



# The Canton Land Conservation Trust, Inc.

## Fall-Winter 2019

### Newsletter

Edited by Gail Deutsch

#### President's Message

Historians often look back on some period of time and declare it a "golden age". One common characteristic is that the people living in that age don't recognize it as a golden age until after it's over.

I think we might look back on the current period as the Golden Age of the Canton Land Conservation Trust. My hope is that we do so because it is still continuing, not because it's over. However, as I think about some of the initiatives we are working on and some of the things we have completed in recent years, I think the membership ought to feel very proud to be associated with this organization.

Our current inventory of properties is impressive and credit for that rightfully belongs to prior generations of members, but we are continuing to add properties. In the last year we received generous donations from the Goodwin family, the Swibold family, and Mr. Reid. We are currently in negotiations that are likely to result in three more additional properties over the next few months.

While acquisition and stewardship of properties is the centerpiece of our mission, I'm happy to report that we are doing so much more than this.

Many members have taken advantage of the miles of hiking trails we maintain; we anticipate additional trails in the near future. Sarah Faulkner proposed that we start a hike of the month, and that has literally exceeded expectations. Many of the hikes have a theme beyond simply getting out on the trail. We had a recent hike with a geology theme, and we have had the hikes concentrating on historical home sites near the trails.

We have funded research into the history of the area which culminated in research reports available on our website and two marvelous presentations by Anne Hall.

We've begun using the Miller Feibel Nature Endowment to fund some educational programs in collaboration with the Roaring Brook Nature Center.

We have reached out to the American Chestnut Foundation, and we are looking into the possibility of helping to bring back this marvelous tree.

Most of these activities are within Canton but we've recently help start an initiative called Pollinator Pathways, which is more regional in scope. We are working with multiple organizations in neighboring towns. We've written about that in other newsletter articles and more will come.

We have provided opportunities for prospective Eagle Scouts to work on projects in the past and there are multiple initiatives currently under discussion.

All of this is being accomplished by an all-volunteer organization. I am very grateful to the volunteers who have stepped up to become board members, members of committees, and those who show up at work parties. That said, I feel like we are asking a lot of those who volunteer, so I hope some of the readers who have benefited from this organization might be inclined to reach out to us to see how you might help.



## EVENTS

### Migration Day

Roaring Brook Nature Center and the Canton Land Conservation Trust sponsored a migration/raptor event featuring live birds of prey from Horizon Wings Raptor Rehabilitation and Education of Ashford on Sat. Sept. 14 at the Nature Center.

We watched for migrant raptors and other animals at the height of the fall migration. Then Mary-Beth Kaeser of Horizon Wings presented a 45-minute raptor program in the Center's auditorium featuring falcons, owls and eagles.

Jay Kaplan



Photo:

*Wildlife Rehabilitator Mary-Beth Kaeser with Chrysos, a Golden Eagle*



### Annual Dinner

The Canton Land Conservation Trust's Annual Dinner will be held on Tuesday, March 24th at 6 p.m. at Season's Restaurant that is part of the Avon Old Farms Hotel, located at 279 Avon Mountain Road in Avon. The restaurant is located at the top of the hill on the left. There is ample parking and the event will take place in the Towpath Ballroom. Cocktails will be available at the cash bar from 6 to 7 in the adjacent Glass Room where you'll have a chance to bid on the auction items displayed there. Dinner will be served at 7 and the presentation will begin about 8 pm. Please look for invitations in the mail in February and plan to bring friends along.

Anne Duncan

### Flatbread Fundraiser

Annually, the Land Trust holds a fundraiser at Flatbread Pizza located in the Canton Shoppes. The Flatbread Company counts the number of pizzas ordered during the evening, and donates a fixed amount per pie to the Land Trust. In addition to being a modest fundraiser, it's often a fun evening to get together and talk with other Land Trust members. This year's event was held on October 15. We typically hold this event each year about the same time.



Phil Philbrick

### Geology Hike

Historically, we know that our little town of Canton was governmentally incorporated in 1806 and was first inhabited by Native Americans some 10,000 years before this. About 15,000 years ago what we now call Canton had finally become ice-free, after the recession of the glaciers from only the latest period of glaciation, which saw the advance and retreat of glacial ice numerous times during the past 2.5-3 million years. These time frames can progressively become almost impossible for us to imagine but geologically, even 3 million years is but the blink of an eye. The geological record of Canton begins long, long before all of this.

About 550 million years ago during the Cambrian period, great mountains, perhaps as high as the present day Alps, were raised, including right here in our little town, and this is where we'll begin our study.

These great mountains, possibly snow capped, began to slowly erode. Now we're definitely talking about "deep time"; ancient indeed. (If, for example, a mountain erodes at a rate of 1mm every 10 years, in 1 million years 100 meters, or approximately 330 feet, will have eroded away).

