



Canton Land Conservation Trust, Inc.
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CLCT also accepts donations and payments over \$20 by major credit cards (Master Card, Visa, Discover and American Express). You can also designate a donation be applied to the Pollinator Pathways Fund.

Please go to our website:

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Find the **DONATE HERE** button

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Canton Land Conservation Trust

Events:

June 5 Trails Day Hike
June 6 Annual CLCT Meeting
June 20 - Sep 22 Summer Hiking Challenge



The Canton Land Conservation Trust, Inc.

Spring 2021 Newsletter

President's Message

Covid still affects our daily lives, including land trust activities, although there are signs of light at the end of the tunnel.

We curtailed our monthly hikes last year, but we did have a successful cross-country ski event over the winter, and we plan to restore our regular hikes soon. See an accompanying article about our monthly hikes plan. The Canton Land Trust Challenge was specifically designed as an activity that could be done within Covid constraints, but it was quite popular and we plan to repeat it. Find information on page 5.

We will have an annual meeting in June, although we have not yet settled on whether it can be held in person or must be virtual.

We are making progress on an overdue initiative – redoing maps of our properties and trails. There is an accompanying article talking about the progress, which is likely to produce tangible results by summer.

The stewardship committee and volunteers have been active, not just with the usual cleanup of existing trails, but with the creation of several new trails. We also embarking on an interesting experiment – we reached out to the town to offer help with stewardship activities on the town-owned Carpenter property at 105 Case street. There is an existing trail on that property which needs some attention, and Town officials accepted our offer to help. This initiative is in the early stages but progressing nicely.

For obvious reasons, we had to cancel one of our major events of the year, the annual dinner which typically included a silent auction and an engaging guest speaker. That dinner provided an opportunity for the membership to interact socially, and that aspect was lost, but Karen Berger and Donna Erickson converted the auction items into a one-time online sale which went very well.



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Our planned guest speaker, Kimberly Stoner, Ph.D., entomologist with the state Agricultural Experiment Station in New Haven, agreed to convert her in-person presentation to a Zoom presentation. While we have been using Zoom for board and stewardship meetings, opening a Zoom meeting to the entire membership was a new step for us. It went very well and may turn out to be a template for future educational initiatives. There is an accompanying article about Dr. Stoner's presentation and a related article by Katie Blake on spring planting for birds and pollinators.

By Phil Philbrick

Sigman Acquisition Added to Bunker Hill Preserve



The land trust has acquired a 12-acre parcel of land located at 45-B West Road.

In 2006, we acquired a parcel of land on Bunker Hill Road, commonly referred to as the Sweeton Pasture. It was 39 acres when acquired, but the area increased to 43 acres after receiving a donation of four contiguous acres from Tom and

Sherry Goodwin in 2018. The recent acquisition, commonly referred to as the Sigman property because it was carved off from property owned by former board member Robert Sigman, is also contiguous to the Sweeton Pasture.

We have recently decided to refer to the combination of the three properties as the Bunker Hill Preserve, which now is 55 acres in size. Volunteers had started flagging a possible trail on the Sweeton Pasture property, but we put that initiative on hold when we began negotiations for the Sigman property. We are likely to continue work on the trail in the future, now with the ability to extend

the trail down to Cherry Brook. The property originally owned by Robert Sigman is located on West Road, with a portion on the east side of Cherry Brook and a portion on the west side of Cherry Brook. The brook was used as a dividing line, and the land trust, with the assistance of a DEEP grant, acquired the portion on the west side of Cherry Brook with the property.

By Phil Philbrick



Crew Removes Invasives from Bunker Hill Preserve



On an early January morning, under the leadership of CLCT member Bob Evenski, a crew of eight land trust members gathered at the 45-acre Bunker Hill Preserve to remove invasive Japanese barberry plants while ticks were dormant. (Japanese barberries are a tick magnet.) The blanket of leaves on the forest floor served to insulate the ground so it wasn't frozen.

The crew removed a stand of barberry plants and any other invasives while we were at it, such as Asian bittersweet and burning

bush. Another benefit to removing invasive plants in the winter or early spring is that the process doesn't spread seed, berries or pollen. (Barberry is one of the first understory bushes to green up in the spring, but with its distinctive spines and dense growth pattern, it is easy to identify. If possible, cut it down with heavy puncture-proof gloves before its early flowers – blooming March–April – have a chance to develop into red berries.)



