

Essex Land Trust Earns National Recognition

Editor's Note: Following is the press release announcing the Essex Land Trust's accreditation by the national Land Trust Alliance. The Board is very proud to accept this recognition after a lengthy and exhaustive process which has spanned the past 2 years. Coordinated by Board member Joel Anik and assisted by President Nancy Rambeau, Vice President Bob Nussbaum and Archivist Cynthia Field, this achievement coincides with our recent 50th Anniversary milestone. Accreditation is a mark of distinction that will enable Essex Land Trust to maintain public confidence by enabling the organization to review and implement policies and procedures to improve operations that lead to more effective land conservation. It also provides third party assurance of quality and permanence of land conservation and is demonstrative of a strong, effective organization that can be trusted.

Strong Commitment to Public Trust and Conservation Excellence

Essex, Connecticut (August, 2019) – One thing that unites us as a nation is land: Americans strongly support saving the open spaces they love. Since 1968 the Essex Land Trust has been doing just that for the people of Essex. Now the Essex Land Trust is announcing it has achieved national recognition – joining a network of over 400 accredited land trusts across the nation that have demonstrated their commitment to professional excellence and to maintaining the public's trust in their work.

“Accreditation gives the Essex Land Trust the opportunity to commit itself to the highest standards of conservation excellence while it pursues its mission of protecting the environment and the small-town character of the Town's three villages, Essex, Centerbrook and Ivoryton,” said Nancy Rambeau, the land trust's President. “The rigorous accreditation process ensures that the land trust's effort to preserve our community's open space and natural resources will benefit both current and future generations.”

The Essex Land Trust provided extensive documentation and was subject to a comprehensive third-party

evaluation prior to achieving this distinction. The Land Trust Accreditation Commission awarded accreditation, signifying its confidence that Essex Land Trust's lands will be protected forever. Accredited land trusts steward almost 20 million acres of land – the size of Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island combined.



The accreditation seal is awarded to land trusts meeting the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence.

Essex's privileged location in the lower Connecticut River Valley gives it a responsibility in providing long-term stewardship for its portion of what The Nature Conservancy

has identified as “One of the Last Great Places in the Western Hemisphere.” Owning a total of 650 acres, the land trust has pursued a strategy of acquiring open space that expands habitat corridors, thereby enhancing the potential for plant and wildlife diversity.

“It is exciting to recognize the Essex Land Trust with this national mark of distinction,” said Tammara Van Ryn, executive director of the Commission. “Donors and partners can trust the more than 400 accredited land trusts across the country are united behind strong standards

continued on page 3

Cross Lots Pollinator Garden

By Pam Peters

To many the Cross Lots Preserve is a haven for dogs and their people. A closer look at the meadows during the warmer seasons reveals an active and healthy ecosystem with some favorite native plants for our winged friends as well. Host plants such as Common Milkweed and Joe Pye Weed hidden among the taller grasses provide an important support system for migrating Monarchs and other pollinators as the seasonal generations move north from Mexico to Canada and back again. Areas like this are critical since one season's migration north and back south typically takes four generations of Monarchs requiring host plants and food along the way.

The Essex Land Trust in partnership with the Essex Garden Club established the Pollinator Garden in late 2016. Now in its third season, the Pollinator Garden with dozens of native nectar plants provides important food for birds, native bees, bats, and a variety of butterflies. Some of the more visible flowering plants are Monarda (Bee Balm), Agastache (Giant Hyssop), Echinacea (Cone Flower), and Aster.

Brochures that identify the garden plants are available on the side of the Cross Lots barn. In addition to a list of the blooms, the brochure also indicates bloom times and pollinators that favor each plant. The bloom cycle starts in mid-April and continues through September. The brochure can also be used as a planting guide if you wish to establish your own pollinator garden to help support the food chain.

