



CORNWALL CAN CONSERVE FARMLANDS AND FORESTS AND HAVE ECONOMIC VITALITY

We had an excellent panel discussion about the economic challenges faced by Cornwall at Cornwall Conservation Trust's annual meeting last November. Our panel discussed using conservation of farmland and forests to promote economic vitality in our town.

Panel members were Ingrid Gould Ellen, Paulette Goddard, Professor of Urban Policy and Planning, New York University; Vicki Been, Boxer Family Professor of Law, New York University Law School; Dave Dolinsky, local Cornwall businessman and member of the Cornwall Economic Development Commission; Tim Abbott, the Housatonic Valley Association's Regional Conservation and Greenprint Director; Gordon Ridgway, Cornwall's First Selectman; and Joanna Wozniak-Brown, Regional Planner, Northwest Hills Council of Governments.

There was a consensus among the panelists that conservation of farmland and forests in Cornwall could be compatible with the economic vitality of the Town. The challenge would be marshaling all the Town's resources to work toward the dual goal of conservation and economic vitality.

First Selectmen Gordon Ridgway gave an overview of the present and future challenges to Cornwall's economy. He said that a key issue is the demographic trend of a declining population that is aging and needs to be addressed by Cornwall, Litchfield County and the State. He pointed to one UConn study that showed the population of Cornwall

declining from 1400 residents in 2010 to 900 in 2040 if present trends were to continue. He thought that the Town should intervene and "bend" that curve much like the challenge for altering the climate change curve. He also felt that the impetus for positive change had to originate in Cornwall rather than be imposed from outside by the state or federal governments. In his view jobs and local businesses were the number one issue and that would require more investment in infrastructure in Cornwall such as waste water treatment in West Cornwall and high speed internet throughout the Town.

Some might well be concerned about UConn's population analysis for Cornwall. However, Dave Dolinsky made the point that Cornwall had survived the ride on that population curve before. Cornwall's population peaked in 1850 at 2041 residents, declined to 896 in 1950 and then recovered to 1443 residents in 2000. During that time period Cornwall went from being a small industrial town to an agricultural town and then to a mix of private school, ski area, business and

agriculture. Now there is no private school, the ski area continues and both local agricultural and businesses are at historical low points.

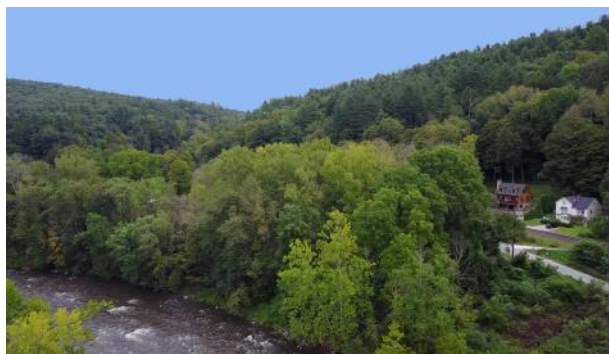
A lively panel discussion ensued. The following summarizes that discussion.

First and foremost, Cornwall should focus on its 2020 Plan of Conservation and Development, continuing the good

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Above, Lower River Road showing the J. Mallinson Shear Co. buildings, circa 1900, West Cornwall. From the collection of the Cornwall Historical Society, Cornwall, Connecticut. Below, a drone photo today from the same view point.



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work it did with the 2010 Plan. The Town leadership should be encouraged to think broadly and creatively about ways to use conservation of farmlands and forests in Cornwall. There should be innovation in Cornwall's zoning regulations. Those zoning regulations should allow for cluster development, affordable housing, home businesses and expanded agriculture. More could be done to promote tourism by making Cornwall more welcoming to visitors. Cornwall should work closely with other towns in the region especially through the Northwest Council of

Governments and the SustainableCT program. Cornwall should look to other similar rural towns for creative models. Regions such as Berkshire County are facing similar demographic trends and economic challenges.

Our conclusion was that Cornwall has the resources to "bend" the demographic curve. The Town's residents need to work with our Town leadership to be creative and help find a future for Cornwall that capitalizes on our unique rural character and ensures a bright economic future.

**A video of the full discussion is available on the CCT website—cornwallconservationtrust.org*

PROTECTING OUR GRASSLAND BIRDS

In March of 2018 we welcomed Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe from Audubon Connecticut to Town Hall for a presentation on protecting bird habitats within our farmers' hay fields. Three species noted, the Bobolink, the Savannah Sparrow and the Eastern Meadowlark, are of special concern in our area due to declining population. Grassland birds are known to reduce populations of potentially harmful insects like caterpillars, weevils, cutworms, beetles and flies. Since these birds nest in the hayfields, the challenge is how to complete an early haying in June without reducing the productivity of the birds. Some strategies were discussed including haying the fields in early May or delaying the haying until mid-August; positioning the blades 6 inches from the ground; and haying from the inside to outside of the field to allow birds to escape. A video of the full presentation is available on our website, cornwallconservationtrust.org.



