



TOWER HILL EASEMENT: JOSHUA'S TRUST'S LATEST CONSERVATION SUCCESS

by Warren Church

On November 19, 2020 in a Government Office in Paris France, Antoinette Monnier signed a 34-page conservation easement deed which permanently preserves over 230 acres of mainly forested land off of Tower Hill Road in Chaplin. Ms. Monnier, who resides in France, is a descendant of a family that resided on the property during much of the 19th and 20th centuries.

This is a major conservation success for the Trust because of the property's strategic location. It abuts the Natchaug State Forest and Agnes' Pasture (Trust property) and is part of a 2,000 acre north/south forested habitat corridor that the Trust has targeted in its strategic acquisition plan. The property also contains an historic house built in the 18th century and over 20 acres of

prime farmland, as well as a matrix of magnificent stonewalls. The protected land is situated on both sides of Tower Hill Road (over 2000 feet of frontage). It is bordered to the west by Stonehouse Brook with several historic mill sites.

Putting a conservation easement on the property is only the first step in the preservation of this property. Ms. Monnier's next step would be to donate the property to Joshua's Trust. If the Trust becomes the owner, it plans to sub-divide and sell an approximately 5 acre lot including the house in accordance with the conditions of the easement. The proceeds of this sale will help with the future stewardship of the property.

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JOSHUA'S TRUST NEWS

JOSHUA'S TRUST

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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.

FINAL WORDS

by Paul Pribula

This will be my last quarterly newsletter column as Joshua's Trust board president, and I would like to thank everyone for the privilege. The last decade of my professional career was centered on IT project management, and as such my role was facilitator of the work of others. The joke was that as a project manager, I didn't have to know anything, and I didn't do any of the real work. At least I thought it was supposed to be a joke. Regardless, my role here, too, has been to do my best to facilitate the hard work of others who know more than I do.

I've done my best to advance the hard work that is required to maintain the legacy of Joshua's Trust, and to promote the change that was already in play well before I arrived. This evolution will need to continue if Joshua's Trust is going to be able to develop and grow. I realize that the need for an organization to grow is a cliché in business, but for Joshua's Trust to keep to its mission of conserving land and protecting the rural character of our region, we will need to grow and increase our capacity to conserve and protect more land.

Over the last year, more and more businesses have transitioned to working remotely.

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THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY SPONSORS





STEWARDSHIP IN 2021: PLANNING FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

by Ada Snodgrass

You might think that we at Joshua's Trust hibernate during the cold months, but it is just as busy as the other seasons! I start the next year's planning process in fall after the annual stewardship reports are turned in. These are reports from our stewardship volunteers that describe how often the property is visited by the public, the condition of the trails, and the overall health of the forests and wetlands. Then, I make a list of what needs to be done on each property, and any issues that need to be resolved. January is spent following up with problems that have been reported, setting forest management goals, and making the trail crew schedule in collaboration with Andy, our wonderful Volunteer Coordinator.

Since the start of the pandemic, we have been walking our trails to see if any can be extended, connected with other nearby trails, or re-routed to work better with the contours of the land. Several drafts of the trails we want to improve are drawn up until we know we have made the best design. We walk the new possible routes with the stewardship volunteers to get their feedback as well.



Projects like this and more are written into the trail crew schedule, so we have a goal in mind for each one. Besides adding trails, we are working on improving directional signage, designing new kiosks, planning for Walktober, and of course, are always on the lookout for beautiful parcels of land to protect. If you would like to be a part of these projects and lots more, send me an email at ada.snodgrass@joshuastrust.org. Hope to hear from you soon!



JOSHUA'S TRUST NEWS

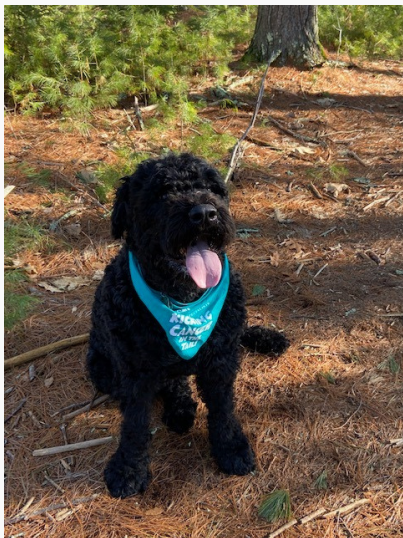
JOSHUA'S TRUST'S NEWEST MEMBER

Our development administrator, Kailyn Murphy, and her husband Dan welcomed their first son, David Jeremiah Murphy into the world in late February/early March. (We are still awaiting his arrival at the writing of this newsletter.) We are wishing them the best as they adjust to being new parents. We hope to get David out on the trails wielding a set of loppers as soon as he's walking! In the meantime, you may notice that our usual communication avenues may look a little different over the next few months while Kailyn recovers and spends time with her little one. Be patient, and rest assured that when she returns in June all will be back to normal!



