

LANDMARK

The newsletter of the Northern Connecticut Land Trust



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Trust Working to Complete Stafford Property Acquisition

For some time, NCLT has been pursuing acquisition of a parcel along Rt 190 adjacent to the Stafford Fish and Game property. Within the Roaring Brook watershed, this 80-acre undeveloped forest lot complements the abutting Nipmuck State Forest and the White Farm, on which the Trust owns a conservation easement to prevent development. This parcel has frontage on Buckley Highway (Rt 190) and Fenton Road, and has a varied rocky terrain with many ledge outcroppings.

Formerly the 200-acre Hambach property, the Stafford Fish & Game purchased it in entirety as the owners wanted to sell to a single buyer, and logged much of it to cover some of the purchase price. The F&G club would now like to sell a portion for open space and further help their financial position.

In November 2016, our application to the State of Connecticut Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition program was rewarded with a \$107,500 matching grant. Since then we have also been awarded a \$35,000 grant from the Cox Family Fund of the Boston Foundation, leaving approximately \$58,000 required to complete the purchase. Fundraising is in process for the remainder. If you would like to support this project, it would be greatly appreciated. You can contact Treasurer and Fundraising chair Jim Gage at jameswgage@sbcglobal.net, or forward your gift to the Trust address with a note "For Stafford F&G purchase".

Volunteering

As an all volunteer organization, the Trust is totally reliant on folks who are willing and able to give of their time and talents to meet our objectives and expand our activities in the coverage area of

Vernon, Ellington, Enfield, East Windsor, Somers, and Stafford. The 16 member Board of Directors also chairs and staffs the working committees and works to build these to better serve our needs. The current seven committees include: Finance Fundraising Land Acquisition Farming Stewardship Membership Public Relations. Several new groups are being considered to serve ever-growing requirements.

In 2016, a new 5-Year Strategic Plan was adopted with objectives and target completion dates for all these areas in an attempt to enlarge our membership base, expand our influence in our towns, and better serve our members and communities (see our website at www.northernctlandtrust.org for this document). Meeting these goals will require more help from our volunteer base. Specifically, additional energy and expertise can be used in the areas of (1) grant writing and fundraising, (2) enhanced use of social media opportunities, (3) communications and interface with area town boards, and (4) membership expansion initiatives.

If you are interested in volunteering, or know of anyone who might be able to help, please contact a board member or the Trust directly (see website or info at bottom of this newsletter), or visit a Board meeting held at the Ellington Library at 7:30 the first Monday of each month to meet Directors, hear of our activities, and talk about opportunities or ideas.

Planned Giving

Planned giving is a way to ensure that the beautiful property that has been in the family for many years will remain undeveloped and well looked after. If you plan to include a bequest of land, securities, or money to the Northern CT Land Trust in your will, please let us know so we may thank you during your lifetime.

Total Number of Active Ct. Land Trusts – 108

Acres of Land Protected

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2015</u>
Under easement	54,616	61,822
Owned	75,037	83,285
Acquired and re-conveyed	20,774	24,982
Protected by other means	<u>18,022</u>	<u>20,104</u>
TOTAL ACRES PROTECTED	168,450	190,193

The State of Connecticut has set a goal to protect 21% of the state's land area by 2,023 with 10% coming from State-held land and 11% by conservation partners such as land trusts, towns and water authorities. As of July 2,016, more than 500,000 acres, or 16% of the state's land area, have been conserved toward this goal.

