

2011 Annual Report

# Aspetuck Land Trust



Randall's Farm Nature Preserve, Easton

## Board Members

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President:  
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VP: Aili diBonaventura  
VP: Jonathan Wagner  
VP: Lisa Brodlie  
VP: Alan Goldbecker  
VP: Nancy Moon  
Sec: Cynthia Williams  
Executive Director:  
David Brant

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Princie Falkenhagen  
Alan Goldbecker  
Dick Ritzel

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Nancy Moon  
Peter Oldershaw  
Don Hyman

#### Weston

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John A. Light, III  
Samuel Martin  
Jonathan Wagner

#### Westport

Ken Bernhard  
Melissa Newman  
Grayson Braun  
Heather Williams

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Aili diBonaventura  
David Storrs  
Cynthia Williams  
Theresa Brasco

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Barlow Cutler-Wotton  
Ruth Glendinning  
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Bruce LePage  
Edith D. Moore

## A Letter from the Executive Director

**2011 was a great year for the Aspetuck Land Trust! More people joined the Land Trust than in any previous year in our history, and we preserved two new properties totaling 73 acres.**



*The Survivor Tree, 9/11 Memorial. Freedom Tower in background.*

Every year my wife and I take our children to New York City for their birthday. The theme of this year's trip was nature. We were inspired by the survivor tree at the 9/11 memorial, walked the wonderfully verdant High Line, saw a famous elm tree in Madison Square Park that was planted in the 1700's, and went to see the Manhattan Project exhibit at the South Street Seaport Museum. Go to the Land Trust blog to read more about our trip.

While nature has been largely tamed in Manhattan, it surrounds us in Connecticut. But it exists in a fragile balance. Many woodlands in Fairfield County are threatened by invasive plants and deer browse

and are monocultures of large trees with little else to support wildlife habitat. With so many threats facing our lands, how we manage our properties is becoming more important. This is why we are conducting our first-ever wildlife survey and forest management plan at our 1,009 acre Trout Brook Valley preserve. Trout Brook is at the center of a 10 square mile area of contiguous forest, the largest and last such area of its kind in Fairfield County. We have an obligation to preserve and protect this vulnerable land that provides habitat for plants and animals and so much enjoyment to the public.

Nature is part of the fabric of life that surrounds us – even in Manhattan – and Aspetuck Land Trust is committed to conserving the land we love so that future generations can enjoy it.

As a Land Trust member, you help inspire and connect thousands of people to the land every year. Your membership supports our guided hikes, children's programs, and the stewardship of our 44 trailed nature preserves with over 30 miles of hiking trails on over 1,700 acres of land.

I want to sincerely thank our 1,000+ local members for their support! If you aren't a member, I invite you to join us.

**We are local. We are your neighbors. We are your land trust.**

See you outside!

David Brant

## Protecting the Land

### Randall's Farm Nature Preserve, Easton

In 2011, the Aspetuck Land Trust received a generous donation of 34 acres from Aspetuck Land Trust member Mrs. Henry B. duPont III. The Randall's Farm Nature preserve includes some of the last great old farm fields in Fairfield County and was named for the Randall family who farmed the land. Groomed walking paths allow for a gentle walk through high grassy wildflower meadows.