Whenever possible, we dug up the roots of the persistent invasive and cut the shrub close to the

ground if removal was impossible. The four-tine pitchfork allowed volunteers to loosen the soil around rocks and tree roots to extract the shrubs with their shallow roots still attached.

This was only our first shot at removing barberry on this property, and it will not be our last such endeavor. We've formed an invasive removal committee called the Bittersweet Brigade and welcome volunteers to help remove invasives from all Land Trust properties. It's amazing what eight determined people can accomplish in a couple of hours of work. If you want to join the next invasive removal work crew, please contact Holly Hambleton, coordinator of the Bittersweet Brigade, at HollyHamb@comcast.net.

By Theresa Sullivan Barger

Spring Cleaning for Birds and Bees

Spring is a great time to get yourself organized for welcoming back birds and pollinators to your yard. Here are a few tips for some spring yard cleaning and creating a wild-life-friendly yard:

Dust off your garden tools and supplies in preparation for planting in May. When you start mowing your lawn again, set your mower height to 3 inches or higher to promote healthy growth. Leave the clippings as a mulch for your lawn.



Clean up your garden beds: chop old perennial flower stalks; find plants by looking for early sprouting through the mulch and leaves and mark them with plant markers to keep track as you add to your garden.

Order your native plants and mark out where you'll plant them in your yard. Try the Native Plant Trust Nasami Farm nursery. Plan to plant your garden or habitat before a predicted rain forecast. This will give your plants a boost to help them establish quickly to their new environment.

Pollinators such as butterflies are very important for the ecosystem. Help provide a habitat for them by planting milkweed for monarchs and avoid pesticides. Join Canton's Pollinator Pathway effort by creating a pollinator garden in your yard or by joining local efforts such as the Collinsville Pollen Trail.

Get excited about warbler migration: Learn and listen to audio recordings of the birds' calls and their migration paths. Keep a checklist of which birds show up in your backyard.

In April, Hummingbirds begin returning from their winter home in Central America. Fill your humming-



bird feeders. Dissolve one part sugar into four parts boiling water. Cool the mixture before setting it out for the birds, and be sure to clean your feeder each time you refill it. Also, download the Audubon Hummingbirds at Home app and help collect valuable data for scientists monitoring their populations.

Remember, there are always incredible habitats and wildlife to see on Canton Land Trust trails.

By Katie Blake

CLCT Hosts Cross Country Ski Event

It appears with climate change, cross country ski conditions in Connecticut occur about every 3 to 5 years, usually in the month of February. This year was great; we finally had excellent conditions and

held our cross-country ski event at the Sun, Wind and Woodland preserve on Saturday, Feb. 13. One person on snowshoes and six skiers enjoyed the trails, which had been packed down by previous skiers and

snowshoes. Hopefully, we will have another great ski season in 2022, with more blizzards, steady winter temperatures and more people to enjoy it.

By John Pech



2020 Silent Auction Emerges One Year Later as Online Sale

This spring's silent auction was different from past, in-person silent auctions where we could enjoy each other's company while perusing the unique items. However, we did reach a wider audience, the purchases still benefitted the CLCT and I heard interesting stories from some buyers which they are permitting me to share.

Christina "Tina" Oswald, a CLCT member, has lived in Canton for 30+ years. This last year found her expanding her garden, biking the trail and joining CLCT led hikes. She particularly likes Jay Kaplan's hikes because he makes her laugh. Tina feels more connected to the community now and as a "worker bee" is eager to meet other volunteers on some CLCT or Collinsville Pollen Trail projects. The "Just Bee kind" shirt seems to fit her well.

When a young woman picked up the signed Red Sox baseball, I asked if she was a Sox fan. She said that it wasn't for her; she bought it for her physical therapy client who decorates his walker with Red Sox banners and stickers. She is eager to give him the ball when they can again meet safely. Pitcher Eduardo Rodriguez would be pleased.

Christine and Ahren Paulson were searching for more outdoor space when they found the right fit in Canton near a CLCT property. They operate Ratlum Mountain Animal Rescue for domestic and wild animals. As new members of CLCT, they supported our online sale and took home the bird bath and Audubon bird feeders. Check out their website, <https://www.ratlum-rescue.org/about>

The Summer Challenge intrigued Suzanne Petke, who, along with her husband Steve Petke, is a CLCT member from Bloomfield, and asked her friend Janet Traceski to join her in the hiking challenge, which the longtime friends completed together. Suzanne recently joined the Wintonbury Land Trust Board. (Steve can be heard on NEPM, New England Public Media on Saturdays.)

