



A Sense of Place

FALL 2020

RIVERWOOD PRESERVE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sheilia T. Beattie, *President*
Allen Leadbetter, *Vice President*
Nicholas J. Stahl, *Secretary*
Gerard Gorman, *Treasurer*

Donna Anderson
Jennifer Brinton
Susan Capalbo
Polly Chorlton
Eric Fiske
Lyman Goff
Linda Griffin
Gail Mallard
Joseph Miceli
Lawrence Orlando
Richard Panciera
David Rathbun
Gene Renz
Jeffrey Walker

STAFF

Jennifer Fusco,
Executive Director
Meg Lee,
Conservation Programs Manager
Erika Lebling,
Donor Relations Manager
Joseph Barnes
*Community Engagement/Youth
Education Coordinator*
Colleen Sullivan
Bookkeeper



MILESTONES: (RE)DISCOVERING THE NATURAL WORLD

Even as a kid, I loved Sir David Attenborough's narration of *Life on Earth* and *The Living Planet*. He brought the exotic, strange and wonderful animals from all over the world right into our living room, and I was captivated. His voice today, even at 94 years old, is strong, yet gentle and persuasive. Attenborough can deliver bad news on the state of our planet in a way that still offers a glimmer of hope and serves to inspire the masses to do better, to *be better*. I wish he was running for president.

He recently remarked about human behavior during the current health crisis,

In the course of this particular pandemic that we're going through, I think people are discovering that they need the natural world for their very sanity. People who have never listened to a bird song, are suddenly thrilled, excited, supported, inspired by the natural world. And they realize they're not apart from it. They are part of it.

Not apart from it; a part of it. This, of course, is every land conservationist's goal—to have more people recognize the interconnectedness of nature, humans included, so that they too work to preserve and protect it. When the world was shutting down, nature stayed open for business, and people came seeking a connection. We witnessed a surge in visitors on our very own properties, and my hope is that lasting relationships were built that will withstand the return to normalcy.

I'd like to imagine that people of all ages and backgrounds are finding peace and inspiration, as well as a sense of wonder on the land that they otherwise may not have discovered. I'm happy to know that people are finding those things on Westerly Land Trust preserves. Welcome home.



Jennifer Fusco,
Executive Director

PASSING THE BATON (OR CALCULATOR)

BILL HORNE

When Bill Horne, who has been WLT's Bookkeeper for the past 12 years, politely requested to retire this year now that he lives in Florida full time, we weren't sure we were going to allow him "early release." Bill has been a cornerstone of the Land Trust, deftly managing our often-complex bookkeeping practices. His accounting prowess and easy-going personality have served WLT well through the years. We will miss Bill around the office, but know that golf, his wife Phyllis and his grandchildren (not necessarily in that order) will keep him busy!



COLLEEN SULLIVAN

We welcome Colleen Sullivan who has taken over the reins as Bookkeeper. Colleen's experience as an internal auditor for healthcare and higher education non-profits will be a major boost to our team. Colleen, who grew up in Westerly, looks forward to getting to know our land trust preserves better. She and her husband, Jack Cannon, and their new puppy, Wrigley, live in Mystic. Please join us in welcoming her to the WLT team.



INTRODUCING JOE BARNES

Joe is excited to serve as the Westerly Land Trust's Community Engagement/Youth Education Coordinator as a member of TerraCorps, a faction of AmeriCorps. He will be designing environmental education materials for students to use the preserves as an outdoor classroom and will be expanding on community outreach programs. Joe graduated from the

University of Rhode Island in 2018 with a double major in Aquaculture and Fishery Technology and Biology. He has worked on coastal marine research projects with oysters and algae, spent some time testing wastewater for pollutants, and most recently raised Branzino in an indoor, recirculating aquaculture facility. Outside of work, Joe has become increasingly more involved in science communication and outreach, serving on town committees and the board of Connecticut's Inter-Religious Eco Justice Network. TerraCorps was the perfect opportunity for Joe to refine his outreach skills into a suitable career, and he looks forward to increasing science literacy and curiosity throughout Westerly. In his free time, Joe enjoys hiking, playing with his dog, Simon, and reading Marvel comics. His position is funded thanks to the General William Mayer Foundation, ServeRI, and TerraCorps.



