

CONNECTICUT
Land Conservation Council

2022 Updates & Highlights



"In the world we live in today, we need things that draw us together as opposed to tearing us apart, and nature is that. So, as you move through the world, let **[nature]** be your compass and let that be what guides you." - HERB VIRGO | KENY PARK SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT

#LoveYourCTLandTrust



Photo Credit Humphrey Tyler

Working together we build trust

We started the paddle as strangers and ended it as friends. Being out in nature has a way of doing that.



Photo Credit Humphrey Tyler

Earlier this summer, I received an invitation from dedicated conservationist and longtime CLCC advisor, Humphrey Tyler, to join a small group of kayakers pulling invasive water chestnuts from the lower Connecticut River. Pulling, bagging, and hauling these insidious aquatic invasives was a wet, dirty, and tiring experience. I loved every minute of it!

Most of us had never met, but we quickly bonded over a common purpose and a shared love of the environment. While focused on the task at hand, we learned about one another's jobs, hobbies, families, and politics.

As we paddled and pulled, we shared success stories, pointed out land acquisition opportunities, and discussed the many challenges to local conservation efforts that are essential to protecting the overall health of the river and region.

During my ride back home to Vernon, I reflected on our work at the Connecticut Land Conservation Council and how building and maintaining connections is essential to the long-term viability of land conservation in Connecticut. It is at the core of everything we do.

It's being relentless in our pursuit of stronger policies and funding programs that advance land conservation at every level. It's engaging in conversations that may be uncomfortable and unfamiliar in the context of the work we do. It's ensuring that land trusts are equipped with the resources they need to be impactful in their communities for the long haul. It's demanding that all people have access to and feel welcome in nature.

By working together, we build trust, learn from one another, foster collective efficiencies, and extend the reach of land trusts beyond organizational and political boundaries to connect more people, conserve more land, empower new conservation leaders, and build stronger communities – all while making new friends along the way.

We are proud of our accomplishments, motivated by challenges, and energized by the many opportunities to strengthen land conservation that await. Thank you for your partnership. We look forward to engaging with you in the months ahead.

Amy Blaymore Paterson

Amy Blaymore Paterson
Executive Director

www.ctconservation.org

Gather on the Land

Conversations Among Generations

► Our 2022 Conference

What is your vision for the future of land conservation? CLCC's 2022 Connecticut Land Conservation Conference created a platform for young conservationists to highlight their unique perspectives and stories. Through a series of intergenerational conversations, these emerging and established leaders shared their frustrations, concerns, hopes, goals, and plans to cultivate a shared understanding and vision of the past, present, and future of land conservation.

Here and throughout this report are **quotes from our conference speakers**. They are a glimpse into the thoughtful and insightful panel discussions nurtured by this year's conference. Learn more about our speakers on our website at www.ctconservation.org

► We are returning to Wesleyan!

CLCC Annual Connecticut Land Conservation Conference

Saturday, March 25, 2023

Want to get involved?

Contact Cristina: chayden@ctconservation.org



"The big thing is making sure young people's conservation voices are intentionally included and heard."

SENA WAZER
Climate Activist

"My message to students is to know your worth. Value your experiences. Everything that you do has value, and it is contributing to your experience and the value that you bring to an organization."

JAYSON VELAZQUEZ
Yale School for the Environment

"You have to open the discussion to realities all across the board because something that is sustainable for one person will not be sustainable for another."

JAYSA HUNTER-MELLERS
Young Voice for the Planet

"As a land trust, your job is not just to protect land and play this crazy game of whack-a-mole against developers trying to protect land before they get to it. You also have to get to know your community and get a sense of community needs and engage groups that haven't been engaged historically and make that effort and not just doing so so that you could add a land equity message to your website. Actually do it continuously and build capacity to keep doing that work."

PAUL MAILHOT-SINGER
Housatonic Valley Association

"We are part of an ecosystem. We are not above it. That keeps me grounded in the work because I want to do everything I can culturally, interpersonally, and legislatively to cultivate life-affirming environments."

