

Looking Ahead

By Gail Cameron

We're busy planning for the coming year's land trust activities. This winter, we expect to host a walk on the ABC property where the land trust holds an easement from the Regional Water Authority. This property is not open to the public, so this event offers a good opportunity to learn about its history and current status. If Mother Nature cooperates with a little snow cover, we can also look for tracks and signs of the animals that live there. Bundle up and join us—a winter hike can be exhilarating.

The eagles on our State Street property continue to nest and produce young (3 fledglings this past year). We'll have a talk about eagles and their recovery from the days of DDT and will also plan a 2nd annual Birds and Brew event if the eagle parents return to the nest next spring.

We also anticipate a pollinator program on creating habitat for birds, butterflies

and bees. We may hold a pollinator plant sale in conjunction with that presentation. Learn why it is so important to help sustain pollinators, and what you can do in your home landscape to provide for them.

Have you ever kept a nature journal? It's a great way to focus on the world around you, de-stress and bring out your inner artist or writer. We've been in contact with a wonderful teacher and hope to host a lecture/workshop led by her. It will be an opportunity to unplug and enjoy the benefits of nature. Just a reminder—if you have suggestions for hikes or programs, please let us know by contacting us via our website at www.hlct.org. We'd love to hear from you!



Join us for a hike or other nature-watching event. Red eft by Connie Gersick



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President's Message Changes in the Land

How might the New England landscape change in 50 years, and what will be the consequences for people and the environment? A recent study* conducted by the Harvard Forest and the Smithsonian Institution, examined four possible scenarios for the future of the Massachusetts landscape depending on current land-use decisions. The researchers found that recent forest loss trends, if they continue unchanged, will undermine land conservation gains, damage water quality throughout the state, and limit the ability of the landscape to protect against climate change. Fortunately for the rest of us, those same researchers have since received National Science Foundation funding to extend their study throughout the rest of New England. In the meantime, we can extrapolate their findings to our own corner of the world. Like people in Massachusetts, we in Connecticut are dealing with urban sprawl and the permanent loss of forest cover, making the land-use decisions we arrive at today all the more critical.

Land is a commodity; when most of us think of land, it raises an immediate cost-benefit equation. It is important to remember, however, that open space has

economic value far beyond its development potential. Preserved land boosts land values, enhances the economy of surrounding areas, attracts residents and businesses, mitigates the effects of climate change (by reducing urban heat island effect or the potential for flooding) and contributes to reduced health care costs (by improving air quality and increasing opportunities for outdoor recreation), and preserves "ecosystem services" such as water filtration. Often, it is less expensive for a community to maintain open space, with its ecosystem services that naturally maintain water quality, reduce runoff, or control flooding, than it is to use tax dollars for costly engineered infrastructure projects like water filtration plants and rebuilt storm sewers. In one example of the economic value of open space, the City of New York used \$1.2 billion to restore and protect natural land within the city's watersheds, preventing the need to build a \$6-\$8 billion water filtration plant.

At HLCT, we are committed to land conservation and to educating the public about the value of open space—economic and otherwise. We do that by

- hosting hikes (like our family hike at Brooksville Park this summer),
- sponsoring nature appreciation events (like our May Birds and Brew event to observe the active eagle nest on our State Street property),
- conducting educational programs (like



HLCT President Jim Sirch shares a nature moment with a family.

- our April rain garden information session),
- researching potential land acquisitions,
- and stewarding the properties in our care by maintaining trails and clearing invasives (like a host of volunteers did this spring at our Servoss and Mather property).

If you care about open space, please consider stepping up your support. There is much to be done. If you can make a second gift in addition to membership, thank you! If you can give us a few volunteer hours during the year, we would be most grateful. If you are in a position to consider a land gift or easement to benefit the HLCT, there is no better time. Together, we can make Hamden a greener, more vibrant place to live.

*Access the report at: <http://harvardforest.fas.harvard.edu/changes-to-the-land>

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Autumn landscape by Kathy Larson



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Hamden Heritage Family: The Hindingers

There's Reason Why They Call it Paradise



Liz, Anne and George Hindinger at Hindinger Farm

At our annual meeting this past June, we honored the Hindinger Family at Hindinger Farm as one of Hamden's Heritage Families. Located at 835 Dunbar Hill Road, the 120-acre Hindinger Farm is well-known in Hamden as an outstanding retailer of fresh fruits and vegetables, jams and honey. Our Heritage Families program seeks to highlight local families who have made an outstanding effort to preserve and protect open space, forested lands and farm lands.

Meeting brother and sister George and Liz Hindinger and their mom Anne was a special experience. George and Liz's great-grandfather William Hindinger came to this country from Germany, took one look at the land in the part of Hamden known as "Paradise," and purchased the farm in 1893. The family has been here ever since. "When my great-grandfather started the farm, people had to be more self-sufficient than they do now," says George Hindinger. "We had a small herd of cows, a flock of chickens, and sold dairy products and eggs." Their grandfather got out of the dairy business and started selling vegetables wholesale. Today, it's a retail business.

It's a great feeling," says Liz, "when we see people come in here, when children learn to appreciate the taste of a fresh picked

apple or vegetable. So many children today are removed from where their food comes from. It's great to see them learn that their food comes from a farm, not a grocery store. –And how things taste when they are really fresh."

