



SUMMER 2023

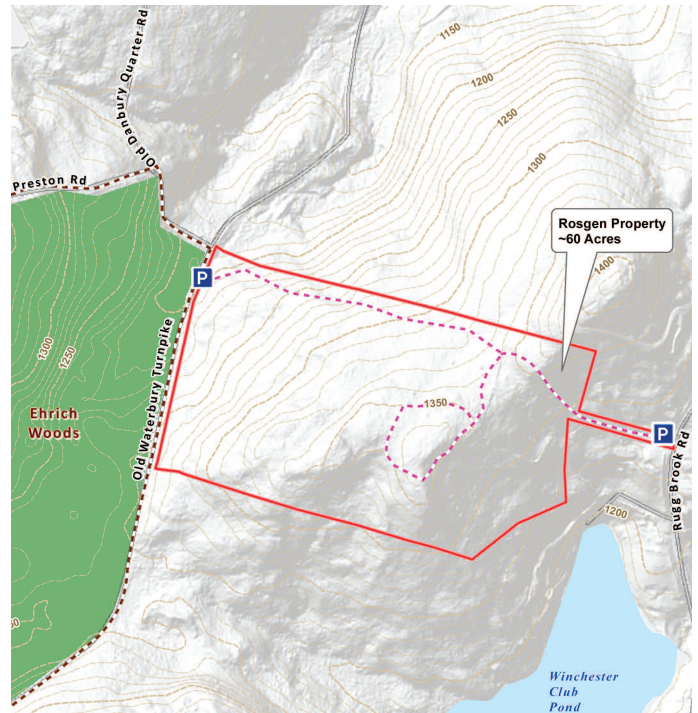


Pen and ink illustration by Margaret A. Race

*Our Mission: The Winchester Land Trust serves as steward of the town's rural character and open spaces, striving to foster the preservation of Winchester's unique lands and natural resources forever. The Trust informs and educates the community to promote the benefits of land conservation and balanced growth.*

## Winchester Land Trust Closes on Rosgen Preserve

On April 4, 2023 Winchester Land Trust purchased a beautiful 60-acre property that links our largest preserves with town water company lands. The property is core forest, borders town water company lands, and Rugg Brook – a primary source for the town's public drinking water supply – flows through it. WLT plans to widen and mark existing trails to make this property easily accessible to hikers. We thank everyone who contributed funds to make this purchase possible, especially the State of Connecticut's Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition grant program, and the John T. and Jane A. Wiederhold Foundation.



Map of "Rogen Preserve" with potential trails marked in purple. Map credit: Stacy Deming, Housatanic Valley Association:



PHOTO BY VERA HATFIELD

A "Done Deal" – our closing on Rosgen Preserve. From left to right: Shelley Harms, Dave Rosgen, Attorney David Cusick, Jennifer Perga

## WLT to be Awarded \$90,000 through Connecticut DEEP's Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grants

by Shelley Harms

The Cannavo Spring is a locally famous landmark a/k/a Winchester's "Fountain of Youth" and Winsted's "Old Faithful." It has been a source of drinking water for cottages without wells on Highland Lake for generations. After the 1955 flood destroyed the Town's municipal water system, many townspeople turned to the spring for drinking water. The small area containing the spring, its piping, the stone monument and faucet will be retained by the Cannavo family and the Winchester Land Trust will acquire the forested watershed area, protecting the quality of the spring water as well as waters in nearby Highland Lake. An old woods road along the top of the property's slopes will be made into a linear trail for walking, bird watching, nature photography and other passive recreational activities.

Although WLT is not purchasing Cannavo Spring itself, preserving 25 watershed acres helps ensure the water's quality.

On the next page, see watershed area we will be protecting.



PHOTO BY BARBARA DOUGLAS

continued

## Protecting Cannavo Spring's Watershed

In the photo at right, the red outline shows the approximate location of the 25 acres WLT will purchase and preserve.

