F The dedicated leadership of the Wilton Land Conservation Trust has assured the preservation in perpetuity of more than 840 iconic Wilton acres for generations to come. The Trust's commitment to conservation and continuity is truly worthy of universal support.

-Ellen and Jim Kapustka, WLCT Members

WILTON LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

Protecting Wilton's Natural, Scenic, and Historical Landscapes

STAY CONNECTED WWW.WILTONLANDTRUST.ORG P.O. BOX 77 WILTON , CT 06897 (800) 983-3552 INQUIRY@WILTONLANDTRUST.ORG



Monarch Butterfly

or the first time, the Int or Conservation of Nature (IUCN) added the migratarch butterfly to its "red list" of threaten ies categorized as "endangered" — two ste from extinct. The Wilton Land Conservation conserves and protects biodiverse meadows rich pollen and nectar sources to support pollinators as bees, moths, beetles, birds, flies, and butterfli

SERVATION

Northern Harrier

species of special concern need to thrive.

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

A State of CT listed endangered species, this bird of prey hunts by flying low over fields and relies on well-managed meadows for hunting grounds and habitat. The Wilton Land Conservation Trust protects hundreds of acres of habitat that many of Connecticut's endangered, threatened, and

Photo by: Neal Heyano

LETTERS FROM. THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR THE PRESIDENT STEPHEN H. WHITE DAVID E. McCARTHY



We have had a good year at the Wilton Land trust. The reasons are many, but let me start with our wonderful board, our growing membership, our passionate Executive Director, and the generosity of the good people of Wilton. Land Conservation has always been important, but never more so than now. The people of Wilton see this need and are increasingly willing to support us in our efforts.

This year, the Town of Wilton is embarking on an Amenities Commission to focus on our town's wonderful open space, trails, and sports facilities. The Wilton Land Conservation Trust is proud to own or have easements on about 840 acres of the Town of Wilton, many of which have hiking trails and are open to the public. Others provide scenic beauty, preserve historical landscapes, and maintain our town's rural look and feel. We think Wilton is endowed with a broad range of amenities, and we welcome the decision to emphasize them.

We are working on improved mapping and identification of our trails, parks, and open spaces to make finding and accessing them easier. Wouldn't it be great to have a town-wide hiking map showing all the town's hiking trails, parking areas, trail markings, and connectivity? If this were England, you would see the pubs shown along the way too.

Want to give back to the community and support conservation in Wilton? We have a professional Executive director, but the WLCT is built around our awesome volunteers who do much of the work. Come, and join us on our workdays. We are looking for volunteers to work on our trails, remove invasives, and perform property maintenance. We also need communicators, photographers, and organizers. Most of us work at the Land Trust because it brings us satisfaction, but we also have fun along the way. I bet you will too.

Kind Regards, Stephen H. White President



I love connecting people with nature. Thanks to our generous community, thoughtful volunteers, and supportive annual members, I'm able to bring nature closer to the hearts of many. I've had the delight of singing and dancing with kids at Books and a Blanket and seeing families light up when they met a screech owl at our live raptor event. I've had the pleasure of introducing people to our vast trail networks, and the honor of working alongside our

volunteers to improve our nature preserves for people to enjoy and wildlife to thrive. I am very fortunate to be there when people's hearts open up to nature and lucky to work in such a wonderfully supportive community.

This year we led by example and did all we could to demonstrate that open space is for everyone, stewardship is for all ages, and conservation matters. We planted hundreds of native trees thanks to our mighty volunteers. We added identification signage alongside our freshly planted trees to encourage people to plant native species in their yards. Planting natives is vital for preserving biodiversity and a much better option than foreign landscaping plants.

Thankfully, our founders had the foresight to establish the Wilton Land Conservation Trust and start preserving the beautiful forests, meadows, and rural vistas that make our town so scenic. Today, the 840 acres of protected open spaces owned and managed by the WLCT conserve biodiversity, provide habitat for species in decline, contribute to healthier lifestyles, and afford many outdoor amenities for Wilton residents. Our preserves are places for people to connect with nature, be inspired, and enjoy the outdoors with friends and family. Nature has something for everyone, and I love helping people get out there to enjoy it.

