THE MASHANTUCKET LAND TRUST INC. · 1968 ·

MASHANTUCKET TRAILS

P.O. Box 49
Old Mystic, Connecticut 06372

DEDICATED TO PRESERVING LAND AND WILDLIFE HABITATS

MAY 1984

FAMILY DAY

"The Annual Meeting of the members of the corporation shall be held at such place and on such day as the Board of Directors (or the President in the absence of action by the Board of Directors) may determine for the purpose of electing Directors and the transacting of any other business which may legally come before the meeting."
MLT By-laws, Article II, Section 1.

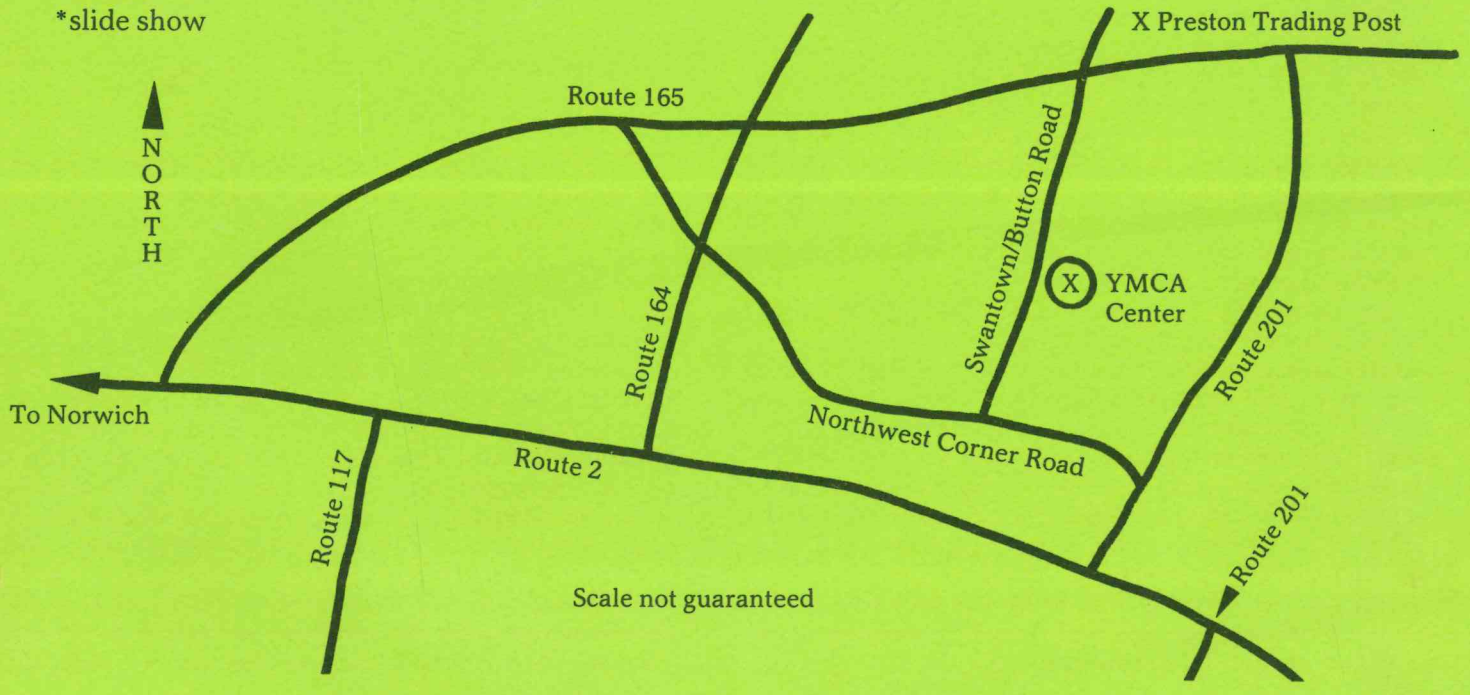
The format of the Annual Meeting will be quite different this year — less formal than in the past and will offer some interesting activities in conjunction with it. Bring the whole family, enjoy the outdoors. Bring your own picnic supper and enjoy! MLT is a membership organization and the opinions and ideas of its members are sought and much needed. Come and chat about MLT, its activities and future directions and help elect Directors for the year ahead.

