

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



Volunteers and board members gathered to build a bridge at the Canal Aqueduct in 2006, and have been building bridges to the community ever since.

Celebrating 50 Years of the Farmington Land Trust *How We Started, What We've Accomplished, and Where We're Headed*

For the Farmington Land Trust, it all started during the environmental awakening of the 1960s. The publication of *Silent Spring*, by Rachel Carson, documented the widespread abuse of chemical pesticides and its impact, ultimately, on life on earth. The author's clarion call for humanity to act with responsibility and care as stewards of a living earth prompted a newfound concern for the natural world and led to the very first Earth Day, in April 1970, the start of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, and yes, the first fledgling steps of the FLT.

Looking back towards our founding 50 years ago, outgoing Land Trust President Richard Kramer fills us in on some of the group's early history and a few of its accomplishment along the way.

Back in the late 60s, with fresh memories of the worst natural disaster in the state's history – the devastating 1955 flood caused by back-to-back hurricanes Connie and Diane – one area of significant concern for budding local environmentalists was the future of our local waterways, the Farmington and Pequabuck Rivers, both their broad flood plain and the aquifer beneath them. There was also interest in preserving the Metacomet Ridgeline and important local historical places, such as the Canal Aqueduct.

These concerns led to the formation of a small group of like-minded Farmington citizens who gathered early one morning in 1969 for their first "informational" meeting, held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. John G. Lee. Those present at this inaugural event were John G. Lee and his wife Percy Maxim Lee, who served as President of the League of Women Voters; Joseph Ward; Walter Aston; Richard Hube; and John (Jack) Emery, chair of the Town Conservation Commission.

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An Insider's Guide to the Best of the Land Trust's Walks

If you ever thought about taking a hike on a Farmington Land Trust property, you might wonder about what might be the best place to go. As is often the case, you might want to ask the experts. In this case, the members of the Board of Directors of the Farmington Land Trust. They've been just about everywhere on our properties. They can tell you, perhaps better than anyone, where the going is good. But as to exactly where that might be, well, it depends who you ask.

So, we asked. Here are some of our board members' favorite spots:

My favorite Land Trust place to visit is the **Nancy Conklin Trail** on the **Cowles Parcel**. Walking along the trail, the one meadow surrounded by trees with the Pequabuck River hugging the land allows me to escape the worries of the day and clear the mind.

— Cate Grady-Benson

A favorite spot for me is **Rattlesnake Cliffs** on Rattlesnake Mountain, located on the **Wadsworth Memorial Easement**. After a rugged hike up on the Metacomet Trail, I love the panoramic view from the cliffs, encompassing the Hartford skyline, Pinnacle

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am honored to continue the fine work of the FLT as the next president of the Board of Directors. Richard Kramer, who is stepping down as the President, has done a masterful job putting the organization on a firm financial and organizational footing. I know you join me in thanking Richard for building the strong foundation on which the FLT is constructing its future.

My own footings in Farmington and Unionville stretch over 30 years of service. As Executive Director of Stanley-Whitman House from 1998 until 2018, and now as Farmington Town Historian, I am intimately connected to our town's history and keenly aware of what that history means for us now and into the future. A lifelong hiker, thanks to a geologist father and a family of vigorous outdoorsmen, I have an abiding love for the natural world. FLT's mission of bringing the natural world to everyone is a mission I embrace with personal conviction.

The vision of FLT is clear as we establish a new headquarters and environmental education center, reach out to a wider audience, and continue to caretake and preserve open space for the good of all. I look forward to working with all of you to make that vision a vibrant reality.

— Lisa Johnson



Best Land Trust Walks (continued from page 1)

Ridge, West Peak, and Sleeping Giant. It's the perfect place to take in the changing seasons. In spring, the view has the reddish hue of tree buds, then later the soft greens of emerging leaves. Summer brings full greens, fall the yellows, oranges, and reds of the turning foliage. In winter white snow contrasts with the grays of hardwood trees and greens of pines and hemlocks. And if the cliffs are blanketed in snow, I might even see the occasional coyote track.

— Peter Dorpalen

My favorite FLT property is the **Canal Aqueduct** — it combines the beauty of the Farmington River, the trail through the woods, and the historic artifact of the great brownstone aqueduct itself. The history of the Farmington Canal is one of great promise and failure, with lessons of how times changed so fast even back then, that the canal was outdated almost as soon as it was finished. The preservation that the FLT does is never outdated! — Evan Cowles

I'd choose the bend in the river at the **Nancy Conklin Trail** on the **Cowles Parcel**. I enjoy seeing changes in perspective from different views of well-traveled areas. While the Cowles is so close to busy Meadow Road, few people take the opportunity to walk this trail and see the area from an entirely different perspective. Walking only a few hundred feet from Meadow Road, you will see the whole area differently and be able to appreciate the beauty of the river, the fields, and the flora and fauna. Next time you drive by the Cowles parcel and have even 15-20 minutes to spare, pull off Meadow Road and take a short stroll to gain a new perspective. It is a refreshing walk and an easy way to take a quick break from the hustle and bustle of our normal routines. — Jennifer Villa

