2020 Connecticut Land Conservation Conference

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

As of 3/5/20 – check back regularly for updates

Choose 1 Workshop from each Session:
A (10:30 am – 12:00 pm); B (1:15 – 2:30 pm);
C (2:45 – 4:00 pm); and D (4:15 – 5:00 pm)

WORKSHOP SESSION A: 10:30 am – 12:00 pm

A.1 Waging Peace Through Land Conservation: Resilience in the Face of Climate Crisis
All Levels

Nature-based solutions are essential to addressing the global climate crisis facing us now. We all have a moral obligation to protect the natural world and the work of land trusts has never been more important – connecting us to the land, with each other, and to the planet. Led by award-winning journalist, Dahr Jamail, Keynote Speaker Anne-Sophie Pagé, and First Nations spiritual teacher and guide, Terri Delahanty, this workshop mixes scientific and spiritual knowledge and is intended for individuals and community organizations.

_reverend terri delahanty, member, kamihcetwayaksikh opiway (cree tribe), founder, women in the spirit retreats, educator, university of hartford magnet school_
_Dahr Jamail, author, journalist, and mountaineer_
_Anne-Sophie Pagé, environmental activist and veterinary student_

A.2 Land Trust Law School – Tree and Land Law Connecticut Style
All Levels

For stewards of all skill levels, this year's program will have special emphasis on the law of trees, a topic of perennial interest. We will review the legal strategies and tools available to land trusts, environmental organizations and landowners seeking to protect, assert and know their rights. We will cover laws, regulations, and review the broad history of cases that illustrate how Connecticut's courts have shaped the law. Topics will include encroachments, tree law, water and wetlands, liability and risk management, restoration, documentation and participating in the public process. We will make time to cover the issues you bring to the session with interactive Q&A. At the end of the session you will have handouts outlining available tools and the rights and rules that govern land and environmental stewardship with an emphasis on the Connecticut context.

_Keith Ainsworth, managing member, law offices of Keith R. Ainsworth, Esq., LLC_

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A.3 Introduction to Revised Connecticut Model Conservation Easement (101 Series)
Intro Level

Ideal for newcomers or those needing a refresher, this 90-minute workshop will provide an introductory overview of conservation easements, guided by CLCC’s revised model Connecticut Conservation Easement (CE). Intended for use by the state’s land conservation community, the model CE was developed with a goal of simplifying language as much as reasonably possible and permitting adaptation to a broad array of situations. There will be ample opportunity for Q&A and discussion.

Linda Francois, Esq., Partner, Cooper, Whitney & Francois
Ailla Wasstrom-Evans, Esq., Attorney, The Prue Law Group, PC

A.4 Film: Lost Forests of New England
All Levels

Come enjoy a showing of “The Lost Forests of New England: Conserving Our Remnant Old-Growth Forests.” This documentary by Ray Asselin includes stunning footage of our region’s rarely seen old-growth trees, and tells the story of central New England’s old-growth forests: what they once were, what changes have taken place since European settlers arrived, and what our remnant old-growth stands look like today. Among other experts, Bob Leverett, co-founder of the Native Tree Society and an old-growth tree expert is featured in this fascinating film. Following the film, there will be a 30-minute Q&A.

Ray Asselin, Naturalist and Filmmaker, New England Forests Films
Robert T. Leverett, Co-Founder, Native Tree Society
Jared Lockwood, Member, Native Tree Society

A.5 Forest Management with a Climate Lens
All Levels

Does your land trust own woodland? Do you often wonder what management options are appropriate in the face of climate change? If so, this workshop is for you. Presenters will discuss why forests are important for climate change and what to consider when balancing forest management decisions. Case study examples will highlight forest health, resiliency, biodiversity, cost share opportunities and the benefits/challenges of forest management.

Dan Evans, State Lands Forester, CT DEEP
Lisa Hayden, New England Forestry Foundation
Lindsay Suhr, Land Conservation Director, Connecticut Forest & Park Association
Andrea Urbano, Service Forester, CT DEEP

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A.6 New England Landscape Futures Explorer: A Tool to Envision and Plan for Resilience
All Levels

The New England Landscape Futures (NELF) Explorer is a map-based land-use planning and conservation tool that uses land-use and climate scenarios to visualize and explore the impacts of possible future trajectories. This session will introduce the NELF Explorer and highlight applications relevant for conservationists, including: fundraising with donors, understanding recent land-use trends, assessing development vulnerability to augment conservation planning, and engaging with landowners and decision-makers in conversations about land-use and climate change, forest ecosystem services, and resilience. By the end of this session, participants will know how to access, navigate, and interpret the NELF Explorer; understand why scenarios are used generally and what the NELF scenarios are specifically; and be aware of the ways NELF Explorer and scenarios can be used for conservation purposes. An interactive activity and discussion / Q&A will follow the roughly 30-minute presentation. Participants are encouraged to bring their laptops so they can familiarize themselves with the NELF Explorer and scenario outcomes in their service area.

