



# Canton Land Conservation Trust, Inc. NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 1994

## Land Trust Receives Additional Lands on Breezy Hill

**O**n May 27, 1994, the Canton Land Conservation Trust received a 60-acre parcel of land on Breezy Hill as a donation from The Thomas M. Perry Charitable Trust, which had earlier received the parcel as a donation from Sun Wind and Woodland, Inc. a subsidiary of The T. M. Perry Company.

These sixty acres have approximately 1000 feet of frontage on the easterly side of Breezy Hill Road and lie northerly of the small brook that drains the roadside pond near the summit of the hill.

This donation was made possible through the generosity and accommodation of the shareholders of Sun Wind and Woodland, Inc. including Dr. Fredrick Feibel, Miller Feibel, Dr. Fredrick C. Feibel, Dr. Craig S. Feibel, Laurence R. Smith Jr., Eleanor C. Smith, Elizabeth Smith van Gemeren, Laurel B. Smith Mrvic, Ruth Smith Washburn, Laurence R Smith III, Frank and Elizabeth Stanley, The T. M. Perry Company, The T. M. Perry Family Trust, and Landsford W. Perry.

Diverse habitat types including open ponds and watercourses, brushy and wooded wetlands, exposed mossy ledges and timber-covered uplands are found on this site. The donation of this parcel provides a critical link between Canton Land Trust properties to the South donated earlier by the Thomas M. Perry Charitable Trust, which received them from The Braislin Farm Company, a subsidiary of The T. M. Perry Company, and Canton Land Trust properties to the North donated by Thomas M. Perry and family.

The Canton Land Trust now has received interests in approximately 750 acres in the Breezy Hill/Ratlum Mountain area. This secure island of undisturbed, diverse habitat should be increasingly valuable to wildlife as Canton continues to grow.



### SAFETY TIPS & RULES FOR VISITORS TO LAND TRUST PROPERTIES



**RULES:** No fires, camping or hunting. Hiking and cross-country walking are encouraged. No motorized/non-motorized vehicles, including bicycles. Horseback riding is permitted in some locations, call Ray Smith at 693-6044 for details. Picnicking is permitted, but remember if you carry it in, you must carry it back out.

**SAFETY TIPS:** Wear adequate footwear and dress in layers. Protect yourself against deer ticks by wearing long pants, socks and insect repellent in all seasons. Stay on marked trails and when hiking alone, make sure someone knows where you are.

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## A letter from the President.



As I write this in late October, the leaves are falling like snow flurries on any light breeze. By all accounts, this seems to have been one of the most beautiful autumns in memory. How many friends and neighbors have mentioned that the colors were as beautiful right here in Canton as anywhere in New England? We're very fortunate to be able to call this town "home." The views of Collinsville from Sweetheart Mountain at this time of year are breath-taking. From the hill's higher elevations the town looks like a model railroad village of yesteryear nestled in the river valley and surrounded by hills sporting a wide range of colors.

If you feel you want a new outlook on life, I recommend a 20 or 30 minute walk on Sweetheart Mountain; or if you prefer a stroll in the woods, the Ted Wright trail off the northern end of Breezy Hill Road is easy-going most of the way. However, the descent to Doyle Road at the far end of this trail is steep; so when you reach that point be prepared to return from whence you came or to pick your way very carefully down the trail. Bob Allen, our Trail Committee Chairman, will try to plan a somewhat easier descent on that steep downhill section next Spring. We're working on another trail near the intersection of the Indian Hill and Breezy Hill roads. Fred Feibel "discovered" this trail on CLCT property and suggested that a minimum of clearing would be necessary to make this a very comfortable walking path for folks of all ages. We hope to be able to put the finishing touches on this trail before winter sets in and it should be all marked and ready to go by Springtime. And for those of you who will be visiting our Christmas tree farm on Doyle Road, you may want to take a few extra minutes to climb the Charlotte Craig trail with views that are well worth the effort.

