



What Has Been Protected

Compiled by Jenny Kitsen and Bill Myers • January 2023

The Chester Land Trust maintains lands that have been deeded to the Trust with the intent to preserve the natural habitat and assure the environmental health of these properties. Members of the Land Trust conduct annual inspections of each property to assess and improve when necessary the conditions of each site. These Chester parcels of land have diverse topography and ecological characteristics.

Duck Pond Preserve

This preserve consists of 6.2 acres of upland woods bordering the Duck Pond marsh, located southwest of 195 West Main Street. It contains some dense covering of shrubs and vines. At the south end of this preserve is the Cedar Swamp. It is a valuable natural habitat for deer, bobcats, mammals, and birds.

Burr Brook Preserve

This small preserve, acquired in 1998, has a triangular shape covering approximately 1.63 acres. It is on the south side of the Burr Brook Bridge on Route 148 near the intersection of Route 145. There is a stone wall at the eastern boundary. The western border is not well defined due to extensive underbrush and significant wetlands. Burr Brook runs directly through the parcel and is a major important tributary to the Pattaconk Brook.

Chester Creek Preserves

There are three parcels of marsh land consisting of 40 acres adjacent to the tidal Chester Creek, which were transferred from The Nature Conservancy to the Chester Land Trust in 1999. This parcel is east of Route 154. Prior to this land transfer, the one large parcel of 32 acres was given by the Carol Nelson Family in 1986 and the remaining two parcels of ap-

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proximately 8 acres were given by Karl Thonnes in July 1990 to the Nature Conservancy. The Chester Creek has extensive mud flats at low tide. This unique freshwater marsh is an important area for migrating waterfowl. The birds feed on the wild rice that exists in the creek. There is valuable ecological significance in the tidal fluctuations; the area serves as a feeding, nursery and spawning ground for several species of fish.

Two pieces of the preserve are a narrow marsh strip, of 8 acres on Water Street, west of and near the bridge on Route 154 next to Moravelas Pizza. The larger parcel of 32 acres is east of Route 154, and on the north side of Grote Road, having extensive covering of phragmites at the marsh level. In 2018, an Osprey Nest Platform with a “husband’s perch” was installed in the Chester Creek by the Land Trust and can be seen from Grote Road. An Osprey family has been enjoying their new home every year. The narrow land section located halfway down Grote Road has hardwood trees and mountain laurel.

Carini and Scudder Preserves

In the center of Chester next to the Herbery is the 6.5 acre Carini preserve at 30 Water St. The Land Trust has developed this site for public use. Visitors are encouraged to have a restful picnic, relax, or fish in the Chester Creek or the adjoining Great Brook. Trust members have planted new pollinator native plants at the entrance of the site. This property is at the confluence of the Great Brook and Pattaconk Brook which flow into Chester Creek. In 2010, the Land Trust Trustees constructed a gazebo at the end of the preserve. In 2020, new interior seating was installed with repainting and staining of the entire gazebo.

In 2020, a new informational storyboard has been installed at the restored Carini kiosk about the Land Trust and the preserves. In the past, educational site visits have been conducted by trustees for the children from the elementary school.

The adjacent 1/2 acre of land east of Carini Preserve at 34 Water St is known as the Henry Scudder Preserve, was donated to the Land Trust by the widow of Henry Scudder. The small vacant house was removed in 2000. The Trust volunteers have cleared the land, planted several native species and created a small patio area. There are two granite benches for visitors to observe the birds in the Chester Creek.

Waterhouse Brook Preserve

The Land Trust obtained the title, in 2002, for this 2.2 acre parcel of land after the CT Department of Environmental Protection certified the site was free of all pollutants. This parcel of tidal wetlands is located on the left side of Dock Road, immediately after crossing the Valley Railroad tracks.

Piquet Preserve

In 2000, owner Elise Piquet at 28 Wig Hill Road, gave approximately 8 acres to the Land Trust. This parcel is located behind the existing property that contains a home and garage/studio building. The stipulation by Mrs. Piquet is that the land remains undisturbed and undeveloped.

Rayner Preserve

In 2009, a donation of 2.7 acres was received from the Rayner family of woodland property on West Main Street located southeast of the Brushmill Restaurant. The Pataconk Brook passes through the property.

