



The Land Steward

NEWSLETTER OF THE BETHEL LAND TRUST

Preserving open space since 1977

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Say hello to our friend, the Bee



There are nearly 20,000 known species of bees, with about 4,000 species in North America. Bees are found throughout the world except at the highest altitudes and in Polar Regions, in every habitat on the planet that contains insect-pollinated flowering plants. Of the 4,000 species of bees in North America, 40 of them are introduced species, such as the European honeybee.

Some bees, such as the honey bee and bumble bee, live socially in colonies called hives. Other species, such as the carpenter bee, live a solitary life. Bee colonies typically contain one queen bee, worker bees and drones. The worker bees and the queen bee are female, but only the queen bee can reproduce. All drones are male. Worker bees clean the hive, collect the pollen and nectar to feed the colony and take care of the offspring. The drones' only job is to mate with the queen. The queen's only job is to lay eggs. Most bee species nest in the ground, though a few species nest in wood, and they mass-provision their young (a mass of pollen and nectar is formed inside a waterproof cell, an egg laid upon it, and the cell sealed off, so the larva is given all of its food at one time), as opposed to "progressive provisioning", where a larva is fed repeatedly as it grows, as in honey bees.

Bees are the workhorses of the insect world. By transferring pollen from one plant to another, they ensure the next generation of the fruits, nuts, vegetables, and wildflowers we so enjoy. Most bees have specialized branched or feathery body hairs that help in the collection of pollen. It is the female bees that have the defensive sting. Some bees produce honey from flower nectar. Honey bees hoard large quantities of honey -- a characteristic that is exploited by beekeepers, who harvest the honey for human consumption.

The honey bee population is on the decline. In recent years, honeybee numbers across the continent have plummeted by as much as 70 percent, and the biologists are still scratching their heads as to why and what to do about the problem they have termed "colony collapse disorder (CCD)". Many believe that our increasing use of pesticides and herbicides, which honeybees ingest during their daily pollination rounds, are largely the blame. Others blame the destructive mite, viruses and fungi that may be a result of global warming. Others are looking at genetically modified crops which may generate pollen with compromised nutritional value. Bee populations may also be vulnerable to other factors, such as increased atmospheric electromagnetic radiation as a result of increased wireless communication towers which may interfere with the bees' ability to navigate. Throw in urbanization and the lack of flowering plants; our friend the bee needs our help.



The Stephenson Preserve -- Bethel Has a New Preserve!

By Mary Ann Kulla

We are delighted to report Bethel has a new Preserve! The estate of Jack Stephenson has conserved 128 acres by deeding it to the Redding Land Trust. It's a beautiful piece of property and typical of our area, consisting of rocky, wooded hills with a stream and a pond. At one time much of the area was farmland. Most of the land is in Bethel. The Bethel Land Trust and Redding Land Trust plan to manage the land co-operatively.

The location of this property is of critical importance. It fronts on Rt. 58 near Putnam Park and Wolfpit Preserve. The land extends south and west to the power lines that are behind Mike's Pond, almost to Chestnut Hill Road. On the other side of that road is the Bethel Reservoir land. Just to the south of the reservoir, in Redding, there are big contiguous preserves. The Stephenson land is the link in the chain that forms the large, unbroken greenway which so many animals and birds need to prosper. What a great gift to Bethel and Redding!

A parking lot is in process off Rt. 58, Putnam Park Road, so you can access and enjoy this land. The Stephenson Preserve is located midway between where Hoyt's Hill runs into Rt. 58 and Saras Way. It is on the right side of the road as you drive from Bethel towards the coast. In the meantime, you need to park on Saras Way, cross 58, and walk uphill towards Bethel to enter the preserve. As always, dress to prevent deer ticks.

If you would like to work on the trail system being developed, contact Stuart Green at shgreen@optonline.net. An Opening Day ribbon cutting and hike is planned for the fall. The name of the preserve has not been firmly decided yet. For now, we are referring to it by the donor's name



Photos by David Heald

Replacing and rebuilding bridges over Wolf Pits Brook

On a pleasant and sunny day, Josh Adams, Chris Morton, Frank Borysiewicz, Vince Nero and Don Warfield spent a few morning and afternoon hours repositioning one bridge and building a new bridge crossing the Wolf Pits Brook in the Wolfpit Preserve.



