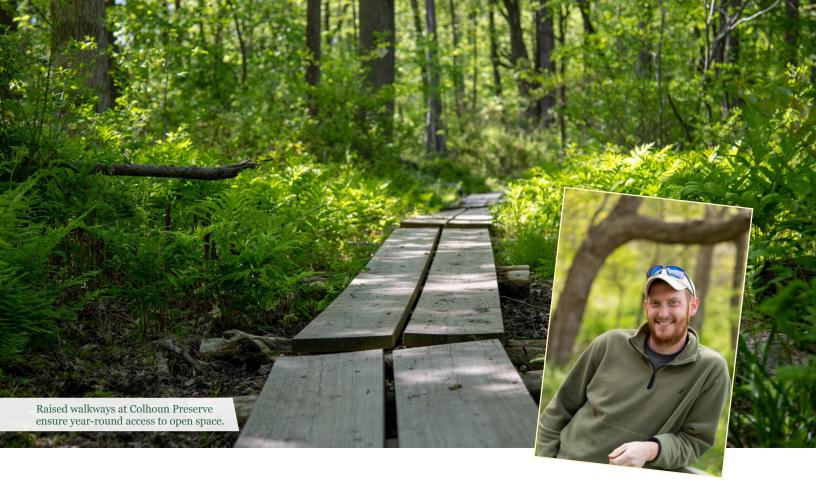


A Promise for People, for Nature. Forever.



# Looking Back, and Looking Forward

### A Message of Gratitude from the Executive Director

I t goes without saying that the past year has been difficult, but it was made easier thanks to you.

If you donated to the Land Trust, you helped ensure that our network of open space remains accessible and safe for all to enjoy. Thank you. If you volunteered, your time and talents helped to maintain our trails and protect valuable habitats. Thank you. If you participated in one of our events, you learned with us and helped us build lasting partnerships. Thank you.

Your support comes in many forms and creates positive change in New Canaan. Thank you.

### **Adjusting to a New Normal**

Land Trust preserves have always been places for our community to explore, learn new things, and connect with others. Since the onset of the pandemic, they have also become places to escape from Zoom meetings, find solace, and gather safely.

It's hard to say what the future holds, but one thing is for certain: open space and access to nature will continue to be a cherished resource for all.

As we enter the next phase of our new normal, we will continue to rely on the outdoors. By supporting the New Canaan Land Trust, you help ensure that our preserves will remain an enjoyable and accessible resource for our community. Your support also helps us grow those resources and protect New Canaan's valuable remaining open space.

### **Coming Back Stronger**

Driven by this imperative, the Land Trust has taken steps to come back stronger than ever.

A crucial step is the addition of new talented team members. This past summer, we hired a dedicated land steward to maintain and improve our network of open space, a position that we hope to renew each summer. We brought back some of our interns to work on important projects, including a land acknowledgement that will recognize the complex history of our lands and their indigenous inhabitants. And thanks to a generous grant from the Jeniam Foundation, an AmeriCorps member has just started an 11-month service term with us as a Community Engagement Coordinator.

With this added capacity, we will double down on our conservation efforts by reaching out to potential land donors and engaging them in the conservation process.

The Land Trust will also complete essential capital projects, including significant trail improvements, meadow restorations, and finding a permanent home for our organization.

And of course, we will develop fun and creative ways for our community to join us in the process.

### **Thank You**

It is an exciting time, indeed, and it's all possible because of you. Thank you!!

-Aaron Lefland, Executive Director

# **Keeping a Perpetual Promise**

The past year required us to adapt, innovate, and be flexible. One thing, however, has not changed - our promise to conserve land for people and nature forever. This promise is at the heart of everything we do. It is a promise that we don't take lightly, and one that has not wavered, even amid a global pandemic.

Thanks to your support, the Land Trust provides dedicated nature sanctuaries for our community and protects open space across New Canaan.

Here are just a few of the milestones that you helped us achieve. In the following pages, we'll explore some of the many ways that, together, we create positive change in our community.

