

Simsbury Land Trust  
2017 Annual Report



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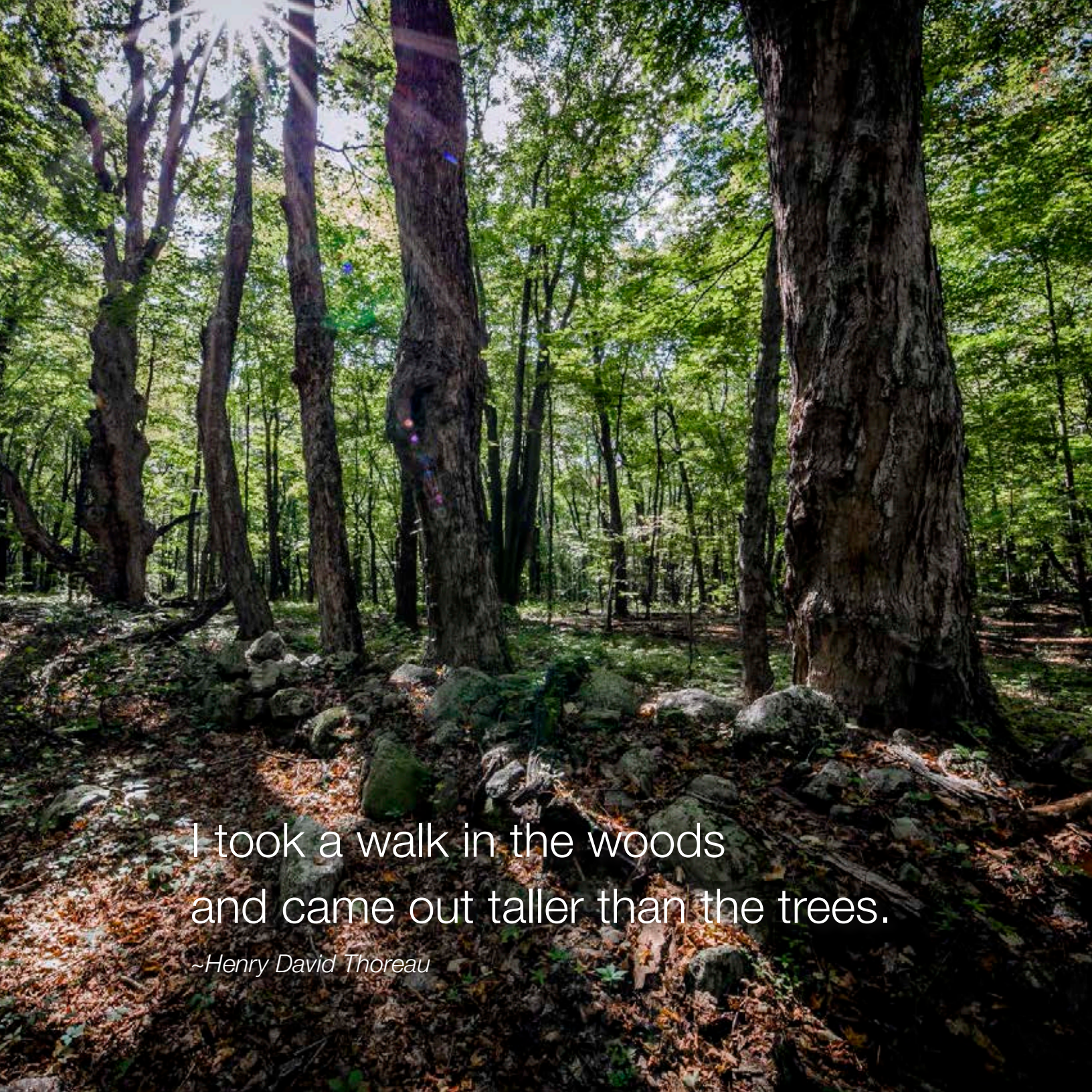
*Editor:* Amy Zeiner

*Design:* John Johnson

Art Direction and Design

*Thanks to our photographers:*

Linda Carissimi, Tom Crawford,  
Ray Padron, Jim Ray, Sally Rieger,  
Susan Van Kleef, Rick Warters

A photograph of a forest floor with large trees and sunlight filtering through the canopy. The ground is covered in fallen leaves and rocks. The trees are tall and slender, with thick trunks. The sunlight creates a bright, starburst effect in the upper left corner of the image.

