



CONNECTICUT  
Land Conservation Council

2025

IMPACT REPORT



## Our Great Green Connecticut

On the final night of Connecticut’s 2025 legislative session, I was at the Capitol, meeting with legislators and advocating until the very last minute. One of the bills voted on that last day included the state bond package—which held essential funding for a critical state land conservation and urban greenspace grant program for land trusts and their communities.

As we do every year, we worked hard to ensure that the funding was included, and although I was confident the bill would pass, I still felt nervous.

And I wasn’t the only one! As the votes came in, a board member sent me a short message:

– *“Voting now in House. Lots of green on the board.”* –

Those words stayed with me. In that moment, “lots of green” meant a resounding win for land trust funding and for the communities, wildlife, and future generations who will benefit from conserved lands. But more than that, it became a powerful metaphor for the year we’ve had at the State Capitol.

This session delivered many “green victories”: the codification of Nature-based Solutions as part of the state’s climate action plans; a long-overdue increase in funding for the Community Investment Act, which supports local land-use projects; and, of course, the renewed commitment to bonding for land conservation. At a time when federal conservation, climate, and environmental protection programs have faced freezes, cuts, and setbacks, Connecticut charted a different course – one that lifts up the environment, equity, and resilience.

For me, this was a personal highlight of the year – a reminder that even in challenging times, progress is possible when people come together for a cause they love. Thanks to your support, CLCC was there every step of the way: advocating, testifying, building relationships, and ensuring that “lots of green” isn’t just a moment in the legislature – it’s a movement for the future of Connecticut.

As you read through this report, I hope you will enjoy the many shades of “green” we achieved together as told through the perspectives of conservation friends and colleagues – from policy victories to the projects and partnerships that continue to shape a more resilient, equitable, and connected Connecticut.

Thank you for your continued support in making all of this possible.

With gratitude,

Amy Blaymore Paterson  
Executive Director

For Land  
For Community  
For Connecticut



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# LAND



Laurel Ridge by Winchester Land Trust

Connecticut is a green state, a testament to the collective efforts of a vibrant conservation community. This past year the state has made remarkable strides in land acquisition, community engagement, and environmental advocacy. From safeguarding critical habitats to fostering inclusive access to nature, CLCC and its partners have worked tirelessly to protect and enhance Connecticut’s natural beauty and ecological health for all.

## Introducing the Land & Easement Acquisition Program (LEAP)

To empower land trusts to swiftly protect Connecticut’s invaluable land and water, CLCC launched the **Land and Easement Acquisition Program (LEAP)** in January 2025. LEAP addresses the critical need for new and matching funding for land and easement acquisitions, helping land trusts bridge funding gaps and move at the speed of the real estate market. Funded through a generous grant from **The Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation**, LEAP requires all awarded projects to close within 12 months or less, ensuring prompt conservation action.

For land trust leaders, LEAP grants fill a gaping hole in conservation finance - fast access to capital. For private landowners, LEAP makes land trusts more viable buyers. And for the officials at the **Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP)**, LEAP creates more viable projects for its Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition (OSWA) Grant Program.

Since its launch, LEAP has awarded **\$1,539,719** through nine grants, leading to the **permanent protection of 7,278 acres** across the state. This significant investment accelerates land conservation, safeguards critical habitats, enhances biodiversity, and expands public access to nature. Examples of LEAP projects follow.

**“CLCC’s grant programs foster crucial partnerships and provide vital gap funding for smaller organizations. This enables a larger pool of conservation projects and expands our collective impact.”**

– **Andrew Hoskins**  
Chief of Staff, CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection

**Aspetuck Land Trust** was awarded \$50,000 for acquisition of a ~6-acre addition to Poindexter Preserve, and \$59,850 to acquire a second parcel that further expands the preserve by another ~4 acres. These acquisitions will expand the popular preserve by over 15%, safeguard diverse wildlife habitats, scenic rock walls, a wetland and grassland meadow cherished by nature enthusiasts, and establish essential public amenities, including safe off-street parking and a new central trailhead.

**Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy (NCLC)** received a grant award of \$98,500 for acquisition of the 117-acre Glen Brook property in Sherman, expanding NCLC’s Strauss Morrissey Preserve and creating a continuous 277-acre public recreation area. The Glen Brook property is a critical remaining farmland and forest parcel, featuring core forests, wetlands, and vital habitat for rare, threatened, and endangered species like the Eastern Box Turtle, Wood Turtle, and Spotted Turtle. The project will establish a public parking area and a new trail network, connecting to existing trails for a total of 4.5 miles of passive recreation opportunities.

**Wyndham Land Trust** was awarded \$75,000 for the acquisition of the 320-acre Hillandale Woods property located in Pomfret and Brooklyn. This project is significant for its connectivity, linking previously protected conservation lands and enhancing regional wildlife corridors. For residents of Brooklyn, a town with a very low percentage of protected land, Hillandale Woods will offer opportunities for hiking, horseback riding, and bird watching on existing logging roads.

**“LEAP provided crucial gap funding for our flagship Bond project. Land trusts need programs like this so that we can move faster and close more land deals.”**

– **Dennis Main**  
Board Chair, Avalonia Land Conservancy

### LEAP Grants, January - September, 2025

Land Trust	Project	Town	Acres	Grant
Aspetuck Land Trust	Poindexter Preserve Addition #1	Easton	6	\$50,000
	Poindexter Preserve Addition #2	Easton	4	\$59,850
Avalonia Land Trust	Bond Property	Montville	669	\$500,000
Litchfield Land Trust	Putnam Property	Litchfield	105	\$52,034
Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy	Colebrook Reservoir	Colebrook & Hartland	5,200	\$250,000
	Glen Brook	Sherman	117	\$98,500
Trust for Public Land	Girl Scout Camp	Lebanon	350	\$280,000
Winchester Land Trust	Laurel Ridge	Winsted	507	\$174,335
Wyndham Land Trust	Hillandale Woods	Brooklyn & Pomfret	320	\$75,000
<b>TOTAL (9 Grants)</b>			<b>7,278</b>	<b>\$1,539,719</b>



Putnam Property by Litchfield Land Trust

## Transaction Assistance Grant Program (TAG)

CLCC's Transaction Assistance Grants (TAG) help land trusts cover due diligence costs such as land surveys, appraisals, and environmental assessments. These grants are indispensable for land trusts, helping close the gap in funding for essential activities that are challenging to fund.

