



BARRINGTON LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

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HISTORY AND ECOLOGY ARE PART OF JOHANNIS FARM WILDLIFE PRESERVE

About a dozen hikers, led by land steward **Pete McCalmont**, learned about the diversity and rich history of the Johannis Farm Wildlife Refuge during a Land Trust walk last November. The 32-acre parcel, along with an abutting 30-acres of protected open space in Swansea offered a remarkable look at wooded, meadow and marshland habitats, all in a single location.

Rare plants and animals and sea life share a landscape that was once one of the most industrious in Barrington. The preserve is pristine, and other than bird houses, the land appears untouched by humans. However, in the late 1600s, the property was the site of Barrington's first brick kiln. Mr. McCalmont says bricks made from clay on the property were floated down the Palmer River to Warren for use as ballast in ocean-going vessels. Today, the brick kiln and a boarding house for the workers are long gone. Public access



is limited to tours of the property with Mr. McCalmont or other Land Trust guides. Access to the farmland is overseen by Robert Johannis and William Johannis Jr., owners of Johannis Farm on Sowams Road.

In 1989, Johannis Farm was established as a wildlife preserve and working farm. The BLCT bought the property in 1990 for \$650,000 using its own funds, as well as support from both Rhode Island and Barrington open space bonds. Public access was limited in order to protect rare and endangered plants like the slimspike three-awn, colic root, leafy bulrush and seaside gerardia. It also serves as a habitat for many migratory birds.

The marsh is part of more than 100 contiguous acres owned by the Land Trust and the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, and is considered an area of high importance for coastal habitat protection by the state. "One of the most impressive things about the property is that whole shoreline along the Palmer River is very vast, protected habitat," Mr. McCalmont said.

A walking path leads through deciduous forest to the marshland, which is home to ducks, seaside sparrows and osprey. Birds such as hawks and herons and eagles have also returned in recent years. Deer, fox, coyote, turkey and

fisher cats are all regular visitors in the meadow. Vernal pools in the wooded areas are also populated by salamanders, spring frogs and, on occasion, spotted turtles have been sighted.



The history of the property and the Hampden Meadows section of Barrington dates back well before the 1600s. The land was part of the Sowams territory of the Wampanoag Indians and used for hunting, fishing and trapping. Shards of Indian pottery are still found on the site. According to town records, a local sachem sold the Sowams territory to Myles Standish for 35 pounds sterling in 1653.

The land was renamed New Meadow Neck and farmed by the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The Johannis family doesn't go back that far, but the family has owned and farmed the land for several generations, running a greenhouse and farm stand, which sits on property still owned by the family. The arable land located on the wildlife preserve is currently harvested for its hay.

For information on visiting the Johannis Farm Wildlife Preserve contact Peter McCalmont at pete630@verizon.net or 401-247-1170.

-Tim Faulkner



Pete McCalmont points out features along the Palmer River.

JUNE AT NOCKUM HILL

Spending time at Nockum Hill at the Doug Rayner Wildlife Refuge in the summer has become really special to me and my family. Being involved and helping terrapins increase their chances for a successful nesting season is now a seasonal ritual that my sons and I look forward to. It's so very easy in our fast-paced and busy lives to become detached from nature and the many dramas that play out all around us. Literally right in our backyards critical moments in the diamondback terrapin lifecycle take place. This is a way for me and my family to stay connected to nature. We are reminded that our world is not just about what we can achieve, or what we can accomplish in school, athletics, or careers. Our world is really more than these things; it's also about what was here before us and existed for hundreds of years.

For those who are not familiar with the diamondback terrapin, they are an endangered turtle and we are very lucky to have a colony that lives in Hundred Acre Cove adjacent to Nockum Woods.

Every June the terrapins begin their mating season in Hundred Acre Cove and soon after the females begin to lay their eggs in the fields of Nockum Hill reservation. As you might imagine, because of development and human encroachment their nesting places have become smaller and smaller over time. The very survival of this population depends on as many eggs as possible surviving through gestation and hatching and the newborn terrapins making their way successfully to the water and becoming adult turtles.

I'm looking forward to another season with the turtles! Bring on spring!!

Jackie Senich

For more information about the Diamondback Terrapins, look on the Land Trust website, www.blct.org.



These babies are ready to go to the water.

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBER

Julie Vanier grew up in Barrington, leaving town for college and to live in San Francisco for seven years but returned nearly 17 years ago to raise her family. Julie and her husband, John, have three sons (Jack, Charlie and Bo) and live in West Barrington right by Haines Park. Living on open space, amongst the quiet and limited street lighting and amongst abundant wild life, serves as a reminder of the importance of protected space.

Julie graduated from the University of Rhode Island and along with much time spent volunteering works fulltime at Brown University as a Development Officer.