REMEMBERING: PAUL MEYER



On October 1st, we lost a dear Westerly Land Trust family member. **Paul Meyer** was a steadfast volunteer, serving on the Board from 2005-2019 and offering his brains and brawn as a loyal CCC member. He was introduced to the Land Trust through the fledgling development of the Avondale Farm Preserve and was quickly appointed site chair, leading the charge to convert an abandoned farm into a grassland preserve. Right from the start, Paul took on the responsibility of ensuring our land stewardship equipment was in top shape.

With an engineering background and keen mind for everything mechanical, Paul was instrumental in constructing all the early kiosks, the Cynthia and Charlie benches at Dr. John Champlin Glacier Park, the gates at Quaker Burial Ground, and the small bridge over the stream by the road in Grills Preserve. As WLT progressed

and included culturally significant urban properties in our mission, Paul spearheaded the rather complex addition of the old Industrial Trust Building to the Land Trust. Perhaps most notable of Paul's contributions was his work on the Polly Coon Bridge at Grills Preserve, which has become a hallmark Westerly Land Trust project.

A leader in the early Thursday walking group and a regular at CCC, Paul gained the respect and friendship of the entire Westerly Land Trust community. According to Sheilia Beattie, he was a "truly unassuming person who quietly made his mark on us."

Close friend and CCC partner, Dick Holliday, noted, "Paul will always be honored and remembered as one of the reborn, reconstituted Land Trust's founding fathers."

We will miss Paul and his thoughtful, soft-spoken leadership, but his legacy lives on in all that we do.

2020'S PHOTO CONTEST BECOMES 2021'S CALENDAR

Because we have so many talented photographers enjoying our properties, we decided to hold a photo contest to show off their skills! Congratulations to all 12 winners, each of which will be featured in the Westerly Land Trust's 2021 calendar! Thank you to all participants who submitted photos throughout the year. The pictures display wonderful scenes from our nature preserves featuring wildlife, foliage, and seasonality. The contest winners each won a jar of local honey made by the bees right on the Barlow Nature Preserve! Calendars will be on sale in early November on the Land Trust's website, westerlylandtrust.org. Buy one for yourself and pick some up for your family and friends- they make great gifts, especially at a time when we've never wanted to flip to the next year more!



SINGING IN THE WOODS

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of us were forced to make sacrifices, and the Chorus of Westerly was no exception. Over the spring and summer, rehearsals, events and performances were canceled, but as fall approached the Chorus began to brainstorm ways to resume rehearsals in a safe manner. We were beyond honored when they reached out to us, requesting the use of Wahaneeta Preserve for safe outdoor rehearsals. The Chorus began gathering there in September, taking precautionary measures like wearing masks, staying socially distant and following screening protocol. They will continue their rehearsals on Thursday and Friday afternoons at Wahaneeta Preserve into the fall as weather permits.

Over the last six months, we have seen more people turn to nature as a place of safety. We are so proud to have provided that sanctuary during this difficult time and humbled to partner with a true community gem, the Chorus of Westerly.



We are excited to announce that the Westerly Land Trust was nominated and invited to join 1% for the Planet, a global organization started by the founders of Patagonia and Blue Ribbon Flies that distributes 1% of its business members' profits to participating environmentally-minded nonprofit partners. For more information or to sign up your business to support the Westerly Land Trust, visit onepercentfortheplanet.org.

TRAILS APP

Get all Westerly Land Trust trail maps with GPS tracking and interactive maps, a calendar of events, property photos, passport program, live updates of weather and recently spotted wildlife, and more all at your fingertips! Visit your app store and search "Westerly Land Trust" or go to WesterlyLandTrust.app.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS UPDATES

Beginning on January 1, 2021, the Westerly Land Trust will appoint several new officers.

After 15 years of service, President Sheila Beattie has announced her intention to cycle off the Board. Sheila joined the board in 2005 and has tirelessly served as President since 2014.



Sheila Beattie

Nicholas Stahl will become Board President. Nick has been involved on the Board since 2000 and is currently the Secretary and serves on several committees.