GIMLI'S FIGHT

by Kailyn Murphy



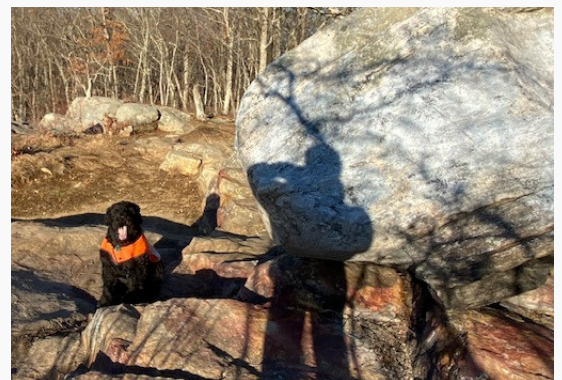
Shortly after COVID began, Tracey lost her mother to lymphoma. Not more than a month later she received the disheartening news that her dog, Gimli, had also been diagnosed with lymphoma. Since Gimli was not even five years old yet, Tracey and her husband decided to start him on chemo treatments. Tracey vowed to take Gimli for a ride and walk every day that he felt well enough to do it. The two began to explore new trails, and Joshua's Trust trails were among the top on their list. Tracey describes the trails as a "life save" for her and Gimli. As a result, Tracey wanted to support Joshua's Trust and chose to do so through her company's matching gift program. She was able to double her impact by giving through her company! Now she and her buddy, Gimli, can continue to enjoy well-maintained trails as Gimli kicks cancer in the tail! If you enjoy Joshua's Trust's trails, we would encourage you to consider giving through your company's matching gift program.

WANT TO SEE MORE OF JOSHUA'S TRUST?

Follow us on social media!



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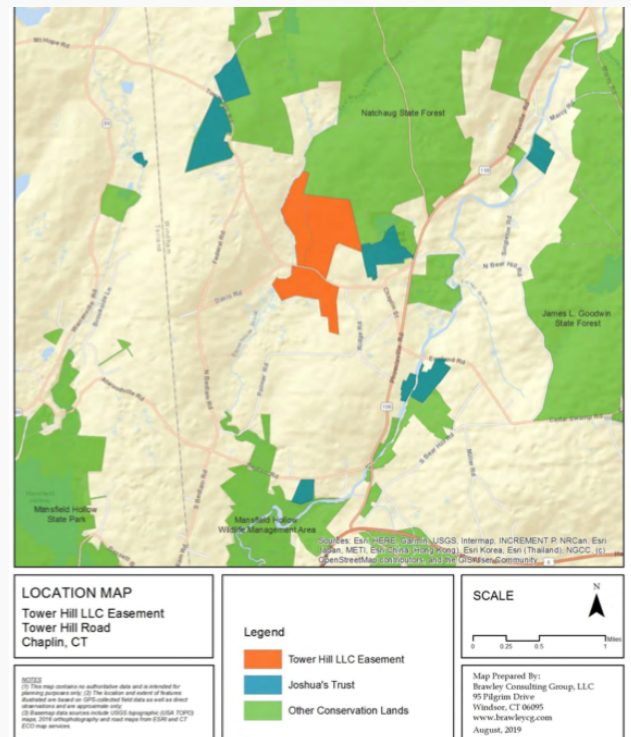
Gimli at Wolf Rock



TOWER HILL EASEMENT (CONTINUED)

The property has remained in the same family ownership for several centuries although the names have changed over time because of widows remarrying. In its early history it was owned by the Rosses who were very prominent residents in Chaplin. William Ross II left money in his will for Chaplin's first library. His widow Emily was the mother of Walter Clark the first Governor of Alaska. Whenever he came to Chaplin to visit his mother, it would create a splash in the local press. Emily later married Walter Scott Vail whose uncle was Theodore Vail the founder and long time president of AT&T.

We owe a special gratitude to Ms. Monnier and her family for this magnanimous donation.



FINAL WORDS (CONTINUED)

This has led to a migration away from urban areas and towards rural areas. This fact is evident in property value trends. Residential development will happen in our region and it would be naïve and wrong to think that development can be stopped. Instead, our goal should be to preserve as much of the high conservation value land that we can before it's gone, and that will require increased capacity. Capacity means increasing our staff's roles to ensure that we protect and maintain our properties to the highest standards. Capacity means more volunteers to assist our staff in the numerous projects that are going on at any given time. Capacity means more members and supporters ensuring that we have the funds to keep up our operations. All of which, of course, brings me to my "ask." If you don't already, volunteer with us. To our current volunteers, thank you and keep up your hard work. And to everyone, invite your friends to join the work we are doing here at Joshua's Trust. The work is more important than ever.

ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, April 14th at 4:00 PM

We will be hosting our Annual Meeting online once again this year! Please register at <https://joshuastrust.org/annual-meeting-2021/>

Only members will be permitted into the Zoom room for voting purposes. If you are not a member you may view the livestream on our YouTube Channel. If you have any questions please contact the office at 860-429-9023 or administration@joshuastrust.org.

JOSHUA'S TRUST NEWS

LOOKING FORWARD

by Robert Beach

The year 2020 was, by all standards, a tough year. Face-to-face events evaporated. We zoomed our meetings and distanced our greetings. Sometimes we felt the social fabric was stretched beyond recognition. But the work of Joshua's Trust continued: despite adversity, we managed, as always, to preserve the land and heritage of northeastern Connecticut.

In the coming year, we will emerge stronger and energized to work on several initiatives. We are concentrating on the preservation of unfragmented forests in order to promote resilience and biodiversity. We are identifying prime areas for conservation and are finding ways to work proactively with landowners and other organizations. Preserving forest land also protects watershed areas from erosion and pollution. In these efforts, we look forward to coordinating our efforts with the larger land trust community.



We also continue to encourage the enjoyment of open space by maintaining and improving our parcels that accommodate public recreation and appreciation of nature. We construct trails, kiosks, bridges, boardwalks, and parking areas and spend time and resources clearing areas of fallen trees and, alas, trash. We are working with educational institutions and developing our own programs to provide children with nurturing experiences in the outdoors.

We are in the process of restoring the buildings at Atwood Farm and the Grist Mill. The investments incurred now will encourage appreciation of our heritage into the future. A number of our properties are home to identifiable remnants of mills and farms.

We are imagining ways to encourage underserved communities to enjoy beneficial natural experiences and to feel comfortable in, and more knowledgeable about, the great outdoors.

To effect this vision, we will rely on the magnificent contributions of our staff and our ever-reliable and growing cadre of volunteers. Each of us has the opportunity to contribute to the enterprise and to experience the fellowship and joy of the Trust.

What is a Joshua's Trust Member?

A member of Joshua's Trust is anyone who has donated in the past 12 months. Members are eligible to vote in our annual meeting. Not sure when you last gave? Feel free to ask!



TRIBUTE TO TONY (1935-2021)

by Allison Burchell-Robinson

Tony Holt entered the world as Hamilton Bowen Holt II but he moved through life as Tony. He was a true gentleman with a positive outlook, a sly sense of humor, and imbued with dignity and kindness. Tony was passionate about many things including skiing, golf, music, and red wine, but he was most passionate about his family. He and his wife, Kay, were a team for 61 years.

Tony believed in community service and made his mark in many areas. He served as President of the Board at Day Kimball and Windham Hospitals, Board Chair of the Mansfield Center Historic District Commission and Treasurer of Joshua's Trust.

Tony served as Treasurer of this land trust for many years. In that capacity, he led the Finance Committee and helped move their assets from CD's and a savings account into an investment firm that resulted in major growth of the Trust's finances. Tony was meticulous in preparing the weekly deposits checking them once, then checking them twice to ensure accuracy and full and complete details.

Tony handled all the insurance requirements for Joshua's Trust meeting every year with the insurers to ascertain that all areas had sufficient coverage. He also monitored, completed and submitted the various reports required by the 14 towns encompassed by the Trust.

He rarely missed a Board meeting, distributing financial reports in advance to give the Board an opportunity to review and ask questions. Once when a Board member grumbled that his reports contained far more information than the member thought necessary, Tony calmly replied, "You can never have too much information about the finances of the organization you serve." In Tony's lexicon, point made and served.

Everyone at the Trust knew of Tony's enthusiasm for golf and skiing, but they probably did not know that Tony included an abolitionist in his family tree and a connection to Roseland Cottage in Woodstock. His grandfather, for whom he was named, was a founding member of the NAACP in 1909, an attendee at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, and the President of Rollins College from 1925-1949.

Tony did not fall far from that tree. He lived his life enjoying his family, friends, his company, the Fitch House B & B, and his many passions. He also valued community service as evidenced by his many contributions in that area. Joshua's Trust was fortunate to have his steady hand on the helm. Thanks, Tony!



**Tony and Kay Holt with
former Trust President,
Doug Hughes.**

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UPCOMING EVENTS

On the Lookout for Spring and Its Flowers

April 11th at 2:00 PM

Knowlton Hill Preserve with Debra Hultgren and Mona Anderson

On the Lookout for Lichens

May 8th at 10:00 AM

Wolf Rock with Zach Muscavitch

Hike the Connecticut Path

June 5th at 10:00 AM

Regan Preserve with expert Tim Gottier

Geology and Boards

June 12th at 10:00 AM

Bradley-Buchanan with the stewards

Atwood Open House

June 12th from 12:00-4:00 PM

Self-guided tours

Space is limited to 10 people, please register online. Registration links and additional information can be found at joshuastrust.org/events.