

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a forest. In the foreground, there are dark, silhouetted tree branches and dense green foliage. In the background, a body of water is visible, surrounded by trees with autumn-colored foliage in shades of orange, red, and yellow. The scene is misty or foggy, creating a soft, ethereal atmosphere.

## Simsbury Land Trust 2016 Annual Report

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*Celebrating 40 Years  
of Protecting Open Space in Simsbury*



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## Letter from the President

As the Simsbury Land Trust celebrates our 40th year anniversary I would like to see everyone in Simsbury be a member. Over those 40 years the residents of Simsbury have been given a multitude of compelling reasons to become members of the SLT. Hikes, talks, movies and educational offerings are constantly on tap. Our celebrations are great fun and an opportunity to socialize with like-minded people. Still, most people are involved because they understand the value of preserving open space for future generations.

Together as a group we have preserved over 1,100 acres — including the ridge along West Mountain where one can walk for over five miles on SLT trails. We have a beautiful boardwalk on the largest bog in town. You can view the bluebirds and hawks as you walk the open fields of Wagner Woods. Recently purchased Tanager Hill may be the most biodiverse property in Simsbury. Most noticeably we have acquired in perpetuity the development rights to the three largest farms in town.

We are in it for the conservation. Though there are several great open space parcels around town not owned by the SLT there is no mandate that they be managed strictly with conservation in mind. Our open spaces need constant, science-based

*Obtaining our wonderful properties has only been half the job. Your membership contribution provides the necessary funding to keep our open space viable.*



management to stave off the multitude of environmental stresses that they face. Fields need to be mowed, trails need to be kept cleared and invasive plants removed. Obtaining our wonderful properties has only been half the job. Your membership contribution provides the necessary funding to keep our open space viable.

We are extremely grateful for the loyalty of our current members, and hope that everyone who is not yet a member will join up right now! I understand that there are a great many organizations in town worthy of your membership. Please join the SLT in having a positive impact on everyone in town now and in the future.

— Fred Feibel

## Why should you be a member of the SLT?

Every year in the fall we send out mailers asking you to renew or join the SLT, telling you why we think you should join. This year we asked some of our long-time members why they became involved with the Simsbury Land Trust. Here are some of their responses.

- “We love Simsbury and saving land is important to us.”
- “We believe in the SLT mission.”
- “We need to preserve the land and natural beauty.”
- “Why wouldn’t I?”
- “Because we love hiking and the outdoors, and all the programs you offer.”
- “We love Green Scenes movies and hikes.”
- “Open space is important to us.”
- “SLT is an elegant and efficient way to protect the character of the town.”
- “To preserve the beauty of town and keep it from becoming overdeveloped.”
- “Because the impact of the SLT is close to home.”
- “It’s my duty as a good citizen – I joined in the 90s!”
- “To help preserve the land and quality of life in Simsbury.”

No matter what your reason is, we hope you will consider joining or renewing today!





# You Can't Walk in the Same Forest Twice

Margery Winters, Vice President

Simsbury Land Trust's mission is to implement creative land conservation solutions for the benefit of present and future generations. But what exactly does this mean in practical terms? Conservation is defined as the preservation, protection, or restoration of the natural environment, ecosystems, vegetation, and wildlife. Preservation is defined as an effort to keep something in its original state or in good condition. Permanence is implied but as the Greek philosopher Heraclitus wrote, "there is nothing permanent except change."

Change is a constant. Our Connecticut landscape changes season to season, year to year, decade to decade, and century to century. Four hundred years ago William Branford described New England as a "hidios (sic) and desolate wildernes (sic)...full of woods and thickets...". Just 180 years later in 1804 Jedidiah Morse, a Connecticut native who became America's first eminent geographer, described the whole state of Connecticut as resembling "a well-cultivated garden." By 1830 Connecticut was covered with farms and only 20% was forested. Now, almost 200 years later, farmland is scarce and 60% of our state is mature forests. Simsbury Land Trust has worked diligently to help our farmers preserve what limited farmland remains in town and much of our stewardship efforts are dedicated to the management and preservation of our forested areas.

How successful will our preservation efforts be? As physicist Niels Bohr once quipped, "prediction is very difficult, especially if it's about the future." Our current forests are not the same as our forests of 100 years ago. Prior to the accidental introduction and spread of the Chestnut blight fungus, the American chestnut thrived in

Connecticut and made up one-quarter of all the trees in New England's forests. In 1910, there were approximately 130 million American chestnut trees in our state. By 1930, in one of the greatest botanical disasters in history, mature chestnut trees were all but eliminated throughout the Appalachian range from Maine to Florida and west to Ohio.