Important initiatives like this would not be possible without the continued efforts of our ELT Stewards, Volunteers, and Member support. Please come view the garden with its winged visitors. If you see our ELT garden team – Cynthia Field, Pam Peters, Catharine Wagner (pictured below) and their helpful sidekicks – please stop to say hello.



White Beardtongue



Garden Phlox & Blue Giant Hyssop



Wild Bergamot & Cone Flower

Emily Blicharz Makes a Donation

By Jim Denham

Emily Blicharz is an 8-year-old third grader, the daughter of Drew and Carolyn Blicharz. Living near the Essex Land Trust's Windswept Ridge Preserve, Emily has had the opportunity to explore this property along with her younger brother Ben.

When planning her birthday party for this past June, Emily thought it would be a great idea to celebrate it in Windswept Ridge. Its many trails and open space offered the opportunity to share one of her favorite places with her friends.

What started out as a way to enjoy the outdoors turned out to be so much more. She decided to invite 14 friends including some of her softball mates and family members with the proviso that they would not give her any presents. She only asked that they consider making a donation to the Essex Land Trust to help take care of her new preserve, Windswept Ridge. She had heard of other kids doing something similar, for example, like supporting the Shoreline Soup Kitchen.

Of course, it was supposed to be a birthday party and all that it means. The party favor was a special drawstring back-pack bag with each participant's name and included a small canteen, binoculars, compass and pencil stick. She also had the idea of providing rations, so her friends could make their own trail mix. During their hike, they played

games in Windswept Ridge, such as "flash flood" where one needed to climb to the highest ground and "camouflage" where they would seek to disappear in the woods.

The most fun was a scavenger hunt where they looked for a variety of items: jack-in-the-pulpit, New York fern, tulip trees, fairy sword (tulip tree seeds), skunk cabbage, acorn, lichen, trail markers, birch bark, hickory nuts, Christmas fern, mushrooms, pine cone and rhododendron.

Emily has many interests including arts and crafts, playing sports, dancing, and music. She recently

began playing the piano and she says she might like to be a music teacher someday. She has always loved exploring outdoors and says "I love nature so much it's so cool to look at other things learn what's out there."

Emily's party ended with a small firepit in her backyard to make your own s'mores and the party was a big success. Everyone had fun exploring the land trust's Windswept Ridge, which goes to show that land trust properties offer all kinds of opportunities to those willing to get outdoors. Oh, it was also a big success for the Essex Land Trust as Emily was able to raise \$300 through her thoughtful and generous gesture to forego personal presents. What an example to us all. Thank you, Emily!



ELT Earns National Recognition ... continued from page 1

and have demonstrated sound finances, ethical conduct, responsible governance, and lasting stewardship."

Essex Land Trust is one of 1,363 land trusts across the United States according to the Land Trust Alliance's most recent National Land Trust Census. A complete list of accredited land trusts and more information about the process and benefits can be found at www.landtrustaccreditation.org. The Essex Land Trust will now proudly feature the Land Trust Alliance's seal of excellence in all its communications.

About the Land Trust Alliance

Founded in 1982, the Land Trust Alliance is a national land conservation organization that works to save the

places people need and love by strengthening land conservation across America. The Alliance represents 1,000-member land trusts supported by more than 200,000 volunteers and 4.6 million members nationwide. The Alliance is based in Washington, D.C., and operates several regional offices.

The Alliance's leadership serves the entire land trust community—our work in the nation's capital represents the policy priorities of land conservationists from every state; our education programs improve and empower land trusts from Maine to Alaska; and our comprehensive vision for the future of land conservation includes new partners, new programs and new priorities. Connect with us online at www.landtrustalliance.org.

The Miracle Bridge

By Merle Drift

Missing Bridges - 2012

I met this man before he joined the Essex Land Trust. Probably around 2002 or 2003. He wasn't passionate about the land or environmental issues. But he liked to contribute and the land trust was a good place to do that. I know most of the story about the bridges because he told me about them, late one night at The Ivoryton Tavern. Bridget was working late that night and left us alone in a corner of the bar. This is what transpired, as memory serves.

