



WINTER 2019 Landlines

SIMSBURY LAND TRUST

Since 1976

Native Plants Ask Gardeners to Bee Specific

— Margery Winters, SLT Trustee

Visit Roaring Brook Nature Center on a sunny July day and I will be delighted to take you to witness what I think is the spectacle of the summer. The Native Plant Bird & Butterfly Garden in front of the Center has a large patch of mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*), a native meadow plant. To our eyes, there is nothing particularly spectacular about this plant — its flowers are small and nondescript. It takes a moment to fully appreciate its appeal, but the appeal is evident to the bees that flock to it in amazing numbers to seek its nectar¹. Despite the proximity of these plants to the paths in the Nature Center's garden, bee stings have been non-existent; these insects are besotted with the nectar on offer. According to Penn State Master Gardener trials, mountain mint was found to be the overall single best plant for attracting both pollinators and insects. It is a trouble-free plant that should be in every garden.

In witnessing this impressive activity on mountain mint, one comes to appreciate that bee pollinators come in many more shapes, sizes and colors than honey bees and bumble bees. In fact, there are over 300 species of native bees in Connecticut, all with fascinating names like mason bees, plasterer bees, miner bees, and carpenter bees. While the non-native honey bees get all the publicity as pollinators, our unsung native bees may be much more effective pollinators. Native bees have a pollinator efficiency rate² of 91% while honey bees rate only a 72% and wild pollinators, primarily native bees, may be responsible for the pollination of over 80% of crops that depend on pollinators. Our native squash bees, for example, are the primary pollinators of all pumpkin, squash, and cucumber crops. Like the honey bee, some native bees are generalist feeders able to obtain nectar from a wide variety of flowering plants. Other native bees are specialty feeders, feeding on the nectar and pollen of only a few species of plants that bloom only at certain

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Coverts Project — Helping Stewards Learn More About the Land

Bob Shea, SLT Steward

Editors Note: Simsbury Land Trust encourages property stewards to take advantage of learning opportunities to increase their understanding of the land they help maintain. Bob Shea is one of several stewards who have participated in this program.

I had the good fortune to attend the 2018 Coverts Project on the Simsbury Land Trust's behalf. Coverts is a longstanding educational program of UConn Extension, Connecticut Forest & Park Association, and CT DEEP (Forestry and Wildlife divisions) that teaches Connecticut woodland owners about sound forest management practices. We spent three days at the old Yale Forestry School camp in the Great Mountain Forest in Falls Village, CT.

The Coverts Project's host is Thomas Worthley, professor from UConn Department of Natural Resources and the Environment. He is the Master of Ceremonies, introducing the many speakers and hike leaders for field explorations. Walking in the forest with him is like a constant quiz to identify every plant, bird or animal and environmental niche. Our other leaders were from CT Forest & Park Association, CT DEEP, and CT Audubon, all with interesting information. Details like the population of indicator species such as the New England Cottontail and efforts to support them made fascinating lectures.

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Coverts participants learn inside and outside of the classroom.



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Simsbury Land Trust
 P.O. Box 634
 Simsbury, CT 06070
 860-651-8773
www.simsburylandtrust.org

LANDLINES —

Editor: Amy Zeiner
Design: John Johnson
 Art Direction and Design
Thanks to our photographers:
 Mary Baier, Sally Rieger,
 Bob Shea, Susan Van Kleef

Letter from the President

— Fred Feibel

Dear Friends,

Currently before the CT Environment Committee is Bill 5254, a municipal open space funding bill which proposes:

“An act establishing a pilot program authorizing municipalities to impose a buyer’s conveyance fee on real properties to fund the purchase and stewardship of open space.”

As a pilot program, the bill extends only to towns that sign up but would likely become statewide if successful. The bill would allow (but not require) municipalities to impose a fee of up to 1% on buyers of property valued over \$150,000. Each town could only use these funds for specific conservation purposes.

As you know, the Town of Simsbury has preserved a great many acres of open space. Combined with the well-managed properties preserved by the SLT, these lands lend character and environmental stability to Simsbury and our surrounding towns. This proposed funding from Bill 5254 would allow the Town of Simsbury to plan and carry out much needed stewardship projects on its properties. Funds would also be available and grants more easily obtained for the town to partner with the Simsbury Land Trust to undertake projects such as those we have done to preserve Rosedale, Tulmeadow and George Hall/Pharos farms.

