

## A Poem

**Foundling** for Willy & Marianne, Cummington, 1995

Wee creature  
fallen to earth.  
I fished you from my pond.  
Now what?

I don't fly anymore.  
You haven't learned how.  
Yet, here we stare in moral  
confrontation. If I put you

down, blue one,  
the predators win.  
If I lift you to your house  
abandoned; starvation looms.

These minutes of  
wariness serve us poorly.  
You belong to the heavens.

I'm of the globe. We both lack,  
both long for, peace. Why do  
you trust me so? Nature won't  
shield lost motherless things.

~ James F. Cahillane, Williamsburg



PO Box 251  
Chesterfield, MA 01012

### THE HILLTOWN LAND TRUST MISSION STATEMENT:

- To conserve active farmland and other 'working' properties;
- To save native plant and wildlife habitats;
- To protect watersheds;
- To preserve the scenic and rural character of the Hilltowns.

*The Hilltown Land Trust recognizes that our towns must balance their need to create new housing and jobs with their need to preserve critical natural resources and their rural character. We're committed to being an important participant in this endeavor.*

### HILLTOWN LAND TRUST BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

*Katharine Baker*  
413-268-7572  
*Jennifer & Lincoln Fish*  
413-268-3288  
*Wil Hastings*  
413-584-4957  
*Mary A. Koncel*  
413-238-4221  
*James Molyneaux*  
413-238-5547  
*Ruth Pardoe*  
413-667-3118  
*Jeff Penn*  
413-667-5230  
*Thomas Quinn*  
413-238-5850  
*Jesse Robertson-Dubois*  
413-296-0310  
*Spencer Timm*  
413-296-8053  
*Richard Tracy*  
413-527-5440  
*Eric Weber*  
413-268-3160  
*Shirley S. Winer*  
413-667-3439

NON PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT #TK  
NORTHAMPTON, MA



# NEWS

CHESTERFIELD, CUMMINGTON, GOSHEN, HUNTINGTON, MIDDLEFIELD,  
PLAINFIELD, WESTHAMPTON, WILLIAMSBURG, AND WORTHINGTON

## Nineteen, Twenty...and Still Growing! The HLT's Newest Conservation Restrictions

### Nineteen... by Lincoln Fish

In December of 2005, the HLT was the grateful recipient of its nineteenth Conservation Restriction—a 23.7 acre parcel on Curtis Road in Worthington. The CR was donated to the HLT by Paul Strasburg.

What makes this CR special and highly valued by the HLT is its location. It's directly across from a 167-acre parcel on Curtis Road that is protected from development by another CR that Paul donated to the HLT in 1998.

This larger parcel in turn abuts the Fox Den Wildlife

Management Area, which is owned by the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife. In total, Paul's two parcels of CR land and the state land form a substantial block of more than 1,000 contiguous acres that are protected from development.

Paul's newest CR is entirely wooded. He will continue to own it and manage it as forestland under the Forest Stewardship and Chapter 61 Forest Management Programs. In addition, this CR will permanently protect two feeder streams that form an

important part of the headwaters of Kinne Brook, a largely unspoiled tributary of the Middle Branch of the Westfield River. More than 1,000 feet of frontage on Curtis Road, which is still a mostly undeveloped dirt road in the southwest part of Worthington, will be protected from development by this CR.

We thank Paul for his generosity, his vision, and his continuing efforts to preserve some of the most beautiful land and valuable natural resources in Worthington.

### Twenty... by Eric Weber

In late December, the HLT also acquired its twentieth Conservation Restriction when long-time Worthington resident Claire Bateman made a gift to us of a CR on 33.7 acres of her 38-acre farm. Located at the intersection of Goss Hill Road and Thrasher Hill Road, the farm is bounded on the north and west by Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife land and adds variety to the range of protected habitats in the area.

The restricted part of Claire's farm includes about 13 acres of cleared land, 19 acres of woods,

and a one-acre pond beside Goss Hill Road. Also included in the protected area is a large, well-maintained 50-year-old blueberry patch, which Claire has operated as a pick-your-own and where many hilltown residents have bought delicious berries in the past. Views of the pastures, farm buildings, pond, and blueberry patch enhance the distinctly rural character of two of Worthington's smallest and least-traveled roads.

A 4.5-acre lot was surveyed out around the farmhouse and barn and will remain unrestricted, preserving future owners full

flexibility in that area. Claire is in the process of selling the property to a couple who expect to continue its recent uses as a horse farm and artist's studio. The prospective buyers are already living on the farm and making plans and improvements. Agricultural, horticultural, animal-husbandry, and forestry activities are all permitted under the CR, while division of the land, new building construction, regrading, paving, and other activities and uses that would be detrimental to its natural and scenic values are prohibited. *(continued)*

Conservation Restrictions continued:

We are very grateful to Claire Bateman for this generous gift, which will help to keep a beautiful corner of the hilltown landscape rural in perpetuity. And we look forward to a long, friendly relationship with the new owners.

## Calendar

### Meet the Land Trusts

Wednesday, May 24 at 7p.m.

#### Cummington Community House

Interested in land conservation but can't keep all the land trusts straight? Representatives from The Trustees of Reservations, Massachusetts Audubon Society, the Nature Conservancy, the Hilltown Land Trust, and the Franklin Land Trust will share information on how each of these organizations helps individual landowners conserve places they care about.

### Assessing Chapter 61 Land

Wednesday, June 7 at 7p.m.

#### Worthington Historical Society

This workshop will provide the basics of how land is assessed under the Chapter 61 current use program, what assessors are looking for from landowners, and how the assessed value and the rollback tax are determined. Appropriate for both town assessors and landowners interested in understanding more about the Chapter 61 assessment process.

