

OPEN SPACES

STAMFORD LAND CONSERVATION TRUST, INC.



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." — Margaret Mead

SUMMER 2018

JUNE ROAD PROPERTY PRESERVED

LAND TRUST ACHIEVES LONG-TIME CONSERVATION GOAL - BY HARRY DAY

People and organizations covet all kinds of things: more money, time and resources being three of the top desires. But at the SLCT, we covet more open space, especially open space near a river or watershed. We wish for that like Red Sox fans wish for another World Series title.

Recently, we achieved our equivalent of a Major League Baseball championship: We just played a key role in ensuring that an undeveloped 21-acre property on June Road—long of interest to the Stamford Land Conservation Trust—will be preserved in perpetuity.

The SLCT teamed up with the Mianus River Gorge, Inc. (MRGI) in purchasing the property on April 30th following a long negotiation with Martin Sands, principal of a limited liability company that had acquired the property from the Overbrook Foundation in 2005.

The property borders almost half a mile of the Mianus River. It is marked by beautiful, if challenging, terrain and is near other large tracts of undeveloped land. The property's extraordinary location and environmental value has made it the SLCT's number-one target for open space conservation for many years.

The acquisition became feasible due to a very substantial anonymous donation to the MRGI dedicated solely to purchasing the property. The MRGI and the SLCT contributed the remaining amounts necessary to consummate the transaction. The SLCT will have a Conservation Easement on the 21 acres.

Like most land in the Riverbank Road and June Road areas (including the Altschul Preserve now under the SLCT's umbrella), the property was once part of the Altschul Farm. It was sold in 2005 by the Overbrook Foundation, comprised of members of the Altschul and Graham families (who have been long-time friends and supporters of the Land Trust). The Overbrook Foundation, while at the time focusing on other priorities that required it to sell the property, nevertheless did a huge favor in restricting development of the property to two lots. The restriction assured that most of the land would remain open space even if developed. Without that restriction, it is unlikely that the property could ultimately have been preserved in its entirety.

As mentioned in President Harry Day's letter (see page 2), it is not the practice of the SLCT to expend funds for purchasing open space. The SLCT relies on donors to contribute land for preservation. This transaction, however, was unique in two key respects.

First, the owner had demonstrated no donative intent since acquiring the property in 2005, and it had become clear that the property would never be totally preserved other than through purchase. Second, the SLCT—following many years of interest in this property—suddenly had the opportunity, in collaboration with the MRGI, to preserve it for a cost to the SLCT of a mere fraction of the property's fair market value. For these reasons, the Board of the SLCT voted unanimously in favor of contributing \$100,000 toward the purchase.

The SLCT looks forward to working with the MRGI in protecting this land in years to come. Its acquisition is a major accomplishment, and could not have been possible without the continuing support the SLCT receives from its many friends who are committed to open space conservation.

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER



Harry Day, Stamford Land
Conservation Trust President

Dear Friends of Open Space,

2018 is already turning out to be an exciting and successful year for the Stamford Land Conservation Trust and its mission of preserving open space. We recently collaborated in the purchase of a 21-acre parcel on June Road. Combined with still more acquisitions in the pipeline, this represents a surge in open space conservation not seen in recent years.

Preserving the June Road property—bordering, as it does, a significant stretch of the Mianus River as well as a Stamford city park—has been a top priority of the SLCT since the property was sold by the Overbrook Foundation in 2005.

“Any news on the June Road property?” has been a recurring question at almost every SLCT board meeting for years, and we seized the opportunity to join up with our friends at Mianus River Gorge, Inc. (MRGI) in purchasing the property.

Typically, the SLCT receives donated property rather than contributing funds directly toward the purchase of property. However, it has been apparent for years that complete preservation of the June Road property would only be achieved

through purchase. It also became clear that the proposed acquisition being spearheaded by MRGI could not be consummated without our financial participation. Given these circumstances, the SLCT Board of Directors unanimously approved a \$100,000 contribution toward the purchase, in return for which the SLCT receives a conservation easement on the property.

The contribution represents a significant depletion of our investment account and it is our earnest hope that you will help us replenish our resources; we will be grateful for any donation you can make.

Four other properties are currently under consideration for donation to the SLCT. Two of the donations (one of which we expect to receive shortly) would preserve land adjoining previously donated open space properties—always desirable for maximizing wildlife and nature-related benefits.

The SLCT succeeds in its mission because we have enthusiastic and hard-working board members, wonderful stewards and volunteers, and all of you who support our mission. Achieving the major goal of preserving the June Road property carries with it the irony that we now need your support more than ever. Please make a donation in recognition of that accomplishment.

Thank you, and best wishes for a wonderful spring and summer season!

