

Aspetuck Land Trust
P.O. Box 444
Westport, CT 06881

Established 1966

Join Us

We invite you to join our nearly 1,000 local members who support the Aspetuck Land Trust. A remittance envelope is enclosed for your convenience. Thank you for your support!

We accept credit card donations on our website. It's fast and secure, and you will still receive your acknowledgment letter in the mail, along with a cool ALT bumper sticker and our new 4 town map of all of our trailed nature preserves.

Contact us at 203-331-1906, or
www.aspetucklandtrust.org

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Aspetuck Land Trust

ANNUAL REPORT **2012**

LETTER FROM DAVID

Dear Friend and Partner,

We do three basic things at Aspetuck Land Trust. We preserve local open space by acquiring land through donations or purchases, we conserve the land we own by protecting or improving habitats, and we engage the public on the land. In 2012, conservation was our main focus which culminated in two significant projects with partner, Connecticut Audubon Society. The wildlife study and forest management plan on our 1,009 acre Trout Brook Valley Conservation Area in Easton/Weston is a model for future conservation efforts.

Trout Brook Valley was found to be one of the most important ecological features of Fairfield County. The preserve, which is visited by thousands of people annually, forms the core of a 6,400-acre expanse that is the “lungs of Fairfield County.” The wildlife study identified a remarkable inventory of species and their habitats on the property.

Though Trout Brook Valley is our largest and most diverse preserve, our active conservation efforts extend beyond Trout Brook to our other preserves. For example, we are restoring native salt marshes,

| *Eastern Bluebird*

| (Cover) Eastern Newt in Trout Brook Valley vernal pool
Photo credit Connecticut Audubon Society

improving streams so native brook trout can thrive, removing invasive plants, and planting pollinator meadows to support insects like the dwindling honey bee.

Nature is part of the fabric of life that surrounds us. Aspetuck Land Trust members are committed to conserving the land we love so that we and future generations can enjoy it.

When you support the Land Trust as a member, you help inspire and connect thousands of people to the land every year. Our nearly 1,000 members support our guided hikes, children’s programs, and the stewardship of our 44 trailed nature preserves with over 30 miles of hiking trails!

Thank you for your support! If you aren’t a member, we invite you to join us! We are local. We are your neighbors. We are your land trust.

See you in the woods!

David Brant, Executive Director

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New Southport Park Opening Spring 2013

We are partnering with the Sasquanaug Association to create a new 10 acre park in the heart of downtown Southport in Fairfield. The park is located on Old Post Road and will include walking trails and a Natural Playground for children.



UPCOMING EVENTS



| *Ecologist Anthony Zemba*

Land Trust Annual Meeting

Join fellow Land Trust members on June 12, from 7 – 9pm at the Pequot Library in Southport for the Land Trust’s annual meeting. The featured speaker is Anthony Zemba, Director of Conservation Services with the Connecticut Audu-

bon Society who will discuss the Trout Brook Valley wildlife study. A short business meeting will precede the speaker, and members will be asked to approve a slate of directors – Class of 2017 which consists of: Nancy Moon (Fairfield), Dick Ritzel (Easton), Jacquie Littlejohn (At-Large), Tom Johnson (Weston), and Heather Williams (Westport). Hors d’oeuvres and refreshments will be available.



| *Barlow Cutler-Wotton*

In Memoriam

Barlow Cutler-Wotton, a lifelong Westporter who founded the Aspetuck Land Trust in 1966, passed away on March 23, 2013. She was 92. Aspetuck Land Trust member Margery Silk, a long-time friend of Barlow’s said, “Her great cause was saving land in Fairfield County and preserving the heritage and beauty of the land in our local towns.”



PROTECTING ENDANGERED SPECIES



Trout Brook Valley Wildlife Survey

Plants and Animals Found in Survey

- 210Plant species
- 79Butterfly, dragonfly & damselfly species
- 159Bird species
- 14Amphibian species
- 15Mammal species
- 5Fish species
- 11Reptile species

Conservation biologists from the Connecticut Audubon Society spent hundreds of hours over four seasons performing fieldwork at the preserve and analyzing data. They discovered dozens of high priority conservation species listed under the state of Connecticut Endangered Species Act including the Bobcat, Eastern Box Turtle, Tiger Spiketail Dragonfly, and the Jefferson Salamander. There are over 60 ephemeral wetlands and vernal pools on the preserve. Vernal pools are filled by snow melt and spring rains and contain amphibians that form the foundation of the forest food chain.