From July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, CLCC awarded 22 TAG grants totaling **\$233,488**, facilitating the **protection of 2,837 acres**. Since launching the TAG program in 2023, CLCC has provided a total of \$517,000 in TAG grants to 40 land trusts, helping them protect ~5,300 acres across Connecticut.

## 2025 Katchen Coley Award for Excellence in Conservation

### David Sargent of the North Branford Land Conservation Trust

CLCC was honored to present the Katchen Coley Award for Excellence in Land Conservation to **David Sargent**, President of the **North Branford Land Conservation Trust (NBLCT)**. Under his guidance, NBLCT has navigated unique challenges to achieve remarkable success, acquiring key properties including the 22-acre Harrison Farm Preserve, the Starry Lane property, which created a crucial trail connection for the community, the 16-acre Angeloni Woodland Preserve, and a 37-acre parcel near Lake Gaillard. His dedication and vision make him a truly deserving recipient of this award.



## TAG Grants, July 2024 - September 2025

Land Trust	Project	Town	Acres	Grant
Aspetuck Land Trust	Poindexter Preserve Addition #1	Easton	6	\$50,000
	Poindexter Preserve Addition #2	Easton	4	\$59,850
Avalonia Land Conservancy	Raymond & Althea Main Conservation Area	Ledyard	30	\$3,000
	Victor & Murray Czczotka & Lucy Lefevre	Griswold	28	\$6,000
Bolton Land Trust	Esche Property	Bolton	52	\$6,885
Cornwall Conservation Trust	Cobble Forest	Cornwall	42	\$16,800
Farmington Land Trust	Cohen Property	Farmington	37	\$3,500
Groton Open Space Association	Center Groton Preserve	Groton	84	\$18,000
Kent Land Trust	Lovig Property	Kent	62	\$1,803
Litchfield Land Trust	Putnam Acquisition	Litchfield	105	\$18,000
Morris Land Trust	Humphrey Farm Reserve	Morris	37	\$2,500
Norfolk Land Trust	Erder Property	Norfolk	12	\$6,500
Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy	Milde Farm	Litchfield & Torrington	670	\$20,000
Old Lyme Land Trust	188 Four Mile River	Lyme	42	\$15,000
Ragged Mountain Foundation	Pinnacle Cliffs	Plainville	3	\$7,500
Roxbury Land Trust	Weinberg Property	Roxbury	259	\$18,000
Salisbury Association	Miles Mountain	Salisbury	221	\$20,000
Southington Land Conservation Trust	North Ridge Preserve	Southington	60	\$1,000
Steep Rock Association	Hidden Valley Expansion: Cornell Parcels Acquisition	Washington	145	\$12,000
Winchester Land Trust	Laurel Ridge	Winsted	507	\$20,000
Wolcott Land Conservation Trust	The Edward & Adelaide Piteo Preserve	Wolcott	34	\$2,000
Wyndham Land Trust	Abbott Project	Pomfret	380	\$20,000
<b>TOTAL (22 Grants)</b>			<b>2,837</b>	<b>\$233,488</b>

## Advocacy & Conservation Policy

**“For the state, CLCC’s leadership on the Natural Heritage and OSWA Review Board is invaluable, as it guides and informs decision-making on legislative changes and policy that directly impact land trusts.”**

– Lindsay Suhr  
Director, Office of Land Acquisition & Management, CT DEEP

CLCC continued to be a leader in land conservation policy at the Capitol, working closely with legislators, **CT DEEP**, and **CT Department of Agriculture** to advance 2025 funding and policy priorities including restoring bond authorizations for the open space grant program; integrating Nature-Based Solutions into CT climate action, response, and preparedness policies; increasing funding to support open space and urban greenspace projects; and establishing a new grant program supporting farmland access for under-served farmers.



CLCC's Amy Blaymore Paterson at CT DEEP's OSWA grant announcement.

Along with **Governor Lamont, CT DEEP Commissioner Dykes, and Hartford Mayor Arunan Arulampalam**, CLCC celebrated \$14.3M in OSWA grant funding to land trusts and municipalities. This funding was used to purchase and protect more than 2,270 acres of green space across 25 properties in 22 towns and cities across Connecticut.



Colin Piteo of CLCC; Shelley Harms of Norfolk Land Trust; Sharon Lynch of Avalonia Land Conservancy; and Aaron Lefland of CLCC at Advocacy Days in Washington, D.C.

Member land trusts take advantage of several opportunities throughout the year to learn about public conservation policy and program. At the state level, CLCC partners with CT DEEP to help land trusts navigate application requirements for the OSWA and Urban Green and Community Garden (UGCG) Grant Program. At the federal level, CLCC represents Connecticut’s land trusts at the **Land Trust Alliance’s** Advocacy Days event, sharing policy priorities with legislators and bringing guidance on federal regulations back to member land trusts.

**“CLCC’s guidance and support in applying to CT DEEP’s OSWA grant program is crucial for land trusts, especially the small land trusts I work with in Northwestern Connecticut. Acquisitions of land and easements would not be possible without it.”**

– Shelley Harms  
Board Member, Norfolk Land Trust



**“Our role as the voice of Connecticut’s land trusts allows us to publicly advocate on issues that state agencies cannot directly address. It’s an empowering position, and one that delivers real, tangible results for land trusts and the broader land conservation community.”**

– Amy Blaymore Paterson  
Executive Director, Connecticut Land Conservation Council

### Advocacy Goal: Support Funding & Staff For Land Conservation & Farmland Preservation

#### Policy Priority

#### Progress & Results

Champion consistent bond funding for CT DEEP land conservation, trails, and parks programs, including **Open Space & Watershed Land Acquisition (OSWA)**, **Urban Green & Community Garden (UGCG)**, **Recreation & Natural Heritage Trust Program**, and **Recreational Trails Program**, to protect wildlife, habitats, and clean water while providing equitable access for public recreation and local food production.

Bond authorizations for conservation programs have been renewed for the next two years. The bond package included \$10MM per year in authorizations for OSWA and UGCG. Also included in the bond package are authorizations of \$3MM per year to support the Recreation & Natural Heritage Trust Program, and \$10MM for the Recreational Trails Program.

