

# 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)

## GOING FOR THE BIG LEAGUES

by Kailyn Murphy

Our newest property, Schmid Overlook, is not just a beautiful property along the Willimantic River, it actually holds a little bit of family history for our board member and stewardship chair, Ann Dunnack and her husband, Scott. The Dunnack family homestead, situated on Route 32 in Mansfield, was lovingly nicknamed "The Ridges." The family consisted of 11 children, three girls and eight boys. The boys loved to play outside and in particular they loved to play baseball, but being just one boy short of a team they recruited a neighbor whom they called "Dope" to join them. These boys played baseball wherever they could. Willimantic, Windham High School, and Twilight Leagues. Their team was of course called "The Ridges."

The boys grew up but kept playing baseball and after World War II, four of the brothers were drafted to play AAA ball. Eventually, all the brothers came back home to the area and started to play again but needed a field. The Coutu family lived across the street and owned what is now Schmid Overlook. They allowed the brothers to build themselves a baseball diamond, which the Dunnack brothers built with nothing but muscle and a desire to play ball. Ann Dunnack's husband, Scott, remembers sitting on the sand dunes with his cousins watching his dad and uncles play.



**Scott with his father, Jerry.**

Today, the field is gone, but the property will become a place of community activity once again. Joshua's Trust has plans to install a loop trail around the property, complete with a bird blind for birders and a bench for those who like to simply sit and enjoy nature. Additionally, there will be a place to drop in kayaks and canoes and the property will be open for fishing. The Trust is excited to create a place where families can make their own memories just as the Dunnacks did decades ago.



**Pictured above: Four of the Dunnack boys from a newspaper clipping. Pictured at left: The current view of the river from Schmid Overlook.**

# 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.

## THANKFUL THOUGHTS

*by Paul Pribula*

We're just past the Thanksgiving Day holiday, but I've found myself still thinking about a lot of the things for which I'm thankful. A fair amount has been said about those who originally founded Joshua's Trust over 50



**Invasives at Skungamaug Meadows**

years ago as well as those who dedicated their time and energy into building our conservation properties portfolio while keeping things running. And of course, there were those who gave generous donations of land, conservation restrictions, and yes, money.

However, I'd like to highlight some of the activities that I've had the privilege to observe over the past few months, that might have gone under the radar to most of our membership. The picture I've included for this season's newsletter is of a morass of invasives that had overwhelmed a dirt access road and several meadows on one of our properties. No, I'm not thankful for invasive species. I'm thankful for the hundreds of UConn students who volunteered to manually clear invasive plants at this and other properties. I'm also thankful for the low profile but major efforts by other volunteers:

- The crew that's replacing the ramp at the Gurleyville Grist Mill
- The individuals who took on the field brush cutting and tree removal projects at the Grist Mill

*Continued on page 4*

## THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY SPONSORS



**StanleyBlack&Decker**







## LEO J. AND ROSE PAGEAU TRUST GRANT

by Nancy Silander

Joshua's Trust is the recent recipient, through the Education and Outreach Committee, of a grant from the Leo J. and Rose Pageau Trust. The Pageau Trust annually funds Windham area nonprofits who have projects that specifically benefit area residents. The grant will pay for transportation and materials for students at Sweeney School in Willimantic to explore nature at a Joshua's Trust preserve. Teachers will use the Project Learning Tree curriculum as a resource in

conjunction with the science curriculum at the elementary school to create a pilot project that will broaden the children's experience outdoors. We hope to engage university students who are interested in working with children to help facilitate the program. A secondary goal is to encourage parental involvement, through specialized Trust programming such as weekend walks. If the program is successful, we plan to replicate it at other Windham area schools. Keep a look out for an update in the summer newsletter!