RECENT GIFTS

In honor of Pete McCalmont from Maxine Richman

In honor of Nancy Burlingame from Bob and Jan Malcolm

In memory of Barbara Bond Allen from Leone Nell Smets

In memory of: Kenneth Beaver, Gail Davis, Jean Davis, and Jean Fain from Heather MacLeod and Bruce Ruttenberg



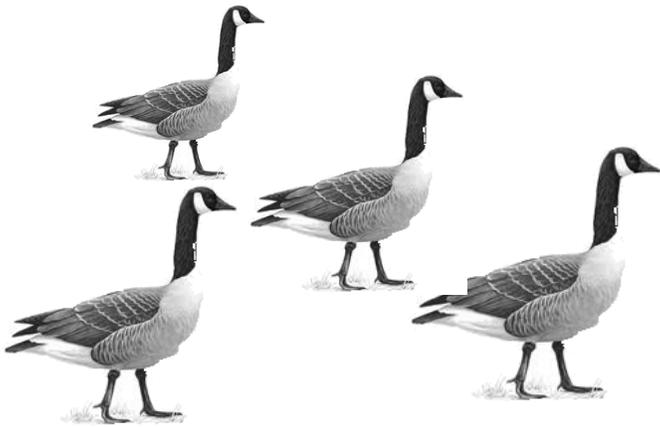
PLAN NOW TO COME TO OUR ANNUAL MEETING JUNE 12

Barrington Land Conservation Trust is pleased to announce that **Todd McLeish** will be the speaker at its annual meeting to be held on Tuesday, June 12, 2012. McLeish's talk is entitled *Rare Wildlife in Southern New England* and will feature species from each of his books. The talk will examine some of the rarest wildlife in the region, from birds and bugs to sharks and flowers. It will include discussion of the lives of these rare creatures and the threats they face, as well as first person accounts of McLeish's adventures with the biologists who are studying them.

Todd McLeish is a science writer at the University of Rhode Island who has written about wildlife and the environment for 25 years. A native of North Kingstown who now lives in Burrillville, his articles have appeared in two dozen publications, including *Bird Watcher's Digest*, *Country Journal*, *Natural New England*, *Northern Woodlands* and the *Providence Journal*. His next book examines the lives and threats faced by the narwhal, the Arctic whale with the spiral tusk. Learn more about McLeish at www.toddmcleish.com/biography.

THANK YOU CVS CAREMARK!

The BLCT extends a special thank you to the CVS Caremark Charity Classic, one of New England's largest and most successful charitable fund-raising sporting events. We were extremely fortunate to have been awarded a \$5,000 grant in December 2011. We had requested funds to provide ongoing maintenance to selected properties of the BLCT, to support the ongoing Terrapin Project at Nockum Hill, and for the development of facilities that will enhance the access and use of the properties by the general public. Proper trail and property maintenance ensures that all the citizens of Barrington who like to walk, hike and explore in our open fields, woodlands and wetlands are able to do so in a completely safe and hazard-free environment. Thank you CVS Caremark!



THANK YOU TO JOHN DEANGELIS!

Recently an enormous pile of dirt, bricks, cobblestones, concrete and large rocks was dumped at the Barrington Land Conservation Trust's Sowams Woods property—right in front of the Sowams Woods sign on South Lake Drive. The enormous pile most likely was dumped by a large truck filled using a backhoe to lift the largest boulders and concrete pieces. Helen Tjader, a land steward of Sowams Woods, posted about this on the Land Trust's Facebook page and it was described in the online Barrington Patch publication. Within 24 hours, a volunteer had come forward to remove the pile. Thanks go to John DeAngelis of DeAngelis Excavating who will remove it as soon as possible.



Dumping at Sowams Woods

ARE YOU TIRED OF THOSE BIG FLOCKS OF CANADA GEESE?

Relief is available for Rhode Island's growing Canada goose problem. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is offering geese abatement plans and financing to humanely control the resident goose population. And they are reaching out to land trusts and other large property owners to help.

Three seminars held across the state in late February explained the local history and solutions for curtailing local geese.

Much of the Canada geese problem began in the 1950s when the state Division of Fish and Wildlife established a resident goose population at the Great Swamp Management area in West Kingston. Hunters and environmentalists also used decoys and other techniques to encourage migrating geese to stay full time. A lack of natural predators and fewer hunters allowed the population to multiply rapidly.

By the mid 1990s, there were 4,000 resident Canada geese across the state. The numbers today are much higher and are causing widespread damage to land and water.

Canada geese eat on average about four pounds of grass per day and leave more than a pound of poop in their wake. Crops like corn have been ravaged. And the bacteria from goose droppings harms shellfish beds, fish and drinking water.

The geese are largely protected from intentional harm, but can be hunted with a proper permit. Some of the following abatement techniques can be employed with help from the NRCS. They are backed by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and considered humane by groups like PETA.

- **Modify Habitat** - Geese love to eat short manicured lawns. Allowing grass to grow to full height to discourage feeding. Installing a grid system of low wires or fencing between water areas and lawns.
- **Scaring** devices like mylar tape, balloons, flags, noisemakers, and owl and coyote decoys and even dogs.
- **Chemical lawn repellents**
- **Capture and removal of geese**
- **Destroying eggs with oil**

The NRCS, with an office in Warwick, can help with these techniques and is already working with land trusts like Aquidneck Land Trust. They also offer programs for wetlands restoration and invasive plant removal for phragmites.

-Tim Faulkner



BARRINGTON LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

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Membership Categories (circle one)

Life Member \$1000

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Patron \$100

Sponsor \$50

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____ I'd like to volunteer,
please contact me.

____ I'd like information
on donating stock.

We're on the web at

WWW.BLCT.ORG

**JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST
FOR NEWS OF SPECIAL
EVENTS -SIGN UP at our
website or contact**

INFO@BLCT.ORG



We solicit funds to help maintain our properties via an Annual Appeal in December. Membership dues are solicited in May and are for that current calendar year.

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