



Years of Preserving Land *1966-2016*



ASPETUCK LAND TRUST
2015 ANNUAL REPORT

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Dear Aspetuck Land Trust Supporter,

Since 1966, the Aspetuck Land Trust (ALT) has partnered with our members to preserve land as open space and nurture a love of nature in Fairfield County residents. This year's annual report provides an opportunity to reflect not just on this year's accomplishments, but 50 ALT highlights from the last 50 years.

Thanks to the help and financial support of community members like you, ALT maintains 146 open spaces and 40 miles of hiking trails on 1,700+ acres in the towns of Westport, Weston, Fairfield, Easton, Wilton, Redding and Bridgeport. Our managed open spaces provide safe refuge for more than 500 species of mammals, birds, amphibians, insects and plants and countless hours of outdoor enjoyment for the general public.

As we celebrate our half century of preserving land, we also want to set the stage for the next 50 years. To enable us to continue to deliver on our mission to "preserve open space, farm and forest land and natural resources in the towns of Easton, Weston, Fairfield and Westport for the benefit and education of the public" we have set an ambitious goal for our 50th Anniversary year. **To be a more powerful environmental organization, we want to increase our ranks to 1,000 members! For every new member, we can preserve more land. If you're not a current member, please join us by making a tax-deductible donation today.** Already a member? Help us spread the word by sharing your love for our environment with friends and family or giving them the gift of membership.



ALT blueberries. Photo credit: Nancy Moon.

To celebrate our 50th Anniversary you can adopt a blueberry bush for \$50. Simply return the enclosed donation envelope and write "blueberry bush sponsor." Blueberry bush sponsors will be invited to plant their bush in the orchard this fall.

We are 850 members strong. We are local. We are your neighbors. We are your land trust.

Thank you for your support!


Dick Ritzel
President


David Brant
Executive Director

PS: We've made it easy to become a member by enclosing a pre-addressed envelope. Or you can donate online by visiting www.aspetucklandtrust.org. All donations are tax-deductible.

50 Accomplishments for 50 Years!

1966 – 1976

- 1 Aspetuck Land Trust (ALT) founded by Westport resident Barlow Cutler Wotton with help from Leonard Schine to provide better protection to undeveloped land during a time of intense development pressure.



Distinguished Service

Barlow Cutler-Wotton and Leonard Schine received the distinguished service award presented by the Aspetuck Land Trust at the trust's 12th Anniversary meeting. James Daniel (right), president of the trust, presented the awards.

- 2 The scope of the Land Trust expands to include the four towns traversed by the Aspetuck River— Easton, Fairfield, Weston and Westport.
- 3 First nature preserve established in Westport in 1967 on property donated by Ralph Glendinning. Property is named the Leonard Schine Preserve, now the home of our popular Natural Playground and children's nature trail.



Cover photo top: Early leaders of Aspetuck Land Trust (from left): Margery Silk, Ruth Glendinning, and Barlow Cutler-Wotton, founder of Aspetuck Land Trust.

Cover photo bottom: View from the Trout Brook Valley orchard. Photo credit: Jacquie Littlejohn.



CHARLIE PUTNAM TOURS PRESERVE IN WESTON
Charlie Putnam — best friend of the Aspetuck Land Trust

Charlie Putnam, early leader of ALT.

- 4 The Aspetuck Land Trust holds its first public meeting on Friday, March 31, 1967. The public was invited to hear speaker Richard Pough, chairman of the Open Space Action Committee, discuss "The Individual's Role in Preserving the Beauty of Our Communities."
- 5 Actress Eva LeGallienne donates the 13 acre LeGallienne Bird Sanctuary in Weston.



Actress Eva LeGallienne lived in Weston and played Peter Pan on Broadway.

- 6 Ms. Alice DeLamar donates the 21 acre Stonebridge Waterfowl Preserve in Weston.



Stonebridge Waterfowl Preserve, Weston. Photo credit Tracy Pennoyer.

