
The Balance Sheet

Cheshire Land Trust

www.cheshirelandtrust.org

Vol. 54 No. 2

Preserving Land as a Living Resource Since 1969

CLT Agrees to Purchase More of Quinnipiac River Corridor

The Cheshire Land Trust has signed a Purchase Agreement with members of the late Frank and Norma Papandrea's family to protect 18.5 acres of land along the Quinnipiac River at Cheshire Street and East Johnson Avenue. The property has been used for agriculture for over 150 years.

This land needs to be protected given its 1,300 feet of riverfront including slopes, fields, wetlands and flood plain. This parcel will add to a Quinnipiac Preserve created by several adjoining parcels already protected by CLT. Immediately to the south is 800 feet of river way protected by a gift of land from Emma and Seymour Pelz in 2001 and 2,700 feet of riverway at Ives Farm, given to the Trust by Betty Ives in 2006. To the north of the target property is 1,700 feet of riverway greenbelt owned by the Quinnipiac Valley Audubon Society and protected with a CLT conservation easement. Taken together, these parcels will create a 1.25 mile long wildlife corridor including a protected flyway for local and migrating birds.

While CLT has a contract to purchase this property, the details are complex and a successful outcome will require significant funding from state, local and private citizen sources. Look for more information at the CLT booth at the Fall Festival.

Managing the Ives Woodlands

It may not be immediately apparent to the casual observer, but Ives Farm is more forest than farm. Ives has 55 acres of farmland but 109 acres of forest, most of which is on the east side of Cheshire Street above the farm fields.

As part of our stewardship of this property, in 2019 the Trust commissioned a Forest Management Study

conducted by Ferrucci and Walicki, a local forestry management firm. Stewardship of forest land entails much more than protecting the land from development. In fact, the resulting plan was quite detailed and recommended that the first steps should be to reduce the population of invasive plants in the forest. Over the past three years All Habitat, an environmental firm that specializes in the treatment of invasive species, was hired to significantly reduce the number of these plants.

With the invasives under control, the recommended next step is to implement a professionally managed thinning of the forest to remove trees that are dead, dying or diseased. This thinning will also include strategically removing selected mature trees to promote more vigorous growth of younger trees ensuring a healthy forest in the future.

This summer foresters worked to identify and mark trees to be harvested next winter. The thinning of the forest will be done under the supervision of Ferrucci and Walicki. It is inevitable that there will be some disturbance of the forest during this process, but every



effort will be made to minimize the impact. The restoration of any damage to the forest floor will be part of the contractual obligations of the company that does the thinning. While forestry work can be startling to people who use our trails, the work must be done to ensure a vibrant and healthy forest for generations to come.

Please contact us if you have questions.

Good News: All Historic Cheshire Farmland Is Not Disappearing

News about the actual or potential disappearance of more of Cheshire's iconic farms has become a major disappointment and frustration for Cheshire residents. The last crop to grow on these properties will be houses. But all is not lost. Last month, 22 acres of the historic Terrell Farm on Yalesville Road (Rt. 68) were sold to new owners who intend to keep farming alive.

The Terrell family received a land grant from King George II in 1747. It was part of the New Haven Colony that made up a large section of what is now south-central Connecticut. The land remained in the family ever since.

CLT had discussions with David and Donna Terrell about the future of their land for almost a decade. At one point, with the help of Jeanne Chesanow, retired Town Historian, it was revealed as to just how large the Terrell Farm had been. An 1880 State of Connecticut farm census described the farm as 279 acres on both sides of Yalesville Road. The farm raised sheep, cows, potatoes, hay, apples, pigs and chickens. It was a large operation. The most astounding statistic in that 1880 report was that the farm had produced 5,000 pounds of butter that year!

The well-known pressures on Connecticut farms took their toll on the Terrell Farm and pieces of the property were sold off, first on the northern side of Yalesville Road (now Terrell Farm Place) and then a southern section that became Andrea Court in 1996. David and Donna continued a vegetable and flower operation selling produce at farmers' markets in the area. Like all land owners, they wrestled with the options for the future of their productive farm land. They took their time and found a new family to continue almost 300 years of keeping the land open and productive. The new owners, the Robert Paolella family, have already started to make improvements. They will call the land "Freedom Farms" and hope to get some items for sale at their farm stand within the next twelve months. Good luck to them and thanks to the Terrells for their thoughtfulness.



Dues and Donations

Enclosed is a Membership/Donations envelope. You may use it to join CLT or submit your 2025 renewal dues if you have not already done so. You can make an additional donation above and beyond membership dues. Send a check to P.O. Box 781 in Cheshire or -pay on our website at www.cheshirelandtrust.org.

CLT has 633+ acres to protect, a new farm initiative at Ives and a Purchase Agreement to acquire important open space along the Quinnipiac River. We cannot do it all without public support. Your help would be appreciated!

Why Do Ives Farm Fields Look Different?



