

Celebrating 50 Years - Canfield Woods: Dedication to an Idea

By Steve Knauth

Canfield Woods is one of the area's most popular parks, a preserve of wooded trails, rocky outcroppings and abundant wildlife. Together with its contiguous neighbor Meadow Woods, the two comprise more than 300 acres of hilly, forested land with mixed old-and new growth forest.

It came into being 40 years ago, thanks to a team of citizens, town administrators and government agencies dedicated to the idea of preserving open space for the use and enjoyment of future generations.

Creating the preserve was no easy task, and, at one point, it looked as though the 226 acres would be offered up for the residential development for which it was zoned. In the end, it took patience, sacrifice and compromise to bring Canfield Woods into being. As such, it was an object lesson for those involved in future land donations on a grand scale, including the 1,000-acre Preserve.

It began with a 1976 proposal from Earl and Margaret Canfield, longtime residents of Deep River, to give over control of 226 acres in Deep River and Essex to be used

as open space. The couple would donate half the appraised value of the land to the two towns, and they, in turn, would obtain the remainder of the funds from the Dept. of the Interior's Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR).

The Canfields had already made one gift to the Town of Essex, the tract of land known as Meadow Woods. That had "met with such success that we chose to see this land [Canfield Woods] used in a similar fashion," Earl Canfield said.



Mr. and Mrs. Earl Canfield

The saga began in March of 1977. Jerome Silverstein, an appraiser chosen by the towns, walked the property and submitted an approximate valuation of \$3,500 per acre for the 116 acres of land in Essex, \$2,500 for the 109 acres in Deep River. Meanwhile, voters had authorized the two towns to apply for the federal funds

that would help pay for the property and applications had been forwarded to the BOR.

Then, the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) called for a second appraisal. Robert Palmer, an appraiser chosen by the state and approved by the DEP, suggested the first appraisal was too high and the BOR would likely not accept it. The second appraisal came in at

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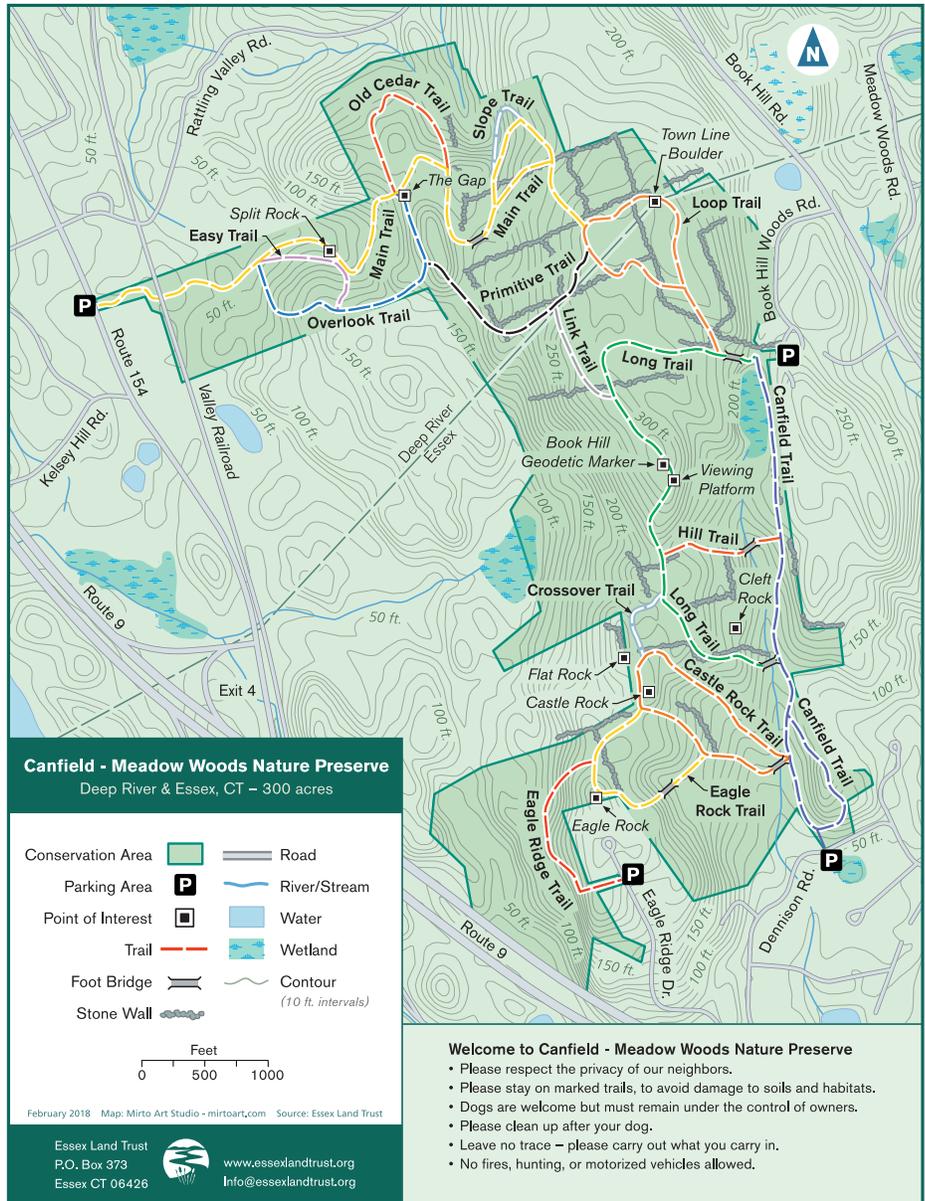
“slightly under \$2,000 per acre” and Canfield, saying he could not accept the latest figures, withdrew the offer.

