



SUMMER 2020



Pen and ink illustration by Margaret A. Race

Our Mission: The Winchester Land Trust serves as steward of the town's rural character and natural heritage, striving to foster the preservation of Winchester's unique lands forever. Working with government representatives and public and private landowners, the Trust informs and educates the community to promote the benefits of land conservation and balanced growth.

Our Trails Are Open!

by Jennifer Perga

As with most trails around the state, Winchester Land Trust's (WLT) trails are seeing more use as people venture from their homes after long quarantines. WLT recommends Hurlbut Field – with a trail to Winchester Lake or the trail system at Houlihan Woods/Michael Giordano Tribute Area. At both locations, there are safe parking areas and kiosks with maps available.* After a short hike across fields, hikers will find shady trails through the woods, crossing vernal pools or small streams and sometimes meandering along old

stone walls. The field portions of our trails are mowed to reduce tick danger, thanks to Doug Pfenninger (Hurlbut) and Dave Bottass (HW/MGTA).



“Trail usage is skyrocketing as people look to get outside during the coronavirus pandemic and parking lots at many state parks have reached capacity on nice weekend days,” according to Lori Riley, *Hartford Courant* (4/28/2020).

Join your fellow nature lovers and come enjoy WLT's trails. If you encounter a fellow hiker, please step off the trail and maintain social distancing. Happy Hiking!

*Trail maps are also available on WLT's website: www.winchester-landtrust.org



PHOTO BY BARBARA DOUGLAS



A few of the volunteers who helped plant chestnut seedlings in Hurlbut Field

Reviving The American Chestnut Tree

by Doug Pfenninger

The Winchester Land Trust is working with The American Chestnut Foundation to help bring back a tree that was an important source of food and timber until it was decimated by a fungal blight over a century ago. It is estimated that over 4 billion chestnut trees grew in the U.S before the blight. Mature trees were often over six feet in diameter and the timber from one tree could fill a boxcar.

Winchester Land Trust will be creating an orchard of seedlings supplied by TACF which are the result of a cross breeding program with the Chinese Chestnut. By selecting trees that are blight tolerant but still characteristic of the American Chestnut the hope is that the tree to can be restored to its habitat across America.

The first 150 seedlings were planted this spring at Hurlbut Field, a WLT property in Winchester Center. Eventually an entire acre will be dedicated to this program.



Winsted's Troop 127, ready to install benches at the Houlihan Woods/ Michael Giordano Tribute Area

Be Cool, Be Calm, Be Healthy: What is Forest Bathing?

by Barbara Douglas

Forest Bathing, or in Japanese, Shinrin-Yoku, started in Japan in 1982. The word literally means, spending more time with trees. Since then, this has been studied in major institutions around the world, and the findings are quite stunning.

Did you know that simply walking through a forest can lower your blood pressure, decrease your heart rate, reduce stress and anxiety and boost energy?

The Japanese do it "to make the body strong against illness."

How does it work, and how do we do it?

Certain trees and plants give off a chemical called phytoncides to help them fight disease. When we breathe in these chemicals our bodies respond by increasing the number and activity of certain white blood cells.

What better time, than now!

How do we take a Forest Bath?

It is the art of truly being in the moment. Wander. Don't jog or rush. Smell the forest, feel the breezes, see the light and how it changes from moment to moment and with every step you take, listen for the birds and the sounds of the forest.

Slow down.

Take the forest bath challenge and see if you feel better, by just BEING.

This is YOUR Land Trust – the legacy that we have been gifted and what we leave for future generations. Let's teach ourselves, and our children to truly be in the forest and allow her to make us stronger.

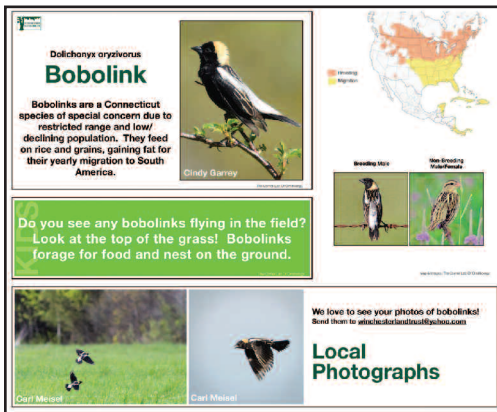
New Educational Developments At WLT Nature Trail

by Doug Pfenninger

The Winchester Land Trust (WLT) has been awarded a grant from the Elson-Slemmer Fund for the Environment, a fund administered by the Northwest Connecticut Community Foundation. WLT applied for the grant in collaboration with Winchester Public Schools. Proceeds will be used to pay for signage and seating for a nature trail to be located at Houlihan Woods/Michael Giordano Tribute Area, a WLT property on South Road in Winchester Center.

The Winchester Land Trust is dedicated to preserving open space in Winchester and to educating the public about the importance of our natural environment. The nature trail will be focused on flora and fauna on the site and will include informative signs which will educate school children and others about the features of the local landscape. Completion of the trail is expected by the end of the summer.

The Houlihan Woods/Michael Giordano Tribute Area has become a popular hiking spot and there has been increased activity due to the pandemic as people seek the solace of the outdoors. We look forward to adding an educational dimension to the property and helping Winchester students learn about nature.



One of the informational signs proposed for the nature trail, created by Nick Giaconia, a Northwestern Regional #7 student

WLT VP Doug Pfenninger putting the map on the kiosk he built for Houlihan Woods parking area



Eagle Scout candidate Connor Rego's "bluebird trail" installed at Hurlbut Field



Trail Steward, Diane Jakobsen, and volunteers repairing the bog bridges on Hurlbut Field Trail to Winchester Lake

THANKS
Thank you for work at Houlihan Woods/Michael Giordano Tribute Area to **Dave Bottass** for his ongoing work to keep the trails across the field mowed; and to **Paul Sokolik** of J&J Excavating for delivering the boulders lining the parking lot areas.

Be part of our mission. Stay in touch!

Please make sure we have your current contact information.

See the latest WLT information on our Facebook page

Visit our website: www.winchesterlandtrust.org.

Email us at 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.**

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*"Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength
that will endure as long as life lasts." – Rachel Carson*



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*Student volunteers from Northwestern Regional #7 cutting bittersweet
at Hurlbut Field*