



# The Canton Land Conservation Trust, Inc.

## Spring-Summer 2020

### Newsletter

Edited by Theresa Sullivan Barger

#### President's Message

It will surprise no one that the theme of this message will involve COVID-19. It is quite remarkable how this crisis seems to affect every facet of life. So much has been written elsewhere that I won't even try to add my thoughts about the general situation, but I will comment on aspects in the context of the Land Trust.

Sadly, we were devastated by the passing of board member Ted Cowles to COVID-19 complications. On the board since 1994, Ted spent countless hours building bridges and clearing several Land Trust trails. We will miss his service and dedication.

Our history of frugality and emphasis on volunteer spirit has always served us well, but never more than during this crisis. I attended a virtual meeting of representatives of land trusts in the region. Amy Patterson, executive director of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council remarked that the mood in other meetings was closer to panic. Land Trusts with substantial expenses were concerned about fundraising, with most planned events being deferred or cancelled, and while we had many topics to discuss, financial viability was not the most important concern.

Other land trusts uniformly reported what is also true for Canton—our trail usage is up considerably. With many organized outdoor activities curtailed by social distancing rules, people have taken to hiking trails. Some state parks have been overwhelmed, and while our membership has always enjoyed our trail network, many other members of the general public are taking advantage of Land Trust trails, which have not been quite so overwhelmed. When the country first began clamping down on some types of activity, several board members leapt into action and began communicating to the public, encouraging responsible

use of our trails. I'm very pleased to see how quickly we responded.

While the trail usage and our profile are positive news, there are some areas of concern. We have received reports that there have been multiple examples of trespass onto private property adjacent to Land Trust properties and confrontations between hikers and private property owners. The Capen cabin has been broken into twice recently. Owners of motorized quads and trail bikes have long been an issue, but the frequency of problems seems to be increasing. I don't hear reports of trash on Land Trust properties, but there are reports of increased trash on roads adjacent to our properties.

We hope it is not Land Trust members, and it is an unfortunate by-product of increased usage, it's small solace to land owners who have to deal with trash or hear profanities.

One of the issues appears to be that our maps do not clearly delineate property boundaries. Especially in the Sun, Wind and Woodland area, many of the properties are part of the Land Trust, but some are not, and in some cases, we have a narrow easement over private property owned by others. We are taking steps to remedy this omission, but it won't hurt to remind everyone that it's always appropriate to be polite, and especially important during this crisis, when tempers might be on edge. Please dispose of trash responsibly, don't tease dogs on adjacent properties and don't venture onto non-Land Trust properties unless you have obtained specific permission from the landowner. Let's all find ways to share this message with everyone.

— Stephen 'Phil' Philbrick

## Stewardship Revises Trail-Clearing Policy

One of the tasks our stewardship committee does well is respond to notices from members that a trail needs attention. Many of these reports are about trees blocking trails. While typically not an emergency, we try to remedy quickly so as to not inconvenience hikers using trails, especially with increased usage of the trail. We have stewards monitoring most of our trails, and I often get a report that a problem has already been addressed. In those case where we receive a report that requires more than a single individual to correct (e.g. requiring a chain saw), we usually respond within a few days, frequently as early as the next day. This is partly because Steve Mitchell is often willing and able to respond with very little notice, so if you happen to see him, make sure to thank him.

I don't plan to change our goal of addressing concerns as quickly as possible, but I wanted to alert our members we are modifying slightly how we handle some situations. Unfortunately, we have been dealing with incursions by motorized trail bikes and quads for some time, and this activity appears to be increasing. Because of this, while we used to try to remove every downed tree across a trail, we are now deliberating leaving some in place. The theory is that a one-foot diameter log across the trail is trivial for a hiker to step over, but more difficult for motorized bikes or quads to negotiate. I don't pretend that it completely stops them; some can go over the obstacle, and sometimes they go around, but if there are enough obstacles, they may choose to go elsewhere.



Obviously, if a tree is down and causes the trail to be impassible without a significant detour, please continue to report such instances, but if it is easy to step over or step around, it may have been deliberately left in place. I know of such examples on the Ted Wright Trail and the Sweetheart Mountain trails, and there may be others. We aren't being lazy; we are attempting to make it a little more difficult for motorized vehicles.

