

Joshua's Trust News

Protecting Land and Preserving Heritage. Forever.



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www.joshuastrust.org

A FRIEND AND CONSERVATIONIST REMEMBERED

by Warren Church

In 2023 Samuel Harvey (Sam) donated 180 acres of largely forested land in northwestern Chaplin to Joshua's Trust. This is the second largest land donation to the Trust only exceeded by the nearby 253-acre Tower Hill Preserve which was donated by Antoinette Monnet in 2022.

Sam was an accountant who spent most of his childhood and adult work life in Maryland. He was very proud of his Southern and his Chaplin heritage. He cherished his childhood visits to his grandfather Samuel's farm in Chaplin. The Harvey family ownership of the land goes back to the 19th century when one of Sam's ancestors was part owner of a sassafras mill along Stonehouse Brook.



Samuel Jackson Harvey, 1934-2023

When Sam's grandfather died in 1950 the Chaplin estate was divided into three parts: one part each going to Sam's dad (another Sam Harvey), his uncle, John Harvey, and his aunt, Margery Harvey. When Sam retired around 1994 he moved to Chaplin with a goal of putting his grandfather's farmland back together. In just a few years he was able to purchase the outstanding parcels which luckily were still owned by relatives.

The property that Sam gave to the Trust permanently protects this historic property with over 2,000 feet of frontage on North Bedlam Road, and over 3,000 feet of frontage on Federal Road. The property abuts a larger, unfragmented forest and other open space that contain high-quality habitats for a variety of wildlife. It also protects both sides of over 2,500 feet of the Stone House Brook which includes over 1,000 feet of scenic gorge including several waterfalls. The Trust plans on developing a trail on the property which showcases these impressive features.



Sam alongside Stone House Brook mill falls (Circa 2000)

We look forward to safeguarding this land not only for the benefit of the wildlife and waterways that run through the property but also for the benefit of future generations who will be able to enjoy this beautiful Chaplin landscape much as Sam did for almost 30 years.

We are grateful for Sam's commitment to land conservation and for his generous donation to Joshua's Trust. We send our deepest condolences to the Harvey family and a special thank you to Sam's daughter, Paula Spangler, who provided photos for this article.

Please join us Saturday, December 9 at 1:00 PM (Rain date Dec. 10) for a special preview of the newly created trail through Harvey Preserve. Stay tuned for more details about this conservation celebration.

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.

PRESIDENTIAL MUSINGS A MYSTERY CABIN IN THE WOODS

by John Hankins, President

One of the unexpected pleasures I've had as the President of Joshua's Trust has been contacting donors on occasion to thank them for their generosity. On one recent call to a woman from Chaplin that I'll identify here as "Judith," I mentioned our recent acquisitions of over 400 acres in her home town, including the new Tower Hill Road Preserve which was close to where she lived. She was not only familiar with the property, but she confided in me that her son had built a cabin on the site in the 1980s.

I'd walked the property extensively when we were conducting pre-acquisition due diligence, and had noted the outline of a decayed log foundation, perhaps 15-feet on each side. Within the outline of the foundation was the remains of a wood stove that someone had fashioned from a 55-gallon drum. The choice of the site was strategic, as it overlooked a scenic waterfall that cascaded down the east-facing slope of the abutting property into Stonehouse Brook. Although I had noted the presence of the structure during our walkovers, no one was able to tell me the specific story of the building. That mystery was about to be solved.

Judith reported that her son, whom we'll call "Willard," had built the cabin. Names in this article have been changed to protect both the innocent and the potentially guilty, as Willard did not exactly have

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THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS



FRESH PERSPECTIVE, INCLUSIVITY, AND THE POWER OF DEEP LISTENING

by Bryan Avery

In June of 2023, staff and Trustees of Joshua's Trust met with facilitators, participants, and funders of the NE Advancement Initiative. With the help of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC), the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, and The Last Green Valley, three outdoors groups toured a number of Joshua's Trust Preserves. Latino Outdoors, CT Black Women Hikers, and the UCONN League Walking Group volunteered to give feedback about their experiences visiting trust properties.

Joshua's Trust was the only land trust to participate in the program. Which is no surprise; most organizations could reasonably think, "why should we sit through feedback that we cannot afford to act on?" Inclusivity on any public conservation property seems like a huge problem that requires huge fixes. What Joshua's Trust learned was precisely the opposite. A series of small fixes can make a huge difference and the key aspect to remember is that Joshua's Trust properties need to be safe and welcoming to everyone. Proudly visible signage, a clearly defined parking area, an accurate map, and thorough trail blazing make all the difference for those who are unfamiliar with trust properties.



Members of Latino Outdoors-CT at Hubbard Sanctuary in Chaplin, CT

Adventure is a relative term and familiarity has its own conformation bias. For many who live in suburban or rural Connecticut, when we think of going on a nature adventure, we think of the deep woods of Maine, mountain ranges named after colors or Native peoples (The Whites, The Greens, Adirondacks, Catskills, Poconos), or perhaps we envision traveling further across the country or even abroad. For many others who grew up in a more urban setting, these Instagram worthy adventures are

far outside their comfort zone. For some of them, traveling 20-30 miles to a trail in The Last Green Valley feels like an adventure.

