

Spring 2022 Terra Firma

Newsletter of the Manchester Land Conservation Trust | Info: 860-643-1823 20 Hartford Road, Manchester, CT 06040 Email: Info@ManchesterLandTrust.org

Website: www.manchesterlandtrust.org | Facebook: www.facebook.com/Manchesterlandtrust | Insta: @manchesterlandtrust



1972-2022 — half a century of preservation and fostering an appreciation of the

outdoors. This year we celebrate you, our members, and all that the Land Trust has accomplished, including preserving over 600 acres of open space property. We celebrate our founders, and the 1,400 members over the decades who donated time, talent, and generous financial gifts.

Anniversary dinner at Georgina's

Friday, April 22 at 5:30 p.m., a festive evening for members, friends, and acquaintances. See invitation on page 5. Must RSVP by April 8.

Annual meeting and picnic at Bush Hill

Sunday, July 17, from 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m. Annual meeting at the pavilion and orchard. Park at 330 Bush Hill Road, Manchester and walk to the pavilion. Bring a picnic lunch. Hamburgers and hot dogs will be served; donations accepted. RSVP to ensure we have a quorum of members: Phone Terry 860-643-1823 or email us at

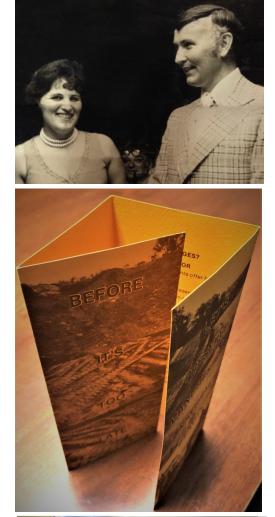
info@manchesterlandtrust.org. We'll picnic first and then meet to hear annual reports, elect directors. Rain or shine. Optional walk to the farm pond after the meeting. Thanks to Dick and Rita Borden for hosting.

See you on the trails

During the pandemic, our properties have provided the public a getaway into nature, peacefulness, and fresh air. Check out our guided hikes on page 7.

•••• Then and now ** ** 1974—Gould Parklet 0.1-1986-Risley Pond, this portion 2015-2021-Bush Hill & Lomb-2022—5 parcels near the acre, 149 Lakewood about 104 acres, 366 Lake ardo farms & prior acreage. Now hospital, 11.57 acres given by 177.5 acres, Bush Hill Rd., Manch. Circle North, Manchester Street, Vernon, Now 155 acres. ECHN, Hemlock St., Manch.







In April 1972, the Manchester Land Conservation Trust was founded to "conserve valuable open space land and historical property in Manchester and provide an opportunity for persons to donate property to a group which will preserve it." Both The Manchester Evening Herald (see article at left, April 15, 1972) and The Hartford Courant covered the Trust's founding and first meeting. The Trust's first major project was to advocate for the purchase of

Case Mountain by the Town of Manchester, a project that was a struggle, and was opposed by some residents.

←Pictured are Terry Parla and Douglas Smith, M.D., officers elected Treasurer and President, respectively, who continued to serve for many decades. Other officers: Harry S. Maidment, Vice President, Frerick W. Spaulding, D.M.D., Secretary. Board members: Robert Fuller, Walter S. Fuss, Attorney John S. Papa, Rev. Clifford O. Simpson, and William Sleith. Several medical doctors were charter members of the Trust advocating for clean air and open spaces for the health of the public. The Trust recruited charter members, asking for a \$25 or more donation. A membership drive that fall would recruit town resident members at \$5 annually. Children under 18 could join for \$2 annually.

← This artistic brochure is on heavy card stock, and publicized the Trust for many years. It was printed for the newly organized Manchester Land Conservation Trust, describing the benefits and purposes of a land trust. Contact information (about 1973) was through the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, where staff answered the phone and accepted postal mail for the Trust. The Trust held its meetings in members' homes, including the Adelaide Road home of Doctor Alexander Marsh and Gertrude Marsh – she designed this quarter-fold brochure, and he took the photographs for it. (They also donated the pond at Porter Street/ Adelaide Road to the Trust.)

