



# The Canton Land Conservation Trust, Inc.

## Spring/Summer 2017

### Newsletter

Edited by Gail Deutsch

### President's Message

Our organization has had a very successful year due to a very active board and an engaged membership. Our signature event of the year was the completion of the clearing aspect of the so-called "bunny cut." I won't dwell on the details of this initiative in this newsletter item because we've covered it extensively in prior reports, except for one event not previously reported — On June 4, the CLCT hosted a hike as part of the Connecticut Trails Day. The hike was held at the Sun, Wind, and Woodland Preserve, visiting both the bunny cut area as well as portions of the Tom Perry trail. Jay Kaplan led the hike, which included explanations of the project (and the usual nature hike).

A number of members participated in an archaeological dig conducted at the site of the former Canton poorhouse now part of the Mary Conklin property. The dig was led by local historian Anne Hall, and noted archaeologist Ken Feder. The results of the dig, as well as an in-depth history of Canton, were highlighted by a presentation at our annual March dinner meeting by Anne Hall. In addition to the keynote presentation by Anne Hall, our annual dinner included a successful charity auction.

Several hiking events were organized during the year, primarily by the Trailblazers, but we also had bird and wildlife identification hikes and a vernal pool visit. During the winter, we held our annual moonlight hike, which featured record attendance this year.

There were many stewardship events with trail crews improving our trails at the Goedecke-

Humphrey and Uplands properties. Also, the stewardship committee supervised the construction of a new trail that was completed by an Eagle Scout candidate under our supervision. It extends an existing Onion Mountain Park (Simsbury) trail up to the top of the ridge in Canton. This is the first leg of a planned three-leg project that would connect the parking lot in Simsbury with the Roaring Brook Nature Center in Canton. We made substantial progress reinvigorating the Christmas tree farm (Smith Tree Farm), which culminated with a Christmas tree sale in December.

We acquired a 27-acre parcel of land on Gracey Road, graciously donated by the Freemans. Canton's Town Poet Laureate, Joan Hofmann, reached out to us to do a joint project to add poetry boxes which have been built by Ted Cowles and placed at two locations on the Conklin Property.

Finally we continue some of our regular events such as this semi-annual newsletter and an annual fundraiser typically held in October at Flatbread Company.

Sincerely,  
Stephen "Phil" Philbrick, President,  
Canton Land Conservation Trust

P.S. Please visit our website at [cantonlandtrust.org](http://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

### Connecticut Trails Day Walk

On Sunday, June 4<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM, members and friends of the Canton Land Conservation Trust met in the Sun, Wind and Woodlands parking lot for an official “Connecticut Trail Days” walk. Connecticut Trail Days is sponsored by the Connecticut Forest and Parks Association and



walks are held throughout the state on the first weekend of June. Our walk was designed to introduce participants to the “bunny cut” established on this property late last fall, as well as tour some of the woodland trails at this large Land Trust preserve on Ratlum Mountain. Thirteen hikers assembled in the parking lot, hoping we might beat the rain predicted for later that afternoon.

Trail leader and CLCT Co-President, Jay Kaplan, began the walk by explaining why the Land Trust’s Board of Directors had decided to participate in the “New England Cottontail Initiative.” The objective was not solely to increase habitat for and to attract this declining species of rabbit, indistinguishable from the introduced and abundant eastern cottontail, but to promote habitat diversity. Although there are many acres of mature forest on Ratlum Mountain and throughout Canton, brush lands and young forests continue to decline as these lands mature. There are some 47 wildlife species of concern in Connecticut that are now declining due to the loss of brush land habitat, and the project is designed to increase populations of a wide range of species including ruffed grouse, American woodcock and several warbler and other songbird species in addition to the cottontails for which the project is named. Although the area is still a couple of years from attracting these species, keen eyed observers could already see the sprouts of trees poking through the ground in the ten acres that had been clear cut.

A number of bird species were seen and heard in

the area including a brilliant orange and black Baltimore oriole. One hiker asked why the slash from the cut had not been removed. The slash is left on the ground in an effort to prevent white-tailed deer from browsing on the tender young saplings and, as if on cue, a well camouflaged doe suddenly bounded away from our group. We had not even seen the doe, she was well hidden amidst the remaining trees. Reaching the end of the clearcut, we hiked some of the woodland trails through Sun, Wind and Woodlands. A vernal pool was full of wood frog tadpoles and there were the remains of three egg masses that once held spotted salamander eggs, now hatched.

Birds encountered along the trail included wood and hermit thrushes, ovenbird and black-throated blue warbler.

