



Hamden Land Conservation Trust
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Look What You've Done!

- By Jim Sirch

Just look at all you've done! With your support, in just a short time, the Hamden Land Conservation Trust has preserved 40 acres along the Quinnipiac River that supports a bald eagle nest with its fledglings year after year. Your dollars leveraged your land trust's ability to win an Audubon CT Urban Oasis grant and mobilize volunteers to install the Joseph C. Lee Pollinator Demonstration Garden along the Farmington Canal Greenway (across from Route 10 Restaurant). Best of all, you answered the call to help save Rocky Top after years of hard work by the Rocky Top Neighbors and the CT Forest and Parks Association paid off, resulting in the opportunity for the land trust to become the permanent steward of this remarkable property—

home to box turtles, lady slipper orchids and a host of other animals and plants.

In celebration of National Trails Day, I was privileged to lead a group of 40 hikers up the Rocky Top slope to appreciate the maple-leaved viburnum in bloom, the great views through the trees, and marvel at the remnants of old stone chimneys—emblems of the property's history as a recreational get-away. Years ago, Reverend Edgar Heermance started the Connecticut Blue Trail System here on Rocky Top. He established the trail and marked it with his signature light blue blazes to guide hikers. Without his foresight, the Blue Trail might not have been established.

Like Rev. Heermance, you know that if we don't step up to preserve

open space now, it might not be there for the next generation. That's why I'm asking you to make a gift to your land trust now. With your support, the Hamden Land Conservation Trust will continue to identify new land parcels for preservation, maintain current holdings to keep them in prime shape for hiking, and educate the public about the natural world. Thank you for your help in protecting open space in Hamden. As always, we are grateful for your support.



President's Message Plays Well With Others

Thank you for all your great support over the past three years! This will be my last President's Message, as my term as president of your land trust winds down and I am succeeded by whichever of our capable board members you elect at the next annual meeting on June 15. I'd like to leave you with a thought about collaboration. Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a community to protect precious open space. It takes volunteers maintaining trails, nature lovers leading hikes and sharing their knowledge, and helpers of all kinds. The Hamden Land Conservation Trust is proud to be the stewards of our new Rocky Top Preserve, but the work to protect this remarkable property was the effort of a

host of neighbors and other community members who raised their voices, wrote letters, came to inland-wetland hearings, gathered relevant data, donated their hard earned cash and made a strong case for preservation. It included the efforts of the Connecticut Forest and Park Association, which donated surveys and conducted back-door negotiations. In the end, that community effort prevailed. To paraphrase Howard Zinn, "small acts, when multiplied by many people can transform the world." In addition to collaborating with local residents, your land trust is exploring ways to collaborate with other land trusts in our region and with groups like the Connecticut Land Conservation Council.

our efforts to preserve open space in Hamden and let's keep making the most of those great collaborations!

Jim Sirch



HLCT President

Stories in the Snow

- By Gail Cameron

Your support made a great new program happen this winter. In January, your land trust held its first winter tracking presentation. Although we had some snow earlier in the week, it had started warming up and things were rapidly melting. Fortunately, there were still some patches of snow in the woods where we were able to observe tracks. It was a glorious day to be outside and we had 36 people in attendance, including a number of youth.

We began indoors at the Lock Keeper's House next to the Farmington Canal. Many thanks to the Hamden Historical Society for allowing us to use this space. There was a display of pelts, and replicas



HLCT President Jim Sirch shares a nature moment with a family

You'll be seeing hikes and other activities sponsored by our sister land trusts on our website and Facebook page in the days ahead.

When it comes to the work of the HLCT, it might not seem like much to protect a few acres here and there, but over time, those acres add up. In the end, our town will be greener, healthier and friendlier to wildlife, including E. O. Wilson's "little things that run the world." Thank you for your faith in

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of scat and tracks that had been lent to us by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. Participants had the opportunity to examine the display items and ask questions about what we might see on our walk. We also discussed some basic principles of tracking, and we encouraged everyone to get out, even in their own backyards, to read the “stories in the snow”.