## HEAVEN ON EARTH

by Kathleen Alape Carpenter

Bill Alape was 6 years old when Robert "Eddie" and Anne Alape moved, along with Bob, 7, from Jersey City, NJ to Ashford, CT. They bought the now-gone chicken farm surrounded by land on Bebbington Road near the intersection of Pumpkin Hill Road. Originally city people, the country life appealed to my parents and older brothers; Billy especially loved being outdoors, roaming the adjacent fields and clearing paths through the woods. Three more siblings - Kathy, Joyce, Philip - were born and we remember "Bill's trails" with great fondness, and as our own gateway to the exploration of pristine nature. Though his working life took him to many places around the globe, Billy Alape was happiest outdoors in his woods. When he returned to Ashford and acquired the house on James Road, he reveled in owning his own expansive tract of land. The Bill Alape Gateway that now belongs to Joshua's Trust is a fitting memorial to Bill's love of the outdoors and his desire to protect and preserve natural resources for future generations. I especially like the thought of school buses full of children passing the gateway sign every day and perhaps being inspired by Bill Alape to get outdoors to explore the woods and fields! Bill used to say "On earth there is no heaven, but there are pieces of it." And now, the Bill Alape Gateway will remain a piece of heaven on earth, *forever*.

***Kathleen with the sign  
erected on Bill's  
birthday.***



# JOSHUA'S TRUST NEWS



Pictured above: The trailer that you all made possible through your immense generosity has been put to good use! Here it was used to haul out brush from Hubbard Sanctuary. Pictured on right: Black Sheep Post and Beam have been working to repair and restore a section of the roof at Atwood Farm.



## THANKFUL THOUGHTS (CONTINUED)

- The individuals who cleared trees at Wolf Rock to restore the scenic view
- All of the stewards who have completed their steward's annual report form

I understand that the last one might seem trivial, but I know I do not enjoy paperwork, so I appreciate those who make it possible for us to maintain our land trust credibility and accreditation.

So, for all of the above, I'm thankful, and I hope that all of those involved in those efforts know they're appreciated.



The annual Cider Press was a huge success this year! Over 70 people stopped by and visited to make cider the old-fashioned way. We were thrilled to see so many new faces.

*...preserving land in perpetuity is important, because once developed, the value of the land as an open space dissipates, wildlife suffers, and our memory fades. Supporting Joshua's Trust was long overdue.* - **PETER BERRIS, DONOR**

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

*Follow us on social media!*



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# EXPLORING JOSHUA'S TRUST

by Ada Snodgrass

Greetings Readers!

My name is Ada Snodgrass: avid reader, hiker, coffee drinker, and Stewardship Coordinator at Joshua's Trust. During my first six weeks at Joshua's Trust I was given the task of walking all of our beautiful trails. During this time, I was delighted to come across some of the most beautiful views I've ever seen, sometimes only minutes from my own backyard! This is the first in a series for the newsletter, in which I hope to inspire you to discover new Joshua's Trust properties.



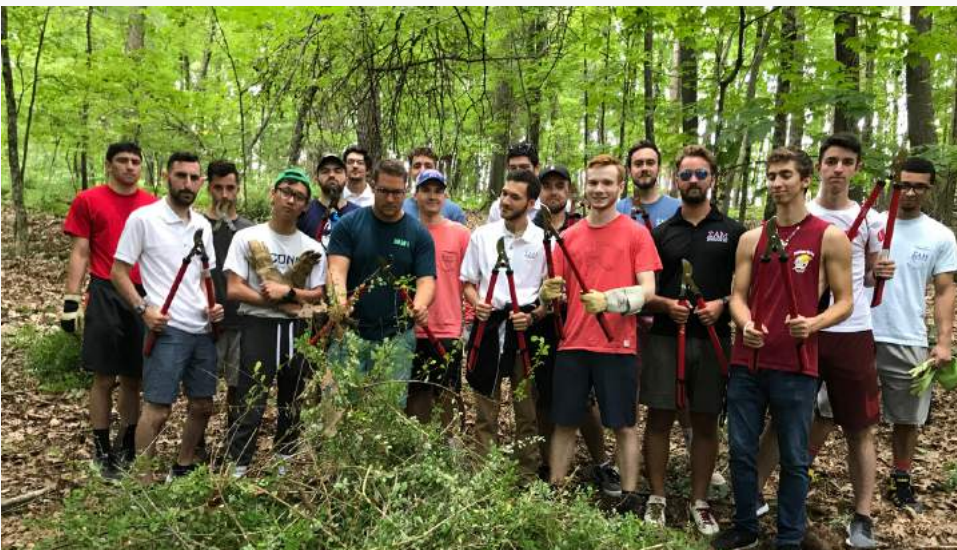
Joshua's Trust has something for everyone. Whether you're looking to take a stroll with your loved one after dinner, or challenge yourself to a strenuous hike, there is a trail for you. I'll be your guide to finding just the right property. Though many of our properties offer a variety of scenic vistas, my personal favorites almost always include a water feature. If you prefer heights, there are plenty of properties to point you to. Some of our trails begin in residential areas, where you may feel at first you are in someone's backyard but don't let that dissuade you.

