

Fall 2022

# WLCT TIDINGS



PO Box 1124, Westbrook, CT 06498 (860) 399-5224 [WestbrookLCT@Gmail.com](mailto:WestbrookLCT@Gmail.com)

The Westbrook Land Conservation Trust Newsletter

## *President's Message by Tom Elliott*

Dear Members and Friends,

It feels like we are finally out from under the Covid cloud, although we all still have to be mindful of measures to keep us safe. All our Board Meetings and activities are now in person. Our two Osprey nests on WLCT properties at Hammock Road and Seaside Avenue were occupied and produced offspring again this year! The WLCT also wishes to report that we have a new web site up and running: [Westbrooklct.org](http://Westbrooklct.org)

The Westbrook Land Conservation Trust is working hard to ensure that everyone in our community has the opportunity to enjoy our open space. The Westbrook 10 Hike Challenge was successful ended with a final hike and lunch at the 51-acre Conservation Easement at the Elliott Farm on Chittenden Hill Road. The WLCT again participated in the International Coastal Cleanup at the West Beach.

The Westbrook Land Conservation Trust wishes to extend our sympathy to Shirley Lusk and family for the passing of Frank Lusk, a former WLCT President. We will miss his quiet but firm guidance of our organization.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Tom Elliott*

President, Westbrook Land Conservation Trust

**Annual Meeting!** November 9, 2022 in the Town Library

Presentation: **Molly Bernstein**, of the Conservation Commission, graduate of Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington, will talk about the Connecticut Forest and Park Association and her experiences on the trail with them becoming certified in Wilderness First Aid.

## International Coastal Cleanup 2022



Again this year the Land Trust hosted the International Coastal Cleanup for Westbrook. This is an annual event sponsored by the Ocean Conservancy throughout the world and by Save the Sound in Connecticut. Both these organizations do great work. Check out their websites.

On a gorgeous Saturday, the nineteenth of September fifteen volunteers cleaned West Beach, Coral Sands Beach, the dunes and sidewalk nearby.

We collected over 30 pounds of trash of all varieties from cigarette butts to half a boogie board. While the amount has declined, it is still disappointing. We are lucky to have a picturesque beach with trash cans provided and emptied by the Public Works Department. Would that everyone would make use of them!

## *The WLCT lands a Westbrook Foundation Grant*

In an endeavor to bolster our visibility, on our parcels and in the media, and for support in maintaining properties, the Trust applied for a grant to assist financially. Most of our signage on properties is over fifty years old and needs replacing. We will be adding small signage in particular places to indicate no vehicle usage, as well as QR code stickers, which will direct visitors to our website. The grant will support our website, as well, for the next five years. In addition, we will purchase materials to facilitate stewarding properties, such as manual trash grabbers.



Thank you, Westbrook Foundation for your thoughtful consideration our our needs!

## Forest Forensics: A Field Guide to Reading the Forested Landscape

by Tom Wessels

Book Review

By Bill Neale

You may know Tom Wessels from YouTube. Walking through the woods with his long white beard, he explains how to tell the forest past just by looking.

This book is a field guide for New England hikers to do this for themselves. Put it in your pocket and take it with you. It has great pictures to help you see what he is talking about.

Cradles and pillows send us to sleep, but for him, they tell al story about wind effects and time. A cradle is a dip in the ground where tree roots ripped up the soil as the tree fell over. A pillow is the pile of soil the fell from the ripped up roots. The pillow is down wind from the cradle. If the trunk and roots are still around, this happened not too long ago depending on the species. If the pillow is very gently sloping it has eroded over time, so is older. This is just one example from the book.

We know our woods were mostly cleared until a hundred years ago or less and we are vaguely aware that some wall enclosures mean they were used for agriculture. Grazing or plowing? Hay or crops? Sheep or cattle? Use this book to add a whole new dimension on your hikes.

