## ASPETUCK LAND TRUST 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

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"I only went out for a walk, and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in." –John Muir

# DEAR ASPETUCK LAND TRUST SUPPORTER,

For almost five decades, the Aspetuck Land Trust (ALT) has preserved land and nurtured a love of the natural environment in Fairfield County residents. Every year we make progress to achieve our vision to preserve more open space, improve wildlife habitats and get more people outside, and 2014 was no exception. We preserved more land, found new ways to fund our efforts and got even more people back out into nature.

We can't do any of this without the support of the 900+ local Land Trust members like you who care about preserving local open space. Because of you, Aspetuck Land Trust maintains 130 open spaces and 40 miles of hiking trails on 1,700+ acres in the towns of Westport, Weston, Fairfield, Easton, Wilton, Redding and Bridgeport. That's a lot of habitat, hiking, biking, dog walking, bird watching and outdoor enjoyment!

You sustain and inspire us and make your little corner of the world a better place by supporting something larger than ourselves – nature.

We are local. We are your neighbors. We are your land trust.

Thank you for your support!

Daniel

**Dick Ritzel** President

**David Brant** Executive Director

**PS:** If you are interested in supporting the Land Trust at this time, we've made it easy by enclosing a pre-addressed envelope. Or you can donate online by visiting www.aspetucklandtrust.org.

COVER: Old Hay Fields Preserve at Cedar Lane and Morehouse, Fairfield.

### **Board Members**

President: Dick RitzelVP: Lisa BrodlieVP: Alan GoldbeckerVP: Heather WilliamsSec: Cynthia Williams

**Executive Director:** David Brant

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### Westport

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### **At-Large Directors**

Aili diBonaventura Bill Kraekel Jacquie Littlejohn Cynthia Williams Dick Ritzel

### **Honorary Directors**

Robert Larson Bruce LePage

## PRESERVE



Aspetuck Land Trust (ALT) received a gift of 6 acres of land off of Steep Hill Road in Weston from Howard Aibel. Mr. Aibel also made a \$40,000 donation to our Land Stewardship Endowment Fund. Aspetuck Land Trust has preserved 1,745

Howard Aibel of Weston

acres of open space in Easton, Weston, Westport, Fairfield, Redding, Wilton and Bridgeport. We know that landowners have a deep connection to their land and that donating

land is one of the greatest gifts that one can give to future generations. We would like to acknowledge the generosity of the many individuals like Howard who have given to the Land Trust over the years in the form of membership contributions, land, bequests, and stock gifts. Without their support the Land Trust would not be where it is today.

## RESTORE

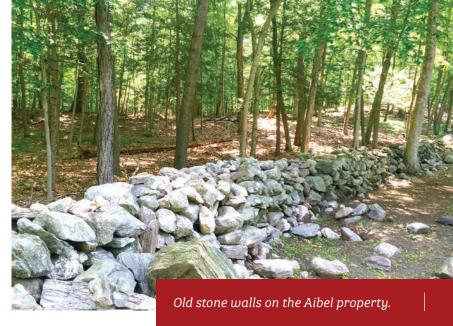
We actively manage our properties to improve wildlife habitats. In 2014 we finished the first phase of our Salt Marsh Restoration project in downtown Westport, made major progress on our other habitat restoration projects and began work to create a 2.5 acre pollinator meadow in the Trout Brook Valley orchard. We are currently improving wildlife habitat on over 40 acres of land. To learn more, see Protecting Land on our website.

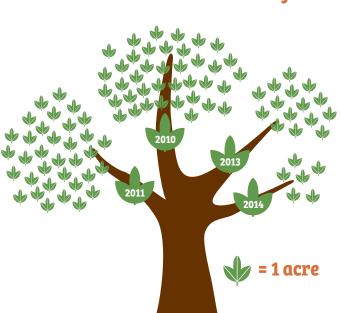
## PLAN

In 2014 we finished a land mapping project in partnership with the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies that will help us to identify future open space properties to preserve. We are currently working on a project to preserve 130+ acres in Weston and Wilton which will create an open space comparable in size to Trout Brook Valley and make a connection between the 38 mile Norwalk River Valley Trail in Wilton and Huntington State Park in Redding.