The Chamber of Commerce eventually moved to rental space at 20 Hartford Road, and continued to allow the Trust to use its phone number and mailing address, a much-appreciated service! During the 1970s and 1980s, the Trust organized well-attended slide shows and lectures for the public at various locations, including the East Catholic High School auditorium. Annual meetings, often held at Manchester Country Club, invited speakers on land preservation, nature photography, native plants, geology, etc. The Trust rented a conference room at the Manchester Historical Society, 175 Pine Street, from 2005 to 2013, using the space for document storage and meetings.

←In October 2013, we began renting space from South Methodist Church at 20 Hartford Road, in the same building as our friends, the Chamber of Commerce, although they no longer answer the phone for us! Our rental space at 20 Harford Road, in the former Frank Cheney, Jr., mansion, provides meeting and office space with computer, copy machine, map cabinets, and document storage space. Today, our documents are increasingly stored online. Pictured at 20 Hartford Road in October 2014 are board members Terry Parla, Richard Griffiths, Bill Doak, and Helen Robbins; Land Trust friend, Judi Smith, who arranged for the rug donation by Glastonbury Carpet; director Malcolm Barlow; member Gary Robbins; technology consultant, Jack Bowden.

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 \star 50 years of land preservation \star \star

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				TOTAL	605.07

See our website for the most up-todate property list: https://www.manchesterlandtrus

t.org/properties.html.

Our first property, donated by the Gould family, is 1/10th of an acre. Over the years we have received donations and purchased land in Manchester, Andover, Bolton, East Hartford, Glastonbury, and Vernon.

Each property has a story! For example, • The 35-acre "Reed Park" property in Andover was a gift to us when the Mohegan Land Trust, an Andover nonprofit, went out of business. They were struggling with the paperwork and regulations required of Land Trusts and nonprofits. • The Cheney railroad acquisition was a drama of fund-raising, angry neighbors, monumental clean-up, and ongoing maintenance. Thanks to the volunteers and donors who worked to create the rail trail! • Risley Park entails a long story of donations, dam repair (there would not be a pond if the Trust hadn't stepped forward to fix the dam), purchases, and Eagle Scout projects. For many years, the 155-acre Risley property was our largest. It benefits from the devotion of our volunteers, particularly steward Doug MacGillvary and his friends. Stickney Hill Preserve in Rockville was an unwanted 15.93acre property with a steep hill – the housing developer didn't want to continue to pay taxes and tried to give the land to various organizations. When the Land Trust eventually acquired the acreage, it became a local gem, providing open space, fun trails, a bench with a view, and lots of history. • The story of the purchase of the 62-acre Botti farm is a dramatic story of fundraising and struggle. With the donated Manning-Ferris property, the DeSousa Drive .15 acre, and the former 102-acre Lombardo farm, the Bush Hill preserve now spans 177.5 acres. A major success for the Land Trust and its supporters.

\star \star \star We love our volunteers \star \star \star





Dan Pons, recently elected a Board Member, volunteers at our newly acquired Lombardo property. In this February 2022 photo by Bush Hill Preserve steward, Brad Palmer, Dan is working on a bulldozer donated to the Land Trust. Brad notes that Dan "is mechanically inclined."



Volunteers created a rock garden near the Story Trail at Bush Hill Preserve. October 2021 photo by volunteer Jean DiBenedetto, who also took part in the project. Check it out — starting at 330 Bush Hill Road, walk along the farm road, past the pavilion, past our neighbor's goat farm, and the new garden is on the left as you start up the hill toward the Story Trail. The volunteers planted perennials.

Stephen Gagnon, Eagle Scout candidate from Troop 27 in Manchester, worked on this 50-foot bridge at Salter's Pond in October, 2021, with help from fellow Scouts, parents, and Land Trust stewardship chair Jeff Sullivan. The public and our neighbors at the Salter's loop trail, Northfield Green Condominiums, chipped in \$3000 for the materials. Jeff notes these other Eagle projects: • Conor Mulligan, Troop 123, trail at Barlow Park, Hillstown Road, January 2022, and • Ian Cameron, Troop 25, improvements at Salter's Pond, March 2022.