Manchester Land Trust Acquires Rockville Property

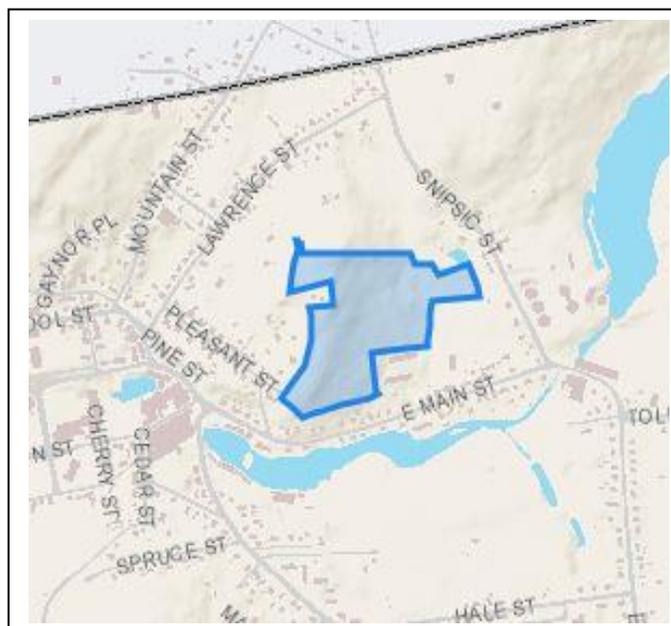
A 15.9-acre parcel of forest, rock, hill, and ledge in Rockville was recently donated by Lee and Lamont Realty to the Manchester Land Conservation Trust as an open space gift for the public to enjoy. The Northern Ct. Land Trust was originally offered the property several years ago but declined the offer due to stewardship and maintenance concerns.

The property was owned in the latter 1800's by Deacon John Stickney, who was involved with a number of mills in the area, including the paper mill on nearby Paper Mill Pond. Entrance to the property is at the eastern end of Pleasant Street (see below), in the northeast part of Rockville. The land trust is seeking help in naming the site and is considering 'Pleasant Hill' and 'Stickney Hill.' Vote for either of these names or create your own, and email info@manchesterlandtrust.org. Neighbors of the parcel are especially encouraged to participate.

Volunteers are in the process of creating a trail, and in the spring there will be a free walk on the property. The Trust's Stewardship Chair, Colin McNamara, says, "The preserve's varied terrain will offer something for everyone, right in urban Rockville." Rob Lewis, volunteer Steward of this Rockville property, envisions a loop trail starting from Pleasant Street and meandering around the property, and says, "It will be a place to unwind and get a little exercise." Local historian Jon Roe said, "There was a very early iron mine and foundry in the area, that goes back to the early 1700s, but the exact location is undiscovered. An 1877 map of the area seems to show houses at the top of the hill, which was known at one time as Stickney Hill."

Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD)

If you are over 70 ½ years old and must take a minimum required distribution (MRD) from an IRA, a qualified charitable distribution is a cost effective way to make a contribution to the Northern CT Land Trust. Money that is donated through a QCD to a qualified charity is not included in your adjusted gross income on your federal tax return. Keeping your gross income lower may reduce your taxable income and may reduce the impact to certain credits and deductions, including social security and Medicare. It may also reduce your reported income for state income taxes. The more you donate, the more you save on taxes. Talk to your tax advisor to see if a QCD is right for you.





2017 Schedule of Hikes And Events

(check www.northernctlandtrust.org for latest activities info)

Sat. April 8 - Sunset / Moonlight at Skyline – 6:45 PM - moonrise at 4:57, sunset at 7:24. We will hike around Trust's 65 acre Skyline Scenic Area on Stafford Rd near Somers/Stafford line. We will enjoy the sunset and beautiful view across valley towards Springfield from atop the mountain, have a snack if you would like to bring one, then return by the light of the moon. Meet at the rear of the Somers Town Hall, 600 Main St., Rt. 190 near the intersection of Rt. 83 and carpool to the site. For questions, contact Albert Grant, 860-623-5487

Sun. April 9 – Culver Pond – 10:00 AM - Explore the latest Land Trust acquisition. Culver Pond is a 118 acre parcel of land in Stafford, near the Somers town line. We'll hike the rolling hills of the property, about four miles, approximately a two to three hour hike. Bring binoculars for spring birding opportunities. Meet at the Culver Pond Land Trust parking lot on Gilbert Road, it's a gravel road. Friendly leashed dogs welcome. Call hike leader, Wes at (860) 402-2388

Sat., May 6 – Canoe and Kayak Paddle of Upper Bolton Lake in Vernon -Take a leisurely tour of this pristine lake setting, perfect for bird-watching, photo opportunities, or just a quiet morning enjoying the outdoors. Meet at the boat launch area off Hatch Hill Road at 9:00 AM. Must bring your own boat, paddles, and life vests. Call Karl at 860-649-4949 for more information

