

# Whispers in the Forest



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*Connecticut's Oldest  
Private Land Trust*



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Whispers in the Forest  
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ON THE COVER:



Clethra alnifolia (sweet pepperbush or summersweet) on the NFA's newly-acquired property at 196 Hattertown Road is just one of the many features that make it special.. PHOTO: Guy Peterson

**NFA Board of Directors:**

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# A Letter from the NFA President



This year Newtown as well as sharing our efforts regionally as members of the Western CT Regional Conservation Partnership.

has been quite a busy one for us here at The Newtown Forest Association. We

worked together with interns and local students to plant a memorial tree nursery. The all volunteer help from Deloitte and Touche install additional plantings and landscaping at the Holcombe Hill Memorial Garden was wonderful day for everyone involved. We also partnered with local volunteers, neighbors, and received support from the community organizations as well as help from The Aquarion Water company to attempt to protect the Gretsch Property from a cluster housing development. We truly appreciate the opportunity to step up and lead by example here in

Our Glen Preserve in Sandy Hook received a major face lift and our respected Christmas Tree was trimmed and fed and is looking great as part of the updated Sandy Hook Streetscape. Another neighborhood will be benefiting from our latest land acquisition on Hattertown Road with the purchase of 25 acres with a trail system a stream and woodlands bisecting the property. Plans are being made for an expansion of our trail system on our Brunot Preserve to link the former Franc Property and our abutting neighbors in Bethel..

We are always looking for volunteers to help us with our mission and you are welcome to join us in our efforts. Sunny Regards, Bob

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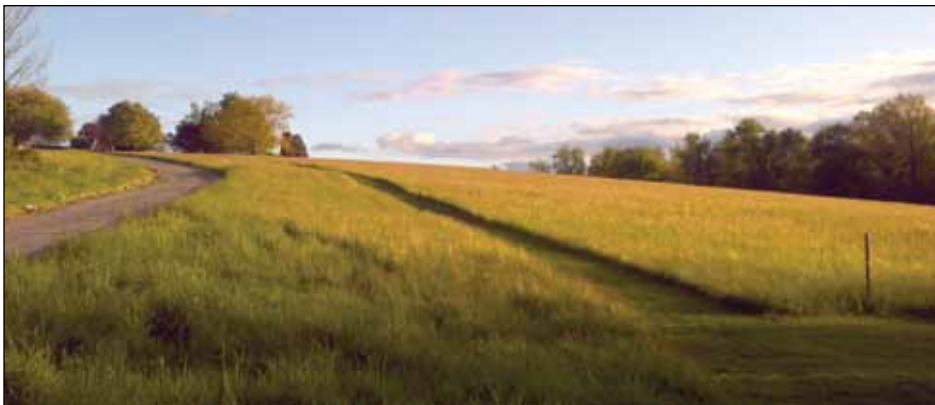
Dozens of Deloitte employees braved a rainy Spring day to volunteer with the NFA.





# Support Your NFA

## Individual Giving Is Critical!



The Newtown Forest Association is the oldest **private land trust** in Connecticut. It has been dedicated for more than eighty years to securing for the residents of Newtown and their posterity the benefits derived from open space lands. The **non-profit** Newtown Forest Association relies heavily on membership dues and other contributions from our neighbors, like *you*. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation today and/or becoming a member to help the NFA continue its mission to preserve Newtown's forests and open spaces.



### Give Online

Please visit  
[NewtownForestAssociation.org](http://NewtownForestAssociation.org)  
 today to make your secure,  
 online gift through PayPal  
 or Network For Good.



### All a-Board!

The NFA recently welcomed a new member to its Board of Directors. Don Morrissey is Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of Aquarion Water Company, as well as a long-time resident of Newtown. Don got involved with the NFA earlier this year as an integral part of the effort to preserve the Gretsch property on Castle Hill. He now brings his expertise and enthusiasm to the NFA Board and its Land Acquisition sub-committee. Welcome!



### Parade 2013

Did you get your NFA wildflower seed packet at this year's Labor Day Parade?



