



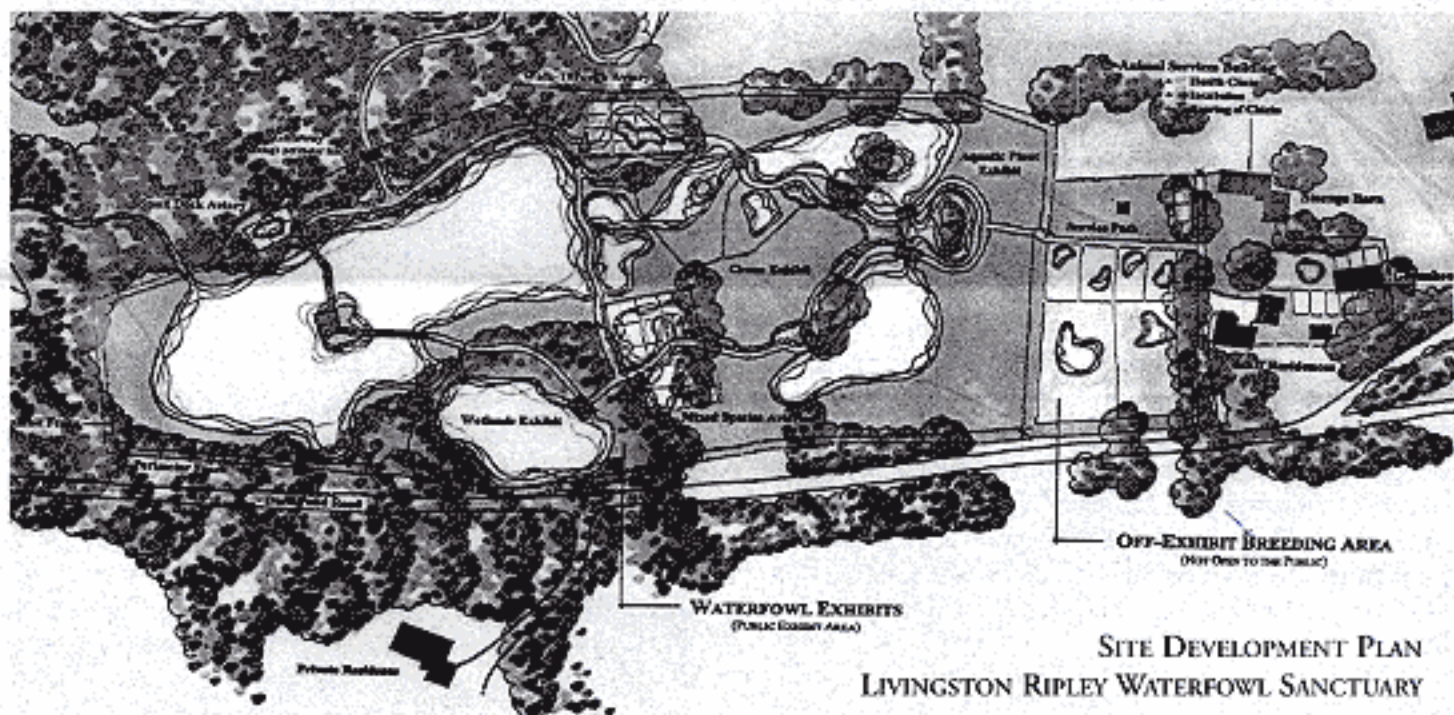
# LIVINGSTON RIPLEY WATERFOWL SANCTUARY

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Fall 2002

## Board of Directors

Dr. George Archibald, Chairperson; Dr. Thomas Lovejoy, President; Ms. Sylvia Ripley Addison, Vice President; Ms. Rosemary Livingston Ripley, Treasurer; Ms. Julie Ripley Miller, Secretary; Mr. T. Dennis Williams, Mr. Michael Bean, Avian & Operations Director.



The last twelve months have been filled with exciting developments for LRWS!

