



## BRANFORD LAND TRUST

*The mission of the  
Branford Land Trust  
is to preserve open space  
in Branford, and to  
promote our community's  
appreciation of Branford's  
diverse natural features.*

## — 2015 ANNUAL REPORT — President's Message

In our correspondence with you, we often refer to our mission statement: *"The mission of the Branford Land Trust is to preserve open space in Branford, and to promote our community's appreciation of Branford's diverse natural features."* It's included on the front of every newsletter. It's on our website. But what does it mean?

It means that as an organization, we are charged with the tasks of acquiring land with valuable natural resources, overseeing the open space properties entrusted to us, and educating our community about the value of those properties and resources.

From year to year, much of our work is the same, and similar to what you'll read about in the enclosed Annual Report. We coordinate land acquisitions like the Gould Lane parcel (page 6), we maintain our properties with ongoing trail upkeep and work parties (page 11), and we present a variety of community programs and events like our spring lecture series, Nature Explorer walks, and the Environmental Day Camp (pages 8-10).

But the preservation of close to 1,400 acres of property in a town as large and diverse as Branford is a multifaceted task. That is why you'll frequently see Land Trust representatives coordinating scientific research on properties, talking with land owners about property boundaries and maintenance, attending Town and commission meetings, and taking active roles in conversations about conservation and development, especially in matters that could pose a threat to the natural resources we protect.

The Branford Land Trust has a long history of these types of activities. It was founded in 1967 by a group of concerned citizens, led by First Selectman John Sliney and Town Attorney Frank Dumark, who wanted to protect places like the Branford Supply Ponds from being developed, and it has regularly taken positions about potential threats to Branford's natural resources, like the proposal in the early 2000s for a natural gas pipeline crossing three Land Trust properties between Pine Orchard and Stony Creek.

While we are encouraged by the support of many of our members, we realize that some of you may not be familiar with the Land Trust assuming these important—sometimes unpopular—roles. Please know that at all times, we are working with respect to our mission and bylaws, and in accordance with the principles and high standards set forth by the Land Trust Alliance, a national conservation organization that represents more than 1,700 land trusts across the country.

Your continued support of the Land Trust makes it possible for our all-volunteer organization to work on your behalf to carry out our mission. We ask you to consider making a generous end-of-year contribution to support our efforts to preserve and promote Branford's diverse natural features for future generations.

*Amos Barnes, President*



## BRANFORD LAND TRUST

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(203) 483-5263  
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### Vice President

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### Secretary

Lauren Brown

### Treasurer

Todd Konnik

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Bill Leece

Michael McGuinness

Jen Payne

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Rose Rita Riccitelli

Heather Smiarowski

Larry Wheeler

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*The Branford Land Trust NEWS is mailed to all Land Trust members. It is produced by Words by Jen, Branford, and printed with soy ink on FSC Certified paper with 50% post-consumer content.*

## Upcoming Events

See [www.branfordlandtrust.org](http://www.branfordlandtrust.org) for complete details.

### ANNUAL NEW YEAR'S DAY WALK

at the Short Beach Preserve

Thursday, January 1 @ 1:00PM

Start your New Year by walking out of doors! This walk, led by Meg Kilgore, is open to all ages and free of charge. Meet at the end of Midwood Road, which runs off of Shore Drive in Short Beach. The walk begins at the cul-de-sac at the end of the road. Expect moderate terrain, some sloping trails and inclines, rocky underfooting. Please wear appropriate dress and comfortable, supportive walking shoes. Bring water. Walking sticks welcome. For questions please call (203) 415-1571.

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### WINTER ANIMAL TRACKING CLASSES

at Lake Saltonstall Preserve

January 23 & February 27, 9:30AM - 11:00AM

Learn to recognize animal footprints and other signs of their passage through the woods during two upcoming Animal Tracking Classes sponsored by the Branford Land Trust's Nature Explorer Program, from 9:30AM to 11AM on January 23 and February 27. The classes will be led by Tom Cleveland and Chris Woerner. We'll hope for snow, but it will be fun even without it! Expect moderate terrain, some sloping trails and inclines, rocky underfooting. Parents should be prepared to carry younger children if they get tired. Please wear appropriate dress and comfortable, supportive walking shoes. Bring water. Walking sticks welcome. Meet at the Regional Water Authority parking lot on the north side of Hosely Avenue, down Hosely Avenue 0.3 miles from Brushy Plain Road. Bad Weather dates: January 24 & February 28. For questions please call Tom Cleveland at (203) 981-9040.