VP and Volunteer Frank Belknap, pictured with his wife, Barbara, removed invasive plants at our 21.24-acre Pavan Preserve, 421 Bush Hill Road, Manchester. The Connecticut Audubon Society, which funded our March 2020 purchase of the property, stipulated that the Trust create an invasive-plant-removal plan. Frank formulated a threeyear plan, starting with removal of Japanese Barberry in Year One. Frank consulted with UConn, which demonstrated that this plant, besides being an invasive, attracts deer ticks. Almost all the Barberry was removed, thereby making way for native plants, which are necessary for bird populations. To visit: Bush Hill Rd. to Garnet Dr., left on Winthrop Dr. to cul-de-sac. Park and follow trail.





FOUNDED 1972

On Earth Day, Friday, April 22, 2022

At Georgina's Restaurant, 275 Boston Turnpike, Bolton, CT 06043

\$40.00 for members; \$45 for non-members; \$21.60 for children 12 and under * 5:30 p.m.: Social time, cash bar. 6:00 p.m.: Buffet dinner, featuring: vegetarian, chicken, and pork entrées, vegetables, dessert. * 7:15 p.m.: Reflecting on our 50th birthday, and Frederick Law Olmsted's 200th birthday; Olmsted (born 1822 in Hartford; died 1903 in Belmont, MA), "founder of American landscape architecture."



Susan Fiedler will present Reflections on Frederick Law Olmsted's 200th Birthday, noting Olmsted's "inspiration to all who strive to protect open spaces, promote environmental justice, and improve quality of life." Susan has over 30 years' experience in landscape architect in private, public, and non-profit sectors, and is currently employed by the CT Department of Transportation's Highway Design Unit. She is an advocate of civic horticulture, ecologic restoration, and landscape stewardship. Her interest in Fredrick Law Olmsted features his life in Connecticut, journey towards his profession, and the landscapes which inspired it. Susan's research includes Olmsted's travels from Hartford to the shoreline, his efforts at scientific farming, and his roaming in Europe and America. "The rich culture and varied scenery of Connecticut influenced how Olmsted perceived the world. Olmsted's strong sense of purpose compelled those around him in the mid-1800s to reform and make big plans."

◆ Name of each guest, print clearly! ◆ Mail to Land Trust DINNER, 20 Hartford Road., Manchester, CT 06040. Due to our contract with Georgina's, we need your check & reservation by FRIDAY, APRIL 8

Your telephone number _____ Email _____

Members @ \$40 each ____. Non-members @ \$45 each ___. Children 12 & under @ \$21.60 ____.
Total enclosed _____. Check # _____ I can't attend, but am sending a donation to the Land Trust Return this portion with check. Please write DINNER on outside of envelope. Sorry, no refunds. Questions: phone Terry Parla at 860-643-1823 or info@manchesterlandtrust.org

Or, register & pay online with a credit card at: www.manchesterlandtrust.org Note, click the "other" button and enter "Dinner" in the Additional Information box.

News from . . .



Dermot Jones Land Trust President dermot.jones@manchesterlandtrust.org 860-995-1912

Board of Directors 2021-22

Dermot Jones President Frank Belknap Vice President Lincoln E. LeFebvre Treasurer William Doak Recording Secretary

Malcolm Barlow Dick Borden Ginger Jackson Rob Lewis Colin McNamara Kwasi Ntem-Mensah Theresa Parla *Membership Chair* 860-643-1823 Daniel Pons

Helen Robbins Liaison, conservation commission Richard Sellman Jeff Sullivan Stewardship Chair

Technical Advisor Jack Bowden Webmaster, newsletter editor Susan Barlow info@manchesterlandtrust.org



Dear Land Trust Members and Friends:

As your new President — elected in July 2021 — I am grateful for the support of our growing membership, and our successes in acquiring over 600 acres of open space for the benefit of our local communities. I worked for the Department of Public Health for 35 years, and I know that clean water and air are of great benefit to our health. I have had a long standing interest in the environment beyond my working career. I was a board member of the Inland Wetlands/Conservation Commission in the town of South Windsor, before moving to Vernon in 2007. As a board member and Treasurer, beginning in 2017, I arranged for the Trust's acquisition of a 2.44-acre parcel of land in Vernon near Risley Park.