KATHARINE MORRIS
Scholar-Activist for Environmental Justice

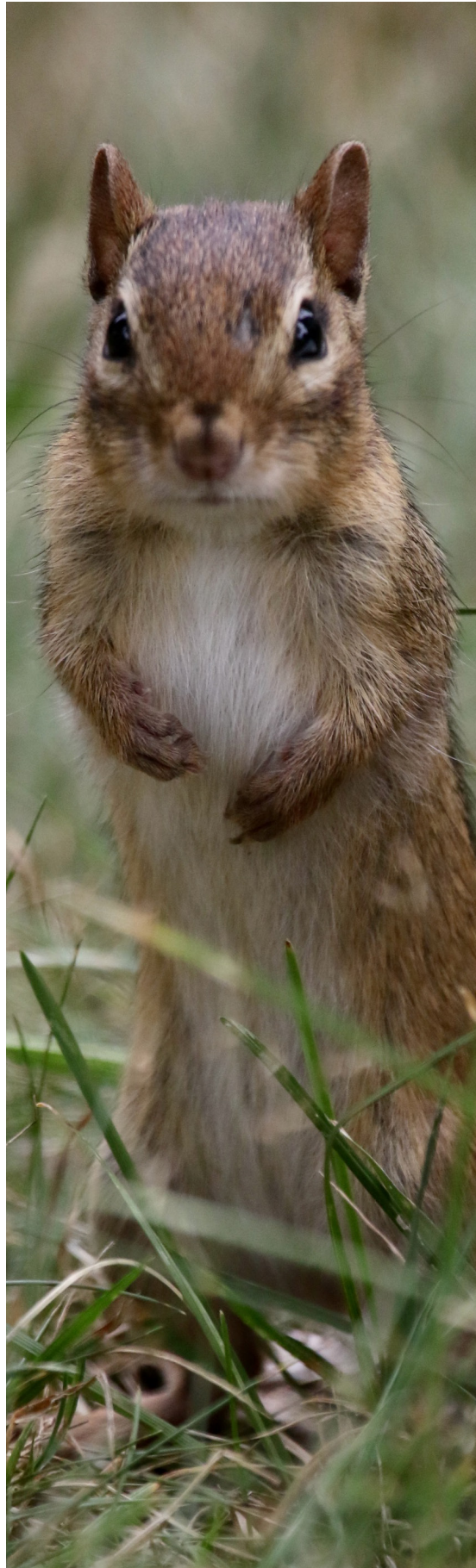


Photo Credit Rick Newton

2022 Legislative Session

Includes Good News for Land Conservation Funding

There was no shortage of action in the 2022 Legislative Session.

Thanks to strong grassroots advocacy from local land trusts and a unified effort among land conservation advocates, Connecticut's approved 2023 Budget included the following wins for land conservation and parks – all top priorities for CLCC.

\$15 million

in bond funding for the Open Space & Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program (OSWA), which provides matching grants to municipalities, land trusts, and water companies for open space and watershed land conservation and includes the Urban Green and Community Garden Program for community garden and greenspace projects.

Additional OSWA funding

from the Community Investment Act remained intact.

\$6 million

in bond funding to support land trust and community trail projects and acquisition of land or easements for trails and trail corridors.

Over \$50 million

in funding for State Park infrastructure projects.

These wins continued in July with the State Bond Commission's release of \$34 million of this funding, including \$10 million for the OSWA program.

However, as CLCC Executive Director, Amy Blaymore Paterson, said in a recent Hartford Courant article, "Ten million dollars is a great win, but the truth is we're going to need a lot more for the state to fully meet its goal. We must significantly ramp up our investments in land conservation to make a profound impact on the state's climate crisis."

Source: "CT spending \$10M to preserve more open space, combat climate change, ensure it's 'forever wild'" By Stephen Underwood Hartford Courant July 30, 2022.



Photo Credit Libby Lord

While we should celebrate this step forward to support stronger investments in land conservation, we must continue to act:



- ✓ **Thank your legislators** for the 2023 Budget investments in land conservation, trails, and public lands but emphasize the need to amplify this funding to meet statewide conservation and climate change mitigation goals.
- ✓ **Invite them** to join your land trust for a hike or other event to highlight the importance of preserves, parks, farms, gardens, and trails to your community.
- ✓ **Urge your local elected officials** to take advantage of new federal funds to invest in local parks, working and natural lands, and climate resilience.
- ✓ **Contact us for assistance** in applying for land conservation grants. With more funding available – including CLCC's new programs – this is the time to engage with landowners and move forward with priority projects.

