

**CLINTON LAND CONSERVATION TRUST, INC.
56th ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS**

**ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT
FOR THE PERIOD SEPTEMBER 1, 2022 to AUGUST 31, 2023**

Thank you Ken for your help with the nominations, and thanks to the Board Members who have agreed to stay on.

Welcome, Thank you for coming to the 56th annual meeting of members, I am Dana Skidmore, President of the Clinton Land Trust.
(a slide show will run in conjunction with this report)

First slide is our "CLCT Crew". Without this fabulous group of humble, kind, motivated, fun, dedicated people none of the work you are about to see would have been accomplished.

A highlight of our year was being awarded a grant from the Community Foundation of Middlesex County. The monies awarded allowed us to partner with the Henry Carter Hull Library for many spring and summer programs as well as story walks and story hikes.

Community Foundation Grant = \$7,083

Speaking of money, I will report out on the details of our

FINANCIAL STATUS

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

We started our fiscal year with investments and cash totaling \$ **\$657,116** and ended our fiscal year on August 31, 2023 with investments and cash totaling **\$768,660**. This represents a net **increase** in our endowment portfolio of **\$111,544**.

Dividends and interest earned on investments this year totaled **\$9344.00**. We received **\$8932.00** 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 **\$15,115** this year, compared with **\$17,235.00** last year, which represents a decrease of **\$2120.00**. 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 completed and filed our 990 Tax Return as required by the IRS for the previous fiscal year. This report will be posted on our Website within the next week or two.

MEMBERSHIP

Our secretary, Sue Savitt, is in charge of taking our monthly minutes and also keeps track of our membership. We all appreciate the hours she puts in behind the scenes, cataloging contributions, managing spreadsheets and writing thank you notes. She always keeps us up to date and current. The breakdown of memberships is as follows:

Membership Numbers

Family:	56
Individual	49
Business	8
Life	35

We removed Life memberships from our membership form but the number (35) were grandfathered in.

Out of the life members 6 gave additional money this year.

Expenses for Membership

Thank you notes: \$206.91

Town Wide Mailing for Membership: \$5,604.37

The cost of the memberships are as follows:

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

LAND HOLDINGS & ACQUISITION:

The total acreage owned by the Trust is 900.80 acres. The Trust also owns conservation easements on five privately owned parcels representing approximately 3 acres.

Larry Oullette, Alan Felgate, Mike Houde and Mike Castiglione are motivated committee members who are working on projects to acquire future parcels of open space. Stay tuned!

STEWARDSHIP OF LAND

Frank Byrne continued as chair of our Land Management Committee, which includes Dana Whitney, Gary Stevens, Eric Leu & Kevin Brinkman.

Every year this committee commits to on-going trail maintenance on all of our properties. This takes a lot of time and effort and I know I can speak for anyone that utilizes our trails that the work that this committee does is greatly appreciated.

Below is the list of CLCT properties:

- Chittenden Hill Preserve
- Dean Haag Preserve
- Elliot Preserve
- Jesse Buell Forest
- Kenilworth Forest
- Weiss Loveday Watershed
- Peters Memorial Woods
- Lar Fagan

- Hammocks Parking Lot

In addition to maintaining our properties I would like to celebrate the projects that were also accomplished this year:

- New Bridge over boulder Creek at Kenilworth Forest
- New Bridge at Peter's Woods at Yellow / Purple Trail Connector
- Weiss-Loveday- Removed access to tree house
- **Lucy Elliot** - installed a new Story Hike
- **Chittenden Hills**- Land Management coordinated with Eagle Scouts for plank walk replacement
- **At Jesse Buell**-
 - On-going clean-up of parking area
 - Removed dangerous limbs
 - Oversaw Installation of Fire Department water tank

Thanks to all of the other volunteers who have helped us over the years. We could not do it without you.

OUTREACH AND EDUCATIONAL EFFORTS

Sally Heffernan continued as chair of our Outreach Committee, which also includes Kim Flanagan, Coralie Williams and myself. This committee has been in charge of publicity and environmental education through various events throughout the year.

In February, CLCT sponsored a "Who's been in My Backyard?" Tracking Program led by Naturalist Erik Becker. Kids learned how to identify signs of animals both on tree bark , in rock crevices and with footprints in the dirt. (No snow this year!)

In March, we celebrated the return of the osprey and were very grateful when the Menunkatuck Audubon Society offered to install an osprey cam on the Pratt Road nest. Thanks to the Allen Family who provided the internet, we were able to enjoy this osprey cam all summer long!

Also in March, 4 Bushy Hill Scholarships were awarded to Joel Students thanks to generous gift of Eunice Carter Symonds. For 15 years, thanks to her generosity, the Clinton Land Trust has been able to provide environmental educational opportunities to the children of Clinton. The 2023 scholarship winners were: Didier Orelluna, Aidan Langner, Emma Lawlor and Casey Gallardo.

The Trust kept busy in April providing opportunities to hike our properties with the Seniors in Clinton as well as Earth Day Cleanups at Joel School.

The Peeper Prowl is always a spring highlight when children and families come together donning headlamps, rain boots, waders, nets and buckets to explore the vernal pools at the Indian River Complex in search of salamanders, newts, frogs and toads.

I think its safe to say that The Outreach Committee all had a moment that night when we paused, looked around, and all we saw were headlamps and all we heard were spring peepers peeping and children being thrilled to be with their families in nature. Melts my heart!

Thanks to the Alice and David Crosby Scholarship fund, the Clinton Land Trust awarded Sophia Pacileo a check for \$1,000.00 to pursue future studies in science in college.