Thank you to all who donated items to the Silent Auction, all who purchased treasures from the online sale and the many who shared the stories of their connection to the Canton Land Conservation Trust. A special thanks to Donna Eriksen and Christian Winkler who created the attractive online sale site.

By Karen Berger

Hike of the Month Update

The CLCT's Hike of the Month has been growing in popularity and bringing more and more people onto our trails and into the preserves. But COVID-19 certainly put a crimp in our monthly hikes. We are grateful to the handful of leaders who continued to lead hikes – wearing masks and socially distancing, with advance registration and limited numbers. Jay Kaplan led several small bird walks; Nate Cantwell led a couple of hikes on new trails; and John Pech finally had enough snow to hold his annual cross-country ski trip in February, which is often canceled for lack of the white stuff. We're pleased that, with the advent of warm weather and vaccinations, we'll soon be back to a regular schedule of hikes. We'll continue with the COVID-19 protocols, but will welcome larger groups and a gradual return to normalcy. In the meantime, please enjoy the preserves on your own. Adventure awaits.

By Sarah Faulkner



Mark CT Trails Day with Land Trust Hike

Start your self-guided hike on Saturday, June 5 at the Canton Land Conservation Trust's Sun, Wind and Woodlands Preserve parking lot at 151 Breezy Hill Road (Breezy Hill is a rough dirt road off of Route 44. Use Indian Hill Road to connect to the paved portion of Breezy Hill Road.) Land Trust Board members will greet you between 10 a.m. and noon, provide you with maps and advice, and send you on your socially distanced, individual hikes on our trails. There are several preserves in close proximity; you can choose. Hikes can be short or long, easy, moderate or challenging – we'll help you choose your options.

Wear sturdy walking shoes, bug spray, and please leave dogs at home. In case of bad weather, check the Canton Land Trust website at www.CantonLandTrust.org Please RSVP if possible.

Leaders:

Nate Cantwell and Sarah Faulkner

Leader's Contact Info:

860-693-6224

mcclavecantwell@aol.com

By Sarah Faulkner

Land Trust Brings Back Summer Challenge

The CLCT is excited to announce the 2021 Land Trust Summer Challenge. The Land Trust created the First Annual CLCT Summer Challenge last summer to encourage hikers to get outside and enjoy our local trails. We invited members and non-members alike to participate in the hiking challenge, which included eight different hikes with a total distance of just over 23 miles. We hoped that including a variety of our trails might introduce or re-introduce hikers to the diversity of trails right here in Canton; our trails include breathtaking vistas, unique geology, remnants of Canton's history and a myriad of babbling brooks.

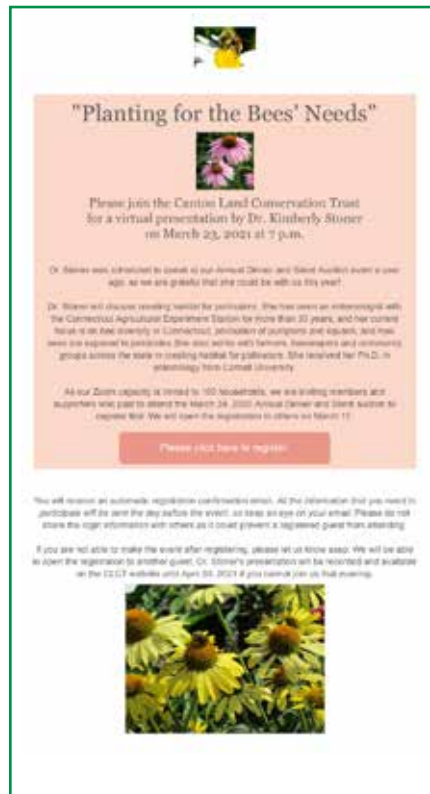
Our inaugural Summer Challenge was met with enthusiasm, with many hikers informing us that the event inspired them to try new trails, and over 25 people completed the entire Challenge. We hope that you will take on the Challenge this summer. The Challenge is not a race; the goal is to complete (and enjoy) all of the hikes during the summer.

The Summer Challenge will officially begin on June 20, 2021, and continue through the summer, ending Sept. 22, 2021. Successful participants will receive a completion gift, a certificate and, of course, local bragging rights.

