
The Balance Sheet

Cheshire Land Trust cheshirelandtrust.org Vol. 44, No. 1 March 2016
Preserving Land as a Living Resource Since 1969

Annual Meeting

Cheshire Land Trust's 47th Annual Meeting will be held **Thursday, March 31st at Cheshire Town Hall**. Join us for refreshments at 6:30 p.m. followed by the business meeting and the election of the 2016 governing board at 7:00 p.m.

This year's program will feature author, illustrator and naturalist John Himmelman. The Killingworth resident is the co-founder of the CT Butterfly Association, past president of the New Haven Bird Club, The Nature Connection, and the Killingworth Land Trust. Himmelman is an avid photographer, has lectured and led many trips in search of various flora and fauna throughout the country.

For information on the event please contact 203-806-0258 or Dave Schrumm at 272-2689.

PROSPECT RIDGE PRESERVATION

Inverness Glen

By Tim Slocum

Cheshire's west side is dominated by forested upland known as Prospect Ridge. In 1970 the Land Trust could claim a foothold in Ridgetop preservation thanks to Helen Russell. Those rocky forty acres are now memorialized as the Russell Family Preserve. With energized CLT support Roaring Brook Falls was saved. Soon after 14 acres of nearby Nettleton's Ravine was gifted and preserved. By the early 1990's with the help of the State the Town had embarked on taxpayer supported preservation efforts to protect substantial portions of the ridge.



Newly fallen snow at Ives Farm – Feb. 6, 2016

Today 445 acres are forever protected from development. This includes five CLT properties totaling 84 acres and five properties owned by the town and the state comprising 361 acres.

This past December thanks to the generosity of Whitney & Lori Watts and Chris Baillie more acreage has been protected. They donated a 4.7 acre property on Inverness Court giving the Trust a direct connection to the 40-acre Russell Preserve it abuts along its westerly reach from Inverness Court. The area has been named "Inverness Glen." A glen is a hollow or valley (traversed by a stream or river), a steep narrow-sided valley. This property certainly meets that descriptive appellation. The property has a narrow frontage along Inverness Court where a stream crosses under the road on its descent to Willow Brook. The densely forested hilly terrain

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widens as it reaches to the Russell property. This property is part of 171 connected acres owned by the state, town and CLT.

CLT ownership and stewardship of this land not only provides easier access to the Russell Property from Inverness Court but also creates opportunities for improving public access to the Quinnipiac Trail, which runs along the ridgetop and through a portion of the Russell Property. The Blue-Blazed trail was the first of its kind in Connecticut and it has been a connection to nearby wilderness areas for nearly a century.

When CLT organized in 1969, its primary motivations were to preserve and protect land for the benefit of wildlife and residents alike. The partnership in preservation was always welcoming of development that best planned for protections of greenways and wildlife corridors. As Inverness Court was planned, its developers were very sensitive to this point and early on established a right-of-way for access to CLT's Russell property. Their most recent generosity has simply made this potential a reality. In the coming year the Trust will commence a plan to develop a clearly marked trail from Inverness Glen to the Blue-Blazed Trail.

President's Letter

Here in Cheshire, we live in a dynamic landscape that offers endless opportunities to experience for those who look.

One of the great joys of living in southern New England is experiencing the various natural seasons and all their cyclical change. Each season—spring, summer, fall and winter—offers a different perspective of our place in the world.



In order to begin fully appreciating this landscape, it's always useful to purposefully view each of these seasons at least once. In our part of the world, it's actually hard to say you're beginning to truly

“know” a place such as a forest or a meadow until you've experienced each season at least once.

Luckily, it doesn't matter when you start. After all, chances are that our seasons will continue to circle around the same way that they have for quite a while. Now, in late winter / early spring, is as good a time as any to start a year-round exploration. As this is being written in late February, a rather mild winter could be coming to end, with budding trees and spring peepers possibly not too far off, with leaves and wildflowers to follow.

This year, consider exploring one of your favorite Cheshire Land Trust hiking trails in all four seasons. If you don't have a favorite yet, find one at www.cheshirelandtrust.org. Fresh Meadows, Brooke Memorial Preserve and Ives Farm all provide great opportunities. The Quinnipiac Blue trail runs through CLT's Russell Property and our Old Farms Preserve trail connects with the Town of Cheshire's DeDominicis trail system. Each of these trails offer something different and something for everyone. There's something new to see each time you visit in each cyclic season every year. So far this year, I've only made it out to Ives and Fresh Meadows, so I have work to do too to add more chapters to my own hiking observation notebooks.

All Cheshire Land Trust trails are open to the public from dawn-to-dusk, 7 days a week (unless otherwise seasonally posted). Please go explore! If you're not familiar with our trails or would rather not go alone (at least the first time), please join one of the regular hikes run by our Outreach & Education Committee.