### **Creating a Lasting Impact**



Hours dedicated to land stewardship by our 10 summer stewards and internship coordinator



Feet of raised walkways installed to improve trail accessibility



Birdhouses prepared for the nesting season and monitored throughout the summer



New GreenLink Trail constructed along Oenoke Lane



Climate change-themed programs, hosted in partnership with New Canaan Library



Acres across 4 watersheds, permanently protected



Guests at the Summer Sculpture Soiree, our first ever virtual gala



Feet of historic stone walls restored by volunteers and interns



Podcast with renowned firefly expert, Dr. Sarah Lewis, enjoyed by some of the 400+ visitors to the sanctuary





nearly 200 user-submitted checklists documenting over 100 different bird species.

log your own sightings!

# Our Forests and Their Champion Trees

# **Identifying Natural Wonders and Sharing them** with You

Walking through the woods, it's sometimes easy to overlook the wondrous world of trees. For decades or even centuries, the trees on our preserves and throughout New Canaan filter our air and water, absorb carbon, and provide food and shelter for wildlife. Often, it's not until one of these towering giants falls that we realize just how remarkable its life was.

Such is the story of a magnificent Red Oak that recently fell at the Watson-Symington Preserve. After clearing the tree's massive branches from the trail, Land Trust Executive Director Aaron Lefland cut a cross-section of the tree and counted more than 100 annual growth rings, pictured here. The full story of this tree can be found on our website's blog. It details the tree's life which pre-dates the American Civil War.

With your help, we will discover even more of New Canaan's remarkable trees.

# Land Trust Executive Director, Aaron Lefland, measures a tulin tree at Watson-Symington Preserve

Land Trust Executive Director, Aaron Leffand, measures a tulip tree at Watson-Symington Preserve.

### **Becoming a Citizen Scientist**

Launched in partnership with New Canaan Library, the New Canaan Champion Tree Project is a citizen science project that engages our community in identifying New Canaan's biggest trees. Citizen science kits can be borrowed from the library and contain everything needed to measure big trees: a tape measure, height gauge, tree identification book, and a datasheet.

"Trees are too often taken for granted. I was drawn to the project as a way to support the trees that provide so many benefits to us all. Many of our trees are suffering, and this was a rewarding way to help the Land Trust gather information that can be used to protect our town's magnificent trees."

—Jim Westlake, local citizen scientist

Once trees are measured, they are submitted into a database managed by the Land Trust. Local champions are then remeasured for consideration as State or even National champions.

### Learning, Together

Thanks to the help of our many citizen scientists, we've been able to identify and catalog some of the Land Trust's largest trees. This information helps us better understand how much carbon is stored on our preserves and about the health and variety of the many trees that make up our suburban forest.

You are also helping to discover more of the natural wonders that exist at the Land Trust's preserve. Whether it be a towering Red Oak at Watson-Symington, or a hardy American Chestnut at Browne Preserve, your support ensures that these incredible trees - and New Canaan's special places - are protected forever.

To learn more about and participate in the Champion Tree Project, visit www.NewCanaanLandTrust.org/champion-tree





### A Perfect Match: Art and Nature

When developing the first edition of the New Canaan Sculpture Trail, a global pandemic was the furthest thing from our minds. The motivation behind the exhibition was to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, introduce visitors to the Land Trust's network of open space, and showcase New Canaan as a nexus for design and creativity.

Yet as non-essential businesses temporarily shut their doors, the eight sculptures on the New Canaan Sculpture Trail remained open for all to visit and enjoy. More than 5,000 people visited the six sculptures installed at Land Trust preserves, and countless more enjoyed the works on display at Town Hall and the Carriage Barn Arts Center.

It turned out that the Sculpture Trail was exactly what our community needed during that challenging time.

### Creating Space for All with the Next Sculpture Trail

Today, our nation and our community are grappling with a different challenge: one of social justice, equity, race, and privilege. Just as the 2020 Sculpture Trail helped guide us through a challenging time, so will the 2022 edition.