I took a walk in the woods  
and came out taller than the trees.

*~Henry David Thoreau*



## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Now is the time! Join in and become involved with the Simsbury Land Trust. As little or as much time as you can spare, we want you to get involved. There are as many ways to help the SLT as there are to enjoy it. In fact, as our volunteers have found out, being involved is a lot of fun! There are stewardship workdays where you can be a part of an enthusiastic crew and there are properties that you can monitor on your own schedule. We have events and educational presentations to organize and children's programs that you will enjoy as much as the kids do. We need your help with photography, social media and education. We even need your ideas for new programs, hikes and activities.

Our current membership has reached a new high of 828 members this year! We are very proud of that but hope to see the SLT reach even more households in the future. As I have said before, everyone in

Simsbury should be a member. Our current volunteers do wonderful work and we would like to support them by bringing in new and energetic people to help out. As more volunteers become active we will be able to create more opportunities for everyone to enjoy our properties. A larger, more active membership puts us in a position to access new grants and funding. We make sure that all membership contributions are used to maximum benefit. For all our current members and volunteers, thank you. For those who have not yet joined in, now is the time!

Fred Feibel



## Why Should I Invest in the Simsbury Land Trust? *Amy Zeiner, Executive Director*

What is the Simsbury Land Trust anyway? Who are they and what do they do? Why should I join?

Officially, the Simsbury Land Trust is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to protect scenic vistas, geological features and farmland that visually define Simsbury's character and provide healthy habitats for local wildlife and plants. Our goal is to consistently craft, support and implement creative land conservation solutions for the benefit of present and future generations.

In simpler terms, the Simsbury Land Trust is a group of conservation-minded individuals who have banded together to permanently protect some of Simsbury's most beautiful and scenic

farms, fields, forests, wetlands and ridgelines. Governed by a volunteer board of trustees and two part-time employees, with the help and financial support from 828 families in Simsbury and the surrounding towns, the SLT has permanently protected 1,106 acres of property.

For 40 years our focus was on conservation and the acquisition of new properties. Now our focus is shifting toward stewardship — the care of those 1,106 acres and maintenance of our trails — and recreation and education, promoting the use of our properties through public hikes and increasing awareness of the value of conservation and these beautiful properties by offering a variety of educational programs to the public.

This doesn't mean we have gotten out of the acquisition business altogether, but simply that we are shifting our focus. We are always on the lookout for a property that may become available for protection that fits the mission of our organization.

What does that mean to you?

- Member or not, this means that nearly 20 miles of trails on some of our 35 properties are open to you and your family and friends for hiking.
- It means that scenic vistas and fabulous views have been preserved, and your favorite farm will continue to be a farm instead of a new neighborhood.
- That ridgeline walk with the view you love will always be there, both on the east and west sides of town.
- The favorite field with the nesting birds — along with butterflies and dragonflies and other creatures — will be there for the long-term for exploration and quiet walks.

Since 1976, when the original forward-thinking group of Simsbury

residents gathered to form the Simsbury Land Trust, we have been working diligently to preserve important parcels in town. We have also been telling you what we do and how important it is, why we need you and why you should support us through membership contributions and donations of time and talent as volunteers.

Over 40 years ago the founding members set out to preserve property for future generations, their children and grandchildren, nieces and nephews. Now many of you are that future generation! We hope you consider paying it forward by helping to protect these parcels for the next generation by investing in the SLT.