PLACE: YMCA Outdoor Center, North Stonington, Connecticut.
(RAIN OR SHINE — there is quite adequate shelter)

4:00 - 5:30 P.M. — COME AND PLAY
*tennis - four courts available
*softball - bring your own equipment and play on the open field behind the tennis courts
*hike - follow the cleared trails on 185 woodland acres

5:30 - 6:00 P.M. — SUPPER - bring your own

6:00 - 7:30 P.M. — ANNUAL MEETING - informal reports and discussion. Nomination and election of Directors.
INFORMAL ENTERTAINMENT —
*music
*slide show



The Canada Goose

To anyone who has explored the waters or surrounding land areas of Chesapeake Bay - or read Michener's wonderous tome, *Chesapeake* - the sound and marvelous flight formations of the "honkers" is familiar and exciting. The Department of Environmental Protection reports in *Citizens' Bulletin* what many of us Chesapeake lovers know well. The Canada goose is becoming a familiar bird in Connecticut.

The Canada is recognized by its black head, bill and neck which contrast with a pale gray breast. A distinct white cheek patch covers the throat. The birds are gray brown to dark brown on the back and wings, white on the belly and have black rump and tail feathers. They weigh anywhere from six to thirteen pounds. The Canadas flying in high "V" formations and honking to one another are a wonderous sight. These formations and the accompanying sounds have long been a harbinger of autumn.

Canada geese are found throughout Connecticut. In the spring and summer breeding season they are found in traditional nesting areas such as marshes and isolated lakes and rivers. In the fall and winter geese are also found throughout the State until freshwater areas freeze. The birds then concentrate in our coastal areas. Throughout the year the highest numbers are found in Fairfield County. In 1984, 6,600 birds have been counted Statewide, up from an average of 138 in mid-winter counts in the 1950's.

In the spring the Canada is an early nester. They may begin defending nest territory in March and nesting early in April. Canadas are monogamous and pairs mate for life. They use a great variety of nest structures such as islands, man-made structures, muskrat and beaver lodges and shore-line edges, always requiring proximity to the water, cover for the nest and an exposed view for the incubating birds. Sounds like an ad for some local condominiums. Usually, four to seven eggs are laid which the female incubates while the male mounts guard not far off. This all takes about a month. Survival of nests and goslings is generally high. Sometimes flooding and predators such as skunks, foxes, dogs and herring gulls take their toll. Canadas are not popular with everyone - along with gulls. They invade golf courses, park ponds, lawns, reservoirs, even swimming pools where their growing numbers are not welcome. They foul the areas they invade and their droppings can cause algae blooms by overfertilization of ponds. They can damage cranberry bogs, winter cover crops and pasture areas. Shame! But we still run at the sound of the wonderful raucus honk and marvel at the fascinating formations.

So - do we have a problem with our growing population of Canadas? It would appear so, particularly in urban and suburban areas where hunting is not a viable management tool. DEP suggests a variety of nuisance control devices - scarecrows, flashing lights, balloons, noise makers and similar nuisances in themselves. Connecticut citizens can help by not feeding geese and remembering that waterfowl - all waterfowl - are better off when left alone. Try to remember that when you drive up River Road in Mystic with youngsters in the car!

We shall continue to thrill as the honkers pass overhead - but where they land and how they multiply may yet reduce the thrill. We earnestly hope not.

Natural-Data Base

Early in 1984 announcement was made of the establishment of the Connecticut Natural Data Base. This is a comprehensive inventory of all the State's rare and endangered species and vanishing natural communities. This data base, like that in 32 other states, is computer assisted and will use the same computer language and identical nomenclature as that used to classify natural elements in other states with similar programs. The program is the joint effort of The Nature Conservancy, Connecticut Chapter, and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. It is also supported by the National Audubon Society.

Scientists from DEP's Natural Resource Center, where Data Base is located, after research in the field, list the State's known rare ecosystems and species in order of degree of threat and priority of needed protection. The result will be a series of maps of those portions of the State most acutely in need of protection.

Experience in other states shows that developers, government agencies and others can consult the list and that the list can be used to resolve environmental conflicts before they occur. Highway routes and utility rights-of-way can be determined to create minimum environmental disturbance.

The data will be of utmost assistance to land trusts in examining lands where protection may be needed. They will be of great use to landowners seeking to determine the environmental value of their lands and the need to protect them in the future. Use of the Data Base will be invaluable to MLT as it responsibly evaluates decisions to acquire land holdings in the years ahead.