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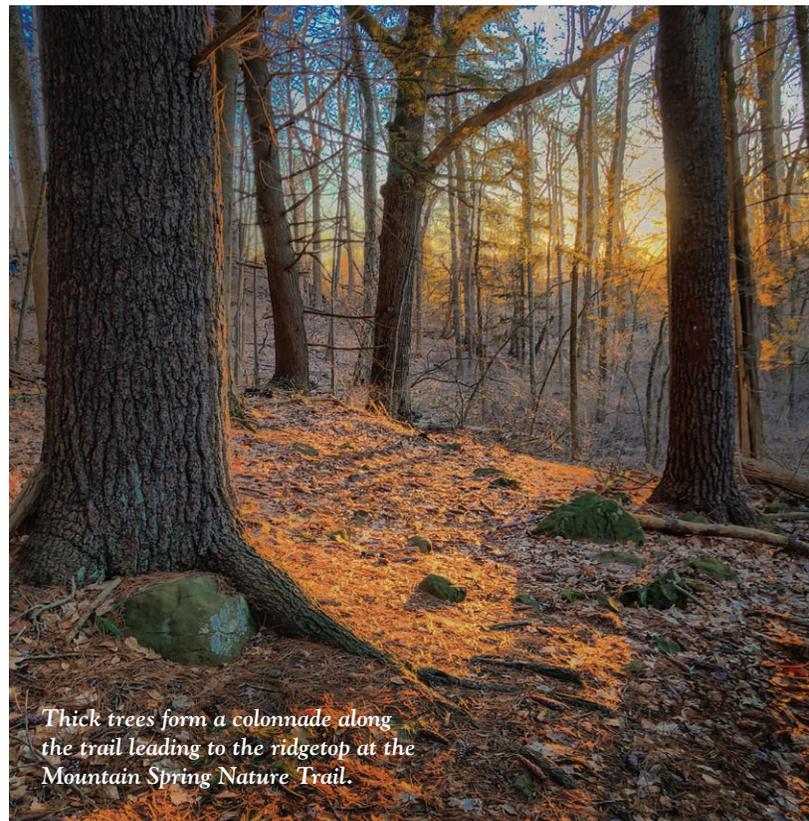
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The Farmington Land Trust
 The Canal House
 128 Garden Street
 Farmington, CT 06032

Office Hours:
 MWF 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.
 Phone: 860.674.8545



Thick trees form a colonnade along the trail leading to the ridgetop at the Mountain Spring Nature Trail.



*It's not just history!
Some sights along the Canal
Aqueduct glow with a special
beauty when the sun sets.*

I have many favorite spots along many of the Land Trust's trails and properties, but one of my most memorable hikes was one I shared with my granddaughters, who, at the time, were 6 and 8. We joined a sponsored Black Friday hike to **Will Warren's Den** on the **Wadsworth Memorial Easement**. In the months leading up to it, I had told them the legend of Will Warren. Every time they came over, we would read and reread the legend as told in the "Farmington in Connecticut" historical book. I was a bit concerned that the trail would be a little tough for them to navigate, and being kids, worried they might be a bit careless with their own safety. That morning after we all assembled for a few moments, they took off like racehorses out of the gate. They knew how to read trail blazes, having hiked many trails beforehand, so I was confident they wouldn't get lost, and with the leaves off the trees, we could keep track of them. When we got to the den and the leader began with the legend, they kept interrupting, setting him straight if he left anything out. They had all memorized the legend. — *Steve Nelson*

I love the **Mountain Spring Nature Trail**. First, I love the name of it. Second, I love the way the trail winds around a curvy path in and through the woods, and then up the hill. Plus, it has a bit of mystery to it... You'll have to go and see what I mean... — *Francie Brown-Holmes*

I like the **Canal Aqueduct**. I love history, and the history of the canal and aqueduct are absolutely fascinating. Not to mention that the short hike and setting are beautiful. — *Jon Estrellado*

The **Cowles Parcel** is one of my favorite places to walk. Tucked along a curve of the Pequabuck River, the parcel features a walking trail that connects to the town-owned "Meadows," where the Tunxis Indians and early English cultivated their crops. Walking this quiet and historic property always gives me a feeling of connection to people who walked here centuries before. — *Lisa Johnson*

So, I am going to say that my favorite place is at the **West District Nature Preserve** near the pond where in spring you can find Lady Slippers and Spring ephemerals (left side as you face the pond after you cross the little stream.) From there, it is a short walk to the vernal pools, where there are uncommon turtles. I haven't searched that area thoroughly for salamanders yet, but they are certainly there and are also big favorites of mine! — *Diane Tucker*

Every Land Trust trail could be a contender, but I'd opt for a trip on the **Canal Aqueduct**. I always check on the pond next to the parking area, then follow the lovely avenue that leads through the tall trees, past a tiny little waterfall, and down to the river, where a jumble of mossy brownstone blocks and the remaining ramparts of the old aqueduct exude a sense of mystery and a whiff of fallen empires. From that evocative spot, I cross the stream for a quick ramble along the **Henry Mason Trail** to remind myself that, in the end, nature always triumphs. Lastly, I'll stand on the spit of land jutting out into the Farmington River, to remind myself of all that has transpired along its banks. — *Steve Silk*

Jack's vision and Percy's organizational skills created the Farmington Land Trust, Inc., which was officially recognized two years later upon the filing of its articles of incorporation with the State of Connecticut on April 29, 1971 by John H. Filer, Jack Emery, and John M. Donahue. That same evening, an organizational meeting was held to elect the Land Trust's first slate of officers:

John H. Filer, President
Percy Maxim Lee, Vice President
Richard Hube, Treasurer
John M. Donahue, Secretary

That same year, Connecticut's General Assembly created a new state agency – the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), headed by Dan W. Lutkin, its first commissioner. The agency is now known as the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP).