Similar programs have helped nearby states successfully preserve and manage thousands of acres of open space. Simsbury Land Trust has asked the Town of Simsbury to sign on for this program, and we ask you to get in touch with your legislator to lend your support for the bill. For more information check out the Connecticut Land Conservation Council website for an excellent overview (<http://www.ctconservation.org>).

Thank you for all your support!



Coverts Project *(continued from page 1)*

Because Great Mountain Forest has 6,000 acres and has been managed for over 100 years we could visit sites that were planted or cut at various ages, with various goals. For example, a field of maples was thinned to let the large trees grow better for syrup taps, but the foresters know that heavy equipment like skidders would damage the maple roots. The results are big, beautiful trees without a lot of understory making collection easy. We also examined other cuts made from five to 25 years ago. Researchers use this forest to investigate a variety of things, from the hemlock woolly adelgid to various planting methods to protect young saplings from deer.

The program name “Coverts” comes from leaving forest cover. Species that need cover from predators (think birds to mice, rabbits, and squirrels) all appreciate some cover, for example, piles of cut tree branches to hide under. The practice of piling some cover rather than stripping the ground gave the project its name. When we have healthy animal populations at the bottom of the food chain the whole ecology improves.

The Great Mountain Forest’s facilities are off the grid. The beautiful camp was built for Yale in 1941, but was recently updated so there is a modern kitchen and bathrooms. The food was great and the company wonderful, as the program attracts like-minded people, all interested in protecting forests.

Most people don’t recognize that virtually all forests are managed, especially in New England. Owners may have chosen not to cut anything in the last 50 or 100 years, but that is still a managed choice. What we learned is that a skilled forester can evaluate a property and help guide the owner towards practices aimed at their own choice. Simsbury Land Trust has a Forest Management Plan from Andrew Bosse Forestry Service from 2013 for our Wagner Woods property.

As an example, this forester first evaluated the land for its existing conditions. He divided the property into three stands or management units. Stand one is 22.4 acres of mostly white pine with mixed hardwoods with about 278 trees per acre, mean stand diameter of 10 inches, medium quality timber of fair health, in overcrowded conditions with abundant invasive shrubs in the understory. While he provides even more information that would be meaningful if one is interested in the timber and value of the trees, he guides us to our own goals. Those goals for this stand are to discourage exotic elements, like Japanese barberry and Multiflora rose, protect water resources and wetlands, increase diversity, and maintain hiking trails. Our primary action to achieve those goals is to control the invasives, which is well on the way.

The 2019 Coverts program is scheduled for September 12-15. For more information visit the website at <https://ctwoodlands.org/CTcoverts>.

Editors Note: If you are a property steward and are interested in attending the Coverts program next year please contact the Simsbury Land Trust office.



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3

Advocates for Sound Forest Management in CT Needed: Join the Coverts Project!

Coverts is a longstanding educational program of UConn Extension, Connecticut Forest & Park Association, and CT DEEP (Forestry and Wildlife divisions) that teaches Connecticut woodland owners about sound forest management practices. The program is open to woodland owners, land trust representatives, educators and engaged citizens. During this engaging three-day seminar held at the beautiful Yale Forestry Camp at Great Mountain Forest in Falls Village, CT, you will learn about Connecticut forests and how they can be better managed to support wildlife. You will learn about natural resource professionals and organizations available to assist you, and how you can become an advocate for sound forest management in our state. The seminar includes meals, lodging, training, and reference materials. The cost to participants is only \$150.

For more information, check out the CFPA webpage on Coverts: ctwoodlands.org/CTcoverts Questions? contact Emma Kravet: ekravet@ctwoodlands.org. We need knowledgeable advocates for sound forest management in CT more than ever. Inquire today!

Coverts Project Seminar 2019:

September 12-15, 2019
Yale Forestry Camp at
Great Mountain Forest
Falls Village, CT

For more information
contact Emma Kravet at
860-346-2372 or
ekravet@ctwoodlands.org

Happy Trails to You

These two contiguous SLT parcels offer more than two miles of trails and a diverse landscape that provides excellent habitats for many native species of flora and fauna.

