



THE BALANCE SHEET

CHESHIRE LAND TRUST cheshirelandtrust.org VOL. 40, NO. 2 SEPTEMBER 2012
Preserving Land as a Living Resource Since 1969



Eva Kasinskas picking strawberries at Ives Farm

FALL HIKE SERIES

By Mark Kasinskas

Join the Cheshire Land Trust this fall for a guided hike as we explore some of Cheshire's great open space areas.

BERT CRAN MEMORIAL: Saturday Sept. 15th

The first hike of our Fall Series will explore the CLT's 6.8-acre Bert Cran Memorial property located between the Linear Park and Towpath Lane. Brief discussion of wetlands, woodlands, and land use history. We will meet at the Linear Park - Lock 12 parking lot at 487 North

Brooksvale Road (Rt. 42) and hike 0.1 mile north to the CLT property. This is an easy walk for all ages.

IVES FARM WOODLANDS: Saturday Oct. 20th

This 2-mile hike will take place throughout the more sloping and forested east side of the Ives Farm property on easy-moderate terrain at the height of fall foliage season. Hikers will explore the farm's 80-acre woodland and discuss local forests and forest history. This hike will last approximately 1 ½ - 2 hours.

Meet and park at the Ives Farm produce stand on the east side of Cheshire Street (across the street from the farm house at 1585 Cheshire Street). This is a moderate-level hike suitable for all-ages.

ROARING BROOK FALLS & PROSPECT RIDGE Saturday November 3rd

This will be the most challenging hike of the CLT Fall Hike Series, running for approximately 3 miles over rolling and steep terrain. Hikers will climb to Roaring Brook Falls (CT's 2nd highest waterfall), and then traverse a portion of Prospect Ridge to the CLT's Russell Property. This hike will feature late-season foliage and views over Cheshire, and a discussion of the area's geologic history. Hike will last approximately 2-3 hours.

Park and meet at the end of Roaring Brook Road, off of Mountain Road. This is a moderate to difficult hike and may not be suitable for small children.

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FALL HIKE SERIES

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OLD FARMS PRESERVE & DE DOMINICIS PROPERTY

Saturday November 24th

The final hike of the Fall Series will explore 2 miles of trails within the CLT's Old Farms Preserve and a portion of the Town-owned DeDominicis Property. Join us for a terrific Thanksgiving weekend hike through a variety of forest types and habitats over rolling terrain. The hike will last approximately 2 hours and you'll learn much about habitat management and watershed protection in this significant south Cheshire preserve.

Park and meet along Old Farms Road, just north of Old Lane Road. This is a moderate-level hike suitable for families.

All hikes will begin at 8 A.M. Questions: contact Mark Kasinskas, mkasinskas@me.com or call 203-806-5165. Follow @mkasinskas on Twitter for hike updates and rain cancellations.



Great White Oak – Bert Cran Memorial Preserve

JOIN US AT THE FALL FESTIVAL & MARKETPLACE

The Cheshire Fall Festival is just around the corner. On Saturday, **September 8, 2012** (rain date on the 9th), the CLT will be spending the day at Bartlem Park and joining in on the fun at the Fall Festival. The theme of this year's booth will be **Hiking in Cheshire**. We will have information about the CLT, new hiking maps for some CLT properties, and will be promoting our Fall Hike Series. In addition, we will be seeking stewardship volunteers and new CLT members! Please stop by to see what's new and sign up for our new email list. If you would like to volunteer for part of the day, contact Mark Kasinskas at, or 203-806-5165.

We're looking for CLT volunteers to help staff the booth. If you can help anytime at the booth please contact **Janice Bryden** 203-250-8817 or **Mark Kasinskas** 203-806-5165.

Prospect Ridge

By Mark Kasinskas

Cheshire's western border with Bethany and Prospect is defined by Prospect Ridge, a north-south trending basalt ridgeline that marks a portion of the boundary between Connecticut's Central Valley and Western Highlands. To early settlers, the Ridge was known as the "Blew Hills", and on some early maps it appears as the "Devil's Backbone".

The Ridge rises from 400 to 650 feet and runs in a northerly direction from Mount Sanford (elev. 800') at the Cheshire/Hamden/Bethany town line and abruptly descends in the area of the Notch at West Main St. A geologic extension of Prospect Ridge rises again at Peck Mountain, forming a rocky spine that extends into Southington and beyond.

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Prospect Ridge

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Prospect Ridge is one of the Town's most prominent and significant natural landforms. Perhaps the most spectacular feature on the ridge is Roaring Brook Falls, an 80-foot cascade, and Connecticut's second-highest waterfall. The ridge also provides habitat for an incredible diversity of species, including several rare or endangered within the State.

The Ridge is excellent for nature study and education, and passive activities such as hiking and bird watching. An existing trail system includes a portion of the blue-blazed Quinnipiac Trail (maintained by the CT Forest & Park Association) which runs along the ridge top, and an Orange Trail, which leads from Roaring Brook Road to the Quinnipiac Trail via the falls.

Much of Prospect Ridge was deforested in the 19th century for lumber and firewood. The hills became steep pasture lands defined by craggy stonewalls, wood lots, and mill sites where water power from the mountain brooks could be harnessed for their energy.