We also began the process of reviewing our land management practices with an eye towards managing our properties for wildlife. Local wildlife is under stress from development and climate change and we want to do more to make our open spaces more hospitable to them.

Through our involvement with the Fairfield County Regional Conservation Partnership we are working to create more open space connectivity throughout greater Fairfield County.





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## SAVING LAND FROM DEVELOPMENT

"This land is your land..."

-Woody Guthrie

Elisabeth Moore Preserve, Hill Farm Rd, Weston

## **SUPPORT**

If you are interested in learning more about preserving your land we can discuss the various preservation options with you, many of which come with federal income and estate tax benefits. To learn more visit our website and click on Donating Land or contact David Brant at (203) 331-1906.

# **SUSTAIN**

We are excited to announce that in 2014 we created a Land Stewardship Endowment Fund to support maintenance and special land conservation projects on our properties. The Endowment Fund was started with donations from two generous members of the community and currently has a balance of \$92,725. We will continue to fundraise to increase the size of this fund to generate annual income to support our land stewardship efforts. Please contact us to learn more or to make a donation to the fund.

## WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

If you are not a current member of Aspetuck Land Trust we have enclosed a pre-addressed envelope if you wish to make a donation. Or you can donate online by visiting **www. aspetucklandtrust.org.** 

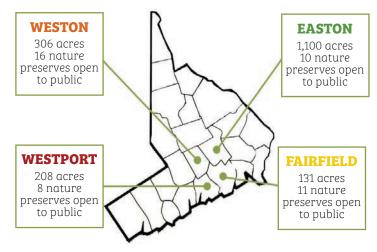
Donations are tax deductible and a receipt will be provided. Members receive a member decal, 4 town map, and access to special events and member only hikes and the satisfaction that you are supporting YOUR local environment.

## CONNECT

Become a Fan of Aspetuck Land Trust on Facebook. Or sign up on our website to receive our e-newsletter.

# **LEGACY GIFTS**

Making a gift to Aspetuck Land Trust through a bequest in a will and/or or a revocable living trust allows the donor to decide how his/her estate will be distributed and enables the donor to take advantage of tax-saving opportunities. Please consult your attorney or financial advisor.





# NATURAL PLAY

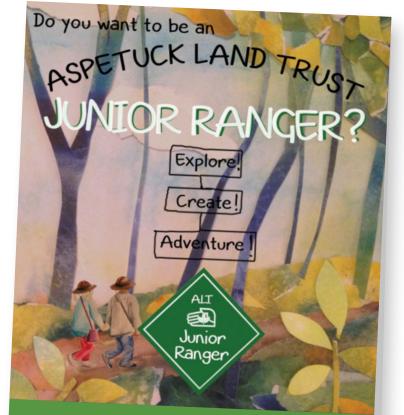
Children need open space and the outdoors now more than ever. There are many benefits of outdoor play in a natural setting – fresh air, exercise, imaginative play, and an appreciation and respect for nature. That's why we started a Children's Hike Series (aka Short Hikes for Short People), built the area's first Natural Playground at our Leonard Schine Preserve in Westport, and asked a local nature loving mom to write about her experiences hiking the land trust's most family friendly nature preserves.

In 2014 we received a grant to develop even more creative strategies to get children outdoors. As a result, we created the ALT Junior Ranger Program and are developing new ways to get middle and high school students outdoors.

