



A Sense of Place

SPRING 2019

AVONDALE FARM PRESERVE

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MILESTONES

We are pleased to present the inaugural issue of our newly designed newsletter, *A Sense of Place*, and believe it reflects Westerly Land Trust's new direction. We've seen lots of change these past few months, not the least of which has been in the growth of our staff. **Meg Lee**, whom many of you have met through our public programs, has been promoted to the full-time position of Conservation Programs Manager. Whether she's leading school field trips, producing quality educational programs, or focused on land stewardship priorities, Meg brings smart organization and a cheerful exuberance to the job each day. I'm also pleased to share that **Erika Lebling** has joined as our Donor Relations Manager. Erika brings tremendous energy to our team, helping us to polish our communications and support our fundraising efforts. This newsletter is a shining example of her creativity and professionalism. I couldn't be happier with this team.

In this time of transition, we chose to preserve the newsletter's title, *A Sense of Place*, as a thread that connects our future to our past. This has led me to contemplate what *sense of place* means to me, to our supporters, and to our community.

Sense of place may describe the way each of us relates to the 1,700 acres of woodlands and wetlands, forests, and fields that we care for. The land anchors us and gives us reason to come back year after year, or reason to stay year-round.

Through our recent move out of the Industrial Trust building, our home for more than 12 years, we have found that *sense of place* is less tangible than any one physical location. The team is fully operational at our temporary office space in the Westerly Community Credit Union while our future home at the Eleanor F. and Edward W. Barlow Nature Preserve is being renovated.

In so many ways, *sense of place* is embodied in the boundless energy of our Board, staff, and volunteers, those with a true land ethic and a desire to expand WLT's connection to the community. WLT has forged inspiring partnerships with many local organizations and businesses who see us as a worthy organization with strong priorities, a true community partner.

In effect, we are all stewards of Westerly's *sense of place*- whether you visit our lands, walk our trails, use our app or attend our events, we hope you will build a deeper connection to the Westerly Land Trust. ***Your support will help us maintain this momentum, and we thank you for considering a gift to The Westerly Land Trust this spring.***

There is an African proverb, "If you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far, go together." It is our sincere hope that these pages will illustrate to you how far we can go together to preserve Westerly's *sense of place*.

Jennifer Fusco,
Executive Director

WE'VE MOVED

The Westerly Land Trust has moved to a new office space at 122 Granite Street on the second floor of the Westerly Community Credit Union (WCCU). We are incredibly grateful for WCCU's warm hospitality during this time of transition. This move is temporary, while we await the renovation of our new home at the Eleanor F. & Edward W. Barlow Nature Preserve, an 80-acre parcel of forest, wetlands and farmland. Over the next several months, the house on the Barlow Nature Preserve will be transformed into our new offices, meeting space, and welcome center. The farmland will be cultivated by three farmers, and we envision the Barlow Nature Preserve as a place where people come from all around to learn about conservation and agriculture, purchase produce directly from farmers, and connect to the land.

The Industrial Trust building, at 10 High Street, will remain in our urban property portfolio, and we are working with prospective tenants who will remain true to the building's character while showcasing its beauty and historical value.

For more information on the Barlow Nature Preserve, please contact Jennifer Fusco at jfusco@westerlylandtrust.org.

COMMUNITY GARDEN

As a part of Westerly Land Trust's Urban Initiative, the Community Garden opened its gates at its new location at 145 Main Street on May 11th. The garden features 20 plots, four of which are raised for individuals who will be gardening from a seated or standing position. Pollinator-friendly flowers and shrubs frame the garden, and the public courtyard invites the community to sit, rest, and enjoy a bit of nature amidst the hustle and bustle of Main Street. Slabs of Westerly granite, donated by the Town after being excavated during the downtown water project in 2018, have been used to create a walkway into the garden area and benches in the courtyard. The Community Garden will also be home to the "Tenor Tree" as a part of the Bricks and Murals' project, Harmony Trail, coming to Westerly-Pawcatuck in June.

A project with true community support, the garden was designed and built by Westerly Land Trust Board, staff, and skilled volunteers, many of whom are members of our stewardship team, "CCC," (a nod to Civilian Conservation Corps, but which actually stands for Coffee and Clearing Club.) Materials and labor were donated or offered below market value from several local businesses.

