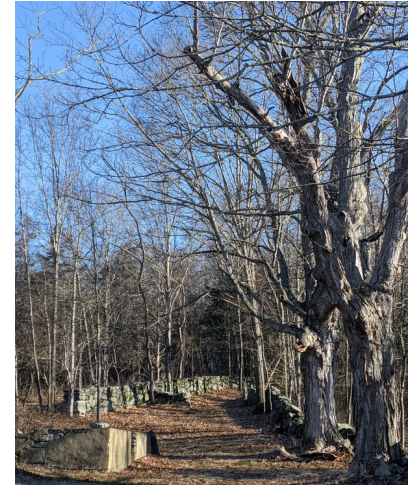




TOWER HILL PRESERVE - THE GRAND UNVEILING

by John Hankins, Vice President

Joshua's Trust will be unveiling its latest land acquisition on May 20 when we host an open house at the Tower Hill Preserve in Chaplin (rain date May 21). This 236-acre property came to Joshua's Trust as a gift from the Alexander Family Trust in 2021 and constitutes the largest single gift of land to the Trust in its 57-year history. The property, together with the newly acquired 178-acre Harvey property on North Bedlam Road in Chaplin, represents major milestones in our goal to protect an unfragmented wildlife corridor along Stonehouse Brook between the federally-owned Mansfield Hollow State Park to the south and the state-owned Natchaug Forest to the north.



The Tower Hill Preserve checks all the boxes – historical foundations, a former mill site, ecologically-critical wetlands, vernal pools, productive agricultural soils, and riparian habitat along Stonehouse Brook. The preserve is now available for access to the public via a 1.5-mile yellow-blazed trail with a route that takes advantage of historic forest roads which avoid the wetter, more ecologically-sensitive areas of the property.



The moment you park your car at the entrance to the property on Tower Hill Road you realize there's something special here. Foundations and stone gates with their original iron hardware adorn the front area inviting visitors to speculate as to the original operation of the homestead. The tightly-fitted stone walls topped by enormous rectangular capstones are engineering marvels that leave you wondering about the mechanical ingenuity of the early inhabitants. These curving walls define a lane that draws you into the property, where after a short walk you come to a forested cross-roads where a myriad of well-preserved stone walls radiate outwards. A few hundred feet further into the forest you encounter a recently toppled six-foot diameter oak tree that once stood over open fields.

While it is clear that farming occurred on this property for many years, the specifics of the operations remain largely unknown. A large foundation exists near the entrance of the property where the "Ross House" originally stood. The land and the house on the property were handed down over the generations between the Ross family. The first recorded transactions in the property deeds were from Ebenezer Ross to his son William in 1848 and then to William Ross II in 1888. William Ross II was a Selectman in Chaplin.

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JOSHUA'S TRUST NEWS

JOSHUA'S TRUST

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Stewardship Coordinator: Ada Snodgrass

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Development & Communications Manager:

Michelle Poudrette

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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.

TIME MARCHES ON

by Rob Beach, President

I will be leaving office in the spring, at the conclusion of my current term. My emotions are mixed. I have very much enjoyed personal relationships, both within and external to the organization, but I'm also looking forward to other interests in life. In a bout of pre-nostalgia, I look back through a mostly rosy lens.



When I became president in May, 2021, we were in the early stages of the second year of Covid. (Remember "two weeks to flatten the curve?"). We had mostly mastered the Zoom meeting ("You're on mute") and were moving toward "hybrid," but public events were severely limited. We still had the thermometer available at the door. Many were reluctant to spend time in person with anyone.

In retrospect, however, the great outdoors gained new lustre. We found more and more people visiting our preserves; most of them, from the feedback we received, had positive experiences.

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THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS



JOSHUA'S TRUST NEWS

A CONSERVATION DREAM COME TRUE

by Michelle Poudrette

I'm sure you have heard the saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words." I chose to share this photo of myself because almost everything you need to know about me can be summed up by this one candid, taken by a friend while I was studying lichens on the forest floor. For as long as I can remember, the forests of Northeastern CT have been both my refuge and my inspiration.