*In addition to the very generous OSWA grant, WLT needs to raise an additional \$50,000 or \$60,000 to purchase the property, conduct a new survey, cover closing costs.*

*We are grateful for a recent \$5,000 grant toward a new survey from Northwest Community Bank Foundation and we continue to seek new funds to complete this project.*



PHOTO BY DYLAN THOMSON

## Winchester Bird Watch

by Kamaren Suwijn

The month of May is the most exciting time for birding in our area, with many migratory species passing through Winchester on their route north to breed in Canada in the summer months. Winchester's Dave Rosgen, a retired environmental conservation police officer and wildlife biologist with Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), retired forestry firefighter, and avid birder for fifty-three years, spoke to WLT's Kamaren Suwijn to provide an update on bird sightings in our town.

In 2022, Dave Rosgen inventoried 149 bird species in the Town of Winchester – our town had one of the most diverse bird counts in the State of Connecticut, certainly in the top fifteen. This year, Rosgen has counted 97 species so far, and is well on his way to equaling last year's total when he concludes his annual bird census in the last week of June.

Townpeople of Winchester have probably noticed Bald Eagles nesting and fishing on Highland Lake, Crystal Lake, and Park Pond. A total of five Bald Eagles were spotted wintering on Highland Lake in February - two adult females, one adult male, and two immature females spent their winter months enjoying our town's largest body of water. With spring comes breeding, and a nesting pair of adult eagles are known to defend a large radial territory when expecting young, forcing other eagles away from the area. The nesting eagles on Highland Lake have sadly been reported to have had damage to their nest, and are unlikely to fledge any eaglets this year, though they will continue to protect their territory including Highland and Crystal Lakes for the coming months. Park Pond is also home to one adult male eagle. In our neighboring towns, there are two nesting eagle pairs on Barkhamsted Reservoir, one pair at the American Legion Forest in Barkhamsted, and sightings of eagles on West Hill Pond in New Hartford.



*Bald Eagles, like the one pictured, nest at WLT's "Long Pond Ridge" property.*

PHOTO BY BARBARA DOUGLAS

This year, Rosgen has identified other species of note, including a small population of Buffleheads on Crystal Lake for several weeks in late April and early May and a flock of seventy Ring-Necked Ducks on Hurlbut Pond, Crystal Lake, and the Third Bay of Highland Lake. Both the Buffleheads and Ring-Necked Ducks will depart for Canada to breed as the weather continues to warm. Rosgen also discovered Northern Waterthrush, Field Sparrows, and Savannah Sparrows among a huge population of songbirds in the region of Forest View Cemetery and the northern end of Sue Grossman Still River Greenway. He encourages amateur

and skilled birdwatchers alike to log their sightings on eBird, a free online database hosted by Cornell University's Department of Ornithology, the Audubon Society, and the U.S. Geologic Survey, or on the Connecticut State DEEP website.

Rosgen believes that the wonderful diversity of birds enjoyed in Winchester is due to the many lakes, ponds, streams, and rivers that are used as migratory stopovers as well as the large parcels of preserved woodland and fields that serve to absorb pollutants and purify the watershed. He stresses that our community can do its part to support bird populations by maintaining boat motors to ensure they don't leak oil and gasoline into our waterways, by regular maintenance of our septic tanks and sewer lines to ensure clean soil and water, and by managing our properties from invasive species that are harmful to our native plants that attract and feed bird species. Rosgen, himself, has done his part for local environmental conservation – he recently sold 60 acres of his own property, a mature woodland with a natural stream near Rugg Brook, to the Winchester Land Trust at a discounted price our organization could afford with the aid of State grants. His goal was for that land to be preserved for generations to come, a site which hundreds of species of animals and birds can call home.

# Connections

by Barbara Douglas

The rain stopped just long enough for us to forge a trail through the woods connecting the stables at Lakeridge and the WLT field at the Houlihan Woods and Michael Giordano Tribute Area property.

