

The Warren Conservator

Spring 2015



From The President's Desk

Dear WLT Friends and Supporters,

As you've likely noticed from the photo accompanying this missive, The Warren Land Trust has a new president. After numerous years on the Board of Directors, and five years as vice-president, it is my honor and great pleasure to succeed Ted Morse as WLT President. For those of you whom I've not yet had the pleasure of meeting, my family and I have been in Warren for the last dozen years, first on Melius Road and more recently on the lake. My husband Jim and I grew up in New England, and this part of the world feels like home to us. When our children Kira and Will (now 17 and 15) were little, we knew we wanted them to share some of the experiences we'd had growing up – to enjoy peace and quiet and the great outdoors; to know that peaches and apples grow on trees, not at the corner bodega; or to know what cows look (and smell!) like up close. We feel very lucky to have found our way to Warren.

I came to be involved in and passionate about land preservation in a roundabout way. Unlike some of our board members, I have no training in forestry or land management or orienteering: if lost in the depths of the woods, I doubt I could find my way out without GPS or a cell phone (assuming, of course, that I could get service)! As an avid runner, however, I've explored many of our local roads and trails, appreciating the beauty and quietude of my surroundings. I've seen the town I grew up in on Boston's North Shore, and the Cape Cod town where I vacationed as a child, change irreversibly due to incautious development. And finally, like my predecessor in this position, I'm a historian, and thus prone to thinking about what is worth preserving as time and progress march on. As a land trust board member, I have been involved primarily in matters of outreach and governance, although I've accompanied our land acquisition and stewardship team on more than one information-gathering or property management walkabout, and look forward to understanding that aspect of our work in greater depth.

These are exciting days for The Warren Land Trust. As you will read in this newsletter or perhaps have already heard, after years of diligent preparation, we have been accredited by the national Land Trust Alliance. This is a significant vote of confidence in our organization, and we couldn't be happier or more proud to share it with our friends and supporters. We are equally happy to once again devote ourselves full-time to the business of being a land trust: pursuing potential properties for preservation, educating the community about land conservation, supporting thoughtful and measured development, and celebrating our natural surroundings. We hope you'll join us in the latter: please read about the upcoming April Town Clean-up and June CT Trails Day hike...and join us at both events!

Finally, I would like to close with a few words of appreciation for my predecessor. Ted presided over the WLT over the course of five eventful and sometimes challenging years. It's not often that one would commend a respected historian and former school headmaster for serving as head cheerleader, but that was an important part of Ted's role – shepherding us through the accreditation application process with faith in our abilities and achievements, with steadfast optimism, and with a much-needed sense of humor. Fortunately for the WLT, Ted will remain on the board, where we will continue to benefit from his effectiveness and affability. Thank you, Ted, for your leadership and your work on behalf of the Warren Land Trust!

Sincerely,
Rebecca Neary

Warren Land Trust Board

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Rebecca Neary

Vice-President
Tim Angevine

Treasurer
Barbara Page

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Jack Baker
Jamie Browne
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Bill Mansfield
Dave Schneiderbeck

EX OFFICIO BOARD MEMBER
Craig Nelson

Warren Land Trust Mission Statement

The Warren Land Trust is an advocacy group dedicated to the preservation of the rural character of Warren. Its mission is to preserve farmland, open space, natural and endangered resources such as wetlands, forests and wildlife habitats, to encourage outright gifting of land for permanent protection and the use of conservation easements to preserve open space.

Town Clean-up Announcement: Keep Warren Beautiful! Town Clean-up: April 18th

Commemorate Earth Day by keeping our little piece of the planet clean and pristine! The Warren Land Trust is once again partnering with Warren Parks & Recreation for the annual Town Clean-Up. The clean-up is scheduled for Saturday, April 18th, with a rain date of Sunday, April 19th. Come to the Community Center starting at 10am, pick up garbage bags and rubber gloves, and choose your route from the town map. Cover as little or as much of our roadside as you can – every little bit counts. Wear something comfortable, weather-appropriate, and that can stand to get dirty! Refreshments will be available, so you can fuel up before heading out. Bring the (older) kids – the clean-up is a great way to get them involved in hands-on community service. Questions? Email us at info@warrenlandtrust.org.



Exciting News: We Are an Accredited Land Trust!



The Warren Land Trust is proud to announce that it has been awarded accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. The Land Trust Accreditation Commission was established by the national Land Trust Alliance to recognize land conservation organizations across the country that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. The Warren Land Trust's accreditation process began in May 2010 with the Board's decision to pursue accreditation and create an Accreditation Committee, and culminated in February 2015, when the Land Trust Accreditation Commission awarded Warren Land Trust accreditation. The five years in between these two points encompassed a rigorous independent analysis of our programs and practices, as has been outlined in previous newsletter articles.

