



SINCE 1972



Spring Newsletter 2022

CANTON LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

50th Anniversary Message

50 years ago, the first land trust president, Richard Sanger wrote:

The first year of the Canton Land Conservation Trust has been exciting and rewarding, mixed at times with frustration as we proceeded through the organizational stage and obtained our tax status.

It all began in January 1972 when the Conservation Commission applied to the Ford Foundation for a grant to establish the land trust. This consisted of \$750 outright and \$825 in a matching grant. We received the grant on May 4 and incorporated on May 22, 1972.

We published a brochure and mailed it in a general mailing through-out the town; made plans for a newsletter, of which this is the first; and with the help of many people throughout the town produced "Swiftly Flew the Years," a synchro-

nized, narrated slide presentation with background music.

Of course, the primary function is to obtain land and interest in land throughout the town for conservation purposes. We are currently negotiating with about 15 property owners in town for gifts of the land or interest in it and expect very soon we can report the transfer of deeds to the trust.

I wish to express my personal thanks to the members of the board for the diligence and loyalty that they have shown during this year and to the many interested citizens of Canton who are participating in this program. They've all made this first year a success and ensure the continued success of the land trust.

By Richard Sanger



Phil Philbrick with Harvey and Paige

50 years later, I am reminded of two conversations. I visited Dr. Fred Feibel to reminisce about the early days of the land trust, and he remarked, "I'm not sure how much people today appreciate what we have done but our grandkids will be thankful."

More recently, I had a conversation with a volunteer who is helping us update the website. She said she walked land trust trails every day and was thrilled for the opportunity to help give back to the organization.

Both are correct. It's the legacy of the founding members and the hundreds of volunteers over the past half-century that prompted the volunteer to be so excited about being involved, and it's our collective continued diligence that will prompt our grandchildren to be thankful for what we have accomplished.

By Phil Philbrick

The First 10 Deeded Transfers to CLCT

Charlotte Craig -----July 1973	Charlotte Craig Meadow
James and Judith Potter -----Sept. 1973	Meadow Road
Ruth B. Knode -----Dec. 1973	Rt. 179 Canton Center
Wilson F. Smith -----Dec. 1975	Smith Tree Farm
Edith A. Yakemore -----June 1975	Onion Mountain Preserve
Longshaw K. Porritt -----July 1975	Onion Mountain Preserve
Anne C. Paust -----Jan. 1976	Smith Tree Farm (Barkhamsted)
George C. Capen -----June 1976	Capen Cabin
Robert and Mark C. Yellin -----Dec. 1977	Carpenter (for Town of Canton)
Lee and Constance Fielden ---- March 1979	Robin Drive access to Cannon

By 1980 almost 119 Acres were protected



What is THAT?

A collection of surprising photos from the CLCT Preserves (answers on the last page)

1. You'll come around a bend and see – What is THAT??? – and you're likely to do a double-take and maybe even jump. But don't worry; it won't come after you. (heading north on the Arthur and Eunice Sweeton trail on the Sun, Wind and Woodlands property.)



Table of Contents

Uplands Purchase	2
50th Anniversary	2
What is THAT?	2, 8
Trails through the Seasons	3
Bluebird Houses	4
Summer Hike Challenge	5
Poem	5
Quarter Century Spotlight	6
In Gratitude	6
Past Hikes	7
Trail Report	7
2022 Hikes	7
Photo Contest	9
Dog Policy	9
Plans for Pratt Preserve	9
Invasive Bittersweet	10
CT Trails Day Hikes	11
Answers: What is THAT?	11

Land Purchase Expands Uplands Preserve

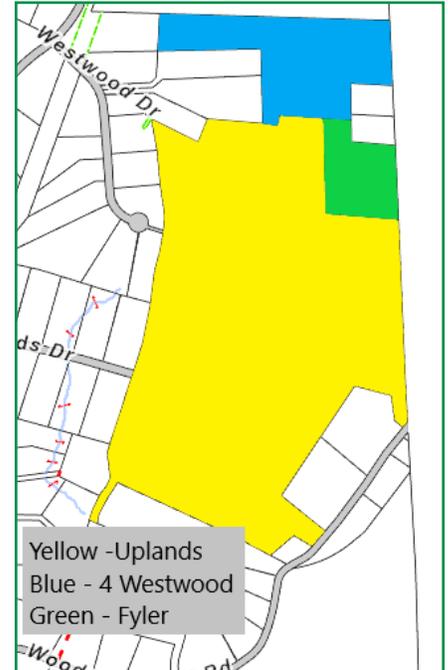
In November 2021, the land trust purchased 6.55 acres of land, called the Fyler property. Because the land is contiguous to our Uplands Preserve, it is now part of our Uplands Preserve, accessible both from Uplands Drive and Westwood Drive.

