



Tolland Growing, But Wisely

The sound of lawnmowers and house construction mixes with the bird trills and the rat-a-tat of the pileated woodpecker on the Skungamaug Meadows trail, lending credence to Tolland's reputation as the fastest-growing town among the 14 in Joshua Trust's region.

Founded 300 years ago this year, Tolland has grown from a town of about 1,000 to more than 15,000 in the past 60 years. Understandably, this population growth has put a lot of pressure on those who want to ensure that the open space does not completely disappear.

Fortunately, Tolland has taken a number of steps in the past 15 years to ensure the protection of some of its most valuable resources – the land and water.

According to Linda Farmer, Tolland's director of planning and community development, the town's open space has increased to around 20 percent as they have parlayed \$6 million from three referenda into protecting over 1,300 acres. (This figure does not include the required subdivision open space nor conserva-

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Lebanon landowner helping protect threatened rabbit

**By William Purcell
Soil Conservationist, USDA-NRCS**

Despite feeling like you see rabbits everywhere, in fact, New England's only native cottontail numbers are dwindling because its habitat of weeds, grass and brush is disappearing and reverting back to forestland.

There are two cottontail rabbits in our region – the Eastern Cottontail and the New England Cottontail. The two species cannot breed or hybridize, and because the Eastern Cottontail is not native, it has been more successful at adaptation as the environment changes.

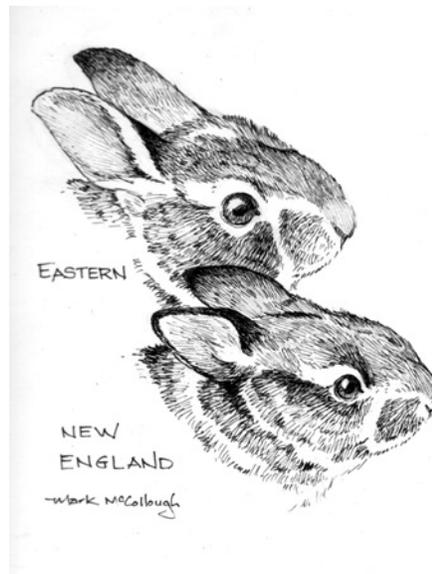
The New England Cottontail, however, requires at least 10 acres of dense, shrubby thicket to survive and cannot adapt to dwindling habitat or fragmented areas. As areas naturally revert back to forest, the forest overstory closes in and the thick shrub habitat on the forest floor shrinks or

disappears. This makes the New England Cottontail very vulnerable to predation. (Think owls and other birds of prey, as well as coyotes.)

Starting in 2012 the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) started a national [Working Lands for Wildlife/ New England Cottontail Initiative](#) to help create appropriate habitat on private land throughout New England. In addition to the New England Cottontails, this initiative will benefit 47 other wildlife species of greatest conservation need (including ruffed grouse, American Woodcock, bobcat, and indigo bunting) that are declining due to their dependence upon similar habitats.

Enter the Magnusons in Lebanon. Since 2009, Lance Magnuson has been working with the NRCS and CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to manage his

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Sketch by Mark McCollough, USFWS



Joshua's Tract Conservation And Historic Trust, Inc.

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www.joshuastrust.org

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Joshua's Tract Conservation and Historic Trust was formed in 1966 to receive gifts of money and land, or to buy land of historic, aesthetic, or scientific value, for the benefit of future generations.

The Trust protects over 4,400 acres in the region, maintains trails which are open to the public, and publishes *The Joshua's Tract Walk Book*.

Office: The Atwood Farm,
624 Wormwood Hill Rd., Mansfield.
Office hours: Tues. and Thurs. 1- 4 p.m.
Phone: 860-429-9023



The accreditation seal recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent.

Accreditation: Lots Of Work But Bringing Many Benefits

There's always a lot of activity in the summer at Joshua's Trust – our veritable army of volunteers use the long days to clear trails, pull invasive plants, build bridges and boardwalks, and hike the boundaries of our properties and easements looking for signs of encroachment.