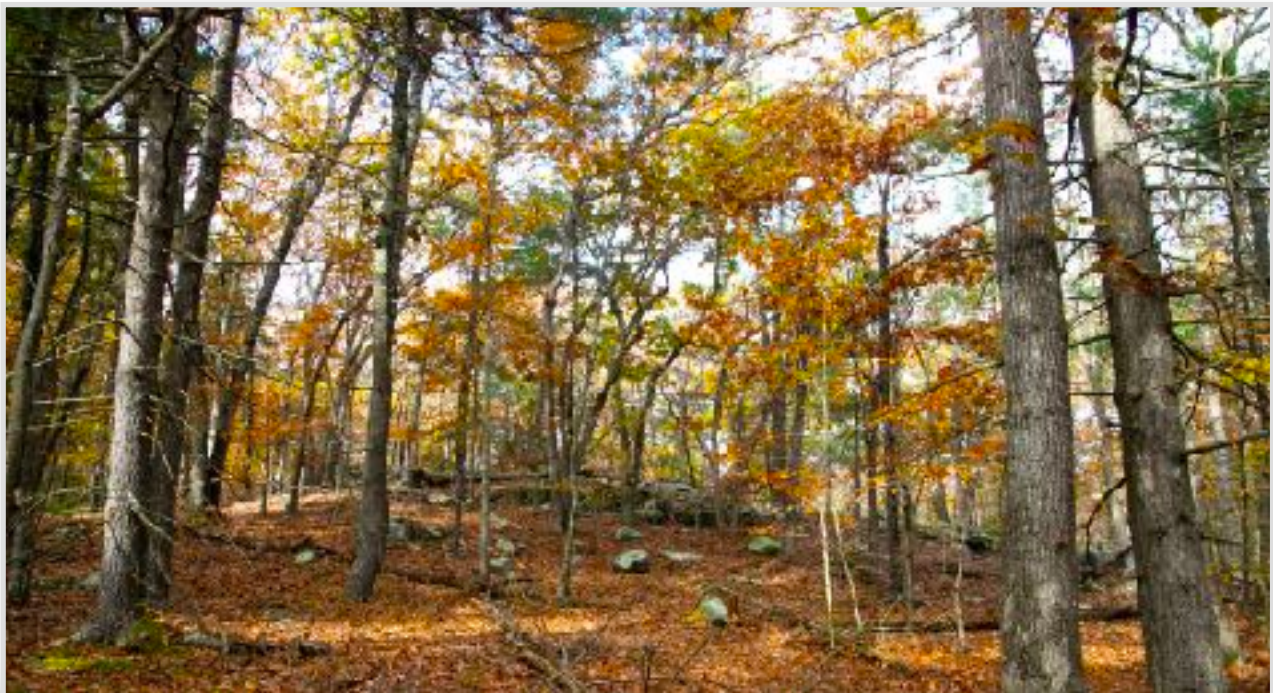
## WLCT's One Mile Trail

Amenable to easy hiking, perhaps with a family, our One Mile Trail through forty acres starts and ends at the cul-de-sac at the end of either Autumn Ridge Road on one end, or Lake Louise Drive on the other end. Parking is allowed. Just find the Land Trust sign to find the head of the trail. We are working to keep the path clear and visible and marked with 2x4" white blazes. From the Autumn Ridge end, your walk will extend 3/4 of a mile through hilly forested terrain before



encountering the power lines, from which there is quite a view! From the Lake Louise Drive start, a short walk leads to a bridge overarching important Trout Brook. Soon after, you will need to scale a hill with a challenging vertical incline to continue to the power lines and beyond. So, plan an excursion perhaps by placing a car at either end, or double back for a two-miler. You will view seldom touched woodlands and variegated landscape, preserved forever. The land traversed is in red in the diagram below.

Follow the markers!



