



# BARRINGTON LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

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PRESERVE. ADVOCATE. EDUCATE. ENGAGE.

## Featured Property: Osamequin Nature Trails and Bird Sanctuary

By Victor Lerish and Melissa Horne

The Osamequin Nature Preserve, with its unspoiled shoreline on Hundred Acre Cove, remains one of the most visited natural areas in the town of Barrington. Considered an “Important Bird Area” by the Audubon Society, the Preserve offers a diverse sample of coastal plant and animal communities for visitors to explore. Walking the Preserve’s 1 ½ miles of trails through meadows and upland also provides breathtaking views of the third largest salt marsh estuary in Rhode Island.

The Osamequin Nature Preserve is named in honor of Ousa Mequin, the Massasoit or “Great Leader” of the Pokanoket Tribe of the Wampanoag Nation, whose settlement known as Sowams covered much of the East Bay.

The Town of Barrington acquired the 42 acres of land that became Osamequin Nature Preserve through the Green Acres Program, a state-funded program initiated in the 1960’s to help preserve open space. Since its dedication in May 1968, Osamequin has been co-managed by the Barrington Land Conservation Trust and Barrington Garden Club with support from Barrington’s Department of Public Works. Garden Club and Land Trust volunteers work throughout most of the year maintaining trails, repairing bridges, removing litter, and cutting or removing invasive plants.

Recently, a team of twelve “Tuesday Trails Team” volunteers created a new access trail through the woods across from the community gardens at Walker Farm. The trail will now connect the soon to be upgraded Walker Farm recreation area to the southern end of the trail system at Osamequin.

The trail will get finishing touches in the spring, including signage and trail markers.

Frequent visitors to Osamequin may have noticed that the osprey platform easily viewed from the shoreline trail disappeared, after being toppled and damaged beyond repair. The BLCT stewards have been busy this fall and winter trying to replace it. Happily, thanks to funding from the Town of Barrington and permitting approval

*Cont. on next page*



Photo by Sara J. Horvet

from the prev. page... from the Coastal Resources and Management Council, a new composite osprey platform should be in place before the osprey return from their winter range in South America. Watch for them this summer, caring for their young on the nesting platform. Perhaps you'll get a glimpse of one dipping into the Cove, catching a fish in its talons and flying off to the nest.

Located off the Wampanoag Trail (Route 114) at the north end of Barrington, Osamequin is a perfect spot to stop and take a few minutes out of our busy lives, especially in this time of COVID-19.



The flat, easy-to-access trails are color-coded and well-marked. Some trails may be muddy after rainstorms and during especially high tides, so waterproof footwear is advised. Bring binoculars for watching the birds and, in the warmer months, looking for diamondback terrapins peeking out of the water on their way to the nesting grounds across the Cove at the Douglas Rayner Wildlife refuge.

Osamequin shines any time of the year! Child and dog friendly (if your dog is leashed and you bag and remove all waste), it makes for a great family outing. Take some time soon to explore its trails and take in its beauty.

## Rare Bird Sightings

Thanks to Butch Lombardi for sending us these pictures taken on BLCT properties. The top photo is a Red-headed woodpecker at Sowams Woods, and below that is a Western Kingbird at Nockum Hill.

## Save The Trees

Do you love receiving our newsletter, but worry about how much paper it takes to produce this wonderful publication every three months? Then send us your email address and we will send the newsletter straight to your inbox! Just go to [bit.ly/blct-newsletters](https://bit.ly/blct-newsletters) and fill out the form (and check out our older newsletters while you're there). We will never give your info to anyone else, so don't worry about email spam.



Photos by Kristen Lainsbury

# Will You Join the Barrington Pollinator Pathway?

Pollinator populations are in sharp decline because of pesticide use and loss of habitat. Bee populations, both native and honey bees, have seen sharp declines. Monarch butterflies have declined by 94.6% in the last 20 years, according to the US Wildlife Federation. A recent German study shows a 75% decline in all flying insects in the last 25 years. This loss of insects also has a dramatic impact on those backyard birds we all love so much. In fact, the Cornell School of Ornithology recently released a report indicating that since 1970 the North American bird population is down by nearly 3 billion birds, “a staggering loss that suggests that the very fabric of the ecosystem is unravelling”. The threat to pollinators is a very real threat to all of us! And that’s where you come in.

