



WARREN LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

We think the world of Warren

Newsletter

Fall 2021

Volume 4

Issue 1

President's Letter

The Warren Land Conservation Trust is part of and looks after enchanted places. This is felt through our connection to our preserves – from Haile Farm and Tom's Island to Jacob's Point and Toweset Landing. This is heartfelt when we walk the trails and shorelines, seeing the seasons change. And we experienced this last summer through the magical evening we shared during the moonlit bay cruise and the joyful kite flying event.

Our Land Trust has seen significant changes over the past 6 years. Under the leadership of our past president, Michael Gerhardt, the land trust more than doubled the amount of land we steward and saw significant increases to our endowment. This has helped us protect a large portion of the shoreline along the eastern side of the Palmer River. Our vision is to have a continuous protected corridor here from Swansea to Belchers Cove.

As part of this effort, we are expanding our mission to be responsive to the impacts on these fragile marsh habitats from climate change and sea level rise. We are partnering with Save The Bay (with a shout out to Wenley Ferguson for her amazing work), as well as an alphabet soup of state and federal agencies: the RI Coastal Resource Management Council (CRMC), the RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM), USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and the US Army Corps of Engineers (ACE).

This expanded mission comes out of work on our strategic plan. Stay tuned for more details on how the Land Trust envisions conservation of Warren's open spaces over the next 10 years – and on through 2100.

We are tremendously grateful to all of our volunteers for their work in bringing these efforts forward. The results should be tangible this coming year, when our newest preserve - Sowams Meadows on Market Street - will have habitat restoration work performed and hopefully trails open to the public.

Contact the WLCT



<http://www.warrenlct.org>



The Warren Land Conservation Trust, Inc.



warrenlctri@gmail.com



PO Box 565, Warren, RI 02885

And we cannot say enough about our wonderful members, donors and corporate sponsors, who support us in protecting Warren's natural lands and waters and providing public access to these open spaces.

We think the world of Warren, and we look forward to seeing you soon!

E. Jenny K. Flanagan, President, WLCT



Poster design by Karen Dionne

2021 WLCT Annual Meeting

The 2021 Annual Meeting of the Warren Land Conservation Trust will be held on Tuesday, January 11, 2022 at 7:00 pm at the Event Room at Cutler Mill.

Kate Sayles, recently hired Director of the RI Land Trust Council will be joining us to talk on the theme, “New Year, New Directions.” She will be discussing the Council's strategic vision for the future, plans for assisting land trusts with capacity building, and how Warren fits into the bigger picture of permanent land conservation and stewardship in Rhode Island.

We hope you will join us to additionally hear an update on our strategic plan, get a preview of events and activities for 2022, elect our Board of Directors and its officers, and see who has received this year's Distinguished Service Award. Refreshments will be offered.

A Fabulous Evening on The Bay

by Martha Antaya, Secretary

The Warren Land Conservation Trust 2021 summer fundraiser was a moon rise cruise on Narragansett Bay on August 24 aboard the Prudence Island Ferry.

Music was provided by Otis Read and the Lucky Band who provided the soundtrack for a magical evening on the bay for the 120 participants. After postponing the event from Monday to Tuesday due to weather uncertainty (tropical storm Henri), all were treated to perfect summer evening. Atwater and Donnelly also added musical inspiration.



2021 Moonlit Cruise of Narragansett Bay

As part of WLCT President Jenny Flanagan's address, a special award was presented to past WLCT President Marilyn Mathison for sustaining the Land Trust after the passing of founding members Dick and Betty Hallberg. Part of this award was the naming of a trail in Marilyn's honor at Jacob's Point.

This event raised significant funds to assist in the mission of the Trust and have many looking forward to an encore next year!

A Thank You to Our Corporate Supporters

By Jan Reitsma, Executive Director

As we were planning the recent Bay Cruise fundraiser, the Trust reached out to several local businesses to ask for support. The request was for both short and longer term, and various types of support, including but not limited to direct financial support. The response to date has been wonderful, giving us confidence that a corporate program is an appropriate and viable next step for the Trust. We want to thank the following business for helping us launch this program with generous donations:

- Jade Engineered Plastic (\$1,000)
- Blount Fine Foods (\$500)
- C. Brito Construction (\$500)
- Navigant Credit Union (\$500)
- WaterRower (\$500)
- Farmer & First (\$100)
- Taylor Box (\$100).