– Phil Philbrick

## New CLCT Trails

We recently completed one new trail, laid out a second one and are deep into completing a third. We finished the Fred and Miller Feibel Trail, which takes off from the southern end of the Arthur and Eunice Sweeton Trail. Hikers soon encounter a brook, and stonework makes for a dry crossing. The route follows an old farm road and then heads up through abandoned fields and connects to the Barbour Woods Trail, allowing a variety of route variations for hikers. The Feibel Trail heads back, passing a wood cut area which is fascinating for its bird life, especially in the early morning. For Labrador Retrievers, the trail is rated three water features.

Along Hanson Road, we were happy to lay out the Noel Baker Trail on the preserve donated by and named after her. She had asked specifically that a trail be put on the property when she deeded it to the Land Trust, and we were happy to oblige. Currently unmarked, it will be a short trail through the woods with a stream crossing near an interesting rock formation, with multiple dog-approved water features.

The Ted Cowles Trail, honoring the late Board member's 26 years of service to the Land Trust, is being built. Several Board members worked out the somewhat long trail route, and a small crew has made good progress clearing it. There is open forest land, some rocky outcrops and several through-the-leaves views along the way. The trail is part of the Swan Preserve Trails system and takes off from and returns to the existing trails familiar to regular hikers.

Other trail ideas are in the works. To do this, several Board members lay out an interesting, approachable trip through our property. A work crew then cuts and cleans out brush, removing downed trees in the way and sets tree blazes (markers) to show the way. We have a number of trail stewards who adopt a trail and do routine cleaning/maintenance and they report larger projects such as fallen trees so that we can clean up trail blockages. Anyone wanting to steward a trail or help build them is encouraged to contact the Land Trust at [cantonlandtrust@gmail.com](mailto:cantonlandtrust@gmail.com). We appreciate your help.

—Nate Cantwell and Mike Gotaski

## Land Trust Acquires 35 Acres of Land

A year ago, Margaret and David Ayres contacted the Land Trust to discuss the possible contribution of a nearly 19-acre parcel of land. The parcel was to be created by carving off a portion of their existing property, leaving a portion of the property with the house to be sold and an anterior lot to be given to the Land Trust. However, this lot would no longer have access to a road. Knowing there are challenges with landlocked properties, the Land Trust directors began investigating how to address access. To make a long story short, the Town of Canton agreed to give a narrow access strip of land located at 41 High Valley Road, which can be used to access the donated Ayres property. Relatively flat and forested, the land offers long-term potential for hiking trails.

Also, we have finally completed the swap of the property we know as Maglaty, located at 79 Commerce Drive, for a 16.5-acre property at 4 Westwood Drive. This is a perfect example of how a transaction can greatly benefit both parties. The property at 79 Commerce Drive was donated to us, not with the expectation that it would become a nature preserve, but with the expectation that it might be sold to a commercial developer to raise funds for our operations. Instead, it is going to the Town, which plans a dog park there. The town-owned property at 4 Westwood Drive would not be suitable for a dog park. However, it is well-suited for the Land Trust. It happens to be contiguous to our Uplands property, extending the footprint of that location, which benefits wildlife by ensuring preservation of a larger corridor of land. We've already investigated extending the Uplands trail network onto the property.



As this goes to press, we received a check for \$27,500 from the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection arising from a successful grant application for the purchase of a 12-acre property. We have not yet closed on the property, but we will soon be able to announce an additional parcel contiguous to existing Land Trust preserves.

– Phil Philbrick

## COVID-19 Isolation's Upside

No question – this has been a very odd spring. We've been socially isolating at home, avoiding each other even when grocery shopping and learning new electronic ways to communicate. The Land Trust has canceled hikes, programs and our Annual Dinner. But one thing has not been taken from us during the quarantine: the ability to get outdoors and welcome the return of our foliage, flowers and migratory birds. There's nowhere better to do this than on the trails of the Canton Land Trust, Roaring Brook Nature Center and local rail trail. We're lucky to live where social distancing is easy and we can feel normal in the woods.

### Hiking Guidelines in the Age Of COVID-19

Please observe these hiking-safety guidelines:

1. Use appropriate social distancing by staying at least 6 feet from others. When passing someone on a trail, yield and allow for plenty of space and keep your dogs leashed and close to you;
2. Go outdoors as a solitary activity or in a group of five or less, and if you get to a place that is already crowded, find another place to go; and
3. Wear a mask if close to others; cough or sneeze into your elbow; and if you are not feeling well, stay at home.