INFORMATION, PLEASE.

Do you know a parcel of land of unique interest or containing endangered wildlife or botanical species which ought to be preserved? Write to the President, Mashantucket Land Trust with as much information as you have. Your letter will be held in strict confidence.

HELP!

Is there a volunteer sign maker among our readers? We need the services of a craftsman with a router to help make signs to be erected on our various properties. MLT will buy the materials. We hope there is someone out there who has the knack and interest in helping. Let us hear from one or all of you. No rush jobs. Give us the signal and let's plan what may be done.

We also need suggestions and ideas on how to construct a weather-proof, vandal-proof (!) sign which can contain some words of a brief text. Project Oceanology is authorized to use South Dumpling Island as an outdoor laboratory. As part of the agreement, Project O submits each year a report on the use of the island along with recommendations to MLT regarding its stewardship. The most recent report suggests the erection of a sign on the small beach used as a landing place. MLT subscribes to the ideas suggested, but lacks the know-how to provide a sign meeting the necessary requirements. Any thoughts?

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

There has been much interest in planning events and activities for members. Accordingly, the schedule below has been prepared. It is hoped many members and their families will participate. Bring neighbors and friends.

May 18: 4:30 - 7:30 P.M.

FAMILY DAY. YMCA Outdoor Center, North Stonington. RAIN OR SHINE.

May 20: 9:00 A.M.

BIRD WATCHING walk on MLT's Pequotsepos Preserve acquired in 1982. Leader - Mrs. Thomas (Ann) Hopps, an officer of the Pequot Chapter of the Audubon Society. Meet at Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center, Pequotsepos Road, Stonington. RAIN OR SHINE.

June 2: 8:45 - 11:00 A.M.

CRUISE to MLT's South Dumpling Island. Meet on dock of Project Oceanology, Avery Point, Groton for embarkation on the Project's research vessel, ENVIRON-LAB. Beside the boat captain and crew, two instructors from Project Oceanology will accompany the party for guided walk through the island's gull rookeries. An exciting opportunity to cruise on Fishers Island Sound and see one of MLT's most interesting holdings. RAIN OR SHINE. Be prepared to descend ladder from bow of vessel to landing beach. Can't always be done with dry feet.

IMPORTANT - vessel is limited to 48 passengers. It is essential that early commitment be made.

COST - $7.00 per person for members of MLT or member's immediate family. $10.00 for non-members (by invitation of members only). The $10.00 charge will include a one-year membership in MLT.

ACT EARLY. Fill out the coupon below and mail soon **with check**. If you act too late and trip is filled, your check will be returned promptly.

June 17: 1:30 P.M.

CANOE OUTING on Poquetanuck Cove. Join the flotilla and see more of MLT's property holdings, the Poquetanuck Sedge Beds. These beds are valuable tidal estuarine marshes containing sedge or grass-like plants which grow in tufts or clumps in the wet grounds. Early farmers cultivated the "salt hay" in these beds for cattle feed. The Poquetanuck Sedge Beds were a portion of the so-called Brewster farm. In December 1979, Lionel and Ann Wood of Preston donated these beds to the Trust.

In the 1700's the Cove was an important harbor. Today it is a haven for waterfowl that are attracted to the wild rice that grows along its shores and the abundance of small fish in the waters. Several osprey nest there and The Trust has constructed an osprey platform in the marsh. Numerous kingfisher, some blue heron and egret also nest there. Thousands of ducks and Canada geese use the Cove during their migrations. In 1982 the Connecticut General Assembly designated the entire area as a bird sanctuary.

The three mile canoe trip will begin at the Tuckerbung Club, located in Ledyard about 1/4 mile south of Route 12 bridge over the Cove on west side of Route 12. Anyone with a canoe is invited to participate. LIFE JACKETS ARE REQUIRED. Departure from the Tuckerbung Club, 1:30 P.M., RAIN OR SHINE.

July:

Date to be announced in the press. Walk on MLT's Yannatos Preserve, North Stonington, led by Director Hugo Wilms. The Preserve borders on the site of an old mill dam on Route 216 along the Green Falls River, 600 feet west of intersection with Clarks Falls Road. The 13.5 acres contain a field, high granite cliffs, deciduous woodland and fascinating stream banks. Stay tuned for the specific date and time.

August 11: 2:00 P.M.

