
The Balance Sheet

Cheshire Land Trust

cheshirelandtrust.org

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Preserving Land as a Living Resource Since 1969



Land Trust 54th Annual Meeting

Thursday, March 20, 2025

7:00p.m.

Counter Weight Brewing

7 Diana Court, Cheshire, CT

Meet the new team for Ives Farm and learn about what is coming in the Spring!

A New Start for an Old Farm

Last Spring the CLT Board released a Request for Proposals for people interested in farming at Ives. Many verbal inquiries were received while seven written proposals were submitted. After careful consideration, the Board selected the husband and wife team from River Ridge Farm and Market in Portland, CT.

Dakota Rudloff-Eastman and Matt Went have over twenty years of experience managing and owning farms in New England. They own a 34-acre farm in Portland and a fresh produce market in Middletown.

An important consideration for the CLT Board in choosing River Ridge was their approach to managing the farm's soils, their wide variety of vegetables and their use of low impact, innovative planting methods to provide year round produce. They plan to operate Ives as a four season farm and farmstand utilizing organic (eventually USDA certified) practices with limited soil disturbance. This would revitalize the soil, bringing it back to life after decades of conventional management.

“We believe success begins with healthy soil,” according to Dakota. “Some crops get ‘direct seeded’, directly planted into the soil before germination. For a majority of our crops, we prefer to transplant them after they have had a good healthy start in a greenhouse. Healthy seedlings make for healthy plants with good yields.”

Their farm plan relies on heavy rotation of crops and cover crops both for soil health, disease control, pest control and turning over quick crops for sale. Some crops will be grown under “high tunnels” in the ground even during the winter.



Winter kale

With the addition of the Ives land, they will be expanding their current crop list, adding more winter storage crops and producing more value added products. According to Matt, “We could also add carrots, beets, onions, parsnips, potatoes, pumpkins and winter squash to the crop plan in quantities that would get us through the winter in all our four season locations.”

River Ridge markets produce using a wide distribution network including their farm stand, several farm markets, local school districts, food co-ops, restaurants and breweries and the Northwest Food Hub among others.

The current plan is to maintain the existing farm stand for the coming season while planning for an expansion in a permanent location next year. Most of the existing fields will be allowed to remain fallow for 2025 with some limited crop production on the east side of Cheshire Street.



Their current production includes: Asparagus, Beans, Broccoli, Broccolini, Brussel Sprouts, Cabbage, Cauliflower, Celery, Celeriac, Chicory, Chinese Cabbage (Napa Cabbage), Collards, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Fennel, Garlic, Greens, Kale, Kohlrabi, Leeks, Lettuce, Melons, Okra, Peas, Peppers, Radishes, Shallots, Spinach, Sweet Potatoes, Swiss Chard, Tomatoes, Basil, Cilantro, Dill, Lavender, Mint, Parsley, Rosemary, Sage, Oregano, Thyme, Strawberries, Blueberries, Peaches, Raspberries, Rhubarb, Sour Cherries, Northern Kiwi Berry.

A CSA will be available with details coming soon.

Flowers Coming Back to Ives as Well



In addition to vegetables, there will be flowers in the east fields at Ives this summer. The Trust has decided to continue our relationship with Rocky Floral, a flower growing company in Bethany that was already using some land next to the Ives farmhouse.

Owned and operated by Izy Martin-Garrison, the new agreement will allow her to move her plot to the area north of the existing farm stand. Rocky floral grows a variety of flowers for weddings and for wholesaling through a floral co-op in Meriden.

Where Did “The Balance Sheet” Come From?

This is the 108th issue of the Cheshire Land Trust’s newsletter, *The Balance Sheet*. The name was derived from our early logo which showed a scale balancing a tree and a house, open space balancing development with a hint of the western ridge in the background. The Trust was founded in 1969 when residential development was accelerating at an alarming pace consuming forest and farmland. The hope was that a balance could be found between the trees and the



houses. Some would argue that, in general, a balance has been maintained. Others would argue that the scale has been tipped too far on the development side. CLT needs your help in keeping the scale balanced for the benefit of us all.

Fresh Meadows Goes Batty



As part of a community service project requirement for his Eagle Scout award, Thomas Franco of Troop 92 in Cheshire built two large bat boxes which he installed this past fall on the Land Trust's Fresh Meadows property on Cook Hill Road.

