



LANDMARK

THE NEWSLETTER OF NORTHERN CONNECTICUT LAND TRUST, INC.



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Help us Celebrate NCLT's "25th Anniversary!"

Doesn't seem possible! Twenty-five years? Time flies when you're having fun (*and protecting pieces of Connecticut, at the same time*). Ingrid Aarvetson is the very capable Chair of our Special Event on Sunday, June 3rd, at the Worthington Farm on Mountain Road, Somers, where you will find food, drink a Dixie Land Jazz band, all kinds of outdoor activities and lots of your friends. All members are invited, and the only cost is the gasoline needed to get there. The band sounds off at 2 pm and our clean-up volunteers will usher you out by 7 pm. PLEASE NOTE: We will need a head count in advance, so if you can attend, please notify Ingrid 860-684-5822 or ingridaar@cox.net, by May 30.

NCLT adds Stevenson Property

With the signatures of Winthrop Stevenson and his sister Polly McCranie, the Stevenson Property, 30 acres at the junction of Mountain and Camp Roads, joined the growing list of Northern Connecticut Land Trust properties. The parcel, a steep drop-off from Mountain Road, sits astride Gillette Brook, which rises in nearby Cooley Pond and Hurd's Lake (Camp Aya-Po). A cold water fishery, the brook tumbles from the highlands to the valley floor, where it eventually joins the Scantic River. Funding was provided by a consortium, consisting of the State of Connecticut, Town of Somers, the Bafflin Foundation, the Jessie B. Cox CLT-Cox Family Fund at the Boston Foundation and the Fields Pond Foundation. A section of the Blue Trail crossed the acreage some years ago, but was abandoned at the request of the property owners. It hoped that this section of the famous hiking trail may be restored. Aside from the land acquisition, there appears to be an opportunity to capitalize on the beauty and flowage of Gillette Brook as a potential Greenway, starting at the Stevenson land and progressing down the mountain as far as Turnpike Road. Should the situation warrant, the Greenway could progress through the low lands, perhaps eventually uniting with the Scantic River. Intrigued by the Greenway possibility, the Board invited John Monroe of the National Park Service and a seasoned Greenway planner, to tour the rivine and attendant lands along Gillette Brook. John's enthusiasm encouraged the Land trust to explore Greenway possibilities further. We welcome your thoughts and comments. Our mailing address is Box 324, Somers, CT 06071, and our website is www.northernctlandtrust.org



Doctor Gillette and his

Very Special Brook

Sometime around the turn of the century, Doctor Gillette, a successful New York dentist, discovered the Somers area as the perfect summer retreat from the hustle and bustle of the big city. To that end, he purchased the grand Springstead house, at the corner of Turnpike and Mountain Roads. Totally bald, with a long white beard, Dr. Gillette was often seen careening around town in his open automobile, his beard flowing in the wind. "There goes Doctor Gillette" a town lady was reported to have said, "*the wind blowing through his beard, but never touches on his head.*" The good doctor was a dedicated fly fisherman and proximity of



the brook which today bears his name was *nirvana*. He constructed a large pool, just above Turnpike Road, which he proudly stocked with trout. PRESTO! His life was complete; the country delight of summering in Somers with his prized trout rising to his fly in his own pool! With the acquisition of the Stevenson property, NCLT is now considering the possibility of a Greenway, concluding at his special pool, we hope he will approve, Because it is a very special place.

Dear Member or Potential Member of NCLT:

This year is the *25th Anniversary* of the founding of the Northern Connecticut Land Trust which preserves and protects over 1334 acres of natural resources such as open space, forests, wet-lands and farmland in East Windsor, Ellington, Enfield, Somers, Stafford, Tolland, and Vernon.

Do you like to hike, take photographs? Do you appreciate quiet and serenity? Do you enjoy birding, viewing wildlife, seeking out old stone walls, admiring flora, or just being outdoors with friends, family or other people who enjoy the hiking? We do and that's why we have more conservation and preservation activities in the works right now. But we need your support to continue our stewardship, trail maintenance, organized hikes and assistance to landowners.

As a strictly volunteer organization, we rely on memberships, donations, and public and private grants in order to deliver these special services to our communities for present and future generations. From a total income of little more than \$132,000 over the past two decades, NCLT listed last year over \$5 million in total assets, mainly protected lands. This multiple is over 35 times income. Being an all-volunteer organization with no salaries certainly helps. But each year hundreds of individual contributors, like you, provide the seed money that enables us to leverage grants. Every \$100 you've contributed in the past has been leveraged into almost \$3,800 in protected land! Please show your continued support by mailing your membership renewal today.

You can learn more about NCLT at www.northernctlandtrust.org. The care with which your contribution will be overseen will be evident from the 2010-2011 Annual Report and recent "Landmark" newsletters which can be viewed under the "Newsletters" tab on the Home Page. Consider checking the email delivery option on the reply envelop flap to speed communication, save paper and reduce expenses.

Please mail your membership today with your check payable to NCLT, which is an IRS 501(c)(3) organization. Your gift is tax deductible.

Thank you for your support.