For example, Iron Mine Valley is tucked between private properties on Sand Hill Road in Ashford, but once you walk down the narrow beginning of the trail, you turn to see a vast forest ahead of you. Along the trail you can see where bog iron was mined from the wetlands during the Revolutionary War. White tail deer gallop through the forest until the loop trail leads you across wetlands and the Mount Hope River. The river ripples softly as birds, beavers and otters prepare for the season ahead. This is just one of many hidden gems the Trust has to offer. I hope through this series you find yourself wanting to uncover many more.





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## IMAGES FROM FALL TRAIL CREWS

Here are a few statistics about this fall's crews:

**262 Volunteers**

**17 Work Days**

**419 Hours of Dedication**





# TRAIL CREW VOLUNTEERS

by Andy Woodcock

When your obligation is also your joy, you might just be a member of a Joshua's Trust trail crew. We were fortunate this fall to blaze a new trail, clear seven trails, build two bridges, add a non-skid surface to a boardwalk, plant erosion preventive bushes on a slope, and attack some off-trail invasive species.

To call this productive would be telling half the story. We had fun – the kind when the time flies and the project slips into place. So does the laughter. Trail crews are a special breed of JT volunteers – they're tangibly part of something larger than themselves and yet the camaraderie in the moment is unbeatable. It's almost a shame to remind the crew members that we're preparing the property for the hikers coming tomorrow, later in the week, 40 years from now and in perpetuity.



JT is seeing a larger number of volunteers from a wider range of our 14-town community. But we are always looking for more people, of all ages, who want to explore and engage with familiar and new properties. The projects generally don't require experience, and yet people who repeatedly join projects gain confidence and skills.

We also have projects for people who bring skills to the sites – carpentry, design, teaching, group dynamics, are all skills needed for projects anticipated for 2020. Additionally, we are in search of new Regional Coordinators, who oversee and assist our stewards in maintaining our properties.

Volunteering is easy. And we're making it easier. In January, I'll post a calendar on our website of trail crews through May; in June, a summer calendar is planned and in late August, the autumn calendar will be posted. You can contact me anytime at [andy.woodcock@joshuastrust.org](mailto:andy.woodcock@joshuastrust.org) with questions, comments or to discuss volunteer opportunities.

## THANKS TO ALL OUR DONORS!

So many of you have not only given once but several times this year. We truly cannot continue in our mission without your generosity. So we thank you! We look forward to serving the community in new ways in 2020 thanks to your generosity.

## REMEMBER

There are many ways to give to Joshua's Trust! We accept gifts of money, land, stock, IRA distributions, volunteer hours and more. If you would like to discuss any of these opportunities with us, please email [administration@joshuastrust.org](mailto:administration@joshuastrust.org) or call (860) 429-9023.

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## JOSHUA'S TRUST UPCOMING EVENTS

### Winter Seminar Series Climate Change Action

*Learn what you can do locally to help address climate change.*



*Dr. Anji Seth*  
**January 12**



*Christine Palm*  
**February 9**



*Beth Bernard*  
**March 8**

For the full details of each event in our seminar series along with biographies of our presenters, visit [joshuastrust.org/events](http://joshuastrust.org/events). All events will be held in the Biophysics auditorium on the UConn-Storrs campus at 2 pm.