The Grist Mill opens for visitors, and the Atwood Home and Farm get painted and pruned. The never-ending work of maintaining our properties is central to our promise to perpetual preservation.

But there's another mammoth task underway at the Trust this summer, one that doesn't require work gloves or sunscreen: The JT Board has voted to seek renewal of our accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, the national organization that certifies organizations like ours as using best practices.

As in 2010, we'll have to prove we're meeting the LTA's rigorous requirements ensuring our transactions are ethical, documented and secure, and our land is carefully managed and defended.

They make sure we are devoting adequate financial support to protect our land, and are following proper

protocols. They help our Board to understand their responsibilities and challenges. Their standards change over time, as they analyze problems that other trusts have struggled with and identify ways we can protect ourselves going forward.

Despite the burden, we seek accreditation for a couple of reasons.

First, it makes us better and stronger to understand and follow the best practices and draw on the experiences, good and bad, of land trusts from

around the country.

Secondly, LTA accreditation is a badge we wear to show the world that we care enough to do the job right and are worthy of support.

One benefit of accreditation we did not expect, but are delighted to receive, is recognition by the LTA's Excellence Program. Only a few of the more than 130 land trusts in Connecticut have received this award, which promises multi-year support in the form of consulting and training for our Board and executive director.

It's a huge boost to our drive to grow our resources, and it's an honor that would not be possible without the loyal support of our members.

Thank you for helping us do more!

TRUST NOTES



By Doug Hughes
Joshua's Trust President

Joshua's Tract Conservation and Historic Trust Turns 50 In 2016!

Would you like to help us celebrate our golden anniversary?

Rudy Favretti is already working on the historical book. Now we need a committee to organize various activities during the year. Please call the office and leave a message or email Nancy Silander (nancysilander@gmail.com).

Bobolink Population Falling, But We Can Help

By Jamie Sydoriak

Did you know that Bobolinks travel over 12,000 miles to and from their wintering grounds in northern Argentina every year?

These boisterous songsters return to Connecticut in mid-May in search of open field habitat and begin to build their nests on the ground, usually concealed in clumps of grass. About 65 days later, they will have fully fledged their next generation and begin to fatten up for the flight back to South America.

Sadly, grassland-nesting birds, including Bobolinks, are experiencing the fastest population declines of any group of birds in New England. They thrive in open landscapes that have few trees or shrubs. In recent decades they have been disappearing as farming declines, fields revert to forest, and farmers mow their hayfields earlier and more frequently in the summer.



Bobolinks on barbed wire. Photo by Steve Morytko

At our Hubbard Sanctuary, the Trust has partnered with a local farmer to manage a hayfield for nesting bobolinks. He will harvest the field in late July, after most fledged young birds can escape a passing mower.

New signage around the field requests that visitors keep out of the field in order to avoid any and all disturbance to the nesting birds there.

You can continue to walk the loop trail at the edge of the field at any time of year, but please enter the field only after the farmer has harvested the field for hay.

Thanks our local farmer, Paul Zlotnick, for his cooperation in this project; as well as Stephanie Clark and Maura Robie for helping to reach this partnership. Thank you to our volunteer stewards Carl Lindquist, Catherine Lynch, Bob Dubos, as well as birder Steve Morytko, for creating and installing the new signs at Hubbard Sanctuary.

Really Good Riddance!

Have something you no longer want to dust, but not enough stuff to have a tag sale? Take it to Hall's Emporium in Willington, on Rt. 32.

If you tell Susan Dinallo, the proprietor, that it is for Joshua's Trust, she will give all proceeds to the Trust. Not only do we get free publicity, but we also get some funding for our various activities.

For more information, please contact Susan at trumbull-recreation@sbcglobal.net And, thank you to Ruth Cutler, who suggested this!

