



Canton Land Conservation Trust, Inc.

Fall 1997 Newsletter

CANTON ON THE MOVE

The developing "Rail-to-Trails" program in Canton prompts a review of the various means of transportation throughout our town's history. Such a review might well be divided into four time periods -- prior to the mid 1800s, roughly 1850 to 1900, 1900 through the 1950s, and from that time to the upcoming year 2000.

Means of transportation developed gradually during the first 230 years of our local history. Water travel gave pioneers their first access to, and into, the new world of the 1600s and 1700s. Utilization of native trails and creation of exploratory paths by settlers came next. Short, dirt roads and then longer "turnpikes" were developed as wagon traffic developed and grew. Next came stagecoaches carrying paying passengers, goods, and mail; the Albany and Litchfield Turnpikes were two of Canton's through routes.

Later in the 1800s canal construction was widely supported to improve on wagon transportation. The Farmington Canal from New Haven to Avon and Simsbury indirectly served Canton by means of a feeder canal between Farmington and Unionville. This branch, completed in 1828, made it practicable for the growing Collins Company's axe manufactory to import steel and coal, the latter being used in its furnaces as charcoal became scarce. A painting in the Canton Historical Society's Museum shows Enos Dyer's oxen and one-half ton wagon car-

rying coal. The coal, perhaps from Pennsylvania, was unloaded from a large canal boat tied at Woodford's on the Albany Turnpike, in the center of Avon.

The canal's life was short, however, as railroad service came to Collinsville at the beginning of the 1850-1900 period. The first was the Canal Railroad, built by some of the directors of the Farmington Canal. Another painting in the Museum shows the local excitement as

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HIKES

Four hikes have been planned for this fall. Each will be led by a knowledgeable member of the Land Trust. The hikes are open to all, but please call Shirley Sutton, at 693-4067, to say you are coming so we can plan accordingly.

October 17, 1997 - 7:30 PM - Evening Hike Braislin Farms. Meet on trail which is on west side of Breezy Hill Road 150 yards north of intersection of Breezy Hill Road and Indian Hill Road.

October 18, 1997 - 1:30 PM - Sweetheart Mountain. Hike will be geared for families with young children 3-8. Meet at parking lot off Dunne Ave.

October 26, 1997 - 1:30 PM - Mary Conklin Sanctuary. Meet at garage 144 Indian Hill Road.

November 2, 1997 - 1:30 PM - Smith Tree Farm. Meet at Farm - Doyle Road.

NEW DONATIONS TO THE CANTON LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

In July, 1997 the Canton Land Conservation Trust received a very generous donation of land from Jeannette R. Gladstone and Dr. James Gladstone. The Gladstones live on Woodchuck Hill Road where, in addition to their own home, they also owned three building lots which they donated to the Land Trust. There is a beautiful brook running through each of the lots, somewhat parallel to Woodchuck Hill Road. The total area is about 3.3 acres. As building lots, the land is quite valuable, and we are all very thankful for the Gladstones' generosity and thoughtfulness.

The Land Trust is also grateful to Sun, Wind and Woodland for a conservation easement on twenty acres of land on Breezy Hill Road which used to be the Simpson property. The conservation easement allows one dwelling place on the property which can never be divided for further development. It is adjacent to land already held by the Land Trust so the corridor of open space has been increased in a most positive way. The press of development makes this corridor increasingly important for wildlife providing a variety of habitats for forage, nesting, and breeding.

Membership Campaign and Categories

This Fall Newsletter includes our organization's membership drive for 1998. After reviewing our membership drive activities in the past, the Board of the Canton Land Conservation Trust decided to conduct the drive earlier in the fall so that the campaign would not be lost in the bustle of the holiday season. Please use the enclosed envelope to initiate or renew your membership for 1988.

The Board has also concluded an extensive review of our organization's membership categories. Trying to be realistic about our needs, we have expanded and changed our membership categories. Starting this fall they are: individual - \$15; family - \$25; supporting - \$50; contributing - \$100; and life - \$250.

The category of honorary membership will be changed to benefactor, reflecting the extreme generosity of those people who have directly or indirectly donated land to the Canton Land Conservation Trust. Included in this last category are those who were part of the

Braislin Farm Company and those who are part of Sun, Wind and Woodland, Inc. Through their generosity and foresight, Braislin Farm and the Simpson lands on Breezy Hill Road were saved from development. In subsequent years the land was then donated to the Land Trust by the T. M. Perry Charitable Trust. We mention the Braislin Farm Company and Sun, Wind and Woodland, Inc. specifically because we previously had not publicly acknowledged their contributions. We are deeply indebted and grateful to all our benefactors.

Board of Directors

Betty Stanley, President	
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Bunny Terry, Treasurer	
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Skip Alford	Lori Oleasz
Ted Cowles	John Pech
Bill Danielson	Bob Porter
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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR GROWING LAND TRUST

Old and new members, if you would like to help in the work of the Land Trust, please fill out this form and return in the envelope with your membership.

I/we would like to help in the following area(s):

- Christmas tree planting/pruning
- Christmas tree sale
- Land maintenance: mowing, brush and tree cutting
- Trail blazing and maintenance
- Carpentry and other construction
- Newsletter
- Serve as land steward
- Serve on Canton Land Conservation Trust Board
- Telephoning for volunteer work parties
- Other (please specify) _____



Name _____
Address _____
Telephone _____

CANTON ON THE MOVE (continued from page 1)

the first train arrived in Collinsville in 1850. This north-south railroad was extended to New Hartford in 1870, and in 1871 the Connecticut Western Railroad began east-west service from Hartford through Tariffville, Simsbury, Canton, New Hartford, Winsted, Norfolk and on to connecting lines in New York State.

