

WHISPERS IN THE FOREST

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 1

Newtown Forest Association, Inc.

SUMMER 2008

The NFA is Connecticut's oldest private land trust and a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization. The NFA is dedicated to the preservation of open space forests, meadows and watershed areas. With over 80 years of experience and over 1000 acres protected, the NFA has been helping Newtown retain its rural character. Join or Donate Now and support the NFA to continue its mission and expand and care for the land it owns and preserves.



Are you a "GOOD NEIGHBOR"? Do you want to be a GOOD NEIGHBOR? Go to www.newtownforestassociation.org/infagood-neighbor.html.

ANNUAL MEETING, NEW OFFICERS, REVISED BY-LAWS

On May 8, 2008 the Newtown Forest Association, Inc. (NFA) held its Membership's Annual Meeting, at the Cyrenius H. Booth Library. The NFA is a private not-for-profit land trust that owns over 1000 acres of forest, meadows, ponds and wetlands in Newtown that it will protect in perpetuity to enhance our community for passive recreation and wild-life sanctuaries.

The NFA board obtained the memberships approval to adopt a revised set of by-laws, the slate of officers and directors and presented a summary of the activities they had conducted over the past year and its plans for the balance of 2008.

The board slate remained consistent year over year with the only change being R.T. (Bob) Eckenrode, former Secretary, assumed the responsibility of President and Martha Wright, former President, assumed the responsibility of Secretary. The Board expressed its appreciation and thanks for Mrs. Wright's leadership over the past 3 years. In addition to Mr. Eckenrode's role as Secretary, he was co-chair of the Stewardship Committee where he developed stewardship and property management plans for several properties. He was the visionary of the Holcombe Memorial Garden, honoring the property donor Joesephine Holcombe, which serves to demonstrate the use of native plant species for a low maintenance educational garden surrounding our offices.

Under Mrs. Wright's leadership the NFA, and its Board, have focused heavily on governance activities and have established a platform for the organization to grow by adopting many land trust best practices, including the adoption to ascribe to the

Standards and Practices established by the Land Trust Alliance (a nationally recognized not-for-profit established to serve as a resource to the land trust community).



From Left to Right: Bob Eckenrode, Carly Wilson & Martha Wright

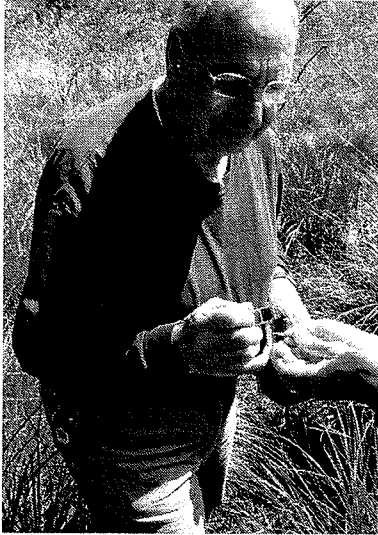
Mr. Eckenrode plans to continue the efforts of strengthen the NFA's infrastructure and developing long-term stewardship plans for each of our properties; much of which is focused on wildlife habitat enhancement, encouraging biodiversity, and good forest health, addressing abutting property owners property line posting and encroachment and invasive species control are also issues that will continue to be addressed. In addition, the NFA is seeking additional assistance in these stewardship efforts by requesting neighbors to volunteer in some capacity who live near or adjacent to NFA lands. If you are interested working outdoors, and want to get involved, in our efforts please contact us at 203-270-3650. (continued page 5)

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WHISPERS IN THE FOREST

BEETLES SURVIVE WINTER AND GET TO WORK



Bob Merola gets a close look

Just under a year ago, biological control of Purple loosestrife began at an NFA site here in Newtown. The beetles overwintered and colonized at the site. They've begun to emerge and propagate.

You may recall that Purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) has been designated by the State of Connecticut as an invasive plant. It was banned from commercial sale in Connecticut in 2005. Purple loosestrife is one invasive plant for which biological control agents (such as *Galerucella* beetles) have been identified, tested and released.

At a visit to the site on May 31st this year, recently elected NFA President Bob Eckenrode and NFA Treasurer Guy Peterson, hosted Donna Ellis, University of Connecticut, Department of Plant Science and 2007 "beetle farmer" Bob Merola. Donna is an extension educator at the University of Connecticut and Co-Chair for the Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (CIPWG).

Donna, Bob, Guy and Bob observed significant Purple loosestrife plant damage at the site. Purple loosestrife plants were approximately 8-12 inches high

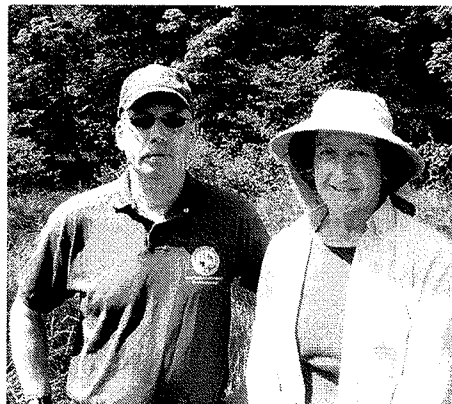
and displayed the telltale pinhole damage caused by the beetles. Clusters of beetle eggs were observed on many plants and several adult beetles were also seen nestled in the tender shoots at the top of the plants.

As a beetle farmer in 2007, it was a gratifying experience to see the early results of last year's efforts. Donna Ellis was heard saying "I was very pleased to see the impacts that the beetles were making so soon after their release in the wetland."

In their continuing efforts to preserve the land, NFA approved and allowed two Newtown Master Gardener 2008 interns to dig Purple loosestrife plants at the site for their Beetle Farmer outreach program this year. They will collect beetles at some other site in CT, farm/raise the beetles and ultimately release them at some other CT site, thereby continuing the effort to control the invasive and banned Purple loosestrife.

This is a good example of maintaining and improving our wetlands through good stewardship.

The NFA wants to thank Bob Merola for his assistance on this project and the drafting of the following article.



Bob Eckenrode & Donna Ellis during our site visit at our beetle release site.

PRESIDENTS NOTES

Greetings Friends and Neighbors,

I would like to take this opportunity to express to you what an honor it is to assume the position of President of the Newtown Forest Association. As CT's oldest private land trust we are also Newtown's largest private land owner. The responsibility for overseeing the health and maintenance of these lands is one we take very seriously. In accordance with Newtown's plan for conservation and development, as a private landowner, the NFA has an important role to play in preserving the rural character of the town by preserving and maintaining the health the natural resources we oversee.

With continued guidance from our outgoing President and current Secretary, Martha Wright, our current board and volunteers have made great progress in helping our organization move forward in many areas. We have been able to enhanced guidelines for better stewardship of our properties, grow membership, a proactive effort to include abutting neighbors and volunteers, and a working relationship with the. The Land Trust Alliance, the Connecticut Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and the Connecticut Land Conservation Council These activities have enabled the NFA to be more efficient in the way we do things and succeed in the goals we have set out to accomplish. I welcome members and non-members alike to share in our efforts to enhance, maintain, and enjoy some of Newtown's greatest forests, meadows, ponds and trails. I look forward to meeting with you and I guarantee this will be a rewarding experience we can all appreciate for generations to come.

Warm Regards,
R.T.Eckenrode
President