- 7 Accepts 20 acres of land in of Andre Beaumont's back woodlot in northwest Weston, later dedicated as the Honey Hill Preserve which now spans 86 acres.
- 8 ALT hires its first part-time staff to help manage the activities of an active Land Trust that is busily preserving land in a time of intense development pressure.

1976-1986

- 9 Creates the Benjamin Wildflower Preserve with the donation of 4 acres off Stagecoach Road in Weston from the estate of Curtis and Norma Benjamin.
- 10 Receives a donation from the Nature Conservancy of 6 acres of salt marsh off Grove Point Road in Westport known as Allen Salt Marsh where oysters are grown and sold to upscale restaurants in Connecticut and New York City.
- 11 As a strategy to increase its land-holdings during a time of rapid new home development in the area, ALT accepts donations of land from developers through "subdivision set-asides."

- 12 Receives 13 acres of land from a developer in a subdivision set-aside located off Pheasant Hill Rd in Weston. The Preserve is named after Weston Selectman Walter Wagner and his wife Barbara who served on the ALT board of directors.

1986-1996

- 13 In 1994 an anonymous donor gives 162 acres of land in Easton to ALT which would become the Crow Hill Preserve, ALT's largest donation to date.
- 14 The 3.2 acre Taylortown Salt Marsh in the Saugatuck estuary in downtown Westport donated to Aspetuck Land Trust by Jaime & Susan Moreno. Twenty years later the Land Trust would embark on a major project to restore the marsh.
- 15 Receives an anonymous donation of a 4-acre hay field at the corner of Morehouse Lane and Cedar Road in Fairfield named Old Hay Field #1. Just east on Cedar Road, Old Hay Field #2 was donated a few years later by the same anonymous donor.



Old Hay Field Preserve, Fairfield.

- 16 Accepts 11 acres of land in Fairfield from Ernest Hillman, creating the Ernest Hillman Preserve which contains a US Geodetic Survey Reference plaque, first installed in 1882, indicating it is one of the highest points in Fairfield.
- 17 Receives 40 acres in Easton known as the Poindexter Preserve off of Judd Rd from George and Elinor Poindexter. There is a stone bench in the meadow where the Poindexter's rest inscribed: How lovely is thy resting place.

- 18 Accepted donation of 9 acres of land on Morningside Drive South in Westport from the Trust of Hilla von Rebay, an artist and co-founder of the Guggenheim Museum.



Artist Hilla von Rebay.

1996-2006

Newman's own: He's standing up for nearby forest

Developers are learning not to mess with actor Paul Newman's neighborhood.

Newman made a rare stage appearance with his wife to benefit a land trust that is trying to save 730 acres of forest from development in Easton/Weston



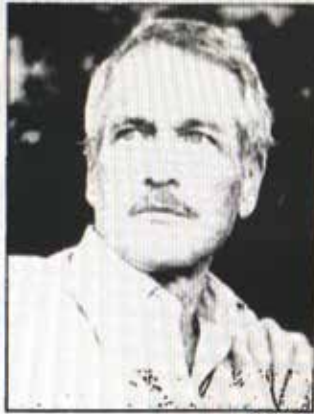
Woodward

"I haven't been on stage since we were wearing furs and carrying clubs with spikes," Newman said Sunday.

His co-star in a local production of the play "Love Letters" was his wife of 41 years, actress Joanne Woodward. Newman's appearance at the Westport Country Playhouse raised \$175,000 for the Aspetuck Land Trust, which must raise \$12 million by September to purchase the land.

Newman, 74, and Woodward, 68, live near the property. Woodward said their children used to fish in the nearby reservoir.

"If a community like this doesn't



FILE PHOTO

Newman: Message in a battle.

protect the few parcels of open space now, we'll be kicking ourselves 50 years from now," Newman said.

Newman also has donated \$500,000 in proceeds from his Newman's Own food company to the land trust.