Fresh Meadows provides local bats with an ideal habitat, including open space and a water supply from the Mill River. In addition to helping bats, some species of which have shown alarming population declines in recent years, Thomas hopes that the bat boxes and information that he has provided at the trail entrance to Fresh Meadows will educate visitors about the role bats play in the environment.



Dogs at Fresh Meadows

Please resist the temptation to let your dogs run unleashed at the Fresh Meadows preserve. First, they can chase down and injure/kill the animals there and second, because coyotes and bobcats have been seen there, they may be injured or killed. Walk safely with your pet, keep them on a leash.

Make Your Voice Heard on Town's Future

The Town of Cheshire is updating the Town's Plan of Conservation and Development. A Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) is an advisory document that serves as a municipality's official action plan for its future land use, development, and conservation goals.

At this point in the process, the Town is looking to gather community feedback. The public input survey can be accessed here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TNSSGCS>

Concerned about Cheshire's future? Take the survey.

The POCD process will include public hearings on the report before it is finalized. See the Town website for details as they develop.

CLT Remembers.....

Michael "Mickey" Arisco – May 1942 – January 2025



Cheshire lost one of its most dedicated and friendly farmers on January 23. Well known and respected in the Connecticut farming community, Mickey worked on the Land Trust's Ives Farm for over ten years creating bumper crops of vegetables. One of his specialties was peppers of all kinds, sweet and hot.

He loved being on his tractor and stayed active on the Ives fields until just a few months before his death. CLT and his many friends will miss him and his example of hard work and willingness to help others.

President's Message

There have been a lot of developments in the past few months and we are excited to share them with you.

I am pleased to announce that Ives Farm will have some new farmers in the fields and at the farm stand this coming spring. After a long selection process, our board chose two of the organizations that submitted proposals and CLT entered into leases with them in January. We are very happy that River Ridge Farm will be joining us at Ives Farm in the coming months. Rocky Floral, a florist/grower will be returning on a different plot on the farm as well. Our board is enthusiastic about these folks and we are confident that you will be, too, once you get to know them. You can even meet them in person at our Annual Meeting in March!

This process has been a major undertaking by CLT and we were pleased with all of the excellent proposals we received from respondents. We believe River Ridge and Rocky Floral were the best fit for Ives Farm among the options we considered. Stop by the farm this spring when people and things start moving about, and please take a minute to welcome them to our community. They will certainly appreciate it and so will we.

In other news, we are currently working on a number of projects on the farm and on our other properties, such as Fresh Meadows. If you are looking for a chance to enjoy the outdoors, make some new friends and contribute to your community, we have plenty of opportunities for you to make it all happen. And whatever your skills or interests may be, we can certainly find something for you to do with CLT and further conservation in our community. Please contact us at cheshirelandtrust@gmail.com, and we will get you involved.

On the topic of volunteering... I would like to recognize our local Boy Scout Troop (92), which has been a continuing source of volunteer efforts to improve our properties and work on long term projects supporting our conservation efforts. I would also like to extend a special thanks to Eagle Scout Thomas Franco, who completed a project for us last year. Tom is a great example of dedication and service to his community and we appreciate all he has done for CLT.

Finally, I would like to note that our board is always working on acquiring new land. We, and the entire Cheshire community, are grateful for the extraordinary generosity demonstrated by those who have donated their land to CLT for conservation. They are special people.

While land donations are always welcome, we also recognize that sometimes land has to be purchased in order to conserve it. Your monetary donations can help make the difference in allowing us to acquire land and protect it forever. We appreciate all of the donations that our members and friends make to further this goal.

I look forward to seeing you at our annual meeting at 7:00 PM on March 20th at Counter Weight Brewing in Cheshire!

Mike Ceccorulli



Dues and Donations

Enclosed is a Membership/Donations envelope. You may use it to submit your 2025 dues if you have not already done so. If you wish, you can make an additional donation above and beyond membership dues. You can pay on our website at www.cheshirelandtrust.org.

CLT has 633+ acres to protect as well as a new farm initiative that will require significant capital investments. Your financial support would be appreciated!



Carpenter-Blackburn Preserve -Sperry Road