

Hedgerows

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Mill Update

by Caryl Brackenridge

Those of you who regularly drive past the Obadiah LaTourette Mill on East Mill Road may have noticed that much of the siding on the facade of the older part of the mill has been removed. Many of those boards display the remains of a painted Ceresota Flour logo and are being stored safely inside the building while the wall undergoes restoration.

The Lincoln log apparatus is "cribbing" to stabilize and support the wall so rotted parts of structural members can be restored with epoxy or removed and replaced. A quick glance at the southeast column will give you a good idea of the problems facing us.

The restoration of the facade, completion of the first floor restoration and the installation of thirteen historically accurate windows are being funded by a matching grant from the Morris County Historic Preservation Trust Fund and will be completed this summer.

In 1992, we commissioned a Condition Assessment Report which stated that restoration of the mill would cost between \$1.5 and \$2.2 million. To-date, we have spent \$552,750. Public grants provided \$288,319 and private donations provided \$264,431. Our largest private donations were \$150,000 from Jack Borgenicht (which enabled us to obtain our New Jersey Historic Trust grants) and \$40,000 from the Leavens Foundation. The remaining \$74,431 were smaller donations from many generous supporters and fund raising efforts by the Board of Trustees.

Once our current grant ends, the work that remains is the siding on the other three walls of the 1750 section, thirteen more windows, a barrier free entrance, and a barrier free bathroom. We estimate that another \$250,000 will complete the restoration, bringing the total to a little more than half of the consultant's lowest 1992 estimate. This has been possible because of donated materials and equipment by people like Bill Harrington, and countless hours of volunteer labor.

The mill is open for tours most Saturdays between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. When you see the Mill Tour sign outside, stop in and see us. Maybe you'll be inspired to stay and help!

visit the Land Trust web site at
www.wtlit.org

Grassland Restoration at Crystal Spring Park

by Tim Morris

When WTLT and five partner groups purchased close to 300 acres of land on Schooley's Mountain last summer for parkland, the work to truly preserve the property was just beginning. Recently restoration began on portions of the property's agricultural fields. Hunterdon County Park Commission has teamed up with the US Fish and Wildlife Service through the Partners For Wildlife program to create a native warm-season grassland.

Native grasslands are among the fastest disappearing habitats in all of the northeast, and the wildlife that use these grasslands are among the most threatened. Bird species like the Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, and Upland Sandpiper depend on large grassland habitats and their populations are dwindling due to loss of habitat. Other familiar wildlife like Eastern Bluebirds and American Kestrels also use this disappearing habitat.

The history of grasslands in New Jersey is unclear. Some biologists believe that grasslands and grassland bird species were not found in New Jersey until European settlers started to clear land on a large scale, because previously almost all of New Jersey was covered in mature forest. Grassland species then expanded their range from the Midwest to exploit the new habitat opportunity created by man.

Other biologists believe that grasslands always existed in New Jersey, scattered about the landscape after natural disturbances such as a forest fires, abandoned beaver meadows, and windstorms. According to this theory, grassland birds moved about the landscape and utilized these temporary habitat patches.

Both sides agree that grasslands were a big component of New Jersey's landscape soon after European Settlement. Fallow agricultural fields were often used as grassland habitats, and grasslands grew up where land was cleared for timber and left to regenerate naturally. The peak of grassland habitat occurred in the early 20th century when many farms across the state were abandoned, and left to grow into ideal grassland habitats.

More recently these abandoned farms are being lost as grassland habitat as they follow the natural course of succession into young forests, or are developed for residential, commercial, or industrial uses. Even the remaining active farms have lost most of their value as habitat because agricultural practices have become more intensive. Every corner of arable land is now tilled and harvested, leaving no place for grassland birds to nest.

For native grasslands and its dependent wildlife to remain a part of our landscape, these habitats will have to be actively managed for. Fortunately, grasslands are fairly easy to create and maintain. Once seeded and allowed to establish, native grasses need only be mowed once every one to three years to maintain their dominance and keep trees and shrubs from growing.

