

# LAND TRUST NOTES



The Bethlehem Land Trust Inc., P.O. Box 322, Bethlehem, CT 06751  
bethlehemlandtrustct.org

Winter 2015

## ***Our Holdings Have Grown!***

It is with great excitement that we announce receipt of a new conservation easement: Bethlehem residents Ann and Michael Loeb have placed a permanent easement on 20.5 beautiful acres at Arrowhead Farm, their home on Carmel Hill North, ensuring that it will remain forever undeveloped. As an easement, the parcel continues to be private property and the Loeb's expect it to be cherished by their children, grandchildren, and generations beyond while passersby enjoy the unbroken landscape surrounding their lovely old farmhouse and barns.

Ann and Michael purchased Arrowhead Farm in 1970. At that time it comprised 75 acres; over time they acquired more adjacent acreage, some in the town of Washington and some in Bethlehem. Active in land preservation for many years (Michael at one time served as chair of the Sierra Club Foundation), they have previously donated land to their neighbor, the John Dorr Nature Laboratory, with easement coverage by Steep Rock Association. The Bethlehem Land Trust is honored

to hold this new easement. We are pleased that the property, which includes mixed hardwood forest, evergreens, a tranquil pond, and contours typical of the Litchfield County uplands, will join the neighboring Nature Laboratory to create an even larger haven for wildlife. The Loeb's gift brings the Land Trust holdings to 359 acres—250 owned outright and 109 protected by permanent easements.

## **MOTIVATED TO PRESERVE?**

Land that is preserved by the Land Trust can never turn into a subdivision. If the generosity of Ann and Michael Loeb puts you in mind to take similar action, either by donating property outright or placing a permanent conservation easement on it, the BLT is here to facilitate the process. Both options can be implemented in the immediate future or included in your estate planning, and there may be significant tax advantages to them. For more information visit our website, [www.bethlehemlandtrustct.org](http://www.bethlehemlandtrustct.org) or email us at [bethlehemlandtrustct@gmail.com](mailto:bethlehemlandtrustct@gmail.com).



PHOTOS BY BEV MOSCH

***"We particularly like Bethlehem because of its lack of development and hope it can stay a country community. Our kids feel the same way," commented Michael Loeb when talking with the BLT Board last fall.***

## GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM MEANS KNOWING WHERE WE ARE

You may not have given much thought to the boundaries of the BLT properties, but consider this: One of the responsibilities of stewardship is to monitor each wholly owned or eased property once a year to ensure its natural state is undisturbed (except for BLT trails or cleanup, etc.). We can look at a town map and easily see which road each of the Land Trust properties lies along or near, but once on the ground, the line dividing our property from our neighbors' is not always apparent. The solution lies in digital technology that makes it possible to record particular locations on the properties, map them, and find them again on future visits. Requirements? A camera (smart phone will do), GPS receiver, and a computer with special software. How does it work? We hike the property to discover surveyor's monuments and other landmarks; we snap photos of these key locations and also "record" their position with the GPS receiver, and then download the data from both to the computer, which merges the information to create a geographic information system (GIS) map.

The BLT is fortunate that the Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust, headquartered in Kent, offers classes and hands-on training in the creation of these GIS maps. Board members Doug Mahard and Mary Hawvermale have begun this training and are eager to gain enough proficiency to get out in the field and tackle the logistical work of recording the boundaries and other features of our holdings. "It's complicated enough," reports Doug, "that you do have to understand the process; it makes sense for only those who've really been trained to do this." But once a few board members have mastered the process and we have the equipment and software, we'll be able to create accurate maps of not only the property perimeters but also any trails or landmarks on the preserves that are open to the public, along with efficiently mapping new trails and producing a same-day trail map. Someday we may even have an app enabling visitors to follow the maps in the field.

### A RESOURCE TO APPRECIATE: WEANTINOGE

You may have seen its signs and property markers without realizing what this organization is or does. Founded 50 years ago and today Connecticut's largest land trust, Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust permanently protects more than 9,000

acres in 17 communities through outright ownership and conservation easements, including some small parcels in Bethlehem. Through continued land acquisition, science-based stewardship, and the achievement of the highest standards and practices in the field, the Trust aims to assist communities in permanently protecting their most critical natural areas forever.

Weantinoge has a paid professional staff that reaches out to other Connecticut land trusts, offering classes, information, guidance, and the benefit of their expertise and experience. It is a valuable resource.

Some of Weantinoge's preserves are nearby and open to the public for hiking, enjoyment of the outdoors, and observation of wildlife. If you are interested in longer or different hikes from those on the BLT preserves, visit [www.weantinoge.org](http://www.weantinoge.org) to see some other alluring choices.

## Thanks to you, our 10th dinner/ auction was a great success!

Good food, good cheer, and enthusiastic bidding marked our 10th annual dinner and auction. The Land Trust Board would like to thank everyone who helped to produce the evening, especially Vic Losure at Elm Press, in Terryville, for the invitations, Riverhouse Catering, in Avon, for the delicious dinner, Bantam Bread, musician Mark Miller, Lou Pereira and his crew at Preferred Building Maintenance, in New Milford, for pitching in with the not-so-fun task of cleanup, and our neighbors who helped in the office and with serving and tending bar. Many thanks to all those who donated items to the auction or purchased ads in the catalog. And thank you to all who attended and marked the silent auction bid cards or waved paddles at the live auction. Your support helps us to preserve the rural beauty of our town.