Sincerely,

Harry Day

FAST FACT: A tree can absorb 48 pounds of carbon dioxide annually and sequester a ton of carbon dioxide by the time it reaches 40 years old.

WE'RE GROWING!

BIGGER IS BETTER WHEN IT COMES TO OPEN SPACE!

In the past year, the Stamford Land Conservation Trust has been fortunate to acquire 27 acres. These acquisitions bring the current total acreage under SLCT stewardship to 447!

Why is open space important? Conserving the natural landscape is an investment in our quality of life that also produces significant economic benefits for communities and their residents. But we sometimes overlook the health

benefits derived from open space. Multiple studies confirm that deepening our connection with nature improves our health and wellbeing. Anyone who's taken a 10-minute walk outside—even better along a woodland path—knows this is



true! Connecting with nature is an easy way to “unplug” from our daily lives and relax. We encourage everyone to try it! You could start on an SLCT property with walking trails. One of them, Birch Meadow, is featured in this newsletter (see page 4).

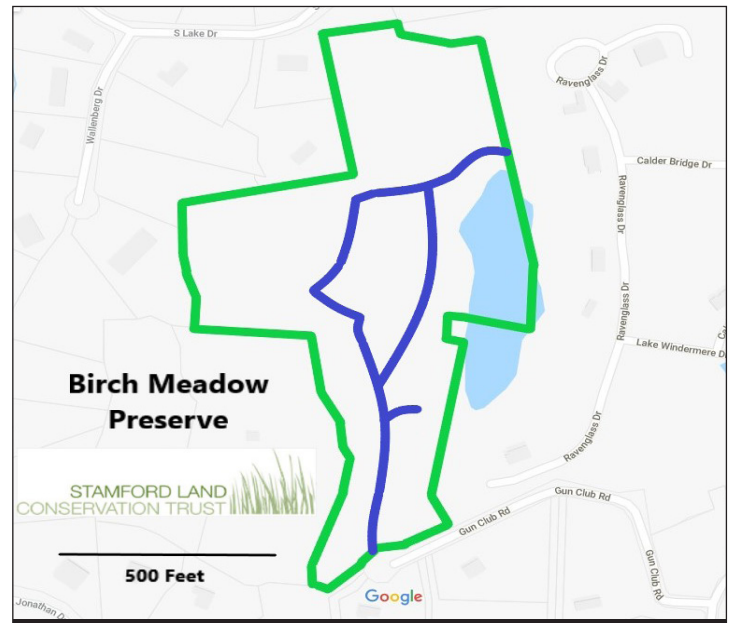
If you have property you would like to donate to SLCT, please contact us at: info@stamfordland.org. Donating land can provide an upfront tax benefit to the donor and ensures the property will be maintained as open space in perpetuity.

Spring

K Y J I B S M F G J	TREE
S P L R O B I N W N	TULIPS
T V P F O K Q A O P	RAINBOW
R T O U R S S A R G	MAY
E D J H D E T C N D	BUTTERFLY
A W C R M D T K K A	ROBIN
M N E E R T L T G N	SUN
M T U L I P S E U J	STREAM
A A L S F I X B S B	GRASS
Y S L W O B N I A R	PUDDLES

MEET A PRESERVE

BIRCH MEADOW



From “Hiking Trails” to Natural Oasis

By John Stone

Located just north of Gun Club Road in North Stamford, the Stamford Land Conservation Trust’s Birch Meadow Preserve is 25.5 acres of permanently protected forest and wetlands. The second largest of SCLT’s preserves, Birch Meadow is wonderful example of local biodiversity — consisting of forest, a small pond, diverse wetlands such as vernal pools, and approximately one-third of neighboring Lake Windermere.

The preserve provides important woodland and wetland habitat for a wide variety of animals including deer, coyotes, amphibians, and aquatic and terrestrial birds. Mature forests in the northern part of

the preserve are supplemented by second growth forest throughout the remainder of the area, and stone walls mark a significant part of the preserve’s boundaries.

As shown in this aerial photo, taken from the southern edge of the



This picturesque ridge is situated on the southwestern edge of the preserve.

MEET A PRESERVE

BIRCH MEADOW

preserve looking north from Gun Club Road, the property extends from Gun Club Road almost all the way to South Lake Road and Wallenberg Road.

Visitors Welcome!

Birch Meadow is accessible to visitors, who are welcome to enjoy its natural beauty year-round. The preserve's .75-mile trail system (shown in blue on our trail map) adjoins the adjacent Windermere on the Lake Development, where there are additional private trails. The SLCT trails are most easily accessed from the end of Gun Club Road which, though private property, includes an easement for SLCT access.