Among the many events in the works, highlights of CLT's hiking calendar will include a Kensett-themed hike at Roaring Brook Falls (co-sponsored by the Cheshire Environment Commission) and a hike of Prospect Ridge as part of The Connecticut Forest & Park Association's Trails Weekend in June. These two events will pass through some of the first properties the Cheshire Land Trust worked to protect, and are reflective of the collaborative efforts needed for successful conservation efforts, whether for acquisition, education, or recreation goals.

Looking to the future, our Stewardship Committee has begun planning work to improve an old trail on

the Russell Property that will soon extend through Inverness Glen, the Cheshire Land Trust's latest acquisition. Other trail improvements and recreational opportunities that will allow you to experience CLT properties in new ways are also "in the works."

CLT's ability to maintain our properties and hiking trails, to run hiking and other events, and most importantly, to have these properties in the first place, are all due to the interest and support from you —our members, donors, and volunteers.

Your continued support of the Cheshire Land Trust is appreciated. Whether as a member, donor, property monitor, volunteer, or event attendee, your involvement has been and continues to be a crucial part of our collective success. Attending hikes, paying membership dues, helping out on stewardship days, making financial donations, participating in events and donating properties are all important elements of a strong, dynamic conservation organization. All roles are crucial. And if and when you're ready to bump up your involvement or level of contribution – let us know. As an organization, we have cyclical needs (like clearing trails and paying basic non-profit bills to "keep the doors open") and long-term needs (like acquiring new properties and developing new events).

Thank you for your generous support of the Cheshire Land Trust. Get ready for another exciting year. *Mark Kasinskas, President CLT*

A NOTE TO THE MEMBERSHIP ON CLT V. CASEY

As many within the Cheshire Land Trust membership and the Cheshire community are aware, CLT was involved in a legal suit for several years with Mr. Timothy Casey. CLT prevailed in the case – an eviction – both in the original judgement in 2012 and in 2015, upon appeal by Mr. Casey.

On behalf of CLT, the Board of Directors was directly involved in every step of this case, and continuously apprised of its status by our legal counsel and/or the CLT's Farm Committee. The case, and appeal, transpired over a much longer period of time and at much greater expense than the Board would have preferred.

Each step of the way through this case, the Board's intention was to act in the best interest of CLT's membership and donors, and the organization as a whole, in line with CLT's mission statement.

The final legal ruling for Cheshire Land Trust, LLC v. Casey, 156 Conn. App. 833 (Conn. App. 2015) is available online at www.jud.ct.gov, and a short summary is available on the Connecticut Land Conservation Council website, www.ctconservation.org. The CLT Mission Statement is posted at the bottom of our homepage, www.cheshirelandtrust.com.

Any member interested in additional information regarding the case may email CheshireCTLand@aol.com or call 203-806-0258.

News & Notes

By Joy VanderLek

It's been a dynamic time for CLT programs and events. We hope you had a chance to get involved in some of the fun. Since our last newsletter, CLT hosted a free day of fun for the community in the annual "**A Day at Ives Farm**" in September. The event has become a staple for us and immensely popular.

January's **Riverside Reptiles** was held at the Youth Center with Brian Kleinman. The program stressed the importance of conservation and the environment, endangered and "sensitive" species here in Cheshire and what amphibians and reptiles might be found in town and on CLT properties. Brian's Burmese python was the Wow! factor in the show. We also had a craft session with about 40 children after the show.

CLT hikes have been numerous. CLT President Mark Kasinskas and birds of prey specialist Bob Giddings, CLT member and former Boulder Knoll president, led a wildlife and tree identification hike in November at the Sperry Road Brooke Preserve property. We didn't see much in the way of wildlife, but there were a lot of trees. The event had an excellent turnout, as did the **Ives Farm Autumn Amble** with Audubon's Corie Folsom-O'Keefe from Riverbound Farm and Quinnipiac Valley Audubon Society.

We kicked off the New Year, with a “**Sketch and Stretch**” event, co-hosted with QVAS at Riverbound Farm Sanctuary, down the road from Ives Farm. Artist Linda Marino gave a quick sketch lessons for nature journaling, and with adults and children in tow, we took in the beautiful trails at Riverbound and finished up with hot cocoa and cookies.

Did you enter? The Cheshire Land Trust Facebook Photo contests have shown us how talented our members are and how really beautiful Cheshire can be in all four seasons (yes, even mud season).

While we do give prizes to our winners, they are really just tokens. Winners have received CLT handmade birdhouses to small gift certificates to Cheshire ice cream shops, coffee shops and lunch spots. Many thanks to all who have played along, and thank you for sharing your talent and beautiful photos with us.

CLT has also been busy collaborating with **David Smith of Cox Communications Public Access** in Cheshire, to produce a series of shows on the land trust and the properties in CLT’s care.

