

The Canton Land Conservation Trust, Inc.

Fall/Winter 2016

Newsletter

Edited by Gail Deutsch

Co-Presidents' Message

The Mission of the Canton Land Conservation Trust starts off with the following: "to acquire, preserve, and protect land of scenic, natural or historic value within the Town of Canton." Many of you are familiar with our activities as they relate to scenic and natural values, but may question the "historic value" of our properties. We are excited to report some recent activity that relates to the "historic" aspect of our mission statement.



On October 23rd, more than 25 people arrived at our Conklin property to participate in an archaeological dig inside a foundation of a

barn that was once part of the Canton Poor House circa 1870. The activity was managed by nationally well-known archaeologist Ken Feder, a professor at Central Connecticut State University, as well as Anne Hall, the New Hartford town historian.

The project began with the clearing of brush that included a substantial percentage of invasive species like barberry, Oriental bittersweet and multiflora rose, prior to laying out one meter square grids and carefully digging down in layers 5 cm at a time. The first round only went down three layers, but uncovered a number of interesting artifacts. A follow-up session took place on October 29th. Anne Hall will be the speaker at our annual dinner meeting in March and we look forward to her report on this fascinating project. Additional information about this program will appear in the new year.

By the time you read this, a project to create habitat for New England cottontails and a wide range of songbirds on the Sun, Wind and Woodland Preserve will be close to completion. We look forward to monitoring the results of this project in the years to come.

In addition to these initiatives, the Land Trust's Board of Directors and our many volunteers are engaged in a wide range of programs and activities from maintenance of our trails and properties, to our Trailblazers programs for young children and their families, to educational events and activities for the community. The Canton Land Conservation Trust is an all-volunteer organization and we are only as strong as the support we receive from the Canton community.

We hope you will join us, as members and as volunteers, as we strive to be good stewards of the land for generations to come and we hope we may count on your support in the year to come.

Sincerely, Stephen "Phil" Philbrick & Jay Kaplan Co-presidents, Canton Land Conservation Trust

P.S. Please visit our website at cantonlandtrust.org. In addition to providing information about upcoming events and maps of our properties, you may now become a member or renew your membership online via credit card for added convenience.



EVENTS

Recent:

FLATBREAD FUNDRAISER A SUCCESS

The Canton Land Conservation Trust held its annual fundraiser at the Flatbread Pizza Company in The Shoppes at Farmington Valley on September 27th. This year's event had an interesting twist as the Land Trust Board of Directors held its monthly meeting in the restaurant towards the end of the dinner hour. Although acoustics made the meeting somewhat challenging, it was certainly the best refreshments we've ever had at one of our board meetings. During Flatbread's fundraisers, the Company donates a percentage of every pizza sold that evening to the sponsoring organization. Our fundraiser netted a contribution of just under \$300.00 to the Trust. Each year, Flatbread sponsors fundraisers of this kind for a wide range of community organizations throughout the Farmington Valley. Thank you to The Flatbread Company and to the Canton Community (which, by the way, is the name of one of Flatbread's signature pizzas) for their support.

Jay Kaplan

Upcoming:

CHRISTMAS TREE SALE

The Canton Land Trust is delighted to announce that there are some beautiful trees awaiting your arrival at the Smith Tree Farm on Doyle Road. We will start promptly at 9 am and the sale will end at 1pm. Volunteers will be there to assist you in cutting down your tree and hoisting it onto the roof of your car. Cookies and hot chocolate will be provided. In addition, there will be greens to take home for decorating in and out.

At the same time, memberships can be initiated as well as renewed. The CLCT is always looking for new members. So please pass the word around to friends and family that our tree sale is on and that we'd enjoy welcoming all to one of the Trust's earliest land acquisitions...the Smith Tree Farm. It's such a fun family event. Trees start at \$25.

We look forward to sharing the holiday season with you. Come early and stay as long as it takes to find the perfect tree!

