

LANDMARK

The newsletter of the Northern Connecticut Land Trust



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"Time spent among trees is never time wasted." --- Katrina Mayer

2020 Census Shows that Land is the Answer

The Land Trust Alliance released a new report recently finding that 61 million acres were conserved by 1281 land trusts nationally as of year-end 2020, more than a 30% increase since 2010, for a total acreage more than all the national parks combined. This dramatic increase in land conservation shows that the land trust community is gaining ground in Connecticut and nationally. With 1900 acres conserved in north-central Ct, your Northern Ct Land Trust is playing a key role in the land trust movement with your help.

2020 was also a landmark year for traffic to our nation's land trusts. In a time of crisis, land trusts provided a place for 16.7 million individuals to safely gather, exercise and find moments of peace. And those numbers have increased dramatically in 2021. The data also show that local land trusts are leading the way forward — **70% of the growth in land protected since 2015 was achieved by local and state land trusts.** The Land Trust Alliance is proud to share the results of the **2020 National Land Trust Census** with our community (or visit: <http://findalandtrust.org/land-trusts/gaining-ground/united-states>) . You can also check the status of any state at this site.

Connecticut boasts of having 107 land trusts, third most of the 50 states, behind Massachusetts and California. The oldest Trust is 127 years old, while the most recently formed Trust came about just 15 years ago. These organizations have over 22,000 members/financial supporters, 1120 Board members, and accomplish their work with over 4400 volunteers. They have preserved over 200,000 acres, most of which is open for public enjoyment.

But, if we are to continue gaining ground in addressing the climate crisis, halting biodiversity loss, and ensuring equitable access to the benefits of nature, we need land conservation as a priority for funding and programming at every level of government, and support from all our town residents. **The stakes are high, but so are the opportunities.** Together, let's make 2022 a banner year for land conservation in Connecticut.



Nipmuck Woods “Adventure Trail”

Trust volunteers are developing a trail system on the Stafford Nipmuck Woods property off Rt 190 in Stafford that is intended to appeal to all ages and interests. The 79-acre forested parcel that abuts the Nipmuck State Forest was acquired in 2017 from the Stafford Fish and Game Club. Led by the efforts of Richard Bailey and Mary Baugher, planning is underway for signage, benches, and interactive activities for school-age children up thru senior adults to enjoy the property and learn as you go. Several visits by state naturalists and historical experts have helped identify several interesting

Andover Property Transfer Completed

Land Trusts are known for their preservation of property efforts whether the preservation is for agricultural lands or hiking trails, or sometimes just to preserve land. It isn't often when a land trust that has been donated land gives that land to another entity, in this case the Town of Andover, to combine it with other open space property to create a large contiguous piece to enjoy. The Town of Andover, the Talbot family and the Northern CT Land Trust did just that. On Wednesday Jan. 19, 2022, Andover officials and others met at Andover Town Hall to witness Thomas D. Talbot signing the deed that conveyed ownership of his 7.84-acre “Wildcat Lot” over to the Town of Andover. This signing brought to a successful conclusion a multiyear effort to combine five separate lots into a single 37.74-acre contiguous lot now belonging to the town. The new parcel was formed from 2 lots previously owned by Andover, 2 lots donated by the Northern Ct Land Trust, and finally Talbot's lot. The newly formed parcel is adjacent to the Andover/Bolton town line between Shoddy Mill Rd and Boston Hill Rd and is part of a very large forested undeveloped section of Andover.

In the spring of 2019, the NCLT approached Andover officials and inquired if they would be interested in accepting donation of the 2 NCLT properties in Andover since the properties fell outside the typical areas served by the Trust. These properties, plus land nearby in Bolton, were donated to the NCLT in 2000 by F. William Finley and his sister Ruth Finley Bell. The properties had been in the Finley family since 1877 when as the result of a judgment against the previous owner for an unpaid debt, the deputy sheriff of Tolland County set off these lots to David C. Finley,

features and facts to be highlighted. The Northeast Land Trust Advancement Initiative, sponsored by the Ct. Land Conservation Council and Last Green Valley, has appropriated a \$1000 matching grant to help fund the materials required for the project. The loop trail of approximately .7 miles, recently completed, is intended to be accessible and easily transited by all ages. As work continues with spring completion in mind, watch the Trust website for further progress and information. We hope this brings an exciting, unique opportunity for outdoor activity and learning for all to enjoy.

grandfather of the brother and sister. Shortly after the Trust approached Andover officials, Andover wetlands agent John Valente contacted Thomas D. Talbot inquiring if he would consider donating his 7.84-acre property as that would connect all 5 properties, and Talbot agreed. This lot has a unique place in Andover history as the deed for the conveyance of this lot in 1849 is on Page 1 of Volume 1, thus becoming the first property ever recorded in the Andover Land Records after Andover became a town in 1848.

Patrice Carson, NCLT President, sings over Andover parcels.



“Nature, time, and patience are the three great physicians.” --- Chinese Proverb

2022 Outdoor Activity Schedule

Check News and Events at www.northernctlandtrust.org for latest announcements

Sun March 27 – Culver Pond – We will take a 2 ½ mile loop hike and look for signs of Spring at Culver Pond in Stafford. Culver Pond and Rock of Dundee Brook is the origin of the Scantic River. This will be a leisurely paced walk. The parking is off Gilbert Road which is a gravel road, left off Mountain Rd in Somers. For further info, call Albert Grant at 860-623-5487

Sat. April 16 - Sunset / Moonlight at Skyline – 6:30 PM sharp - moonrise at 5:23, sunset at 7:32. 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

Sat., May 7 – 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 8 - 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

Sun May 15 – Nipmuck Woods – Family walk in Stafford – 10:00 AM. Leisurely 1 mile walk on the newly created Nipmuck Adventure Path, stopping along the way for stories and exploring the natural world, including 2 very impressive glacial erratic boulders. Good even t for families with small children as well as anyone who enjoys being around children. Meet at the large pulloff on the south side of Rt 190 a short distance past Rockwell Rd, east of the center of Stafford Springs. For additional information, contact trip leader Richard Bailey at 860-749-0061.

Sat, June 4 - 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 2 ½ mile hike will be scenic, with bridge crossings and beautifully constructed and well-preserved stone walls. 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.

Sun, June 19- Father's Day Hike at Ernie Boothroyd and Bellante Preserve, Ellington - 11:00 AM. The 58-acre Ernie Boothroyd Preserve was acquired by NCLT in 2010. The Bellante Property is 36 acres abutting the Boothroid Preserve that was recently acquired. The hike will be about 2 miles featuring abundant mountain laurel in bloom. From Stafford, take Tolland Ave south for 1.5 miles. The Boothroyd Preserve is on the right. 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 Albert Grant, 860-623-5487.

Sun, Sept 11 – 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. The trails are steep and rocky in some places but not difficult with good shoes. The distance will be about 2 ½ 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

Sun, Oct 2 – Skyline Scenic Area – 10:00 AM - Foliage hike with great views of the valley to the west. 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

Sun., October 16 – Fall foliage along Railroad Brook gorge in Vernon. Leisurely walk 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 energetic 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

“Colors are the smiles of nature.” --- Leigh Hunt