This year 828 families — a Simsbury Land Trust record — decided that what we do was worth an investment. If you are currently a member, we hope you decide to invest in us again for 2018. Perhaps consider volunteering to work on a trail, or lead a hike. If you aren't a member please consider joining us for a year and see for yourself if those other 828 families were right!



*Since 1976, when the original forward-thinking group of Simsbury residents gathered to form the Simsbury Land Trust, we have been working diligently to preserve important parcels in town.*



We asked some of our members to tell you why they help the SLT. What follows are their own words explaining why they joined, why they are on the board, and why they spend their valuable free time helping us to take care of the trails and properties.



**Tom Crawford**

SLT Member since 2004

Easement Monitor, George Hall Farm and Pharos Farm  
Simsbury resident since 1982

*"I enjoy spending time on so many different trails from steep hills to rolling valleys, and appreciate all that SLT has accomplished. Belonging to the SLT and helping out with stewardship gives me an opportunity to give back."*

**Paula and Rick Robinson**

SLT Members since 2011

Property Stewards, 60 Westledge

Lifelong Simsbury residents

*"We joined and volunteer for the SLT because it offers a hands-on, outdoors approach to community involvement. Whether it's maintaining a trail, snipping back invasive vines, or building a footbridge, we are doing our small part to help preserve the natural beauty of our surroundings. As an added bonus, we get to meet new people and attend many interesting events throughout the year."*



**Deborah Leonard**

SLT Life Member

Artist

Simsbury resident since 1987

*"Nothing is more healing or uplifting to me than being out in nature. The natural beauty that I love to paint has to be preserved. It's a wonderful gift that we are all responsible for passing on to coming generations. I became a life member of SLT because I wanted to make a statement for preservation at a time when my life was busy with kids, school and family schedules and I couldn't do any more."*



## Karen Brand

SLT Member since 2002  
SLT Trustee and Board Secretary  
Simsbury resident since 1990

*"I donate and am involved with the Land Trust because I believe that keeping our open space, farms and special natural places is important for so many reasons, and I value the time and effort of people who work to preserve them. I also feel lucky to live in a beautiful town where many people appreciate the natural landscape and have been able to marshall the resources to protect it. Since I enjoy it so much, I want to help keep it."*



## Jim Ray

SLT Member since 1999  
Property Steward, Wagner Woods  
Simsbury resident since 1997

*"I have long enjoyed and supported all things related to outdoors so it was natural for me to join the Simsbury Land Trust. However, it has been the many hikes on the properties, participation in training events like the Connecticut Coverts course and the Connecticut Land Conservation conferences, leading hikes, taking pictures, being a steward for the Wagner Woods property and working with other members on those special work days that have provided the real meaning."*



## Steve and Susan Byer

SLT Members since 1999  
Simsbury residents since 1993

*"We moved to Connecticut 24 years ago. Having previously lived in a small cramped suburban community, we were hoping to now find a more spacious and natural setting. When we saw the neighborhood farms and open spaces that exist here in Simsbury, we knew this was the place. We purchased a home on 9 acres of land, but wondered about the 15-acre field that abuts our property. Soon after we moved in, that neighboring land was donated to the SLT. Another neighbor, Dick Davis, explained the ideas of keeping open spaces alive to enjoy now and for future generations."*

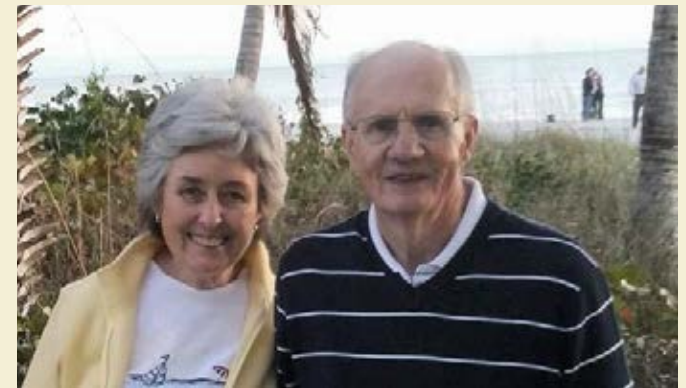
*Words cannot adequately describe the enjoyment we get living in this environment. Every time we come back home from a vacation or even a trip from West Hartford, we realize how lucky we are to have the Simsbury Land Trust caring about the open spaces of this wonderful town. We are happy to support their efforts."*



