

CHANGES BEING MADE TO WILTON RECYCLING PROCEDURES

Changes to the recycling procedures in Wilton are expected to be fully implemented by July 1, 2009. Additional communication will occur this spring. Among the changes:

- Residents will have no annual fee for use of the recycling facility. There will continue to be no charge per visit for recycling.
- Fluorescent light bulbs, including CFL's (compact fluorescent light bulbs) will be recycled at the transfer station
- Electronics (TV's, computers, digital cameras etc. ) will be recycled at the transfer station
- Plastics # 1 through #7 will be able to be recycled, rather than only #1 and #2
- An area of the transfer station will be arranged for citizen recycling, separate from the area used by commercial haulers

The Town of Wilton is making these changes to encourage recycling / reuse in order to reduce the amount of solid waste that ends up in our landfills or is burned, as well as to conserve energy used in the manufacturing of new products / packaging. The Board of Selectmen and the Conservation Commission are confident that the residents of Wilton will support this effort and encourage all to reduce / recycle / reuse. More information and changes to the transfer station procedures will be publicized in the coming months.

The Conservation Commission is working in conjunction with the Selectmen and Department of Public Works on this effort. If you have questions or comments, please forward them to Kristen Begor and Dave Hapke of the Conservation Commission.

– Dave Hapke & Kristen Begor, *Commissioner Conservation*

Your Town officials post valuable information online for your convenience. Please visit [www.wiltonct.org](http://www.wiltonct.org) regularly for Rt 7 construction updates, trail maps, Wilton's zoning and wetland regulations, and more.



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Wilton  
Conservation  
Commission  
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TREE COMMITTEE TAKES ROOT

The Wilton Tree Committee is off and running! The Town's newest municipal group focuses on preserving and protecting our wonderful urban forest and educating residents about the importance of community trees. The committee is busily overseeing implementation of the Wilton Center Tree Plan, a town-wide initiative to replace diseased, dying, and otherwise unsuitable trees with healthy ones donated by residents and local businesses. To date, 20 trees have been donated, about one-third of the total number envisioned—a great start for the plan. If you want to donate a tree, please contact the Environmental Affairs Office for more information.



The Tree Committee is also co-sponsoring a wonderful family fun day, the Norwalk-Wilton Tree Festival, on Saturday, May 16, 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., at Cranbury Park in Norwalk. The festival will have children's activities, environmentally-oriented exhibitors, and tree care demonstrations. Free food and drink will be provided, and door prizes given away. Please join us for what promises to be an entertaining and educational occasion. Look for more festival information around town as the date approaches.

Jessica Kaplan  
*Chair, Tree Committee*

**Wilton Joins International Sustainability Coalition**

The Town of Wilton has become a new member of the global community known as ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability. The American entity has more than 500 member municipalities that join with 500 more members from around the world—all working together for an environmentally sustainable future. Wilton can both lead and learn from its fellow members, and the support of town residents, businesses, educators and the spiritual community will enhance world prospects for success. Details on how we can benefit from this association will be released in the coming months.

# HEALTH OF A RIVER

The health of the Norwalk River has been the focus of ongoing testing since June, 2008 when the CT Department of Environmental Protection awarded the first water quality monitoring contract to HarborWatch/ RiverWatch (HW/RW) of Westport. The purpose of the monitoring was to examine a series of parameters that are indicators of the river’s health and to see if the river is meeting the water quality standards of a Class B watercourse, meaning it is suitable for fishing and swimming.

Dissolved oxygen (DO) is measured to assess if there is enough oxygen; E. coli, a bacteria that originates in the gut of warm blooded mammals, is measured to give us clues regarding sewage discharge; conductivity describes the ability of water to pass an electrical current, which can guide one to the type of pollution—nitrogen (TN) and total phosphorous (TP) are nutrients that become pollutants when they are excessive.

Sadly, all monitoring sites with the exception of the Ridgefield Wastewater Treatment Plant (WTP) exceeded the CT DEP Class B river criterion for E. coli bacteria. In fact, HW/RW discovered an ongoing sewage discharge at the School Street storm drain discharge in Norwalk and an unknown pollution source at the James Street site on the Silvermine River which will require further investigation. On the bright side, most all DO samples met the CT DEP criterion for a Class B river, while conductivity goals were met in the lower reaches of the river. In the upstream areas, conductivity values varied, probably due to the presence of limestone beds that naturally influence the conductivity of streams. And finally, analyses of water samples for TN and TP were conducted to (1) determine the downstream nutrient impact, if any, of the three WTPs (one in Georgetown and two in Ridgefield); and (2) quantify the amount of TN and TP that were being discharged to the river. Discharges of TN at two of the WTPs remained relatively constant, while the observed TN in the Georgetown WTP effluent tended to fluctuate. Elevated TP levels were observed in May in effluent discharges at two of the WTPs.

