

Joshua's Tract Conservation and Historic Trust, Inc.



WINTER NEWSLETTER

www.joshuaslandtrust.org

A Love Of The Land Comes Natural To Them

Photo and story by Suzanne Zack

Wolf Rechlin's respect for trees seems to be genetically ingrained in him.

His paternal grandfather carefully shaped planks of wood into the staves for revolutionary, elongated barrels that aerated water as they moved, enabling live fish to be successfully transported in Germany in the mid-1800s. His father, Emil Rechlin, taught him how to plant and then fell a tree with a handsaw, and plane the lumber to build barns for the family's dairy farm on Waterman Road in Lebanon.

For the last 24 years, Rechlin and his wife, Edwina, have lived three miles down the road from his family's



Edwina and Wolf Rechlin of Lebanon

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Members — The Bedrock of Conservation

Joshua's Trust has been fortunate in having a wide base of loyal support from members since its inception in 1966. Some members, like Sam Dodd and Trudy Lamb, have been there from the start, and have been active volunteers as well.

Others are new comers, who after taking a walk on one of the trails, have joined to express their appreciation. There are even 47 who do not live in the area, but who support JT's efforts.

As a private, non-profit organization, Joshua's Trust relies on membership dues and contributions to operate. Almost every penny goes directly to conservation because with the exception of one part-time staff person, all the work is done by volunteers.

Everything from the first discussions with a potential land donor to the keeping of complex financial records to the making and maintaining of trails – all are carried out

by an extensive corps of volunteers.

Without an increasing base of membership support, Joshua's Trust will not be able to thrive. A campaign to attract business supporters and life memberships has been underway. And as 2010 approaches, all our members are encouraged to renew their support.

Life Members: Honey and Harry Birkenruth, Peggy & Warren Church, Margaret Joy Daentl, Mary Ellen and Michael Ellsworth, Linda & Shawn Fisher, Margaret & Quentin Kessel, Corine and Richard Norgaard, Nancy Polydys, Dan Reilly, Richard Schleicher, Donna & Richard Skaats, R. Patricia Schoppe, Ann & Winn Smith, William Stallman, Roxanne Steinman, Jack Summers.

Business Sponsors: Landon Tire, Shane & Navratil, New England Design, Fuss and O'Neill, and the Gardens at Bassetts Bridge.

Use form on back to join, renew, or give a gift membership.



Joshua's Tract Conservation And Historic Trust, Inc.

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Joshua's Tract Conservation

and Historic Trust was formed in 1966 to receive gifts of money and land, or to buy land of historic, aesthetic, or scientific value, for the benefit of future generations.

It is designed to supplement the open space efforts of federal, state and local governments. The Trust protects over 4,000 acres in the region, maintains trails which are open to the public, and publishes *The Joshua's Tract Walk Book*.

The office is located in the historic Eagleville Schoolhouse, South Eagleville Rd., in Mansfield. Office hours: Thurs. 1:30-3:30 pm.

Phone: 860-429-9023

Thanks To Hard Work And Generosity, We Now Protect More Than 4,000 Acres

With the final acceptance of the 110-acre Wolf property in Windham, the Trust has surpassed 4,000 acres of protected properties and easements!

It was only four short years ago that we passed the 3,000-acre mark. There are several reasons for this success, including the generosity of our donors, the hard work of our volunteers, and the incentives provided by the IRS. I think that we can look forward to continued success in protect-

ing valuable open space in the Quiet Corner as we move toward the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Trust in 2016.

There is one important Trust acquisition activity that is not reflected in the above acreage totals. That is the land protected through our collaborative activities with towns, other conservation trusts and state agencies.

A good example is the 104-acre Rechlin property in Lebanon (see article on page 1). The Trust usually helps a town obtain a property or conservation easement by contributing a sum of money toward the project. In the case of the Rechlin property, we also used our

experience in negotiating conservation easements to help broker an agreement between the Town of Lebanon and the Rechlins.

Other examples of collaborative projects include the Croke Orchard (153 acres in Ashford), the Knowlton property (134 acres in Willington), and the Olsen property (60 acres adjacent to the Coney Rock Preserve in Mansfield).

Currently, the Trust has pledged \$15,000 to the Town of Ashford,

which is purchasing development rights on 423 acres of the Knowlton Farm. Collaborations such as these are a powerful tool for leveraging our modest budget for land acquisition.

We try to recoup some of the contribution through various fund-raising activities so that we will be able to continue these projects.

For example, a copy of this newsletter is being sent to every household in Lebanon with the hope of contributions and new memberships.

