

FALL/WINTER NEWSLETTER 2019



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Preserving Bethel Open Space Since 1977

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The Land Steward

NEWSLETTER OF THE BETHEL LAND TRUST

Preserving open space since 1977

Vol. 4 No. 1 • Fall 2019

Introducing the Franc Preserve

By Don Warfield

Say hello to Bethel's first designated town-owned nature preserve.

The Franc Preserve is a 72-acre parcel of Town-owned land that is being managed by the Bethel Land Trust *in cooperation* with the Bethel Parks and Recreation Department.

Acquired in 2012, the Franc Preserve is a valuable asset to the Town of Bethel for a variety of reasons. On its own, it contains multiple habitat types (wetlands, old fields, woodlands of varying ages and species composition, and rock outcrops. Coupled with the adjacent 72-acre Brunot Preserve (owned by the Newtown Forest Association), it makes a contiguous, protected block of protected open space land nearly 150 acres in size.

In 2013, the Franc Committee (made up by volunteers) was established to receive input from residents to determine the potential uses of the land and to determine what rules and regulations should be implemented based on the use of the land. After a series of Committee meetings, and a site-walk, the Committee reported to the Board of Selectmen that the parcel should remain as open space.

The Preserve has an agricultural past, with old pastures, fields, and trails, as well as wetlands, watercourses and forest stands. There are approximately 8 acres of fields, 2 acres of forest swamp, 8 acres of wetland forest and 54 acres of mixed oak forest.

Well-maintained and marked trails are accessible through the main entrance off of Plumtrees Road (first driveway on the right) past the intersection of Plumtrees Road and Old Hawleyville Road as you travel from Bethel center towards Newtown) and a second entrance is located at the end of Shelley Road.

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

Please consider becoming a member or renewing your membership.

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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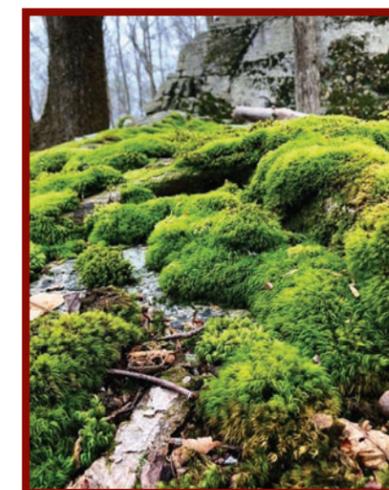
100% of all donations go to help your local Land Trust in our efforts to maintain and protect your local environment.

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

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT





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BLT Mission

The mission of the Bethel Land Trust is to conserve land in its natural state and to steward the land so that it is available for walking, contemplation, and enjoyment, and as unspoiled habitats for plants and animals.

The *Land Steward* is published by the land trust for its members and supporters

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From the President

A very heartfelt thank you to all of our contributors for your generous donations. Some of you have been donating to the Land Trust for years and it is much appreciated. I must also recognize our dedicated board members and volunteers. They give their time and money often without the thanks that they deserve. We all share the desire to protect and preserve the open spaces that we are blessed to have in Bethel.

The funds that we receive allow us to purchase tools, maintain trails, remove dead trees, repair vandalized signs and defend the properties that we protect. Unfortunately not all of our neighbors respect the properties that they border. Our properties are for the enrichment and enjoyment of the Bethel residents. Those preserves are for their benefit.

We have made additional improvements to the Wolfpit Preserve this summer. That 92 acre parcel has many walking trails, nature signs and trail markers. The kiosk, that was built last year, has a map showing the trails. The recent work effort included removing several dead trees and significantly expanding the parking area. We are very proud of the preserve and hope that many of you are able to visit it and enjoy all of our efforts.

Thank you again for your support and enjoy the holidays.

Frank

From Don Warfield

This is my last Land Steward Newsletter. I hope this one will encourage you to visit the Franc Preserve.

Each previous newsletter contained at least one educational article that is relevant to our mission of land conservation and its effect on Bethel's ecology. Past newsletters covered such topics as Watershed Conservation, Forest, Conservation - Wetlands, Nature Deficit Disorder, Bird Migration, Bees, Tick-borne Diseases, etc. while also discussing various activities such as the installation of our Nature Interpretive Signs, Wolfpit Kiosk, work projects, etc.

I hope you enjoyed reading them.

Franc Preserve, continue...

The Preserve is being managed by a conservation management plan that I developed that was accepted and approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission.

In the Winter of 2017- Spring of 2018, several members of the Bethel Land Trust and Boy Scout Troop initiated the Preserve management plan by laying out, cutting and marking a trail system. In addition, they manually cleared the upper meadow of saplings and small trees to stop the forest encroachment.

Parks and Rec installed a kiosk that contains a trail map and Preserves signs at the corner of Old Hawleyville Road and Plumtrees Road and the entrance to the Preserve.

The Town's Public Works Department made improvements to the driveway leading into the Preserve.

Last summer, members of the Bethel Land Trust built a wooden foot bridge over the Limekiln tributary, installed eight Bluebird houses in both meadows and installed a mailbox at the end of the main parking lot so that visitors may share their experiences with fellow visitors.

2019-2020 plans call for the installation of a new kiosk containing information about the preserve and a trail map, creation of a preserve brochure, additional trail marking, continued trail maintenance and the design and installation of nature interpretive signs.

Adam Geriak leads a weekly 9:30 am Sunday walk with "Friends of Franc Preserve". The hike is open to all.

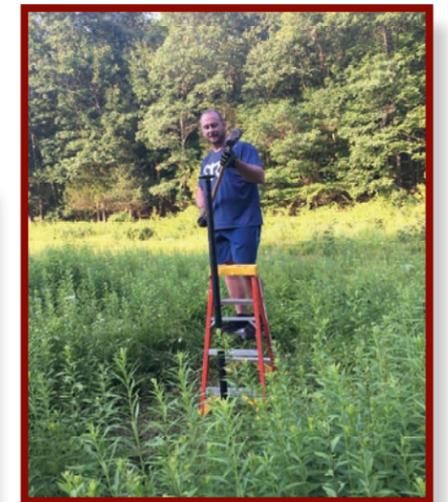
"Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares drop off like autumn leaves." John Muir



Bridge Building



Trail Mowed



Installing Post for Bluebird House

Come and enjoy your Franc Preserve

