

**CLINTON LAND CONSERVATION TRUST, INC.  
51st ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS**

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT  
FOR THE PERIOD SEPTEMBER 1, 2018 to AUGUST 31, 2019**

**FINANCIAL STATUS**

We started our fiscal year with investments and cash totaling \$625,500.20 and ended our fiscal year on August 31, 2019 with investments and cash totaling \$582,316.37. This represents a net decrease in our endowment portfolio of \$43,183.83.

Dividends and interest earned on investments this year totaled \$9,282.91. We received \$5,944.41 in membership dues and for general donations, which include donations for the David and Alice Crosby Scholarship, land acquisition, programs and maintenance.

We had operating expenses of \$10,804.00 this year, compared with \$20,921.00 last year, which represents a decrease of \$10,117.00. Expenses include costs for insurance, property maintenance, Website and network support, accounting fees, printing and postage, boundary and trail maintenance, and our annual scholarship awards. We also have an outstanding loan in the amount of \$73,142.78.00, borrowed for the purchase of the Weisse-Loveday property.

The Finance Committee, which includes our treasurer Jack Breen, Ken McDonnell, Mike Houde, our bookkeeper Kathy Tessman, our accountant Dave Reynolds and Dave Adams from Morgan Stanley Smith Barney, helped in compiling information for this annual report.

This report will be posted on our Website within the next week or two. We completed and filed our 990 Tax Return as required by the IRS for the previous fiscal year.

**LAND HOLDINGS**

The Trust acquired no new properties during this past year. The total acreage owned by the Trust remains at 878.37 acres. The list of properties held by the Trust is attached to this report. The Trust also owns conservation easements on five privately owned parcels representing approximately 3 acres.

**STEWARDSHIP OF LAND**

Vice President Frank Byrne continued as chair of our Land Management Committee, which includes Dana Whitney and Gary Stevens. Frank and his land

management committee, along with our volunteers, continued their regular monthly work days held on the second Saturday of every month from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. at various properties as listed on our Website. This year work focused on keeping the entrances at Peters Memorial Woods and The Jesse Buell Forest trimmed up. Also, we kept the grassy trails mowed in Jesse Buell Forest and kept the alternate entrance to Jesse Buell on Taylor Ridge Road mowed as well.

We have also kept the trails at The Elliott Preserve mowed, and Gary Stevens, with help from Mike Hesel, brought their skid steers down to the Elliott Preserve to do the twice annual field mowing to maintain the property as a meadow.

Clinton resident volunteer, Bion Shepard, repainted the trail blazes in Peters Memorial Woods, because they were beginning to fade.

Dana Whitney has begun work on blazing and cutting new trails in our new property, The Weiss Loveday Watershed, with help from local members of the Connecticut River Horse Council. We will be working on the trails beginning in late fall and hope to have a good portion of them finished up some time this winter. Gary Stevens, a Board member and owner of Steven Excavating, has put in a short road and parking area for access to the Weiss Loveday Watershed on River Road heading north a short way after the entrance to Riverdale Farm Campsite.

As always, thank you to all of our volunteers who help with the maintenance of our properties. We certainly could not do it without you.

## **OUTREACH AND EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS**

Sally Heffernan continued as chair of our Outreach Committee, which also includes Larry Ouellette, Mike Castiglione, Kim Flanagan and Dana Skidmore. This committee has been in charge of publicity and environmental education through various events throughout the year.

The 21st Annual Alice and David Crosby Scholarship was awarded this year to 2019 Morgan School graduate, Rachel Flanagan, who is currently attending Worcester Poly Tech studying Civil Engineering with a focus in Urban Development and Environmental Sustainability.

The 10<sup>th</sup> annual Eunice Carter Symonds Scholarships were awarded this year to 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students at the Abraham Pierson School. The scholarship winners were Declan Shortt, Lexie Neumann, Rayna Vanderwood, Nate Plunske, Savannah Powell and Assandro Guardado. Some of the students attended a two-week session and others attended a one week session at the Bushy Hill Camp in Essex. Bushy Hill Camp's program has been recognized nationally and has been used as a model for environmental camp programs across the country.

In February, the Trust again sponsored a Winter Animal Tracking Program called “Who’s Been in My Back Yard?” at the Indian River Complex. Eric Becker, former director of Bushy Hill Camp, did an excellent job engaging and teaching a large group of kids how to identify different animal tracks in the snow.

In April we held our first Wild and Scenic Film Festival to a sold-out crowd at the Andrews Memorial Town Hall auditorium. Partnering with the Madison Land Trust, we presented ten short films on various environmental topics, preceded by a warm reception featuring local beers, wine and gourmet cheeses. We raised over \$12,000, shared between the two land trusts.