The rationale for the acquisition of this open space property can largely be explained by reference to the map that appears alongside this story. In 2006, the land trust purchased at auction a 76-acre parcel of property referred to as Uplands. The parcel is colored yellow in the nearby map.

In 2020, the land trust negotiated a swap, giving the town of Canton a parcel of property at 79 Commerce Dr., just south of Dowd Avenue, which the town used to create a dog park. In exchange, the town gave to CLCT the property colored in blue on the map, known as 4 Westwood.

The Fyler property, in green, now helps create a contiguous block of land, which is important for wildlife corridors.

By Phil Philbrick



Join Us for 50th Anniversary Celebration

We are celebrating the Canton Land Conservation Trust's 50th Anniversary with an evening celebration on Saturday, Sept. 10, 2022 at Ski Sundown in New Hartford. There will be dining and dancing into the night, with hours still to be announced. The band, Eight to the Bar, will perform.

We will be asking for volunteers to help between now and Sept. 10th. Volunteer tasks before the event include publicity, managing reservations, taking care of flowers and table decorations and planning the bonfire and luminaria. Contact Anne Duncan at annesvd7@gmail.com to volunteer.

Tickets will be \$100 per person. Stay tuned for an announcement via social media for when tickets become available – mid- to late-summer. Mark your calendars for this very special event. If you attended our evening celebration 10 years ago, you know we can throw a great party. Plan on a fun evening. We look forward to welcoming one and all.

By Anne Duncan

The 40th was a hit. Let's party again for the 50th.



Canton Land Trust Trails Through the Seasons

One of the great things we get to experience in New England is the change of seasons and the fresh new look that comes with those changes. We hope that you have been able to get onto one or more of the Land Trust trails in each of the seasons. As the leaves fell this past autumn, the woods literally opened to a whole new outlook. In that openness and brightness, you could clearly see distances that, under the lush growth of summer, were pretty much obscured. At the same time, the colorful leaves of autumn often obscured the trails and made hikers more dependent on the blazing on trees to keep them on track. In early fall, the mushrooms and other fungi could also be found in the leaf litter.



As winter approached and snow fell, still other views unfolded. There were clear tracks in that snow which gave an indication of the animals who call these properties their home. Tracks in the snow also told of people who traveled the trail before you. Some of those individuals may have been on snow shoes or cross-country skis, or perhaps it was you who was the first to leave tracks with skis, snowshoes or boots. At times this winter, trails became icy and micro-spikes or other aids were needed to safely traverse them. In any event, there were adventures to be had.



Now, with spring here, as you get on the trails you may find some to be rather wet, and you may need to take alternate routes to enjoy the evolving views. As trees and shrubs begin to green up and the canopy once again begins to limit the sunlight entering the woods, the sounds of wildlife and inhabitants like the spring peepers will fill the woodlands. Perhaps earlier this spring, you were fortunate enough to observe some of the early wildflowers of the forest such as the trillium, trout lily or bloodroot. You may recall where some of these were last year, or you may explore new trails and make new discoveries.



Before you know it, we will be fully into the summer season with long and sometimes hot days. You



may be able to take advantage of the trails in the early morning as the dew on open grassy patches sparkles like gems in the sunlight. Or, to avoid the heat of the day, you may take to the trails in the early evening for relaxation after coming home from work or after dinner. Whatever time of day you find yourself on the trails in the summer, remember your bug and tick protection, beware of patches of poison ivy and bring water to keep yourself hydrated.

Lastly, please take advantage of the variety of trails that the Land Trust offers and maintains. We hope to see you on the trail.

By Bob Evenski

Bluebird Houses Ready for Occupancy

Welcome bluebirds, chickadees, nuthatches, house wrens, tree swallows and tufted titmice – but NOT English sparrows (aka, house sparrows). The English sparrow, being an invasive bird, is not covered by regulations which protect other likely competitors for bluebird boxes, and they should be removed from nesting boxes. The English sparrow was introduced in the 1850's from England on the premise that they would help to reduce insect pests. This was followed by an explosive population increase which led to extensive damage to crops and fruit trees. The English Sparrow remains one of the most abundant and widely distributed birds in North America and is not welcomed in our bluebird nesting boxes. English Sparrows outcompete native cavity-nesting birds and are known to destroy nests, eggs, nestlings and adults while taking over an occupied nest site. They'll build a nest on top of another species' nest, so experts suggest removing competitors' nests.