Despite conservation efforts, our landscape has been chopped up, or fragmented, through suburban-ization. The problem is, we can no longer support sustainable populations of wildlife in isolated preserves like those maintained by BLCT alone. As Dr. Doug Tallamy, University of Delaware entomologist, argues so eloquently in his book *Bringing Nature Home* there is, luckily, a solution. If we begin to manage our own yards organically and with native plantings, we can use them to connect parks and preserves, creating crucial corridors for wildlife. That is the idea behind the Northeastern Pollinator Pathway, and why we need you to join our Barrington effort today!

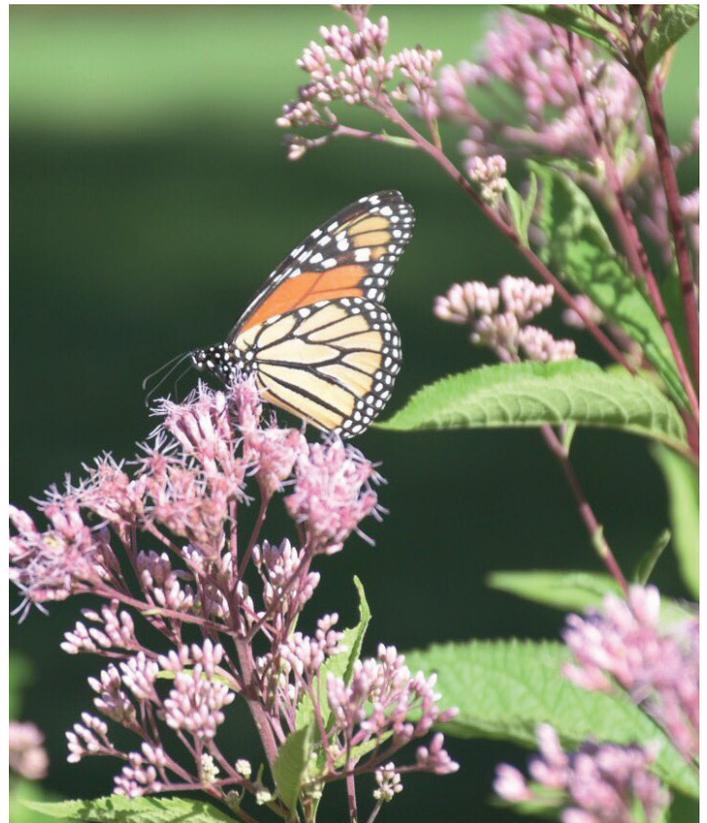
Our official Barrington Pollinator Pathway effort will launch this spring with a kick-off event on **Wednesday, April 14, 2021 from 12:00-1:00** and a native plant sale in mid-May. Register for the kick-off event by clicking the Zoom link [here](#). Be sure to follow the BLCT Land Trust Facebook Page for announcements of other upcoming events and to learn more about all the ways you can help.

E-mail [education@blct.org](mailto:education@blct.org) if you have further questions.

**Ready to Join the Pathway? To Get Started:**

- Come to our event!
- Eliminate the use of pesticides and herbicides
- Include native plants on your property and manage invasive species
- Rethink your lawn
- Help spread the word!

Several BLCT properties and some of your own neighbors have already joined the Pollinator Pathway. Visit [www.pollinator-pathway.org](http://www.pollinator-pathway.org) to learn much more and to get your property on the map!



*A monarch butterfly feeds on Eutrochium purpureum (Joe Pye Weed) on a stop in a Barrington backyard.*

*Photo by Cindy L. Larson*

The BLCT wishes to recognize and thank the members of the Tuesday Trails Team, who volunteer their time every month to create and maintain the many trails of the Barrington Land Conservation Trust. Their work keeps the trails in shape for everyone to use. Thank you!

