



BRANFORD LAND TRUST

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ESTABLISHING POLLINATOR HABITAT AT TODDS HILL WET MEADOW PRESERVE

Patrick Sweeney, Ph.D., Senior Collections Manager, Division of Botany, Yale Peabody Museum

The Branford Conservation & Environment Commission (BCEC) and BLT have been collaborating at Todds Hill to convert old field habitat into native plant meadow habitat for pollinators and other wildlife. Along the way, we compared two no-till methods to learn which one does a better job of clearing out the unwanted, non-native plants.

During 2022 the two organizations worked to install test plots. The first step was to prepare the ground by completely clearing, via weed-whacking and raking, all the vegetation from the surface in both plots. The next step was to cover the ground in each plot for a few months during the growing season. One plot was treated by *solarization*, which uses a cover of clear plastic. This approach scorches the upper few inches of soil, killing roots and seeds. To be effective, it requires several weeks of hot, sunny weather and that the targeted area



Treatment areas covered with clear (solarization, foreground) and black plastic (occultation).

receives ample sunlight. For the second method, *occultation*, black, opaque plastic is used, instead. This method blocks light and is reported to trap less heat. It takes longer, but in cooler areas might work better because weeds will not grow when temperatures are too low to kill the plants.

At Todds Hill, occultation appeared to do a better job of suppressing the underlying vegetation, at least in the short term. Some grasses seemed to thrive under the clear plastic. There were no plants visible in the area that was covered with black plastic. These results are in line with other findings, as other groups in New England have had mixed results using solarization.

In the fall of 2022, we planted a native wildflower meadow seed mix in the treated areas. This summer several native species took root, including black-eyed susan, Virginia wild-rye, and partridge pea. We will

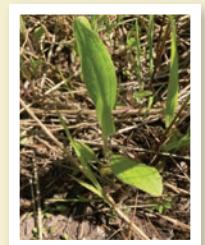
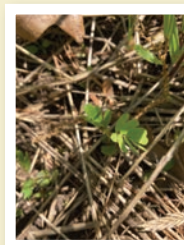
be monitoring the two plots to see if there are any differences in the longer term. It takes a few years for a wildflower meadow to become established. As a saying goes, newly establishing meadows “sleep, creep, and leap.” That is, the first year plants are “sleeping,” in the second year they are “creeping,” and in the third year they “leap.” So, stay tuned for further updates on the progress at the Todds Hill meadow. ■



Close-up image of two areas after being treated. The area on left was solarized and the area on the right was occultated.



Area prior to removal of non-native grasses.



Native plant seedlings in mid-May (partridge pea and black-eyed susan).



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UPCOMING EVENTS

We are busy putting together an interesting assortment of events for the first half of 2024!



BLT's second annual film festival on Afro-indigenous relationships to land with Clan Mother Shoran Waupatukuay Piper, of the Golden Hill Paugussett Tribe. Our upcoming speaker series will include a presentations from Malaine Trecoske about food waste, and several other experts on important environmental topics. Watch for emails with details.

These programs are supported by a grant from the Guilford Savings Bank Foundation.

Watch for details on these programs — as well as our New Year's Day Walk, Animal Tracking classes, and popular spring walks — on our website and Facebook page. ■



Visit our website for details on all of the events you see listed above.



**Art,
Poetry &
Preservation
Make
a Great
Gift!**

Writing the Land: Windblown I is national anthology of art and poetry. A creative project from the Branford Land Trust & the Branford Arts and Cultural Alliance, it features poems by Laurel Peterson and art by many Branford Artists. Combined with a membership in the Branford Land Trust, it's a stand-out gift idea! Visit branfordlandtrust.org for more information.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

It's been a busy season for all of us at BLT, but especially for the Buildings Committee. We're thrilled to say that the work to rehabilitate the beloved Land Trust House is underway! We've started at the bottom to make the crawl-space and chimney base safe for the work above to proceed. For those of you who attended one of our open houses, you know it's exciting to see the work underway.

By now, you have probably received a request for donations to rehabilitate the Land Trust House. Because of the magnitude of this project, we're working hard to supplement your generosity with grants. So, the BLT grant writers have been very busy lately, too.

