

LANDMARK

The newsletter of the Northern Connecticut Land Trust

*1900 acres of open space protected in E. Windsor, Ellington, Enfield,
Somers, Stafford, and Vernon Connecticut since 1987*

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“Some beautiful paths cannot be discovered without getting lost.” -- Erol Ozan

Trust Adds 54 Acres of Open Space in Stafford

NCLT has acquired a scenic 54-acre property in Stafford Ct. along Rt 190 less than a mile from the recently opened 79-acre Nipmuck Woods. It is primarily upland forest that abuts a section of the state Nipmuck Forest and includes sections of Roaring Brook, a cold water trout stream. Located on the north side of Rt 190 and bounded on the west by Crooked S Road, the Trust intends to name the property Roaring Brook Woodlands. It will be protected as open space and will be open to the public for passive recreation after parking and trails have been established. This acquisition brings the total land protected by the Trust to 1900 acres in the area.

The property was generously donated by the Dix Place, LLC, a family organization. The Dix Place, LLC has retained ownership of about 15 acres containing a vacation home and pond that will now be surrounded by protected open space. The transaction has many benefits. It provides the Dix family with the opportunity for a major charitable donation deduction on federal income taxes, it reduces property taxes, and it ensures their vacation home will forever be protected by open space. It also contributes to the State’s goal and the NCLT goal of preserving the natural resources of Connecticut and will provide additional opportunities for passive recreation to the public. In the future, when parking facilities and trails have been developed, the Trust will provide maps of Roaring Brook Woodlands. Follow the progress of this success on the Trust website, www.northernctlandtrust.org.



Can Land Conservation Be Supported for Economic Reasons?

The answer is a solid “YES”. Many studies have been published that show the reasons why people support land conservation, many of which are pure dollars and cents. The Connecticut Land Conservation Council website (www.ctconservation.org) contains many resources in their **Resource Library** (under “Tax Issues” or “Benefits of Open Space”) documenting these studies. The CLCC is the statewide organization whose mission is to elevate and strengthen land conservation in Connecticut, and serves as the only statewide service provider and voice for all Ct. land trusts. Arguments for land conservation range from helping local economies thrive to direct impact on local property taxes and increasing property values. Contrary to some beliefs, open spaces generate more public revenue than they receive in public services. According to the CLCC one-pager “Economic Benefits of Land Conservation”, a study of 9 Ct. towns showed that for every dollar generated by these open and working lands, only 37cents were spent supplying public services to these lands (see “Cost of Community Studies” in the Resource Library, conducted by American Farmland Trust).

For example, findings of a recent study by the East Lyme Town Finance Director were published in the 10/16/2023 edition of ***The Day***. He found that not purchasing a proposed 255 acre open space parcel might cost the taxpayers approximately \$300,000 per year. If the property was not kept open and 45 new homes were built, based on areas identified by an appraiser that were developable, they would generate \$470,232 in property taxes yet cost the town \$764,407 in town-supplied services every year. Included primarily were expenses related to education, public safety, and trash collection, with more costs that could be included but were beyond the scope of the study.

NCLT Membership/Support Process is Being Revised

In the past, NCLT has solicited membership donations early in the year (Feb/March) for memberships coinciding with that calendar year. Yet many folks prefer to make charitable donations towards the end of a year for tax bookkeeping. As mailing costs become more burdensome and to make our membership tracking more concise, the Trust is planning to modify their schedule. In 2023, we combined our membership requests into our late year Annual Report mailing (December), but despite prior notifications of this change, information flow was probably confusing and responses were not robust. Please stay tuned for correspondence with the revised plans to be determined soon.

Want to Help with Our Property Stewardship?

NCLT is an all-volunteer organization. From the board of directors to our stewardship volunteers and property stewards, we rely on our members to keep our organization functioning and continuing to acquire and preserve open space in north central Connecticut. To monitor our properties, we rely on property stewards who are assigned to each of our properties. We currently have openings for stewards on several of our properties in Somers, Ellington and Stafford. In Somers they include Schlaf Farm (mixed agriculture and woods without trails), Skyline Scenic Area (includes trails), and Stevenson Woodlands (future trails planned). In Ellington, Shenipsit Woods is land locked woodland adjacent to Shenipsit State Forest and close to NCLT’s Bird Field Conservation Area. In Stafford, Haggerty Hollow is woodland adjoining NCLT’s Culver Pond. Future trails are planned. Property Stewards perform light trail maintenance as well as inform the Stewardship Committee of any issues and larger maintenance activities required. They also are ambassadors for NCLT interacting with members of the public using the area. If you have an interest in becoming one of our property stewards or would like additional information, please contact Richard Bailey, Stewardship Chair, at dweezle_ct3@att.net.

2024 Activity Schedule

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

Sun. April 21 – Earth Day Hike at Culver Pond - 10:00 - We will take a 2 ½ mile loop hike to explore and look for signs of Spring at Culver Pond in Stafford. Culver Pond and Rock of Dundee Brook is one of the origins of the Scantic River. This will be at a leisurely pace. The parking area is on Gilbert Rd., which is a gravel road, left off Mountain Rd. from Somers. For questions call Albert Grant, 860-623-5487

Sat., May 11 – 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 12 – Mothers Day Hike on McCann Family Farm - 10:00 AM. Comfortable trail walk thru field and forest. Wild flowers and good bird-watching habitat. 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 1- 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 16 - _Father's Day Hike at Boothroyd/Belante preserve, Ellington _ 11:00 AM – The 2 properties cover 94 acres acquired over the past 10 years. The hike will be about 2 miles featuring abundant mountain laurel in bloom. From Stafford, take Tolland Ave south for 1.5 miles, and will be on the right. From the south from Tolland Green, take Old Stafford Rd (becomes Tolland Tpke) 4.8 miles north to Boothroyd Preserve on the left. For further information, contact Albert Grant, 860-623-5487, albert_grant@sbcglobal.net

Sat. July 13 -_Nipmuck Woods -_Family hike in Stafford - 10:00 AM. Leisurely one mile walk on the Nipmuck Adventure Path. We will be stopping along the way for stories and exploring the natural world including two very impressive glacial erratic boulders. Good event for families with children as well as anyone who enjoys being around children. Meet at the large pull-off on the south side of Rt. 190 a short distance past Rockwell Road, east of the center of Stafford Springs. For questions or additional information, contact trip leader Richard Bailey, 860-559-3901

Sun Sept 8– 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., October 13 – 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, up and downhill. Meet at the rear of the Somers Town Hall, 600 Main St. to car pool. For questions call Albert Grant, 860-623-5487.

Sun., October 13 – 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.

"It is in the true silence of Nature where one will find true bliss"



LANDMARK: *Newsletter of the*
Northern Connecticut Land Trust
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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 _____

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

Mail to: Northern Connecticut Land Trust
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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** ___