Eco-Forum Launching In Fall

Joshua's Trust is launching an Eco-Forum speaker series this fall and winter, designed for members and others to learn more about current environmental topics.

Our first-ever speaker series of programs is now in development, and this year will include lectures and presentations on climate change, particularly as it is related to population trends in birds, insects, and plants in Connecticut and New England.

Stay tuned for more details coming soon in the September newsletter as well as on the web site.

Here Are Some Specific Items The Trust Could Also Use

As a non-profit, the Trust cannot always afford various items that are needed for many of our activities. Sometimes, these are things that might be taking up extra space in your home or garage for which you no longer have a

need. We could certainly use any of the following as a donation – please see the web site for a more complete list. If you have any questions, call the Trust office to speak with Mike, our executive director. Thank you!

Picnic Tables
Coffee grinder
30-cup coffee percolator
Electric kettle
Coffee and Tea
Matching chairs for board room (up to 20)
Desk and floor lamps
Light-weight plastic folding tables

Microscopes
Small quiet generator
Canopy tents
White copy paper
Large whiteboards and markers
Easels and easel pads
First-aid kits and quick clot
Brush hog and DR mower

Dollies
Litter tongs
Leather gloves
Paint brushes
Pick-ax
Pole Saw
Iron Rake
Lockable metal double-door supply cabinet



Brush is good habitat for New England Cottontail

property for wildlife, forest health, and controlling of invasive plants. Since the forest understory was dominated by Japanese barberry, the forest was mowed and given an application of herbicide before cutting trees.

Brush piles were built with the left over slash from the project to create instant rabbit cover while the area regrows.

In the spring of 2015 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided Lance with native shrub seed to help develop a thick shrubby



USFWS photo

habitat on a few acres, and to increase species diversity. The Magnuson property will thus serve as an important property to help disperse the New England Cottontail in the Lebanon/Franklin area.

For more information on the New England Cottontail rabbit see:

www.newenglandcottontail.org.

For interest in developing New England Cottontail habitat on your property please contact Paul Rothbart from the CT DEEP Wildlife Division (paul.rothbart@ct.gov) or your [local NRCS office](#).

Trust's fastest growing town is smart about saving open space

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tion easements.)

They have received grants from a number of governmental agencies including the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and the USDA, as well as various watershed organizations to further protect valuable agricultural lands and their soils as well as important riverine areas.

For instance, much of the frontage of both the Willimantic and the Skungamaug Rivers has been protected through ownership and conservation easements.

Farmland in the area, such as the Bahler farm, with more than 150 acres of prime agricultural soil, and farms in both Ellington and in Tolland are supported by the newly formed Tolland Agricultural Commission and Tolland County Agricultural Center. So are two orchards, Kollas and Wrights.

Tolland currently has over 1,600 acres of land classified as farmland under the state's PA 490 Open Space Program. (PA 490 allows for farm property to be taxed at its "use" value rather than its higher "fair market" value.)

Town officials also work with two active community conservation groups in town – Conserving Tolland and the Tolland Conservation Corps, who coordinate maintenance of passive open space – as well as with others such as the Willimantic River Alliance and large landholders including fish and game reserves and the Girl Scouts.

Tolland is fortunate to have several large areas desig-

nated as parks or open spaces in different parts of the town, for example Crandall Park, the Weigold property, and Skungamaug Marsh. Joshua's Trust protects two properties in town: Skungamaug Meadows – an old gravel pit -- and Tobiassen Memorial Forest which abuts the Weingold property.

The town of Tolland is an exemplar of the value of many people working together toward a common goal. Without the support of the community, government agencies and land trusts, the town's open space, agriculture lands and protected watersheds could be diminishing, rather than increasing.

As the Open Space and Conservation Plan observes, "as development pressure continues in Tolland it is increas-



Tolland's Skungamaug Meadows

ingly important to make land use decisions that protect sensitive resources and habitats, encourage citizen support and participation in these decisions, and provide guidance to land developers and development consultants to work with the town to achieve open space."