The young land trust organization hit the ground running. In the Village, there was concern that Miss Porter's School was considering selling its Riding Ring (now one of the school's athletic fields located opposite the entrance to the Hill-Stead Museum) and the Bull Lot, a parcel off Colton Street. The 600-acre expanse of flood plain in the meadows was also in play as its owners were getting out of farming and selling off the pasture and agricultural lands. There was a lot to do for a young land trust, one of the few in the state at the time. The Land Trust connected the Town with the Federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, resulting in the Town receiving a \$750,000 grant, half the purchase price, to acquire what we now know and appreciate as the Meadows.



Charlie Leach (right) accepts the Land Trust Alliance award in 2007 for "Volunteer of the Year" for his efforts at developing legislation to protect open spaces from encroachment.

It took a bit longer to protect the Bull Lot, but that too was accomplished in 1978 with the Land Trust's acceptance of conservation easements over the Bull Lot, portions of which were purchased by six adjoining neighbors. A seventh portion was the gift of a generous but anonymous donor. The Bull Lot is now a much-appreciated pasture on Colton Street in the Village.

The first property acquired outright by the Land Trust was the holding basin at the Canal Aqueduct, which was donated by Mr. James Thompson, who purchased the property and gave it to the Land Trust in 1972. What we now know as the Canal Aqueduct property took much longer to acquire. It is the result of a series of land acquisitions, swaps, and easements which, in 1988, capped many years of effort by Howard Coe to protect this historical site

commemorating the short-lived but at one time essential artery of commerce, the Farmington Canal (also known as the New Haven and Northampton Canal) on behalf of the Land Trust.

These are among the earliest happenings of the newly created Farmington Land Trust, Inc. which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

The Bull Lot and Canal Aqueduct represent just a few of the 67 parcels covering more than 300 acres that the Land Trust now protects in Farmington. Acquisition of open space is a vital and important part of what we do. But, as a Land Trust, we are about a whole lot more! Our mission is to *protect open space through acquisition, stewardship, education,*

and advocacy. And so, acquisition is just one piece of the puzzle.

Here are a few examples of other Land Trust activities from the past fifty years:

Stewardship

Our care of The Henry Mason Trail at our Canal Aqueduct property is one example of the Land Trust's dedication to stewardship as shown by Henry Mason, our first director emeritus.

Early on, Henry improved access to the area by removing invasives and underbrush on the easement along the river connecting the properties owned by the Land Trust. He often stopped by on his way home from work to mow the path that led to the picturesque, moss-covered ruins of an aqueduct that crossed the river. With the construction of the bridge over the swale by the Rotary Club in 2006 (dedicated to Dick Noyes, executive director at the time), Henry recognized the opportunity to extend his path by blazing a loop trail running along the river and back through the Town-owned property sandwiched between the two Land Trust properties at either side. And that is exactly what he did. When completed in 2008, it was named the "Henry Mason Trail" by the Town Council in recognition of Henry's two decades of devotion to preserving and improving the site. Well known for its wildflowers and towering trees, this riverside ramble is a favorite trek for hikers year round, with parking on Route 10 across from Aqueduct Lane.

THE BULL LOT AND CANAL AQUEDUCT REPRESENT JUST A FEW OF THE 67 PARCELS COVERING MORE THAN 300 ACRES THAT THE LAND TRUST NOW PROTECTS IN FARMINGTON. ACQUISITION OF OPEN SPACE IS A VITAL AND IMPORTANT PART OF WHAT WE DO. BUT, AS A LAND TRUST, WE ARE ABOUT A WHOLE LOT MORE! OUR MISSION IS TO PROTECT OPEN SPACE THROUGH ACQUISITION, STEWARDSHIP, EDUCATION, AND ADVOCACY. AND SO, ACQUISITION IS JUST ONE PIECE OF THE PUZZLE.



Sweet sounds from local musicians enhance some of our outdoor fundraising events.

Advocacy

There is no better example of our advocacy than a law protecting against encroachment on open space which the Land Trust was instrumental in passing. That story began in 2005, when several mature trees on a Land Trust property, the Carey Pasture, were cut down by a developer. The damage represented a significant encroachment. At the time, little more than the value of the lumber could be recovered as damages. The Land Trust's president at the time, Charlie Leach, set about to find a solution that would make it possible for a conservation organization to seek restoration of the land from damage caused by encroachment on open space. His initiative led to the passage by the Connecticut General Assembly of CT Act 06-89 which does just that. In addition to requiring the restoration of the land, the court may award monetary damages of up to five times the cost of the restoration or statutory damages of up to five thousand dollars, plus the plaintiff's attorney fees. This legislation, a first, has become a model for similar laws adopted by other states across the nation. At the 2007 LTA National Convention, Charlie was honored as the LTA Conservation Volunteer of the Year.