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BLT Mission

The mission of the Bethel Land Trust is to protect the scenic and open space of Bethel for the benefit of our community and future generations.

The Land Steward is published by the land trust for its members, supporters and collaborating supporters.

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President’s Message

In 2013, the Board of Directors made a decision to develop its first 3-year Strategic Plan (2014-2016). We believed that such a comprehensive plan was necessary to guide our work, make use of our talents and resources, maximize the pace of land protection and truly make good on our promise of being good land stewards.

The Strategic Plan included six broad goals for the three years ahead:

- Increase the acreage of protected lands
- Enhance the Land Trust’s Stewardship Program
- Improve the Land Trust’s finances
- Enhance the Land Trust’s working relationships
- Raise its public awareness
- Improve the Land Trust’s governance and management

I am pleased to report that we are running on all cylinders. We have increased the amount of protected lands by 11 %. We have completed ecological inventories of all our preserves and have developed individual preserve management plans for each preserve to enhance our land steward program. Our finances are the strongest they have been in decades. We implemented a newsletter program and enhanced our website and we operate under the guidance of the Land Trust Alliance.

Our Land Trust’s key ambition is to remain a robust land trust, to fill a critical conservation role for the community. Together, with your continued support, we can determine what Bethel will look like in five, 20 or even 100 years.

Don Warfield

Public Speaking Engagements

BLT Receives Grant

The Alfred and Helene Meserve Foundation has awarded a grant of \$3,500 to the BLT to be used to design and install nature interpretive signs in several of its preserves. The interpretive signs offer stories that are designed to stimulate trail visitors interest, focusing on various topics of nature. We hope to increase visitor enjoyment through the appreciation and understanding, of some of the natural features found in our preserves. Come and see.



On December 9th, John O’Neil gave a talk to Bethel’s Girl Scout Troop 50177.

On May 5th, Vincent Nero gave a talk at the monthly meeting of the Bethel Garden Club.

Tick-Borne Diseases

Connecticut is home to many different species of ticks that are known to carry diseases that are transmissible to humans and (pets) by deer (Black Legged) and dog ticks. Ticks are blood feeders, i.e. they need a meal of blood to survive and reproduce. Although they love to feed on deer (hence their name) and other wild animals such as white-footed mice, chipmunks, rabbits, squirrels, raccoons, etc. they also feed on birds and reptiles. Per the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, New Haven, the most common CT ticks are:

- The black legged tick (deer tick)
- The lone star tick
- The dog tick

Unfortunately, the tick population is increasing, not only out in the woods and fields, but also in our yards.

Ticks have 3 basic life stages: the larval, nymphal, and adult (male and female). The nymph stage is the most dangerous. They feed for relatively long periods (several days), during which they remain firmly attached to the host. Also, their bite is usually painless and they may go unnoticed for lengthy periods of time. Each stage of the tick feeds only once.



There are at least eleven recognized human diseases associated with ticks. The Tick Management Handbook, produced by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, New Haven (www.ct.gov/lib/caes/documents/publications/bulletins/b1010.pdf) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (www.cdc.gov/lyme/resources/Tickborne_Disease.pdf) provides a good description of the diseases, symptoms and medical treatment, their carriers and where you may find the ticks.

The **severity** and time of onset of these symptoms can depend on the disease and the patient's tolerance level.

Preventing Tick Bites – Some suggestions by the CDC, www.cdc.gov/ticks.