Currently, the BLT has three active grants for the Land Trust House. First, we have a \$200,000 grant from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). This is a matching grant, meaning that for every dollar we receive from SHPO, we must provide one dollar in match. Second, we have a \$10,000 grant from the 1772 Foundation, administered by Preservation Connecticut, to refurbish the historic doors and windows in the schoolhouse for energy conservation. This is also a matching grant. Both grants are reimbursement grants, meaning that BLT must pay for the work up-front and then get reimbursed when the project is completed. Third, the Land Trust House work was approved for the State of Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Act (NAA). The NAA gives direct tax credits to corporations that support approved projects. So, we have been actively seeking corporate participants for the NAA. Stay tuned to see which Connecticut corporations contribute! (If you know of a corporation that might like to participate for tax credits next year – let us know.)



A lot of curious guests were able to see renovations in progress during the Land Trust House Open House events including State Representative Moira Rader.



We are anxiously awaiting the outcome of other grants for which we've applied. There is a pending application to the Community Foundation of Greater New Haven to fund the new septic system. We have a pending application to the Branford Community Foundation which is administering the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for the Town of Branford. If funded, this grant would allow us to install a fire suppression system at the Land Trust House. And then we have a pending application to the M&T Bank Foundation for the cost to paint Land Trust House. Each of these funding mechanisms is competitive and we're never sure which, if any, we'll receive. Keep your fingers crossed!

In addition, there are other activities for which we've sought funding in 2023. We received \$15,000 from the DEEP CT Recreational Trails Program to plan our first handicap accessible trail on Todds Hill Wet Meadow Preserve. (We're so pleased with this project to make nature accessible, and we're also proud to be one of the few land trusts that were funded!) We received over \$8,000 from the Community Foundation of Greater New Haven, and from the Land Trust Alliance, to purchase two high-quality fireproof, floodproof filing cabinets to meet accreditation requirements for

secure storage of our important documents. We also received \$2,500 from Guilford Savings Bank, through the Branford Community Foundation, to fund our 2024 speaker series. Other grants that we're waiting to hear about include a federal application submitted with CT DEEP for land acquisition and two significant applications for land restoration on Jarvis Creek Farm.

The BLT works diligently to maintain a robust grant portfolio. As an all-volunteer organization without any administrative infrastructure, it takes a tremendous amount of human resources to apply for, and then administer, grants like these. Nonetheless, we vigorously seek out and apply for these funds in order to supplement your donations.

Thank you so much for your generous support so far. Combined with grant income, we look forward to remaining on sound financial footing with our many efforts including Land Trust House renovations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julie Wagner'.

Julie Wagner, President

EVOLUTIONS STUDENTS VISIT THE GOSS AND VEDDER PRESERVES

Contributors: Tenzin Youdon, high-school senior in the EVOLUTIONS program and Museum Interpreter at Yale Peabody Museum, and Amin Rosli, alum of the EVOLUTIONS program and Museum Interpreter at Yale Peabody Museum

EVOLUTIONS is a program at the Yale Peabody Museum for students attending public schools in New Haven and West Haven. Participants benefit from a class once a week focused on careers in science and museums, environmentalism, culture, college prep, and whatever else peaks their interest! After being enrolled for a year, these students have the opportunity to work on the museum floor as gallery educators. While the Peabody is under construction, we (the youth educators) have been engaging in community outreach and outdoor education efforts.

On Saturday, August 12th, ten youth educators went to the Branford Land Trust and learned about local species. Our morning guides, Chris Woerner and Gaile Ramey, first introduced us to different skulls of local wildlife including a fox, Osprey, and deer along with its antlers. Next, we watched the variety of birds that were surrounding us, using both eyes and ears. Some birds we found were House Finches, as well as a nest of Ospreys. Afterward, we went on a walk, talking about the different species of flora around us while still listening for birds. We spotted birds that we identified as gulls and egrets. Our favorite thing that we learned about was worm poop! The guides pointed out crumbly worm poop that blended in with the dirt.



They said that the jumping worms were invasive by eating all the leaves that would typically preserve moisture.

For the second half of our day, we were introduced to two new guides, Lauren Brown and Jack Matthias, who brought us through another trail. While walking, we would sometimes stop to listen for more birds that may have not been around at the beginning of the day. Then, we learned about some of the history of the land trust including a local crabbing hotspot. We also learned about how the BLT acquired different properties, and use them for research and preservation. Toward the end of our walk, it began to rain, which the guides used as an opportunity

to talk about the importance of the marshland. We learned that marshland prevents loss of life and property by mitigating the impacts of floods caused by heavy storms. It also enhances the quality of the water by filtering out pollution.

