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With a properly sized Clemson Tube, no matter how high the beavers build their dam, the water level remains constant. Secondly, the noise of rushing water that triggers the “plug & patch instinct” is eliminated or minimized. Once installed, a Clemson Tube should be regularly inspected to make sure it is not plugged and is operating properly.

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The Trust plans to utilize these contractor services in the future to help address its stewardship needs. The Trust extends its sincere appreciation to contractors Jerry and Ron who volunteered their time, talent, and machinery on that cool November day.

Beavers in Connecticut

The State of Connecticut DEP web site states: Beavers were common in Connecticut when the first colonists arrived. However, by the mid-1800s, with no regulations restricting when and how many beavers could be trapped, the species was [eliminated] from the state. In 1914, a pair of beavers was relocated to Union in an effort to return beavers to Connecticut. By the 1950s, after additional releases, thriving beaver populations could be found in some areas of the state. Connecticut’s beaver population was well established by 1961 when a regulated trapping season was instituted to address the growing number of beaver damage complaints.

The beaver’s natural range now includes forested regions in most of the United States and Canada. When fully grown they can weigh up to 65 pounds and be over 50 inches long, up-holding a reputation as the largest rodent in North America.

From an environmental point of view the ponds do serve an important function. Once again the DEP web site provides us with a good summary of these benefits: Beaver ponds and their associated wetlands provide habitat for a wide variety of animals, such as insects, spiders, frogs, salamanders, turtles, fish, ducks, rails, bitterns, flycatchers, owls, mink and others. Dead standing trees killed by flooding provide preferred nesting habitat for colonies of great blue herons and cavity-nesting birds, such as the wood duck and hooded merganser. The wildlife described by DEP, with the possible exception of mink, have all been observed around Shelton’s beaver dams.

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Wildlife in Crisis

Wildlife in Crisis is a non-profit organization located in Weston, Connecticut, dedicated to the care and nurturing of injured or orphaned birds and animals, with the primary objective of returning them to their natural habitat. The Wildlife Center also seeks to educate the community on the preservation of open spaces. Open spaces provide safe, natural habitats that are free of pesticides, vehicles, and noise, all of which adversely affects all living creatures.

Dara Reid is the Director of the Wildlife in Crisis, which was started in 1989. Dara has a Masters of Wildlife in Biology Degree. She is sometimes assisted by local veterinarians, and is knowledgeable about environmental laws. She, along with volunteers and her husband, Peter, spend their days (and sometimes nights) tending to the needs of more than 5,000 animals each year. The list of their bird and animal patients include everything from tiny hummingbirds to bald eagles, fox, deer, turkeys, blue birds, sea gulls, possums, raccoons, and many others. They are kept busy 15 or more hours a day, seven days a week, especially from May to September when many babies are born.

Although local police and veterinarians refer some volunteers, Dara advertises at area colleges, recruiting graduate interns (Bachelor’s degree preferred) willing to work at least six months at the center. Some volunteers have stayed over a year. The job is “all consuming because we are surrogate parents, responsible for raising the babies,” says Dara. The workers are asked to commit to at least 6 months, as the animals need consistency of care. “At times we wake up from a dream, knocking on the door, feeding the baby birds every 20 minutes,” she adds.

In winter they released their 10,000th bird, the numbers have since, kept increasing. Each year they receive approximately 15,000 phone calls from people who are concerned about a bird or animal that appears to be injured, or in need of assistance. After speaking with the caller, Dara may ask the individual to bring it to the center, where Dara will examine it and give it the help it needs.

Since her furry and feathered patients can’t be expected to pay for the care they receive, the Wildlife in Crisis center must pay for the facilities, food, and medicines necessary to assure their survival. With no governmental assistance, or public grants, that often means that Dara must come up with the money herself. So, it is indeed, very much appreciated when private individuals make a donation to help defray some of the expenses.

If you would like to know more about Dara and the Center’s work, you may contact them at: Wildlife in Crisis, Inc. P.O. Box 1246 Weston, CT 06883 203 544-9914 www.wildlifeincrisis.org

Your interest and support will be very much appreciated, especially by the birds and animals that are helped.

Annual Meeting April 8

The Annual Meeting of the Shelton Land Conservation Trust will be held at the Plumbe Memorial Library, at 7 p.m., on Wednesday, April 8, 2009. At that time, the Trust will conduct its election of Officers and Board Members. The meeting is open to all Land Trust members, and the general public. Light refreshments will be served.

The meeting will also feature guest speaker Eric Hamerling, Executive Director of the Connecticut Forest & Parks Association (CFPA). Over the past century, CFPA has been instrumental in the acquisition of more than 100 state parks and forests for public use and enjoyment. When the organization began its work in 1895, Connecticut was 20% forested; today it is 60% forested.

In addition to protecting land for public enjoyment, CFPA’s visionary leaders established the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail System in 1929, which traverses public and private lands throughout Connecticut and is enjoyed by thousands of citizens each year. Today, approximately 825 miles of trails are maintained by hundreds of CFPA volunteers working in cooperation with many public and private landowners.

To learn more about CFPA and its current activities and programs, please do come to the April 8th meeting, meet Eric in person, and learn first hand, of all the good works and benefits this organization contributes to Connecticut and its residents. You may also visit their website at crowdfunding.org
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Many Shelton residents are often surprised to learn that we have beaver colonies living right here in town. The Far Mill River and Means Brook corridors provide excellent habitat for beavers. These water bodies pass through several Land Trust and City owned open space parcels.

Beavers are very intelligent and industrious creatures. They are semi-aquatic and prefer to settle in areas with moving water, or marsh where they can build an impoundment dam. From the pond they create, they will consume the bark from surrounding woody plants, their favorites being aspen, willow, birch, ash, alder, and apple.

Beavers have one mate at a time, and often mate for life. Typically they have one litter per year, with 2 to 5 “kits” [cubs] in each litter. It is their inherent need and industrious ability to build impoundment dams that causes the most direct conflict with humans in suburban settings. The beaver uses the ponds they create for protection of their home from predators, and for transportation to their food sources. A hiker along a trail will find the ponds fascinating marvels of animal engineering, but the homeowner whose basement is flooded, or the highway department whose road is flooded, may find it more of a nuisance.

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...and local conservation issues, why not join the Trust’s Email Alert list. To be added, simply send an email to slctjeow@sbcglobal.net