Our 50th anniversary — Since our founding in 1972 as a grass-roots conservation group, we have benefited from the work and support of over 1,400 members and directors, some from before my joining the organization — the legendary Doug Smith, M.D., the inspirational Sue and Cliff Pierce, the environmental warrior Fred Spaulding, and some I have worked with — past President Malcolm Barlow, Terry Parla and her energetic family, and so many more. In 2022, we celebrate their contributions and dedicate the organization to its mission, stated in 1972, to "conserve valuable open space land and historical property in Manchester and provide an opportunity for persons to donate property to a group which will preserve it." Since then we have expanded our mission to include publicizing and advocating for land preservation, through our guided walks, trail creation, signage, social media, and encouragement of enthusiasm for the outdoors. We have also expanded beyond Manchester, with property in five neighboring communities.

Volunteers — you are the backbone of the Land Trust, and we salute you for all your hard work over the years. Feedback from our members and friends says your work is very much appreciated. Members can support us in so many ways — including financial donations — and there is no obligation to put in hours and hours of work, but if you are interested in volunteering out on the properties or at the tag sale, etc., please contact me or Stewardship Chair Jeff Sullivan. See contact info in box on left.

Future plans — The Land Trust is working on stewardship recruitment and education, with an eye to improving our properties, including providing access and signage to the public, reducing invasive plants, and being good neighbors. We may be setting up some work parties in the months ahead. Contact us at info@manchesterlandtrust.org to spend some productive hours outdoors. Or phone Terry Parla, 860-643-1823. We are also continuing to work on the Land Trust Alliance accreditation project, which involves establishing best practices, agreeing on policies, monitoring our properties to prevent encroachment, and keeping track of our 600+ acres.

50th anniversary dinner — Our annual dinner is a highlight of the Land Trust year. Please consider attending, even if you haven't in the past. It will be an opportunity to meet others who value preservation. See details on page 5 of this newsletter. Also note, annual meeting and picnic, July 17. See page 1. — *Dermot Jones*, President

Photos from the 2021 dinner, left to right • Photo 1. Guest Nancy Wall, new VP Frank Belknap and his wife, Barbara, new Pres. Dermot Jones. • Photo 2. Figuring out the slide show, Terry Parla, Malcolm and Susan Barlow • Photo 3. Telling a joke, Mayor Jay Moran, with members of the Ntem-Mensah family.



For details, visit the event page of our website:

www.manchesterlandtrust.org

Friday, April 22, 5:30 p.m. at Georgina's Restaurant, our 50th anniversary dinner. See invitation and details on page 5.

Saturday, April 23, Earth Day work party at our "hospital" property, from 9:00 to 1:00. Come and go as you have time. Bring rakes, work gloves, loppers, etc. Meet at the metal gate at the curve of Anderson Street, near Hemlock, Manchester. Direct questions to: info@manchesterlandtrust.org

Tuesday, April 26, 5:30 p.m. at 146 Hartford Road, Manchester, an Olmsted 200th birthday stroll, recognizing the importance of this Hartford-born landscape architect and advocate for open space, parks for all people, and equity in access to nature.

Saturday, May 7, 1:00 p.m. at the corner of Anderson and Hemlock Streets. We'll explore the 11.57-acre parcel donated by ECHN.

Friday, May 20, through Saturday, May 28 from 9:00 to 3:00 each day, gigantic tag sale at the cider barn, 330 Bush Hill Road, Manchester. Accepting donations: drop off outside the barn May 2 through May 15 from 10:00 to 2:00, or phone Terry any time 860-643-1823. Terry also needs volunteers to set up, organize, and help during the sale.

Saturday, June 4, and Sunday, June 5, at 1:00 p.m., Connecticut Trails Days. All are invited to our Land Trust events: • June 4, Center Springs Park, Manchester, and • June 5, Risley Park, Vernon. Our friends at Connecticut Forest and Park Association organize these events throughout the state.