Lucy Lee, Research Assistant, Harvard Forest

A.7 Stewardship Speed Dating (101 Series)
Share your stories and your expertise! Solve problems AND make new friends. In this session, we will pair up stewardship practitioners for short sessions, allowing people to exchange questions and ideas and share contact information before rotating. We will leave some time at the end for general questions and discussion, including an introduction to some tech tools that can make your life as a land steward a bit easier! We hope that both experienced and less experienced folks will attend the session so wisdom can be passed along.

Michael Benjamin, Science Teacher, Kent School
Paul Elconin, Director of Conservation, Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust

A.8 Youth-Powered Partnerships: Engaging Next Gen Conservation Leaders to Get Stuff Done
All Levels

Do you want to increase public environmental engagement in your community or land trust? The Natural Resources Conservation Academy (NRCA) at UConn is an innovative program in conservation and land use planning that engages high school students, adult conservation volunteers and teachers with conservation efforts at the local level. During this workshop, UConn NRCA faculty members will discuss recruitment strategies, identify tangible projects that can help meet local environmental needs, demonstrate technologies and resources helpful in achieving on-the-ground community project success, and provide tips/tools to support youth-adult conservation projects. This workshop will also include an opportunity for participants in our Conservation Training Partnerships program to share their projects with audience members through in-person presentations, videos, story maps, and other media.

Cary Chadwick, Geospatial Training Program Coordinator, Extension Educator, UConn Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR)
Laura Cisneros, Assistant Extension Professor, UConn Department of Natural Resources and the Environment
Dave Dickson, Assistant Extension Educator, UConn CLEAR
Nicole Freidenfelds, Program Coordinator, Natural Resources Conservation Academy, Conservation Training Partnerships Program, Visiting Assistant Extension Educator at UConn
John Volin, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, UConn Office of the Provost
**A.9  Community Forests:  Updating the New England Town Forest for the 21st Century**  
All Levels

Join The Trust for Public Land (TPL) for an overview of community forests in New England focusing on how they deliver open space, economic, recreational and ecological benefits to local communities. The workshop will focus on how a community forest is different than the traditional town forest and how it can be tailored to fit community needs. TPL’s methods maximize community engagement and the funding model leverages municipal contributions with state, federal and private grants.

*J.T. Horn, Senior Project Manager, The Trust for Public Land*

**A.10  A Seat at the Table:  Partnerships for Healthier Communities**  
All Levels

Today, many nonprofits across the state are asking questions about how to improve community health and well-being. Many of those conversations include discussion about how to get people outside, how to grow and eat better food, how to exercise outside of a gym, and how to engage with people personally instead of virtually. Land trusts can and should be part of these conversations and contribute to these solutions. Presented from the perspective of the human service sector, this session will explore what role land trusts can play and what partnership opportunities exist to build healthier communities. There will be ample opportunity for discussion.

*Sharon Danosky, President, Danosky & Associates, LLC  
David Morgan, President & CEO, TEAM, Inc.*

**A.11  Looking in the Mirror Towards a More Diverse Organization**  
All Levels

Two experienced diversity trainers will lead participants through a discussion of why and how land trusts and other organizations might work to become more diverse and equitable. With a special focus on how individual change can enhance development and impact the mission of our organizations and communities. Through facilitated activities, this session will aim to explore how our assumptions about others impacts our interactions and our organization achieving its mission. During the session we will develop methods to raise awareness, build connections with participants and have a little fun.

*Ashley Stewart, Equity Coach, Sustainable CT, Environmental Planner, Town of Bloomfield  
David Sutherland, Director of Government Relations, The Nature Conservancy CT Chapter*

**A.12  Connecting More Effectively with People from All Walks of Life (101 Series)**  
Intro Level

Land trusts work with many people including landowners, members, community members and policy leaders. Some are supportive, others not so much. Yet if we are going to conserve more land and inspire more support, we need to effectively communicate with all of them. Effective communication is more than what you say, it’s also how you listen and respond to the other person. The good news is that there are proven techniques to engage with people in a respectful and thoughtful manner. This workshop will provide you with the skills needed to have a dialogue rather than talking past one another. Through a series of interactive exercises, you’ll practice crucial communication skills that can improve your ability to understand and to be understood. Building these skills can help you create more authentic connections, get your message across more effectively, and grow your land trust’s influence in your community.

*Karen Strong, Principal, Strong Outcomes, LLC*
A.13 Raising Major Gifts from Individuals (101 Series)
All Levels

Need to raise major gifts for the gorgeous parcel you want to preserve? In this presentation, you will learn how to identify, cultivate, solicit, close, and steward major gift donors. We will also cover suggested language to use when asking for an appointment, for a gift, as well as responding to a variety of donor responses. You will learn what motivates donors to make major gifts for land conservation, how to approach family foundations, the importance of bequests. This session is for anyone – in particular: board members, executive directors, and other land trust volunteers who are involved in the process of asking individuals and family foundations for money.

