

About The Wyndham Land Trust

The Wyndham Land Trust, Inc. is engaged in the preservation of natural resources in Windham County, Connecticut. Its emphasis is on wild-life habitat, especially where unique or particularly fragile assemblages of animals and plants exist or may be expected to exist. Its properties are open to the public for the quiet enjoyment of nature. Land may be acquired by donation or purchase. Since WLT enjoys 501 (c) 3 status donations to it are deductible under IRS rules, a feature which sometimes proves attractive! Our work is supported by dues, donations, grants and a very modest endowment income. Members enjoy an annual potluck supper, generally in the fall.

Inquiries may be directed to the
Wyndham Land Trust, Inc.,
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Pomfret Center, CT, 06259
or to info@wyndhamlandtrust.org
Please see our web site
www.wyndhamlandtrust.org
Phone (860) 963-2090.
Your comments, questions and suggestions are most welcome.

We Seek To Increase Our Membership Base

Presently annual dues are:

- INDIVIDUAL \$20
- FAMILY \$30

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

- \$300 INDIVIDUAL
- \$500 FAMILY

We now accept 

**DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE
UNDER IRS RULES**



A view across the Robbins Preserve.

THE ROBBINS PRESERVE

The 124-acre Robbins Preserve sits in the northeast corner of Thompson and was purchased in June 2012 through a partnership between the land trust, the Nature Conservancy, and an Open Space matching grant from the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. The land was purchased from Malcolm (Mac) Robbins and was once working farmland owned by Mr. Robbins's father.

In more recent years, the property was worked for sand and gravel, and the sandy soil supports plant species such as pitch pine, alder, and sweet fern. It also supports one of the best populations of variable sedge, an endangered species in Connecticut. The land also provides suitable habitat and a host plant—wild indigo—for the frosted elfin butterfly, a state-listed threatened species. Forested wetlands and vernal pools on the property support a variety of amphibian species, including blue-spotted salamander, a state-listed species of special concern. Andy Rzeznikiewicz reports that Whip-poor-wills, an uncommon nesting bird in Connecticut, have been heard in the area and may be nesting. The land



The BSA Troop 27 of Woodstock has been helping to clear white pine and create brush piles for wildlife.



The Five Mile River cuts through the Robbins Preserve.

trust is working with a local scout troop to manage the early successional growth and to encourage some of the more uncommon species, such as pitch pine.

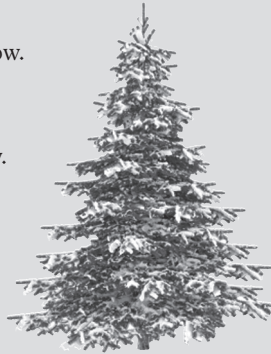
The Five Mile River cuts through the center of the property, and it is bounded to the east by Quaddick Town Farm Road. You can park at the gate at the northern end of the property. A variety of gravel roads provides walking trails, although none of them are currently marked.

Seasons Greetings from the Wyndham Land Trust

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening by Robert Frost

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.



He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark, and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

THE ROBBINS PRESERVE EXPANDS

In November **Norma O'Leary** donated a five-acre tract of land that abuts our newly acquired Robbins Preserve. The tract is located to the south of the Robbins Preserve along the west side of the Five Mile River. The property is mainly a wetland thicket and provides excellent nesting cover for many bird species. Mrs. O'Leary wanted to see her property conserved and was pleased to increase the acreage protected in this area. She is a local advocate for land conservation, especially in Thompson. The Wyndham Land Trust would like to thank her for generous donation.



Andy Rzeznikiewicz introduces the Walktober participants to the Linda J. Rapoport Memorial Preserve.

Walktober

Andy Rzeznikiewicz led a walk on the **Linda J. Rapoport Memorial Preserve** and the **Paul and Avis Spalding Preserve** in Woodstock as part of the Last Green Valley's month-long Walktober event. About 20 walkers spent a beautiful fall day exploring the two preserves while Andy explained the goals of the land trust and the work we were doing to maintain the property.