Anne Duncan

PROJECTS

Archaeological Dig

One man's trash is another's treasure"

The past use of a piece of land is often evident in its current state: old walls reveal fields, cultivated or drained land grows different trees than rough pasture, roads remain present for centuries after abandonment. Sometimes, one can go farther: by researching written records for the historical narrative and using archeological studies one can develop a detailed picture stretching back across generations. Such is the case with the Mary Conklin Sanctuary project, which is combining archeology and history to explore the land's past use beyond what is visible on the surface during a walk across the property.



Archeology tells us about the people who are not recorded in the written history of a place or time. History records the deeds, the dates, the taxes, the criminal cases, the names; but it rarely reveals how people actually lived. That is the realm of archeology, where even a nameless person becomes flesh and blood through what remains. When history and archeology combine, the story of a person or of a place becomes far more complete.

This deeper understanding is why the Trust held a short, introductory dig on the Mary Conklin Sanctuary last month, led by Dr. Ken Feder of Central Connecticut University, archeologist, along with Dr. Anne C. Hall, historian. Held over two days, the dig made remarkable progress in a very short time. Work on the dig has been suspended for the fall and winter, but given what was found so quickly and the enthusiasm of the volunteers, who turned out on two windy and cold days, it may be something that continues. The dig was located within the nineteenth century barn foundation, badly overgrown with Japanese Barberry and Oriental Bittersweet, along with a small amount of native Winterberry. For anyone with experience searching for late nineteenth century foundations, the barberry is an immediate giveaway: where there were cows, there is barberry. The other two plants: one invasive and one native, along with the ash trees, which line the foundation, are also typical first colonizers of an old site.

By noon of the first day, our group of volunteers had cleared the barn foundation and surrounding barnyard of barberry, bittersweet, and winterberry: approximately twenty by twenty meters; and the recent leaf cover was removed, leaving only the soil level behind. Then came the work of laying out the grid for the dig itself and selecting five meter by meter squares within which to dig. The levels for each square were set at five centimeters and digging commenced, with each man made artifact carefully collected for future study. Also collected for study was the glass and metal scattered on the actual surface of the site, which ranged from intact bottles to a decrepit stovepipe.



immediate The results from the dig bear out certain original premises. It is not а site contaminated modern with 'trash': the majority of the glass found dates from at least half a century ago and there is a complete absence of plastic. On the other hand, the

site was a farm dump in the early twentieth century. The latter conclusion was a positive: these discarded items are a source of information. Another immediate conclusion was also reached: there is very little decorative ceramics or glass; almost everything found was utilitarian. This was not a wealthy farm, at least not in the early twentieth century. The finds revealed changing technologies: a discarded oil lamp, small glass medicine vials, early mass manufactured canning jars, the large bones of a butchered cow, a section of tile pipe used for modern drainage. It raised questions: when exactly were paper towels invented? What was the strange bubbly glass in two bottles? Why was fine charcoal found in only one location?

As the pieces are catalogued and identified this winter, they will likely both answer and raise many questions. This investigation will create a more detailed picture of Indian Hill's history and the old farm on the Mary Conklin property. In the meantime, as you walk past the foundation this winter, you might end up wondering...what images can be drawn from your lives through only what sits, this night, in the trash?

Anne Hall

Stone Piles

Recently, Dr. Brian Jones, the state of Connecticut

archaeologist, visited our Sun, Wind and Woodland property. The reason for the visit was to ask Dr. Jones to look at some of the stone piles on the property and give us an assessment of their origin. As most of you know by now, we have an agreement with the Natural Resources Conservation Service



to do a woodland cut of approximately 10 acres as part of the New England Cottontail Initiative. There have been some suggestions that the stone piles might have been Native American in origin, so we wanted an opinion from an expert to help us determine what, if any, steps should be taken in light of the planned work in the area.