*Sarah Shrewsbury, Principal, Vineyard Consulting*

**WORKSHOP SESSION B: 1:15 – 2:30 pm**

B.1 Connecticut General Assembly 2020 Session Update
All Levels

Join Connecticut land conservation advocates for a facilitated discussion of some of the hot topics under consideration by the Connecticut General Assembly. There will be ample opportunity for you to provide input and ask questions regarding legislation and issues that are relevant to your work in land conservation and environmental protection.

*Eric Hammerling, Executive Director, Connecticut Forest & Park Association*
*Environmental Champions of the Connecticut General Assembly (Invited)*

B.2 Survival by Degrees: 389 Bird Species on the Brink
Intermediate

This workshop will focus on National Audubon Society's recent report showing 389 North American bird species that are vulnerable to extinction from Climate change. Audubon Connecticut’s Executive Director Tavares will speak directly about the report. Director of Bird Conservation Folsom-O’Keefe will describe Connecticut-specific impacts including information on the effects of sea level rise and loss of salt marshes on our birds and what land trusts can help do to help mitigate these impacts. Community Conservation Manager Elkins will offer examples of how land trusts can get involved in their communities to help birds by working to raise awareness through proclamations, planting native plants, and managing their properties to offer birds and wildlife the foods they need to survive.

*Ken Elkins, Community Conservation Manager, Audubon Connecticut*
*Corrie Folsom-O’Keefe, Director of Bird Conservation, Audubon Connecticut*
*Ana Paula Tavares, Executive Director, Audubon Connecticut*

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B.3 Revised Model Conservation Easement – Compilation of Options and Advanced Topics
Intermediate - Advanced

Is your land trust negotiating a conservation easement with a landowner that wants to retain the right to build a house on the property? Or would your land trust like the option to explore the siting of a cell tower, wind turbine, or solar array in the future? What about a system of multi-use trails? The original 2014 Connecticut Conservation Model Easement included very few landowner (Grantor) retained rights or land trust (Grantee) permitted uses. A list of options was appended, but no suggested language was included. Revised in 2019, the Model now provides landowners and land trusts with model language for basic options related to a range of Grantor and Grantee rights. There will be ample opportunity for Q&A and discussion. We encourage you to bring your land trust’s attorney, too!

Linda Francois, Esq., Partner, Cooper, Whitney & Francois
Ailla Wasstrom-Evans, Esq., Attorney, The Prue Law Group, PC

B.4 Doing Deals (101 Series)
Intro Level

This introductory workshop dissects typical land conservation projects including both fee and easement transactions. Learn the basics of land transactions from project selection through the closing event, including landowner negotiations, creating and executing a successful funding plan, due diligence, and community outreach. This workshop is perfect for staff, volunteers and board members involved in land protection projects.

J.T. Horn, Senior Project Manager, The Trust for Public Land

B.5 Farmland Access: Making Land Trust and Municipal Lands Available to New and Beginning Farmers
Intermediate

According to the 2017 National Agricultural Statistics Services Census, Connecticut has some of the most expensive farmland in the country. Beginning farm organization surveys list “Access to Land” as the number one barrier to beginning farmers in the United States. Land trusts and municipalities are uniquely positioned to keep our working lands in agricultural production and provide affordable land opportunities to new and beginning farmers. Participants will learn from experts who are working on addressing issues of farmland access and accessibility on how your land trust can effectively work with new and beginning farmers while meeting additional conservation and community objectives.

Paul Elconin, Director of Conservation, Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust
Kip Kolesinskas, Consulting Conservation Scientist, Connecticut Farmland Trust
Will O’Meara, Connecticut Field Agent, Land For Good

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Wildlands – legally protected forests in which timber harvesting, salvage logging and other wildlife management is prohibited – represent a very small fraction (1-2%) of the Connecticut landscape. Yet wildlands provide disproportionately large benefits in the form of vegetation structure, habitat and species diversity, and carbon storage and climate mitigation. Moreover, wildlands provide unparalleled locations for solitude, inspiration, and escape from human dominated landscapes. Despite these benefits, important opportunities to protect wildlands are often undervalued relative to conserving forest cover in general or overlooked in favor of the broader designation of multiple use forests. In this informational workshop, we will detail some of the scientific and human rationale for increasing the amount of wildlands in Connecticut and the importance of making Forever Wild Easements available to land trusts and landowners.

Edward Faison, Senior Ecologist, Highstead Foundation
Jon Leibowitz, Executive Director, Northeast Wilderness Trust
Susan Masino, Vernon Roosa Professor of Applied Science, Trinity College

Drones are proving to be a useful tool in conservation work. In this workshop you will have an opportunity to view a fleet of professional-grade drones – fixed-wing, quad, and hexacopters – on display. You will learn about the latest sensors and what kind of information they collect; explore topics on using drones to monitor forest health, invasive plant populations, and wetlands; and see a demonstration of the photogrammetry software called Agisoft Photoscan, which can stitch hundreds of images to produce a large-scale georeferenced image.