The rugged terrain was less ideal for homesteads so the march of time saw the town's further development in the lowlands as forest reclaimed the hills where recreational pursuits were gradually introduced. In 1928, Edgar Heermance started the Quinnipiac Trail, the first trail in the Connecticut Blue Trail System. The 22-mile footpath contains about 4.4 miles of well-marked, easy to walk trail within Cheshire, crossing some of the town's most beautiful land along the top of Prospect Ridge.

Publicly owned property on the west side of Cheshire is part of the Prospect Ridge preservation corridor which is a combination of state, town and CLT holdings. The Ridge has been an area of conservation interest for the Town for over 40 years, with the overall goal of preserving a greenbelt along much of Cheshire's western border.

CLT's first acquisition was along Prospect Ridge, by way of a gift from Helen Russell of 40 acres of mountainous forested property she bequeathed to the Trust in 1970. This was followed by the Trust's strong support for the town's acquisition of Roaring Brook Falls in 1978. In 1979 CLT member Linda Carmichael donated Nettleton's Ravine, a 14-acre property characterized by a deep ravine with rain forest-like flora and fauna populations. This fragile environment is under careful protection of the trust and public access is limited. The final piece of CLT ridge property is the 24 acre Thomas Pool Memorial donated by Percy Goodsell in 1981. This property is off the Blue Trail and features rocky outcrops, steep slopes and beautiful views of Cheshire and the Hanging Hills of Meriden.

Much of the Town land acquisition program's early acquisitions (begun in earnest in 1986) focused on Prospect Ridge, where 165 acres have been purchased through a combination of town and state funds.

While the goal of a continuous preserved greenbelt along Prospect Ridge has yet to be fully realized, the successes to date are a model for cooperative preservation efforts between the Town, the State, and the Cheshire Land Trust.

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES?

Grow with us and help us grow. It's time to renew your membership if you haven't done so already. The membership year is from 4/1/12 to 3/31/13. Your Donations are tax deductible. The Cheshire Land Trust actively manages 25 properties and 5 conservation easements totaling 530 acres. Membership dues and contributions provide for management of these properties.

(WE HAVE TO INCLUDE AN ENVELOPE WITH EACH MAILING FOR POSTAGE WEIGHT UNIFORMITY. WE DON'T WANT YOU TO PAY TWICE...PLEASE PASS A MEMBERSHIP ENVELOPE ALONG TO A FRIEND)

Learn more at www.cheshirelandtrust.org

President's Letter

Despite being on the CLT Board for about 5 years, I had never set foot in the Fresh Meadows Preserve. I can be a procrastinator. Fellow Board members have told me how beautiful it is and the property has been the topic of discussion many times at meetings, but for one reason or another, I have just have put off visiting.

I had just dropped my middle daughter off at the high school to meet friends for a game of volleyball. Sitting in the parking Cheshire High parking lot, the battle of wits – in my own head – ensued. “You’re wearing flip flops. You can’t walk on those grassy and wooded trails,” my left brain said. “Just go. You can walk in a little ways and check it out. It will take too long to drive all the way home for the right shoes,” said my right brain. “You’ll be eaten alive by mosquitoes!” countered the Left brain. “It’s now or never! Just go!” said the right brain. And so, I did. And boy was it worth it.

Exiting my car and entering the preserve, I could hear the buzz of a nearby neighbor’s lawn mower. But within a few yards down the grassy path I was greeted by a yellow warbler and immediately taken in by the sights, sounds and smells of the preserve. In the preserve for only a few minutes, I heard voices and soon met up with a college aged man, his sister and their adorable greyhound. The trio was just finishing their hike and the young lady was quick to tell me “how cool this place is.” Her obvious excitement was contagious.

Making my way over a wooden bridge on the eastern trail, I soon came to the top of the ridge with a beautiful vantage point of Fresh Meadows and the neighboring Tufte property and had a chance to admire the newly installed stone memorial bench honoring Jean May which had recently been placed by her family with the help of CLT volunteers. I navigated down the rock steps and finally onto the path leading to the meadow. There I was met with tall grasses, wildflowers, butterflies and a good size bees’ nest. I paused to watch the bees darting in and out doing their work. Forty five minutes later, after having walked the trails, I made my way back to the parking area. I was thrilled with my “adventure” and so pleased that I had just gone and done what I had meant to do for so long.



**In Memory of Jean May
Environmental and Champion of Cheshire
Land Preservation**

As my term unfolds it is my goal to work collectively with the board and our membership to strengthen our commitment to good stewardship of the land and historic places we have been entrusted to care for. While stewardship, in the purest sense, involves monitoring and protecting these properties, there is quite a bit behind the scenes that support the stewardship process. Not only do we rely upon our members to volunteer to be stewards of our properties, but we also rely upon them for their fiscal support. Additionally, we benefit from the many talents of our members, which include not only land management skills, but expertise in management, accounting, finance, fund raising , advertising, event-planning and “just plain old not afraid to dig in and helping.” Do any of the areas listed pique your interest or tug at your heart strings? Procrastinate no more, step up and support the Cheshire Land Trust with your special talent. Our Board has exciting plans for community outreach, membership building and strengthening our role as a resource for those wishing to plan for conservation protection. You could make all the difference. Join us as we continue doing our utmost to preserve and protect Cheshire’s natural resources and its scenic and historic properties.

I’d love to hear from you. You can drop me a line at janice.bryden@snet.net or give me a call at 203-250-8817.

Janice Bryden, President