Based on this data, HW/RW believes the Route 7 WTP should be modified to remove phosphorous from the wastewater effluent. Downstream impoundments

such as Factory Pond at Georgetown become totally overgrown with algae each summer much to the dismay of surrounding residents. Phosphorous removal is terminated by NPDES permit as of September 30 and does not resume at the two other WTP locations until April 30. HW/RW questions the wisdom of this practice as TP is a conservative pollutant and either settles in the river sediments or flows to Long Island Sound during the period of limited growth.

Individually, we can steward the river’s health by being mindful of our own landuse practices. While it seems easy to point a finger at the WTP’s, the reality is that how we care for our properties is the bigger source of pollution. We can help by minimizing our use of fertilizers and pesticides, pick up after our pets, and have our septic tanks pumped out every three years.

– Kristen Begor, *Chairman Conservation*



**WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

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**Kristen Begor, Chairman**

Kim Young  
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Nick Lee

**Kate Throckmorton**  
**Patrice Gillespie**  
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**Patricia M.P. Sesto, Director**  
**Mike Conklin, Environmental Analyst**  
**William Brennan, First Selectman**

# VOLUNTEERS TEAM TOGETHER

Many Wilton residents have been watching with curiosity as the boundary of the Wilton Land Conservation Trust Harrison Smith Preserve and the Town-managed park, Quarry Head, have undergone a dramatic transformation. The wonder will continue for the near future as the ongoing meadow restoration project continues to evolve. What started as a good-will project from some neighbors has developed into a tremendous boon for the park habitués. Welcome to the expanded meadows of North Wilton!

The project began with some modest invasive removals to allow better access to the trails, which were inundated with vines and overgrowth. A group of neighbors realized that the goals should be elevated and agreed to expand the scope through their own generosity. This led to the engagement of a local tree care specialist who diligently and aggressively cut the invading Norway Maple trees with his crew and slashed through the Bittersweet vines and Multiflora Rose underbrush with his wonderful Unimog, a machine that cuts the woody material to a very low height and must be seen in action to be believed. This removal took a dense stand of impenetrable jungle comprised of evil invasives and transformed it into a wide open space highlighted by magnificent vistas and future habitat for a wide range of species.

The next step in the metamorphosis was a wonderful community day. Honoring their esteemed classmate, Nick Parisot, the class of 2012 volunteered a day clipping the remaining exposed woody material and gleefully pitching it onto small fires which warmed all present. The Land Trust provided also volunteers, and parents of the participating youth were there to pitch in as well. The project now stands ready for another round of clipping which will be followed up with some machine grading of lower spots to create a surface conducive to mowing. This will accompany the reestablishment of the trail. The final step will be the return of the eager 2012ers to seed the meadow area. Long term maintenance, such as overseeding, will be required to ensure good germination and in a few short years the meadow should replicate other beautiful meadows such as the nearby Keeler Ridge Meadow and the in-progress Schenck’s Island meadow. Please stop by and walk the meadow-to-be and continue to enjoy our town’s plethora of parks and open space.

For information or a map of this property or other properties, please go to the Conservation link on the Town website: [WiltonCT.org](http://WiltonCT.org)

– Nick Lee, *Conservation Commissioner*

## LOCAL BIRD ORNITHOLOGISTS LEAD SPRING BIRD WALK

Join Wilton residents and bird experts Luke Tiller and Joe Bear as well as members of the Conservation Commission on their annual spring bird walk in Wilton on Sunday, May 3. We will meet at 7:15am at the parking lot at Merwin Meadows in Wilton (the early start is essential to see the most bird activity) and take a walk along the river during the height of northbound migration before finishing up at Allen’s Meadows. Last year produced some great birds including many neotropical migrants. The walk is suitable for all ages and abilities. Please bring your binoculars, water and a snack. The walk will go ahead rain or shine. Pre-registration, which is requested but not required, can be made with Luke Tiller at [luke@sunrisebirding.com](mailto:luke@sunrisebirding.com).