Nancy Marek, Ph.D. Candidate, UConn
Chandi Witharana, Assistant Research Professor, UConn

Here’s a fact that every land trust land steward already knows: Invasive plants are a major threat to Connecticut’s environment and economy. They disrupt ecosystems and wildlife habitat as they overtake native plant species, leading to a loss of biodiversity, human health risks and negative economic impacts for landowners and land managers, communities and commercial industries. Bottom line, dealing with invasive species is a major challenge for every land trust and timing is critical to invasive plant management. In this workshop, Emmett Varricchio of the Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (CIPWG) will introduce an invasive plant management calendar to aid your land trust in the detection and removal of some of the most common and insidious invasive plants on your preserves.

Emmett Varricchio, Co-Chair, Steering Committee, Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group (CIPWG)
B.9 Walking on Thin Ice: Land Trust Risk Management Strategies
All Levels

While state statutes can reduce liability of land trusts, they do not eliminate or prevent a lawsuit for something that happens on land trust property or during a land trust event. Land trusts need to develop a risk management plan that integrates sound risk balancing practices into land trust operations. In this workshop, you will have an opportunity to talk with attorneys about the scope of the Recreational Land Use Act, as well as best practices, recommendations for, and the effectiveness of risk management mechanisms including waivers, kiosk postings with prohibitions (e.g., no swimming), limitations on use (closed at dusk through dawn), warning advisements (e.g., thin ice). We’ll also talk about risk management for land trust events where you DO charge a fee, such as weddings, kayak trips, concerts, paid guided hikes, etc. There will be ample time for Q&A.

Keith Ainsworth, Managing Member, Law Offices of Keith R. Ainsworth, Esq., LLC

B.10 Wander Our Watershed: Connecting Communities & Open Spaces
Intermediate

The Eightmile Wild & Scenic Watershed Coordinating Committee recently initiated the “Wander Our Watershed” project – an interactive on-line map project to highlight outdoor recreational opportunities as well as local businesses within the region that support outdoor adventure such as campgrounds, farm stands, eateries and outdoor suppliers. The project has enabled the coordinating committee to engage the community in a unique way, supporting local businesses as part of a shared landscape, while creating a new sense of connection to the watershed for locals. In this workshop, participants will learn about all stages of the project; discuss GIS mapping tasks and platform selection; view a live demonstration of the website and its features; and explore the economic benefits of connecting communities to open spaces; and discuss future opportunities for this project and others like it.

Kimberly Bradley, Committee Member, Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Watershed Coordinating Committee (ERWSCC), President, New England Mountain Bike Association
Riley Doherty, Environmental Programs Coordinator, ERWSCC
Andrea Peres, Outreach Specialist, ERWSCC
Patricia Young, Program Director, ERWSCC

B.11 Building a Stronger Board (101 Series)
Intermediate

The best land trusts have the strongest boards. How to build a strong board means having a well-thought out board recruitment strategy and succession plan. This workshop is for board members and executive directors and will focus on the nine steps to recruiting an active and engaged board.

Sharon Danosky, President, Danosky & Associates, LLC

B.12 Record Keeping (101 Series)
Intro Level

Record keeping is as important as stewardship for all land trusts. Demystify the process and come away with real strategies to conduct a comprehensive records review, create policies, procedures and duplicates, and implement sound record keeping as an ongoing practice.

Amanda Branson, Executive Director, Naromi Land Trust
B.13 Assembling an Annual Stewardship Workplan
All Levels

Land trusts across the country are finding that stewardship expenses have increased, particularly as they move from a land-protection focused operating strategy to one including more land management, restoration, community engagement, and climate mitigation. Wondering how your land trust will navigate a shift to planful, results-oriented stewardship activity, and how to budget for this? Learn how the Kent Land Trust structures its stewardship program to incorporate fee property management plans, annual monitoring results, expense tracking and budget forecasting to create a solid annual workplan and calendar accounting for half of its annual expense. Examine how other land trusts in CT and nationwide are incorporating similar tools into their operating plans. Leave equipped with examples to help create an annual stewardship workplan well-suited to your organizational structure and helpful in guiding allocation of resources year-round to accomplish land management goals.

*Connie Manes, Executive Director, Kent Land Trust*

B.14 Using Visual Communications to Connect and Inspire People to Action
All Levels

Are you looking for tips to enhance your visual communications? Most people process visuals much faster than the written word. But what kinds of images are helpful to inspire your readers? We will discuss examples of print and social media visual strategies related to fundraising, growing awareness, land restoration, and increasing volunteering. We will also touch on where to find great images that aren’t expensive and how to repurpose content so as to leverage your time.