So, who am I? In short, I am the new Development and Communications Manager here at Joshua's Trust. The long story involves several years in Austin, TX, a career in education, and a life-long passion for the protection of native plants in their natural habitats. To that end, I have volunteered hundreds of hours, collectively, with the Native Plant Trust, the Texas and James L. Goodwin Master Naturalist programs, the Eastford Conservation Commission and other environmentally-focused organizations. To say that I am thrilled to join this enthusiastic and dedicated team is an understatement. It has long been my dream to effect meaningful change in the Quiet Corner, to leave these forests better than I found them, and to help protect them so that future generations have opportunities to grow with and care for our wild spaces.

It has been almost two months since I joined the Joshua's Trust team and I am feeling more hopeful and more inspired than ever. To be amongst so many like-minded individuals, who give time, money, and heart to protect this land is an immense privilege. I am grateful for each and every one of you. If you happen to be out and about on one of our many trails and see a human lying on the forest floor trying to take close-ups of tiny plants, don't worry. It's probably just me, living the dream. Come join me.

RMD'S IN BRIEF

Did you know that once you reach age 73, the IRS requires you to withdraw a certain amount of money from your IRA and workplace retirement accounts each year? This is called a required minimum distribution (RMD). According to the new SECURE 2.0 Act of 2022, however, you may be able to lower your taxable income with a qualified charitable distribution (QCD). When a QCD is made to an eligible, 501 (c)(3)

organization, the charitable contribution made from your IRA or other accounts can be counted toward satisfying your RMD for the year. The QCD is excluded from your taxable income.

Many limitations apply. Please speak with your financial or tax advisor regarding RMDs, QCDs, and other retirement account withdrawal strategies.

WANT TO SEE MORE OF JOSHUA'S TRUST?

Follow us on social media!



@joshuastrust @joshuas_trust @JoshuasTrust_ joshuastrust.org



MUSEUM MAKEOVER GRANT AWARDED FOR GRIST MILL

by Ann Dunnack

Congratulations are in order for Joshua's Trust and the dedicated volunteers of the Gurleyville Grist Mill Committee! We have been awarded a Museum Makeover Grant to improve the experience of visitors to our unique historic site at the Grist Mill and Miller's Cottage campus.

Museum Makeover is designed to improve the visitor experience at cultural heritage organizations throughout Connecticut. Successful applicants receive two free site visits from a team of traveling museum curators who will examine the exhibit and develop a plan to improve the area and elevate the visitor experience. Members of these cultural heritage organizations will be actively involved in all phases of Museum Makeover and will work closely with the Traveling Curators to implement the recommendations. Each participating institution will also receive up to \$3,000 to help cover the costs of upgrading the exhibition.

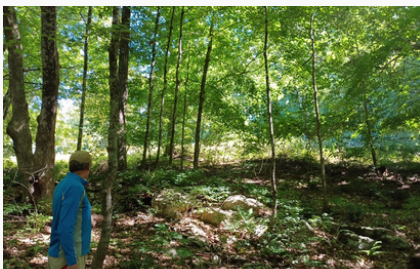


With the grant funding and Traveling Curator advice, Joshua's Trust intends to develop and install external interpretive signage. Because the Grist Mill is staffed by volunteers, and open seasonally, this signage will be especially important to improve the experience of visitors who visit at times when the Gurleyville Grist Mill is not open for tours.

Museum Makeover is a program of Conservation ConneCTion and is supported through a partnership with the Connecticut League of History Organizations and funded by a grant from the CT Cultural Fund. The CT Cultural Fund is administered by CT Humanities, with funding provided by the Connecticut State Department of Economic and Community Development/Connecticut Office of the Arts from the Connecticut State Legislature.

THE PINKHAMS REMEMBERED

by Allison Burchell-Robinson



Arthur, better known as "Pink," and Margaret Pinkham brought their energy, enthusiasm and joy of life to Joshua's Trust as they did to all aspects of their life. Pink, serving as a Trustee, brought his financial acumen and changed the Trust's investment strategy resulting in a solid and strong portfolio. Margaret served on the Acquisition Committee and brought her knowledge of potential properties, clearly recognizing the potential while acknowledging the pitfalls.

They could usually be found at all the Board meetings ready to answer questions or offer an opinion if asked. Their passion for their land and their desire to preserve it led to the gift of their property to the Trust.