It was the nadir; the year-old proposal looked dead in the water. Lorraine Wallace, Deep River First Selectman, expressed doubt that talks would continue. Carl Ellison, First Selectman of Essex, expecting no further action by the town, said he’s “disappointed that it did not work out.”

But the idea persisted. In late November, newly elected Essex First Selectman Richard Riggio set up a meeting with Canfield, Silverstein and Jerry Knight from the DEP’s Open Space Acquisition Unit to come up with a third set of figures. “We think we will finally get this thing completed,” Riggio said. Canfield re-opened his offer, expressing hope that a middle ground could be found between the two appraisals. The meeting resulted in an agreement between Silverstein and Knight to study Silverstein’s original figures.

The DEP completed its review in mid-February 1978 and a compromise appraisal figure of \$497,200 was reached, \$185,000 less than the original figure, \$64,000 higher than the DEP’s appraisal. Canfield, the DEP and both towns accepted it. The BOR still had to OK the figures and release the funds. In early May, word came from Capitol Hill in Washington that the BOR had accepted the figures and US Rep. Chris Dodd said a formal announcement was “imminent.” On May 25, the BOR accepted the appraisal figure; it was the last major hurdle.

The closing took place in September at the Essex offices of the Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency where Canfield signed over deeds to 226.09 acres to the towns. Ending 40 years of what he termed his family’s



The magnitude of the Canfield Family generosity can be best appreciated by looking at this new map of the property. With 15 different trails and numerous points of interest, it is easy to see why this property is a popular destination. Editors Note: This map has been recently created as part of a project to update all Essex open space maps. See related article on page 4.

stewardship of the land, Canfield said, “[We] derive great pleasure knowing that generations of people will enjoy Canfield Woods.”

Said Deep River First Selectman Wallace, after “two and a half years of ups and downs, we’ve at last come to this. I’m pleased.”

Minimizing Pollution and Maximizing the Effectiveness of Lawn Fertilizer

By Michael Dietz, Ph.D.
UConn, July 2017

Editor's Note: as we are looking forward to enjoying the outdoors and our lawns, the following article provides useful advice on how best to care for your private green space and the environment.

