



In Rare, But Appropriate Property Agreement Trust Sells Labbee Land To Be Farmed Again

When Esther Labbee of Willington passed away in 2012, she bequeathed her house, barn, and a five-acre field to Joshua's Trust.

This was the piece that she had retained when she donated other, larger portions of the property, some 55 acres, to the Trust in 2004. By mutual agreement, the Trust and Ms. Labbee agreed to name that property "Chênes Roches Preserve."

Chênes Roches is French for Oak Tree Rocks, which is certainly appropriate given the presence of an impressive

white oak and the typical rocky terrain for which New England is known. This oak was clearly a special place for her. She requested that her ashes be scattered in its clearing.

Esther was a grade school teacher, but she always considered herself a farmer, and maintained the small farm with the field and barns for her animals. She took great pride in that part of her life, and when she gave the 55 acres, she specified that no hiking trails would be allowed during her lifetime.

The Trust's mission is primarily to preserve land, and the Trust has rarely been put in a position to sell what is given to it. The last time was over 15 years ago in a bequest from Dorothy Goodwin, who specified that her home be sold to support the Trust's mission.

Esther made no specific requests about the future use of her land. In order to honor her life as a farmer, the Trust decided to sell the house, barn and field as a farm unit. One acre would be kept by the Trust to provide access to the Chênes Roches Preserve.

A conservation easement was placed on the field to allow it to be farmed in perpetuity. The Trust hoped that her "farm" would be purchased by someone who would



Ed Wazer and Roluca Mocanu of Shundahai Farm.

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Windham's Development Strategy Includes Acquiring Open Space

Windham is unique among the area towns associated with Joshua's Trust. It is the only one to have a city – Willimantic – within its boundaries.

The residential and business areas of Willimantic and the Windham villages make up about 25 percent of the municipality. Only a small portion of Windham is protected farmland or open space. A substantial amount that is in forest is mostly privately owned and not necessarily in contiguous parcels necessary for wildlife corridors.

The Windham Plan of Development (2007) designated natural resources and open spaces as one of eight priority areas and recognized that the "best strategy for maintaining a stable mill rate is to acquire open space."

More than 70 percent of Windham's residents agree they

want to protect their scenic natural areas, aquifers, forests, wildlife and farmland.

The most significant parcel of open space in Windham is around the Mansfield Hollow reservoir maintained by the state. Other than that, there are smaller parcels owned by the state, the municipality (primarily parks) and a few private owners.

There are several permanently protected farm land tracts, the most significant parcel being in the southeast part of the town that is next to state-owned open space.

The Trust enabled Windham to increase its open space along the Route 6 corridor north of town with the donation

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Joshua's Tract Conservation And Historic Trust, Inc.

P.O. BOX 4
MANSFIELD CENTER, CT 06250
Email: joshuastrust@snet.net
www.joshuastrust.org

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Vice President: Mona Anderson
VP Land Acquisition: Richard Hyde
VP Historic Properties: vacant
Secretary: Carol Enright
Treasurer: Hamilton Holt
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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 Historic Eagleville Schoolhouse, South Eagleville 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.

Acts Of Love, Faith And Trust

Volunteers: people who give because they want to give to a higher cause, not for their own direct benefit -- deeds done with purpose and by choice.

Each piece of property donated to Joshua's Trust was recognized as something special by the donor who loved his or her land.

Walking quietly on a trail in the woods, a heightened awareness of nature seeps in, sharpened by realizing that the property has qualities worthy of preservation recognized by someone who sees the beauty of the land -- and who loves the land enough to forgo the profit from its sale to preserve it so unknown others can discover its beauty.

This is an act of someone who loves the land enough to entrust it to strangers.

This is certainly an act of not only selflessness and faith, but also of trust.

Joshua's Trust protects almost 4,400 acres of such land. Some is owned in fee simple, some protected by easement.

All of the properties the Trust owns are cared for by stewards who dedicate many hours to keeping the property intact, and the trails open for the public.

Stewards care for the land, love being in the woods, and find peace in working in the quiet of the natural world.

Easement-protected land is monitored by the Trust, but is held in private ownership through a conservation restriction or easement, which allows the owner to keep his land or sell it in the future, and know that it will be protected by the restrictions that remain with the property in perpetuity.

Most conservation easements preserve certain qualities and land prevent development.

The Trust's finances require an annual audit, and provide information on the number of volunteer hours given. In this last fiscal year, July 1 to June 30, our volunteers gave over 12,300 hours to maintaining the viability of the Trust,

now in its 48th year.

With the exception of two dedicated part-time employees, a conservation coordinator and finance clerk, volunteers do the work of the Trust: maintaining land, planning and upkeep of the two historic properties.

Committees are all volunteer, and require dedication and a positive attitude about giving.

A volunteer doesn't seek praise for the giving, but certainly deserves admiration for what is given.

There is always a place for volunteers to help. The skills needed are many.

