



**THE WESTERLY LAND TRUST**  
**2014 Membership Dues and Annual Fund**  
 PO Box 601, Westerly, RI 02891-0601

Please make your check payable to **The Westerly Land Trust** and return with this slip. **THANK YOU!**

I am / We are interested in volunteering for:

- Outdoor work       Office work  
 Committee work

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Please initiate / renew my / our membership at the following level:

- Individual \$30       Family \$50  
 Business \$100

I / We want to become a major supporter; we enclose \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

- Conservationist \$100-\$249  
 Protector \$250-\$499  
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 Steward \$1000 and over  
 (Complimentary membership included.)



The recently completed cairn at Grills Preserve, which took more than 100 hours of work by 24 volunteers to place the stones. The cairn height—8-feet—holds special significance as it matches the high-water mark of the March 2010 flood.

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The best way to convince people, young and old, of the value of protecting open spaces, Beattie says, is to show them. "I've been involved with the Land Trust for 10 years, but it was not until recently that I was able to see my father truly understand the value that we have in conserving space."

She drove him out to Grills Preserve in Bradford. "He was quiet when we first entered, and by the time we reached the Polly Coon Bridge and our cairn with its top showing us the high-water mark of the 2010 flood, he turned to me said, 'This is really something special.'

"It came all together for him, and with that single visit he has become one of our biggest proponents, and not just because I am involved, but because he knows the value it gives to Westerly."

**STAFF**

- Executive Director, Kelly Presley  
 Development Administrator, Pamela Sawyer  
 Bookkeeper, William Horne  
 Newsletter Editors, Leslie Ahern Brown  
 and Deborah Stewart  
 Volunteer Coordinator, Sally Hanson  
 Program Coordinator, Keith Cowley  
 Garden Coordinator, Jen Ritter  
 Intern, James Stewart

**OFFICERS**

- President, Shellia Terranova Beattie  
 Vice President, William Mckendree  
 Secretary, Nicholas J. Stahl  
 Treasurer, David B. Francis

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# A Sense of Place

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERLY LAND TRUST

## THE MEADOW

In a world full of worry and demands,  
I look to the meadow for peace and inspiration.

Whether I've spent time with her just  
the day before,  
or it has been too long since our last visit,  
the meadow always greets me  
with a warm smile and an enthusiastic wave.

There is a constancy to the meadow,  
best enjoyed in the company of my best friend.  
Sometimes she leads, often she just listens,  
never judging, always patient, always supportive,  
always with a look in her eyes that indicates her  
joy to be with me and in nature.

Along with all of this is the meadow's  
obvious beauty.  
It's easy to see her charms when it's spring,  
and she's in full bloom,  
and yet in the depths of winter,  
under a leaden sky,  
I've seen her face fully capture the orange glow  
of a struggling January sun. At that moment,  
the wind's harsh bite recedes, and all is right  
with the world.

Now in my 56th year, I can't imagine my life  
without the meadow.  
There's comfort in knowing she will always  
be there, now,  
and in the years to come, for me, and all those  
who find strength, happiness, friendship, and  
renewal in her embrace.

— By David Hannon

"The Meadow" is dedicated to all of the two-  
legged and four-legged friends I've made over  
the course of hundreds of walks in the loop in  
Avondale Preserve and the trails that border the  
property. I'm grateful for the vision of the  
Westerly Land Trust in protecting the open  
spaces in our town for the benefit of the wildlife  
that calls those places home, and the rest of us  
who enjoy them in a variety of ways.

## NEW LAND TRUST PRESIDENT BELIEVES IN GOING THE DISTANCE

Dawn breaks, and many of us are still  
snuggled in our beds. But rain or shine, in  
blaze of summer or gloom of winter, Sheila  
Terranova Beattie is out the door by 6:45  
for her daily run. Sometimes she hits the beach.  
But oftentimes she runs a four-mile loop at  
the Dr. John Champlin Glacier Park Preserve  
with her two poodles, Chisel and Hatchet.

The preserve is not just  
one of her favorite  
running spots. It's now  
part of her domain as  
the new president of the  
Westerly Land Trust.

The petite 50-year-old  
Beattie has some  
extremely large shoes to  
fill. Harvey C. Perry II  
stepped down in January  
after 13 remarkable  
years as board president.  
It was a time of  
incredible growth for the  
Land Trust, which  
expanded to 1,600 acres  
of protected open space  
in 22 preserves.

But Beattie clearly feels  
up to the challenge.  
After all, this is a woman  
who has run in 10  
marathons in the United States and Europe  
and—over those same 13 years—scaled the  
highest peak in each of the 50 states.

Beattie joined the board of directors in 2005  
but began volunteering before that, often  
the only woman in the Coffee and Clearing  
Club army that meets weekly year-round to  
clear brush, build bridges and trails and do  
much of the necessary but "dirty" behind-  
the-scenes work of a land trust.