By being open to feedback, our eyes have been opened to the perspective of these local adventurers.

WANT TO SEE MORE OF JOSHUA'S TRUST?

Follow us on social media!



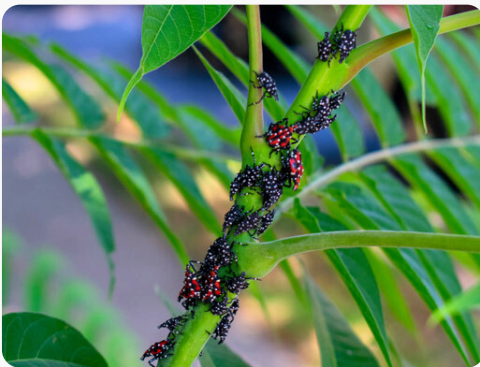
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ONE IF BY LAND, TWO IF BY TREE: HOW ERADICATING TREE OF HEAVEN CAN HELP FIGHT AN INSECT INVASION

By Marie Cantino

You probably don't need a guy in a three-cornered hat galloping down your street to know that the spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*) is coming to our corner of Connecticut. This native of China was first identified in Pennsylvania in 2014, and has been eating its way through the country ever since. Established populations have been found in Fairfield, Litchfield, Hartford, New London, and New Haven Counties. While its preferred host is tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), this insect will snack on a wide variety of plants when its favorite meal isn't available, making it a source of concern for naturalists, gardeners and farmers.



Spotted Lanternfly photo from udel.edu

Tree of heaven is an invasive species native to China that was intentionally introduced in the US in the late eighteenth century and quickly became popular in the nursery trade for its rapid growth habit. Unfortunately, over the years it has escaped from gardens, creating headaches for homeowners and municipalities (it can damage sewer lines and building foundations), and reducing habitat for native species by competing for resources and producing compounds that prevent establishment of other plants nearby.

Although removal of tree of heaven has been suggested as a way to control spotted lanternflies, the insects can live off other hosts, so it has been unclear how this effort can have much impact. But a recent study (<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-018-34946-y.pdf>) suggests an explanation. Immature lanternflies are mostly black during their early nymphal stages (instars), but in their last instar they develop red patches, making them more conspicuous to birds. Around this time in their development they also increase their dietary preference for tree of heaven. The study showed that feeding on tree of heaven makes late instars and adults less appealing to birds and that this change is likely the result of accumulation of unpalatable compounds derived from the tree of heaven.

It is unlikely that we will ever completely eradicate spotted lanternflies, but by reducing populations of tree of heaven we can help create tastier insects and thereby recruit an army of hungry birds to help keep the spotted lanternfly population in check. Learn more about spotted lanternflies at <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Forestry/Forest-Protection/Spotted-Lanternfly>

Become a Member

Your membership matters! As a member, you'll have a direct hand in safeguarding the beauty and vitality of northeastern Connecticut for generations to come. Join us in this crucial mission and help ensure a greener, healthier future for all. Return the enclosed card or visit our website at joshuastrust.org to become a member today.

A MYSTERY CABIN IN THE WOODS (CONTINUED)



the landowner's permission to build the cabin, or to cut down the trees on the property that were critical components of the structure. As the story goes, Willard and his friends, who were in high school at the time, were looking for a place where they could hang out. They weren't allowed to use power tools, so they cut down the trees and assembled the cabin manually. The resulting structure, for which Judith provided a photo, was built of logs and included an upstairs loft.

Shingles for the roof were reportedly provided by a local school bus driver and they scrounged scraps from other projects to complete the work. Exactly what went on in the cabin is a matter of some conjecture, but Judith did confide in me her suspicion that "they may have had *Playboy* magazines in there."

The legend of the cabin grew as more local teenagers visited the site, and eventually word got back to the property owner, "Mrs. Jones", who reached out to Willard to have a little discussion on the topics of trespass and illicit harvesting of forest products. Willard offered an apology, and Mrs. Jones was so taken with Willard's sincerity that she told him that he and his friends could continue to use the cabin as a therapeutic retreat; however, there still was the matter of the trees that had been cut down. The score was settled when they reached an agreement that Willard would mow her lawn and perform odd jobs for her over the next year, a shining example of Chaplin street justice in the late 20th century.

Could such a cabin be built illicitly on a Joshua's Trust property today? Probably not, and if so, not for long. As required by our accreditation, one of our responsibilities for our fee-owned properties and for the properties where we hold a conservation easement is to conduct annual site walks to assure that our properties stay in their natural state. While both intentional and unintentional encroachments do occur from time to time, we're virtually always able to address these amicably with the encroaching parties. Clear markings of our boundaries and good communication with our abutting neighbors are the keys to this program, and we've not yet had to implement any of the Mrs. Jones street justice tactics that were so effective in the 80s.

Have you heard of the Joshua's Trust Bequest Challenge?