Residents driving past the wide Ives Farm fields along Cheshire Street have wondered why the fields have looked different this summer than they usually do. Many of the fields have not been plowed and don't appear to have crops planted on

them. The answer is that our new farmers are taking a different approach to soil and crop management. Last Fall a cover crop of winter rye was sowed on all the fields. This spring it matured and was left standing until the seeds dropped. They will sprout later this year for more rye. Most of the fields were harrowed with a special piece of equipment that knocked the rye stalks down and planted several types of cover crop seeds to grow through the dead rye during the summer. Eventually the resulting organic material will be added to the soil or used



as row cover between future crops. Ives will become a “no-till” farm where only the very top layer of soil is disturbed from year to year. Because the deeper soil is not disturbed it is better able to absorb water and other nutrients through existing mycorrhizal networks, roots and organisms. No-till soil has better yields, more nutrient dense food and less pest pressure.

While most of the 55 acres of crop land at Ives will be fallow this year, some crops have been planted including tomatoes, squash and pumpkins.

A large pumpkin patch is growing next to the farm stand and you will be able to pick your own come fall!



A Ptemkin farm stand?



Many people drive by the farm on Cheshire Street and pay little attention to the farm stand since that looks different too.

However, look inside! You will find a surprising array of products made and grown organically. Currently, much of the produce and products come from River Ridge Farm in Portland and other organic partners.

As the season progresses, more will be coming from the Ives fields and next year the variety grown at Ives will be even greater.

Stop by and taste the difference while supporting truly local agriculture as well as the Land Trust.



Historic Paths Cross at the Barn



On August 14, CLT hosted the Ball and Socket Arts 8th annual “Evening About Town” at the Ives Farm. The weather was perfect, the sunset worthy of an artist’s brush. Those in attendance learned a bit of Cheshire

history. Some descendants of John Ives, an early colonist (1644 - 1681), started Ball and Socket Manufacturing in 1850. Another Ives family member started Ives Farm a decade later. Two branches of the Ives family tree were re-joined at a wonderful event.

Keep CLT on the Cutting Edge!

Do you have any hand clippers, loppers, pruning saws, shovels or rakes that you don’t want? Our work parties can use them for keeping our properties and trails in shape. Contact us and we can pick them up! And winter is coming.....need firewood? From time to time there will be opportunities to cut wood on CLT properties in order to keep trails and fields open. Let us know if you are interested.

www.cheshirelandtrust.org

The Seasons are Changing.....Take a Hike on Cheshire Land Trust Trails

Three of CLT's largest parcels include Ives Farm in the north end of Cheshire and Fresh Meadows and Brooke Preserve in the south end. These properties boast a great community resource: **trails** maintained for hiking. The trails offer a chance to get some exercise while enjoying the flora and fauna in a quiet outdoor setting. On all three properties you may see deer, bobcat, and coyote, as well as a large variety of birds.

Ives Farm, the largest property owned by the Land Trust, may be familiar to Cheshire residents because of the farmed fields, the old farmhouse and the farmstand on Cheshire Street. However, the Ives Farm also includes 109 acres of woodlands with three miles of rolling trails to the east of Cheshire Street. That portion of the Farm was open grazing land over one hundred years ago, but it gradually returned to mature forest. There are two entrances to the trails, one just to the right of the farmstand and one off the cul-de-sac at the end of North Pond Road.

As you hike the Ives trails, you can see remnants of the land's farming history, including stone walls and an occasional fence post with rusted barbed wire. Although the forest is now mature with beautiful tall oaks, maples, and tulip poplars, in the understory you can see numerous red cedars, many dead, some still alive. These were the original pioneer trees when the abandoned pastureland was first reverting to forest.

Fresh Meadows is on the north side of Cook Hill Road. not far from Rte. 10. The property includes thirty-three acres owned by the Land Trust plus ten acres owned by Elim Park but managed by CLT. The Mill River runs through Fresh Meadows and most of the 1.5 miles of trails are in the old flood plain of the river. As a result, in the wet seasons, some of the trails are a bit soggy so wear appropriate shoes. One of the Fresh Meadows trails runs along a ridge on the east border of the property and is drier. The preservation of this land along the Mill River is important since the river runs into Lake Whitney, a public water supply.

Portions of Fresh Meadows are mowed, keeping them appropriate to the name. This provides a diversity of habitat (meadow, forest, and boundary) that makes for great birding. The meadow also provides an ideal habitat for two large bat boxes, erected as an Eagle Scout project.

Just up the hill from Fresh Meadows on Sperry Road, the Brooke Preserve spans 44 acres of mature forest. A mile long trail runs around the periphery of the property. A beautiful small stream runs through Brooke Preserve and eventually flows down into Fresh Meadows to join the Mill River.

The trails on Cheshire Land Trust properties are open dawn to dusk. There are trail maps in the kiosks at the trail entrances. Please, no bikes or motorized vehicles on the trails. Dogs are allowed on leashes, and please clean up after them.

Thank you, Scouts!

For over five decades, local Scout Troops have provided invaluable assistance to CLT by building bridges, kiosks, bat and bird houses and by maintaining our trails.

Troop 51 upgrades Fresh Meadows signs.



Troop 92 tends to Brooke Preserve



...and now....GEOCASHING thanks to Anthony Giuliano from Troop 92. Watch for details.