More information about the Land Trust Summer Challenge, including this year's hiking legs and distances, will be available on our website, www.cantonlandtrust.org, by mid-June.

By Jen Mason

Scientist Gives Virtual Talk 'Planting for the Bees' Needs' on March 23rd



Because of the pandemic, we cancelled our annual dinner this March for the second year, but the Canton Land Conservation Trust pivoted and offered our first virtual presentation instead. We welcomed Kimberly Stoner, Ph.D., entomologist with the state Agricultural Experiment Station in New Haven, on March 23 for a presentation entitled "Planting for the Bees' Needs." Dr. Stoner explained what is contributing to the decline of native bees and what we can do to help the bees and other pollinators. First, we should avoid neonicotinoids, which are insecticides that take a year to

break down; 94 percent of neonicotinoids end up in the soil and waterways, she said. Other factors contributing to the decline of bees are pollution, urbanization, lights on at night, deforestation, insecticides and introduced species.

She introduced us to the wide variety of bees and wasps found in Connecticut, described their essential roles in pollination, and helped us better understand their planting and feeding needs in our ecosystems. We need pollinators, she said: 87 percent of all plant species are pollinated by bees, flies, wasps, moths, butterflies, bats, birds or ants.

To help the bees and other pollinators, she suggested planting flowers, shrubs and trees that bloom early in the spring and late in the fall, when food for pollinators is scarcer. Most native bees are solitary bees and don't sting, she said. While some wasps can be aggressive, very few wasp species sting. In the fall, she suggested, leave the leaves in the garden beds and shrub areas to provide a habitat for fireflies, butterflies and bees to overwinter.

A recording of Dr. Stoner's presentation can be found on the CLCT website, and she provided several web resources.

By Theresa Sullivan Barger

Additional Resources:

- Dr. Stoner's pollinator page with the CT Agricultural Experiment Station: <https://portal.ct.gov/CAES/Publications/Publications/Pollinator-Information>
- Pollinator Pathway resources page: <https://www.pollinator-pathway.org/resources>
- National Wildlife Federation's Native Plant Finder (helps you locate native plants for your area): <https://www.nwf.org/nativeplantfinder/plants>



Canton Land Conservation Trust, Inc
MEMBER NEWSLETTER
SPRING, 1996

Quarter Century Spotlight

In the spring of 1996, the newsletter announced the publication of “properties and trails of the Canton Land Conservation Trust” booklet. It provided some useful tips for hikers which are still valid today. The map from that booklet is reproduced below. The newsletter noted the contributions of many individuals, but especially Jay Kaplan and Shirley Sutton.

The newsletter announced four new board members: Baldwin

Terry, better known as “Bunny,” who served as treasurer and Shirley Sutton who served as secretary. The other two new board members are still on the board — John Pech and Elenor Smith. Congratulations to both of them for their quarter century of service to the land trust. Also thanks to Jay Kaplan for his 25-plus years of volunteer service to the Land Trust in many different roles.

By Phil Philbrick



The Swibold Trail at 727 Cherry Brook Road is our newest trail. It is Yellow-blazed and ready for hikers.



On which trail might you find these trees?



1996



2021



The two maps above demonstrate the increased acreage that the Canton Land Conservation Trust has acquired or preserved over the past 25 years.

Canton Land Conservation Trust — Properties and Trails

Look for our distinctive “Canton-shaped” signs.

CONKLIN SANCTUARY TRAILS

144 Indian Hill Road

- Ray Smith Trail **Red /Yellow**
- Tommy Ryan Trail: **Green**

SMITH TREE FARM TRAILS

53 Doyle Road

- Charlotte Craig Trail: **Yellow**
- Ted Wright Trail: **Yellow**

SUN, WIND, AND WOODLAND TRAILS

151 Breezy Hill Road

(Breezy Hill is a rough dirt road off of Route 44— use Indian Hill Road to connect to Breezy Hill)

- Arthur & Eunice Sweeton Trail: **Yellow**
- Barbour Woods Trail: **Blue**
- Barbour Woods Trail Spur: **Green**
- Barbour Woods Cutoff: **Yellow w/ Blue dots**
- Fred Feibel Trail: **Red**
- Taylor Road Extension (Taylor Rd to Barbour Wood): **flagged**
- Sun, Wind and Woodland Trail: **Yellow**
- Taylor-Moses Trail: **Yellow w/ Blue dots**
- Tom Perry Trail: **Red**
- Breezy Hill Farm Trails: **Yellow**