Join the Trust, and give your time to help make our corner of the world a better place.

TRUST NOTES



By Fran Funk
Joshua's Trust President

Inspired to volunteer?

There are a variety of opportunities listed and explained on Page 4.

Help From Many Means Knowlton Hill Trails Now Connected To Wormwood Hill Road

By Greg Anderson

Thanks to contributions and cooperation from many, a boardwalk - elevated above a stream and a marsh - and a trail have been completed at Knowlton Hill Preserve, marking the last piece needed to connect the established trails on the preserve to Wormwood Hill Road.

About five years ago Knowlton Hill stewards Greg and Mona Anderson re-opened an access way from Wormwood Hill Road that had become a tangle of multiflora rose, barberry and bittersweet.

New Trust members (at the time) Katrina Higgins and JC Beall followed

by marking out a trail connecting the new entrance with the established trails on the preserve. The remaining impediment was crossing a small stream and a wide marsh/swampy area down near Knowlton Pond.

Thanks primarily to Paul Ference, that last element was just completed. He used the design and construction of the first part of the treated timber elevated walkway/bridge (41 feet long) as an Eagle Scout Service Project,

and with the help of his Troop No. 92 completed it in October of 2012.

All the materials, totaling about \$750, were contributed by O. L. Willard Co. in Storrs and Eastford Building Supply in Eastford.

Paul returned this past May with an interest in volunteering for more work on Trust property. He added water bars, cleared stones, cut invasive plants, and completed the walkway.

Working with his father, local mason James Ference, they added two more sections, one 30 feet long, and the second more than 12 feet long. Once again, the materials -- about \$600 worth -- were contrib-



The new elevated walkways at Knowlton Hill Preserve in Mansfield.

uted by O.L. Willard Co. The new trail is now complete and offers access to some additional interesting woods and marsh areas.

All the trails are best accessed from the parking area at the top of Knowlton Hill as there is no parking area on Wormwood Hill. This Trust property should offer some spectacular walks this fall.

Come out and enjoy!

WALKING AROUND...



Bird and Plant Walk: Knowlton Hill Preserve, Sunday Sept. 28 at 2 p.m.

This walk will focus on fall plants and birds on the newest trail on the Preserve. It will go through a hay field and then skirt the edge of Knowlton Pond walking over a newly constructed wooden walkway. The walk will be about 2 ½ miles and take about 1 ½ hours. (Botanists and birders move very slowly).

Meet at the parking area on Knowlton Hill Road at the top of Knowlton Hill on the East side of road. Led by Greg and Mona Anderson and ornithologist Chris Elphick.

And don't forget "Walktober." See [The Last Green Valley](#) website.

Grist Mill Remains Open Through Mid-October

Reminder: The Grist Mill and museum are open from 1 to 5 p.m. on Sundays through the second Sunday in October. Groups may be hosted any day by appointment. Call Joshua's Trust at (860) 429-9023. There is no admission fee, but donations are welcomed.



Want To Volunteer? Here's Work That Needs Doing

The all-volunteer Joshua's Trust workforce could sure use:

- Help in monitoring easements in the following towns: Ashford, Chaplin, Columbia, Coventry, Hampton, Lebanon, Mansfield, Scotland and Tolland.
- People to set up and work at an information table at events to talk about the Trust's goals and activities.
- Trail workers to help with keeping trails clear and safe.
- People willing to help clear invasive plants from our properties as needed.
- A volunteer coordinator who works well with people to organize volunteers and match them with projects.
- Guides/docents at the Grist Mill on Sunday afternoons, May through October to talk to visitors about the Gurleyville Grist Mill and its history.

Gurleyville Grist Mill Docents

The Grist Mill is open to the public on Sundays from Mid-May to Mid-October. The Trust is looking for people to be there on Sundays from 1 to 4 p.m., as docents, or tour guides.

Their job is to tell the story of the Mill and the Miller's house; learn the purposes of various parts of the Mill in order to explain how the mill worked; and understand the importance of Gov. Wilbur Cross, who was born in the Miller's house when his father was the miller there.

Information Booth Volunteers

The Outreach Committee is looking for people to be at the Trust table at various fairs and town events to talk with people about the Trust, the properties, hand out brochures,

and to encourage people to become members.

These volunteers would also educate people who stop by about the purpose of a land trust; discuss various properties, their locations and their trails; and direct people to the Trust's website.

Trail Clearing Work

The Trails Committee and Stewards are always looking for qualified people to help keep trails clear and remove invasive plants from Trust properties. Training sessions as appropriate can be offered to insure safe operation of tools.

Consignment Shop Donations

The owner of Hall's Emporium has agreed to have a Joshua's Trust booth in her store as an on-going supplemental fund-raising effort.

Susan Dinallo of Hall's Emporium, a consignment shop on the ground floor of the Hall Mills, 148 River Road, (Route 32) in Willington, has offered to accept and sell donated items in her store, with part of the proceeds going to Joshua's Trust.