"We are delighted and relieved that all the hard work, self-evaluation, and commitment of the Board paid off in this very rewarding experience," said Ted Morse, who, as president from 2009 to 2014, shepherded our small, all-volunteer organization through the process. "This was an enormous project; we re-examined all of our existing policies and procedures, updated and improved them where necessary, and in many cases generated new ones," he added.

As an accredited land trust, we are now able to display the Land Trust Accreditation Commission's trademarked seal, indicating to current and potential supporters, and the public at large, that we meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust, and have ensured that our conservation efforts are permanent. Additionally, The Warren Land Trust is eligible to participate in a special insurance policy rating structure designed by the Chubb Group of Insurance Companies, and to participate in the Land Trust Accreditation Commission's conservation defense insurance program.

In addition to the long hours and contributions by the board – most notably, Accreditation Committee chair Dan Hulseberg - The Warren Land Trust extends special thanks to Connie Manes of Manes Consulting LLC for her guidance, Denise Trevenen of Trevenen and Coploff for her legal expertise, and the entire team at Baker Botts LLP for their pro bono legal support.

As WLT president Rebecca Neary observed, "The accreditation application process was a strenuous one, but ultimately has made us a stronger and more effective organization. We are looking forward to serving our community and fulfilling our land conservation mission with greater transparency and a renewed sense of purpose."

New Board Member: Bill Mansfield

We hope you will join us in welcoming the newest member of our Board

of Directors: Bill Mansfield. Bill and his family (wife Joanne, and children Owen, Bennett, and Alice) have spent weekends and summers in Warren for over 15 years. A 25 year-plus veteran of the financial services industry, Bill will serve on our Finance committee, and will also indulge his love of Warren's great outdoors (he's an avid biker and runner) as a member of the Land Acquisitions & Stewardship committee. He commented, "I am



Nice hat, Bill!

very excited to join the Board of the Warren Land Trust. Warren has a wonderful rural character and I am honored to be in an organization dedicated to maintaining this character."

Are you WLT's neighbor?



Do you live near one of the Warren Land Trust's fee properties or easements? Check out the interactive map on our website, www.warrenlandtrust.org, and see. If you are, we'd like to make a "conservation connection!" Our aim

is to maintain these properties in a largely natural state, and we could use your help. If you're interested in helping us oversee or otherwise steward a Warren Land Trust property near you, please let us know: contact Tim Angevine at timotheangevine@hotmail.com

Report on our 2014 Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of The Warren Land Trust was held on November 15th at 9am at the Academy on Sackett Hill Road. It was a pleasure to have some of our supporters on hand to hear an update on the past year's activities and our plans for 2015.

John Favreau, Waltraud and Herman Tammen, Terry and Anne Jones and Howard Rosenfeld had some good questions and interesting commentary to offer.

We dedicated significant time at the meeting to discussing our financial status, our stewardship practices, and programming. We appraised the membership of the final stages of the accreditation application process, scheduled to be completed in December.

Sadly and reluctantly, we accepted the retirement letter of May Brawley Hill, a member of the original 1989 land trust board. May served with great dedication in many capacities – most notably as our longtime Secretary - and graced our board with quiet competence, and a dry and gentle wit.

Much as we regretted to announce May's departure, we were pleased to welcome a new Director, Bill Mansfield, to the board. Bill brings both financial expertise and a love of Warren's great outdoors to the land trust, which will stand him in good stead as a member of our Finance and Land Acquisition & Stewardship committees. Look for a brief profile of Bill found to the left of this article.

Directors Tim Clew, Rebecca Conner, Nancy Morse, Rebecca Neary, Barbara Page, and Dave Schneiderbeck were also reelected for three-year terms.

The business portion of the meeting having been completed, many people stayed to enjoy refreshments, chat, ask questions and offer support. It was truly a gratifying and agreeable close to a productive annual meeting!

**The WLT currently holds over 650 acres under permanent protection.
IF YOU AREN'T A MEMBER OF THE WARREN LAND TRUST,
WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN NOW!!**

Becoming a Member of The Warren Land Trust is easy. Simply cut off this page and send it to our mailing address below, along with your check. We will send you a receipt along with our thanks for your generous, 100% tax deductible contribution. Please include your name, address and email so that we may include you in our email updates. Choose the type of membership you would like:

Family Membership \$25

Land Protector \$100

Land Caretaker \$300

Land Conservator \$500

Land Steward \$1,000

Land Grantor \$2,500

Email: _____

Please make checks payable to: The Warren Land Trust, Inc.

MAIL THIS FORM AND CHECK TO: The Warren Land Trust, Inc. 50 Cemetery Road, Warren, CT 06754

To join or donate online, visit www.warrenlandtrust.org

Please make any necessary corrections to your name and address on the mailing panel and submit to the WLT.

