



The Warren Conservator

Spring/Summer 2023

WARREN
LAND TRUST



President's Letter

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Looking out my window this morning, I see signs of Spring, and hope that they are here to stay. Spring is a perfect time for new projects and new energy – for the Warren Land Trust as much as for us as individuals. As you may recall, we've been engaged in a strategic planning preparation process that has had us thinking about our evolution over the last decade or so, and where we hope to go from here. A springtime project par excellence!

One important element of that project included revising WLT's mission statement – the definition of our core purpose; what we do and why we do it. Our previous mission statement, adopted some time ago, declared:

The Warren Land Trust is a conservation organization 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.

This was an apt description of our fundamental area of endeavor. But we felt it important to express more clearly our duty to steward the land under our protection, and underscore our organization's "why" – the connection between land and community. In a working group and then with the full board, we carefully and thoughtfully combined the best of the earlier version with newer priorities. This is our new mission statement:

The Warren Land Trust is a nationally-accredited conservation organization dedicated to the preservation and responsible stewardship of open space, watershed and natural resources in and around Warren, Connecticut for the benefit of current and future generations. These protected resources include meadows, forests, lakes, ponds, streams, wetlands, wildlife habitats and corridors, farmland and scenic vistas. Committed to connecting the community to nature, the Warren Land Trust creates opportunities to enjoy, learn about and care for land and the environment.

At the same time, we decided that it would also be helpful to adopt a vision statement as a way to guide strategic thinking about WLT's future. A complement to the mission statement, a vision statement describes what we aim to achieve when fulfilling our mission. We agreed on the following vision statement:

Through the work of the Warren Land Trust, we envision:

- Open space and natural resources of high conservation value that are protected in perpetuity in Warren and its environs.
- A resilient natural environment adaptable to climate change.
- Passive outdoor recreational opportunities accessible to the public.
- Healthy working farms and farmland.
- Clean drinking water and healthy water resources, including Lake Waramaug and its watershed.
- Implementation of best practices in land stewardship on WLT preserves and easements.
- An informed and engaged community that supports our work, enjoys our preserves, and values environmental protection and land conservation.
- A balance of conservation and development that supports a vibrant Town of Warren, as envisioned by its Plan of Conservation and Development.
- Organizational sustainability to fulfill our mission and realize our vision with a fully engaged board, collaborative partnerships, a robust volunteer corps and a dedicated donor base.

We are energized and inspired by the goals and guideposts that our new mission and vision statements provide. We look forward to updating you as we adopt strategies to fulfill them, and to your feedback!

Sincerely,

Rebecca Neary
President, The Warren Land Trust



Welcome, Greg LaCava!

WLT is pleased to welcome Greg LaCava to our Board of Directors. Warren's First Selectman serves as an ex officio board member, and we are fortunate that our town's first officers tend to value the great outdoors! Greg is no exception: he is an avid hiker. He says: "Growing up in Warren and returning here later in life, I've grown an even greater appreciation for the serenity of this town's natural beauty. I have always enjoyed viewing and experiencing Warren's many lakes, rivers streams and trails. I hope future generations will enjoy Warren as much as I have." We couldn't agree more!

Give Local and Help Fund a Major New Project!

Tuesday 4/25-Wednesday 4/26

Give Local, the CT Community Foundation's online giving campaign benefiting regional non-profits, will take place on April 25th and 26th, we ask you to support a major and conservation initiative. From 7am on the 25th to 7pm on the 26th, you can support a major land conservation initiative!



The Warren Land Trust is set to close very soon on our newest preserve, a 237-acre property at the end of Cunningham Road in Warren. This acquisition has been in the works for nearly 3 years and the property is a stunning mixture of forestland, streams and swamps, and dramatic rock formations - as well as the homesite of Charles Grandison Finney, a major 19th century religious figure and President of Oberlin College (whose students erected a monument to him on the property). It abuts Kent Land Trust's 263-acre East Kent Hamlet Nature Preserve (the hiking possibilities are making us drool!) as well as a large section of CT's Wyantenock State Forest.

As soon as the property has been purchased and thereby preserved forever, the WLT will be clearing an old logging road that connects directly with KLT's property and cutting new trails designed to mesh our 2 trail systems. We will also install kiosks, create parking areas and clean up the land around the Finney homestead.

