



Canton Land Conservation Trust, Inc.

**Fall 2002
Newsletter**

Progress on the Capen Cabin

The Capen Cabin is one of the oldest of the Land Trust's properties, and is being returned to good condition for use by local youth groups. The Cabin is up at the top of Breezy Hill Road, near the eastern end of the Ted Wright Trail. It has been many years since the Cabin has had significant maintenance, and there was a great deal of accumulated neglect. Since last spring there has been a tremendous effort on the part of dedicated volunteers and the Cabin is much friendlier and nicer to visit.

Since the spring there have been six or seven work parties involving Ted Cowles, Andy Dylag, Scott McAlindin, Niels van Gemeren, John Pech, Peter Lamb, Simon White, Fred Feibel, Betty Stanley, Charlie and Rhonda DeWeese, Bill Crowe and his son, Ted Kolzak, Steve Stang and his son, Chris Williams, Joe Bechard, Art Mauger, Bunny Terry, Chris Warren, Gene Douthit and others, who have made a substantial difference in the appearance of both the inside and outside of the cabin.

INSIDE - Several volunteers using ladders and moveable scaffolding prime-coated the walls and ceiling, then repeated the effort applying a white finish coat. The water stains and some of the spiders are gone. What a difference!

OUTSIDE - The chimney was in pretty rough condition, and it has been professionally repointed. When the chimney man went up to install flashing, he came right back down, as there was a nest of snakes behind the old flashing. The snakes are gone now, and the flashing will be replaced this fall. They did leave a fine snake skin behind for our souvenir. The exterior clapboard siding on the west side of the annex was finished; the roof on the annex was completely rebuilt with rafters, sheathing, and shingles (which were donated by Miner's Inc.) Rotten foundation sill and door sill were replaced in time for the CLCT annual meeting held in early June. Since then siding on the west side has been stained; the south side of the annex has been taken apart, repaired and partially clapboarded. The badly rotted area left of the front door is also being rebuilt.

Many thanks to those who volunteered their time! Between now and the time the snow flies more volunteer effort is needed to close in a few areas still open to the weather. Please call Ted Cowles at 693-6340.

Barkhamsted Land Trust Up and Running

Canton's neighbor, Barkhamsted, has an active and successful Land Trust once again. The Barkhamsted Land Trust was started in the 1970s, but had fallen dormant until revived about two years ago. They now have two properties and are actively working on acquiring others. At the Barkhamsted Land Trust annual meeting in March of this year, they honored Canton residents Art and Eunice Sweeton for their generous donation of approximately 40 acres, including the eastern and northern shores of the Big Down Marsh in the southeast corner of Barkhamsted.

The Big Down Marsh was dammed by the Sweetons many years ago with the assistance of the DEP, creating a pond which provides important habitat for beaver, otter, wood ducks, grebes and other water-loving animals. The beaver have improved the original dam, increasing the size of the pond to over 10 acres. The pond is the site of a large heron rookery. This summer there were 13 nesting pairs of great blue herons, by far the most that have nested there in recent years..

We applaud the success of the Barkhamsted Land Trust, and look forward to a cooperative future with them in protecting the land in both towns. The area along the border of our towns is very beautiful and rugged mountain habitat. Art Sweeton is a long-time director of the Canton Land Trust.

Forest Management

The Canton Land Conservation Trust is very committed to good forest stewardship. We have a management plans in place on the Mary Conklin Preserve and at the Smith Tree Farm. Both these plans were prepared by our consulting forester, Jim Gillespie of Forestland Associates.

Jim is now working on management plans for the Swan Preserve off Case Street and the Sun, Wind and Woodlands Preserve off Breezy Hill Road. In addition to his professional work on our behalf, Jim has donated land and has donated his time and the equipment to install solar-powered electric fencing around a two-acre patch of regenerating forest at the Smith Tree Farm. He also stops there regularly to maintain the fence and remove branches that fall across it. If you have the chance to see this fence, you will find it very interesting to observe how much higher the trees are growing inside it than the ones just outside. The fence keeps deer from browsing the shoots and saplings and is critical in allowing our forest to regenerate. Our relationship with Jim is an important part of good management of our land.

Wreath Sale

Cherry Brook Garden Club is raising funds to cover the cost of construction of a reading garden in back of the town library. They are making Christmas tree wreaths for sale in different sizes. Order one to support your library! Call Rhonda DeWeese 693-3988 now through December 10.