## Joe and Mary Jane Springman

SLT Members since 1996  
Property Steward, Tanager Hill  
Simsbury residents since 1980

*"We donate to SLT and participate in stewardship and workdays because local, convenient access to undeveloped open space is a major part of our quality of life in Simsbury."*



# Another Busy Year in Stewardship— Taking Care of SLT's Properties

*Don and Sally Rieger*

Our stewardship volunteers did yeoman's service again, both at all-hands workdays and by pitching in when needs are identified. Some tasks are beyond what they can safely undertake, and then professionals are hired.

Tanager Hill, our newest property, has been a major stewardship focus this year. To prevent erosion, we installed water bars on trails and obstructed informal paths that had developed on some hillsides. Of course, we attacked alien invasive plants, notably Tanager's robust Oriental Bittersweet. We built a footbridge at one brook crossing. We installed three park benches at birding sites identified by the late Roger Preston. The trail up to Penwood saw further improvements with help from the Connecticut Forest and Park Association. It is now clear and blazed all the way to its junction with the park yellow trail at the top of the hill.

Tanager's professionally done management plan suggested that one of the vernal pools should have a better tree canopy. To achieve that we closed the trail that separated it from the adjacent woods, planted some native shrubs and trees, and adjusted the mowing of the adjoining field. In time, the vernal pool should be in more of a wooded environment. As always, stewardship involves balancing public access and wildlife habitat.

We were concerned that the powerline work being done by Eversource would do aesthetic as well as habitat damage to Tanager. We were particularly worried about the migration corridor between the mountainside and the wetlands because that is the route used by upland dwelling amphibians to go to their breeding sites in the pools. We met with Eversource representatives at the site and were impressed by the care they were taking. The disruption, while not pretty in the short term, is being minimized, and we believe the area will be properly restored.

A second major focus was Glover. We had, with help from the Hartford Foundation and the Farmington River Watershed Association, planted a variety of native shrubs there two years ago. Regrettably, the drought and marauding deer took a toll on the plants. This year we replaced some of the shrubs and outfitted many of them with deer cages to give them a fighting chance. Things are



*We brought in the heavy artillery to attack entrenched invasives at Glover.*



*Pat Uhl, Dennis Lockwood and Sally Rieger plant native shrubs to enhance a vernal pool at Tanager.*

*As always, stewardship  
involves balancing public  
access and wildlife habitat.*

looking better, in part because of increased rainfall in the spring and part of the summer. Glover offers a wealth of invasive plants, and many volunteer hours were spent there. A new invasive has showed up in town, Sow Thistle, which is more commonly found in the Midwest. Growing to a height as high as seven feet, it aggressively occupies vulnerable spaces, producing more than 10,000 seeds per plant. In September, we took eleven big leaf bags of Sow Thistle from Glover, trying to remove it before the seeds matured.

In past years, we had not tried to manage the western half of Glover because it was an impenetrable thicket mostly of Multiflora Rose. This year we hired a forestry mower to clear the site and then planted it with varieties of seed from native plants suited to the different parts of the area. The results so far are encouraging, but it will take a couple of years before we are ready to think about a trail there. To view the work site and see what happens to be in bloom, walk along the Glover boardwalk and through the pine grove to get a peek out the back of the grove across the newly seeded area.

Wagner Woods has been undergoing a second phase of professional invasive plant control. The property has also been enhanced by the addition of two park benches overlooking the hay field.

60 Westledge Road's parking area is being enhanced by filling low spots with gravel. That work is on-going and will make parking in the small parking area easier.



