



BWLT NEWS

Protecting The Land You Love

February, 2022

The Fortuna Corner Preserve

A Small But Important New Preserve in Bridgewater

In December of 2020, the Bridgewater Land Trust finalized the donation of a four acre parcel recently named the Fortuna Corner Preserve. The preserve is located across from the Town Garage on the corner of Hut Hill Road and Stuart Road East. As newly protected open space it expands a corridor of preserved land that encompasses over 60 acres and includes land preserved by NCLC (Northwest CT Land Conservancy) and farmland preserved by Bridgewater resident Bud Wright.

The land is now a wooded lot but formerly and as late as the 1950's, dairy cattle grazed on what was then an open field with a pond. The stone walls which enclosed the field are still intact with a break in the wall where the cows were herded across the street from what was known then as Triangle Farm.

The four acre parcel was donated by Phyllis Fortuna and her sister Audrey Hancock who have shared their reflections: "Our parents, Stanley and Margaret Fortuna, purchased the land in the 1950's. It was a working dairy farm, complete with cows and milking equipment. Our memories include watching our brother, Richard, ride horses on the rolling hills and learning how to move the herd at milking time. As years passed, attempts to develop the property did not come to fruition. Families on both coasts wondered how the land would be best used. A decision was made to donate it to the Bridgewater Land Trust and we are grateful that the Land Trust has chosen to honor the memory of our parents by placing a "Fortuna Corner Preserve" marker on the property. We are pleased that the citizens of Bridgewater will now be able to enjoy the land that has been in our family for two generations."

A new sign will be installed in the spring, and additional work will be completed so that the property can be more easily viewed and enjoyed.



Bridgewater resident Walter Von Egidy, artist and owner of the New Milford Sign Shop, prepares our new sign.

Are You Interested In Protecting Your Land? *The Benefits of Conservation Easements*

Several Bridgewater landowners have opted to protect their land through a conservation easement, also known as a conservation restriction. This restriction allows the landowner to sell or donate rights to develop their land. Landowners retain ownership of the land, but give away the right to develop the land in the future so that its natural beauty and functions are preserved. There can be significant tax benefits with this restriction, as well as the reassurance that your land will remain protected forever.

One of our conservation easement partners Elaine and Tom Presby, explain how this process worked for them:

"When we first bought our home on Keeler Road in 1997, we were fortunate in that it came with an extra 50 acres of woods and equestrian trails. We knew from the outset that we would be unwilling to either subdivide or develop this beautiful extra space. Accordingly, one of our trusted advisors suggested that we consider a conservation easement, which would ensure that this property would never be developed; enhance the value of all our neighbors' homes; and, if done well, provide us with an income tax deduction as a charitable contribution. Our advisors insisted that we handle the transaction in a very rigorous manner. This meant: Two reputable appraisers; first class surveyors and appropriate income tax advice. He also made sure that the easement negotiated with the Bridgewater Land Trust protected our interests while still qualifying as an irrevocable gift. We followed his advice and received the material benefits and goodwill that drove us to do the transaction in the first place. It was a pleasure dealing with the Land Trust: the representatives were

straightforward and reasonable in every respect. If we had it to do all over again, we absolutely would do so. We would also be happy to share our experience in detail with any Bridgewater resident considering an easement."

The steps required to protect your land through a conservation easement are outlined on our website: www.bridgewaterlandtrust.org/give-land/conservation-easements/. If you have questions or want to learn more, please contact us.

Trail Team Volunteers Needed

Do you enjoy hiking or clearing trails? Are you an outdoor enthusiast? Would you like to share your hiking experiences with others? If you have answered yes to any or all of these questions you may want to join our Trails Team. Your involvement and commitment of time are flexible. This spring we are looking forward to clearing and enhancing our existing trails and making some new ones. If you are interested please email: julie@bridgewaterlandtrust.org.



It is in man's heart that the life of nature's spectacle exists; to see it, one must feel it.

- JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU



Bluebirds at the Le Vaillant Wildlife Preserve, Bridgewater. Photo by Julie Stuart

Support Us

The Bridgewater Land Trust is a federally recognized 501(c) (3) charitable organization, and all your contributions are tax deductible.

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