



# BARRINGTON LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

• ESTABLISHED 1979 •

PRESERVE. ADVOCATE. EDUCATE. ENGAGE.

## Featured Property: Lombardi Park

By Melissa Horne

Lombardi Park is an easy property to visit year 'round, but its history makes it especially interesting to visit in winter. Located just off the East Bay Bike path just north of its intersection with North Lake Drive, Lombardi Park offers views of Little Echo Lake, which frequently hosts several pairs of graceful swans and from which ice was harvested in the late 19th century.



Little Echo Lake is a flooded claypit, originally excavated to supply raw material to the Barrington Brick Yard. Beginning in the much colder winters of the late 1800's, workers used long saws to cut blocks of ice from the frozen pond. The workers used long poles to guide the floating ice blocks to a conveyor belt at the edge of the lake. The conveyor belt moved the blocks into an icehouse located on the western shore of the

lake, where it was stacked and layered with sawdust to prevent melting.

The ice sometimes stayed frozen throughout the summer. Some of the ice was delivered to residential customers in Barrington for use in ice boxes. In 1918, the Willis E. Blount Ice Company took over the ice harvesting operations to assure a steady supply of ice for the Warren-based Blount Oyster Company. Ice from Little Echo Lake was hauled to Warren and then packed into railroad cars to keep oysters chilled during shipment.

The need for ice declined as electricity and refrigerators became common in the 1930s and 1940s. The Blount family sold the icehouse and surrounding property in 1944. The icehouse was destroyed by fire in 1965, but portions of its foundation can still be seen in Lombardi Park.



In 1971, the property was purchased by the Lombardi family. The patriarch of the Lombardi family, Salvatore Lombardi, immigrated from Italy in 1924. He and his wife, Josephine, settled in Barrington. Salvatore Lombardi initially worked at the Barrington Brick Yard and became a skilled stone mason. Eventually, he and Josephine, together with their family, developed a successful masonry construction and real estate development business. In 2004, Salvatore Lombardi, Jr., Anthony Lombardi and Joseph Lombardi donated 3.4 acres of the property, including Little Echo Lake and the wooded upland overlooking it, to the Barrington Land

*Cont next page*  
Page 1





from the prev. page... Conservation Trust. Three generations of the Lombardi family attended the dedication ceremony, at which some members of the family recalled swimming in Little Echo Lake.

Now known as Lombardi Park, this small park has a bike rack and a granite bench overlooking the pond. It's a nice place to sit, watch the swans on the pond, and contemplate how different the world must have been before electricity made it easy to keep food and beverages cold.



## Help the BLCT by Volunteering!

Have you ever wondered what it takes to keep the trails in Sowams Woods marked, mapped and maintained?

Have you seen ads for Barrington Land Conservation Trust events, walks and kayak excursions and thought, who makes these happen for our community members and how do they do it?

If these questions resonate with you, volunteering with the Barrington Land Conservation Trust may provide the answers and an opportunity for you to give back to our community in a meaningful way.

Volunteers are needed in all areas including community outreach, development, special events and the board of directors. This is a great opportunity for people of all ages to help us preserve the open spaces in town, get to know other community members and nature lovers, and see nature in action!

Interested in learning more? Email [volunteers@blct.org](mailto:volunteers@blct.org) to set up a tour of a property and get to know how you can help the Barrington Land Conservation Trust.

