

LANDMARK

The newsletter of the Northern Connecticut Land Trust



Number 37

September 2019

"The earth has its music for those who will listen." George Santayana

Annual Meeting Sunday, Sept. 22

The pot luck dinner and Annual Meeting, open to all members and guests, will be held at the Somers Congregational Church on Rt 190 in Somers Sunday evening starting at 5:30, beginning with a social time followed by dinner starting at 6:00. A brief business meeting will follow to elect officers and directors for 2020. This year's featured speaker will be Dr. Richard Cowles, a scientist at the Ct. Agricultural Experiment Station in New Haven for 25 years. He will talk about "Our Forests in Peril: New and Old Invasive Pests", starting around 7:00. Please bring a dish to share, plus your own plates and utensils and any special beverage you might want. Attendees are welcome just for the program as well.

This year's nominating committee has put forth the following slate of Officers and Directors for consideration. Officers serve for one year, while Directors serve 3 year terms. Additional nominations will be recognized at the meeting before voting.

Directors:

Re-election: Gail Faherty – Vernon Albert Grant - Melrose

New Director: Summer Rain Ursomarso - Enfield

Officers nominated to serve in 2019-2020:

President – Patrice Carson, Somers
1st V. President – Rick Dewey, Stafford
2nd V. President – Karl Hasel, Vernon (Manchester)
Treasurer – Jim Gage, Ellington
Secretary – Paul Lagel, Enfield

Proposed changes to the bylaws:

Article II Board of Directors

Section 3: Vacancies. In case of vacancy, the position shall remain open until a successor is elected by the membership. If such a vacancy would cause the Board to have less than the minimum number of directors to effectively manage the affairs of the organization, a successor may be elected by the remaining directors for the remainder of the vacant term.

Proposed change: In case of vacancy, the position shall remain open until a successor is elected by the membership. If such a vacancy would cause the Board to have less than the minimum number of directors to effectively manage the affairs of the organization, *or the board wishes to fill a vacancy, a temporary Director may be appointed by the remaining directors for a short term until the membership can vote at the next annual meeting.*

Article I Membership

Section 8: Notice. Not fewer than ten days prior to each meeting, notice shall be mailed to all members setting forth the date, time, and place of such meeting and indicating the nature of the business to be transacted.

Proposed change: Not fewer than ten days prior to each meeting, notice shall be *sent out via electronic communication and/or postal mail* to all members setting forth the date, time, and place of such meeting and indicating the nature of the business to be transacted.



"Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads." Henry David Thoreau

Article III- Officers and Committees

Section 2: Powers and Duties. The officers shall have such powers and duties as are customarily incident to their respective offices, and in addition, such powers and duties as the directors may confer or designate.

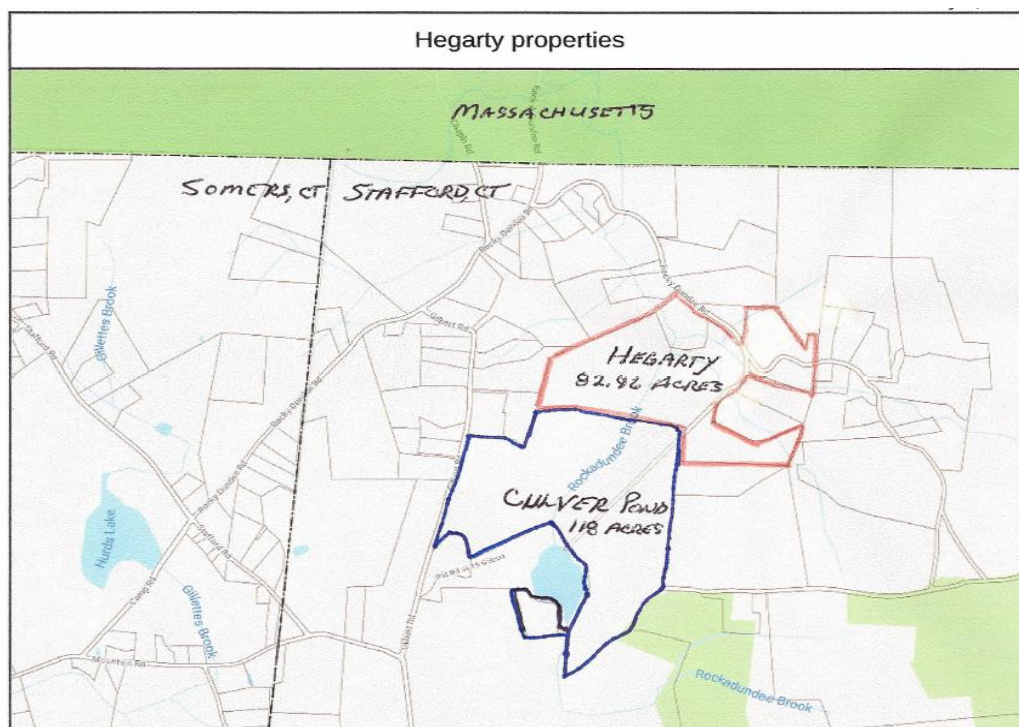
Proposed change: The officers shall have such powers and duties as are customarily incident to their respective offices, and in addition, such powers and duties as the directors may confer or designate. *The First Vice President shall have all such powers and duties as are customarily accorded to the President for continued operation of the organization in the incident where the President cannot execute the duties of his or her office.*

Hegarty Property Transfers Completed

John R. Hegarty was a neighbor and friend of NCLT's past president, Culver Modisette. John and Culver both served in WWII on conveyances that were attacked by German submarines while crossing the North Atlantic Ocean. John was in the merchant marine and Culver was in the Navy serving on a sub tender. They would meet regularly and have a whiskey or two and talk about the old days. John Hegarty had no children and, based on Culver's urging, agreed to revise his will to leave his properties, including his house, to the NCLT. The will had a provision that John's niece, Sharon Kida, would have life use of the properties that would be owned by the NCLT.

