

## WILTON AWARDED DOE GRANT FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAM



Every household in Wilton, and those in 13 other diverse Connecticut communities, will soon be invited to participate in an innovative energy conservation project. The communities comprise a coalition of energy-savvy municipalities that was awarded a competitive federal grant from the Department of Energy aimed at helping communities achieve higher levels of energy efficiency.

The focus of the program, which is called the Neighbor-to-Neighbor Energy Challenge, is to make energy savings a community affair. Wilton joins its fellow Fairfield County towns of Ridgefield, Weston and Westport in a friendly competition to encourage 10% or more of local households to cut their energy use by at least 20%. The other ten participating towns are Bethany, Cheshire, East Haddam, East Hampton, Glastonbury, Lebanon, Mansfield, Portland, Wethersfield and Windham. Along the way there will be rewards and incentives for each town that reaches its goals.

The proposed project received the support of the entire Connecticut congressional delegation. "The Recovery Act continues to create jobs while making smart investments in our communities, and I was proud to help secure this grant," said Congressman Jim Himes. "Projects like this are a win-win: they help reduce our dependence on foreign oil and create jobs at the same time."

The Neighbor-to-Neighbor Energy Challenge [NtNEC] includes a comprehensive portfolio of tools, including an unique and innovative website to help residents track their energy usage and quantify potential energy savings from different home improvements; an on-the-ground clean energy community corps to work with local volunteers and community groups to spread the word about the program; and rewards to communities for achieving energy savings goals.

"From home energy assessments and clean energy signups to home energy retrofits and installation of clean energy systems, there is something that everyone in Wilton can do to meet this energy challenge and increase efficiency," said Hal Clark, Selectman and Wilton Energy Commission member.

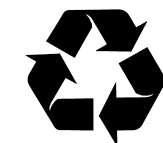
Additional details about this engaging project will be announced in the coming weeks and months, and posted at the NtNEC website <http://www.ctenergychallenge.com>

—Roger Smith and Patrice Gillespie

Please visit [www.wiltonct.org](http://www.wiltonct.org) regularly to access trail maps, Wilton's zoning and wetland regulations, news about community events and more.



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## Wilton Conservation Commission Newsletter



### LIGHT POLLUTION AND MIGRATORY BIRDS

During fall migration songbirds, raptors, shorebirds and others – make their way from their summer breeding grounds in the north to wintering grounds in the southern U.S., Central and South America. Along the way they encounter many perils - storms, limited food supplies, and exhaustion. Compounding these natural threats are myriad additional ones created by humans, including the bright lights and the tall structures of cities.

Many birds migrate at night navigating by stars and sensing the earth's magnetic fields. Artificial lights confuse the migrants, especially on cloudy nights when they are flying at lower altitudes and stars are not visible. Confused birds will continually circle lighted buildings and towers until they either collide with them or drop from exhaustion. Some lights not only visually disrupt birds, but also emit electromagnetic pulses that disrupt the bird's magnetic orientation. Skyglow, also called light waste or light pollution, is light which is either deliberately aimed upwards or emanates from poorly designed lamps. This lighting is responsible for the death of thousands of birds every year.

Responsible communities have begun to tackle the problem of light pollution through voluntary programs and legislation. Minnesota has recently enacted a law

requiring all larger state owned and leased buildings to turn out their lights after midnight during spring and fall migration. Detroit Audubon's Project Safe Passage has resulted in legislation, HR 31, to support its bird-saving message. Chicago has started a voluntary Lights Out project, which has all tall buildings in the downtown area dim lights during peak migration for 5 months of the year. It is estimated that they have saved the lives of 10,000 birds annually as well as significant amounts of electricity.

Fortunately, people can help ensure a safer journey for migrating birds. Backyards and parks, are often key stopover points for many species, and can become bird-friendly rest stops with a few simple steps. Turn off lights at night. This will help prevent birds from becoming disorientated by artificial light, resulting in fatal collisions with homes. During peak migration time in April-June and September-October, turn off as many exterior and interior lights as possible. Outside lights can be outfitted with top and side shields to direct light downward. If you work in a high-rise building, advocate for lights out at night during peak migration periods. You will be saving the lives of migratory birds and saving electricity costs as well.

—Kim Young



Photo by Don DeBold

# CALLING ALL RESIDENTS

With the support of the Board of Selectmen and the Conservation Commission, the Deer Committee is changing tactics in order to increase the number of deer harvested in Wilton. The CT DEP estimates that Wilton has 1,600 deer (60/sq.mi) roaming our landscape; this is roughly 1,300 more than we should have. The Deer Committee has suspended its controlled hunts and is instead asking residents to seriously consider allowing a hunter to use their property to help solve this problem.