Many foundations, individuals, and local entities supported this wonderful Westerly Land Trust project.

"Westerly Land Trust, through our Urban initiative, helps to revitalize downtown properties, and the new Community Garden space on Main Street is a perfect example of transforming an empty urban lot into something our community can be proud of," said Executive Director Jennifer Fusco. "We are incredibly grateful to all of our partners who brought this project to life."

To become involved in or to support the Community Garden, please email Jennifer Fusco at jfusco@westerlylandtrust.org.

MANY THANKS TO OUR PARTNERS WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE COMMUNITY GARDEN

BankNewport
Jennifer and Alan Brinton
James Capizzano Fence Co.
Paul Chiaradio
Cherenzia Companies
The Elms Retirement Residence, Inc.
Peter Fusaro
Pamela and John Gentile
Goff Architecture, Ltd.
Grey Sail Brewing Company
Harmony Trail, a Bricks and Murals Project
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The Rhode Island Foundation
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Southern Rhode Island Conservation District
Town of Westerly
Jonathan Townsend
Vita Nova Compost
Westerly Agway
Westerly Land Trust Board of Directors
Westerly Land Trust Stewardship Team, "CCC"



Photo Credit: Greg Pettys

TRAILS AND ALES

On March 20th the Westerly Land Trust collaborated with two local businesses, Grey Sail Brewing Company and Cahill & Co., to host a first-of-its-kind event called "Trails and Ales." This year a Supermoon coincided with the first day of Spring, so what better day for an afterwork hike? The group of more than 60 eager hikers met at Grills Preserve, enjoyed each other's company on the trails, and then migrated to Grey Sail Brewing Company for a post-hike free draft pour. Cahill & Co. gifted hikers with koozies and coupons for their store. The event was such a success, you're sure to see similar partnerships in the future.



Photo Credit: Donna Anderson

THANKS to our 2018 SUPPORTERS

FOUNDATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

\$10,000 AND ABOVE

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Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
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\$5,000 TO \$9,999

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Lisa McGinley
Marguerite and Tom Moore, Jr.
The New York Community Trust
Lise Strickler and Mark Gallogly

Linherr and I LOVE what you and the WLT have accomplished over the years. We are so lucky to live on the edge of the preserve and experience the amazing wildlife and views!

~ Dana Hollingsworth



Col. Willie Cove by Rebecca Woodward

\$2,500 TO \$4,999

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Deborah and Samuel Shaw
Vanguard Charitable Endowment
The Washington Trust Charitable Foundation
Marilyn and Bill White
Rebecca Woodward and Adam Kaufman

One of the most exciting things about moving to Westerly this year is being able to volunteer and assist with some of the Land Trust's many new projects.

~ Paul Butler

\$500 TO \$999

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Deborah and Peter Lamm
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Susan and William Lester
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THANKS to our 2018 SUPPORTERS



Winnapaug Farm Preserve by Jennifer Fusco

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Gayle and Howard Rothman
Sharon and Stephen Rowley
Donna and David Sirianni
Meg and Jason Tefft
United Way of Rhode Island
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\$250 TO \$499

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Cahill and Co.
Frank Hall Boat Yard
Lawrence & Memorial Hospital
Paddy's Beach Restaurant
Pleasant Acres Florists
ServiceMaster of South County

The Westerly Land Trust is an integral organization to the Town of Westerly providing educational and recreational opportunities for its residents through conservation of important environmental, open space, and cultural resources. The Cherenzia Companies are pleased to support and honored to be a part of their efforts.

~ Sergio Cherenzia

This list represents donors of \$250 or more in calendar year 2018. We've made every effort to ensure the correct listing of each donor and gift, but please notify us of any corrections or omissions.

FARMING AT BARLOW NATURE PRESERVE

As the renovations begin on the Barlow house creating space for our offices, meetings, and events, we are pleased to introduce the three farmers who will be working the farmland in the 2019 growing season. Cassidy, James, and Stephanie submitted compelling proposals to farm the land at the Barlow Nature Preserve, and are excited to partner with the Westerly Land Trust.



