



# BARRINGTON LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

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PRESERVE. ADVOCATE. EDUCATE. ENGAGE.

## Annual Day after Thanksgiving Walk at Johannis Farm Wildlife Preserve, BLCT's Largest Property

By Cindy Larson Moura



The rain didn't stop volunteers and visitors from turning out for the much anticipated BLCT Annual Day After Thanksgiving Walk. Nor did it dampen spirits as walkers explored the rare unspoiled beauty of the pristine Johannis Farm Wildlife Preserve. Normally closed to the public to provide safe haven for wildlife and to protect rare and endangered plant life found in the Preserve, the site can be accessed only with a BLCT representative or during special events such as the annual walk.

The Johannis Farm Wildlife Preserve is a unique and special area of conservation land in the East Bay, showcasing an interesting mixture of open fields, woodlands, salt marshes and ponds. It is BLCT's largest property, encompassing a total of 40 acres; 36 in Barrington and 4 adjacent acres in Swansea, MA. Adding to the impact of this site, the Preserve abuts another 30 acres of protected space in Swansea, and is an integral part of well over 100 acres of contiguous undeveloped marsh and upland located on the Rhode Island/Massachusetts border. Acquisition of this property was made possible by generous donors to

BLCT, essential State and Town Open Space Bonds, and with the cooperation of the Johannis family that farmed this land for several generations.

The rich history of this property dates back well before the 1600s. The land was part of the Sowams territory of the Pokanoket Wampanoag Tribe, which utilized these fertile grounds with tributaries, freshwater springs and tidewater estuaries for fishing, gathering and agriculture. The area of land that now sits between the Palmer and Barrington Rivers, was known as Chachacust by the Native Americans. BLCT's ongoing conservation and education efforts are an effort to honor the legacy of the indigenous people who stewarded these lands for decades before us.

European settlers later named this area New Meadow Neck. In the late 1600's, Barrington's first brickyard was established on the land that is now the Preserve. Small ponds, dug for clay, still exist on the site, as does the canal that was used to transport bricks via barge. Many of these bricks were unloaded at the shipyards in nearby Warren to be used as ballast for ocean-going vessels. *Cont next page*



from the prev. page... BLCT manages the Johannis property with a focus on all types of wildlife and pays special attention to ensuring the habitat supports pollinators and a variety of raptors and bird species. The Preserve and surrounding area are a major stopping point for a variety of bird species in their fall migration, so a rich natural food supply is essential.

With recent grants and expert support from the National Resources Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, a multi-year project is now underway to further improve the habitat of the Johannis Preserve. BLCT will create a comprehensive forest management plan and oversee the fields to improve the quality and diversity of plant life. We will



also plant dozens of native, fruit and berry producing shrubs and trees around the perimeter of the fields and establish a pollinator garden in a portion of the field. BLCT is excited to have the support of the NRCS, but there is an immediate need for additional financial resources and volunteer support to make this project an even bigger success. Please consider donating and signing up to volunteer today!

## 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.

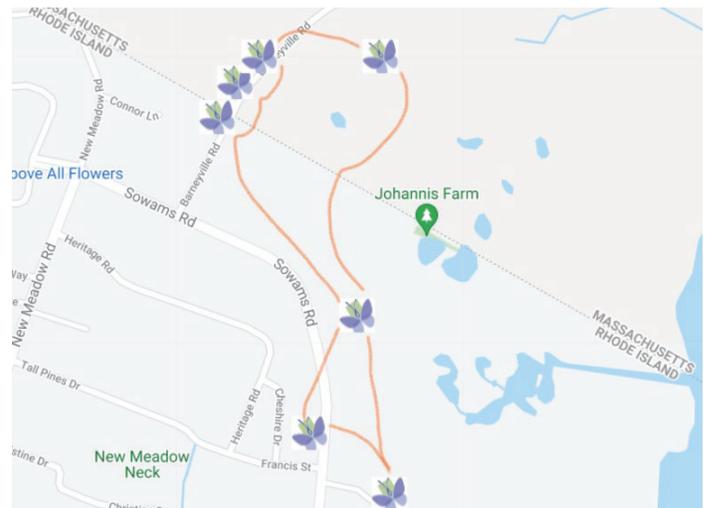
# Bringing Barrington's Pollinator Pathway from Vision to Reality

By Cindy Larson Moura

Last spring BLCT launched an effort to build out a pollinator pathway across Barrington. Modeled on the Northeast Pollinator Pathway Project, the goal is for property owners to work together to establish pollinator-friendly habitat and food sources for bees, butterflies, hummingbirds and other pollinating species. Pollination enables the plants in our yards, parks, conservation lands, farms, orchards and gardens to reproduce. Although imported European honeybees are the bees we think of most often, there are over 4,000 species of bees native to the United States which play a vital role in pollinating the plants on which our communities rely. Pollinator populations are in sharp decline because of pesticide use and loss of habitat. However, if we all do our part, right outside our own doors, we can help reverse this trend.

