



Wildlife Habitat

When George McLean purchased the land, this particular area was mostly swamp, fed by the waters of Bissell Brook, which threads through the lands of what became the Game Refuge like the string of a necklace. McLean, whose foresight created a refuge for himself in his lifetime, also created a Refuge for 42 species of mammals, 194 species of birds, 19 species of fish, and for us all, as his legacy. As one of the early heroes what we now call the environmental movement, McLean studied the land, realized that an earthen dam would not survive the surging spring waters of the brook, and devised a solution that has lasted to this day.

**Help us Save and Restore
a Vital Wetland Habitat for
Animals, Fish, and Waterfowl**



Community Treasure

Almost everyone who discovers the McLean Game Refuge enters from Route 10 in Granby, wanders the woods road into the quiet, crosses a small bridge, and discovers Trout Pond, coming upon it without warning. The serene water, stirred only by Canada Geese, or by the shadows of fish beneath the surface, encourages reflection. Watching over the pond is the small chestnut log cabin, on whose porch generations of children, and several Presidents, have sat and wondered.

Seven hundred and fifty feet southwest of the present dam, McLean constructed a diversion system, which guaranteed the pond would have sufficient depth, but which also channeled a flow

of the brook around the pond. He had the swamp dredged, and constructed an earthen dike stretching some 1400 feet, across the area we think of as the dam, and then running up what would become the eastern side of the pond. East of that dike, the through flow of the brook joins the runoff from the pond that slips over the concrete spillway, and they slide under that bridge we all cross when entering the Refuge. In the middle of the pond McLean built islands of the dredged swamp materials, to create refuges for ground-nesting birds from foxes and raccoons. They look like they've always been there, but they grew from seeds in the Senator's imagination and foresight.



Historical Legacy

Trout Pond is an historic monument of national importance. Senator McLean was a conservation activist who appointed the nation's first state forester while Governor in 1901. Early in his Senate career, he wrote the first Migratory Waterfowl Act. Trout Pond is symbolic of his forward thinking. He entertained three Presidents – Coolidge, Taft, and Hoover – at the pond for fishing. It was stocked with trout, which could migrate into cooler water upstream.

Gifford Pinchot was a close friend of the Senator. Pinchot was born in Simsbury, and was the first American educated as a professional forester. He became the first Chief of the U.S. Forest Service and later was elected Governor of Pennsylvania. No doubt the two early conservation leaders pressed their mutual agenda while enjoying the view from Trout Pond.



Local Landmark

Trout Pond is the jewel in the crown of the more than 4,400 acres of land that is the McLean Game Refuge. As once rural and wild, wooded hills and valleys have grown into suburban developments, Senator McLean's vision offers not only recreational and spiritual respite, but a veritable museum of what this region we love used to be.