Gateway Preserve

The Connecticut River Gateway Commission gave 14.6 acres of undeveloped land on the Connecticut River to the Chester Land Trust in March 2014. The property runs parallel to the Valley Railroad Tracks east of Railroad Avenue. It has some upland hardwoods as well as significant (and) tidal marshland, and offers wonderful views of the Connecticut River. Access to the preserve is complicated with an easement walk area behind the marina and east of railroad tracks. Difficult access complications continue to be unresolved.

Motley Preserve

The Constance Baker Motley Preserve was purchased by donations, and funding from members of the Chester Land Trust in November 2016. This 6.7 acre Preserve is located at 100 Cedar Lake Road across the street from the seasonal home that was owned by the Motley family for 40 years. The pie shaped preserve is surrounded by the Cockaponset State Forest. The land by the street has been cleared to provide a small parking area with a picnic table. The kiosk describes some of the many accomplishments of Judge Motley. The Chester Land Trust trustees have uncovered Judge Motley's husband's beautiful vegetable and flower gardens. CLT has developed in 2020 a half mile loop hiking trail named "The Little Rock Nine Trail" on the preserve. This is the Land Trusts only established hiking trail at this time. This preserve was added to the Connecticut Freedom Trail in October 2019.

Woods Preserve

In 1998, 1/2 acre located at the southwestern end of the Chester Creek bridge on Route 154 was given to the Land Trust from the Leland Wood Estate. Since the reconstruction of the bridge, this marshy land is now partially under the end of the bridge.

Lakeview Preserves

In the fall of 2021, the Land Trust acquired 2 donations of undeveloped land parcels near the top of Lakeview Avenue near Cedar Lake. The first parcel on the north side of Lakeview Ave was donated by the Greco family, and the second parcel on the south side was donated by Eli and Rachael, both neighboring families. Each parcel is 1/2 acre, with both parcels together totaling about 1 acre. They are located directly opposite each other and consist of upland hardwoods and some seasonal partial wetlands. Both parcels serve an important purpose in the protection of a significant watercourse leading directly to Burr Brook, which then feeds the Pataconk Brook. This area is a natural wildlife corridor supporting a variety of animals, birds, and amphibians which regularly use these two parcels.

The Old Tannery Preserve

In March 2022, the Chester Land Trust received the donation of the one half acre property that was once part of the “Old Tanning Yard” located near the intersection of Goose Hill Rd and King’s Highway. This gift from Geraldine and Nathan Jacobson protects a unique piece of Chester history from the 1800s. The mill foundation stones and trough stones are still visible in the wooded site. For more information about the history of the tannery, see the file in “Properties section” on CLT website.

Melillo Preserve

In June of 2022, the Chester Land Trust received a generous donation of 2 acres of land from the Melillo family. The donation was coordinated by Ann Brint who worked with the land trust to execute the property transfer. This preserve is located on the south side of Route 148 in Chester, about 1/8th of a mile west of the intersection of Route 145 and Route 148. The Burr Brook meanders directly thru this new preserve of extensive wetlands, serving as important and crucial wildlife habitat. This property is almost adjacent to the 1.6 acre “Burr Brook Preserve” currently owned by the land trust.

The Pines and Liberty Ridge Conservation Easements

These two easements are private property, and not owned by the Trust. These properties cannot be developed and serve as open buffer habitat space next to homes that have been developed close to wetland. The Pines Easement was established in 1988 and consists of 4 acres. It has rolling terrain with a marshy wet watercourse that flows in a snakelike pattern to Cedar Swamp. Hemlock, mountain laurel and white pine dominate the area. It is located behind the homes on the east side of Pine Knoll Drive. No public access is permitted on this Conservation Easement.

The Liberty Ridge Easement, established in 1997, is located between Brook Lane and Liberty Street, consisting of approximately 4 acres with a high, hilly, wooded terrain. The Deep Hollow stream is to the north side of this easement. Hemlocks and excessive amount of Japanese Barberry exist. No public access is permitted on this Conservation Easement.

Bush Conservation Easement

In 2014, Shirley Feldmann Bush established a 10 acre Conservation Easement on Cedar Lake Road south of the residential home at 11 Cedar Lake Road. The easement has access to the road and extends back to about the 38 acres she gave to Cockaponset State Forest. The easement has 6 acres of open, cleared meadow; the other 4 acres is woodland of mixed pine and hardwood trees. The space is a sanctuary for wildlife. The land is to remain in its natural state and cannot be developed, and no public access is permitted on this Conservation Easement.

Note: The Land Trust Board invites Chester residents to volunteer to be stewards to help monitor and protect these wonderful, valuable open spaces for our community.

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