



CONNECTICUT  
Land Conservation Council

## What is a Land Trust?

Land trusts are your local connection to conserving, exploring, and celebrating the land and special places you love...



**LAND CONSERVATION + YOU + YOUR COMMUNITY**





## From the farthest rural corners to the most densely populated urban centers—the work of Connecticut land trusts is all around you.

Are you looking for a place to get outside and explore nature? Experience community gardens and productive neighborhood farms with fresh, healthy food?

Perhaps you'd like to find a place to swim, boat, or just enjoy the water and a spectacular view? If you're like many, exploring the outdoor spaces in your community with friends and family or learning about its history, is part of your health and wellbeing—bringing you joy and a connection to place.

Chances are many of the special places around you were conserved or created, and are often managed, in partnership with land trusts.

### What is a Land Trust?

**Land trusts** are **nonprofit** conservation organizations that work with local families and landowners, community organizations and municipalities, schools and other nonprofits, to conserve, protect, and connect people to the lands important at the local, regional, and state-wide level.

Almost every town and city in Connecticut has a land trust working to conserve the green spaces of that area. Some focus on one town, others on a larger region.



## What Do Land Trusts Do?

Land trusts are your local connection to conserving, exploring, and celebrating the special places you love by...

**Conserving land and water.** Land trusts protect natural habitats and water quality by conserving forests, woodlands, meadows, wetlands, streams, ponds, aquifers, and municipal water supply areas.

**Connecting people to the land.** They establish trails and provide access to the outdoors and community gathering spaces.

**Enhancing urban green spaces and developing community gardens.** Land trusts work within urban centers to create healthier communities through parks, natural areas, forests, and community gardens.

**Preserving farms and supporting rural economies.** They assist farm families and their communities to ensure that land is always available for local agriculture and food production.

**Protecting scenic views.** Land trusts may also conserve land in order to protect a scenic viewshed from being lost to development.

**Connecting communities to the land, history, and each other.** Land trusts assist their communities by preserving the natural and historic places that are important to our local history.

## Connecticut Land Trusts are Community Partners

Together, with thousands of volunteers each year, land trusts are working to create a welcoming and inclusive landscape to bring the lands and waters of Connecticut to people from all walks of life through...

- **Outdoor recreation, educational and leadership programs** providing a wide variety of experiences for people of all ages, with diverse topics including local history, climate change, enhancing wildlife habitat, and urban farming.
- **Community outreach** building relationships with other community stakeholders to identify who lacks meaningful access to the outdoors and what can be done to remedy community issues.
- **Landowner guidance** providing insights and technical assistance to help achieve land conservation goals.
- **Partnerships and volunteer opportunities** teaming up with community groups, businesses, schools, seniors, scouts, and others. Land trusts are terrific partners and offer a myriad of opportunities to volunteer and have some fun.



Lisa Lane Farm, Wintonbury Land Trust by CLCC





## How Do Land Trusts Conserve Land?

Some land trusts own land for conservation purposes, such as wildlife habitat or recreation; others don't own land but conserve the land in partnership with the landowner; and there are many who assist their municipalities in acquiring land for conservation.

No one size or approach fits all: Many land trusts conserve land by some or all of these means. This type of voluntary conservation effort relies on the vision and generosity of local families and businesses who want to ensure their land is protected for generations to come.



Smyrski Farm Preserve, Northwest Connecticut  
Land Conservancy by Wendy Carlson

### Conservation Options

- Landowners often choose to donate their land to land trusts. There may be tax benefits for donating land outright to a land trust.
- Land trusts also purchase lands of high conservation or community value.
- Sometimes the land trust will pay the “full market value” for the land; other times the landowner will sell their property for something less, called a “bargain sale.”
- When a landowner prefers to conserve their property but still retain ownership, they may enter into an agreement with the land trust called a “conservation easement.”
- When land is protected by a conservation easement, the landowner may also receive tax benefits.
- Lands can be bequeathed, transferred, or sold subject to the conservation easement.
- The land trust is responsible for ensuring that the terms of the conservation easement are followed as the land changes hand over time.