Later the same month, a group of my fellow EVO students took a hike with BLT board member Bob Hull and volunteer Matt Ormrod and to learn about tree identification. Those students report having a great experience, too.

Our partnership with the BLT gives us the access and ability to explore nature. We use this time to learn more about plant and animal identification as well as outdoor education practices. We learned how to give a guided tour and what aspects of the trail we should emphasize. Being immersed in outdoor environments makes the content we are learning about come to life, and each visit allows us to gain a deeper understanding. We plan to share our knowledge and invite out other students in our program as well as their families. ■





Accreditation is awarded to land trusts meeting the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence.

The Branford Land Trust proudly displays the Accreditation Seal of the national Land Trust Alliance, which it first earned in 2019. Every five years accredited land trusts must participate in a six-month long renewal process that examines transactions, stewardship, organizational governance and financial systems. Our 2024 renewal review has begun.

All aspects of land trust activity will be examined. The Acquisition and Property Management Committees are busy preparing submissions detailing new acquisitions and reporting on Management Plans and annual inspections. The Treasurer is preparing for the review of our accounting and financial management. The President is preparing responses to questions on all aspects of governance.

The rigorous accreditation process assures landowners and donors that land transactions will be professionally managed, any public funding will be properly spent, and the property will be appropriately stewarded long-term. The accreditation seal is a mark of distinction, and being accredited helps a land trust to stand out, to say to landowners, funders and other supporters: "Invest in us. We have proven we are a strong, effective organization you can trust to conserve your land forever."

Accreditation also helps the land trust community maintain the trust of Congress, the Internal Revenue Service, and the public. Being accredited also provides a number of tangible benefits including eligibility for Conservation Defense Liability Insurance, as well as Directors and Officers insurance, and access to numerous trainings, publications, expert consultation and technical support. We connect regularly with our Land Trust Alliance contacts at the state, regional and national level. The organization has been critical in helping us resolve numerous legal and ethical challenges with land transactions. ■

REMEMBERING JOAN BERDICK

We were saddened to learn of the death of Joan Berdick on August 21. In 1967, Joan, along with 13 others, signed the Certificate of Incorporation which created the Branford Land Trust. She and the others were visionaries, as the concept of preserving land was a new one, and not universally popular, but they could see how rapidly Branford was changing and they were willing to roll up their sleeves and do something about it.



She served as Land Trust president from 1978-1981, when the Trust received its first major gift of land: 27 acres from the late Ray Van Wie. This gift was the first of many others from Ray and his son Bill which would make up what is now the 100-acre Van Wie Preserve, stretching from I-95 to Flat Rock Road.

Joan's contributions to the town of Branford were not limited to her service with the Land Trust. She served on the Planning and Zoning Commission for 21 years, several years as chair; the Inland Wetlands Commission; and for many years on the board of the Blackstone Library, eventually becoming chair of that body as well. In that role, she oversaw a major renovation which included more efficient use of available space, restoration of the murals in the rotunda, system updates, and provision of handicapped access.

Joan requested that donations in her memory go to the Branford Land Trust. She was a talented and committed person who believed in serving her community and we are grateful for her vision. ■

(Some information for this article was supplied by Deborah Trofatter, Associate Librarian for Reference Services and Technology, James Blackstone Memorial Library.)

For more about the early days of the Land Trust, read a short history of our organization on our website written by Joan (under the ABOUT section).

THANK YOU AND WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

by Joan Merrick, Chair, Nominating Committee

The Branford Land Trust Board of Directors is pleased to announce the election of three officers and six directors to the Board at the May Annual Meeting. Newly elected officers serve two-year terms, and Directors, three-year terms. In cases when an officer or director retires early, a new officer or director is elected to finish the term.

The membership elected Ellen Skinner as Secretary and D.J. Smiarowski as Treasurer. Liz Donegan will serve a one-year term as Corresponding Secretary.

Four Directors elected for three-year terms are Bill Chapin, Chris Edmonds, Jack Mathias, and Allen Miller. Susan McDonald will serve a one-year term, and Clare Hambly, a two-year term.

We sincerely thank retiring Treasurer Rob Olejarczyk, Corresponding Secretary Louisa de Cossey, and Directors Andy Bromage, Jonathan Katz, Jeff Page, Martha Rice, and Marcia Wheeler for their service and hope they remain active members for years to come.