*Volunteers removed the invasive  
Sow Thistle from the Glover property*



*The view from one  
of the new benches at  
Wagner Woods.*




*One of the new  
benches at Wagner  
Woods was  
dedicated to the  
memory of Roger  
Preston, birder  
extraordinaire and  
property steward.*




A number of our properties with fields require regular mowing to keep them accessible to walkers. We hire local landscapers to mow the paths at the Case property, Wagner Woods, Glover and Tanager Hill during the summer. Maintaining fields to provide habitat for grassland birds and pollinators requires mowing before the new growing season. Otherwise the fields would revert to forest.

In the future, we will be continuing with our invasive control work and our mowing program. We expect to repair the boardwalk that provides access to the viewing platform at the red maple swamp on the Knapp property. We'll have volunteers maintaining our trails and making sure that the bird nesting boxes we've put up are clean and ready for spring use. As needed, we'll consult with professionals for advice on various aspects of habitat improvement as we did this year. For example, we often need guidance on how to best control certain invasive plants, and to provide for the needs of special concern or endangered species of plants and animals that our properties harbor.

Overall, we do as much stewardship as we can with volunteer workers. They have been the foundation of our land stewardship and we are deeply grateful for their contributions. You could not enjoy our trails and visit our properties without their work. As time goes on, following the guidance of the Land Trust Alliance, we are trying to rely more on professional help. The Land Trust Alliance sees a future for land trusts in which there are fewer volunteers available to provide the services we need. We see professional help as a growing necessity. Like many other land trusts, we have more properties to steward than we did in earlier years, we find our younger families are busier than in the past and our current volunteers are aging. As circumstances continue to change and the value of protected land increases along with increasing land development, we need to be able count on you for your membership and your donations to provide the funding to continue to keep our properties available and safe for public use.



*Overall, we do as much stewardship as we can with volunteer workers. They have been the foundation of our land stewardship and we are deeply grateful for their contributions.*



*Don Uhl stewards the West Mountain Blue Trail.*





*Peter Picone (L), CT DEEP, Don Rieger and Sally Rieger discuss Peter's suggestion for controlling invasives at Wagner Woods.*



*Future SLT stewards on the Glover property.*



*Volunteers work on one of the three new benches on Tanager Hill.*

## Volunteer Opportunities

**PROPERTY MONITOR:** Each monitor is assigned a specific property. There can be more than one monitor per property. It is the responsibility of the monitor to walk the property (or trail, if one is a trail monitor) twice a year and to submit a monitoring report form to the SLT. Many monitors visit their properties more often, and do some basic trail work — picking up garbage, moving small limbs and branches. Others ask for advice on problems and will help with the larger jobs. Monitors also report on problems requiring prompt correction such as dangerous leaning trees or misuse of the property. Both the formal and informal reports help us keep track of what is happening on our land and let us know about any work that needs to be done.

**WORKDAY VOLUNTEER:** Several times a year the SLT holds Stewardship Workdays. We ask for volunteers, and usually meet in the parking lot at the SLT office. The volunteers come at the set date and time to get a job. Most workdays involve projects on several properties and volunteers are not expected to do anything they are not comfortable doing, nor is anyone sent off to a job alone. Commonly used tools at these events are loppers, clippers, bow saws and work gloves. The SLT owns some tools available for the volunteers. This is a great opportunity for those with limited time.

**HIKE LEADER:** Our trustees currently lead most SLT hikes, but we would love your help. Do you have a favorite and often frequented hiking trail, either a SLT property or other trail in town? Would you like to lead a small group hike? Let us know and we can help schedule an event.

**EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATION:** Several times a year, generally on Sunday afternoons or Thursday evenings, the SLT offers educational programming. Sometimes it is a documentary film followed by a discussion. Or it can be a lecture with slides or photos. Do you have an area of expertise you would be willing to share with the SLT and our members? Please contact the office to let us know.

For additional information on how to volunteer for the SLT, please contact [amyzeiner@aol.com](mailto:amyzeiner@aol.com) or 860-651-8773. Thanks for your interest.

