



CANTON LAND CONSERVATION TRUST, INC.

**Spring 2008
Newsletter**

Land Trust Operational Assessment

The Canton Land Conservation Trust is in its 35th year, and it has been a remarkable success story. CLCT obtained its first donation, a one-acre parcel, in 1974. It now has over 1,800 acres under management, which amounts to over 11% of the total land area in the town of Canton.

The Land Trust has benefited from the efforts of dedicated Board members and volunteers, many of very long standing. Over time the challenges of managing the responsibilities we have taken on have increased. The wisdom, experience and energy of the directors, officers and other volunteers and the support of the community have all contributed to keeping us successful and growing.

This winter the Board of CLCT voted to undertake an assessment of our organization to make sure we are well equipped to execute the responsibilities we have undertaken. As a first step, we met with Kevin Case of the Land Trust Alliance, or LTA to discuss how we might best assess ourselves. LTA is an organization we belong to that provides services to land trusts, including the development of standards of practice. LTA is in the process of developing an accreditation program for land trusts that meet the standards. The Board also hired a consultant with experience in this area, and appointed a committee to concentrate on the assessment and to help us upgrade where necessary to meet the LTA standards and to improve our overall effectiveness.

Our consultant's final report will be delivered to the Board in May, but our organizational work will just be beginning. Along the way we have learned some things that we need to do better. In particular we need to improve our planning capabilities, for example. We have also been able to see that the Land Trust has done really, really well when measured by standards of organization, performance and ethical conduct that the LTA has established.

In particular, our Land Trust earns high marks for how engaged and ethical our Board has been, for our effort and effectiveness in managing our properties, and for outreach to the community through providing hikes, the Trailblazers club for children, newsletters, our website and other activities like the annual dinner and the Moonlight Hikes.

The Trailblazers Club has been our most popular activity. When I meet people from other Land Trusts, it is what they want most to know about us. Mary Ellen Mullins started the Trailblazers Club at least five years ago. Her enthusiasm, energy and sense of fun have made it a popular and enduring part of the community, with 50-75 participants at the monthly activities.

If you have not seen our website www.cantonlandtrust.org, please visit it. It is really remarkable. Bill Duncan has updated and expanded it, and kept it supplied with maps and pictures. It is a very appealing presentation, and contains lots of useful information.

For a land trust with the amount of property and scope of responsibilities and activities, we are somewhat unusual in that we are entirely a volunteer organization without any staff. This places a lot of demand on those of you who are our most dedicated volunteers.

We need to expand and renew our volunteer base in order to achieve our goals. If you think that you will be able to help, or even better, if you are involved with a youth group that would be able to take on projects, please contact me or one of the other directors so we can have a conversation about what the Land Trust needs, what you do best, and how you would like to be involved.

Charlie DeWeese

Land Trust announces donation of Barbour Woods

The Canton Land Conservation Trust is pleased to announce the donation by Betty and Frank Stanley of a 118 acre parcel on the west side of Barbourtown Road. The Stanleys have been long-time benefactors of the Land Trust. Betty has also been a Director of the Land Trust since 1985 and she has served as president or co-president since 1996. The property represents generally the western part of land the Stanleys have owned since 1984. This property was once owned by the Barber or Barbour family, one of the most influential families in the early years of Canton. The Stanleys' home, which they have owned since 1968, was built by Alson Barber in 1839. In honor of the Barbour family, the Stanleys have requested that the property be known as Barbour Woods.

Barbour Woods is contiguous with other Land Trust parcels on Ratlum Mountain to the west. It is completely wooded, primarily with mixed deciduous trees, and with areas of hemlock and pine higher up. It rises steeply from Barbourtown Road to an upper plateau and contains many dramatic topographic and rock features. Because of its location contiguous with other Land Trust properties and because of its particular physical beauty, it is one of the most important acquisitions the Land Trust has had in its 35 years of existence. It brings the total acreage under Land Trust management to over 1,800. After the Land Trust has ensured that the boundaries are adequately marked and has completed a plan for the management of Barbour Woods, it will be open to the public.