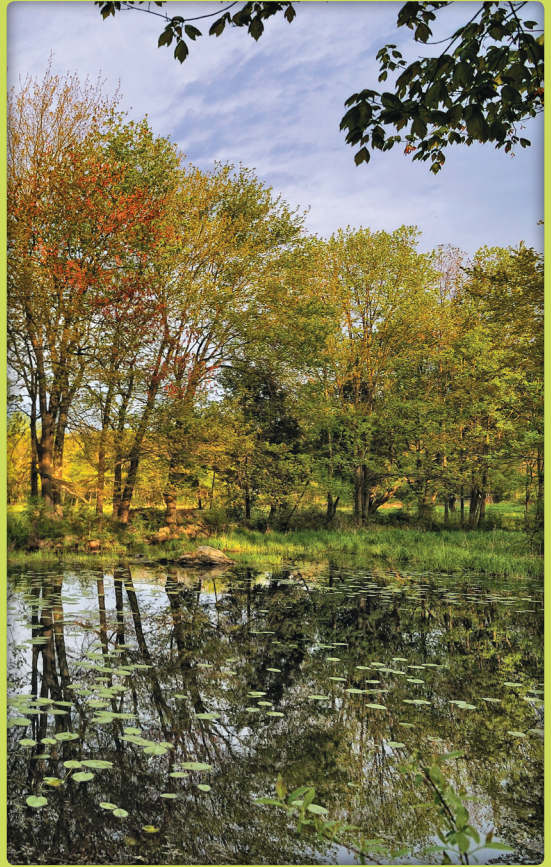


Photo credit including cover: SimplyMaura Photography

### Newman Poses Nature Preserve, Westport



*Newman Poses Preserve Opening. From Left: Aspetuck Land Trust board president Prinnie Falkenhagen, executive director David Brant, and board member Lissy Newman.*

Officially opened in May and preserved through a partnership with the town of Westport, the Newman Poses preserve is named after two local people who helped to preserve this land: actor and philanthropist Paul Newman,

and FDR Administration lawyer Lillian Poses. This new preserve provides 39 beautiful acres of trails, meadows and woodlands along the majestic Aspetuck River.

## 2011 Financial Highlights

2011 contributions income was \$212,630. Expenses decreased by 17% to \$221,488.

Our general endowment fund decreased by 1% or \$7,635.

These funds are used for land purchases and to offset expenses not covered by membership contributions.

**Maps of our Nature Preserves can be found on our website.**

## Land Stewardship

### Land Trust Receives Grants to Remove Invasive Plants

Did you know that the presence of invasive Japanese Barberry increases the risk of encountering ticks which carry Lyme disease by seven-fold? In 2011, we received a three year grant from the Natural Resource Conservation Service to remove Barberry from our 28 acre Elisabeth Moore preserve in Weston. We also use sheep to eat invasive plants on our preserves.

*Icelandic Sheep eating invasive Wisteria*



### Wildlife Survey and Forest Management Plan

We are conducting a wildlife survey and forest management plan in Trout Brook Valley to better understand the flora and fauna that exist there. A survey of wildlife has never been conducted within the 1,009 acre preserve and will help us to better understand how to manage the property for wildlife and our human visitors. Funding for the wildlife survey was provided by a grant from the Connecticut Land Trust Challenge Fund administered by the Land Trust Alliance in partnership with the Connecticut Land Conservation Council. Funding for the forest management plan is being provided by the Environmental Quality Improvement Program administered through the Natural Resource Conservation Service. For more information please visit our website.



*Trout Brook Valley view.*



### Boy Scouts Help the Land Trust

The Land Trust provides leadership opportunities for Boy Scouts earning their Eagle Scout ranking. In 2011, we worked with Fairfield Troops 10 and 82, and Weston Troop 788 to build birdhouses, information kiosks and boardwalks. Thank you Boy Scouts!

*Boy Scout Rob Callahan from Troop 10 in Fairfield installed Bluebird boxes in Trout Brook Valley.*

## Stay Connected



**Stay connected.** Become a fan of our Aspetuck Land Trust Facebook page, follow us on Twitter @AspetuckLT

**Sign up** on our website to receive our fun and occasional e-newsletter

## ALT - 2012 Hikes

The Aspetuck Land Trust offers educational and specialty hikes for children and adults that are open to everyone and offer a great way to explore and learn more about the local diversity of our 44 trailed nature preserves on over 1,700 acres of open space in our community. Reserve your space early as spaces are limited for these popular hikes. Details on our website.

## Member Activities

### Annual Meeting to feature Regional Conservationist Bill Labich



*Conservationist, Bill Labich*

Join fellow Land Trust members on June 20, from 7 – 9pm at the Pequot Library in Southport for the Land Trust's annual meeting. This year's featured speaker is Bill Labich, Regional Conservationist with Highstead Arboretum and Harvard Forest, who will discuss how the Aspetuck Land Trust fits into the larger regional conservation picture in Fairfield County and the Northeast. Bill lives with his wife Christine and two ten-year olds Grace and Noah on 16 wooded acres in western Massachusetts with chickens, tractor, and logging winch. A short business meeting will precede the speaker, and new board members will be elected by majority vote of the members present. Board of director nominees are: Lisa Brodlie, Letitia Carter, Lissy Newman, Peter Oldershaw, and Aili diBonaventura. Hors d'oeuvres and refreshments available.