A veery nest held several eggs of the most beautiful blue. These small thrushes nest on or near the ground and sing a beautiful song, most often heard in the early morning and at dusk. Pointing out various types of vegetation and wildlife signs along the way, we returned to our starting point in the parking lot at 3:30 PM, just as the first rain drops began to fall. By the time the last car had left the lot, a steady rain was falling.



Jay Kaplan

### Bird Walk at Sun, Wind and Woodland

On the final day of April at 7:30 AM, 13 members and friends of the Canton Land Conservation Trust gathered in the Sun, Wind and Woodland parking lot for a bird walk on the periphery of the newly created “bunny cut” and surrounding woodlands. The parking lot area hosted the usual eastern phoebe as well as newly arrived migrants like black-and-white warbler and blue-headed vireo. After nibbling on donut holes provided by Anne Duncan, we walked through the newly cut area and onto the yellow trail. We heard a far off ovenbird and there were a few woodpeckers, most notably the increasingly common yellow-bellied sapsucker, but the paucity of bird song on this pleasant morning was somewhat

disconcerting. Upon returning to the bunny cut, we spied a gorgeous male eastern bluebird and we soon learned why birds were keeping a low profile when a Cooper's hawk flew along the forest edge and into the woods. These bird-eating hawks are known for "spooking" most songbirds. With the hawk gone, birds began to sing. We watched a great blue heron, enormous compared to the chipping sparrows and American goldfinches we'd been seeing, fly directly over us. Perhaps this was one of birds that nest at nearby Big Down Marsh just over the Canton line in Barkhamsted. After looking at a hermit thrush and multiple sapsuckers, we found the best bird of the trip, a male American kestrel that flew to the top of a tall, thin tree and stayed there, affording terrific looks for the entire group. This smallest of our falcons last nested in Canton twenty years ago near the transfer station on Powder Mill Road. Now listed as a threatened species by Connecticut's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, dare we hope that the new bunny cut might lure a female to this area? Although the primary purpose of these cuts is to provide habitat for the New England cottontail, this declining habitat is equally important for a wide range of birds that prefer brushlands and young forests. The 10 acre area will be carefully monitored over the coming years to determine what species may nest here. It was now approaching 9 AM, and as our group began the return walk to the parking lot, we were treated to a decent mixed flock of birds that responded to the "pishing" calls of our leader. In addition to the boisterous chickadees, we added ruby-crowned kinglet and pine warbler to our morning list. Compiling our checklist in the parking lot, we totaled 23 species and following some brief announcements concerning upcoming bird walks, people dispersed to work in their gardens or, in some cases, head out for breakfast at various local eateries.



Jay Kaplan

### Vernal Pool Hike

On Sunday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> the Land Trust sponsored a vernal pools hike at our Uplands Preserve, led by Board member Sarah Faulkner. Vernal pools are small, shaded ponds that fill in the spring with snow melt and rainwater, and dry up by late summer. They provide critical breeding habitat for wood frogs and many species of salamanders, and are filled with life in April. We were lucky on this hike to find both wood frog and salamander eggs in the pools at Uplands, as well as a number of red-spotted newts and two-lined salamanders under logs around the pond. After examining the ponds, we went on a pleasant hike through the spring woods. The visit was attended by 24 people.

Sarah Faulkner

### Annual Dinner

On Tuesday March 21, 2017, the CLCT held its Annual Dinner at the La Trattoria Restaurant in Canton. The guest speaker was Dr. Anne C. Hall, a native of New Hartford, who received her Doctorate in History from the University of Edinburgh. Doctor Hall spoke about the historical story of the Mary Conklin Sanctuary. In the Fall/Winter issue of the CLCT's newsletter an article described the archeological dig on the property that was led by Central Connecticut State University Professor, Doctor Kenneth Feder.

Anne researched the history of the Mary Conklin Sanctuary using the dig as a starting point. She reviewed written records and with the dig artifacts developed a historical narrative for the property that extended for generations. The more than 100 persons who attended the event are much more knowledgeable about the history of Canton's exceptional Conklin property.

The evening's events also included a silent auction. Thanks to the hard work of the CLCT's Board of Directors and the generous support of our underwriters and contributors, the CLCT was able to offer over 65 prizes for bidding. The auction earned over \$2500 in money that will be used by the CLCT to support its mission. Our evening's underwriters and contributors are separately listed. Thank you one and all.

The evening would not have been as successful without the extra effort provided by Board

Members Karen Berger, Gail and Barry Deutsch, Anne Duncan, Sarah Faulkner, Fred Feibel, Thom Rice and Betty Stanley.