So, go ahead and enjoy the trails and nature in Canton. And please consider joining the Land Trust, supporting our mission and volunteering.

As people seek exercise and fresh air while social distancing, we've seen a tremendous uptick in the use of our trails this spring. One delight has been the additions to the journals in the poetry boxes at the Mary Conklin Preserve. These boxes were installed a few years ago to encourage visitors to stop, consider the land and write whatever they were feeling. So, where should you hike? The list below describes some terrific Canton hikes. For more details, or other Land Trust hiking opportunities, look at the Land Trust's website at [cantonlandtrust.org/trails](http://cantonlandtrust.org/trails).

#### 1. Ray Smith Trail at the Mary Conklin Preserve

Take a peaceful hour to walk the 1-mile, figure-8 loop of the Ray Smith Trail at the Land Trust's Mary Conklin Preserve on Indian Hill Road. This rolling trail, blazed

in yellow and red (two sections), traverses deciduous forest and laurel thickets, skirts a vernal pool and crosses over a stream. It's beautiful year-round, with the potential for spring views at the southern tip of the figure-8.

### **2. Quarry Trail in Werner's Woods**

The Quarry Trail (yellow blazes) in the state-owned Werner's Woods is both a gorgeous hike and holds historical interest. It was the source of much of the rock used for the first significant dam built across the Farmington River by the Collins Company in the early 1860s. The 160-acre, state-owned parcel is adjacent to the Roaring Brook Nature Center on Gracey Road. During the spring, the trail provides excellent views and sounds of Jim Brook as it babbles over boulders and crevices among the mixed deciduous/hemlock forest. The loop hike is about 1½ miles long and relatively easy, with some gradual slopes. Park in the Roaring Brook Nature Center parking lot and follow a short segment of the Red Trail to access the Yellow Trail. Note: The Nature Center building is closed until further notice, but the trails are open. Dogs must be leashed.

### **3. Goedecke-Humphrey Trail on West Road**

This little-known preserve is owned by the Land Trust on property donated by these two long-time Canton families. About ½ mile in length, this moderately difficult trail follows the path of Cherry Brook, offering breath-taking views of the stream and valley. You'll pass through deciduous forests with large hemlocks and laurel thickets. Watch for many woodland birds and listen for the woodpeckers and owls. The trail ends in a short, steep loop, affording views from the



top. The trailhead is on the north side of West Road near #76 – watch for the trail sign. Park in the small pull-off on the opposite side of the road, just south from the trailhead.

### **4. Farmington River Rail Trail: Town Garage to Railroad Bridge**

This one-mile scenic section of the Farmington River Rail Trail offers picturesque views of the Farmington River and Collinsville mill pond. Park at the Town Garage on River Road and follow the paved rail trail along the river, across the flower footbridge and into Collinsville. Look for mergansers, geese, ducks,

herons, bald eagles and osprey in this section. The trail continues across the road and to the railroad bridge overlooking the lower rapids and river.

**5. Hiking Trails at the Swan Preserve** Enjoy a leisurely walk on this Land Trust property. The three interconnected trails start at the parking area on Case Street and go across and along a babbling brook and into lovely uplands. The trails provide a moderately challenging, 1½ mile-hike.

### **6. Farmington River Rail Trail: Town Garage to Rte. 177**

Follow this paved section from the parking area by the river to the intersection of Routes 44 and 177, a 3-mile roundtrip walk. The off-road portion of the trail ends near Best Cleaners, which prohibits parking in its lot when open.

**7. Sweetheart Mountain Preserve** Enjoy one of the Land Trust's premiere preserves with a strenuous up/downhill hike on its three different trails. The trails are about 1½-2 miles in length and about 500' in elevation. This land, the former Canton Ski Club property, overlooks Collinsville and the river. Please stay on the trails so you don't trespass onto adjacent lands, including the MDC watershed property that bans public access.

**8. Sun, Wind and Woodlands Preserve** This large preserve on the shoulder of Ratlum Mountain offers a network of trails of varying difficulties. Two popular hikes are the Tom Perry Trail loop (red blazes), about 1 mile long, and the Yellow Trail loop (yellow blazes, with some distance on the Red Trail), about 3.3 miles. There are several trailheads; the easiest begins from the Breezy Hill Road parking lot.