# Westbrook Land Conservation Trust Membership



P.O. Box 1124, Westbrook, CT 06498 (860) 399-5224 email: [WestbrookLCT@gmail.com](mailto:WestbrookLCT@gmail.com)

**Names and Address:** (Please list all family members)

- \_\_\_\_\_ Individual \$15.00/year
- \_\_\_\_\_ Family \$25.00/year
- \_\_\_\_\_ Patron \$50.00/year
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sustaining \$100.00/year
- \_\_\_\_\_ Life \$500.00
- \_\_\_\_\_ Additional contribution  
for land acquisitions

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

*By providing your email address, members will receive notification of board meetings, special activities, including nature walks, as well as property clean ups, and a newsletter highlighting annual accomplishments.*

Make checks payable to "Westbrook Land Conservation Trust." Dues and contributions are tax deductible to the extent permitted by law.

**Circle one**

- Yes No Please contact me about volunteer opportunities.
- Yes No Please contact me about neighborhood stewardship.
- Yes No Please have a director call me to discuss land acquisitions

*Or, join or renew membership online @ [WWW.WestbrookLCT.org](http://WWW.WestbrookLCT.org)*

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*Dear Friends and Neighbors,*

*Westbrook Land Conservation Trust can be proud of its 54-year history and its part in the protection of approximately 20% of Westbrook's land area as open space. Our responsibility to manage it prudently involves insurance, the majority of the annual expense of the organization. **Please join and make your contribution to the continuation of responsible stewardship.***

*Membership involves as little as the \$15 for individuals, but there are plenty of opportunities for more involvement including helping with the newsletter, stewarding one of our parcels or becoming aboard member. You will receive our newsletter, be invited to help with special events - including hikes and programs with speakers - and get updates on important environmental issues such as land use issues in Westbrook.*

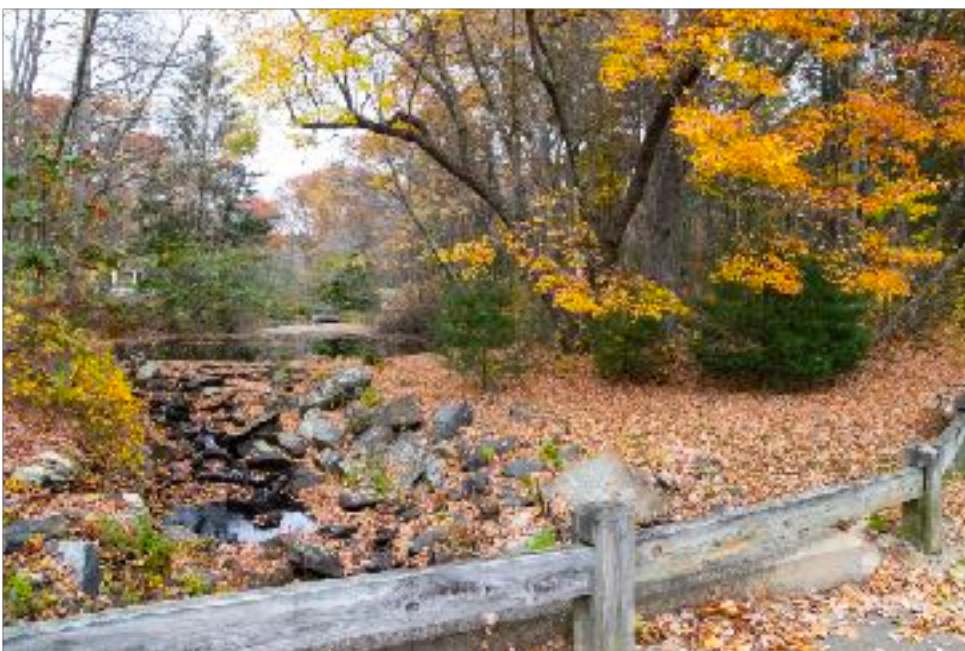
Copy the form above and send to the P.O. Box or give directly on our website

*The success of our **Land Trust depends upon an active membership**, for financial support, to maintain properties, and to meet local needs for conserving and enjoying open space in Westbrook.*

