21, several dozen hikers were able to explore a newly protected parcel of open space off Keeney Road in Lyme. Ecologist Anthony Irving, Lyme Land Trust board member and chairman of the Eightmile River Wild and Scenic Coordinating Committee, led the group through the 125-acre property. Formerly owned by the Larsons, and then the McNamaras, it was listed by the DEEP in their 2016 Forest Resource Management Plan as highest priority for acquisition if it came on the market. In 2017, the State of Connecticut was able to acquire and incorporate the property into the northern edge of the existing 1,925-acre Nehantic State Forest.

The parcel extends important connections between other protected blocks in Lyme. It is part of the Eight-mile River watershed, with Beaver Brook flowing through it and will increase breeding habitats for native species like the New England cottontail and wood duck, as well as shrubland birds including eastern towhees, and blue winged and cerulean warblers.

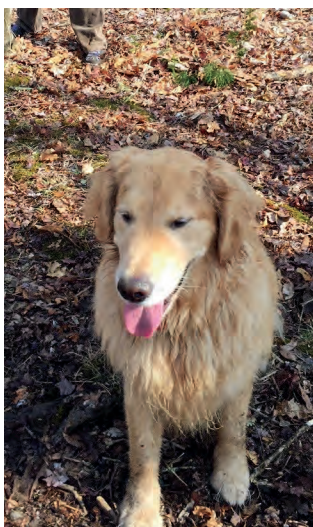


Photo: Wendy Hill

During the glacial retreat about 15,000 years ago, an ice dam deposited hundreds of tons of sand and gravel into the area, to a depth of 100 feet. The property's topography is unusual for Lyme, with steep banks dropping to Beaver Brook, and high ridges and deep swales created by the movement

of glaciers. It was probably too dry to be useful for farming or even livestock grazing, but there is evidence of logging and quarrying. Many white pines cover the hills, but there are few large rocks — in fact, one of the land's very noticeable features is the presence of only a few stone walls!

Dogs and their People Enjoy the Preserves



Many dogs enjoy Land Trust preserves. A few are pictured here, clockwise from upper left: Whisper; Marco and Annie; Stella; Brady; Nibble and Sprite; and Jambo. Do you have a favorite photo to share of your pet in our preserves? Please share on FB or Instagram!

Dogs are welcome on Lyme Land Trust and town preserves. Please be sure to keep dogs leashed or under your control at all times.



Thach Preserve, *continued from page 1*

Preserve is outlined in yellow, including a nearly 2,000 ft. right-of-way from Brush Hill Road.



Turtles, *continued from page 2*

Brush piles can provide shelter for turtles and many other species.

Lyme Land Trust preserves are good areas to find turtles. Eastern painted turtles are some of the easiest to find, sunning on rocks. Try Roaring Brook in Banningwood, the Eightmile River in Pleasant Valley, and small ponds and marshy areas in Hartman Park. If you find turtles, post your pho-

tographs on our Facebook page.

Resources:

CT DEEP Distressed Wildlife Site
Pamela Meier, turtle rehabilitator,
Madison, 203-530-0518

The Turtle Rescue League
Northeast Partners in Amphibian
and Reptile Conservation: (PARC),
“Backyard Guide: Helping Amphibians
and Reptiles”

Would you like to learn how to conserve your land?

We’d be happy to talk with you confidentially about how you can protect your farm, natural areas, or family homestead. You may also appreciate the possible income and estate tax benefits.

To find out more, please contact John Pritchard at 860-434-9896.

12th Annual Land Trusts Photo Contest And the Winners Are...

Amateur photographers, friends, and members of six local land trusts celebrated the Twelfth Annual Land Trusts Photo Contest at a reception on April 6 at the Lymes Senior Center.

The 350 photos on display depicted the wildlife, flora and scenery of East Haddam, Essex, Lyme, Old Lyme, Old Saybrook and Salem.

Winners were selected in six categories: landscape, wildlife, plants, youth, black & white, and cultural/historic. The contest's judges, Skip Broom, Amy Kurtz-Lansing and Joe Standart selected the winners of each category. Andrew Heist was awarded the John G. Mitchell Conservation Award for his photograph "Marshy Way."

This year's contest featured such a large number of youth participants that the land trusts decided to add a "Fan Favorite" award, enabling all of the reception attendees to vote for their favorite Youth photo. The Fan Favorite award went to eleven-year-old Ashley Holt of Westbrook for her photo entitled "Phragmites on the Shore."