Beginning a year ago, we commenced the planning process for a substantial renovation of our ponds and other water habitats. Our major ponds were constructed in the 1940's and 1960's, and over the ensuing years, their banks had gradually eroded, causing the ponds to become increasingly shallow. As a result, especially on hot summer days, the water temperatures would rise and the ponds would fill with algae, making less than ideal swimming conditions for our ducks, geese and swans!

With the assistance of Mr. Joel Hamilton from Environments: Designs for Human Nature, a company which has worked with numerous zoos, the Board developed a "master" plan, a phased plan for renovating the Sanctuary facilities. The first phase, which is virtually complete, required dredging the ponds to a minimum depth of five feet. This necessitated approvals from the Litchfield Inland Wetlands Commission, which we received in 2001. With maps and permits in hand, we began interviewing construction firms which could assist us with this unusual project. After receiving two propos-

als for each aspect of the work, we began looking for the means to make these dreams a reality and were thrilled to receive two grants that would cover phase one! One grant was made by the Scherr Thoss Foundations and the other by Mr. Joseph F. Cullman III. Both groups are well known for their very generous philanthropic giving. The Scherr Thoss Foundations have been instrumental to numerous important projects in Litchfield, and Mr. Cullman is an avid naturalist who is committed to environmental conservation.

The dredging began on August 1st and continued to the end of September. Lots of heavy equipment was needed, including bulldozers, an excavator, and articulating dump trucks. We trucked boulders in to be placed carefully like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle around the edges of the ponds to reduce erosion and support the banks. Finally, the grounds were reseeded with grass seed, and we hope that the Ragged Robin and Queen Anne's Lace will reseed themselves. As Mike Bean, our avian and operations director, said on any given day he felt like Fred Flintstone presiding over Bedrock and sometimes even bedlam!



*Dredging the large pond.*

*Photo: Darryl S. Nicholson, Jr.*

By the end of September, we began working on resurfacing the pools in seven of the birds' pens. This first required moving all of the birds, which had been crowded together while the large ponds were being dredged, into other pens or back into the large ponds. Next, drainage pipes had to be laid to separate each pen's water source from the others, and then the old concrete pools were broken up and removed. New holes were subsequently created and a swimming pool company came in to create seven small pools. Once completed, these pools will be easier to keep clean and maintain, thus deterring the transmission of diseases and improving the overall conditions for the birds.



*Lining the pond with boulders.*

*Photo: Rosemary Ripley*

While this has been a busy and exciting summer, we are already beginning preparations for phase two of our plan. This part of the project entails configuring the pens and fencing for our revised flock plan. This requires careful consideration of how many species we plan to keep in total (currently we have over 60 species). In addition we must consider which species we will focus on breeding, and how to display our birds for maximum interest and education of our visitors. We also plan to install an additional perimeter fence to enhance security and comply with the recommended guidelines of the American Zoological Association. New pathways and boardwalks

will also be created to facilitate self-guided tours and improve the separation of our visitors from the waterfowl. We hope you will plan to come and see (and even help) our plans become a reality!



*Canal pond completed.*

*Photo: Darryl S. Nicholson, Jr.*

## NEW ARRIVALS

During the last year, we acquired a species we have not had at the Sanctuary for roughly two decades: the Cape Barren or Cereopsis goose. These beautiful grey birds with greenish-yellow beaks are native to southern Australia, Tasmania and the surrounding islands.

Unlike most waterfowl which prefer aquatic environments, the Cape Barren geese live primarily on grasslands and in pasture areas. While they inhabit coastal regions, these geese rarely swim in salt water. Even copulation occurs on land, which is atypical of waterfowl. These geese feed on succulent grasses and sedges with a high water content to supplement their fluids. Highly developed salt glands facilitate the birds' ability to extract fresh water from salty grasses near the sea.