Approximately half of these donations will be used to offset the cost of the Bay Cruise, so that most of the ticket sales were net revenue. The Board approved putting the remainder into our new Acquisition and Stewardship account, set up to help fund the Trust's capital projects.

Several other businesses have indicated interest in joining the program and will hopefully be able to do so in the near future. In addition, several business leaders showed interest in helping us build our corporate program, not only to raise funds on an ongoing basis, but also advising us in financial and organizational planning.

The Board of Directors is truly grateful for this interest and support. It confirms that economic and environmental objectives are not only compatible but mutually beneficial in a community like Warren where

CORPORATE SPONSORS (CONTINUED)

we value both. This program will be very helpful as the cost of not just acquiring conservation land but especially of managing and maintaining the resources is steadily increasing.

We will continue talking to additional businesses in town, and hope to host an event for corporate supporters in the near future, to thank them and get their input on several issues, including appropriate categories/levels of support. For the time being we propose at least three levels:

- \$250 - \$499
- \$500 - \$999
- \$1,000 and up.

We welcome creative suggestions for naming these categories. Please join us in thanking our supporters in the business community, let us know if you have questions or suggestions, and stay tuned.

Sowams Preserve Update

by Mike Gerhardt, Past President

The newest addition to the WLCT holdings has been named the Sowams Meadow Preserve in honor of the Native Americans who occupied this area for thousands of years.



Upper Meadow of Sowams Preserve

The property, which is located off Market Street, was generously donated by Karen Burnes of Westport, MA after a conservation easement was placed on it by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the US Department of Agriculture. NRCS is now working with the WLCT to develop a management plan for the meadows and marshlands that make up the preserve.

Eventually the WLCT hopes to establish a small parking lot off Market Street and develop walking trails that will

lead to the Palmer River marsh. Stay tuned for more information on our plans for habitat restoration and possible public access at this wonderful property.



Warren firefighters during a training day at the ramshackle house at Sowams Meadows Preserve before the sale of this part of the property

When planning for the donation, a small piece of the property – including a ramshackle house – was excluded from the conservation easement. After exploring the alternatives, the WLCT Board of Directors determined that the best long term option was to sell this property, which was successfully accomplished.

The question for the Board was then how the significant proceeds of the sale should be used to support the long term success of the WLCT. A three-pronged strategy was developed:

- a significant portion was devoted to increasing the WLCT endowment that has been established at the Rhode Island Foundation;
- about 50% was set aside for a fund devoted to land acquisition and stewardship
- and the remainder was allocated to our operational funding.

Sowams Meadow Preserve represents an enduring legacy for Warren, and the funds generated by the donation will help assure the future financial solvency of the WLCT.

Southeast New England Program (SNEP) Network Award

by Rock Singewald, Vice President

The Town of Warren, in partnership with the Warren Land Conservation Trust, was one of eight communities in Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts to win a 2021 technical assistance award from the Southeast New England Program (SNEP) Network. The purpose of the award is to advance stormwater and watershed management, as well as climate resilience planning.

The SNEP Network is a collaborative partnership of local non-profit organizations and universities that provide expertise in a wide range of technical assistance and training to advance stormwater and watershed management with sustainable financing.

Technical services provided by the Network in this first round of awards include developing innovative financing of climate adaptation actions, building local capacity to implement stormwater and watershed best management practices, and conducting a municipal capacity assessment to address critical environmental needs.

“The SNEP Network’s first round of direct community assistance awards has been a great success, and EPA is excited to support their presence in another nine deserving communities,” said EPA Region 1 Acting Administrator Deborah Szaro. “I’m particularly pleased that this year the Network will be working with two federally recognized Tribes. It reflects the Network’s emphasis on capturing a rich mix of projects and communities, including those in underserved and economically disadvantaged communities, as well as tribal lands. This outreach recognizes that building capacity across all communities in our region is critical to its continued environmental and social resilience.”

Communities awarded SNEP Network services this year are Warren, RI; Mansfield, MA; Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe; Newport, RI; Providence; South Kingstown, RI; Westerly, RI and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head Aquinnah.

WLCT and the Town of Warren will focus on the Haile Farm Preserve Detention Pond Retrofit Design. The detention basin bordering the Haile Farm Preserve was constructed in the early 1990s to address flow attenuation from a commercial and residential development project on the east side of the Palmer

River. The detention basin is formed by earthen berms along the edge of a red maple swamp bordering a brackish and salt marsh.