## Guess That Plant!

Answer on Page 6

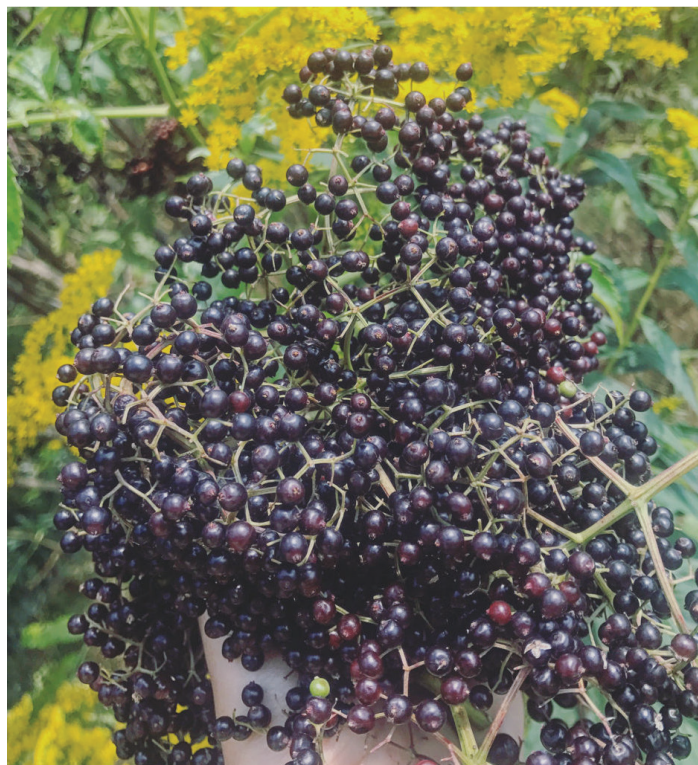


Photo: Town Farm Tonics

## 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 email 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.

# A TALE OF OWLS, WOODPECKERS AND THE SNAGS THAT SUSTAIN THEM

By Cindy Larson Moura

Novelist and environmental activist Wendell Berry said,

*"To go into the dark with a light is to know the light. To know the dark, go dark, go without sight. And find that the dark too blooms and sings and is traveled by dark feet and dark wings."*

Head outside on a clear winter night in Barrington and you will likely be greeted by the deep, soft hoots of the Great Horned Owls advertising their territories and calling for a mate. Listen more closely and you may hear the varied hoots and songs of the Barred Owl or the rattle call of the Eastern Screech Owl. These three species are the most common owls found in Rhode Island and all are year-round residents. Owls are known as an indicator species, meaning that they rely on the most sensitive aspects of a habitat and serve as a barometer by which to measure the success of that habitat.

As day breaks, these nighttime sounds are replaced by the commonly heard tap, tap, tapping of woodpeckers across town. These gregarious birds make their presence known. The species you are most likely to see around Barrington are red bellied woodpeckers, downy and hairy woodpeckers and northern flickers, though a lucky birder visiting the more forested areas of western Rhode Island might also spot a pileated woodpecker, a sapsucker or a red headed woodpecker like the ones that overwintered in Sowams Woods recently. Woodpeckers are amazing birds and are considered a keystone species. Scientists describe keystone species as, "an organism that helps define an entire ecosystem...without its keystone species, the ecosystem would be dramatically different or cease to exist altogether." In other words, if the species were to disappear from the ecosystem, no other species would be able to fill its ecological niche. The loss of a keystone species will lead to the death of many others.

That's where the connection between owls and woodpeckers comes in. The voice of the night and the voice of the day have a symbiotic relationship. Owls don't actually create nests; they rely on other creatures to create their nests. It is very common for owls to make those nests in cavities of trees previously hollowed out by woodpeckers. In fact, more than half of the owl species in North America rely on woodpeckers for their nesting sites. Woodpeckers are primary cavity excavators -- they peck out

homes for themselves in trees, but then they quickly abandon them to be used by many generations of others, including owls, nuthatches, chickadees, bats, squirrels and raccoons.

Another thing that owls and woodpeckers have in common is the essential role they both play in natural pest control. Woodpeckers help to control invasive wood boring insects, which is vital to protecting hardwood forests. They also help expose insects for other species to eat. Owls are voracious eaters of rodents, which helps to keep those populations in check. Unfortunately, the very role they play in natural pest control makes them especially sensitive to the chemical pesticides that are too frequently used in suburban and agricultural landscapes.