Betty Stanley

Betty Stanley is stepping down after 12 years as President of the Land Trust. Betty has directed the Land Trust through a period of expansion and achievement. CLCT was fortunate in its early years to obtain some wonderful property through donations made by generous townspeople. Under Betty's tenure, CLCT has continued to maintain and enhance the public support it receives in Canton, and CLCT has expanded its scope not only through donations, but also through its first purchases of land. Among the important things that have happened on Betty's watch:

- Purchase of over 300 acres of land in four different transactions with the assistance of successful state grant applications and partnerships with the Town of Canton and the Simsbury Land Trust.
- Expanded community outreach through the very successful Trailblazers Club and through participation in Sam Collins Day, the Annual Dinner and the Moonlight Hikes.
- Creation and improvement of a network of hiking trails, and updated trail guide and provision of guided hikes on those trails.

In addition to providing guidance, Betty has also been personally the most dedicated volunteer in all aspects of the Land Trust's work, and she has been a great financial supporter of the Land Trust as well. Betty will remain on the Board and her wisdom will continue to be a great resource for CLCT. It is left to the rest of us to move CLCT on and build on her many accomplishments.

The Morgan Cowles Easement

The Canton Land Conservation Trust is pleased to announce that Frederic (Ted) Morgan Cowles III and his wife Jan have donated a conservation easement to the Canton Land Conservation Trust consisting of 32 +/- acres, part of 39.5 acres bought by Ted's parents from Kent Gillette in 1930. The property will be known as the Morgan Cowles easement, in honor of Ted's father. The donation occurred in December 2007.

While this property does not come to the Land Trust with any right of public access, we welcome Ted and Jan's decision to assure its protection as open space into the future. This easement does mean that the property will be kept in its natural state and not subdivided or developed, and that the Land Trust will monitor the easement in perpetuity.

The first structure on this property was constructed in 1760-61 as a story and a half house, built by Moses Gaines, husband of Lucy Barber. Henry Barbour became the owner in 1820 and added the second floor and attic, reusing attic beams from the original structure. Jan and Ted built an addition to the rear of the 1760-1820 structure and moved from Simsbury in 1987. They have donated this easement in honor of Ted's parents who loved the land so much and spent their 55 years together caring for the property.

Join Our Email Blast - Be Informed and Involved!

The Land Trust maintains an "email blast" list that is used judiciously to inform members about hikes, meetings, activities, trail crew work parties, tree farm work parties, and occasional volunteer opportunities. If you'd like to be added to our list, please send a "please add" email to websteward@cantonlandtrust.org, or sign up through our website at www.cantonlandtrust.org. When you sign up, please let us know if you have any special interests, or if you'd like us to include you in messages about regional conservation efforts such as vernal pool monitoring, biodiversity studies, or the Farmington River Wild & Scenic efforts.

Animal Tracks and Signs on the Trails

By Shirley Sutton

Our winter snows contributed to a good tracking season. The Breezy Hill Farm trail showed evidence of deer passing through, bedding down overnight, and browsing. Over 80,000 white tail deer are estimated to be living in Connecticut, so it is not unusual to see their tracks, but a watchful eye will spot more deer signs. I found a deer bed under a conifer with low hanging branches. The snow revealed the impression of the deer's body. Nearby were a couple of small trees that had been browsed. The deer's lower incisors left scrape marks on the tree trunks as this animal stripped away bark for food. Deer will eat the bark of hemlock, witch hazel, sumac, fir, elderberry, apple, cherry, striped maple, mountain ash, willow, shadbush and others as available. Just a few feet from the bed site was a rub. Rubs are made by the male deer, the buck, and are scent posts. The buck rubs his antlers on the tree. As he does this, his scent is transferred to the tree from scent glands on his head. Biologists believe this marks territories and informs other deer of their presence.

I saw bobcat tracks in two places crossing the Breezy Hill Farm trail, deep in the woods and earlier in the field. The tracks in the field came up from the direction of Breezy Hill Road, through the field and safely into the forest. Bobcat tracks can be distinguished from coyote in a few ways. First, coyote tracks tend to show claws; bobcat tracks do not. Second, coyote tracks look more symmetrical with the two front pads even with each other. The two front pads of the bobcat track will show one pad slightly ahead of the other. Other differences are less distinct.