Correction

Attorney Michael A. Lockaby generously donated \$250 for our 30th Anniversary Celebration. His telephone number was incorrectly printed in the program guide.. His correct address is:

136 Dowd Avenue
Canton, CT 06019
Tel. 693-9663

30th Anniversary Celebration

Over 150 Land Trust members and friends helped the Land Trust celebrate its 30th anniversary with a party at Mary Conklin Preserve on October 5 on a truly beautiful fall day that turned up unexpectedly after several days of rain. A number of interesting activities were held, including:

- Raptor demonstration with live birds including a red-tail hawk, Eurasian owl, turkey vulture and peregrine falcon by Wind over Wings;
- Rescue dog demonstration by Connecticut Canine Rescue;
- Music provided by Geoff Metesky and Julee Glaub;
- Nature walk led by Jay Kaplan of Roaring Brook Nature Center;
- Geology walk led by Dr. Craig Feibel;
- Mushroom walk with Marlene Snecinski; and
- Orienteering demonstration with Charlie DeWeese

Lunch was prepared by Blue Sky Diner; cookies, pies and other desserts were all homemade.

Many people contributed to the success of this fine day, including Betty Stanley, Chris Williams, Rhonda DeWeese, Jackie Shadford, Deene Morris, Mary Ellen Mullins, Elenor Smith, Betsy van Gemeren, Joan Kenney, Diana Hurrie, Eric Sondergeld, Art Mauger, Art Sweeton, Fred Feibel, Rownie and Jim Okie and Sara and Tim Campbell.

It was a great party, but a lot of work. Should we do it again? Let us know!

New Land Acquisition

Joan Kenney of North Canton has donated a five-acre woodlot on Ratlum Mountain to the Land Trust. This lot adjoins the land behind her house and is between the extension of Lavander Road and the Barkhamsted town line. The land on the other side of this parcel in Barkhamsted was recently donated to the Barkhamsted Land Trust by Art and Eunice Sweeton. Joan's mother had bought this woodlot many years ago.

Joan has also recently donated a number of antique tools to the Canton Historical Society.

Boundary Marking

Steve Cotton of Henry C. Cotton and Associates recently surveyed the western boundary of the Korder-Bredahl Preserve off Gracey Road. A work party was promptly held to mark the boundary with Land Trust signs. It was a beautiful fall day, and quite a lot of fun. It was a treat to walk the boundaries of this wonderful property. Betty Stanley and Charlie and Rhonda DeWeese carried a ladder, hammers and nails and the signs along the new boundary, and marked 1600 feet of it, in just an hour and a half. Just 1,000 feet to go, and it will go quickly.

BIODIVERSITY PROJECT SURVEYS BIRDS ON CANTON LAND TRUST PROPERTIES

This spring, the Farmington River Watershed Association initiated a "Farmington Valley Biodiversity Project.." Biodiversity refers to the total variety of living organisms and habitats within a given area. Canton is one of seven towns included in the study. Our town enjoys a rich variety of habitats including marshes, ponds, streams, forests, open fields, traprock ridges and, of course, the Farmington River. These habitats serve as homes for plants and animals.

In Canton, several of the Biodiversity Project's study areas encompass Land Trust Properties. These properties were surveyed for breeding bird activity during this past spring and summer seasons. Other species of interest, including reptiles and amphibians, were also noted. Land Trust Preserves surveyed included the Joe D. Pratt Onion Mountain Preserve, the Sweetheart Mountain Preserve, and several of the Land Trust's holdings on Ratlum Mountain. In total, 74 species of birds were observed on or adjacent to Land Trust properties. Several of these are significant, such as a small population of Whip-poor-wills on Ratlum Mountain. The Whip-poor-will is now listed by the State Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) as a "species of special concern" because it is currently at a low population level within our state. The Ratlum Mountain population is one of but a few remaining in northwest Connecticut. Another exciting find was a Hooded Warbler near the Joe D. Pratt Onion Mountain Preserve. If breeding activity can be confirmed, this would mark the first documented breeding record in Canton for this more southerly occurring songbird. The Hooded Warbler is but one of the many warblers that nest in Connecticut. These beautiful little denizens of the treetops require large unfragmented forest areas in which they can safely raise their young. Some of our Land Trust preserves provide just the habitat these birds need. Additional warblers located during the census included Blue-winged, Chestnut-sided, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, Yellow-rumped, Black-throated Green, Blackburnian, Pine, Black-and-white, American Redstart, Worm-eating, Ovenbird, Louisiana Waterthrush, Common Yellowthroat, and Canada - a total of seventeen warbler species! Large forested blocks provide warblers and other birds that nest in the interior of the forest a safe haven in which to raise their young. Many predators, including raccoons, skunks, opossums, house cats, crows and Blue Jays patrol the forest edges in search of fledglings that have left the nest, but are still unable to fly well. Development within the forest gives these predators a foothold from which to prey on fledgling birds. Thus, our large Land Trust preserves provide important sanctuaries for many songbirds. Other interior forest nesting birds noted on our Preserves included Wood Thrush, Scarlet Tanager, Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

