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Stay in touch with the Winchester Land Trust

The Winchester Land Trust is on Facebook! Go to our page to see up to date information regarding events such as our upcoming bird-banding and the cleanup on Preston Road and the Waterbury Turnpike. If you're not into social networking, you can always email us at winchesterlandtrust@yahoo.com or call us at 860-738-2811. We continue to receive our "snail mail" at

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Pen and Ink illustration by Margaret A. Race



Winchester Land Trust

May 2010 Newsletter

Hurlbut Field, Preserved Forever

On August 4, 2009, the Winchester Land Trust purchased Hurlbut Field, a gorgeous 37-acre property on Winchester Lake, from Phil and Marion Hurlbut. A few weeks later, the Land Trust placed a conservation restriction on the property. Held by the State of Connecticut, the restriction permits farming on the existing field, but prohibits development.

It was the culmination of a long and nerve-racking process. The Land Trust had entered into an agreement with the Hurlbuts and applied for a state grant in early 2008. Just after Thanksgiving that year, the state announced the grant would be awarded. At the same time, the economy wasn't looking good, and the Land Trust seemed less likely to be able to raise the matching funds. The Land Trust decided to soldier on and raise the funds somehow.

Immediately, the Land Trust sent out a town-wide appeal, to more than 6,000 people. The trust held an auction fund-raiser, and Taylor Mali did a wonderful benefit performance. The Community Foundation of Northwestern Connecticut helped out, with a

\$5,000 grant. And the Land Trust applied for and got a one-year, no-interest loan of \$180,000 from the Norcross Wildlife Foundation, backed by a guarantee from an "angel" who prefers to remain anonymous. Once the State released the grant money, in August 2009, the purchase was completed.

The \$180,000 loan must be paid back by July 31, 2010. To help the Land Trust raise this money, several donors have joined together to offer a \$20,000 challenge grant. If the Land Trust can raise \$20,000 in the three months between April 24 and July 30, every dollar will be matched!

Artist Victor Leger, whose paintings featured so prominently at our auction, has donated a beautiful oil painting of the field in autumn. The Land Trust has decided to award this painting to the highest "bidder" – the individual who makes the largest donation toward the challenge grant. (Right now, the "bidding" is at \$250!).

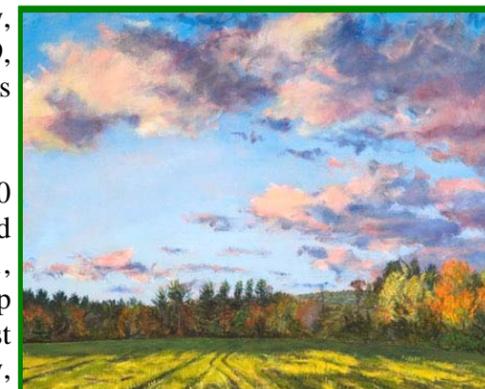
Is Hurlbut Field worth all this? Definitely! Land Trust board members who have been out on the property, exploring it and tagging its boundaries, and talking with farmers about the field, are impressed by Hurlbut Field's gorgeous scenery, its

high-quality wildlife habitats, and its potential for passive recreation.

The field portion, rimmed by trees and stone walls, is very scenic. When it was plowed last spring, geese, killdeer and turkey were seen scouring the rich earth for worms and seeds. In spring, tree swallows and barn swallows wheel over the field catching insects. The field is currently planted with alfalfa, which is cut by an area dairy farmer to feed his cattle. The Land Trust is considering how best to manage the field going forward.

Between the field and the woods are several acres of scrubby shrubland. Several species of birds rely on this type of habitat, which is scarce in Connecticut. Buckthorn and multiflora rose are starting to take hold in this section, and the Land Trust plans to have it cut in late summer to control these invasive species.

(continued inside)



Victor Leger's painting of Hurlbut Field in autumn will be given to the person who makes the largest donation toward the Winchester Land Trust's \$20,000 challenge grant!



Hurlbut Field

Winchester Land Trust Stewardship

What is stewardship? Each land trust is entrusted with the mission to protect and preserve its land for future generations. This land must be safeguarded forever! On a local level, this translates into scheduled monitoring of our properties and keeping records (written, photographic) about their status. We identify our properties by attaching small signs to trees along boundary lines. We also remove garbage from our properties and try to meet neighbors who may be willing to keep an eye on the property. "Walking the land" is a fun, social activity. We hope you will join us.

