



BARRINGTON LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

• ESTABLISHED 1979 •

PRESERVE. ADVOCATE. EDUCATE. ENGAGE.

Save Lot 3A to Protect Rayner Refuge

By Melissa Horne

Nockum Hill is a very special part of Barrington. Prime agricultural land fades into the Douglas Rayner Wildlife Refuge and Hundred Acre Cove. The Rayner Refuge features a wide variety of habitats, including overgrown farm-field edges bursting with wildflowers and tussocks of delicate grasses, the tall meadow, the marshland and mudflats, and the ribbon of forest that embraces the land as it slopes into Hundred Acre Cove. It is a place that seems wild and out of the way even as the sounds of Wampanoag Trail across the cove encroach on the silence its visitors enjoy.

The Town of Barrington purchased the Rayner Refuge in the late-1960's to prevent its development as a warehouse facility. The Town declared the property a nature preserve after it was discovered that the most important population of state-endangered Diamondback Terrapin nest in the Rayner Refuge. In 2005, the Town granted to BLCT a conservation easement on the refuge "to assure that the [Refuge] will be retained forever in its open, scenic, and natural/ecological condition and to prevent any use of the [Refuge] that will significantly impair or interfere with the conservation values of the [Refuge]." BLCT maintains the property pursuant to a management plan developed with input from the Town, making sure that paths are mowed, invasive species are removed and the Terrapin's nesting grounds are protected.

In an effort to protect the conservation values of the Rayner Refuge, the Town is poised to acquire Lot 3A, a former horseback riding facility that abuts the Refuge. A developer intends to build as many as 27



housing units on the approximately 4 acres of buildable land existing on Lot 3A. It is not hard to imagine the adverse effect that this unacceptably dense development could have on the habitat of the Northern Diamondback Terrapin or the negative environmental impacts to the Rayner Refuge that would result from a failure of the complex's septic system. The Town's proposed acquisition of Lot 3A is the only way to fulfill its goal of

photos by Amy O'Donnell

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1 protecting the rural nature of Nockum Hill generally and the conservation value of the Rayner Refuge in particular. It is just as important to protect Lot 3A from development now as it was to protect the Rayner Refuge from a similar fate almost



50 years ago.

Barrington's voters will be asked to approve the acquisition of Lot 3A at the Financial Town Meeting on May 22, 2019. Only those who attend the meeting will be able to vote on the fate of Lot 3A and the integrity of the Rayner Refuge. It is critical to the continued preservation of the Douglas Rayner Wildlife Refuge



that BLCT's members and supporters attend the FTM to vote in favor of this acquisition. Please don't leave it to others -- please make every possible effort to attend the meeting scheduled for 7 pm at the High School and vote to preserve this very special part of Barrington.

BLCT leads Christian Academy Nature walk

In February, the Barrington Land Conservation Trust led a nature walk with Ms. Roney's 5th grade class from The Barrington Christian Academy. They explored the Johannis Farm Wildlife Preserve off of Sowams Road. The weather was crisp and sunny and the students engaged in "field investigation", connecting their classroom learning with first-hand experiences. In



addition, the walk raised the student's awareness of the issues our state faces when it comes to invasive and endangered species. Ms. Roney reports that the students are still talking about the walk,



especially the bald eagle sightings! If you're involved in education in Barrington and want to find out more about BLCT-led nature walks, please reach out to Mary Grover at grovermaryl@gmail.com.



Winter Scavenger Hunt Recap!

The BLCT partnered with The Barrington Public Library for another winter scavenger hunt during February school vacation week. This year the hunt took place at the Osamequin Nature Trails and Bird Sanctuary, just off of Rt. 114 North, near the East Providence line. It's a wonderful property and an excellent place to stage a scavenger hunt. Keep in touch with the BLCT for announcements of other fabulous outdoor adventures at our wonderful properties.



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.

As our fiscal year comes to an end, we urge you to make a generous donation to ensure that BLCT can continue the types of activities featured in this newsletter in the future. The Barrington Land Conservation Trust and all those who depend on its efforts appreciate your support!

The BLCT is lucky to have local wildlife photographer **Robert Puckett** on the Board of Directors. Robert's work was recently showcased at The Barrington Public library. Below is a great shot he took over the winter of a snowy owl.