Barry Deutsch

We thank the following individuals and businesses for contributing to this evening's event:

Larsen Ace Hardware	La Trattoria Restaurant
Avon MotoPhoto	Litchfield Locker
Anne and Alan Duncan	Marandino's Foods
Avon Prime Meats	Midas Automotive
Benidorms	Mikado's Asian Bistro
Blumen Laden	Mitchell Auto Group
Red Sox	New Hartford Diner
Buon Appetito	Nodine's Smoke House
Cake Gypsy	Nutmeg Symphony
Carol & Co.	Orchestra
Cherry Brook Pizzeria	Orvis Stores
Clayworks Pottery	Petals and Paws
Collinsville Canoe & Kayak	Polsky Sports
Cook & Kozlak Flooring Center	Entertainment
David Kubas	Quercibella Wood-Grilled
David P. Sinish	Foods & Flatbreads
Dynamic Auto Works	Raimie H. Weber
Frank and Betty Stanley	Roaring Brook Nature
Gail Deutsch	Center
Gresczyk Farm Stand	Rootz Salon
Harvey & Lewis	Saybrook Fish House
Harold Mullins	ShopRite
Hickory Ledges	Simsore Tennis Center
Infinity Music Hall	Super Cellar Wines
Jane Latus	Sarah Faulkner
Jay Kaplan	Ted Cowles
Jeff Brewster	Trader Joe's
Jen Mason	Trish Tressy
	Welden Hardware
	West Hill Beach Club
	West Street Wines

Also, many thanks to this evening's underwriters: The Miller Craig Feibel Nature Endowment, Collinsville Savings Society and the Avon Veterinary Clinic.

## PROJECTS

### From the Stewardship Committee

For the past years, the CLCT has been fortunate to have Drew Stone as the focal point of trail maintenance activities. Drew has scouted the trail network to assess needs, then organized and led work parties to accomplish the required maintenance. Unfortunately, Drew will be relocating away from Canton leaving behind a large pair of shoes to fill. In an effort to fill this position the CLCT stewardship committee will be employing the following multi-pronged approach. A new board member, Scott Persing, has agreed to give it a go at heading up trail maintenance.

Scott has been a National Park Service volunteer serving in various National Parks and is headed to Idaho this summer. In order to assist Scott with this transition we are also instituting a trail stewards program, which is essentially an adopt-a-trail approach. We are still in a bit of a trial phase on this and here is how we currently view the responsibilities of a trail steward:

- The steward will visit each trail assigned to that steward on a regular basis perhaps as often as monthly (perhaps less often when snow-covered).
- The steward will be responsible for minor maintenance work. This includes:
  - Picking up trash left on the trails
  - Using loppers to cut out encroaching branches or brush
  - Reviewing signage and blazes to ensure that both are in good shape, and that the blazes are adequate for ensuring that people can find the trails
  - Removing small logs and branches which may fall on the trail
- Anything that would require more than one person, including any work requiring the use of a chainsaw, should be reported to the stewardship committee to arrange for a trail crew. The steward will be invited to participate with the trail crew.
- The steward should fill out a report, at least once and ideally twice a year, assessing the status of the trail. We are currently contemplating a spring and fall review.

To date, the following people covering the noted trails/properties have agreed to participate.

- Patrick Paulett - Ted Wright & Charlotte Craig Trails
- Peter Keyo - Goedecke-Humphrey Trails
- James Day - Sun, Wind, and Woodland Trails
- Rick Cowles- Sweeton Pasture
- Fred Swan - Swan Preserve

We are looking to expand the coverage of this program. If you have a particular fondness for one of our trails/properties and are interested we would love to hear from you. We are also looking to establish a date and schedule a trail maintenance work party for the fall.

After a period of dormancy the CLCT decided to reopen the Smith Tree Farm the past 2 years for limited Christmas tree sales. While open only one day each year the support and turnout have been encouraging and the CLCT would like to continue this effort. CLCT Members Tom Noonan and Alan Duncan are heading up the effort, mowing the

fields and working to revitalize the tree farm. We have a 2017 action plan in place and have new board members Gary Nedorostek and Thom Rice with arborist backgrounds engaged. Over the next year we will be working to cull unacceptable trees from the fields, while pruning and shaping the remaining younger trees. We would like to work toward a goal of planting new seedlings next spring. We are planning a pruning workshop in the fall. Again, if you are interested in being a tree farmer and helping out we would love to hear from you.



The CLCT Stewardship Committee would like to welcome aboard the new members, wish Drew Stone the best of luck with his new endeavor and thank the community for their continued support.

