



## LAND TRUSTS WITHOUT BORDERS

by Rob Beach

"Hey! What are you doing out there in the woods?" The man walked toward us across his lawn. It was likely that our orange flagging tape had, not unreasonably, aroused suspicion.

"We're from Joshua's Trust. Trying to locate the boundary. You've got some beautiful land here. By the way, do you happen to know where the red oak stump is with a nail in it?"

"Oh yes, I think we did get a letter last week. Well. I've wondered about the exact line myself." After introductions, he joined us for a few minutes. He hadn't known with precision where his own boundaries were, and he was interested in our quaint but effective methods. For his return home, we gave him a Joshua's Trust brochure and we very likely had made a friend.

Like the inquisitive neighbor, you most likely have noticed "Joshua's Trust" diamond shaped

medallions affixed to trees and, occasionally, fence posts. Most know they have something to do with boundaries. They do; but they also expand our opportunities to meet the community and expand our network of friends.

For twenty years, Hill Bullard has led the campaign to mark clearly every property and conservation easement. The process begins in the local town halls with examinations of pertinent deeds and, if we are lucky, surveys. Frequently, we resort to abutters' records in order to establish one of our common lines. When the leaves have fallen and the vegetation has grown less lush, the boundary marking season begins. Hill now has the capacity to run two crews at the same time. We first notify abutters and, in the case of conservation easements, the owner of the property.

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# JOSHUA'S TRUST NEWS

## JOSHUA'S TRUST

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Volunteer Coordinator: Andy Woodcock

Development Administrator: Kailyn Murphy

Stewardship Coordinator: Ada Snodgrass

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

## MEMORIES' REWARDS

by Rob Beach

I was fortunate enough to have spent summers in the golden age of youth at a rugged camp in western Maine. The water was pure and the pine woods were clean. We learned campcraft, canoeing, mountain climbing and nature, along with traditional sports. We were required to be respectful toward each other and nature; attitude was as important as achievement. And it was really hard to get all the pitch off our hands.



I frequently look back through memory's haze at the western Maine ideal. Though I lived my everyday life in the wilds of the Connecticut suburbs, I channeled my camp experience to paddle the Allagash, ride horses and hike in the Rockies, and, ultimately, became involved with Joshua's Trust. The camp experience has proven to be far more than a gauzy memory: it has engendered an emotional connection to the land. The conservation ethic may be possible as an academic exercise, but it is deeper when it is felt.

Our mission at Joshua's Trust is to preserve land of high conservation value, along with complementary goals including education, passive recreation and community involvement. It's quite clear that these activities, and the efforts of conservation

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## THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY SPONSORS



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# ECOSYSTEMS BY DESIGN

by Ada Snodgrass

"This is about connecting landscapes. And what that really means is, plants." Sarah Bergmann created the Pollinator Pathway to be first and foremost an ecological design program. Since its start in Seattle, Washington over a decade ago, she has made it a priority to include urban areas as much as possible.

The program is much more than just helping bees. Most of the pollination is done by butterflies, moths, flies, bats, and more. To make the positive change we want to see in the natural world, we need to make those changes to our landscapes ourselves. The Pathways in Connecticut began in 2017. Since then, over 45 towns have been connected, including Chaplin, Mansfield, and Windham that will soon be mapped on the Northeast website.



For Joshua's Trust's contribution, I decided to distribute to stewards, a blend of seeds; primarily coneflowers, zinnias, and milkweed. Properties with scheduled planting dates included Agnes' Pasture, Atwood Farm, Josias Byles Sanctuary, the Gurleyville Grist Mill, and Owen's Mere. We chose these locations primarily based on sun exposure, and the pollinator's access to water sources. Most of our land has dense tree coverage, which acts as a great habitat for some pollinators, but aren't a good spot to plant wildflowers. Still, the project has inspired me to expand the Pathways on Joshua's Trust properties as much as possible. In the future I will be more inclined to plant native shrubs instead of seeds.

However, I still wanted to give our wonderful volunteer base an opportunity to participate. If you would like your own back yard to be a part of a pathway, there are a few steps to take before registering your garden. Include native plants on your property and manage invasive species. Avoid using pesticides and herbicides. Consider leaving some bare ground and dead wood for nesting native bees, leaving some autumn leaves for overwintering eggs and pupae of pollinating insects. Then contact Joshua's Trust to receive a 6" sign showing your yard is on the Pollinator Pathway.

## IT'S A FULL-TIME JOB

We are excited to announce that Ada Snodgrass, our stewardship coordinator, is now full-time at Joshua's Trust! As full-time stewardship coordinator Ada will be doing what she's been doing over the past two years, but with a little extra. She will continue coordinating preserve management, conservation easement monitoring, leading work parties, planning stewardship for the year, and creating and updating maps for our preserves. Ada is the second full-time staff member at Joshua's Trust and this is a huge step forward in ensuring that our mission is enacted at the highest level. We have been able to increase staffing over the past few years because of the generosity of you, our supporters. Thank you!





