



SPRING 2015 Landlines

SIMSBURY LAND TRUST

Since 1976

2015 SLT MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME!

Are you a member?

Simsbury Land Trust protects over 1,000 acres of beautiful open space in Simsbury. We have been fortunate to have support from over 700 member families each year, all making generous membership donations that help make our work possible.

DID YOU KNOW...?

- 🌿 Simsbury Land Trust has over 25 miles of trails for you to hike and explore.
- 🌿 You can find some new trail maps on our website — www.simsburylandtrust.org
- 🌿 We offer a program free of charge for children and grandchildren of members called the Dirty Boots Kids Club.
- 🌿 Green Scenes Film and Discussion series is held six times each year at the Simsbury Public Library, showing documentary films on a variety of topics, followed by a lively discussion with experts in the film topics. And it is FREE!
- 🌿 SLT trustees lead ten hikes each year on area trails — free of charge to members.
- 🌿 Educational talks are given several times a year at the library about many interesting topics.

Simsbury Land Trust is able to offer these activities and programs at no charge thanks to membership contributions from generous area residents. These donations also fund stewardship of our properties, an office and two part time staff members, and all of our publications and communications.

Memberships are based on the calendar year. It is time to renew or join for 2015.

Please help us by sending in a membership contribution in the enclosed envelope today! You can also join online at simsburylandtrust.org

Tanager Hill Fundraising Complete

Additional funding still needed for stewardship of property.

By Dick Davis, SLT Trustee

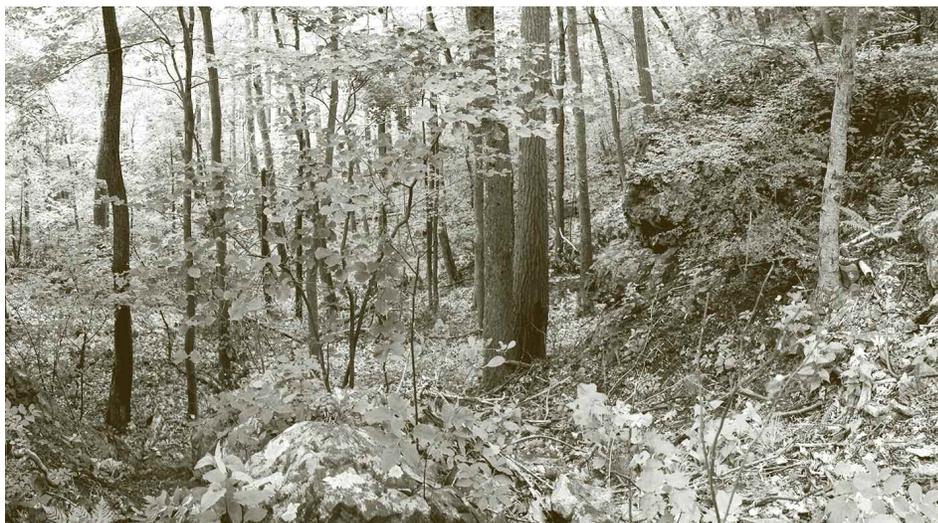
Over the last two years we have reported on our progress in acquiring Tanager Hill, a 75-acre hillside on East Weatogue Street between Pinnacle and Talcott Mountain Roads. We have reported on the unique and significant environmental attributes of this land as well as the opportunity it provides for the community to learn more about Simsbury's geological history and its uniquely wide range of natural habitats and features. We are now in the final steps of the acquisition process and expect to close this month.

Many of you have taken advantage of a series of guided tours of the site sponsored by the SLT. All who have seen this magnificent hillside recognize it as a signature property. It has also been one of the more difficult purchases to complete.

We would like to thank the key funding sources for this \$1,200,000 project. Contributors include: the CT-DEEP-Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program (\$500,000), Sellers' gift (\$250,000), the John T. and Jane A. Wiederhold Foundation at the Community Foundation of Northwest Connecticut (\$125,000), the Richard P. Garmany Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving (\$75,000), The Hartford Audubon Society (\$5,000), and the many individual members and friends of the SLT who provided \$295,000 in private contributions. We also had the support and encouragement of the Connecticut Forest and Park Association which manages the adjacent New England Scenic Trail for the National Park Service. Each one of these participants played an important role. Without the commitment, patience and generosity of any one of them, the permanent protection of this site would never have occurred.

“Without the commitment, patience and generosity of any one of them, the permanent protection of this site would never have occurred.”