SWAN PRESERVE TRAILS

25 Case Street

- Swan Blue Trail
- Swan Red Trail
- Swan Yellow Trail
- Ted Cowles Trail: **White**

WINSOR WOODS TRAILS

West Simsbury Road

- White Trail
- Blue Trail
- Yellow Trail
- Red Trail
- Orange Trail

SWEETHEART MOUNTAIN TRAILS

80 Dunne Ave & 36 Sweetheart

- Mountain Road
- Red Trail
- Blue Trail
- Yellow Trail
- Blue with White dot Trail

UPLANDS PRESERVE TRAILS

End of Uplands Drive & end of Westwood Drive

- Blue Trail
- Yellow Trail
- Westwood: **flagged***

GOEDECKE-HUMPHREY TRAILS

23 West Road

- Orange Trail
- Blue Trail

Other Trails

ROARING BROOK ORANGE AND BREWSTER TRAILS

70 Gracy Road

- Roaring Orange Loop
- Brewster Trail

NOEL BAKER PRESERVE

(across from) 16 Hansen Road

- Noel Baker Trail: **flagged***

SWIBOLD PRESERVE

727 Cherry Brook Road

- Swibold Trail: **Yellow**

TOWN OWNED

- Carpenter Trail
105 Case Street
- Cannon Trails
546 Cherrybrook Road

New BUNKER HILL PRESERVE

77 Bunker Hill Road

- Sweeton Pasture Trail - **flagged***



* Trail has been planned and flagged but not yet blazed

Map Initiative Takes Shape

Your land trust has maps of our properties and trails in various places. Property and trail maps can be found on our website; some trail maps can be found in a Google map; and some trails have been added to an online app known as AllTrails. We have long known that our online trail maps need an upgrade, partially because we created some brand-new trails that aren't shown on the maps and partly because the quality of the trail maps doesn't match current technology.

This should all change in the coming months. We have hired Steve Perry, owner of Sperry Geospatial, LLC to upgrade our

maps. The initial steps will include upgrading maps on our website, but those maps will also be used as part of longer-term projects to create a walk book and to investigate adding an open space layer to the maps on the town GIS website.

Steve Perry has provided a first draft to us. As might be expected, the initial draft has some issues that need to be addressed. In some cases, we must do some careful checking of property boundaries relative to hiking trails. The review process will take some time, but we hope to announce new, improved maps in the coming months.

If you would like to check out a sample of his work, look at the map for the Dismal Brook Wildlife Preserve on the Granby Land Trust page:

<https://granbylandtrust.org/glt/dismal-brook-wildlife-preserve/>

You can go directly to the link listed above, or you can access the Granby Land Trust website from the links section of the Canton Land Conservation Trust website, and find the page under the “Trails” tab. You can also access an interactive property map from the Granby Land Trust site.

By Phil Philbrick

Meet Bob Evenski — Our Stewardship Volunteer Coordinator

CLCT is always seeking new volunteers, and in January of 2021 Bob Evenski answered the call. He took on the huge task of coordinating the property and trail stewards for lands that are under our protection. He began by working with our stewardship committee to identify areas in need and in the process became familiar with and walked most of the trails that we maintain. In the dark days of winter, he contacted all of the 70-plus volunteers who had expressed an interest in helping out and organized our database of volun-

teers, stewards and work crews.

Some of the first in-the-field projects he took on were finding the boundary pins off of Dunne Avenue for our Sweetheart Mountain property, along with the location of our yellow trail. In January, he led the group of volunteers who removed barberry and other invasive plants at the Bunker Hill preserve. He then expanded to projects at Windsor Woods and Swan in consultation with Phil Phil-



brick and Scott Persing. In March, he resolved a boundary encroachment issue at Uplands. And the list of projects goes on.

On April 30 a huge tree fell at Swan that blocked access to our trail. Bob organized the trail crew who got the trail cleared and the job done within three days.

By Holly Hambleton



Curiosity and COVID Contribute to New Trail

The credit for this new trail should go to COVID-19. In an effort to get away from the snacks in the house (and to work off those I hadn't shunned), I was walking the Sweeton and Barbour Woods trails pretty much on a daily basis this fall. I kept wondering what else lay between these two trails and if I could find a way around the wet spots on Barbour Woods.

