

Harwinton Land Conservation Trust, Inc.
Annual Meeting
Harwinton Public Library
April 4, 2019

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President, Bob Orciari, at 7:00 PM.

Attendees

Officers

Bob Orciari	President
Rob Lesniewski	Vice President
Herb Etter	Treasurer
Karen Burnett	Secretary

Board of Directors

Larry Connors	Steve Craig	Karen Kelleher
Howard Rood	Elaine Sederquist	Bill Tracy

General Membership & Guests

Introductions

Officers and members of the board were introduced.

Introduction of guest speaker

Eric Rahn introduced our guest speaker, Ginny Apple. She speaks about bears, bobcats and bald eagles. Her home is located near state forest and she shares quite a few encounters with these animals as they pass through her yard.

Bobcat Program

Ginny Apple recounted stories of some bobcats in her yard and had pictures of many of them. She provided some basic information about bobcats. Bobcats are elusive and well camouflaged. They range throughout the United States except in the central agricultural area. Ginny Apple recommended the book set "Lives of Game Animals" by Ernest Thompson Seton for more wildlife information. Bobcats den in rocky outcrops having several dens and moving between them. This type of den has only one entrance so bears do not like them and do not compete for them. Connecticut has about 1000 bobcats with an average lifespan in the wild of 12 years. They are potent hunters and ferocious killers. In 1972 Connecticut protected bobcats from hunting. Bobcat researchers in Connecticut have put GPS collars on about 100 bobcats. The audience asked about cougars in Connecticut. Ginny Apple said that there is no breeding population in Connecticut. They deduce this from the facts that there are no local photos on security or game cameras and there are almost no road killed cougars. The one road killed cougar that was found in Connecticut was traced back to South Dakota.

The program was followed by Larry Connors giving out door prizes which were nice wooden items that he made.

There was a 15 minute social break with refreshments.

Updates

At 8:15 Bill Tracy introduced Bob Orciari who provided updates on the Harwinton Land Trust and our activities. Bob reported that our volunteers put in about 600 hours last year. Most of that time was spent at Indian Meadow which is our 34 acre property at White Oak Drive and Route 4. We have owned it for 30 years and this year we decided to make it accessible to the public. There was an Eagle Scout project at the White Oak Drive entrance. We also had help from the Wilderness School which is run by the Connecticut Department of Children and Families. Indian Meadow has a trail about one mile long with 10 bridges. There is also an old field which is being rehabbed into a pollinator meadow.

At our Bull Pond property Eagle Scout candidate Joe Sefcik built an elevated observation deck along the Red Trail.

At Forever Forest we had a project to restore the water level at the far marsh. A dike was broken and we rebuilt it. We seem to have more wildlife and we also hope the raised water level will reduce the invasive phragmites.

We have two other properties open to the public, Meadowview and Laurel Marsh, which did not have major projects.

We also have the Prudden Easement. In this conservation easement we do not own the property but we watch to see that the area is protected and we work with the owner. Last year about 2 acres was illegally clearcut. We have been working with the owner, the transgressor and the town to remediate the situation. During the past year the stumps were removed, rocks were moved to the stone walls and erosion controls were put in place. There is still some planting to be done.

Plans for 2019

The land trust has several plans for the upcoming year. At Bull Pond the driveway has been in need of repair for a long time. The driveway is actually owned by the town but it serves as the main parking area for our property. We obtained a grant from the NW CT Community Foundation to cover a minor part of the overall project, estimated to cost approximately \$10,000. However, that funding lapsed while the Town sought approval for LOCIP (Local Community Investment Project) funding to cover the majority of the project. It was hoped that LOCIP funding could cover the entire project. Bob Orciari has been working with the town on this and ultimately the town will be repaving the driveway about the third week of May.

National Trail Days will be on June 1st and 2nd. Once again we will participate and this year we will have two properties open. We will have people stationed on June 1st to guide visitors at Bull Pond from 1:00 – 2:30 PM and at Meadowview from 3:00 – 4:00 PM.

We plan regular work parties through the year. They are fun and draw in a lot of people. On April 20th we will meet at Bull Pond for mowing to control invasives near the entrance. We will also be weeding and mulching the gardens. On April 27th we will meet at Indian Meadow to clean up at the entryway. Two benches will be installed, blueberries will be planted and bluebird boxes will be put in. On May 18th we will meet at Meadowview to clear trails. We will have another work party later when we can determine a date. This will be at Forever Forest to clear trails and install a bench.

Other projects under consideration are that we are planning on having the Wilderness School help move gravel from the entrance of Indian Meadow to some low spots on the trail and with purchased gravel at Meadowview to fill a muddy section of trail. At Bull Pond we are looking into adding some parking spaces along Locust Road. The estimated cost of materials is \$1,000 and we are considering applying for a grant to cover the cost. At Indian Meadow we are looking into improving parking options along Route 4.

Nominations

Karen Burnett read the following nomination slate for members of the board of directors:

Lawrence Connors	Steve Craig	Franci Knight
Bob Orciari	Eric Rahn	Howard Rood
Tom Schoenemann	Elaine Sederquist	William Tracy.

The floor was opened for nominations and Franci Knight nominated Celeste Echlin. At this point Larry Connors said he would decline to run in favor of Celeste Echlin. Sam Walker moved to accept the nominees. Karen Kelleher seconded this. It was approved unanimously.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Karen Burnett, Secretary