Can you help us? Funds donated to the Warren Land Trust during Give Local 2023 will go directly to this new preserve and its trail network; any additional funds left over will also support our land conservation mission.

A live link will be sent to you by email blast before and during the fundraiser. Your donation is augmented by bonus funds provided by the Connecticut Community Foundation and Give Local sponsors, giving your generosity an extra booster. You may also make a secure contribution, by directly visiting www.GiveLocalCCF.org. Thank you so much for your generous support. Together we can make this new property one of the jewels of our preserve system and a destination for hikers and nature lovers near and far.

Warren Community Garden Update



The Warren Community Garden took the opportunity over the winter to analyze the garden's soil and determine the best treatment for enhancing soil health and productivity as it prepares for its second growing season. Garden members, with the assistance of Connecticut's Agriculture Experiment Station, performed soil tests that confirmed the success of soil amendments completed last year. But there is always room for improvement and the WCG has begun to implement an organic fertilizer regimen to be continued through bed prep in April.

New ideas that are sprouting at the WCG for the upcoming season include a Children's Garden in one of the large beds, a renovation of the Wasleys' former blueberry grove, field trips to neighboring farms and a composting workshop. In addition to renting beds, there are many ways to join the garden community such as helping to maintain the donation beds and general garden area, and/or participating in workshops. Please contact Kathy Newton at newts198@optonline.net if you would like to rent a bed, volunteer or have any questions.



The Warren Land Trust and friends celebrated another festive Holiday on the Hill!

Warren Land Trust Board Members

President

Rebecca Neary

Vice-President

Elizabeth Chandler

Treasurer

Barbara Page

Secretary

Nancy Adams Morse

Directors

Tim Angevine

John Barrett III

Laura Moore Brown

Timothy Clew

Bill Mansfield

Deirdre McDonald

Mickey Morris

Craig Nelson

Dave Schneiderbeck

Roberta Stafford

Waltraud Tammen

Ex Officio Board Member

Greg LaCava

Warren Trust Mission Statement

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Margaritas, Anyone?

If you love margaritas, thank a bat! You may be aware of the pollinator shortage, but probably think about bees and other insects. However, bats are the only pollinators of the agave plant, which is where your tequila comes from! Bats also provide free pest control: In the US alone, they are estimated to save farmers billions of dollars by eating insects that would otherwise cause serious damage to our agricultural fields. And more bats means fewer pesticides used on crops.



CT is fortunate to lay claim to 9 bat species (out of 1400 worldwide) - but of those 9, 8 are either Endangered, Threatened or of Special Concern of becoming extirpated. Those are some concerning statistics!

In 2006, bats hibernating in a NY cave were found to have a white fungus growing on their skin. This was the first observation of White Nose Syndrome, caused by *Pseudogymnoascus destructans* - which has killed millions of bats. Many of our most common species have been decimated by 90-95%, and the fungus continues to spread across the US and Canada. It is a cold-loving fungus, so is found in the hibernaculum where it easily spreads from one bat to another as they are in deep sleep, often killing them before they are ready to awaken in spring.



Bats are our only flying mammal and belong to the family Chiroptera, which means “hand wing.” For centuries, myths have surrounded these night-flying creatures, including such popular but inaccurate examples as: bats fly into people’s hair; rabies is contracted by being in the vicinity of bats or their droppings; bats are aggressive and will attack people and animals to drink their blood. For the record, bats may fly close to someone because they are hunting insects near that person; bat guano is no more dangerous than any other animal dropping; and out of those 1400 species worldwide, only 3 species of bat use animal blood to satisfy their nutritional needs (by the way, those bats are found in Central and South America and feed almost exclusively on livestock). Bats are rarely aggressive and are quite willing to reside near human activity if left alone. Finally, you can only contract rabies from the saliva of an infected animal through a bite, scratch or direct contact with the eye.

Local bats may roost or hibernate in our homes. Having bats in your barn, garage or shed (or belfry!) may not be harmful, but may also not be desirable. Bat exclusions can evict them without harm, but should be done carefully – ideally by a professional – and not during the period when bats are birthing and rearing their young.