Although many improvements have been made in the water quality of Long Island Sound, pollution from nitrogen still leads to excess algae growth and low oxygen in certain parts of the Sound. Stormwater runoff from lawn fertilization is one source of nitrogen pollution. The following recommendations are based on the research of leading turf scientists in New England. By taking some of the following actions in your yard, you can help to improve the health of Long Island Sound:

- If an unfertilized lawn is considered acceptable, then do not fertilize.
- Return clippings to lawn and mow as high as can be tolerated (at least 3 inches). This practice can reduce nitrogen needs (and your fertilizer cost) by 50%.
- Test soil to determine if fertilization is needed. For information on having your soil tested and getting fertilizer recommendations, visit <http://soiltest.uconn.edu> and select "soil testing."
- If planting a new lawn or reseeding, choose grasses such as fescues that require less nutrient and water inputs.

Use the Right Formulation for YOUR Lawn:

- If a soil test shows that phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) are adequate, only apply nitrogen fertilizer. Applying more than what is called for wastes your money, adds to pollution and doesn't make your lawn healthier.
- If fertilizing, slow-release fertilizers are better than soluble, fast release formulations.
- For new turf, if soil organic matter is below 3% (your soil test results will give you this value), incorporate compost or another organic matter to raise the OM in soil to at least 3% (preferably 5%).
- Avoid using combinations that include both fertilizers and pesticides. You may be over-applying harmful pesticides when they are not really needed.

Apply the Right Amount:

- If adding nitrogen fertilizer, set a target maximum rate of one half (or less) of the bag recommendation, with a maximum annual application rate of 3.25 lbs. of total nitrogen for every 1000 ft². Less fertilizer should be applied if you live near an environmentally sensitive area, such as next to a wetland or waterbody.



Fertilize at the Right Time:

- Do not apply fertilizer before spring green-up, or after October 15.
- Do not apply any fertilizer if major rain is expected within 48 hours. Excess fertilizer can wash off into the stormwater system, which leads directly to local streams.

Fertilize in the Right Place

- Do not apply ANY fertilizer or pesticide to turf that borders a waterbody.
- If property borders a lake/pond or river, leave a buffer of unfertilized grasses or other vegetation of at least 20 feet.
- Apply fertilizer carefully so that excess doesn't land on hard surfaces like sidewalks and driveways. The next rain event will wash the fertilizer into the storm system where it will be discharged to the nearest waterbody, where it causes problems.

Other Useful Tips:

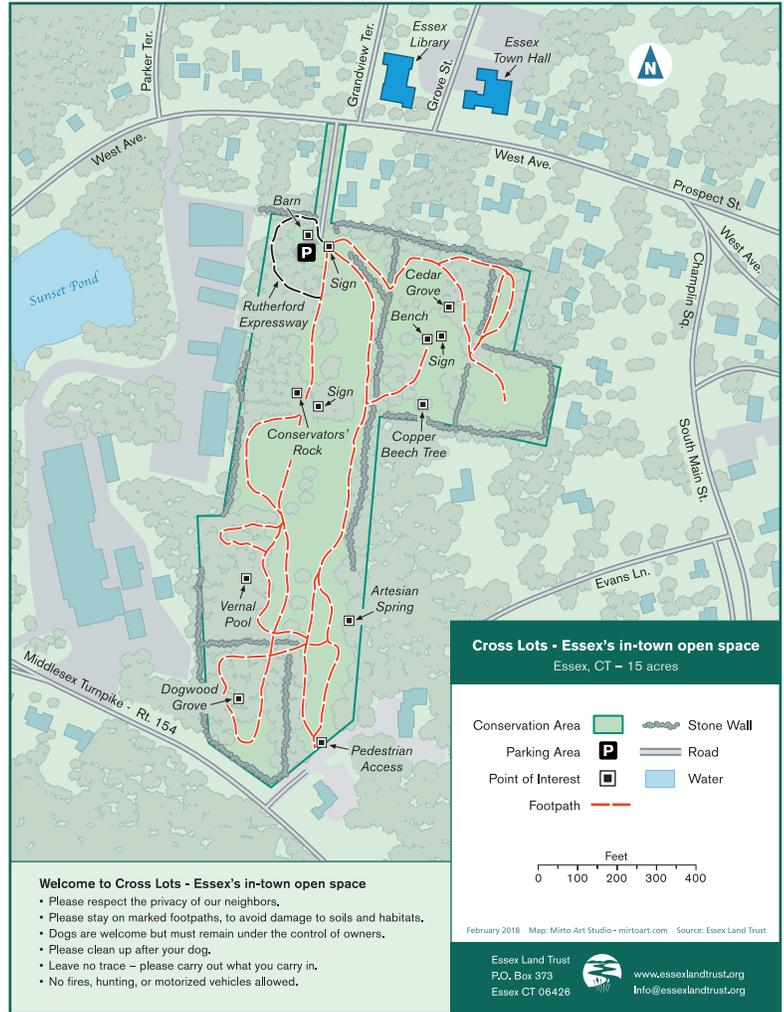
- Trying to figure out how big your lawn is? Use our rain garden app or website! The sizing tool on the website or in the app allows for you to zoom in on your location and outline the shape of your roof, to measure the area. However, you can outline a shape on any area, including your lawn. Use this tool to figure out how big your lawn is to help determine how much fertilizer to apply. Visit our website here: <http://nemo.uconn.edu/raingardens>, or search for "rain garden" in the Google Play store (Android) or the App Store (iOS). It's free!