Dr. Jones examined eight or 10 of the dozen or so stone piles in the area. He came away convinced that the stone piles were created in connection with the clearing of the land for agricultural purposes. This conclusion doesn't definitively state who actually carried out the labor — some suggestions that Native Americans may have been part of the process is not precluded by the conclusion that they are associated with clearing activities, but it is extremely unlikely that they represent ceremonial stone piles.

He reached this conclusion based on several factors. One of the more convincing factors is that Native American ceremonial stone piles tend to be smaller and tend to be made up of fist sized stones, while the stone piles on our property range from cantaloupe size to watermelon size or more. He also noted that the location was guite consistent with land clearing practices. It is often the case that there is an extremely large rock somewhere in the area too large to move, and it is common practice to use that large rock as a starting point for an additional pile of rocks. If one cannot plow through or graze at that location it makes a lot of sense to use the location for a pile of rocks. He also noted the grade of the area. Some sections were relatively flat while others had a steeper pitch. When clearing land, it is common to locate piles on the steeper pitches because those are less attractive for agriculture. In many cases, the locations of the piles were consistent with this approach.

Finally, when clearing land and creating a rock pile it is not unusual to place a few of the first stones carefully



on the downhill side of the pitch in a row to create a support for the pile while the remaining rocks are thrown more randomly onto the pile. Almost all of the piles had this characteristic.

Dr. Jones did note that these rock piles still qualify as important examples of 17th and 18th century rural America and urged us to leave them in place. We on to our forester to

have passed this information on to our forester to ensure that the rock piles are not destroyed.

After the visit by Dr. Jones, we arranged for a visit from Doug Schwartz (New England Antiquities

Research Association) and Elaine Thomas (Mohegan Tribe). They reached a very different conclusion, believing that the piles may have a Native American history. They had access to the Connecticut LiDAR maps (created using lasers), which clearly identified the 20 or so stone piles in the area. They noted that the piles appeared to be arranged in lines consistent with lunar observations and felt they may have astronomical significance. In addition, several of the piles had a quartz stone, sometimes white and sometimes rose or pink, near the top. This stone is associated with the moon by some Native Americans. Many of the piles have a depression near the top, and although unexplained, it is a feature noticed in other stone piles in the state and mentioned in historical literature.

Phil Philbrick

Gracey Road Property Donation

The Land Trust recently accepted a donation of property from Canton residents, David and Sylvia Freeman. Located off Gracey Road, the property is just over 27 acres in size and is adjacent to an existing 17 acre Land Trust parcel. The property could be characterized as brush land reverting to young forest. It is excellent habitat for a wide range of bird species including woodpeckers and songbirds. It is also in close proximity to the Trust's extensive holdings along Onion Mountain providing a wildlife corridor for numerous other species. This past fall, porcupine and bobcat have been seen in the area. Currently, there are no trails on the property, however, the parcel will be evaluated for this purpose at a later date. The property is accessible from Gracey Road, but hikers should use care in parking along this narrow roadway. The Trust would like to thank the Freemans for their generosity.

Jay Kaplan

Onion Mountain



The Land Trust is working on adding a new trail to our network of trails. The long term plan is to add a trail which will connect the Orange trail at the Roaring Brook Nature center (on the east side of Gracey Road), to the blue trail in Simsbury's Onion Mountain Park.

The first phase of this project is a segment of the trail, starting at the Blue trail in Simsbury, following an old logging road for 0.4 mile, and then ascending to the top of the ridge approximately one mile south of Onion Mountain. The initial segment has been flagged, cleared and blazed. Because the trail connects the blue trail in Simsbury to the orange trail in Canton, the trail is blazed with a pair of blazes, one blue and one orange. This work has been completed as an Eagle Scout project under the leadership of Eagle Scout candidate Ethan Porter. He organized and led several work parties of Scouts to clear the trail. While the steep portion of the trail nearest the ridge may need some additional work, it is ready to hike. The trail currently ends at the top of the ridge on the property known as "Corey", where there are nice views into Simsbury and Canton.

