

## **Westport Land Conservation Trust**

### **2023 Board of Directors, Members at Large election**

#### **Pam Wilde**

Over a decade ago as a newcomer to Westport, I participated in a kayak outing with Brendan Buckless as our guide. Brendan talked about the WLCT with great enthusiasm and commitment, introducing me to the mission and activities associated with the Land Trust. Naturally he spoke of Trail Team which was immediately added to my list of things to do once retired. Fast forward, I retired, became a devotee of Trail Team and have continued to grow my involvement with the WLCT by periodically helping out in the office, volunteering at various events and recently joining the Stewardship Committee.

My involvement with the Land Trust has continued and grown because of the quality of people involved, from volunteers to management, all working towards the same goals. The organization is well run, thoughtful, strategic, and the 'work' we do is valued, necessary, appreciated, meaningful, fulfilling, fun, often educational—and it makes a difference. Not only is the time spent with the WLCT enjoyable, one can see the impact being made.

After school when I was growing up we would walk through a field and over a stone wall to Rippe's Farm and pluck apples off the trees. We could walk out our kitchen door and play for hours in the stream and pond that was 100 feet from my bedroom window. We turned over rocks to see bugs and salamanders, watched the mallards nesting in the swamps around the pond and skated on it in winter. Now that acreage is covered in houses that overwhelm the land; the pond and its inhabitants are gone. This is why conservation is important to me—to preserve what we can that is remaining of our natural world and work to restore some balance to an environment that has been ravaged and strained by human activities. Through our actions here in Westport I want

to see us do our part and hopefully through our efforts and successes others will be influenced to do their part, locally and globally.

There is nothing like farm land rising up from coastal lands, being on the migratory path of millions of birds; watching winter ducks (bufflehead, mergansers, scaups, canvasbacks) bobbing around the Point docks on a blustery winter morning; seeing schools of bluefish and striped bass coming up the river; witnessing blue birds perching on bird boxes while barn swallows dart around the Herb Hadfield meadow; hearing the first osprey of spring on a clear, cool April morning; watching dozens of egrets settle for the night in the trees over a small pond near the river; walking up the Dunham's Brook trail and arriving at the old corn field that opens up to the sky—these are the things that make Westport and our area special to me.