

# Joshua's Trust News

## Protecting Land and Preserving Heritage. Forever.



Published quarterly by Joshua's Tract Conservation and Historic Trust

[www.joshuastrust.org](http://www.joshuastrust.org)



## MONSOON SEASON

by George Jacobi

July's belligerent streams and rivers took only a short respite, to besiege us again in August. Fifteen to twenty inches of rain have now soaked into aquifers or run to the sea this summer, overrunning roads and flooding basements on the way. Drought is a memory. Their roots waterlogged, many oaks, weary from aridity and gypsy moth abuse, gave up the fight. Mosquitoes are deliriously happy. Those of us who want to hike in the forest without getting bitten are less pleased. Washed out roadways all over eastern Connecticut are making local Public Works Departments re-evaluate the efficiency of culverts and have forced Joshua's Trust into significant extra work as well.

On July 10th, the USGS gauge on the Mt. Hope River recorded a level higher than in the Hurricane of 1938! Thus, our wooden bridge and 200-foot boardwalk at the Church Farm Meadow attempted to migrate south once again.

The Church Farm Meadow, a large marsh, is a regularly flooded part of the Mt. Hope floodplain. Three years ago the boardwalk seemed pretty solid despite getting almost covered with water every spring. Then these drenching rains became larger and more regular. Add to that beaver dams below and above the bridge, the one above with devastating potential, and serious conversations are under way about whether we should rebuild the structures for the third time. Frustrating. Environmental disturbance is a perennial part of nature (more on this on the JT blog). But as Executive Director Mike Hveem says, "The rate of change has changed – and not for the better."

Trails on steep slopes (think Knowlton) became runoff channels and ditches. In some spots brush fetched up into impassable Pick-Up Stick piles.

*Continued on page 3*

# JOSHUA'S TRUST NEWS

## JOSHUA'S TRUST

Mailing address:

P.O. Box 4

Mansfield Center, CT 06250

Email:

[administration@joshuastrust.org](mailto:administration@joshuastrust.org)

[www.joshuastrust.org](http://www.joshuastrust.org)

Visit us at:

The Atwood Farm

624 Wormwood Hill Rd., Mansfield Ctr.

Phone: 860-429-9023

### OFFICERS

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Vice President: Betsy Paterson

Secretary: Karen Zimmer

Treasurer: Gail Bruhn

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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.

## FOOD, PESTILENCE, AND...GRATITUDE

by Rob Beach

As I figuratively put pen to paper, the remnants of Ida are demonically depositing five more inches of rain on Joshua's Trust. The summer has not been kind: rain and dew points in the seventies have made trips to the woods less refreshing, and the increased standing water has spawned a truly impressive flock of mosquitoes, black flies and their colleagues. Boardwalks and portions of trails are submerged. Trees, now rooted in slush, topple. Our meetings, delightfully but briefly held in person, are again zoomed.



Is this the summer of our discontent? Remarkably, the answer is a resounding "No." Under the tutelage of Andy Woodcock and Ada Snodgrass, volunteer work parties have continued to sculpt trails and clear barberry. Volunteers and staff are building kiosks and designing signs. Chainsaw crews clear the trails. Executive Director, Mike Hveem, pushed the "Submit" key on the application for reaccreditation by the Land Trust Alliance. Families with children and dogs, along with more wizened ones, visited Trust properties, and many left enthusiastic messages on social media. Further opportunities for conservation have been pursued, and boundary and legal work contribute to the conservation effort. The list goes on and on.

*Continued on page 5*

## THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY SPONSORS



StanleyBlack&Decker







## MONSOON SEASON (CONTINUED)

Trees continue to fall and need to be chain-sawed and removed. Parts of some trails themselves will have to be relocated, due to new water hazards or sand and mud accumulation. Anyone engaged in the “Walk to Water” Challenge knows that clues placed in some locations floated away. A more adventurous game than we planned! Is anyone still unaccounted for?

Managing and repairing the damage means time spent away from priorities and progress for Andy Woodcock, Volunteer Coordinator, and Ada Snodgrass, Stewardship Coordinator. A log jam at the Fenton River bridge might have threatened the Grist Mill and they “stepped in” – yes, right in. Complex trail issues grew more complex at Potter’s Meadow and the Schmid Preserve. More member volunteering (and donations) would be doubly valuable to Joshua’s Trust during this fall and winter season. Like somebody once said, “We’re not out of the woods yet.”

## HIKING CONVERTS

*by Kailyn Murphy*

When COVID forced six-year old Aine and four-year old Greta to do school remotely, they started going to their grandma, Donna’s, house during the day. Donna, a frequent volunteer and hiker of Joshua’s Trust properties, started taking them on hikes during their lunch time.

Their first hike was Knowlton Hill and as Aine put it, “We got a little cranky.” Then, Donna mentioned the Passport Challenge to them. Suddenly, they had a purpose! The thought of a hat and a goal made it exciting for them. For each hike they would have a nickname. Lof Woodlands was dubbed the “crystal hike” because there were so much ice and Owen’s Mere was nicknamed “shorty pants.” Aine fondly remembers finding a rock that was the perfect shape to paint an owl face on.