Perhaps there is a chance we can restore the magnificent American Chestnuts (once called the 'redwoods of the East') to our forests. Scientists at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station have been hard at work for many years trying to develop blight-resistant trees by crossing American and blight resistant Chinese chestnuts. The Experiment Station's hybrid American Chestnuts should be available from Connecticut nurseries within 5 years. The Station as well as the Connecticut branch of The American Chestnut Foundation is seeking sites for the establishment of chestnut plantations where these hybrids can be tested. Such projects provide wonderful opportunity for land trusts with suitable sites to help bring back a historically important forest tree most of us have never seen.

What will our forests look like 50, 100 or 200 years from now? There are many threats to our best preservation efforts, some within and many beyond our

control. The list is long. Our high populations of whitetail deer preferentially eat certain tree seedlings such as maples, avoiding other less tasty saplings. Over time these browsing habits will result in a gradual change in the tree species in our woodlands. Invasive non-native plants threaten to choke out native species in certain habitats. Many hours of volunteer and paid labor

*Land preservation is not a passive process and it is time now to begin the discussion of how we want to manage our properties.*





have been devoted to the ongoing removal of these plants from SLT woods. Other threats such as the Asian longhorned beetle, ramorum blight (sudden oak death), emerald ash borer, hemlock woolly adelgid—are all introduced species which have the potential to eliminate one or more of our forest tree species or to devastate our forest. How sad to think that our great-grandchildren may not see the bright fall colors of maples, ash, and oaks we see dotting our forested hillsides.

Some changes to our forests can occur practically overnight as happened on September 21, 1938 when the most powerful hurricane in recent New England history hit Long Island and continued north, the eye following the Connecticut River north into Massachusetts. This so-called Great New England Hurricane, a Category 3 storm, devastated the forests of the Northeast, knocking down two billion trees in New York and New England and affecting over 35% of New England's total forest area. Imagine the havoc a similar sized storm would wreak on our mature forest cover today!

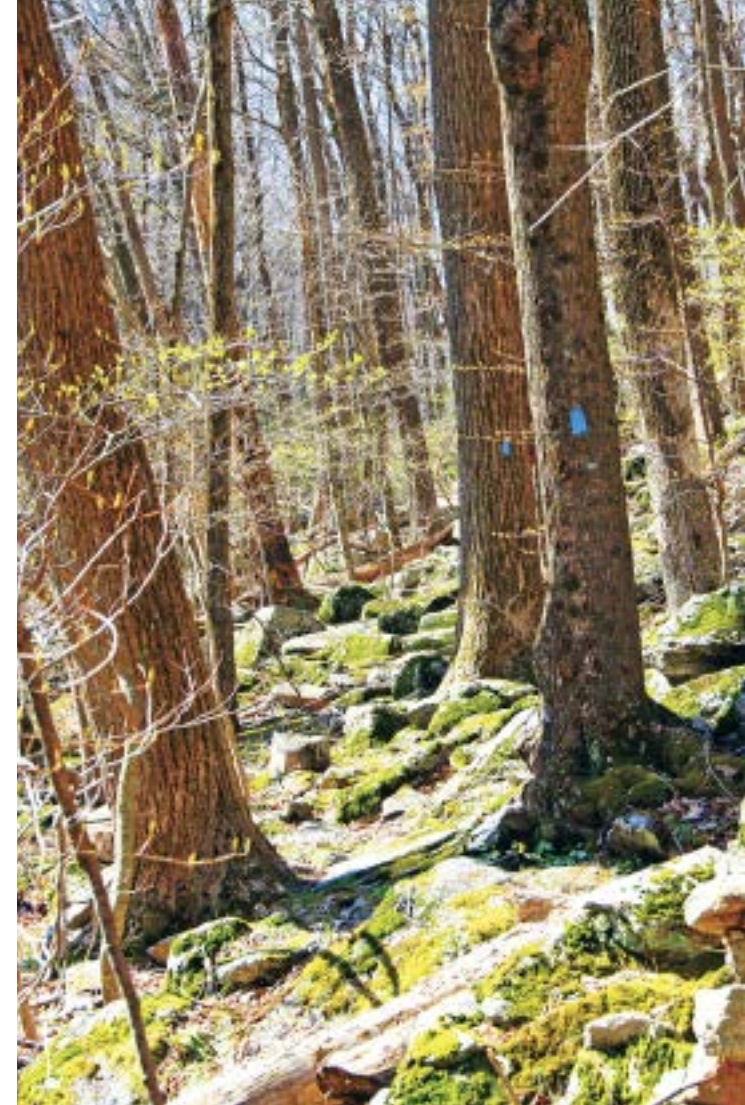
And management of our forests may also mean the cutting of certain sections to help diversify the aging