Liz Donegan, Corresponding Secretary

Liz grew up in New Haven, but spent 9 years in Boston and then a little over 20 years in Chicago before returning to Stony Creek in 2019. She was a practicing commercial interior designer for 10 years before switching careers to the book business 12 years ago. She currently works at Breakwater Books in Guilford. She is an avid reader, hiker, kayaker and beachcomber and has recently taken up biking and fishing.

Ellen Skinner, Secretary

Ellen, although born and raised on Long Island, New York, has spent most of her life in Connecticut. She is an avid

outdoors person who enjoys gardening, kayaking, bicycling and hiking. She is passionate about the need of all people to be fed and have the opportunity to enjoy the beauty of nature. While she has only been able to offer financial support to food and conservancy programs in the past, now that she is scaling back on work, she has the time to offer hands-on service. She is just beginning to explore all the special qualities Branford offers, including the extensive BLT trails open to the public, and appreciates the opportunity to work with the Land Trust in preserving Branford's open spaces and honored to be a member of the Board.

D.J. Smiarowski, Treasurer

D.J. Smiarowski first joined the Land Trust board in 2009. He served as treasurer from 2009-2013 and has continued to be involved through the Finance Committee. His family has been very involved with environmental issues. All four of his children have helped his wife Heather with Project Limulus and the Environmental Day Camp. His oldest daughter is the Stewardship Coordinator for a land trust in Massachusetts and his youngest daughter is pursuing a degree in Environmental Science this fall.

Bill Chapin

Bill is a retired physical therapist who spent most of his professional life working in the New Haven area. He grew up on a dairy farm in western Massachusetts where he developed a great fondness for spending time in the woods and the importance of open spaces. Bill got involved with the Land Trust by participating in Saturday work parties, then was part of the weekday trails crew. He now is serving his first

Liz



Ellen



D.J.



Bill



term as a member of the Board of Directors and is overseeing the rehabilitation project of the Land trust House at 26 School Street. He is a strong advocate of the mission of the Branford Land Trust.

Chris Edmonds

Chris has long enjoyed the outdoors. He has hiked throughout Connecticut and the Long Trail in Vermont. In 1981 he took a Hurricane Island Outward Bound Course in Maine then spent the next several years becoming an EMT and a Coast Guard licensed captain. He realized that he really wanted to become an Outward Bound Instructor. He was invited to Outward Bound staff training in 1984. He has taught Outward Bound courses in Maine and Florida since then. He moved to Short Beach, Branford in 1985 and enjoys the BLT trails and Long Island Sound.

Clare Hambly

Clare works in educational publishing and has a background in conservation and environmental education going back to her upbringing and early teaching career in South Africa. A keen walker and naturalist, she moved here with her husband Peter from NYC in 2021 and is thrilled to contribute to the valuable work of the Land Trust.

Jack Mathias

Jack is a 3rd generation Connecticut resident who grew up along the shoreline on the Guilford-Branford town line. For the past 15 years, he has pursued a career in natural resource management, including working as an Environmental Scientist for the State of California. Recently, Jack returned

to the area and now works for the Connecticut Chapter of the National Audubon Society. In this role, he pursues and leads coastal resilience projects with a focus on salt marsh restoration. Jack loves to fish, hike, garden, walk his dog, and bike in the area.

Susan McDonald

Susan is an organic gardener with a passion for native flora and fauna. She maintains a firefly sanctuary with her family and loves walking the BLT trails.

Allen S. Miller

Allen spent 25 years as an executive in the media and computer services industries. Later in life he embarked on a second career in teaching—in large part through the support of a National Science Foundation fellowship for graduate work in the history of technology and the environment at University of Virginia. Being active in the out of doors all his life, Allen and his family were drawn to Branford by its coastal areas and open spaces, and since settling in Short Beach, have found a special appreciation for the Land Trust's mission and its properties which provide fun and spiritual renewal on a nearly daily basis. ■

Chris



Clare



Jack



Allen



BUILDING BRIDGES – LOCALLY AND TO THE FUTURE

by Heather Wells-Sweeney, Chair, Branford Conservation and Environment Commission

We've had several opportunities to learn about seeds lately, through a seed lecture, a seed walk at Jarvis Creek Farm, and a seed sowing workshop held on the grounds of the Blackstone Library. These events came together as a 3-part series through a wonderful partnership between the Branford Land Trust, the Branford Conservation & Environment Commission, and the James Blackstone Memorial Library.