In 1991, the Land Trust organized, with the participation of the Town Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission, *Farmington's Future Coordinating Committee*. Chaired by David D. Eveleth, then president of the FLT, the purpose of the Committee was to initiate a community dialogue on the future growth and development of the Town. Three forums were held in the winter months of 1992 by the consultants chosen to run *Farmington's Future*, each attended by about 90 participants. Those attending were tasked to find consensus on various basic values which would guide the Town's future in land conservation and economic development. The values identified by *Farmington's Future* formed the basis of the seminal 1992 Town Plan of Conservation and Development, which laid the cornerstone for much of the planning for the open space which we enjoy today.

Education

One manifestation of our efforts to educate the public can be found in "*Farmington: New England Town Through Time*", with text by Barbara Donahue with photographs by Saren Langmann, a book published by the Land Trust in 1989. Robert Hincks, FLT president at the time, said of the publication: "The book is a lot more than a nostalgic look at the past. It examines how and why Farmington has changed and challenges us to be as successful in coping with change in the future."

"Our purpose in publishing the book is quite clear: We hope the book makes a difference in the future of Farmington. We hope the book will move residents and others to believe that Farmington's livability can be protected, and encourage them to do what has to be done to accomplish that protection." Today, the book has a cherished presence on the bookshelves of many Farmington residents and is much sought after by those not so fortunate as to own a copy.

We have also collaborated with Central Connecticut State University for mutual benefits:

In 2012, David DeNuccio, FLT board member and retired CCSU professor of biology, made a startlingly good observation: the FLT properties would be a perfect laboratory for biology students. David set about to contact various colleagues in the biology department at CCSU to seek participation. Professor Barbara Nicholson thought it might be a perfect fit for her Ecology class, and so, an enduring collaboration with Barbara's class was born that continues today.

Numerous research projects have been conducted over the intervening period at our Carey and Barney Pastures, the Bancroft Memorial, West District Nature Preserve and The Clatter Valley Road Parcel. In 2016, Professor Paul Hapeman's CCSU mammalogy class joined to conduct a mammal survey at the CVRP. They have returned to this spectacular site several times. Professor Nicholson will spend her sabbatical semester this fall researching the lichen and moss

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Under the watchful eye of Professor Paul Hapeman, students from CCSU set up motion-triggered cameras as part of a study on mammals at the Clatter Valley Road Parcel.

Celebrating 50 Years *(continued from page 5)*

communities at our West District Nature Preserve and Schlatter Wildlife Preserve. As a result, students have learned and practiced the methods of scientific field research and their efforts have helped the Land Trust better understand some of its properties.

Throughout our tenure as an organization, we've kept an eye toward the future. In 1988 the Land Trust had conducted a town-wide survey asking participants to express their views on the preservation of open space, with many in support of land preservation. As a follow-up to the survey, the Land Trust organized the Land Use Conference, held in December 1989 with Town officials, local representatives and the public participating.

Where is FLT Going?

Marking our 50th birthday provides us the timely opportunity to review some of our past successes, but it also poses a question about what's next for the FLT, a topic incoming FLT President Lisa Johnson addresses in the following.

Maps are important tools to help us get where we want to go. Whether you use a paper map or your phone's map app, that guidance can be critical in assuring that you arrive at the right place. The Farmington Land Trust also has a "map" to guide the organization in getting to the "right place." The Board worked diligently on a strategic plan for 2020-2025 and voted to approve the final version in December 2020. Here is where our map is taking us:

The strategic plan reaffirms FLT's role to **protect natural areas** with two goals. The first goal is to **increase our holdings** to complement and expand open space, and to protect key habitats, wildlife corridors, and natural and cultural features. The second goal focuses on **supporting and encouraging the Town's acquisition program** and increasing cooperation between the Town and FLT.

Taking care of FLT protected areas will continue to be a critical goal, using the best management practices available. This goal is carried out by a legion of volunteers, using FLT Resource Management Plans and Annual Work Plans.

In the area of environmental education, developing and implementing programs and materials to **encourage curiosity and appreciation of the natural environment** will be a fundamental goal that reaches out to students and the general public. In concert with that goal, our 50th Anniversary projects will drive toward establishing an **environmental education center and headquarters at the Wilcox-Bushley Homestead**, with an emphasis on the habitats and wildlife at the West District Nature Preserve and the history of the

homestead and farm. This exciting project will be made possible through a **capital campaign** that will also grow the Landmark Fund endowment to support this important community center well into the future.

These goals can be achieved only by an **organization with a strong foundation**, and the strategic plan assures that we pay attention to maintaining and increasing this strength. This includes maintaining a vibrant and diverse board of directors to carry out the plan; managing staff,

volunteers and facilities effectively; assuring compliance with laws, standards and best practices; and, maintaining responsible financial controls and invested funds to assure financial stability. Equally important will be developing multiple membership and fundraising programs that financially support the FLT mission, including drawing in a wider membership and funder base, a business and corporate sponsorship program, and a planned giving program.