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### 2016 WORK PARTIES

Work parties are scheduled for January 16, February 20, March 19, April 16, May 21, and June 18 (Branford Festival), as well as the spring River and Town Clean-up in April. Watch for details on the BLT website.

**Please visit our website and Facebook page for information about our Spring Lecture Series and upcoming Work Parties.**

# Welcome New Board Members

The Branford Land Trust Board of Directors is pleased to announce the election of two officers and three directors to the Board at the May 2015 Annual Meeting. Rose Rita Riccitelli was elected to a second two-year term as secretary. Todd Konnik will serve his second term as Treasurer. Directors re-elected for a second three-year term are Bill Leece and Martha Rice. Bill Donaruma will serve his first full three-year term as director. One director slot remained open.

Since the annual meeting, Rose Rita retired as secretary. At the November meeting of the Board of Directors, Lauren Brown was elected to fill the remainder of Rose Rita's term. Rose Rita was elected to fill the vacant slot as director.

We sincerely thank retiring Director Curt Johnson for his service and hope he remains an active member for years to come. Curt has recently taken the helm at Save the Sound, which is great news for Long Island Sound and those of us who love it.

## OFFICERS (2015-2017)

**Lauren Brown, Secretary**  
Motivated by a love of the outdoors and dismay at the rapid disappearance of open space, Lauren Brown first joined the Land Trust board in 1976. She served as president from 1984-1988, and has continued to be involved. She and her husband, John Herzan, spearheaded the passage in 1987 of the state scenic roads

legislation, which lends protection to beautiful byways such as Route 146, and with then Land Trust president Jeff Clark, she worked hard for the preservation of Beacon Hill. She has written two botanical field guides and enjoys leading walks for the Land Trust and other organizations.

## Todd Konnik, Treasurer

Originally from Seymour, Todd is now an active Branford resident. He has 30 plus years of banking experience that includes time as a commercial lender, loan review officer and credit officer. He also has a background in real estate appraisal. He currently serves as the Senior Credit Analyst for Guilford Savings Bank. He formerly served as vice-chairman and chairman of the Town of Seymour Board of Finance, as a director of the Nautucket Exchange Club and as a volunteer for Waterbury Hospital's Healthy Hearts Program. He has participated in Land Trust work parties in the past several years. His interests include golf, hiking, cooking and travel.

## DIRECTORS (2015-2018)

### Bill Donaruma

Bill will serve his first full term as director. He has been a member of Branford Rotary Club for over 20 years. He has served on the Rotary Board, as president and assistant district governor. He also worked on the Branford River Project, Branford River Clean-up and several civic

boards and committees. Bill is a Connecticut certified residential real estate appraiser.

### Bill Leece

Bill loves the outdoors and has always had an appreciation for the importance of open space that ultimately led to his interest in the Land Trust. Bill has been active on the Property Management Committee and serves as stewardship chair. He participates regularly in work parties and loves the work. He has owned a home in Branford for over 13 years and moved here full time three years ago after a career in investment management at Prudential Financial. Bill has been active in volunteer work with the Red Cross, the Branford Community Dining Room, and the Connecticut Food Bank. He has also worked as a volunteer high school golf coach.

### Martha Rice

Martha grew up in Branford and has been volunteering with the Branford Land Trust since 1989 and served two terms on the Board many years ago. Martha is chair of the Community Outreach and Education Committee and helps organize Land Trust events and educational programs, including the Environmental Day Camp, Project Limulus (Horseshoe crab survey), and the Winter/Spring Lecture Series. She has a degree in environmental science and has worked for The Nature Conservancy for 20 years.

### Rose Rita Riccitelli

Rose Rita grew up in New Haven and spent many summers at Double Beach in Branford, so her move near the Short Beach area of Branford in 2000 seemed like the perfect transition after selling her home in Hamden. She loves exploring and enjoying the natural lands that surround the beaches and neighborhoods in her community, and appreciates the time, effort and dedication that members of the Branford Land Trust give to the preservation of the natural landscape of our community.