John Arcari  
Susan R Beck  
Ellen Berren  
Ann Brouillette  
Peter Burke

Andrew Curtis  
Lou Gerbi  
Jerry Gonville  
Richard Greene  
Mary Grover

Joan Haas  
Donna  
Hartmann  
Frank Hearn  
Susan Hoagland  
Victor Lerish

Cindy Pierce  
Albert Pointe  
Frank Santos  
Zachary  
Hartmann



Please note that pictures showing volunteers without masks were taken before the pandemic



Photos by Victor Lerish

# Rayner Wildlife Refuge Hosts Another Conservation Effort

The Doug Rayner Wildlife Refuge at Nockum Hill has become the site of another effort to protect a rare species. The Rayner Refuge has long been the location of the Terrapin Conservation Project, a BLCT-sponsored effort to conserve Rhode Island's largest known population of the endangered northern diamondback terrapin. More recently, the Rayner Refuge became home to a project intended to promote the sustainability of another rare species, the sundial lupine (*Lupinus perennis*).

Sundial lupine is considered a rare species in Rhode Island and is listed as a Species of State Concern. It is a host plant to butterfly and moth larvae, including the frosted elfin (*Callophrys irus*), a Rhode Island Species of Greatest Conservation Need, and larvae of the nearly extinct Karner blue butterfly (*Lycaeides melissa ssp. samuelis*), as to which it is the only known host.

Informal efforts to propagate the sundial lupine at the Rayner Refuge began in 1997. Charlie Brown, a wildlife biologist with Rhode Island's Department of Fish and Wildlife, had observed a population of sundial lupine growing on a sandy outwash bluff along the eastern shore of the Seekonk River in East Providence. The site was heavily used for recreation and the lupine population was



Photo by Mary Grover

becoming increasingly compromised. In an effort to save the genetic line of the East Providence population, Brown collected seed from the remaining plants. He and his wife Ginger, a former co-president of BLCT, later planted the seed in the sandy outwash soils of the Rayner Refuge. Several patches of the species have continued to grow there as a result of the Browns' seed collection and sowing efforts.

In 2019, the Browns' efforts were formalized through a cooperative program supported by the Rhode Island Natural History Survey, the Rhode Island Wild Plant Society ("RIWPS"), and the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management. The program, which is coordinated by Hope Leeson, Botanist for the Rhode Island Natural History Survey, aims to increase existing rare plant populations by propagating the seed of state listed rare plant species in order to support other rare organisms that depend on these plant species for food. Lupines were selected as a first project, with the goal of increasing the population at the Rayner Refuge.

Seed was collected from the genetic lineage of the East Providence population from plants at the Rayner Refuge, as well as those growing in sandy soil at the Browns' Barrington home, and propagated by Linda McDaniel at the RIWPS greenhouse in Portsmouth. Members of the RIWPS, including BLCT Board member Mary Grover, transplanted and nurtured 24 plants at two locations at the Rayner Refuge in May 2020. Some of these plants were uprooted by terrapins and their predators digging within the planted areas and others died back despite weekly watering, but eight of the transplants were still alive at the end of August. It is hoped the deep tap roots characteristic of the species will enable these plants to resprout in the spring of 2021 and join additional seedlings being propagated this winter for planting in the spring.

In addition, the Rayner Refuge's steward, Pete McCalmont, and Charlie Brown weeded and cleared branches over two areas with existing plants to give those plants better growing conditions. In 2020, as a result of vegetation and light management, a total of 312 sundial lupine were recognized as offspring of the 1997 cohort of plants.

Like the Terrapin Conservation Project, the sundial lupine propagation program is another example of the benefits that can be achieved by cooperative efforts to conserve land and protect endangered flora and fauna. BLCT is grateful to the efforts of all those who have fostered and supported this project. We look forward to an increasing population of sundial lupine at the Rayner Refuge that may eventually be propagated for planting somewhere else in Rhode Island.