stands of forest to create a mix of young, mature and old forest which would be able to recover from hurricanes, ice storms, and other such disasters. Selective logging would have added benefits of increasing wildlife diversity. Other land trusts, including the Canton Land Trust, have recently logged a 10-acre section of one

their forested properties to increase habitat for the rare New England cottontail (a different species from the Eastern cottontail we see in our backyards). This logging will create a section of thicket habitat that this species and a host of other species favor.

What changes are in store for our properties? Land preservation is not a passive process and it is time now to begin the discussion of how we want to manage our properties. Even if we left the land unmanaged to let nature take its course, changes—some of them dramatic—will occur. An alternative is for the Simsbury Land Trust to develop more active best management plans to preserve and restore our native flora and fauna and to maintain and enhance the diversity of our forested landscape. Going forward, we may need to act purposefully to effect change to our properties, and sometimes our actions will need to be reactive to unexpected changes. We cannot always predict future challenges and opportunities, but with your ongoing help, the Simsbury Land Trust will be able to adapt the changes that are certain to lie ahead.





# Working Farms, Working Forests

*Sally Rieger, SLT Trustee*

Simsbury Land Trust has successfully protected three Simsbury farms in perpetuity (forever and ever) from residential and commercial development in the face of economic pressures favoring development over farming. These properties—Rosedale Farms, Tulmeadow Farm and the George Hall/Pharos Farms—are protected as working farms, meaning that farm operations are ongoing. Because federal funding helped finance the protection agreements, all three farms have some legally secured right of public access which may be disrupted from time to time to allow necessary farm operations.



## What's a working forest?

Of the three protected farms, only Tulmeadow Farm has a woodlot. For protection funding purposes, a woodlot is not considered a “farm” so the Tulmeadow Woodlot is protected under the United States Forest Service’s Forest



Legacy Program as a “working forest”. A working forest is one used for timber harvests and other business purposes such as maple sugaring. According to Don Tuller, Tulmeadow Farm has harvested timber from the Woodlot for over 200 years!

This spring there was a timber harvest at Tulmeadow Farm. It came as a surprise to some town residents and didn’t please the regular users of official and unofficial trails on the property. After all, there was the inconvenience and the disappointment of finding the Woodlot closed to the public as well as the fact that the aftermath of a timber harvest looks like devastation to many people. People wondered why trees had been cut and what was going on.

## Why do the Tullers cut timber?

Sustainable forest management, including periodic timber harvests, benefits:

- the farm, by raising cash
- the Woodlot itself, by creating a multi-aged forest with patches of open and closed tree canopy favoring a diversity of trees
- wildlife, by creating early successional forest, the rarest forest type in Connecticut, and required by some species of birds and mammals
- seedling trees, because that ugly looking slash (tops of trees and small branches) left on the ground helps keep the deer from eating small trees and sprouting tree seedlings.

## Was the timber harvest done right?

The timber harvest at Tulmeadow was done in accordance with a Forest Stewardship Plan that was filed with the State of Connecticut and approved by a certified state forester. The plan is based on Connecticut’s best management practices and is a requirement under the Forest Legacy Grant program. It specifies many different



parameters, including how many tree seedlings of a certain size must be left, what work can be done near vernal pools and temporary streams, and what can be done near rivers and perennial creeks and streams. For this harvest, a state forester visited Tulmeadow Woodlot and approved the work.

## What happens next?

The Tullers cut timber about every ten years, so it will be a while before the Woodlot is harvested again. The trails are open and Don Tuller offered a tour of the Woodlot at the celebration of the Simsbury Land Trust’s 40th anniversary in October.

The forest will regenerate in the cut areas, where the additional light and space favor the growth of healthy trees. The Woodlot that you saw here before the timber harvest was the result of Tulmeadow Farm’s ongoing forest harvesting and management program.

