

Connecting People with Nature- Thrall Parcel

Wintonbury Land Trust
PO Box 734, Bloomfield, Ct. 06002



12 acres. – Costs of Repairs and Improvements (\$57,000) Wintonbury Land Trust Property

Thrall Farm at 490 Old Day Hill Road is a twelve-acre site containing six acres of prime farmland, two barns, wetlands and a pond.



A study done by two interns in early 2010 provided the history and background of the property. The study found that the property has had a history of farming since the Revolutionary War.

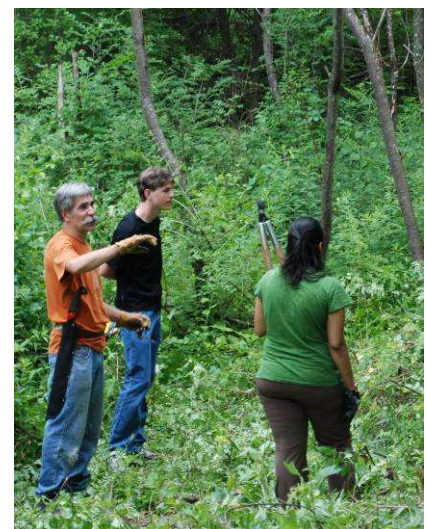
- The field tobacco shed with its unique charcoal storage shed, originally built for broad leaf field tobacco, was retro-fitted for shade tobacco in the late 1920's. Between 1950 and 1976, the barn and property were used for the Thrall dairy business, Fleetwood Dairy.
- The Potato Barn, built during WWII for potato storage, allowed the Thralls to obtain rationed fertilizers through the production of food products.
- The property was used for the 1961 Warner Bros. film "Parrish." Concluding scenes included the barn, shed, and pond and demonstrate how the preserve looked when successfully managing shade tobacco on a working farm.

In early 2010, Tecton Architects projected critical costs of repair on the Thrall Parcel of \$57,000. The repairs include \$45,000 for the Thrall Potato Barn, \$5000 in wetland restoration work and \$7000 in invasive plant removal.

In order to preserve historical farmland along with its buildings and increase supervision, the Wintonbury Land Trust in 2010 signed a five-year lease with Mark Hall of Stefan Farms to plant the 6 acres of prime farmland. Mark has cleared about 2 acres in front of the old-field tobacco barn. The farm has good access from I-91. The potato barn and pond are visible from Day Hill Road.

A grant from Hamilton-Sundstrand provided support to reestablish existing walking trails and remove invasive plants in key locations making the site more accessible to people. The invasive plant removal allows native plants space to establish a healthy sustaining ecosystem. Planting of native shrubs will be part of the next phase of site renovation. The plant removal also allowed efficient field layout for food production. A new path will be created to connect the existing paths and lead into the wetlands

GPS systems were used to map and determine connections between existing trails. There are plans to add geocaching to a couple locations on the site. This will connect with an active existing geocach near the property and increase use of the trails.





Note the two structures on the map; the tobacco shed lower center and the potato barn lower right.

The scene from the film "Parrish" shows the interior of Potato Barn looking east with the cows in the background.