A Westerly native, she has fond memories of  
a thriving downtown. She sees the Land  
Trust's urban initiatives, unique among land  
trusts, as an important part of its mission.  
"I've bought into the idea that by supporting

both open space and downtown  
regeneration, we create sustainability in our  
little piece of the world."

A businesswoman herself, Beattie owns  
Cornerstone Self Storage and helps run  
several family businesses, including Stanton  
Realty, the Newland Motel and the  
Cornerstone Inn. Her family sold the

Pleasant View Inn  
last year, coincidentally  
closing on the same  
day she was asked to  
become Land Trust  
president.

Among her priorities  
are building  
endowments to help  
cover operating  
expenses and to  
protect land  
acquisitions in  
perpetuity, and  
completing the  
national  
accreditation process  
for the Land Trust,  
begun under Perry,  
which Beattie says is  
crucial for securing  
funds for future  
projects.



Sheilia Terranova Beattie with her running  
companions Hatchet, left, and Chisel.

She also hopes to foster more cooperation  
among land trusts in the area and said  
several joint projects are in the works: "We  
would be stronger working as one group  
rather than as separate groups."

Beattie emphasized the importance of  
getting younger people involved in carrying  
on the Land Trust's mission. "We need the  
next generation to see the value in these  
environmental aspects, so that they are  
ready to take over the job. Forever is a long  
time, but that is what we have promised  
our community."

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## MILESTONES



Bobcats and fishers and mink, oh my! The snow-covered ground in forest or field reveals who may be lurking there out of

view. One of the many ways to enjoy our preserves in the winter months is to do some animal tracking, even if you are a novice. Children are astute observers, and some quality time in nature is a great remedy for cabin fever. Whether you prefer hitting the trails on your own or with a group on a guided hike, animal tracks are likely to be found. Be sure to check out our events calendar to learn more about our programs, including special events with our friends from Born To Be Wild Nature Center.

While many are suffering from the winter blues, the active Land Trust trail crew has been as busy as ever. Despite the deep freeze, they have been constructing cairns, monitoring preserve boundaries and even building a new wooden trail bridge to span a stream. Wahaneeta Preserve is a favorite location for wintertime workers, with the weatherproof lodge and its newly installed wood stove where volunteers can get warm after time in the great outdoors.

Exploring the preserves during the winter months gives visitors a different perspective, and some point out that there are definite perks to cold-weather hiking: no biting bugs and fewer people along the trails. Because most trees have dropped their leaves visibility is greatly increased and makes birdwatching a bit easier. There is a hush over the landscape, a quietness found only in wintertime. A blanket of snow also provides an opportunity to travel through the forest on snowshoes or cross-country skis.

So when you think you've had about as much winter as you can take, remember it's a perfect day for an outdoor expedition.

## Field Notes

### THE EVOLUTION OF THE EASTERN COYOTE

While coyotes historically originated out West, they have slowly expanded eastward and into New England. Interestingly, Eastern coyotes are not true coyotes but a hybrid between coyotes and the once dominant Northern wolves.

Over time as colonial development progressed, most of the New England wolf population was

BY JAMES STEWART

killed off or forced from their homes through excessive hunting and deforestation. With the decrease of these larger, more formidable predators, the population of Ohio coyotes gradually spread eastward, while packs of Eastern Canadian coyotes migrated south.

Over many generations, there was significant crossbreeding between coyotes and wolves. By the time the coyote populations had settled in New England, their genetic makeup was a complete hybridization. As a result, New England coyotes have more variation in color and are considerably larger than their western counterparts. Sometimes they even resemble German shepherds.



Despite this great migration eastward, the first coyote sighting in Rhode Island wasn't until 1969, and sightings today are quite common. In areas such as Westerly, coyote activity is usually nocturnal, or during the dawn or dusk hours, to avoid most human interaction.

They feed on prey such as rabbits, deer, mice, birds and snakes, as well as carrion (usually the result of death by natural causes, starvation or car hits). They will also feed on a variety of fruit and produce such as strawberries or corn when available.

Forested areas like Grills Preserve or the large expanse of grassland in Avondale Farm Preserve are the perfect nighttime hunting grounds for these animals, although it would be rare to find any there during the day, when people are around.



Volunteers constructing a bridge over a small stream at Wahaneeta Preserve.

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR HIKE-A-THON

The Land Trust will host its first Hike-a-Thon fundraiser this spring that will be more than just a fundraiser. It will be a fun-filled day for families and anyone who like to hike. But to make it happen we need your help.

We envision kids' activities and nature guides along the hiking route to share stories and facts about Westerly's open space lands. We are seeking volunteers to help plan and launch this great event that will connect people with the land and raise funds to care for it long into the future.

To join the planning team, contact Kelly at 401-315-2610 or [execdir@westerlylandtrust.org](mailto:execdir@westerlylandtrust.org).

## A LONG WINTER'S NAP

In the thick of winter—dark days, shivery temperatures—the thought of taking a long nap is especially appealing.