In the winter 2012, Tom Rutherford, Chief Steward of the Essex Land Trust, took a prospective land trust steward for a walk on a narrow, snow filled path at The Millrace. The Millrace is a 6-acre historic park on the Falls River in Ivoryton. Tom was showing the new guy the lay out of the property, happily pointing to the surging water and saying "this is where a bridge used to be.... and another one used to be further upstream. They both floated away.... say, how would you like to become steward of this place?" Tom wasn't kidding.

Now this friend of mine tends to look on the bright side of things. He considered the offer - it's only 6 acres. It has a beautiful river smack dab in the middle. And Mr. Rutherford said the other stewards of less beautiful properties had gathered up the bits and pieces of the washed away bridges and piled them up somewhere. Waiting to be reassembled. That's better than awful. It sounded like a puzzle. Sort of. So, the new guy said OK.

Perpetually Missing Bridges - 2013 to 2017

If I can accelerate the story somewhat - the bridges were rebuilt. The next year they floated away again. The bridges were rebuilt again. The next year they floated away.... again. Get the picture? And life went on. One of this guy's family traditions happens on Thanksgiving Day. Prior to a massive and mildly just OK dinner, his three sons would put on an assortment of hip boots, gloves and heavy coats and pull the Walnut Street bridge out of the water and stack the sections high enough on the shore to avoid late winter and early spring floods. It was heavy and hard work. It didn't take long for young guys. When the spring rains subsided, my friend would bribe his sons back from Boston or wherever they were hiding to put the bridge sections back in the water.

Inevitably, his indentured offspring grew up. They graduated



from universities, found legitimate employment and had families. They discovered new interests; taking the bridges out of the water and putting them back 6 months later wore thin. A new solution was needed. Then in 2017 they floated away for good. Oh, our steward found the pieces downstream but didn't put them back. He'd had enough.

Imagining Bridges: 2018

A mantra came to him: build a bridge that would last. That meant it had to be high off the water and could not have any part vulnerable to the seasonal strength of the Falls River. So, it had to be long, both ends well up on the river bank, safe from the rainy season.

He considered suspension bridges.... "The Golden Gate Bridge of Ivoryton." He spent a day with a fellow who built nuclear utility facilities.... that was a day to remember.... He sat down with a variety of engineers and contractors. He discussed glulam's, steel I-beams. Lots of ideas. One lesson seemed certain, if it was to be a bridge that would last, it wouldn't be an easy bridge to build. And the better the idea, the more it cost. The best idea, which won't even be mentioned, was priced out at \$40,000 dollars each.... and the land trust needed two.

We are a non-profit land trust for crying out loud!

He was stuck. Then he got a call from Bob Nussbaum. Bob was the very first steward of The Millrace. Today he is sort of a steward without portfolio with plenipotentiary powers. He had been watching the situation evolve. He knew the challenges better than anyone. He got right to the point.

continued on page 5

The Miracle Bridge ... continued from page 4

He had heard that Eversource was replacing the wooden poles along the high-tension lines with metal ones. They would be working in The Preserve shortly. He wondered if Eversource would donate some discarded poles to the land trust. So, they talked poles. They talked about the logistics of getting poles 50 to 60 feet long delivered to two separate sites surrounded by forest and difficult terrain. What kind of foundation work would be required? What kind of design would work? Neither had the answers but Bob



made a call to his contact at Eversource. One step at a time.

A meeting with Greg Emory from Eversource took place along the access road to the Preserve where Eversource crews were removing utility poles made of western red cedar and replacing them

with steel poles. Greg and Eversource had always been good friends of the land trust, contributing both thoughtful advice and resources when the Preserve was just getting organized. There was reason to hope.