BLCT ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday June 5th at 6:30 pm



We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Charles Clarkson as the featured speaker at our Annual meeting in the Barrington Public Library Salem Auditorium. We will hold a brief business meeting at 6:30 followed by Dr.

Clarkson's talk at 7:00 pm.

The Rhode Island Bird Atlas 2.0: A Year-Round Perspective

Bird Atlases provide data on the distribution, abundance and long-term change of bird populations within a state. Because birds are effective indicators of environmental change, these metrics can be used to determine habitat health and atlases are often employed by conservation agencies to inform land management strategies. The Rhode Island Bird Atlas is unique in that it is the first atlas to survey year-round use of habitats by birds. Combined with detailed habitat mapping tools and advances in the use of NEXRAD radar, the current iteration of the Rhode Island Bird Atlas will be a valuable tool for conservation groups seeking to promote biodiversity through habitat management. In its fourth-year of data collection, the atlas has already shed light on a number of significant changes to the avifauna of Rhode Island. This talk will discuss these changes and results to date specific to the properties owned and managed by the Barrington Land Trust.

Charles Clarkson developed an appreciation for

nature early in life as a child growing up in the mountains of Virginia. He gravitated towards birds after his first college course in Ornithology and decided there could be no more satisfying life than one devoted to his feathered friends.

As a graduate student at Virginia Commonwealth University, he studied song production in male warblers, documented owl demography, and then built and maintained an ornithological museum collection. After completion of his Master's degree, he led a team of biological technicians rebuilding habitat and tracking woodpecker groups throughout the Southeast. Charles returned to school at the University of Virginia to pursue his doctorate in avian toxicology where his primary focus was on the impact of mercury on the growth and development of nestling waterbirds. During his tenure at UVA, Charles began teaching for the Semester at Sea and led students around the world teaching ecology, ornithology and conservation. Through the Semester at Sea, Charles became involved in projects throughout the tropics educating and aiding small-scale coffee producers about using rainforests in a way that would promote bird habitat and reduce habitat destruction. In addition, Charles worked passionately to reduce the mortality of seabirds by the world's commercial fishing industry by serving on advisory panels, attending senate hearings and teaching courses in ocean conservation.

Following the completion of his PhD, Dr. Clarkson moved to Rhode Island and began teaching at Salve Regina and Roger Williams Universities. In 2015, Dr. Clarkson was employed as the coordinator for the Rhode Island Bird Atlas, a five-year, state wide project aimed at documenting the distribution and abundance of our birds. In addition to coordinating the project, Charles also serves as a board member for the Audubon society of Rhode Island and The Aquidneck Land Trust and as the co-chair of the Conservation Committee for the International Waterbird Society.

Open House at Barrington Farm School

Sat, May 18
10 am to 1 pm

Free and Open to All

Join in the gardening fun for the whole family with an Open House at Barrington Farm School.

On the Farm you can find hands-on demonstrations about composting and beekeeping, free seed packets and soil testing (courtesy of URI Master Gardeners), along with children's activities.

TALKS & HANDS-ON DEMOS
Introduction to Composting:
10:30 am & 12 pm

Bees on the Farm:
11 am & 12:30 pm

SOIL TESTING*

*Soil samples must be dry
(limit of 3 samples)
Take home free seed packets

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES
Seed planting table
Help build an insect home



Sponsored by

Barrington
Farm School



BARRINGTON LAND
CONSERVATION TRUST
• ESTABLISHED 1979 •



Barrington
PUBLIC LIBRARY

Vendituoli Farm (a.k.a. Barrington Farm School) is located at the corner of Federal Rd and Middle Hwy in Barrington (near the Safety Complex).

Protect Raynor Refuge!

Barrington's voters will be asked to approve the acquisition of Lot 3A at the Financial Town Meeting on May 22, 2019. Only those who attend the meeting will be able to vote on the fate of Lot 3A and the integrity of the Rayner Refuge. It is critical to the continued preservation of the Douglas Rayner Wildlife Refuge that BLTC's members and supporters attend the FTM to vote in favor of this acquisition. Please don't leave it to others -- please make every possible effort to attend the meeting scheduled for 7 pm at the High School and vote to preserve this very special part of Barrington.

Read our feature on the front page of this newsletter for more information.



Photo by Amy O'Donnell