Rose Rita is a former deacon at the First Congregational Church of Branford, served on their Booster Fundraising Committee and was a summer volunteer at Camp Totokett, a camp sponsored by the church serving children from the surrounding communities whose lives have been affected by HIV-AIDS.

Rose Rita also served on the board of Shoreline Village CT, a volunteer organization that helps keep seniors in their homes for as long as possible.

# Building a Strong Membership

by Meg Kilgore, Membership Chairperson

In the fall of 2014, the Membership Committee was revamped for several reasons. Most importantly, there was a changing of the guard. Marina Neris, who had been the database manager for many years moved away and Chris Collins, one of the committee co-chairs stepped down after six years of dedicated work on the committee. Gary Garnet continues on as a committee co-chair and the expert on the fundraising database, which has enhanced our ability to keep a history of our members and run the committee more efficiently. Marcia Wheeler has taken over as the database manager, and I have replaced Chris.

Just prior to these changes, BLT decided to return to having one annual appeal in the spring for renewing memberships. This appeal was sent out to all of our members whose yearly membership had expired by May 2014 and we received over 200 renewals! That plus our life members brought our total membership to 486.

Then we sent out a follow-up renewal reminder in October, and heard from even more of you, so the current total membership is 629! This not only helps us financially, but also confirms the support we have from the community to carry out our mission to preserve open space and promote appreciation of Branford's diverse natural features. And, we hope each of you will enjoy some of the many activities and events we offer throughout the year.

Our committee has other members who have important functions necessary to carry out our job. Connie Drysdale has processed the membership mail, and now PayPal, for at least six years; Stephanie Peck is BLT's corresponding secretary and prepares many of the membership thank you's; Jen Payne maintains the BLT website and set up PayPal to process memberships and in general has helped immensely in the transition since last fall; and Bill Horne does many things where depth of history of the membership is needed.

We thank you all for past support of the Land Trust and look forward to your continued support by keeping your memberships active.

## Funding A Mission

by Todd Konnik, Treasurer

The fiscal year ending April 30, 2015 was a very good one for the Branford Land Trust. Through the generosity of our members and donors, we now protect almost 1400 acres of natural areas and open space.

Ninety-three percent of all of our revenues come from membership dues, contributions, bequests and donations. We are an all-volunteer organization, so the majority of our expenses are for the maintenance and protection of our properties.

The financial condition of the Land Trust remains strong, with the aforementioned land comprising

ninety-four percent of our assets. The Land Trust also maintains funds for land acquisition and stewardship. Funding for land acquisition is often supplemented by government and private grants, membership and public contributions. The Land Trust also has a line of credit with a local bank, if funds are needed quickly. The line of credit has never been used, and the Land Trust has no other debt.

The goal of stewardship funding is to provide an income stream to be used for the management, protection, and monitoring of the conservation values of our properties, without addi-

tional cost to the organization. Through generous donations and prudent fiscal management, the Land Trust has met last year's goal for increasing the stewardship fund.

The results for the fiscal year ended April 30, 2015 have not yet been finalized, but preliminary indications are for another year of strong financial performance and condition.

We would like to thank all of our members, contributors and volunteers for their support in helping to preserve our open space in Branford.

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**TO SUPPORT THE  
LAND TRUST IN ITS  
EFFORTS PLEASE  
CONSIDER AN END-OF-  
YEAR DONATION. A  
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.....

# In Memory

by Jen Payne

During 2015, the Branford Land Trust noted the passing of a number of long-time supporters including Dr. Nicholas Nickou who loved sharing his vast knowledge of botany and horticulture. He consulted on many town planting projects and hiking trail plant identifications, including those at Young's Pond. Dr. Nickou and his wife Doris gave the Land Trust a large part of the wetland downstream of Griffing Pond between Totoket Road and Sunset Hill Drive.

We were likewise saddened by the passing of Dr. Vincent DeLuca, a former board member, who thoughtfully led the Land Trust's Stewardship Committee for a number of years. During his tenure, he oversaw the development of management plans for several important preserves, and organized a number of informative lectures for property stewards.