Greg explained the pole replacement work and why they were far behind schedule. Months behind actually. Apparently, there were some rare and protected plant life somewhere in the Preserve; no one could be told exactly where. This fauna required studies by scientists and care being taken by folks driving around big yellow earth movers with wheels taller than a house. It wasn't the best time to cater to a land trust needing poles. Much easier and faster to dig them up, saw them up and throw them out. Still Greg thought he could scrape up four in the fullness of time. The fullness of time turned out to be almost a year.

With all that waiting, it is hard to imagine our stalwart steward did not succumb to some less than insouciant sentiments... Waiting, he drew pictures of bridges made from long poles on yellow legal pads and wondered, once the poles were his, how would he move 5 to 6 tons of Western Red Cedar through the woods and span the Falls River.

Then one day while talking to Jeff Stevens of Stevens Ex-

cavating about a parking lot at Woodja Hills, he mentioned the bridge challenge. Jeff thought the whole project sounded like something his Dad could help with. "He's a bridge man from way back," maybe not exactly that but something like that... anyhow, walking the future bridge site and eyeing the river, the first words out of Gary Steven's mouth were "We'll put them on Mafia blocks. They'll be way above the water, safe. Last forever." Gary reported that upon hearing those words my steward friend broke down and sobbed.

Four mafia blocks were installed in short order one fall morning, two for the middle bridge and two for the future bridge on the Walnut Street side of the land trust property. Each block was carried through the woods by an excavator and positioned on the river bank. Each pair of blocks were leveled bearing in mind that a utility pole is not uniform in diameter. Western cedar utility poles taper 1 inch for every 5 feet—so a pole that is 50 feet long may have a 36-inch butt end and a 26-inch top end...so the blocks need to be placed with an offset of 10 inches for a level bridge. Without the poles in hand, they guessed, and set the blocks.

Building Bridges: 2019

Six months later the poles arrived. Two were delivered to the field by Walnut Street, and two were delivered behind Moeller Industries near the middle bridge site. With all the rain and poor weather, the rare plant debacle, the late start, the difficult work schedules, Greg Emory and the Eversource team came through. Four beautiful western cedar utility poles ready to become the basis for the bridge system at the Millrace.



And if it would stop raining they could build bridges. It didn't stop raining. It rained for weeks. So, the poles were laid across the Falls River in the rain. Planks were cut in the rain and it was built in the rain.

The Future

At this writing the middle bridge on the Falls River at the

continued on page 6



Millrace is almost done. The bridge has a bit of a bounce to it so Gary wants to jack up the poles a few inches to create a crown effect and add a couple trusses for support.... if we were left to our own devices we would probably go with

a slightly bouncy bridge. But Gary is the man. He taught us a lot this summer and, when Gary says this is the right thing to do.... well, it is. And we do it. So, feel free to walk on it, the bounce will be gone soon.

As for the last bridge, on the Walnut Street side, the poles are lying in the grass. Gary and my friend are waiting for the ground to firm up so they can move the poles down to the stream. And they are drawing pictures of bridges again on yellow legal pads.... waiting.

The Miracle Bridge



Why the Miracle Bridge? There have been three stewards of the Millrace since its origins as a land trust property in 2006. Each steward saw what my friend saw walking with Tom Rutherford in 2012, a

beautiful winding river surrounded by an infestation of invasive plants. A jungle. They saw an awkward property with paths that met a bend in the river and needed a ford or a



crossing. They saw a property that once was integral to the citizens of Ivoryton but over the years had decayed. Sometimes they were over

whelmed by the challenge of the Millrace. All three worked to make it better. The bridges were always the key.

If a hiker couldn't cross the river, it didn't matter how many historical markers were installed or paths were cleared.... and the river is a tough customer.