**9. Winsor Woods Preserve** This little-known preserve offers a network of trails, with the average hike being 1.2 miles of moderate difficulty. The trailhead is located on Route 309 1/10<sup>th</sup> of a mile from its junction with Cherry Brook Road (Route 179).

**10. Uplands Preserve** This property offers a short but steep hike (Blue Trail, .5 miles), and a longer, more level hike (1 mile). Both traverse deciduous woodlands, have varied bird populations and in spring are home to several vernal pools. Find the trailhead at the Westwoods Drive cul-de-sac.

– Sarah Faulkner

## EVENTS

### Canton Land Trust Summer Challenge

Many Land Trust members have their favorite hiking trails, perhaps one nearby or one they stumbled upon and decided it was worth revisiting many times. Jen and John Mason, partially motivated by the COVID-19 social distancing orders, began a daily hiking routine this past spring visiting many of the Land Trust trails. Their excitement around reacquainting themselves with different trails led them to propose the idea of a hiking challenge, which would hopefully encourage others to also branch out and visit some Land Trust trails that they may not otherwise frequent.

They worked together with other Land Trust members to create the Canton Land Trust Summer Challenge, a series of eight hikes whose total distance is just under the marathon distance of 26.2 miles. This is not a race; the goal is to simply complete all of the listed hikes at whatever pace and in whatever order you choose during the summer.

While the Challenge was in the development stage, we learned of the passing of long-time board member Ted Cowles, who was instrumental in the creation and caretaking of many of the Land Trust trails. The First Annual Canton Land Trust Summer Challenge is dedicated to Ted.

All of these trails are in whole or in part on Canton Land Conservation Trust properties. We have included some old favorites as well as our newest trail, the Ted Cowles trail, which is accessed from the Swan property. There is also one hike that includes trails at the Roaring Brook Nature Center.

We hope that you will decide to take on the Summer Challenge. The hope is that as you visit some of the lovely trails in the town of Canton, you may discover a new favorite hike or two. Successful participants will receive a certificate and recognition in a future newsletter.

More information on the Canton Land Trust Summer Challenge, including the list of trails and their lengths and altitude gain, as well as how to register, can be found on our website: [cantonlandtrust.org](http://cantonlandtrust.org)

– Phil Philbrick

### Sun, Wind & Woodland Bird Walks

The purpose of holding bird walks at the Sun, Wind and Woodland Preserve is: (1) to provide Land Trust members and their friends an opportunity to increase their birding skills and learn about Canton's birdlife; and (2) assess the success of the 10-acre "bunny cut" initiated in the fall of 2016. Although the goal of the bunny cut was to lure the threatened New England cottontail across the New Hartford border into this area, another primary goal was to determine if "shrubland" nesting birds would increase. These birds, faced with disappearing habitat throughout much of the state, have been in serious decline for quite some time. We scheduled the spring walk last fall, well before the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic. After a great deal of thought, and in conjunction with CLCT leadership, we decided to hold the walk under strict protocols.

We limited attendance to six people who had to wear masks. Unless they were in significant relationships, they were required to remain six feet apart and 10 feet from the leader, Jay Kaplan, Roaring Brook Nature Center director. We were inundated with requests, and the walk filled up the same evening the release went out.

Following a cool, wet April, the first weekend of May was a true delight with warm temperatures and sunny skies. In spite of some showers before dawn, it was dry by 7 a.m., when we met in the parking lot off Breezy Hill Road. As we assembled, a cottontail in the driveway afforded the opportunity to discuss the difference between the introduced eastern cottontail that we were looking at, and the threatened New England cottontail that we are trying to attract. We headed into the "bunny cut," where we heard a house wren and a prairie warbler singing, both recent spring migrants that, it was hoped, would nest here. The cut area was quiet with the exception of the call notes and songs of the eastern towhee, one of the birds that it had been hoped the cut would attract. Both male and female towhee were observed and eventually everyone had a decent look. After spying a hairy woodpecker, we headed toward the woods. It had become obvious that the gnats were going to be a problem, particularly for those who did not wear a hat or some other head covering. We heard and saw a single blue-gray gnatcatcher. We needed another hundred to afford us some relief. On the plus side,

these were, for the most part, not biting black flies, but they were an annoyance. Bushwhacking through the woods, we came upon the Red Trail that would lead us back to the parking lot. Birds seen or heard on the return trip included blue-headed vireo, numerous singing ovenbirds that nest in the area, wood thrush, many migrant yellow-rumped warblers and a newly arrived black-and-white warbler that was observed creeping along the tree branches. In olden days, this bird was known as the black-and-white creeper.