The excessive numbers of deer browse our forests to a point where the understory (saplings and shrubs) is severely compromised or absent. The resulting forest structure cannot support wildlife that relies on the understory nor can it repair itself after a damaging storm. High numbers of deer ensure the reproductive success of deer ticks, which carry Lyme disease, Ehrlichiosis, and Babesiosis. To break the reproductive cycle and take pressure off our forests, deer density needs to be brought down to fewer than ten deer/sq.mi.

The Deer Committee goal is to harvest 300 per year. That's twice as many as were harvested last year. This number can only be reached with the support of our residents. To assist homeowners, the committee has a list of hunters who have passed a proficiency test, had a background check, and have been interviewed by committee members. Residents can ask that a hunter from the list be assigned to them to discuss the suitability of their property for hunting.

If the hunter deems the property suitable, the hunter and property owner can then discuss concerns and accommodations the property owner needs to have addressed. Guidelines for issues to consider and questions to ask can be found on the town's website (wiltonct.org) or by calling the committee's office in the Environmental Affairs Department (203-563-0180) to request a copy.

The committee asks homeowners to keep in touch with the hunter to ensure they are in fact, hunting the property. If the hunter usually takes only one or two deer for his personal use, he should be strongly

encouraged to harvest more and donate the additional deer to food kitchens. Information on donating deer can be found on the town's website.

Reducing our deer population to a level that is healthy for the forest and our residents must be a community wide effort that is undertaken prudently and with safety in mind. The committee and its staff are committed to those goals and will gladly assist you by answering questions or providing guidance so that you can move ahead with confidence.

If interested in meeting with a hunter, please call 203-563-0180 or email Patricia.Sesto@wiltonct.org and a hunter will be assigned to you.

— Patricia Sesto

**REMINDER!**

**Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day**

Saturday, October 30, 2010 9:00AM–3:00PM  
Miller-Driscoll School, Wolfpit Road.

*\*We do not accept water based (Acrylic or Latex) paint or electronics.*

For more information, please contact  
Environmental Affairs at 203-563-0180



# DON'T MOVE FIREWOOD



Wiltonians are again being reminded not to purchase firewood that originated more than 50 miles away, and preferably not even that far. Likewise, if you are traveling to a vacation house or campsite, buy wood there and leave your wood from home behind. While Connecticut only has an advisory with these directives, New York and Massachusetts prohibit the import of wood from other states or long distance movement within their state.


Transporting firewood is believed to be a leading cause in spreading harmful insects and disease among our forests. A person cannot tell if wood is infected “just by looking” and even a seemingly healthy tree that was brought down in a storm may be harboring in infestation that is not yet evident. Likewise, be cautious with kiln-dried wood. Often wood is kiln-dried to make it suitable for burning, but if it wasn't heated hot enough or long enough the insects or their larvae may not have been killed. So the best solution is to buy local and burn local.

Remember: Ask your wood provider where the wood came from and be diligent; our forests are counting on you. For more information visit [dontmovefirewood.org](http://dontmovefirewood.org) or [ct.gov/dep](http://ct.gov/dep)

— Patricia Sesto

**WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

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**Mike Conklin, Environmental Analyst**  
**William Brennan, First Selectman**

# TOWN FOREST IMPROVEMENTS FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT PROTECTION

Wilton's Town Forest, located between Branch Brook Road and Boas Lane, is undergoing several major changes this year. Over the past 15 years, park users have established several unauthorized trails to the detriment of the land, wildlife, and hikers. For wildlife protection and hiker safety Wilton's Conservation Commission (WCC) is closing a number of trails.

The problems are that rogue trails bisect areas of the park that should remain undisturbed to provide habitat for wildlife. The constant intrusion into these areas by hikers, bikers and dog walkers displace wildlife and upset the natural ecology of the park. And for people, the extraneous network of trails is confusing, leading some hikers to lose their way and emergency personnel would have a hard time finding an injured hiker on an unauthorized trail.

The Connecticut Chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association (CT NEMBA) is helping WCC to close a portion of trails. CT NEMBA volunteers will install “Trail Closed” signs, remove trail markings from trees and rocks, and cover closed trails with dead leaves and natural woody debris. Impacted areas will be brought back to a natural state through this process which has proven to be successful in other Wilton parks.

A second major improvement to Town Forest has been proposed by local Boy Scout Bryan Caswell. In an effort to complete his Eagle Scout Award, Bryan has proposed to re-blaze the trails within Town Forest. He has assembled a group of volunteers to undertake the task and he is hoping to complete the project this fall. His project will allow new trail users to easily follow the clearly marked paths.

The Commission's ultimate goal is to manage Town Forest in a manner that promotes ecological sustainability while keeping the park open to hikers, bikers, equestrian riders and dog walkers. The Commission is asking every park user to stay on the marked trails, keep dogs leashed, and respect the new trail closures as the habitat restoration project progresses. If you would like more information on Town Forest visit the Commission's website <http://www.wiltonct.org/PDFs/conservation/townforest.pdf>

— Mike Conklin