The signs are out: "Bluebird Houses Ready for Immediate Occupancy." By the time you read this, nesting boxes will already have been claimed by bluebirds since they begin to nest by late March. The Land Trust members are maintaining 16 bluebird boxes on three different properties. There is a pair of boxes

at the Charlotte Craig property on Rte. 179 and a second pair of boxes at the Noel Baker field on the Bunker Hill Trail, at 40 Bunker Hill Road. The remaining six pair of boxes are on the Mary Conklin Sanctuary, which is accessed from 144 Indian Hill Road. These are distributed throughout the five fields at the Conklin Sanctuary. Each field has a pair of boxes, with the exception of one field which is large enough to support two pairs of boxes.

Why are bluebird boxes in pairs? The simple answer is that this increases the likelihood that one of the boxes will become a home to a bluebird couple. Other competitors may move into the boxes as well. If, for example, a pair of Tree Swallows were to move into one of the pair of boxes, they would aggressively defend a large territory including the paired nesting box against any other Tree Swallows. This would increase the likelihood that a pair of bluebirds would inhabit the second nesting box.

Another factor that increases the likelihood of attracting bluebirds is to place paired boxes 125 to 150 yards apart. Ideally, bluebirds need one to two acres of open meadow or grassland to supply adequate food to raise a brood of offspring, and they will aggressively defend this area against other bluebirds.

Other steps that help to attract and retain bluebirds include placing houses along the northern or western edges of fields with the opening facing to the southeast to get the morning sun and avoid prevailing winds. Placing boxes more than



50 feet from heavily wooded areas will discourage House Wrens. Low-lying tree branches not too far from the

opening of the house will give young birds a safer place to land rather than on the ground where their lives may be in jeopardy. In addition, avoid placing near overhead branches from which predators could leap onto the nesting box.

Other factors that will improve the success of a breeding pair of bluebirds (or other songbirds)

- Mount nesting boxes about 5 feet off the ground to provide easy monitoring and cleaning and a degree of safety for nesting birds.
- Install predator guards. Each of the refurbished houses has a Kingston stovepipe-type guard and an extender on the box entrance.

Although there is a wide variety of bluebird nesting box designs available, no decision needed to be made on this matter. Volunteers were able to restore most of the old boxes. All of the boxes needed a good clean-out, which, in many instances, included evicting mice. Some boxes needed roofs to be replaced, and most needed modifications to the doors.

Finally, a disclaimer: I am not an expert on bluebirds, and what I have presented is based on researching the North American Bluebird Society publications, which are a great source of reading material for additional information.

By Bob Evenski

Land Trust Summer Hiking Challenge

The response to the Land Trust Summer Hiking Challenge was overwhelmingly positive again in 2021, the second year of the challenge. The Challenge was extended through Thanksgiving weekend due to an extremely hot and rainy summer. About half of the participants were “veterans” who completed the challenge for the second time. Hikers expressed gratitude for the opportunity to revisit familiar places or discover new ones, as well as the ability to create memories with family and friends. However, the sentiment that was shared most frequently was simply the appreciation for the variety, beauty and accessibility of the natural world that surrounds us here in Canton.

Finishers included Michele Evans, who was one of just a handful of participants who completed the challenge during the summer. Michele completed the inaugural Challenge last year and, as a result, became inspired to get more involved with the Land Trust. She has since become the volunteer



Jessica and Stephen look forward to a very full day on the trails.

Membership Coordinator. Evans’ highlights from this year include hiking some trails with her young grandson and revisiting hikes from last year and seeing them in a new light. Bill Porri, a self-professed, three-season hiker, completed the Challenge during the cooler and less buggy fall. He shared that he enjoyed many of the hikes included in the challenge, but his favorite hikes were the ones near water. Beth McCabe completed the challenge with her dog, Grace. Beth especially enjoyed the new trails that were included this year while Grace enjoyed all the trails.

Perhaps the most impressive story of completion was that of finishers Stephen Shaw and Jessica Sikora, who started the challenge on Thursday, Oct. 28 and completed it exactly 11 hours later. According to Shaw, the pair hiked 23.1 miles with an elevation gain of 4,026 ft. during 8¾ hours of hiking time.

Kudos to all finishers. These are just a small sample of the stories from the trail. Every hiker has a story, or more, to share. We hope you are

inspired to take on the challenge next year. Maybe you will find a new favorite trail along water, like Bill, or you may be motivated to join the Land Trust as a volunteer, like Michele. Whatever you decide, we hope to see you out on the trails.

By Jen Mason

Hiking Challenge finishers: 13 Hikers and 2 dogs

Michele Evans

Bill Porri

*Jessica Sikora and Stephen Shaw
– in one day!*

Beth McCabe and Grace (dog)

Lee Carvalho

*Jen and John Mason
and Charlie (dog)*

Marie Etter

Theresa and Glenn Barger

Steven Madamba

Lori Davison

Bird Within

What bird lives within?