Mike Gotaski  
CLCT Stewardship Committee co-chair

ShopRite Donation

ShopRite continues to be a significant partner with our Land Trust. They annually provide an enthusiastic crew of volunteers at one of our trail crew events. They also contribute financially. Chuck Joseph presented a check for \$1500 to the land trust on behalf of Joseph Family Markets. This continues a multiyear commitment of both financial and volunteer support.



Audubon Habitat Assessment Done at Sun, Wind, and Woodlands

This past fall and winter the Land Trust participated in a statewide initiative for habitat assessment done in collaboration with the National Audubon Society. The focus of the assessment was on forest birds, and was done for 162 acres at our Sun, Wind, and Woodlands property on Breezy Hill Road. CLCT Board members Mike Gotaski and Christian Winkler joined Audubon biologist Patrick Comins, Connecticut licensed forester Eric Hansen, and Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station technicians, who walked the property together in order to determine: 1) what birds are currently utilizing the habitats on the property; 2) current forest bird habitat conditions on the property; and 3) recommendations for protecting and improving habitat for a suite of priority forest birds. The team analyzed the type of landscape (open, forested, types of forest, meadows, wetlands, etc.), evaluated the threats to wildlife (roads, development, etc.), catalogued the biodiversity of the property, and made specific recommendations for both short and long-term management of the property. Their comprehensive, 45 page report is available on the CLCT website. We are very grateful to the National Audubon team for their outstanding work. We anticipate that the report will help us direct future management on this property.

Sarah Faulkner



Photo by Mike Ignatowicz

Canton Poetry Project – Canton Land Conservation Trust: Write the Wild

There are many programs that focus on writing of the environment in one way or another. Write the Wild is a project to a) increase the visibility of Canton Land Trust trails, b) increase foot traffic on the CLCT trails, c) provide opportunity for writing

while in a natural setting and d) promote writing about the environment particularly poetry.

In October 2016, it was proposed that several podium-boxes be built and installed on a selected, accessible, multi-habitat Canton Land Trust trail. Each box could contain artifacts, but most importantly, each would hold a book that contains poems or short excerpts, ideas/prompts to generate writing, and a pencil and notebook or journal in which to write.

The CLCT built and installed two podium-boxes on the Conklin Trail in May 2017. Items were placed in the boxes in spring 2017. An opening event will be formally held in fall 2017.



Joan Hoffmann  
Poet Laureate, Canton, CT

### Moonlight Hike

The Canton Land Conservation Trust Moonlight Hike is a favorite community event. This year was no exception! Hundreds of glowing luminaries helped guide hikers along a snow-packed trail through the snowy woods to a nearby barn. The mild temperatures coupled with a recent, much anticipated arrival of over a foot of fresh snow helped make this year's Moonlight hike a success. Upon arrival at the barn, hikers are greeted with warm chili, side dishes, hot and cold beverages and a plethora of treats. Land Trust members and friends gather inside the horse barn or outside by a roaring bon-fire. This year, as in the past, new friends were made, old friends reminisced, and stories were shared by all. We hope to see you by the fire next year!

Jen Mason

### Hike of the Month

Beginning in September, 2017, on the 1st Sunday of the month, The Canton Land

Conservation Trust will offer a hike on a variety of Land Trust trails. What a great way to familiarize yourself with all the offerings we own here in the Town of Canton. Remember, all together, we own more than 2,000 preserved acres, many suitable for hiking. So consider the opportunity to get out once a month at 1:30 p.m. to introduce yourself to a new place and to stretch your legs. The hikes will be led by folks familiar with the properties, probably a Land Trust board member or a volunteer with experience. If you have a passion for a particular property and would like to lead a hike, please call Anne Duncan, 693-6859. We ask that you leave your dogs at home as we may encounter birds or other wildlife. Watch for publicity and email blasts that will alert you to upcoming hikes.

Here's a list of possible trails:

Barbourtown Woods  
Goedecke/Humphrey  
Ray Smith  
Ted Wright  
Arthur and Eunice Sweeton  
Breezy Hill Farm  
Tom Perry  
Sun, Wind, and Woodland  
Swan  
Uplands  
Winsor Woods  
Sweetheart Mountain

See you out there on the trail!

Anne Duncan

## **ABOUT US – CLCT**

Our Thanks and Gratitude to these Board Members

We want to thank several CLCT Directors for their years of leadership, service and energy as they step down from the Board of Directors.

Charlie DeWeese, a long time Director and past Vice President and President, will continue his involvement with the Land Conservation Committee.

Rob Sigman initiated the CLCT Constant Contact email blasts and kept the members up to date.