Sun. May 14 - Mother's Day hike on McCann Family Farm - 10:00 AM. Comfortable trail walk thru field and forest. Good bird-watching habitat. Mothers bring the kids – kids bring your mother! Meet at the rear of the Somers Town Hall, 600 Main St., Rt. 190 near the intersection of Rt. 83. For questions, contact Albert Grant, 860-623-5487

Sat. June 3 - Trails Weekend - 10:00 AM - We will follow blazed trails through the Land Trust's premier 200+ acre, Whitaker Woods property, featuring woodland and a cow pasture. This approximately 5 mile, one way, hike will be scenic, with bridge crossings and beautifully constructed and well preserved stone walls. There will be the opportunity to loop back to the trail head for a shorter hike. From the Land Trust property we will continue on Somers Trail Committee and Shenipsit State Forest trails to the Soapstone Mountain Lookout. There will be transportation back to the trail head. We will discuss the natural and land use history as well as local wildlife along the way. Meet behind the Somers Town Hall, 600 Main St., Rt. 190, near the intersection of Rt. 83 in the center of Somers. We will car pool to the trailhead. For questions, contact Albert Grant, 860-623-5487, albert_grant@sbcglobal.net.

Sat. June 10 - Hike at Ernie Boothroyd Preserve, Ellington. - 10:00 AM. The 58 acre Ernie Boothroyd Preserve was acquired by NCLT in 2010. This will be an easy 1.2 mile walk with stops to look at and discuss items of interest. Directions: From the junction of Rte. 140 and Tolland Ave. in Stafford Springs take Tolland Ave south for 1.5 miles. The Boothroyd Preserve is on the right. If coming from the south; from the Tolland Green take Old Stafford Road (becomes Tolland Turnpike) 4.8 miles north to Ernie Boothroyd Preserve on the left. For further information contact leader Richard Bailey at 860-749-0061, dweezlect3@att.net

Sat. Sept. 23 - Bald Mtn. Preserve, Somers - 10:00 AM – We will hike through two Land Trust properties as well as Town of Somers and State of CT properties. These comprise the Bald Mountain Preserve, which includes the entire summit of the tallest of the surrounding mountains. Foliage should be starting to turn. The trails are steep and rocky in some places but not difficult with good shoes. The distance will be about 2 1/2 miles. Meet at the rear of the Somers Town Hall, 600 Main St., Rt. 190, near the intersection of Rt. 83. For questions, contact Albert Grant, 860-623-5487

Sat., Sept. 30 - The 5th Annual Talcottville Gorge/Falls and Vernon Rail Trail circular hike. Moderate effort, rambling walk of 2 miles along the scenic and historic site brook and view the falls off Dobson Rd. This very popular event takes attendees on a history/geology/archeological tour of this fascinating area – a jewel in the Vernon/Talcottville area. 1:00 pm at the Talcottville Congregational Church on Elm St.

Sat., October 14 – Skyline Scenic Area – 10:00 AM - Foliage hike with great views of the valley to the west. On Stafford Rd. near Somers/Stafford line. . Meet at the rear of the Somers Town Hall, 600 Main St., Rt. 190 near the intersection of Rt. 83 and carpool to the site. For questions contact Albert Grant, 860-623-5487

Sun., October 15 – Fall foliage along Railroad Brook gorge in Vernon. Hike thru the Trust's Andrew Webster Knapp property to the Rails-to-trails, then up to the ridge overlooking Valley Falls Park and Railroad Brook for some beautiful scenery. Fairly challenging walk with up and down steep slopes, 1 to 1 ½ hours. Meet at the Valley Falls parking lot off Valley Falls Road at 9:00 AM. Call Karl at 860-649-4949 for further information.



LANDMARK: *Newsletter of the*

**Northern Connecticut Land Trust
PO Box 324
Somers, CT. 06071**

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If you have a friend interested in joining the Trust and supporting the work of protecting our natural resources, please pass this newsletter on to them. Contributions are tax deductible.

MEMBERSHIPS:	Individual	\$25	Family	\$35
	Sustaining	\$50	Patron	\$100
			Benefactor	\$1000

NAME _____

ADDRESS

PHONE: _____

E_MAIL: _____

Would you like to receive the newsletter by e-mail? _____

**Mail to: Northern Connecticut Land Trust
PO Box 324
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If you would like to volunteer to work projects such as fund-raising, trail maintenance, newsletter, or others, please check YES ___ NO ___