

Canton Land Conservation Trust, Inc.

Spring 2000
Newsletter

First Annual Tour of Ratlum Mountain

Ten intrepid hikers participated in the inaugural hiking tour of Ratlum Mountain on Saturday, October 23, ranging in age from Zack DeWeese, 7 to Art Sweeton, 86. The tour was organized for the benefit of the Canton Land Conservation Trust land acquisition fund, and to show off some of the Land Trust's hiking trails, covering about 8 miles. The hike was led by Land Trust board member Charlie DeWeese. Among the participants were two 7th grade boys from Sarah Leff's life science class at Canton Junior High School.

Early drizzle gave way to a beautiful day. The hike began at 8 am at the Mary Conklin Preserve on Indian Hill Road, and followed the new Ray Smith loop trail, recently completed by the Land Trust with the help of a grant from the state Forest Stewardship Improvement Program. This trail passes old fields, areas in early succession, and mature forest areas. A cloud of cedar waxwings were vigorously attacking juniper berries in one field we passed. A short walk down the road led to the Land Trust's Breezy Hill Preserve, and another yellow-blazed loop trail. This trail starts on Breezy Hill Road just north of the junction with Indian Hill, and incorporates old roads that Dr. Larry Carlton remembered as short cuts from his days of making house calls in the area. A large group of turkeys was seen in the field.

We then headed off into the woods onto the 145 acre Sun, Wind and Woodlands property, which

is under contract for the Land Trust to acquire with the help of a state open space grant. This property does not yet have a trail system, and careful navigation was required. Another flock of turkeys was seen in the woods, scratching in the leaf litter for food. Large stone piles were evidence of a prior farming history, as was an old dump that contained both old farm equipment and household items. The hikers passed woodland ponds with blueberries, cranberries and poison sumac, and an oak tree 17 feet in circumference, as well as a few old cellar holes.

Hikers then moved on to the unpaved section of Breezy Hill Road, dodging the puddles and on to the Ted Wright Trail, which connects Breezy Hill with Doyle Road. The Ted Wright Trail now includes a vista to the West that was cut during a recent Land Trust forestry operation. They continued up Doyle Road to the Land Trust's Smith Tree Farm, site of the annual Christmas tree sale, and also of recent logging. They stopped there for cookies, apples and cider that had been stashed earlier. Hikers saw an area of pines that had been clearcut to start a new forest, and hiked up the Charlotte Craig Trail to a spectacular lookout to the southwest, also cut during the recent forestry. They continued over the top of the mountain and down the new logging trail to come out on Robin Drive in Barkhamsted, where they walked up to Ratlum Mountain Road and onto the old Derby Road at the Devil's Elbow.

(Continued page 2)

Spring Trail Building and Maintenance Days

We have a number of upcoming trail projects, as well as routine maintenance needs. There will be a trail workshop on Saturday, May 13 from 9 am to 2:30 pm at the Smith Tree Farm, where volunteers will learn about trail planning considerations, trail building technique and tools, and get some hands on experience. Lunch will be provided. Please call Charlie DeWeese (693-3988) and reserve a space, so we can provide the right amount of lunch.

There will be trail work parties from 5 until 7:30 pm on two Tuesdays and two Thursdays in May. If there is interest they will be continued on into the summer months. Please call Shirley Sutton for information (693-4067). See the Calendar for dates and places. Bring a snack!

There are a number of other projects looking for volunteers, including:

Installing guideposts for the Ray Smith Trail at Mary Conklin's
Pruning crabapples, dogwood and cedars at Mary Conklin's
Installing birdhouses at Breezy Hill Farm
Planting trees at the Smith Tree Farm (see the Calendar)
Installing deer fencing at the Smith Tree Farm



If you can help on any of these projects, please call Charlie DeWeese 693-3988.

(First annual tour continued from page 1)

Derby Road is now a path through the woods, but years ago was the main road from Barkhamsted to Simsbury. One half mile in is the Big Down Marsh, site of an active beaver pond. The beavers have improved their dam to the extent that Derby Road is no longer passable. The final leg of the journey traversed the DeWeese property, through a recent logging operation. The hikers stopped to look at charcoal platforms, reminders of the charcoal industry of over a century ago that fueled the early steel industry in Connecticut. The ravenous hikers then feasted on hamburgers and salads at Rhonda and Charlie DeWeese's house, 6 hours after they started.

This year's tour of Ratlum Mountain will also start from the Mary Conklin Preserve, 144 Indian Hill Road, at 8am on June 4 (National Trails Day), with perhaps a slightly different route.