# Financial Highlights

## Statements of Activities

For the Years Ended June 30, 2017 and June 30, 2016

	2017				2016			
	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED	TOTAL	UNRESTRICTED	TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED	PERMANENTLY RESTRICTED	TOTAL
<b>CHANGES IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS</b>								
<b>Revenues:</b>								
Membership Contributions	\$107,738			\$107,738	\$104,926			\$104,926
Contribution Income — Restricted *			17,810	17,810	4,988		97,387	102,375
Grants	25,000			25,000	30,000			30,000
Land Acquisition Contributions	750			750	5,750			5,750
Annual Dinner — Net	2,265			2,265	11,149			11,149
Miscellaneous Income	10,249		7,201	17,450	1,035			1,035
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>146,002</b>		<b>25,011</b>	<b>171,013</b>	<b>157,848</b>		<b>97,387</b>	<b>255,235</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>								
Administrative	38,202			38,202	41,381			41,381
Salaries and Benefits	37,764			37,764	38,663			38,663
Membership	34,391			34,391	41,111			41,111
Stewardship	16,902			16,902	29,456			29,456
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>127,259</b>			<b>127,259</b>	<b>150,611</b>			<b>150,611</b>
<b>Revenues Over Expenses</b>	<b>18,743</b>		<b>25,011</b>	<b>43,754</b>	<b>7,237</b>		<b>97,387</b>	<b>104,624</b>
<b>Other change in unrestricted assets:</b>								
Unrealized (loss)/gain on short term investments	(1,491)			(1,491)	415			415
Change in net assets	17,252		25,011	42,263	7,652		97,387	105,039
Net assets, beginning of year	296,433	14,603,722	187,643	15,087,798	288,781	14,603,722	90,256	14,982,759
<b>Net assets, end of year</b>	<b>\$313,685</b>	<b>\$14,603,722</b>	<b>\$212,654</b>	<b>\$15,130,061</b>	<b>\$296,433</b>	<b>\$14,603,722</b>	<b>\$187,643</b>	<b>\$15,087,798</b>

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

## Balance Sheet

For the Years Ended June 30, 2017 and June 30, 2016

	June 30 2017	June 30 2016
<b>Assets</b>		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash – Unrestricted	\$310,678	\$287,746
– Donor Restricted	953	5,523
Prepaid Expenses	2,054	3,163
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	313,685	296,432
OTHER ASSETS		
Investments Held by Others	212,654	187,644
Land	14,603,722	14,603,722
TOTAL OTHER ASSETS	14,816,376	14,791,366
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$15,130,061</b>	<b>\$15,087,798</b>
<b>Fund Balance</b>		
Unrestricted	313,685	296,432
Restricted – Richard A. Davis Endowment Fund	212,654	187,644
Temporarily Restricted	14,603,722	14,603,722
<b>Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$15,130,061</b>	<b>\$15,087,798</b>



# Membership Donations

We want to thank the community for its generous support this past year. None of the Simsbury Land Trust's accomplishments in 2017 would have been possible without our membership and our many remarkable volunteers and donors.

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Your membership donations are vital, supporting the every day operations of the Simsbury Land Trust. But there are additional stewardship and long-term needs that you can help by giving in one (or more) of these ways.

### A gift to the Richard A. Davis Simsbury Land Trust Endowment Fund

The Richard A. Davis Simsbury Land Trust Endowment Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving allows the SLT to continue expanding its work protecting properties and provides financial flexibility and resources for critical property stewardship needs. We are pleased to report that thanks to some generous support from our membership the endowment has reached over \$200,000, which provided \$8,000 in income for stewardship activities in 2017.

Gifts to the SLT Richard A. Davis Endowment Fund must be made directly to the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving. You can donate online or send a check: [www.hfpg.org/index.php/donate/view-fund/simsbury-land-trust-endowment-fund](http://www.hfpg.org/index.php/donate/view-fund/simsbury-land-trust-endowment-fund).