Look for Newman also on the big screen in the tear-jerker romance "Message in a Bottle," in which he's drawing rave reviews for his comic performance as Kevin Costner's eccentric father.

The movie also stars Robin Wright Penn.

- 19 Same anonymous donor who gave the 162-acre Crow Hill Preserve, donates an additional 117 acres in Easton known as Jump Hill.



Running to pick blueberries in Trout Brook orchard. ALT maintains 800 blueberry bushes for picking by ALT members only.

- 20 ALT exercises its right of first refusal to prevent Bridgeport Hydraulic Company from selling 730 acres of land now known as Trout Brook Valley to National Fairways, a housing and golf course developer.
- 21 National Fairways had plans to build an 18-hole golf course and 103 home gated community on what is now Trout Brook Valley. Professional golfer Tom Watson walked the property to survey potential golf holes.



Ninth hole green location in Trout Brook Valley planned by the developer.

Actor Paul Newman helped to save Trout Brook Valley.

- 22 Many local people contribute their time and effort to preserving Trout Brook Valley including actor Paul Newman who contributed \$500,000 to the effort.



Lissy Newman and her dad Paul Newman were involved in the effort to save Trout Brook Valley.



Former ALT Executive Director Bruce LePage who oversaw the Save Trout Brook Valley campaign standing at a scenic overlook in Trout Brook Valley.



Trout cookies were sent to 130 CT legislators during the Save Trout Brook Valley campaign.



Prinnie Falkenhagen participated in the Save Trout Brook Valley campaign when she was on the ALT Board of Directors.

- 23 ALT with help from the State of Connecticut, and The Nature Conservancy and the town of Weston, successfully purchases 730 acres from Bridgeport Hydraulic Company for \$11.3 million creating the Trout Brook Valley Preserve. These 730 acres were contiguous with earlier donated properties Crow Hill on the south and Jump Hill on the north, creating the 1,009-acre Trout Brook Valley Conservation Area.

- 24 Introduces honey bees onto our properties by partnering with the Backyard Beekeepers.

- 25 Procures the 16 acre Caryl and Edna Haskins Preserve in Westport through a donation by the Haskins estate.



Caryl and Edna Haskins Preserve in Westport. Photo credit Derek Sterling.

- 26 ALT receives a Conservation Easement donation of 17 acres of shoreline next to Sasco Beach in Fairfield, ensuring that the shoreline will never be developed.
- 27 Receives donation of 8 acres in Fairfield from Fran and Philip Snyder, named the Putnam Preserve for long-time ALT board member Charlie Putnam. The Preserve is accessed by a Pent Road trail bordered by stone walls which used to be used by onion farmers to take their crops to Southport Harbor.



Entrance to the Putnam Preserve in Fairfield is down an old pent road which was used by local farmers to transport onions to Southport Harbor.

- 28 Accepts a donation of 28 acres in Weston from Elisabeth Luce Moore, sister of Henry Luce founder of Time Life Magazine who used to entertain high level government officials on the property.