Tolland is certainly well on its way. Happy 300th birthday!

WALKING AROUND...



Summer is a great time to get out and see the forests in full bloom and look for those elusive flowers and birds. Many walks go rain (but not thunderstorms) or shine!

June 3 – Wednesday - 1:30 – 3 p.m. Byles Sanctuary (Ashford)

Join Marian Matthews, steward of the Byles Sanctuary, for a moderately difficult walk. The Sanctuary is located on Rt. 44 in Ashford, 1 mile east of the junction of Rts. 44 and 89. The Trail entrance is on the north side of Rt. 44 across from the North Veterinary Clinic.

Parking is at the trail head. For information contact Marian Matthews at (860) 420-8544.

June 12 – Friday - 8:30 – 10 p.m. H.E. Preston Sanctuary (Hampton)

(Rain date or cloud cover – June 13)

Join us this evening at the H. E. Preston Sanctuary in Hampton and spend some time under the night sky of eastern Connecticut with stargazer Bob Grindle.

The Sanctuary is 3 miles north of Hampton center, on the west side of Rt. 97, across from Kimball Hill Rd. It is marked by a Joshua's Trust sign at the entrance. Parking is along the highway and on the grassy shoulders. For information, contact Bob Grindle at (860) 617-3662.

July 5 - Sunday – 9 - 10:30 a.m. Knowlton Hill Preserve (Mansfield)

Join Dr. Greg Anderson on a tree walk and talk hike describing the trees seen from the trails, including ecology, history, identification and conservation. The Preserve is on Knowlton Hill Road, one mile south of Rt. 44, 3 ½ miles east of Rt. 195. Park on the right at the park-

ing area.

For more information, email Greg Anderson at greg-ory.anderson@uconn.edu.

July 15 - Wednesday - 9– 10:30 a.m. Abraham R. and Samuel H. Friedman Memorial Forest (Ashford)

Join naturalist Marcia Kilpatrick for a walk of 1.8 miles through the woods on a slightly hilly loop trail crossing Bebbington Brook. We hope to find the yellow snapdragon in bloom.

The Forest is on Bebbington Road, off of Bicknell Road (1.1 mile east of the Ashford/Mansfield line on Rt. 89). Park at the entrance. For information contact Marcia at [860-455-1226](tel:860-455-1226) or kalmia1234@gmail.com

August 12 – Wednesday - 1 – 2:30 p.m. Dunham Woods Preserve (Mansfield)

Join us for a summer walk at Dunham Woods Preserve and Owen's Mere. The Preserve is on Rt. 275, just east of Dunham Pond Road. Park on south side of South Eagleville Rd. For information, contact George Jacoby at (860) 450-0845.

Be sure to check the web site for other activities and up-dates.



Don't forget to look for the Trust table at various town fairs this summer and fall. Come say hi! Introduce us to your friends – and help us grow our membership!

Help Us Renew Our Accreditation With Your Comments

Joshua's Trust is applying for renewal of its accreditation to the Land Trust Alliance through the national Land Trust Accreditation Commission (LTAC) this year.

LTAC, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, invites your comments on our benefit to you and the 14 towns in which we operate.

Comments must relate to national quality standards addressing the ethical and technical operation of land trusts. For the full list of Standards see:

www.landtrustaccreditation.org/tips-and-tools/indicator-practices.

Comments on our application will be most useful by **Nov. 2**, and signed comments can be sent by e-mail to info@landtrustaccreditation.org, or by mail to:

**Land Trust Accreditation Commission,
Attn: Public Comments, 36 Phila Street, Suite 2
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.**

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thank you!

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Dues (\$10 Full-time Student; \$20 Individual; \$35 Family; \$100 Sustaining; \$250 Patron; \$500 Benefactor)
New member Check here []
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