



## Her indoors work helps us save the out-of-doors

Just in case you thought that all Trust volunteers worked in the out-of-doors, meet Gayle Hightower – file expert extraordinaire.

Originally from Virginia, she and her husband moved to the area over 40 years ago. In college, she worked on the Blue Ridge Parkway, but admits her interest was more in the vistas, rather than the science side.

For the past year, in an effort to “stay away from the refrigerator” during her new-found free time as a retired Mansfield Middle School Latin teacher, Gayle has spent many Tuesday morn-

ings helping to maintain and clean up the numerous files on Trust properties.

We had improved our filing system, but there was still plenty of work that needed to be done. For Gayle, this has been a new learning opportunity.

“Mike Hveem, the Joshua's Trust executive director, has been very patient in explaining the intricacies of ‘legal’ language,” said Gayle.

“I seem always to learn something new from my days there. Who knew that after losing our yard oak trees to gypsy moths that our ash trees would



Gayle Hightower

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## The Trust's projects soar with local Eagle Scouts

Eagle Scout projects and Joshua's Trust almost seem like a natural fit – and indeed they can be. Eagle Scouts need a project, and the Trust certainly has properties that can benefit.

Over the past several years, the Trust has been fortunate to have hosted at least five projects on our preserves, and two more are in the planning process this spring.

The most recent beneficiary is Knowlton Hill Preserve in Ashford. The stewards – Greg and Mona Anderson –

had recently created a new trail, and needed sign posts; as well, the entrance sign was in need of repair, and a large ash tree in the middle of the hay field needed removing.

Enter Jon Varga, whose family, a nearby neighbor to the property, has been haying the field for over a generation. Jon is a member of Willington Scout Troop 82 of the (Connecticut Rivers Council). Troops maintain lists of organizations to contact who might have potential Eagle

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## Annual meeting speaker will address climate change's local impact

Concerned about how climate change will affect the wild-life living in the Quiet Corner?

Mark Urban, professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Connecticut, will be our speaker at the annual meeting on **Saturday, April 13**, beginning at 4 p.m. at the Windham Center Firehouse (Rts. 14 and 203 in Windham Center). His talk will address climate impacts on wildlife in Connecticut

This get-together also offers an opportunity to celebrate those who have made contributions of time and energy to

the environment and to conservation this past year in the Trust region as well as to the Trust, and to find out what other Trust members have been up to.

We will also vote on new Trustees. Since the recent format change from dinner to drinks and light hors d'oeuvres, there is no charge, (donations gratefully accepted) but we do ask that you email the Trust no later than April 8 ([activities@joshuastrust.org](mailto:activities@joshuastrust.org)) if you are coming so we can plan appropriately.

We look forward to seeing you!

**Joshua's Trust**

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Visit the Trust's Facebook page for news updates.



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

# Four years with the Trust and so, so much learned

I can't believe it's almost four years since I joined the Joshua's Trust Board.

Before that, I figured the Trust existed to protect some nice parcels of land and make trails for people like me to hike on. I didn't think about what went into evaluating, acquiring and caring for the preserves.

But the Trust is so much more than trails and scenery. Over the past four years, my understanding of what land trusts across Connecticut are accomplishing has evolved, and will continue to evolve, and as with any organization, making priorities and trying to stick with them is, well, a priority!

Number one priority, of course, is taking care of what we have preserved. Boundary crews mark the perimeters of preserves and easements, so we know exactly what to monitor.

Our network of stewards and volunteers identify work to be done, and then our Volunteer Coordinator (Andy Woodcock) rounds up and outfits work parties. Trail safety must be maintained; bridges and boardwalks examined and repaired. A few years ago, we realized we had outgrown what volunteers alone could handle.

JT continues to adapt and branch into excit-

ing new ways of serving our region. Much of this growth has been possible because of our Executive Director, Michael Hveem, who

begins his fifth year with us. Unless you sit in the Atwood office all day, every day, you will never be able to appreciate all the things he does for us.

The daily challenges of answering dozens of emails and phone calls, helping volunteers who pop in, maintenance and repair of our historic buildings, writing grant applications, attending numerous meetings, etc., would

keep most people busy.

While juggling those things, Michael watches what other land trusts and nearby towns are doing. He is a keen observer, a visionary, and problem-solver (and he often notices problems before anyone else.)