The first show was taped in studio with CLT board members, and looks at the early days of the Cheshire Land Trust. It focuses on the founding members and the grass roots movement that brought about the creation of the group and a few of the keystone properties of the nascent organization.

Two more tapings were done on location at Ives Farm woodlands and Fresh Meadows Preserve. The program will be shown on Cox Public Access, PATV-15, as well as “on demand” from the website, <http://www.patv15.com>. Hosted by CLT President Mark Kasinskas, viewers follow on the hike of the properties, learning about the trees, flowers and plants, wildlife, birds and special features of each property.

Officers & Directors

The Cheshire Land Trust is currently looking to its membership to fill open Board of Director positions. What skills and enthusiasm can you bring to the Cheshire Land Trust and our many activities? Tell us about your interests, your experience/training, or what you would like to learn more about.

We welcome the chance to hear from you. Please contact Mark Kasinskas at CheshireCTLand@aol.com or 203-806-0258.

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

President	Mark Kasinskas
Vice President	Sam Waldo
Treasurer	David Schrumm
Secretary	Open

John Hilzinger	2016-2019
David Mercugliano	2016-2019
Patty Hartmann	2016-2019

Joy VanderLek	2015-2018
Open	2015-2018
Matt Abdifar	2015-2018

Janice Bryden	2014-2017
Rick Marinaro	2014-2017
Jim Mertz	2014-2017

Patty Hartmann fills the unexpired term of Elizabeth Joy Johnson. Patty joins the Cheshire Land Trust Outreach and Education and Membership committees. Patty has been the Cheshire Community Food Pantry Director since 2012.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Grow with us and help us grow. It’s time to renew your membership. The membership year is from 3/31/16-4/1/17. Your Donations are fully tax deductible.



Welcome New Members

New Life Members: Christine Baillie, Whitney & Lorie Watts, John & Rosanne Purtill, Robert & Tim Weiland
New Members: Betsy Fox, David Johnson, Philip & Sandra Karakoosh, Marianne Mullen, Michael & Therese Ritchie

YOUTH SERVICE AWARDS - 2016

Veronica Schaefer, Sarah Silvati and Richard Miller from Cheshire High School.

Calendar of Events & Happenings

March 31, Thursday, 6:30–9:00 p.m.

CLT Annual Membership Meeting at Cheshire Town Hall

April 16, Saturday, 8 a.m. – Audubon Bird Walk with CLT at Fresh Meadows on Cook Hill Road.

Lead: Audubon’s Melissa Baston

April 23, Saturday: Roaring Brook hike with Cheshire Environment Commission and CLT, Details TBA

June 4, Saturday, CT Trails Day hike – Prospect Mountain. Hike leader: **Mark Kasinskas**

Duration; 2 hours; Difficulty: Very difficult



Ives Farm Tractor Trot 5K

You heard it here first. The Cheshire Land Trust will host its own 5K run in October. With a tip of the hat to Betty Ives, the event has been dubbed, “The Ives Farm Tractor Trot 5K.”

We are very excited about the race, especially to offer it in such an ideal location.

Runners will travel alongside planting fields on packed and sandy surfaces, traverse next to the beautiful Quinnipiac River, and head for the woods, into the Ives Farm wooded trail network.

The race will be timed by by Peter Volkmar and SNERRO (known to many runners as the former Southern New England Road Race Officials).

The Ives Farm Tractor Trot 5K will be held on Saturday, October 29, 2016 with a start time of 9:30 a.m.

Runners and walkers are invited to enter. No baby strollers, please, and dogs will not be permitted on the property the day of the race.

Tell your friends, and watch for updates on how to enter on the Cheshire Land Trust **Facebook page** and at www.cheshirelandtrust.org.



Painting by Linda DeLuca

IVES FARMSTAND T&D

If you haven’t signed onto the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program at Ives Farmstand T&D yet, why not try it this season!

The CSA will begin June 17, 2016 and run through October 28, 2016. In total, the CSA runs for 20 weeks, with a cost of \$300 (for a family of four) for the season.

T&D plans to open Thursday, March 24th for Easter flowers. They’ll also take CSA names at that time. Tote bags will be given with each sign-up.

April plans for T&D is tentatively set to open Thursday through Sunday, from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Offerings should include lilies, tulips, pansies and daffodils. CSA applications will be taken at this time, too.

For the summer ahead, count on a greater variety of vegetables, thanks to your feedback last season. The CSA will have 20 or more vegetables, including onions, herbs, carrots, collard greens, spaghetti squash, and of course, peppers, eggplants, tomatoes, lettuce and cucumbers. To sign up get information, email ivesfarmtd@yahoo.com The phone number is 203-272-0009. Check out the CSA on Facebook at Ives Farmstand T&D.



The Balance Sheet is published by the Cheshire Land Trust twice a year.

Keep up-to-date with CLT news, Stewardship days, events and programs by visiting cheshirelandtrust.org, our **Facebook page** or **follow us on Twitter**.