Photo: Peter Muir

Dedicated BLCT volunteers thoughtfully maintain conservation properties in ways that help these important night and day birds to thrive. You too can play an important role right on your own property. As a starting point, eliminate the use of any poisons and consider leaving snags. Dead trees, or snags, are valuable to a wide variety of wildlife. Unfortunately, many people assume snags are of no value and routinely cut them down. This practice has caused cavity-nesting bird and mammal populations to decline. Though nest boxes may provide alternate nesting sites for some cavity-nesting birds, they are not suitable replacements for the dead trees which provide ideal feeding sites for woodpeckers, homes for cavity nesting birds, hunting perches for raptors and song posts for small birds.

Snags can be incorporated into your residential landscape. Try to keep old and damaged trees when possible and when safe to do so. Of course, snags are best located away from high activity areas so they will not pose a safety hazard if they fall. Trees that lean away from homes and structures may present little or no risk. You can also create snags on your property by removing the top third of the tree and half of the remaining side branches, or leave the top the way it is and remove a majority of the tree's side branches. Consider doing this with trees that currently create a hazard due to weak wood or disease, trees that are creating too much shade where you want sun, or a tree in an area where there are currently no snags. It is highly probable that any snag you provide for birds and other wildlife will be used. So, save a snag -- the owls and the woodpeckers will thank you.



Photo: Sal Capirchio

**More owl and woodpecker pictures on pages 4 and 5**



# Volunteer Spotlight: Bill Kirkpatrick

By Meghan Frost

As a steward at Johannis Farm, Bill Kirkpatrick takes great pride in his work and his role. Visiting the property on a monthly basis, Bill sees the dynamic changes that take place each season in bird life and plant life. As he describes the property, his passion for the natural world, nature, and the Barrington Land Conservation Trust is clear.



Volunteering for the Barrington Land Conservation Trust has afforded Bill the opportunity to give back to an organization whose mission he believes in and the opportunity to make community connections with other volunteers and local groups that help with Johannis projects. An added bonus, Bill and his grandchildren have been able to

explore different properties across town with binoculars in tow because you never know what you might see!

In our recent conversation, Bill conveyed the following about his volunteer work:

**For me, the BLCT means...** hope for the future. It is very rewarding to be part of this organization and to serve the mission of the Land Trust and contribute to something bigger than oneself.

**I decided to volunteer for the BLCT because...**

I wanted join others and participate in conservation efforts locally, and it offered an opportunity to spend time outdoors in a pristine place.

**Why should others volunteer for the BLCT?.....**

The BLCT depends on volunteers for all of it's operations. Being a volunteer for this organization, as is the case for any volunteering activity, means giving back to others, and in doing so adding value and enjoyment to life.

**A few of my favorite projects have been..**

Developing a detailed guide to the Johannis Farm property, including information on plants and wildlife,

and the native American history of the Sowams Heritage Area.

Providing guided tours of Johannis Farm on the day after Thanksgiving tours open to the public.

Providing a walking tour of the property which was filmed and posted on the Sowams Heritage Area web site:

<https://sowamsheritagearea.org/wp/bill-kirkpatrick-tours-the-johannis-farm-in-sowams/>

**Favorite BLCT property? Activity?**  
Johannis Farm.

**Is the BLCT for young people? Families?**

People of all ages?... All. I enjoy seeing families bring their children out on the property for the walks and tours. It is important to introduce conservation and respect for the natural world early on.

As we concluded our conversation, Bill commented that there are great open spaces in Barrington. He recommended that people who are curious should drive around and get to know the properties and see what is possible for opportunities to experience the natural world locally and to learn about ways to give back.

Thanks Bill for all you do for the BLCT!



Photo: Kathy Bartels



Photo: Kathy Bartels



Photo: Kathy Bartels



# “The Annawamscutt WHAT?”

By Sandra Wyatt

Have you ever passed by the almost invisible bridges at Haines Park Road or Promenade Street or Bay Spring Avenue or along the Shaw's parking lot and wondered about the little body of water that flows beneath them? Whether you call it a brook or creek, it is the Annawamscutt (Narragansett Algonquin meaning “at the end of the rocks”) -- the most invisible, disregarded, degraded but persistent little creek that flows south approximately six miles from Forbes Street in East Providence to Allin's Cove in the Bay Spring neighborhood in Barrington.

