



A Sense of Place

SPRING 2022

RIVERWOOD PRESERVE

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MILESTONES:

It is spring again. The earth is like a child who knows poems by heart. — Rainer Maria Rilke

The return of the daffodils, bluebirds, lilac, and red-winged blackbirds signal another rotation around the sun for all of us, and I've enjoyed seeing new growth sprouting in all things, including our Westerly Land Trust community.

After 2 ½ years, we are returning to in-person events and programs (in-person Farm Dinner is back this year!), and our team has been busy developing programs for all ages. Conservation Programs Manager Lauren Barber has been building our **Living Laboratories** and **Wellness in the Woods** programs and threading her positive energy into all Westerly Land Trust programs, increasing our reach and community connections with each week.

The Westerly Land Trust staff team is also growing. Marc Doherty, whom many of you have met over the past 8 months as our TerraCorps Land Stewardship Coordinator, has accepted our offer to stay on as Land Stewardship Manager after his service year concludes. Marc has made himself indispensable for stewardship, and his sunny personality, fearless enthusiasm, and boundless thirst for knowledge have endeared him to all of us. He is exactly what the Land Trust needs. Not to mention he's turned us all into coffee snobs. Marc will officially join our team in August, and we couldn't be happier.

Our dedicated CCC volunteer group has expanded significantly. Each Tuesday morning close to 30 people join us for stewardship work—maintaining trails, monitoring properties, and even building a permanent workshop for future projects here at Barlow Nature Preserve. We officially christened "The CCC Coop" just a few weeks ago making birdhouses for Avondale Farm Preserve...the birdhouses will serve two purposes—to provide housing for our feathered friends and to designate electrical boxes to aid our stewardship team in mowing.

Our lands are getting a little bigger too—we are so proud to add the Cottrell Family Preserve to our conserved lands (more on that on page 3) and to have conserved this family land forever in a very important area of our community.

All of these are signs that the Westerly Land Trust is growing and reaching for new heights. We hope your spring is off to a great start too.

Jennifer Fusco,
Executive Director

WELCOME BACK TO THE BOARD, DAVID RATHBUN

We are excited to announce that David Rathbun has rejoined the Westerly Land Trust Board of Directors. David originally joined the Board in 2006 and served 14 years. After a year hiatus, he's back! David is the owner of Wehpittituck Farm in Stonington, CT. He serves on WLT's Urban and Acquisition Committees and advises on the Farmers Market. We are happy to have his sense of humor and expertise back on the Board.



WREATHS AT WINNAPAUG

Over the holiday season, you may have noticed the larger-than-life wreaths on the Winnapaug Farm Preserve cairns. As a part of our regular land management assessments, two trees on Westerly Land Trust's Sunnycres Preserve were identified as needing to be removed, so they were cut down by our Coffee and Clearing Club (CCC). John and Steve Crandall repurposed the greens from these trees into beautiful and festive wreaths to adorn our cairns. Thank you, John and Steve!

These cairns were constructed by CCC from fieldstones that continue to surface with the cyclical freezing and thawing of Winnapaug Farm Preserve.



Announcing The Cottrell Family Preserve

The Westerly Land Trust is proud to announce the acquisition of the Cottrell Family Preserve, 21.47 acres on the Pawcatuck River in the Potter Hill area of Westerly.