The stewards of the Essex Land Trust are not carpenters. Or engineers. They are retired salesmen, consultants, bankers, insurance people, writers and teachers. They worked for IBM, PwC, The Hartford, Air Products and Chemicals, Inc. In spite of all the obstacles, they got the resources where they need to be, picked up their hammers and went to work. And they built a grand bridge, finally. A bridge that will last through storms and be the foundation for a lovely wilderness in the middle of Ivoryton. Huzzah! Huzzah!

There are four bridges along the winding Falls River in the Millrace Park. The first is on Ivory Street; it's tiny, but necessary since it gets a walker over the runoff from a small beaver dam. Then there's a somewhat larger bridge crossing the historic Millrace itself. It doesn't often float away, but it has once in the last decade so we are watching it. Then the Miracle Bridge in the middle and later on, closer to Walnut Street, the pedestrian bridge. This bridge floats away with the regularity. It has been AWOL for over a year and my friend and Gary have it in their sight. If you hear a lot of hammering and laughter in the woods just off Main Street, take a short walk in the woods and watch a miracle happen.... again.

ELT Briefs



Walking Sticks

A peculiar phenomenon has arisen on some Essex Land Trust properties with the random appearance of walking sticks placed strategically at some of the entrances. As can be seen in the photo the walking sticks are hand hewn and have the Essex Land trust logo on them. It is a mystery how these walking sticks have recently appeared but the hope is that they will be used by intrepid hikers and returned to where they were found so that others may benefit from their convenient placement. Property stewards are now actively investigating the identity of the mystery walking stick purveyor.

Essex Financial Services Explore Windswept Ridge

Led by Windswept Ridge steward Jeff Croyle, members of the Essex Financial Services customer relationship team planned an after work outing to this preserve on June 24. The team plays a key part in supporting the firm's financial advisors. Windswept Ridge is a 47-acre preserve that abuts Essex Financial Services parking lot. Public access to this preserve from this location is possible through its parking lot due to special arrangement with the firm. A driveway and parking area at the far end of the facility provides convenient access to the preserve, off of Route 153. The outing gave Essex Financial Services employees an opportunity to become familiar with their "backyard" preserve.



Essex Fire Department Rescue Training

On the evening of July 16th, the Essex Fire Department responded to a 911 call. Two hikers in The Preserve were lost, one of them seriously injured. It was a simulated call and a practice drill. A command post was set up in the East Preserve parking lot. Chief Aron Schumacher was in charge. Myron Stacks, Essex Land Trust steward was there to provide knowledge of the trails and terrain. The fire fighters were told the hikers "thought" they were on the Blue Trail. A rescue plan was made and successfully executed. The call for help and the response by the Fire Department was a simulation of events that happen often across the country. It was a test of both the equipment and our first responders.

Annual Meeting Report - April 11, 2019

President's Message:

A look back at the last 50 years highlights numerous accomplishments, notably preservation and conservation efforts. Along the way, we have evolved from an opportunistic and patchwork set of preserves to a prioritized plan of acquisition to a focus on the development of strategic corridors. The two most recent exciting ones have been the expansion of Windswept Ridge and the acquisition of Woodja Hill with its connection to two existing Land Trust preserves, all with new trails systems and public access. The result: as you go village to village, Ivoryton to Essex, neighborhood to neighborhood, you will always be near a permanently preserved open space for recreation and the enjoyment of nature. There are major open space and wildlife corridors within reach of each village. Our open spaces are connected to those our neighbors: Old Saybrook, Westbrook and Deep River.

Over the years, we have grown from a small organization, working out of borrowed space and a safety deposit box, to one managing 650 acres and 55 trails spread over 23 preserves. Our current size presents new challenges. To

meet them, we have been going through a three-year process that began with a self-assessment guided by the Land Trust Alliance, the national accrediting organization for land trusts. We reviewed and documented our past experience. We adopted best practices from the Land Trust Alliance. We updated our strategic plan, focusing on ensuring the future. We used the national accreditation process to guide our efforts. We submitted our application in September 2018, reviews have been completed, and we are awaiting a final determination in August.