(continued on page 3)





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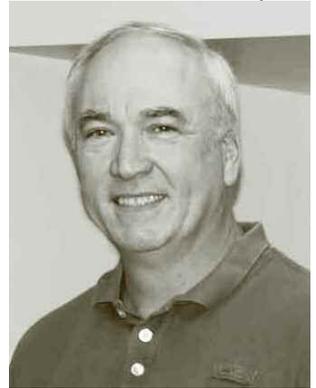
Letter from the President

— Fred Feibel

The start of a new year is always the easiest time to reflect on what has been accomplished during the previous year and on what we want to achieve in the future. As you will read in this newsletter, the Simsbury Land Trust has had a terrific year. Activities such as the Dirty Boots Kids Club and the Green Scenes Film Series are more popular than ever. Our Stewardship group has worked with vision and tireless energy to preserve and enhance the biodiversity of our properties. Last year we helped preserve the George Hall Farm, the third farm in town we now maintain development rights to. Tremendous popular support has landed us with the funding necessary to close on the landmark Tanager Hill property along the base of Talcott Mountain.

By nature land trusts are forward thinking organizations. This spring the Board of Trustees has taken on the job of creating a Strategic Plan which will help us identify our near and long-term goals and the processes needed to accomplish them. At present we have no large acquisition projects in the works. Our focus will shift more to the use and conservation management of our properties. How do our properties fit into the overall picture of open space in our community? How can we increase usage and appreciation for our open space while at the same time enhancing the ecological stability of our properties? What can be done to provide dependable long-term funding for all the great things we need to do? These are just a few of the issues we will be examining over the next few months. The strength of this organization has always been its dedicated membership. Please share your thoughts with us as we move forward.

See you on the trails!



Farms, Forks and Frames a Big Success!

A near sell-out crowd of over 200 people attended SLT's Farms, Forks and Frames Art Auction and dinner featuring local farm food this past fall. The SLT raised over \$24,000 at this event.

Sales of beautiful pieces of art from local artists Catherine Elliott, Deborah Leonard, John Johnson and Alexander Anisimov, along with many silent and live auction items donated by area residents and businesses, helped make this evening a success. Many thanks to our guest auctioneer Bob Maxon, as well as the area farms who donated produce, and all those who attended this fun night.





Tanager Hill

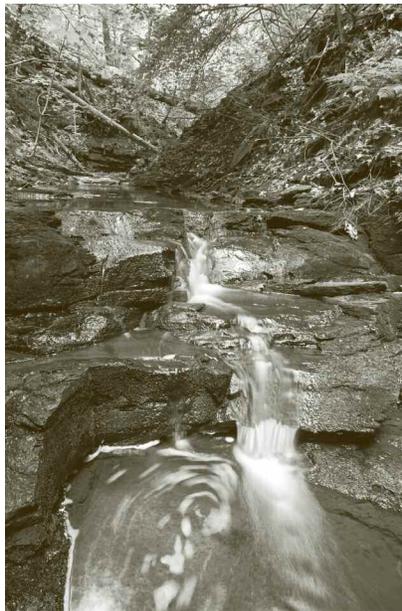
(continued from page 1)

Tanager Hill includes over 500 feet of elevation change, a glacial moraine, a trap rock ridge, wetlands that include wet meadows, woodland swamps, streams, farm pond and vernal pools, lowland and upland forest, 15 acres of scattered meadows, utility maintained succession growth and the Lucy Brook Ravine.

Because of this unusual natural diversity, this property is environmentally important in and of itself. It is also important in that it adds to the wide variety of habitat types that now make up the 1,110 acres of land that the SLT now protects across the Town. Simsbury is blessed by its geology that frames a 7-mile stretch of river valley between two lava ridges. Water runs down these ridges on both sides of town forming streams and a variety of wetlands on its way to the river. Glacial till and thousands of years of river floods have given us some of the most productive agricultural soils in the country. Sizable examples of each of these features are now protected by the SLT for the benefit of all of us and for generations to come, and in many cases our land connects these natural features by helping to create corridors that support the continued health of Simsbury's rich biological diversity.

Tanager Hill will be easily accessible via walking trails and will provide a connection between one of the few woodland passes over the ridge that lines up with a pedestrian bridge crossing the river. The SLT also plans to use Tanager Hill as an educational site showing not only the natural features of the land, but equally important, the need 1) to actively manage the land to preserve and enhance its biodiversity and 2) to manage the access and use by the community in a way that minimizes conflicting activities and activities that undermine the property's conservation purpose.