Become a Member

Membership is given for one year to anyone who gives at least one dollar to Joshua's Trust. Our members are critical to the mission of Joshua's Trust and have the important role of voting on new Trustees and other issues at our annual meeting every April. Become a member of JT today by returning the envelope in this newsletter.



TIME MARCHES ON (CONTINUED)

In a perhaps ironic way, what was difficult for the organization also benefited the organization. Waves of newcomers volunteered for outdoor activities, including families who were looking for ways to spend time together.

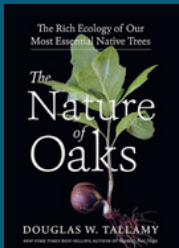
The organization has grown stronger. We added several significant properties to the ledger of protected land: Tower Hill and the Harvey parcels in Chaplin, Pinkham in Ashford and Janosack in Franklin are outstanding new preserves. We added a land protection specialist to our staff, and we have coordinated with school districts, municipalities and conservation commissions. Our board has added strong voices with varied backgrounds. And, in the midst of the hubbub, we managed to be reaccredited by the Land Trust Alliance. Thank you, Michael.

There are, of course, challenges to be met. We must always be prudent financially and continue to raise sufficient funds to carry on in perpetuity. We must properly steward the lands for which we're responsible. We must continue to work cooperatively with all people and organizations whose mission is conservation. We must reach out to encourage the advancement of the mission. And most importantly, we must continue to protect land for the benefit of future generations.

I take no personal credit for Joshua's Trust's accomplishments in the last two years; many people, including the talented staff, have done the hard work that makes progress possible. Much of the necessary work receives no notice if it is done well, and trustees, staff and volunteers - not to mention donors - have done well. I am confident that my successors will competently continue the mission, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to have contributed in a small way.

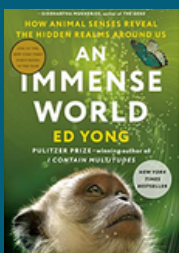
May the road rise up to meet you.

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE JT CRITTER BOOK CLUB



In January, the JT Book Critters enjoyed reading and discussing *The Nature of Oaks: The Rich Ecology of Our Most Essential Native Trees* by Douglas W. Tallamy (Timber Press, 2021).

In February, we gave our attention to *An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us* by Ed Yong (Penguin, 2022). We recommend both to JT members.



Tallamy's *Oaks* offers an ecologist's insight into the most important genus (*Quercus*) in our northeastern woodlands. Moving from October through September, he narrates the changes of the oak tree in his yard, with special attention to the comings and goings of insects and animals. At times, we felt like he was writing about our favorite JT properties.

Yong's *Immense World* was a detailed look at the perceptual universe --umwelt-- of a wide variety of animal groups. All creatures experience the environment in their own way, through sight, sound, smell, electricity, heat, and magnetism. The coyotes, humans, bats, birds, insects, squid, crayfish, spiders, whales, and mites effectively have their own worlds.

This group is co-coordinated by Kristine and Robert Thorson.

JOSHUA'S TRUST NEWS

TOWER HILL - THE GRAND UNVEILING (CONTINUED)

At the time of his death in 1908 he had an estate worth \$90,000, which likely made him the wealthiest man in town. The Ross House is believed to have been the first in Chaplin with indoor plumbing, which would have been installed in the early 1900s. Remnants of this plumbing can still be seen in the foundation hole. Ten thousand dollars of William's 1908 estate was used to build the William Ross Library, a brick building that remains on Main Street in Chaplin to this day.



I recently interviewed long-term Joshua's Trust member Warren Church about his recollections of this property as a boy growing up in Chaplin. Warren reported that in 1950, when he was an 8th grader at Chaplin Elementary School, he was selected for the lead male role in the school play. At that time, the Principal of the school was a tenant in the Ross House. Warren recalls that he attended a rehearsal for the play at the Principal's house while he was in residence. Although 73 years have passed since that fateful rehearsal, Warren still remembers the love song that he sang to his female counterpart in the play, on the front porch seen in the photo above.

Please join us on Saturday, May 20, to celebrate this momentous occasion, to share stories, and, if we're lucky, to hear Warren sing a verse or two of that storied love song.

AN INTERVIEW WITH NEW TRUSTEE, CHRIS KUEFFNER



How long have you been involved with Joshua's Trust? "Involved" with? Well, I have admired and kind of had a crush on Joshua's Trust since we moved here 30-ish years ago, but I've been interested in the land since I began exploring and admiring the Connecticut woods as a young child.