Dina Brewster, a full-time farmer at The Hickories, presented "Ecological Restoration, Local Native Seeds, and Home Gardening" via Zoom in which she shared her story of becoming a seed farmer. She humorously relayed how her farmer colleagues were reluctant to raise *milkweed*, *ironweed*, or *butterflyweed*.

Part of her motivation was the impending insect apocalypse, which is due in part to the lack of native host plants in the developed landscape. Many insect larvae can feed on only a select few species. One simple way to boost those insect populations: plant their host plants. Not so easy, given a bottleneck in production of native plants – especially genetically diverse plants that come from seeds, not tissue culture. Want to produce *lots* of seed? As Dina says, "You're going to need farmers."

She partnered with the botanist at The Highstead — a conservation non-profit dedicated to increasing land protection in New England — to responsibly collect seeds to plant Founders Plots that would then be the seed source for growing a second generation of seedlings. That second generation would be the source of seeds to distribute for ecological restoration projects and for home gardeners.

The seed plots at The Hickories, she shared, are compelling. Farm staff naturally started migrating to the Founders Plots for business meetings and social gatherings to soak in the beauty of the blooms and enjoy the buzz of pollinators who also were drawn to the flowers.

A fabulous opportunity exists between seed farmers and land trusts and conservation commissions. She encourages us to steward the *seedshed* in our land stewardship efforts.

She cleverly connected us with Dan Brubaker, Conservation Outreach Manager for the Greenwich Land Trust, who graciously came to lead a seed walk at Jarvis Creek Farm. Dan demonstrated how to tell whether the seed is ripe, how to clean the seed for storage, and how to protect collected seeds from growing moldy. Participants on the seed walk collected seeds from wood asters, goldenrod, and evening primrose. Some of those seeds were sown at the Winter Seed Sowing Workshop. Local gardener Ivy Kim hosted the workshop in order to increase native plant seeds in the seed library at Blackstone, which she began in the spring. A special thanks to Ivy for organizing the workshop, which inspired the idea for the 3-part series.

The seed walk was the first event held at the newly acquired Jarvis Creek Farm property. And, as the BLT looks at management objectives for JCF, it's hard to overlook the abundance of invasive plants. The BLT hopes to remove invasive plants and replace them with natives. How cool it would be to plant native plants that came from plants living at JCF, right now. We can't get more LOCAL than that! ■



Dan Brubaker leads the seed walk at Jarvis Creek Farm.



Ivy Kim presents the seed sowing workshop.

RECENT RESEARCH PROJECTS

Just a few weeks before this newsletter went to press, a new infestation was discovered on the JCF property: Mile-a-Minute vine. Luckily the three patches are relatively small now — but look for a call for volunteers to help remove it!

Please remember to always get permission before collecting seeds on Land Trust or town property.

Click on the QR code to watch "Ecological Restoration, Local Native Seeds, and Home Gardening" with Dina Brewster.



ASSESSMENT OF SMOOTH CORD GRASS

Katie Sperry, doctoral candidate, Northeastern University Marine Science Center

For her dissertation research, Katie is conducting a comprehensive assessment of *S. alterniflora* (smooth cord grass) variation across southern New England salt marshes, including BLT's very own Foote marsh on Summer Island Road. Smooth cordgrass is a perennial deciduous grass which is found in intertidal wetlands, especially salt marshes. There are two forms of the plant — a tall form that lives in the low-marsh near the water, and a short-form that lives in the high marsh away from the water. The height of the plant is controlled by the elevation of the marsh and the plant's genes. Katie is assessing variability in the relationship between cordgrass height and saltmarsh elevation at different sites. At each site, she places transects and measures characteristics of the marsh such as elevation, characteristics of the soil such as salinity, and characteristics of the cordgrass such as height. She also takes small samples of leaves of the plants for DNA analysis. Results of this study could have implications for how we assess a marsh's vulnerability to sea level rise.