*Screeching jay, antic nuthatch
creeping upside-down and headfirst
downward, regal hawk on high,
or loon calling manically at night?*

*All feel caged among my ribs
where they flutter and glide,
seducing me with hopeful songs
for the unbearable buoyancy of flight.
I'd cross over if I could cross back.*

*Birds fly unaware that we morph
feathers and hollow bones
into metaphors indulging our desires
and dreams. Free as birds, they live
in a world where sky is destiny.*

*By David K. Leff
Canton Poet Laureate*



Canton Land Trust Conservation Trust, Inc.

MEMBER NEWSLETTER
SPRING 1997

Quarter Century Spotlight

Into the Land Trust Big Leagues

This year marks the 26th anniversary of one of the most significant contributions to the Canton Land Conservation Trust (CLCT). In 1996, a bequest by Mary Conklin, who had been a long-time resident on Breezy Hill, transferred her home and more than 100 surrounding acres to the Land Trust, making it the first large land donation to the Canton Land Trust. Unfortunately, it was also the year in which Ray Smith, a past president of CLCT, died. Ray, who had worked with Mary in devising this donation, was later appropriately memorialized by the naming of the “Ray Smith Trail,” which goes through the property.

Ray had an easy going, yet effective, manner, and his dedication to the Land Trust resulted in not just this, but also other significant acquisitions. Much earlier he was instrumental in the first property acquired by the Land Trust in 1973 – Charlotte Craig’s gift of the “Canton Center Green,” opposite the church, general store, and U.S. Post Office. Charlotte recalled a discussion with Ray concerning this potential donation. It was over lunch, a favorite medium of Ray’s. “We forgot to talk about [the matter] and consequently set another date,” Ray said at the time.

Ray was famous for his luncheon gatherings, and this program went on for 10 consecutive occasions, some of which were for business and others about matters of the larger and smaller worlds. This truly was typical of Ray; he handled Land Trust matters in a most agreeable – yet effective – manner.



Memorial rock on the Ray Smith Trail at Mary Conklin.

In brief, his leadership was instrumental in creating a solid base in regard not only to property, but also to membership and organizational stability. If we were able to tell him that, he probably would reply something like: “Well I’m not so sure about that. Let’s have lunch and talk it over.”

Thanks, Mary. Thanks Ray.

By Betty Stanley

In gratitude for donors and volunteers

When you spend enough time with a piece of land, why call it anything but love? That land becomes your companion on your best days, when you cheer for every new bud along the trail. It’s your companion on your worst days, when you’re grumpy and huffing along. You get to know its moods too: Where it will turn into lethal icy patches in February and mud by March. Where it bursts into mountain laurels in June, and goldenrod in August.

It’s been four years since I moved to Canton and began falling in love with the Mary Conklin Sanctuary. That’s four years of lingering over its poetry boxes and exploring its cut-throughs; surprising and being surprised by deer, foxes, owls and the odd turkey along the way. I walk the Ray Smith Trail almost every day. When my brain is really buzzing, I head to the deeper quiet of the Tommy Ryan Trail. I’ve stood for long stretches in the middle of the big field, watching the bluebirds and thinking of my grandmother. She adored bluebirds.

Here’s what else I’ve done, over and over again: Picked my way over a fallen tree one day, and passed through easily the next. That’s because some tireless volunteers came by to clear the path. I’ve recently had the chance to meet some of them through the website redesign committee, my first volunteer effort with the land trust. It feels good to give back in my own small way, and it’s given me a new appreciation for the volunteers who give their time and talent year-round in countless other ways. I am beyond grateful to them, and every member of the Canton Land Trust.

At the top of the list: Mary Conklin. She clearly loved this land. Thanks to her generosity, now we all can.

Laura Benys, Canton

Remember that old newsletters can be accessed on our website:

<https://cantonlandtrust.org/newsletter>

Past Hikes

November History Hike

Nate Cantwell led 13 hikers on a gray November day on the trails in the Barbour Woods. He informed us about the previous landowners who scratched a living out of the hill farms in the area. These hardy souls first farmed for their own survival and later provided the food that would allow their community to prosper.



Learning About Lichens

In December, botanist Steve Messier, author of the *Traprock Ridge Lichens of Connecticut* field guide and a retired Canton High School science teacher, led a guided walk focusing on lichens found along Onion Mountain.