Next year's exhibition will prompt artists to reflect on the conflicted history of land ownership in the United States and the ways that open space and land conservation can help build a more equitable future. In turn, events and programs will provide opportunities for discussion, reflection, and growth.

### What's to Come in 2022...

The New Canaan Sculpture Trail is a joint project between the New Canaan Land Trust and Carriage Barn Arts Center. The Harlan and Lois Anderson Family Foundation has once again signed on as the lead sponsor. Up to ten sculptures will be featured across New Canaan from June through October of 2022. Events, celebrations, and other gatherings are planned throughout the exhibition.

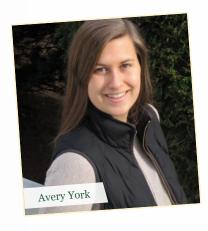


Learn more at Sculpture.NewCanaanLandTrust.org.



# **Turning Lemons into Lemonade**

# **Local College Students Spend Summer with Land Trust after COVID-18 Updends Plans**



Like countless college students across the country, Avery York and Eliza Pohle received last-minute news that their 2020 summer jobs were canceled. Left without summer plans, they were among dozens of local college students who reached out to the New Canaan Land Trust, hoping to make the most of a seemingly lost summer.

Thanks to an outpouring of support from attendees at our Summer Sculpture Soirée, coupled with generous grants from the Jeniam Foundation and New Canaan Community Foundation, the Land Trust created two seasonal internships to address this youth unemployment crisis.

These internships built on the Land Trust's annual high school internship program to create rewarding summer experiences for local students. In turn, our interns, Avery and Eliza, helped complete several meaningful projects that benefited the Land Trust and our community.

### Learning our History, with Avery

Avery, a lifetime resident of Norwalk and an Environment and Sustainability Studies major at Wake Forest University, jumped into the role of Historian. She helped digitize and catalog more than 50 years' worth of historical photographs, newspaper articles, and other archives, culminating in a digital presentation on the history of the Land Trust.

"I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to learn about and document the history of New Canaan and its Land Trust. So many people have worked so hard to conserve land in New Canaan."

—Avery York

Avery also conducted research at the New Canaan Historical Society about indigenous and colonial uses of the Land Trust properties. Before her work with the Land Trust, there was no documented record of the indigenous people who inhabited today's Land Trust properties.

Thanks to your support, we now have a better understanding of our history and will be working to incorporate that knowledge into future programs and publications.

### Stewarding the Land, with Eliza

Eliza, a New Canaan native and an Environmental Policy and Spanish double major at Colby College, filled the Land Steward position. In that role, she brought her skills as a backcountry trips leader to help the Summer Steward Interns complete trail maintenance and habitat restoration projects.

Eliza also had the unique opportunity to visit many of the Land Trust's lesser-known preserves. During the process, she learned how the Land Trust inspects all of its preserves annually.

"It was eye-opening to learn about Land Trust accreditation and the various ways that the New Canaan Land Trust ensures that its properties are protected now and into the future," said Eliza. "It's comforting to know that once land is conserved by the Land Trust, it really is protected forever."



### **Meet Some of Our Volunteers**

Volunteers accomplish so much, year after year. Their tireless efforts help us conserve land, keep our trails and preserves in tip-top shape, and more. The eight volunteers highlighted below come from all walks of life, but share a passion for open space and land conservation. We invite you to learn their reasons for volunteering with the Land Trust.



**Danny Babashak** is a local high schooler who stewards the Hawkins Preserve on North Wilton Rd. by clearing vines from trees and historic stone walls, mowing along the road's edge, and collecting litter. "It's challenging work, but it is also very rewarding and a fun way to spend time outside. Volunteering has strengthened my commitment to environmental conservation, and I look forward to continued work with the Land Trust."