In addition to hiking the trails, we suggest that visitors take the time to relax and enjoy an excellent view of Windermere Lake from a stone bench situated at the end of the short spur trail shown on the trail map. While you are there, make sure to locate the plaque adjacent to the bench that commemorates the contributions of Percy Langstaff — a former president of the Trust and a visionary advocate for the preservation of open space.

We encourage you to spend a peaceful hour or two enjoying this unique and special natural oasis, tucked away right here in Stamford's own backyard.



Percy Lee Langstaff was the founding member and long time President of the Stamford Land Conservation Trust.



We've come a long way!

The early 1970s, when the SLCT was founded, was ripe for environmental action. We couldn't imagine a world without these four environmental milestones:

Before the Clean Water Act of 1972, raw sewage and industrial waste was routinely dumped into waterways. The surface of some rust-belt rivers even caught fire (yuck!).

The insecticide DDT was banned in 1972, helping bald eagles, peregrine falcons and other endangered birds rebound.

The Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act as well as the Marine Mammal Protection act both passed in 1972, helping marine mammal populations to recover.

The Endangered Species Act was signed into law in 1973 by President Richard Nixon, classifying endangered and threatened species and helping U.S. Fish and Wildlife enact special protections for them.



WE ARE GEOCACHING!

Stamford Land Conservation Trust is now part of the world's largest treasure hunt.

Our first geocache is in the Helen Altschul Preserve at 41°07'07.3"N 73°35'02.4"W.

This is just the beginning. We plan on adding many more geocaches during the next few months. Keep checking back on our website, stamfordland.org, and collect them all. It's fun!

What is geocaching?

Geocaching is a real-world, outdoor treasure hunting game using GPS-enabled devices. Participants navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates and then attempt to find the geocache (container) hidden at that location.

What do I need?

A GPS device or a GPS-enabled mobile phone, so that you can navigate to the cache, and a Geocaching.com membership. The geocaching membership is free and lets you to discover



geocaches near you.

Make this your next adventure. Sign up at geocaching.com to start Geocaching and discover all the best-hidden places, around Stamford and around the world.

Happy Hunting!

Rules of Geocaching

There are 3 rules:

1. If you take something from the Geocache (or "Cache"), you will have to leave something of equal or greater value.
2. Write about your find in the Cache logbook.
3. Log your experience at www.Geocaching.com. And for those social networkers among us you can visit the Geocache pages on <http://www.facebook.com/Geocachingdotcom> and <http://twitter.com/GoGeocaching>



Did you know?

GEOCACHES ARE HIDDEN IN 191 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES ON ALL SEVEN CONTINENTS (EVEN ANTARCTICA)!

WHAT WE DO – ADMINISTRATION

By John Stone

When you think of the SLCT, you might conjure up visions of pristine forests, ponds teeming with wildlife and a welcome sanctuary from all the technology and stress of modern life. To no small extent, you're right – acquiring and protecting open space is why we're here.

But that's only part of the story. As the old saying goes, the job ain't over until the paperwork is done.

The SLCT is a tax-exempt, non-profit corporation as defined by the Internal Revenue Service. Getting this designation is difficult, and to meet IRA requirements, we have to keep track of donations and expenditures and the changing value of our land holdings. We must acknowledge donations in writing, and track financial and volunteer support from the community. And although we are tax exempt, we still must file an annual tax return, which must then be made available to the public (please contact us at info@stamfordland.org for our latest Form 990 filing if you're interested).

A large part of our work involves raising awareness and funds. So, like any other 21st century enterprise, we maintain constantly changing databases of donors, abutting landowners, elected officials and volunteers. We reach out to the community through email blasts and print newsletters. But our favorite awareness-building activities are the fun events we co-sponsor with local organizations like the Ferguson Library and Avalon Theatre, with topical speakers to help inform the public.



Finally, the SLCT is in the process of gaining accreditation by the Land Trust Alliance, a national organization of over 1,000 land trusts. The LTA has established a set of stringent, best-practice guidelines (available at www.landtrustalliance.org), touching on everything from accounting practices to how properties are stewarded. Obtaining LTA accreditation is a time consuming process, but one that will ultimately help us better meet our mission.

None of this happens without the help of many volunteers. If you believe in the value of preserving open space in Stamford, we can use your help too! There are many ways you can support our cause without even having to get your hands dirty. (And if you DO want to get your hands dirty, well we can handle that too! See our Barberry cleanup story on page 3.) Reach out to us at info@stamfordland.org if you'd like to join the team of people who make the SLCT work.

STAMFORD LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

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STAMFORD LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

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STAMFORD LAND CONSERVATION TRUST, INC.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Stamford Land Conservation Trust is dedicated to the preservation and protection of open space in the City of Stamford, both for the benefit of the citizens of the City and the sustainability of our environment.

Open space is land as nature left it, or land that has returned to a natural state over time.

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