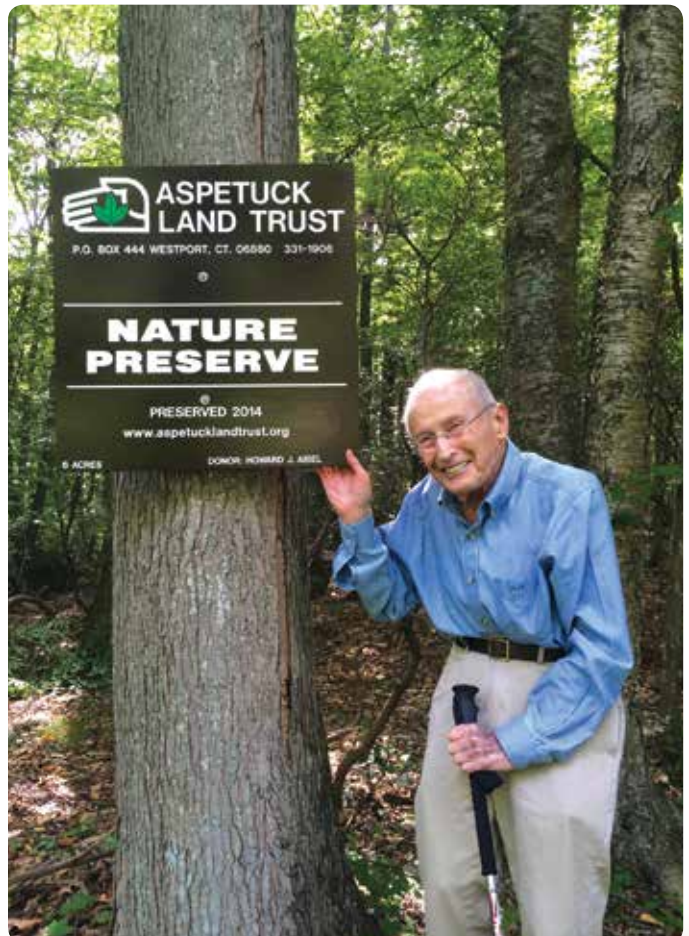


Great Salt Marsh Island Preserve in Ash Creek in Bridgeport. Photo credit Elizabeth Gentile

- 29 In partnership with the town of Fairfield, ALT preserves the 14-acre Great Salt Marsh Island at the mouth of Ash Creek. This island was part of a tidal dam that operated a mill in colonial times. Nearby are the remains of an old colonial road built from trees known as a "corduroy road," named for the bumpy nature of its log-hewn construction.

2006-2016

- 30 Conducts a Conservation and Management Plan in the 1,009-acre Trout Brook Valley Conservation Area in Easton/Weston to better understand and manage the property.
- 31 The Land Trust receives federal grants to improve 40 acres of wildlife habitat by removing invasive plants, creating pollinator meadows, and improving bird habitats.
- 32 In 2014, receives a donation of 6 acres (3 building lots) off Steep Hill Road in Weston from Howard Aibel who wanted to protect the land he and his wife loved.



Howard Aibel donated 6 acres in Weston.

- 33 Receives a 34-acre donation in 2011 of 34 acres in Easton by Mrs. Joan duPont who asks that the property be named after the Randall family who once farmed the land.



Randall's Farm Preserve in Easton donated by Joan duPont. Photo credit Simply Maura Photography.

- 34 Creates the Caryl and Edna Haskins Lecture Series in 2013 to honor world renowned scientists Caryl and Edna Haskins who donated their 16-acre estate in Westport to ALT. The first speaker was climate change activist Bill McKibben, author of *The End of Nature* and founder of 350.org.
- 35 Completes three-year project to restore 3.2 acres of salt marsh at the Taylortown Salt Marsh in downtown Westport. The fiddler crabs have returned and the birds have come back to feast on them.



Restoring the Taylortown Salt Marsh in the Saugatuck River in downtown Westport. Photo credit Nancy Moon.

- 36 Creates first Monarch Waystation in 2015 at the 0.3 acre Sasqua Wildflower Preserve across from the Pequot Library.

- 37 Starts a Junior Ranger Program for children in grades 1-5. Jr. Rangers learn about wildlife and nature by visiting ALT properties and completing a Jr. Ranger guidebook. See children's activities on our website.

- 38 Builds the area's first Natural Playground in 2010 at the Leonard Schine Preserve voted one of the Top 50 Playgrounds in the U.S. by Early Childhood Education Zone.



Natural Playground at the Leonard Schine Preserve, Westport.

- 39 Built a fish ladder in Trout Brook Valley to help fish migrate upstream and spawn.
- 40 Preserves 15 acres adjacent to our 86-acre Honey Hill Preserve in Wilton in 2015. ALT has plans to continue to expand the Honey Hill forest block and is in negotiations to purchase 38 acres of adjacent open space land.
- 41 Preserves a nearly one acre building lot in 2015 at 1400 Pequot Ave. across from Southport Beach that was threatened by development. The Southport Conservancy contributed to the effort.