So, one day, armed with a roll of yellow "crime" tape, in lieu of the proverbial bread crumbs, a hand saw and the AllTrails app on my phone, I set off into the woods from the southeastern edge of the Barbour Woods trail, about 100 feet past where it leaves Taylor Road. My thought was to make a diagonal pass from there to the Sweeton

trailhead off Breezy Hill Road and to see if I could find points of interest along the way.

However, I kept getting tangled in mountain laurel thickets or found myself on the edge of rocky, steep descents, and twice, I landed right



back onto the Barbour Woods trail. I finally hung several pieces of the yellow tape, high enough so I could see them, and then set out from the northern end of the Sweeton trail. The mountain laurel proved

too thick for the first 500 feet or so off the Sweeton trail but I finally found a way down to the gorge, where I discovered a lovely vernal pool. From there I walked over the stream and up the hill until I spotted the tape I had hung previously, and voila — the trail was now connected. Nate Cantwell and Scott Persing then walked the trail with my husband, Roger and me, and they helped clear a trail.

We were so enamored with the electric chain saw that Nate was carrying, that we went out and treated ourselves to an early Christmas present. We are now armed and ready for more trail work.

By Karen Manternach

Trail Stewards Meet Increased Demand with New Trails

This past year brought about more usage of our trails throughout every month, and the winter saw more signs of snowshoes and skis. Luckily, there are now more active trail stewards spreading out the work needed to define, build and maintain the trails. We've added some trails, modified others and have more proposed.

At the Noel Baker Preserve on Hansen Road, there will be a loop through the woods, passing an interesting rock outcropping cut through by a brook. At one point, this area was a well-established field, now grown over. We have been trying to involve the Scouts in trail maintenance, as they have made nice efforts on other trails in the past. The Bunker Hill Road/West Road parcels (Sweeton, Goodman and the new Sigman) are going to have a trail plotted out that connects the parcels, with improved parking along Bunker Hill Road.



Heading out from the red blazed Fred and Miller Feibel trail, a new trail, as yet unnamed, has been cut and approved, with its blazing pending. It heads through young forest and over to what is known as Taylor Hill Road, a long-abandoned colonial era north-south road which is part of our Barbour Woods trail.

The new trail runs through an area that has private property on one side of the trail that hikers will need to respect.



The green blazed Barbour Woods Extension now has been lengthened northwest along Barbour Brook to the intersection of Barbourtown and Breezy Hill Roads. Parking for a car off the road is available at the intersection, with more room along Breezy Hill Road on the other side of the stop sign. If you have dogs who like to get wet, this stretch has plenty of "water features." Once an agricultural field, thousands of large stones were moved to line the brook to make the remaining land more useful. Please imagine the work involved in the era of oxen teams, manpower and stone sleds. The short new section can be used alone or to get to the little-used but long-established, doughnut-calorie burning section of Barbour Woods Extension that runs uphill from Barbourtown Road. Passing stone piles and walls, old wells and foundations, trail users can get long views from the upper trail section in the spring and autumn.

The newly yellow/blue blazed Taylor/Moses trail cuts from the Sun, Wind and Woodland trail to Breezy

Hill Road, traversing an old farm with stonewalls, a hand-dug well and a foundation that can hold more water than the well (another dog



"water feature"). The Moses family provided the town with timber in the 1850's with the possibility of a sawmill in this area. Metal wagon remains are surrounded by stones, (possibly an old shed foundation).

The roughly east/west blue/yellow blazed Taylor Hill Road Bypass is a new trail that was plotted out, cut, cleaned and detailed by Karen and Roger Manternach. (Thanks go out to them. Please see article on page 8) It is a pleasant up and down meander



through hill and dale with one excellent "water feature" and adds a nice option for varying trail trips to keep the Land Trust trail experience fresh.

By Nate Cantwell

To volunteer please contact our Volunteer Coordinator:
 Bob Evenski
 Cell: 860-681-4459
 Email: revenski@att.net

Land Trust to Create Bird Checklists



Wood Thrush



Pileated Woodpecker



Catbird



Yellow Warbler



Blue winged Warbler

Recently, there have been requests for the Land Trust to publish a bird checklist that visitors may use when visiting CLCT properties and trails. There are several bird lists available: The Hartford Audubon Society's list includes all birds seen in New England and northeastern States, including many species not found on our Land Trust properties. Roaring Brook Nature Center's bird list includes species found at the Nature Center or in the immediate area. After careful consideration, Land Trust directors decided to develop a Land Trust bird checklist unique to those species found on the Land Trust properties.

