
The Balance Sheet

Cheshire Land Trust cheshirelandtrust.org Vol. 43, No. 1 March 2015
Preserving Land as a Living Resource Since 1969

Annual Meeting

Cheshire Land Trust's 46th Annual Meeting will be held **Thursday, March 26th at Cheshire Town Hall**. Join us for light refreshments at 6:30 PM followed by the business meeting and the election of the 2015 governing board at 7:00 PM. This year's program will feature **Jeanné R. Chesnow**, Cheshire's Town Historian. Her presentation, **Glaciers to Greenhouses**, in words and images, will describe the landscape of Cheshire, and how nature and humans have changed the town's land use and appearance over the centuries from the last Ice Age to the 21st century. For information on the event please contact Janice Bryden 250-8817 or Dave Schrumm 272-2689.

A Storied Bridge

By Jean McKee

THE FIRST BRIDGE AT MT SANFORD RD

As drivers pass from South Brooksvale Rd. onto Mt. Sanford Rd. they probably do not know much about the history of the bridge there. Still fewer know anything about those toy boats they may have watched or played with in the stream in front of our house at 532 So. Brooksvale Rd.

In 1838 David Brooks and family owned both sides of what is now South Brooksvale Rd. David and son Alonzo decided to ask the town if they could straighten out the road in front of their Brooks Homestead. The original dirt road sloped down from the west curving in front of their home on the north side of the stream cascading down the Mt. Sanford ravine. There was a marshy area on the south side of the stream. They proposed putting in two culverts for the stream -- one at the top and one at the bottom so they could fill in and straighten out the dirt road. The town officials said that it would be all right if they did not stop commerce. So, at night, by



The Early Bridge at Mt Sanford Road

lantern light they put in two culverts and filled in the land so that the road went straight and the original stream continued through their property for water. (*No Inland-Wetland Regulations back then*)

The original dirt road coming from the north was designed to go from the so-called "Notch" in west Cheshire to Hamden via what are now named Mountain Rd, onto North Brooksvale Rd and South Brooksvale Rd, and then Mt. Sanford Rd. This was designed to avoid the Toll Roads from Waterbury to Cheshire and Cheshire to New Haven. Later on when the Mt. Sanford stream in the meadow to the southwest side of the road began to split and potentially cut off Mt. Sanford Road, you can find in the early town records and thanks David Brooks for building the bridge.

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Historic Bridge

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The wooden bridge remained intact until the fall of 1942 when my Uncle Thornton Thayer's copious notes report "Road men from Cheshire began work on widening road below brook crossing...the four foot diameter reinforced concrete sections dropped off." These culverts meant that the level of the water would be lowered and insufficient to continue the original course of the stream. Uncle Thornton then offered to pay for a dam that would maintain the correct level in a small pool just past the culverts and this was accomplished. He also worked with the town to insure an appropriately designed bridge that you still see.



Snow laden Span at Mt Sanford Road

We still have the Douglas Ram that at one time pumped water from the brook to the house. I found the Judge's decision in the unsuccessful suit challenging the rights to the stream coming under the road to the house. Oh, yes, the original 1942 culverts were too small, so the town had to replace them.

The traffic from Mountain Rd and Bethany Mountain Rd has increased over the years. Cars dash by every morning heading down South Brooksvale Rd onto Mt. Sanford Rd toward Hamden and New Haven drivers unaware of this history they are passing.

Editor's Note- CLT has a conservation easement on 48 acres of the historic McKee Farm. The bridge at Mt Sanford Rd is once again being examined for improvements by the town. It will be prudent for town officials to respect and balance the historic character of the bridge while maintaining public safety.

Acquisition News

The Trust received two land donations in 2014 adding 10 acres of protected land to our portfolio.



Last December Francis Roke, Jr and his sister Diane M. Tansley donated six acres of property along Waterbury Road in west Cheshire. This is CLT's first acquisition of land in this part of west Cheshire. The property has provided a habitat for wildlife of all sorts and has been undisturbed since it was acquired by the family in 1938.

The rugged upland property has frontage along Waterbury Rd. opposite Blackies. The property has extensive wetlands covering about 40% of the acreage. The rest of the property is forested with mixed hardwoods and is noteworthy for rocky outcrops along Edgecomb Rd. The area has been named "**Josephine's Woods**" in honor of the donor's grandmother.

In summarizing the donor's intent, Mr. Roke stated it best in a note to the Trust; "I wanted to touch base with you and let you know what a great experience it was working with your organization. From start to finish I was amazed at how smoothly everything went and what a good feeling I had upon completion of our donation. It didn't really hit me until I went by the land one more time on my way home. This was my grandmother's first piece of ownership in her newly adopted country and now we have come full circle with its return by this donation to the Cheshire Land Trust. Your gift of "The Duffy" lets us retain a portion of the land and we will always treasure it as our part of Josephine's Woods.