**ANNUAL MEETING**

**June 20, 2012  
7 – 9 p.m.  
Pequot Library  
Southport**

### Getting Children Outdoors

Did you know that children now spend 53 hours per week with technology and that the average teen sends 3,000 text messages per month? Scientific studies are now documenting what many parents already know: getting kids outside is good for them. To get more kids outdoors, we built a Natural Playground for Children at the Leonard Schine Arboretum in Westport and started a hike series for kids, Short Hikes for Short People. See our website for more information on how you can connect your children with nature.



*Short Hike Participants, Stonebridge Waterfowl Preserve, Weston*

### Aspetuck Land Trust Volunteer Profile

Donna and Curt Naser live in Easton and participate on the Invasive Removal Team which removes invasive plants from our preserves. They also serve as Trail Stewards in the Crow Hill section of Trout Brook Valley, where both have spent countless hours removing invasives and clearing fallen limbs from the trails. We thank them for all they do for Aspetuck Land Trust.



# MEMBERS of Aspetuck Land Trust

## INDIVIDUAL

Callie Altomaro	Jennie Julio	Phil Statlender	David Browne	Amy Hanninen	Linda & Steve Murray
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Dan Bennewitz	Joanne Koeller	Mrs. Karin Sugerman	Krista Bradford & Crispin Cioe	Caitlyn & Edward Hessell	Analeise Paik
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 Mr. Charles Reid  
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 Susan Schneier & David  
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 Judith Anderson & Nicholas  
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 Jon & Kathleen Russell  
 Anita Sabatino  
 John & Janice Salva  
 Amy Sander  
 Barbara Ann Sanders  
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 John Schmidt  
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Roni & Michael Widmer  
 William Wiehl  
 Cynthia A. Williams  
 Richard Wright  
 Hyun Yu  
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 William C. Bullitt Foundation  
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 Colin Walklet & Heather  
 Williams

#### FOOTNOTES

1. In honor of Elyse McCambley
2. In honor of Thomas Dubay,  
 Jane & Andy Ahrens, Anne  
 & David Toombs, Thomas &  
 Heidi Connelly, Heather Linder  
 & David & Joyce Kay
3. In honor of Regina & John's  
 50th wedding anniversary
4. In honor of Susan Hand,  
 retiring teacher

#### MEMORIAL GIFTS

**In Memory of Theodore Meyer**  
 Seyed Aleali, M.D.  
 Robert & Lois Bull  
 Denise Larson Fenton  
 Joyce & Harold Wilson  
 Mrs. Donald T. Benson  
 Ms. Phyllis T. Wing  
 Easton Republican Town  
 Committee

#### In Memory of Abe Rothenberg

Peter & Carol Mack  
 Ms. Magda Salvesen  
 Mr. & Mrs. Emanuel Margolis  
 Vivian Perlis  
 Mr. & Mrs. David Rubinstein  
 Mr. & Mrs. Donald Schapiro  
 Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Siegal  
 Mr. & Mrs. Richard Steinberg

#### In Memory of Hal & Ruth Wesman

Lisa Brodrie

**Note:** If there are any omissions  
 or if corrections are needed,  
 please contact our apologies and  
 accept us at 203-331-1906  
 All donations made from Jan. 1,  
 2011 to Dec. 31, 2011

## In Memoriam

### Fran Snyder

**July 25, 1927 – December 26, 2011**

We recently lost one of our long-time supporters, Fran Snyder of Hulls Farm Road, Southport. Early in our history, the Land Trust served only Westport. Fran encouraged the organization to conserve land in Weston, Easton, and Fairfield. Forty years later, her advice has proven wise as the Land Trust has become a strong force for local land preservation in all four towns. Fran loved the land and donated a portion of her Southport property to the Land Trust. She hiked extensively, often with her husband Phil and their Jack Russell terriers.



*Fran Snyder*

## Join Us

**Contact us at 203-331-1906**, or [www.aspetucklandtrust.org](http://www.aspetucklandtrust.org)

We invite you to join our now 1,000+ local members in supporting the Aspetuck Land Trust. A remittance envelope is enclosed for your convenience. Thank you for your support!

You can now make credit card donations on our website. It's fast and secure, and you will still receive your acknowledgement letter in the mail, along with a cool ALT bumper sticker and our new 4 town map of all our trailed nature preserves!

**Aspetuck Land Trust**

P.O. Box 444  
Westport, CT 06881

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