*Judy Anderson, Principal, Community Consultants*

WORKSHOP SESSION C: 2:45 – 4:00 pm

C.1 The Green Gap: Environmental Justice in Connecticut and Beyond
All levels

Environmental justice is the quest to distribute environmental hazards equitably among communities. Unfortunately, however, people who live, work and play in the most polluted environments – in Connecticut, throughout the United States, and around the globe – are commonly people of color and the poor. Environmental justice is an important part of the struggle to improve and maintain a clean and healthy environment while also confronting racism and other societal inequities. In this roundtable, we will talk about the meaning of environmental justice, explore examples from towns and cities from Connecticut to New Zealand, and hear about what’s being done to address these serious issues.

*Dahr Jamail, Author, Journalist, and Mountaineer*
*Katherine Lange, Sandy Breslin Conservation Fellow, CLCC*
*Jameelah Muhammad, Urban Farmer, CT Roundtable on Climate & Jobs*
*Anne-Sophie Pagé, Environmental Activist and Veterinary Student*

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C.2 Land Trusts Taking Action on Climate Change
All Levels

Is your land trust interested in taking action to address climate change? Join us for examples from across the country, and Connecticut, on what land trusts are doing to inspire action, adapt and slow down climate change. It will be a great way to consider how you can tap into ideas and infuse climate change into what you do. We'll provide time for people to brainstorm together.

Judy Anderson, Principal, Community Consultants

C.3 Best Practices in Due Diligence
Intermediate - Advanced

Conducting due diligence is an essential aspect of any transaction to acquire land, a conservation easement or agricultural easement. In this workshop, you will have an opportunity to ask questions of a team of attorneys regarding more advanced topics in due diligence including surveys, baseline documentation, appraisals, title search and insurance, phase 1 environmental assessments, legal and other services in support of land conservation and farmland acquisition projects. The workshop will also include an overview of relevant Standards & Practices, particularly Standards 8 (Evaluating and Selecting Conservation Projects) and 9 (Ensuring Sound Transactions.) Bring your questions and your land trust's attorney!

Catherine Rawson, J.D., Executive Director, Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust
Richard Roberts, Esq., Halloran & Sage, LLP
Ailla Wasstrom-Evans, Esq., The Prue Law Group, PC

C.4 Innovative Models for Conserving Land
Intermediate – Advanced

Learn about three innovative land conservation case studies: (1) A farmland project utilizing a “Buy-Protect-Sell” model and a unique partnership between land trusts, government agencies, and community groups to preserve Strong Farm in Vernon; (2) a multi-year, multi-faceted project in Northwest Connecticut that failed (twice!), only to be revived through persistence, creativity, and a couple of key funding sources; and (3) a project that sought a bridge loan as part of its successful fundraising plan. Join experienced project managers and representatives of the local land trusts with whom they partnered to explore innovative models for conserving land.

Tim Abbott, Regional Land Conservation & Greenprint Director, Housatonic Valley Association
Kathleen Doherty, Conservation Coordinator, Connecticut Farmland Trust
Lisa Hageman, Co-President, Colchester Land Trust
Karl Hasel, Board Member, Northern Connecticut Land Trust
Cathy Shea, Co-President, Colchester Land Trust

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C.5 Roundtable: Forest Protection and Management for Biodiversity and Climate Mitigation
All Levels

Should your land trust protect only wildlands? Should your land trust actively manage for timber? Should your easements contain reserves? These are all valid questions that come up when protecting and managing forests in Connecticut. Join our roundtable experts in a discussion to work through these tough decisions. Climate mitigation and forest protection/management workshops have been in abundance the last few years, but most workshops have narrowly focused on one aspect of the equation. With a roundtable of professionals with varying backgrounds and varying perspectives on forest protection and management, we anticipate a lively discussion on the benefits/costs of forest management, what constitutes a healthy forest, what actions we can take in the face of climate change, and what additional research would help advance our knowledge of forests’ role in climate mitigation.

Dr. Robert Fahey, Assistant Professor, UConn, Department of Natural Resources and the Environment
Edward Faison, Senior Ecologist, Highstead Foundation
Tom Lautzenheiser, Central/Western Regional Scientist, Mass Audubon
Jon Leibowitz, Executive Director, Northeast Wilderness Trust
Lindsay Suhr, Land Conservation Director, Connecticut Forest & Park Association
Andrea Urbano, Service Forester, CT DEEP

C.6 Working Lands as a Key Part of Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies
All Levels

Connecticut has done tremendous work in protecting our working lands for the next generation. As state legislators and the Governor contemplate climate change legislation and policies that will lead to a net zero carbon future, and build resiliency to the impacts of climate change, how can Connecticut’s working lands be an integral part of the solution? Participants will gain knowledge from a soil scientist, advocate, policy maker, and farmer as to how we can use our working lands to sequester carbon, build resiliency, and adapt to a changing climate.