Above, a male bobolink, and at left, a female bobolink on Town Street. Photos by Joe Ellis.

FOREST & FARMLAND ADDITIONS

The Cornwall Conservation Trust gratefully accepted the contribution of 100 acres of forest on Johnson Road from the Dobbs family, now known as the Nancy Nauts Dobbs Preserve, and the contribution of 37 acres of farmland off Cherry Hill Road from the Cooley family which has been added to the Cooley Farm Preserve. In addition, CCT successfully conserved the following properties since our last newsletter:

- The purchase of 90 acres at a substantial discount from market value off Route 43, now known as the Cheryl Cadman Evans Preserve, using state and Federal grants and private contributions; and
- The purchase of 7 acres off Cherry Hill Road added to the Hart Family Farm Preserve using private contributions and CCT funds.

These beautiful parcels of forest and farmland help to create an important rural legacy for future generations.

Like or follow us on your favorite social media platform and be part of the conversation in conservation!

FACEBOOK 

facebook.com/CornwallConservationTrust

INSTAGRAM 

instagram.com/CornwallConservationTrust

TWITTER 

twitter.com/CCT_Connecticut

NEWS BRIEFS



Terry Burke is our newest board member and has been a Cornwall resident since 2012. Terry is a retired United Nations international staff member and also a member of the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area Bicycle Committee. He is a passionate cyclist and keen hiker, kayaker/canoer, cross-country skier/snowshoer and gardener.

An enthusiastic crew from Indian Mountain School helped clear the trail at Cooley Farm Preserve in the Fall of 2017. We love getting the next generation involved in conservation!



BOARD MEMBERS

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Our first annual Clean-Up/Green-Up Day brought out more than 50 volunteers on a beautiful fall day last September. It was pleasantly noted that our town roads are, in general, fairly clean, but we still managed to collect many bags of trash including numerous beverage bottles. Our hardy workers then planted 300 daffodil bulbs on the lawn of The Cornwall Library. A welcome sight of blooms rewarded passerby after a snowy, cold winter.

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF STUDENT GRANT PROGRAM

The Trust has been awarding scholarship grants since 2008 through an endowment established by the Calhoun Family. In an effort to promote education in areas of study that match our mission, student grants are awarded on a yearly basis in May to graduating high school students or students who are enrolled in college and are residents of Region One.

The tradition continues with eleven scholarships awarded from this year's Student Grant Program, making this year the largest in number of funds given. Preference is given to Cornwall students and this year we had five students from our home town; Olive Cowan, Roxana Hurlburt, Katelyn Kearns, Patrick Kennedy, and Daniel Marino. Additional awards were granted to Mari Cullerton of Canaan; Brooke Dodge of Falls Village; Abigail Lafontan of Kent; Jack Scarpa of Salisbury; and Elias Hill and Shelby Luminati of Sharon. Congratulations to all!

The Cheryl Cadman Evans Preserve is one of our newest conserved lands with an easily traversed trail and features an observation area of the Hollenbeck River. *Photo credit: Lazlo Gyorsok.*



Peter Del Tredici, noted botanist and author led 32 hikers through Cooley Farm Preserve for "Wild Plants: Friend or Foe?", providing information on non-native species in our area. Watch for our upcoming hikes with featured naturalists.



FARM CORNWALL: MAKING A LIVING

We invite you to join us on Saturday, November 10 for “Farm Cornwall: Making a Living”. We’ll start with a seminar at Cornwall Town Hall at 9am with a panel discussion on *A Farmer’s Life, Challenges and Rewards*, followed by a second panel discussion on *Farm Resources Needed to Make a Living*. Panel members include local farmers and farm resource professionals.

Then join us that evening at 4pm at The Old’s barn on 39 Jewell Street in Cornwall Village for our annual meeting and a Celebration of Farming in Cornwall, with light hors d’oeuvres and music by Still the Homegrown Band. Kindly RSVP with an email to event@cornwallconservationtrust.org.

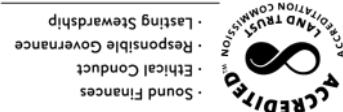
NEW SPACE, NEW MAPS!

The CCT now has a new office location at 7 Railroad Square in West Cornwall. The larger space now allows us to hold board meetings and events and also serves as an excellent exhibition space to showcase our maps.

Speaking of maps, our trail maps have been updated and redesigned and are available on our website: cornwallconservationtrust.org. New maps are also available for the Cooley Farm Preserve, the Cheryl Cadman Evans Preserve and the Trinity Forest Preserve. 🌿



**STAY UP-TO-DATE ON UPCOMING EVENTS!
VISIT CORNWALLCONSERVATIONTRUST.ORG AND SUBSCRIBE TO OUR E-NEWS!**



We really do! Together we have achieved great things for Cornwall. We strive to keep you informed and educated on the topics that are important to you and to plan events that get you outdoors. We hope you enjoy the work we do as much as we do. Your support keeps us going and we are so grateful.

WE APPRECIATE YOU!

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CORNWALL CONSERVATION TRUST