A map of the route, with photos, can be viewed at: <u>https://drive.google.com/open?id=1WvbQPEGyczkZR</u> 9XU0OMxGmeS0F4&usp=sharing

This segment can be accessed by starting on the Onion Mountain Park blue trail, either starting at the main parking lot, or at the other end on West Mountain Road, near the intersection with Lostbrook Road. The first phase is now done, and we will make plans for the extension on to the Nature Center trails next year.

Phil Philbrick

New Bridge



We have a new bridge. A Boy Scout, John Solomon, completed an Eagle Scout project to rebuild a bridge behind the Canton High School. After completion, a 16-foot section of the old bridge remained, and John contacted the Land Trust to see if we would have a use for it. By happy coincidence, the land trust has been considering building a bridge on the Tom Perry trail over a wet area that can be forded on some strategically placed rocks, but could use a proper bridge. The length of the bridge is perfect.

On August 27, Ted Cowles volunteered his son Rick, along with his 14 foot four wheel drive dump truck to move the bridge. We loaded the bridge onto the truck at the high school, and Rick was able to drop it off at the stream crossing. A work crew including Mike Gotaski, John Pech, Steve Mitchell, and Phil Philbrick dug out holes for the footing (who would have guessed we would run into rocks digging in New England), placed concrete blocks and rocks for a foundation, and placed the bridge on the foundation. A little bit of fill is needed at one end of the bridge, which John Pech will address next time he has the tractor in the area.

Phil Philbrick

New England Cottontail Initiative

The Land Trust commitment to the New England Cottontail Initiative (affectionately known as a "bunny cut") took important another step this week. The exact borders of the project have changed a few times, although still within the Sun, Wind and Woodland properties (Breezy Hill) and the



neighbors have been consulted but this week, several of us walked the property to mark what are called "leave trees".

The goal is a clear-cut of a 10 acre parcel of land, removing the larger trees to be used for wood products, and piling the smaller trees into large brush piles to serve as habitat for the New England cottontail and other animals. In some cases, the parcel is literally clear-cut, with no remaining trees in the interior of the project. In this case though, we've identified approximately 70 trees which will remain uncut. These trees are called "leave trees" because we will leave them standing and cut everything else. The choice of leave trees is based on several criteria. White Oak is a preferred species, so several of the identified trees are White Oak. There is also a desire for a diversity of species, so a few specific trees such as a scarlet oak, a white birch, a chestnut oak and a few others were chosen for diversity of species reasons.

Candidates for keeping include mature mast bearing trees which are likely to produce nuts for food and a lot



of seedlings to provide regeneration of the forest. In addition, trees with cavities are attractive for two reasons: they are likely to serve as habitat for animals and are less attractive to the logger. In some cases, we can see evidence of old barbed wire which is now completely within the tree. Many of these are saved because barbed wire can be damaging to logging equipment.

Our forester walked around with a spray can of blue paint marking trees which should be saved. We found out the hard way that you have to stay away away from him when he is marking the tree, as the spray can go more than 10 feet beyond the tree.

The following link: <u>https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1H</u> <u>UxAbTbNssx5IY3kAJiEIzMiVHI</u>

goes to a Google map where we have identified many of the trees to be saved. In most cases, there is some explanation. The blue icons reflect trees designated to remain inside the border of the cut. In some cases they are simply marked "leave" while in some cases the species is indicated. There were some lighthearted disagreement between some of the NRCS employees, so one of the trees is marked "Judy" reflecting the fact that she insisted it be saved, and another one is marked "Fernando".

The red icon also identify some trees which are

designated "border". These will be saved because they are outside the cut area but the marking helps the logger identify the edges of the cut. "Leave trees" are marked with a single blue band while boundary trees are marked with a double blue band.

The two green icons indicate that some photographs have been taken; click on the icon to see the photos of the blue markings.

The actual logging commenced October 16th. During the logging, the parking lot and the project area will be off limits. There are signs to let people know.

Christian Winkler

Information Technology

Our activities in support of our main mission (acquisition, preservation and protection of land with scenic, natural or historic value) are supported by information technology, such as the organizations web site, software used to create this newsletter, and programs used to track our properties and membership.