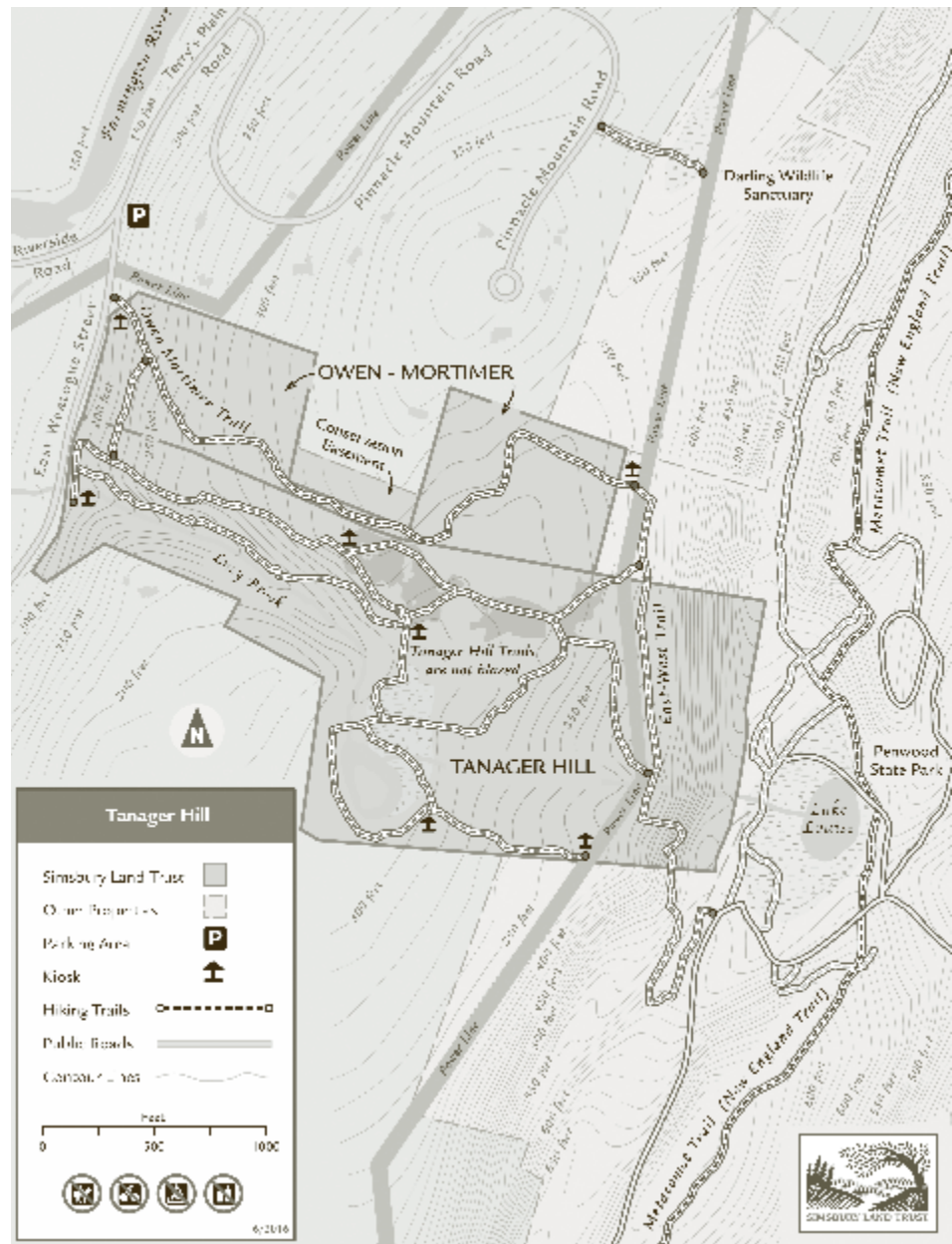
Owen-Mortimer Trail

Location — On the east side of East Weatogue Street, just south of Riverside Road. Park on Riverside Road or at the Tanager Hill parking area.

Distance — 0.5 miles

Terrain — A wide and easy trail, the first third of which is on a moderate grade.

