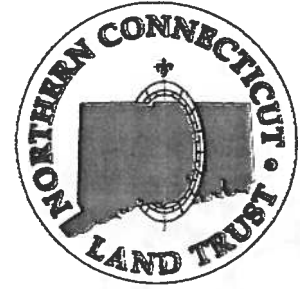


# LANDMARK

The newsletter of the Northern Connecticut Land Trust



Number 10

February 2003

---

## Somers, Land Trust Loses a Good Friend

On January 3, Walter Whitlock "Whit" Davis, long time friend and supporter of open space initiatives and the Somers community, passed away. Whit was one of the early members of the original land trust in the area, which evolved into the current Northern Connecticut Land Trust, and served on the Board of Directors up until the time of his death. He also served as the Somers Town Historian. On November 11, 2000, Somers and the NCLT sponsored "Whit Davis Day" to honor Whit for his dedication and service to his country and his community, capped off by a dinner and reception where the Whit Davis Bird Sanctuary on the McCann Family Farm was dedicated. We will long remember Whit for his efforts to improve the Town of Somers and the lives of those to follow him. Memorial donations made to the Trust, at the request of the family, have been added to the stewardship fund set aside for the maintenance and improvement of Trust properties. At the January Board of Directors meeting, this fund was unanimously redesignated the Whit Davis Endowment Stewardship Fund. Additional donations can be mailed to the Trust and designated for this purpose.

## Scantic River Protection Group to Hold Organizational Meetings

The revival of the Scantic River Watershed Association, mentioned in the last issue of Landmark, is moving into its organizational phase after completing efforts to incorporate and attain federal tax exempt status with the IRS. On March 10, a kickoff meeting is scheduled with the organizational committee, the National Park Service, and a Town of East Windsor appointed Scantic River greenway group. This meeting will be followed in the near future by appointment of officers and directors for the Association, and informational and membership drive functions in the several towns along the banks of the river through Connecticut and Massachusetts. Objectives of the Association are to preserve and protect the river and land along the banks to form a continuous greenway and parkway open to the public for passive recreation and enjoyment.

The Scantic River watershed involves an area of some 90,000 acres, extending across Hamden, Mass., and the Connecticut towns of West Stafford, Somers, Enfield, South Windsor, and East Windsor. Named after an Indian tribe found along its banks by the early settlers, the river has its headwaters among several streams which drain the southern foothills of Hamden/Monson, Mass., and the northern slopes of Shenepsit State Forest in Ct. From the point where these streams converge to the river's mouth is a little over 17 miles as the crow flies, but the Scantic meanders for over 38 miles before it reaches the Connecticut River in South Windsor.

*For those who missed the work party at the Swann Farm February 15, the 13 people who did participate enjoyed a fruitful and entertaining day. Besides completing the burning of the old brush piles and creation of 2 new ones in the snow, the team was treated to an old fashioned hot dog and marshmallow roast taking advantage of the fires. Who ever said work couldn't be fun?*

*NOTE: Jerry Stage is taking over the volunteer coordination. He can be reached at [jerrystage@aol.com](mailto:jerrystage@aol.com), or by phone at 860-870-4255. Thanks to Ginny Patsun for her service devoted to this job.*

*Many thanks to volunteer Skip Mathews, a participant in the Shenepsit Striders running club, for clearing the President's Day storm snow from the McCann parking lot so that it could continue to be used this winter.*



### **Scantic River Waterfront Protection Gets a Boost**

The first parcel of property associated with the effort to protect and preserve land along the Scantic River waterfront is now under NCLT ownership. On Friday, January 17, the Trust purchased the 17 acre Lipton property, located north of Rt 190 along Durkee Road in Somers. Obtained from Simon Lipton and the Pleasant View Farms Realty, the land is primarily marsh and forest, although portions of the property have been used to raise bedding hay in the past. To the Trust, it represents important open space buffering the river from development

and other environmental pressures. It is planned that it will eventually be linked up to other properties as they are acquired along the river to create a much larger parkway/greenway accessible to the public for recreational use.



### **McCann Family Farm to Benefit from Improvement Grant**

In September, the Trust accepted a Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the USDA aimed at improving the wildlife characteristics of the property. The nearly \$10,000 grant is a 5 year contract to clear a small pine forest and replant with warm season native grasses for grassland bird habitat, and to clear a 35 foot riparian zone along Gulf Stream of invasives and replant with appropriate trees and shrubs. The grant calls for a matching effort by the Trust which is being fulfilled with volunteer time completing much of the work, with the forest clearing activity to be contracted out this year. Work parties are regularly scheduled to meet the matching requirements. If interested, contact Jerry Stage of the Stewardship Committee (870-4255).

