



February 2019

Winter-Spring Events/ Presentations

March

14 – **New Britain Garden Club**, Shuttle Meadow Country Club, Kensington
We Need Our Pollinators
Presentation

April

7 – **Newtown Pollinator Pathway Kickoff Event**, Cyrenius Booth Library, 2- 4 PM, Free & open to the public

Go to www.Propollinators.org for details and additional program dates:

Importance of Wetlands

Wetlands are more than just wet areas. They are extremely important for recharging and purifying ground water and for controlling flooding and erosion. And that's not all. Wetlands provide valuable habitat and food for many wildlife species.

Wetlands are marshes, swamps and bogs. A wetland can be any area where water covers the soil or is near the soil surface either all year or just certain times of the year as with a vernal pool.



Sometimes we don't realize the negative impacts of altering wetlands. Activities such as, dumping of any materials (including compost and leaves), filling, clearing, and diverting or obstructing water flow are all damaging to wetland habitat and put everyone's water supply at risk. Lawn chemicals and faulty septic systems also threaten wetlands.

(cont. on page 2)

CT Land Transfer Constitutional Amendment

An important amendment to Connecticut's Constitution was approved this fall when Amendment 2, the Legislative Requirements to Transfer State Properties Amendment, was passed.

This amendment requires 1) a public hearing on bills to authorize the transfer, sale, or disposal of state-owned properties, such as state parks, forests, and conserved lands, to non-state entities, and 2) a two-thirds vote of the General Assembly to authorize such a transfer.

These changes give the public the important opportunity to comment on proposed transfers before they take place, increasing governmental transparency and potentially protecting open spaces from development.

Since the loss of habitat for pollinators is probably the most important issue for their survival, this protection from development is particularly timely and gratifying.



Pollinator Pathway for Newtown

Protect Our Pollinators is proud to announce that we will be leading the effort to create a pollinator pathway in Newtown. A Pollinator Pathway is a pesticide-free corridor of public and private properties that provide native plant habitat and nutrition for bees, butterflies, and other important animal pollinators. Towns and property owners participate by creating healthy yards and public spaces for pollinators, pets and families.

Pollinator Pathways are needed because many of our native bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects are in decline due to land fragmentation, small private land ownership, and a lawn culture that requires excessive fertilizers and chemicals and that offers no benefit to wildlife. (continued on page 2)

Farm Bill Maintains Current Jurisdiction Over Pesticides

For those concerned about the health of pollinators, as well as other species, it was gratifying when Congress passed a version of the 2018 Farm Bill which upheld the long-standing right of local governments to control pesticide use on town- owned property.

Federal law, which stems from a U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 1991, has generally been interpreted to mean that local governments can't control pesticide use on private land, but can do so on parks, playgrounds and other public property. An alternate version of the Farm Bill would have negated this right.

Local regulations vary widely—some communities restrict neonicotinoid use to protect pollinators, while others map out pesticide-free buffer zones. Nationwide, 58 communities have adopted more comprehensive policies that prohibit the use of glyphosate, the widely used weed killer under increasing scrutiny for its human health impacts.

Maintaining local control over local pesticide regulations was supported locally by Protect Our Pollinators, the Pollinator Pathway, the

Wetlands (continued)

Wetlands are protected areas on local, state, and federal levels. These “regulated” areas require a permit prior to initiating any activity. Homeowners should be familiar with and respect local restrictions.

Protection of wetlands makes them ideally suited as habitat for birds, fish, amphibians, mammals and, if course, our pollinators. Many native trees, shrubs, and wildflowers thrive in wetland soils and are important floral resources for bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects. Button bush (Cephalanthus), willow (Salix), New York ironweed (Vernonia), and sneezeweed (Helenium) are just a few of the plants that thrive in wet soils. For a comprehensive list of wetland plants that benefit pollinators and other wildlife, go to our website: Propollinators.org.



Poppers Jess and Gabby pose at Newtown Labor Day Parade, September 3, 2018

Farm Bill (continued)

Norwalk River Watershed Association as well as national organizations including the National League of Cities, the National Association of Regional Councils, Pesticide Action Network, and the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Pollinator Pathway for Newtown (continued)

Pollinator Pathways emerged from H2H, a regional conservation partnership whose mission is to advance the pace and practice of regional land protection and stewardship from the Hudson to the Housatonic Rivers. Newtown will join towns who have already established successful pollinator pathways.

Property owners can help bees and other pollinators by joining the effort to create pesticide-free wildlife habitat gardens at home or anywhere in their community. Even the smallest yard can help provide for pollinators. Planting native blooming trees, shrubs and wildflowers provide pollinators with nectar and pollen that best meet their nutritional needs. For more information on the Pollinator Pathway initiative, visit Pollinator-pathways.org.

Beginnings of the Pollinator Pathway

The idea for a pathway to support pollinators is not a new concept. It originated with a woman in Oslo, Norway who envisioned a “bee highway” to provide sustenance for bees. A number of “flower stations” were constructed around the city to provide nutrient rich resources for the benefit of bees.

Donna Merrill of the Wilton Land Conservation Trust was working as a facilitator of H2H when she conceived the idea to give away dogwood trees along a pathway connecting NY to CT, in and around the Ridgefield-South Salem area. The giveaway was such a success that Donna wanted to try to do the same thing in Wilton. A group formed that included representatives from Wilton’s Woodcock Nature Center, Wilton Land Conservation Trust, Wilton Conservation and Inland Wetland Commissions and the Norwalk River Watershed Association. The group sat around a table and drafted the plans for starting a Pathway based on what was done in Oslo. “We realized that asking landowners to care for pollinators on their own properties would be the best way to help. Bees, butterflies and people are all connected one way or another!”

Because the Norwalk River watershed is made up of 7 towns, including Wilton, Louise Washer, President of NRWA, wanted to establish pathways in the other 6 towns, first in Ridgefield and then in Norwalk. Weston joined the initiative working through Donna and the Aspetuck Land Trust. This spring Louise will be working with Redding and New Canaan which are also joining. Louise comments, “Because I was doing [Pathways in] multiple towns, I ended up teaming with Mary Ellen Lemay of H2H, and we have been working with towns all over the area since then, to get Pollinator Pathways going.” There are also new pathways in Darien, Greenwich, Westport, and Westchester County.

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