



Whispers in the Forest

The newsletter of the Newtown Forest Association, Inc.
Connecticut's Oldest Private Land Trust

www.NewtownForestAssociation.org

Volume 6, Issue 1

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Do you know about the Brunot Preserve? With a great new trail, fun geocaches and more...you should.



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Visiting as many NFA properties as possible is vital. Can you help?



PLUS:

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Getting To Know Brunot

Dozens Help NFA Dedicate New Brunot Preserve Trail

What's better than exploring a beautiful new trail on a beautiful day? For the walkers who joined the Newtown Forest Association, Inc. (NFA) for a guided four-mile walk to dedicate a newly built trail at the NFA's Brunot Preserve on June 4, the answer was...nothing! The group took full advantage of the sunny skies and NFA guides to learn about the variety of habitats at the Brunot Preserve, as well as the acquisition of additional land, the completion of an Eagle Scout Project and the addition of several fun Scrabble-themed geocaches.

Yellow Perimeter Trail

NFA Board member Aaron Cooper-smith—who spearheaded an effort to add a new trail loosely following the Preserve's perimeter to the exist-

ing White trail (an old farm road going through the middle of the Preserve)—was one of the day's hike leaders. Aaron's new Yellow trail showcases the Preserve's diversity as it meanders from the Taunton Hill Road trail head, past three enormous glacial erratics and through woods, wetlands and meadows.



TOP: Getting ready to walk. ABOVE: Looking out over one of the Brunot Preserve's pristine meadows..

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A Letter from the NFA President

Greetings to all our volunteers, friends and neighbors:

Summer in Newtown is a great time to be out in the woods. We are fortunate to have our natural resources awash in color, texture, smells and abundance of wildlife and native plant species. Whether it's hiking, biking or just going for a stroll, we can all appreciate the restorative powers a healthy walk in the woods can give us.

The NFA continues to move forward with projects we set out to do this year. These projects include developing a stronger public presence in Newtown, increasing our

membership, working with town conservation officials in preserving and maintaining more open space, property

organization forward to meet our current and future challenges. A special thank you goes out to all the friends and fam-

ily of Wes Gillingham for sharing him with us. Wes left us a legacy of watchful oversight through the many years he committed to our organization and the conservation of natural resources here in Newtown.

In accordance with Newtown's plan for conservation and development, the NFA continues to play an important



inspections, abutting neighbor engagements and encroachments, land and easement acquisitions, beaver and water course quality issues and a working relationship with other land trusts.

This year we have again enlisted the help of two natural resource interns to compliment our stewardship efforts on over 80 individual properties we oversee. These efforts included site inspections, property management, and invasive species removal. And, of course, we continue to engage volunteers to help in these on going efforts to maintain our properties.

As President of the Newtown Forest Association, I am honored to work with some of the most talented and insightful board members and volunteers. These folks continue to move this or-

role in preserving the rural character of our town. We are committed to preserve these properties in perpetuity and maintain the health the natural resources found there. We ascribe to the Standards and Practices as guidelines established by The Land Trust Alliance related to land trust governance, stewardship, land acquisition and finance issues.

The NFA is more than just Newtown's land trust organization. We are the stewards of permanently protected open space which is the fabric of maintaining a rural Newtown. We are your neighbors with property in your neighborhood. We look forward to you joining us as members, volunteers and neighbors.

See you in the woods! □

NFA Board of Directors:

R.T. (Bob) Eckenrode, President
Edward Kelleher, VP
Bart Smith, Secretary
Guy Peterson, Treasurer

Dr. Aaron Coopersmith
Coke Cramer
Dan Dalton
Tim Gagne
Brian Hennessey
Bill Watts
Martha Wright

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State Forester Speaks at NFA Annual Meeting