We returned to the parking lot promptly at 8:30 am. The bugs had won, and in spite of a Carolina wren singing right out in the open, all but one of our participants headed for their cars.

### Jaybird

Shrill herald sounding alarms  
of awakening at any hour,  
the blue crested rascal screams  
his presence shattering winter's cold,  
shriveling summer's heat.

Alive with antic movements,  
madman shrieks, harsh whistles,  
rattling clicks and clever mimicry  
Jaybird is a centripetal axis of bluff  
and bluster, doings and goings.

Icily, he watches me watching  
him, a lumbering earthbound  
creature neither quick  
nor colorful, never knowing  
that he's the only miracle I need.

– David Leff

### BIRD WALK, PART II

The success of the May 3 walk called for another in order to accommodate those who had been put on a waiting list for the first walk. Again, this walk filled up quickly, but whether we would hold it was in doubt on the previous evening as snow fell and the temperature plunged to the freezing mark. Would anyone show up on Sunday morning? It turns out that everyone was right on time. It was a balmy 34 degrees with a brisk northwest wind and there was a dusting of snow underfoot. The sun, however, was warm and the best part – there were no bugs! Off we went into the

bunny cut. Once again, there were numerous eastern towhees signing away, and the prairie warblers had increased to several singing males and at least a couple females. This was good news, as this is one of our

target species for the bunny cut area. The cold north breeze, no doubt, cut down on birds singing in the openness of the cut, so we



ventured into the woods where the trees provided some needed shelter from the wind. Once in the woods, we began to see birds. A pair of hermit thrushes picked for food amidst the fallen leaves; ovenbirds sang, although we could not see them as they are masters at camouflaging themselves while in song. In the woods, the name of the game was spring warblers and we were not disappointed. Our group, having had good looks at the male prairie warbler that sang from an open tree branch, was ready for the challenge. Yellow-rumped, pine and black-and-white warblers were noted. Suddenly, our leader showed great excitement with the arrival of a Blackburnian warbler, sometimes known as the "firethroat." This winged jewel of a bird with bright, fluorescent orange throat sang from an exposed perch in a hemlock tree, affording good looks to the entire group. This alone made for a great trip. The sky was now bright blue, the wind had diminished somewhat and the temperature was probably into the lower or even mid-40s. Reaching the Red Trail, we headed back toward the parking lot, picking up good looks at yellow-bellied sapsucker, blue-headed vireo and white-breasted nuthatch along the way. Compiling our list in the parking lot, a raven flew overhead, croaking as it disappeared across the bunny cut and into the woods. It was only 8:30, and a good start to Mother's Day and, hopefully, better weather ahead.

– Jay Kaplan

## Moonlight Hike Attracts All Ages

On the night of a full moon in February, nearly 200 adults and children followed a trail of luminaries and moonlight up the Breezy Hill trail to a land trust member's barn where they enjoyed conversation around a bonfire, chili, dessert and beverages. This year, conditions for the Feb. 8 hike were a little different—we had moonlight but no snow—but that did not deter the hikers who came from Canton, Barkhamsted, Avon and Simsbury, and as far away as Vermont and Massachusetts.



Volunteers did not need to pack down snow-covered trails as in past years, but they still placed more than 400 luminary bags filled with sand and candles, parked about 100 cars along Breezy Hill Road, served about 18 gallons of chili or black beans, and distributed information about the Land Trust's programs and projects. Everyone agreed that it is among the best events of the year. We missed the snow but enjoyed the stars visible in the clear skies. Many thanks to all the volunteers, neighbors and merchants who made the event a success.

– Mary Ann Mahony

## CLCT Aids American Chestnut Recovery Effort

American Chestnuts (*Castanea dentata*), magnificent trees considered the most valuable of hardwoods and previously representing 30 percent of deciduous trees, were more or less wiped out by a fungus in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. If you live in a house built before that time, the structure is likely chestnut. Large chestnut planks found in my family's 1781 house had growth rings indicating its life started at least in the 1600's. While other imported types of chestnuts exist and are not affected by the blight, the American Chestnut Foundation ([www.acf.org](http://www.acf.org)) actively works to bring back the American Chestnuts as pure descendants.