<b>A hearty welcome and thanks to several new additions to our Life member supporters :</b>	
<b>John Gitzus - Somers</b>	<b>Nancy Strong - Vernon</b>
<b>John Kouba - Enfield</b>	<b>Patricia Okada - formerly of Somers, now overseas with the NAVY</b>

### **State Open Space Grant Received for Knapp Property in Vernon**

Another Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection Open Space grant was received in September to help fund the purchase of a 30 acre parcel of open land in the center of Vernon. Known as the Knapp property for owner Elizabeth Webster Knapp, this parcel represents the last undeveloped property in the immediate area surrounded by other areas of open land and allows the Trust to complete a large greenway section south of Interstate 84. The property is surrounded by the Town of Vernon's Valley Falls Park and Boulder Ridge park, State of Connecticut's Belding Wildlife Preserve, and another Trust property on Boulder Ridge. The property is bisected by the Rails-to-Trails biking and hiking path, and will eventually provide another access to this popular attraction, as well as its own hiking trail. The \$42,700 matching grant will be supplemented with other funds to complete the purchase this spring from the Knapp family, and will be named after Andrew Kenneth Webster, Elizabeth Knapp's father, at the wishes of the sellors.

## **Public Relations Committee Openings**

The team responsible for news releases, activity announcements, and publication of the newsletter is looking for some new faces to aid in their efforts. The most critical need is for a skilled person to maintain our Website and update information in it regularly, as well as monitor the email attached to it. If you are interested in helping out, please call Karl Hasel (872-8731) or Judy Snyder (749-5411).

## **NCLT-Sponsored Hikes / Walks for 2003**

### **Skyline Scenic Area, Somers**

**April 12:** Join leaders Jerry Stage and others for a 3 to 5 mile sunset/moonlight hike to take in the beautiful overlook towards the west. Starts at 6:30 PM, or begin with pizza at Italian Villa at 5:00.

**Nov 1** A re-run of the sunset/moonlight hike, this time starting at 3:45, for those who missed the first one or enjoyed it so much they need to do it again! Watch for further details in the August newsletter.

### **McCann Family Farm, Somers**

**May 4** Birding in the Whit Davis Bird Sanctuary, beginning at 7:30 AM.

**May 25** Spring wildflower hike of ~2 miles with Jerry Stage, 9:00 AM.

**June 29** Early summer wildflower hike of ~2 miles with Jerry Stage, 9:00 AM.

**July 13** Ferns and clubmosses hike of ~2 miles with Jerry Stage, 9:00 AM.

**August 17** Late summer wildflower hike of ~2 miles with Jerry Stage, 9:00 AM.

**September 14** Fall wildflower hike of ~2 miles with Jerry Stage, 9:00 AM

**October 12** Fall foliage hike of ~2-3 miles with Jerry Stage, 9:00 AM

**August 31** Take a 1-3 mile exploration walk around the new Lipton property bordering the Scantic River in Somers with leader Albert Grant.

For more information about any of these activities, call Jerry Stage - 860-870-4255.

### **Wapping Black Spruce Bog, East Windsor**

**July 20** Take a 1-2 mile exploration walk around one of the Trust's truly unique properties with leader George Grant (860-749-3282).

**October 26** Hike the Scantic River area in East Windsor with Albert Grant

### **Vernon/Bolton/Tolland**

**April 6** Valley Falls/Belding Wildlife Management area starting at 1:00 PM at Valley Falls park, a 3 or 4 mile hike thru wooded area and railbed trail, including scenic lookout.

**May 4** Hockanum River hike, starting at Dart Hill South parking lot at 1:00 PM. 2 or 3 mile sections.

**June 1** DEP Wildlife Preserve in Tolland. 9:30 AM at parking lot off Exit 69 of I-84 East for walk through forest and along Willimantic River.

**July 6** Bolton Notch to Risley Pond. 9:30 AM at commuter parking lot off Rt 44, Bolton, near old Manchester Drive-in. 3 mile walk around pond and forest, or longer 5 mile hike to Risley Pond and back.

**August 3** Valley Falls loop trail, including Boulder Crest area. 9:30 AM at Valley Falls parking lot. Full walk 5 miles, or shorter section of 3 miles.

For more information, call Ed Dresner at 860-872-4120

Watch the Rockville Reminder and Journal Inquirer for up-to-date announcements on these and other Trust activities.



Non-profit Org.  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Vernon, CT  
Permit No 92

Northern Connecticut Land Trust  
PO Box 324  
Somers, CT. 06071

**Philip & Selma Grant**  
120 Broad Brook Road  
Melrose CT 06049

06016+9616 02



**Board of Directors**

**President**

Culver Modisette, Stafford

**1st V. President**

Karl Hasel, Vernon

**2nd V. President**

Jerry Stage, Stafford

**Treasurer**

Jim Gage, Ellington

**Recording Secretary**

John Maulucci, Vernon

**Corresponding Secretary**

Fay Dresner, Vernon

**Directors**

Ed Dresner, Vernon

Judy Snyder, Somers

Ernie Boothroyd, Ellington

Lois Osier, Enfield

Albert Grant, E. Windsor

Arend Jan-Knuttel, East Windsor

George Grant, Ellington

Don Smith, Somers

Michelle Hayward, Somers

If you have a friend interested in joining the Trust and supporting the work of protecting our natural resources, please pass this newsletter on to them. Contributions are tax deductible.

**MEMBERSHIPS:**

Student - \$2.00	Individual - \$20.00	Family - \$30.00
Business - \$100.00	Life - \$250.00	Patron - \$500.00
	Benefactor - \$1000.00	

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ E\_MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to receive the newsletter by e-mail? \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Northern Connecticut Land Trust  
PO Box 324  
Somers, CT. 06071

If you would like to volunteer to work projects such as fund-raising, trail maintenance, newsletter, or others, please check YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_