Investments in land conservation programs and protection of public lands are essential to meet the state's 21% open space goal, mitigate the environmental and human health impacts of a fast-changing climate, halt biodiversity loss, keep air and water clean, and improve the quality of life and strength of the economy in Connecticut's communities.

Together, at every opportunity, we must emphasize this message and demand action.

To learn more about how you may get more involved with CLCC's policy and advocacy work contact Amy: abpaterson@ctconservation.org

"There is this constant fail forward cycle where we just gobble up more land after land, and we need to realize [that] needs to stop, and [go] in the opposite direction."

AUSTIN SERIO
Chicoran Shakori



Photo Credit Julie Stewart

Taking Climate Action by Saving Land

We are at a critical point for our planet's future.

Scientists have warned us for decades. New studies raise increasingly urgent alarms. And in Connecticut, we are living it.

Climate change is here. Extreme heat, frequent and destructive storms, flooding and drought conditions, poor air quality, and disappearing wildlife - Connecticut's residents - both human and non-human - are suffering from the ill-effects of a changing climate with the hardest hit being low-income and minority communities.



"Related to those warming winters and longer growing season is the rapid spread and abundance of invasive plants, and the migration of these plants from southerly regions into the Northeast. This is impacting forest health, resilience, and biodiversity at large."

ANDREA URBANO
CT DEEP Forestry

The good news is that the benefits of nature-based climate solutions – including conserving forests, grasslands, wetlands, watersheds, and healthy soil – in mitigating the impacts of climate change are well established.

Protecting Connecticut's natural and working lands limits greenhouse gas emissions, ensures cleaner air and drinking water, reduces flooding, increases and enhances wildlife habitat, enables better food access, and provides other community and environmental benefits.

Connecticut land trusts are pivotal to curbing climate change and engaging and empowering healthier local communities. With 130 land trusts - one in almost every municipality - there is power in numbers. Collectively, they have conserved over 204,000 acres across all landscapes, with thousands more in the queue for protection.

Recognizing that natural resources – and their myriad benefits – do not stop at town boundaries or state lines, Connecticut land trusts are working together and in partnership with other community groups to prevent land fragmentation, protect wildlife corridors, create greenways, and establish pollinator pathways. Their efforts are inspiring, impactful, and crucial in the statewide effort to fight the climate crisis.

CLCC is committed to ensuring land trusts have the tools, funding, and policies they need to collectively, collaboratively, and effectively ramp up their efforts to take climate action.

We have years, not decades, to act.

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Spotlights

The following are just a few examples of land trusts and community partners working together across the state to build connective landscapes to address climate change, enhance wildlife habitat, and connect more people to the benefits of nature.

Follow the Forest in Northwest Connecticut and Beyond

Follow the Forest – extending from NW Connecticut to Canada – is an expanding network bringing land trusts, municipalities, and other conservation partners together at an unprecedented scale to create a resilient climate corridor that benefits people and wildlife alike, now and into the future.

[More at www.followtheforest.org](http://www.followtheforest.org)

Connecticut is on the Pathway!

The Pollinator Pathway project is organized by volunteers from land trusts and town conservation organizations working together to establish pollinator-friendly habitat and food sources for bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and other pollinating insects and wildlife along a series of continuous corridors. This project began in 2017 in Wilton, CT. Since then, pathways have been established in over 200 towns in CT, NY, MA, NJ, PA, and the list keeps growing.

[More at www.pollinator-pathway.org](http://www.pollinator-pathway.org)

Keney Park Sustainability Project (KPSP)

Through experiential learning opportunities ranging from agricultural production to forest stewardship to wellness and health, KPSP seeks to create the next generation of healthy, productive, and environmentally conscious citizens. All programs are based in the federally-designated North Hartford Promise Zone, one of the poorest neighborhoods in the country, and predominantly Black and Hispanic.

[More at www.keneyparksustainability.org](http://www.keneyparksustainability.org)



Photo Credit Keney Park Sustainability Project

Learn About 30 x 30

The 30 x 30 Initiative is a global initiative to halt mass extinctions and bolster resilience to climate change by protecting at least

30%
of the planet's lands
and waters by 2030

While Connecticut struggles to meet its goal of conserving 21% of its land area by 2023, other states as well as land trusts and their communities are following the national lead and exploring a commitment to 30 x 30.