A final footnote to the pre-1900 era was a trolley line proposed in 1895. It would have run from Unionville along Lovely Street, the Albany Turnpike, Dowd Avenue, Maple Avenue, and Center Street to Collinsville's Main Street. However, it was never built.

From 1900 to 1968, the rail service to Canton continued to be important. To say nothing of busy freight and express service, good north-south (the Canal Line) and east-west (Central New England) passenger service was available. In 1900, the Central New England line had six trains serving Canton passengers--east to Hartford or west to Winsted and beyond. However, early in the century, automobiles appeared and steadily increased in numbers and usefulness. This resulted in a statewide program "to get Connecticut out of the mud" and the development of our present road system. Service on the Central New England line was abandoned in the 1930s, and the Canal Railroad line ceased by 1968, at the time of the dissolution of the Collins Company.

Since 1968, during the last period of our brief review, the automobile and truck have remained dominant. However, vestiges of the past remain and are in use. Some rail beds have been obliterated by nature's flooding, others by man's regrading and building. Rail property has been acquired for power or water transmission lines, and some old road beds are growing up to be young forests. The old trails and turnpikes are gone, but names -- as well as routes -- remain as reminders of earlier traffic.

However, here as elsewhere in the state, some of the dormant old rail lines will be put to a new current usefulness. Walkers, bikers, roller bladers, baby carriages, strollers and wheel chairs are traveling ten-foot-wide paths in Simsbury, Avon, Cheshire, and Hamden. These paths are built on former railroad beds and canal tow paths. Locally a trail will be created on the rail bed of the Canal Railroad branch through Farmington, Unionville, Burlington, and Collinsville. Another will follow some of the old Central New England line to Simsbury. So as we approach the turn of the century and millennium, we can indeed reflect that if not "everything" at least some things "old are new again."

(This brief review is based on information generously furnished by Arthur Sweeton.)

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CANTON LAND TRUST JOINS FOREST STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

The Canton Land Conservation Trust has entered into the Connecticut Forest Stewardship Incentive Program in order to help in planning for management of the Mary Conklin property. The Forest Stewardship Program provides cost sharing for a variety of forest management and wildlife habitat enhancement practices. The first step is construction of a detailed inventory of the forest and development of a ten-year management plan. CLCT has hired Jim Gillespie, a consulting forester with Forestand Associates, to help put the management plan together. The plan will be completed by the fall of 1997, and planned management activities will be scheduled, mostly to be carried out by CLCT member work parties. The Stewardship Program will pay 75% of the cost of developing the plan.

Among the objectives CLCT has for the Mary Conklin property are:

1. Wildlife habitat enhancement. This is an important goal of CLCT, a goal that is consistent with Mary Conklin's use of the property during her lifetime. Among the specific projects will be encouragement of preferred food and cover vegetation, creation of nesting habitat, and creation of areas in different stages of succession for different animals.
2. Passive recreation, including development of hiking paths. The Ray Smith Trail will be built at Mary Conklin's.
3. Promoting the health and diversity of the forest. This may involve thinning trees that are growing too closely together and providing the most desirable trees room to grow.
4. Maintenance of open fields and meadows. A mowing schedule will be developed that will maintain meadows, but encourage enough brushy growth for optimum wildlife habitat.
5. Nature Study opportunities, including interpretive signs along the Ray Smith Trail.

Many of these projects will also qualify for cost sharing under the Stewardship Program. CLCT recognizes that the health of the forest depends on prudent stewardship. The Forest Stewardship Program is also available to private landowners who want help with managing their land. It enables access to professional advice, as well as defraying a large part of the cost of activities, to promote forest and wildlife health, aesthetics, water quality, or recreational enjoyment. For further information, contact Charlie DeWeese at 693-3988 or Esther Danielson at 693-0017.

NATURE CENTER FORESTRY LECTURES

November 15, 1997 -- A History of Forest Land Use in Connecticut: Starling Childs of Norfolk will follow the history of forest land use from colonial times through deforestation and up to the present time.

January 24, 1998 -- Invasive Plants and the Forests of Southern New England: Dr. Leslie Mehrhoff, Curator, Torrey Arboretum, University of Connecticut.
March 7, 1998 -- Connecticut's Notable Trees: Glenn Dreyer, Director of the Connecticut College Arboretum.

All lectures will be at the Roaring Brook Nature Center, Saturday morning from 10 am until noon. There is no charge; however, reservations are requested. These workshops are funded by a grant from the Talcott Mountain Forest Protective Association. Additional information is available by calling the Nature Center at 693-0263.

For Your Calendar

Work Parties -- Smith Tree Farm --Doyle Road

Saturday, Sept. 27, 9 a.m. --
mow, clear around trees
Saturday, Nov. 1, 9 a.m. --
cut trees to open areas

Hikes

Oct. 17 -- 7:30 p.m. -- Braislin Farms
Oct. 18 -- 1:30 p.m. -- Sweetheart Mountain
Oct. 26 -- 1:30 p.m. -- Mary Conklin Sanctuary
Nov. 2 -- 1:30 p.m. -- Smith Tree Farm

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE SALE

Saturday, December 13, 1997
9 AM until 2 PM

Please park at the head of Doyle Road. Your tree will be brought up to the parking area. As usual, hot chocolate, cookies, and Christmas spirit will all be found in the farm house along with a nice warm fire. All trees will be \$25; free bundles of greens will also be available. Bring all the family and have a wonderful time picking your special tree.

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Please renew your membership or join the Canton Land Conservation Trust. We are a public, town-wide organization and we need your help!