It's with great thanks to the Wilton community that I get to connect people with nature and restore native habitats across our wonderful town. Thank you for supporting the Wilton Land Conservation Trust and for making our work possible!

Sincerely, David McCarthy **Executive Director**

Robert E. Sollmann Jr.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR VICE PRESIDENT TRUSTEES **TRUSTEES EMERITUS** David E. McCarthy Roger R. Valkenburgh Brett D. Amero Anthony P. Grassi Thomas M. Sinchak Scott M. Bogan SECRETARY PRESIDENT Meaghan Donovan Robert H. Russell, Jr. Stephen H. White Mark Rice Jay M. Dulberg 2000-2022 Christina Duncan **VICE PRESIDENT** TREASURER Kaki Hughes Craig E. Johnson Michael E. Foster Paige Kellogg Frank Mabley William L. Maxwell Donna Merrill Justin Phillips



As Wilton's leading conservation organization, we are a dynamic, inclusive, and educational 501c3 community-focused nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting, enhancing, and conserving open space in Wilton.

The WLCT depends solely on the support of its members to carry out its critical work.

CONSERVATION EFFORTS

The WLCT is dedicated to protecting, enhancing, and conserving open space in Wilton. Our protected lands preserve Wilton's historical landscapes, maintain Wilton's rural character, increase continuous wildlife habitat, and protect water quality. Conservation protects species from extinction, mitigates climate change, and improves air quality. We raise funds to purchase the land outright and work with landowners to bequeath, donate, or place a conservation easement on their land.

With a deep concern for Wilton's environment, we're actively restoring native habitats across our 119 separate parcels totaling 840+ acres in Wilton. We're enhancing ecosystems by integrating the latest science and best practices into our land management, restoration and educational projects, community programs. Together, we're working toward a vision of native rich wildlife habitat, prolific pollinator habitat, protected watercourses, healthier forests, and increased environmental

awareness.

1 WILTON LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

CONSERVING AND PROTECTING THE LANDS AND WATERS THAT SUPPORT LIFE

Gen space is a hallmark of Wilton's country lifestyle. As the town grows, it is reassuring that the Wilton Land Conservation Trust is strong, thriving, and a major force in protecting and sustaining our environment. Thanks to the WLCT, residents can rest assured that our open spaces will be protected, not just for the people, but for our wildlife and native plant communities as well. -John and Peg Ottman, WLCT Members

WILDLIFE HABITAT RESTORATION

NATURE PRESERVES & OPEN SPACE AMENITIES

We know that the best way to experience nature is to get out there and enjoy it. WLCT's preserves offer open space amenities to the Wilton community, such as hiking, fishing, birding, jogging, sightseeing, picnicking, and nature preserves for the WLCT to hold its recreational and educational programs. The benefits of conservation go far beyond the environment. WLCT's conserved open spaces provide residents access to cleaner air, cleaner water, and healthier lifestyles.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE: WHY STEWARDSHIP MATTERS

Scientists say we're living in the Anthropocene epoch, a time when human activity has significantly and negatively impacted the planet's climate and ecosystems. Your Land Trust is dedicated to protecting and improving Wilton's natural resources. This year, the WLCT has significantly increased its efforts to restore native forest and wildlife habitats across Wilton. Thanks to the incredible support of our members and volunteers, we're:

Preserving open space! **Removing invasive species!** Supporting endangered wildlife! Protecting water quality and habitat! **Restoring native forests and meadows!** Building a community centered around nature!





RESTORING BIODIVERSITY TO: SCHENCK'S ISLAND

In 2022, the WLCT kicked off its multi-year endeavor to restore native plant habitat on its section of Schenck's Island: a critical first step to preserving biodiversity. With support from our members, volunteers, and community partners, we're nurturing a living landscape for birds and animals on the island, as well as aquatic and amphibian life in the Norwalk River. We removed tons of invasive species and planted over 125 native trees and shrubs along the forested river walk!



