

## NEW PAINT RECYCLING PROGRAM

Gone are the days of waiting in long lines at the Household Hazardous Waste Collection to dispose of old house paint. Thanks to a new state law the paint and coatings industry is now responsible for managing leftover paint and stain. PaintCare Inc. is a non-profit organization responsible for collecting and recycling household paint and stain. They have partnered with local businesses throughout the state to establish paint drop-off sites. The program is funded by fees included in the purchase of new paint at retail stores. The fee is not a deposit; you do not receive it back when you recycle paint. There are now several local sites where residents can drop off paint everyday:

Rings End Lumber: 129 Danbury Road, Wilton, CT Phone: (203) 761-0688  
*Call Ahead, 5 gallon limit per day*

Wilton Hardware: 21 River Road, Wilton, CT Phone: (203) 529-3650  
*Call Ahead, 5 gallon limit per day*

Keough's Paint and Hardware: 1 Ethan Allen Highway, Ridgefield, CT Phone: (203) 544-8379  
*Call Ahead, 5 gallon limit per day*

PaintCare, Inc. has many other additional drop-off sites that may be convenient for you. For a complete list of paint drop-off sites please visit [www.paintcare.org](http://www.paintcare.org) or call them at (955) 724-6809.

### REMINDER!

Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day, Saturday October 25, 2014 9:00AM – 1:00PM Miller-Driscoll School, Wolfpit Road. *We do not accept paint as there is a new program where the paint is accepted at retailers*

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



**RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMER**  
**WILTON, CT 06897**



**BULK RATE**  
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Wilton, CT  
Permit No. 11

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## Wilton Conservation Commission Newsletter



### WHAT'S HAPPENING TO THE BIRDS IN YOUR BACKYARD?

I was jarred by the headline last week: “230 Bird Species in U.S. on Watch List for Extinction”. What is this about?! A team of scientists from the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI) had released its 2014 State of the Birds Report with an alarming message: our birds are in trouble. The report pointed to the stresses of less land, less water and less space for birds as the root of a gradual yet insidious road to the collapse of certain species. However, it also spoke of “recovering” species whose populations have climbed back from the risk of extinction because of one crucial change. What made the difference? Healthy habitat.

Birds use cues to manage their daily activities. Like all life, they evolved in concert with their environment, selecting the foods available in their range, making breeding decisions to ensure success, and finding places to hide safely from predators. The species on the 2014 Watch List live in every type habitat in the United States, including the forests, fields, and wetlands of Connecticut. More than 20 of those species are forest-breeding birds that migrate south along the Atlantic Flyway, returning in spring to a habitat like that in Wilton. The Atlantic Flyway is home to one third of the nation's people, but only one tenth of its land mass. Dense population is accompanied by development, sprawl, poor agricultural practices, overfishing, and, above all, habitat fragmentation. Yes, we live in a built-up area, but if well planned, we have great potential to provide for many of our birds that are currently in decline. In other words, conservation works.

In Wilton, we love our land. How can we restore it for birds? The key is to imitate the undisturbed habitats that existed before our development. (1) Use native plants—they establish relatively easily, and are home to the insects our birds eat. (2) Replicate a natural forest by using a variety of plants, ideally of different ages, all growing

together to mimic the complex layering found in healthy woodlands. (3) Devote a pocket of your garden where you tightly plant different shrubs and ground covers; regular pruning will control their size and promote density, providing shelter. (4) Strive for “patchiness”. This means interspersing the open spaces we desire around our homes with dense shrubby areas that can act as bird microhabitats. (5) Minimize activities with degrading impacts: reduce or eliminate pesticide use; don't mow the entire lawn so that some of the grasses set seed and provide food for our smaller birds; maintain paths that prevent trampling and reduce the disturbances that cause birds to abandon nests; finally, allow fallen limbs and branches to stay in place. They provide invaluable habitat and harbor insects for birds.

As suburban homeowners, we also should understand the concept of “corridors”. Corridors are linear strips of native vegetation. While they are important to all wild animals in search of food or mates, they are important to birds that might otherwise be reluctant to venture into suburban or urban areas. In Wilton, we have the advantage of an abundance of remnant vegetation surrounding our properties. With corridors, wider is better, so use the vegetation you already have to maximize the benefits by adding plants to what is already in place.

The news about our birds is a warning, a warning of a trend that is growing so gradually that few of us even notice. Perhaps we are in a period that is neither pre-collapse nor post-collapse, but whatever our position, it is no time to ignore the evidence of science. We are fortunate. Wilton is not devoid of suitable bird habitats, and we can provide significant areas for birds by simply enhancing and protecting what we already have in place. Our community, working together with planning and vision, can make a difference. Let's start today.

- Donna Merrill

## HORSESHOE POND — WHAT’S UP WITH THE LILY PADS?

Our last newsletter explained the steps being taken in the springtime to control the lily pads that had taken over Horseshoe Pond. Many residents and visitors drive by this “gateway” to Wilton Center every day and are perplexed by the amount of lily pads still present over the summer. Don’t fret; it will take time.

The first year of treatments to the lily pads WAS SUCCESSFUL! The program, which was approved by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, involves applying herbicides to the lily pads during the early part of summer. A substantial impact could be seen within weeks of the initial herbicide application. Since then, lily pads have grown back but not as dense as previous years. This project was initially approved as a 3-year program to greatly reduce the amount of lily pads, not to eradicate them. We are hopeful that as treatments continue, the lily pads will be further eliminated and the overall health of the pond will improve.