Most native bees have a range of only about a half mile. Therefore, to establish corridors of habitat, we need many more residents working together to form corridors along which pollinators can successfully travel. As detailed in the front page article, BLCT has a project underway to improve the habitat at Johannis Wildlife Preserve that will include establishing a pollinator garden. In that corner of town, private residents are joining the effort and adding their properties to the Pollinator Pathway map to help support and extend pollinator focused practices.

Take a look at the visual to get a sense of this concept of a connected corridor. This is a small, but encouraging start. But we need many more properties on the map to successfully offer pollinators the ability to find the habitat they need within their range of travel. We hope you will join us! Conservation is not something that only happens over there, it is something all of us can contribute to right from home. View properties that have joined the this effort all across town at the Pollinator Pathway website, [www.pollinator-pathway.org](http://www.pollinator-pathway.org).



## Guess That Plant!

Answer on Page 6



# The BLCT Thanks its Donors

Thanks to the generous supporters, volunteers, and community members of the Barrington Land Conservation Trust, our properties remained open for all to enjoy during the past year. From keeping trails clear to hosting education programs, our 172 donors who contributed a total of \$68,319 during BLCT's last fiscal year helped make this happen. Humbled by the generosity of our community, we express our gratitude. We couldn't do what we do without you.

Thank you to the following who made a financial contribution, and our apologies if we missed anyone:

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Joan and Anthony Arico  
Lorena and Christopher Houseworth  
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Alice and Daniel O'shea

# A Brief History of the BLCT

The BLCT owns and manages nearly 300 acres of land spread across 80 properties. The all-volunteer, non-profit organization was founded in 1979 by a small group of townspeople who were concerned about the gradual loss of open space in town and the pressure of land development. Their concerns were well-founded, as Rhode Island is the second most densely populated state in the nation. More than 98% of the land in the state is privately owned, creating particular conservation challenges. That's why private land trusts, such as BLCT, which permanently conserve open space, are especially vital. The BLCT is a member of the Rhode Island Land Trust Council, which defines itself as "a coalition of community-based organizations formed to protect our special places: the scenic open spaces, natural areas, farms, forests, historic sites, watersheds and drinking water supplies that define the character of our communities and our state. Land trusts are protecting our heritage so that it will be a legacy for future generations."

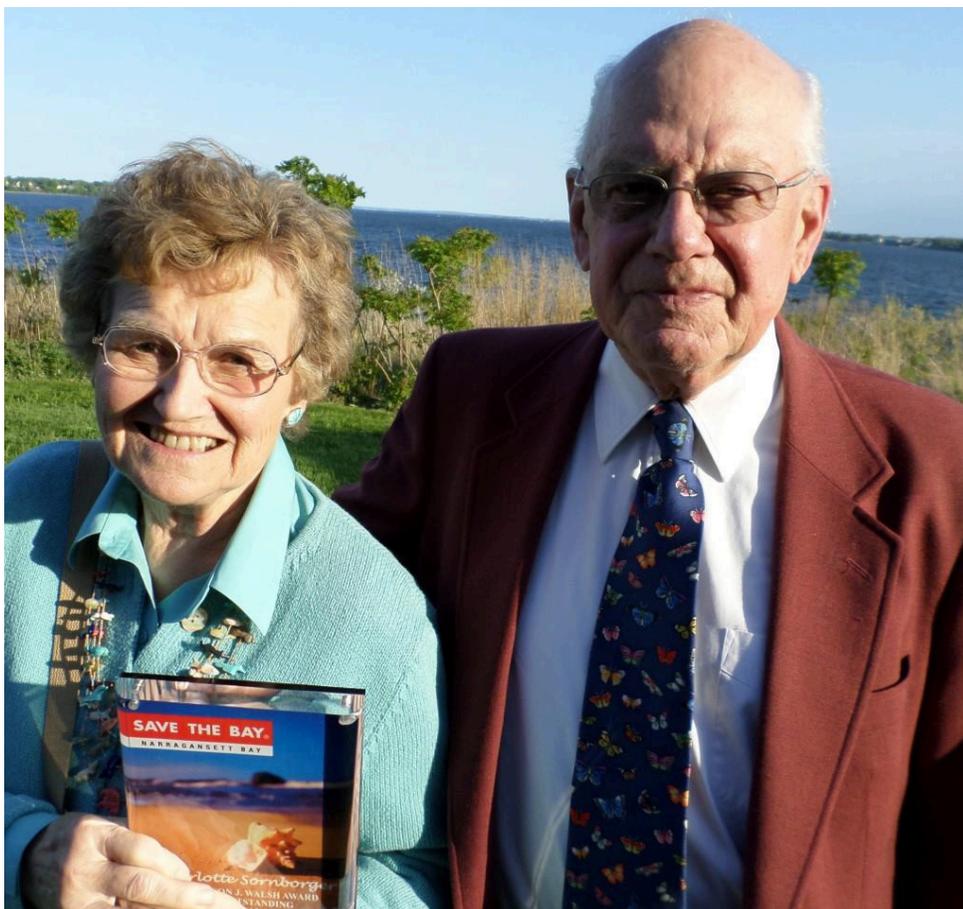
Through hard work and persistence, the original BLCT founders grew the land trust into what it is today. The organization's stated mission is "to preserve the remaining natural resources of Barrington, RI and adjacent areas including water resources, streams, ponds, marshlands, woodlands and scenic and natural sites as well as the plant and animal life. Land acquisition, educational programs and advocacy on the state and local level achieve our objectives". Along with stewarding our own properties, BLCT has agreements with the Town of Barrington to manage the McCulloch Fields at St. Andrews Farm, the Doug Raynor Wildlife Refuge and, in collaboration with the Barrington Garden Club, the Osamequin Nature Preserve.