Lichens are organisms composed of an alga and a fungus, living together in a symbiotic relationship. In other words, they help each other. The alga, being a green plant that engages in photosynthesis, makes food for the fungus. The fungus protects the alga and brings in water to prevent the alga from drying out, called desiccating.

The CLCT-sponsored walk, which began in Simsbury's Onion Mountain Park and continued into Canton, offered a look at a variety of lichens, some of which are relatively recent arrivals to Connecticut, having extended their range northward due to rising temperatures. Lichens can be found in most environments and serve as a biological indicator of air quality. Look for lichens around your property.

Trail Report

Nate's Dogs' Travels in the Barbour Woods

In past issues, I have reported on various trails and their usefulness for getting dogs wet. I have given a rating in "Labradors" to several trails. Apparently, a few people have enjoyed the premise.

This issue, I want to talk about a section of trail starting at the intersection of Barbourtown and Breezy Hill roads. I cut a trail in a couple years ago that runs along Barber Brook. (Notice the name difference?) Our girls are now 13½ and do short, wet trips if they can break through the ice. I call it Barbour Woods Extension ...extension. It's a nice walk that will give a few premium water features – "three Labradors" – before you head uphill after crossing a bridge to the official Barbour Woods Extension.

The uphill section is steep and will get you to the Barbour Woods trail and a group of other trails that are much easier. Through the trees, there are good seasonal views on the way up. If I were to rate steep climbs in "doughnuts," this would be a "one doughnut" trail. I have found that my phone's steps counter would indicate a two-plus-hour walk as a "two-doughnut" hike. In case you aren't just eating carrots.



Water Feature rating: "3 Labradors"
Steepness rating: "one doughnut"

Other Trails

There have been reports of motorized vehicles accessing CLCT land via the repaired bridge on the town-owned Cannon Property. Just a reminder - if it uses gas or has a battery - it is motorized! And no motorized vehicles are allowed on Land Trust Lands.

On the Swibold Property, a porcupine was reported near the bridge that crosses the bridge over Cherry Brook. Dog walkers beware.

The eastern leg of the Fiebel trail is outstanding for bird watching and listening during mornings in spring near the partially cleared area.

And common sense would dictate that care should be taken on very windy days when walking in the woods.

By Nate Cantwell

2022 Hike Schedule

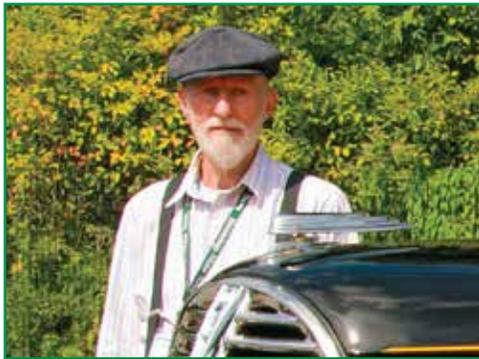
To learn about future hikes, check our Facebook page or website at CantonLandTrust.org.

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| April 24 | Bird Walk with Jay Kaplan at Sun, Wind and Woodland 7 am. Bring binoculars. Leave dogs and small children at home. |
| May | Lichen Hike II with Steve Messier
Time and property TBD |
| CT Trails Day Hikes | |
| June 4 | Short tour of the Collinsville Pollen Trail 9, 10, and 11 am. Led by Master Gardeners. |
| June 5 | Short or long options. Led by Nate Cantwell and Sarah Faulkner. 10 am. Sun, Wind and Woodland parking lot |

New CLCT Board Members for 2022

Bob Evenski Commits to the Board

My interests have always been in the sciences, and upon completion of my undergrad work, I went into teaching secondary level science. At the same time, I got into nature photography and can recall instances such as the time I had my first daughter, now 50, on my back in a backpack carrier while lying on the ground taking closeup pictures of insects and lichens.



Fast forward a bunch of years to 12 years ago when my wife, Jill, and I, living in Southington at the time, decided to walk the Farmington River Trail to one of our favorite places, Collinsville. As we started that walk on a Sunday just before Thanksgiving, little did we know that we would purchase an historic

home just off the green and move to Collinsville within a few short months.

We spent several years restoring our home. I followed the home restoration with the total restoration of a 1938 Ford Tonner. After completing the house and truck restoration, I began volunteering with the Canton Land Conservation Trust. I began as a trail steward, then joined the Stewardship Committee and, in January 2021, took on the role of Coordinator of Stewardship for trails and properties.

After being asked, I agreed to join the Board because I feel it's an honor, and because I welcome that additional role in which I can assist the Land Trust with its objectives. Working with the Land Trust, I became familiar with many areas of Canton I had not previously visited. I have been extremely impressed with the trails and properties under the care of the Canton Land Trust and the volunteers from all over Canton whom I've met and enjoyed working with.