The Land Trust considered getting involved at a nursery level but opted out due to the expense and labor involved. As an ACF member, I found I could buy

bare root trees this spring. My wife Judy and I bought 50 trees to distribute to Land Trust members interested in parenting a few trees on their property. In addition, we received permission from the town to plant a few trees in what is known as Millennium Park along the bend of the Farmington River in Collinsville, and they were planted June 1.

When the "kids" arrived, they were a bit underwhelming in stature but, as of this writing, they have been distributed; most have been planted and leafed out. While they will likely die from the blight in future years, the goal is to have them get big enough to put out burrs (nuts), which would be collected, planted and used to start new trees in the hope that successive tree generations would have more resistance to the still-present fungus.



It's important to have the public know of the ACF breeding project and support the possibility of a healthy future American Chestnut generation. We encourage you to look at the ACF website, especially the Connecticut chapter, join them and be part of this adventure.

– Nate Cantwell

## In Uncertain Times, Annual Dinner Postponed

As uncertainty around coronavirus controls persists, the Canton Land Trust Board of Directors agrees that planning for our annual dinner scheduled for Oct. 6 is too questionable to risk. Therefore, postponed this event until March 23, 2021. Hopefully, we will be able to engage Kim Stoner, Ph.D., entomologist with Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station in New Haven, who will speak on "Planting for the Bees' Needs" and Pollinator Pathways. For those who have made reservations and chosen your meals, there's nothing left to do but to show up at Seasons Restaurant in Avon at 6 p.m. for cocktails, silent auction, dinner and speaker. We will send out reminders as the time approaches. Thank you for your support and delight in sharing the land preserved for us all by the Canton Land Conservation Trust.

– Anne Duncan

## NEWS

### Stewardship Team Plants Christmas Trees

Eight stewardship committee members held a tree-planting party at the Smith tree farm on May 14. We had purchased 100 Concolor firs to help replenish our Christmas tree inventory. While it was a little chilly for a typical day in mid-May, the weather was welcome, as digging holes for the trees helped work up a sweat. Last year we used a special shovel which you could just place in the dirt and twist to create a hole for the seedlings, but we decided to do something different this year for two reasons: 1) A number of the trees planted last year did not survive, so we felt we needed more aggressive holes; 2) This year's seedlings were substantially larger than last year's, so they needed a 12- to 15-inch-deep hole.

The participants were Betty and Frank Stanley, Mike Gotaski, Scott Persing, Nate Cantwell, Tom Noonan, John Peck and Phil Philbrick. Bonus: we picked a day where rain was expected in the evening so we didn't have to water.

–Phil Philbrick

### Pollinator Pathway Launched

After three years removing invasive Japanese knotweed and other invasive plants from land between Allen Place and the Farmington River Rail Trail, a team of volunteers led by Karen Berger, a UConn master gardener, has launched the town's first Pollinator Pathway, called the Collinsville Pollen Trail. Allen Place area residents Jenny Abel and Holly Hambleton, CLCT director, oversaw Eversource-contracted landscapers to plant 31 native shrubs after Eversource contractors removed several trees marked for saving.



A team of volunteers from the Cherry Brook Garden Club planted dozens of perennial bulbs, which bloomed this spring. And,

with mulch provided by the Town Department of Public Works, volunteers mulched beds and scattered thousands of milkweed seeds along the slope beside the trail. To learn more about the [Collinsville Pollen Trail](http://www.collinsvillepollentrail.org/), go to [www.collinsvillepollentrail.org/](http://www.collinsvillepollentrail.org/)

As volunteers from the neighborhood, Garden Club and the UConn Master Gardener program continue to work to remove more invasive plants between the trail and the river, the invasives will be replaced with native shrubs, perennials, sedges and grasses that will attract pollinators and bring wildlife back to this sunny section of the trail. DPW crews have helped with removing the garbage bags filled with invasives and with mowing the Japanese knotweed at designated increments to try to keep it in check. To help with this effort, please contact Karen K. Berger at [karenkberger@gmail.com](mailto:karenkberger@gmail.com)

Karen and Theresa Sullivan Barger, UConn Master Gardener intern, presented two Pollinator Pathway workshops given via Zoom with help from Canton Public Library staff. The spring workshops focused on why plant for pollinators and how to attract pollinators.