Finance: Operational Income for calendar 2018 was \$186,000 with \$29,000 coming from dues and the balance from Donations, Grants, and Bequests. Expenses were \$186,000 with the largest portion attributable to mowing, tree removal, and treatment for invasives on several of our preserves. Other core expenses funded communications activities, various programs & events, and the annual membership drive. We also expended funds last year for several projects: the Follow the Falls project in collaboration with the Essex Historical Society, phragmites work, our trail map project, and the accreditation application process.

continued on page 10

New Board Members Elected

Stephanie Gatto and Jeff Croyle were elected to Essex Land Trust's Board of Directors at this year's Annual Meeting.

Jeff Croyle moved to Essex in 2016 shortly after retiring from a 35-year career as an HR consulting Partner with PWC and ISG. Jeff is an avid kayaker and enjoys working with Pam Peters on their 1760s house in town. Jeff Croyle will be Chair of the Nominating Committee. In addition



to that role identifying new Board members, Jeff manages our Volunteer community and identifies potential Stewards. Jeff is also the Steward for Windswept Ridge, our 47-acre preserve that went through a major expansion in 2017 and 2018.

Stephanie Gatto has held various positions in Fortune 100, local private, and non-profit organizations. While raising her family, she has attended numerous nature classes, programs and received her Connecticut Master of Gardening Certificate. During her time living in Singapore, she traveled internationally with her family enjoying and learning from many different cultures and exploring new environments. Stephanie holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Anthropology from Central Connecticut University. She has been a consistent land trust volunteer participating in the programs committee and recently handling our Facebook page. She will be assuming the role of land trust Secretary.



Annual Meeting Report ... continued from page 8

We would like to thank all of our Members, Donors and those Grantor organizations: Community Foundation of Middlesex County, MRB Foundation, Essex Lions Club, Essex Savings Bank Community Investment Program, The Willow Creek Foundation, and JCEM Foundation. Our donors also include Corporate Matching gifts from: IBM, GE, Google, Pfizer, and Virtus Partners. We have also been fortunate to receive financial and-in-kind contributions support from 24 local businesses in our community.

Acquisitions: In the period up to 1998, the land trust approach to open space acquisition was largely reactive to opportunities that arose spontaneously. At this point the land trust owned 119 acres. After 1998, the approach followed to a more proactive one, seeking areas that were quality habitats, with increasing connectivity and focusing on areas in or near the Falls River. In the last five years alone, the land trust has added 193 acres of new protected open space in Essex, with specific additions such as Pond Meadow, The



Preserve, Johnson Farm, Great Meadow, Doanes' Woods, Woodja Hill and additional acreage on the Great Meadow and Windswept Ridge.

Since our last meeting we have concentrated on preparing these new preserves for public access. We have created many interesting and challenging trails, built a variety of bridges, installed convenient parking lots, created trail maps and installed information kiosks. While we have no major new potential acquisitions in process at the moment, we are pursuing several smaller potential additions to expand our existing preserves. In summary, the Essex Land Trust's major focus going forward will be to ensure that we have the funds and the energy necessary to manage and protect



our current portfolio of preserves. We will also always be on lookout for new opportunities to acquire and protect open space in Essex.

Stewardship: The land trust has achieved significant additions to its roster of preserves over the past few years. Stewardship of this increased acreage has become a major responsibility. As we transition to a more proactive stewardship focus, the main challenges being faced are: consolidating what has been achieved such as building new trails, clearing fields to preserve existing meadows, adding new features (such as the Pond Meadow boardwalk) and addressing the ever-increasing impact of invasive vegetation. In addition to financial resources, the main challenge is deploying a dedicated group of highly effective preserve stewards. We have an engaged cadre of approximately 35 preserve stewards who dedicate as much time as possible throughout the year. In order to pass on our preserves to future generations in a sustainable condition, we will need a concerted effort to recruit additional committed stewards while simultaneously adding to our volunteer pool.