# T • O • W • N

## Land Lover Stories

In response to our request for "Land Lover" stories, several members of the HLT have submitted their recollections and reflections about their special places in the hilltowns. We've included two stories and one poem in this issue and will continue to print others in future issues. Please read and enjoy them – as we have! And if they inspire you to write your own, please do! Mail submissions to Mary A. Koncel, Editor; P.O. Box 583, Worthington, MA 01098 or email to mkoncel@smith.edu.

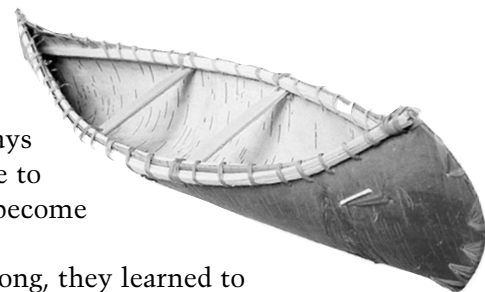
### Plainfield Pond

"Did you swim to the rock?" That is the question most often asked when you come out of the water at Plainfield Pond. I have been swimming there for the past sixty years, and the rock is still there, about half way across, just two points above the surface at high water, a full ridge at low water. Amazingly, the rest of the Pond has not changed much either in sixty years. About half of the shore is state forest. Three older cottages are set back on the remaining shore. One small cottage has been built on the right side, but you cannot see it from the beach.

Oh, yes, the beach. There wasn't always a beach. As a child, I hated getting into the water because you had to walk through weeds, muck, and squishy things. But there was a raft anchored halfway out to the rock so you could dive and sunbathe. The raft disappeared in the 1970's. Teenagers would cut the chain and the Town finally got tired of replacing it. But now we have sand, beautiful sand, which the Town provides each year. The kids can build sand castles, sunbathers don't have to swim to the float, and you can catch up on the town gossip.

I practiced swimming as a child at the Pond. At first, I so envied my cousins, all older than I, who could charge into the water and swim, sometimes to the other side but always to the rock. Then I found the courage to swim to the rock myself, and it has become my goal now whenever I swim.

When my three children came along, they learned to swim using those funny blow-up things on their arms, and later, received tin can top medals when they first swam to the rock. Finally we would swim together to the other side, where Dad would meet us with the canoe and the picnic lunch. Now I am taking my first grandchild to the Pond, and he loves it, squeezing his two-year-old toes into the sand and "swimming" to his grandfather. I hope it will be there for many more generations.



~ Ann L. Irvine, Plainfield

# U • P • D • A • T • E • S

## Miracle Valley

In early May 1990, my son moved up to our farmhouse in Chester to write a book. He had been living in Manhattan. He was 29. The family owns a number of acres in Chester on Kinne Brook Road. The road runs through the woods and steeply down hill from Worthington. Two miles are still dirt, and it traces the floor of the Kinne Brook valley to the Middle Branch. Our land is a narrow valley of fields and the brook, with sharply rising forested hills on both sides.



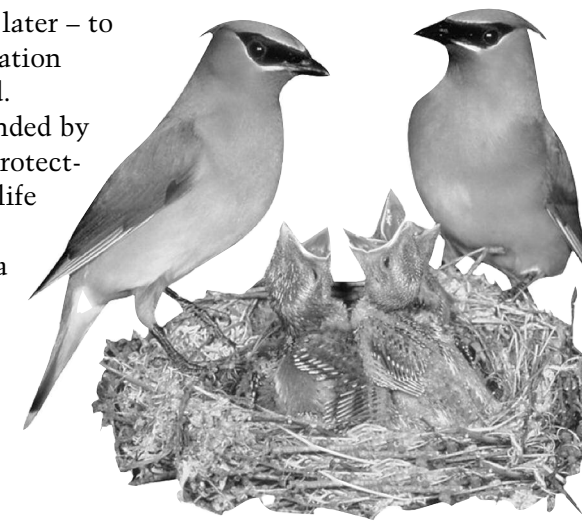
It was quite a change from Manhattan! Doug sat in the yard or on the porch most of every day, writing, thinking, and noticing the spring as it returned with surprising force. Alone up here (with his beagle) and without the noise and distractions of a city, many subtle changes became sharp and clear. There were birds he had never before focused on, flowers and trees and grasses, insects beyond mosquitoes and black flies, songs and calls, and the steady progression of the return of life. Even though this has been our second home for all of his life, this kind of exposure was different.

When I arrived one weekend to begin the seasonal mowing and garden work, he said, "This valley is a miracle" and relayed some of what he had been experiencing.

For years now, such ideas have always made me think – will it be here forever or will people find a way to ruin it? Such an environment supports a vast web of life, much of which we are not aware exists. My thoughts gradually began to hone in seriously on permanent land protection, no matter who owned this property in the future. This led me to the Hilltown Land Trust, to persuading them to try to protect the entire Kinne Brook Valley, and – ten years later – to giving them a Conservation Restriction on my land.

Our land is surrounded by thousands of acres of protected open land, and wildlife flora and fauna have plenty of habitat. It is a good feeling. But it will take many more protected parcels to make a real difference.

~ Shirley Winer,  
Chester



## MEMBERSHIP INFO

### Please join the Hilltown Land Trust!

Get newsletters about Hilltown conservation and notices of special events.

*Help support the work!*

Along with your name, address, and contact information, please send your check or money order payable to:

**Hilltown Land Trust  
PO Box 251  
Chesterfield, MA 01012**

\$35 per year (our basic "Land Lover")

or with more passion:

\$50 per year

\$100 per year

\$500 per year

\$\_\_\_\_(Other) per year

THANK YOU!