

Board Members

Jen Perga, President

Shelley Harms, Vice President

Doug Pfenninger, Treasurer

Louise VanAlstyne, Secretary

Sue Closson

Andrea Hitt

Katherine Oneglia

David Woodworth

Stay in touch with the Winchester Land Trust

Winchester Land Trust's Facebook page is the best way to see the latest information regarding events such as our recent hike at Hurlbut Field. Our website is www.winchester-landtrust.org. You can email us at winchesterlandtrust@yahoo.com or call us at 860-738-2811. We receive our "snail mail" at PO Box 10, Winchester Center, CT 06094.



**The WLT Annual Meeting will be August 31 at 4 p.m.
at the gazebo on the Winchester Center green.**

Winchester Land Trust
PO Box 10
Winchester Center, CT 06094

NONPROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
WINSTED, CT
PERMIT NO. 11



Pen and Ink Illustration by Margaret A. Race



Winchester Land Trust

June 2014 Newsletter

Winchester Land Trust Celebrates Connecticut Trails Day



Hikers on "CT Trails Day Hike" (Hurlbut Field/Winchester Lake Trail)

For the fourth consecutive year, the Winchester Land Trust (WLT) sponsored a hike on CT Trails Day. Hikers gathered at the Winchester Lake Boat Launch at 9am on June 7. The weather was warm and sunny and many fishermen were already enjoying the day on the water.

Each June, the Connecticut Forest and Park Association organizes "Trails Day." This year there were 258 activities in 142 towns. The activities included hiking, biking, kayaking, bird watching, letterboxing, running and trail maintenance.

Hikers joined WLT board mem-

bers to walk along Winchester Lake and into Hurlbut Field. We walked on the bog bridges and past the bear study area. Graduate student, Michael Evans, collects the hair from bears to study their DNA and also snaps a quick photo using a game camera. The field has recently been seeded with warm season grasses (see article in this newsletter) and supports a wide variety of wildlife. Recent sightings include bobolinks, swallows, turkey and a very plump woodchuck.

If you missed this year's hike, look for the CT Trails Day Booklet at your local library, town hall or

state park. We look forward to seeing you on the trail next year.

* Trail maps for Winchester Land Trust hikes are available to download from our website.



Native Grasses at Hurlbut Field Support Wildlife

The Winchester Land Trust received a grant from the NRCS division of the USDA to fund the planting of over fourteen acres of Hurlbut Field with warm season grasses.

For the past several years the land trust has rented this land to Sherm Wiegold, a local dairy farmer, who alternated between planting corn and alfalfa in the field. This spring Sherm prepared the field for us, turning under the remnants of last year's corn crop and harrowing the soil. One hundred twenty pounds of warm season grass seed, including big bluestem, little bluestem, side oats grama and autumn bentgrass were planted with the assistance of NRCS who loaned us the equipment and operator required to plant the seed. Over two hundred pounds of oat seed were also planted as a nurse crop which will shade the warm season grasses as they establish themselves.

This grant gave a big boost to our effort to make this property a significant wildlife habitat for a variety of birds and mammals including northern bobwhites,

bobolinks, turkeys and New England cottontail rabbits. Warm season grasslands are true native habitats, providing food shelter and refuge for wildlife. In addition they are drought resistant and disease free. Non-native grasses, such as fescues, form a dense impenetrable mat, whereas warm season grasses provide an open network of clumps which provide food, nesting sites and shelter for wildlife.

In addition to the portion of the field planted with warm season grasses there are several acres of brushy field which will be mowed periodically to maintain the transitional ecosystem that is fast disappearing in New England as more and more former farmland becomes forested. Land trust members and volunteers work to remove invasive species such as barberry, Russian olive, multiflora rose and bittersweet from the fields and the perimeter. We also maintain a trail through property that is open to the public, so be sure to visit and see our progress.



Coyotes in Connecticut



Paul Rego, Wildlife Biologist, CT DEEP, spoke to over 35 people at the Beardsley and Memorial Library April 24, 2014 about the life and habitat of the Eastern Coyote. Coyotes have adapted well to living in proximity to humans. You are likely to see or hear one as the number of coyotes has been growing in Connecticut in the past 50 years. Rego, in a 1999 article entitled "Coyotes in Connecticut" (Connecticut Woodlands, vol. 64, No. 1, p.4), estimated there were then between 3,000 and 5,000 coyotes in the state. He said that was probably the maximum number that could thrive in the state. Northeastern coyotes are larger and heavier than western coyotes. Males typically weigh from 35 to 40 pounds and rarely exceed 50 pounds.

The following photos come from homeowners whose land abuts Winchester Land Trust land. The elegant Sandhill Cranes were visiting land near Ehrich Woods. The family of foxes, two adults and five kits, use protected land on East Wakefield Boulevard.