**Youth Group Winners: Gabe Waldo,
Allie LaMotte and Ashley Holt**



Clockwise from upper left: Youth Second Prize, Allie LaMotte, "Pastel Piers;" John G. Mitchell Conservation Award: Andrew Heist, "Marshy Way;" Youth First Prize—Jake Ramage, "Foggy Sunset." Other first place prize winners (not pictured) include: Landscape/Waterscape—Kathryn Cannon; Wildlife—Soren Frantz; Cultural Historic—Brittany Griffin; Black & White—Gene Suponski; Plants—Richard Morris.

See listings for all the winners at:
landtrustsphotocontest.org

Award sponsors for the 2018 contest are Ballek's Garden Center, Evan Griswold at Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage, Essex Meadows, Essex Savings Bank, Essex Steam Train & Riverboat, Lorensen Auto Group, OWCM Group Morgan Stanley Wealth Management, RiverQuest CT River Expeditions, Dr. Gita Safaian of Hamburg Cove Endodontics, and Alison Mitchell.

Winning photos will be on display at the Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library in June.



Photo by Leonard Green

Making a planned gift to the Lyme Land Conservation Trust will help protect what you value most in Lyme — our open space.

Simply name us as a beneficiary of your IRA/401-K. To learn about our Heritage Society for Planned Giving and how to include the Land Trust in your estate plans, contact Milt Walters at milton.walters@lymelandtrust.org

Celebrating the Earth



The Lyme Land Trust celebrated Earth Day in Diana's Field at the Banningwood Preserve on April 22,

with the help of many volunteers, Land Trust Board members, and Parker and Diana Lord. Lyme Park and Recreation organized crafts and activities. Many families brought picnics and shared s'mores by the campfire, while enjoying a presentation from A Place Called Hope in Killingworth, a raptor rehabilitation and education center. They introduced us to several magnificent hawks and an owl who could no longer live in the wild.

Patricia Young, Program Director at Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Watershed, and Sarah Manstan, summer intern for the Land Trust and Eightmile River, assisted us in discovering

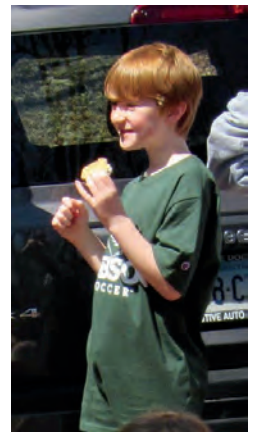
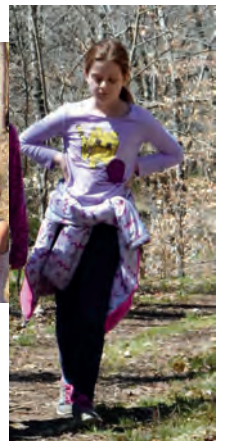
macroinvertebrates that live in Roaring Brook. The presence of some specific macroinvertebrates indicate that the water quality in this brook is very high.

Local biologist Jim Arrigoni led an ecology walk through the Preserve in the afternoon. When families departed, each child was given a bag with a frisbee, a native perennial and seeds to plant, all generously provided by Reynolds' Subaru and Ballek's Garden Center.

Special thanks are due to The Patagonia Environmental Grants Team for a "Community Restoration" Grant which funded this special day.



Photo credits: Tom Aiezza, Emily DeLuca, Wendy Hill, Mary Guitar



An Intimate History of Brockway Hawthorne Preserve

From Three Old Oaks to Deep Holler

By Wendy Hill
Land Trust Director

On many Land Trust preserves, there still exist intriguing clues about the existence of people who lived in these hills and fields decades, even centuries ago. We can find them in ancient quarries, and house foundations, and in the stone walls and cart paths that meander across them. Many times the names and stories of these older inhabitants are lost to us, but sometimes we are lucky and have the opportunity to hear the personal histories of these places.

I recently took a walk through the 82-acre Brockway-Hawthorne Preserve and the Ravine Trail with Bill L. Hawthorne, who was happy to share some of his memories with me. Bill grew up on this land, and knows the history of its familiar features, named after almost forgotten people and events.

When Bill was young—in the late 1940s and 1950s—he hunted with his dad and Uncle John Mitchell on this land. His dad hunted fox. Bill remembers that the gray fox was the most challenging and entertaining quarry because it would circle around and backtrack on its scent trail, confusing the hound dogs, while the red fox just ran straight. They supplemented their income by selling the fox fur to Elmer Blackwell. Bill believes it was the mange in the 1960s that wiped out the gray fox. You rarely see one now.

Two red cedar ladders that have been there for as long as Bill can remember lean against ancient trees in the area they used to call Three Old Oaks, near the intersection of the white and yellow trails in the Brockway-Hawthorne Preserve. Uncle John left them there many years ago to climb up into the trees to observe deer for hunting.

