



Annual Report 2023

October 2022 through September 2023

Land Conservation and Stewardship

- In May, 2023, HLT closed on a pristine 51-acre parcel on Mill Street near route 20 in West Hartland. The property was purchased with an In-Lieu Fee award through the Army Corps of Engineers and Audubon CT, with additional support from the Farmington River Coordinating Committee, and is now known as the **Mill District Nature Sanctuary**. A Mitigation Plan and the property's Conservation and Management Plan are underway. **Tom Kean** has volunteered to serve as Property Monitor.
- On HLT's **Bassett-Kell Preserve**, mitigation of invasive phragmites is ongoing, with technical support from biologist John Anderson. Kiosks with trail maps have been installed in both ends of the Preserve's red trail.
- The **Beach Nature Preserve** now has two great new volunteers to help with stewardship: **Wade Banks** as the property's Trail Manager has downed several hazardous dead ash trees and re-routed part of the trail to avoid our thriving milkweed colony. **Jeff DeMeglio** is serving as Property Monitor. Thanks as well to HLT volunteer **Tom Dyer** who pulled lots of invasive Oriental Bittersweet from the meadow.
- CT Agricultural Experiment Station Entomologist Carole Cheah, Ph.D., made two visits to HLT's **Mill District Nature Preserve** to assess damage to the Preserve's hemlock trees from the hemlock woolly adelgid and to release a small colony of predator ladybeetles obtained through a grant from the Farmington River Coordinating Committee. Work crews built a new bridge by the beaver pond and posted signage in an attempt to deter ATVs from encroaching on the property. A drone observation was conducted. Thanks to **Nicki Hall** and **Sam Slater** for their service as Property Monitors and also to all those who participated in trail maintenance.

Community Outreach and Education

- A variety of indoor as well as outdoor programs were held this year. Speaker Series events included National Park Service's **Liz Lacy** presenting on Wild and Scenic River Stewardship and archaeologist **Lucianne Lavin, Ph.D.** who spoke on Native American Winter. HLT hosted its first Birding Hike on the Mill District Nature Preserve led by **Fran Zygmunt**; we also held a CT Trails Day Hike on the Mill District and Bassett-Kell Trails, again led by **Steve and Pam Emmons**. During May a group of citizen scientists assessed wildlife "pinchpoints" in both East and West Hartland for the **Follow the Forest** initiative promoting wildlife corridors.
- The pollinator garden at Hartland School was replanted and a rain barrel system to water the raised beds was installed. Thanks to **Amanda Lukingbeal, Tom Kean** and all the volunteers who worked on this project; the results look great.
- The Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Committee awarded \$2,300 to Hartland School for enhancements to the Salmon-in-Schools program. HLT volunteers assisted Middle School science teacher Deb Costolnick with proposal-writing. Deb was able to purchase some needed equipment and reported that the students gained much from having the Farmington River Watershed Association's biologist involved in this fun educational program.
- HLT also gave a presentation to the Hartland Women Creating Community, continued cooperation with the Hartland Historical Society and the Lions' Club in delivering Welcome

Packets to new Hartland residents, manned a booth at the Firemans' Carnival and marched in both the Memorial Day and Carnival parades.

Collaboration with Conservation Organizations/Conference and Workshop Participation

- 5 HLT Directors attended the CT Land Conservation Council's annual conference.
- HLT Board members monitored and submitted comments regarding MDC's Colebrook Reservoir abandonment permit application as well as State legislation banning the feeding of wildlife.

Board and Organizational Development

- HLT's Board welcomed two new members: **Tom Kean** of West Hartland and **Tom LeClerc** of East Hartland.
- HLT Board adopted a new Stewardship Policy
- Funds were transferred to an investment vehicle

Fundraising

- A new supply of HLT caps was printed due to popular demand!
- Successful membership drive (with newsletter) and Year-end Annual Appeal were conducted
- Ninth Flatbread fundraiser was held

Public Communication/Social Media

- HLT's Annual Newsletter, *The Preservationist*, again mailed to all Hartland residents
- Board members **Jane Jones, Amanda Lukingbeal and Susan Pearson** continue to keep our community informed via the HLT website, Facebook page and Mail Chimp e-mails.

Regional Membership/Partner Organizations

- Land Trust Alliance
- CT Land Conservation Council
- Housatonic Valley Association/Litchfield Greenprints
- Sharon Audubon Center
- Farmington River Coordinating Committee
- Lower Farmington River/Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic Committee
- Horace B. Clark Woods Advisory Committee
- State of CT Department of Children and Families' Wilderness School

Heartfelt thanks to the many volunteers, members and donors who have helped build HLT into a thriving organization "working for the preservation and enjoyment of open space in our community".