Ted Cowles, our tree farm Chairperson, is working closely with Tom Noonan (who has been in residence at the farmhouse for about a year now) to make some major interior improvements to make the house more livable this winter. We put a new roof on the house last year and have done a considerable amount of rehabilitation on the barn over the last few years. We plan to continue improving the general condition of the house and barn in coming years. Our two newly-acquired DR brush mowers have done a great job of keeping the field weeds down, particularly around the many young trees which have been planted for future Christmases.

I would like to thank all of the volunteers and contributors who really represent the heart of this land trust. Your Board of Directors truly appreciates your efforts to preserve the land and increase everyone's enjoyment of it, and we look forward to your continued help in the future. Our annual Christmas tree sale will be held on December 10 from 9AM to 1 PM. We urge you to come early as the supply of trees is somewhat limited this year.

- Ramon Smith

# ANNUAL Christmas Tree SALE

The annual Christmas tree sale will be held on December 10th from 9 AM to 1 PM. This year, in order to allow our stock of young trees another year to mature, the Land Trust will be offering a small number of pre-cut trees.

Large trees can be topped by visitors, providing trees suitable for the home. Able-bodied help will be available to assist in this effort. Bundles of greens will be available free of charge. As usual, hot chocolate and cookies will be served in the farmhouse.

Come and join us for a winter walk in the woods and some friendship by the fire. Look over your newly-renovated farmhouse and discuss future plans with Tom Noonan and Ted Cowles. Please park on the paved section of Doyle Road and walk in to the farm.

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## Bald eagles are soaring back

The Bald Eagle has a wingspan that can exceed seven feet. Thus, when one flies in front of your car as you drive down River Road, you're bound to take notice. Bald Eagles here in Canton? There was a time when such a report was sure to be passed off as a Turkey Vulture, an Osprey or even a Red-tailed Hawk. But no longer. In 1992, a pair of Bald Eagles nested at the north end of Barkhamsted Reservoir, the first Connecticut nesting of our national bird in almost 40 years. This pair of eagles has now nested for three consecutive years and wildlife biologists are hopeful that there is enough habitat for additional eagles to consider nesting in the Barkhamsted area, or perhaps even in Nepaug Reservoir. Earlier this year, Bald Eagles were

# Canton Land Conservation Trust, Inc. Questionnaire

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

For which of the following activities would you volunteer your time?

- \_\_\_\_\_ Annual tree planting in May
- \_\_\_\_\_ Christmas tree pruning
- \_\_\_\_\_ Weeding
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mowing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Land clearing (cutting trees, removing brush)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Trail blazing
- \_\_\_\_\_ Carpentry and other building activities requiring construction skills
- \_\_\_\_\_ Annual Christmas tree sale
- \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter
- \_\_\_\_\_ Donation of equipment (pruning saws, chain saws, riding mowers, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this questionnaire in the enclosed envelope.

## We urgently need volunteers.

Please consider it. Thanks.

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removed from the federal endangered species list as their population has increased nationwide.

Why the sudden increase in eagles? In order to understand why eagles are on the upswing, it is important to understand why they declined in the first place? In the 1950's, it became apparent that a number of birds of prey at the top of the food chain were disappearing from the northeast, as well as from other parts of the country. Eventually, it was determined that the pesticide DDT, commonly sprayed on farm fields to eliminate harmful insects, was interfering with the birds ability to breed. The DDT caused a calcium imbalance in the eagles, so that the females laid eggs with thin shells. When the birds sat on the eggs, they broke and the embryos did not survive to hatch. Fortunately, DDT was banned in the early 1970's and the pesticide has slowly disappeared from the environment. Coupled with an active captive breeding program for Bald Eagles that resulted in the release of many additional birds to the wild, eagle populations began to climb. In fact, the eagles that nested in Barkhamsted are likely birds that journeyed here from Quabbin Reservoir in Massachusetts, where there has been a successful eagle reintroduction program for the past decade.