Stormwater detention pond adjacent to Haile Farm Preserve

Over the last 15 years, based upon analysis of aerial imagery and site visits by the Town, Save The Bay, and the Warren Land Conservation Trust, water has been observed seeping out of the base of the detention basin’s southwestern berm. This discharge flows into the bordering red maple swamp and salt marsh along the eastern side of the Palmer River becoming trapped on the marsh surface causing the marsh substrate to degrade and subside. This exacerbates the amount of standing water on the marsh platform and in the marsh migration corridor. The increased freshwater flow into the salt marsh in a concentrated area has caused *Phragmites australis* to expand in this area.

Additionally, the detention basin’s discharge has increased the amount of freshwater flow from the watershed into

the marsh converting the marsh from a vegetated brackish marsh to open water bordered by *Phragmites*. The detention basin is also impaired by algal blooms throughout the year and could be a source of nutrients to the Palmer River, an impaired water body.

Go Fly a Kite

by E. Jenny K. Flanagan, President



Families flying kites at Jacob's Point

The 3rd Annual Kite flying event hosted by WLCT took place at Jacob's Point on Saturday, August 28. Every year the turnout for this event increases. So, watch for the announcement of next year's family-friendly and fun-filled event!

Mount Hope Bay Kayak Access

by Mike Gerhardt, Past President

There are only a limited number of public rights of way to the water in Warren. But there is one at the end of Maple Road leading to Mount Hope Bay. When the WLCT received the donation of a small piece of property – now named Toweset Landing – adjacent to this right of way, the question was what might be done to improve public access. It was determined in consultation with the Town that this would be best accomplished with the establishment of a kayak rack.



Toweset Landing area where kayak rack will be installed

This required an application to the Coastal Resources Management Council (CRMC) for an "assent" covering a small parking area, the rack itself and two benches for casual bay viewing. The application was successful and the parking has been constructed. An agreement was then negotiated with the Warren Harbor Commission to construct and manage the rack itself. After review, this was also unanimously approved by the Warren Town Council.



Viewing bench recently added at Jacob's Point.

2021 Board of Directors

E. Jenny K. Flanagan – President

Rock Singewald – Vice President

Martha Antaya – Secretary

Finn Brudevold – Treasurer

Board Members – Michael Gerhardt, Ed McAloon, Scott Spear, David Weed

The Warren Land Conservation Trust is eager to expand its Board of Directors, and currently has vacancies. We are seeking volunteers with enthusiasm and expertise to assist us in the following areas: finance/investment, social media, development, special events, mapping/GIS, and stewardship.

Committee participation by non-Board members is welcome and encouraged, so let us know if you are interested in that option as well. You can contact us at WarrenLCTri@gmail.com.

Only with the support of the community can the WLCT achieve its mission of protecting and making more resilient Warren's open spaces.



Volunteers clearing trails at Haile Farm Preserve.

2021 Donors

The Warren Land Conservation Trust's would like to thank all our donors to our 2021 fund drives. Also, we especially wish to acknowledge our donors who gave above and beyond:

\$250 to \$499

- * Anthony Boitano
- * Adrian Boney and Martha Fish
- * Brandt Heckert and Eileen Collins
- * Peter Wheaton
- * Scott Spear

\$500 to \$999

- * James Allen
- * Susan Anderson
- * Priscilla Angelo

- * Martha Antaya and Don Betts
- * Jenny and Tom Flanagan
- * Jane Harrison
- * Rock Singewald
- * Scott and Daniella Roop
- * Doug and Nancy Hinman

Going forward, we would like to move on from the well-worn donor category monikers based on precious metals. We are asking for recommendations of names for our donor levels. They might be based on our preserves, important individuals, or animal or plant names, or maybe nature-inspired adjectives? What do you think our donor categories could be? Let us at warrenlctri@gmail.com.

Please Support your Local Land Trust!

Lastly, if you believe that the Warren Land Conservation Trust's ongoing work to protect open space in Warren and make it available to the public is of value to the community, **please complete the form below**. Or you can go to our **SUPPORT US** page on our web site warrenlct.org.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

The WLCT is a federal 501(c)3 non-profit corporation.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$15 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New | <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$25 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$100 |

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Make your check out to
 "Warren Land Conservation Trust"
 and return this form to:
 PO Box 565, Warren, RI 02885

*This publication was compiled and edited by Ed McAloon,
 WLCT Board Member.*