Marketing and communication will increasingly take an intentional approach in order to best support the FLT mission and vision. Included in this new frontier are branding, signage, outreach with social media, and messaging to reach youth and diverse audiences.

The life blood of the Farmington Land Trust is its volunteers.

Through the work of volunteers such as board members, land stewards, members and funders, along with our talented staff, FLT will meet these goals with energy and enthusiasm. We are glad you are on the trail with us!

For information about how to get involved in any of these efforts, and to share your thoughts and ideas, please email Interim Executive Director Cate Grady-Benson at office@farmingtonlandtrust.org.

TAKING CARE OF FLT PROTECTED AREAS WILL CONTINUE TO BE A CRITICAL GOAL, USING THE BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AVAILABLE. THIS GOAL IS CARRIED OUT BY A LEGION OF VOLUNTEERS, USING FLT RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS AND ANNUAL WORK PLANS.





Why I Belong

Lands Trust Members Speak on the Rewards of Membership

Why do I support the Farmington Land Trust?

For two reasons, that are both dear to my heart. Protecting open space, which is the Land Trust mission, is necessary more than ever as our climate changes. The Land Trust currently protects more than 300 acres of open space, creating places of refuge for the benefit of people, plants and animals throughout the Town. It also partners with the Town of Farmington to promote the Town's acquisition of open space, such as the Farmington Reservoir and Suburban Park. I absolutely believe that without the Land Trust our town would be a less pleasing and healthful place to live and each of us would feel emptier in spirit.

Secondly, and as dear to my heart, are the people who volunteer for the Land Trust. What an amazing group – hardworking, smart, fun, principled and kind. I've developed wonderful friendships over the years as a member and supporter, and I'm forever grateful to the Land Trust for this.

– Cindy Stanley

Preserving Our Legacy Fundraiser Event Raises \$30,000

On Friday, May 21st, friends of the Farmington Land Trust spent a gorgeous spring night at the Tunxis Country Club celebrating together as we launched the Capital Campaign for the renovation and preservation of the Wilcox-Bushley Homestead. Because of the pandemic, this was the first event for many to finally gather with friends and FLT supporters.

Golf carts were decorated with colorful flowing streamers. Guests participated in putting and driving games as well as a trivia contest on the Red Course. With beer, wine, a special Farmhouse Fizz cocktail, and an array of appetizers, the evening was a delight.

Local businesses and committee members generously provided creative prize baskets nestled in 3 antique treasure chests from the Wilcox-Bushley Homestead for the winners of the games. Volunteers from Farmington High School were instrumental in providing help for the games and added a youthful vibe for supporting our community.

The evening was topped off with a generous grant of \$25,000 presented by Kathy McPadden, Executive Director of the ION Bank Foundation. Thanks to all who have supported the campaign. Currently we are \$425,000 closer to our goal to raise 1.3 million dollars towards "A Future For Our Farm" at the Wilcox-Bushley Homestead.

We thank all of our volunteers and our lead sponsors: The Hometown Foundation/Bozzuto's, ION Bank, and Connecticut Wealth Management along with all the other businesses and individuals who contributed to our success.

– Francie Brown-Holmes

Help Us Build A Future For Our Farm

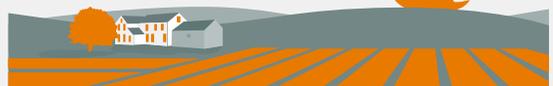
We have an extraordinary opportunity to create a community learning center and establish a permanent headquarters for the Farmington Land Trust at the Wilcox-Bushley Homestead.

Located at 119 Coppermine Road in the Unionville section of Farmington, the 24 acres of land surrounding the farmhouse were gifted to the Land Trust in 1995, becoming the West District Nature Preserve. The Wilcox-Bushley Homestead was donated to the FLT in 2019 by Mary Bushley and Ruth Bushley Childs. By renovating the property and former home, we hope to honor its history and promote a legacy of preservation in our community. Our vision is to create a place of learning, fellowship and refuge for all ages to enjoy.

We have initiated a \$1.3 million Capital Campaign to be completed over three years in order to fund the renovation of the farm house and adjacent buildings, create an outdoor classroom space, and contribute to our endowment. At our recent public launch of the Capital Campaign we were presented with a check for \$25,000 from the ION Bank Foundation, our first significant donation from area businesses. We have also received a \$10,000

FARMINGTON LAND TRUST

Wilcox-Bushley Homestead Capital Campaign



A FUTURE FOR OUR FARM

matching grant from Preservation Connecticut for the restoration of the windows in the historic farmhouse. Thanks to these donations, contributions from friends of the Farmington Land Trust, and a gift from Mary Bushley's estate, we are already a third of the way to reaching our goal.

We have many options for supporting this important community endeavor. Go to www.farmingtonlandtrust.org/wilcox-bushley-homestead to learn how!

— Cate Grady-Benson



A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THESE VOLUNTEERS

The Farmington Land Trust would like to thank these volunteers for their assistance in our efforts on the Wilcox-Bushley Homestead:

Susan Grzyb, past owner of **On The Road Bookshop** in Canton, volunteered her time to go through the family's books, separating those that are particular to the family and which will be added to our archives, and books that we will dispose of.

