

Grist Mill Improvements Are In The Works

Grant Applications Are Being Prepared To Fund Continued Renovation

Third graders and their teachers from Mansfield's Vinton School toured the Grist Mill in September to learn its history and engage in activities with Joan Gerdson. Joan and her husband Bill have been caretakers of the mill and miller's house, coordinating the schedule of guides and work parties. Our thanks to them for their enthusiasm and fresh ideas.

Numerous renovations are underway at the mill. During the past year, the cracked concrete porch on the miller's house was removed and replaced with a period-friendly wooden porch. The contractor was Bar-Con of Willington. In addition, excavation behind the house will provide drainage to stop the moisture buildup in the building and prevent the foundation from deteriorating. The drainage work was designed by Trust member Rudy Favretti; the contractor was Richard Garrison of Windham. The 1772 Foundation provided 50 percent funding for both projects and has recently approved a grant of \$3,300 toward the cost of painting the miller's house.

Isabelle Atwood, chair of the Grist Mill Committee,

brought in a consultant to advise on other needed repairs. John Curtis, a restoration consultant from a firm in Brimfield, Mass., wrote in his report: "A large part of the charm and appeal of the Gurleyville Grist Mill is that it is not overly restored and polished. It retains John Ruskin's 'golden stain of time' and is all the more convincing and interesting for it." Grant applications will be made to offset the recommended repairs.



Third graders from Mansfield's Vinton School visit the Grist Mill

Allison Burchell-Robinson, who has already brought in grant money on other projects, is seeking a grant to construct a working model of the mill, which will increase the educational value of the visitors' experience.

She also has submitted a grant for a series of educational programs on Trust properties, including one at the mill, which will focus on its role in the early economy of the area.

Thanks to all of this year's volunteers: Allen Barstow, Al Ching, Dale Cloud, Bruce and Donna Clouette, Sara Ann Chain, Mary Feathers, Al and Arlene Gray, Win and Dolores Hilding, Quentin and Margaret Kessel, Gordon and Pat Mochel, Rob Munhall, John Meyers and son, Steve Noonan, Shelia McCracken and Gene Mann.



Joshua's Tract Conservation And Historic Trust, Inc.

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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.

It is designed to supplement the open space efforts of federal, state and local governments. The Trust protects over 3,000 acres in the region, maintains trails which are open to the public, and publishes *The Joshua's Tract Walk Book*.

The office is located in the historic Eagleville Schoolhouse, South Eagleville Rd., in Mansfield. Office hours: Thurs. 1:30-3:30 pm.
Phone: 980-429-9023

Using Donors' Resources Wisely

Welcome to the many new members who have joined this fall. I hope you will enjoy knowing that your support goes directly into local conservation.

The newsletter will tell you about the wide range of activities and initiatives undertaken by the Trust. Lacking a large endowment and wealthy benefactors, the Trust depends on having a broad membership base. Building that base remains one of my priorities.

The Trust must use its limited funds creatively to have the greatest impact. With that in mind, the Board voted to pledge \$15,000 to assist in purchasing the development rights for Crooke's Orchard. Our action contributed to the momentum for conservation in Ashford. We hope that we will be able to have a similar impact in other towns.

On Nov. 7, Mansfield voters passed a bonding issue for open space which had

failed to pass the previous year. Knowing the history, the Trust had allocated a modest amount to purchase signs supporting the open space bonding. We wrote letters to the editor and to the Mansfield members of the Trust.

Again, I like to think that the Trust contributed to the momentum for approval of the bonding.

My sincere thanks to all who have contributed thus far to the annual appeal.

Many of you are donors to a range of charities, each serving an important role in our community.

Knowing the desperate plight of charities, it is always hard for me to ask for money. At the same time, it is also inspiring to witness the generosity of our donors. The next newsletter will acknowledge the names of all who have contributed this year. In the meantime, I thank you heartily.

A Note From The President



Madge Manfred

Good Time For Granting Easements, Giving Gifts

Congress just passed a new tax law that helps all of us interested in protecting clean water, natural areas and family farms. The law enhances the federal tax benefits for landowners who donate conservation agreements. The time to act is now because the benefits are available only until the end of 2007, unless extended by Congress.

What Congress just did makes the tax law work much better for many modest income landowners who, under the old rules, only got credit for a small portion of the value of their donation. Now, a conservation donor

can deduct up to 50 percent of their adjusted gross income in any year (up from 30 percent), and, if most of their income is from farming, ranching or forestry, they can deduct all of their income. Even more important is that if the value of their donation is larger than this, they can continue to use the deduction for up to 15 years (up from five) after the initial year.