During breeding, the Cereopsis can become extremely territorial like many other species, but at other times, they gather in flocks. Once the breeding season starts, they head inland where they will use fresh water areas for chick-rearing and molting. Nests are generally located in areas of high visibility in lowland pastures or occasional-



*Cereopsis Goose.*

*Photo: Michael Bean*

ly in trees. Typically, these geese will lay a clutch of 3 to 6 eggs and incubation is 35 days. Like most geese, this species generally mates for life and both sexes are active in rearing their young.

During the 1960's, the number of *Cereopsis* geese in the wild declined precipitously due to over-hunting. In the ensuing years a number of nature reserves were created and available farming land provided favorable habitat so that by the late 1980's the wild population was estimated at 16,000 to 18,000 individuals. *Cereopsis* geese are not abundant in captivity, and we anticipate that visitors will be interested and excited by the chance to see them.

### COLLECTION PLAN

As renovation of the Sanctuary's ponds nears completion, efforts are being directed towards the development of a waterfowl collection plan. This plan will provide a method to insure that the waterfowl collection reflects the Sanctuary's mission, goals and master plan both now and into the future.



Components will include justification for maintaining certain species, propagation plans for these species, the planned acquisition of new species and the phasing out of others currently in the collection. Criteria used to determine these components will be: status in captivity and the wild, usefulness in education programs, availability, exhibition value, staff expertise, adequate off-exhibit propagation space, and the potential to cooperate with other captive waterfowl programs to provide long-term management. While the Sanctuary's collection plan will provide guidance, it will be also be flexible enough to allow the Sanctuary to react to the changing availability of waterfowl, the development of new programs and the changing needs of existing programs.

### TOUR INFORMATION

Tours are available on Saturdays in June and July at 2:00 p.m. The cost is \$8.00 per person; children under 12 are free. Please call (860) 567-1691 for further information or send us an email at [duckpondroad@snet.net](mailto:duckpondroad@snet.net).

### 2002 GIFTS TO LRWS

Mr. & Mrs. Christopher Abelt  
Mr. & Mrs. William L. Bird, Jr.  
Ms. June Bingham Birge  
Mr. Guy Bocchino  
Mr. & Mrs. John Booth  
Mrs. Jackson Burke  
Ms. Ellen Burns & Mr. Darwin Ellis  
Mrs. Miriam Crocker  
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Devine  
Mr. William Caldwell  
Brig. Gen. & Mrs. T. J. Camp, Jr.  
Mr. & Mrs. David Challinor  
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph F. Cullman, 3rd  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert deCourey  
Mr. Sidney G. Dillon  
Ms. Carleen Falconer  
Ms. Carole French  
Ms. Frederica R. French  
Mr. Bob Gerber  
Ms. Martha Vietor Glass  
Mrs. August Heckscher  
Dr. Barbara L. Hempstead  
Honorable Frances L. Kellogg  
Mr. & Mrs. Abram Lerner  
Mrs. Alexander E. Liggett  
Mr. & Mrs. Paynter  
Mr. & Mrs. Graham L. Platt  
Miss Priscila Manning Porter  
Mr. Jonah Ratsimbazafy  
Mr. & Mrs. Malcolm P. Ripley  
Mrs. Hans C. Seherr-Thoss  
Seherr Thoss Foundations  
Ms. Abby R. Simpson  
Mr. & Mrs. Seven C. Sommerfelt  
Mr. James E. Thompson  
Ms. Marjory H. Train  
Honorable & Mrs. Russell E. Train  
Mrs. Alexander O. Vietor  
Mr. & Mrs. John Yang

### DIRECTIONS TO LRWS

Directions to LRWS from Litchfield center: Take Rte. 202 West toward Bantam. From the center of town, travel 0.8 miles to traffic light (just past Stop & Shop shopping center on left) and turn right at the light onto Milton Road. Travel 1.2 miles on Milton Road, taking the third left turn onto Duck Pond Road, a small dirt road. Proceed 0.5 miles to the third driveway on the right, marked with wooden sign for Livingston Ripley Waterfowl Sanctuary. You will be met there.