Avid ornithologist Noble Proctor passed away in May. Proctor was a professor of ornithology, botany, and biogeography, a noted wildlife photographer, and the author of a number book on birds and wildlife. Over the years, he provided a wealth of knowledge to the Land Trust about the biological communities on BLT preserves, and was a favorite speaker at our Spring Lectures.

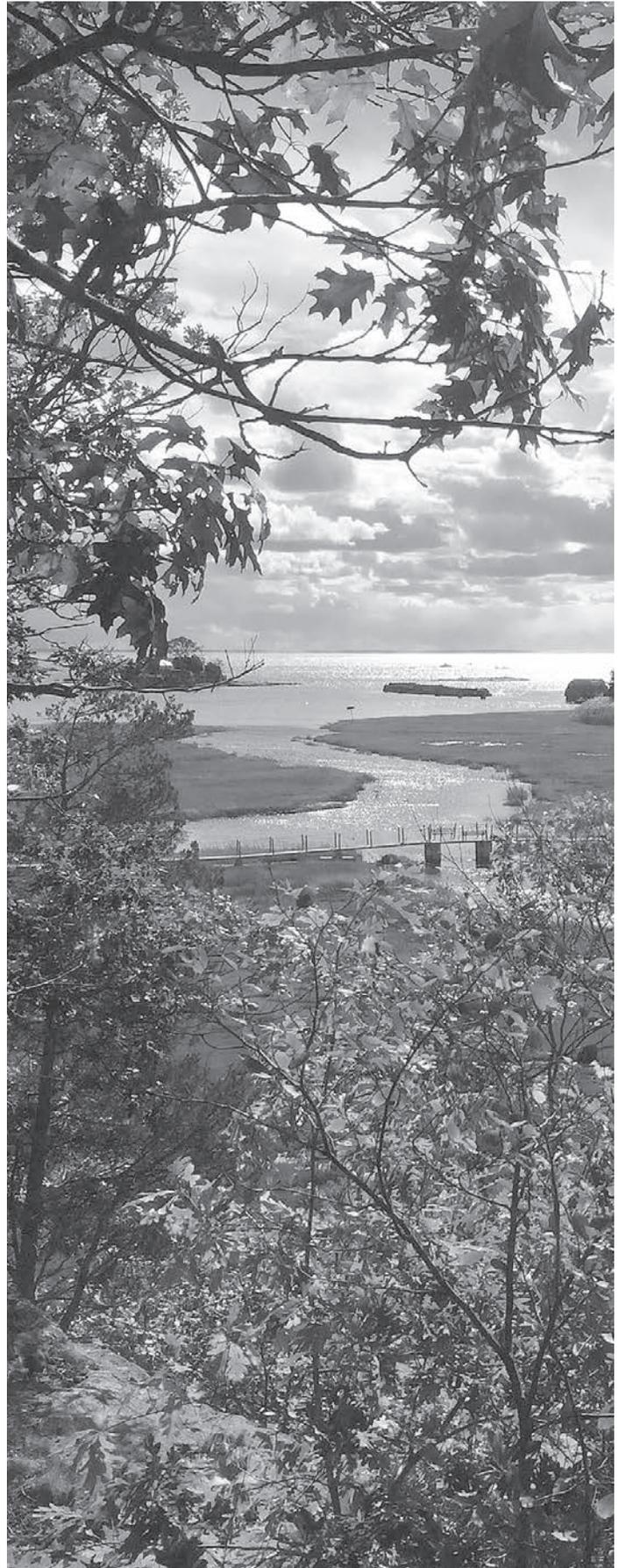
..... **ALONE WE CAN DO SO LITTLE; TOGETHER WE CAN DO SO MUCH.** .....

In April, we were notified of Frank Dumark's passing. Attorney Dumark was a partner in the Dumark and Lindsay law firm in Branford, and served as town attorney during the Sliney administration. He was one of the original incorporators of the Branford Land Trust.

Most recently, we lost longtime supporter and former board member Chris Peterson. His life was anchored by his love for Long Island Sound, where he sailed for decades. He was a founder of the Friends of the Farm River Estuary, and served as its president for several years.