Property across from Southport Beach preserved in 2015. Photo credit: Brian Russell.

- 42 Creates a Children's Interpretive Nature Trail at the Leonard Schine Preserve in Westport.
- 43 Opens the 39 acre Newman Poses Preserve in Westport in 2010 in partnership with the town of Westport. The property is named after actor Paul Newman who lived nearby and Lillian Poses, a neighbor and friend of Mr. Newman's who worked on the New Deal in Franklin D. Roosevelt's administration and who was one of the first women to graduate from NYU Law School.



*The Newman Poses Preserve in Westport was created in honor of Paul Newman who lived nearby and his friend Lillian Poses.
Photo credit: Jim Freund.*

- 44 Conducted a Forest Management Plan on the 13 acre LeGallienne Bird Sanctuary in Weston to restore the property to its former glory as a haven for birds.
- 45 The Land Trust becomes a participating member and leader of the Fairfield County Regional Conservation Partnership, a consortium of 31 Fairfield County Land Trusts working together to preserve more open space in Fairfield County.
- 46 Helps the Sasquanaug Association to refurbish the 10 acre Southport Park in Southport. The property features a playground for children.

- 47 Receives donation of 5 acres off Horseshoe Lane in Fairfield from Jean Baldrige Uehlinger who used to play on the land as a little girl.
- 48 Establishes a Land Stewardship Endowment Fund to provide funds for special habitat and maintenance projects on our properties.
- 49 Begins a Trail Steward Program to monitor our open space properties.
- 50 Creates an Educational Hike Series for children and adults. A total of 2,560 people have attended ALT's 128 educational hikes.



*Hawk hike in the Trout Brook Valley Conservation Area, Easton.
Photo credit: Jim Freund.*



ALT improves habitat for the Eastern Blue Bird.

2015 Financial Highlights

2015 contributions income from individuals, foundation grants and other sources was \$295,369. Expenses were \$221,265. Our general endowment decreased to \$1,583,864 after expenditures for land acquisition, offsetting donations totaling \$64,900, and earnings of -1.84%. Our Restricted Portfolio had an ending balance of \$1,330,732 after disbursements and earnings of -2.86%. Our Land Stewardship Account had an ending balance of \$89,654 and earnings of -3.31%. The total of all of our invested funds was \$3,004,250 on December 31, 2015.

2015 in Review

NEW MEMBERS	175	\$33,772
Membership Categories:		
Friends: \$0 - 49.99	129	3,881
Individual/Family: \$50.00-99.99	292	14,967
Naturalists: \$100.00-\$499.99	335	49,584
Trailblazers: \$500.00- 999.99	45	22,349
Stewards: \$1000.00 +	45	97,084
Total Members	846	

REVENUE

	2015 Actual	2016 Budget
Donations from Members	\$187,865	\$177,000
Foundation Grants	68,434	58,000
Restricted Grants	8,459	10,850
Other	30,611	25,100
Total	\$295,369	\$270,950

EXPENSES

Property Acquisition	\$5,124	\$5,000
Property Maintenance & upgrades	67,400	85,000
Program Implementation	10,2674	93,000
Administrative Costs	46,067	70,470
Total	\$221,265	\$253,470
Surplus	\$74,104	\$17,480

2015 ENDOWMENT FUNDS

	Main Account	Restricted Account	Land Stewardship Fund
Beginning Balance	\$1,712,278	\$1,421,838	\$92,725
Donations	1,034		
Investment Income	-30,659	-39,895	-3,071
Transfer from Haskins	51,211	-51,211	
Land Acquisition Expenses	-150,000		
Ending Balance	\$1,583,864	\$1,330,732	\$89,654

2015 RESTRICTED GRANTS

Beginning Balance (Grant funds received 2014)	\$29,328
Total Received	0
Transfers/Expenditures	8,459
Ending Balance	\$20,869

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Volunteers planting native plants at the Sasqua Wildflower Preserve, Southport.