Gift increases acreage at Brooke Preserve



Dr. Leonard Kolstad and his wife Karen donated four acres of property that adjoins Brook Preserve. The Kolstad's said that they often enjoyed walking on the Land Trust's Brooke Preserve on Sperry Road. "We came to realize that our property adjoined that CLT open space. We were inspired to donate a piece of our land as a way of giving back to the community by expanding this beautiful area", said Karen Kolstad.

The property consists of a small area of wetlands and several acres of early growth, upland forest. The area has been named "Kolstad Woods".

This gift expands CLT's forty acre Brooke Preserve that was donated by the Carpenter-Blackburn family in 2005. The Kolstad gift is very important since greenbelts are the preferred way to protect land. Instead of small pieces of land here and there, greenbelts provide better cover and corridors for animals and birds. They also serve to maintain an open countryside appearance for the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Kolstads were presented with a "Duffy", a metal sculpture made for the Trust by local artists Diane Buettner and Sharon Kree. Duffy's are modeled after the leaves that are found on donor properties and serve as a permanent reminder of the givers' generosity.

The Land Trust exists for exactly this kind of situation providing a means for committed preservationists to protect their land now and long after they are gone. The Trust currently protects 578 acres of land in Cheshire.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Grow with us and help us grow. It's time to renew your membership. The membership year is from 4/1/15 to 3/31/16. Your Donations are tax deductible. The Cheshire Land Trust actively manages 27 properties and 6 conservation easements totaling 578 acres. Your membership dues and contributions provide for management of these properties.

President's Letter

What a winter! The cold, the storms, school closings, cancellations, shoveling, slipping and sliding seem never ending. In fact, as I write this, snow is gently falling once again. The newest white blanket covers its predecessor, along with any brave patches of grass that had begun to emerge. Will spring ever come? Of course it will. By the time this newsletter reaches your doorstep, spring will be upon us. The snow will melt, uncovering the season's impact, and leave most of us with a long list of to-dos. For the Cheshire Land Trust, it's time to get on with the important business of 2015; stewarding the land in our care, continuing important outreach to our members and the people of Cheshire, and making sure to take time to have some fun.



The Land Trust was fortunate to receive two donations of land this past year. Leonard and Karen Kolstad donated four acres of property between Sperry Road and Half Moon Road and Francis Roke Jr. and his sister Diane Tansley, donated six acres of property along Waterbury Road, opposite a local landmark, Blackie's restaurant. The Cheshire Land Trust is grateful for these generous donations and honored that the Kolstad, Roke and Tansley families have entrusted the land to our care.

President's Letter *Continued from page 3*

These 2014 acquisitions bring us to almost 580 acres of land under our care for monitoring and maintenance. The majority of the land is open to the public and guided hikes are scheduled throughout the year however I encourage you to visit the properties on your own.

Consult our website www.cheshirelandtrust.org to learn more about CLT properties with public access and view and print maps for your visit. If you make the effort to get out on the properties, I promise you'll be amazed about what treasures you will find in "your own backyard." I'm betting you'll like what you see and I'm hoping you'll join CLT in its mission to preserve wetlands, farmland and open spaces and protect the character and beauty of our town.

As a non-profit, non-governmental organization, membership support is the driving force behind our successes. This newsletter contains an envelope for those who want to join the Land Trust or renew you will consider fiscal support of our endeavors, but also physical support. There is a great need for volunteers to support stewardship of our properties. There is a variety of work to be done, from easy to technical. Additionally, there is a need for volunteer support for planning and running events, as well as researching and writing grants.

To help, please contact Mark Kasinskas at mkasinskas@me.com, or Rick Marinaro at rickssin@cox.net, or leave a message at 203-806-5165. Individuals, families, scout groups, church groups, student groups, senior groups, and civic groups are all welcome! I invite you to join us for our Annual Meeting on March 26, 2015. Come see what we're all about. We'd love to hear your ideas on how the Land Trust can serve you better. Can't make it on the 26th? Our regular meetings are scheduled at 7 pm on the third Thursday of every month at the Chamber of Commerce office on S. Main St. Meetings are open to all members and the public. We'd be happy to see you. But why wait for a meeting? You can get involved right away. Drop me a line anytime at janice.bryden@snet.net or give me a call at 203.250.8817.

Janice Bryden, President

News & Notes

By Joy Vanderlek

In spite of the not-so-great weather, the November 6, 2014 "**Art ... Uncorked**" event at Bagelicious Bagels on South Main St. was well-attended and a wonderful time for everyone who came out. Fine spirits were provided from Wine Sisterhood, along with delicious snacks and food, and beautiful art. We are so thankful to Andrew Moskowitz at **Bagelicious** and the Cheshire Art League for their over-the-top generosity. You made the night a huge success. We could not have done it without you.

"**A Day at the Farm,**" at Ives Farm on Cheshire Street last fall was quite a success. There was fun for everyone. There were tours of the farm and the new barn, bird walks with the Quinnipiac Valley Audubon Society, educational displays from various non-profits including Riverbound Farm Sanctuary and displays of tractors (old and new). The Cheshire Historical Society was on hand and gave a mini-preview of their "Spirits Alive" Halloween presentation.