**Aine and Greta wearing their hard-earned JT hats.**

Now, a 2.5 mile hike in New Hampshire is no problem for these girls! When asked why they like to hike, Aine says, “It’s fun and I get to find new things. There is a lot of nature around and it feels nice to be in nature. I get lots of ideas for projects when I’m on hikes.” And when I wondered if they would keep hiking with their grandma, the answer was a resounding YES!!!



**Church Farm Bridge**  
**Photo credit: Michael Hveem**

# JOSHUA'S TRUST NEWS

## EASTCONN SIGNS UP FOR MORE THAN JUST CARPENTRY...

by Ada Snodgrass

If you start to see new Joshua's Trust kiosks, they were probably made with the help of EastConn employees! The Connecticut Youth Employment and Training Program is annual employment opportunity, where young people from 14 to 24 are trained in the skills that employers are looking for. Despite the humidity, participants worked diligently to build signs, kiosks, and hiking trails. While only a few of the young men had experience with carpentry, the group was able to put together a dozen new kiosks in only a matter of weeks. Once those were complete they spent the last 2 weeks building two brand new trails.



**EASTCONN Connecticut Youth Employment and Training is coordinated through the Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board.**

The blue-blazed 1.1 mile "Ridge" trail at Chenes-Roches, has been in the works since last fall. After you reach the end of the third boardwalk on yellow trail, the new path takes a sharp right before climbing to the ridge. The left side of the loop features vistas of the preserve that will become even more beautiful this Fall. The Willimantic River can be seen from the right side below the ridge.

Their final project was the double loop trail at the new Madeline Reagan Preserve in Tolland. The historic Connecticut Path needed minimal work, but the loops needed an extensive amount of work. Now visitors are able to enjoy the newest Joshua's Trust property, including the undulated trail and views of a glacial esker.

We can't thank this group enough for all of the hard work they put in this Summer. To the crew - I hope you are filled with pride whenever you visit these trails.

Readers, tag @JoshuasTrust in your photos when you check them out!

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

*Follow us on social media!*



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







## GRATITUDE (CONTINUED)

We are far too resilient to give in to uncomfortable circumstances. I couldn't be more proud of staff and volunteers who have soldiered through. The role that the trust plays, and the role that you play with the trust, are too important to take a break when the going gets tough.

When land is to be conserved, when biodiversity and wildlife corridors are at stake, and when the community is to be served, your spirits are up to the task. Take a look at some of the activities you may have pursued in September alone: trail crews at Regan, Chenes Roche and Mt. Hope Wildlife Sanctuary, a leisurely walk with a Parent and Caregiver Walking Group, a naturalists' field trip to observe life in a stream, stargazing at Knowlton Hill, and a bonfire to celebrate the change of seasons. Your agenda shows no sign of weary resignation. I am grateful to you for your continuing support and to Joshua's Trust for providing continuing opportunities to serve and to learn.

Let me close with a tip that has been a life saver for me: the ever-fashionable bug hat. It raises the comfort level of excursions into the woods, and, of course, is a chic addition to anyone's wardrobe. In hoc petaso vinces.

## WHAT'S THE BUZZ ON BEEKEEPING?

*by Evan Fulton*

On October 6th at 7:00 pm, spend some time with me in a webinar, as I go over what it's like to own bees as well as a little history about beekeeping and information about general bee husbandry. I've only been keeping bees for a few years, so I have a lot to learn myself but have gained a lot of insight into what it's like to keep these amazing insects. While providing honey is one benefit, local beekeeping is a very important skill that is essential to the ecosystem.

While this isn't a class about beekeeping (I would recommend taking bee school), I'll go over the basics of what the local beekeeper's life looks like, season to season. The whole family can learn from this instructional webinar and will provide some insight into the basics of what to do if you're even the slightest bit interested in beekeeping. (See page 7 for full details on how to sign up!)