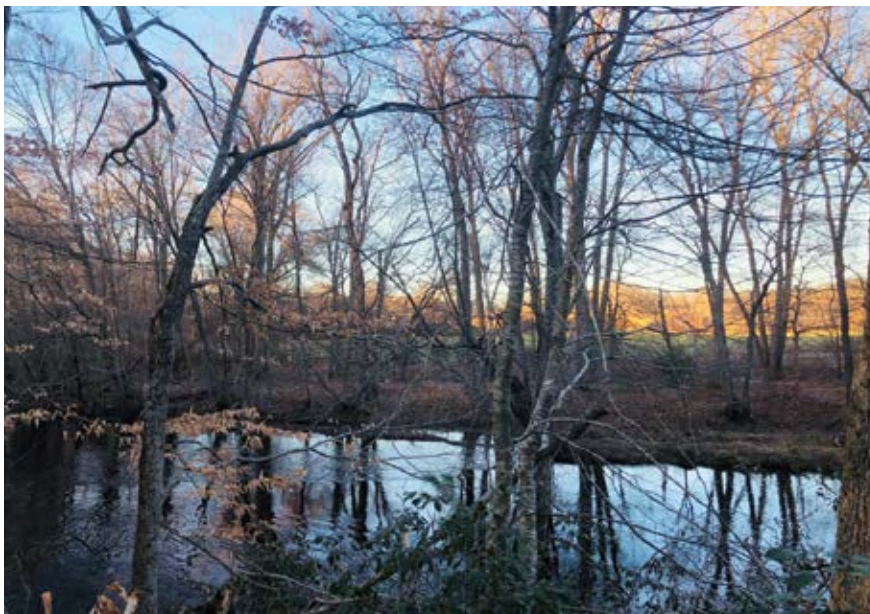
“With its streams, acres of mountain laurel and quarter-of-a-mile river frontage, the preservation of this property furthers the Westerly Land Trust’s efforts to protect the Pawcatuck River,” said Les Crandall

of the Westerly Land Trust’s Acquisition Committee. “WLT is grateful to the Cottrell family for working with us to protect this land and make its wonderful habitat available to the public.”

Gail Mallard, Westerly Land Trust Board member and Acquisition Committee Chair, added, “This property is a significant addition to existing protected land in this area of Westerly. The newly protected open space abuts the Westerly Town Forest which, in turn, is across Potter Hill Road from the existing WLT Flora Whiteley and Anderson Preserves. Together these preserved properties have significant river frontage, provide a continuous area of protected habitat for wildlife, and present opportunities for recreation by the public.

Protection of this land was made possible through the generous support of the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM), Forrest and Frances Lattner Foundation, the Bafflin Foundation, the Champlin Foundation, and the Horace A. and S. Ella Kimball Foundation, in addition to the thoughtful consideration of the Cottrell Family Real Estate Trust. The Land Trust is grateful to the Cottrell family for their foresight in conserving this land.

Special thanks to Gail Mallard, Les Crandall, and the entire Acquisition Committee whose hard and diligent work drove this project from inception to fruition.



FARMSTAND AND EDUCATION PAVILION AT BARLOW NATURE PRESERVE

The farms at the Eleanor F. and Edward W. Barlow Nature Preserve are flourishing, and so are the farmers’ businesses. Concurrently, our educational programming is thriving (read more on page 6). To further both endeavors, the Westerly Land Trust is constructing a multipurpose pavilion that will double as farmstand and an outdoor educational space. This permanent open-air structure will provide consistent and reliable access to nutritious locally sourced food and will allow our youth programming to continue despite poor weather conditions.

The pavilion was designed by Bob Saint, father of Echo Rock Flowers’ Stephanie Bennett. Stephanie’s brother Eric will provide the building expertise and lead our experienced volunteers through the building process. Peter Fusaro has excavated the area and built a retaining wall using WLT’s Westerly granite.

Through donations of labor and materials, WLT was able to manage expenses at a time when building costs have never been higher. The Westerly Land Trust extends gratitude to Willie Barber for his time, labor, and material donations. Additionally, a RIDEM Local Agriculture and Seafood Act (LASA) grant was matched by a private donation from Stephen and Sharon Jackson. The WLT pavilion will be up and running later this month.

“It’s really our pleasure. When you described this project, which seems so essential and integral to the WLT property, it was so easy to decide to do our part to help out,” said Steve Jackson.

Special thanks to our own Marc Doherty, 2022 TerraCorps member, who has stewarded this project from the start and coordinated all the moving pieces, even when they weren’t moving. We’ll let him inscribe his initials somewhere.