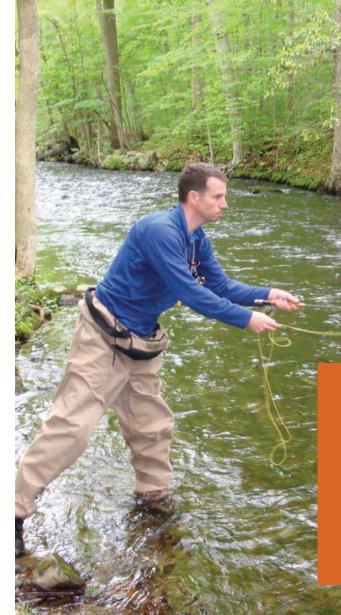
ALT Junior Rangers explore and enjoy adventures at a variety of ALT preserves by completing a booklet of activities ranging from hiking to leaf identification. Upon completion of the booklet, children are presented with a Certificate of Accomplishment and an ALT Junior Ranger patch at a special ceremony. To receive an ALT Junior Ranger Booklet, contact David Brant at dbrant@aspetucklandtrust.org.

To learn more about how you can get your children outside visit the Children's Activities section of our website.





We introduced the ALT Junior Ranger program to engage the imagination and natural curiosity of children in first through fith grades.



## MEMBER HIKES

We offer a variety of educational and specialty hikes for adults and children. These hikes are a great excuse to get outside and learn more about our 1,700+ acres of protected open space. These hikes fill up fast! See our website for the complete list of 2015 hikes and reserve your space now. If you are not a Land Trust member, please return the enclosed envelope with your membership donation and we'll see you on a hike!

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## GETTING PEOPLE OUTDOORS

"Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished."

-Lao Tzu

Warner Angler's Preserve, South Park Ave, Easton.

### What We Know About Our Members

- Other than that they are generous, and want to protect our open space...
- In 2014, more new members came from Weston and Westport than any other town.
- Fairfield residents, collectively, contribute the most dollars
- Easton has the greatest donation average (\$228 v. \$124 other)
- They love the ALT with more than 63% of members renewing their membership
- Our core donors are very loyal
- more than a third have given three years in a row
- 143 have been members for more than 15 years.

## 2014 **FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS**

2014 contributions income from individuals, foundation grants and other sources was \$284,717. Expenses were \$210,815. Our general endowment fund earned 7.02% and increased to \$1,712.278. We received a bequest of \$79,083 which was deposited in our general endowment. These funds are used for land purchases and extraordinary expenses not covered by membership contributions. We received a \$40,000 donation to our Land Stewardship Endowment Fund which ended with a balance of \$92,725.

## 2014 in Review

MEMBERS	GIVING	ACTIVITIES
<b>904</b> (203 New)	= \$169,343	Volunteers
<b>205</b> Individual - \$35	= \$6,692	
276 Families - \$50	= \$14,403	Guided Hikes
330 Naturalists - \$100 - \$499	= \$50,415	40.5 Acres Improved
<b>41</b> Trailblazers - \$500-\$999	<b>= \$</b> 22,566	Wildlife Habitat
43 Stewards \$1,000+	= \$75,267	Acres New Land Preserved

#### Revenue

	2014 Actual	2015 Budget
Donations from members	\$169,343	\$175,150
Foundation Grants	86,671	59,331
Restricted Grants	1,222	
Other	27,481	20,000
Total	\$284,717	\$254,481
Droporty acquisition	\$7,646	\$2,409
Property acquisition		
Property maintenance and upgrades	64,835	88,640
Program implementation	88,208	111,420
Administrative Costs	50,126	51,894
Total	\$210,815	\$254,363

### **2014 Endowment Funds**

Transfers/Expenditures

**Ending Balance** 

	Main Acct	Restricted	Land Stewardship Fund
Beginning Balance	\$1,522,456	\$1,333,095	\$51,592
Donations	133,165	264	40,000
Investment Income	108,249	105,476	1,133
Expenses/Transfers	(51,592)	17,000	
Ending Balance	\$1,712,278	\$1,421,838	\$92,725
014 Restricted Grants			
Total Received	\$30,550		

(1, 222)