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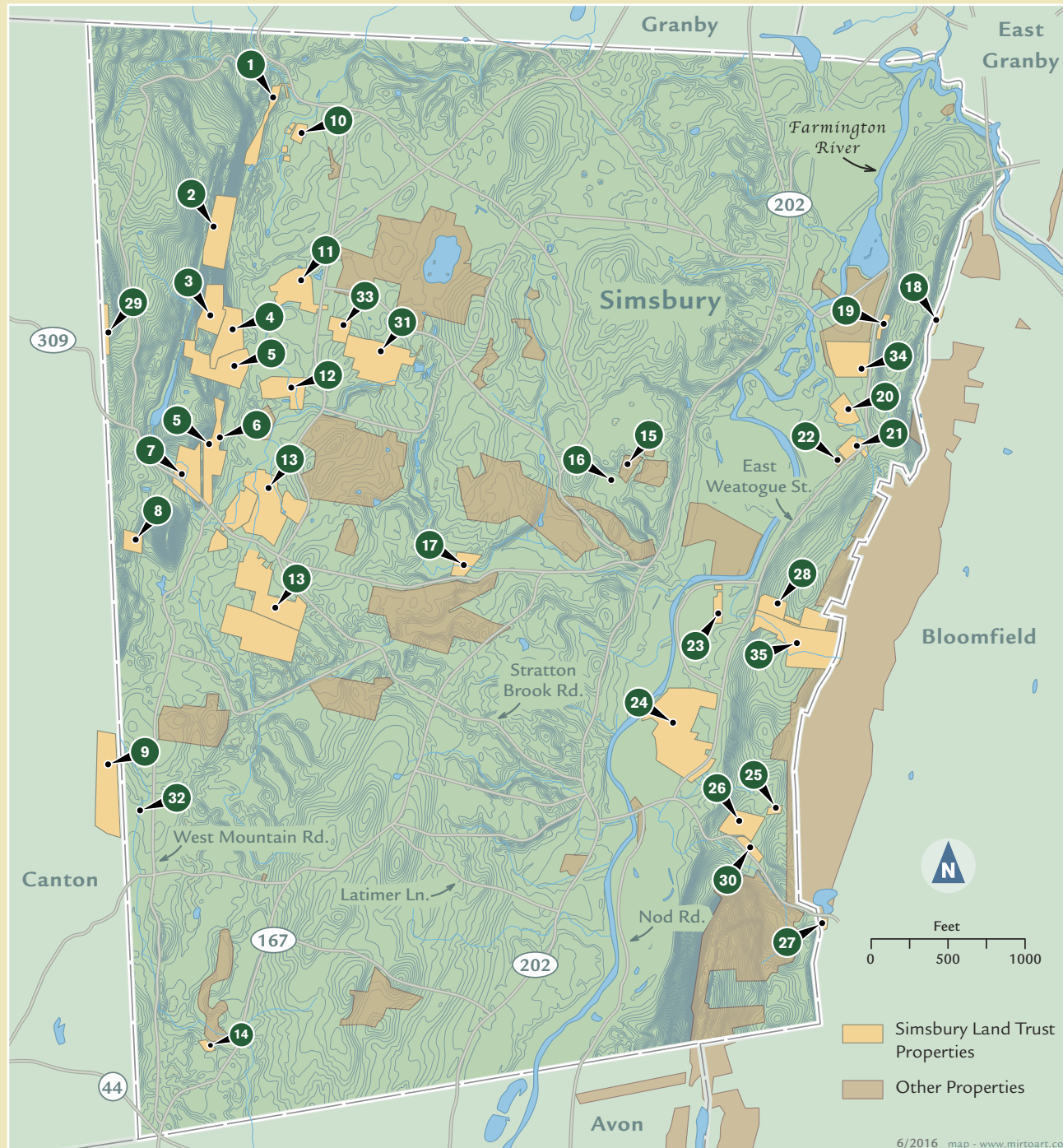
### Through a planned gift

A bequest to SLT or the Richard A. Davis Simsbury Land Trust Endowment Fund translates your commitment to protect Simsbury's open space, farmland, and scenic vistas into a lasting legacy. If you are considering a general use gift to the Simsbury Land Trust as part of your estate plan, you can add a simple provision to your will or trust such as: "I give (specific amount, percentage or residue) to Simsbury Land Trust, Inc. (Tax ID# 06-09585-73), having its principal offices at 10A Phelps Lane, Simsbury, CT 06070, for its general purposes."