# JOSHUA'S TRUST NEWS

## FOR THE LOVE OF MOTHER EARTH

by Kailyn Murphy

When Joe and Jane\* bought their home in the Dunham Pond Road area, they opted to buy additional parcels adjacent to their property. Years later, Joe and Jane have decided to ensure that land stays open space forever by putting Joshua's Trust as the recipient of that land in their will. Though, Mother Earth willing, the land won't come into Joshua's Trust's possession for many years, even now, Joe and Jane are making plans. They are even ensuring that the land comes with ample funds to maintain the land, build a trail and erect a dedication to them as the donors of the property. Why would they go through all this effort? "For the love of Mother Earth." They said that their beliefs and values line up with the mission of Joshua's Trust and they want to make an impact on their community. They hope that this donation will connect existing open space and provide more opportunities for the community to enjoy the Dunham Pond Road area.

### WANT TO SEE MORE OF JOSHUA'S TRUST?

*Follow us on social media!*



@joshuastrust @joshuas\_trust @JoshuasTrust\_ joshuastrust.org

How are you making a lasting impact on your community? For Joe and Jane, it was donating property to Joshua's Trust in their will, while for others it may be a gift of stocks or bonds. We hope for many it comes in the form of volunteering your time. Whatever your path may be, do it for the love of Mother Earth.

*\*Names have been changed to respect the privacy of the donors\**



Pictured at left: We held our 2021 annual meeting via Zoom for approximately 25 members. Despite the Pandemic, the Trust has continued our monitoring and stewarding activities, and welcomed many new volunteers who appreciated being able to simultaneously socialize, exercise and achieve results during productive work parties.

Pictured at right: Joshua's Trust recently received an award from The Last Green Valley commemorating our participation in Walktober every year since it began in 1991! Nancy Silander, Warren and Peggy Church, and Mona Anderson represented Joshua's Trust in receiving the award.





## LAND TRUST WITHOUT BORDERS (CONTINUED)

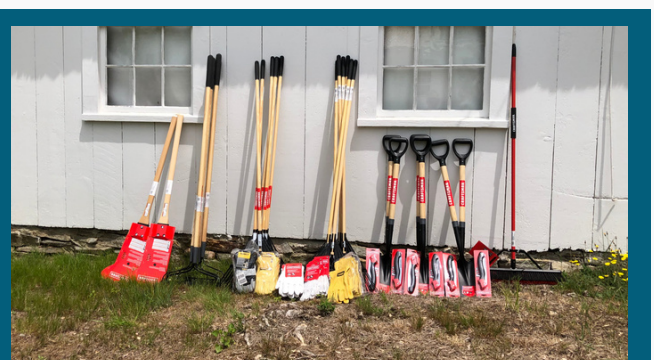
Otherwise, neighbors may quite understandably be apprehensive to see people with orange vests and flagging tape traipsing by.

Locating the boundaries on the ground can be a painstaking process, and no two boundary projects are identical. We usually start by determining the variance between “north” as designated by the survey and the current magnetic north indicated by our sighting compasses. Sighting between two surveyor pins, or along an especially straight stone wall boundary, can accomplish the task. Using the compass correction, which should be internally consistent within the deed or survey, we locate surveyor pins, iron pipes and other monuments with the help of a metal detector and a standard measurement application on a smart phone or GPS. The boundaries are first flagged with orange tape, and, when we’re sure of the line, we affix the medallions so that a person entering the preserve or easement will see them; finally, we mark the trees with red paint so that the steward or monitor can more easily find the boundary in the future. We frequently are thrown curveballs by deed descriptions such as “the oak with a nail,” the “middle of three birch trees,” or, my personal favorite, “the old Smith place.”

Why go to all this trouble? Well, the first reason is practical: we have the legal obligation to protect our properties, and in order to do so we need to know exactly where the properties are on the ground. The second reason may be a bit selfish: the combination of sometimes rigorous outdoor activity with intellectual challenge is stimulating. The third reason is perhaps the most gratifying and most unexpected. Abutters and second generation owners of restricted land are at times querulous or even hostile when they first see us in the field. We think of these encounters as opportunities rather than obstacles. We have found that even a brief discussion of Joshua’s Trust mission and activities - and the advantages bestowed on their land - turns doubters into advocates.

Although we occasionally come across minor encroachments and violations of conservation restrictions, we have found that problems usually may be resolved with a friendly conversation or sometimes a formal boundary agreement. On a conservation easement, we found a private cemetery (and were able to give an easement for that purpose). The more people know about us and understand what we do, the more friends we have. Our boundaries may be geographic limitations, but they are also openings to new opportunities.