NATURE WALK on the Hoffman Evergreen Preserve, Stonington. The Preserve of 142 acres was obtained as a gift to MLT in 1976. It is located on the west side of Route 201 and extends along Route 201 north of Route 184 for a half mile. The boundary starts 1.5 miles north of Route 184. Go to the northerly entrance. The Preserve contains well-marked excellent trails as well as an historic cemetery. The walk will be led by Mrs. H. H. (Amy) Stiles.

RAIN DATE: August 12, 2:00 P.M.

CRUISE TO SOUTH DUMPLING ISLAND

Complete and mail this form immediately to: Mr. Harry O. Tobiassen, 30 Arrowhead Drive, Ledyard, CT 06339.

Enclosed is my check payable to Mashantucket Land Trust for $ _____. There will be _____ (number) of people in my party, _____ (number) members and _____ (number) non-members.

I ask that the following persons who have paid $10.00 be enrolled as members:

Name _____ Address _____

Name _____ Address _____

Name _____ Address _____

My name, address and telephone number: (please print)

Name _____ Address _____

Telephone number _____

It is understood that if I have acted too late and cruise is full, I will be notified promptly and my check returned.

Idea to Tradition

Three years ago a mid-winter experiment was tried - an evening of a pot luck supper and program for members and friends was held. To the delight of the Directors who acted as hosts and organizers, the evening was very much a success. The following winter the idea was tried again with even greater satisfaction. On January 28 of this year approximately one hundred people gathered for an evening of real delight. The pot luck servings were delicious and the evening program excellent in every respect. Richard Bruce Gillie, M.D., Ph.D. of Westerly talked and showed slides of his experiences as a member of a research expedition to the waters of southeast Alaska. His pictures of whales were spectacular and his talk a marvelous mix of good humor and much knowledge of great interest to the scientific and lay mind alike. Surely, what began as an experiment has become a tradition and next January another such event will be scheduled.

There have been some problems with getting announcements of the above and other events into the hands of members. The problems center around the Postal Service. Announcements have been mailed well ahead of time, but of budget necessity have gone under MLT's Non-Profit mailing permit. We discovered to our horror last winter that delivery from one area Post Office had been unreasonably delayed. We believe we cannot stretch our limited resources to use First Class mail, but will make every effort to speed this and other pieces on their way.

RECOMMENDED FOR YOUR BOOKSHELVES

Klimas, John E., Jr. *A Pocket Guide to the Common Wild Flowers of Connecticut,* Walker and Company, New York 1975.

An excellent little book for the layman and wanderer about Mashantucket trails. Still in print and available through your local bookseller.

The Board of Directors meets regularly on the third Wednesday of each month. Questions to the Board may be addressed to any one of the Directors.

Changes in By-laws

Early in the year the Directors, acting in accordance with Article XI of the by-laws which provides for amendments, effected some changes in the required qualifications for Directors. Essentially, the amendments brought about two basic changes: 1. In order to serve as a Director, a person need not be a resident of the town represented, as previously required, but may serve if a landowner in the town represented. 2. Make it possible for five Directors-at-Large to serve irrespective of place of residence or ownership of land. Such Directors will serve for one year terms, but may be re-elected to succeed themselves.

Printed changes in the by-laws will be available at the Annual Meeting for insertion in the by-law booklets previously distributed to all members.

Directors Chosen

Four new Directors have recently joined the Board and one Director has changed status. Acting in accordance with the by-laws and taking advantage of recent amendments, The Board of Directors has recently elected three new members to regular positions and chosen two Directors-at-Large.

George Leon, RFD #3, Lewis Road, Norwich, who actually lives in Preston, will represent that town. David Oat, RFD #6, River Road, Norwich will also be a member of the Preston delegation. R. Quincy Robe, 55 Toll Gate Road, Groton has joined the Griswold group, replacing Lauren Arpin who has moved to Ledyard. The Directors were able to insure the continued contributions of Mrs. Arpin, now at 159 Indiantown Road in Ledyard, by electing her to be a Director-at-Large. Paula Peckham, P.O. Box 203, Old Mystic, was also elected a Director-at-Large.

At its most recent meeting, the Board received the resignation of Burton Jernstrom of Voluntown who is leaving the Board after twelve years of faithful and valuable service. The Board accepted Burt's resignation with very great regret, but with the understanding that because of the press of business and family he is entitled to a rest. He will be sorely missed.

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P.O. Box 49, Old Mystic, Connecticut 06372

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