Please note that planned gifts to the Endowment Fund require different language specifying the Richard A. Davis Simsbury Land Trust Endowment Fund as the recipient. The SLT can work with you and your attorney to craft the appropriate language.

For more information and assistance in donating to the Endowment Fund, customizing a large or planned gift, or to notify us that you have done so, please contact us at 860-651-8773 or [amyzeiner@aol.com](mailto:amyzeiner@aol.com).

*Thank you for your consideration.*



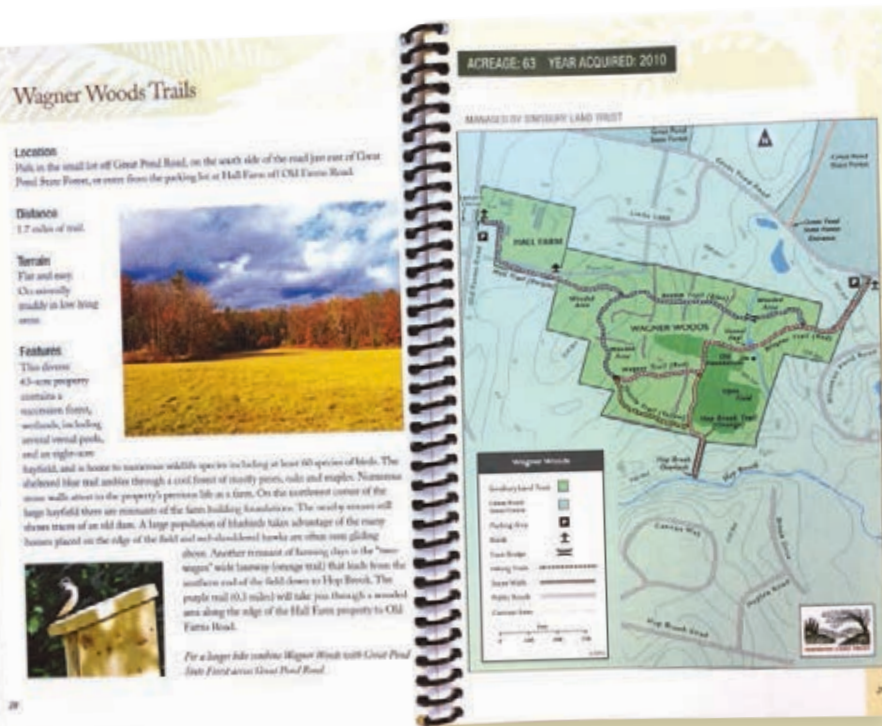
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1. Cannon
2. Cathles
3. Friedman
4. Hendrick
5. The Master's School
6. Fonteyne
7. 60 Westledge
8. Walker
9. Arnold
10. Leaska
11. Bog
12. Knapp
13. Tulmeadow Farm
14. Rose/Krasnoger
15. Carlson
16. Bergman
17. Welden
18. James
19. Ketchin Quarry
20. 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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- 27 hikes with maps and descriptions
- Geological facts and features
- Color photos of all properties

*Special thanks to  
Simsbury Bank  
for helping to  
underwrite this book!*

## It's membership renewal time.

Your membership contribution to the Simsbury Land Trust:

- 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.

### New members receive a free Walkbook

Join as a member for 2018 and get your free copy of The Walkbook! The recently updated 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.

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 to new members joining the Simsbury Land Trust for 2018.

**Please use the enclosed envelope to renew or join today.**