These men are testament to one of Helen Keller's favorite statements: "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." We are grateful to all of them, and all of you, for helping us do so much.

*View of Long Island Sound from the Vedder Preserve. Photo by Jen Payne.*



# Land Trust Acquires Open Space on Gould Lane

*by Bill Horne*

In July, the Land Trust acquired 5.5 acres of upland and wetland as part of a planned residential development between Gould Lane and Lomartra Lane. The wetland on the new property, pictured below, is a diverse red maple-shrub swamp, with a mixed community of red maple, winterberry, high bush blueberry, sweet pepperbush, tussock sedge, cattails and other wetland plants. It is the eastern end of a larger wetland that extends behind three houses on Gould Lane onto the Land Trust's Beachwood tract on the far side of Beechwood Road. The wetland drains north under Gould Lane into the small pond on the open space parcel that the Town gave to the Land Trust in 1999. The property management committee has marked the boundary of the open space parcel and letters have been sent to the owners of abutting properties introducing them to the Land Trust.

The 47 Gould Lane parcel is one of two acquisitions that the Acquisition Committee worked on during the 2014-2015 fiscal year. The second was land from an open space residential development of the property at 271 Brushy Plain Road. An open space residential development protects more open space than a standard subdivision. The proposed plan, which has been approved by the Inland Wetlands Commission and the Planning and Zoning Commission, will protect 6.3 acres at the east end of the property. Look for more details in coming issues of the BLT newsletter.



*The Gould Lane property.  
(Photo by Bill Horne)*

# Branford High School Seniors Intern with the Land Trust

by Bill Horne



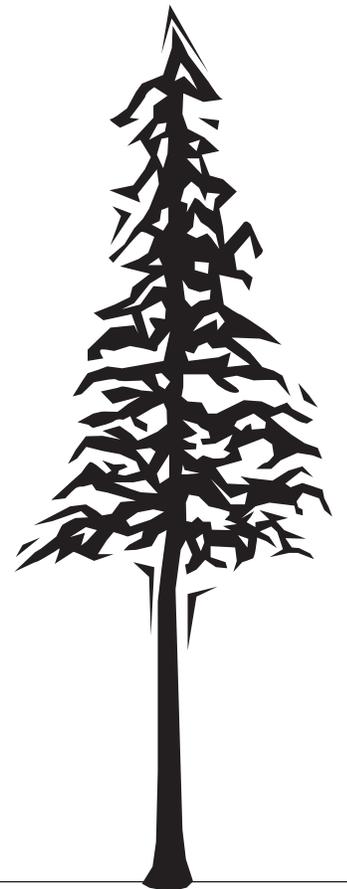
Zoë Smiarowski, Aaron Radulski and Leah Braley in the Jarvis Creek Preserve. (Photo by Bill Horne)

For the second year in a row, Branford High School seniors who share an interest in the outdoors and environmental issues did full-time internships with the Branford Land Trust from May 11 to June 11, learning about Branford's open space and how the Branford Land Trust works to protect it for future generations. Leah Braley, Aaron Radulski and Zoë Smiarowski worked with BLT volunteers and scientists from Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies (YFES) on a variety of activities that support BLT's mission to protect Branford's open space. Leah is now studying marine science at the University of Maine-Orono, Aaron is now studying environmental engineering at Loyola-Marymount, and Zoë is now studying environmental science at UConn.

The interns worked with YFES postdoctoral fellow Lauren Smith, BLT Director Bill Leece and Bill Horne to set up a study to compare the effects of spring and fall mowing on the biological diversity of the Land Trust's old fields. Multiple groups of three 20 meter-square plots were staked out in the fields of the Medlyn, Van Wie, Stony Creek Limited Partnership and Hammer Woodlands tracts. In each set of plots, one will be mowed in the spring and one mowed in the fall; the third plot will be an unmowed control. The plots will be monitored each year to identify different plant and insect species and determine how mowing at a different time affects the biological diversity.