As a result of the wildlife survey, we have new educational signage and rules in the Trout Brook Valley Conservation Area. Please read the new kiosk signs located at each of our 6 trailheads. Thanks to Easton Boy Scout Troop 66 for building these new kiosks.



| New Trout Brook Valley kiosk



| Jefferson's Salamander



| Trout Lily



| Spiketail Dragonfly



| Pearl Crescent Butterfly



| This 100 acre field in the Trout Brook Valley orchard provides important migratory bird and raptor habitat and is one of the last great fields on the Northeast Coast



| Eastern Bobcat



| Palm Warbler

So much conservation can take place in our own neighborhoods and towns. The key is finding capable partners who understand where we live, why it matters to us, and how we can make a difference together. The Aspetuck Land Trust is a capable partner for our conservation values, and that's why we're a proud supporter.

Tripp Killin, Executive Director, Jeniam Foundation





RESTORING LOCAL HABITATS



Taylortown Salt Marsh

We are restoring 12 acres of the Saugatuck River estuary in downtown Westport off the King's Hwy bridge and Wilton Road. The estuary has been taken over by invasive Phragmites which chokes out native salt marsh plants and wildlife. The multi-year project will result in more colorful and diverse salt marsh plants, improved views of the Saugatuck River and more wildlife diversity. Financial and technical support is being provided by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and the Jeniam Foundation. We are looking for additional financial support for this project.

Contact us if you are interested in supporting this effort.

Aspetuck Land Trust board member and plant expert Tom Johnson planting native plants to restore the stream bank at Warner Angler's Preserve on the Mill River in Easton. A properly vegetated stream bank provides cool water shade for brook trout and prevents siltation of the river.



Land Management Committee member Joe Schneirlein inspecting a native Bayberry plant on the marsh which is being crowded out by invasive Phragmites



CT DEEP mowing the invasive Phragmites with their Marshmaster amphibious vehicle



Aspetuck Land Trust executive director David Brant (far right) with CT DEEP restoration crew



Our beautiful sign announcing the restoration effort painted by local artist and Land Trust member Gail Bell



Restored Allen Salt Marsh. The height of the native marsh plants are much lower compared to the invasive Phragmites

Aspetuck Land Trust is a valuable partner of the Westport Conservation Department in meeting its goal of wetland protection, restoration and improvement.

Alicia Mozian, Town of Westport Conservation Department Director

FINANCIAL REPORT

2012 Financial Highlights

2012 contributions income from members and grants was \$243,216, an increase of 14% over 2011. 70% of our income came from individual member contributions. Expenses increased by 5% to \$232,600. This was due primarily to Hurricane Sandy expenses. Our general endowment fund increased by 12% or \$130,170. These funds are used for future land purchases and to offset future expenses not covered by membership contributions.

Caryl and Edna Haskins Lecture Series



Bill McKibben

Author and Environmental Activist Bill McKibben will kick-off our new environmental lecture series in honor of Westport scientists Caryl and Edna Haskins who bequeathed their estate on Green Acre Lane to Aspetuck Land Trust. The estate is now a nature preserve bearing their names. Tickets to this exclusive event will be made available to Aspetuck Land Trust members only. Time Magazine called McKibben 'the planet's best green journalist' and the Boston Globe said in 2010 that he was 'probably the country's most important environmentalist.'

Legacy Gifts

Making a gift to Aspetuck Land Trust through a bequest in a will and/or a revocable living trust allows the donor to decide how his/her estate will be distributed and enables the donor to take advantage of tax-saving opportunities.



Connecting People to the Land

Educational Hikes

We offer educational and specialty hikes for children and adults which are a great way to explore locally and learn more about the diversity of our 44 trailed nature preserves on over 1,700 acres. See our website for our 2013 hikes.



| Butterfly expert Victor DeMasi holding a Viceroy Butterfly
| Fall foliage hike. Photo credit Nancy Wilt



| Children on our annual butterfly hike at the Randall's Farm Preserve in Easton

Getting Children Outdoors

Land Trust members are passionate about conservation and getting children outdoors. Local children participate in our Short Hikes for Short People and thousands have visited our popular Natural Playground at the Leonard Schine Preserve in Westport.



| Children exploring the Tower at the Natural Playground located at the Leonard Schine Preserve in Westport

Yale University Interns

Three graduate students from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies worked with us in 2012 on a 4-town land mapping project which will aid us in our land acquisition efforts. They also helped us with the salt marsh restoration project in Westport.

Local Scouts Help the Land Trust

Westport Cub Scouts from Pack 39 in Westport led by Cub Master Eric Overgard built Info boxes for our nature preserves.



| Yale Intern Ke Yang



| Westport Cub Scouts from Pack 39

Improving our Trails

Volunteers led by the Fairfield County Chapter of the New England Mountain Biking Association help to improve our trails in Trout Brook Valley. Join them at www.fcnemba.org

Thank you to Hatch and Bailey Lumber in Norwalk for donating lumber for all of our Boy Scout projects.



| Volunteers led by the New England Mountain Biking Association

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