The Yosemite Valley Preserve

In August, 2012 **Josephine Stenback** donated 36 acres of forested land in Killingly to the Wyndham Land Trust. The property includes 2600' of road frontage along the NW edge of Yosemite Valley Road and 360' of frontage on the Five Mile River and will be known as the Yosemite Valley Preserve. The Wyndham Land Trust is grateful for her generous donation.

"Josie" moved to Yosemite Valley Road in 1958 with her late husband Reino, who's family purchased the property in 1944. "I wanted to see the property protected," said Mrs. Stenback. "I'd rather see animals using it than people."



Steep ledge abounds in the Yosemite Valley Preserve and is home to interesting plant life such as Common Polypody fern.



Mrs. Stenback reviews a map of the new preserve with board member Jeff Stefanik, who surveyed the property.

QUIET CORNER LOSES HOLLY DRINKUTH

Holly Drinkuth is a familiar name to the conservation community in the Quiet Corner. Holly has worked on environmental issues in Northeast Connecticut in a variety of roles and has been a strong supporter of the Wyndham Land Trust.

Holly grew up in Hebron, CT and started her working life as a pastry chef after graduating from the prestigious Johnson and Wales culinary institute in Providence. In 2000 Holly was living in Brooklyn and raising a family and found herself at a Last Green Valley course run by UConn's Steve Broderick called "Understanding the Natural World." After 17 years in the culinary business, Holly's life was about to change course.

Participants were encouraged to work on conservation issues in their communities, and Holly's contribution was to restart the Brooklyn Conservation Commission which she chaired for the next 11 years. In addition Broderick hired Holly to work at the new Green Valley Institute

(GVI), a joint venture between UConn and the Last Green Valley. Holly's role was to feed information into the conservation commissions and to support their missions. In 2004 she graduated from ECSU with an Environmental Sciences degree and in 2009 she earned a master's degree in Water Resources Management from UConn's Department of Natural Resources and the Environment. She was now splitting her time between working for the GVI and The Nature Conservancy.

"Holly was the perfect person to fill the role of land conservation specialist at the Green Valley Institute," said Broderick. "She is well organized, a remarkably quick learner, and has a great ability to size up a complicated issue and get straight to the right plan for addressing it. She is also a terrific person who was fun to work with. There are towns all over the Last Green Valley whose Conservation Commissions she helped create, and who learned how to set priorities and fulfill their missions from Holly. And that's just one of her many lasting accomplishments.

"When you work in an area like land conservation, where there are so many needs and so few resources, your mantra has to be 'don't confuse activity with accomplishment.' Holly understands this as well as anyone I've ever worked with."



Holly is always willing to work on conservation projects. Here she's planting elm trees in the Connecticut River flood plain. (Photo Francine Maglione.)

Holly worked on a variety of conservation projects, but her crowning achievement was The Nature Conservancy's Quinebaug Highlands Natchaug River Watershed Project which was awarded a grant of \$1 million from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) in 2009. The project permanently protected 11 different tracts totaling 1,103 acres of wetlands and forest and included a partnership with the Wyndham Land Trust, three private landowners, the Green Valley Institute, Connecticut DEEP, and the towns of Eastford and Woodstock.

Holly also coordinated the Natchaug River Basin Conservation Action Plan adopted in 2011

by eight watershed municipalities. More recently she was instrumental in providing The Nature Conservancy's funding that helped the Wyndham Land Trust purchase the Robbins preserve in June of 2012.

Over the last 11 years, Holly has had a huge impact on conservation in the Quiet Corner, but moving to New Haven just means her talents and her love of nature will be applied in a new region. She has been hired as the director of outreach for The Nature Conservancy's Long Island Sound Program and will also be working on the Connecticut River Basin program that spans four states and multiple partners.

"I miss everybody already," said Holly from her new home near the Green in downtown New Haven. "I think of the forests and streams and I get upset... I miss them so much. But I had an incredible time working with a lot of good people. I couldn't have asked for a better career. Now I have new challenges to face."