Features — The Owen-Mortimer Trail begins with an uphill section on an old farm road surrounded by numerous stone walls and cedar trees. Simsbury Land Trust has done extensive work here to remove invasive plant species. Further on you will be surrounded by mature forest with large pines and oaks. About half way up, the trail runs alongside the open fields of the Tanager Hill property. The upper third of the trail has boardwalks which take a hiker through an extensive wetland with abundant wildlife and interesting plants. This area has several interconnected open space parcels to explore. To the northeast is the Town-owned Darling Wildlife Sanctuary and trail. To the south is the SLT's beautiful and inspiring Tanager Hill property with its meandering trail system. A short walk south along the utility right of way allows one to connect to a trail up to Penwood State Park. Importantly, Owen-Mortimer has been chosen to be the first section of a future east-west trail connecting the New England Trail with the Appalachian Trail.



Tanager Hill Trails

Location — Park off the east side of East Weatogue Street, just south of Terry's Plain Road.

Distance — More than 2 miles total. Tanager Hill trails are not blazed but highly interconnected and easy to follow. This park-like affect is designed to encourage a more meandering visit. Several kiosks help with location and provide information.

Terrain — Trails are wide, flat and easy. The western end of the property is steep as is the eastern connection to Penwood State Park. There is a 500-foot elevation change top to bottom. Areas can be wet seasonally.

Features — Geographically, Tanager Hill is the most diverse parcel of preserved open space in Simsbury. The property begins just above the Farmington River flood plain and climbs by connecting trails, ultimately through a basalt talus field to the top of Talcott Mountain. A large portion of the property is on a glacial moraine at the base of the mountain with extensive wetlands, including a farm pond and vernal pools. Lucy Brook runs along the entire southern boundary cutting a deep ravine in the redstone as it heads to the river. Adding to the diversity are 15 acres of open meadow and extensive, mature upland forest. This is a wonderful area for bird watching as there are numerous species of birds taking advantage of the varied habitats for nesting and as a stopping point while migrating. To the north the property is bounded by the SLT's Owen-Mortimer property which borders on the Town-owned Darling Wildlife Sanctuary.

This area was designated as a Primary Conservation Area in the Metropolitan Conservation Alliance's Farmington Valley Biodiversity Project conducted in 2006. Please stay on the paths to help protect the many sensitive species that live here.

Bee Specific *(continued from page 1)*

times of the year. Such a relationship is often noticeable in the scientific name given to the bee, for example, the miner bee (*Andrena erythronium*) which feeds on the nectar and pollen of an early spring flower trout lily, (*Erythronium americanum*).

Native flowering plants and bees have co-evolved to accommodate each other's needs and there is much to learn about this hidden communication between bee and flower. In addition to their fragrance and petal color used to attract bees, flowers are designed to accommodate either the long or short tongues of various bee species. Blueberry flowers have pollen tubes that will release their pollen only after being vigorously shaken by the buzzing of bumble bees. Some flowers have specific patterns on their petals that, though invisible to us, are visible to bees' ultraviolet vision. These nectar guides alert the bee to the flower's nectar supplies and these signals disappear after the flower has been pollinated. Bees have specialized hairs to attract and collect sticky or electrostatically-charged pollen and these hairs are sparse or dense to accommodate the size and quantity of the flower's pollen.

Our native bee populations benefit greatly from the existence of the native plants found in land preserved in open space. But pathways from one wild area to another often travel through our backyards which are often planted with non-native plants that may not be as attractive to our native pollinators. But small changes can make big differences. Including native plants like mountain mint in our own gardens will not only help our populations of native bees and help support the pollination of our local farm crops, it will bring the spectacle of summer to your own yard this July.

Note: To learn more about bees and their habitats join us for our annual membership dinner on April 9! See the mailing panel for information.

FOOTNOTES

1) To appreciate the intensity of insect activity on this mountain mint visit:
<https://videopress.com/v/XdmMZ8zz>
<http://www.louistheplantgeek.com/a-gardening-journal/1298-pycnanthemum-muticum-082416>

2) Pollination efficiency is defined as the relative ability of an insect to pollinate flowers effectively, as measured by fruit production per some unit of measure (i.e. per visit)



Please close the gate!