Chelsea Gazillo, Director, Working Lands Alliance
Kip Kolesinskas, Consulting Conservation Scientist, American Farmland Trust
Amanda Freund, Farmer, East Canaan, CT

C.7 Innovative Beaver Control Program for Connecticut
All Levels

This workshop will cover beaver history, biology and behavior so attendees can gain a greater understanding of why this animal does what it does, and discover the valuable ecological services it provides. In addition, the wide range of problems that beavers can cause humans will be detailed, along with effective solutions for managing each of these problems. Finally, this workshop will present an exciting Connecticut beaver management program scheduled to be launched and administered by the Beaver Institute Inc. in 2020. The goal of this program will be to assist Connecticut property owners manage beaver conflicts in a more cost-effective, long-term, environmentally friendly and humane manner. Learn how this new program can help CT land managers and why it is needed.

Michael Callahan, President, Beaver Institute, Inc.

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C.8 Introducing Multi-Use Trails to Your Land Trust Properties (101 Series)
All Levels

This interactive workshop is ideal for anyone planning to build or expand on trail systems for multi-use. Working together, participants will learn how to define a quality trail system appropriate for a local land trust and engage user groups in the process of planning, designing, and ongoing maintenance of sustainable trail systems which will engage passive recreation user groups and ensure environmental, social, and economic sustainability. Representatives from Avalonia Land Conservancy will share how multi-use trails are being introduced into various properties and trail systems.

Kimberly Bradley, President, New England Mountain Bike Association-Southeastern Connecticut
Paula Burton, Project Manager, Western Council of Governments, President, New England Mountain Bike Association-Housatonic Valley

C.9 Hidden Landscapes: Native American Stone Ceremonial Sites on Connecticut Public and Private Lands
All Levels

North America was once all Indian Country and so their places of ritual are located throughout the countryside, on private and public properties as well as present Native American reservations, in what was once tribal homelands. Consequently, many have been and are being destroyed by suburbanization and industrialization processes that are now spreading into regions once safe from their destructive effects. Indigenous ceremonial stone landscapes (CSLs) have been discovered on Connecticut land trust properties, state forests, and other “protected” lands that were previously unknown to staff (and, therefore, in danger of being disturbed by logging, controlled burning, trail making, and other activities that routinely affect the surrounding environments). This workshop will introduce participants to the indigenous stone ceremonial sites that dot our New England landscapes – what they look like, where they occur, how their existence is supported by Native oral traditions and by non-Native historical accounts, and how to protect and preserve those on public and private lands.

Harvey Buford, Chairman, Hopkinton Rhode Island Conservation Commission
Lucianne Lavin, Director of Research and Collections, Institute for American Indian Studies Museum & Research Center
Edith Pestana, Administrator, CT DEEP Environmental Justice Program
Elaine Thomas, Deputy Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, Mohegan Tribe

C.10 Become a Certified Frogwatch Citizen Scientist
Intro Level  (Note that this session is two hours scheduled in Sessions C and D.)

Conducting citizen scientist program on your land trust and local properties can provide important scientific data while engaging members of your community. This certification workshop will train you become a FrogWatch Citizen Scientist while you learn the life histories of Connecticut’s 11 species of frogs and toads and proper monitoring protocols, and how to recruit and sustain volunteers for establishing the program on your land trust and local properties.

Bridget Cervero, Manager of Citizen Science, Teen Programs and Training, The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk
Jim Sirch, Education Coordinator, Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History

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C.11 Connecticut Land Trust Mergers
All levels

Deciding to merge with another land trust may prove to be the perfect mechanism to grow organizational capacity and sustainability as well as enhance conservation permanence. The decision also requires careful consideration and planning. Join us for this introductory workshop where we will examine the benefits and challenges of merger and discuss the steps for consideration, due diligence, and decision-making throughout the merger process.

Kevin Case, Eastern Division Director of Field Programs, Land Trust Alliance
Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director, Connecticut Land Conservation Council
Catherine Rawson, Executive Director, Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust

C.12 Boards, Fundraising and Strategic Plans
Intermediate

This workshop will discuss the role of strategic planning, walk participants through the preparation of a strategic plan and discuss how it can be used to build board consensus and inspire donors. Boards and staff alike are ambassadors for their land trusts. With a strategic plan, it becomes far easier.

Sharon Danosky, President, Danosky & Associates

C.13 Ins and Outs of Restricted Gifts
All Levels

Negotiating, documenting, or tracking restricted gifts are often part of our everyday work as land trusts. In this workshop, four accredited land trusts will share information and experiences about financial restricted gifts. Presenters will begin with a brief overview of definitions, key concepts and applicable sections of Land Trust Standards & Practices (2017). We will share practices and experiences within our land trusts including negotiating and documenting restrictions, turning down a restricted gift, memorializing donor intent, gift acceptance policies, accounting practices, release of restrictions, and more. Bring your questions and tips to share with your peers.