- Be extra vigilant in warmer weather months (April –September) when ticks are most active.
- Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass, leaf litter and barberry
- Walk in the center of trails and be sure to wear long sleeve shirts and tuck pant legs into boots when hiking. Brush yourself off before entering your car.
- Repel ticks with bug repellants with DEET (20-30% DEET) on exposed skin and clothing or use Permethrin (0.5%) on clothing
- Examine yourself, your children and pets for ticks when returning indoors
- Shower within two hours or as soon as possible after leaving an area with ticks to wash off ticks and to find them more easily. Do a body check. Ticks are usually found:

- ❖ Under arms
- ❖ In and around ears
- ❖ Inside belly button
- ❖ Behind knees
- ❖ Between legs
- ❖ On the scalp

In addition to providing suggestions on preventing tick bites, The CDC's website www.cdc.gov/ticks/ provides a wealth of information on preventing ticks on your **pets** and preventing ticks in your **yard**.

If you develop a rash or fever of removing a tick, see your doctor.

* Powassan Virus – is a relatively unknown tick-borne disease that has the potential to become a serious health concern. Powassan virus attacks the nervous system and can infect the brain causing swelling of the brain, a condition known as encephalitis. It can also infect the lining of the brain and spinal cord, causing meningitis. For additional information go to www.publichealth.yale.edu.

Looking to source more of your food locally? So are we. Toward this goal we have compiled a list of local farms and producers. Here is a summary of what we found. You don't have to travel far to buy locally produced food.



Holbrook Farm Market and Bakery– Bethel

www.holbrookfarm.net

Until 2015 Holbrook Farm was a small, family operated farm, operated by John and Lynn Holbrook for over 40 years. In 2015, John and Lynn decided to phase themselves out of the day-to-day operations leasing the farm to Jessica Wong the former farm manager, who started as an inexperienced volunteer.

Operating year around the farm grows an extremely diversified array of vegetables and greens and carry CT grown apples, peaches, plums, pears, blueberries and strawberries and corn. The also offer farm fresh eggs from their free-range chickens and CT sourced dairy and cheese. While not certified organic, Holbrook Farm has been pesticide and herbicide free for at least the 40 years that Lynn and John have owned the farm.



Blue Jay Orchards – Bethel

www.bluejayorchards.ct.com

A picturesque 140-acre apple orchard -37 varieties- farm market, pick-your-own apples in September and October. First founded in 1934, Blue Jay Orchards is a thriving pick your own apple orchard. The name of the farm comes from the original owner, Mr. Josephi, who used to paint a blue "J" on his wholesale apple crates. In 1985 the orchard came under the ownership of the Patterson family who, in keeping with the history of the previous owners, named it "Blue Jay Orchards". The Patterson's grow 37 varieties of apples on 122 acres, using Integrated Pest Management methods and water/sun soluble sprays only when needed. Participating in Farm to School, they also host tours for approximately 7,000 school children per year. Their farm store holds many delicious items to choose from, in particular a sugarless apple pie made from their very Hayrides to the pumpkin patch during October (weekends only). Fresh cider, many varieties of home baked fruit pies, the Orchard's own apple sauce and apple butter, gift baskets, local honey. You will find unique items from the gift shop including local produce, famous cider donuts, maple syrup, seasonal gifts and more. A great New England farm experience. No pets please. A great place to bring the family for picking apples and pumpkins.

During the summer and fall months there are two farmers' markets:

Bethel Farmers' Market 67-69 Stony Hill Rd Saturdays: 9:00AM to 1:00PM, June/July to November

Bethel Community Market, Municipal Center Lawn, 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month, June to September, 4pm to 7pm

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2016



BETHEL LAND TRUST
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Preserving Bethel Open Space Since 1977

Cut here and return with your donation to the address below.

Please consider becoming a member or making a contribution.

The Bethel Land Trust is a 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization, and gifts are fully tax-deductible.

For Gift Memberships, Tributes, Land and In-Kind donations, please visit our website; bethellandtrust.org

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- Naturalist \$100 - 499
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- Individual \$ 25
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ANNUAL BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP

- Business Benefactor \$1,000 – +
- Business Patron \$500
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100% of all donations go to support your local Land Trust and our efforts to maintain and protect the preserves.

Please make your check payable to: Bethel Land Trust

Mail this form and your contribution to: Bethel Land Trust, P.O. Box 332, Bethel, CT 06801

OR you may go to our website and donate through that portal: www.bethellandtrust.org

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT