

LAND TRUST NOTES



The Bethlehem Land Trust Inc, P.O. Box 322, Bethlehem, CT 06751
bethlehemlandtrustct.org

Spring/Summer 2013

WHAT MAKES LAND DESIRABLE?

Have you walked the Two Rivers Preserve lately, or driven past the new Canfield Preserve on Still Hill Road? These are two beautiful properties the Land Trust acquired through the generosity of the community. What makes them worthy of conservation? Both feature abundant natural woodland habitat with significant watercourses. Both have frontage on public roads, which means we can make them accessible to you.

These are just a few of the attributes the BLT Board of Directors looks for when we evaluate land for conservation. Another is contiguity to other preserved land, or the possibility a neighboring parcel could be preserved in the future. The larger the area of continuous open space, the more sustainable is its biodiversity, and the more impressive its prospect. Woodlands are not the only habitat we prize; farmland is important to our community in so many ways, and open land that gives everyone a chance to enjoy a panoramic view of our lovely rural area is unquestionably attractive.

The BLT preserves land through outright ownership and also conservation easement (by which property remains privately owned, without public access). We rely on area landowners for donation of property and easements; only when the community supports us financially are we able to purchase a parcel. Our complete Land Acquisition Criteria are on our website, where you can read them and learn more about how you can help us provide more open space for everyone to enjoy.

Our Excitement Grows

One evening early in May, Earl Canfield, previous owner of the Canfield Preserve, led a group of BLT Board members on a tour of the perimeter of our new property. Bob Hanahan, a founder of the

BLT and the attorney who facilitated our purchase of the property, and his wife, Elizabeth, joined us. Earl showed us the yellow blazes by which he had marked the border and we put up small Land Trust signs at intervals all around to indicate our ownership. The terrain is varied, mostly wooded and sloping, with several small streams meandering down to Wood Creek, which runs through the 30-plus acres. We admired impressive rock ledge, several old stone walls, trilliums, jack-in-the-pulpit, and other signs of spring. We are looking forward to building trails to make it easier for everyone to enjoy this land.

When you visit the Canfield Preserve, look for the new sign at the parking area at the bottom of the hollow on Still Hill Road. And please note, the old wood road visible from the parking area is not part of the Preserve, which begins at the crumbled remains of a stone wall to the east of the wood road.

"How old the tree is and how long the tree will live are two questions impossible to answer. We just want to appreciate it while it is alive."

*Joe Bernardi, arborist and co-owner
of Brothers' Tree Service.*



TURN THE PAGE FOR MORE ABOUT BETHLEHEM'S ANCIENT OAK

Notably Auncient

Did you know there is an extraordinary tree that gives Auncient Oak Road its name? It is listed as a “notable tree of Connecticut” and while it is on private property, the BLT holds an easement to oversee its well-being. Some time ago it lost one of its giant limbs, and this spring, Brothers’ Tree Service, of Middlebury, spent several hours cutting and removing the downed wood and cabling the six remaining branches to ensure they stay aloft. We are most grateful to the Bernardi brothers for their generous donation of time, equipment, and skill to care for the tree. Drive by to admire it! And, no promises, but we have a hunch cabinetmaker Woody Mosch will create something wonderful from a section of the limb and offer it to you at our Dinner/Auction fundraiser next fall.



PHOTOS BY MARY HAWVERMALE

WANT TO COMMUNE WITH NATURE? VOLUNTEER!

Fresh air, new friends, exercise (gentle or strenuous, your choice), knowledge and skills, and satisfaction from helping your community could all be yours. The BLT is looking for people to help with land stewardship, property monitoring, and trail building. Have just a bit of time? Why not sign up to monitor one of our properties—all that’s required is to walk the property once a year to see what’s what and fill out a simple report. Feel like stretching some muscles? Help clear a trail at the new Canfield Preserve, or do maintenance at Long Horizons or Bellamy or Two Rivers (those too-frequent big storms leave a lot of debris). Who knows, you may discover you really enjoy this. The BLT Board does! Email us at bethlehemlandtrustct@gmail.com for more information or to let us know you’d like to help.

Thinking Ahead

Have you something someone else might covet that you would like to share for a good cause? Please donate a weekend at your condo on the beach, a lavish meal, a work of art, or similar gift. Every November, on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, the BLT hosts a Dinner/Auction to raise funds for land acquisition and stewardship. Exciting donations made in a timely way can be mentioned in promotional material for the evening, helping us to attract attendees who will enjoy the bidding and the spoils. And yes, we can place a minimum on the auction price. Contact us via the website, bethlehemlandtrustct.org, or at bethlehemlandtrustct@gmail.com. And save that date, the evening is always tasty and fun.