Champion increased funding for the **Community Investment Act** and ensure the funds remain dedicated to supporting state programs for open space, agriculture, historic properties, and affordable housing.

The Community Investment Act received an increase after nearly 20 years, with 25% of the funds allocated to CT DEEP to support the OSWA and UGCG programs.

Strengthen CT DEEP’s capacity to streamline grant administration and engage in public-private partnerships that help the agency meet its mission.

CLCC’s Executive Director, Amy, continues to serve as Chair of the state’s **Natural Heritage, Open Space, and Watershed Land Acquisition Review Board**. Yaw, CLCC’s Director of Grants & Programs, continues to Co-Chair of the Land Subcommittee of the **Connecticut Equity & Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC)**. In these capacities, Amy and Yaw represent the land trust community and support collaboration between land trusts and state agencies.

Support authorization for the **CT Department of Agriculture** to administer a farmland access program, including financial assistance to land trusts, new and historically marginalized farmers, and other tools to increase farmland access opportunities for farmers seeking land.

Public Act 25-141, **An Act Establishing a Grant Program for Agricultural Preservation & Farmland Access Purposes**, was passed overwhelmingly by the General Assembly. It authorizes the Department of Agriculture to create a new grant program to encourage and retain agricultural lands for agricultural purposes, supporting new and historically marginalized farmers.

## PEOPLE

Land trusts and conservation allies across the state look to CLCC as an indispensable partner and leader, providing critical training and resources while fostering a collaborative and forward-thinking land conservation community. With CLCC and our network of partners in their corner, land trusts can achieve much more than they could working alone.

### Building Land Trust Capacity

There are ~120 land trusts in Connecticut. Approximately 75% service a single town, with the rest operating regionally or on a statewide basis. That means that staff and board members are intricately connected to the community and adept at navigating local conservation challenges and opportunities. This grassroots strength, however, is also a barrier to success because most of the land trusts across the state are small, volunteer-run organizations with operating budgets of less than \$50,000. In a complex, costly, and changing conservation landscape, limited capacity is a persistent constraint felt by many land trusts

That's why CLCC continues to build out training, technical assistance, and resources that help land trusts serve Connecticut's communities with excellence. This year, land trusts and conservation allies accessed several new resources, including:

#### Resources for Land Trusts

**Board Development Toolkit:** Land trusts often face challenges in maintaining a high-functioning board, recruiting new board members, orienting them to the organization, and sustaining high levels of engagement. That is why CLCC partnered with the **Land Trust Alliance** to create a Board Development Toolkit, a comprehensive, seven-part resource to help land trusts build stronger, more effective boards.

**Strengthening Land Trusts Through Smart Fundraising:** CLCC partnered with **Danosky & Associates** to develop and deliver a four-part webinar series that equips land trust board members and staff with the tools and strategies for building a strong and sustainable fundraising program. From understanding donor behavior to identifying prospects and cultivating major gifts, each session offers practical insights to help land trusts and conservation organizations raise the funds needed to acquire, protect, and steward land.

**Anatomy of a Land Transaction:** Acquiring land and conservation easements is complex and time-consuming. To help land trusts navigate this process, CLCC created Anatomy of a Land Transaction, a seven-part webinar series designed to give land trust staff and board members a practical, well-rounded foundation in the core components of land conservation deals, from project selection, appraisals, and environmental due diligence, to surveys, closings, and post-closing responsibilities.

**"CLCC is an educator, a convener, and a source of financial and technical support that is indispensable to conservation in Kent and statewide."**

– **Connie Manes**  
Executive Director, Kent Land Trust



Bill Kraekel and David Brant of Aspetuck Land Trust; Amy Blaymore Paterson of CLCC; Charles Irwin Schoendorf; and Lisa Shanahan of Norwalk Land Trust.

**"This merger is about securing the future of land conservation in Norwalk. ALT brings ten full-time staff, decades of expertise, and a proven track record in protecting land and connecting people to nature. Together, we'll be able to do more, and do it better – forever."**

– Lisa Shanahan, Board President, Norwalk Land Trust

**"Aspetuck Land Trust has always taken a regional approach to conservation. Welcoming Norwalk into our network is a natural extension of our mission."**

– Bill Kraekel, Board President, Aspetuck Land Trust

#### Technical Assistance Tailored to the Needs of Land Trust Members

**Advanced Collaboration and Merger Assistance Program:** CLCC's Advanced Collaboration and Merger Assistance Program is designed to help land trusts achieve stronger organizational health and effectiveness by pursuing structural realignment, advanced forms of collaboration, or merger with other organizations. In the past year, CLCC helped three groups of land trusts join forces for long-term sustainability and impact.

The **Barkhamsted Land Trust** and **Hartland Land Trust** joined together to create the **Northwoods Land Conservancy**. By merging into a single entity, these two volunteer-led organizations seek to better serve their communities and protect and steward more land.

The **New Roxbury Land Trust** merged with **Wyndham Land Trust**, providing enhanced protection and preservation of land in Woodstock and Union. For Wyndham Land Trust, the merger expands its footprint and forms one of the largest land trusts in the state, encompassing land in eleven towns in Northeastern Connecticut.

The **Norwalk Land Trust** merged with **Aspetuck Land Trust (ALT)**, a regional organization serving Bridgeport, Easton, Fairfield, Redding, Weston, Westport, and Wilton. By joining Aspetuck, the Norwalk community will benefit from greater access to conservation resources, expertise, and capacity to protect and care for its open spaces. By acquiring Norwalk's protected lands, Aspetuck will advance a regional vision for land conservation, the Green Corridor 2030 Initiative, which aims to connect and protect natural areas across Southwestern Connecticut.

**"We (Barkhamsted Land Trust) didn't have any capacity, we were pretty much a defunct organization, and we were concerned about what's going to happen to our properties if the land trust couldn't continue to operate. Joining forces with Hartland Land Trust was extremely worthwhile for land conservation in both towns. It's the way to go."**

– Roger Behrens  
Board Member, Northwoods Land Conservancy



# Cultivating Conservation Connections

If you were to ask the staff and volunteers of your local land trust, "Where's the best place to learn about land conservation in Connecticut?", chances are their response will include CLCC's Connecticut Land Conservation Conference. The annual event, the largest gathering of conservation professionals in the state, welcomed over 600 participants in 2025, marking the largest turnout in its 41-year history. Representatives from land trusts, conservation groups, municipal commissions, state and federal agencies, students, and allies passionate about conserving Connecticut's natural and working landscapes gathered to make connections and learn from one another on topics such as land acquisition and conservation funding; protecting biodiversity and wildlife; land use planning, tools, and technology; and stewardship and natural climate solutions.