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Two new members joined the Board of Directors in 2011—**Jeff Stefanik** from Woodstock and **Ron Tillen** from Thompson. Both Jeff and Ron have been very active since joining the board and we welcome their enthusiasm. Here are a couple of biographies to introduce them to you and to describe the special set of skills that each brings to the land trust:



Jeff Stefanik loves the Red Sox almost as much as the New England woods.

Jeff Stefanik

Jeff Stefanik is Director of Land Surveying at Woodstock based CME Associates, Inc. and has been working in that profession since 1983. He brings a wealth of knowledge in regard to local history, land use and boundary research to the Board of the Wyndham Land Trust.

Jeff was born in Webster, Massachusetts and has had an interest in local history since childhood. "I read a history of Webster Lake and the Nipmuck Indians who lived in the area when I was very small," said Jeff, "and I've never lost interest in trying to understand how the landscape changes and evolves over time. Our work at the Land Trust does a great service in preserving many sites that can be enjoyed by future generations and I don't think there is more important work that can be done than that."

He has served as Windham County Director for the Connecticut Association of Land Surveyors, Vice-Chair of the Woodstock Open Space and Farmland Preservation Committee, Woodstock Town Historian and is a licensed Surveyor in Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont, New Hampshire and New York. CME has mapped and served as a consultant to many of the Northeast's most interesting clients including Hancock-Shaker Village, The Nature Conservancy, Old Sturbridge Village, Teddy Roosevelt's summer White House

Sagamore Hill, The Preservation Society of Newport Rhode Island and the State of Connecticut Department of Agriculture and Department of Energy and Environmental Management.

The volunteers who serve the Land Trust have greatly impressed Jeff. "Everyone benefits from the work the volunteers do but it is easy to overlook our accomplishments because if we are successful then the neighborhood looks the same as it always did." He urges others to get involved. "There is a strong legacy from the founders of the Wyndham Land Trust that has been handed down to the present board. We will keep that going, but we always need financial and technical support."

Jeff lives in an old house in North Woodstock with his wife, Donna. They have two children, Alison of Philadelphia, and Adam attending Arcadia University. They also have a summer cottage on Quaddick Lake in Thompson where he spends much of his time hiking, kayaking and keeping an eye on the campfire plus paying close attention to the fortunes of the Boston sports teams.

Ron Tillen

Ron Tillen's interest in conservation and wild life began when he tramped the woodlands and hiked the Berkshire downs as a boy in England. Married to Gwyneth Tillen, a former librarian in Thompson, he has enjoyed a 50-year career as an optical physicist, most of them in the USA with Perkin-Elmer in southwest Connecticut and with American Optical in Southbridge.

With time to spare since retiring in 1999 Ron has served on the Thompson Inland Wetland and Conservation Commissions. As a collector and compiler of information he volunteered to survey the significant barns in the town with the blessing of the Thompson Historical Society. He is an en-

thusiastic bird watcher and has roamed the local countryside with Andy Rzeznikiewicz on the Audubon Spring and Fall bird walks and has plowed through the undergrowth with Fran Baranski on his energetic tracking soirées. Ron's interests in ornithology resulted in him becoming a board member of Bird Conservation Research (BCR) and to serve as its secretary, and he has enjoyed some wildlife observation field days with BCR's Robert Craig.



Ron works with Andy Rzeznikiewicz on exploring the boundaries of the Chaffee Preserve in Putnam.

Community affiliations have included the Thompson Fire Engine Company, of which he has been a member for over 40 years. For the last 12 years Ron has been heavily involved with Learning in Retirement at QVCC serving in the past as President and Chair of the Curriculum Committee. Subjects of his many talks for LiR include travel, science but especially history, often with a local bias spurred by his attendance at meetings of the Northeast Connecticut Civil War Round Table.