Faye, owner of Moonracer Farms at Lakeridge, and her handy crew with loppers in hand, and Kujo the goose in tow, braved the muck and mud, downed trees, and hanging branches to mark the future trail for horses and riders. Mike will do trail construction; cutting and clearing brush so the horses can safely move through the woods. Jen, President of the WLT, always our tech-savvy scout, used her GPS to map boundaries. Hakki, General Manager of Lakeridge, always ready with supplies, went all the way back to his truck to get us more ribbon for the trees so we could find our path again.

Once the trail is complete, horses and riders will meander through mixed forest woodlands, reaching an open meadow and stepping back into history. Before the field was used for farming, it was an airfield and a lifeline to both Torrington and Winchester, bringing in much needed supplies after the devastating flood of 1955. Now, the horse trail will enable horses and riders to reach the beautiful field safely.



PHOTO BY BARBARA DOUGLAS

Exploring the "Connection Trail" between Lakeridge Stables and HW-MGTA on a wet day this spring.

## Education Program at Beardsley & Memorial Library – sponsored by WLT

by Carol Parent, Children's Services,  
Beardsley & Memorial Library

Curious Creatures from Branford, CT delighted and educated all ages with their menagerie of furry and scaly animals on Saturday, April 8th at Beardsley Library. Whether the children were wearing it around their necks, perched atop their heads, or held in their arms, our visit with a snake, lizard, turtle, tarantula, hedgehog, ferret, alligator and a pair of chinchillas was a joy filled time as you can see by the happiness on their faces! This wonderful program was sponsored by the Winchester Land Trust and we are so thankful for their continued generosity!

PHOTO BY CAROL PARENT



A chinchilla keeps your head warm!

## The Bobolinks Are Back!

by Jen Perga



PHOTO BY BARBARA DOUGLAS

The bobolinks have returned to both HW-MGTA and Hurlbut Field in Winchester.

The bobolink is a species of Special Concern because they rely on grasslands like HW-MGTA and Hurlbut Field for nesting and in Connecticut, most land is forested or developed. This amazing bird migrates as far as south as Argentina, up to 11,000 miles round trip!

Please keep your dog leashed when hiking WLT's fields, to avoid disturbing the bobolinks, whose nests are hidden in the tall grass.

WLT thanks the Bottass and Weigold families who delay mowing our fields until after July 15, when most of the newly hatched bobolinks have fledged.

If you visit WLT's fields in the morning or evening, you will have a good chance of seeing the bobolinks.

## Be part of our mission. Stay in touch!

Please make sure we have your current contact information.



Winchester Land Trust

See the latest WLT information on our Facebook page

Visit our website: [www.winchesterlandtrust.org](http://www.winchesterlandtrust.org).

Email us at [winchesterlandtrust@yahoo.com](mailto:winchesterlandtrust@yahoo.com)

Call us at 860.379.9622.

Mail to P.O. Box 10, Winchester Center, CT 06094

**Winchester Land Trust is grateful for the support  
to help preserve the beauty around us.**

## Board of Directors

Jennifer Perga, President

Doug Pfenninger, Vice President

Louise Van Alstyne, Secretary

Joey Pierce, Treasurer

Alan Colavecchio

Barbara Douglas

Gayle Moraski

Kamaren Suwijn

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The 2023 Annual Meeting of the Winchester Land Trust will be held on Sunday, August 27 at 4 pm in the gazebo on the Winchester Center Green.



P.O. Box 10  
Winchester Center, CT

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



## Do you want to volunteer for Winchester Land Trust?

**WLT needs property stewards:** a board member will walk a property with you.

Then, as a steward of that property, you visit it at least once a year.

You can also volunteer on clean-up days or trail maintenance days.

Email: [winchesterlandtrust@yahoo.com](mailto:winchesterlandtrust@yahoo.com) or look for updates on WLT's Facebook page.



*Rugg Brook, Winchester*