ENHANCING NATIVE HABITAT: ACROSS WILTON

The WLCT cares deeply about the condition of Wilton's In 2022, with great thanks to its members and volunenvironment; it's committed to restoring ecosystems, habitats, and native biomes within its 840+ acres of protected open space.

C The Earth is all we really have. We must be responsible stewards of it.

> -Dr. Mark and Linda Rubinstein, WLCT Members

teers, the WLCT removed invasives and planted natives across its major preserves:

> FORESTS Maple, Willow, Service Berry, Aster, Winterberry, Highbush Blueberry, **Mountain Laurel**

WETLANDS Silky Dogwood, Summer Sweet, Cedar, Swamp White Oak

MEADOWS

Eupatorium perfoliatum, Rudbeckia hirta, Symphyotrichum patens, Spice Bush

In partnership with Highsted and CT NOFA's Ecotype Seed Project, we're proactively preserving New England's native meadow wildflowers. Seeds are collected, cultivated, and replanted to restore native pollinator habitat.

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY SERIES: BIODIVERSITY FOR ALL AGES



WLCT'S STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE: REVITALIZED

Thanks to the leadership of its recently appointed Chair, Justin Phillips, WLCT's all-volunteer Stewardship Committee has been rejuvenated. Our mighty stewardship committee members are the heart of WLCT's. stewardship efforts. Throughout the year, the committee works to ensure the health of our preserves and the safety of our trails. No matter the weather or temperature: they're removing invasive species, cutting nonnative vines, and clearing trails.



WILTON CORPORATIONS STEP UP: AND PARTNER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT





OUTDOOR SPORTS CENTER The Outdoor Sports Center closed its doors for a day to sponsor a corporate workday at Schenck's Island. Nearly 30 employees worked to remove invasive plants and plant about 45 blueberry bushes.

ASML

ASML sponsored a corporate workday with the WLCT to steward and expand WLCT's Schenck's Island blueberry fields. A team of 30 ASML employees removed invasive species, planted 20 blueberry bushes, and spread four cubic yards of mulch.

Introduced in 2020, WLCT's flagship educational workday program has taken off! Thanks to the incredible support of our members and volunteers, we're restoring native habitat, protecting biodiversity, and building a stronger community centered around nature.

"COMMUNITY AND CONSERVATION ARE CONNECTED." David McCarthy, Executive Director

What adds to the joy of living in Wilton are its abundant open spaces and walking trails. We owe a big thank you to the Wilton Land Conservation Trust for maintaining, preserving, and expanding these spaces - as it has done at 183 Ridgefield Road! Let's all support the Trust. -Paul Evanson, WLCT Member

THANK YOU 2022 VOLUNTEERS!

Because of you, we're tackling more ground than ever to protect water quality, restore trails, and support wildlife.

350+ VOLUNTEERS! 1500+ HOURS 225+ NATIVE TREES PLANTED!

GET INVOLVED:

The WLCT depends on its membership support and volunteers to keep its preserves healthy and accessible. Consider supporting our critical work and giving back to our community.

ASML is proud to support the Wilton Land Conservation Trust. As a global technology leader and employer, ASML believes that when the community thrives, we thrive. The environmental preservation and education the WLCT provides is an invaluable asset to our community. -ASML, WLCT Member

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LEADERSHIP PROGRAMMING

BUILDING A COMMUNITY AROUND NATURE: MADE POSSIBLE BY YOUR MEMBERSHIP

We love nature; we love Wilton, and we love connecting the two. Over the past year, we've developed, hosted, and partnered on a wide variety of nature-focused recreational, educational, and experiential programs to bring families together outdoors.



We are hiking across Wilton in partnership with the Woodcock Nature Center.

SOF PREY



We are bringing the secret lives of New England raptors front and center in partnership with the Sharon Audubon Center.

UR LAND TRUST



We are showcasing the hidden beauty preserved by local land trusts in partnership with the land trusts of lower Fairfield County.



We are connecting young ones with nature, books, and recycling, in partnership with the Wilton Library and Wilton Go Green.