Many of you have noticed by now the new gate at our 60 Westledge property. The town requested we install the gate due to neighborhood issues with people using the parking area after hours.

The property is open dawn to dusk. Please open and close the gate after yourselves any time during this time period. It is important that the gate be closed after you leave. We do not have staff to open and shut the gate on a daily basis, so your help with this is very much appreciated.

Help keep our properties clean!

On a recent trip to the Bog property one of our stewards was disturbed to find that over 30 bottles and cans had been thrown into the bog! Care and maintenance of our properties is done by SLT volunteers. Please help us enjoy our properties and protect the environment by carrying out your trash and disposing of garbage appropriately.





*"The purpose of life is to live it, to taste it,
to experience to the utmost, to reach out eagerly
and without fear for newer and richer experience."*

— ELEANOR ROOSEVELT

Never Stop Exploring

Mary Baier, SLT Trustee

Make it a 2019 goal to never stop exploring Simsbury's open spaces
and include the Simsbury Land Trust in your goal!

Why?

Simsbury Land Trust has permanently protected over 1,100 acres of important open space. This open space serves not only to provide wildlife corridors but places for passive recreation such as:

- Hikes — we have our own Monthly Hiking Club open to hikers of all levels!
- Bird watching
- Wildlife tracking
- Plant identification
- Snow shoeing
- Cross country skiing
- Running

Simsbury Land Trust has open space for everyone to use and we also offer:

- Fascinating guest speakers
- Cool films and discussion programs
- Fun stewardship projects including, but not limited to, the following:
 - trail building
 - invasive species plant control
 - property management plans
 - trail informational signs
- Opportunities to make friends with other volunteers and members.
- Old school reads such as:
 - Landlines, our annual newsletter
 - The annual report
 - Our famous Walk Book — *Given free only to members of the SLT!*

It is only possible with support from our membership — your contributions allow the Simsbury Land Trust to offer these programs and activities.

Donate at any level, an individual member can donate at the family member, or higher. You can even write in an amount — donations are important at any level! As always thanks to those of you who are members for your past support and continuing interest.



***Not a current member?
What are you waiting for?***

*By joining you help support all
Simsbury Land Trust efforts.*

JOIN TODAY!!!

*Follow us on Facebook! Instagram and tweet
if you are on a SLT Property; don't forget to
add #SLTRocks.*

CLIMATE CHANGE SERIES DOCUMENTARY FILM AND DISCUSSION

TREES IN TROUBLE

Thursday, March 21, 2019

6:45 – 8:30 p.m.

Simsbury Public Library Program Room

From the *Trees in Trouble* website:

"*Trees in Trouble* tells the story of America's urban and community forests: their history, their growing importance to our health, economy and environment — and the serious threats they now face. Through stories of everyday people on the frontlines of change, the film will show how community-wide efforts can save and protect our urban forests for future generations. Designed for audiences of all ages, *Trees in Trouble* inspires viewers to take action, and points towards first steps."

This program is co-sponsored by Reid and Riege and Simsbury Clean Energy Task Force.

ENHANCING LAND FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Thursday, April 18, 2019

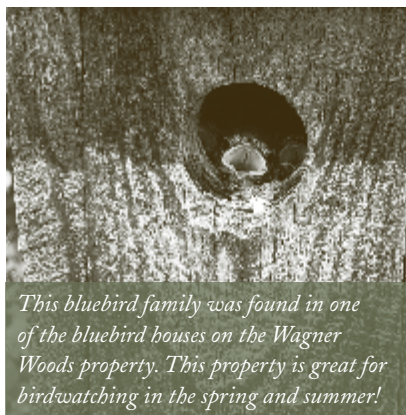
6:45 – 8:30 p.m.

Simsbury Public Library Program Room

Enhancing land for biological diversity requires the thoughtful management of plants. DEEP Wildlife Biologist Peter Picone will share his knowledge and insights to enhancing habitat for both small and large acreages. He will speak on improving habitats through the planting of natives and reducing/preventing the spread of invasive non-native plants, thereby improving biological diversity. He uses short video out-takes to illustrate inextricable links between plants and animals. He will also discuss how climate change may bring in a host of new invasives and the importance of prevention and



This little guy had his first Tulmeadow Farm hike on a beautiful winter day. Rory Heaphy is the grandson of SLT Trustee Paul Henault.