How lucky we are to have so many volunteers and supporters, and to have such a leader!

My two years as President will end in May, but I look forward to supporting our new President, Paul Pribula, from Willington.

Stay tuned! And thanks to all who have supported our endeavors and helped me grow during the past two years. — *Karen*

**TRUST NOTES**

By Karen Zimmer  
*Joshua's Trust President*

**Many thanks to our community sponsors who give generously to support the mission of Joshua's Trust.**

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## Rediscover wildflowers, trees, song birds and more

*While it's difficult to determine when the snow and cold will end in northeastern Connecticut, the Trust has planned several activities in the next few months to get you outside and looking for signs of spring.*

**Saturday, March 30**, 10 a.m. – noon. The Mansfield and Chaplin public libraries along with Joshua's Trust are co-sponsoring a morning of kite flying at Hubbard Preserve in Chaplin (just off of Route 198; park at Garrison Park).

There will be prizes for the most original kite as well as for the kite that stays up the longest. Bring your own kite – and if it needs repairs, we will have a small repair table available, as well. Rain date is April 6.



**Saturday, April 20**, 9:30 a.m. Want to get your walking legs active again? Join Deb Field at Tobiassen Memorial Forest in Tolland as we look for the new leaves on trees and bushes and learn their names. Moderate difficulty.

**Saturday, May 4**, 10 a.m. at Pigeon Swamp in Lebanon join us for a wildflower peek-a-boo walk with Deb Russel. Moderate difficulty.

**Sunday, May 5**, 2 p.m. at Atwood Farm in Mansfield.

Join the Mansfield Middle School fiddlers who will play for us as we dance around the May Pole. We will also make May baskets and wind socks. (Heavy rain cancels.)



**Saturday, May 11**. 8 a.m. Bring Mom along to Church Farm, Route 89 in Ashford (on the Mount Hope River side) as we search for bird mothers with one of our birders. Easy walk.

*Please let us know you are coming for the walks by emailing [activities@joshuastrust.org](mailto:activities@joshuastrust.org). That way we can plan appropriately. And don't forget to check the website for up-dates, as well as rain dates.*

## Still time to join the Walden Pond excursion to Concord, Mass.

There are still several places open for our excursion with Robert Thorson to Walden Pond, on Saturday, April 27 (heavy rain date May 4) in Concord, Massachusetts, the historic epicenter of America's environmental movement.

Thorson, local author of scholarly and popular books on Walden Pond, will be our guide as we explore the pond.

After, we will have lunch at Concord's Colonial Inn, and then spend some time at the Authors' Ridge in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery,

before returning to Connecticut.

The cost is \$100, which includes a copy of Thor's most recent book – *The Guide to Walden Pond*, lunch, and entrance and parking fees.

We will meet at the pond entrance at 10 a.m. on the 27th and plan to leave about 4 p.m.

(Participants are responsible for their own transportation to Concord.)

For more information, or to sign up, please email Nancy Silander ([nancysilander@gmail.com](mailto:nancysilander@gmail.com)).



Thoreau's cabin and statue at Walden Pond.

## Fellow volunteers are her the best reward

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be next because of some bore-type insect?"

"I most enjoy the new people I have met. The other volunteers are such interesting people who have great stories about their travels and their hobbies. I like being greeted like Norm from 'Cheers' with a smile from whomever is in the office!" And she says she has a new appreciation for how important documentation is.

*Joshua's Trust needs a used 4WD pickup truck to help with stewardship.*

*If you're planning on trading or selling your older truck, and you would consider making a donation to JT instead, call Mike Hveem at 860-429-9023.*



# A memory, like the Grist Mill, endures

*Gale Morganroth of Coventry recently wrote the Trust with her donation to the Grist Mill's improvement and shared a memory which we reproduce here.*

"My memory goes back 40 years or more to the time when the mill and house and field across the Fenton was owned by Anthony Doua.

"Uncle Tony" was the uncle of my close friend's wife and while he and his dog Rex were alive, every opening day of fishing season began with a campout in the field, playing cards, and toasting to the next day's catch. As the years went by our group graduated from tents to pop-up campers. And over the years our group got smaller. Rex died. And then Tony.