**Deborah Burnaman** is a local realtor who, for 11 years, has been helping families discover all that New Canaan has to offer. "Our town's open space and vibrant non-profit community are two of its biggest assets. I volunteer because I want to see more land conserved today, and for future generations." As a volunteer on the Open Space Committee, Deborah and her business partner Aimee MacKimm, help the land trust identify conservation projects, and connect us with buyers, sellers, and other realtors who have an interest in conserving land.

**Elaine "Laney" Lloyd** uses her passion for photography to capture the natural beauty of the Land Trust. She was also our official photographer for the 2020 Sculpture Trail, and contributed thousands of photos to our media library. "I volunteered because I am passionate about the mission of the Land Trust. As the days, then months, then seasons passed, I fell in love with the properties and the sculptures." Many of Laney's photographs are featured throughout this report, including the striking image on the cover.

**The Neubohn Family** has made volunteering a family affair. "As neighbors to the Browne Preserve on Valley Road, we frequently enjoy the trails and wanted to find a way to give back to the land, and to the Land Trust." Lars and Gustav (father and son) have built multiple benches and are working on a kiosk for the trailhead. Jean and Heidi (mother and daughter) tend to birdhouses and regularly monitor the trails for litter, fallen trees, or other issues.

**Rebecca Tribelli** has been an advocate for land conservation for most of her life. "Growing up in rural Wisconsin provided me with a childhood free to explore my natural surroundings and taught me many valuable lessons. It's important to me that my children, and all of New Canaan's children, have the same opportunity." Leveraging her experience in event planning and her passion for engaging and educating others, Rebecca helps coordinate community events for the Land Trust, including some featured on the following page.

### Interested in Volunteering? There's Something for Everyone

There are countless ways to become a Land Trust volunteer. Your skills and talents are invaluable, from administrative work in the office to down and dirty trail work, to helping out with our events. We invite you to learn more about how you can participate in our volunteer opportunities at NewCanaanLandTrust.org/Volunteer.





Poet Laureate, Margaret Gibson, joined other CT poets in a plein-air reading of their recently published anthology.

# Staying Connected During a Year Apart

Through more than a dozen virtual, in-person, and hybrid events, we continued building community, together. From lectures about climate change to guided walks, we made the most of a year that did its best to keep us apart.

"The Land Trust's quick pivot to virtual events meant that our community could continue learning about a wide range of environmental issues. Their commitment, even in a pandemic, makes the organization such an important asset for our town."—Robin Bates-Mason, Town Council Member, and President of Planet New Canaan



After a heavy snowstorm, intrepid hikers gathered for socially-distanced snowshoeing, identifying wildlife tracks along the way.





# **Growing Our Network of Open Space**

Acre by Acre, You are Helping to Protect New Canaan's Special Places

In partnership with students from the Yale School of the Environment, the Land Trust recently released a strategic conservation plan that will guide us in doubling the size of our open space network. The plan calls for 400 new acres of land to be conserved by 2040. We've prioritized areas that protect healthy habitats and water resources, create recreational opportunities, and preserve historic and cultural resources in New Canaan.

With your support, we can achieve this ambitious goal.

Supporters like you make it possible for us to work with local families interested in conserving their land forever. Your gifts ensure that we can cover transaction expenses, including legal and appraisal fees, surveying, and other transaction costs, and that we never miss an opportunity to protect New Canaan's most valuable resource: its open space.



The New Canaan Land Trust builds upon a regional effort to conserve and connect open space.



To learn more about the plan, and our vision for a greener, healthier New Canaan, visit our website at NewCanaanLandTrust.org/protecting-open-space.



### Is Conservation Right for You or Someone You Know?

### **Leaving a Lasting Legacy**

E veryone conserves their land for different reasons, but each shares a common goal: to leave a lasting legacy. Together, we can create a greener and healthier future for New Canaan.

To learn more about how the Land Trust can help achieve your conservation vision, please call us at 203-972-1270. We will gladly review the conservation tools available to you and discuss some of the financial benefits of land conservation.