Peter Keyo Joins Board

As a child growing up in Massachusetts, I spent most of my time hiking in the woods, mountain biking and swimming. When my wife Jennifer and I moved to Canton in 2008, I quickly discovered the Canton Land Trust trails. Since then, when not working as an engineer, I have spent countless hours running and hiking on the trails around town. With three children aged 1, 4, and 8, most of the running now occurs very early in the morning, and family hikes have become commonplace. It can sometimes be a struggle to get everyone out the door, but the complaining dries up quickly once we make it into the woods.

I have always been impressed by the land trust properties, and the effort that goes into maintaining them. Some of my favorites are the Sun, Wind and Woodland trails, and the Goedecke-Humphrey trails. Over the last few years, I have been looking for opportunities to give back, first as a trail steward, and now as a director. Going forward I would love to stay involved in Stewardship, and would also like to work on getting more kids off of the electronics and out in the woods.



2. With our very wet conditions last summer, these popped up all over our preserves. But what are they? (Uplands Preserve)



3. What are these piles of stones? (Sun, Wind and Woodlands Preserve)

CLCT Adopts Dog Policy

Last spring, the CLCT looked at its dog policy as a result of several other land trusts doing the same in an environment of increased traffic on trails. We formed a committee and chose medieval weapons to work out the details. In the end, no blood was spilled nor were there bad feelings or slashed tires. The board accepted the recommendation.

What we didn't do was weed the already minimal wording down and post signs at many trail heads and kiosks. The bottom line is: we are adopting something similar to state rules that want dogs to be under the owners' control, regardless of being on or off leash. Basically, be considerate to others.

We will be having "NO dog Sundays" at Conklin so some people can get a break from dogs. Travel up to Sun, Wind and Woodland for dog walks to replace Conklin on Sundays. We are going to request you leash dogs through a small section of the Sun, Wind and Woodland property seasonally, for the sake of some ground-nesting bird species with which we are having some success.



ALL dogs LEASHED near the "Bunny Cut" at Sun, Wind and Woodland for the bird nesting season, May 15- Aug. 15.

We will post special signs just for that area. We have called the area we will restrict the "Bunny Cut" since we collaborated with the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to build habitat for Eastern Cottontails. We got birds instead. Who knew?

By Nate Cantwell

CLCT Photo Contest Send us your best

This year, the Canton Land Trust is proud to celebrate its 50th anniversary with an evening of dining and dancing scheduled for Sept. 10 at Ski Sundown. Part of our gala features a photography contest with the winning photos displayed that evening, as well as posted on our website.

Board member Harold Mullins will coordinate the entries and the judging.

More details of this contest have yet to be determined but will be made public soon and posted on our website and Facebook page. Consider submitting photos of places that appeal especially to you – perhaps a secret spot you'd like to share.

Stay tuned for information on reservations for the celebration. We look forward to your photo entries. **See you Sept. 10.**

Photo Contest Guidelines:

- Open to the public; no entry fee.
- Photo must be taken on Canton Land Trust Properties. Any year.
- Up to four entries per person. Try to represent all four seasons.
- Photo resolution should be sufficient to enlarge to poster size.
- Entries should identify which property and approximate date along with your name and contact information.
- Entries will be pre-judged in late August. The top 13 will be recognized (selected to hang) at the event, with the night's revelers choosing the "Best of Show" by "teacup vote."
- Deadline to enter is **Aug. 10, 2022.**

Pratt Preserve to Get Trails, Meadows

The Land Trust plans to add trails and native flower meadows at the 48-acre Pratt Place Preserve property starting this spring. We hope more people can enjoy this property, which includes the recent Cotterman-Green parcel adjacent to land we own on Cherry Brook Road. The property includes portions of Cherry Brook and a flat, open area ideal for gathering for hikes or talks.

After failing to secure a state grant to install a parking area, educational signs and a meadow, we are seeking other grants to pay for the parking area and signs. Meanwhile, we are reassessing our plans and moving forward with work from volunteers and existing funds.

Our Stewardship Committee is working to get a bridge installed over Cherry Brook. Once that's

completed, crews will begin clearing and marking trails on the west side of Cherry Brook.

As a learning practice, Pollinator Pathway Committee members plan to install two side-by-side native flower meadows over existing turf grass now used for parking. They'll employ two different methods:

- occultation, where plastic tarps are laid down to kill the grass and weed seed for several months; and
- 'no mow' where we mark off a designated area to allow a meadow to grow wild.

At the right stages, we will plant native flower seeds and small seedlings, tracking the progress and determining which method works best.