Ann Astarita, Executive Director, Roxbury Land Trust
Amanda Branson, Executive Director, Naromi Land Trust
Rick Newton, Board Member, Avalonia Land Conservancy
Anne Westerman, Former Board Chair, Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust

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C.14 Accreditation: Myth Busters and Unexpected Bonuses
All Levels

Now in its 14th year, the Land Trust Accreditation Program has accredited 439 land conservation organizations across the country – including 30 within Connecticut – and established its position within the lexicon of conservation work. Many variables impact the experience of each person involved in an accreditation application. As a result, past applicants have characterized their experiences as ranging from “straightforward, not that bad”, and even occasionally “easy”, to “unnecessarily duplicative and time consuming”, “confusing”, and “difficult”. How is one to make sense of these disparate opinions? This workshop, led by experienced consultants and your peers from accredited land trusts, will provide information about the accreditation program and process, clarify mistaken beliefs about what is required, present the benefits – some unexpected – to organizations who undertake the process, help you assess whether it would be appropriate and feasible for your organization, and point you towards next steps to take.

Connie Manes, Circuit Rider, Land Trust Alliance
TBA

C.15 Strategy Workshop: It’s Not What You Save, It’s Why You Save It
All Levels

Does your land trust use some combination of the words "protection, conservation, saving land, working together" in your mission statement or brand tagline? These words describe what you do, but not why you do it – and the “why” is what inspires action. In this strategic communications workshop, we’ll explore how to make your mission matter to more people. Starting with your “why,” we’ll explore how to build campaigns and spread your message across PR, social media, email and website platforms in a way that resonates with wider audiences. At the end of this workshop, you’ll walk away with a draft campaign you can put into action immediately.

Sharon Bruce, Communications Manager, Audubon Connecticut

WORKSHOP SESSION D: 4:15 – 5:00 pm

D.1 A Conversation with Anne-Sophie Pagé and Dahr Jamail
All levels

This is your opportunity to get up front and personal with our 2020 Connecticut Land Conservation Conference keynote speaker, Anne-Sophie Pagé and special guest presenter Dahr Jamail. Bring your questions and thoughts to share during this open forum Q&A with our internationally acclaimed speakers.

Dahr Jamail, Author, Journalist, and Mountaineer
Anne-Sophie Pagé, Environmental Activist and Veterinary Student

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D.2 Update on Farm Bill and NRCS Funding Programs
All levels

Every five years, Congress passes a new Farm Bill that shapes food production, agricultural practices, land conservation and farmland preservation, and on-farm energy production, while also impacting rural economies, trade, climate change and much more. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) offers financial and technical assistance through conservation practices, activities and enhancements to help agricultural producers make and maintain improvements on their land. In this workshop, staff from NRCS Connecticut and the Connecticut Department of Agriculture will provide you with an update on Farm Bill programs, including The Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Healthy Forest Reserve Program, as well as state programs such as the Farmland Preservation Program, Farmland Restoration Program, CT Farmlink, and the Farm Viability Program, that may be available to land trusts and communities interested in farmland preservation, land management, and farm viability.

Kip Kolesinskas, Consulting Conservation Scientist, American Farmland Trust
Joyce Purcell, Assistant State Conservationist-Programs/RCPP Coordinator, NRCS-CT

D.3 Introduction to Connecticut Model Agricultural Easement (101 Series)
Intro Level

In 2014, the American Farmland Trust with support from the Connecticut Land Conservation Council and Connecticut Farmland Trust, completed Connecticut’s first Model Agricultural Easement – funded through an Agricultural Viability grant provided by the Connecticut Department of Agriculture. In this workshop, you will receive an overview of the Model Agricultural Easement including which provisions have been flagged for revision and the important ways it differs from conservation easements.

Elisabeth Moore, Executive Director, Connecticut Farmland Trust

D.4 Introduction to Connecticut Model Forever Wild Workshop
All Levels

In 2019, the Connecticut Land Conservation introduced a Model Forever Wild Easement with a goal of providing an added layer of protection for land intended to evolve in its most natural state. This easement can be used as a stand-alone or an add-on to an existing easement and provides clear guidance on stewardship and simple reserved rights that are relatively easy to enforce. Attend this workshop to learn more about the Connecticut Forever Wild Easement and where and why it might be appropriate. The workshop will include case studies of where this tool has been and is expected to be used in New England to maximize the protection of important forests and other special natural resources.

Ed Faison, Senior Ecologist, Highstead Foundation
Jon Leibowitz, Executive Director, Northeast Wilderness Trust
Susan Masino, Vernon Roosa Professor of Applied Science, Trinity College

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D.5 Making the Case for Conservation: 30 Years of Landscape Change in Connecticut
All Levels

How has your town’s land changed in the past 30 years? UConn’s Changing Landscape project uses remote sensing to chart landscape change from 1985 to 2015. This workshop will summarize the results of the study, including a live demonstration of the interactive study website, and conclude with a discussion of how this information can be used to support conservation efforts in your town. This presentation is suitable for participants of all levels of knowledge (both about land conservation and geospatial technology). Participants will learn about the extent, trends and areas of concern regarding changes to Connecticut’s land cover. Participants will also learn how to access all of this information – no technical expertise required -- on the project website for use in land conservation efforts in their town.