Map & Trail Guide Project: Over the past year and in conjunction with celebrating the land trust's 50th anniversary, we have undertaken to revise all property maps, produce an updated Trail Guide, and print detailed property maps for installation on kiosks. This project has involved visiting all properties in order to update the location of trails, notable points of interest (including significant stone walls) and making these maps available electronically on the land trust website and through the Maplets application.

continued on page 10



The last Trail Guide was produced in 2008 and covered 15 preserves representing 400 acres. The new Trail guide will encompass 23 preserves (belonging to the land trust, the Town of Essex and The Nature Conservancy) covering approximately 1100 acres. Once printed, all land trust members will receive their free copy of the Trail Guide, which will also be available for sale at local retail outlets. We anticipate that the Trail Guide will be available this fall.

A special note of thanks to steward Myron Stacks who walked every preserve, GPS located every trail, most stone walls and points of interest. We especially appreciate funding support from the Community Foundation of Middlesex County, Robert and Theresa Dryfoos, Essex Savings Bank and contributions from Town of Essex Conservation Commission and Park and Recreation Department as well as Essex Meadows.

Programs: Our 50th anniversary hike took place at Windswept Ridge, celebrating the re-opening of this 47-acre preserve. New trails constructed during the early months of the year now connect our newest parking area off Rt. 153 with entrances on Windsor Lane in Centerbrook and Old Dobbin Lane. The trails offer the option of through hikes and loops, with varying levels of difficulty. Approximately 50 people met a steward at one of the 3 parking areas for a guided walk and a rendezvous at a central spot. Several were so enthusiastic about what they discovered that they encouraged friends to join them the next day for a return visit. In addition to these special events we again offered the popular kayak trip and the annual Town Park picnic and concert by The Corinthian Jazz Band, as well as a number of guided hikes and informative conservation lectures.

Follow the Falls: The land trust has joined up with the Essex Historical Society in developing the Follow the Falls initiative, which aims to feature the history and ecology of Essex by focusing on the role of the Fall River. This first



continued on page 11

Annual Meeting Report ... continued from page 10

phase of the Follow the Falls project culminated the historic examination of the Williams Complex and Shipyard dating from 1689 to 1845, in Falls River Cove, along with the unique perspective and location offered by Osage Trails donated to the Land Trust by Elizabeth “Diz” Callender. A 22-page full color booklet was published and a celebratory event was held at Osage Trails in June, 2018. There are two



more iterations planned. In 2020 the focus will be on the history of Centerbrook and its link to the Falls River and this will be followed by the final phase, in 2022, focusing further upstream on Ivoryton and its association with Falls River.

Membership: Membership in the land trust remains at a stable level of 380 family memberships, of which 155 are Conservators for Life. We also benefit from the support of 24 corporate members. Less than 15% of land trust preserve abutters are members so we continue to aim for increasing neighbor participation and community involvement. Membership renewals are a vital component in funding land trust projects and programs.

Legacy Giving: While there are a number of ways to donate, we encourage supporters to include the land trust in planned and legacy giving. The Legacy Circle currently includes 10 members, who through their generosity will have a lasting impact on our commitment to steward your preserves in perpetuity. You can find information about ways to donate to the Essex Land Trust on the home page

of our website.

Recognition: Steward Dana Hill was recognized for his long-term involvement on caring for various land trust preserves. Having been steward of Canfield Meadow Woods for many years, Dana took over the responsibility for Johnson Farm once it was acquired by the land trust in 2015. He is retiring (gradually) and will be handing over responsibility for Johnson Farm to Erik Leu. Dana was presented with a certificate of appreciation from the Board and was awarded the status of Conservator for Life. Dana and his wife, Joan, will have their names installed on the Conservators Rock located at Cross Lots.

Goody Lelash has decided to resign from the Board after many years of active involvement. The Board extended its appreciation to Goody for her recent role as Secretary and her steadfast participation in the Programs Committee.