The first year of this program cost approximately \$5,000 and has been made possible mostly through generous private donations. The Friends of Horseshoe Pond is still trying to raise \$10,000 to cover the next two years of chemical treatments. To donate, send a check made payable to “Town of Wilton” to the attention of The Friends of Horseshoe Pond at the Conservation Office at Wilton Town Hall, 238 Danbury Road, Wilton, CT 06897.

- Mike Conklin

## GETTING SOCIAL WITH THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Do you like Wilton’s parks, trails, open spaces and the semi-rural, wooded beauty of our town? Would you like to know more about our natural flora and fauna? Then like us on Facebook! The Conservation Commission has just launched our very own Facebook page (search for Wilton Conservation Commission.) We will keep you up to date on upcoming trail walks and other outdoor activities for the whole family, provide links and resources for education and discovery, build – with your help – photo albums showcasing Wilton’s great outdoors through the changing of the seasons, answer your questions, and make sure you know about

our flagship events, including the town-wide cleanup day and hazardous waste collection day.

Our monthly meetings will continue to be the venue for official commission business and public discussion, and our newsletter will continue to reach every Wilton home as it has for many years. But we’re excited to add Facebook as a more immediate and friendly way to get to know one another and promote the rewarding work that we do on behalf of everyone in our town who loves our little corner of the great outdoors. We hope to see you there!

- Dan Berg, Chairman & Jill Brown

## CHERRY LANE PARK

Cherry Lane Park is one of Wilton’s hidden gems for most of us and well known by its quiet corps of frequent users. The Town of Wilton acquired the 50 acre property in 1972 after the property was identified in the 1963 Plan of Development as desirable open space. This open space parcel is home to a small former ice pond nestled among woodlands one can explore via a network of maintained walking trails. Many neighbors walk in the park regularly, utilizing the space to exercise and enjoy the fresh air.

Cherry Lane Park is one of 15 properties the Conservation Commission is responsible for maintaining. A new initiative for the Commission is to actively engage park neighbors and “regulars” to join in park management. In March, the commission convened a meeting of the neighbors and users with the hopes of opening a line of communication and enlisting some park stewards. The feedback received during that meeting has proven very helpful in planning future park projects. Several park users have volunteered to undertake small projects, such as helping to rebuild a foot bridge over a stream and cut fallen trees across trails as needed. This type of volunteer work is greatly appreciated and the commission is looking forward to working with this group in the future.

If you are interested in visiting Cherry Lane Park you should know that the main parking area is located on Cherry Lane (between Sharp Hill Road and Dudley Road) and a secondary park entrance can be found at the end of Banks Drive. The park is included in the town’s controlled hunt from November 1st to January 31st. For a list of parks that are not included in the hunting program, please visit our website at

[www.wiltonct.org/conservation](http://www.wiltonct.org/conservation). Dogs are welcome in the park but please keep them on a leash. If you are interested in helping out in Cherry Lane Park or any other open space, please contact the Commission at 203-563-0180 or email [mike.conklin@wiltonct.org](mailto:mike.conklin@wiltonct.org).

- Mike Conklin

## WILTON WALKS

Did you know that Wilton has numerous spaces throughout our community where residents can hike or take leisurely walks? Many of these are wooded, others are open spaces, some include water such as ponds or wetlands, others include recreational areas. We are a fortunate community to have so many opportunities for exploring!


To encourage the use of our parks and other open spaces, and to familiarize our community with these special niches of natural beauty, the Wilton Conservation Commission and the Wilton Garden Club Conservation Committee will be jointly organizing and leading walks in Wilton’s parks and open spaces over the coming months.

The first scheduled walks will be:

- October 19th at Schencks Island at 1pm with Dean Keister, Trout Unlimited
- November 23rd at Town Forest at 1pm with Dan Berg, Conservation Chairman

Residents in Wilton and beyond are encouraged to join the walks as often as possible, to learn more about the beauty of nature and the concerns for its well-being in our locale.

Details on the walks will be posted on our Facebook page, Wilton Bulletin and the Villager, as well as on the Wilton Town website (<http://www.wiltonct.org/conservation>).



**WILTON CONSERVATION COMMISSION**  
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Mike Conklin, Environmental Analyst  
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Walks are free, but registration is advised. To register, please phone 203.210.5240 and leave a message with the date of the walk, your name and the number of persons who will join the walk. Please also include a phone number to reach you, should the weather be inclement or should fewer than five persons indicate their intention to participate.

- Jackie Algon

## ORGANIC HOME REMEDY FOR WEEDS

If you’re worried about the toxicity of weed killers sold in stores, here’s a recipe to try that’s simple and inexpensive:

- Mix: 1 quart ordinary household white vinegar with ¼ cup of table salt. Stir until dissolved.
- Blend in: 2 teaspoons liquid dishwashing soap (This helps the vinegar/salt solution adhere.)
- Pour mixture into a spray bottle or pressurized garden sprayer.
- Pick a sunny day, ideally when there is no rain in the near future, and drench your weeds with the solution. They should be gone in a matter of days!

### Helpful Hints:

- This recipe makes a NON-SELECTIVE herbicide, that is, it will kill anything with which it comes into contact.
- It works best when weeds are young and/or smaller than 6 inches in height.
- It is non-residual and therefore may not stay on long enough to do the job. If that’s the case, spraying a second time should do the trick.
- It may be more effective on annual weeds that reseed every year, such as crab grass or stilt grass, and not strong enough to penetrate to the roots of tough perennial weeds, i.e., those not killed by the winter cold.

Have fun! You’ll be making your backyard beautiful while caring for your children, your pets and Wilton’s wildlife by avoiding the use of harmful chemicals.

- Donna Merrill