Annual Meeting and Picnic

The annual meeting and picnic will be at the Mary Conklin Preserve on Sunday afternoon, June 11. There will be a hike on the Ray Smith Trail at 3 pm followed by the Meeting and Picnic at 4. All members and their guests are invited.

CLCT Sponsors Free Seminar

The Canton Land Trust, the Canton Open Space Committee, Roaring Brook Nature Center, and several neighboring towns' land trusts are sponsoring a free seminar for landowners, their advisors and town officials to learn about land preservation options. The free program, entitled, "A Landowner's Guide to Land Preservation Options" will be held in Canton on Saturday, April 29. The program will be held from 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. in the Canton Community Center on Dyer Avenue in Collinsville.

The program will cover three topics:

1. Conservation options - the various tools that landowners can use to preserve their land through donation or sale, and how each method works;
2. Tax benefits and estate planning implications of the various conservation options, including recent tax law changes; and
3. Land preservation organizations and programs - how the various groups go about preserving land, and what programs and funds are currently available for land preservation.

While the seminar is free, pre-registration is strongly encouraged, as space is limited. Register by sending name, address and phone number to the Canton Land Conservation Trust at P.O. Box 41, Canton Center, CT 06020, or by e-mail to esonderg@aol.com. For more information, contact Eric Sondergeld at 693-8678.

Canton High School Student's Senior Project: Build a Trail

Sean McAlindin of 22 Old Mill Lane has chosen as a senior project to build a trail on the Mary Conklin property to link the Ray Smith Trail to a scenic overlook atop a rocky outcrop. This project involves gaining permission from the Land Trust and adjacent property owners (since part of his trail will require a crossing of private property), planning the trail to minimize erosion, and construction of the trail, including cutting the path and improving the footbed. He has already walked the proposed trail with Land Trust directors and researched the property lines in the area.



Sean is the son of Scott and Pat McAlindin, and has a brother and a sister. In addition to being an avid hiker, Sean is captain of the Canton soccer team and plays clarinet in the school band and piano in the jazz band. He will attend college in the fall, and is considering the University of Colorado in Boulder and Skidmore College. Sean and his father worked on the Ray Smith Trail construction project last year, and plan to help the Land Trust mark the boundary of the Mary Conklin preserve this spring.

Land Trust Director

At the time the last issue of the newsletter was published, we did not have the biographical information for our new director, Dick Swibold, and so we are catching up now.

Dick Swibold lives with his wife Gretchen on Cherry Brook Road in North Canton. He is retired from a career as an architect which took him to France, Italy and West Africa, and as Professor of Architecture at the University of Connecticut. He has a long record of community service, including terms as Vice President and President of the Board of Trustees of Roaring Brook Nature Center and the Children's Museum, member of the Canton Planning commission, Secretary of the Executive Committee of the Capital Region Council of Governments Planning Commission, and Director of the Connecticut Architecture Foundation. Currently, in addition to his service as Director for the Canton Land Conservation Trust, he is also Director for People's Action for Clean Energy and Bulletin Editor for the League of Women Voters of Canton. He has two children and two grandchildren. We are very fortunate to have Dick join the Board.

Update on Sun, Wind & Woodland Preserve Purchase

The Land Trust will be purchasing 130 acres on Breezy Hill Road soon, with the help of a grant of \$67,500 from the State of Connecticut Open Space and Watershed Protection program. The Land Trust has its remaining funding in place, due to the generous donations of many members to the Land Trust Acquisition Fund. One of the last hurdles to overcome before the acquisition was the recently completed property survey, very ably performed by Steve Cotton of Henry Cotton & Associates. In order to determine the property lines, Steve spent many hours in research on old deeds, maps and grants. We will include a summary of his research into the history of this property in a future newsletter. Once the acquisition is completed, we hope to enroll this property in the Forest Stewardship Incentive Program, and to build a trail to allow hikers to enjoy the varied terrain and cultural features to be seen there.

TOWPATH ASSOCIATES DONATES LAND IN COLLINSVILLE

TOWPATH ASSOCIATES HAS DONATED A FOUR ACRE PARCEL OFF HIGH STREET IN COLLINSVILLE TO THE LAND TRUST. THE PROPERTY IS WOODED AND GENTLY SLOPING UP TOWARD HUCKLEBERRY HILL. STONE WALLS, SPRINGS AND OLD WELLS (NOW SECURED) ATTEST TO ITS HISTORY AS OPEN FARM LAND. WHILE THERE WILL BE NO PROVISION FOR PUBLIC PARKING, THE LAND TRUST HAS BEEN GIVEN AN EASEMENT FOR FOOT ACCESS TO THE HIKING TRAIL BY THE NEIGHBORS, JOHN SQUIER AND WILLIAM DOYLE. THE LAND TRUST WILL BE POSTING A SIGN AND MARKING THE ACCESS THIS SPRING.