Currently, the vast majority of the Trust's holdings encompass woodlands. A small portion of the Trust's properties include wetland habitats, but there are no large ponds or marshlands that harbor aquatic birds. Several years ago, the Trust logged 10 acres of the Sun, Wind and Woodland property on Breezy Hill Road for the express purpose of creating "brushland" habitat for declining species that require this habitat for breeding. Although the "bunny cut," as it is known, was

created with the hope of attracting the New England cottontail, there are numerous bird species that also utilize this kind of environment. A number of these birds are now declining in Connecticut due to the loss of suitable habitat. Preliminary observations tell us that this effort has been successful in attracting several of these "young forest" species.

The Land Trust checklist will not only list the birds that one may encounter on a visit to Land Trust properties, but will also provide guidelines on which habitats each species is most likely found. Keep in mind that birds, being able to fly, may appear in places where they are not expected. The checklist will also provide information on whether a bird is a year-round resident, a migrant on its way elsewhere or a species only seen during the winter months. Connecticut is now in the final year of a three-year effort to document the state's breeding birds. Visitors who see signs of nesting such as birds carrying nesting material, feeding young or other behaviors that may indicate breeding, are asked to make note of these

behaviors and report them to Jay Kaplan (jaybrd49@aol.com). Because birds are sometimes seen far out of their normal range, sightings of species that do not appear on this list should also be documented. A separate listing of birds that may occur as fly-overs, but do not reside on these Land Trust properties will also be part of the checklist. This would include birds like osprey and bald eagle that may be spotted flying over Land Trust properties, but do not live in close proximity to them due to lack of suitable habitat. We hope the checklist will be available by the start of the summer season. Once it's completed, it will be posted on the CLCT website, www.cantonlandtrust.org



Occasional bird walks led by knowledgeable guides are a great way to improve your bird identification skills. Check the Land Trust's website for upcoming bird walks on CLCT properties.

By Jay Kaplan



Scarlet Tanager



Baltimore Oriole



Redwinged Blackbird

Bird Photos Courtesy of Roaring Brook Nature Center

Poetry Trails

Inspiration beckons. Take a hike along the trails of the Mary Conklin Sanctuary and find five posted poems to enlarge your sense of wonder. From Emily Dickinson to Pablo Neruda, their words grow our connection to the living world.

Three podium-style writing stations stand along the trails. Equipped with pencils and a notebook, they offer opportunities to jot a few lines about what you see, hear and feel. Within the drawer of each box, you'll also find a few additional poems to stir your creativity. Let your imagination roam across a page.

Posted poems along the trails enable us not only to perceive nature through our own senses, but to share the vision of geniuses like poets Gary Snyder and Edna St. Vincent Millay. These writers can open us to new ways of looking at familiar surroundings.

At the writing stations, you need not be a budding Robert Frost or



write something for publication. Just jotting down a few thoughts about your observations and feelings while out in the woods focuses the mind, enhances memory and deepens experience. Reading the notebooks and writing in them also allows you to share thoughts with those who have been there and with hikers yet to come. It's an opportunity to have some fun with words.

Poetry trails have been established in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Vermont, Massachusetts and elsewhere. In Connecticut, poetry is posted on the blue-blazed Mattatuck Trail that runs through several towns in Litchfield and New Haven counties and the Finch Brook Trail in Wolcott.

Former Canton poet laureate Joan Hoffmann started the poetry trail at Mary Conklin Sanctuary a few years ago with two writing stations built by the late Ted Cowles. A third box that Ted built is now on the trail, thanks to the help of CLCT director Mike Gotaski.

Nature is a place to refresh our spirit. Poetry is an art that can connect that spirit to nature. Grab a pencil and paper and go.

*By David K. Leff
Canton Poet Laureate*



Photo by Rob Hyner

Barred Owl

Vigilant, Sphinx-like, perched high among spruce branches, solemn searchlight brown eyes pierce viscous darkness for barely visible frogs, crayfish, voles and snakes.

Hoohoo-hoohoo, hoohoo-hoohooooaw haunts the night air, draws me deep into shadowy woods. "Who cooks for you, who cooks for you-all" sounds mysterious, profound. Who's in my kitchen, I wonder.

Hard wired instinct of muscle and feathers, owls are sovereign over sage mnemonics. We've conflated concentration with intuition, visual acuity with wisdom, wondering why we aren't any wiser.

By David Leff