Also in April, we sponsored the 17th annual Peeper Prowl at the Indian River Complex with Brendan Hylan of the Bushy Hill Camp. After Brendan’s indoor presentation to a full house of children and parents on microorganisms, frogs and amphibians found in ponds and vernal pools, the group went outside for the annual expedition into the woods and vernal pool adjacent to the playing fields.

At the end of May, Board members Mike Houde and Dana Skidmore held the last of the annual field trips to the Town Beach with students from the Abraham Pierson School for “Pierson Beach Day.” This year’s event again included helpers from the Morgan School and members of the Clinton Shellfish Commission, along with parents and retired teacher volunteers. With the closing of the Pierson School, this event will not continue.

On the first weekend in June the Land Trust hosted a Trail Days event at the Peters Memorial Woods.

2019 marked the 12<sup>th</sup> year of Ecology Camp, led by Board member Dana Skidmore. 60 campers and 13 counselors enjoyed five mornings of science exploration at the Town Beach, Peter’s Memorial Woods and the trails at the Indian River Recreational area. Unfortunately, rain kept us away from exploring the Peters Memorial Woods habitat.

The goal of the Ecology Camp each year is to expose children to the different habitats in and around Clinton. By doing this, campers gain an appreciation for what is truly living in their “back yard.” Through this educational experience, the hope is that these young environmentalists will continue to appreciate and protect the environment throughout their lives.

In July the Trust co-sponsored a summer reading program with the Henry Carter Hull Library in honor of Lynnabeth Mays. This year’s program was called “Story Walk,” in which children read a book titled *Over in the Forest*, about different birds and animals that live in the forest. The children could follow the story by going to stations set up outside the library.

In September Board member Kim Flanagan chaired the annual Beach Cleanup at the Clinton Town Beach in conjunction with “Save the Sound.” Board members, along with a group of volunteers and members of Clinton’s Pretty Committee collected trash from beaches along the Clinton Harbor, Hammock River and Cedar Island. Each year all the debris is categorized and documented and the results are sent to Save the Sound for analysis.

At the Annual Meeting in October, Dr. Kimberly Stoner presented a program entitled “Planting for the Bees Needs, Providing Habitat for Honey Bees and Wild Bees.”

In April of this year, the Trust was contacted by HNTB Corporation, an environmental engineering firm from Boston. They work with Amtrak Railroad on a variety of wetland issues. Amtrak is currently expanding the width of its track in Clinton, and the expansion is impacting some wetlands. Amtrak is required by Federal Law to mitigate any wetland issues that exist in the towns affected by the track expansion and to compensate the wetland loss that occurs when the track is widened. The Board has met with HNTB and has had discussions with them about invasive species mitigation on the Lucy Elliott preserve, and they are currently working on a proposal that would renovate the wetland area of the preserve. At the July Board meeting, the Board voted to allow HNTB to move ahead with the planned mitigation design.

John Pease of Networks Plus continues to maintain our Website, [www.clintonlandtrust.org](http://www.clintonlandtrust.org).

## **GRANTS AND LAND ACQUISITION**

None.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

Our secretary, Sue Savitt, has updated our membership and continues to keep it current. Our total number of active memberships of individuals, families and businesses who renew annually, plus the life memberships is 164. The breakdown of memberships is as follows:

- Individual Members: 50
- Family Members: 55
- Life Members: 57
- Business Members: 2

Our membership categories have been reduced to the following three with these updated dues amounts:

- Individual Annual (\$25)
- Family Annual (\$40)
- Business Annual (\$50)

## **PRESIDENT'S COMMENTS**

There has been a lot of news lately concerning the environment and climate change. That's a good thing, but sometimes when I read and think about the issue, I feel overwhelmed. I don't think I'm alone in this regard. A few weeks back I read an article written by Al Gore. Remember Al Gore, our former vice president? The article was called "The Climate Crisis is the Battle of Our Time, and We Can Win." In the article, Gore recognizes the many positive steps that have been taken by nations around the world to reduce carbon dioxide from our atmosphere. He also acknowledges the dangers of our continued investment in fossil fuels, reckless extraction of natural resources, and the wanton destruction of the rain forests, which are considered the lungs of the planet and home to indigenous people and diverse animal species.

Overall, though, the article is hopeful. What is needed is for people to find the will to make changes in how we interact with our planet. We need to change your way of thinking about Mother Earth. We must recognize that there is no "planet B," and acknowledge that all cultures must come to value and protect the environment and all living things on earth—to value life itself.

How do we get involved in this battle? A good place to start is at the Natural Resource Defense Council's Website, [NRDC.org](http://NRDC.org). There you can find out what you can do to help win this battle to save our planet.

My favorite line in Al Gore's article is, "...and so far the best available technology for pulling carbon dioxide from the air is something called a tree." For starters I urge you all to think globally, act locally and plant a tree or two.

Respectfully submitted,  
Michael J. Houde  
President of the Clinton Land Conservation Trust, Inc.  
October 21, 2019