This article is based upon an article, *At Risk Plant Propagation Program*, written by Hope Leeson for the Rhode Island Wild Plant Society website

# Announcing the 2021 BLCT Photo Contest

The Barrington Land Conservation Trust has protected and stewards more than 70 properties throughout Barrington. These properties, most of which are open to the public, offer a variety of landscapes and a wide range of flora and fauna. In an effort to capture and share the beauty of its properties, BLCT is sponsoring its first-ever photo contest.

Photographers of all ages may submit as many as 3 photographs in any one or more of the following categories: Landscape; Plants and Animals; and People Enjoying Nature. All eligible photos must have been taken on a BLCT property. Local artist Lenny Rumpler will choose two winners in each category from among the photos submitted by adults and by students under the age of sixteen, as well as a "Best in Show" entry.

## Guidelines

1. Photographs may be submitted between April 1, 2021 and 11:59 p.m. on May 31, 2021, but the photos do not need to have been taken during that time frame.
2. Photographs can be color or black and white.
3. All photographs must be submitted to BLCT by utilizing the address [photos@blct.org](mailto:photos@blct.org).
4. All submissions must include the photographer's name, a title, the location of the photo and the month in which it was taken. Photos entered in the student category must include the student's age.
5. By submitting a photograph, you warrant that the photograph is your own work and that you alone own the copyright.
6. While photographers will retain complete copyright over their entries, BLCT will acquire a royalty-free right of use, display, and reproduction of all photos for purposes of publication in all media, including but not limited to BLCT's website, social media, exhibitions, slideshows and fund-raising items. Every effort will be made to credit the photographer for such use.
7. Winners will be notified by email, and announced at the BLCT Annual Meeting.
8. BLCT may request a larger, higher resolution file of the winning images.

9. Wildlife cannot be enticed, restrained, or put in any type of jeopardy for photographs submitted to this contest.

Your submissions to the 2021 BLCT Photo Contest will help the Barrington Land Conservation Trust continue to fulfill its mission of preserving open space and the plants and animals that inhabit these special places. Thank you for helping to further our mission through your photography.



*Photos by Kristen Lainsbury*

## BLCT Needs Your Help - Please Give Generously!

The Barrington Land Conservation Trust depends upon the generosity of its members and friends for the funds necessary to steward the 76 properties it has conserved, to protect the animals and plants that live within those properties, and to share the natural wonders associated with this flora and fauna with school children and residents of Barrington.

Please help to ensure that BLCT can continue the types of activities featured in this newsletter in the future by making a donation today. The Barrington Land Conservation Trust and all those who depend on its efforts appreciate your support!

You can scan the QR code below to go straight to the BLCT donation page at [Paypal.com!](https://www.paypal.com)



## Osamequin Look and Find Nature Walk!

The Barrington Land Conservation Trust partnered with the Barrington Public Library to sponsor a Look & Find Nature Walk/Raffle over February vacation week, February 13-21. Families were tasked with searching the trails for hidden clues to solve a word scramble and answering questions about the natural world, all while enjoying the snowy trails of Osamequin Nature Preserve. Completed worksheets were eligible for a raffle drawing with a prize of a backpack filled with nature books and a set of binoculars.



Photo by Katie Donato



Photo by Sara J. Horvet

# Barrington Pollinator Pathway Presentation

Wednesday, April 14, 2021, 12:00-1:00pm

Join members of the BLCT Pollinator Pathway Committee and special guests as we kick off an important town-wide initiative! Zoom Lunch and Learn featuring special guest Louise Washer, President Norwalk CT Watershed Association and Pollinator Pathway Steering Committee Member. Louise will explain the Pollinator Pathway Project, talk about its history and importance and guide participants in understanding how Barrington can get on the map.

Register for the kick-off event by clicking [here](#).

Email [education@blct.org](mailto:education@blct.org) if you have further questions.

Learn more about the Pollinator Pathway Project at [www.pollinator-pathway.org](http://www.pollinator-pathway.org).

*A caterpillar enjoys a snack on Asclepias incarnate (swamp milkweed) here in Barrington*

*Photo by Mary Grover*



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