Is a forest regeneration area pretty after a timber harvest? Nope, but the Woodlot could not have been protected without the Forest Legacy Grant for working forests. The question to ask yourself is “Would I have preferred to see this land sprout a housing development?”





## A Bridge Not Far Enough

Eleven years ago a team of land trust volunteers built a 24-foot bridge across Hop Brook at our 60 Westledge Road property. This year, it failed. For a few months walkers on the West Mountain Red Trail had to wade or step rock-to-rock to cross the brook. That was not too bad during a drought, but we were counting on the drought lifting some day and the bridge again being essential. We studied how to make the repair, hoping to avoid the shortcomings that led to the failure. Several alternatives were considered. Finally, we concluded that a little more than half the bridge was salvageable. Volunteers built a cinderblock pier in the middle of the brook and jacked up the bridge. They removed the damaged parts, replacing them with new lumber. They added metal flashing to the design, to better repel water. They added some extra lumber to bolster the old part and connect it to the new. They lowered the bridge into place and removed the cinderblock pier. They replaced damaged walkway treads and rebuilt the railing. Finally, they posted a weight limit, one walker at a time, just in case. A project such as this relies on both volunteer labor and financial contributions. One trail user spontaneously made a donation earmarked for bridge repair! We hope you enjoy the new trail—one at a time!

*Special thanks to Don and Sally Rieger,  
Joe Springman and Joe Treacy  
for helping to repair the bridge!*



## This One Is For The Birds!

### *SLT Birdhouse Auction and Contest*

SLT is hosting our first Birdhouse Auction and Contest and we need your help! Beginning in January, we will have 50 birdhouses available for members to paint and decorate to be auctioned at our 2017 Annual Membership Dinner in the spring. More details will be announced at a later date.

Many local artists, including Alexander Anisimov, Catherine Elliott, Deborah Leonard, and John Johnson will be painting birdhouses for the auction. The birdhouses are available to members only and must be returned. Thank you Katie French, Coldwell Banker, for providing the birdhouses! If you are interested in participating, contact Amy Zeiner at [AmyZeiner@aol.com](mailto:AmyZeiner@aol.com).



## Deborah Leonard Designed Pendant Benefits Simsbury Land Trust

**Available exclusively at Bill Selig Jewelers**

Simsbury artist Deborah Leonard and Simsbury jeweler Bill Selig have teamed up to design a pendant necklace to benefit the Simsbury Land Trust 40th anniversary! This sterling silver pendant on an 18" sterling silver cable chain is priced at \$125.00, with Bill Selig Jewelers donating \$25.00 from each pendant sold to the Simsbury Land Trust. The pendant was designed by Deborah Leonard, and is available exclusively at Bill Selig Jewelers. Get yours for the holidays!





# Simsbury Land Trust — 40 Years in Review

## Looking back at 40 years of land preservation in Simsbury

Simsbury Land Trust started out in 1976 with no property and 70 charter members led by Peggy Shanks, the first president.

Today we have nearly 700 members and over 1,100 acres under permanent protection! We are using our 40th anniversary as a good reason to look back at all we have accomplished over these 40 years and celebrate the wonderful properties we now permanently protect.

SLT receives a gift from the Fonteyne family to be used to purchase 22 acres west of The Hedgehog.

SLT sponsors a Farmland Protection Forum.

Incorporation of the Simsbury Land Conservation Trust — now known as the Simsbury Land Trust.

70 charter members.

Marge Alspaugh creates the first edition of Landlines, the SLT newsletter. Marge remained the editor of the newsletter until she retired from the board in 1985.

John Cannon donates the first portion of 25 acres on the West Ridge.

SLT considers development of a West Ridge Trail and planning started on several portions.

Town and SLT begin an inventory of large undeveloped tracts of land and begin contacting new property owners.

First publication of The Simsbury Walkbook.

Pat Wegner donates the 15-acre Traineband Field on Terry's Plain Road to SLT.

SLT produces the second edition of The Simsbury Walkbook.

Ensign-Bickford Realty Corp donates the Ketchin Quarry to the SLT.

Preston Case donates 12 acres on Terry's Plain Road.

1976

1977

1979

1982

1983

1986

1990

1991

1992

1993

1994

1995

1998

1999

2000

Founders worked with town and state officials, experts in land use, and existing environmental groups to develop organizational structure, procedures and focus.