The creek squeezes into one long viaduct under two blocks in East Providence, and then through viaducts under four bridges, causing massive flooding during severe rainstorms. It continues south, spreading out into wide wetlands in East Providence and Barrington, under the bike path in Bay Spring, and through two little ponds beside Bay Spring Avenue. Finally, it rests in O'Bannon Pond at the Barrington Cove Apartments before it spills over a waterfall into Allin's Cove.

Despite that long trek through trash-lined and eroded banks, while it collects contaminated runoff from the landfill site in East Providence (now a solar field), the brownfields site in Barrington at Allin's Cove, and from roads, roofs, driveways, lawns, and shopping plazas, the tough little creek hosts abundant life that two elementary schools in Barrington and East Providence have documented for the past eleven years.

At Waddington School, next to the creek on Rounds Street in East Providence, third, fourth and fifth graders study the creek through art and science. The third graders drew the animals they found in the creek; the drawings now appear on the creek side signs at several streets in East Providence and Barrington. A quarter of a mile down the creek at Haines Park, St. Luke's School eighth graders study and record the creek and its environment. The students use a seine net to identify macroinvertebrate life in the creek,



record water chemistry, temperature, depth, width, rate of flow and the contents of leaf packs previously secured in the creek for life that has crawled inside. Students from the two schools meet along the creek during the year to share their experiences and findings.

The students' research has revealed much life exists in the creek, from minute larvae to crayfish and frogs. But absent are the numbers and variety of life normally found in a healthy creek. The creek needs help greater than the children's efforts.

What kind of help? By spreading the word about being a good neighbor to the creek by hosting clean ups and planting buffer gardens, by proper disposal of yard waste in containers, and encouraging East Providence and Barrington to mitigate road runoff and the incursion of invasive plants that pollute and erode the “little creek that can.”

The children have taken the first steps; now it's up to us to carry on.



Photo: Kathy Bartels



## Nature Needs You - Please Give Generously!

Your support of the Barrington Land Conservation Trust enables:

\*Pollinator plants to grow.

\*Our community to have access to open space for exploration and education on trails maintained by the Tuesday Trails volunteers.

\*Flora and fauna species to thrive in Barrington in spaces where our Education Committee conducts numerous community programs for all ages, all year long.

\*Numerous birds and animals to have open space homes and sanctuaries.

Can the Barrington Land Conservation Trust count on your support this spring to ensure that we are able to continue to offer our members and friends access to the natural world in our town and continue to benefit from restorative power of the natural world?

Please support BLCT by taking a moment today to make a tax-deductible donation at the most generous level possible. Your donation will help ensure that BLCT will have the funds necessary to continue to protect Barrington's special places and keep its properties open and available for recreational and educational opportunities. Thank you!

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



If you've got a new neighbor,  
please share this newsletter once  
you've had a chance to read it.

## Guess That Plant Answer

*By Sara Horvet*

The American elderberry (*Sambucus Canadensis*) is a deciduous shrub with bright white flowers and small, dark berries. Known by many different names, including black elderberry and American black elderberry, this shrub makes a lovely addition to any garden or landscape thanks to its lush green leaves, sprays of flowers, and edible fruits. The berries and flowers are packed with antioxidants and vitamins that may help boost your immune system.

Elderberries begin to ripen right at the end of summer, just before warm days give way to autumn snuggles and sniffles. Because of the medicinal properties- the berries of the plant are often made into a tonic for keeping our immune systems resilient. The herbal recipe for making tonic is easy enough to make in our own homes. But for those without easy access to ingredients or time there are lots of local places that offer it for sale. If interested you could check out Town Farm Tonics, Prickly Ed's Cactus Patch and/or your local Whole Foods marketplace.



*Photo by: US Forest Department (USDA)*



# Coyotes In Our Community

By Sara Horvet

The eastern coyote (*Canis latrans*) looks a lot like a medium-sized dog in size and shape, but has longer, denser fur and pointed ears. They are predators and are extraordinarily adaptable to a wide range of habitats. Coyotes can thrive in suburban, urban, and rural areas. They will utilize whatever food is naturally available, including small animals, birds, insects and fruits, as well as artificial sources such as garbage, pet food, birdseed, and compost.