In addition to their work on the field mowing study, the interns completed the marking of the Van Wie

Woods Preserve boundary and began marking the boundary of the Anderson-Wilcox tract with BLT Director Larry Wheeler, discovering several minor encroachments in the process. They conducted annual monitoring of BLT's Jarvis Creek Preserve and Vedder Preserve, and removed invasive garlic mustard from the Vedder Preserve. The interns also assisted Bill Horne in hosting a field trip for Mary Murphy third graders to learn about ospreys and observe an osprey nest near the Trolley Trail. They finished the internship with a day on Outer Island helping to mentor several classes of New Haven elementary school students learning about the wildlife refuge and resident shore birds and invasive Asian shore crabs.



# Nature Explorer Program

by Meg Kilgore

The BLT's Nature Explorer Program continues to offer activities for adults and families, encouraging people to have fun outside as we explore the preserved properties in Branford.

From 2014-2015, we repeated our regularly scheduled events, and added a new bird walk in the fall, and a spring turtles and snakes walk. Here is the rundown:

The Branford River Parade, paddling from Branford High School to Branford Point, included a picnic afterwards at Parker Park. Jay Babina and his brother Phil, with their handmade wooden kayaks, led the paddling. Matt Reed and Beth Dock helped in running the trip.

Paul Wolter, a great birder who lives in Branford, led a Bird Walk at the Supply Ponds. It was a chilly October day, but the birds didn't mind! We saw 36 different species, including two flocks of pine siskins, a late

migrating magnolia warbler, and a pair of hunting coopers hawks!

Truman Sherk led the Fall Foliage Walk at the Hammer Woodlands. Of special interest were the remains of an icehouse and the walk around the property's three ponds.

The Pre-Thanksgiving Walk on the Van Wie property has been a BLT tradition for many years, and continues to be a popular event, with about 50 participants coming out on a glorious fall day to explore BLT's largest holding. The walk was led by Bill Horne and Ainsley Highman.

The New Year's Day Hike this year was on a beautiful mild day with a turnout of around 85 people! Bill Horne led the walk around the Goss property and then along the Trolley Trail, with many continuing on around the Vedder property as well to see the terrific view of the Thimble Islands from its highest point.

Tom Cleveland and

Chris Woerner, who have much to teach families about the various tracks we see in snow, led the Animal Tracking Class. Chris also showed us numerous skulls and bones of animals found in our woods. Luckily there was abundant snow on both days. Altogether, there were around 90 participants. On the second walk, someone even spotted bobcat tracks!

The Wildflower Walk was led this year by Bill Horne on the Bontatibus property. He had discovered that it had an abundant number of wildflowers, so it was good to have an event on a property that not many of us know. Bill was able to identify the flowers as many smart phones snapped photos!

And then there was the annual Bird Watching Walk led by Chris Woerner on the Stony Creek Trolley Trail and the Vedder Preserve. Chris is so good at identifying all of the birds we see and hear. And, he has such enthusiasm about each and

every kind of bird! On each day, we saw or heard over 40 species, including many oystercatchers, yellow legs, and a red-throated loon.

There was a Turtle and Snake Walk led by Luis Moreira at the Supply Ponds in June. He was very informed, and brought a spotted turtle to show us. We also saw many painted turtles, one that he picked up for a few minutes from the edge of the pond; a snapping turtle; and many places where snapping turtle eggs have been laid. It was a fun adventure for the adults and children who attended!

And there's more coming! The details of the Upcoming events can be found on page 2. And, if you get on BLT's email list, you will receive reminders of these and all BLT events about two weeks before they happen. So, sign up NOW on the BLT website!



An abundance of snow was a welcome bonus for the winter Animal Tracking Class at Lake Saltonstall. (Photo by Meg Kilgore)



Bill Horne leads the spring Wildflower Walk on the Bontatibus property. (Photo by Meg Kilgore)

# Project Limulus

by Heather Smiarowski

## COMMUNITY-BASED ATLANTIC HORSESHOE CRAB STUDY

**H**orseshoe crabs come to spawn on the beaches of the Atlantic Coast, but the population has significantly declined during the last several decades. The Branford Land Trust continues to contribute to the community-based research study that is conducted in many states on the East Coast, through both the United States Fish and Wildlife Survey and locally organized by Sacred Heart University. Our local volunteers placed approximately 600 tags on the crabs in the Short Beach area during the 2014 spawning season. We had a group of enthusiastic Girl Scouts and their families join us for a 1:20AM survey. They did a wonderful job helping and they learned a lot about the study. The troop leader designed a special patch for their participation and several of the Scouts went on to



incorporate Project Limulus into their public service projects.