By Theresa Sullivan Barger

This Spring, Remove Bittersweet Before it Takes Over

Do you recognize invasive Asiatic bittersweet, (*Celastrus orbiculatus*)? Autumn and winter are an easy time to identify this aggressive plant. After leaves fall, you can see the bright red seeds in yellow capsules, the heavy vines circling tree trunks to their tops and slender vines curling out of the tops of shrubs searching for something to climb. Walk around your yard, your neighborhood, parks and forest trails and you can quickly spot this destructive invader. It kills trees by girdling the trunks, smothering the canopies and downing them with the added weight.

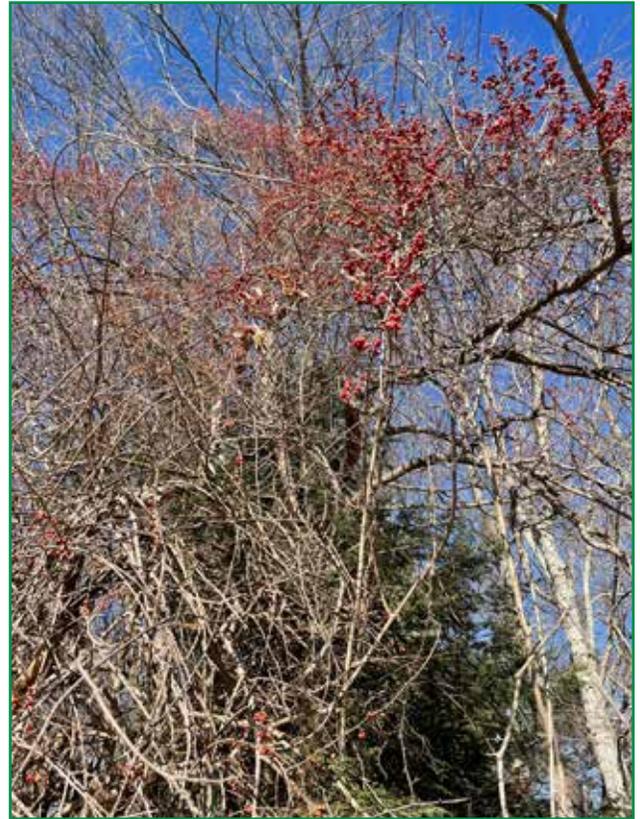
Imported in the 1860s for its showy berries and later used for erosion control due to its vigorous growth, it was widely spread by collectors, nurseries and birds. A hundred years later, its capacity to spread quickly, displace native plants, reduce biodiversity and create mono-cultures was slowly recognized.

One notable mono-culture is the tree-line along Rte. 84 in southern Connecticut, blanketed for miles by bittersweet. Listed on the Connecticut Invasive Plant List, it cannot be imported, moved, sold,

purchased, transplanted, cultivated or distributed. There is a native American bittersweet, (*Celastrus scandens*), which has berries at the end of the branch, while Asiatic bittersweet has berries along the entire branch. While the native plant can be found in nurseries, it can be difficult to identify and is also a vigorous grower.

Winter and spring are the best times to cut bittersweet vines at ground and chest height to prevent the formation of new berries and reduce the load on tree canopies. Monitor the area to cut regrowth and pull seedlings before they become established. The bright orange root verifies you removed a bittersweet plant.

Several land trust members and volunteers began cutting invasive bittersweet in Bicentennial Park this March. By cutting in the spring, the



vines will not leaf out, allowing tree canopy growth. The heavy vines will gradually decay and fall. When walking the Farmington River Trail, look for the trees with dead bittersweet vines and make a plan to prevent thousands of berries from developing on your property by cutting your vines this year.

The Invasive Plant Working Group advises people to avoid cutting branches of the berries to use for fall decorations. And if you can't resist the urge to do so, please dispose of them in the trash, not in the woods or compost pile, where you will just be spreading the plant.

By Karen Berger



On March 20, the first day of spring, a crew of CLCT volunteers, Cherry Brook Garden Club members and some local bittersweet haters attacked the bittersweet vines at Bicentennial Park along the Farmington River.

March 26: Second Bittersweet attack at Bicentennial Park



When I surveyed the bittersweet, poison ivy, honey suckle and whatever else at the Bicentennial Park along the Farmington River three weeks ago, I thought clearing the infestation choking the trees and riverside shrubs was impossible. One volunteer called it a rats' nest. Karen Berger and I thought we'd pull a crew together, but I didn't have a lot of hope that we could make much of a difference.

How wrong I was. The Marines have a saying:

"The difficult we do immediately; the impossible just takes a little longer." What a team of 28 volunteers did over two days with the impossible is really impressive.