Nick Stahl

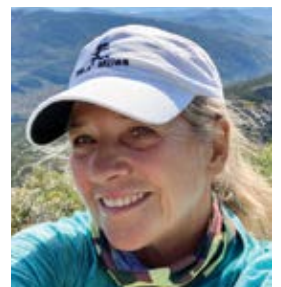
Linda Griffin will become Vice President, replacing Allen Leadbetter. Linda has served on the Board since 2012 and currently chairs the Development Committee. Allen will continue as a member of the Board, serving on several committees.

Donna Anderson, Chair of the Membership and Programs Committee, will be the incoming Secretary. Donna joined the Board in 2018 and has helped to develop new hiking opportunities and to introduce many new members to the Westerly Land Trust.



Linda Griffin

Gerry Gorman, a member of the Board since 2015, will remain Treasurer and Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee.



Donna Anderson

On behalf of the staff and all of our board members, we would like to thank Sheila for her dedication and leadership over the years. Sheila expressed her commitment to land conservation in Westerly with a "boots on the ground" leadership style. During her Presidency, the Westerly Land Trust has seen acquisitions of several new properties, achieved national accreditation, created specific plans for the stewardship of each property, and cultivated a strong and effective Board. Her daily runs with her three dogs through WLT preserves truly keep her connected to the land. And on Tuesday mornings she can always be found getting her hands dirty maintaining trails and monitoring properties with CCC. Sheila will remain active with this group, underscoring her dedication to the Land Trust.

In addition to the officer changes, the Board will welcome back Bill McKendree and will say goodbye to Donna Celico and David Rathbun who are concluding their commitment cycles. Donna has served on the Board since 1999 and David since 2006. We are grateful for their years of service.



Gerry Gorman

Board and organization members will vote on the above nominations at the 2020 Annual Meeting held virtually on Thursday, December 3rd. For more information on how to log in to this meeting, please see westerlylandtrust.org.



WELCOME TO BARLOW

When we set out to renovate the Barlow Nature Preserve, we envisioned a Grand Opening with all of our friends and supporters gathered to tour the property. After all, this is our new home, a true ambassador landscape complete with hiking trails, wetlands and farmland that perfectly illustrates our mission. But, as with so many other things this year, we had to push pause and delay the festivities until it is safe to gather again.

The staff relocated from our gracious host's offices at the Westerly Community Credit Union to the offices at the Barlow Nature Preserve in June. Standing in the field behind the offices you can truly feel the importance of protecting this land. For the first time in Westerly Land Trust history, food is being produced on our property: fresh, nutritious produce that feeds our community through the farmers market, the seasonal farm stand or online at frontierfarmri.com. And wildlife is thriving. When you visit, you might catch a glimpse of Eleanor, a resident red-tailed hawk the staff has affectionally named after Mrs. Barlow.

We have yet to unlock the full potential of this land. In addition to hosting all-ages programs here, we are also hard at work writing K-8 curriculum specifically tailored to the Barlow Nature Preserve. We are focusing on virtual learning and homeschool modules for small groups, and in the future, we will welcome large class field trips here. Students will learn first-hand the importance of composting, bees (from a safe distance), local agriculture and land conservation.

Thank you to all of our partners who made this transition possible. Since acquiring this property from the estate of Eleanor F. and Edward W. Barlow in 2018, the Westerly Land Trust has diligently sought funds from partnering foundations. Because of generous donations, the renovation project was completed on budget without a significant financial burden on the Land Trust, allowing our individual members' gifts to stay focused on our land conservation and stewardship efforts. We are grateful to be in our new home and look forward to the day when we can share it with you in person.





2020 FARM DINNER REIMAGINED

We were on the verge of canceling the 2020 Farm Dinner, but then we reflected on what this event had become over the past 9 years: a community celebration of local farmers on local land. Things were different this year, but we are still a community and now more than ever, we are reliant on local food. So, we began to reimagine. We couldn't gather together at the longest table in Westerly, but if we made a really great meal and found a way to deliver it to all of you in your smaller groups, couldn't we still be one community enjoying the feast together...apart? Would it be possible to transfer the charm and character of the classic event to your very own backyard? If we sent out the invitation to the 10th Annual Westerly Land Trust Farm Dinner Reimagined, would anyone respond? You all answered with a resounding YES!