We are peeking into the mysterious lives of turtles and tortoises in partnership with The Turtle Room.

HE PRESER



We are blending art and the natural environment in partnership with the Wilton Library and the CT Poetry Society.

INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS

The natural environment faces many threats, and soon enough, it will be up to the next generation to address them. Through our educational programs, stewardship Sundays, and professional internships, we educate and inspire Wilton's youth to become more involved, take action, and help address super wicked problems like climate change.

2022 INTERN & FIELD RANGER: PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WILTON'S YOUTH



2021-2022 FIELD RANGER Gavin started as a volunteer and was quickly hired as WLCT's Field Ranger in 2021. He worked diligently to improve the trails, meadows, and forests we all cherish. Gavin led workshops, ran workdays, trained interns, and enriched the Wilton Community. A strong and passionate leader, he will take all of his experience from the WLCT to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Trov. New York.

RECOGNIZING ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP

The WLCT recognizes and fosters environmental leadership in Wilton's Youth. We honor two exceptional students yearly with awards at the High School Academic Awards Program.

BOY AND GIRL SCOUTS

The WLCT proudly partners with our local Girl and Boy Scout leaders to steward open spaces and complete projects that benefit the Wilton community. In 2022, the WLCT worked with several scouts to plan and develop amazing Eagle Scout projects that support conservation and enhance hiking in Wilton.

biodiversity.







2021-2022 INTERN

Jill joined the WLCT in 2021, and she tended to our new habitat plantings, supported our programs, and maintained our American chestnut tree orchard. With a strong passion for the environment, she fostered a community centered around nature and brought her experience to her Senior Year at Wilton High School.

2022 E. DAN CAPPEL SENIOR SCHOLARSHIP AWARD OF \$1,500



David McCarthy, Executive Director of the WLCT, presented Gavin Fusco with WLCT's 2022 E. Dan Cappel Senior Scholarship Award of \$1,500 for his leadership

and willingness to preserve Wilton's

receive the Wilton Land Conservation Trust's Senior Scholarship Award."



community.

2022 JUNIOR BOOK AWARD

David McCarthy, Executive Director of the WLCT, presented Jill Roberts with WLCT's 2022 Junior Book Award for her outstanding environmental leadership and commitment to the Wilton

"Receiving the Wilton Land Conservation Trust's Junior Book Award is a great honor." - Jill Roberts

CONNECTION

ANNUAL MEETINGS: OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR LAND TRUST

At the 57th Annual Meeting of the WLCT, we celebrated a year of bringing the Wilton community closer to nature. The highlight of the evening was our featured guest speaker, Dr. Mark C. Urban, who presented on climate change, and how it's affecting Connecticut's wildlife.

You are cordially invited to the 58th Annual Meeting of the WLCT, where we will hear from our President, Treasurer, Committees, and Executive Director. The meeting will be held remotely, via zoom, on Wednesday, February 22nd, at 7:00 pm.

The highlight of the evening is our guest speaker, Geordie Elkins, Executive Director of Highstead. His talk will illuminate the importance of creating native habitats, preserving biodiversity with the Ecotype Project, large and small-scale habitat protection and restoration, and much more. Please RSVP at wiltonlandtrust.org; We hope you'll join us.

CHESTNUT MEADOWS NATURE PRESERVE:

In 2020, the Wilton Land Conservation Trust purchased 183 Ridgefield Road; with great thanks to its friends' and members' financial support and the award of a \$707,000 Open Space Acquisition Grant from the State of Connecticut.

OPENING THE PRESERVE

In 2022, 183 Ridgefield Road was officially named Chestnut Meadows by George and Carol Bauer, angel investors to the Save 183 campaign. Excited for families, hikers, and birders alike to visit and explore the Nature Preserve, the WLCT is developing the plans needed to implement its vision for the newly named 13.5-acre Chestnut Meadows Nature Preserve.

POLLINATOR & WILDLIFE HABITAT

Meadows are early successional habitats that provide food and shelter for birds, butterflies, bees, reptiles, and other wildlife. These habitats are declining across Connecticut. The WLCT is actively maintaining, restoring, and optimizing the conditions for wildlife to thrive across the historical property.