Aside from benefiting certain wildlife species, native grassland habitats have many other advantages that make them appropriate for former agricultural lands. Native grasslands require no ongoing fertilizer or herbicide treatments, and only need infrequent mowing,

(continued on page 4)

Mission Statement

The Washington Township Land Trust was organized to protect and preserve the ecological, cultural, and historical integrity of the areas that contribute to and enhance the rural character of Washington Township and its environs. The Trust also promotes public interest in conserving land for open space uses in harmony with the natural environment and acquires interests in land by purchase or donation. It also manages land and property easements for the benefit of the public and educates the public to be stewards of the land.

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LOCAL NEWS

The Gruendyke Mill Trail Project

by William Leavens

A coalition of local and national partners has formed to remove a non-functional dam at the intersection of Rt. 46 and the Musconetcong River between Hackettstown and Mount Olive. The project is in final negotiations to secure full funding and will be completed this year. Additionally, a public access trail will be built along the Hackettstown side of the river and the upstream river banks will be restored and planted.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Watch for details

December

2005 Annual Meeting and Potluck Dinner

Ruby Throated Hummingbird



by Tim Warrner

Although there are about 320 species of hummingbirds, only one, the Ruby Throated Hummingbird, is regularly seen in the Northeastern US.

Most species reside in the southern hemisphere but the Ruby Throated hummingbirds are only found in the western hemisphere. The Ruby Throated hummingbird spends the winter in Mexico and Central America, and then migrates north, sometimes 600 miles across the Gulf of Mexico, following the opening of the spring flowers, ranging north to Canada by mid-May. This bird is so tiny and fast it is easily missed but makes a distinctive humming and chipping sound while flying. Both sexes are iridescent green above, gray below. Only the male has the red throat.

The shoulder attachment of the hummingbird allows the wing to turn completely over on the backstroke as well as the forestroke so it can fly in any direction, up, down, sidewise, forward, backward and hover—nature’s helicopter. The wings beat up to an amazing 75 times per second in straight flight, giving the distinctive hum. Some observers claim to have timed this tiny flier at 55-60 MPH although this was probably downwind. Wind tunnel experiments have not produced speeds more than 27 MPH. It has also been observed to remember which flowers it has already visited and if returning to the same location in the afternoon, will not bother with flowers it has already visited earlier in the day.

Hummingbirds feed on nectar from brightly colored flowers and are particularly attracted to the color red. They will also feed on small insects. If you wish to feed them, red colored artificial feeders are readily available. The feeders should be filled with a mixture of 4 parts water to 1 part sugar. Adding food coloring is not recommended. Also, late in the summer it is better to reduce the amount of sugar in the mixture to encourage the hummingbirds to migrate as the natural supply of nectar diminishes. The birds are territorial and sometimes will chase other hummingbirds away from the feeder. If this is the case, add a second feeder somewhat away from the first.

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Walking tour of the newly preserved Crystal Springs Park and wine reception at HILLCREST

June 12, 2005



Asian Long-horned Beetles Threaten Northeastern Forests

by Keith Hayes



Sometime in the late 1980s or the early 1990s, a container of goods, originating from China, arrived by ship into a port in New York or New Jersey. The pallets of goods were unloaded from their containers and placed into trucks for delivery throughout the Northeast. One of these deliveries arrived in Brooklyn, another near Amityville, Long Island. When the goods were unloaded, the pallets were most likely discarded. As the wooden pallets lay exposed outside, some spotted black beetles emerged from the wood and flew off to some nearby hardwood trees where they laid some eggs. These eggs hatched and the resulting larvae bored into the trees to develop into adults. These adults then mated and laid their eggs on the same trees. Soon, these trees were fatally riddled with holes and tunnels.

By 1996, these infestations were discovered by the New York Department of Agriculture and the insect was identified as the Asian Long-horned Beetle (ALB). The beetle is native to China, Japan and Korea and is a serious pest in those countries. There is no chemical control for the beetle and it has no known effective natural enemies. The ALB is one of the worst invasive pests in our history and it has the potential to destroy half of the trees in our Northeastern forests if it is not eradicated. The fight against this beetle is less than 10 years old and we may not be winning. It is still too soon to tell.

The adult beetle is shiny black with small white spots; it is about 1 to 1.5 inches long. Its' name comes from their long antennae, which are banded black and white. They are very destructive to hardwood trees, favoring all kinds of maples, horse chestnuts, poplars, willows, ashes, elms, mulberries and black locusts. To lay her eggs, the female chews small oval or round niches in the outer bark of the tree. When the immature worm-like beetles hatch, they bore into the trunks and branches and create immense tunnels for themselves inside of the trees. The adult beetles chew their way out, usually in late spring or summer, leaving round exit holes about half the size of a dime.