Erosion has continued to this day, and Cherry Brook contains some of the rocks that eroded from this ancient mountain range.



Our group discovered a rock called schist (German "shiny"), stratified (layered) in distinct bands, and containing mica, shiny and gleaming in sunlight.

This rock once lay at the bottom of the ancient Iapetus Ocean as sand, silt, and clay, perhaps washed from the shores of Avalonia and Laurentia, and then subducted (buried under the surface of the earth) as the land masses collided, to great depths, miles below the surface, and subjected to immense pressure and heat, metamorphosed (changed form) into schist and then thrust up again.

We also found gneiss, (possibly German for "sparkling" although most gneiss does not sparkle), another metamorphic rock, again subjected to the same processes as schist, but much harder than schist, due to conditions of being exposed to even higher temperatures and pressures. Gneiss also shows distinctive banding, but unlike schist, gneiss is very hard and cannot be easily split along the banded layers of minerals.

Quartzite was also found at our site, another metamorphic rock, and in this case, sandstone is its parent rock. The hardness of quartzite is comparable to modern steel and getting samples using a geology hammer, as we did, is a chore, for sure.

The story doesn't end here, though. Many of our samples have been transported from perhaps great distances away, by glaciers, which plucked bedrock from points north, tumbling and rounding hard, jagged rock into smooth, sometimes almost spherical shapes, and depositing them to our study site. Cherry Brook, too, silt-filled after rain and snowmelt, has had an effect on these rocks, further smoothing and eroding them. Eventually, sand might be the final

product of all this erosion, and before we built modern dams, this sand from Cherry Brook would eventually be carried into the Farmington River, then to the Connecticut River, then out to sea, and maybe carried by the Gulf Stream current to western Europe, down to Africa, and far beyond.

Of course, there's much, much more to this story but let's leave it at that.

Tom Noonan

### **Hikes of the Month Gain in Popularity**

Last year, the Land Trust started our "hike of the month", showcasing our different preserves and focusing on different topics with our trips. This fall continued our new tradition. We hope you'll join us on our future endeavors!

**June 2:** Our June hike preceded our Annual Meeting and was led by Jay Kaplan and Nate Cantwell. While Jay provided natural history information about the land, Nate described the farming history of the Taylor, Moses, and Whiting families from the mid- to late-1800's. The group of 26 or more people started at the Sun, Wind, and Woodlands parking lot and hiked the Tom Perry trail, ending at the "bunny cut". The group was pleased to see the advancement of growth in the cut area, which was clearcut in 2016 to provide habitat for the New England Cottontail. While no rabbits have been seen (yet!), Jay noted that many other species are taking advantage of this valuable, open area, including bird species that rely on forest edges.

**September 15:** A small group followed leader Nate Cantwell into the Barbour Woods to learn about the history of the area. Starting on Breezy Hill Road by the Capen Cabin, the group proceeded down to the south, discussing the history of the McCulnery, Taylor, and Moses farms as they proceeded down Taylor Hill Road, examining foundations that dated back to the 1760's with the Taylor family. The group then returned via the Barbour Woods extension trail to Barbourtown Road and back up the steep hill to the cars.

**October 20:** Tom Noonan, who is an experienced science educator, led a geology walk and talk at

the Pratt Property off Cherry Brook Road. Attended by around 20 people, Tom focused on the geological history of the Cherry Brook region, describing the formation of the valley and the types of rocks found in it. A fun feature was encouraging participants to find their own stones and have Tom identify them and describe their origin.

**November 17:** Harold Mullens led a hike at the Swan Property



Sarah Faulkner

### **Annual Christmas Tree Sale**

Dec 7, 2019 CLCT will host its annual CLCT Christmas Tree sale at the Smith Tree Farm on Doyle Road

Come pick a tree or come for the cookies and cocoa. Some trees are small and some are BIG with everything in-between. It's cut-your-own or we can supply the manpower to cut it down and drag it back to the barn. Our trees have been manicured by nature so don't expect the perfect tree. Do expect to reconnect with your neighbors and Canton Land Conservation Trust volunteers who continue to honor the wishes of Hannah



Smith to preserve and protect the farmhouse, land and barn at 53 Doyle Road. Dec 7, 2019

Holly Hambleton

## **PROJECTS**

### **Winter Birds**

If you're looking for a way to keep our feathered friends happy this winter, here are a few tips to keep your yard welcoming to birds during these cold months:

- Take the opportunity to clean out and repair nesting boxes for birds. Bluebirds tend to check out nesting sites beginning in late winter.
- Set up bird feeders and drinking water or a bird bath. To keep water from freezing, set up a submersible water heater in the birdbath.
- Hang suet blocks in trees to attract insect-hunting woodpeckers to your yard.
- If you didn't get around to raking this fall, fear not! Use fallen leaves to mulch perennial beds to protect plants and create habitat for overwintering critters.
- Feeling festive? Decorate the trees and shrubs around your house with a holiday treat for birds such as a garland made of popcorn, cranberries, and raisins.
- If you're interested in getting out and learning more about birds, look into joining a local **Audubon Christmas Bird Count**.
- Winter is also a great time to start planning enhancements to your garden. Keep an eye on which areas birds use for winter shelter and be sure to preserve them. Take note if there are areas of your garden that would benefit from additional shrubs or perennials. Perusing native plant guides while sitting by the fire is a great way to pass cold and snowy days!

