

About the Painting

Indian Hill is the town's most recent open space preservation project. It is a mix of meadows and mature deciduous forest with walking trails that lead to the Indian Hill Reservoir and the town's Cherry Hill property. Stonewalls and cart paths lace the property, a reminder of its past land-use as designed by Ben Perley Poore in the mid 19th century. Now it is habitat for owl, hawk, deer, coyote and a plethora of plant and wildlife. It is a majestic sight when one drives around the Indian Hill Reservoir and sees its pristine form, mostly void of houses, roadways and lights. The added benefit of this open space is that it is connected to other parcels of protected open space.

The painting, "Indian Hill Reservoir", is done in a folk art style which shares traditions specific to West Newbury. The foreground portrays several apple trees on town open space, the former Cherry Hill Nursery property, planted by John Thurlow in 1991 and 1992. The trees are in a line bisecting a field that abuts Indian Hill Reservoir. It was curious to the artist as to why there wasn't a whole orchard or more than one row of apple trees. Upon inquiring, Ms. Mansfield learned that Mr. Thurlow, whose family founded Cherry Hill Nurseries, planted this row of trees at the end of his vegetable garden. They are located in a place where the garden's fertile soil changed to a rocky substrate, good for fruit-bearing trees; not for vegetables. The apple trees came from the Geneva Experimental Farm in New York. Interestingly, one of the trees is of an antique variety, Cox's Orange Pippin, known for its excellent flavor! Canada geese flying overhead, a family picking apples and a person horseback riding adorn the painting. This imagery portrays recreational activities many West Newbury residents enjoy. With its stately presence in the background, one can contemplate a peaceful view from Indian Hill, down to the reservoir and around to the Cherry Hill property!

The original painting is painted in acrylic on a piece of plywood. A simple painted border of apples and leaves frame in the main subject. This piece is intended to reflect the traditions of West Newbury, open space and its availability to all!

About the Artist

Tricia Mansfield is a West Newbury resident who paints landscape and nature scenes in both acrylics and oils. She is a graduate of Connecticut College and Tufts University. As a wetlands wildlife researcher, her fascination and study of nature has led her to spend many years observing and documenting various flora and fauna in coastal New England. With her practical experience as a naturalist, she began incorporating nature into her artistic themes. In the past few years, her unique style of folk art, deeply influenced by impressionistic landscape painters, has made its way to the palette and canvas. Much of her work portrays nature, land use and environmental elements. Many times her finished paintings inspire people familiar with her subjects to tell their "story" behind her paintings. Ms. Mansfield welcomes this dialog and is reminded of the deep connections people have to their community and its natural elements. At the present time Ms. Mansfield also serves on the vestry of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Newburyport and participates in on a long term vernal pool study at the Massachusetts Audubon's Ipswich Wildlife Sanctuary. She recently served on the Greater Newburyport YWCA's Board of Directors for three years and All Saint's Episcopal Church's Executive Committee for a year and a half.