Come Hit the Trail with the Warren Land Trust on June 6th!!

Did you know that the weekend of June 6-7 is Connecticut Trails Weekend? Coordinated by the Connecticut Forest & Park Association since 1993, this celebration of hiking and the great outdoors allows state parks, towns, land trusts, nature centers, and other organizations to showcase their trails, their volunteers, and the work they do to thousands of people statewide. All while promoting healthy outdoor recreation.



The Warren Land Trust will sponsor a hike on Saturday, June 6th at 10am (rain date, June 7th). Join us as land trust board member and orienteering expert Dave Schneiderbeck leads a guided nature hike along the Mattatuck Trail through Warren's scenic woodlands to the Upper Shepaug Reservoir. Wear your hiking boots and dress for a 4-mile walk in the woods over moderate terrain. Bring your water bottle; we'll provide the gorp! We will meet at the end of the paved portion of Hardscrabble Road. Parking available. Pre-registration is recommended. To register or with questions, contact Rebecca Neary at info@warrenlandtrust.org.



Seeking Volunteers and New Board Members

Volunteers are very important to the Warren Land Trust (WLT). There are numerous opportunities throughout the year to help WLT. Whether you have a few hours or a full day to volunteer; whether you could attend a meeting or event, or would prefer to do something from home; whether you have a special skill or just enthusiasm, please consider donating your time to help protect Warren's unique resources and open space.

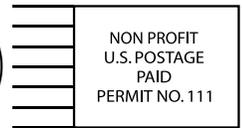
Here are some ways in which we could use your help:

- **Trails and property maintenance; lead a nature walk**
- **Warren Fall Festival Booth**
- **Town Clean Up and Swap Meet**
- **Write for our newsletter**
- **Help with mailings**
- **Tech support**
- **Event planning**

We are also looking for new volunteer Board Members who can bring experience to the board in areas such as working with nonprofits, fundraising, finance, law (particularly CT bar), land trust operations, surveying and property inspection.

To volunteer, please contact Rebecca Neary (info@warrenlandtrust.org / 860-868-7939) and indicate how you would like to help.

If you are interested in joining the Board, please contact Rebecca Neary (info@warrenlandtrust.org / 860-868-7939), along with a copy of your resume or other description of your experience and interest. All board members are elected at the annual board meeting in November. However, we may add an interim board member during the course of the year.



Important Dates:

- **April 18 - 11:00 - 2:00**
Town Clean-up
(Rain date Sunday, April 19)
- **June 6 - Trails Day**
(Rain date Sunday, June 7)
- **Oct. 10/11 - Fall Festival**
- **Nov. 21 - Annual Meeting**

For up to date information:
www.warrenlandtrust.org

In Memoriam: Tom Sarsfield

Longtime board member Tom Sarsfield passed away on November 21, 2014. Tom was previously profiled in these pages (see the “Featured WLT Board Member Profiles” box on our website for that article), but we wanted to take a moment to honor someone who meant so much to our land trust. As a board member, Tom was indispensable. He never served as an officer (although asked to do so more than once), but operated behind the scenes on multiple levels and with great efficiency – a real “sixth man,” in basketball terms. Anyone who knew Tom also knows that he’d hate a page full of sentimental encomiums. So we leave it to those who worked most closely with him on our board to simply say a few words about Tom.



Tom in action at the WLT booth at the Fall Festival

Jack Baker, who served with Tom on the Land Acquisition & Stewardship Committee: “Tom loved Warren. He brought a common-sense, no-nonsense approach to the many boards and committees he served on. All of us have benefited from his efforts to make Warren the best town it can be and to preserve Warren for future generations. Tom’s commitment to his community, friends and family was inspirational to all who knew him.”

Ted Morse, WLT President from 2009-2014: “Tom had an amazing ability to boil a complex issue down into simple, comprehensible terms: Let’s cut the BS. Here’s the bottom line. Do we want to do this or not? He was Mr. Can-do: Here, give me the paperwork. I’ll take care of it and share results at the next meeting. Or I’d call and say, ‘Tom, I just received some papers which need a second opinion and signature.’ He’d reply, ‘Ted, meet me and Jack at the Rooster Tail at 5, and we’ll solve everything over a beer.’”

Barbara Page, WLT Treasurer, who worked with Tom in his capacity as chair of the Finance Committee: “Tom was a bit intimidating at first, but I soon learned that he enjoyed giving that first impression. As time passed, I found him to be accessible, warm, very smart and experienced, and yet humble enough to appreciate others for their experiences and expertise. He clearly adored his wife and had the utmost respect for her. It was so heartwarming to see that, and the warmth that was underneath the tough exterior. I really miss working with Tom. I learned a lot from him. I miss his advice, his short, timely and clever emails, and most of all, his character.”