For the 17th year, Members of the Land Trust led stations at the Town Beach. Mike Houde educated kids about ospreys and conservation efforts, while I used buckets and nets and educated the 4th graders about vertebrates and invertebrates of Long Island Sound. This a wonderful community event where the Land Trust works collaboratively with the schools, the shellfish commission and the Clinton Sailing Club.

The Eliot Preserve is the location of our story hike installed this past spring. The book is: If Bees Disappeared and soon after this was installed, the Land Trust and Cindy Stevens Art Gallery teamed up to provide an experience for kids to spend the morning at the Elliot Preserve, reading about these pollinators and then culminating their nature experience by painting a beautiful scene. Co-sponsored by the Henry Carter Hull Library and the CLCT.

2023 marked the 17th year of Ecology Camp. 50 campers and 12 counselors enjoyed five mornings of science exploration at the Town Beach and the trails at Peters Woods and the Indian River Recreation area. Thanks to a grant from the Community Foundation of Middlesex County and support from the Land Trust, 5 campers were awarded Ecology Camp scholarships. Ecology Camp Scholarship winners were: Nathan Reeves, Piper Gabor, Ava Clarke, Lydia Templeton, & Laconia Shepard.

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.

Throughout the spring and summer thanks to the GRANT we received from CFMC, the Land Trust and the library collaborated on many programs. This slide shows some of the amazing programs that took place at the library recently.

Also, the Grant allowed the library to showcase different children’s books on the library story walk. One was “We are Water Protectors” and currently our latest story walk book is John Himmelmann’s own, “Noisy Bird Sing-a-long”.

On October 1st., Board member Kim Flanagan chaired the annual Beach Cleanup at the Clinton Town Beach in conjunction with “Save the

Sound.” The Trust has sponsored our town beach cleanup since 2007. This year a team of dedicated volunteers (over 56!) gave their time to help us remove 386 pounds of trash from the Clinton Town beach and the shores of Cedar Island. This indicates that we are, as a community, making a difference and we hope that world-wide efforts are as well. The CLCT greatly appreciates the support of our community in helping us in this effort.

A huge thanks goes out to our social media committee of Kim Flanagan and Coralie Williams. Managing our website and putting out FB blasts really help to keep our story and our mission present in the community.

While I say a few words, please enjoy Gary Steven’s drone video of the Elliot Preserve.

PRESIDENT’S COMMENTS

2022-23 marked the first year of my Presidency, and boy did I have big shoes to fill. I will always be grateful for the combined Presidential leadership of Mike Houde and Ken McDonnell - whom I have learned so much from since my joining the CLCT Board in 2007.

Leading this Board has been an honor. As evidenced by this Annual Report, you can see that we are a very active Board. We enjoy being together and we have lots of fun. We all thrive in promoting our mission of helping to conserve and protect Clinton’s natural resources, and we feel it is so important to educate all ages; promoting future stewards to help protect our environment.

I would like to take a moment to publicly thank all of the Board Members for their commitment to CLCT. So much of the work that is accomplished, gets done in a humble way - without fan fare and without spotlights. I am always amazed when I am hiking one of our trails and I see that “someone” has been there cleaning up debris, cutting up fallen trees, or better yet, has built a new bridge. I know as

President, I can't be involved in every single project but it makes me so happy to know that I am surrounded by humble, trustworthy, competent volunteers who want nothing more than to continue to nurture this organization in Clinton.

Not only is our Board active in each Department, but the spouses of our Board Members are also deserving of thanks! Specifically last fall, Diana Byrne (Frank's wife) took on the intensive job of revamping our CLCT brochure. Diana did a great job with it and we all appreciate that time she put into updating it. Thank you to Diana. Feel free to take one tonight.

In addition to Board Members and their families who volunteer for the land trust, we are grateful to the volunteers that help us too. We appreciate it when Eagle Scouts reach out to us looking to enhance our properties with bridges or benches. If you are interested in volunteering, please reach out to us on our website.

This year I was especially grateful for the Grant that was awarded to us from the Community Foundation of Middlesex County. It was so wonderful to be able to collaborate with the library to provide such enriching experiences for the people of Clinton.

Looking ahead, we are excited to bring back our Wild & Scenic Film Festival (in conjunction with Madison Land Trust) this April 2024 at the Clinton Town Hall. This is just an example of one fundraiser that will help us in achieving our goal of purchasing/acquiring land to preserve as Open Space in our Town of Clinton. We also have a goal of increasing our membership this year too.

The fact that you are all here tonight tells me something - it tells me that you care about the Town of Clinton and its beautiful natural resources and that you also have a desire to protect and preserve it for our future stewards.

I will end with a quote that my husband has framed in his office that is a great daily reminder:

from Margaret Mead:

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.”

I look forward to seeing you around town and on our hiking trails in Clinton,

Respectfully submitted,

Dana Skidmore

President of the Clinton Land Conservation Trust, Inc.

October 18, 2023

Skip to the SLIDE - Introduction of John Himmelmann.....

And now, finally I get to introduce to you the REAL REASON why you are all here!

As you can see, John Himmelman is a local legend. Not only has he written and illustrated numerous children's books that connect to nature but he has served on many Boards promoting stewardship of land and love of the environment.

I met John over 30 years ago when he did a book talk on his series of children's books on luna moth, spotted salamanders, ladybugs and slugs.

I reconnected with him at this years Peeper Prowl when he came to explore with his adorable granddaughters.

Needless to say, it was quite intimidating knowing he was in the audience and I had to educate HIM!

Without further ado, let me introduce to you, Mr. John Himmelmann!