As I came to the Sun, Wind and Woodland Trail connection I saw some squirrel activity and many rodent signs. Rodent tracks confuse me; I can never tell if it is a mouse, mole, vole, or shrew! I enjoyed following the tracks as they went here and there, along stone walls and diving in and out of the snow. Further along the trail I investigated a large tree that had fallen many years back. The tree, now a log, was situated on a rise that overlooked what appeared to be a deer run and animal trail. To my surprise, I found the scat of a coyote. Due to the daily changes in the weather, I was unable to find good tracks of this coyote.

As I reached the junction of the Sun, Wind and Woodland trail that leads back to Breezy Hill Road, I spotted a large deer rub on the slope. The tree was twelve inches around, indicating that the rub was made by a large buck. Deer tend to return to the same trees year after year, so I will be looking for this evidence in the future. The sun was going down and it was starting to rain--not good for tracking--so I headed off for the Breezy Hill Farm trail and my car.

To view some of my finds, check out the pictures on the CLCT website---[www.cantonlandtrust.org/photo gallery](http://www.cantonlandtrust.org/photo_gallery) Animal Tracks and Signs on the Trails.

Hunt for Wild Food with "Wild Man" Steve Brill

On Saturday, June 7th the Canton Land Conservation Trust, in conjunction with Roaring Brook Nature Center and the Simsbury Land Trust, will present world-famous naturalist, "Wild Man" Steve Brill. Brill is best known for being handcuffed and arrested by undercover park rangers for eating a dandelion in New York City's Central Park. He is the author of *Identifying and Harvesting Edible and Medicinal Wild Plants in Wild (and Not-So-Wild) Places* and *The Wild Vegetarian Cookbook*. Brill also stars in *Wild Edible Basics*, the first of a video/DVD series on foraging. Brill will present both a morning lecture and two afternoon walks along the trails at Roaring Brook Nature Center. The lecture will begin in the Nature Center auditorium at 10:30 AM. The one hour afternoon walks will begin at 12:30 and 2:00 PM. The cost for both the lecture and one of the walks is \$5.00 per person. Pre-registration, with payment, is required and checks should be payable to Roaring Brook Nature Center. Please make certain to include which of the walks you want to attend. Mail registrations to Roaring Brook Nature Center, 70 Gracey Road, Canton, CT 06019. Additional information is available by calling the Nature Center at 693-0263.

Eagle Scout Project

Located on the Capen Cabin property is an old pump house and broken hand pump that are in dire need of repair. A local Boy Scout, Matt Casey, has chosen to rebuild the pump house and repair the pump for his Eagle Project. An active member in Scouting for 10 years, Matt is a member of BSA Troop 177 of Collinsville, CT. A community service project is required by the Boy Scouts of America to attain the highest rank in scouting, Eagle. The purpose of this project is to demonstrate leadership and project planning.

For this project Matt will remove the old pump house, clean out the well, construct a new building and reinstall the repaired pump. The new structure will be a 3 sided Adirondack style shelter that will be designed to last for a long time.

SPRING 2008 CALENDAR

APRIL

26 - Saturday 9:00 AM Tree Planting at Smith Tree Farm - Doyle Road

MAY

17 - Saturday 9:00 AM Work Party - Meet at Canton Center General Store (Cherry Brook Grocery)

18 - Sunday 1:30 PM Amphibian Hike and talk led by Tom Noonan - Mary Conklin Preserve

JUNE

7 - Saturday 10:30 AM "Wild Man" Steve Brill lecture - Roaring Brook Nature Center - 12:30 & 2:00 Nature walks with Steve Brill

8 - Sunday 1:30 PM Dragonfly walk with Jay Kaplan - DeWeese property - 263 Wright Road

4:00 PM Annual Meeting and Picnic - Capen Cabin

21 - Saturday 9:00 AM Work Party - Meet at Canton Center General Store

SEPTEMBER

20 - Saturday 9:00 AM Work Party - Meet at Canton Center General Store

27 - Saturday 1:30 PM Geology Walk led by Dave and Barbara Korzendorfer - place to be determined

To be announced Mushroom Walk and talk led by Marlene Snecinski



Like to chop down trees?
Rev up a chainsaw?
Build stone stairs or
bridges?

Our trail crew always welcomes new participants willing to spend a few hours a month helping to maintain and expand our trail system. Anyone in good physical condition and fourteen years and older is welcome! To find out more, join our "email blast" list (email websteward@cantonlandtrust.org) or email Drew Stone at drew.stone@comcast.net.