NFA Board member Don Morrissey (left), Board President Bob Eckenrode (right) and Caretaker Ray Ormsbee (Center) pass out wildflower seed packets along the Labor Day Parade route.

**PLEASE CUT OUT AND RETURN THIS FORM TODAY**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

If paying by check, please make your check payable to "The Newtown Forest Association" or "N.F.A."

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

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

**MAIL COMPLETED FORM AND CHECK TO: NFA, P.O. BOX 213, NEWTOWN, CT 06470**



## Sandy Hook School Memorial Tree Fund

The NFA established the Sandy Hook School Memorial Tree Fund to support the creation of a living memorial in honor of the Sandy Hook Elementary School victims. To date, nearly \$300,000 has been pledged or received from across the nation. The NFA is honored



to be able to be a part of the healing process and to be involved in a future living memorial(s). All donations to the fund will be restricted to the preparation, planting and maintenance of a living memorial to honor the victims. To make a tax-deductible donation, please send checks made out to "Newtown Forest Association, Inc.," along with a note that your gift is to be used for the "Sandy Hook School Memorial Tree Fund," to P.O. Box 213, Newtown, CT 06470.

Contributions can also be made with a credit card by visiting [www.NewtownForestAssociation.org](http://www.NewtownForestAssociation.org)

# Property Files

## 27 Acres on Hattertown Road Becomes Newest NFA Preserve



For the NFA, the mission of protecting open space in Newtown takes two tracks; caring for the land currently under our stewardship, and acquiring new parcels that hold conservation value. Working along that second track, the NFA has acquired 27.66 acres at 196 Hattertown Road. This property had recently come back on the market in January. And when one of the parcel's neighbors brought it to the NFA's attention, we knew right away that this land should be preserved.

### Why Is This Property Important?

The NFA has a defined set of criteria for accepting land and even higher standards when considering a land purchase. In February, several board members visited and inspected the property. The property has 225 feet of road frontage along Hattertown Road with property lines bounding the property exceeding one mile in total. The property is surrounded by 11 homes and has a roadbed/trail extending into the center of the property. The property has two streams, wetlands, ponds/vernal pools, beautiful rolling woodlands, lots of stone walls and evidence of historical agricultural activities. The NFA even obtained 1934 aerial photos showing that several acres of this property were formerly meadows.

This property was within a conservation priority area that the NFA had previously identified where the NFA would like to see an increase in land conservation. This parcel met all of our criteria, most importantly its ecological diversity and the multiple watercourses that traversed the property that represent the headwaters for the Pootatuck Aquifer; a source of drinking water for many Newtown residents. This property is also approximately 600 feet, as the crow flies, from our 119 acre, Hattertown Pond Preserve that is bounded by Aunt Park Lane, Castle Meadow Road and Maltbie Road.

As NFA Treasurer, Guy Peterson, said "The NFA was presented with a market driven opportunity and had to react quickly to prevent a developer from exploiting this property with a sub-develop-

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ry short time, the NFA was able than \$45,000 in grants and donating one \$10,000 grant from the Melrose Community Grant program. The purchase price comes from funds that the NFA had accumulated over the years."

and would be difficult to develop there was little other interest and the NFA's purchase offer was over the next few months a formal survey of the property was conducted and its boundaries were marked. When the ground thaws in the spring, we will be erecting a sign and evaluating the long-term stewardship needs, developing a long-term stewardship plan and defining uses for the property. Despite our hesitations about entering into the property, there are many advantages to curb-cut permitting convenient access to the property. In this matter to work through in the future, we would like to have this preserve up in the future to be used for passive recreational uses only,

The NFA does have a history of acquiring land, most of the 1,100 acres the NFA protects has come from donations from private individuals who desired to preserve the rural character. The NFA is another land trust throughout the region and has seen an accelerated trend to purchase land through conservation easements to conduct preservation activities. This trend is influenced by several factors, including the recent increase in the growing number of property owners who are wealthy and cash-poor that leave no option but to sell their land to the NFA to fulfill their obligations. □

196 Hattertown Road



BOTOM LEFT: Looking downstream at 196 Hattertown Road.