SLT acquires the first property, a 10-acre wetland donation from George Leaska.

Began examining the open space corridor along the Farmington River.

Two more West Ridge donations, 10 acres from the Friedman family, 50 acres from the Hendrick family.

Town and SLT examine the impact of a proposed North Saddle Ridge extension on the ridge and wetlands.

Mary Knapp donates the first portion of a 29-acre wetland at the south end of Saddle Ridge.

Farmington River Watershed Association begins work on a Wild & Scenic designation.

193 members.

Gerti James donates 9 acres on the Metacom Ridge to SLT.

Cathles family donates 49-acre ridge property.

233 members.

SLT engages graduate students from Yale School of Forestry to study the West Ridge and recommend a management plan.

SLT acquires 19 acres on Hedgehog Mountain, the first effort by SLT to raise acquisition funds.

SLT acquires 40-acre bog.



(Note: Some of this material originally appeared in our 30th Anniversary Annual Report—but we are taking this opportunity to update our timeline and share with all our neighbors in this special town-wide Annual Report. There are years that have been omitted from the timeline if no significant activity occurred.)





The Macke family donates 19 acres adjacent to the Arnold property in West Simsbury.

SLT commissions a feasibility study for a major campaign.

First Executive Director is hired and office space rented.

Bog Walk is constructed.

10-year Campaign for Simsbury announced with a goal of protecting specific properties totaling 1,000 acres.

Helen and Marion Walker leave an 8-acre ledge to SLT.

SLT purchases a 167-acre easement from Tulmeadow Farm. 775 members.

75 acres on West Mountain purchased from The Master's School – 500 continuous acres owned between the SLT and Town of Simsbury.

SLT obtains \$1.415 million Forest Legacy Grant toward the purchase of a conservation easement on the 67-acre Tulmeadow Woodlot.

SLT office relocates downtown to the Old Probate Court building.

62-acre Wagner Woods property in West Simsbury donated by Wagner family.

An endowment fund for the SLT is established with the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

760 members.

SLT completes the project and purchases a conservation easement on George Hall and Pharos Farms.

Native plant garden established on the Glover property.

Farms, Forks and Frames Dinner and Art Auction raises over \$20,000.

SLT completes \$1.2 million Tanager Hill purchase, 75 acres adjacent to the Owen-Mortimer parcel.

A second three-year Strategic Plan is completed and initiated.

2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016

SLT receives its first public grant, \$740,000 from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service for a conservation easement on Rosedale Farms.

Madeline Salster donates 5 acres to SLT on the Farmington River.

SLT acquires a conservation easement from 109-acre Rosedale Farms with funds from federal, state, town and individual sources.

Preston Case gifts his residence, subject to a life estate, to advance the SLT mission.

Simsbury and Canton Land Trusts acquire the 67-acre Arnold property next to Onion Mountain.

SLT accepts a \$325,000 bequest, its largest monetary gift ever, from the estate of the late Marie Dugan.

SLT purchases the conservation easement to the "triangle" portion of Tulmeadow Farm, an addition of 20 acres.

20-acre easement on the East Ridge donated by Leland Holcomb.

Laird and Ann Mortimer donate 28 acres running from East Weatogue Street to the base of Talcott Mountain, known as the Owen-Mortimer property.

Extensive West Mountain Trail system completed by SLT stewardship volunteers.

SLT begins work on a complex deal between George Hall, Town of Simsbury and the SLT to preserve George Hall and Pharos Farms.

First year for Green Scenes, our documentary film and discussion series.

Past-President and longtime SLT acquisition leader Dick Davis retires from the Board of Trustees.

The SLT renames the endowment fund the Richard A. Davis Endowment Fund and raises funds to honor Dick Davis' contribution to the SLT.

683 members.

SLT closes on the conservation easement for the Tulmeadow Woodlot, the final piece of the Tulmeadow Farm project.

Records are digitized over a three year period with help from a \$15,000 grant.

"Dirty Boots" Kids Club is started with an activity book for children.





