



LANDMARK

THE NEWSLETTER OF NORTHERN CONNECTICUT LAND TRUST, INC.



NUMBER 23

MAY 2011

HISTORIC PARK DONATED TO NCLT

Valentine's Day, 2011, was more than hearts and flowers for the crowd assembled to celebrate the gifting of a 20 acre, historic park, by the Talcott family, to the Northern Connecticut Land Trust.. Formerly known as the "Talcottville Gorge", the property was re-named the "Talcott Ravine," reflecting its colonial past, and the mills situated on their power source, the Tankerhoosen River. Owned and overseen by the Talcott Family through the years, the decision was made to preserve and protect the site through donation to the Land Trust.



The land encompasses steeply sloped rock outcroppings, as well as the remains of early 19th century textile mills. The outcroppings form the ravine area which is 30-50 feet deep. A 26 foot masonry dam was built in 1900. From the ravine, the Tankerhoosen River flows west into the Talcottville Pond, a favorite haunt among trout fishermen. The land is characterized by a well-developed hemlock-hardwood forest with an upper story 35-65 meters high.

TODAY'S HISTORY LESSON

In 1809, Peter Dobson, a pioneer in textile manufacturing, built a cotton spinning mill on the Tankerhoosen River, which led to the founding of the industrial villages of Dobsonville and Talcottville. In 1825, while supervising the construction of another cotton mill, Peter was puzzled by the quantity of rounded boulders, mixed with clay and sand, that his workmen encountered. Further investigation resulted in a major geologic discovery: the transport of rock by glacier. Intrigued, Peter authored a paper "Remarks on Boulders", which was published in the American Journal of Science in 1826. He described how large boulders of 15 tons, were dug from clay and gravel, when making his cotton factory in Vernon, CT. He noted that it was not uncommon to find them worn, abraded and scratched on the

lower side, as if done by their having been dragged over rocks and gravelly earth in one steady position. "I think we cannot account for these appearances, unless we call in the aid of ice as well as water, and that they have been worn by being suspended and carried in ice over rocks and earth under water." In support of his theory, Dobson quoted the statement of British authorities who claimed, "As ice flows constantly carrying huge masses of stone and deposits them, at great distances from their original situation, so may they explain the transportation of foreign boulders to our continents."

American Journal of Science and Arts, 1842

As part of the ceremony, Bill McGurk of the Rockville Bank presented a check to NCLT President, Culver Modisette, which capped a fund drive, initiated to fund acquisition expenses. It was announced that stewardship responsibility will be shared by NCLT and the many, enthusiastic Vernon volunteers.

WALKING THE PROPERTY



A hiking trail follows the north side of the pond and river from Main Street to Talcottville to Dobsonville Road. By linking to the Rails-to-Trails pathway the 2 mile Talcottville Loop Trail encompasses the whole area.

To walk just the Ravine Trail park next to Talcottville Pond at the end of Main Street and walk from there to the ravine and back. The trail along the north side of the Tankerhoosen River from the pond to the ravine is flat woodland. On your left is the Exit 65 I-84 fly over constructed in 1980. This highway expansion took away half of

the distance between the highway and the river; another example of man's adverse effect on nature.

The river at its widest here making it a popular spot for fishing. This area is very picturesque during the summer and the autumn. Along the trail you'll see evidence of beaver activity. Also note the gas pipeline that cuts through the area from north to south.

As you approach the ravine the trail forks. The right fork follows the river and accesses the ravine, but is a dead end. Along this path you will see a mill race and old Indian cave on your left. Near the river a section of cliff has broken away making it very difficult, but not impossible, to approach the dam. The NCLT is considering options for a bridge in this area.

After visiting the ravine, return to the fork and climb the hill overlooking the area. This will take you past more mill ruins and to Dobsonville Road overlooking the dam. You can return along the same route or loop around the Rail Trail through Talcottville.

LAND TRUST ACQUIRES PROPERTY ADJACENT TO STATE FOREST

The Northern Connecticut Land Trust has acquired a 30 acre forested property in Ellington, adjacent to the Shenipsit State Forest. The Land Trust decided it was important to protect this property as open space for a combination of reasons: It is watershed with a feeder stream for the Shenipsit Lake Reservoir, a public water supply. It provides hiking trails linked to the Soapstone Mountain Blue Blaze trail system. It expands the width of an important wildlife corridor and is surrounded on three sides by the Shenipsit State Forest.

The purchase of this property was made possible by generous contributions from the Jessie B Cox Charitable Lead Trust - Cox Family Fund at the Boston Foundation, by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, and by the Town of Ellington. Additional support was provided by the friends of the Northern Connecticut Land Trust.

CALENDAR OF HIKES 2011

May 22nd, Sunday 9 a.m.

Meet at Somers' town hall parking lot. This hike will be at a leisurely pace to allow for observation of the surrounding landscape. Approximate time of hike will be 2-3 hours.