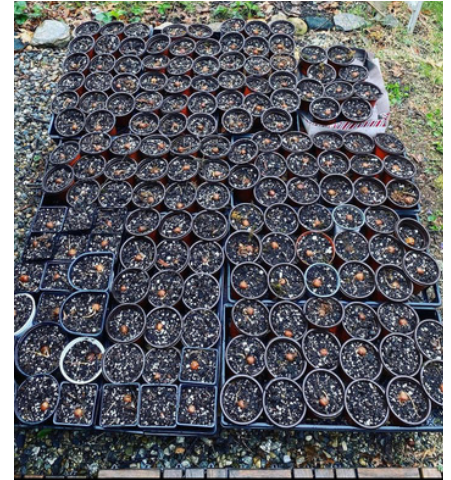
# JOSHUA'S TRUST NEWS

## AN IDEA SPROUTED

by Casey Walsh

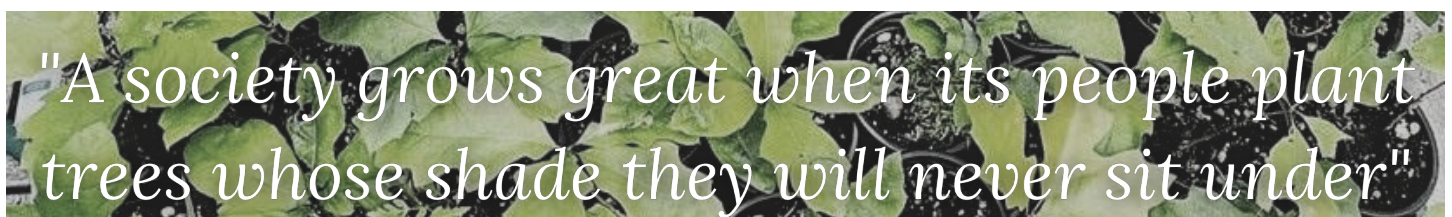
There is just something amazing about nature that is constantly drawing me to it (especially on rainy days) that can't really be put into words, maybe it's the fresh air, the smell of leaves composting into soil or just the sound of birds chirping in the trees, but whatever it is puts me at ease and makes me feel small.

When I'm not out hiking, I'm typically working with trees and plants as I love to watch things grow and go from a seed to a living thriving being of sorts, and that hobby led me to taking on a project this past fall. I first began hiking the Two Sisters trail several years ago and was really blown away by the devastation the gypsy moths had done to the property a few years back and found myself wanting to do something about it. I have many red and white oak trees on my property in Windham and sugar maples at my dad's house in Lebanon, so I began collecting the acorns from the oaks and the "helicopter" seeds from the maples and stratified them in the fridge in my garage over the winter. I organized them based on the species with help from a New England tree field guide to identify the type of acorns/seeds and simply placed them in plastic bags mixed with wet moss or sawdust to endure the winter. To 'stratify' an acorn or seed is to simulate natural conditions that the seeds must experience before germination can occur. This process is necessary because many seed species have a dormancy phase and will not sprout until that dormancy is broken.



Once spring came, I used the soil from my composting unit to plant the newly sprouted acorns and seedlings into pots and from there (besides watering them every so often) just let Mother Nature take over. After a few months of growing, I contacted Joshua's Trust over social media and told them about my idea for replanting at Two Sisters and we then made a plan to plant them this summer. With the help of several volunteers - from friends of mine to avid hikers of the trail, we were able to plant 150+ saplings along the preserve in the open areas that were once filled with mature trees. These saplings will go on to sequester carbon from the atmosphere, supply oxygen back into it, and will soon provide habitats for animals and plants, including ferns, mosses, lichens, and fungi - all of which play important roles in ecosystems by providing nutrients for a variety of organisms and animals, recycling/filtering water and capturing pollutants.

If you have any interest in doing this on your own and want some tips or guidance, feel free to reach out to Joshua's Trust and they can refer you to my email. If you have an idea for your local preserve run it by them, whether it's Joshua's Trust or some other land trust, everything we can do to help conserve and preserve and regrow our forests matters!





## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Everything about Beekeeping Webinar**

October 6, 7:00 PM

Register at

[joshuastrust.org/beekeeping](https://joshuastrust.org/beekeeping)

### **Poetry at Mason's Mill**

October 16, 9:30 AM - 12:00 PM

[joshuastrust.org/poetry](https://joshuastrust.org/poetry)

### **Cider Pressing**

October 16, 2:00-4:00 PM

Atwood Farm

### **Walk Church Farm**

October 23, 10:00 AM

Register at

[joshuastrust.org/church-walk](https://joshuastrust.org/church-walk)

### **Forest's Sleep**

November 13, 10:00 AM

Register at

[joshuastrust.org/tobiassen-walk](https://joshuastrust.org/tobiassen-walk)

### **After Thanksgiving Walk**

November 27, 10:00 AM

Register at [joshuastrust.org/utley-walk](https://joshuastrust.org/utley-walk)

## UPCOMING TRAIL CREWS

### **Potter Meadow**

October 2, 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

Commerce Road, Columbia

### **Bernard Church Woods**

October 9, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Bujak Road, Chaplin

### **Church Farm**

October 16, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Varga Road, Ashford

### **Josias Byles**

October 23, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Route 44, Ashford

### **Iron Mine Valley**

October 30, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Iron Mine Lane, Ashford

### **Pigeon Swamp**

November 6, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Pigeon Swamp Road, Lebanon

### **Whetten Woods**

November 13, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Hanks Hill Road, Mansfield

Visit [joshuastrust.org/events](https://joshuastrust.org/events) for more information about these events and more!



JOSHUA'S TRACT  
CONSERVATION AND HISTORIC TRUST, INC.  
**P.O. BOX 4**  
**MANSFIELD CENTER, CT 06250**

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# JOIN THE 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!