Finally, the ongoing cost of maintaining the land and the SLT's educational programs require a strong stable organization, a growing base of volunteers and consistent financial support. All of this comes primarily from our membership. Collectively, our volunteers, staff, officers and trustees have done a tremendous job in crafting and establishing the protection programs for these sites. Now we need to make sure we maintain this great support as we embark on the equally important challenge of managing this land. In particular we want to thank you, our members, for your consistent support, year in and year out, for over 35 years. Your continued support will be equally important going forward as we seek to better understand the land, adapt best practices in its management and expand our education and recreational programs. Your membership has never been as important as it is today!



Stewardship Funds Needed for Tanager Hill

Simsbury Land Trust anticipates that Tanager Hill will present many new stewardship challenges. Without professional advice, which we will seek after acquisition, we cannot be certain exactly what conservation issues the property will present, but our stewardship experience gives us some general ideas. The property includes meadow trails that will require frequent mowing but we might mow the meadows ourselves only annually to provide nesting areas for grassland birds. The steep part of the land hosts Lucy Brook, so it is likely there will be drainage and erosion issues. The lower slope has a huge invasive plant problem, Japanese barberry being one of the main culprits. The barberry will need to be controlled. Tanager Hill brings the SLT our first farm pond. It appears to need considerable work, having suffered from street runoff containing sand from many winters. We will have to obtain expert guidance and professional work to remediate the problem.

Simsbury Land Trust has a good reputation for its stewardship of its holdings. While the accepted wisdom is that a land trust should not acquire a property unless it has the money set aside upon acquisition to provide for proper stewardship needs, that is a luxury we did not have when the opportunity arose to acquire this unique treasure. To do right by this special place, we must look to our members and friends to help provide the financial resources Tanager Hill stewardship will require.

If you would like to donate to the Stewardship Fund for Tanager Hill, please use the enclosed membership envelope to send your contribution. All donations are very much appreciated!

Gifts of Plants and Time Help Improve Glover Property

By Sally Rieger, SLT Trustee

Simsbury Land Trust's Glover property, which fronts on King Philip Road and Princess Lane, benefitted in October from a wonderful gift of native plants from the Farmington River Watershed Association. Through the generosity of the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving and with the expertise of the North Central Conservation District, nine species of native shrubs and wildflowers were selected for the Simsbury Land Trust property. In late October, volunteers from the AnteaGroup and SLT, along with staff from the FRWA and the Conservation District, dug 238 holes in the rocky soil at the Glover property and put in the plants.

The plants will be the basis of a native plant garden and are all varieties that have desirable landscape characteristics and value for wildlife. The SLT plans to use the garden as a teaching tool to encourage homeowners' use of native plants that provide habitat for wildlife. According to Douglas Tallamy, professor and chair of the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware and author of the excellent book, *Bringing Nature Home: How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens*, "It is increasingly clear ... that much of our wildlife will not be able to survive unless food, shelter and nest sites can be found in suburban habitats." (p.21) Dr. Tallamy argues that because so much land has been developed all over the United States, there is not enough protected land to provide the necessary habitat. Wildlife benefits from land protection as do people, but wildlife also needs the help of all of us in our yards.

The Simsbury Land Trust is grateful to all our partners in the native plant garden project. We were fortunate to receive both the material help and the donation of volunteer and staff time without which we could not have gotten the plants in the

ground. We are also proud to be recipients of such kindness and generosity: the Farmington River Watershed Association would only provide plants for a site which is managed to control invasive plants on an ongoing basis.

When the SLT first acquired the Glover property, a mixed wet meadow and upland area, it was so heavily impacted by non-native invasive plants such as Oriental bittersweet and multiflora rose that it was not possible to walk through most of the property. Opening up the property required a professional crew from a landscaping company specializing in working on minimally managed natural areas. When enough invasive plants had been cut and the dumpsters full of them were hauled away, SLT volunteers developed paths enabling public access. Tommy Kim, an Eagle Scout candidate, took on the job of building a boardwalk over the wet areas. Simsbury Land Trust volunteers continue to remove bittersweet vines and other invasive plants and make improvements to the paths which are frequently used by neighboring landowners and are open to the public.

Winter may not be the best time to visit the Glover property, although frosted grasses and the stalks of the summers flowers are lovely. However, come spring, it will be fun and exciting to see the new plantings leaf out. Look for bayberry, blueberry, spicebush, meadowsweet, redbird dogwood, gray dogwood, native bush honeysuckle, serviceberry and blue wood aster. There will be signs that indicate which plant is which, explain how they might fit in your yard and give information on how each benefits wildlife. Maybe you will be lucky enough to see a woodcock or some of the dozen species of butterflies that have been reported at Glover. We hope you will visit and enjoy the property!