Regina Madigan of **Regina Madigan Appraisals** volunteered her time to go through the furniture in the house to identify and give us rough values of many of the pieces of furniture and objects in the house.

Waste Material Trucking Company, the Town of Farmington's waste collection contractor, owned by the Zommer family in Southington, furnished us with two dumpsters for use during our cleanout of the Homestead.

Sheldon Crosby and **Hillary Donald** of **L'Arc Architects** in Farmington are volunteering their time to create plans for our renovation. They continue to provide invaluable ongoing architectural services.

Biff Schechinger of **Robert C. Schechinger, Jr. ASLA, LLC**, in Farmington, is volunteering his Landscape Architecture expertise to create our site plan for the exterior work required for our renovation. He also continues to provide invaluable ongoing design services.

— Evan Cowles

What's Happening at the Wilcox-Bushley House?

A year ago we told you of our hopes and desires for the Wilcox-Bushley Homestead, the 10-room house located on the 25-acre core of a historic family farm on Coppermine Road donated to us by the Wilcox-Bushley family. We envision the home as the centerpiece of what we now call the West District Nature Preserve.

We've begun the process of renovating the house and making it our headquarters. We will be keeping the historic farmhouse's exterior appearance substantially the same, with the addition of parking and handicap access to the building. Signage and landscaping will complete the picture. Inside, a comfortable one-bedroom apartment will be built in the front portion of the second floor of the house, and a climate-controlled archival storage area will be created in the back of the second floor. We are also making a strong effort to create a green building consistent with our conservation-oriented philosophy.

Our plans also include an indoor classroom for our multiple, ongoing educational programs and an outdoor, covered classroom to be located in the adjoining farm shed. Our educational programming currently includes subjects such as how environmental health affects human health, the study of wildlife, nature photography, and the importance of pollinators in the food chain. The new educational facilities at the Wilcox-Bushley Homestead will expand our reach to expose more Farmington students to environmental concerns and opportunities.

In addition, the Homestead will give us the chance to layer onto our existing programming the historic relationship between the family that lived in the Wilcox-Bushley Homestead and the vernacular landscape of the farmland that supported it. This will expand the Land Trust's perspective from land conservation and the natural environment to include how a local family has related to land as a productive and sustainable resource for their livelihood.

Along with the Bushley's home, we received over 150 years' worth of family artifacts and papers. We've professionally archived many of these and they will remain as part of the Land Trust's records. These archives will eventually help us tell the story of the generations who lived on this land. Although we will not be interpreting these archives immediately,

we will keep them for reference and future research.

The Homestead is listed in the Connecticut Historical Commission's Historic Resources Inventory as the Isaiah Rowe House, the Rowe family having built the house in the early 19th century. We are currently working with Preservation Connecticut (formerly the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation) and the State Historic Preservation Office as we plan our historically sensitive renovation. Our first step is to have the house listed on the Connecticut State Register of Historic Places.

When Mary Bushley died, she left a bequest in her will that will contribute to some of the cost of making the renovations and creating educational spaces. However, we are also planning to raise additional funds through grants and personal donations to complete the renovations and increase our endowment to cover the added expenses of the Homestead and continue the mission of the Farmington Land Trust. Please stay tuned.

— Evan Cowles

Jon Estrellado, Treasurer

I am originally from the West Coast but made my way to Connecticut in 1990 after graduating from Eastern Washington University in business administration/finance. After working in insurance industry and private-equity start-ups for over 30 years, I landed in the technology sector.

My wife Sherri and I moved to Farmington after our three adult children launched. We renovated The Academy/Union Hall (circa 1816) in 2014 and subsequently moved into it as our new home. Pre-Covid, when I'm not traveling for business, I try to be outdoors as much as possible, including taking walks, hikes, cross-country skiing and cycling — which Farmington provides plenty of options for.

How did you first become involved with the Farmington Land Trust?

After moving to Farmington, I wanted to be involved with the community and was introduced to the Land Trust by a current board member, Jim Calciano, and became a member.

What made you decide to join the Board of Directors?

I wanted to take on a more active role towards the mission of the Land Trust. After meeting the other board members, seeing their dedication, enthusiasm and enjoyment in what they were doing. I knew it was something I wanted to do and be part of.

What part of the Land Trust's mission — education, stewardship, acquisition — is most interesting to you and why?

All of the above. I am taking the easy answer on this one! Seriously though, all three work in unison for the continued success of the mission. All the board members are actively involved in each.

How do you think the FLT could reach out more effectively to the community?

It's been said before...we really need to bring in younger people, families and be more inclusive. The Land Trust has always provided great education and activities, but I think we have seen an uptick in engagement from local folks and those living outside of Farmington. This is due in part to more people looking to enjoy the outdoors due to Covid-19. Social media has some positive sides to it — The Snow Moon Snowshoe/Hike on the West District Nature Preserve was great success because folks found us there. In addition, our virtual programs, like Regenerative Farming: What Is It? and Owl About EVE-ning allow us to reach more people like never before.

Is there anything specific you hope to accomplish during your term?

