



THE CORNWALL WE LOVE: BART REFLECTS ON...

Almost 30 years ago, a group of conservation minded Cornwall residents who love Cornwall sat down to talk about how to preserve the forests and fields they cherished. Soon, the Cornwall Conservation Trust (CCT) was born. Today, CCT manages over 1,000 acres valued at over \$6 million.

ACCREDITATION

This summer CCT received accreditation from the Land Trust Alliance, a national organization devoted to defending the pastoral character of rural communities. Barton Jones, president of CCT, said accreditation is a sign of the local group's experience and maturity and a reassuring signal to potential supporters who want to make sure their donations are well spent. "It shows the seriousness and professionalism of the land trust," he said. "It is like a Good Housekeeping

seal of approval for land trusts." Jones said the two-year accreditation process included a rigorous review of 12 different measures of reliability and competence, from thoroughness of recordkeeping to freedom from conflicts of interest.

EXPANDING

Jones said that the CCT is now looking at expanding the recreational and agricultural uses of its pastureland and forests, which are protected in perpetuity from commercial development. These include handicap access to some trails and perhaps bike paths where appropriate.

HUNTING

Hunting, which has been prohibited in CCT preserves, will be permitted in the newest one: the 315 acre Trinity Forest stretching from the Housatonic River south of West Cornwall to Dibble Hill Road on Green Mountain



CCT President Barton Jones speaking at Trinity Retreat Center, August 27, 2016

to the east.

"Hunting will be allowed on Trinity because historically it has been," Jones said. He said hunters maintain the trails, follow state guidelines and patrol

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The accreditation seal is awarded to land trusts meeting the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence.

HIKE OUR TRAILS - WIN A PRIZE!

Join the Cornwall Conservation Trust's geocache contest for a fun outdoor adventure. Use a GPS enabled device (such as your smartphone) to navigate to the secret stashes on 4 preserves and enjoy our beautiful trails.

What is Geocaching?

Geocaching is a recreational activity of hunting and finding a hidden object by means of GPS coordinates.

What am I looking for?

The geocache is a plastic box and may be hidden under twigs or leaves or behind a rock. It's up to you to find it!

Visit www.CornwallConservationTrust.org for full details, coordinates and images. Then go take a hike! Contest ends October 31, 2016.



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the land. "They will in effect be your game wardens."

He said CCT ownership of the forest insures that the public never loses access to the craggy ridges above the river.

"If private owners were to buy it, they would have every right to say 'no trespassing' and that would preclude the public from enjoying a beautiful piece of forest," Jones said. "The land is critical for an unbroken animal habitat" because it puts 300 acres of undisturbed woodland adjacent to the 700-acre Housatonic State Forest reserve.

TAXES

CCT land is exempt from state and local taxes, but in most cases preserving it does not significantly reduce Cornwall's tax revenue. "Trinity, for example, was already owned by a not-for-profit, so it wasn't taken off the tax rolls," Jones explained. In other cases, the CCT acquired land that was already taxed at very low rates under a state program intended to give property tax breaks to farmers and owners of undeveloped forests.

"Almost all the land we have either purchased or been donated was already in one of those programs," Jones said. "So, the amount of tax

revenue coming out of say, the Day property, was very little. I think frankly it has the effect of boosting the town's property values. It makes it a more attractive place to live, makes it a more attractive place to buy a house. It hopefully will boost the economy and over the long term make Cornwall unique among many towns."



View overlooking the newly acquired Cooley Preserve

BUDGETS

Jones said almost half the CCT's annual budget of over \$70,000 goes to land-management, monitoring and clearing. "We are a substantial asset in the town of Cornwall and we need to be managed properly and that takes money," he said, adding that the CCT hopes to raise half its operating budget through contributions from sustaining member who agree to make annual donations for several years. CCT has a goal of raising at least half of its annual

operating budget from annual contributions. Volunteers are important, too, for trail clearing and other preservation work. Jones said that the CCT's five-year strategic plan, formed in consultation with Cornwall residents and conservation professionals, provides an agenda for trail improvement, wildlife management and promotion of agriculture along with improved financial support.