Much of our documentation is still paper-based, and we are beginning an effort to scan the documents, creating electronic versions of our paperwork. Soon after starting that project, it became apparent that we have a number of computer related applications. In addition to the ones already mentioned, we have mapping software, financial software, and more.

While all of these applications are "working," most are not talking to each other, so we spend time manually transferring information. The board decided to set up an IT committee to explore the software products currently used, with an eye to determining whether better application software should be explored, either as individual products, or options which may provide more integration of functions.

The committee is still in the formation stages, and is currently made up of Board members Phil Philbrick, William Duncan, Mike Ignatowicz, Mike Gotaski, and Christian Winkler. While the membership has a fair amount of IT knowledge, the committee would be interested in adding non-board members with interest and knowledge in the field, particularly in the field of web site design.

Mike Ignatowicz

Canton's Poet Laureate, Joan Hofmann



Bird Talk

In bed I hear day's early light through bird song.

Wind-sung promise translates to my half-pillowed ear:

Would, would, would ya? Would, would would ya?

Treat, treat, treat me To a, to a, to a

Hey, sweet sweet sweet Hey, sweetie, sweetie, hey

ABOUT US – CLCT Trailblazers, by Michelle Winkler

Our first hike of the season on October 23 was a Halloween themed hike at the Mary Conklin property. Despite a windy day, we had over 30 hikers follow a spooky trail through the woods. Many of the kids dressed in costume and we all enjoyed cider and treats at the end. Our hike passed the site of a CLCT sponsored archeological dig at a barn foundation. Anne Hall, New Hartford's town historian, was kind enough to give a short description of the dig. See the related article for more information.

I am happy to welcome a new Trailblazers co-leader. Thank you to Kimberly Ahlgren for agreeing to help this year! We have seven more hikes scheduled. Our hikes are geared in length and topic towards elementary school aged children, but all are welcomed. Most hikes begin at 1:30 pm and last about an hour. Please visit the Activities/Trailblazers tab the CLCT website for on more information. Registration forms are also available online.

Nov. 20 Sweetheart Mountain – Invasive plants Dec. 18 Goedecke – Winter tree ID Feb. 11 CLCT Moonlight Hike Mar. 19 Sun, Wind, and Woodland – Animals in Our Woods Apr. 23 Uplands – Pond Study May 14 Swan – Spring Plants and Creatures June 4 CT Trails Day/CLCT Annual Meeting

CLCT 2016 Membership	Jim & Kathy Carpenter		Jill & Robert Evenski		Michael & Norma Ignatow	/icz
by Michelle Winkler (We are using a new	Joseph & Holly Casioppo		James & Valerie Everett		Todd & Olga Jacobs	
	Kathleen Cavanaugh		Farmington Animal Hospi	tal	Sandra R. Jacobus	
membership data base.	Thomas & Dianne Chauvir	ו	Sarah Faulkner		Wayne Jekot	
Please let us know if your name is missing or misspelled.	Cherry Brook Garden Club		George & Patricia Fehr		Katherine Jenkins	
is missing of misspeneu.	Dennis & Kate Ciccarillo		Frederick Feibel		Stephen & Kimberly Johns	son
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Canton Land Conservation Trust, Inc. PO Box 41 Canton Center, CT 06020 www.cantonlandtrust.org

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CLCT Assets as of 09/30/15

by Christian Winkler, Treasurer Current Assets Total Checking/Savings - \$310,364 Endowment Investment - \$342,777 Fixed assets (land, buildings, equipment) - \$7,167,232 Total Assets: - **\$7,820,373**

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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: Canton Land Trust to find the DONATE NOW button, or go to CLCT's Secure Payment Link:

http://payments.lawpay.com/bpl/lp2525952

For more info please check our web- site: <u>www.cantonlandtrust.org</u>. or search Facebook for Canton Land Conservation Trust

Become a member today