Cassidy Whipple

Cassidy Whipple, pictured above with her fiancé, Jim Given, owns and manages Frontier Farm, a small-scale diversified farm specializing in the organic production of vegetables and herbs. Frontier Farm aims to provide the public with high quality produce grown sustainably with environmental stewardship as the top priority. Forming meaningful relationships with her customers and other local business owners is paramount to Cassidy. She believes everyone should have access to local, seasonal, and organically grown produce regardless of location or socio-economic status.

Additionally, Cassidy believes soil health is the foundation to a healthy environment and successful farm. Previously working for other local farms with similar values taught her that organic, chemical-free farming practices are not only highly effective, but also the only way farms should be operating. Now, as a farm business owner, she aims to implement these practices season after season on the farm at Barlow Nature Preserve.

Cassidy holds a Bachelor of Science in wildlife and conservation biology from the University of Rhode Island, and has been farming for several years. "I am overjoyed to be working with the Westerly Land Trust, not only to make my farming dreams a reality, but to help make the farm at Barlow Nature Preserve something to be proud of for years to come," Cassidy said.



James Cruso

James Cruso, a Westerly native, owns and operates Vita Nova Compost (VNC), a company that aims to divert organic waste from local landfills through vermicomposting, utilizing worms to break down the waste and create nutrient-rich organic fertilizer and soil conditioner. VNC employs 1,000 red wiggler worms per square foot!

James is motivated by our country's waste issue, noting that the average family of four can create 400-800 pounds of organic waste per year. When disposed of improperly, this waste sits in landfills, resulting in the release of dangerous methane gases. VNC offers residential and business compost collection services throughout South County, and is currently collecting waste from Dave's Coffee, Terra Firma Farm, High Tide Juice Bar, Bogues Alley and the Cooper Group. To date, VNC has diverted 12,207 pounds of waste from our local landfills and turned it into nutrient-rich compost. When James begins operations at the farm at Barlow Nature Preserve, he aims to have zero footprint, using solar panels and collecting rainwater to run his operation.

James earned a Bachelor of Science in civil engineering from Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston. To find out more about how James can collect your compostable waste (anything from the earth, non-bleached paper products, uncooked food/vegetable scraps, herbs, egg shells, fruit casings, etc.), visit his website www.vitanovacompost.com.



Stephanie Bennett

Stephanie Bennett is venturing into her first official year of growing specialty cut flowers for market. After opening the Malted Barley with her husband, Colin Bennett, in downtown Westerly in 2011, and keeping busy raising their two young boys, Stephanie is eager to implement a vision she has been cultivating for some time. Echo Rock Flowers was created in 2019 and has found its first home in the garden plot at the farm at Barlow Nature Preserve. Echo Rock is a historical site on her parents' property in Ashaway, Rhode Island, and the company was so named to pay homage to where her journey began – growing up surrounded by the beauty of her mother's flower gardens.

Stephanie dreams of one day owning and operating a much larger flower farm, complete with event space for classes, private events, and retail sales. For now, however, farming on 3,700 square feet at Barlow Nature Preserve is an ideal way to plant the seed, so to speak, and grow the business from humble beginnings.

Growing 40 different crops and well over 100 varieties using sustainable practices, gorgeous blooms and lush foliage will be harvested weekly for local floral designers and florists. Additionally, fresh market bouquets will be sold at the Westerly Land Trust's Farmers Market and the Malted Barley.

2019 FORAGED OF THE EARTH DINNER

It was a full house for the 5th Annual Foraged of the Earth Dinner at the Knickerbocker Café on April 28. This year, two chefs collaborated on the foraged feast: Chris Champagne of 84 Aleworks and Mark Lacz of Casa Della Luce & Vetrano's. Many thanks to the hunters and foragers Larry Orlando, Steve Crandall, Eric Fiske, Keith Cowley, Tom Beattie, Paul Benoit, Lou Pucci, Joe Cozzolino, and Frank Turrisi for delivering oysters, pheasant, wild turkey, moose, boar, local greens, and more. Beer and wine pairings were graciously provided by Grey Sail Brewing Company and Jonathan Edwards Winery. Thank you to all of our guests who attended to support the Westerly Land Trust's endeavors. It was our pleasure hosting you, and it appeared that everyone left full and happy!