BELOW: Ferns and other natural plants surround a pond on the NFA's newly acquired property. The NFA is currently having a professional plant and wildlife survey conducted of the property as a baseline for a comprehensive management plan.



## Summer Interns

Newtown Forest Association interns for 2013 had a successful summer program under the guidance of NFA caretaker Ray Ormsbee. Projects included invasive plant removal, painting, gardening, and refurbishing the gazebo and pond at our Holcombe Hill Preserve headquarters.

The NFA Intern Program provided an opportunity for students to work outdoors together as a team while learning new skills. We want to thank them for their commitment and a job well done.



ABOVE: Pictured left to right are Summer 2013 interns Drew Szarka, Grandon Smith and Laura Rice with NFA President Bob Eckenrode.



## Governor Malloy Visits The Glen

Governor Malloy recently visited Sandy Hook Center, including the NFA's Glen Preserve. The Glen Preserve has always been at the heart of Sandy Hook Center.



It was once the site of the village post office and library at the turn of the last century. The Wasserman family donated the property

to the NFA in 1985 as a public place to be left primarily in its natural state. For many years now, The Glen has been the location of the Sandy Hook Christmas celebration and was the site of a temporary memorial to the tragedy that occurred at Sandy School last year.

A short flight of stone steps descends from the paved plaza to a special place to view the scenic Pootatuck River. Though it is one of the smallest parcels of open space the NFA oversees, The Glen has become one of the most important parts of the new streetscape project. The NFA is honored to maintain The Glen as a place to be enjoyed by the entire community. □

# Open Space Preservation

## The Effort To Preserve Castle Hill

Located directly across Castle Hill Road from the NFA's Nettleton Preserve and extending down to Taunton Lake, the 130-acre Gretsches property was the object of a sudden and exciting preservation effort earlier this year. Before many, including the NFA, were aware that the property was up for sale, a developer was already planning to build dozens of large houses on this iconic and environmentally important parcel.

Although the NFA-lead coalition which acted quickly and raised more

than \$2 million was not ultimately successful in acquiring the property, we did form some important community bonds and make some great new friends.

The NFA would like to thank everyone throughout our community who pulled together to try to preserve Castle Hill and the rural nature of Newtown. Your support and spirit makes the sometimes difficult work of standing up for Newtown's nature even more rewarding! □





# Volunteerism

## Deloitte Makes An Impact



**D**ozens of area Deloitte employees did not show up at the office on Friday, June 7... and their bosses were OK with that. The group of more than four dozen Deloitte employees who came instead to the NFA's Holcombe Hill Preserve were part of tens of thousands nationwide who participated in Deloitte's annual Impact Day, a company-sanctioned program that sends employees into the community to volunteer at local non-profits.

Despite a steady rain that fell all day, the group's enthusiasm could not be dampened. Plenty of work was accomplished cleaning up and mulching beds of native plants, maintaining trails, and performing other maintenance at the NFA signature preserve (which includes NFA headquarters and a caretaker's house). □



## The Red Fox

Sometimes that yip or bark you hear isn't the neighbor's dog. The red fox is widespread and abundant in Newtown and throughout Connecticut. The red fox can be identified by its reddish coat, black legs and ears, and long, white tipped, bushy tail. It has an elongated muzzle, pointed ears, and a white underside.

The red fox is an omnivore, meaning that it eats both plant and animal foods. Food items include small rodents, squirrels, woodchucks, rabbits, birds and eggs, amphibians, and reptiles. Foxes also will eat vegetation, fruits, nuts, insects, carrion, and garbage. □





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# Support The NFA

Because the Newtown Forest Association is a private non-profit organization not affiliated with the Town, we rely heavily on membership dues and other contributions from our neighbors, like *you*. Please consider making a tax-deductible donation today and/or becoming a member to help the NFA continue its mission to preserve Newtown's forests.

Please see the donation form inside.

Thank you!

View from the overlook at NFA's Wasserman Preserve, Sandy Hook