What prompted you to get involved? I didn't need prompting as much as I needed time, and retirement has helped with that. And I think active land conservation is the single most important thing we can do— for us, and for all.

What's your favorite Joshua's Trust property and why? A favorite property? This reminds me of the question, "And which of your children is your favorite?" I love the woods. I love a meadow. I love a ravine and a view, rivers, streams, and the aura of time and life I see and feel in a vernal pool, a quiet pond, or a shimmering lake.

Don't forget that you can make a difference both today and tomorrow by making estate plans that include Joshua's Trust. If you notify Joshua's Trust of your estate plans for the future, a generous donor couple will give \$750 to Joshua's Trust TODAY!

To learn more about the Bequest Challenge visit joshuastrust.org/bequest-challenge.



WITH GRATITUDE TO HENRIETTA HOUSE B&B

by Michelle Poudrette



To break bread with the women of Henrietta House is to celebrate community, to revel in the simple pleasures of a lovingly prepared meal, and to reflect upon the homestead's storied past as well as its bright future.

Although I knew Marian and Jasmine prior to my affiliation with Joshua's Trust, I was not surprised to learn that they are ardent supporters of our mission. As thoughtful guardians of a three hundred year old farm house, preserving history and protecting land is part of their ethos, our shared ethos. They steward, not only their own land, but Marian is also a steward of the Josias Byles Sanctuary that abuts their property. Jasmine has been my gracious and informative trail guide there on multiple occasions. Their love of this land and sense of responsibility to it is incontrovertible.

Last August, members of our President's Circle were invited to Henrietta House to enjoy a farm-to-table dinner prepared by Marian and Jasmine. Fine food, locally crafted artisanal vases filled with hand-picked flowers, and a tour of the home and gardens were all part of the memorable evening. We are incredibly grateful for their generosity and hospitality. Our community partnerships make us who we are. To learn more about Marian and Jasmine and the Henrietta House Bed and Breakfast, visit their website at www.historichenriettahousebnbct.com.

STAR-GAZING AND DARK SKIES (AN EXCERPT)



by Charlotte Pyle

In today's world the responses of living organisms to the night sky are being widely disrupted by light pollution of an intensity many times brighter than that of a full moon. If you are a stargazer, you may have experienced intense light pollution when city lights lit up the sky so much you could not even find the Big Dipper.

Migrating birds face much more drastic consequences when their night-time navigation is confused and they are drawn to brightly lit areas where they circle and circle around lit up tall buildings or communication towers (dying of exhaustion and falling to the ground or crashing into the structures).

Can anything be done about light pollution? Connecticut has a variety of state statutes and regulations aimed at reducing light pollution. There is currently an innovative bill in the CT state legislature to protect night-migrating birds from collisions with brightly lit buildings. To learn how you can help or to find out more information about the Lights Out Connecticut Bill (H.B. 6607), visit www.lightsoutct.org.

To read this article in its entirety, please visit our website at www.joshuastrust.org/category/blog. To learn more about the International Dark Sky Association, visit www.darksky.org.

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SPRING EVENTS

A Bird's-eye View of Wolf Rock (Drones), April 8, 9:30 a.m.

Cellphone photography rescheduled at Atwood Farm, April 15, 10 a.m.

Annual Meeting at Knowlton Hall, April 15, from 4 to 6 p.m.

Earth Day Walk: "Writ in Stone" at Tower Hill, April 22, 1:30 p.m.

Mosses and Lichens, Tobiassen Forest, April 29, 10 a.m.

Meet author, Deborah Boerner Ein at Chaplin Library, May 5, 6:30 p.m.

May Pole Celebration at Atwood Farm, May 6, 2 p.m.

Wildflowers of Spring, Hubbard Sanctuary, May 13, 10:30 a.m.

Tower Hill Grand Opening, May 20 (Rain Date 5/21), 10 a.m.

Family Day at Gurleyville Grist Mill, May 27, from 10 to 2 p.m.

CT Trails Day, Gurleyville Grist Mill, June 4, 1 p.m.

More Events to Be Announced Soon

For more information or to register, visit www.joshuastrust.org/events