"The Land Trust made donating property simple and rewarding. My wife and I lived in New Canaan for more than twenty years and raised our family there. We love the outdoors, and we were drawn to New Canaan for the open spaces and landscapes."

-Scott Amero, donor of the 2.5-acre Amero Preserve on Turner Hill Road

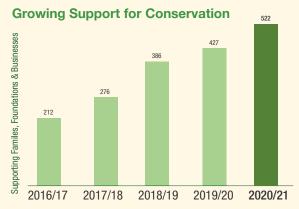
# Fisal Year 2021 Revenue

- Donations \$163,348
- Grants \$39,701
- Sponsorships \$4,120
- Board Contributions \$36,452
- Program & Other Revenue \$15,862
- Gifts In Kind \$11,911

Grand Total \$271,394.00

# Open Space Protection \$29,535 \$31,468 Land Stewardship \$88,606 \$20,465 Community Engagement \$78,761

**Grand Total \$248,835** 



Financial statements presented in this report are unaudited, and reflect operating revenue and expense for the fiscal year beginning June 1, 2020 and ending May 31, 2021.

Copies of the Land Trust's most recent audited financial statements and Form 990 are available upon request by contacting the Land Trust at 203-972-1270 or emailing info@newcanaanlandtrust.org.



# An Organization You Can Trust

As a nationally accredited Land Trust, we believe in building an organization that is here to stay. Your gifts are investments in the future of everyone who lives in and visits New Canaan—as well as the wildlife who call it home.



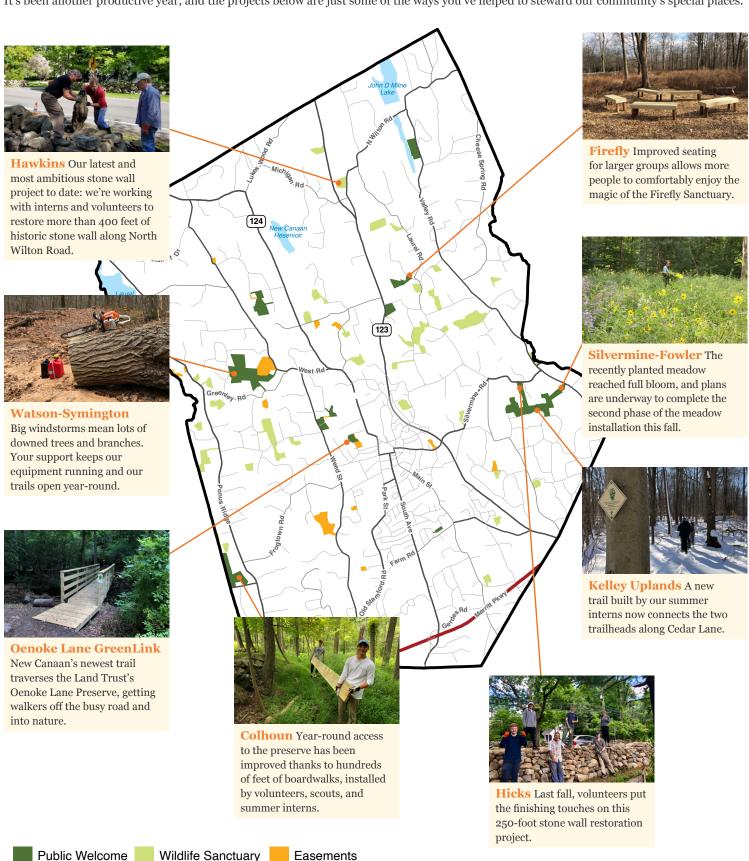
"We've always known that the New Canaan Land Trust was doing incredible work. National accreditation is a major milestone for the Land Trust, and should give community members the confidence to support their excellent work." —Lauren Patterson, President and CEO of the New Canaan Community Foundation



### Caring for the Land, for our Community

Through your support, once a Land Trust preserve is protected, it will be cared for and protected for generations to come. Across our network of open space, we strive to create healthy habitats and opportunities for recreation, while protecting our town's natural resources.