ELT Briefs

Property Map Update Project

It has been ten years since Essex Land Trust property and trail maps were first created. With the advent of the Trust's 50th Anniversary, the Board decided to revise and update all property maps. This effort requires that all properties be visited, trails and points of interest mapped with a gps device and that boundaries are confirmed using the Town's GIS system. The project will be completed by mid-year after which time, the new maps will be posted on property kiosks, brochures will be printed and digital versions will be made available on the ELT website and other map sharing applications.

This project is being led by Board Member Jim Denham with significant assistance coming from steward Myron Stacks, who has individually walked every trail of every property and plotted points of interest including major stone walls. When this update is completed, digital versions of the maps will be usable for self-tracking in conjunction with smart phone applications and for locating specific points of interest. To the right is one of the already completed maps for Cross Lots. This project is funded in part through a grant from the Community Foundation of Middlesex County.



New Property Acquisition

The Essex land Trust has been awarded a state grant in the amount of \$166,950 toward the purchase of 18.54 acres off of Oxbow Lane. The main purpose of this ridge property overlooking the Connecticut River is to connect or link three protected parcels: James Glen, and Doanes' Woods (Essex Land Trust) with Lyons Meadow

(Deep River Land Trust) for a total of a 50-acre greenway. The varied wildlife habitats include open field, upland forest, forested wetland and a beaver pond.

According to Connecticut Governor Dannel Malloy, "Connecticut's tradition of preserving open space has helped define our landscape and preserve its important natural resources and geographical beauty. These grants continue our open space preservation legacy and will increase the availability of open space for our residents across our state."

Along with funding of \$50,000 from the Town of Essex Open Space sinking fund and \$131,000 coming from the Essex Land Trust endowment, this transaction is expected to close imminently. This new property will be named Woodja Hill and will be inaugurated to the general public once a trail system is completed later this year.





By Steve Knauth

Who knew? Some rock formations along the Connecticut River are up to a billion years old. Gillette Castle sits atop exposed sedimentary rock from the ancient Iapetus Ocean. A receding glacier left a huge lake covering much of today's river valley.

The geologic history of the Connecticut River is a fascinating tale of shifting continents, pre-historic seas and monumental glaciers against a backdrop of countless ages, from the Paleozoic to the Pleistocene. The gentle stream we all enjoy has, it seems, quite a tale to tell.

Ralph Lewis, former Connecticut state geologist, explained it all during a fall "Geology Cruise" down the approximately 15,000-year-old river. In an ELT presentation earlier in 2017, Lewis talked about the tectonic history of the region; beginning in the Paleozoic Era (540-250 million years ago) as the super continent Pangaea was formed. The colliding landmasses created the Appalachian Mountains and gave what was to become Connecticut a north-south grain to the bedrock, which much, much later helped determine the river's direction.