THE DANIEL OFFUTT BARN

In 2021, the WLCT Building Committee commenced the antique barn's reconstruction at Chestnut Meadows. The 19th-century post and beam barn is near completion and features vaulted ceilings, a spacious meeting room, two lavatories, a small office, and an energy-efficient heating and cooling system with an option for solar. The WLCT expects to complete the barn in 2023.



AMERICAN CHESTNUT TREE ORCHARD

Together with the American Chestnut Foundation and our wonderful community, we expanded our Germplasm Conservation Orchard from 10 to 40 native American chestnut trees to help save the American chestnut tree from the brink of extinction. This ambitious scientific project aims to return the iconic American chestnut tree to its native range.

REFLECTION **INCREASED SUPPORT FOR WLCT'S MISSION**

TRUSTEES

This year, the WLCT appointed three Trustees to the Board: Christina (Tina) Duncan, Katharine (Kaki) Hughes, and Justin Phillips.

MEMBERS The 2021-2022 giving year marks the highest unrestricted charitable giving on record! We are very fortunate to have such generous members committed to our Mission. Thank you!

The Wilton Garden Club has a long history of contributing to community organizations that reflect the Club's cornerstones of education, conservation, preservation, and beautification. At the forefront of these organizations is the Wilton Land Conservation Trust with its strong ongoing commitment to the careful stewardship of Wilton's open spaces and dedication to promoting and protecting the web of life. - The Wilton Garden Club, WLCT Member

REMEMBERING BOB RUSSELL

On June 18. 2022. Wilton lost an esteemed and revered citizen. For decades, Bob served in key fiduciary and leadership roles for the

Wilton Land Conservation Trust, as well as for the Wilton Library and the Wilton Historical Society. He also served in Town government, on the Board of Finance, and as First Selectman, from 1993 to 1999.

Under Bob's leadership as First Selectman, more open space was conserved in Wilton than has ever been achieved before or since. He convened a Land Advisory Committee of concerned citizens and worked to preserve properties owned by the Sackett and Black and Belknap families, acreage adjacent to the Wilton Railroad Station (now site of the Teen Center), the Ambler Farm, and Millstone Farm.



Robert Russell with David McCarthy, Executive Director, standing in front of the under-construction Daniel Offutt Barn at Chestnut Meadows

After his retirement as the first Selectman in 1999, Bob served as a Trustee of the WLCT and continued his efforts to preserve and protect our open spaces. Bob loved Wilton's agrarian past and rural character; he devoted himself to preserving the Town's history and historical landscapes. He and Carol generously gave their time, talent, and treasure to the WLCT. His gifts and legacy will never be forgotten.



As partners in the **Pollinator Pathway of Wilton,** we're excited to promote a spectacular native flower you can plant in your garden to attract and feed a beautiful butterfly.



Spicebush (Lindera benzoin) is a host plant for Swallowgreenish-yellow flowers are tiny and aromatic, and many species of birds favor its fruit.



The spicebush swallowtail (Papilio troilus) is one of the most beautiful and interesting swallowtails. It feeds on the nectar of spicebush flowers. Then, it lays its eggs on the leaves that serve as food for emerging hatchlings.

SUPPORTING OUR CRITICAL MISSION MEMBERS 2021-2022

PLANNED GIVING: CREATING YOUR CONSERVATION LEGACY

Slaughter Fields - 17 acres donated to the WLCT in 1991



WLCT ENDOWMENT FUND

We have established the WLCT Endowment Fund to help sustain our critical mission long into the future. Create a lasting legacy by including the WLCT Endowment Fund in your long-term plans.

DESIGN YOUR CONSERVATION LEGACY

The WLCT is eager to work with you to support your conservation goals and create your lasting legacy. Your planned gift can help us continue addressing issues like clean water, wildlife habitat, open space, biodiversity loss, and our changing climate.

To make special arrangements for donations and start designing your conservation legacy today, visit our website to learn more and get in touch with our Executive Director, David McCarthy, at (800) 983-3552.