If you are not now a member, please join us and help to protect the rural character of our region.

Warren's Word

By Warren Church
Joshua's Trust President



Corrine Rueb Named Regional Coordinator

Corrine Rueb has become a regional coordinator for a number of preserves in Mansfield, where she lives.

She brings to her new role considerable skills and experience, including GPS, work parties, and boundary marking. Corrine has been the steward at Michael's Preserve for several years.

The position of regional coordinator was established in 2007 when stewardship operations were reorganized. Prior to that time, one person had been in charge of stewards at the 57 properties owned by the Trust. There are now five regional stewards, each responsible for ten or more preserves. Their job is to communicate with and assist the individual stewards in monitoring and maintaining the properties.

The regional coordinators have also been instrumental in developing the written management plans for all properties.

Trust Property Trail Maps Now Available To Download

Updated trail maps for Trust properties are now available for download from our website: www.joshuaslandtrust.org.

They cover several new trails (Couch, Pappenheimer) and re-routes and new color blaze systems on several others. The new color system is to lessen confusion on properties where in the past multiple trails were all blazed yellow.

Updated descriptions for these trail changes will soon also be added as a one page download, and will be similar to the usual descriptions found in the Walk Book.

The computer and GPS unit, and software on which the maps were prepared were acquired in the past several years by grants from the Norcross Foundation and Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) respectively.

Nurme Joins Board

Ray Nurme, a Chaplin resident, has been appointed to the Board of Trustees to fill a vacancy.

Ray brings to the Board considerable skills, having retired ten years ago from his position as Planning and Zoning Director of Darien, and having previously worked on the Adirondack Park Agency legislation.

Since joining the Board, he has chaired the Long Range Planning Committee. He and his wife, Marilyn, live adjacent to the Natchaug River on a property that has been in his family for about 50 years.

Sale Of Development Rights To Their Homestead Land Assures A Lasting Legacy For The Rechlin Family Name

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homestead in a home they built in the middle of a 104-acre woodland sanctuary, on land that's been in his family since 1949. There, they've served as stewards of the land, planting, thinning, and harvesting timber and operating a Christmas tree farm, all of which earned Rechlin the "State Tree Farmer of the Year" designation by the National Tree Farm Association in 2002.

In October, the couple made certain their property would retain its pristine character -- lush with stands of red oak, white and black oak, hickory, birch, and larch -- intersected by two brooks and a pond, and home to bird species ranging from Baltimore orioles to tanagers.

They sold the development rights to the town, the Connecticut Forests and Parks Association, and Joshua's Trust. The plan was to create a lasting legacy that honors the memory of Rechlin's late father.

"He'd certainly approve of it," Rechlin simply says.

Both Wolf and Edwina graduated from the University of Connecticut and moved to Glastonbury in 1965. They raised their son and daughter there and lived for two decades while watching their rural environment give way to dozens of houses. It made them feel "closed in," Edwina

says.

Long interested in preserving the land, the Rechlins were among the first people in Lebanon to take advantage of Connecticut's Public Act 490, enacted in 1963, which allows farm, forest, or open space land to be assessed at its use value rather than its fair-market or highest and best-use value.

"The Trust feels that collaborative projects with towns, land trusts and State agencies is becoming an important tool in the preservation of valuable open space," said Joshua's Trust President Warren Church.

"Last year the Trust helped Ashford and the DEP to preserve the Croke Orchard. Joshua's Trust is currently working with the towns of Ashford, Willington, and state agencies to preserve over 500 acres of valuable farm and forest land in those towns."

For the Rechlins, the conservation easement allows them to continue living in their house, and actively enjoy all the pleasures their woodland sanctuary affords: hiking, bird watching, and an abundance of flora and fauna.

"You're close to nature; you're very aware of what's going on and you don't take it for granted," Edwina Rechlin says.

**Joshua's Trust totes, caps, shirts, pins and books make great holiday gifts.
Shop for them at www.joshuaslandtrust.org**

2010 Membership Form — Renew, Join, or Give a Gift

Membership in Joshua's Trust expires at the end of the calendar year. Sending your renewal now will save us the cost of mailing a reminder later. Thank you for your support.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Dues (\$10 individual; \$20 family; \$50 sustaining; \$100 patron; \$250 benefactor \$1,000 life)

New member, check here [] Gift Membership: List names and addresses. We'll send a gift card.

Year-end contribution \$ _____ Unrestricted \$ _____ Specifically for _____

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Focusing on conservation in Lebanon