Three Cheers for Community Service . . .

Take a few steps in from the entry to the Long Horizons Preserve (on Long Horizons Road, naturally) to discover our arboretum of mostly native trees, which was planted over several years by Frank Errico. Native or not, the trees require care, so we were most appreciative when, one afternoon this spring, a crew of enthusiastic and able-bodied students from the Woodhall School joined us to weed and spread mulch. Many thanks to the crew and to Gerard St. Laurent of Bethlehem Masonry, who generously donated the mulch.

. . . and Take a Hike

If you're looking for a pleasant place to walk, consider the ravine trail at Long Horizons Preserve. It's a little gem, and not rugged—though parts may be soggy. Follow the signs from the arboretum, or from the Community Garden at the town-owned Swendsen Preserve. Take binoculars, you may see something worthy of note flying over the farmland or flitting among the trees. Let us know if you do.



Reach Us on the Web

Our new website is up and running. On it, among other things, you'll find background and administrative information about the Bethlehem Land Trust, including our Strategic Plan and Land Acquisition Criteria; information on how to preserve your land; our blog of Natural Happenings; and lots of links so you can contact us should you have questions about or be interested in donating, volunteering, or simply learning more about us. And the site makes membership signup easy. That's right, now you can join us or make a donation via PayPal. Check it out: bethlehemlandtrustct.org is the address.

A NEW WAY TO APPEAL

Unless you are a new resident in town (and if you are, welcome!) you know the Land Trust sends an annual appeal letter urging you to join or renew your membership. We think this newsletter is much more appealing—we can share more news and have a bit of fun as we do. So this year, don't look for the usual appeal letter. Instead, clip and return the membership coupon on this newsletter, or go online to join us: bethlehemlandtrustct.org. Be as generous as you can: Open space is priceless in one sense, but requires an investment in another.

Thank you.

— ❁ ❁ — SUPPORT THE LAND TRUST — ❁ ❁ —

Mission Statement

To permanently protect and preserve local farmland, fields, forests, and wetlands through acquisitions or easement; to conserve the natural, scenic, and historic resources of these properties and educate the public about them; and, where feasible, to provide access for their enjoyment by the community at large.

You can help the Bethlehem Land Trust to fulfill our mission. To become a member or make a donation, simply fill out this form and return it to the address on the reverse, enclosing a check made out to the Bethlehem Land Trust. Or visit bethlehemlandtrustct.org to join and pay by PayPal or credit card.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP \$35.00

❁ FOREST STEWARD (UP TO \$499)

❁ FIELD STEWARD (\$500–\$999)

❁ FARM STEWARD (\$1,000 PLUS)

AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____

Bear Quest

Mary Hawvermale, BLT president, biologist, and wildlife lover, was recently contacted by Mike Evans, a Ph.D. student from the University of Connecticut, who is conducting a research project to discover the number and range of black bears in the state. She helped him set up barbed wire lures on a couple of our properties to collect bear hair samples, which Mike will analyze for DNA so he can identify and count individual animals. If the research is successful it will inform a comprehensive black bear management plan for the state. Don't worry, the lures do not have long-range appeal—they attract only bears that are already in their vicinity. We'll keep you informed about what Mike learns.



SPEAKING OF BEARS

THIS BEAR VISITED THE BAKER RESIDENCE, WHICH IS DOWNSTREAM FROM THE TWO RIVERS PRESERVE, ON ARROWHEAD LANE, THE MORNING OF MAY 24 AT 6 A.M., ENJOYING OUR BIRD FEEDERS, PARTICULARLY THE SUET CAGE! IT WAS FUN TO SEE THE BEAR LYING ON ITS BACK AND TOSSING THE CAGE AROUND LIKE A TOY, TRYING TO GET THE SUET OUT! THIS WAS GREAT ENTERTAINMENT UNTIL THE DOG CAUGHT WIND AND BARKED, FROM INSIDE OF COURSE, AND THE BEAR THEN LUMBERED DOWN THE PATH TO THE WEE-KEEPEEMEE RIVER BEHIND THE HOUSE, WITH THE SUET CAGE IN ITS MOUTH.

THE BEAR AGAIN CROSSED OUR PATH A HALF HOUR LATER AS IT WALKED ACROSS THE ROAD AS WE WERE DRIVING TO MY DAUGHTER'S BUS STOP AT THE END OF THE ROAD. FUN MORNING! GUESS WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE THE FEEDERS DOWN NOW!

☛ LYNN BAKER

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