\$29,328

### **ALT MEMBERS** Individual 0 - \$49 Karin Giannitti

Edna Louise Albrecht

Allison Gill

Mr. Steven E. Glovinsky Mary Ann Atwater Susan Gold Harry Audley Burton Grad Ruth Ayles Mrs. Nancy Graham Mr. Mark Bain Arthur Greenberg Claire Baker Justin Grieco Jennifer Balbes Carol Hager Frances Baldwin Madelon O. Hall Kristen Barnard Diane Harper Ms. Ruth Baron Mr. & Mrs. Daniel R. Nora Baskin Hennessev Jeremy Bassie Peter Holland William Bates Jan Hollerhach Thomas Begg Mary Crean & Steven Sandra Blum Holm-Hanser Warren Jahn Al Bodnar Mr. Louis F. Bregy Randy Katzenstein Elisabeth H. Breslav Frank Keen Duncan Keith Dr. & Mrs. Carmine T. Calabrese Eileen Brennan & Albert Lucia B. Kimber Caronia David Kish Carol Cate Marilynn Kish Ms. Ann Cathcart Arnold Klipstein Nicolas Cheftel Marcia Kosstrin Cyrus Chess, MD Jason Koulouras Myles & Mary Cohen Martin & Roberta Nancy R. Coley Krauthamer Mr. Eugene T. Connolly, Jr. Melissa Krisak Mark Corcoran Scott Craighead Beth Krueger Mr. & Mrs. William Kevin Ladny Crowther Tom Ladny Amy Curry John Laiacone Mr. & Mrs. Thomas A Joyce Lake Decerbo Laurel Langdon Rima Demarias Dimitri Lanssens Dale Demner Roger Lasky Janak Desai Alice Layton Kathryn Diberardino Janet Lenhart Anne Dowling Kevin Lewis Jeffrey Dueltgen Kerri Llovd Mary Jo Dunne Dr. & Mrs. Richard N. Jacqueline Duvoisin Lopatin Jean Early Wiliam Maloney Laura Ehrenkranz Suzan Maxev **Richard Ellis** Brian May Joyce Evans Susan & John McCarthy Alice Falkowitz George McCormick Dorothy Felske Mary McCutcheon Mike Ferrari John McNamee Karen Fischer Andy Meyers Lawrence Flynn **Dusty Miller** Timothy & Pam Foarde Leslie & Giuliano Minasi Mr. Walter Fowski Kate Moore Edward & Elizabeth Michele Morris Gentile

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	Katherine & David Allen	Mia Dillon
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tz	Robin Benditsky	Sugarnah Callaghar

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Mrs. Stanley Bleifeld

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Smith	Richard & Margaret
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	Zucker
	Trailblazers \$500 - \$999
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	Laszlo & Jill Birinyi, Jr.
	Jason & Kimberly Brenner
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	Commons Management
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nom	Dalio Foundation, Inc.
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<b>?</b> .	Mr. & Mrs. William Everett, Jr.
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	Kevin Fleming
а	Fairfield Garden Club
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	Meagan & Dan Johnson
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Brian	Jacquie Littlejohn Ms. Giselle Wagner &
	Paul Myerson
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#### **IN MEMORY GIFTS**

#### In Memory of Nikki Mever

Robert Bast Elizabeth Corzine David & Susan Droste Elizabeth Durfee Ina Chadwick & Richard Epstein Christopher Hall Breck Lardner Therese Sullivar Steven Skoler

#### In Memory of **Buth Bedford**

Anonymous Central Long Island Sound Star Fleet Elizabeth Sesselberg

#### Memory of Justin Gibbons:

Dana Uhrynowski

In Memory of Boone Horowitz

Roy & Ellen Gelerman



Aspetuck Land Trust P.O. Box 444 Westport, CT 06881

**Established 1966** 

### ALT 2014 ANNUAL REPORT



A short business meeting will precede a walk through the orchard.

Trout Brook Valley orchard. Photo credit: Nancy Moon

## JOIN US FOR OUR ANNUAL MEETING

Join fellow Land Trust members on Saturday June 27, from 10:30am to noon in the beautiful 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 2019 – which consists of: Cynthia Williams (At-Large), Princie Falkenhagen (Easton), Don Hyman (Fairfield), Jack Light (Weston), and Ken Bernhard (Westport). 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. There will be no bathroom facilities.

### **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.