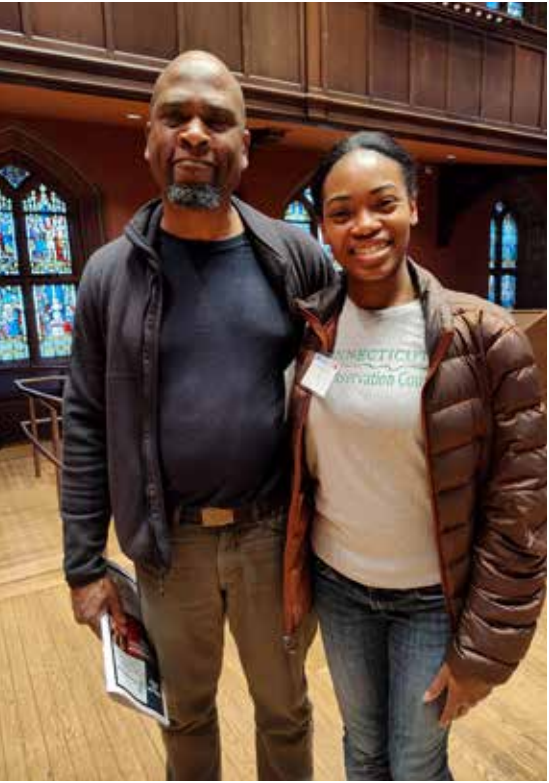
**"Wherever I choose to be, I belong."**

**- Dudley Edmondson**  
Photographer, Filmmaker, Writer, Activist

The keynote address, delivered by photographer, filmmaker, writer, and activist Dudley Edmondson, focused on community-centered conservation. Dudley reminded the attendees that nature is everywhere. Whether in a park in Hartford or a preserve in Northwest Connecticut, every outdoor space can spark a lifelong love for the natural world. The future of conservation depends on our community's ability to foster these connections and ensure everyone has access to nature's benefits and cares about protecting them for generations to come.

**"CLCC is a great convener, and its annual conference and workshops provide invaluable training and resources that help land trust leaders acquire new skills, connect with peers, and talk through challenges and successes. It's really good content that improves overall the capacity and effectiveness of land trusts."**

**- Eric Hammerling**  
Board Member, CLCC  
Office Director, CT DEEP Environmental Review & Strategic Initiatives



U.S. Senator Murphy, Lynn Werner of HVA, Amy Blaymore Paterson of CLCC, Tony Zunino and Tim Abbott of HVA

## 2025 Conservation Hero Award

**Lynn Werner of the Housatonic Valley Association**

Land conservation is a local endeavor, with each community presenting its own challenges. That's what makes Lynn Werner's legacy so remarkable. CLCC honored her with our **2025 Conservation Hero Award** for her transformative leadership at the **Housatonic Valley Association (HVA)**, where she served as Executive Director for three decades.

Lynn's collaborative approach fostered partnerships that have protected vital landscapes across town and state borders. She co-founded the **Litchfield Hills Greenprint**, which has conserved thousands of acres across Northwest Connecticut. She served as a key player in the Stanley Works effort, preserving over 5,000 acres along the Housatonic River. And her vision led to the Wild and Scenic designation for a 41-mile stretch of the river and the **Follow the Forest** initiative to connect forest habitats across the Northeast.

Congratulations, Lynn. Your expansive and enduring impact inspires us all.

**SAVE THE DATE** Connecticut Land Conservation Conference  
**March 21, 2026 Wesleyan University**



“CLCC’s support acts as a stamp of approval, giving our forest stewardship efforts greater credibility. Because CLCC is helping fund our work, the community is more willing to trust and support the Woodbridge Park Association’s efforts.”

– Andrea Urbano  
Board Member, Woodbridge Park Association

“Land trusts don’t have many options for funding that supports land management, and that’s a big problem. We have a lot of forests in Connecticut and across New England, but they’re facing serious threats from climate change, invasive species, and ongoing development pressure. CLCC’s climate-smart program is enabling us to proactively care for and strengthen our forests.”

– David McCarthy  
Executive Director, Joshua's Trust

Land trusts are at the forefront of addressing the environmental threats of climate change. Land stewards are charged with the long-term care of Connecticut’s natural lands. They are leading the way in testing and deploying climate-smart stewardship practices that strengthen environmental resilience, enhance biodiversity, and safeguard land from stressors such as invasive species and extreme weather events.

## Advancing Climate-Smart Stewardship Practices

CLCC’s Climate-Smart Land Stewardship Grant Program helps land trusts integrate climate mitigation, resilience, and adaptation into the stewardship of conserved lands. This program provides grants for developing and executing stewardship plans that support landscape resilience, sequester carbon, and nourish biodiversity.

In 2025, CLCC awarded 19 grants to land trusts - eleven planning grants and eight implementation grants - totaling **\$340,222**. The funded projects demonstrate proactive, practical, and innovative nature-based solutions, which may involve creating forest management plans, restoring pollinator meadows and early successional habitats, and implementing climate-smart forestry demonstrations. Examples of climate-smart projects follow.

**Joshua's Trust's** implementation grant is advancing a restoration project at the Madeline Regan Preserve in Tolland, focused on regenerating pitch pine and oak, removing invasive species, and increasing biodiversity in an area currently dominated by white pine. Pitch pine-scrub oak barrens are among Connecticut’s most threatened terrestrial habitats. The aim is to open up the area to promote regeneration, potentially using prescribed burns to remove pine duff and create space for seedlings. This project will enhance climate resilience by reducing the risk of blowdown and pest outbreaks typical in dense, even-aged pine stands, while fostering a more diverse and structurally complex forest.

**Great Mountain Forest's** climate-smart project is enhancing the resilience and productivity of its forest by addressing several areas with stalled growth and low diversity. Techniques include planting climate-adapted native trees, and thinning overcrowded young trees to accelerate succession, supported by invasive species removal. With funding from a CLCC implementation grant, GMF is improving structural complexity and fostering a diverse, multi-aged forest. These efforts will significantly enhance carbon sequestration and serve as a model for climate-smart forestry.