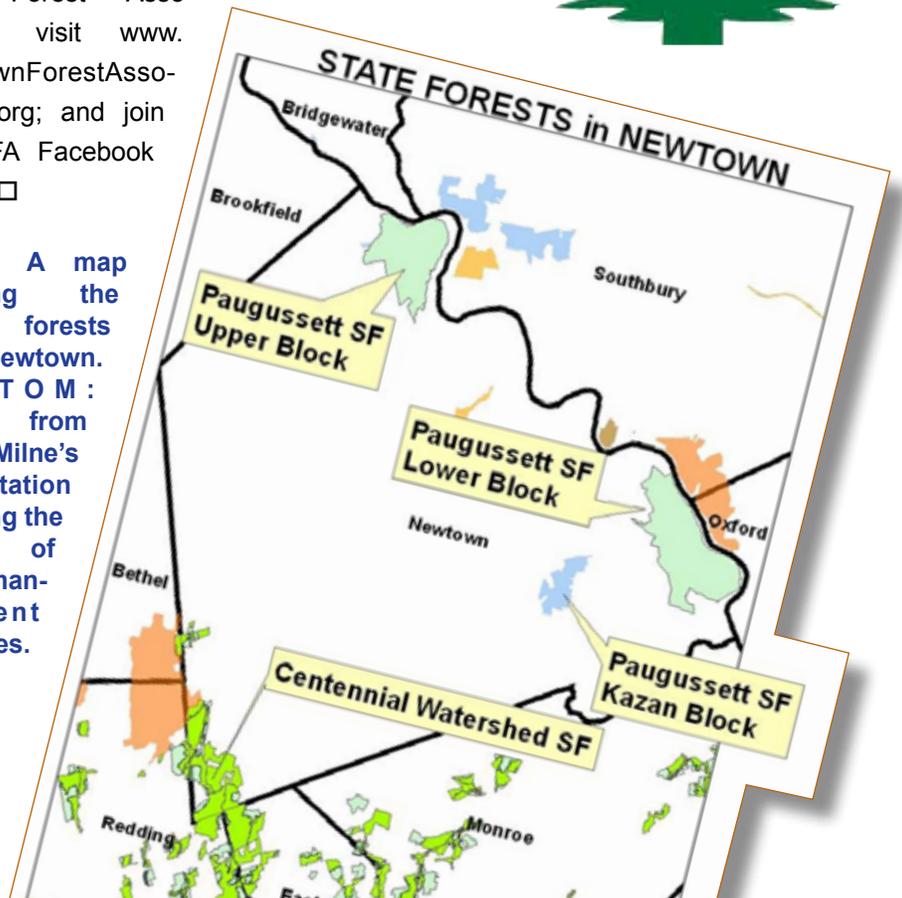
It may take a village to raise a child, but just one man supported by a small staff manages all the State of Connecticut's forests in Western Connecticut. That man, State forester Gerard Milne of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, spoke at the NFA's Annual Meeting in May, giving attendees an educational and sometimes entertaining look at how the State's land in Newtown (including the Upper and Lower Paugussett Forests) are managed for the benefit of the public and the wildlife that inhabit the thousands of acres under the State's care.

Mr. Milne enlightened the audience on how the state of the Paugussett Forests' management plans and how the State inventories resident plant and animal species, administers public timber and public firewood cutting programs, and manages invasive species. More than interesting facts, because the issues facing the Upper and Lower Paugussett Forests in Newtown also affect residential properties throughout

the area, Mr. Milne's discussion was full of information landowners can put to use in their own backyards.

For more information on the Newtown Forest Association, visit www.NewtownForestAssociation.org; and join the NFA Facebook group. □

RIGHT: A map showing the State forests in Newtown. BOTTOM: Photos from Mr. Milne's presentation showing the variety of land management activities.



Volunteers Wanted

The NFA needs your help. Do you have the time and desire to walk and photograph NFA properties, keeping an eye out for potential issues? Do you have an environmental background and can help us execute and refine good land stewardship practices or inventory plant and animal species on NFA properties? Even those with fund raising, membership growth, outreach and education experience, as well as those with the time to garden at the NFA office or the desire to serve on the Board are needed.

If you are interested in volunteering, please reach out to any NFA Board member, or call us at 203-270-3650

Earth Day Clean Up 2011

A small but dedicated group of volunteers turned out for the NFA's annual Earth Day Clean Up at Nettleton Preserve on May 7 and spent a beautiful morning pruning overhanging privet and limbs from the trails, repairing wet trail areas, removing invasive species, mulching existing plantings and flower beds and cleaning up fallen sticks, logs

and other debris. Some Cub Scouts even found an old tire!

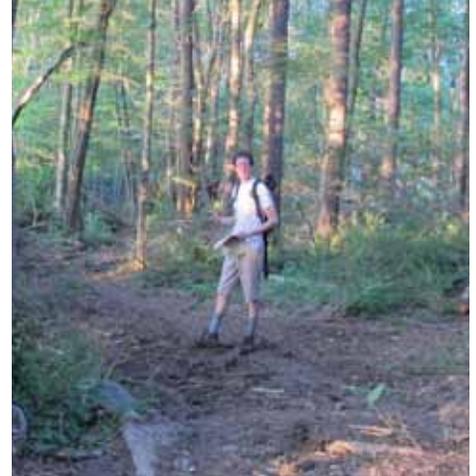
A big NFA thank you goes out to: Bobby Bowles, Mrs. Fitsimmons, Charles Zukowski, my folks, Barbara Smith, the Ashcroft Family, the a local cub scout Pack and the NFA Board members and their families who lent a hand. □

Property Inspections

Visiting as many of the NFA properties as possible is a vital component to managing the land and protecting it from misuse. Prompted by a tip from a local geocacher, several NFA Board members recently visited an NFA Preserve to investigate reports of bulldozer activity creating a road through our property. But we can't visit every NFA property every year. If you visit an NFA Preserve and think you've seen something "fishy" going on, please let us know.