Katie Blake

### **Pollinator Pathways Progress Update**

The Pollinator Pathways have grown beyond Fairfield and Westchester counties and are spreading north toward Central Connecticut. Pollinator Pathways are in 85 towns in

Connecticut and eastern New York and counting.

The Canton-Simsbury Pollinator Pathway steering committee hosted Mary Ellen Lemay, one of the leaders in Connecticut's Pollinator Pathways initiative, to speak at the Simsbury Public Library in September. People from Bloomfield and Berlin joined those from Canton and Simsbury to hear about Pollinator Pathways and how to bring them to our towns.

Pollinator Pathways connect preserved open spaces with pollinator-friendly, pesticide-free plants, shrubs and trees. Native bees and other pollinator populations are declining due to climate change, pesticide use and habitat loss, so people along the Pollinator Pathways are working to create pollinator habitats on public and private property. Native trees, shrubs and flowers are crucial sources of food and habitat at every stage in the life cycle of pollinating bees, butterflies, hummingbirds and bats.



The steering committee includes representatives from Canton and Simsbury's land trusts, garden clubs, conservation commissions, schools, garden centers, the Farmington River Watershed and the Roaring Brook Nature Center. Twin Gardens garden center on Powder Mill Road carries natives, and the manager says staff will be happy to help people find natives to fit their growing conditions.

Do you have native plants you can divide and share? In Spring 2020, we'll be collecting plant donations that we can offer to people who can't afford to buy plants. Do you know how to propagate seeds? We'd also welcome donations of seeds or starter plants for native wildflowers. In addition to residents, we're hoping to engage business owners, houses of worship and land-owners who would like to be on the Pollinator

Pathway.

The steering committee is spending the winter months planning a Spring Pollinator Pathways launch. We've established subcommittees and welcome volunteers to serve on fundraising, communication, education, volunteer coordination and pathway mapping.

To learn more, join the Pathway or participate in this effort, please contact steering committee Co-Chair and CLCT Director Theresa Sullivan Barger at [tsullivanbarger@gmail.com](mailto:tsullivanbarger@gmail.com)

Theresa Sullivan Barger

### The American Chestnut Tree

The American Chestnut tree, during pre-Columbian times, had a range from extreme southeastern Canada to northern Florida and westward to at least Indiana and south to Mississippi. The number of American Chestnut trees had been estimated to be at least three billion to as many as five billion trees. It was once the most valuable tree on the North American continent and its wood was used for every conceivable purpose, from railroad ties, due to its decay resistant properties, to building framework and interiors, to cabinet and tool making and much more. It is said that every farmer in this region had an American Chestnut grove, which was harvested during winter, when crop fields were fallow. The American Chestnut was a fast



growing, massive tree, reaching 100 feet tall and having a diameter of, in some cases, 8 to 10 feet. These trees produced immense crops of chestnuts, which were a staple food, in early autumn, for many different wild animals, including turkeys and other birds, deer, bears,

raccoons, squirrels, and all manner of smaller mammals.

Other species of chestnut, native to Asia, were introduced into North America sometime in the late 1800s to early 1900s. These trees carried a pathogenic fungus, which, because of perhaps millions of years of coexistence, the Asian chestnut trees had developed a resistance to. Not so our native American Chestnut, which very rapidly succumbed to this fungus, in enormous numbers. In a few short decades, the American Chestnut was all but extirpated from its entire native range, which dealt an enormous economic blow to many areas of the American economy. Since the devastation of this most valuable tree, many efforts have been made to reestablish the American Chestnut to its former range, with only very limited success. Hybridization, using cross pollination between the resistant alien species and our own native chestnut have had some success; presently chestnut trees that are 15/16 American Chestnut have been hybridized, and these trees closely, but of course not completely, resemble our native tree. Pathogens to the mentioned fungus have also been used to combat the disease, known as the Chestnut Blight, and it is hoped, with these two and other, newer biological methods of saving our native chestnut, that someday a restoration of the valuable and majestic American Chestnut tree will be possible.



The Canton Land Conservation Trust has allied with the American Chestnut Foundation to help the recovery of the American Chestnut, and we will be working closely with the ACF to dedicate

some of our areas to this noble cause.