You can learn more about why landowners chose to work with their local land trust to conserve their land, and the tools they used to do so in the Connecticut Land Conservation Council's booklet, *Protecting the Land You Love*. Find it at [ctconservation.org](http://ctconservation.org).





## How to Find a Land Trust

You can locate a land trust that serves your community and where you own land by using the Connecticut Land Conservation Council's website, [ctconservation.org](http://ctconservation.org).

Under the **Find a Land Trust** page you will find additional information related to the land trust's work, its conservation focus, and contact information.

If you are interested in finding a land trust outside of Connecticut you can do so by visiting [findalandtrust.org](http://findalandtrust.org). All 50 states as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico are served by land trusts.

## How are Land Trusts Supported?

As independent, community-supported nonprofits, land trusts rely on the generosity of individual donors and the community to help purchase land and conservation easements and to support improvements like trails, footbridges, signage, scenic overlooks, and other programs. Foundation grants and business support also provide essential funding for land trusts.

While some land trusts have staff, the majority operate and manage their lands in partnership with community volunteers.

In addition to regional land trusts, there are statewide organizations that conserve land such as the Connecticut Farmland Trust, Connecticut Forest & Park Association, and Connecticut Audubon Society. There are also national conservation organizations, such as the Land Trust Alliance, The National Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, American Farmland Trust, and the Trust for Public Land—to name just a few—that work in partnership with local land trusts and their communities.

Land trusts may also receive support from Regional Conservation Partnerships. These networks of land trusts, municipalities, other conservation groups, and interested individuals seek to protect land on a larger scale. To find out more visit [rcpnetwork.org](http://rcpnetwork.org).



Farnham Farm, Morris Land Trust and Connecticut Farmland Trust by CLCC

## What is an Accredited Land Trust?

Administered by the national Land Trust Accreditation Commission, accreditation is an innovative and rigorous program based upon national standards of excellence to build strong land trusts, foster public confidence in land conservation, and help ensure the long-term protection of land. Learn more at [landtrustaccreditation.org](http://landtrustaccreditation.org).



## Land Trust Standards and Practices

The Land Trust Standards and Practices (Standards) are a set of guidelines that provide a framework for land trusts to operate responsibly and in the public's interest from a legal and ethical standpoint.

Over 1000 land trusts have adopted the Standards as their guiding principles nationally. Learn more at [landtrustalliance.org](http://landtrustalliance.org).





# How Can You Support Local Land Conservation?

## Volunteers are the heart & soul of land conservation.

Land trusts rely on volunteers to make a difference. Because each land trust has a different focus and different levels of capacity, their needs vary year-to-year and season-to-season. If you would like to become involved, talk with the land trusts in your community or region about how you can use your passion, talent, and interests to further local conservation and connect more people to the land.

### Examples include:

- Providing photographs, assisting with social media, maintaining the website, writing publications and blogs.
- Improving trails and assisting with other stewardship needs.
- Helping with wildlife and/or habitat management like invasive species removal.
- Managing a community garden or urban greenspace.
- Hosting programs and educational events or helping to partner with other community groups on their projects.
- Assisting with office administration and record keeping.



## Your generosity can make conservation thrive.

There's a way for you to make a difference in your community—no matter the size of your gift.

### You can:

- Contribute towards ongoing conservation work, special projects, and educational programs.
- Designate a gift via your Will or as part of other charitable planned giving.
- Work with your local land trust to conserve your land.
- Continue to own your land and protect it with a conservation easement in partnership with a land trust.
- Donate stock, houses, businesses, or land for resale with the proceeds going to enhance additional conservation efforts and increase community programming.



Oxford Land Trust by Katharine Lange



New London Advancement Initiative Bridge Building at Colchester Land Trust's Bulkeley Preserve by Joan Smith

## How Does the Connecticut Land Conservation Council Help?

Thanks to people like you, the Connecticut Land Conservation Council supports land trusts of all sizes and works throughout the state year-round by providing: mentoring, coaching, networking, and learning opportunities for land trusts; strategies for community engagement and inclusive conservation; support for land trust organizational development; advocacy for state and federal conservation programs; and approaches to conservation planning to more fully serve all corners of the state.