Pangaea ultimately spilt apart during the Triassic and Jurassic Eras (225 million to 145 million years ago) almost taking part of Connecticut to what's now Africa. The state "cracked" under the tectonic strain and the pre-historic Hartford Rift Basin formed, extending north from New Haven, along with other smaller cracks to the east. "One of these faults probably controlled the path of the pre-



Former Connecticut State Geologist Ralph Lewis giving presentation on river geology

glacial Connecticut River south of Middletown," Lewis explains.

Four glaciers followed during the succeeding Pleistocene Era (2 million to 13,000 years ago), widening and deepening the valley. The last glacier, the Wisconsin, left behind an enormous glacial Lake Connecticut in a valley filled with sediment. "The draining of Glacial Lake Connecticut and later fluctuations of sea level allowed the river to cut into those deposits," said Lewis, "forming the glacial terraces that occupy the flanks of the river today."

Said Events Chairman Judith Saunders, "The geology cruise with Ralph Lewis was a first for the Land Trust." Following the earlier lecture, participants had the opportunity to revisit these subjects by observing recognizable features from the river's pre-historic past in visible formations from Camp Bethel, north of the East Haddam Bridge, south to Essex.

Coming Events – Mark Your Calendar!



Thursday, April 12, 5:30 pm

Essex Meadows, 30 Bokum Road, Essex Essex Land Trust Annual Meeting

Join us for ELT's festive 50th Anniversary celebration, cocktail party and annual meeting. Light food will be served. Tickets (\$30) for the cocktail buffet (5:30-6:30) will be available at the door. Business meeting and presentation that follow are free to all. Non-members welcome.

Thursday, May 3, 7 pm

Essex Town Hall, 29 West Avenue, Essex Sketching Birds from Life and Becoming a Field-guide Artist

Interested in learning how birds are sketched from a renowned field guide artist? The Essex Land Trust and the Potapaug Chapter of the National Audubon Society are pleased to host a presentation by nationally recognized artist, Michael Di-Giorgio. The artist will describe his journey from tracking and observing birds in the wild to learning how to express their beauty and his feelings about them in drawings and paintings. All ages welcome.

Saturday, May 12, 10 am

Essex Meadows, 30 Bokum Road, Essex Birding and Nature Walk

ELT member and birder, Jim Denham, will lead a 1-2 hour walk through Essex Meadows' woods to explore the peak bird migration and breeding season. You will see and hear dozens of species around this very diverse landscape.

All levels of knowledge are welcome. Refreshments provided at the conclusion of the walk, courtesy of Essex Meadows. Bad weather cancels.

Saturday, June 16, 2 pm

Canoe & Kayak Trip around Thatchbed Island, South Cove

Meet at the public Boat Launch below Essex Town Park. Bring your own boat for an early summer kayak/canoe trip around Thatchbed Island and South Cove, led by a naturalist. Discover the abundant wildlife and the history of ELT's first purchase. Participants should register on site and launch their own boats prior to the 2pm departure. A safety boat will accompany. Bad weather cancels.

5:30 pm

Concert in Essex Town Park, Main Street, Essex

Join us at the lovely Essex Main Street Park for an early summer BYO beverages/picnic and concert by the infamous Corinthian Jazz Band. Bring chairs, blankets. Relax, dance and enjoy! Bad weather cancels.

Saturday, July 14, 10 am

Kayak Race on Mill Pond

Join us for an informal, fun and family friendly race around Jean's island, a seven-acre preserve on Mill Pond in the Falls River. Participants ages 12 and older should register on site and launch their boats from the Falls River Park Landing, located on Falls River Drive. Safety boat will accompany. Bad weather cancels.

Saturday, August 11, 9 am

Heron Pond Road off Route 154, Essex Heron Pond Hike

Heron Pond is a 29-acre preserve with two lively watercourses flowing down separate valleys with a ridge in between. An easy-walking terrain with trails reaching from high ground and rocky outcroppings to sandy streambeds. Discover traces of old roadbeds and stone walls hinting at the land's early uses which included logging and pasturing of farm animals. Bad weather cancels.

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