John died in 2015 and the Probate Court transferred ownership of the main property to the NCLT. However, three smaller abutting properties were omitted from the estate's inventory and were left in limbo. For the past four years, the NCLT had encouraged the estate's executor and lawyer to correct this mistake, and assign ownership of these properties to the NCLT. This finally happened in June 2019 and the three additional properties were transferred to the NCLT. In total, John Hegarty's contribution to the NCLT comes to 83 acres valued at \$551,600.

The Hegarty properties have great strategic value since they abut the land trust's 118 acre Culver Pond Nature Preserve. (See map) Both properties are primarily upland woodlands with a variety of wildlife and streams containing native brook trout. When John's niece no longer uses the house, the NCLT plans to sell the house with several acres and open the remainder of the property to the public for passive recreation. This will include hiking, fishing and wildlife viewing.



"There is something of the marvelous in all things of nature" Aristotle

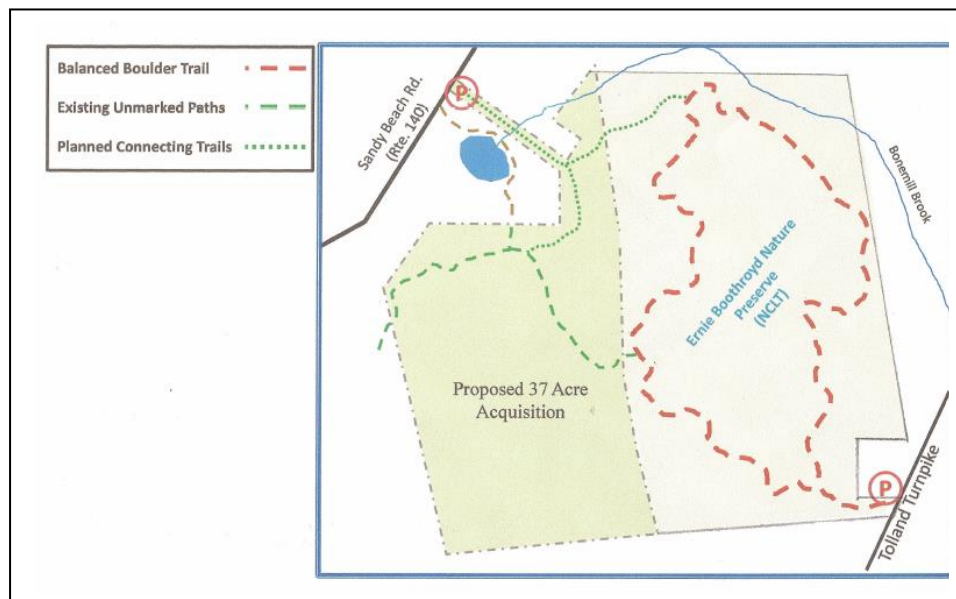
The Bellante Preserve

Several years ago, John and Janet Bellante decided to move to Myrtle Beach, SC, to join friends who had relocated there to enjoy the mild winters. The Bellante's 44 acre property in eastern Ellington included a house, a barn, a manmade pond and approximately 38 acres of woodlands. The property was home to a large variety of wildlife including a bear, deer, fishers, coyotes, turkeys, ducks, herons and many small animals. Because the Bellantes wanted to see the land preserved and the animals protected, they offered to sell to the NCLT at a bargain price.

The land trust did not want to own the house and barn and decided that maintaining the lawn around the pond would require too much maintenance. An agreement was reached to divide the property; the land trust would purchase 36 acres of forest that abutted the NCLT's Ernie Boothroyd Nature Preserve and the Bellantes would sell the remainder to another buyer.

The land trust purchased their parcel in February 2019 for \$80,000. Funds were provided by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the Bafflin Foundation, the Town of Ellington and land trust supporters.

The land trust plans to create a small parking area off Route 140 near the Ellington/ Stafford line. The parking area will be connected by new trails to existing trails on the property and to the Balanced Boulder Trail on the abutting Ernie Boothroyd Nature Preserve. The planned improvements are shown on the enclosed map.



A black bear was spotted on the Bellante property this year and has been seen on neighboring properties for several years. It is probable that the black bear is a young male. Adolescent males are forced to leave home and may travel large distances to find a new territory. Young female black bears tend to establish homes near their mother's dens. Up to now, female bears have not been observed east of the Connecticut River in our state, but it is expected that they will expand east as the bear population increases.

When hiking in dense woods in bear country, it is advisable to make some noise. Black bears are usually shy and will avoid conflict with humans. However, if they are surprised in a close encounter they may become aggressive. Some hikers wear bear bells or talk loudly when traveling through dense cover in bear country. Attacks by black bears are extremely rare but this is not the case with brown (grizzly) bears so it is fortunate that we do not have brown bears in our area.

"The world is mud-luscious and puddle-wonderful" e.e. cummings

