

Protecting open space in perpetuity through acquisition, stewardship, education, and advocacy



*A rich forest of mixed hardwoods rises above the remains of the old Clatter Valley Road on the Land Trust's newest parcel.*

## New 13.8 acre Land Trust Parcel Preserves Historic Clatter Valley Road

On October 23rd, the Farmington Land Trust received the deed to the 13.8 acre wetland tract, gifted by Martin and Karen Wand, as part of the cluster development of their twenty-five acre property, bounded by Mountain Spring Road and Prattling Pond Road. The simple notice of the conveyance of the property from Attorney Robert Reeve of Unionville, belies its significance: that this parcel of land, which borders the historic Clatter Valley Road, will be preserved for generations to enjoy and to reflect on the historic settlement of the Farmington River Valley.

The Clatter Valley Road was one of the earliest routes west over the ridgeline from Hartford to the fertile "Little River" valley, the name the native peoples gave to the Farmington River. The roadway extends from what is now Metacomet Road down to Mountain Spring Road. One might guess that it reverberated with the clatter of wagons descending the stoney track road from the traprock ridge to the valley below.

*(continued on page 2)*

## The Buzz on Bees

Bees and other insect pollinators are said to be responsible for one of every three bites of food we eat. European honeybees are the best known and most widely managed pollinators, but there are also hundreds of other species of bees, mostly solitary ground nesting species, that contribute some level of pollination services to crops and are very important in natural plant communities.

Their work provides us with everything from apples and oranges to potatoes and tomatoes.

But in recent years, increased use of pesticides and changing land use have contributed to plummeting population numbers in both wild and managed bee colonies.

For nearly a decade, media reports have chronicled the mysterious disappearance of large numbers of honeybees caused by what is now called Colony Collapse Disorder. The dwindling numbers of bees and the continuing threats they face have many farmers concerned about how the insects will continue to be able to pollinate their crops. Now more than ever, it is critical to consider practices that will benefit pollinators by providing habitats free of pesticides, full of nectar and pollen resources, and with ample potential nesting resources. Farmington Land Trust member **Brie Quinby** provides us with a look at the main insect pollinators and some the challenges their species face.

### Our Need for Bees...and All Pollinators

"Not a single bee has ever sent you an invoice. And that is part of the problem – because most of what comes to us from nature is free, because it is not invoiced, because it is not priced, because it is not traded in markets, we tend to ignore it." (*The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity, 2010 United Nations Report*)

**Honeybees:** European honeybees are the biggest group of pollinators; they account for about 80

*(continued on page 3)*

## Clatter Valley *(continued from page 1)*

Hilda Johnson Smith, a previous owner of the twenty-five acre Wand property, had previously memorialized the Clatter Valley Road with a right of way easement along its path when she transferred the property in 1953. With this cluster development, the property is now divided into three building lots, the Wand's residence on Prattling Pond Road, and the wetlands tract gifted to the FLT.

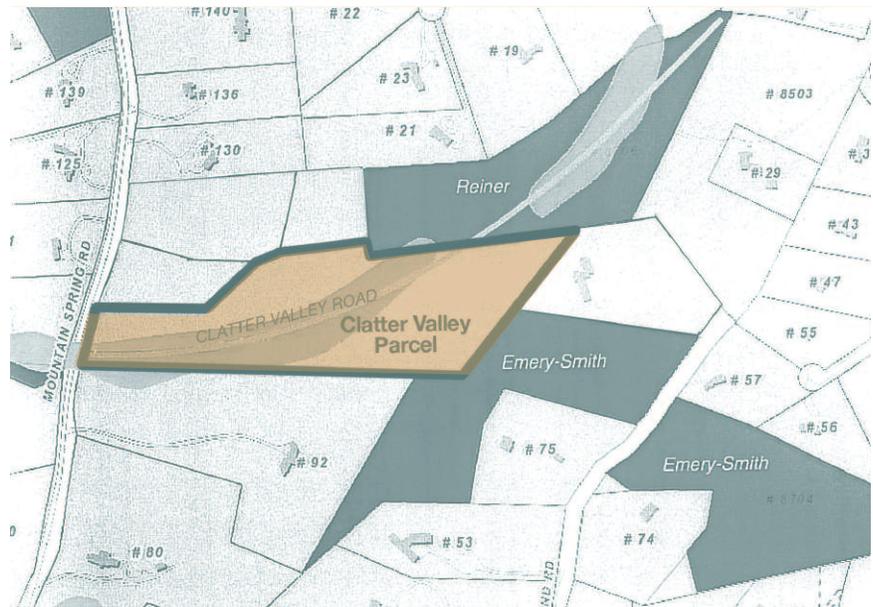
With the acquisition of this property and our Reiner easement to the east, the Land Trust now protects most of this historic roadway.