Julia & Keith Frey	Gretchen Hoffmann	Mr. & Mrs. George Masumian	Brian Roach
Lori Hashizume & Doug Fried	Mr. & Mrs. Richard M. Hoyt	Michael McCabe	Christal Rodenhiser
Ed & Lisa Friedland	James & Claudia Humphrey	Robert & Julie McClenathan	Holly Rogers
Michael Friedman	Lynn Humphrey	Matthew McGlynn	Andrew Rosenberg
Peter Gaboriault	Humphrey-Saipe Family	Ms. Mary Lou McGuire	Sandra Rosenberg
Jeff Galdenzi	Christine Wasylko & Christopher Huntley	David McKinnis	Susan Schneier & David Rosenberg
Garden Club of Fairfield	Marvin Israel	Candace Meader	Jeffrey Rosenthal
Garden Club of Sasqua	Ms. Jalna E. Jaeger	Debbie & Evan Merberg	Mr. & Mrs. Willam Rueckert
Garden Club of Weston	Kevin & Kristine Jandora	Carolyn Meyer	Kevin & Pamela Rugg
Garden Club of Westport	Mr. & Mrs. Gary Johnson	MaryAnn Meyer	George Russell
Mr. & Mrs. William Gault	Tom Johnson	Mrs. Theodore H. Meyer	William Russell
Dennis & Karen Ranzer Geelan	Anne Kallish	Carol Mikesell	Harvey & Cheryl Saipe
Charles Gereg	Judith Kaslove	Pat Miller	Eric & Kim Sarner
Mr. Nathaniel W. Gibbons	Steven and Sherry Kaye	Curt & Donna Naser	Elaine Appellof & Jerry Saunders
Linda A. Giers	Paul & April Kelley	Judith & Alphonse Noe	Elizabeth D. Scarborough
Mrs. Aline C. Gillies	R. Shane Kennedy	Jack & Laura Obringer	Susan Schaefer
Mark Gilrain	Robert King	Ross H. Ogden	Susan Schaller
Peter Gold	Andrea L. Kingsley	Peggy O'Halloran	Joseph Schnierlein
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Robert & Lois Gosse	Norman LaCroix	Glenn Payne	Barry & Susan Seigerman
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Aspetuck Land Trust
P.O. Box 444
Westport, CT 06881

Established 1966

Celebrating *50 years* 1966/2016
of Preserving Land

www.aspetucklandtrust.org

Land Trust Annual Meeting

Join fellow Land Trust members on Saturday June 25, from 10:30am to noon in the blueberry patch in the Trout Brook Valley orchard for the Land Trust's annual meeting. A short business meeting will precede a walk through the orchard with its stunning views and members will be asked to approve a slate of directors – Class of 2020 – which consists of: Letitia Carter (Easton), Aili diBonaventura (At-Large), Peter Oldershaw (Fairfield), Lissy Newman (Westport), Lisa Brodlied (Weston). Refreshments will be available. Bring your family and a blanket to sit on. A limited number of chairs will be provided for folks that need them.

Driving Directions to the Annual Meeting

From intersection of Merritt Parkway and Rte. 58 (Hi Ho Motor Inn), go north on Rte. 58. Pass thru light at Rte. 136, continuing on 58. Pass Bluebird Gas Station and Restaurant on left. After Bluebird take third left (Redding Rd and Norton Rd are 1st two roads) onto Freeborn Road (sign at end of road) which is a couple of miles from Bluebird. Go left onto Freeborn. There will be woods on the left and right. When the woods stop on left (first house lot) look to right, there will be a dirt road thru the woods. Go up the dirt road, pass thru an 8 ft. farm gate into a field where you will park.



Bird watcher on an ALT Educational hike.