The **Woodbridge Park Association (WPA)** is working to promote forest health, resilience, and climate mitigation through its ten-year Climate-Smart Forest Stewardship Plan, focusing on “Beech Treatment for Forest Resilience.” The project is designed as an experiment to learn and disseminate effective strategies for controlling beech affected by beech leaf disease, a new threat to forest health in Connecticut. Through demonstration, signage, guided hikes, educational activities, WPA will raise awareness about beech disease and invasive plant impacts, engaging residents in caring for the health and resilience of local forests.

“As New England faces intensifying climate pressures, resilient and diverse forests are more important than ever. Funding from CLCC enables us to pursue proactive, climate-smart forest management practices that support diverse, adaptive ecosystems capable of withstanding unpredictable climate disruptions.”

– Mike Zarfos, Ph.D.  
Executive Director, Great Mountain Forest

## Climate-Smart Grants, July 2024 - September 2025

Land Trust	Implementation Project	Town	Acres	Grant
Gather New Haven	Quinnipiac Meadows Eugene B. Fargeorge Preserve Forest Stewardship Plan	New Haven	6	\$50,000
Great Mountain Forest	Restoring Forest Resilience Through Climate-Smart Management	Norfolk	56	\$49,825
Essex Land Trust	Multi-Habitat Management for Resilience at the Johnson Farm Preserve	Ivoryton	49	\$50,000
Joshua's Trust	Madeline Regan Preserve Pitch Pine Restoration	Tolland	2	\$11,553
Kent Land Trust	Meadow Restoration at East Kent Hamlet Nature Preserve	Kent	2	\$31,927
Lyme Land Conservation Trust	Climate Resilient Learning Landscape at the John Pritchard Conservation Center	Lyme	1	\$10,048
Madison Land Conservation Trust	Pollinator Meadow & Woodlands Understory Restoration at the Rettich Preserve	Madison	6	\$39,000
Woodbridge Park Association	Beech Treatment for Forest Resilience at Alice Newton Street Memorial Park	Woodbridge	8	\$46,171
<b>TOTAL (8 Grants)</b>			<b>130</b>	<b>\$288,524</b>

Land Trust	Planning Project	Town	Acres	Grant
Branford Land Trust	Van Wie Woods Sustainable Forest Management Plan	Branford	120	\$3,600
Burlington Land Trust	Seven Steps Falls (aka Fetzer Property) Forest Management Plan	Burlington	12	\$1,463
Connecticut Audubon Society	Forest Stewardship Plan at Bent of the River Audubon Center	Southbury	693	\$8,000
CT Forest & Park Association	A Living Laboratory for Climate Resilience & Stewardship at Field Forest	Durham	152	\$6,000
Darien Land Trust	Olson Woods & Piacentini Preserve Climate Resilience Plan	Darien	16	\$5,365
Essex Land Trust	Multi-Habitat Management for Resilience at the Johnson Farm Preserve	Essex	49	\$5,475
Flanders Nature Center	Forest Management Plan at Leavenworth Preserve	Woodbury	86	\$3,375
Lordship Improvement Association	Lordship Bluffs Restoration Project	Stratford	2	\$5,925
Middlesex Land Trust	Palmer Taylor Preserve Forest Stewardship Plan	Portland	87	\$4,425
North Branford Land Conservation Trust	Forest Management Plan for a Carbon-Smart Demonstration Forest	North Branford	37	\$3,750
Shelton Land Conservation Trust	Restoration of the Nicholdale Brook Riparian Buffer Zone	Shelton	67	\$4,320
<b>TOTAL (11 Grants)</b>			<b>1,321</b>	<b>\$51,698</b>

Funding for CLCC's Climate-Smart Stewardship Grant Program was paid for by the Climate-Smart Agriculture and Forestry Grant program, established through Public Act 22-118, and awarded and administered by the **Connecticut Department of Agriculture**. The Connecticut Land Conservation Council was one of twelve organizations selected to distribute sub-grants to land trusts. In 2025, CLCC completed distribution of its Climate-Smart funds.



Connie Manes and Angus Gracey of the Kent Land Trust at the East Kent Hamlet Nature Preserve

"Climate-smart projects are tangible ways to take direct local action through stewardship and channel climate anxiety into something hopeful. As we witness real-time changes and drastic climate events unfolding around us, this work gives us a way to think about the future, support the health of our landscapes, and connect others with resources to do the same."

– Ricky Bentley  
Program Manager, Connecticut Land Conservation Council

### Advocacy Goal: Support Funding & Staff For Land Conservation & Farmland Preservation

#### Policy Priority

Champion **Nature-Based Solutions** as a priority and preferred alternative in state policies, goals, and legislation to allow Connecticut's ecosystems to naturally sequester carbon, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase biodiversity, and protect against climate change impacts that negatively affect the state's public health and infrastructure.

#### Progress & Results

The CT General Assembly passed major climate legislation, including provisions regarding Nature-Based Solutions:

- Public Act 25-125 (HB 5004), **The Climate Action Bill** codifies the use of Nature-Based Solutions (forests, trees, meadows, wetlands, riparian buffers, healthy soils, etc.) as part of the state's comprehensive climate action strategy.
- Public Act 25-33 (SB 9), **The Climate Resiliency Bill** provides planning tools for municipalities to address climate preparedness and response. The bill includes prioritizing Nature-Based Solutions in municipal resiliency improvement districts. It also bans neonicotinoids on turfgrass and restricts the use of rodenticides to certified professionals.

Ensure public lands, including state parks, forests, wildlife management areas, and other natural and working lands of high conservation value, are protected.

Legislative victories protecting public lands included:

- Passing Special Act 25-22 (SB 1565) transferring ~47 acres of floodplain along the Shetucket River, deemed surplus property by the Department of Transportation, to the **Avalonia Land Conservancy**.
- Defeating HB 7282 which would have conveyed a portion of the Mattatuck State Forest in Plymouth to a private entity contrary to state conservation goals.