~ Richard Kramer



Abundant fruits grace the many winterberries (*Ilex verticillata*) thriving in the wetlands of the FLT's new Clatter Valley Road parcel.

**THE CLATTER VALLEY ROAD WAS ONE OF THE EARLIEST ROUTES WEST OVER THE RIDGELINE FROM HARTFORD TO THE FERTILE VALLEY OF "THE LITTLE RIVER", THE NAME THE NATIVE PEOPLES GAVE TO THE FARMINGTON RIVER.**



FLT's new Clatter Valley Road parcel, outlined in bold, connects with three other land trust parcels to embrace the course of the historic road into the Farmington Valley and parts of Metacomet Ridge.



**Farmington  
Land Trust**

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### Do You Shop at Amazon.com?

Then you have one more way to support FLT! Just visit our website — at the bottom of the home page you'll see the logo for AmazonSmile. By clicking on the logo you can designate the Farmington Land Trust as your "charity of choice." Amazon.com will then automatically donate one-half percent, 0.5%, of each purchase to the FLT when you shop at <http://smile.amazon.com>.

(Yes, smile.amazon.com offers the same products and prices as amazon.com. And you can change your charity of choice at any time. Of course, we hope you won't! )

Join others who take advantage of this opportunity. Combined, these small but regular contributions from Amazon.com are a significant source of revenue to help FLT SAVE THE LAND.

**amazon**smile

## The Buzz on Bees *(continued from page 1)*

percent of all pollination. They're not native to this country, having been brought over from Europe by early settlers. They adapted quickly though, and without them, we'd be deprived of roughly 1/3 of the fruits, vegetables, and nuts we eat.

What motivates bees to pollinate? Bees live on pollen, a source of protein and fat, and nectar, a source of carbohydrate. As they forage, bees pick up pollen from a flower's stamens (which is a plant's sperm or gamete) and transfer it to the stigma (a part of the female reproductive organs) of the next flower of the same species, mating the plants. The result is a pear or apple or whatever...and a contribution of roughly \$20 billion to the US economy yearly.

Honeybees are social creatures, living in family groups of as many as 60,000. Their colonies winter over and can last for several years. Bees make honey, essentially a concentrated form of nectar, so they'll have food to live on through the winter. A bee will make about 1/12 teaspoon of this concentrated nectar over its lifetime.

**Bumblebees:** These fat, furry bees, on the other hand, don't live a full calendar year — except for the queen. She mates in the fall, finds a hole (a birdhouse, an abandoned rodent hole) and spends the winter there, emerging in early spring to gather pollen and nectar for the energy of birthing. She builds her nest, lays her eggs and incubates them by lying on them and wiggling to generate heat.

**Butterflies and moths:** Butterflies and moths are also pollinators, and they are also decreasing in number. Recently, the monarch migration from Canada and the US to Mexico reached an all-time low. Loss of habitat and pesticide destruction of the Monarch caterpillar's ONLY food — milkweed — are major contributors to its demise.

**Declining Populations:** Bees and other pollinators aren't doing very well these days. Colony Collapse Disorder — when honeybees simply disappear from their hives en masse — is a complex problem,

and probably has a variety of contributors. For instance, varroa destructor, a parasitic mite, is a serious threat. Last year, a report in the online journal mBio, which was then chronicled and reported in the New York Times, "found that the increase in honeybee deaths that generally starts in autumn and peaks in winter was correlated with increasing infections by a variant of the tobacco ringspot virus. The virus is found in pollen that bees pick up while foraging, and it may be spread as the bees mix saliva and nectar with pollen to make 'bee bread' for larvae to eat. Mites that feed on the bees may also be involved in transmitting the virus, the researchers said." The report also noted that the rapidly mutating virus had jumped from tobacco plants to soy plants to bees.