Walt Moody,
NCLT Membership Chairman

Relics from the Past and Potential Rebirth



Since the spring of 2007 NCLT has been maintaining its Swann Farm Chestnut Orchard in partnership with the American Chestnut Foundation (TACF). The approximately 300 trees at the orchard are a small part of the TACF experimental breeding program to develop a blight resistant American chestnut tree for restoration to its historic range in the eastern US.

In June 2009 NCLT also received two chestnut seedlings that are part of the next step in the TACF breeding program. These "Restoration Chestnuts"; like the BC4 backcross trees at Swann Farm; are 94% American chestnut and 6% Chinese chestnut. Unlike the trees planted at Swann Farm which had a local pure American chestnut as one parent, these trees inherited some degree of blight resistance from both parents giving them an increased probability of being blight resistant. The Restoration Chestnuts are being distributed by TACF both to evaluate their survival and growth characteristics in less controlled environments and to educate the public about the work of TACF.



Although the two trees were initially planted at Swann farm, early this spring the six-foot tall trees were transplanted to a new woodland location beside the Shady Brook Trail at McCann Farm. This location shows extensive evidence of being home to American chestnuts in the past. Several large decaying stumps nearby appear to be chestnut. In addition there are bleached trunks and large limbs lying along the trail which also appear to be chestnut. These are most likely the remnants of trees killed by chestnut blight and cut sometime before 1950. A smaller standing bleached trunk sprouted from the base of a blighted chestnut at a later date but succumbed to the blight after reaching a height of about 40 feet. The growth of our new trees will be monitored in the coming years and compared to the Swann farm trees growing in full sunlight. Hopefully, unlike the surrounding relics from the past, they will not be struck down by the chestnut blight and will grow to be an impressive addition to our McCann property.

NCLT granted \$10,000 for *Management Planning*

Recently NCLT was awarded \$10,000 to subsidize the planning and writing of management plans for a number of its land holdings. An essential ingredient of long term security, wise usage of present assets for future environmental stability is needed and necessary. While it is easy to discuss, the actual doing is more complex. Recognizing this, the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, the Jessie B. Cox Charitable Lead Trust and the Connecticut Community Foundation, joined together and provided funds for hands-on action. Amy Paterson of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council heads the

program, together with The Land Trust Alliance and has supervised the program's introduction and subsequent selection of recipients, NCLT among them. After a thorough analysis of our holding, six were selected for attention: Whitaker Woods, McCann Family Farm the Swann Farm, the Scantic Riparian Area, Bald Mountain Preserve and the Skyline Scenic Area. (A number of NCLT properties had previously established management plans, thus were not considered.) As this is written, the Swann Farm plan has been completed, the Scantic Riparian Area is near completion and Whitaker and McCann are underway. Completion of all is expected by September 1, 2012.



McCann Boardwalk Funding Campaign

This spring the Northern Connecticut Land Trust is asking your help in raising \$4,000 to complete a boardwalk across wet areas on the entrance trail here at NCLT's McCann Farm.

The Boardwalk

The three foot wide, pressure treated boardwalk will be built to replace existing "bog bridges" in wet areas along the edges of fields on both sides of Gulf Stream. It is to be built in 10 foot long sections with a total of 400 to 500 feet required. The first 100 feet were temporarily installed last October. We hope to complete the entire boardwalk by early summer.

The existing bog bridges spanning this area are in poor shape or missing entirely and in need of replacement. The new boardwalk will be a large improvement in terms of user safety, maintenance requirements and longevity. It will be constructed by NCLT volunteers during a series of work parties starting in May. The requested funds are for the purchase of construction materials only.



The Fundraising Campaign

Our goal is to raise \$4,000 so that materials can be ordered for construction to start in May as conditions permit. The designed boardwalk costs approximately \$10/linear foot with each 10 foot section costing \$100. We are asking for contributions from \$10 to \$100. People may contribute individually or as a group. Anyone contributing \$100 or more will be designated a Section Donor and will be recognized on a sign to be erected at the start of the boardwalk. To donate please send your check along with a note asking that your contribution be applied to the Boardwalk Campaign to: NCLT, PO BOX 324, Somers, CT 06071. Contribution forms are also available on the NCLT website. Checks should be made out to NCLT. Donations are tax-deductible as charitable contributions.

Boardwalk Fundraising Committee



Spectacular 25th Anniversary "Membership Drive" Announced

Director Walter Moody, our Membership Guru has come up with a winner! Not only has he provided an opportunity for you to join our ranks, but if you introduce a new/ member to the Trust, Walter will personally deliver to you a stunning piece of haberdashery, in the form of a racy, new NCLT cap*! How about them apples? After gazing into his crystal ball on April 25th, Walt determined that for every \$100 contributed to within the past, NCLT has levered the \$100 into \$3,800 of protected land. *Way to go NCLT!* At last count, our membership had risen to some 300 honest souls, our balance sheet to \$5,304,000. and 1334 acres of Connecticut flourishes under our protection. Come join us! we will be glad to see you.

** caps are also available @ \$20 EACH (\$11 of which is tax deductible) Contact Walt at: waltmoody@comcast.net*