The tagging efforts are designed to study population density and migration patterns. Sacred Heart University has now begun collecting data on size, overall condition, and a shell-rating system, in order to examine the abundance of food sources during the early growth stages, as well as the current health and age distribution of the local population. SHU continues to study and identify important nursery areas close to the shore where the horseshoe crabs spend their first few years feeding and molting. The horseshoe crab will molt on average 17 times over a span of 9 to 12 years

before reaching maturity and returning to the beaches to spawn. Sacred Heart assigned a group of research students to study the area around Short Beach, due to the relative abundance of spawning crabs along this section of the coastline. Nursery areas were discovered and environmental samples taken for further examination. The study of this unique horseshoe crab-friendly ecosystem continues to be of scientific interest and of future research. For additional information and/or to join us next spring for this community research study, please contact Heather Smiarowski at [nauticgal@gmail.com](mailto:nauticgal@gmail.com) or Martha Rice at [mrice@gmail.com](mailto:mrice@gmail.com)

# Branford Osprey

by Jonathan Clark

**T**he osprey population in Branford appears to be thriving, thanks in good measure to the help of Bob Bejnerowicz and his crew of osprey nesting platform maintainers. Not only were almost all of the 30-plus platforms successfully occupied, we also had at least three nests on cell towers and two in trees bordering marshland. Despite the harsh winter, Bob and his crew got urgent repair work done in time for the return of these majestic birds in mid-March. BLT also secured a DEEP permit and installed an additional platform in the Jarvis Creek marsh, just off Leetes Island Road. BLT is partnering with the CT Audubon Society to promote the monitoring of nests to keep tabs on how Connecticut's population is faring.



Chris Woerner helps identify birds along the Stony Creek Trolley Trail during the Spring Bird Walk. (Photo by Meg Kilgore)



Luis Moreira teaches about turtles and snakes during a spring walk at the Supply Ponds. (Photo by Meg Kilgore)

# Land Trust Alliance Accreditation Report

by Jonathan Clark, Vice President

During the past year BLT has continued to review and update our policies and practices to bring them into conformity with the recommendations of the Land Trust Alliance, moving closer to being able to formally apply for accreditation. This year we adopted procedures on how the board's Conflict of Interest policy will be implemented and appropriate records kept. We also adopted a policy on our web page content access. Both the Acquisitions Committee and the Stewardship Committee began review of LTA policy and procedure guidelines in order to bring our practices into full compliance. Several board members met with an LTA representative to discuss certification issues.

We on the BLT board are proud of BLT's conservation accomplishments, education and outreach activities, and strong financial management. By bringing every aspect of our operations into compliance with Land Trust Alliance standards we hope to insure the long term success of our organization and earn the continuing support of our members.

# Educational and Community Outreach

by Martha Rice, Chairperson

Last year the Branford Land Trust held its 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Environmental Day Camp. Over 30 children enjoyed activities that included tide pools and touch tanks (see photo below), nature crafts, and forest and cave exploration. In addition, the children enjoyed programs by Curious Creatures, Dr. Marmalaide, and A Place called Hope. This camp would not be possible without the help of volunteers! Twenty volunteers lent a helping hand with everything from coordinating and planning, leading activities, chaperoning, and serving snacks and lunch.

The Winter/Spring Lecture Series included speaker Steve Broker who spoke about peregrine falcons, Kimberly Stoner from the CT Agricultural Experiment Station who spoke on bees, and author and naturalist Mary O'Connor who helped us use the sweet spots of the earth, the sea, and the sky to our best advantage.

At the Land Trust annual meeting, Robert Tougias, a birding columnist for the New London Day, naturalist and author of *The Quest for the Eastern Cougar* gave a very informative lecture on the eastern cougar.



# Property Management

by Michael McGuinness and Bill Horne

The Land Trust knows that sound property management practices are critical for the protection of land that we hold in trust for the public good. It is important to monitor the physical status of our land and wetland parcels, to keep track of property boundaries and encroachments, and to maintain our properties in their natural state while allowing for the public's easy access to established preserves and trails. Our ability to meet these objectives depends on tract stewards and work party volunteers who are the cornerstone of our program and who play a crucial role in the BLT's management and protection of the land entrusted to it.