Photo Credit: Meg Lee

FIELD TRIPS AND PARTNERSHIP WITH NESS

Spring field trip season is in full swing! Students in grades K-8 from Pine Point School, St. Michael School, State Street Elementary, Chariho Alternative Learning Academy, and others are visiting several Westerly Land Trust properties and getting hands-on nature experiences. The students take part in macroinvertebrate sampling, scavenger hunts, animal home engineering, geologic sampling and surveying and more. It is inspiring to observe the next generation of land stewards get their hands dirty, don their boots to cross the stream, engineer a mock beaver dam, laugh with each other in the sunshine and find their own *sense of place*.

In addition to terrestrial field trips, Westerly Land Trust has set its sights on the seas, partnering with New England Science and Sailing (NESS). This summer will begin a pilot program of co-taught field trips. During the NESS portion, students will learn about oceans, rivers and the importance of marine habitat on Winnapaug Pond through water sampling, sediment analysis, kayak lessons, snorkeling and other activities. The other half of the day will be spent on our



Photo Credit: Meg Lee

Winnapaug Farm Preserve and Wahaneeta Preserve where the students will study different types of land-based habitats, local wildlife and their ecological importance. Hundreds of students from Connecticut and Rhode Island will participate in the program. We are thrilled to partner with NESS in this unique educational experience and are set for a fun-filled, educational summer spent encouraging the next generation of environmentalists on land and sea!

For more information on how to become with involved with our field trip programs, please contact Meg Lee at mlee@westerlylandtrust.org. If you are interested in supporting conservation education, please contact Erika Lebling at elebling@westerlylandtrust.org.

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Avondale Farm Preserve by Rebecca Woodward





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UPCOMING EVENTS

Dine to Donate at Paddy's Beach Club

Thursday, June 6th, 5pm – 9pm

Join us at Paddy's Beach Club! 10% of all sales will be donated to the Westerly Land Trust. Don't forget to show receipt upon departure. Thank you for your support!

Secret Suppers

Evening of Saturday, June 8th

A new event for 2019, guests will dine at elegant homes located on or near our preserves. The catch? You won't know which home will be hosting you until cocktail hour! To reserve your seat, please visit www.westerlylandtrust.org or call 401-315-2610. Tickets are \$100 per guest.

The Birds and the Bees Opening Reception at Avondale Arts

Friday, June 14th, 5pm-7pm

Join us to celebrate nature-inspired art created by local artists. The show runs from June 5th through June 30th, and a percentage of art sales will benefit the Westerly Land Trust. Avondale Arts is located at 95 Watch Hill Road, Westerly.

Full Moon Hike at Dr. John Champlin Glacier Park

Wednesday, June 19th, 5:30pm

Part of Westerly Library's Community Spotlight program series featuring WLT, hikers will enjoy Glacier Park's landscape during a full moon, overlooking the land once carved by enormous glaciers. This hike is moderate level due to hills and uneven, rocky footing. Please RSVP to mlee@westerlylandtrust.org.

Westerly Land Trust's Farmers Market

Thursdays beginning June 20th, 10am-1pm

We are gearing up for our 2019 Farmers Market, which will take place every Thursday from June 20th through September (excluding July 4th). Come support your local farmers at 85 Main St.

Casting into the Light Book Signing at Savoy Bookshop and Café

Tuesday, July 30th, 7:00pm

Janet Messineo, a Martha's Vineyard fishing legend, has written a moving, adventurous account of her quest to master the art of surfcasting and break into a world that was once male-dominated. This event is perfect for anyone who will brave the challenges of nature to achieve their goals.

Farm Dinner at Winnapaug Farm Preserve

Saturday, September 7

Save the Date for the annual and highly anticipated Westerly Land Trust Farm Dinner. Details and ticket information will be available in August.

*For details on our weekly Thursday hikes and paddles and other events, please visit our full calendar page on our website: www.westerlylandtrust.org or visit the events tab on our app.