It would be a major success if we could double our Landmark Fund and move into a permanent headquarters. Through the efforts of both current and past boards and members, the Farmington Land Trust is poised to raise the funds to ensure the continued acquisition of and stewardship of our properties in perpetuity. In addition, our objective to renovate/relocate to a permanent Land Trust-owned headquarters in the Wilcox-Bushley Homestead is in progress and within our reach!



Gratitude for Our Newest Acquisition

We'd like to thank Geoff Sager, Peter Dunn and their company The Metro Realty Group Ltd, who have just completed their gift of over 4.5 acres of land to the Farmington Land Trust in January, 2021. We are very pleased to get this wonderful piece of land contiguous with our existing Bancroft Memorial Parcel on Prattling Pond Road.

The land consists of an upland hillside facing east, running down to a wetlands swale adjacent to the old town dump. The dump had been a quarry, and is now a closed landfill which the town has used for its leaf composting operation. The wetlands swale runs along the Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company Easement, which continues onto our Bancroft Memorial Parcel.

The board will be deciding on an official name, conducting a Natural Resource Report, and exploring the new parcel, so we have just begun to get to know this new acquisition. Thanks again to Geoff, Peter, and their crew!

— Evan Cowles

New Home for Pollinators at West District Nature Preserve

You might have seen a large structure being built just west of the homestead on the West District Nature Preserve last summer, an Air Bee 'N Bee for threatened pollinators. The bee hotel provides housing for solitary bees who live by themselves instead of in hives like bumblebees or honey bees. While these bees do not make honey, they are one of the top crop pollinators. Without them the production of food in the world would be greatly reduced. These bees are in great crisis and their numbers have been dwindling at a rapid rate all over the planet. I created my project to bring awareness to these bees and their plight and show what we, as humans, can do to help them.

Solitary bees tend to have a short lifespan and consequently have a short flying range from their home in order to preserve energy. When they first look for a good nesting spot, they may fly a few miles searching. But once they check into their new bee home, they only fly a few hundred feet (about 100 yards) from their nesting site. This is why it is extremely essential to surround the bee hotel with flowers for all types of pollinators but especially for bees. It is very important to note that solitary bees are not aggressive towards humans or other animals, as their main focus is reproduction and survival.

The bee hotel on the West District Nature Preserve will supply a home for solitary bees for many years to come. It will also provide an educational opportunity for students at West District School and for members of the Farmington Land Trust. The bee hotel is designed with many different types of wood and material for a variety of solitary bees as there are over 4,000 different species. I created a beautiful butterfly garden in front of the structure to provide a close source of nutrition for the bees. There will be opportunities to learn more about these bees and



Raven Barto's Air Bee 'N Bee is open for fly-in business.

about how to build your own Air Bee 'N Bee in the near future. Stay buzzed in!

The Air Bee 'N Bee is my Girl Scout Gold Project. The Gold Award is the highest achievement within Girl Scouts of America; only 5.4% of Girl Scouts successfully earn one. This award must tackle issues in the community and leave a lasting impact. I hope my Air Bee 'N Bee does both.

— Raven Barto

Meet Our New Development Assistant

Welcome to Meghan Naujoks, FLT's new Development Assistant! Meghan's work focuses on membership, fundraising and special events, working closely with acting Interim Executive Director and Capital Campaign Chair Cate Grady-Benson. Meghan's tenure began in early March.

Meghan brings a robust set of skills to her work. A Farmington resident, she has worked in marketing and communications for large corporations such as The Hartford and ConnectiCare, as well as done freelance work as a copywriter for print and digital media. As a board member and volunteer for the Farmington Public Schools Foundation, she planned and implemented events and materials to raise significant funds for our local school district. And last, but certainly not least, she has been a valued FLT volunteer working on the Capital Campaign Committee.

You will probably meet Meghan at some point at an event, program, or when you call the office with a question. Be sure to give her a FLT welcome when you do!

— Lisa Johnson



Remembering Charlie Leach: Friend, Mentor, and Untiring Champion for Open Space

We ended the month of August with sadness at the loss of two of our dearest friends, Liz Dolphin and Charlie Leach, both avid, long-time supporters of FLT and its mission. I am remembering Charlie, who died last month.

Charlie and Joan arrived in Farmington in 1967, eventually settling into their forever house at the corner of Tunxis and Main Streets, a 17th-century home with lots of history, which he ferreted out over time and shared as a member of the Farmington Historical Society. I met Charlie and Joan one morning when I and one of my students landed a hot-air balloon in the Leach's back garden. They were surprised but welcoming once they realized there was no emergency (and that we brought champagne).

Years later we met up again after we'd both had been volunteering in various organizations around town. This time, we ended up working for the cause of 'preserved and protected open space' as Charlie joined the Board of the Farmington Land Trust. I was on the Acquisition Committee. Charlie went for advocacy right away and made a very good job of it.