– Karen Berger and Theresa Sullivan Barger

### Finances Weather COVID-19 Downturn

While the current economic slowdown and social distancing measures have had a negative impact on our finances, the effect has been manageable.

Most of our members renew in the winter months, especially December and January, so they were not affected by the economic uncertainty that subsequently developed.

However, we have been affected in two ways: the postponement and subsequent cancellation of the annual dinner and silent auction, and the market impact on our invested endowment assets. Because we are an all-volunteer organization, we have not had the financial burden other land trusts and nonprofits have faced.

The silent auction is our biggest fundraiser of the year, but it nevertheless represents a relatively small percentage of our annual income. The investment losses in the endowment have been partially reversed by the strong market rebound since the lows of late March, and as of June 1' the year-to-date losses were less than one third the size of the gains recorded in 2019.

In summary, we are fortunate to report that our financial strength is only marginally weaker due to the impact of the current pandemic.

– Christian Winkler, Treasurer

## Ted Cowles: An Appreciation

If people have trademarks, Ted Cowles' were trail-making and woodworking. As a child, Ted spent weekends and summers at his family's country house in North Canton, clearing muck out of ponds, cutting down trees and building trails on the 40 acres on Barbourtown Road.



Only months before passing away in May from Covid-19 complications, the long-time Land Trust director had volunteered to teach Simsbury high school students how to build Adirondack chairs, a skill he had learned in high school shop class at Loomis. As a member of the Rotary Club of Avon-Canton, he answered the call for older adults to work with teenagers to make the 10 chairs which were painted and placed throughout Simsbury to mark the town's 350th anniversary.

"That was classic Ted – an 87-year-old guy in the woodshop helping out high school students," says Mike Gotaski, chair of the Land Trust's Stewardship Committee, where Ted was an active member.

In the 26 years he served the Land Trust, he could be counted on to design trails to maximize enjoyment of natural beauty and clear brush and trees. When he first joined the board, members were creating a new trail.

"In order to complete the trail circle, a bridge over Cherry Brook needed to be made," says former president Betty Stanley. "Ted was front and center in getting that done," designing and making the bridge. When Land Trust members discussed the need for a bridge over the brook on the Swan preserve in 2008, Ted cut down cedar trees from his property because he knew the tree's chemical makeup made it naturally resistant to rot, says his daughter, Laura Hobbs. He stripped the bark and built a log bridge.

In addition to serving on the Appalachian Mountain trails committee, Ted designed, planted and maintained a memorial garden at his long-time church, St. Alban's in Simsbury, Laura says.

After the town's former poet laureate recommended placing poetry boxes at Land Trust trails, while a discussion ensued, says Land Trust President Phil Philbrick, "Ted said, 'Why don't I just build the boxes?' He built three boxes. That's the kind of guy he was. 'Let's go and do it.'"

In his retirement from the Travelers investments department, he started a landscaping business and a maple syrup business with his son. One year, when a cold snap curtailed sap collection, Ted brought 10 gallons of his sap over to the Roaring Brook Nature Center so the annual maple syrup making demonstration could proceed, says Jay Kaplan, Nature Center director.



"He gave us enough so we could have enough for people to taste," says Jay. On the years the sap was slow to run, Ted offered his sap, allowing the Nature Center to keep the tradition going for 40 years without missing a year. "He was a nice man who was always willing to give his time and effort if something needed to be done."

– Theresa Sullivan Barger



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President: Stephen (Phil) Philbrick  
Vice President: Jay Weintraub  
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Theresa Sullivan Barger, Karen Berger, Katie Blake, Nate Cantwell, Anne Duncan, Fred Feibel, Mike Gotaski, Holly Hambleton, Jay Kaplan, Jen Mason, Mary Ann Mahoney, Harold Mullins, John Pech, Scott Persing, Thom Rice, Stephen Shaw, Elenor Smith, Betty Stanley, and Garry Tilton

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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 Canton Land Conservation Trust on Facebook.

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**Upcoming Event**

**Annual Dinner - March 23, 2021**