John Roling lent his time and talent to the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Art Poster Contest and numerous Sam Collins Day and Flatbread events.

Wayne Jekot, a former membership chair, created a topographic booklet of the CLCT property trails.

Jane Latus will generously continue to handle the publicity for CLCT events.

Sarah Bailey, who is the Hartford County Coordinator for the UConn Extension Master Gardener Program and Extension Youth gardening coordinator, is now also the State Coordinator for the UConn Extension Master Gardener Program. She will continue to be a resource for future CLCT projects.

#### Welcome to our newest Board members

Nate Cantwell

My wife and I have lived on the hill here for thirty-seven years. I've been hiking, sometimes daily, for an hour or two year-round and have a very hard time imagining being without the adjacent Land Trust properties. Betty Stanley asked me to book and look after the Capen cabin years ago and beyond that, I've worked almost daily to keep trails up here walkable. My retirement from over forty years of auto restoration started last fall and I now have time to commit to the Land Trust. I have a strong interest in the history of the land here in the northwestern Ratlum part of town and can probably tell you where most every wall, well and foundation is in the areas that I walk.

Gary Nedorostek

Gary and his wife Marsha moved to Canton in 1990 and have resided at 20 North Mountain Road for the past 27 years. They have three children, Kelly, Jack and Kate who are currently at UConn Medical School, The College of the Holy Cross and Canton High School. They also have two Golden Retrievers, Finn and Bay who enjoy living in Canton with their family.

Gary enjoys his family and being outdoors. Taking care of his property, running, biking and hiking are favorite ways to spend time.

Gary's passion lies within trees. Gary received a BS degree in Arboriculture and Urban Forestry at

the University of Massachusetts. He is recognized as a Connecticut Licensed Arborist, Massachusetts Certified Arborist and International Society of Arboriculture, Board Certified Master Arborist. As an arborist for the past 30 years, Gary owned a tree care firm for fourteen years and is currently the New England Assistant Division Manager with Bartlett Tree Experts.

Gary looks forward to the opportunities and work to support the Canton Land Trust members and mission.

Scott Persing

Scott is a retired architect with a professional degree from the University of Washington and an undergraduate degree from UVM. Joyce (my partner and wife), and I spent 10 years in Seattle going to graduate school, working, living and eventually having 2 children before relocating back to the east coast to be closer to friends and family in the late 80's. We designed our current home in Canton and established residency in 1990. Scott joined the Hartford firm of Jeter Cook and Jepson Architects in 1993, which eventually became JCJ Architecture, a national firm with offices in seven cities through out the United States. Also during that time, Scott became a Design Principal specializing in Casino/ Resort Architecture and Master Planning. Since retiring last year on Independence Day, I have tried to maintain a balance to keep me busy, but not too busy so I can enjoy the rest of my life with things I now have the time to do.

Thom Rice

Thom Rice of Canton is owner of Pathway Enterprise, LLC, a landscape construction company specializing in all aspects of landscape design and implementation. Thom's background includes a degree in ornamental horticulture from the University of Connecticut and a Business Administration degree from Central Ct. Originally from West Hartford, Thom moved to North Canton for the accessibility to green and natural open spaces. Thom's interest in the Canton Land Trust came about from his close proximity to and enjoyment of two of Canton Land Trust properties, Swan, on Case St. and Winsor Woods where Thom enjoys hiking. He brings to the Canton Land Trust over 45 years of experience in dendrology care and landscape management.



Canton Land Conservation Trust, Inc. PO Box 41  
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[www.cantonlandtrust.org](http://www.cantonlandtrust.org)

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**Officers**

President: Stephen (Phil) Philbrick  
Vice President: Jay Weintraub  
Secretary: Sarah Faulkner  
Treasurer: Christian Winkler

**Members of the Board of Directors**

Karen Berger, Nate Cantwell, Ted Cowles, Barry Deutsch, Gail Deutsch, Anne Duncan, Bill Duncan, Fred Feibel, Mike Gotaski, Mike Ignatowicz, Jay Kaplan, Jen Mason, Gary Nedorostek, John Pech, Scott Persing, Thom Rice, Elenor Smith, Betty Stanley.

**CLCT Assets as of 06/20/17**

by Christian Winkler, Treasurer

**Current Assets**

Total Checking/Savings	-	\$330,454
Endowment Investment	-	\$364003
Fixed assets (land, buildings, equipment)	-	\$7,167,232
<b>Total Assets:</b>	-	<b>\$7,861,690</b>

**DONATE to CLCT - use your credit card!**

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](http://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:

[www.cantonlandtrust.org](http://www.cantonlandtrust.org).

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