The Westerly Land Trust relies on the Farm Dinner as its primary fundraiser each year. Your charitable contribution goes directly to the conservation of special open spaces in Westerly, land that we are happy to report has seen a record number of visitors safely seeking solace and connecting with nature in 2020. To forgo this event would have been detrimental to our cause, but our community rallied, and really enjoyed themselves in the process!

On August 29, 2020, we hosted the 10th Annual Westerly Land Trust Farm Dinner by delivering to 54 individual parties. We were overwhelmed and frankly humbled by the number of reservations that came pouring in, a true testament that people want to support our mission despite (or maybe because of) the hardships this year has brought.

We are genuinely thankful to all of you for trusting us to pull off an unconventional twist on our favorite annual event. You are our success. We are also grateful for our unflappable Farm Dinner Committee who said, "what hurdles?" and forged ahead anyway; for the chefs who once again pulled off a culinary feat, and did it while wearing masks; for our exquisite group of volunteers who packaged the dinner and then safely delivered it to your doorstep; and of course to the farmers who grow and raise our food, not just for the Farm Dinner but always.

CONTRIBUTING FARMS AND PRODUCERS

Avondale Farm	Quonnie Farm
Beriah Lewis Farm	Seacoast Mushrooms
Dick's World of Wines	Sift Bake Shop
Echo Rock Flowers	Stonyledge Farm
Frontier Farm	Vesta Bakery
Holmberg Orchards	Watch Hill Oysters
Little River Farm	Wehpittituck Farm
Narrow Lane Orchard	West Farm Organics

KEEPERS OF THE LAND

Because we couldn't gather together in the open field for the Farm Dinner this year, we wanted to find an alternate way to connect our guests to our land. Through the generosity of Kathy and Bill McKendree and Annie Aschim and Read McKendree, we engaged with local filmmakers Hilary Federico and Matt Andrews of Frame + Focus Media to produce a short film about the symbiotic relationship between land conservation and small-scale agriculture. Their final product absolutely wowed us! Hilary and Matt interviewed farmers connected to the Westerly Land Trust over a course of six weeks. This developed into a storyline that highlights the conservation-mindedness of so many of our local farmers. If you have not watched Keepers of the Land yet, or even if you want to watch it again and again and again like we do, please visit our website at westerlylandtrust.org or go directly to vimeo.com/452671420.



WHEN NATURE CALLS

Despite the extraordinary circumstances presented by the coronavirus pandemic, we at the Westerly Land Trust forged ahead on a project at Grills Preserve to construct an eco-friendly, accessible restroom.

This is a feat that would not have been possible without the Southeastern New England Educational and Charitable (SNEC) Foundation's generous financial support, for which we are very grateful. One of WLT's summer interns, Grace Vargo-Willeford, a student of Salve Regina University, paired up with talented carpenter and friend of the Westerly Land Trust, Timmy Lebling, completing this project in just 10 weeks. Amongst the trees, just off the main trail now stands an environmentally-sound, compostable restroom facility, complete with solar panels that power a fully operating ventilation system. The design fits in well with its surroundings, encompassing a natural look with the pale wood finish. This restroom was built in compliance with ADA standards to provide a clean and easy to use facility for all Grills Preserve visitors.

The primary objective of this project was to make Grills Preserve available for educational programming. Without a restroom, we were unable to host field trips on the largest of Westerly Land Trust's conservation properties. But now students will be able to visit this expansive green space to learn about numerous habitats, the Pawcatuck River ecosystem, the importance of public recreation, habitat restoration projects, and the vital need for conserving open space.



As with all our properties, the Westerly Land Trust is committed to the stewardship and protection of this land in perpetuity for the enduring benefit of our community. Grills Preserve will now provide us with an additional 500+ acres of educational space for schools and students to experience hands-on, environmental education.

We extend our sincere thanks to SNEC, Salve Regina University, Clivus New England, Arnold Lumber, Pawcatuck Roofing, and The Home Depot for their support, resources, and donations to this project.