From 2014-2015, our property management efforts included the removal of invasive plants at the Addiss and Johnson Point Conservation Group tracts, clean-up and brush removal at Jennifer Heights, the creation of a new trail on the Short Beach Preserve, removal of bittersweet and climbing plants in the Sybil Creek Preserve, clearing of the shrubs along the Zielinski Farm on Brushy Plain Road, maintenance work in the field at the Stony Creek Limited Partnership, and a major clean-up and invasive plant removal at the Vedder Preserve near the Trolley Trail in Stony Creek. We also participated in the Annual Branford River and Town Clean-Up Day in April, and assisted at the Branford Festival in June.

As we moved into the summer of 2015, property management volunteers continued with a number of coordinated work parties and boundary marking projects, including the new Gould Lane tract (see page 6).

A number of Land Trust properties include fields, like you see at Van Wie Woods and Stony Creek Limited Partnership property. This year, scientists from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies helped set up a long-term study to determine how mowing our fields in the spring or in the fall differ in encouraging diversity of plants, insect and birds.

Branford High School interns Leah Braley, Aaron Radulski and Zoë Smiarowski (see page 7) assisted with many of these efforts in May and June. We are grateful to these interns, Board members and the many volunteers who continue to help with our efforts, including Emily Arsenault, Bob Baker, Mike Ball, Amos Barnes, Clarice Begemann, Fred Biamonte, Paul, Deb and Jonathan Bodner, Weylin Burke, Alpha Coiro, Peter Craig, Beth Dock, Dan Fitzgerald, Steve Gallicher, Arthur Haug and Eunice Mahler-Haug, Betsy Hedley-Cohn, Bill Horne, Kitty Ing, Dennis Kelly, Katherine Kuhn, Bill Leece, Tom McGlashan, Mike McGuinness, J E McSharry, Harry Merrick, Judy Miller, Logan Reed, Matt Reed, Danny Shapiro, Lauren Smith, John Soehnlein, Stu Tillinghast, John Watson, and Larry Wheeler.



**PROPERTY MANAGEMENT VOLUNTEERS CONTINUED WITH A NUMBER OF COORDINATED WORK PARTIES AND BOUNDARY MARKING PROJECTS**

## HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED A ROLE IN LAND TRUST LEADERSHIP?

The Branford Land Trust Board of Directors consists of 5 officers and 12 directors. Officers serve a two-year term and directors serve a three-year term. Both are eligible for renewal once. The Land Trust by-laws limit the number of terms for any individual in any one position, to encourage a constant flow of new faces and fresh ideas. This system does just that, but as a consequence we are constantly looking for those new faces. If you are committed to preserving open space in Branford and helping to promote appreciation of Branford's natural resources, a spot on the Board of Directors or the Advisory Board may be right for you.

The Board of Directors meets on the third Monday of every month at 7:30PM at the Land Trust House in Stony Creek. Please consider coming to a meeting to get acquainted, or volunteering for one of our many committees to get started. This newsletter is full of the news for each committee. Or email us at [info@branfordlandtrust.org](mailto:info@branfordlandtrust.org), or call Joan Merrick at 203-481-0674 for more information.

What interests you?



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**NEWS & NOTES**

**Writers Wanted!**

We're looking for writers to help develop content for our newsletter, website and special projects. Topics may include: flora and fauna, environmental issues, local trails, BLT events, and more. If you're interested, please contact Jen Payne, wordsbyjen@comcast.net.

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NEED  
YOU!**

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**SIGN ME UP!**

- Board of Directors/Leadership
- Community Outreach & Education
- Hands-on Environmental Day Camp
- Membership
- Nature Explorer Program
- Publicity & Website
- Secretarial/Administrative
- Tract Stewards
- Trails & Work Parties

Special Interests or Skills .....

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**Mail to: Branford Land Trust, P.O. Box 254,  
Branford, CT 06405, or send your information  
via email us at [info@branfordlandtrust.org](mailto:info@branfordlandtrust.org).**