One bonus to doing invasive removal along the Farmington River Trail is that people passing by asked us who we were and five offered to help in future projects. Three of them joined us on March 26 at Bicentennial Park.

By Bob Evenski

CT Trails Day Hikes, Saturday, June 4 & Sunday, June 5

Saturday June 4:

Tours of the Collinsville Pollen Trail

CLCT Board members and Master Gardeners Karen Berger, Holly Hambleton and Theresa Sullivan Barger are hosting tours of Canton's first official Pollinator Pathway. Join us for a short walk along the Collinsville Pollen Trail, which flanks the Farmington River rail trail section adjacent to Allen Place in Collinsville, between Dyer and Maple avenues.

Leaders will describe the purpose of a pollinator pathway. The majority of new native plants and landscaping along this section of trail are designed to provide food and habitat for bees, butterflies and birds, and the tour guides will explain the process they went through to create this beautiful, functional landscape.

Guided walking tours will begin near the green train depot near 12 Dyer Avenue and leave at 9, 10 and 11 am, Saturday morning, June 4. Participants are encouraged to continue their walks on their own along the bike trail in either direction for Trails Day. Parking is available in the softball field parking lot on Dyer Avenue.

Sunday, June 5: Exploring Sun, Wind and Woodlands

CLCT Board members Nate Cantwell and Sarah Faulkner will lead a hike at our gorgeous Sun, Wind, and Woodlands Preserve at 10 am. There will be two hiking options: one easy, mostly flat hike about one mile long, and one moderately challenging hike about three miles long with a total of about 400' elevation.

Both hikes will start at the Sun, Wind, and Woodlands Preserve parking area on Breezy Hill Road. We will follow the Tom Perry Trail to a junction, at which point hikers will have a choice. The shorter, one-mile hike will continue following the Tom Perry Trail in a loop, returning to the parking area in less than an hour. This hike traverses lovely mixed

woods and fern glens, and passes some Native rock piles.

The longer hike proceeds along a series of other trails in a loop through open farm fields, along small brooks, past some beautiful rock outcroppings and returns to the parking area from the north. It will last two-three hours.

Hikers should wear sturdy shoes and bug spray, bring water and a snack. Please leave dogs at home. To reach the parking lot from Route 44, follow Indian Hill Road to its end; turn right on Breezy Hill and follow to the top of the hill. The parking area is on the left.

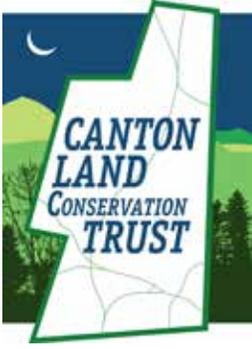
Sunday hikes canceled if it rains.

What is THAT? (Answers by Sarah Faulkner)

1. This 'monster' is actually the blackened underbelly of a fallen tree. But wow, it looks like a creature at first.

2. Known as Ghost pipes (*Monotropa uniflora*), formerly called Indian pipe, this white plant flowers in mid-summer with ghostly, all-white flower heads. Having no chlorophyll of its own, the ghost pipe is a parasite on trees, depending on trees' roots to provide the nutrition the pipe needs to flourish.

3. You'll see many of these stone piles in the woods at the Sun, Wind and Woodlands Preserve. After considerable research and investigation with the state archaeologist and representatives of our state's Native American tribes, we believe these piles to have been constructed by the Nepaug Tribe many centuries ago, with an unknown ceremonial purpose. Use of lidar (ground-penetrating radar) indicates they often have a quartz formation in their center. Out of respect for our indigenous predecessors, we are leaving these stone piles intact. Perhaps one day we'll solve their mystery.



Canton Land Conservation Trust, Inc.
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CLCT Properties Summary	
Property Protected:about 2,100 acres
Added in 2021: 42.3 acres
Trails: 41 trails; 23.5 miles
Added in 2021: 7 trails; 2.9 miles

Thanks to your donations, membership and volunteer time, CLCT continues to protect land and create and maintain trails for all to enjoy. **Don't forget to renew your membership yearly.**

DONATE to CLCT

Canton Land Conservation Trust continues to encourage and accept donations by cash or by check. Or use your credit card.

CLCT also accepts donations and payments over \$20 by major credit cards (Master Card, Visa, Discover and American Express.)

Donate or become a member today.

Please go to our website:

www.cantonlandtrust.org

Find the **DONATE NOW** button

or search Facebook for

Canton Land Conservation Trust

Events:

- Bird Walk – April 24
- CT Trails Day Hikes – June 4 & 5
- Annual Meeting – June 5
- Hike of the Month – TBD
- 50th Anniversary Celebration – Sept. 10, 2022