THANKS to our 2021 SUPPORTERS

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“Hope is the byproduct of action, and the Westerly Land Trust has given us all hope in preserving our most precious land. Thank you and we are grateful.”
~ Arlene and Peter Piacquadio

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"WLT preserves are some of the most beautiful properties in southern RI providing miles of hiking and walking trails for all to enjoy. Having them nearby provides incentive and motivation to wander their paths and revel in their beauty as often as possible." ~ Alesia Sadosky

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Karin McCormick's Farm Dinner Party

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LIVING LABORATORIES: REINVENTED

Living Laboratories, a hands-on, outdoor, educational program, was created during the height of the pandemic to supplement traditional school curriculum and combat unfinished learning. Now as our lives trend more towards “normalcy,” *Living Laboratories* is evolving, largely thanks to the work of WLT’s Conservation Programs Manager Lauren Barber who has incorporated Social Emotional Learning (SEL) elements into the curriculum and aligned the program with CASEL SEL, NGSS, and Environmental Literacy standards.

The Westerly Land Trust is working currently with Westerly Public Schools to design programming that will continue at least through the 2024 school year and focus on elementary school children with the possibility of expanding to include middle school students. The current model is an after-school option,



complete with bus transportation from school as an added benefit for working caregivers and/or families without transportation access. In January and February, students visited Wahaneeta Preserve to “Collect and Craft.” They foraged, learned local species, and created nature-inspired crafts. In March and April, students were invited to “Nature to Nutrition” at Barlow Nature Preserve, where they experienced what it takes to be a farmer by analyzing soil and crop health, learning how to compost, and discovering the benefits of



growing their own food and supporting local farmers. In May’s program, “Eco Engineers,” students used technology to explore Westerly Land Trust trails in search of different ecosystems, studied various habitats, and constructed their own mock animal habitats with surrounding natural elements.

We at the Westerly Land Trust view it not only as a privilege but a responsibility to utilize our 1,700 acres of open space for the enduring benefit of our community’s youth. This programming, which is free of charge for all students, is made possible through the generous support from individuals and foundations, such as the Southern Rhode Island Conservation District, the Rhode Island Foundation, and Emma Clyde Hodge Memorial Foundation, who also see the value and importance of connecting students with the natural environment. To enroll your students in *Living Laboratories* and to learn about summer education options, please visit westerlylandtrust.org.

WELLNESS IN THE WOODS: FOREST BATHING AND YOGA

The Westerly Land Trust is offering a new series focused on the mental and physical health benefits of connecting mind and body with nature.

Wellness in the Woods brings elements of yoga, meditation, mindfulness, and body movement to various WLT preserves. This summer we will partner again with BarreCoast to host yoga classes out on the land. Also, Certified Forest Therapy Guide Dr. Deirdre O’Connor (pictured) has scheduled several forest bathing walks, and WLT volunteer Janice Fifer will be leading yoga hikes.



Forest bathing is the pleasant practice of spending time in nature for the purpose of enhancing health and happiness. Evidenced based research confirms that time in nature has profound healing benefits for physical and emotional well-being. The term forest bathing comes from the Japanese tradition of “shin-rin yoku” literally translated to “bathing in the atmosphere of the forest.” On these walks participants will learn and experience how the regular practice of forest bathing can restore health and vitality by

strengthening immune function, lowering stress hormones, improving mood and sleep, and stimulating creativity. Forest bathing also offers us the opportunity to deepen our relationship with the natural world.

For a full **Wellness in the Woods** schedule, please visit westerlylandtrust.org/events-calendar



MOBILE TRAILS APP

Get all WLT trail maps with GPS tracking and interactive maps, a calendar of WLT 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.



VOLUNTEER CORNER: JANICE FIFER



When Janice Fifer retired from her position as Aquatics Director at Rhode Island College, she began looking around Westerly for fun outdoor activities to fill her time. She came across a blurb in the *Westerly Sun* about an upcoming kayak event hosted by the Westerly Land Trust and promptly registered. That was 14 years ago, and Janice has been involved in the Westerly Land Trust ever since.

"The people were so active and friendly. It was such a great group," Janice said about the people she met on that first kayaking adventure. Since then, Janice has done everything from stuff envelopes to lead yoga hikes. A long-time yoga instructor, Janice loves practicing and teaching yoga outdoors surrounded by nature. "Because yoga prompts you to focus inward, when I'm indoors, I don't pay much attention to what is going on next to me, but when I practice outdoors, I'm so much more aware with all my senses. It is like a dual experience." When she leads her yoga hikes on Westerly Land Trust trails, Janice invites people to slow down and take in all that is around them. Together they practice standing yoga poses and, depending on the geography of the trails, they engage in sitting meditations. "It is a very different experience from the regular group hike," Janice said.