It's been another productive year, and the projects below are just some of the ways you've helped to steward our community's special places.



# Thank you for making a

#### SUPPORTER (<\$50)

Amazon Smile \* Anonymous \* Jonathan and Lisa Bitting \* Maeve Carr Ross and Susie Catlin Center for Optimum Health Charlie and Monica Chimera Valerie Connally Jenette D'Alessandro ★ Meri Erickson Deborah Haines Lenore Herbst Charles and Julie Hoffman Nancy and Lee Jordan Nancy Kitchener Alyssa MacKenzie Marc and Maria Magliacano Natalie McPartland Patricia Oxman Helen Belluschi Charlie and Debbie Rose Jeff Sandreuter and Lisa Ferrante Susan Sanford \* Scott Sorel Robert and Jodi Stiffelman Ann Thurber PayPal Giving Fund ★ Paul and Elizabeth Vigano ★ Jennifer and Peter Walsh Walter Stewart Co. Joseph and Maria Weingarten

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Michelle Wilkes

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Peter Giannone Rob and Kara Gilliam Beth and Arthur Golden

Mona Gowdy Jack Gunther Jr \* Alan and Loni Haas \* Ken and Jean Halaiian Doug and Katherine Harris

Kristen Hartofilis Walter and Edith Holland Peter and Cynthia Hurvitz \*

Peggy Jav \* Barbara Johansen \* Brad and Sandi Johnson

Tony Kave ★ Christa Kenin Russell and Nicki Kimes Benjamin and Adrienne

Kirschenbaum \* Larry and Ilene Lefland Andrey and Irina Lvovsky \* Sharon Maasdorp

Tiger Mann \* Carl Mason and Robin Bates-Mason \*

Christine Matthews Maureen and Ernest Maver

Richard Miller Bob and Robin Miner ★ Lauren Mottley ★ Christian and Stacy Murphy Karen Murphy

Barb Norris \* Penny Ross Pete and Alice Runnette ★ Domenic and Elizabeth Sammarco \*

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Sue Sherwood >

Steve and Gloria Simon Doug and Debbie Simpson \* Nancy Stass

Karen Stumpenhagen \* Anne and John Tropeano Dick Troy \*

Barbara Upson Jeffrey Urstadt \* Karin Verdi \*

Brian Walker and Abby Gross Fric and Katie Welles \* Thomas White

Amy Zoller

### FAMILY MEMBER (\$100+)

Jonathan and Barb Achenbaum \* Brad and Michele Adamczyk Victor Alvarez and Miki Porta \* Roy and Sue Anderson ★ Anonymous (2) Neil and Camilla Austin ★ Paul and Cindy Bamatter ★ Lucy Baney Peter and Pamela Barcia \* Steven and Becky Barlow Duke and Gaby Beecher ★ Thomas Berntsen John and Linda Bertani Bill and Bridget Besgen Steven Bierman and Jerrilyn Glen and Megan Bischoff ★

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John and Christine Deklerk ★ Richard and Mary Depatie \*

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Robert Docters and Nancy Lothrop Shonah Drakos

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Eleanor O'Neill ★ Kirtiman Pathak Mark and Cynthia Peiser ★ Chris and Julie Peter

Rob Petersen ★ Stephen and Karen Philipson

Donations reflect cumulative charitable gifts between June 1, 2020 and May 31, 2021. We apologize if we inadvertently misspelled or omitted your name, and hope that you will contact us so that we may correct our records.

### You Make It All Possible - Thank You!

Have you ever wondered what New Canaan would be like without our woodlands, flowing streams, or scenic meadows? Together, we can protect our network of open space for generations to come.

Thanks to you, and so many in our community, we can preserve the scenic beauty of our town, give our residents access to nature, and create havens for our native plants and animals. Your commitment to the Land Trust ensures that New Canaan will remain a healthy, beautiful, and unique place to call home.