Hibernation is a marvel of evolution: a state, developed no doubt by survival of the fittest, where an animal's temperature, heart rate and breathing are drastically reduced to conserve energy and body fat during the winter when foraging for food becomes difficult.

While only a few creatures in southwestern Rhode Island actually hibernate—the woodchuck, several bat species, and jumping mice—most animals, like us, have learned to adapt to fierce weather and scarce resources. In general, hibernating animals like woodchucks prepare for their long winter sleep by storing nuts in their burrows and by eating heavily before going into hibernation. They dig their winter burrows below the frost line to maintain temperature during the three to four months of deep sleep.

While some creatures migrate to warmer climates—birds and monarch butterflies for example—other animals like chipmunks, squirrels, skunks and raccoons may settle into their burrows to nap during particularly bad weather.

Birds that don't travel south can instead grow more feathers or simply fluff their feathers for better insulation. (Goldfinches actually grow 50 percent more feathers in the cold.) Because they eat more during the day, they are protected by the resulting fat to get them through the night. They also seek out trees, evergreens and shrubs to settle into for cover. Interestingly, some birds find that summer birdhouses work well as shelter, so don't take down your birdhouses in the winter.

Familiar animals like the white-tailed deer we so often see in our land preserves actually grow a thicker undercoat in winter. They may spend their days on sunny slopes to absorb the warmth, then at night head for the woods where the trees protect them from the wind and dropping temperatures. Other local creatures that grow thicker fur are red foxes and porcupines.

Another way animals adapt to winter is by changing their diet. The red fox, for instance, eats vegetation and insects during spring, summer and fall, but in winter will switch to small rodents.

So the next time you are trekking through one of our preserves, be aware that life goes on beneath the snow cover.

## Events Calendar

### Hike Through the Ice Age\*\*

March 9, 2 pm

Explore Dr. John Champlin Glacier Park Preserve on a family-friendly hike that will delve into its geologic history. What was the preserve like during the last Ice Age and why does the landscape look like it does today?

### Walk Under the Full Worm Moon\*\*

March 16, 6:30 pm

Enjoy a winter moonlit walk along the trails of Dr. John Champlin Glacier Park Preserve. Naturalist Keith Cowley will share his knowledge about the preserve's natural history, flora and fauna.

### Owl Prowl at Grills Preserve

March 18, 6:30 pm

Born To Be Wild Nature Center will lead an owl prowling hike for all ages. Because owls are nocturnal, the outing will extend beyond sunset. Be sure to bring a small flashlight or headlamp. Special note: Fluorescent orange safety clothing is required as this hike occurs during the hunting season. Examples are a hat that covers 200 square inches or combination of hat and vest covering 500 square inches.

### 'Green' Reading Group

March 25, 6:30 pm

We will discuss *The Conundrum* by David Owen who has written many user-friendly books on environmental issues. The book's subtitle says it all: How Scientific Innovation, Increased Efficiency, and Good Intentions Can Make Our Energy and Climate Problems Worse. Join us for a challenging look at a book that overturns much traditional wisdom about being green. The discussion is facilitated by Maureen Logan in the Land Trust building.

### Evening with Raptors

April 15, 7 to 8 pm

Born To Be Wild Nature Center will give a presentation in The Land Trust building about wildlife rehabilitation and bring along its resident raptors. This is a perfect opportunity for children to get up close and personal with the amazing birds and learn about the roles they play in the ecosystems found on Land Trust preserves.

### Full Flower Moon Hike\*\*

May 14, 7:30 pm

Celebrate the long-awaited coming of spring as we hike through Wahaneeta Preserve by the light of the full moon and learn about its ecosystem and wildlife. Naturalist Keith Cowley will lead the group on this nighttime exploration.

\*\* Pre-registration is suggested by contacting Keith Cowley at [keith@newnativefoundation.org](mailto:keith@newnativefoundation.org).

## SIGN UP FOR UNITED THEATRE UPDATES

United Theatre e-newsletter coming soon! If you would like to be included on the email list for exciting news about the theater project, please email Simon Holt at [theatred@westerlylandtrust.org](mailto:theatred@westerlylandtrust.org).

## Guided Hikes

**Grills Preserve and Wildlife Sanctuary, Hopkinton**  
March 6

**Rome Point, North Kingstown**  
March 13

**Wahaneeta Preserve, Westerly**  
March 20

**Breakheart Pond, Exeter**  
March 27

**Riverwood Preserve, Westerly**  
April 3

**Alternative Mt. Tom Trail, Exeter**  
April 10

**Woody Hill North, Westerly**  
April 17

**Weekapaug to Quonnie Beach, Westerly**  
April 24



Hikes are at 10 am unless otherwise noted; details are available at

[www.westerlylandtrust.org](http://www.westerlylandtrust.org). Please note that in state management areas everyone is required to wear 200 square inches of solid daylight fluorescent orange from the second Saturday in September to the last day of February and from the third Saturday in April to the last day of May.