The boundary crew consists of Hill Bullard, chair, and crew leaders John Pagini and Rob Beach. Crew members: Greg Padick, Jack Fulton, Steve Bacon, Scott Matthies, Juan Sanchez, Sharron Laplante, Ben Collins, and David Gosselin.



**We recently received a generous donation of tools from Stanley Black and Decker. These tools will enable our trail crews to do more out on our properties!**

# JOSHUA'S TRUST NEWS

## ASHFORD OAK

by Andy Woodcock

At more than 400 years old, the Ashford Oak shows its age. But its significance to Ashford stretches out as its branches did when it was the nation's largest Northern Red Oak. It was a destination from the earliest days of Ashford, a gathering point, a landmark and a point of pride that defined the town. When it was donated to Joshua's Trust in 1972, it was 400 years old. Time and the hurricane of 1938 ravaged the tree and it is today a quieter symbol. But something else grew from the Ashford Oak, even as its stature diminished.



To members of Joshua's Trust, it still stands as the first step in what has become a strong relationship with the Town of Ashford. "It was quite a big deal," Joshua's Trust President Rob Beach said of the Town-Trust relationship and the property itself. He recalled hearing how the Oak was a centerpiece acquisition, that the town encouraged, that a UConn arborist examined the tree, and that newspapers covered the story. The Town of Ashford and Joshua's Trust now own abutting properties, which work to enhance the local hiking experience and attract people from across the Quiet Corner, Massachusetts and Rhode Island. We're proud to have partnered in an effort to make the beauty of Ashford available to enjoy. That work continues with the Ashford Oak. The Ashford Preservation Commission and Joshua's Trust are collaborating to build a split rail fence around the tree. A kiosk with a weather-proof rendering and information on its grand 400 years is also in the works.

## MEMORIES' REWARDS (CONTINUED)

organizations in general, have short-term benefits for health and well-being and long-term benefits for the climate, air and water quality, resilience and biodiversity. But without broad support of the general public, our efforts will be cramped and we'll operate in the margins. If more of the public develops an emotional connection to the land, the environmental goals will be more easily addressed: it is hard to love the outdoors and to see it abused. But most of the public does not live in rural countryside where the outdoors is second nature. Spending time in hiking boots doesn't cross the minds of a lot of people.

So, how do we help to instill a reverence for the land in the general public? It will not be easy or accomplished immediately. It seems self-evident that familiarity with the land will breed respect. The effort highlights the necessity of continued outreach to people who have only minimally experienced the wonders of the outdoors, or not at all. We can collaborate with schools and community organizations; we can ask groups how we can help with encouraging their outdoor activities. We can develop trails that are accessible by less physically able people. There are undoubtedly many other avenues to explore.

In the process, we should vigorously persevere in our primary mission of preserving land of high conservation value, and we should avoid mission creep. But a supportive public may be a necessary component of long-term effective conservation and a part of the mission.





# PASSPORT CHALLENGE

by Kailyn Murphy

When we posted our Passport Challenge on Facebook in January, our hope was that we would encourage our friends and members to get out on the trails even in the colder weather. What we didn't expect was for the post to reach 26,000 people! But maybe we should have expected it. With COVID-19 having kept people indoors for the winter, it isn't surprising that so many were itching to get outside. By best count, about 40 people completed the challenge and received their Joshua's Trust hat. But we suspect there might be more out there who got out on the trails!



Heather, Lisa, and Kathy at  
H.E. Preston Sanctuary.

Some grandparents decided to do this challenge with their grandchildren, others with friends; some even made it a competition between couples to see who could complete the challenge first. Long-time Joshua's Trust supporters discovered new trails. Brave souls hiked in snow. And some were inspired to return to properties in other seasons to discover them all anew.

The success and enjoyment of this challenge has inspired us here at Joshua's Trust to create a new challenge, but this time we are upping the ante. For this challenge you will need to visit 14 properties where there will be a box hidden near a water feature. Inside the box you will find a lettered stamp. After finding all 14 stamps, you will be led to the final property. The first 50 people to complete the challenge will receive a reusable grocery bag with the Joshua's Trust logo. The new challenge will run from July 1st to November 1st. Who's up to the challenge?



Just a few of the many photos sent  
in by participants!



JOSHUA'S TRACT  
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# JOIN OUR NEW CHALLENGE

## *Walk to Water Challenge*

1. Visit [joshuastrust.org/walk-to-water](http://joshuastrust.org/walk-to-water) and download the printable challenge guide.
2. Explore our 14 trails with water features and find the hidden boxes.
3. Unscramble the letters to discover the final property.
4. Get the last stamp!
5. Email a picture of your completed guide to [administration@joshuastrust.org](mailto:administration@joshuastrust.org) for a Joshua's Trust tote bag!