The purple trail in Brockway Hawthorne follows part of an old road that once led to Uncle John's house on Mitchell Hill Road. The vernal pool there by the purple trail bridge was called Bill Hall Pond Hole. Ice was once cut there. Further south, on the red trail in the Ravine Trail Preserve, in the ledge above an opening in the stone wall, is a large rock named Boat Rock for its shape—a familiar landmark for the locals. The Ravine was called Deep Holler. The present-day beaver meadow that the red trail leads to used to be called "Bår Swamp" by Bill's dad. When Bill asked him why, he replied, "Don't know whether someone *saw* a bear or someone *was* bare in there."

Continuing along the edge of the swamp toward Mitchell Hill Road, you see the high steep Auntie Ann's Ledge on the left, named for Ann Phelps who once lived close by.

Uncle John Mitchell was a honey hunter. When wild honey bees came to his portable bait station, he would follow them for a time and set up again. Eventually the bees

led him to their hive and he would harvest the honey. This could take all day. He would walk straight through—making a "beeline"—no matter where he was, even once right through a baseball game Bill and his friends were playing.

While honey hunting, Uncle John discovered a roundish cave full of beautiful black crystals in the cliffs



Photos by Wendy Hill.

Above: Bill Hawthorne, pointing out Aunt Annie's Ledge;
Left: Boat Rock.



above the Deep Holler that he named the Tourmaline Cave. Bill saw it when he was a kid, but he can't locate it now.

For items that self-sufficient Lyme residents couldn't grow, hunt, or make for themselves, they depended on the general store. Lee Luther Brockway, Bill's great-grandfather, opened the present-day Hadlyme Country Market in 1905. He purchased the large tract of land around the store, including Roaring Brook, and set up his homestead across the road. Lee's daughter Carrie Belle lived next door with her husband, William Hawthorne; they were Bill Hawthorne's grandparents. They met when William Hawthorne, an Irish immigrant, found employment as a stone cutter at the Brockway Ferry Stone Quarry. After William died at the age of 42 of stonemasons lung disease, Carrie Belle married John Mitchell.

Bill L. Hawthorne grew up across the street from the Hadlyme Country Store in the house that had belonged to his great-aunt. His family depended on the land just as his ancestors had: they grew vegetables and fruits, hunted, timbered, and kept livestock in the fields and woods that are now part of the Brockway-Hawthorne Preserve.

The preserve was purchased by the Lyme Land Trust in 2017, in a bargain sale from William L. and Anna Hawthorne, with funds from CT DEEP Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program, the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, and members of the community, including the Hadlyme Challenge Grant spearheaded by a lead donor. The legacy of the Brockway and Hawthorne families lives on in the permanent preservation of the unique property they so lovingly stewarded for over 100 years. For that we are very grateful.



Lyme Land Conservation Trust, Inc.

PO Box 1002, Lyme, CT 06371

Events Calendar

All events subject to change. Dates and times will be announced by press release and email, and will be posted on the Land Trust website and Facebook page. Consult the Upcoming Events page at www.lymelandtrust.org/news/events/ for the latest information. To receive email notifications, send an email to: info@lymelandtrust.org.

Connecticut Trails Day Walk Slawson Preserve

When: Sat., June 2, 9:30-11:00 a.m.

What: A walk with Biologist Lisa Wahle, the "Bunny Lady;" Mark LaCasse, Master Wildlife Conservationist and professional land manager; and Emery Gluck, who manages habitat restoration at Nehantic State Forest. We will explore Phase 2 of ongoing improvements made to the land for the benefit of the threatened New England cottontail rabbit and other species that depend upon young forests.

Where: Parking at 435 Hamburg Road, (Rte. 156). Special event parking only. Follow dirt driveway. No dogs please. Reservations recommended in case of cancellation. openspace@townlyme.org

Annual Meeting And Thank You to George Moore

When: Fri., June 22, 6:00 p.m.

What: Business meeting, followed by community cheer, light fare, and libations to celebrate George Moore's fourteen years of service and dedication to the Lyme Land Trust. George Moore retired as executive director of the Land Trust in 2017. Everyone is welcome.

Where: Lyme Public Hall, 249 Hamburg Road (Rte 156).

Lyme Trails Boot Camp

When: Sun, June 17, 1:30-3:30 p.m.

What: Do you want to become a Trail Volunteer or Preserve Steward? Learn basic trail maintenance, how to recognize common invasive plants, and how to use a smart phone app to track your path, and mark locations to send a trail report.

Where: Hartman Park

Registration required
openspace@townlyme.org

CHECK OUT OUR FACEBOOK PAGE

We'd love to hear from you and about you. What would you like to hear more about? Post your pictures of favorite Lyme hikes, or Land Trust activities you've attended. Follow us on Instagram "@lymelandtrust"



For most current information on Lyme Land Conservation Trust events: www.lymelandtrust.org