Bat houses are a great way to support the bat population, but should be built following proper guidelines for planning and placement, as bats are quite selective and are site loyal. Here too, consulting a professional is advised. For additional information on bats visit Bat Conservation International at: <https://www.batcon.org/about-bats/bats-in-homes-buildings/>



Article and photos courtesy of Linda Bowen

Top Right: Little brown bat, 10 day old pup is on the Endangered Species list in CT. Left: Northern long eared bat is on the Endangered Species list in CT, scheduled to be put on the Federal Endangered Species list. Right Bottom: Eastern red bat, one of our migratory bats that is on the list of Special Concern in CT.

Check out WLT's handy new QR code

A quick way to get all the latest info! How do I use a QR code, you ask? It's easy:

1. Open your phone's camera app.
2. Point the camera at the QR code, center it on your screen, and hold the phone steady for a couple of seconds.
3. Tap the notification that pops up to open the link to the WLT landing page.



(You'll need an Internet connection to do this.)

Over 900 acres are permanently protected by the WLT.

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. To join or donate online, visit www.warrenlandtrust.org or cut off this page and send it to our mailing address below, along with your check. We will send you a receipt 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:

<input type="checkbox"/> Land Guardian	\$5,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Land Caretaker	\$ 300
<input type="checkbox"/> Land Grantor	\$2,500	<input type="checkbox"/> Land Protector	\$ 100
<input type="checkbox"/> Land Steward	\$1,000	<input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership	\$ 25
<input type="checkbox"/> Land Conservator	\$ 500	<input type="checkbox"/> Other	\$ _____

Email: _____

Please make your check payable to: The Warren Land Trust
 MAIL THIS FORM AND CHECK TO: The Warren Land Trust
 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.

The Warren Conservator



50 Cemetery Road
Warren, CT 06754

Email: info@warrenlandtrust.org

www.warrenlandtrust.org



Earth Day Town Clean-Up Saturday 4/22, 10am-1pm

It's that time of year again: Spring Cleaning for Warren's roadsides! Earth Day Town Clean-Up 2022 was one for the books – can we top it this year to get rid of a winter's worth of litter?? Stop by the Warren Land Trust table in front of the Warren General Store to select your route, and pick up trash bags and gloves. A dumpster will be available at the Town Garage for refuse drop-off. And again this year, WLT, Warren Parks & Rec, and the Warren General Store are collaborating to offer every trash pick-up party a \$5 voucher for *(continued below)*

For questions or to participate in the following activities you may contact us at info@warrenlandtrust.org

CT Trails Day Hike:

Saturday, June 3, 10am - Sponsored by CT Forest & Parks Association

You're invited to come take a hike at the Graham Brush Connector Trail, in conjunction with the Lake Waramaug Association! If you attended this moderately challenging hike in the past, we promise new perspectives. And if you haven't, come see what you've been missing! This beautiful and bucolic 5-mile woodland loop will include sections of the Wyantenock State Forest and a portion of the blue-blazed Mattatuck Trail. There are some steep sections and wet spots; appropriate footwear suggested. REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED. Please go to <https://www.warrenlandtrust.org> and click on the announcement bar. Hikers meet on Saturday, June 3rd at 10am at the Mattatuck State Forest entrance in Warren at the end of Valley Road, off of Rte. 341, near the intersection with Rte. 202.

Spring Trail Cleanup

Join us for "spring cleaning" on our preserves - help clear winter debris from the trails and see nature springing back to life. Dates TBD in May or early June, depending on weather, to be posted on our website and announced by email blast.

Earth Day Town Clean-Up *Continued*

the general store – it's our way to say thank you for cleaning Warren's roadsides in commemoration of Earth Day. Can't make it on the 22nd? No problem! Choose your route and do a DIY roadside cleanup on your schedule! Just tell us your plans by emailing us at info@warrenlandtrust.org and we'll make note of it - and thank you!

Annual Meeting Wraps up with a Walk at Sunset Ponds Preserve

WLT held its Annual Meeting on November 19, 2022. The business meeting was followed by a map viewing and discussion of trails and hiking opportunities in Warren, on WLT preserves and beyond, led by WLT Board members Dave Schneiderbeck and BK Stafford. Meeting attendees then enjoyed a short walk at the Sunset Ponds Preserve, where short spur trails lead to rocky ledges overlooking scenic wooded ponds. The WLT acquired the 17-acre property some years ago and recently explored its recreational potential. It's a great spot for some waterside quietude.