Pesticides are also problematic, which makes sense since they are designed to kill bugs. Recently, fingers have pointed at neonicotinoid pesticides, neurotoxins that act on the insects' information processing — their ability to function and perform tasks. Some scientists suspect that the famous honeybee dance — the way honeybees tell their colleagues about the location of potent sources of nectar and pollen — is threatened by these systemic pesticides, which are found in agricultural products ranging from lawn treatments to seed casings to chemicals for use in your compost pile. They're even found in animal flea treatments. The European Union recently imposed a three-year ban on neonicotinoid pesticides.



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## Six Ways You Can Help Please the Bees

- Supporting land conservation in your community helps to create and maintain community gardens and green spaces to ensure that pollinators have appropriate habitat. See more at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/plantsanimals/pollinate/gardeners/#sthash.fh9ukWBO.dpuf>
- Create inviting habitat by gardening with native plants, or simple, old-fashioned flowers — think cottage garden style. Choose a mixture of plants for spring, summer, and fall with different flower colors, shapes, and scents to attract a wide variety of pollinators.

Even some of the things we consider to be weeds, such as dandelions, are high in pollen and nectar. Visit <http://www.xerces.org/pollinators-northeast-region/> for some ideas about regional plants and their pollinator value.

- Think twice — and then think again — about using pesticides. If you do use pesticides, use them sparingly and responsibly.
- Leave dead tree trunks, also called "snags," in your landscape for wood-nesting bees and beetles.
- Be willing to pay the price for honey from a local producer who cares about his or

her bees — and if the price seems high, remember how much work went into making that honey.

- Eat organic food whenever possible. Or grow your own. The fewer pesticides in the world, the better for us all.

For more information, go to [www.buzzaboutbees.net](http://www.buzzaboutbees.net) or [http://plants.usda.gov/pollinators/Native\\_Pollinators.pdf](http://plants.usda.gov/pollinators/Native_Pollinators.pdf), a USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) article on the importance of protecting pollinators.

## “Harvest Farm-to-Table Tasting” Event Raises \$20,000

On Sunday, September 20th, more than 190 people gathered at the FLT’s West District Nature Preserve where they enjoyed the rare opportunity to visit this private preserve, a wonderfully diverse property of 23.6 acres with woodlands, forested swamp, meadows and pasture, a hayfield and pond.

Greeted by the music of violinist Aimé Freedenberg on a perfect late summer afternoon, attendees came together under the big tent to celebrate the land, our farming community, and nature’s beauty. Using the generous contributions from the Hein, Krell, Pogson, Sub Edge, and Wollenberg farms, as well as those from Jones Apiaries and Highland Park Market, our caterer, Billings Forge, was able to create delicious foods. Maximum Beverage arranged for local vineyards, breweries and spirit makers to provide samples of their creations for guests’ enjoyment, all to the lively swing and bluegrass music provided by Sam Moss and Luke Nelson.

It wasn’t just about great food, music and drink! Tina Delaney former Executive Director, led walks into the nature preserve, explaining the history of the land and the importance of its preservation. Ted and Becky Jones, apiarists, displayed an active hive and shared information about honeybees and their critical role as pollinators. A Steve Silk-produced video ran continuously. “For What It’s Worth” included gorgeous aerial photography (by Stephen Wasley and Art Sribanpot) of some larger land trust properties and information on the environmental value of the trees that they support.



**THE EVENT’S PROCEEDS OF \$20,000 WILL SUPPORT THE LAND TRUST’S MISSION TO PROTECT OPEN SPACE IN PERPETUITY FOR THE BENEFIT OF CURRENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS THROUGH ACQUISITION, STEWARDSHIP, EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY.**

The day was topped off by a silent auction with art works donated by local artists – many of them capturing the beauty of the farmhouse or preserve – and prizes as diverse as a retreat weekend at the Copper Beech Institute and Broadway at the Bushnell tickets. Visit our website to see photos of the art works by Sara Brown, Roderick H. Brown, Pia Sjolín, Anne Pingpank, Dawn Lombardi and Katherine Wadsworth.

The Event Committee started planning last January. Event Committee Chair Cate Grady-Benson said “Months of hard work paid off! The vibe in the tent was fantastic!” Committee

### Try a Harvest Moon — the Farm-to-Table Tasting’s Signature Cocktail

2 parts apple cider  
1 part ONYX moonshine  
1 part lemon juice  
1 part honey simple syrup

Mix and serve over ice with apple slices.  
Can be served warm.