# Financial Highlights

## Statement of Revenues and Expenses

Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2016

### Revenues

Membership Contributions	\$ 104,926
Contribution Income — Restricted *	102,375
Grants	30,000
Land Acquisition Contributions	5,750
Annual Dinner — Net	11,149
Miscellaneous Income	1,450
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>255,650</b>

### Expenses

Administrative	41,381
Salaries and Benefits	38,663
Membership	41,111
Stewardship	29,456
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>150,611</b>

### Excess of Revenues Over Expenses

\$ 105,039

\* Restricted Contribution Income is funds donated to the Richard A. Davis Endowment Fund held at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

## Balance Sheet

JUNE 30, 2016

### Assets

CURRENT ASSETS	
Cash — Unrestricted	\$ 244,746
— Restricted	48,523
Prepaid Expenses	3,163
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<b>296,432</b>

### OTHER ASSETS

Richard A. Davis Endowment Fund (Hartford Foundation for Public Giving)	187,644
Land	14,603,722
<b>TOTAL OTHER ASSETS</b>	<b>14,791,366</b>

### Total Assets

**\$15,087,798**

### Fund Balance

Beginning Fund Balance	14,752,115
Restricted — Richard A. Davis Endowment Fund	187,644
Board Designated Stewardship Fund	43,000
Excess of Revenues over Expenses	105,039
<b>ENDING FUND BALANCE</b>	<b>15,087,798</b>

### Fund Balance

**\$15,087,798**



# Membership Donations

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Anonymous  
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Mel and Karen Ollestad ♦♦

We want to thank the community for its generous support this past year.  
None of the Simsbury Land Trust's accomplishments in 2016 would have been possible  
without our membership and our many remarkable volunteers and donors.

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## Simsbury Land Trust

# Richard A. Davis Endowment Fund

Since 1976, the Simsbury Land Trust has brought over 1,100 acres of farmland and open spaces under its protection. We have built an extensive network of trails and related parking and access areas on these lands for the use and enjoyment of the public.

Simsbury Land Trust is committed to protecting these lands and to keeping them open for our community to enjoy in perpetuity. Acquisition of these properties is only the first step; the long term commitment to preservation also requires that the SLT have resources adequate for the perpetual care and maintenance of all of these properties. While the volunteer support the SLT receives is tremendous, over the long term not all of the necessary stewardship and maintenance can be accomplished solely with volunteer assistance.

Consequently, a permanent source of funds is required to enable the Simsbury Land Trust to fulfill its commitment of caring for these properties.

There are a number of expenses associated with the Simsbury Land Trust programs and activities needed to care for the land, the trails and other infrastructure. The endowment fund will provide a permanent source of income to cover these costs.

We are asking you to consider helping us build our endowment by making a gift to the SLT Richard A. Davis Endowment Fund. This will ensure a permanent source of funds to care for the properties we worked so hard to protect. Unlike other contributions to the SLT, this donation must be made directly to the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

Our fund, called the Simsbury Land Trust Richard A. Davis Endowment Fund, has been named to honor the commitment to land preservation in Simsbury and over 25 years of tireless effort on behalf of the SLT by Dick Davis, long time SLT Trustee and past president. We would like to honor his outstanding contributions by continually increasing this fund.

Building this endowment fund will help ensure that the property now in the care of the Simsbury Land Trust will stay protected and open to the public in perpetuity. Please consider a contribution today!