We have a lot of work to do; our children's children have a right to see great forests of native American trees.

Tom Noonan

## ABOUT US

### Internal Record Keeping

The Canton Land Conservation Trust is approaching our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Over the years, we have accumulated a substantial portfolio of land assets. As this portfolio has grown, so have our responsibilities and our dedication to managing our assets in an increasingly formal and professional manner. We understand and embrace our role in supporting the Canton community's wish to maintain our heritage and reputation as a steady, naturally beautiful, safe, and serene area to live and grow. So, throughout our existence we have managed our land and monetary assets to ensure that our members and the general public can experience and enjoy the many natural treasures we have here in Canton. We have created and maintained hiking trails and wildlife sanctuaries. We participate in wildlife restoration projects. We contributed to the grant for the Bristol Farm Easement. We offer themed hikes and outdoor programs for all ages... and the list goes on.

Up to now, we have managed our internal record keeping, planning, education, and communication functions mostly by hand using paper, file cabinets, boxes, telephones, and an occasional nod to computers (see our website, <https://www.cantonlandtrust.org/>). The time seems right, if not long overdue, to step from the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the 21<sup>st</sup> with all the automation opportunities it presents. With that in mind, the Executive Board established a new Information Technology (IT) Committee to work with members of the Board of Directors to identify the functions that each committee performs, the activities required to perform the functions, and the tools and techniques currently used to

accomplish the functions. With this information, the IT Committee will look for ways to automate as many of our manual activities as possible, archive our current and historical records electronically, improve our research and reporting capabilities via self-service, establish a shared communications platform, and streamline public access to CLCT information.

This initiative will take time to bear fruit, but with careful analysis, planning, and execution, it will help The Board make the CLCT into an increasingly effective, responsive, and valuable member of the Canton community.

Garry Tilton

### **Sweetheart Mountain trails - please stay off MDC property**

Many of our members enjoy the three hiking trails on Sweetheart Mountain. There's a spot on the red trail with a very attractive view of the Farmington River. This property was formerly a ski area and an old rope tow engine is still visible from the yellow trail.

We want to encourage all Land Trust members to stay on the trails marked by the plastic blazes.

Representatives of the land trust recently met with representatives of the The Metropolitan District (MDC), the nonprofit municipal Corporation whose mission is "to provide potable water and sewerage services on a regional basis". some portions of MDC property are open to the

public, but some other portions of the property is not generally open to the public except by permit (for example, hunting.) The MDC representatives noted that many people are starting on Sweetheart mountain trails but then venturing onto trails on MDC property. Those trails do not have plastic blazes, and are not open to the public. There are many signs noting that this is private property and violators are trespassing, but they know that many people are ignoring the signs and trespassing on their property.

The MDC has the authority to issue tickets to those who trespass on their property. The MDC maintains cameras to monitor this activity.

My experience has been that Land Trust members are very respectful of our shared resources, so I suspect that the trespassers are not members of the land trust. If you know anyone who uses these trails and may not get this newsletter, I hope you will share with them that they should not venture onto MDC property.

Phil Philbrick

### **Trail Maintenance**

There is a nice spot for a view on the Ted Wright trail. However, trees have been growing in and filling in the view, so on 29 August, a work party (Mike Gotaski, Steve Mitchell, Nate Cantwell, Scott Persing, and Phil Philbrick) cleared out some of the trees to restore the nice vista.

Phil Philbrick



**CLCT 2018**  
**Membership by**  
**Michelle Winkler**

The Canton Land Conservation Trust has been in existence for over forty years and continues to acquire, preserve, and protect land of scenic, natural, or historic value within Canton. We thank all those members who have contributed time and money in the last four decades.

Richard & Judy Abraham  
Mahmoud & Rawya Agha  
Skip & Nancy Alford  
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Barbara Backman  
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**CLCT Assets as of 11/1/2019**

by Christian Winkler, Treasurer

Current Assets

Total Checking/Savings	-	\$347,350
Endowment Investment	-	\$483,419
Fixed assets		
(land, buildings, equipment)		
	-	\$7,290,383
<b>Total Assets:</b>	-	<b>\$8,061,153</b>

**DONATE to CLCT - use your credit card!**

Canton Land Conservation Trust continues to encourage and accept donations by cash or by check. CLCT also accepts donations and payments over \$20 by major credit cards (Master Card, Visa, Discover and American Express).

Please go to our website:

[www.cantonlandtrust.org](http://www.cantonlandtrust.org): Canton Land Trust to find the DONATE NOW button,

or search Facebook for

Canton Land Conservation Trust

Become a member today

**Upcoming Events of Note:**

**Christmas Tree Sale – Dec. 7th**  
**Annual Dinner - March 26th**



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