Blue Wood Aster
(*Aster cordifolius* or *Symphotrichum cordifolius*)

Landscape Characteristics: Blue wood aster, 2 to 3 feet tall, grows in full sun to part shade and produces many blue blossoms in late summer to mid fall. It naturalizes well in a shade garden.

Wildlife Value: Blue wood asters provide nectar for butterflies and bees and some larval butterflies (caterpillars) feed on aster leaves.



Educational signs will be placed on the property to identify native plants.



Our thanks to employees from AnteaGroup, along with SLT and FRWA volunteers and staff, who donated a day of digging and planting at the Glover property.

SAVE THE DATE!

Join us for the Simsbury Land Trust Annual Dinner

Thursday, April 9, 2015

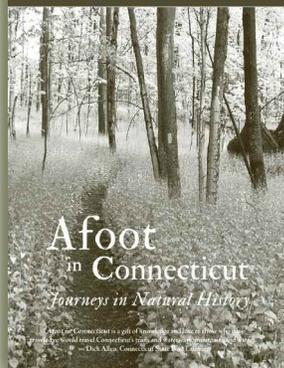
6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

at The Riverview, Simsbury

Guest Speaker: Eric Lehman, *Afoot in Connecticut*



From the author of *Insiders' Guide to Connecticut* and *A History of Connecticut Wine*
Eric D. Lehman



Don't miss the SLT Annual Membership Dinner at The Riverview in Simsbury. There will be great company, delicious food and drinks, and an interesting speaker. \$50.00 per person includes open bar, hors d'oeuvres, dinner, dessert and coffee.

Eric D. Lehman is the author of nine books about Connecticut, including the *Insiders' Guide* and *Becoming Tom Thumb: Charles Stratton, P.T. Barnum, and the Dawn of American Celebrity*. His book *Afoot in Connecticut* is a love letter to our often overlooked state, an inspirational story that will have you taking to the trails and the greenways, along the beaches and mountaintops, and into a land full of transformation, of beauty, and of strength. In his talk he will discuss how he fell in love with the natural beauty of our state by walking the paths and trails, and share some of his most interesting adventures. He will also discuss ideas about using our small size and trail network to our advantage, and how local groups like the Simsbury Land Trust can help.

RSVP and prepayment required by April 2.
Please return the form below with payment or pay online at www.simsburylandtrust.org

M E N U

Open bar

Passed hors d'oeuvres

Fruit, cheese and cracker platters

Spring Salad Station

Carving Station — Turkey, rolls, gravy and cranberry mayo, seasonal vegetable

New England Seafood — Clams, shrimp and scallop risotto, clam chowder, lobster rolls, lobster bisque

Pasta Station — Roasted Vegetable Ravioli w/ tomato basil, bread, Penne ala Bolognese

Dessert — Venetian Station

Coffee and Tea

Yes, we would like to attend the Annual Membership Dinner.

Name _____

Names of those attending with you: _____ *Tables of 8 or 10 can be reserved in advance.*

Please sit me by: _____

Phone: _____ Email _____

Cost: \$50.00 members Amount enclosed: _____

\$55.00 non-members

*R.S.V.P. with payment by April 2 to
Simsbury Land Trust,
P.O. Box 634, Simsbury, CT 06070*

Seeing Red!

By Margery Winters, SLT Vice President

Long after the color of the few remaining leaves has faded from the trees and the rest are blanketing the forest floor, you can see their bright red leaves almost glowing against the browns and grays of the late fall woods — burning bush. And each year there are more, and more, and more. It is making me see red. No walk through the woods is complete until I have yanked out as many burning bush seedlings as my walking companions will allow, or as long as I can recruit them into my obsession. I find myself muttering phrases from the Cold War “Better dead than red,” old Visine commercials “Get the red out,” or MADD slogan variations “Friends don’t let friends plant burning bush.” Why this reaction to a plant I once thought quite handsome?

Burning bush, aka winged euonymus, is an attractive garden plant from Northeastern Asia and Japan prized for its spectacular fall color. Easy to propagate, easy to transplant, easy to grow, and pest free, burning bush has been a staple of Connecticut’s nursery industry. Burning bush is one of the many non-native plants that have been brought from around the world to satisfy our desire for beautiful plants for our homes and gardens. When I moved to Simsbury in 1986 I had two enormous burning bushes in my yard. Encouraged by the advice at the time from Audubon and National Wildlife Federation that its red berries were a great source of food for birds, I planted more. It seemed like a great idea at the time.