# difference in our community

Steven Phillips and Jennifer Frazer ★ Stephen and Christine Pinney \* Thomas and Jodi Pistolas Larry and Mary Pitt ★ Ed and Laura Pla Julia Portale \* Cynthia Potter Dan and Penny Rashin \* James Rattigan William Reed and Kathleen Campbell Michael and Julie Reeves ★ Dara Reid Amy Reid \* Walter Reilly \* Keith and Marina Richev ★ Stephen and Katharine Roach ★ Scott and Renee Roen ★ Rob and Kit Rohn ★ Steve and Sue Root ★ William Root \* Tara Rozen ★ Pamela Safford Lois Sandberg Jeremy and Margaret Saunders ★ Joseph and Kristen Schlim ★ Brian and Susan Scott ★ Susan Scully Rick and Kristin Selvala John and Kathleen Servidea Daniel and Sarah Shevchik Amy Silberfein Sarah Simmons Skip and Margo Sisson Scott and Abby Skidmore Hunter and Marcia Smith Roger and Nell Smith \* Karen Sneirson \* Robert and Barbara Snell Corliss Spencer ★ Dave and Sue Squier Thomas and Janet Stadler \* John and Shirley Stancik \* Michael and Jill Stavman \* Chip and Anne Steppacher Jon and Sue Stone ★ Dennis Sweenev \* Ellen Tackling The Hygeia Foundation Robert Trudel and Amy Zinser Roy and Laura Turner III David and Veronica Verklin Catherine Viggiano Edward Vollmer \* Meg Walsh Jon and Anita Waxberg \* Dan and Richelle Weed Weed and Durvea Ross and Jane Weiner

Mason and Kathryn Wells \*

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Holly Williams Brittain ★
Sarah Wilson
Peter and Kristina Woods ★
Laurence and Catherine Wooters
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### STEWARD (\$2,500+)

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Art Berry ★
Tom and Joy Cronin ★
Susanne Hollinger
Hugo and Ingrid Hollinger ★
Eads and Polly Johnson ★
Chris and Kay Linneman ★
Bob and Robin Lord ★
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Lindsay Tucker ★
Dan and Nancy Welch ★

### CONSERVATIONIST (\$5,000+)

Anonymous ★
Kevin and Cristen Cottrell ★
Bob Doran - The Marketing Loft
The Stuart Higley Foundation ★
David and Sara Hunt ★
Mark and Steffi Loomis ★

### VISIONARY (\$10,000+)

The Harlan and Lois Anderson Family Foundation ★
Anonymous ★
Jim and Dede Bartlett ★
The M.L.E. Foundation, Inc. ★
The New Canaan Community
Foundation ★

Donated consecutively for ★ 2+ years ★ 5+ years ★ 10+ years

### Planned Giving with the New Canaan Land Trust

### **Imagine the Impact You Will Have**

If you love the lands and waters of New Canaan and want to make sure that these special places are conserved and cared for, for generations to come, consider a gift in your will and leave a lasting legacy. You can also designate a gift of improved property or other assets.



P.O. Box 425 New Canaan, CT 06840

### **Land Trust Leadership**

President: Tom Cronin Treasurer: Art Berry Secretary: Nancy Bemis

Susan Bergen **Emily Nissley** Cristen Cottrell Tom Reynolds Dave Hunt Beth Sanford Eads Johnson Chris Schipper Al Tibbetts Dave Kelly

**Executive Director: Aaron Lefland** 



### You're Invited...

### To the Land Trust's 54th Annual Meeting

Wednesday, November 10, 2021

6:00 - 8:00pm at the New Canaan Nature Center

The Annual Meeting is a great way to learn about the many ways that you have helped to make a difference through the New Canaan Land Trust. We'll be joined by Dr. Spencer Meyer, Senior Conservationist at Highstead, for a presentation about conservation finance and landscape-scale conservation efforts in New England.



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

### **Stay Connected Year-Round**

Subscribe to the Land Trust's eNews for monthly updates, invitations to events, and more. Head to our website to sign up.



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