LOOKING FORWARD

Two recent initiatives include an effort "to figure out a way to conserve the shore of Cream Hill Lake so that it is not developed any further and so the view around the lake remains the same," Jones said. In addition, he said CCT is working on a property purchase near the Mohawk Trail and

with a local farm owner to preserve their agricultural land through the Connecticut Department of Agriculture.

Jones said Cornwall's well-being depends on finding productive ways to resist sprawl. "Does Cornwall become the next Ridgefield and in effect a dense residential suburb of New York or Hartford? Or can it continue to be a vibrant, rural and agricultural community? That's a long term challenge." 🌿

THE GENEROSITY OF CORNWALL FAMILIES TO DONATE LAND CONTINUES IN 2015 & 2016

Over a hundred years ago Dr. Edward M. Foote, a New York City surgeon, author and amateur naturalist, walked from Litchfield over Great Hill, passing through Cathedral Pines to find and fall in love with Cornwall. He purchased a farm at the corner of Rt. 4 and the original Pierce Lane, which was part of the old Stagecoach Road. Dr. and Mrs. Foote, called "Muzz" and eventually their children Pris, Tad and CC spent summers in Cornwall at the farm they named "Foote Hills."

A NYC friend asked "Muzz" what Cornwall was near and she replied, "Heaven!" Because of the family's fondness for Cornwall the entire family eventually owned summer homes here. Some became year round residences such as the house located near the original farm and called "Foote Steps."

In the 1960's, Tad and his wife Ruth, gave a field south of Route 4 to Marvelwood School to use as a soccer field which later was given to the town and named "Foote Fields". Later CC's children sold the adjacent land to the town for less than market value to expand the athletic fields.

Tad and Ruth's children, Steve Foote and Betsy (Foote) Pope, continued contributing to Cornwall. In 1988 Steve transferred his eleven wooded



The Foote Family Preserve on Route 4

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acres north of the Foote Fields to Cornwall's affordable housing organization. Most recently Betsy and her husband, who now live in Washington, gifted a twelve-acre field at the corner of Pierce Lane and Route 4 with an appraised value in excess of \$190,000 to the Cornwall Conservation Trust (CCT). Ms. (Foote) Pope said, "My husband Chris Pope and I are now grateful to be able to pass on the gift of our inherited Foote Steps field to the CCT for conservation as open, agricultural land, helping to preserve the rural beauty of Cornwall, somewhere "near heaven."

Lisa Lansing Simont, who knows the family said, "The Foote family lived in Cornwall for many years and was active in supporting town organizations. Time has passed and the family has died or moved away, but their love for Cornwall seems unchanged. Steve transferred the land for the Pierce Lane cluster of affordable housing and now Betsy has placed her land in conservation. Both are acts of generous philanthropy aimed at Cornwall's future as a community."

In addition to the Footes, we are very thankful to James Eddy Blake for giving CCT 5 acres in the middle of the Trinity Forest Preserve in 2015. In 2016 Richard Furniss gave CCT 10 acres on Route 43 that are important wetlands for the Hollenbeck River. Over the last year CCT has also worked with Ed Kenniston's family and the Connecticut Department of Agriculture to preserve the family farm near the four corners intersection.

