



[www.aspetucklandtrust.org](http://www.aspetucklandtrust.org)

## Campaign for the Green Corridor – Case for Support

Imagine a world...

- Where the beauty of the land is protected.
- Where birds and insects flourish and natural species thrive.
- Where the climate crisis is reduced.
- Where people from both our towns and inner cities have more preserved lands to enjoy.
- Where all children can learn to play in the woods again.
- Where drinking water is pure and flooding is diminished.



*“Together we can achieve this vision to create a healthier community that better connects all people in the region and engages our communities in safeguarding our land, wildlife, and water resources for generations to come who will live in the climate that we grew up with.”*

We are realizing our vision by creating a 40,000-acre Green Corridor, circling through Fairfield, Westport, Weston, Easton, Wilton, and Redding and accessible to people from surrounding towns that will protect, connect, and improve the ecological health of our region for all people and other living things.

### A proud heritage

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”* — Margaret Mead

Aspetuck Land Trust was formed in 1966, more than 50 years ago, largely through the efforts of Barlow Cutler Wotton, Connecticut's own Rachel Carson. When a local salt marsh was threatened by lack of planning and conservation, she acted and gathered together like-minded citizens to create one of the first land trusts in Connecticut. Today, Aspetuck Land Trust has grown into a regional land trust serving Westport, Weston, Fairfield, and Easton. We have already protected 150 properties on 2,000 acres with more to come.



*Barlow Cutler Wotton*

## Now it is your turn to act: The Green Corridor Initiative

The Green Corridor Initiative is a coordinated, strategic approach to protecting and stewarding our remaining large open spaces and linking them with homeowner land for the greater preservation of our natural resources, enjoyment of our residents, and protection of our ecosystems. Creating a Green Corridor is the next step to build on our founder's vision formed in the 1960's. It is a call to action to enlarge and further protect our region's treasured open spaces before they are gone forever. By combining large-scale land protection with engaging homeowners to re-imagine their smaller properties in more ecologically sustainable ways we can accelerate and magnify our conservation impact, involve the wider community in our efforts, and combat the climate crisis. In addition to improving our quality of life, green corridors will:

- Protect water resources by reducing non-point sources of pollution
- Reduce flood damage by creating more permeable surfaces for water absorption.
- Create more resiliency in the face of climate change for wildlife, forests, and ecological systems.
- Offer access to spaces outdoors for people of all ages, incomes, and abilities.
- Contribute to our local economy and increase property values through scenic beauty.
- Foster health and wellness
- Enhance the sense of place in a community or region.



## There are two major components to the Green Corridor Initiative.

### 1. Land Protection

We are preserving strategically located land parcels in the six-town region either by purchasing them or receiving them as donations. Our two current focus areas are in Fairfield and on the Weston/Wilton border where we are protecting a large forest block. Overall, we have identified 42 additional properties for protection totaling 805 acres. These properties have significant conservation value and include contiguous properties to create a green infrastructure.

We are also working with community groups to protect land in under-served communities so that more people will have access to affordable farmland. Over the past

several years, there has been increased interest in farming by African Americans and other people of color to provide healthy food for local communities where access to fresh fruits and vegetables is limited.

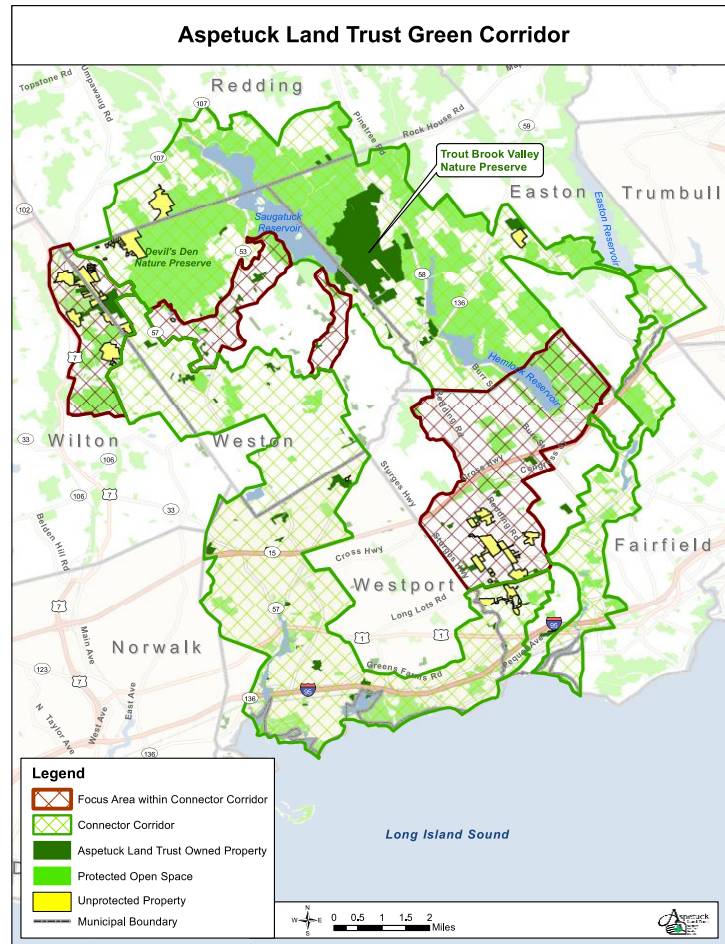
- We all must be proactive before natural land goes on the market.
- Once land is purchased by a developer, it is too late.
- The future of our natural landscapes depends on your support.