# COMMUNITY

**Community-Centered Conservation** aims to broaden the conservation movement to include people as well as large-scale landscapes and ecological connectivity. People have too often been sidelined or excluded from the equation, thus overlooking a critical link between healthy ecosystems and healthy communities.

CLCC defines this approach by centering people—their voices, needs, and lived experiences—in order to achieve a more inclusive and effective conservation movement. By engaging more groups, CLCC seeks to help land trusts build stronger communities and subsequently strengthen long-term support for the land itself, underpinned by the belief that conservation must be for everyone.



Sovereign Land Trust



Don Shaw Jr.



## Bird & Hikes

CLCC's Bird & Hike Program aims to provide opportunities for guided birding outings on land trust preserves, municipal parks, and other green spaces aimed at historically marginalized groups and communities. These events are designed to be a cornerstone of CLCC's community conservation efforts, helping to connect people with nature in welcoming environments to ignite the passion of new environmentalists and conservationists.

Thank you to the organizations that partnered with us to get people outside and interested in bird matters.

Bird & Hike Partners	Location
Dudley Edmondson	
Great Meadows Conservation Trust	Wood Parcel,
Keney Park Sustainability Project	Wethersfield
Men of Color Hike CT	
Outdoor Afro	
Sovereign Land Trust	Westmoor Park,
Outdoor Afro	West Hartford
Interreligious Eco-Justice Network	Knowlton Park,
Sierra Club Connecticut	Bridgeport
Hamden Land Conservation Trust	Brooksvale Park,
African American Society 024	Hamden
Gather New Haven	Quinnipiac
Outdoor Afro	Meadows,
	New Haven
Great Mountain Forest	Great Mountain
	Forest,
	Norfolk
Aspetuck Land Trust	Seaside Park,
Sierra Club Connecticut	Bridgeport
A.J. Lewis Academy	
The Carver Foundation	Jefferson School,
	Norwalk
Sierra Club Connecticut	Northwest Park,
Boy & Girl Scouts	Windsor
Interreligious Eco-Justice Network	Riverside Park,
Sierra Club Connecticut	Hartford
CT Forest & Park Association	
Milner Middle School	Keney Park,
Leadership Grater Hartford	Hartford



AnneMarie Goenne



Diana Johnson

## Amar'e & Ospreys in Bridgeport

Amar'e, sixth grader at Adam J. Lewis Academy in Bridgeport, experienced birdwatching for the first time on a Bird & Hike led by CLCC's Yaw O. Darko at Seaside Park. Now, he's hooked on birds and wants to learn more and do whatever he can to help. He's especially interested in ospreys, one of the species he encountered during his Bird & Hike. He interviewed Yaw to learn more about how and why he got involved in birding.



### What made you want to help birds?

Birds are fascinating creatures—they come in all shapes, sizes, and colors; they embark on incredible migration journeys; and their interactions with each other and their habitats are mesmerizing to watch.

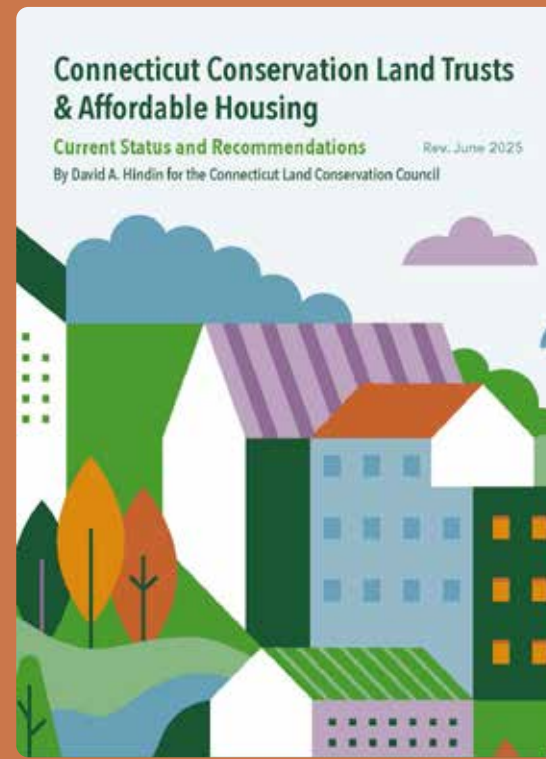
As I spent more time observing birds and appreciating their role in ecosystems, I developed a deep sense of connection with them. Seeing how human actions can both harm and help birds made me want to take an active role in conservation. Habitat destruction, pollution, and climate change threaten many species, but thoughtful conservation efforts—such as habitat restoration, nest protection, and community education—can make a real difference.

This realization motivated me to ensure that others are aware of the birds around them, whether in urban, suburban, or rural spaces. By helping people see and understand birds, I hope to inspire more individuals to care for and protect them.

### What has been your experience with ospreys?

Ospreys are one of my favorite birds to watch, especially when they are hunting. They are incredible fish hunters, often seen hovering over the water before diving feet-first to catch fish. I've observed them in Bridgeport at Ash Creek and Seaside Park; in Wethersfield and Hartford along the Connecticut River; and at different points along the Long Island Sound. I look forward to seeing them during Springtime when they return to their nest and raise their young.

Reggy St. Fortcolin



## Land Trusts & Affordable Housing

If Connecticut values a vibrant and green Connecticut, its residents must ensure everyone has a place to live. Our new report, "Connecticut Land Conservation Trusts & Affordable Housing," offers a fresh perspective on how land trusts can help address the state's housing crisis.

"This report is both a recognition of the thoughtful work many land trusts are already doing and an opportunity to learn more and take action for our broader community. Land trusts have an opportunity to expand their impact by embracing partnerships that support affordable housing—work that complements our conservation values and deepens our relevance in the communities we serve."

- Amy Blaymore Paterson  
Executive Director, CLCC

CLCC's role is to demystify this issue and inspire action. By fostering dialogue, CLCC aims to help land trusts find common ground with housing groups. "The most important thing is to make this a normative part of our conversation," said Connie Manes, Executive Director of the Kent Land Trust. "We need places where everyone who contributes to our community can live. There is no charity implied in that. It's a matter of equity."