In some ways semi-rural Connecticut strikes Ron as an anachronism. The land has not been overtaken by suburban sprawl as it has been and continues to be back in his native England. Fascination with the way life in the last green valley has developed and the way people have related to their environment and cultural diversity has prompted him to do some research. As a result he has compiled a history of the Thompson Fire Engine Company, making good use of the Company's treasure trove of documents going back to 1832, and of the archives in the Thompson Library. It is no surprise that he is a member of the Last Green Valley and Connecticut Fireman's Historical Society.

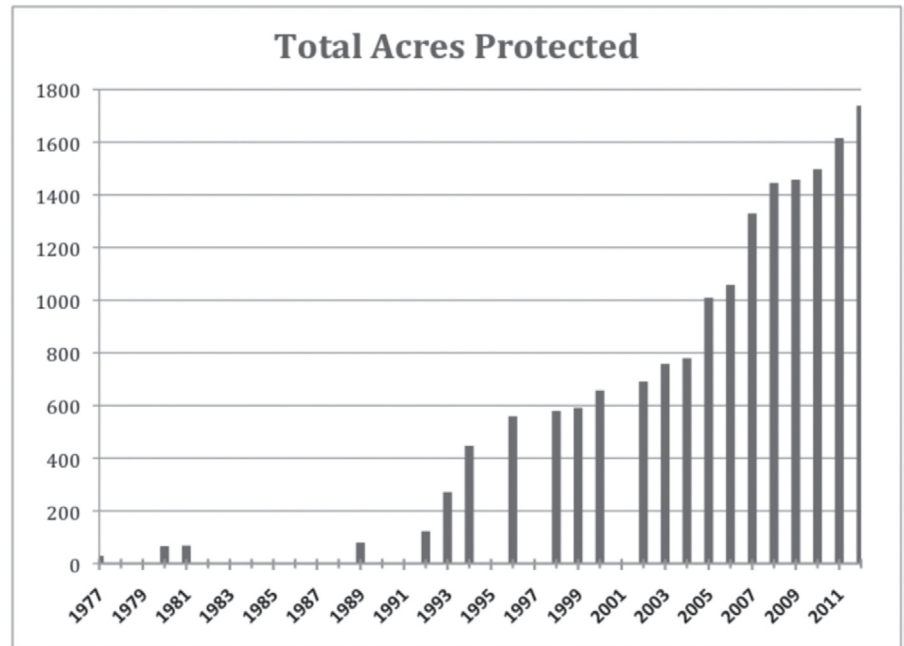
END OF YEAR DONATIONS

The land trust has been very successful in preserving land in recent years, and we continue to acquire property at an accelerating pace. The plot below shows our accumulated acreage since the land trust acquired its first property in 1977. It took us 28 years (1977 to 2005) to acquire our first 1000 acres, and we have acquired almost 800 acres in the intervening seven years (2006 to 2012). With help from the membership we can soon surpass the 2000-acre mark.

If you're one of those people who wait until the end of the year to make your tax-deductible charitable donations, consider a gift to the Wyndham Land Trust. The land trust is a registered 501(c)3 charity, and your donation is fully deductible.

Send a check to Wyndham Land Trust,
PO Box 302, Pomfret Center, CT 06259.
To make things easier you can now donate
on our web site using our secure
Paypal account at:
www.wyndhamlandtrust.org/give_money.html

*We need your support to
continue on our
mission.*



Mission Statement

The mission of the Wyndham Land Trust is to conserve the natural resources of Northeast Connecticut - the water courses, swamps, woodlands, and open spaces, the plant and animal life therein, and the scenic natural and historic sites - all of which are very much a part of the unique character and beauty of all communities in Northeast Connecticut.



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WYNDHAM
LAND TRUST, INC.

The Wyndham Land Trust, Inc.
P.O. Box 302
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THANK YOU

THE WYNDHAM LAND TRUST, INC.

Individual annual membership \$20

Family annual membership \$30

Individual life membership \$300

Family life membership \$500

Donation to Land Aquisition Fund \$_____

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(Gift Memberships Available by Calling: 860-963-2090)