The store is open Thursday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Please bring donated items to the store.

We hope to have enough great things donated to enable the Trust to have its own recognizable booth. Items like glassware, furniture, lamps, etc., that you like, know would sell, but no longer use would add to the booth.

Land Stewards

We need volunteer stewards for three preserves: Merrow Parcel and Michael's Preserve in Mansfield and our Hemphill Preserve in Hampton. Stewards are our eyes-on-the-ground and they help to maintain the land for the enjoyment of humans and wildlife alike. For more information, contact Stephanie at the Trust office or email stephanie.clark@joshuastrust.org.



Windham's White Cedar Bog A Priority Natural Resource

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of just over 100 acres by Ada Wolf known as the Allanach-Wolf Woodlands. This is about three miles from already protected White Cedar Bog of 22 acres. This area is considered the "highest natural resource priority for the Town" according to its Plan of Development.

In 2012, an additional 20 acres were added, 17 that were purchased from the town and three from Dr. Steven Stein. Most recently, a bird blind was constructed as this area is a favorite for birders. In addition, David Hall deeded to the Trust 25 acres next to the Mansfield Hollow reservoir.

The Windham Plan of Development is due for an update in 2017. The Trust looks forward to working with the town to help further protect its natural and historic resources.

New Parking Lot, Handicapped Access At Atwood Farm Headquarters



A new parking area, outdoor lighting, and a new handicapped entrance have been completed outside the Atwood Farm property in Mansfield.

Inside, a bathroom has been created with handicapped access, doors widened and the electrical circuits modified to accommodate 21st Century technology.

Labbee Farming Legacy To Live On With Peace, Harmony

Continued from Page One

farm it and would share the Trust's philosophy of preservation.

It was almost providential when local organic farmers, Ed Wazer and Roluca Mocanu of Shundahai Farm in Mansfield expressed interest in purchasing the Labbee Property to expand their farmland to Willington, thus providing for continued farming on the land Esther so loved.

Shundahai means "Peace and Harmony with all Creation" in the Shoshone language. The Mansfield farm is well-known at area farmers' markets and the Willimantic

Food Co-Op, as well as for their community supported agriculture and their commitment to organic farming practices. More information on the farm can be found at their website, www.shundahai.com.

The Board of Trustees held a special meeting Aug. 7 to review the easement conditions as negotiated between the Trust and the family.

Both the sale and easement were unanimously approved and the sale was concluded the next day.

The Trust is pleased to welcome the Shundahai owners as neighbors of our Chênes Roches Preserve in Willington.

Restoration Grant Is Beginning Of New Funding Strategy

Joshua's Trust recently received a grant of \$5,000 to restore the windows at the Gurleyville Grist Mill through a new historic preservation grant program funded by the 1772 Foundation and administered by the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation.

Joshua's Trust was a strong applicant because it demonstrated its strategic planning for the Grist Mill in its five-year Management Plan, and it had the restoration recommendations of John Curtis, curator emeritus at Old Sturbridge Village.

The 1772 Foundation is a long-term friend of the Trust, having provided six prior grants for the Grist Mill for the shingling of the roof and the miller's house, the correction of the water-drainage problem and other projects.

The newest grant is the beginning of a strategy to obtain expanded operating and manage-

ment funds from foundations and government agencies.

Some Trust properties such as the Atwood Farm and the Allanach-Wolf Woodlands have endowments to be used only on those properties.

While the Trust's resources in land, members' loyalty, and general goodwill are generous, funds for operating costs and unendowed preserves are scarce.

Of our 62 parcels and preserves, only a few have dedicated financial resources.

The Trust counts on income from the Annual Appeal and membership dues to support day to day operations. For the last two years the income from these two sources has fallen short of expectations.

Along with the Legacy campaign, the new gristmill grant represents another funding resource to help support the Trust's operation.



Annual Meeting Oct. 15 At Renovated Windham Club

*The Joshua's Trust Annual Dinner Meeting will be held on **Wednesday, Oct. 15, 6 p.m.** at The Golf Club of Windham, formerly the Willimantic Country Club, at 148 Club Road, in Windham.*

The facility is being totally renovated and will be ready for dinner meetings in October. You can see more at: <http://www.windhamclub.com/>

The dinner will cost \$25 with a cash bar. If you would like to help defray any extra costs to the Trust, you may add a donation when you send in your reservation. More information will be forthcoming.

Joshua's Trust Annual Dinner Reservation Form

Please submit by Oct. 6, 2014

Name: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail address: _____

Please make reservations for _____ people @ \$25 each: Total \$_____.

Chicken _____ Fish _____ Vegetarian _____ Gluten free _____

I cannot attend, but would like to contribute \$_____

Make check payable to: Joshua's Trust Mail to: Annual Dinner, Joshua's Trust, P.O. Box 4, Mansfield Center, CT 06250

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