So, why the sudden increase in eagles here in Canton. Eagles generally show up in Connecticut at this time of year and remain until early spring. The majority of these birds come from further north where severe winters and frozen lakes and rivers prevent them from finding fish, their favorite food. In fact, the prime places to view eagles in Connecticut are rivers that remain free of ice through the winter. The lower Connecticut River and the Shepaug River in Southbury, where a hydroelectric facility with turbines keep the river open, are two prime eagle watching spots. Here in Canton, we have the Farmington River, as well as the nearby Nepaug Reservoir. In late fall, as the eagles move southward, they are attracted to Nepaug, which rarely freezes before the first of the year. When this large water body finally does freeze, the eagles may move to the Farmington, parts of which remain open for most of the winter.

The Collinsville area is a prime location. The large trees along the bank offer excellent vantage points from which to view the River and the water below the dam provides fishing grounds in all but

the coldest weather. Don't expect to see lots of eagles in Canton. You'll be lucky to see one or two of these magnificent birds roosting somewhere in the vicinity of Collinsville or flying over Route 44. Do keep your eyes open, however, and particularly look for colored bands on the eagles legs (requiring a close look indeed). Scientists band the young birds while they are still in the nests. This enables us to learn more about their natural history.

If you want a close-up look at Bald Eagles, there are currently two permanently injured birds on exhibit at Roaring Brook Nature Center. These birds are impressive. Nothing, however, is more impressive than watching an adult Bald Eagle framed against a deep blue winter sky. If you have the patience, perhaps you'll have the opportunity to see one in Canton this year!

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## Smith Farm revisited



Last year we spoke about the Smith Farm property on Doyle Road, one of the Land Trust's "Crown Jewels", and stated that our purpose was to preserve and restore the buildings on the property.

Progress continues. Our resident, Tom Noonan, has spent hours this past summer removing a large section of the second floor walls and ceiling. Into an open dumpster went plaster and lath, bushels of nuts and other interesting debris left by mice and squirrels. The old ceiling height was lower than Tom's six foot two inches. Talk about claustrophobia! When refurbished, two bedrooms of acceptable size and electrification should emerge.

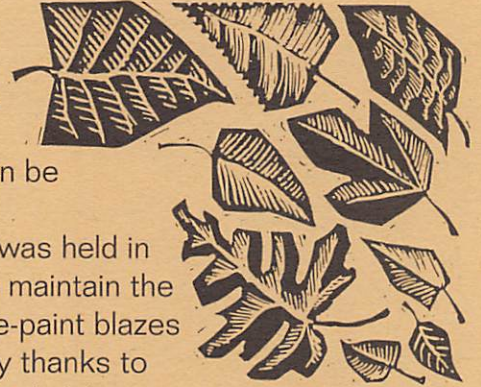
A second project was to relocate the only bathroom (which existed in a small addition built on the east side of the house on an open stone foundation where it has been subject to the freezing conditions of winter) to the first floor, adjacent to the kitchen, and inside the house foundation. CLCT Directors voted to spend \$4000 to bring the bathroom up to modern standards before winter settles in.

# Sweetheart Mountain Preserve

**W**ith the fall of the leaves on Sweetheart Mountain, once again hikers can enjoy spectacular views over Collinsville and the Farmington River. The trails on this preserve, known as the Canton Ski Club Property, offer a variety of hiking opportunities. After an initial steep climb, the two loop trails level out and meander a total of 1 1/4



miles among mixed hardwood and coniferous forests. Wildlife can often be observed.



**A** work party was held in October to maintain the trails and re-paint blazes and signs. Many thanks to Alan Duncan, Sheila Mossman and her daughter, Eric Jackson, Kate Linton, Bev Kent, Eric Sondergeld, and Sally Albrecht for their help.

**T**he Sweetheart Mountain Preserve is located off Dunne Avenue in Collinsville. From Route 179 at the bridge in Collinsville, go up (west) Bridge Street to its end, take a right onto Dunne Avenue, and take the second driveway on the left. The parking area for the preserve is at the top of the drive.

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