## Fall Parcel Spotlight: Four Properties with Streams

*Twenty-six of the thirty-three Land Trust properties include some kind of wetland, from salt marshes to upland vernal pools or streams, and even the Falls River. Highlighted here are four with moving water.*

*Trout Lake: Off Trout Lake Drive, we care for the 3.86 acres with 2.2 acre Trout Lake at the center and the intertidal stream therefrom. This was the fifth property acquired,*



*Fishing Brook: Noticeable on the left at you enter Fishing Brook Road, the majority of the 9.63 acre property is way back from sight, and surrounds the brook quite a distance.*

*Lynn Road: The Falls River runs from northern Westbrook to the Connecticut River, and is full of history. Of course, a segment of the river passes through Land Trust property, at the beginning of Lynn Road. There is a pond there, separated from the river, created when the original bridge was made by the WPA.*

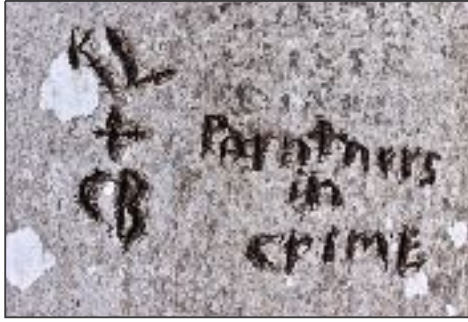


*McVeagh Road: Historically the 3rd property acquired by the Trust. The 2.74 acre parcel surrounds Dee's Brook along McVeagh Road on either side of Meetinghouse Lane.*



## Beeches

Ah, who hasn't etched their initials in a beech tree, when no one was looking? Despite any damage this activity might cause the tree, the smooth grey skin is too tempting, and, besides, others have done it. Years later, you can return to find how nature has magically puffed your draft into a timeless, story-telling etching.



Beeches have been suffering a fungus driven bark disease around here for many years. Now, a new invader from the Ohio area has

arrived, creating... partners in crime. If you've been hiking around the area, you surely have noticed the withered or striped leaves on beech trees, both young and old. A disturbing sight.



The leaves are often contorted grotesquely, with cupping and curling due to a mysterious nematode that has spread astonishingly rapidly throughout New England.



Only three years ago this problem was first noticed! In an article in the *CT Examiner* in July 2022, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station scientist Bob Marr is quoted as saying the following. "It's just shocking. It's like the disease is equivalent to a wildfire." Indeed, in this area, the disease has spread at a much faster rate than in the midwest, perplexing scientists.

Beeches have large and persistent leaves. They are part of the peak community of trees around here. Together with their vast understory of younger saplings, they create shade that allows the cool and moist conditions required of a healthy forest ecosystem. Suddenly, this umbrella is vanishing- as seen above- and the forest floor is exposed to sun and desiccation. In four or five years, if the condition persists, apparently, these trees could begin to perish. What then? Some see this as an opportunity for other species to prevail. I see this as having devastating impact on a ecosystem involving myriad organisms of all kinds.

Doug White



# Land Trust News & Information



## Calendar of Events

Wednesday, November 9, 2022

**Annual Meeting 7 pm**

Westbrook Library Community Room

**Sunday November 20: 1 - 3 pm: Properties Clean-Up**

*Visit some of our parcels, south of Route 1! Help clean up bottles and litter. Bring work gloves and a can-do attitude! Meet at the town hall parking lot.*

**Board Meetings** are held on *the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday* of most months at 7pm in the Town Hall. All are welcome!