Interested in being an NFA Good Neighbor? Visit our web site for more information. □

TOP RIGHT: Dr. Aaron Coppersmith uses his GPS to verify the location of the alleged illegal road. BOTTOM: Guy Peterson (Treasurer), Ed Kelleher (Vice President) and Tim Gagne (Board member) hike into an NFA Preserve on a rainy Sunday morning in June.



We Just Want To Be Liked (on Facebook)

Have you "liked" the NFA Facebook page? It's a great way to keep up to date on NFA events and news, connect with other NFA members, and share your love of the outdoors. "Like" us today!

Brunot Preserve

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Eagle Scout Project

Tom Diluoffo from Troop 270 helped the NFA and fulfilled his Eagle Scout Project requirement, by adding a new trail loop (the Red Trail) in the northern section of the Brunot Preserve extending out to Plumtrees Road and connecting to the new Yellow Trail. The NFA's thanks go to Tom, his family and Troop 270 for the great job they did on this project.



the NFA has had with geocaches on this and other properties, the NFA

Rob added eight new geocaches at the Brunot Preserve that form a Scrabble based puzzle. Geocachers have to find all of the "hidden treasures" to solve the puzzle. It was a Brunot family member who popularized the game of Scrabble, so a like themed puzzle-cache is particularly appropriate for this property. The new geocaches can be found on the web site www.geocaching.com.

New Geocaches

Geocaching is a real-world outdoor treasure hunt. Based on the success

asked local resident, Rob Urfer, an avid geocacher, to add several new geocaches at the Brunot Preserve.

To learn more about the Brunot Preserve, visit, www.newtownforestassociation.org, and download a trail map of the property □

NFA Board Changes

New Members

The NFA recently named two new members to its Board of Directors.

A 20-year resident of Newtown, **Tim Gagne** grew up camping and hiking throughout the Eastern U.S and Canada with the Boy Scouts and with his family. As a teen, he was an active volunteer with the Connecticut Audubon Society in Fairfield. This deep connection with nature has inspired him to spend the bulk of his professional career working for non-profit groups (such as The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk) and to support local organizations, including Cullens Youth Association and the Newtown Torpedoes swim team.

Dr. Aaron Coopersmith recently returned home after pursuing his studies, to join the family chiropractic

practice. He received his undergraduate degree in Biology from Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. While an undergraduate, Dr. Coopersmith earned "Key Holder" status from the environmentally-conscious NUHOC Club. He was also active in the University group Students for Environmental Action (SEA). Aaron Coopersmith later attended the New York Chiropractic College where he received his Doctor of Chiropractic degree. Dr. Coopersmith was the driving force behind the building of the new Yellow Trail at the NFA's Brunot Preserve.

Saying Farewell

Wes Gillingham, Sr. was a resident of Newtown for over 40 years and a member of the NFA for nearly that long. Wes also served for many years as a

member of the Inland Wetland Commission. He joined the NFA board in May 1994, serving several terms as president. Together with his favor-



ite dog, Wes spent many hours visiting and monitoring the many NFA properties in town. Wes

particularly enjoyed Hattertown Pond and was our expert on that property. Wes also passed along his love of the outdoors to his family.

Wes recently relocated to New York and then to Tennessee to be closer to his family, where he passed away recently. The board will miss his insight and field knowledge. Our condolences to Wes's friends and family.



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Please Join Us

The Newtown Forest Association is the oldest private land trust organization in Connecticut. It has been dedicated for over eighty years to securing for the residents of Newtown and their posterity the benefits derived from open space lands. Lands which include, but are not limited to, forest and agricultural land, wildlife and nature preserves and watersheds. The Association was started in 1923 when Dr. Howard Peck presented a gift of 7.2 acres of land to nine Newtown neighbors forming "Newtown Forester's Association." The Newtown Forest Association has since grown from that initial 7.2 acres to its current holdings of more than 1,100 acres located in all sections of town.

Your gift of membership will help the NFA continue that growth. Please consider becoming an NFA member today.

Name _____

Address _____

E-mail _____

Phone _____

If paying by check, please make your check payable to "The Newtown Forest Association" or "N.F.A." To pay by credit card, visit our web site at www.NewtownForestAssociation.org or provide your information here:

Card Type: _____ Expiration: _____

Card Number: _____

Code: _____

- NFA Individual Membership (\$15)
- NFA Family Membership (\$20)
- Additional donation of \$ _____

I would like to volunteer. I'm interested in:

- Office work
- Trail maintenance/property stewardship
- Good Neighbor program

We can accept donations of real property, securities or bonds. If interested, please contact Guy Peterson, NFA Treasurer, at 203-733-2030.