## Land Trusts & Food Insecurity

In partnership with **Steep Rock Association (SRA)**, CLCC launched a project to connect land trusts with social service organizations, aiming to achieve a common goal: growing and distributing healthy food to people and families who need it most. Funded by the **Connecticut Community Foundation**, the effort centered on relationship-building between land trusts and food security organizations in Waterbury through a series of roundtables and a Bird & Hike at SRA's Macricostas Preserve. The groups came together and forged new alliances to discuss how to better meet the need for more hands-on education and the growing demand for fresh food.

To build on this momentum, SRA hosted workshops for community groups at its Judea Garden, offering practical experience in operating a community garden that addresses local food needs. This project has laid the groundwork for future collaboration, showing how land trusts can use their resources—beyond acquiring and protecting land—to help build more resilient and equitable communities.

CLCC also partnered with **Healing By Growing Farms** to inform and inspire land trusts to start community gardens on their land. The East Haven-based organization maintains a small farm in a residential neighborhood that provides support for brain injury and trauma survivors. Produce grown at the farm is donated to neighbors in need and distributed by local community groups.



# COMMUNITY



## Excellence in Community Engagement Award

**"It's fun to spend time in nature, and to be in a tech-free environment."**

**- Connor, 2nd Grade, Groton**

### Groton Open Space Association with special recognition of Lynn & Dan O'Connell

Remember the first time you saw a real waterfall? A group of second graders experienced one for the first time when they hiked at Sheep Farm North, a preserve managed by the **Groton Open Space Association (GOSA)**.

The students were visiting through the GOSA/ Groton Public Schools hiking program, which annually introduces over 600 students in grades K-3 to local preserves and green spaces.

Lynn and Dan helped create and launch the partnership in 2023, and organize volunteer-led hikes that allow kids to explore and enjoy their natural environment, boosting their interest in outdoor activity, science, and land stewardship.



# ABOUT US



Lindsay Pettinicchi

## Progress Towards a Strategic Vision

**In a world where environmental challenges are ever-evolving, CLCC remains steadfast in its mission to elevate and strengthen land conservation in Connecticut.**

Connecticut's land trusts are doing extraordinary work conserving 200,000+ acres of natural lands - more than half of all protected land in Connecticut. Unfortunately, Connecticut's green space and its wildlife have never been more threatened. From the climate crisis to increased development pressure, natural lands are becoming degraded, disconnected, and destroyed. Limited public investments in land conservation and barriers to equitable access further challenge efforts to keep Connecticut green.

Connecticut's land trusts and land conservation community are poised to respond to these threats by accelerating the rate of land protection and using their land to address community needs. CLCC is here to help, and we are working to expand our role as a primary resource for Connecticut's land trusts.

Our strategic goals for 2023-2027 include:

- 1** Dramatically increase the pace and amount of land protected in Connecticut
- 2** Build a strong, sustainable land conservation community with capacity to permanently conserve and steward natural and working lands
- 3** Enhance permanence of protected lands
- 4** Integrate diversity, equity, inclusivity, and environmental justice into all aspects of land conservation
- 5** Strengthen CLCC's organizational capacity and sustainability to lead the state's land conservation community

***Thank you for being a crucial part of this journey.***



# Is Your Land Trust A Member?

CLCC's grant programs, capacity-building programs, and technical assistance are available to land trust members. To learn more about membership, visit [ctconservation.org/membership](http://ctconservation.org/membership).

"As a board member of my small town's land trust, I have experienced CLCC's relevance by way of its advocacy, technical and educational support, and access to much needed funding for land conservation."

– **Celina Vansetti**  
CLCC Board Member, Killingworth

## Officers & Board of Directors

- Gwen Marrion, Chair**  
Bolton
- Jonelle Reynolds, Vice-Chair**  
Coventry
- Eric Hammerling, Secretary**  
West Hartford
- Richard Newton, Treasurer**  
Mystic
- Sue Brittell**  
Simsbury
- Akiebia Hicks**  
West Hartford
- Bill Kraekel**  
Easton
- Eric Lindquist**  
Griswold
- Elisabeth Moore**  
New Haven
- Rebecca Neary**  
Warren
- Catherine Rawson**  
New Preston
- Charlie Stebbins**  
Fairfield
- Celina Vansetti**  
Killingworth

## Staff

- Amy Blaymore Paterson**  
*Executive Director*
- Ricky Bentley**  
*Program Manager*
- Yaw O. Darko**  
*Director, Grants & Programs*
- Vanessa Daye**  
*Community Conservation Coordinator*
- Rebecca Dorsey**  
*Sandy Breslin Conservation Fellow (2025-26)*
- Aaron Lefland**  
*Deputy Director*
- Michael J. Sikora**  
*Communications Manager*
- Brett Thompson**  
*Office & Operations Manager*

**New Board Leadership:** Congratulations to **Jonelle Reynolds** of Coventry, CLCC's new Vice-Chair.

**New Board Members:** We added two new members to our governing board. Welcome to CLCC's Board of Directors, **Celina Vansetti** of Killingworth and **Charlie Stebbins** of Fairfield.

**Thank You:** Two members of our governing board completed their terms. Thank you to **Mandi Careathers** of Bloomfield and **Doris Johnson** of Windsor for all you do to make Connecticut green for everyone.

**Staff Promotions:** Congratulations to **Yaw O. Darko** and **Ricky Bentley**, who earned promotions to Director, Grants & Programs and Program Manager, respectively.

**New Staff Members:** Welcome to CLCC, **Vanessa Daye**, Community Conservation Coordinator; **Rebecca Dorsey**, 2025-2026 Sandy Breslin Conservation Fellow; **Michael J. Sikora**, Manager of Communications; and **Brett Thompson**, Office & Operations Manager.

**Thank You:** Thank you to **Colin Piteo**, 2024-2025 Sandy Breslin Conservation Fellow! We are grateful for your contribution to our mission and vision for land conservation in Connecticut.