Stewardship on Preston Road and the Waterbury Turnpike 9 a.m., June 6

We are planning a tour and cleanup of our largest property on Sunday, June 6 (Connecticut Trails Day) at 9 a.m. We will meet in the turn-around at the end of Preston Road rain or shine. Wear appropriate clothing and gloves. Please email winchesterlandtrust@yahoo.com to RSVP or if you have any questions.



Pen and Ink illustration by Margaret A. Race

Winchester Land Trust Receives Award

The Winchester Land Trust was proud to receive a Conservation Leadership award from the Northwest Conservation District in November 2009. The Land Trust is now protecting 18 properties totaling 190 acres. In the last 5 years, we have doubled the number of protect we own, and increased the number of acres we protect seven-fold. At the same time, our membership has tripled. With your help, we hope to continue making rapid progress in conserving our beautiful open space and priceless natural resources!



Land Preservation Leader Award

Winchester Land Trust Announces a \$20,000 Challenge Grant!

If the Winchester Land Trust can raise \$20,000 between April 24 and July 30, every dollar will be matched! So far, we have raised \$20,000 toward the payback of the \$180,000 Norcross loan, which must be paid back by July 31.

Lou Ehrich Bequests 129 Acres to Winchester Land Trust

Louis Seigman Ehrich, Jr. died at age 93 on Tuesday, January 5, 2010 in Pawley's Island, South Carolina. Lou was a graduate of the University of Virginia, where he majored in engineering. In 1978, the National Association of Oil Heating Service Managers recognized him as Service Manager of the Year. In 2003, Lou retired from his position as a senior associate with JAD Associates. He moved to South Carolina in 2006.



Louis Seigman Ehrich, Jr.

A long-time Winchester Center resident, Lou helped found the Winchester Land Trust. As a board member of the Land Trust and the Park Pond Club, Lou made it possible for the Land Trust to protect four acres on Park Pond – two acres are Land Trust property and the Land Trust protects the adjoining two acres through a conservation restriction. In 2005, Lou donated 66 acres of his forested land along Preston Road and the Waterbury Turnpike to the Land Trust.

We have been notified that Lou has bequeathed to the Land Trust his remaining 129 acres along the Waterbury Turnpike, Preston Road, and Grantville Road. This land is beautiful forest land containing a long section of Rugg Brook. When this transfer is made, there will be a protected wilderness corridor totaling 232 acres linking Hurlbut Field with Lou's earlier donation.

Hurlbut Field, Preserved Forever

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The twenty-plus acres of woodland that slope down to the lake and extend to West Road are mixed hardwoods, with white pine and a large grove of hemlocks. There are mossy glades and vernal pools where amphibians breed.

You are welcome to walk on the property. It is especially nice to approach the property from Winchester Lake. Starting from the

boat launch, you can canoe or walk along the eastern shore until you can see the Land Trust tags through the trees, just before you reach the little island. You can picnic there, or walk through the woods, across the field, and out onto Grantville Road, where you can circle back to the boat launch along Grantville and West Roads.

A good opportunity to see the property will occur on May 22 at 8 a.m., when the Winchester Land Trust is holding a bird-banding demonstration on Hurlbut Field. Park on Grantville Road, and

Bird-banding Demonstration

On Saturday, May 22, Shelley Harms will demonstrate bird banding at Hurlbut Field. Shelley has a Federal license to capture songbirds and put bands on their legs. Each small metal band has a unique number that identifies the individual bird. When a bird is first banded, the band number and information about the bird is entered into a database at the U.S. government's Bird Banding Laboratory. Then, if the bird is captured again, or found dead, its number and location can be sent to the Lab and more information about it is added to database. The information provided by thousands of people across the country and beyond is a resource scientists use to study bird migration and how long birds live. Shelley will demonstrate the use of mist nets and how to put on the band, measure, weigh, sex and age the bird.



Yellow Warbler

walk across the field to the shrubby area, where Shelley Harms will have some mist nets set up and will demonstrate techniques that are helping scientists learn more about our songbirds.

This wonderful property is named Hurlbut Field, but it is much more than a field: it is also forest, an artist's inspiration, home to plants and wildlife, watershed and lake protection, an ideal picnicking spot, and a Land Trust's exciting, challenging project. Discover Hurlbut Field, and find out what it is to you!