Board Election: Finally, two new board members were elected to 3-year terms: Jeff Croyle who will be responsible for Nominations and Volunteers and Stephanie Gatto as Secretary. Tom Rutherford was reelected to a new 2-year term and Chet Arnold, Geoff Furtney, and Paul Greenberg to new 3-year terms. Other board members continue serving their current terms. Board classes were confirmed by voice vote.



Coming Events – Mark Your Calendar!



Kayak Trip on the Lieutenant River

Saturday, September 14, 9:30 am

Ferry Landing State Park, 389 Ferry Rd. in Old Lyme

Join ELT expert kayakers at Ferry Landing State Park (across from DEEP facility). Paddle briefly up the CT River to enter the Lieutenant River for a 2.5-hour trip. Enjoy passing the Florence Griswold Museum and seeing the beauty of this river up close. Intermediate skill level required. Inclement weather will postpone event to September 28.

Ivoryton Pumpkin Chase

Saturday, October 19, 7:30 am

Ivoryton Village Green

This race is supported by the Essex Land Trust, and benefits the Ivoryton Library and its programs. The 5K race course winds through Ivoryton Village and the Essex Land Trust's Falls River Preserve. 5K prizes awarded in 10 age groups. Runners 8 and under running in the Kids' Fun Run will be given medals and invited to stay for craft and story time. Registration begins at the Ivoryton Village green at 7:30 am. Race starts at 8:45 am for children and at 9:15 for adults. Parking in designated lots. Rain or shine.

Stargazing with the New Haven

Astronomical Society

Saturday, October 26, 6 pm

Johnson Farm, Walnut Street, Ivoryton

Join us for this unique opportunity to learn what we see in the late October skies during the New Moon. Experts from the New Haven Astronomical Society will bring telescopes for us to observe the stars, deep sky galaxies, nebula and clusters close-up. Maybe even Saturn before it sets. All ages welcome. Parking in designated location at the farm. Rain date: October 27.

Cross Lots Fall Clean-up

Saturday, November 16, 9am

40 West Avenue, Essex

Cross Lots lovers and dog walkers join us in putting this Land Trust preserve to bed for the winter, get a mild workout and connect with your neighbors in a beautiful setting, including our butterfly garden. Refreshments will be provided. Please bring rakes, blowers and tarps. Families welcome. Rain date: Sunday, November 17.



Year-end hike at Woodja Hill Preserve

Saturday, December 14, 10 am

Parking lot an end of Oxbow Lane, off of Book Hill Woods Road

This 18.5 acres of ridge property was purchased in 2018 and is connected with 3 other properties: Doanes' Woods, James Glenn and Lyons Woods (Deep River Land Trust) for a total 50-acre green way. The wildlife habitats include open field, upland forest, forested wetland and a beaver pond. The property has been used as pasture land and has many stone walls and several large rock outcroppings. It is home to beavers, ducks, little green herons, owls and even flying squirrels. The trees are mostly hardwood. Entrances to the property are from Oxbow Lane in Essex and Meadow Woods Road in Deep River. There is also access from Doanes' Woods off of Navy Lane and James Glen off of Hudson Lane.

Woods & Waters is published three times a year. **Jim Denham**, Publisher & Editor

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Board Members: **Nancy Rambeau**, President; **Bob Nussbaum**, Vice President & Development; **Stephanie Gatto**, Secretary; **Mike Carlucci**, Treasurer; **Paul Greenberg**, Acquisitions; **Tom Rutherford**, Strategic Planning; **Geoff Furtney**, Stewardship; **Judy Saunders**, Programs & Events; **Jeff Croyle**, Nominating & Volunteers; **Joel Anik**, Accreditation; **Jim Denham**, Communications; **Chet Arnold**, Special Projects, **Cynthia Field**, Archivist; **Barbara Sarrantonio**, Member at Large

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