A menagerie of animals was represented that day including chickens, goats and horses. Dawn Cestaro from **Cheshire Hollow Farm** brought her kid goats, which kids loved. The Cheshire Horse Council and the Cheshire Volunteer Horse Patrols brought horses, including a mini-horse. The bounce house and kids' craft station were also popular draws. We can't wait for next year!

The **New Year's Day walk** at Fresh Meadows Wildlife Sanctuary had a great turnout. A group of 20 included new faces, as well as old friends of CLT, who enjoyed a one-hour leisurely paced walk along the winding Mill River, meadows and forest trails. Winter views off the ridge were picture perfect. Board members Tim Slocum, Dave Schrumm and Sam Waldo talked about the history and transformation of Fresh Meadows over its 30 year history. They also took time to point out the plants, trees, birds and animals on the property—and as chance would have it, there was even a fleeting glimpse of a bobcat as it retreated into bog after prey. That was an unbelievable moment for the group.

Election of Officers & Directors

The slate of officers and directors will be placed in nomination at the annual meeting of the Cheshire Land Trust March 26th. Sam Waldo, Rick Marinaro and Dave Mercugliano served on the Nominating Committee. Four officers and four directors are up for election. Officers serve one year terms and Directors serve three year terms. Nominees are listed in bold type.

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

President	Mark Kasinskaskas
Vice President	Sam Waldo
Treasurer	David Schrumm
Secretary	Tim Slocum
Joy Vanderlek	2015-2018
Elizabeth Johnson	2015-2018
Matt Abdifar	2015-2018
Janice Bryden	2014-2017
Rick Marinaro	2014-2017
Jim Mertz	2014-2017
John Hilzinger	2013-2016
David Mercugliano	2013-2016
Kevin Wetmore	2013-2016

Mark Kasinskaskas has served as a Director from 1995-97 and more recently since 2011 and is replacing Janice Bryden as President. Janice will continue to serve on the board. Joy Vanderlek was elected to the Board in 2014, filling a vacancy. She is being nominated for a full three year term. Elizabeth Johnson and Matt Abdifar are new additions to the Board.

Dr. Johnson is Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences at Post University in Waterbury. Prior to this appointment, Beth began her tenure at Post as an Assistant Professor of Environmental Science until being named Director of Science Programs and Academic Program Manager for Environmental Science. Beth also worked for 3 years as a Wetland Delineator and Soil Scientist for an Environmental Consulting firm in Westfield, MA. Beth has a BS in Earth and Environmental Science from Lehigh University and an MS and Ph.D. in Plant, Soil and Insect Science from UMass, Amherst.

Matt Abdifar is currently the Public Affairs Manager at Kinder Morgan in Enfield. He also serves as a volunteer firefighter in Cheshire and sits on the Town Environment Commission. Previously, he was Congresswoman Elizabeth Esty's Director of Community Affairs and held several positions on her campaign staff. Matt is a member of a number of local organizations and serves on the

Board of several. He has a BA in Policy Studies and Political Science from Syracuse University.



Membership News

In 2014 membership year we had 126 renewed memberships, 14 new memberships and 8 new life memberships;

New Life Members: Diane Tansley, Francis Roke, Jr., Dr. Leonard and Karen Kolstad, Edward Konowitz, Drs. Ron & Janet Paret, Patti Youngberg

New Members: The Bavaro family, Michael Brady, Milton Devane, Kerrie Dunne, Heather Fitzgerald, Patti Flynn-Harris, Paris Godbout, Judith Hill, Melissa Jarrell, Elizabeth Johnson, John McDonnell, Mill River Watershed Association, James & Jayne O'Brien, John Votto

Youth Service:

Cheshire High School **Kiwanis Key Club** volunteers assisting with Stewardship Day: Alyssa Matz, Claudia Buszta, Jack Keenan, Jenni Kwiatkowski

Boy Scout Eagle Projects

Alex Housman – Brooke Preserve trail renovation project.

Charles Biddescombe – Old Farms trail renovation and trailhead sign.

Calendar of Events & Happenings

March 26th Thursday, 7 – 9:00 PM - CLT Annual Membership Meeting at Cheshire Town Hall

June 8th Saturday June 6th, 9am - Connecticut Trails Day hike at CLT's Old Farms Preserve & Town owned DeDominicis Preserve. Meet trailhead off Old Farms Rd. Hike leaders: **Mark Kasinskaskas** and **Rick Marinaro** will discuss habitat types, local forest history and open space stewardship practices. Duration; 2 hours - Distance; 2 miles.

The Balance Sheet has been published twice a year since 1973. CLT news is updated on our website, cheshirelandtrust.org. and with periodic email blasts to members throughout the year. The Balance Sheet has been edited by Tim Slocum since 1989.