"I was surprised myself," says their mother Anne. She grew up in New Haven and married into the Hindinger family in 1958. "As a city gal, I was astonished how much better the fruits and vegetables taste when fresh."

Back in 1980, Hindingers was the second farm in the state to enter the Farmland Preservation Program; the family is proud to know that, while there may not always be a Hindinger as farm owner, there will always be a farm at this site in its entirety. "It is something our grandfather and father worked for and would be very happy to know," says George.

"Preserving land in Hamden and throughout Connecticut is so important," says George. "Once it's gone, you don't get it back. It's a very important part of the Connecticut landscape. I know the state budget is what it is, but it's important to continue to provide money and the ability to protect farms like this one. I know how I feel about it. My family has made a

commitment to the farm and the town of Hamden, so we aren't going anywhere. We make our stand here."

The Hindingers are excited about the opportunity to experiment with new crops. For them, farming never gets dull. "Farming is a volatile industry," agrees George. "It helps us to diversify to offset the possibility of a bad year. We're always talking about how we can do better, what different crops we can try."

Hindinger Farm uses Integrated Pest Management (IPM) to prevent pest damage to their fruits and vegetables while curbing pesticide usage. IPM encourages the growth of beneficial insects, uses mating disruptions for some insects, trapping methods as needed, and if a product needs to be applied, takes into account the prevalence of pests to determine exactly how much is needed. "We use the management techniques that make the most environmental sense,

agricultural sense and economic sense," says George. "There's a lot to farming today," he adds. "It's much more than growing crops. There are food safety issues, labor issues, and worker protection issues, all of which have changed dramatically over the past few years. The complexity of a modern farming business has grown substantially. And we're a family business, so we have to do everything ourselves."

"Fortunately, the businesses that buy from us care about buying local. More and more of their customers and ours care about knowing where their food is coming from," says Liz.

"In the end, given all the rules, the weather, the economy, we have a commitment to this place. That's why we're still here," says George. "There may be a time when Liz and I may not farm here, but our commitment to the land here will never waiver." Hindinger Farm is located at 835 Dunbar Hill Road, and is open from early May through late December, Tuesday through Friday 9-6 and Saturday/Sunday 9-5.

Visit their website at:
www.hindingersfarm.com

Event Roundup

2016 was a busy year for the HLCT. In February, Steve Broker presented a wonderful talk **Return of the Peregrine** that delved into the history of peregrine falcons in Connecticut, how they became endangered and the story of their return to the cliff faces of New Haven and Hamden. In March, Michael Dietz, UConn Extension Service NEMO Director, gave us a presentation on **Rain Garden Basics**. Rain gardens improve water quality by reducing stormwater pollution. We learned how rain gardens work as well as tips on siting and plant selection.

We held our first annual **Birds and Brew** gathering in May to watch and learn about the eagles nesting on our State Street property, strolling next door afterwards to chat over a pint at Hamden's own No Worries Brewery. We also sponsored a **Celebrate Wild Hamden Photo Contest** in May, and the winners were honored at our **Annual Meeting** in June, which featured Keynote Speaker Yale University Research Scientist and Lecturer Kealoha Freidenburg who shared insights from her research studying amphibians. Our family hike at Brooksvale Park in June **Seeing the Extraordinary in the Ordinary** was very successful and was led by HLCT President Jim Sirch and Board Members Gail Cameron and Tracy Zarillo.

Our **Celebrate Wild Hamden Annual Beer and Wine Tasting** in September topped the charts. Thanks to Mount Carmel Wine & Spirits, Whitney Center and the Connecticut Natural Science Illustrators for their generous support and to everyone who supported us during the evening. We also held a number of volunteer work days over the spring and summer. Thanks to everyone who pitched in to shovel wood chips, clear trails and remove invasive plants! Our board members enjoyed talking with Hamden residents at our displays at **Hamden's Earth Day Festival**, **Connecticut Agricultural Extension Service's Plant Science Day** and the **Whitneyville Civic Association Fall Festival**.



Thanks to everyone who came out for our Celebrate Wild Hamden Beer and Wine Tasting Event.

Join Us as a Volunteer

The Hamden Land Conservation Trust is an all-volunteer organization. The Board of Trustees is a dedicated but small group, but with assistance from interested members, there is virtually no limit on what we can accomplish. We have standing committees that address various tasks: publicity & programs and acquisition & stewardship are two of the important ones. Help is needed with everything from approaching prospective donors to picking up litter and pulling invasive plants. With your help, we can do even more to fulfill our mission of preserving open space and educating the public. If you're interested in joining a work party or helping out in other ways, contact us at HLCT, Box 6185, Hamden, CT 06517.

Donate Land

Donations of land/property fall into two broad classifications: property that meets the Hamden Land Conservation Trust's criteria for permanent conservation, or property that can be sold or traded to benefit the overall mission of the Trust. We may also be able to help you if you wish to retain title to your land, but have it protected through conservation easement. The most common way to protect land is by "conservation easement." A conservation easement (also known as a conservation restriction or conservation agreement) is a voluntary, legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. It allows landowners to continue to own and use their land, and they can also sell it or pass it on to heirs. The limits of the conservation easement 'runs with the land,' meaning that even if the land is inherited or sold the restrictions stay in place. Contact us at HLCT, Box 6185, Hamden, CT 06517 for more information.