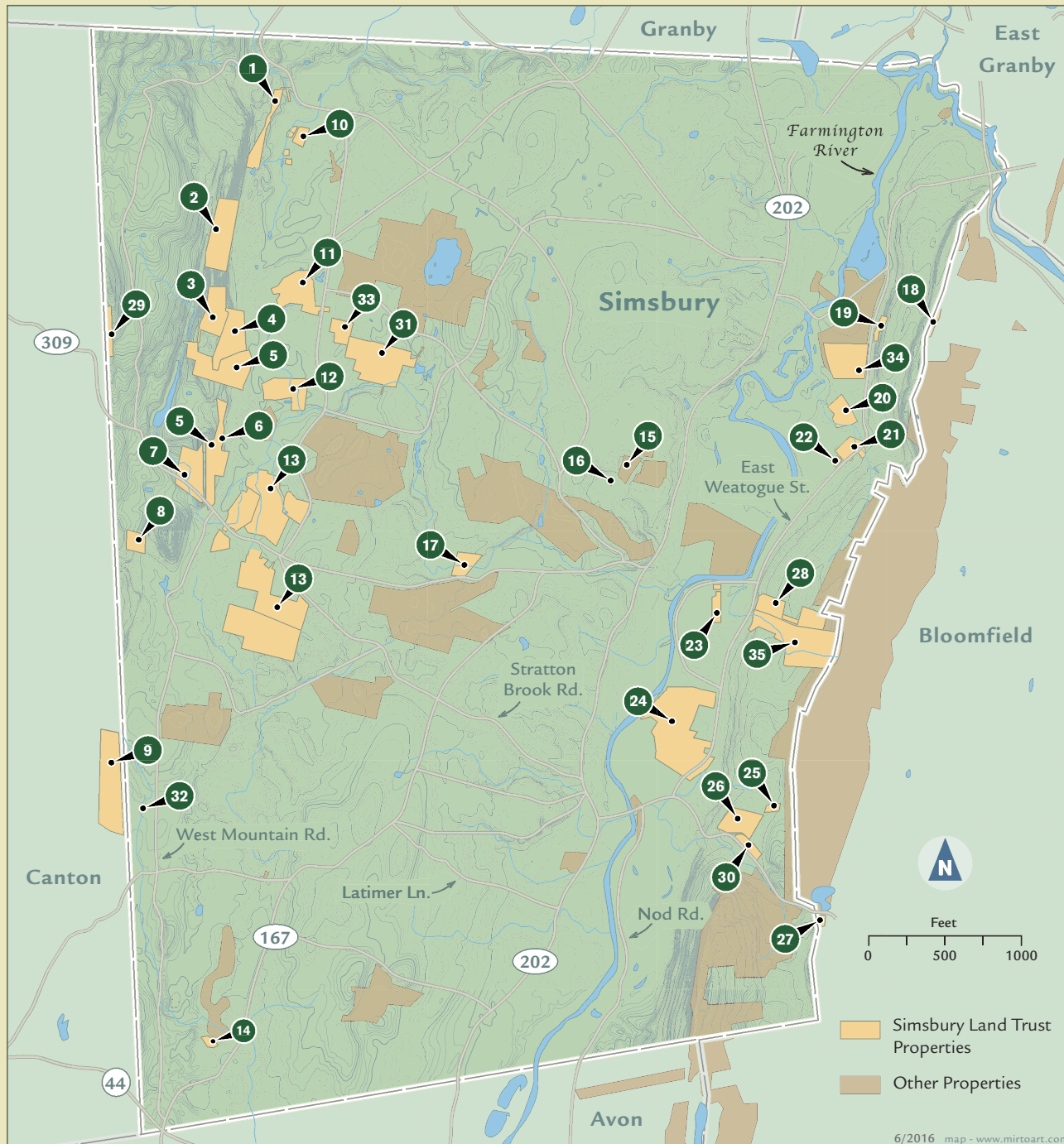


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3. Friedman
4. Hendrick
5. The Master's School
6. Fonteyne
7. 60 Westledge
8. Walker
9. Arnold
10. Leaska
11. Bog
12. Knapp
13. Tulmeadow Farm
14. Rose/Krasnoger
15. Carlson
16. Bergman
17. Welden
18. James
19. Ketchin Quarry
20. Wegner
21. Case
22. Landerman
23. Salster
24. Rosedale Farms
25. Fletcher
26. Holcomb
27. Cutler
28. Owen-Mortimer
29. Landerman #2
30. Glover
31. Wagner Woods
32. Macke
33. George Hall Farm
34. George Hall/Pharos Farm
35. Tanager Hill



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## It's membership renewal time.

Renew or join early for 2017 to get your copy of The Walkbook in time for the fall hiking season! The book features 27 hikes in Simsbury, complete with maps and descriptions of the hikes. Also included are facts and information about the important geological features found in the areas surrounding the trails.

## Get your copy of the new SLT Walkbook.

The new, improved full-color edition of The Walkbook has been completely revised, with all new maps, photos, and updated trail and property information! This new edition is available only to those joining or renewing their membership with the Simsbury Land Trust for 2017.

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- Helps fund acquisition projects, such as Tanager Hill, George Hall/Pharos Farm, and Wagner Woods.
- Provides funds needed to help care for the 35 properties the SLT has under permanent protection, including trail maintenance, bridge building and repair and invasive species removal.
- Funds over 15 education and recreation activities each year, including Green Scenes, our documentary film and discussion series, family hikes, bird walks and more.
- Supports the daily operations of the Simsbury Land Trust, providing funds for member services, informational publications like Landlines, our website and member recognition events.

Please use the enclosed envelope to renew or join today.

- 27 hikes with maps and descriptions
- Geological facts and features
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*Special thanks to  
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