VOLUNTEER CORNER: DAVE PRIGMORE

Dave Prigmore, 2005-2019 WLT Board member, is a devoted Westerly Land Trust volunteer and has become a Coffee and Clearing Club (CCC) leader over the years. A natural fit for our group, Dave marries his love of the environment with a sprinkle of friendly sarcasm. His wry sense of humor and quick wit match his prowess with power tools and appreciation for all things mechanical.

Dave's boots are commonly the first on the ground at many of our preserves – leading the charge, laying out the trail systems, learning of their histories, and putting care into our management practices.

An avid birder, Dave loves to share his passion for birds with others. He has become known as "the bird guy" in his neighborhood, leading walks regularly on many of our nature preserves. One look at his camera roll and you'll know how serious he is about observing and identifying birds. All of this gives him (and us) good reason to work hard to conserve land.

Thank you, Dave, for your contributions of leadership, passion and pure grit to further the Westerly Land Trust's mission over the years. And keep it up. We'll see you Tuesday.



THANK YOU 2020 CORPORATE SPONSORS

PRESENTING SPONSOR



EVERGREEN SPONSORS



STARKWEATHER & SHEPLEY
INSURANCE BROKERAGE, INC.



EAGLE SPONSORS



OLGA B. GOFF REAL ESTATE



HERON SPONSORS

Anchor Insulation
Brookside Electric
Dick's World of Wines
Jonathan Edwards Winery
Ginger's Service Station
Louis Panciera, Inc.
Miceli's Furniture
North American Property Solutions
Valenti Family of Dealerships

BLUEBIRD SPONSORS

The Andrea Seaside Restaurant and Beach Bar
Broadview Garden Center & Florist
Cahill and Co.
Dunns Corners Market
EZ Waste Systems
First Financial Advisory Services
The Hotel Maria
JRV Woodworks
Premier Physical Therapy
Printing Plus
RE/MAX South County
Schilke Realty
Stanton Realty
Stela Parties and Events





THE WESTERLY LAND TRUST

PO Box 601, Westerly, RI 02891-0601
401.315.2610 • westerlylandtrust.org

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
WESTERLY, RI
PERMIT NO.5

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Printed locally on recycled paper

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

We look forward to a time when we can gather together again. We are optimistically planning some events for the remainder of 2020 and early 2021, but as these events approach, we will adhere to guidelines set by the State of Rhode Island.

Please check our website for up-to-date event information at westerlylandtrust.org. Stay safe and healthy.

Themed All Ages Hikes

One Sunday per month

Themed all-ages guided hikes will take place one Sunday per month. The hikes are free for members and \$10 per person for non-members. **RSVP** to jbarnes@westerlylandtrust.org with your **name, email, phone number, and number** of people in your party.

All Ages Hikes

Thursdays from 10am-12pm
Various locations

Regular guided hikes run Thursdays from 10am-12pm at various locations. Check **westerlylandtrust.org** or the Trails App for the complete schedule and to reserve your spot! Please dress appropriately for terrain and weather. RSVP to the hike leader listed for that week. **Note:** Space is limited due to COVID-19 safety precautions. Hikers must bring face masks.

Barlow Farm Stand- see you next year!

It's a wrap! Thank you to everyone who made the Barlow Farm Stand's first year a success! To continue purchasing fresh produce over the winter, shop online at frontierfarmri.com to schedule your pick-up. For compost pick-up, please contact Vita Nova Compost at vitanovacompost.com.

Passport Program

COVID-19 preventing you from traveling? Travel the Westerly Land Trust hiking trails with our Passport Program! Download our "Trails App" from your app store and get started today! There are 3 QR codes on 8 of our hiking trails. Scan them all and win an exclusive WLT T-Shirt!

We've Moved

We've Moved! The Westerly Land Trust office is now located on the Barlow Nature Preserve. Find us at 449 Westerly-Bradford Road, or contact us at info@westerlylandtrust.org or (401) 315-2610. For USPS, please continue to use PO Box 601, Westerly, RI 02891. **Note:** Please inform us prior to your visit, as we are social distancing. Thank you!

Annual Meeting

The Westerly Land Trust's Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday, December 3rd and is open to all members. To practice safe social distancing, the meeting will be conducted on a virtual platform. More information about time and how to log in can be found at westerlylandtrust.org as the event approaches.