While trail maintenance to ensure safe access to properties is important, BLCT's work as stewards of these properties actually is much more involved. One focus is on removal of invasive plants, such as the autumn olive, multi-flora rose, burning bush and oriental bittersweet that are all so prevalent in this area. BLCT also manages forest areas to ensure a balanced habitat that provides food and shelter for an array of flora and fauna. Sightings of rare bird species

on our properties are testaments to the thoughtful management these parcels receive.

You might wonder how a small, all volunteer organization can monitor and manage BLCT's growing portfolio of properties. To start, we are very fortunate to have a dedicated group of more than 20 volunteer property stewards who are assigned properties for careful monitoring. Property stewards are supported by BLCT's dedicated "Tuesday Trails Team" volunteers. This highly motivated group of volunteers share a love the outdoors and come from all walks of life, with birders, master gardeners, retired doctors and many amateur naturalists in the mix. Some grew up in Barrington and share with other volunteers stories of their Barrington childhoods, when the town was far less developed and there was much more open space in which kids could roam.

Today BLCT continues to steward properties, provide educational programming, and promote and advocate for conservation efforts. Our volunteers, donors and members allow us to continue this important work. Please encourage your friends, family and neighbors to join you in supporting our essential efforts.



*Charlotte Sornborger, one of BLCT's founders, with her husband Martin Sornberger, receiving Save The Bay's 2014 Alison Walsh Award for Outstanding Environmental Advocacy.*

# 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 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

Cyanobacteria, also referred to as blue-green algae, are microscopic organisms that live in both fresh and salt water. They multiply and bloom when the water is warm, stagnant, and too rich in nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen) from sources such as lawn fertilizer runoff and septic tanks. When a bloom forms, the water often changes to a blue-green color that many people describe as looking like pea soup with a frothy scum on its surface. Cyanobacterial toxins from that bloom can cause health problems in humans ranging from skin irritations to damage to the liver and nervous system. These toxins can also be harmful or fatal for animals, including dogs that drink or swim in contaminated water.

In early September 2021 Brickyard Pond experienced a bloom and the town hung signs to warn people to avoid contact with the water. It is important for our community

to be aware that these blooms can occur during the summer and fall months. To learn more about blue-green algae blooms check out the following link: [https://www.cdc.gov/habs/pdf/cyanobacteria\\_faq.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/habs/pdf/cyanobacteria_faq.pdf)



# Pictures from the Sowams Woods Fall Storywalk

The BLCT partnered for the third year with the Barrington Public Library to offer a storywalk at Sowams Woods. A storywalk, for the uninitiated, is a way for children and adults to enjoy reading and the outdoors at the same time.

Enlarged and laminated pages from a children's book are attached to stakes and placed along a path, in this case one of the trails at Sowams Woods. As you walk the trail, you're directed to the next page in the story.

Storywalks help build children's interest in reading while encouraging physical activity in a natural setting. Studies show that when children spend time outdoors, it helps to alleviate stress and elevate moods, helps them sleep better, and it fosters their appreciation of the natural



world. (This works for adults too!)

This year's story was *Memory Jars* by Vera Brosgol, a story about a young girl who finds a clever way to keep her favorite things, and people, close to her forever. She begins to save all her favorite things, but realizes that some things are best saved as memories.

The storywalk was up at Sowams Woods from October

8-31, offering families almost an entire month to walk the trails and read *Memory Jars*.