Joshua's Tract Conservation and Historic Trust has been accepting donations like this for 40 years, and has protected over 1,000 acres in North-eastern Connecticut. This change in

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Dunnack and Pagini Join Board of Trustees

Two new trustees have been approved to fill vacant seats. Ann Dunnack, a life-long resident of Columbia, has been a steward of the Utley Hill Preserve and active in conservation organizations. She is eager to engage the Trust in Columbia's efforts to implement its conservation plan and to build Trust membership in Columbia.

John Pagini recently retired from a full-time career as a town planner and now provides consulting services to

area towns. He has a strong interest in protecting rural areas of Coventry, where he now resides in a historic home.

As an environmental planner in Glastonbury, he helped to secure open spaces and easements, one of which made it possible for the Audubon Nature Center to be cited in Glastonbury. Currently he is on the board of 1000 Friends, an advocacy group for smart growth.

Ashford Votes To Protect Local Orchard

Protection of the Crooke Orchard as farmland moved a step closer recently when Ashford citizens voted to approve funds which will enable the town to apply for a state preservation grant.

More than 130 residents attended a town meeting to give unanimous and enthusiastic support for allocating the funds to cover the town's 25 percent cost share in the grant. If approved, the grant from the Farmland Preservation Program will allow purchase of an agricultural conservation easement on the orchard. This will make the orchard affordable for a buyer who intends to continue farming.

The Crooke Orchard property on Bebbington Road abuts the Trust's 143-acre Friedman Forest Preserve and another 80-acre parcel on which the Trust holds a conservation easement. Together these three properties represent a significant rural green space, helping to maintain the natural character of Ashford and acting as a focus for future preservation efforts. Joshua's Trust had encouraged the Crooke family to explore ways to

keep the orchard property intact, and the Trust's board of trustees had voted to donate \$15,000 to assist the town in meeting its share of the cost.

Similar to many farms in our region, the Crooke Orchard was a prime target for development once the family was no longer in a position to continue farming. Traditionally, a farm family's major asset is the value of the land because farmers rarely have pensions. Unless the younger generation takes over the farm and family responsibilities, the land is likely to be sold at market value. The government program which provides grants to purchase the development rights acknowledges the financial difficulties faced by small farmers and the need that communities have to protect the shrinking acreage of prime farmland.

Writing on behalf of the Town of Ashford, First Selectman Ralph Fletcher thanked "the members of Joshua's Trust who helped to make Ashford's first step into the preservation of our agricultural heritage a reality."

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the law will enable us to help many more landowners to protect resources for our children and for our community's future.

If you or someone you know might be able to conserve land by taking advantage of these new incentives, call the Joshua's Trust office: 429-9023 or get more information on our website: www.joshuaslandtrust.org.

If you are one of those who contributed to an IRA account and are approaching the age of 70.5 years, you face the tax consequences of required minimum distributions (RMD). Thanks to a provision in the Pension Protection Act signed last August, you can make contributions directly to a non-profit, such as Joshua's Trust, without paying income tax on the amount.

Prudent estate advice is that if you are in the enviable position of having saved more than you need, consider using the IRAs as charitable donations.

Under the legislation, charitable transfers from a traditional IRA or Roth IRA can be made for 2006 and 2007. Joshua's Trust is striving to build endowments which will provide for the permanent stewardship of properties we own and for the protection of conservation easements that we hold. The new and time-limited legislation may be a unique opportunity for you to make a contribution that will have an enduring impact.

Please consult with your accountant, investment advisor, or attorney to determine whether this opportunity is one that you should act on now.

Help Give The Trust A Special Holiday Present

An anonymous donor has pledged \$1,000 to the Land Acquisition Fund if we bring our membership up to 1,000 by the end of 2006. We still need over 200 new members to reach that goal.

Is EVERYONE you know a member of the Trust? If not, consider a gift membership as a holiday gift.

GIFT MEMBERSHIPS (\$10)

List names and addresses. We'll send a gift membership card.

Name _____

Address _____

Name _____

Address _____

Your name, address and telephone:

Mail form and check made out to: **Joshua's Trust, P.O. Box 4, Mansfield Center, CT 06250.**

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**The Joshua's Trust Walk Book is available at many locations.
See our web site for one year you: www.joshuaslandtrust.org**