Unfortunately, unlike the tired phrase ‘what happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas,’ what happens in our backyards, does not stay in our backyards. The burning bush berries eaten by songbirds pass through their digestive tracts and land in fertilized packages in nearby woodlands, or our neighbor’s yard, where they begin to grow, multiply, and in some areas, take over. Many non-native plants thrive in their new habitats precisely because their insect pests and diseases have been left behind in their homeland, and, as a result, can out-compete native plants. To gardeners, that sounds ideal, but in nature, it is disastrous. But why is that?

For the answer, I encourage you to read Douglas Tallamy’s

book *Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants*. Tallamy, a professor of entomology with the University of Delaware, found that most native insects have evolved to eat only native plants. Indeed, native woody plants may have 35 times more caterpillar biomass than non-native woody plants. While we will rarely see these caterpillars, our native songbirds will. Indeed, songbird parents know that caterpillars (not worms or bird seed) are the favorite food of nestling songbirds and songbirds make about one hundred trips a day to find these highly nutritious packages of protein to feed their fast-growing young. Tallamy’s studies reveal that the greater the number of native plants, the larger the number of successfully fledged songbirds, and the greater the diversity of songbirds in general. And vice versa, when non-native plants dominate the landscape, either in our yards or wild areas, bird diversity and numbers decline. In short, non-native plants, however beautiful, are ecologically useless, or worse, one of the biggest ecological threats to our wildlife and wild areas.

To address this invasion, the Simsbury Land Trust devotes increasingly more resources and effort to the removal of these plants from our preserves. Such efforts, however, are useless if the source of the problem is not also addressed — our own back yards. Removal of these plants from our yards is essential to stop the spread of these plants. Conservation, like charity, should begin at home. So, in addition to any monetary donation you wish to make to preserve our open space and wild areas, think about making a personal pledge to help the Simsbury Land Trust maintain these areas we have all worked so hard to acquire — **PULL OUT YOUR BURNING BUSH!** Plant a native plant in its place; they are equally lovely and, if they escape into the woods, you can feel proud that you were a good steward of the land. The woods and wildlife will thank you and we can all enjoy our walks through the woods once again — without seeing red.

And now, let’s talk about that Japanese barberry in your yard...

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For information on native plants for your garden, here are some websites to check out:

- Connecticut Botanical Society: Gardening with Native Plants — www.ct-botanical-society.org/garden/
- Connecticut Native Shrubs List — www.cipwg.uconn.edu/pdfs/CTNativeShrubList_Lubell.pdf
- Connecticut Native Tree and Shrub Availability List — www.ct.gov/dep/lib/dep/wildlife/pdf_files/habitat/ntvtree.pdf
- The Native Plant Collection at Connecticut College Arboretum — www.conncoll.edu/green/arbo/the-native-plant-collection.htm
- Native Plant List for CT, MA, RI — www.plantnative.org/rpl-nes.htm
- New England Wild Flower Society, Framingham, Mass. — www.newfs.org
- U.S. natives listed in Alternatives for Invasive Ornamental Plant Species — www.cipwg.uconn.edu/pdfs/CTAlternatives04Revised90res.pdf



While Burning Bush is a beautiful plant, it is an invasive species that must be removed. See the article on page 4 for information on native plants to use as alternatives.



SIMSBURY LAND TRUST

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Enter the 2015 Simsbury Land Trust Photography Contest

Deadline: June 15, 2015 Open to all members of the Simsbury Land Trust

Enter up to 3 pieces in the following categories:

1. Closeup
2. Landscape
3. People in Nature – SLT Activities and Events
4. Student photographers – any of the above subjects
(Students are exempt from the membership requirement.)

Work must be in the form of prints 8 x 10, b/w or color. Entries will not be returned. All work must be clearly marked with your name, address and phone number, along with the category and location of photo. If you have your photos on disc, please submit in addition to the printed copy.

All photographs must be taken on Simsbury Land Trust Properties or at an SLT-sponsored event. See our website's Properties & Maps section for a map of properties. All winning photographs may be used for promotional purposes by the Simsbury Land Trust. Photographers retain rights to the photograph. If you would like any additional information, please contact the office at 860-651-8773.

Please submit your entries to:
SLT, P.O. Box 634, Simsbury, CT 06070.



Post Your SLT Pics on Facebook!

We are having a Facebook Photo Contest! Post a picture of any SLT protected farm — George Hall Farm, Rosedale Farm or Tulmeadow Farm — during the month of March. The photograph that receives the most LIKES will win a \$50 gift card. Anyone can enter, limit of three photos per person.

Recruit your friends and family to visit our Facebook Page and LIKE your photo!

Winner will be announced on our Facebook Page in April.

**\$50
prize**