If you missed the storywalk this year, keep an eye out for another one next fall. You can follow the BLCT on Facebook or Instagram to get up to date information on upcoming events.

## Tips For Growing Native Plants

Story and photo by Mary Grover

When adding native plants, try to add a variety of plants that bloom from spring to fall. Most people plant wildflowers that bloom only in summer. Bees, butterflies and hummingbirds need nectar from spring to late fall.

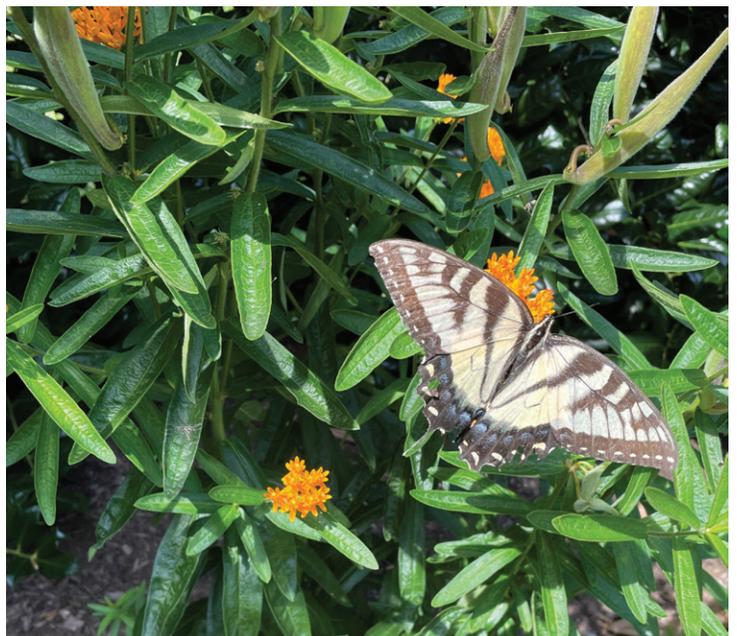
It is best to plant wildflowers in masses. Large patches of color will help to attract hummingbirds, butterflies and bees. Example: Group 5 or more of the same type of wildflowers together rather than just one or two plants.

Many of our bumblebees are endangered, especially the long-tongue bumblebees. Consider adding wildflowers that have a trumpet shape which the long tongue bees prefer. White Beardtongue (*Penstemon digitalis*) is a native plant example that has a trumpet shape.

The best time in Northeast USA to plant a native meadow is autumn as many native plants and seeds require exposure to cold temperature.

Grasses are also important to add to a native meadow (even just a few) as they are important to wildlife. Grasses & sedges are larval host plants for some butterflies & some bumblebees and insects. Little Bluestem is a good example of a grass to add here in the Northeast.

Be patient, native plants take much longer to establish as they have long lives. Some wildflower seeds will take 2 years till they bloom.



# Announcing the 2022 Photo Contest!

The 2022 BLCT photo contest is kicking off this month! The contest will run until November 2022 so that we can get pictures of BLCT properties, animals and plants during all four seasons! Photographers of all ages may submit as many as 3 photographs in any of the following categories: Landscape; Plants and Animals; and People Enjoying Nature.

All eligible photos must have been taken on a BLCT property. Two winners will be chosen in each category

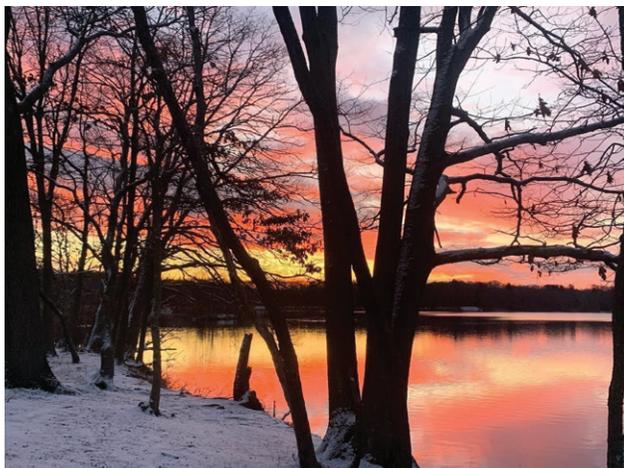
from among the photos submitted by adults and by students under the age of sixteen, as well as a "Best in Show" entry.

You can view more of last year's winners and read the rules on the website at [www.blct.org/more-about-us/recent-posts/](http://www.blct.org/more-about-us/recent-posts/).

Here are two of the winners of last year's contest. Good luck!



Best Animals - Sal Capirchio, Red Headed Woodpecker



Best Landscape - Sara Horvet, Sunrise

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