Sunday, July 17 12:00 noon, annual member meeting, picnic. See page 1 for details.

More history: dams

The Land Trust accepted the donation of **Salter's Pond and its dam** in 1980. The dam's condition was deteriorating, and it needed to be either fixed or razed. Breeching the dam would have taken away Salter's Pond. However, the Trust raised funds and managed the rebuilding of the dam. *Sept. 2000 Journal Inquirer article*



Risley dam's condition could also have brought about its razing, resulting in the elimination of Risley Pond. Fortunately, the Land Trust stepped in, raised funds, and fixed the dam. 1990 photo of Risley dam construction



Story trail



Open dawn to dark every day at 330 Bush Hill Road, Manchester. When a new book is installed, we

host a guided walk, but you can visit on your own. Each page of the story is numbered and has an arrow showing the way to the next page. Follow the signs to read, walk, and explore! We will miss **Dr. Frederick Spaulding** (1925-2022). Fred was a founding Land Trust member and a dedicated conservationist,

instrumental in the 1970s campaign to save Case Mt., several campaigns to protect Center Memorial Park, and active in Rotary, his church, and the town's Conservation



Commission. Fred was known for his generosity, warmth, and wit.

Membership news

Members, thank you for your support! Terry Parla, membership chair, says, please consider upgrading to life membership (\$500). You can • mail a check to us: 20 Hartford Rd., Manchester 06040, or • renew online with a credit card or PayPal on the *Join Us/Donate* page of our website. You can also give a gift membership/donation to honor or memorialize a friend or relative. Email us any time for info: info@manchesterlandtrust.org.

Our current membership: 354, including 188 life members. Note that many members are couples, so this represents well over 475 members.

We are a membership organization! When the Land Trust applies for grants, our membership numbers are important. Your support through membership helps raise funds and also increases our ability to advocate for open space.

Membership year: October 1 to September 30 Annual: Corporate \$200 Sustaining \$100 Individual \$25 Family \$50 Life membership \$500 Single or couple, same address Manchester Land Conservation Trust Inc. 20 Hartford Road Manchester, CT 06040

MANCHESTER LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

Phone: 860-643-1823 *Email:* info@manchesterlandtrust.org *Website:* www.manchesterlandtrust.org ADDRESS *SERVICE REQUESTED*



Scan this QR code with your smart phone to go to our website.

Free email newsletter — We hope you are receiving our monthly e-newsletter with events and Land Trust activities. Sign up via: <u>www.manchesterlandtrust.org</u> — look for the red rectangle that says *Sign Up For Free E-News*. If you subscribed but are not receiving it, check spam and/or send a message to the e-newsletter editor at <u>info@manchesterlandtrust.org</u>.

How to send a *Photo of Month* **picture** — Celebrate our Land Trust properties with your photographs! Submit high-resolution photos to <u>info@manchesterlandtrust.org</u> and include your name, date of photo, location (one of our Land Trust Properties) and what you like about that particular property.

Protecting the environment — The Trust works to protect water, air, and habitat, for animal and plant life in the Trust's natural surroundings. On parcels of sufficient size, the Trust supports passive recreation: hiking, biking, snowshoeing, fishing, bird watching, and other outdoor activities. You, our members and supporters, make this happen. *Pictured at right*, Visitors having a pizza picnic at our Case Parklet, Spring Street, Manchester.



Public welcome to our Board meetings — at 7:00 p.m. the third Thursday of January, February, March, April, June, September, October, November,

December, at our rented offices, 20 Hartford Road, Manchester or via Zoom. At our business meetings, we make decisions and assign tasks. Please let us know if you plan to attend: info@manchesterlandtrust.org.



Volunteers at the Cheney rail trail — *Pictured at left*, September 2008, cleaning up along the trail. The historic South Manchester Railroad operated from 1869 into the 1980s. Although this photo is nearly 14 years old, trail cleanups continue and Doug MacGillvary, at far right in photo, is still volunteering at Trust properties, especially at the Risley trails, where he is the steward. The rail trail, expanded with the Town's purchase of the southern end, now spans its entire historic length, and has parklets along the way, as well as a stunning view of Center Springs Park.