## Land Trust Members (2025)

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| Aspetuck Land Trust, Inc. 🌿                      | Great Meadows Conservation Trust 🌿                   | Northern Connecticut Land Trust, Inc. 🌿     |
| Aton Forest, Inc.                                | Great Mountain Forest                                | Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy      |
| Avalonia Land Conservancy 🌿                      | Greenwich Land Trust                                 | Norwalk Land Trust, Inc. 🌿                  |
| Avon Land Trust, Inc. 🌿                          | Groton Open Space Association                        | Old Lyme Land Trust                         |
| Berlin Land Trust                                | Guilford Land Conservation Trust, Inc.               | Pond Mountain Trust, Inc.                   |
| Bethany Land Trust, Inc. 🌿                       | Haddam Land Trust, Inc. 🌿                            | Prospect Land Trust, Inc. 🌿                 |
| Bethel Land Trust, Inc.                          | Hamden Land Conservation Trust, Inc. 🌿               | Ragged Mountain Foundation 🌿 ⚠️             |
| Bethlehem Land Trust                             | Hartford Audubon Society                             | Redding Land Trust, Inc.                    |
| Bolton Land Trust                                | Harwinton Land Conservation Trust, Inc.              | Roxbury Land Trust                          |
| Branford Land Trust, Inc. 🌿                      | Housatonic Valley Association 🌿                      | Salem Land Trust                            |
| Bridgewater Land Trust, Inc.                     | Joshua's Tract Conservation & Historic Trust, Inc. 🌿 | Salisbury Association Land Trust 🌿          |
| Canton Land Conservation Trust, Inc. 🌿           | Kent Land Trust 🌿                                    | Seymour Land Conservation Trust, Inc. 🌿 ⚠️  |
| Cheshire Land Trust, Inc.                        | Killingworth Land Conservation Trust, Inc.           | Sharon Land Trust                           |
| Chester Land Trust, Inc. 🌿                       | Kongscut Land Trust, Inc.                            | Shelton Land Conservation Trust             |
| Clinton Land Conservation Trust, Inc.            | Land Conservancy of Ridgefield, Inc.                 | Simsbury Land Trust 🌿                       |
| Colchester Land Trust 🌿                          | Land Trust of West Haven                             | South Windsor Land Conservation Trust, Inc. |
| Colebrook Land Conservancy, Inc.                 | Litchfield Land Trust, Inc.                          | Southbury Land Trust                        |
| Connecticut Farmland Trust 🌿                     | Lordship Improvement Association, Inc. 🌿 ⚠️          | Southington Land Conservation Trust, Inc.   |
| Connecticut Forest & Park Association 🌿          | Lower Connecticut River Land Trust                   | Stamford Land Conservation Trust, Inc.      |
| Cornwall Conservation Trust, Inc. 🌿              | Lyme Land Trust 🌿                                    | Steep Rock Association, Inc. 🌿              |
| Darien Land Trust 🌿                              | Lynde Point Land Trust                               | Suffield Land Conservancy, Inc.             |
| Deep River Land Trust, Inc.                      | Madison Land Conservation Trust, Inc.                | The Nature Conservancy - CT 🌿               |
| East Haddam Land Trust, Inc. 🌿                   | Manchester Land Conservation Trust, Inc.             | Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy 🌿           |
| East Haven Land Trust, Inc.                      | Middlebury Land Trust, Inc. 🌿                        | Trust For Public Land 🌿                     |
| ECFLA/Wolf Den Land Trust, Inc.                  | Middlesex Land Trust 🌿                               | Wallingford Land Trust, Inc. 🌿 ⚠️           |
| Essex Land Trust, Inc. 🌿                         | Milford Land Conservation Trust, Inc.                | Warren Land Trust, Inc. 🌿                   |
| Farmington Land Trust                            | Morris Land Trust                                    | Waterford Land Trust 🌿                      |
| Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust, Inc.        | New Canaan Land Conservation Trust, Inc. 🌿           | Watertown Land Trust, Inc.                  |
| Friends of the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve | New Hartford Land Trust 🌿                            | Wilton Land Conservation Trust              |
| Gather New Haven                                 | Norfolk Land Trust, Inc.                             | Winchester Land Trust, Inc.                 |
| Goodwin University                               | North Branford Land Conservation Trust, Inc. 🌿       | Wolcott Land Conservation Trust, Inc. 🌿     |
| Goshen Land Trust, Inc.                          | North Haven Land Trust, Inc.                         | Woodbridge Park Association 🌿 ⚠️            |
| Granby Land Trust, Inc. 🌿                        | North Stonington Citizens Land Alliance              | Wyndham Land Trust, Inc. 🌿                  |
|  | North Woods Land Conservancy 🌿 ⚠️                    |   |

🌿 Plus Members   ⚠️ Welcome to our newest members!



AnnMarie Goenne



## Financials

### 2024 FINANCIALS

#### Operating Income

Contributions	\$1,051,898
Investment Income	\$75,798
Program Revenue	\$52,726
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,180,422</b>

*\*Includes multi-year grants that will be spent down in 2025*

#### Operating Expenses

Programs & Services	\$758,404
General & Administrative	\$224,259
Fundraising	\$51,441
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,034,104</b>

For a full financial statement visit [www.ctconservation.org](http://www.ctconservation.org)

This past year, CLCC bolstered its resources, expertise, and collaborations to better equip our 120 land trusts to meet today's complex conservation challenges.

Through the steadfast dedication of land trusts, partners, and your invaluable support, we stand financially prepared for this pivotal time. Every gift, whether immediate or recurring, directly funds the technical resources and grants land trusts need to make conservation happen across the state.

#### What Will Your Conservation Legacy Be?

The most effective way to ensure a greener, healthier Connecticut forever is through planned giving. By remembering CLCC in your estate plans, you join others who share a passion for our natural and working lands and who value their enduring protection and stewardship.

Your planned gift—regardless of size—creates a lasting legacy, providing for the places and organizations you value most while protecting Connecticut's conserved lands for future generations.

**To learn more about making an immediate, recurring, or planned gift, please visit [ctconservation.org/ways-to-give/planned-giving/](http://ctconservation.org/ways-to-give/planned-giving/).**

## About CLCC

The Connecticut Land Conservation Council is a nonprofit dedicated to strengthening and uniting land trusts and communities to permanently protect the state's natural and working lands.

Our **mission** is to elevate and strengthen land conservation in Connecticut.

We pursue our mission by serving as the **voice and support system** for Connecticut's land trusts. We provide programs and services that help land trusts succeed, including grant funding, technical assistance, and advocacy.

Our **vision** is a future where every Connecticut community is supported and sustained by a diverse mix of conserved land, and land conservation is embraced as an essential community value.

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Middletown, CT 06457

**ctconservation.org**  
(860) 852-5512

# #LoveYourCTLandTrust

## Join Our Community



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