When you inform Joshua's Trust of your decision to include our organization in your will or living trust, a generous donor will match your future gift with an immediate donation of \$750. All you have to do is let us know using the online form and we will receive immediate funds to help protect habitat today.

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

FRESH PERSPECTIVE... (CONTINUED)

In the fall of 2023, with the help of funding from The NE Initiative, we are going to address the recommendations given to us. The parking area at Friedman Forest will be expanded, a new parking area will be built at The Pinkham Preserve, and signage will be improved across all preserves. We are making our blazing more thorough, updating trail maps, and including QR codes on kiosks to help translate our signage into Spanish and Mandarin to minimize language barriers for the two largest groups in our area for whom English is not the primary language.



Emely Ricci, CLCC's 22-23 Sandy Breslin Conservation Fellow, with the CT Black Women Hikers at Whetten Woods in Mansfield

Through the program, our organization was able to view our properties with a much-needed fresh perspective. Hearing the first impressions about Joshua's Trust properties shook loose our idea that these places are inherently familiar to the community we serve. This deep listening enabled us to redefine the scope of the community we serve, redefine what it means for a property to feel safe and welcoming, and ultimately redefine how we can grow our relevancy moving forward.

We took the time to get comfortable in the uncomfortable, to hear feedback about our beloved properties and our

efforts to steward and share them with the public, and we have responded with direct action to address our shortcomings. Many thanks to the funders and participants who have given their time and resources to help Joshua's Trust improve. We are very excited to see the results of this effort and carry on with our mission to make our properties more welcoming and inclusive to everyone.

"We have to build capacity. People have to learn how to create an inclusive environment for everybody. To do that, we have to look at our own implicit bias, our own internalized superiority, our internalized oppression, and we have to work across difference."

Queta Gonzalez, Programs Director for the Center for Diversity and the Environment

What are Qualified Charitable Distributions?

If you are age 70½ or older, you can take advantage of a simple way to benefit Joshua's Trust and receive tax benefits in return. You can give any amount up to \$100,000 per year from your IRA directly to a qualified non-profit organization, like Joshua's Trust, without having to pay income tax on the money. This gift option is commonly called the IRA charitable rollover or qualified charitable distribution (QCD).

Since this gift doesn't count as income, it reduces your annual income. You can also use this gift to satisfy all or part of your required minimum distribution (RMD). Please speak with your financial or tax advisor regarding QCDs, RMDs, and other retirement account withdrawal strategies.

AT LAST

by Hill Bullard

The first part of this article (a section of which is in italics below) was published in our Summer 2023 Newsletter that was sent out in August. You can read the first part of Hill's article, in its entirety, at <https://joshuastrust.org/newsletters/>.

Twenty two years ago the ad hoc Boundary Committee was formed as the Trust did not know the boundaries of most of its properties, largely unsurveyed at that time. The committee and crew consisted of myself and many draftees.

For a year the crew struggled to locate boundaries using only the (usually poor) descriptions on the property deeds.... As the years went by we developed a steady core of knowledgeable volunteers and developed several crews to speed up the process.



Scott Matthies takes note of boundary marker

When boundaries were fuzzy and could not be determined, the Trust executed boundary agreement deeds with abutters. In the past 22 years, there were 6 of those. Also many surveys were commissioned by the Trust to clarify and memorialize boundaries – totaling \$120,000 in cost. All this work and cost has prevented any major encroachments as both the Trust and abutters know the property lines. Sheds and other structures plus dumping and junk cars on Trust land have been resolved with abutters. As Robert Frost said “good fences make good neighbors”.

AT LAST, after 22 years, the boundary crews have caught up to all properties, fee and easement, with the exception a few early easements that do not give the Trust the right to mark boundaries and the new Janosack property in Franklin, currently awaiting survey. Thanks to all who helped along the journey particularly crew leaders Rob Beach, Scott Matthies, and John Pagini. I see the boundary crew's role changing a bit - helping stewards and monitors maintain their signage as well as tackling new acquisitions.

Remember the 11th commandment: “ Know Thy Bounds.”

PS: Here are some boundary descriptions we dealt with along the way:

- “Thence South to a musket barrel” (Easement on Singleton Rd, Chaplin)
- “East to a bed slat” (Tobiasson Preserve, Coventry)
- “Along line of highway to the center line of a garage” (Prue easement, S Eagleville Rd, Mansfield)
- My favorite, from a title search before joining Joshua's Trust: “South to a hole in the ice“ (old McQuade farm, Pumpkin Hill Rd, Chaplin)

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JOSHUA'S TRUST EVENTS

We have a number of fun fall and early winter events scheduled through January 1, 2024. Visit our website at joshuastrust.org/events for updates and details.

November 4

Cider Pressing at Atwood Farm (Rain Date)

and

Explore Tower Hill Preserve in Chaplin with Master Naturalist, Deb Field

November 24

Guided Walk at Utley Hill Preserve in Columbia

December 9

Nature Journaling at Atwood Farm in Mansfield Center

and

Harvey Preserve Preview in Chaplin

January 1

First Day Hike at Pigeon Swamp Preserve in Lebanon