For honey simple syrup, add to a saucepan over medium heat:

1 cup honey  
1 cup water

Once honey is melted, reduce heat to low and let simmer for 10 – 15 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool. Store refrigerated in a glass container until ready to use.



members included Kay Miller Browne, Francie Brown Holmes, Deborah Carey, Tina Delaney, Nina Hayes, Richard Kramer, Sallie Norris, Dr. Art Phinney, Gilda Roncari, Steve Silk, Jennifer Villa and Katherine Wadsworth.

The Land Trust wishes to thank all our sponsors for their contributions, especially our major sponsors: Blue Fox Run Golf Course, The Tomasso Companies, Maximum Beverage, Metro Realty, Billings Forge Community Works, Sallie Norris, Richard and Susan Kramer, Doug Pelham, and Clare Smith and Dr. Arthur Phinney.

~Deborah Carey

## Meet Cate Grady-Benson, Event Chair

Cate Grady-Benson joined the FLT Board of Directors in 2015 and has recently been appointed to chair FLT's Development Committee. Cate is an

environmentalist, an activist, and mother of two amazing daughters. She is currently a board member and volunteer at the Farmington Food Pantry, Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts overseer, and member of the Farmington Green Efforts Committee. Cate graduated from the University of Illinois with a bachelor's degree in the science of nursing. She has worked as an ICU nurse, flight nurse, nurse educator, researcher, and consultant. She is currently in charge of the Farmington Town-Wide Clean-Up.



## Families Enjoy FLT's Fall Farm Day Event

On Sunday, October 25th, 150 kids and adults enjoyed hayrides, marshmallows, music, stories, games, and pizza by Confetti at the event sponsored by FLT and hosted by Sub Edge Farm.



## Steve Nelson: The Stewards' Steward

Meet Steve Nelson. Since his appointment as Stewardship Chair, Steve has made it his mission to match up a steward with every one of FLT's 65 properties. And he's almost there!

Steve's team of 43 volunteers includes veterans as well as 15 new stewards. This fall, with property maps and resource plans in hand, Steve has been busy orienting the new volunteers to the job of regularly monitoring and reporting on the condition of their assigned parcels, with all that job entails.

Francie Brown Holmes, one of the new stewards said, "I am very happy to be a new steward, and after Steve walked me through the parcel I was assigned, I asked for another parcel to tend, which my husband will help me with!" Francie added, "Steve has been helpful, informative, thorough, and has a great sense of humor! It is a real opportunity to be part of taking care of the land here in Farmington, and I hope more people can become involved."

Stewardship of the land we acquire is one of the four supporting pillars of our mission to protect open space in perpetuity. "It's great having so many people who are willing to step up and get their boots dirty," says Steve. "It's a mission-critical role, and that's why we celebrated their stewardship with a recognition event in October."

Steve, a Farmington native, joined the FLT Board this past spring. He is a civil engineer who worked 35 years with FIP Construction of Farmington, holding positions of project superintendent, project manager and vice president. His other community involvement includes Farmington Valley Trails Council trail stewardship and Hill-Stead Museum, where he is developing a pollinator's garden and working to uncover the Theodate Pope walking garden. Steve is a Buildings and Grounds Committee member for First Church of Christ Congregational, 1652, and was a member of the Amistad Hall Building Committee.

~Deborah Carey

Interested in volunteering as a Steward? Call the office at 860-674-8545 or email us at [farmingtonland.trust@snet.net](mailto:farmingtonland.trust@snet.net)

## Adopting New National Standards

With help from the Land Trust Alliance, FLT is making great strides in strengthening our policies and programs so they align with national standards and guiding principles established by the Land Trust Alliance.

Founded in 1982, the Land Trust Alliance (LTA) is a national organization that works to save the places people need and love by strengthening land conservation across America. LTA comprises 1,100 member land trusts and more than 5 million members. This is the 'go to' source of training for people who work in land conservation. With its variety of tools and best practice guidelines, LTA helps land trusts achieve their land preservation goals.

### Jump-starting Change

As an Alliance member, FLT was able to invite LTA to review our operations against the national standards. LTA completed this review in May, 2012, and we have since been working on changes to address their feedback.