News from the Christmas Tree Farm

Last summer's drought was very hard on the seedlings we planted last year, and a high percentage were lost. There will be a planting day on April 15 beginning at 9 am. In addition, we will be installing a fence around the area where we will be planting Fraser firs. These are very popular and beautiful Christmas trees, but also very tasty to the deer. The fence will enable them to live to maturity. Rich Hefler of Cape Cod Fence is donating his labor to dig fence post holes, and we will be installing the cedar fence posts (donated by Ted Cowles) on April 15 as well. Therefore we will need extra volunteers this day. Please join us at the Smith Tree Farm on Doyle Road. For more information, call Ted Cowles at 693-6340.

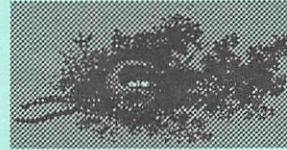


Board of Directors

President	Betty Stanley
Vice President	Jay Weintraub
Secretary	Charlie DeWeese
Treasurer	Bunny Terry
Dave Cover	Ted Cowles
Bill Danielson	Fred Feibel
Jay Kaplan	Peter Lamb
Tim Lord	Art Mauger
John Pech	Bob Porter
Elenor Smith	Eric Sondergeld
Shirley Sutton	Arthur Sweeton
Dick Swibold	Chris Williams

e-Volunteers

We are looking for e-mail addresses for volunteers who would like to be notified of upcoming trail projects. If you have e-mail, please send a message to deweese@compuserve.com to be added to our e-mail roster. All future hikes, trail days, and tree farm days will be published by e-mail.



Boundary Marking Volunteers Needed

Many of the Land Trust properties are not properly marked yet. We have a supply of Canton Land Conservation Trust markers, and some boundary paint. We need volunteers to use map and compass to find the boundaries and put up the markers, ideally every 50 feet. Among the properties most in need are the new Sun, Wind & Woodland Preserve and Breezy Hill Farm on Breezy Hill Road, the Mary Conklin Preserve on Indian Hill Road, the Fielden and Wright Road Associates properties off Foxcroft Road, the Smith Tree Farm on Doyle Road, the new Towpath property on High Street, and the Solomon property on Spalding Road. We need people capable of finding the lines, as well as people to nail up the markers. We nail the markers on trees using aluminum nails, and generally bring a ladder to get them up about 8-10 feet. If you are able to help, please call Charlie DeWeese at 693-3988 or email at deweese@compuserve.com.



CALENDAR

Date	Time	Activity	Location	Contact Person	Phone
Tues, April 11	1:30 - 5	Trail Layout	Smith Tree Farm	Charlie DeWeese	693-3988
Sat, April 15	9 - 1:00	Planting, Fence Posts	Smith Tree Farm	Ted Cowles	693-6340
Sat, April 22	10: 3:00	Earth Day Celebration	Roaring Brook Nature Center	Jay Kaplan	693-0263
Sat, April 29	9-11:00	Landowner Seminar	Canton Community Center	Eric Sondergeld	693-8678
Sat, May 13	9 - 2:30	Trail Workshop	Smith Tree Farm	Charlie DeWeese	693-3988
Tues, May 16	5 - 7:30	Trail Maintenance	Sweetheart Mt.	Shirley Sutton	693-4067
Thur, May 18	5 - 7:30	Trail Maintenance	Breezy Hill Farm	Shirley Sutton	693-4067
Tues, May 23	5 - 7:30	Trail Maintenance	Ted Wright Trail	Shirley Sutton	693-4067
Thur, May 25	5 - 7:30	Trail Maintenance	Charlotte Craig Trail	Shirley Sutton	693-4067
Sun, June 4	8 - 2:30	Tour of Ratlum Mt.	Mary Conklin's (start)	Charlie DeWeese	693-3988
Sun, June 11	3 - 6:00	Annual Meeting /Picnic	Mary Conklin's	Betty Stanley	693-2074
Sat, Jul 29	9 - 1:00	Tree Pruning	Smith Tree Farm	Ted Cowles	693-6340
Sun, Jul 30	9 - 1:00	Tree Pruning (rain date)	Smith Tree Farm	Ted Cowles	693-6340



P.O. Box 41
Canton Center, CT 06020

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Canton, CT
Permit No. 10