During the early 2000s there was a major tree clearing encroachment on one of FLT's properties on Mountain Spring Road. Charlie headed up a 'full court press' on the violator. When it was discovered that there was no chance for compensation under current law, Charlie mounted a successful campaign in the legislature to create a law that would hold those who damaged

protected lands in Connecticut responsible for reparations, both remedial and monetary. For that, the FLT nominated Charlie for the Land Trust Alliance's "Volunteer of the Year" award, which he received in 2007. The law later became a model for similar legislation in other parts of the country. Charlie was also instrumental in the quest to separate the Inland Wetlands Commission from the Plan & Zoning Commission in Farmington, which was a long process but a successful outcome for land use regulations in our town.

Charlie Leach shepherded his committee but also served as Vice President and President of FLT. He led hikes for the Land Trust (lots of them with Liz) and continued participating in his many town wide and professional interests. He gave us lots of his time,

inspired us with his energy and set a great example as a caring and available friend. Thank goodness for him.

— Kathy Wadsworth Delano, Former FLT Board Member

A Celebration of his Life will be held Saturday, October 16, 2021 at the New Britain Museum of American Art — time to be announced. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Farmington Land Trust, P.O. Box 1, Farmington, CT 06034, the New Britain Museum of American Art, 56 Lexington St., New Britain, CT 06052 or to the Farmington Historical Society, P.O. Box 1645, Farmington, CT 06034.



A Tribute to Liz Dolphin, Our Late Executive Director

It is with deep sorrow that I write of the passing of our Executive Director, Elizabeth Dolphin.

Liz was a friend. She was a wonderful person and skilled professional, dedicated to land conservation, who was respected and loved by those with whom she worked.

After receiving a degree in zoology from Ohio Wesleyan and a master's in resource management from Antioch, Liz found her professional home in Farmington, as Assistant Town Planner in 1987. Ever with an eye to conservation of the land, it was only natural that she was appointed liaison to the Town Land Acquisition Committee, originally the Open Space Acquisition Committee, when it was established in 1999 as a collaborative effort between the Conservation Commission and the Farmington Land Trust. After retiring from the Planning Department in 2015, Liz continued as consultant to the LAC. In 2019, it was our good fortune that Liz agreed to come on board as our fifth Executive Director.

Liz's accomplishments regarding the acquisition of town open space are extraordinary: over 50 properties acquired, totaling more than one thousand acres, with \$4.8 million, 20% of purchase price, funded by the State through grants she wrote. Liz also played a central role in almost every environmental initiative in town, and was ever vigilant to achieve the best environmental outcome in every transaction approved by the Town's planning department during her tenure.

It's impossible to adequately honor Liz and all that she has done for land conservation with these few words. She will remain forever in our hearts and memory as will her contributions to the environment, as evidenced by the open spaces and land she helped save throughout Farmington.

— Richard Kramer, Past President



Donations may be made to the Elizabeth Dolphin Birding Trail and memorial dedicated in her memory by the Farmington Land Trust. Please make donations to: www.farmingtonlandtrust.org/memorial-donations.

JOIN US FOR:

Who Were the First Inhabitants of the Farmington Valley?

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7 • 2 P.M.

MOUNTAIN SPRING NATURE TRAIL CARRIAGE HOUSE

David Leslie, a research scientist in the Anthropology Department at UCONN and a Senior Archaeologist with Archaeological & Historical Services Inc., is investigating a number of Paleoindian sites in the valley, including a 10,500 BC site – the oldest yet discovered in CT— as well as even older Pleistocene sites. David will share some of his latest research and tell us who these inhabitants were and how they lived.

FLT's Annual Black Friday Hike to Will Warren's Den

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 26 • 11 A.M.

Join Kathy Delano Wadsworth on a medium-exertion hike to the cave of Farmington's famous hermit, Will Warren. Meet at the Rt. 6 parking lot for the Metacomet Trail.

Alternative Black Friday Hike on the Canal Aqueduct and Henry Mason Trail

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 26 • 11 A.M.

Join historian Jay Bombara for an easy hike exploring the history of the Canal Aqueduct and its beautiful trail. Located on Rt.10.

OptOutside

Adopt-A-Parcels Need Adopters

Looking for a way to have a lasting impact in Farmington? The FLT maintains and protects 67 properties throughout Farmington. Several of the properties have trails for community access. We are offering business and community members the option of adopting one of these select parcels for a period of three years. The cost for each parcel, and time commitment, varies according to its individual needs. The adopter will have a sign erected in their name at the trailhead, much like the Adopt-a-Highway program. The yearly fee will offset the maintenance, signage, and upgrades on the property. The following parcels are being offered for adoption:

1. Boulder Brook: *Adopted by Heidi and Henry Maresh, Reno Property's Group, LLC, and Paul Yeomans*
2. The Cowles Parcel: *Adopted by Judith King and Stephen Gryc*
3. The Canal Aqueduct Parcel: *Adopted by Lee Thomson*
4. Clatter Valley Road Parcel: *Adopted by Clare Smith and Francie Brown-Holmes*
5. The Unionville Fishing Pier on the Douglass Mount and Zipp Parcels: *Available*
6. The Mountain Spring Nature Trail: *Adopted by ProHealth Physicians*
7. The Wadsworth Easement (Will Warrens Den): *Available*
8. The Wilcox-Bushley Homestead: *Available*

If you are interested in adopting one of our remaining parcels please contact our office at 860.674.8545 or a Board Member.