It should be noted that a census of this kind does not adequately cover all species. Questions remain with regard to the presence of certain "hard to find" species. Raptors, particularly owls, are often difficult to find during a one or two day visit to a large area. These birds are usually quiet by day and are often missed. Although Barred Owl was found on one preserve and Great Horned Owl on two, it is likely that both owls are widespread. Thought is now being given to doing some follow-up work next year, specifically for these nocturnal birds. Game birds like Wild Turkey, so often seen throughout Canton during other seasons, can also be difficult to find when they are sitting on nests. The small number of turkeys seen during the census is not indicative of their numbers throughout the area. Other bird species are easier to locate, especially when they are noisy. The most common of the woodpeckers in northern sections of town is the well-named Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. Listen for its "Morse-code" tapping next spring.



**CANTON LAND TRUST TRAILBLAZERS
FUN FOR KIDS OF ALL AGES
JOIN TODAY!**

Want to be part of a new and exciting group of Canton kids to experience the CLT properties, go on day hikes and learn about the cool things to be found in the woods? Join the CLT trailblazers. It's easy. Just send \$5.00 to

*Canton Land Trust Conservation Trust
P.O. Box 41
Canton, Ct. 06019*

Please include your name , address, phone number, age, grade and school. The first member hike was scheduled for November 17th at the Swan Preserve trail, with Fred and Pat Swan telling about what's living in and around the water. The next hike is scheduled for December 15th at Mary Conklin's at 144 Indian Hill Road, and will involve orienteering. Don't be left out. Call Mary Ellen Mullins 693-2299 for details.

Mornings in the Woods

Land trust friends and helpers will be gathering the first Wednesday of each month for hikes, trail clearing and other projects. We will meet at 10, with soup and sandwiches to follow at noon. We will meet at different Land Trust properties, so call Rhonda DeWeese 693-3988 or Betty Stanley 693-2074 for information and location.

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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!



Canton Land Conservation Trust Winter Calendar

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Contact Person</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Wed, Dec 4	10-1:00	Morning in the Woods	To be announced	Rhonda DeWeese	693-3988
Sat, Dec 7	9 - 2:00	Christmas Tree Sale	Smith Tree Farm	Ted Cowles	693-6340
Sat, Dec 8	9- 2:00	Rain Date for Christmas Tree Sale			
Sun, Dec 15	1- 3:00	Trailblazers orienteering Hike	Mary Conklin's	Mary Ellen Mullins	693-2299
Wed, Jan 8	10-1:00	Morning in the Woods	To be announced	Rhonda DeWeese	693-3988
Sunday, Jan 5	1pm	Snowshoeing, X Country, Skiing or Hiking followed By Cocoa and Hot Cider	Sun, Wind & Woodland Preserve (Meet at foundation at top of Breezy Hill Road)	Betty Stanley	693-2074
Sunday, Jan 19	1pm	Snowshoeing, etc.,	Mary Conklin's	Betty Stanley	693-2074
Wed, Feb 5	10-1:00	Morning in the Woods	To be announced	Rhonda DeWeese	693-3988
Sunday, Feb 9	1pm	Snowshoeing, etc.	Breezy Hill Preserve	Betty Stanley	693-2074
Sunday, Feb 23	1 pm	Snowshoeing, etc.	Swan Preserve	Betty Stanley	693-2074
Wed, Mar 5	10-1:00	Morning in the Woods	To be announced	Rhonda DeWeese	693-3988