To better understand these efforts and help to inform state and local policy around 30 x 30, CLCC in partnership with Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy and Yale School of the Environment graduate students, Annie Miller and Shannon Bell, developed a report entitled, "A Path to 30 x 30 in Connecticut". Find a copy at www.ctconservation.org



Photo Credit Rick Newton

Upcoming Programs

Connecting and Learning, With You

As we emerge from three years of distancing and isolation, CLCC is thrilled to rekindle in person many of the programs that bring Connecticut's land conservation community together.

Through roundtables, summits, and other networking opportunities, we learn from one another and better prepare to address opportunities and challenges on the horizon.



"We can all actively protect the diverse nature of our state by inviting others who don't look like us to participate. Stay and hang with them and introduce them to the activities that you love."

LETICIA COLON DE MEJIAS
Green Eco Warriors

www.ctconservation.org

Land Trust Networking

Join CLCC and land trusts in your region to share ideas and resources, explore topics of mutual interest, or begin discussions about closer collaboration. We'll discuss ways that CLCC can best support your conservation efforts in the coming year.

Peer-to-Peer Conversations

Looking to connect with others in similar land trust roles? Keep an eye out for summits of Executive Directors, Treasurers, Presidents, Land Stewards, and other peer groups. We'll create space to learn from one another, dive into topics of mutual interest, and identify ways CLCC can provide additional training and expertise.

Merger Assistance Program

Sometimes it's hard going it alone. There are many reasons why land trusts explore mergers, and CLCC is proud to help. Thanks to a generous grant from The Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation, CLCC facilitates discussions, coordinates feasibility studies, engages consultants, and provides a roadmap to financial assistance for newly merged land trusts.

Technical Training

Conservation and stewardship can be complex topics, and CLCC is here to provide the technical training and expertise your land trust needs. Join us in the coming year for both virtual and in-person workshops, with topics including affordable housing, DEIJ, fundraising, and more.

For more information about CLCC Land Trust Capacity Building Programs, contact Aaron: alefland@ctconservation.org

Advancement Initiatives

New London County Northeast CT

Developing a Comprehensive Conservation Vision through an Equity Lens

The Challenge

The Connecticut Land Conservation Council recognizes that for land trusts to be successful and sustainable, they need to broaden their base of support. This includes becoming relevant to a more diverse cross section of people.

The Opportunity

With funding from the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, the Connecticut Community Foundation, and others, CLCC is working with land trusts and social service organizations to explore community needs and foster relationships to address them.

Facilitated by equity coaches, Ashley Stewart and David Sutherland, these discussions allow

land trusts and community groups to engage directly, share perspectives, and pursue collaborative projects to address issues such as lack of proximity to green spaces, housing and food insecurity, serving people with disabilities, and other local challenges and opportunities.

Spotlight

Bird & Hike with CT Land Trusts

As part of CLCC's pilot program, *Bird & Hike with CT Land Trusts*, Salem Land Trust's David Bingham and CLCC's Yaw Darko, co-hosted a bird walk with Outdoor Afro – New Haven & Hartford. Supported by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, CLCC's goal is to provide Black, Indigenous, People of Color, and other underserved communities with opportunities for guided birding and hiking on land trust properties.

Read Yaw's full blog post about the *Bird & Hike* program on our website, and contact him if you are interested in learning more: yodarko@ctconservation.org.

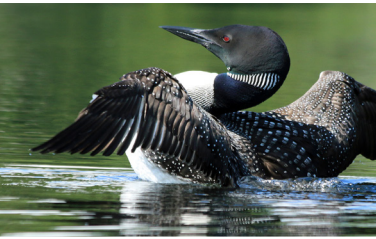


Photo Credit Tom Ouellette

A big thanks to representatives of the following organizations who participated in the 2022 discussions:

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| Avalonia Land Conservancy | Step Up New London | Flanders Nature Center and Land Trust |
| Waterford Land Trust | CT Area Health Education Center | Roxbury Land Trust |
| Groton Open Space Association | Town of Groton | Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy |
| Salem Land Trust | Connecticut Sea Grant | Housatonic Valley Association |
| Colchester Land Trust | New London Trees | Litchfield Hills Greenprint Collaborative |
| Old Lyme Land Trust | Groton Conservation Commission | Morris Land Trust |
| Lyme Land Conservation Trust | Gather New Haven | Warren Land Trust |
| Southeastern CT Community Land Trust | Creative Living Community of Connecticut | Echo Farm |
| Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments | The Last Green Valley (Northeast Project Partner) | Upper Pond Farm |
| Yale Center on Climate Change and Health | Kent Land Trust | New Hartford Land Trust |
| | Connecticut Farmland Trust | Bethlehem Land Trust |
| | | Northeast Wilderness Trust |

Creating a Safe Place to Share Perspectives

"It is likely not apparent that I identify in the LGBTQ+ category... The CLCC roundtables gave me and other participants a safe platform to reflect on, understand, and share our own personal experiences regarding diversity as a starting point to pursuing more inclusive conservation."

– **New London County Land Trust**
Advancement Initiative Participant

Are you interested in bringing an Advancement Initiative to your region? Contact Emely to brainstorm ideas: ericci@ctconservation.org.



Photo Credit Rick Newton

Funding Programs

Bringing Conservation Funding to Connecticut

It's the one thing CLCC hears most frequently from land trusts - "we need more funding". It's no surprise since Connecticut's public conservation funding, per capita, is the lowest of any state in New England.

With new CLCC grant programs – the Connecticut Conservation Partnership Program and Transaction Assistance Grant Program – land trusts have access to significant new sources of funding that will help them to pursue and complete more projects.

Connecticut Conservation Partnership Program (CCPP)

How do we increase the pace, quality, scale, and permanence of land conservation in Connecticut?

www.ctconservation.org

By leveraging federal and state dollars to invigorate the impact land trusts make with each acre of conserved land.

Through CCPP, CLCC has secured \$6.7 million in federal dollars to be awarded to land trusts over the next five years. This program is an opportunity to not only conserve more land, but to tackle the damaging effects of a changing climate, to ensure the well-being of our rural, urban, and suburban communities, and to commit to a present and future furnished with the natural resources imperative to our livelihoods.

Transaction Assistance Grant Program (TAG)

Raising money to purchase land is hard enough. It's even harder to find funds for costly transaction expenses like appraisals, surveys, and closing costs. With TAG, CLCC is helping to ease that burden.

Launched in the summer, TAG will provide land trusts with multiple funding opportunities throughout the year, helping them start new conservation projects and bring existing transactions across the finish line.

For more information about CLCC Land Trust Funding Programs, contact Yaw: yodarko@ctconservation.org

Financials

Thanks to the financial assistance of land trusts, municipalities, foundations, state and federal partners, and people like you, we can serve land trusts at a critical time.



2021 Income

Municipal Commission Contributions	\$1,515
Corp./Org. Contributions	\$16,030
Land Trust Memberships	\$15,325
Program Revenue	\$25,494
Conference	\$18,350
Individual Donations	\$88,705
Foundation Grants*	\$385,700
TOTAL	\$643,596

*Includes multi-year grants that will be spent down in 2022



2021 Expense

Fundraising	\$21,332
Management & Support	\$15,343
Programs (Including Conference)	\$319,577
TOTAL	\$353,252

For a full financial statement, visit www.ctconservation.org



“You must have your eyes on the big picture. You must understand the importance and gravity of what you do. But get your power from small conversations with people—the smaller picture. Let that be what empowers you.”

NATE WELSH
East Granby Land Trust



Photo Credit Rick Newton

Board of Directors & Officers

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Eric Hammerling, *Secretary*
West Hartford

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Fellow



 **eNews**
Woo Hoo!
Aquarion Recognizes
#LoveYourCTLandTrust

CONNECTICUT Land Conservation Council

deKoven House

27 Washington Street | Middletown, CT 06457



Photo Credit: Daniel Goberman

Celebrating 2022 Excellence in Conservation Awards



Photo Credit Chad Lyons



Photo Credit Barbara Douglas

► Every Gift Matters



CLCC greatly appreciates your support. Your gift increases our impact. You may make a tax-deductible donation by sending a check using the enclosed envelope, or make a one-time, or recurring credit card contribution via our website.

To discuss the benefits of other giving options, including remembering CLCC in your estate plans, gifting appreciated stock, or through your IRA, please contact Vanessa: vgiannasi@ctconservation.org.