WLCT MEMBERS CARE ABOUT WILTON'S ENVIRONMENT

Annual membership fuels our critical work of safeguarding Wilton's unique natural, scenic, and historical landscapes through conservation and stewardship. The WLCT's efforts to preserve open space, protect biodiversity and restore wildlife habitat depend solely on the support of its members.

DONATE TODAY

Fund conservation in Wilton and help us take the ambitious steps necessary to address climate change and biodiversity loss.

BECOMING A MEMBER IS EASY

Giving online or via mail is secure and immediately puts your support into action. A gift today makes you a 2022-2023 member. The WLCT is a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit; most donations are tax-deductible.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

WLCT membership benefits bring you close to the impact your generous gift has on Wilton's environment and community. Members receive updates, eNewsletters, and invitations to programs and special events.

Snotted Turtles (Clemmy s auttata) were once considered the most commo



LUMINARY - \$10,000 +

Daniël E. Offutt, III Charitable Trust Mark and Linda Rubinstein

LEADER - \$5,000 - \$9,999

lim and Ellen Kapustka Mark and Amy Rice Robert and Kathryn Sollmann Chris and Catherine Stroup Roger and Ginny Valkenburg

BENEFACTOR - \$2,500 - \$4,999

Mark Broach Peter Brooks Paul and Carol Evanson Family Foundation Jennifer and Matthew Gabrielso ennifer Mo Robert and Carol Russell

CONSERVATIONIST - \$1,000 - \$2,499

ane and Moses Alexand Timothy and Laura Callahan Wilton Garden Club The Creveling Family Douglas Cullen and Eva Pao Jennifer and Geody Davatzes Minette and Lap Dog David The Fleitz Family Janet and Michael Foster Davagell Vendelmer Russell J. Handelmar Judy and Hal Higby Farah Masani Elizabeth and Gerald O'Connell Betsy and Steve Pettit Al and Sue Ravitz Carrie and Ben Sanders Andrea Riina and Rodney Stenlake

STEWARD - \$500 - \$999

Geoffrey and Lynn Ashworth Steve and Emily Blass Scott Bogan Goldman Sachs * Rob and Meg Campbell William and Chrissy Caragnaro Chris and Carol Dubrowsk Fairfield County Bank Michael and Olga Kagan Pamela Hoyland & Steve Lawrence Outdoor Sports Center Rob and Cynthea Pemble Point Break Tacos The Ruffel Family Mathias and Bonnie Rumilly Karen and Warren Saltzman Kathleen Schena: In Honor of John and Peg The Smolenack Family David Wecker & Julie Rudnicki

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9 WILTON LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

Greg and Patricia Caggainello * Employer Matching Gift

Minter and Connie Brown

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SUPPORTER - UP TO \$49

Amazon Smile * Carlo Astrologo Bright Funds Philip and Linda Cannella Blake Claridge Lizzv Coursen Lora Cuff Douglas Davison Shqipe Day **Courtney Dishian** Douglas Drever Linda Fairchild Emily and Michael Faro Christopher Foste Richard Frostig Timsv Gandhi Yang Gao Patrice Gillespie Sarah Grunin Annie Hartigan Jenna Hasselkus Derek Hitchinsor Jody Holmes Levla lenkins Chris and Janet Karabir Robert and Sally Kieffe Jessica Lombardi David Lynch David McNeal Claudia Mendoza Kirk Minnis Rebecca Missimer Frank and Maurie O'Neill Donald and Adrian Offinge Satprem Pamudurthy The Paturynski Family Susan Pellowe Brenda Perez Andress Pettihone Jim and Eileen Pickering Pitney Bowes * Sandy Plue **Caitlin Policastro** Dove Quinn Ellen I. Raleigh Justin Ramsteck Kathleen Repole **Flizabeth Roache** Jeffrey and Laura Rung Maria Sannikova Jessica Savinell Kathy Schuster Stop and Shop Petra Sturcke Elena Svcheva Monika and Grzegorz Szydlowski Riley Watson Elfriede Yoder