About this outpouring of local generosity, CCT President Bart Jones said, "This year and for many years past Cornwall families have helped preserve the rural character of Cornwall by donating land to CCT. I like to think that there is something about the character of Cornwall that attracts such generous families." 🌿

BOARD MEMBERS

Jean Bouteiller, Dody Clarke-Wolfe, Richie Dolan, Katherine Freygang, Ed Green, Bart Jones, Jeff Lynch, Rick Lynn, Danny Marino, Pat Mulberry, Hector Prud'Homme, Emilie Pryor, Jim Sheffield, Bonnie VanGilder Landman, Larry Van Valkenburgh, Hunt Williams, Johan Winsser

HONORARY DIRECTOR

Duke Besozzi, Nevton Dunn, Denny Frost

STAFF

Shelley Harms, *Executive Director*
Cara Weigold, *Office & Digital Administrator*
Harry White, *Conservation Director*

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Richie Dolan's family has lived in Cornwall four generations. He attended local schools and after graduation joined his family's business, Maple Hill Farm. The family buys and sells hay alongside raising and breeding pigs. He brings a broad knowledge of farming to the CCT board.

Katherine Freygang is an environmental designer and educator. She organized five Connecticut education groups from faith based to activist and helped Cornwall win the title "Greenest Town in Connecticut." Currently she serves on the Leadership Team of the CT Sustainable Communities Network.

Danny Marino, a senior at the University of Connecticut majoring in business, plans to pursue a Masters in Wildlife Biology. He grew up in Cornwall and has volunteered at the Housatonic Valley Association and assisted during the summer at the state's Wildlife Division in a bear management program.

Johan Winsser, a network engineer recently retired from Verizon, plans on developing trails in CCT's new preserves. Over the last year Johan and his son Nick led the clearing and now maintenance of the Cornwall Riverside Trail near the Housatonic State Forest and Trinity Retreat Center.

WELCOME NEW STAFF

Shelley Harms will become CCT's part-time Executive Director this Fall. An attorney, she has extensive background with local land trusts overseeing the Land Trust Alliance accreditation projects for Salisbury, Norfolk and Cornwall. She has served on the boards of the Aton Forest Land Trust, the Winchester Land Trust and the Norfolk Conservation Commission. "Shelley can manage the land



*Executive Director
Shelley Harms*

acquisition process from the point where we sign the contract, to getting grants to closing," says CCT president Bart Jones. Jones says it will be helpful to have a professional staff member with Shelley's background manage day-to-day operations and volunteers.

JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL MEETING

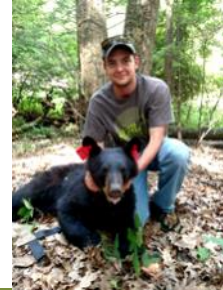
Homemade Pie & Ice Cream Social



Please join us on Saturday, November 5, 2016 at 1:30 pm at the Mohawk Ski Lodge in "The Perch" room, 46 Great Hollow Road in Cornwall, for a homemade pie and ice cream social at our annual meeting. As one of our strategic goals, we'll focus on farming in Cornwall and have farm animals for the kids to visit and pet. Bring your favorite pie to share. Ice cream, hot chocolate, mulled cider, coffee and tea will be provided. Members of the CCT are free, contributions greatly appreciated from guests.

SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED

The 2016 Student Grant program awarded nine scholarships, making this year one of the largest in number and funds given. Preference is always given to Cornwall students and this year we had seven students from our home town. We are proud to say three of those students, Aidan Cowan, Brian Saccardi, and Dan Marino, will be college seniors this fall and have been supported all four college years by CCT. Additional awardees are first time recipients Chloe Ocain, Marina Matsudaira, Sam Marino and Chelsea Kearns. Kelly Sprague and Shelby Jacquier, from Canaan, also received scholarships. Congratulations students!



Cornwallians (from left to right) Aidan Cowan, Dan Marino, and Brian Saccardi have received four years of support from CCT

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AND FIND US ON FACEBOOK AT WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/CORNWALLCONSERVATIONTRUST

We love the photos our Facebook friends send us!

The baby catbirds on the left is from Lori Blakey Welles, the snapping turtle on the right from Terry Burke



THANKS TO YOU!

Conservation of the land that you love, the land you call home, would not be possible without your support.

The Cornwall Conservation Trust protects a total of 1698 acres in Cornwall, a responsibility that we don't take lightly. Please consider becoming a member today.