For example, in 2014 we kicked off a project to compile, sort, and inventory critical land trust records – starting with documents that had been sharing space in the Carey garage with mice and other critters! With grants from Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) and the Norcross Wildlife Fund, we engaged Peter Bartucca, a document management specialist, to review and sort these early and essential Land Trust records. Volunteer Paula Ray (Land Trust Member and Farmington Town Clerk) and former FLT Executive Director Tina Delaney helped Peter find and assemble years' worth of Board minutes, corporation records, and property acquisition files. Those generous grants covered 100% of the project's costs.

And this year, thanks to another CLCC/LTA grant, all our property records have been sorted and digitized by a LTA documents consultant. (For her 150 hours of expert work, FLT's share of the costs was only \$100.) We are close to the finish line for compliance with the national records management standard – on our way from being good to being great!

~Deborah Carey

## Land Trust Member and Archivist Peter Bartucca

Records management consultant Peter Bartucca has more than 35 years of experience as an archivist, law librarian, and records manager. Before starting his own business – Document Management Systems – in 2004, Peter managed records and legislative services in Connecticut's Office of the Secretary of State for 17 years. His expertise in the preservation of historical records and records retention proved invaluable to FLT's efforts to find and organize our archives.

We asked Peter to describe the project and what he learned about the Land Trust.

"After spending many hours digging through cardboard boxes and rusting files with Paula Ray's help, I was most struck by the work done by the Land Trust's founders. This group anticipated the need to set aside land in order to preserve some of what is best about the world we live in. They worked quietly, but with complete confidence in what they were doing. Now, decades later, we can appreciate the results of their foresight and can also understand that we would not be enjoying this wealth of open space and the environment it supports without the efforts made by that small group of individuals – and the likeminded neighbors who supported them."

What about project challenges?

"The project certainly presented its share of challenges, the gaps in the record being the most critical one. The history that we have now secured is rich, but it is also incomplete. Our hope is that as we send out the call, more documents will be discovered and add more substance to the history that has been assembled."

~Deborah Carey



*Peter Bartucca sorted through cartons of documents to help bring order to our archives.*

### How YOU can help

Gaps? Yes, there are gaps in our records. If you have copies of old Land Trust newsletters, photos of events or other FLT memorabilia, please contact us at the office 860-674-8545. You can contribute to our own "Land-tiques Roadshow!"

## Growing Our Membership

I would like to thank the Membership Committee, chaired by Sallie Norris, for our increasing reach and new members. The exact count so far (2015 contributions continue to be received) for 2015 FLT membership is **260 members, with \$42,652.96** reported as revenue from the membership campaign stimulus – basically money received in a membership envelope or designated for membership. The envelopes were distributed through various appeals: the “Preserving our Legacy” event, individual mailings, town-wide newsletter, etc. For those who may not know, the membership in both 2013 and 14 was about 185, so this represents an increase of 75 members, or 40% over prior years. Thank you for work well done!

~Richard Kramer

## Why Members Matter

A strong and vibrant membership provides the volunteer time and financial resources that the Farmington Land Trust needs to continue as a successful land conservation organization.

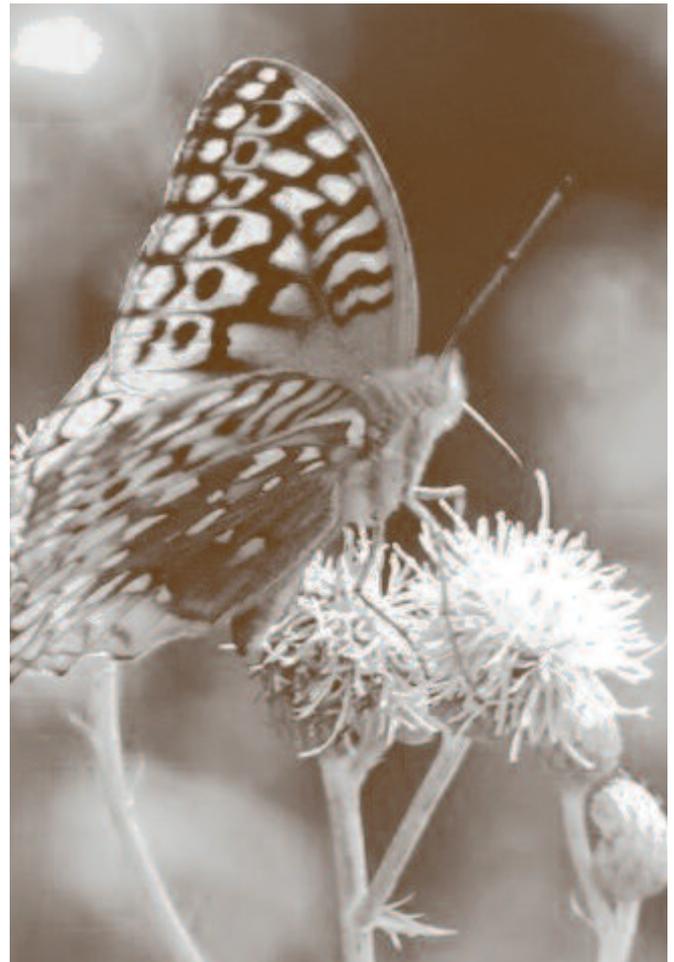
Membership contributions help us:

- Preserve nearly 300 acres of open space in Farmington;
- Support our stewardship of 65 properties;
- Underwrite the educational and recreational programs we offer each year;
- Fund our office and part-time staff, and all our publications and communications.

November is the start of our annual membership campaign.

It's time to renew or join for 2016!

Please help us by sending in the enclosed envelope with your membership contribution today! You can also join online at [farmingtonlandtrust.org](http://farmingtonlandtrust.org).



*Feeding fritillary: This picture of an Atlantis fritillary was taken by Sam Huntington during the Land Trust's July 12 butterfly walk at Carey Pasture.*



**OUR CURRENT MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES 260 INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES,  
A 40% INCREASE OVER 2014. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!**

## New Board Member Evan Cowles

Evan joined the FLT Board this year and serves as Chair of the Acquisition Committee. He also serves on the Town of Farmington's Land Acquisition Committee with FLT President Richard Kramer. (That committee is charged with acquiring land, or interest in land, for the preservation of open space for municipal purposes and for active recreational uses.)

Following years spent in advertising and commercial banking in New York City – and earning an MBA from Columbia – Evan and his wife, Brie Quinby, settled in the Cowles homestead on Farmington's Main Street with their two children. Evan's been active in politics, real estate and non-profit volunteering; after earning a degree in Landscape Architecture from UCONN, he joined Ferrero Hixon Associates. He retired in 2008 after ten years with this Central Connecticut landscape architecture firm.





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### *Please join us for these upcoming events!*

#### **Snowshoe by the Light of the Full Snow Moon!**

Join us on Saturday, February 20th at 5:00 p.m. for a guided snowshoe trek on the Carey Pasture and Anderson Ridge Trails, followed by warm libations. Native tribes of the north and east most often called February's full Moon the Full Snow Moon. Some tribes also referred to it as the Full Hunger Moon, since harsh weather conditions made hunting very difficult. See our website for details as the date approaches.

#### **Talking About What TED Said**

Join us for an evening of curated, environmentally-themed TED Talks followed by a lively discussion led by Linda Tomasso. We're still finalizing the time, date, and place and will share the details on our website and in a future email.

## **Beauty of the Land Inspires Artists**

Nobody knows the beauty of the Farmington Land Trust's 65 parcels better than our members. But we want more people to know about – and enjoy – it. So, we want to share our properties with visual artists who aspire to capture their distinctive beauties. After all, just over a century ago, some of our sites attracted artists from all over the northeast and beyond. So, we hosted an Art at Large day Sept. 13 at the Cowles Parcel, and invited artists to take brush to canvas, pencil to paper, or photon to camera card. Our Harvest Farm-to-Table Tasting event featured in the silent auction several artworks inspired by the FLT's West District Nature Preserve. And in October, we held a photo workshop in the same area. We plan more of these events in the future and hope to accumulate enough Land Trust themed artwork to host an exhibition at one of the Farmington Public libraries.



*Grier Torrence paints a scene at the confluence of the Pequabuck and Farmington rivers; the finished piece is at right. Grier, the Arts Department Chair at Miss Porter's School, says he takes inspiration from renowned Farmington painter Robert Brandegee, the art teacher at the school from 1880-1893 and a frequent plein air painter on what is now FLT's Cowles Parcel.*