We were afraid of what could've become of the mill and house. But the Trust stepped up and the memory of it stayed with us. When Tony was alive he'd unlock the mill and take whoever wanted on a tour – unrestored back then and a bit tricky to navigate. But Tony felt it was a special place that family and friends were allowed to share.



**The Grist Mill and the Fenton River.**

In April 2018 I was the last of our group to stand in the Fenton across from the mill, in the same spot for so many other opening days. In 2019 I might not make it to that spot, too many aches and pains and not as sure on my feet as I was. But maybe ..."



**Jon Varga**

## Eagle Scout and the Trust: a great fit

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Scout projects, and as Jon expressed an interest in taking on an activity that was primarily in the out-of-doors, he contacted Joshua's Trust which put him in contact with the Andersons.

It is important to note that the Scout is not the muscle behind the project, but the organizer.

Jon estimates he spent much more time working on the logistics, including planning with the Andersons exactly what was needed, rounding up other Scouts to do the muscle work, getting adults for supervision for all the activities, purchasing supplies, and finally, finding a weather-

appropriate two days for the work.

He had hoped to finish all by late fall, but the tree cutting had to wait until the ground was appropriately frozen for a large vehicle – in late January. He found the project challenging; and has a new appreciation for what it takes to steward a property.

Jon will graduate in June from Ellis Tech in Danielson and then head off to the University of Connecticut as an engineering major as the recipient of a Presidential scholarship.

He'll take a bit of a break in the summer when he spends time in the Cascade Mountains in Washington state for a National Outdoor Leadership School expedition.



### Volunteers enjoy tea, sandwiches and visit with Henry David Thoreau

About 40 loyal volunteers came to our second annual Valentines for Volunteers event held at Knowlton Memorial Hall in Ashford.

They enjoyed tea, quiche, sandwiches and sweets, all prepared by the Education and Outreach Committee.

As importantly, they got to interact with Henry David Thoreau (aka Richard Smith of the Thoreau Society) who answered questions as if the next 190 years had yet to happen. (That's him at the right with Deb Field.)





Photo by John Pagini of the JT Boundary Crew

## ***We carry Joshua's legacy each time we walk a trail***

*By George Jacobi*

"There are some who can live without wild things, and some who cannot."

The first sentence of the Foreword to *A Sand County Almanac* is unequivocal. How did Aldo Leopold know the path I would take through life in 1948, a year before I was born? When he so uncompromisingly evoked his own heart, I bet he was describing yours as well as mine.

We don't have to be indigenous humans whose daily lives are intimately connected to the land to care for it. Whether you walk here in a scientific or a spiritual way, the earth reaches out to you and your heart reaches back. A prehistoric connection continues.

How do we make sure the care that reaches from Joshua to Leopold to us grows in our children's children?

Much of the youngest generation is active outdoors; I'm not convinced, though, that self-focused 'sport' fosters the same affection for the ecosystem that amateur naturalism does.

Buried under the waters of Lake Powell, Arizona's Glen Canyon is gone. It exists now only in memory, and in the imagination of those who haven't been there. Also gone

now is Katie Lee, the folk singer whose love of the place was so great she swore "the only thing that stops me from blowing up that dam is I don't know how."

Spring is here now, and with it come the Purple Trilliums and Scarlet Tanagers of the Hubbard Sanctuary. And they will return next year, and the next. They are not buried under some reservoir. We don't need dynamite to protect them.

This is a gentle, comforting landscape; the kind of place author Robert Heinlein called "the cool green hills of Earth." There is no part of eastern Connecticut that remains truly wild. Life goes on in Joshua's Trust lands almost as it has since the glaciers receded.

This spring you may pause when birds go silent; your eyes may be lucky enough to see the Barred Owl before his 360-degree gaze finds you. You may note a raccoon track by the brook – and it may even be a bear track.

Together, we carry on a legacy from Joshua and his tribe. The next time you walk one of our protected natural properties, see if you can feel the ghostly presence of Nipmuck and Mohegan folks, who surely trod many of the same trails and looked at sunsets over these same April hills. And pass that teaching on to a young person.



The Trust's Atwood Farm in the afternoon sun.

# Support conservation as you head outside

When warmer weather and longer days cause you to think about going outside, it's a good time to think of donating to Joshua's Trust. As always, the Trust's continued success in protecting Connecticut open space depends on the support of its members who enjoy its trails. All contributions include membership and are tax deductible.

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