The group then headed up the canal to the Winterberry Wetlands property, which the land trust acquired this past year. Everyone was eager to be the first to spot something. In addition to looking for tracks, we talked about other signs such as scat and indications of feeding. The squirrels gave us a lot to see and one observant attendee even found squirrel scat. This was something we had talked about inside and wondered why it is so seldom observed. Kudos to that tracker.

Towards the end of the walk, we came upon a coyote trail and were able to see the differences between a wild canid (like a coyote or fox) and a domestic dog. Learning the basics about size and shape of feet, how an animal moves, and the types of habitats where it



Gail Cameron leading the tracking workshop



Bobcat track in snow

can be found are the basis of beginning tracking. It is fascinating once you start to think like that animal and know where to look – you will be amazed at all the activity that takes place when we aren’t watching. Thanks to all who made this event a success. Perhaps we will make this an annual event and explore some of the other properties that the land trust has helped to preserve.

Shopping with a Smile

Your shopping experience can help support the Hamden Land Conservation Trust. Instead of going to Amazon.com the way you normally do, log on to this URL: <http://smile.amazon.com>. The first time you do so, on the right, you will see the name of a nonprofit. Enter Hamden Land Conservation Trust in the space provided. That sets the land trust as your preference. Then, each time you shop, go through Amazon Smile, not directly to Amazon. Also, you can opt for reminders so that if you forget and go directly to Amazon, a pop-up will remind you to go back

in through the Amazon Smile URL. So as long as you change your Amazon bookmark to Amazon Smile, the land trust will continue to benefit, for which we are very grateful. Make your shopping count in more ways than one. Every Amazon Smile donation to HLCT helps preserve open space in Hamden, and educate the public about how to bring nature home through native plantings that attract pollinators and other biodiversity best practices.

Our Beloved Sleeping Giant

- By Nancy Abbey

The destructive tornado of May 15 has left Hamden’s Sleeping Giant in ruins, with giant pines felled and trails impassable. Most of us have memories of days out, hiking the Giant and enjoying the beauties of wilderness. The grief we all share is a testament to the critical importance of nature in our lives. We at the Hamden Land Trust are so grateful that you share our love of the land, and your support makes it possible for us to continue securing open spaces for all to enjoy. Our Giant will return, as nature always does. It will take many years, and many hours of volunteer work, but we can be secure in the

knowledge that it will be preserved for future generations to enjoy. We welcome you to experience nature at one of HLCT’s open spaces, ones that you helped preserve. Johnson’s Pond has a small trail, and a quiet walk will bring you in touch with many bird species. Our newest addition, Rocky Top, will bring you peace and calm. While we wait for the Giant to heal, let’s all enjoy nature in small ways. Nature is waiting for you.

Recent Programs



Youngsters enjoyed watching the eagle nest at our Gargiulo Wildlife Preserve.

Pollinators: Create a Backyard Oasis;” as well as a virtual tour of Plum Island co-sponsored with Connecticut Fund for the Environment and presented by Chris Cryder. The third annual Birds and Brew took place in May near the eagle’s nest on our Gargiulo Preserve with an opportunity to gather afterwards at nearby No Worries Brewery. Our National Trails Day hike on June 3 featured our newest property, Rocky Top. Our annual meeting on June 15 will welcome Speaker Katherine Hauswirth, author of *The Book of Noticing: Collections and Connections on the Trail*. We hope to see you at a future HLCT event. If you have a suggestion for an event or program, please

contact us via our website or at one of our events and help make your land trust the best it can be.



Attendees at our pollinator talk learned more about native bees, birds and butterflies and plants to attract them.

Join Us as a Volunteer

The Hamden Land Conservation Trust is an all-volunteer organization. The Board of Trustees is a dedicated yet 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, let us know through the “contact” section of our website at www.hlct.org.

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. 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.