Signs of ALB infestation include:

- Large round holes anywhere on the trees, including branches, trunks and exposed roots.
- Oval or rounded, darkened wounds in the bark.
- Large piles of coarse sawdust around the base of the trees or where branches meet the main stem.

The only known control at this time is complete removal of the trees and burning of the material. The initial infestation in Brooklyn and Long Island resulted in the removal of hundreds of trees. Since then, over 10,000 trees have been destroyed in New York and New Jersey.

When new infestations are discovered in New Jersey, quarantine zones are set up around the area. The New Jersey and the United States Departments of Agriculture have teamed up to inspect these areas and to remove trees as necessary. They advise against the removal out of the area of materials such as firewood (hardwood species), green lumber and other wood materials (living, dead, cut or fallen), including nursery stock, logs, stumps, roots, branches, and debris of half and inch or more in diameter. Quarantine zones are presently in Middlesex and Union Counties. Morris County has not yet been affected.

The federal government has allocated \$44 million this year towards the eradication of the ALB with \$11.6 million of this going to New Jersey. The public is asked to report any suspected sightings of this beetle to the ALB Cooperative Extension Program at 1-800-233-8531.



Top photo: depression on tree is area where eggs were laid. Note exit hole below finger.

Bottom photo: exit hole of adult beetle

Additional information can be found at the following websites:

www.aphis.usda.gov (click under Asian Long-horned Beetle under "hot issues")

www.rutgers.edu/presentations (click on Asian Long-horned Beetle under "Plant Agriculture")

Grassland Restoration at Crystal Spring Park

(continued from page 1)

so they are easy to care for and non-polluting. They provide very little food for deer, because our native grasses are "warm-season" grasses that don't green up and provide nutrients until May or June. In contrast, old world "cool season" grasses like those found in our lawns and golf courses, as well as agricultural crops, green up in April and early May, providing food for deer when little else is available in the landscape. Finally, native grasslands are great for parkland management because they are beautiful and make good locations for walking trails.

WTLT, Hunterdon County Park System, and US Fish & Wildlife Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service plan to expand the grassland restoration project to other areas of the 300-acre property in coming years. Please stop by the park some time and check on our progress. For more information on grassland check out: www.massaudubon.org/Birds_&_Beyond/grassland/large.php

If you own property and would like to explore public funding for your own grassland projects, visit Natural Resource Conservation Service's website at www.nj.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/grp/.

Bill Harrington

The death of Trustee Bill Harrington has left a huge void on the WTLT Board. He joined the Board in 1995, and served on the Mill Committee from then on. From the earliest days of the LaTourette Mill restoration, even before he was a Trustee, Bill could always be counted on to solve the biggest problems. He loaned us dumpsters, scaffolding, dump trucks, trucks with cranes, etc. and paid his employees to operate them for us.

In addition to loaning us construction equipment, Bill made his office available for our meetings and gave us advice on construction methods, bidding and contracts. He never sought public recognition and often expressed the opinion that Washington Township had been good to him and his business and, therefore, he felt a responsibility to give back to the town and its people. It would be impossible to exaggerate how much we admired Bill and how grateful we are for his caring and his generosity. We extend our deepest sympathy to his wife, Leona, his children and their families.

Become a Member

WTLT has had a great response to our recent renewal letter. We wish to thank everyone who has sent in their membership renewals. Many people felt they were able to donate in addition to their renewal dues and for that we are extremely grateful. It is not too late if you have not yet sent in your renewal dues.

Memberships (headcount, dues and donations) are vital for our projects and matches for grants to which we apply. If you are not yet a member of the Land Trust, please use the form and join us now. Thank you all for your support.

✉ Mail to:

Washington Township Land Trust
PO Box 4
Long Valley, NJ 07853-0004

❶ Please select a class of annual membership:

- Individual \$25 Family \$35 Business \$100

❷ NAME

STREET

CITY

STATE

ZIP

PHONE

EMAIL

Donation (optional)

- I wish to donate \$_____ for land preservation
 Please use this donation for Mill restoration work \$_____

*Volunteers and Professional Services Needed.
Contact any WTLT officer for details.*



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