For questions about these activities, e-mail [WestbrookLCT@gmail.com](mailto:WestbrookLCT@gmail.com)



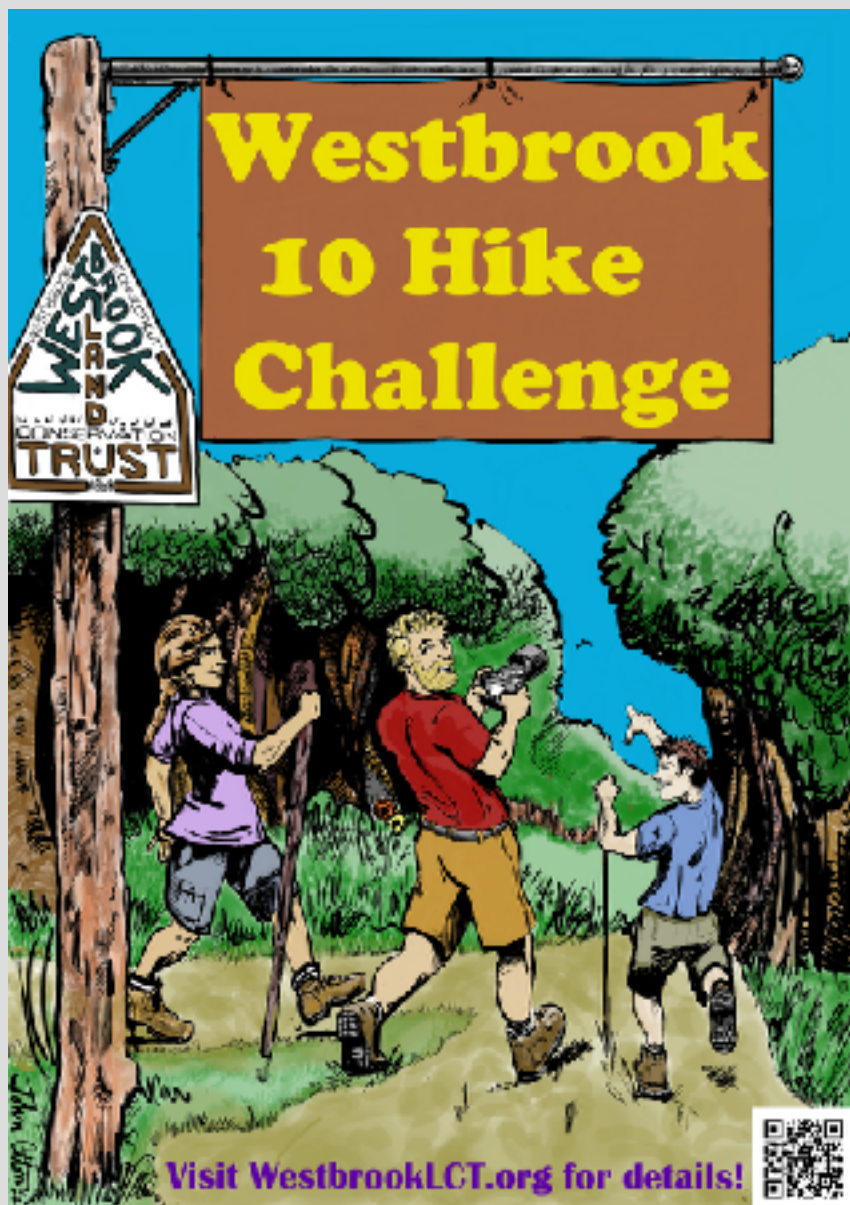
## Westbrook Land Conservation Trust Land Holdings 2021