June 5, Sunday 9 a.m.

Celebrate National Trails Day by hiking Soapstone Mountain to McCann Family Farm in Somers, CT.

August 21, Sunday 9 a.m.

Explore the history and flora and fauna of the Talcott Ravine, the newest NCTLT acquisition. Meet at 9:00 am at the cul-de-sac in Talcottville.

January 1, 2012

The traditional NCTLT New Years Day Hike at Schlaf property and McCann Family Farm, Somers, CT

HERE'S WHAT'S NEW!



Ginny Patsun, left and Land Steward Jack Kertenis show case new signage for the Bald Mountain Preserve, formed by the unification of the Bridge, Galbraith and Trappe parcels.



New signage has appeared at Whitaker Woods to the approval of West Smith (left) and Mike Stenz, members of Whitaker Wood's stewardship cadre.

THE CONNECTICUT COVERTS PROJECT

Connecticut Coverts Project is a forest wildlife education program which reaches out to individual woodland owners to teach them how sound management practices can make wildlife healthier, more diverse and abundant. The Coverts Project began simultaneously in Vermont and Connecticut in 1983. Since that time it has spread to 11 other states across the northeastern U.S. Its goals are to teach forest owners how good forest stewardship can:

- Earn the woodland owner a long-term financial return, and,
- Improve the health and productivity of both the forest and the wildlife that live in it.

For over 300 years, Connecticut's forests have been cutover, burned and otherwise abused for human profit. Decades of neglect have alternated with intense periods of indiscriminate cutting and abuse. Genetic depletion, poor health and productivity, and loss of wildlife species have been the result.

Walt Moody, an Ellington resident, in cooperation with the University of Connecticut and the Connecticut Dept. of Environmental Protection, provides resource information and coordination to assist landowners in enhancing the health and productivity of their properties and to practice sound forest and wildlife conservation.

For further information please contact Walt Moody 860-875-1459. Walt serves on the Board of the NCLT and is Chairman of the Ellington Conservation Commission.

NCLT PROPERTIES, STEWARDS & MANAGERS

ENFIELD

Leaska parcel

Property Steward, Albert Grant

860-623-5487

albert_grant@sbcglobal.net

SOMERS

Bald Mountain Preserve:
(Bridge+Galbraith+Trappe parcels)

Team Leader, Jack Kertenis

860-749-7754

jackjim13kertenis@att.net

Grant parcel

Property Steward, Paul Lagel

860-749-4044

pelagel@snet.net

McCann Family Farm & Whitaker Woods

Team Leader, Wes Smith

860-763-3310

flyingwes@cox.net

Farm Manager: George Grant

860-749-3282

landgrant@cox.net

Scantic Riparian Area:
(Lipton+Wright parcels)

Property Steward, Ginny Patsun

860-763-4047

gpatsun@yahoo.com

Schlaf Farm

Team Leader, Harold Worcester

860-749-9793

hworcester@cox.net

Cornfields

Farm Manager, George Grant

860-749-3282

landgrant@cox.net

Skyline Scenic Area

Property Steward, Doug Metivier

860-745-2867

doug_metivier@yahoo.com

White Parcel

Property Steward, Don Smith

860-749-9550

dnsmith103@aol.com

Skyline Scenic Area

Property Steward, Doug Metivier

860-745-2867

doug_metivier@yahoo.com

STAFFORD SPRINGS

Bacon Parcel

Property Steward, Rusty Moody

860-875-1459

waltmoody@comcast.net

Scott Parcel

Property Steward, Rob Zielfelder

860-454-8788

n1nug@comcast.net

860-684-5781

EAST WINDSOR

Wrapping Bog

Property Steward, Arend Knuttel

860-749-7928

bge103@netzero.net

ELLINGTON

Ernie Boothroyd Nature Preserve

Property Steward, Rob Zielfelder

860-454-8788

n1nug@comcast.net

860-684-5781

Shempsit Woods

Property Steward, Jim Gage

860-875-6971

jameswgage@sbcglobal.net

Sunset Hill Preserve & Joy Parcel

Team Leader, Jim Gage

860-875-6971

jameswgage@sbcglobal.net

Swann Farm

Farm Manager, George Grant

860-749-3282

landgrant@cox.net

Chestnut Orchard

Orchard Manager, Richard Bailey

860-749-0061

dweezle-ct3@att.net

VERNON

AKW Preserve, Echo Ridge, Ecker's Pond,
Brandy Hill, Indian Trail Preserve and
Hatch Hill

Team Leader, George Arthur

860-871-0137

trailсарthur2@comcast.net

Talcott Ravine

Team Leader, Gail Faherty

860-872-9367

gfaherty@sbcglobal.net

TOLLAND

Lee Property

Property Steward, Jim & Dylan Norton

860-875-6115

norton_jm@sbcglobal.net

ANDOVER

Finley Parcel

Property Steward, TBA