In recent years the eastern coyote has created controversy. To some, seeing a coyote in the wild or hearing them howl is a rewarding and beautiful experience. To others, coyotes are seen as a threat. Some people are fearful just knowing coyotes exist near their homes and in their neighborhoods. Although it might seem intimidating to see a coyote walking down the street or along the back edge of your lawn, it is important to realize it is not necessarily a threat. Coyotes have been living in Rhode Island for over thirty years and are an important part of the ecosystem. Unfortunately, suburban sprawl has taken much of the coyote's habitat and there are few wooded areas large enough for them to be able to survive in one spot. They must move from one wooded area to another and often times this is when people see them.

Coyotes are usually wary of people and will avoid us whenever possible. Bold behavior is unusual and is most often a result of intentional or unintentional feeding, the presence of a dog, or the coyote defending its den and/or young. Here are some helpful tips to coexist with these beautiful creatures:

Take the following steps to prevent coyotes from being attracted to your home:



Photo: Tina Charest



Photo: Sara Horvet

- Wildlife-proof garbage in sturdy containers with tight fitting lids.
- Don't leave pet food outside.
- Take out trash the morning pick up is scheduled.
- Keep compost in secure containers.
- Keep birdseed off the ground (seeds attract rodents which then attract coyotes).
- Remove feeders if coyotes are seen in your yard.
- Keep barbecue grills clean.
- Clear away brush and dense weeds near buildings.
- Install motion-sensor lights near buildings.
- Walk dogs on leashes, particularly during coyote mating season (December—February) and pupping seasons (April—July).
- If you encounter a coyote, remember the following:
  - Never feed or try to "tame" a coyote; appreciate coyotes from a distance.
  - Walk dogs on leashes; pick up small dogs if a coyote is near.
  - ONLY IF approached, be BIG and LOUD. You can also scare the animal by blowing a whistle or shaking a can with coins inside or popping open an umbrella.
  - Do not run from a coyote; calmly leave the area.

It's important to share these tips with your neighbors; your efforts won't make a difference if neighbors are still providing food sources or shelter.

# Join the Look and Find Nature Walk

**Osamequin Nature Preserve,  
Saturday, February 19 through Sunday, February 27**

Visit the Osamequin Nature Preserve this February during the school break to get the family outdoors, and participate in a Look and Find Nature Walk, sponsored by BLCT, in partnership with the Barrington Public Library.

The outing will not only provide fresh air and an opportunity for little ones to burn off some energy, but a chance to observe and look for clues along the trails at Osamequin, which will help participants fill in an activity sheet. The activity sheet will offer questions about the animals and plant life at

Osamequin, as well as some open ended questions about the natural world. The clues hidden along the trails will help solve a word scramble.

The event is geared toward elementary age kids, but is designed as a fun activity for the whole family. The event is self guided, and

participants can visit Osamequin anytime between Saturday, February 19 and Sunday, February 27.

A correctly completed word scramble can be entered into a raffle to win a hiking backpack full of goodies.

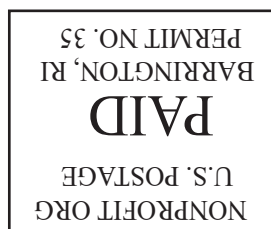
To enter the raffle drawing, take a photo of the of the activity sheet and email it to [kids@barringtonlibrary.org](mailto:kids@barringtonlibrary.org), or drop it off at the library's Reference Desk. The raffle drawing will be held on Tuesday, March 1.

You can download a copy of the activity sheet at:

<https://barringtonlibrary.libcal.com/event/8724577>

Copies will also be available at the Osamequin trailhead.

The Osamequin Nature Preserve is located on Route 114, 1 mile north of the White Church.



PO BOX 324 BARRINGTON, RI 02806  
• ESTABLISHED 1979 •  
BARRINGTON LAND  
CONSERVATION TRUST