### In Memoriam

DONATIONS TO THE BETHELEHEM LAND TRUST  
HAVE BEEN MADE IN MEMORY OF:



MAT MEISTER, BY JESSIE AND HARRY FULTON



RUTH ANN LEEVER, BY JOHN AND JANE PITTARI  
RUTH ANN LEEVER, BY MARY AND ERIK HAVERMALE



CHARLES (BUD) WOODWARD, BY HELEN WOODWARD KUNZ



## VISITORS FROM UP NORTH

There have been some bird species not commonly found this far south wintering in unusually large numbers in our area recently, most likely due to a shortage of their food sources in Canada. Population explosions of this type are referred to as an irruption and birdwatchers are delighted when they occur.

Last year witnessed one of the largest snowy owl irruptions in some time. Owls were seen down the coast as far as Florida. Apparently they had had a very successful nesting season and thus encountered a shortage of food as winter came on, driving them south. This year there are a few snowy owls along the coast, but not as many as last year. One has been resident at Milford Point in Milford, CT. They are usually seen in this part of the country along the coast but can also be spotted on large open farm areas and even airports, so keep your eyes open and look up.

Two other species that come down every so often, and are here this winter, busy at many feeders, including mine, are pine siskins and redpolls. Both are small finch-like birds and very winter hardy. Redpolls will even tunnel into the snow to spend the night.

For more information and to join the National Bird Feeder Watch, check out The Cornell Lab of Ornithology, [www.birds.cornell.edu](http://www.birds.cornell.edu).

☛ MARY HAWVERMALE



PHOTOS: SNOWY OWL BY NICK HAWVERMALE, REDPOLLS BY MARY HAWVERMALE

MARY HAWVERMALE AND HER SON NICK WERE THRILLED TO SEE THIS IMPOSING SNOWY OWL AT MILFORD POINT. AT HOME, THE PRATT PRESERVE PROVIDES MARY WITH THE SIMPLE PLEASURE OF WATCHING THE BUSY REDPOLLS SNACKING WITH UNFLAGGING GUSTO. FOR THE FULL IMPACT OF THE HUES SPORTED BY THESE BIRDS, VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO SEE THIS NEWSLETTER IN COLOR.



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## — ❧ — SUPPORT THE LAND TRUST — ❧ —

### Mission Statement

To permanently protect and preserve local farmland, fields, forests, and wetlands through acquisitions or easement; to conserve the natural, scenic, and historic resources of these properties and educate the public about them; and, where feasible, to provide access for their enjoyment by the community at large.

**You can help** the Bethlehem Land Trust to fulfill our mission. To become a member or make a donation, simply fill out this form and return it to the address on the reverse, enclosing a check made out to the Bethlehem Land Trust. Or visit [bethlehemlandtrustct.org](http://bethlehemlandtrustct.org) to join and pay by PayPal or credit card.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP \$35.00

☛ FOREST STEWARD (\$40–\$499)

☛ FIELD STEWARD (\$500–\$999)

☛ FARM STEWARD (\$1,000 PLUS)

AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## *Tapping Season, Welcome Indeed*

Could spring be on its way? Many local maple trees are sporting sap collection buckets, a signal that daytime temperatures are beginning to rise. The optimal condition for the sap to run occurs when the temperature alternates between freeze and thaw, ideally reaching 40 degrees during the day. There is no flow when the thermometer stays below 32 degrees and the flow stops when it stays above freezing. So tapping season lasts maybe four to six weeks. Consider this: Trees less than 25 inches in diameter generally have only one taphole. The yield from one taphole ranges from 5 to 15 gallons. Ten gallons of sap yield 1 quart of syrup. Savor your syrup!



### QUILL CREATURE

MYTH: THE PORCUPINE THROWS ITS QUILLS AT ENEMIES.

FACTS: THOUGH NOT OFTEN OR EASILY VIEWED, THERE ARE PORCUPINES LIVING IN OUR AREA; THIS ONE WAS SPOTTED AT THE PRATT PRESERVE. THEY ARE LARGE, SLOW, TREE-CLIMBING RODENTS. FOND OF CLOVER IN MILD SEASONS, THEY EAT LEAVES, TWIGS, AND BARK, WHICH THEY CHEW RIGHT OFF THE BRANCHES WHILE PERCHED OVERHEAD. THE QUILLS VARY IN LENGTH WITH THE PORCUPINE'S AGE. THEY ARE RELEASED WHEN SOMETHING COMES IN CONTACT WITH THEM OR FALL OUT WHEN THE PORCUPINE SHAKES ITS BODY, AND THEY REGROW.

☛ PHOTO BY MARY HAWVERMALE

### Bethlehem Land Trust Board of Directors

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**Bethlehem Land Trust**

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