This bluebird family was found in one of the bluebird houses on the Wagner Woods property. This property is great for birdwatching in the spring and summer!

PHOTO: BOB SHEA

early detection and prompt management of new invaders.

Mr. Picone has over 30 years of experience managing habitats on both private and state land. He works for CT DEEP Wildlife Division on Habitat Management Program (manages wildlife management areas western district of Connecticut) and also is ecologically restoring/enhancing his 40-acre Charter Oak Tree Farm in Sprague, CT.

This program is co-sponsored by Reid and Riege and Simsbury Clean Energy Task Force.

WAGNER WOODS/GREAT POND HIKE

Saturday, May 11, 2019 • 9:30 a.m.

Meet at the trailhead to Wagner Woods on Great Pond Road.

There is a small parking area in front of the entry gate, and it is also possible to park on Whitman Pond Road just to the east of the property.

The Wagner Woods portion of the hike will be a loop of about three miles over the blue and yellow trails. It includes wooded and meadow sections of the property. Those who are interested and comfortable with the footing can take a short side trip on the orange trail down to have a look at Hop Brook. The terrain is quite flat, with only gentle slopes and no rocks to clamber over. The hike will end at the Great Pond Road entrance for those people looking for a shorter trip; but depending on interest, we can cross the road from the parking area into Great Pond State Forest and enjoy a loop through the woods there, with views of the pond. That loop is also over gentle terrain with good footing, and would be about two miles.

Dress for the weather and bring water and a snack if desired. Cancelled in the event of rain or poor weather. For more description of Wagner Woods, see the Simsbury Land Trust website at www.simsburylandtrust.org.



Why I Like Being a Steward

— Joe Springman

Simsbury residents enjoy access to many trails for recreation provided by the state, the Town, McLean and the Simsbury Land Trust. I like being a steward because I can contribute something to maintaining that access. Also, being one of the stewards for the combined Owen-Mortimer and Tanager Hill properties takes me onto several different outdoor environments. There are mixed conifer and deciduous forest, upland wetland, the ravine of Lucy Brook, two upland meadows, a pond, several vernal pools and a steep talus slope up to Penwood State Park. There are three different trails uphill from the parking lot with various connections at the top. It's easy to vary your route. Thus, for a little bit of time and effort, I have a reason to go enjoy an interesting property.



If you are interested in becoming a property steward please contact the SLT office at 860-651-8773 or amyzeiner@aol.com.



Preserving Simsbury Open Space Since 1976

SIMSBURY LAND TRUST

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ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DINNER “The Buzz About Bees”

Tuesday, April 9, 2019 • 6:00 p.m.
The Riverview • Simsbury, CT



This year our talk is called **The Bees’ Needs — Providing Habitat for Honey Bees and Wild Bees,** with guest speaker Kimberley Stoner.

Did you know that Connecticut has 349 species of bees — and honey bees are only one species? Bees are important to us for producing honey and wax and pollinating our crops, and they also are important to the health of our environment, pollinating our native wild plants. We get many of our ideas about bees from what we know about honey bees, but honey bees are very different from our native wild bees. Learn about the life cycles of bees, where they live, and what plants they need to thrive, and how to protect them from pesticides.



Kimberly A. Stoner joined the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station in 1987. She is currently studying bee diversity in Connecticut, pollination of pumpkins and squash, and how bees are exposed to pesticides. She also works with

people across Connecticut, including farmers, beekeepers, and community groups, in creating habitat for pollinators.

Note: We will be voting on our slate of Trustees at this meeting.

.....
**Cost: \$60 for members,
\$65 for non-members**

Cost includes hors d’oeuvres, open bar, dinner, dessert and coffee, good company and an interesting guest speaker. Each year over 125 members join us for this annual event.

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

*R.S.V.P. with payment by March 26 to
Simsbury Land Trust
P.O. Box 634, Simsbury, CT 06070*

Name _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Names of those attending with you: _____

Dinner selection: Steak _____ Salmon _____ Vegetarian _____

Cost: \$60.00 members | \$65.00 non-members

Amount enclosed: _____

Tables of 8 or 10 can be reserved in advance.