<u>Parcel/ Fee Owned</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Description</u>
1. Fawn Hill Rd.	3.61	Upland Forest
2. Shelter Harbor Ln.	1.41	Wetlands & Pond
3. McVeagh Rd.	2.74	Creek & Upland Forest
4. Hammock Rd.	4.43	Tidal Marsh
5. Trout Lake Dr.	3.86	Tidal Pond & Upland
6. Mink Rock Cir.	3.80	Upland Forest
7. Malabar Dr.	3.79	Upland Forest
7B. Messerschmidt	2.01	Upland Forest
8. West Pond Meadow Rd.	1.34	Wetland & Forest
9. Carroll Stannard	5.00	Tidal Marsh
10. Barn Way	2.57	Tidal Wetland & Upland
11. Ortner Dr.	3.24	Creek & Upland Forest
12. Pritchett Dr.	2.32	Creek & Upland Forest
13. Fishing Brook Rd.	9.63	Brook & Upland Forest
14. Pond Meadow Split	0.50	Vernal Pool & Upland
14B. Trojanowski	0.90	Vernal Pool & Upland
15. Plymouth Rd.	5.77	Wetland & Upland Forest
16. Big Creek	1.90	transferred to USFWS
17. Seascape	0.13	Tidal Wetland & Upland
18. Homestead Hills	3.31	Wetland & Upland Forest
19. Blue Point	4.00	Wetland & Upland Forest
20. Horse Hill Farms	13.79	Wetland & Upland Forest
21. Wilcox	6.10	Creek & Upland Forest
22. Zito	8.68	Wetland Upland
23. Stannard Gardens	0.16	Tidal Wetland & Upland
24. Lynn Rd. Bridge	0.45	Pond, River & Upland
25. Winterberry Cir.	1.64	Wetland & Upland Forest
26. Timberland Dr.	14.70	Creek, Wetland, Forest & Trail
27. Westbrook Heights	0.20	Woodland & Trail
28. Pointina	0.11	Wetland
29. Toby Hill Chase	26.04	Upland Forest & Trail
30. Nolf	0.83	Tidal Wetland
31. 1552 Boston Post Rd.	0.84	Wetland & Upland Forest
32. Seaside Avenue	11.47	Tidal Wetland
<b>Total Fee Owned</b>	<b>150.27</b>	<b>Acres</b>
<b>Conservation Easement</b>		
1. Elliott	51.0	Upland Forest



This summer the Westbrook Land Conservation Trust created a fun adventure for the citizens of Westbrook. It was called the **“Westbrook Ten Hike Challenge”**. This was designed to encourage the residents to get out and enjoy the natural beauty and the open space in our little town.

We sat down and went through our Land Trust trails and other trails in town. We decided on a nice selection of hikes, then set out to get the word out. First, we needed a fun flyer that would catch people’s attention. Here is what WLCT came up with:



We hung these up in a couple of establishments (The Turtle Café and Julie’s Cup of Joe), the library and the Post Office. We also advertised on the various Westbrook Facebook pages as well as our website, WestbrookLCT.org.

When a person scanned the QR code or visited WestbrookLCT.org they would find a list of ten hikes. The challenge also included a printable PDF for logging hikes. Participants were encouraged to write down and take pictures of scenic parts of the trail. And they did not disappoint. We were amazed.

Here are the people that finished all ten hikes....

**Jean and Ben Vossler.**

These two hikers went all out, took amazing pictures, and kept a very thorough log sheet. Well done!



**Joe Brown**

Joe tracked his hikes on his smart watch and saved the information to his computer. He then gave the WLCT the GPS information. He also provided feedback about the trails that could use some maintenance. We cannot thank him enough for this valuable information. (no pic)

Jay, Jackson, and Isaiah Eno

This team took fantastic pictures and were a lot of fun to meet in person. Great Job, Team Eno!



**Devin Kelly**

From smiling faces in all the photos these guys took, you could tell they had a blast with this challenge.



Andrew Durin

By far the funniest picture taker, congratulations to Andrew Durin. And thank you for your zeal!



Kate Gilstad, Zack Hayden, and the students of Oxford Academy

Kate is one of the people that conceived the 10 Hike Challenge. Thank you, team!



## The After-party

To commemorate the challenge and to recognize the finishers, we threw a party at our president's house. Tom Elliot hosted food and fun including one last hike around his stunning property.



This was a lot of fun, and we want to thank everyone that participated. Whether you hiked all 10 trails or just did one, you got out into the great outdoors. We couldn't ask for more.

Thank you for supporting the Westbrook Land Conservation Trust. See you all out on the trail!!!!!!!









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