## 2. Homeowner Engagement

We will motivate homeowners to re-imagine their front and back yards to include more native species – plants and trees – that support pollinators and wildlife. Traditional turf grass provides no ecosystem services and is known as a biological dead zone. With 85% of land in private hands, modern conservation must also focus on one acre at a time. These transformed properties will link our larger preserves to create the Green Corridor.

### The Costs to Implement the Green Corridor Vision

Our capital campaign aims to raise \$5 million to achieve the Green Corridor vision which will be used as follows:



### Land Acquisition Fund – \$4.3 million

The Aspetuck Land Trust will improve its ability to rapidly identify properties entering the market, along with funds needed for transaction costs associated with buying land. Two key properties have been identified – one already purchased – and they are incorporated into this plan, along with a reserve available to buy future properties after we encourage their owners to donate or sell them.

- **Gilbertie’s Farm, Easton** – \$1.2 million  
This 34-acre property incorporates open space, a working farm, a pond, and wetlands. In addition to protecting the farm, it will serve as an incubator for teaching best practices in farming and nurture interest in farming from diverse communities.
- **Fromson Strassler Property, Weston** – \$1 million  
Negotiations are underway to acquire this 85-acre property, adjoining our Honey Hill Preserve, and a key parcel in Aspetuck Land Trust’s plan to create a 706-acre protected forest block on the Weston/Wilton border.
- **Future Property Acquisition** – \$2.1 million  
Through our strategic conservation mapping in the Green Corridor, we have identified 40 additional properties for protection, totaling 686 acres. Having reserve funds available will allow us to attract matching grants from private and public funds to leverage for acquisitions.

### **Readiness to Conserve – \$350,000**

Long before a landowner contacts the land trust or a property becomes at risk, we must proactively identify properties within or close to the Green Corridor and reach out to landowners to explore conservation options to preserve their land. This process takes time, sometimes years, and requires dedicated staff to conduct the research and work with landowners. This will pay for a Director of Land Conservation for five years who will work with landowners who wish to protect their properties in perpetuity.

### **Homeowner Engagement – \$350,000**

We have already accelerated our outreach and education campaign for homeowners, landowners, community groups, businesses, landscapers, town governments and local non-profit partners working in the conservation space. The centerpiece of this effort includes educating homeowners to create more biodiverse yards. This will pay for a Director of Homeowner Engagement for five years after which we believe it will be self-funding, as our engaging thousands of new people will result in additional financial support.

### **The Time to Act is Now!**

- We believe in the relationships among our communities and their natural resources.
- We treasure the natural bounty of our forests, farms, meadows, lakes, and rivers.
- As neighbors, we share a responsibility for sustaining our vibrant and diverse natural settings and passing these cherished lands to our children in a climate that sustains life as we know it.
- We believe land trusts should support racial equity and listen to many different voices in the community.
- We believe we may be the last generation with the opportunity to save the remaining open spaces and farms in our towns.

**It's time for a bold vision to preserve the open spaces that matter to us all.**

The Green Corridor is a vision that provides invigoration, recreation and solace for our communities, and sanctity for our wildlife. It enables us all to contribute to a greater good that starts right in our neighborhoods and makes a difference in our lives every day.

**This is the vision of the Green Corridor.**

*A vision you can make a reality.*

**Capital Campaign Cabinet**

Co-Chairs Bill Kraekel and Amy Harlacker

Honorary Co-Chairs Lissy Newman and Paul Shiverick

Members Ellen Greenberg, Tracy Pennoyer, Walter Greene,  
Michael Tunstall, Bob McHugh, Deborah Bono, and David Brant