Janice also has been instrumental in the Westerly Land Trust education program since its inception in 2016. Her biggest joy is meeting kids who do not have much or any experience in nature and helping them become comfortable and confident outdoors. Janice values the importance of youth environmental education, saying "if they don't learn about it, they won't protect the world." She attributes her love of nature to her childhood spent climbing trees, chasing worms, and playing in the dirt. Janice has concerns about today's youth's limited physical activity or over-reliance on technology, which is why she is so committed to helping offer hands-on, enriching outdoor educational options. She hopes her volunteering will inspire local students, but also encourage other adults to volunteer in the community, too.

Thank you, Janice, for your many years of service and commitment to our community.

FARMERS MARKET WEDNESDAYS 3-6PM, JUNE 8-SEPTEMBER 7

After listening to our community's feedback and requests, the Westerly Land Trust has changed the day and time of the Westerly Farmers Market. This summer you will find us at the same location, 85 Main Street in downtown Westerly (the ice rink), but the market will be held on Wednesdays from 3pm-6pm. Here, you'll find your favorite vendors and some new faces, too! We will continue to partner with FarmFreshRI to make SNAP benefits available for those who qualify.

The Westerly Land Trust is proud to play a role in supporting these sustainable farms and connecting our community to healthy, nutritious, locally sourced food.



2022 VENDORS

- BeeMindful, LLC
- Better Business Bureau
- Chicamonina Gourmet
- Echo Rock Flowers
- Fenner Ridge Farm
- Firefly Farm
- Frontier Farm
- Gato Gazpacho
- Jumpin Jax Jerky
- Lovewell Farms
- Mama Emily's Sweet Treats
- Narrow Lane Orchard
- Papa Lous Lobster Rolls
- Serendipity Farm
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Secret Suppers

Saturday, June 4th, Evening Secret Suppers is an exciting night with a bit of mystery. You won't know where or with whom you'll be dining until that very evening at a cocktail reception. For more information and to reserve your seat, please visit westerlylandtrust.org.

Westerly Farmers Market

Wednesdays, June 8-September 7, 3pm-6pm at 85 Main Street For many reasons, small scale farmers are some of the very best conservationists. The Westerly Land Trust is proud to play a role in supporting these sustainable farms and connecting our community to healthy, nutritious, locally sourced food. **Please note the day and time change!**

Farm Dinner, Avondale Farm Preserve

Saturday, August 27, 2022 After two years of reimagining the classic Westerly Land Trust Farm Dinner, we are heading back out onto the land and setting the longest table in Westerly for one of our favorite nights of the summer. Join us as we gather again to celebrate the important intersection of land conservation and local, sustainable agriculture.

BarreCoast Yoga (Wellness in the Woods)

May 21, June 21, July 23, August 13, September 24, October 22 The Westerly Land Trust is thrilled to partner with BarreCoast for a third year of outdoor yoga at Winnapaug Farm Preserve. Join us as we practice vinyasa flow in the field while breathing in the fresh air and taking in the natural beauty that surrounds us. For information and to register, please email Lauren at lbarber@westerlylandtrust.org.

Forest Bathing (Wellness in the Woods)

June 5, October 15, October 27, November 13 Deepen your connection with nature on a gentle and mindful walk through the woods, led by Certified Forest Therapy Guide Dr. Deirdre O'Connor. For more information and to register please visit westerlylandtrust.org/events-calendar.

Gong Bath (Wellness in the Woods)

Wednesday, September 21 On the International Day of Peace, meditate in nature amidst the healing vibrations of sound. More information is to come. Check westerlylandtrust.org for updates.

Setting the Pace for Conservation 5K

TBD The Westerly Land Trust's 5K race through Avondale Farm Preserve and the surrounding area is returning! Please consult westerlylandtrust.org for updates on this event.