ENSURING TOMORROW TODAY

Open space preservation a top goal for new president of land trust

By A.J. O'CONNELL
Hour Staff Writer

NORWALK — Former Common Council member William Wrenn has a new appointment.

The nature advocate and photographer was elected as president of the Norwalk Land Trust a few weeks ago, replacing president emeritus Alan McKissock, 92, who had been chief of the organization for 15 years.

"It was a good move," McKissock said of the decision to elect Wrenn to president. "He's a good man for the job."

Wrenn, 54, is well known in Norwalk for his devotion to nature and says that his new position will assist him to preserve what open spaces are left in Norwalk.

"We're stewards of the environment," he said. If the trust is successful in its mission to preserve open spaces, said Wrenn, more people and businesses will want to relocate here.

"If we let the natural environment deteriorate, it will have the opposite effect," he said.

The Norwalk Land Trust was established in 1972 to preserve and protect open spaces in the city. The trust currently holds about 20 properties, totaling about 67.4 acres of open space. Most of the space was donated by residents who didn't want their property developed in the future. Unfortunately, according to McKissock, the tax write-off that landowners get when they donate their property to the trust is often nothing compared to the sums of money offered by developers who wish to build homes on the land.

Wrenn's goal is to get more parcels of land for the trust — even small parcels, such as one or two acres that were once part of someone's yard. However, he most wishes to obtain parcels of land that have the most value for preserving wildlife and to connect the trust's existing parcels of land to create "wildlife corridors" which will allow animals to move from one pre-

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Hour photo/MATTHEW VIN

Bill Wrenn recently was elected president of the Norwalk Land Trust. His goa is to acquire more parcels of land for the trust, even small parcels of one or two acres. Eventually, he hopes to connect the trust's land holdings to create "wildlife corridors" that will allow animals to move from one preserve to another.

Land acquisition, membership growth lead president's agenda

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serve to another.

"(The trust is a) stewardship managed in such a way to maximize the chance for nature to stay in its natural state," he said.

One of the properties that Wrenn believes is extremely important for the trust to fully or partially obtain is the 18-acre White Barn Theater property in the Cranbury area. The trustees of the property have been considering selling part of the land to developers and deeding the rest to the city, although the trustees have not yet reached an agreement with the city and may seek to develop the rest of the property.

Another of Wrenn's goals is to expand the membership of the trust, which now has a board of 15 directors and about 100 members.

Trust member Marny Smith is pleased that Wrenn was elected president of the trust. The 10-year member of the trust says that Wrenn's passion for nature will be a driving force for the land trust.

"He knows how to get things done," said Smith, citing Wrenn's recent experience as a Common Council member.

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