RESEARCHING LOCAL SALT MARSHES

Sarah C. Crosby, Ph.D., Director of Conservation and Policy, The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk

The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk, Harbor Watch, Sacred Heart University, and Northeastern University are conducting research to improve our understanding of how salt marshes will respond to rising temperatures. In this study, they are experimentally warming sections of salt marsh smooth cordgrass to simulate future temperatures and measuring changes in plant growth, flowering, genetics, and other factors that may affect the resilience of these marshes to sea-level rise. Their work at this site is also being conducted at seven other Connecticut salt marshes, from Branford to Stratford. Pictured above are Sarah's miniature 'greenhouses' that simulate warming conditions in the marsh. This was in Sybil Creek marsh, behind Lenny's. This research will be used to improve salt marsh management and restoration efforts in the future.

We're excited to have this important climate science happening on one of our properties!

TRAIL CREW ACTIVITY THIS SUMMER AND FALL

by Gordon Hutchinson

Everyone who enjoys the outdoors has noticed how many rainy days we have had during this past summer. The National Weather Service records indicate that from April through September, New Haven County experienced an additional 10" of rainfall to an average of 35 inches in that 6 months – the ninth wettest summer on record. This extreme wetness has translated into robust overgrowth on BLT trails and fields. It has kept the trail crew very busy meeting the demand to keep trails open and walkable.

In the first picture, one can see the upper Hoadley field trail (Hoadley Creek Preserve) during mowing in June. With a slightly different view in the next picture of the same field taken September 1, one can see the exaggerated growth of field grasses along with invasives such as mugwort. This same story has played out on our 9 fields to one extent or another. Some of these are tractor mowed but require edging by the field crew with the brush cutter (Billy Goat®), others are only accessible to the Billy Goat or to clearing with manual weed whackers or scythe.

Additionally, we have the regular work of felling trees, clearing storm-downed trees, assessing those trees or limbs about to fall, clearing invasives, addressing herbicide treatment of poison ivy where needed, and repair of wooden walkways and bridges (where possible with our own chainsaw-milled planking on site).

The trail crew does this on a completely volunteer basis with 5 regular crew and a number of intermittent crew members two mornings per week under the watchful eye of Matt Reed the Field & Trail Crew Chief. Those interested in this physically demanding but rewarding activity should contact us at: info@branfordlandtrust.org. ■



Join the BLT and Be Part of the Movement!

From its beginning in an era of unfettered industrial exploitation of natural resources, the American conservation movement has grown and evolved over more than a century and a half. For some it has been about the preservation of the environment simply for the sake of its natural beauty. For others it has been the thrill or the spiritual renewal they experience from spending time in nature. Today, in a rapidly changing world, many people feel an ethical responsibility to preserve open spaces, natural habitats, and environmental resources for the well-being of future generations.

Whatever reasons you may have for joining the Branford Land Trust, you will find the assurance of strength in numbers as you come together with others like you to explore, protect, and learn about our many properties. Join today and take a meaningful step toward achieving your personal goal of preserving our community's natural resources.

Thank
You!

VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION PICNIC

by Jen Payne

More than 40 people attended the BLT's Volunteer Picnic in July. The event, held at Foote Park, welcomed many seasoned and new volunteers, as well as our board of directors and committee chairs. It was great to see old friends reconnecting and others meeting for the first time. Our most senior person in attendance was Chet Blomquist — creator of 28-mile Branford Trail — and our most junior person Matt Ormrod's new daughter, Violet.

Violet even won a door prize — a basket of nature-related children's books with a mug and bookends donated by Read to Grow. We were thrilled to have Read to Grow's Bookmobile at the event, thanks to volunteer Laura Noe, who helped organize the event.

We're grateful to the following businesses who also donated door prizes for this event: Ashley's Ice Cream, Guacamole's Restaurant, Pinky Nails, Rock Garden, Strong as a Mother, and Van Wilgen's. With thanks also to Athletic Brewing Co. for donating some non-alcoholic beer, to Indian Neck Liquors for donating the ice, and to Susie MacDonald for the lovely flowers from her garden.

It was a perfect day for a picnic! People sat on lawn chairs in the shade with views of the marsh and marina, or played lawn games like horseshoes and cornhole in the grass. Musicians Nancy Fightlin and Jerry Jacques led singing from the "Rise up Singing" songbook. We enjoyed a potluck supper with lots of great food (and as little plastic as possible).

It was a great day to celebrate all of our volunteers — our work parties, trails crew, property stewards, event volunteers, and those who help out off-trail to make the BLT such an awesome community organization! ■





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Painting by Bill McDonald