### Highlights of CLCC's work include:

- Strengthening regional conservation efforts by advancing partnerships between land trusts and local partners.
- Working collaboratively with land trusts to bring the voice of conservation to Connecticut's state leaders through advocacy, legislative initiatives, and policy development.
- Hosting one of the largest annual state land trust conferences in the country, bringing over 500 people from all parts of Connecticut and the region to learn, share, and foster a love of the land and lasting sense of community.

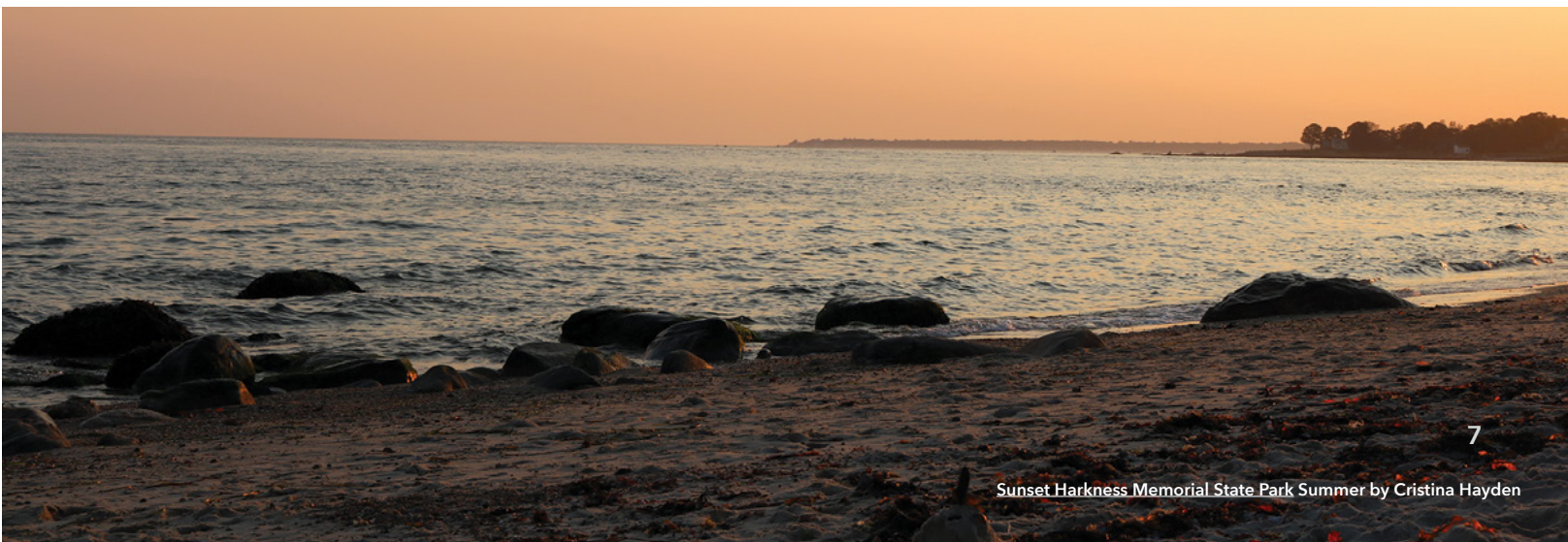
We, too, are supported as a statewide nonprofit by the generosity of people, businesses, foundations, and other nonprofits who care about protecting the environment and enhancing land conservation throughout the state.

Your support is greatly appreciated and will help land trusts and communities ensure that the special places you love are conserved for generations to come.



**The future of the land you love starts with you...**  
**Check out your local land trust today!**

**#LoveYourCTLandTrust**





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For questions or conversations,  
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[ctconservation.org](http://ctconservation.org)  
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On the cover:  
Bee on Milkweed by Rick Newton  
Tory Hill, [Salisbury Association Land Trust](#) by John Landon  
[Groton Open Space Association](#) by DJ Glisson II



Conservation Conversations at English Street Gardens, Gather New Haven by CLCC



Fall Sunset Party, [Litchfield Land Trust](#) by CLCC



Hilltop Farm, Town of Suffield and Friends of the Farm at Hilltop by Libby Lord



Groton Open Space Association by DJ Glisson II