Chet Arnold, Extension Educator and Director, UConn CLEAR
Emily Wilson, Geospatial Educator, UConn CLEAR

D.6 Restoring a Coastal Forest in Westport
All Levels

This workshop will describe the process of restoring 36 acres of abandoned land, covered with invasives and dead trees in Westport to a native forest, meadow and shrubland habitat. What worked and what did not, the costs, volunteer involvement, and future management needs. Anyone planning a large or small scale restoration project involving removing invasives, deer browsing, locating appropriate native plant materials, contractors, etc. will find this talk useful and enlightening.

Charles Stebbins, Board Member, Connecticut Audubon Society

D.7 Trail Building Basics (101 Series)
Intro Level

In this introductory workshop, topics will include trail planning, trail building steps, and ways to maintain a safe sustainable trail network.

Ben Collins, Proprietor, The Trail Building Company

D.8 Using Conserved Land as Laboratory and Classroom
Intermediate

This workshop will discuss how land conservation organizations and landowners can join together to provide valuable land-based experiences to the local community. Gustavo will describe his experience teaching college Field Courses, where students make use of natural systems to learn fundamental concepts in the Life Sciences. Gustavo will illustrate ways that land conservation organizations and landowners can promote both land stewardship and science literacy in learners of all ages. Bill will provide a case study in doing this on a wildlands CR in Northfield, Massachusetts. From bioblitz events to service learning projects, internships and children’s programs, Bill will show how a single forest CR has provided an array of restorative, inspirational and informative experiences for the local community.

Bill Copeland, MD, Landowner, Masson Ridge, Northfield, MA
Gustavo Requena Santos, COEEA Board Member
D.9 Landscape Design for Cognitive Development
All levels

Children are our future stewards and helping them establish connections to nature in early childhood has lifelong benefits. This workshop is for everyone who is interested in getting children in nature and creating landscapes that foster cognitive development. A sensory garden contains many things to taste, touch, see and smell but cognitive growth is enriched when experiential learning and thought become part of the experience. This workshop will introduce the term Cognitive Garden and share some of the ideas that make this type of garden different. Led by the creators of a model cognitive garden at UConn's Avery Point campus in Groton, it is hoped that participants will come away with a better understanding of how important rich sensory experiences are to our children's development, how we can make nature-spaces more engaging for children, and how liability, risky play, and other issues affect how we allow our children to interact with nature.

Mary Ballachino, Freelance Graphic Designer
Annette Montoya, Landscape Designer, Farmer, and Naturalist
Petie Reed

D.10 Building Community Engagement with Pollinator Pathways
Intermediate

The rural community of North Branford chose to launch a Sunflower Project to develop a community-wide engagement project which would also attract visitors and pollinators to the town. Volunteers from ages 3 to 98 participated and designed the project together with students in the school system. Some 200,000 sunflowers resulted at no cost to the residents. In this workshop, you will learn why the town decided it made sense to build pollinator pathways in a traditional farming community, and how town officials and the land trust engaged residents, businesses leaders, town administrators, and younger members of the community in this conservation project.

Lorin Leisenfelt, President, Red Rover Creative Studio
Roger Salway, Economic Development Coordinator, Town of North Branford
David Sargent, President, North Branford Land Conservation Trust

D.11 Staffing up!
Intro Level

To staff, or not to staff? If we decide to staff-up, should we hire an executive director or an office manager? How do we determine a reasonable salary? Do we have to provide benefits? The transition from an all-volunteer organization to first staff can be both rewarding and challenging. It is often a giant leap forward towards a more professional organization with much more potential to fulfill the land trust’s mission. In this workshop we will discuss the ins and outs of “staffing-up”, including considerations around determining what position is most needed, as well as personnel policy, employee culture, benefits, and burnout. Come away with a fresh perspective and some tips to help your land trust in making the decision to hire its first staff. This workshop is ideal for board members from small organizations.

Kevin Case, Director, Northeast Region, Land Trust Alliance, Treasurer, CLCC
Chuck Toal, Development and Program Director, Avalonia Land Conservancy, Vice-Chair, CLCC

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D.12  Financial Reports to the Board and Other Best Practices for Financial Management
All Levels

The land trust community reviewed and updated the Land Trust Standards & Practices in 2017, providing comprehensive guidance for current best business practices in nonprofit land conservation work. Among the updates are new and strengthened practices related to financial management, with an increased focus on the role of the board in ensuring financial sustainability and the organization’s ongoing ability to pursue its mission and goals. This workshop will examine the role of the board and best practices relating to financial management, including delegation of financial responsibilities, internal controls, budgeting and periodic reporting, and the annual review and tax return. Participants will examine model approaches and templates used by different land trusts, evaluate their current business practices, and identify opportunities for improvement within their own organizations.

Connie Manes, Circuit Rider, Land Trust Alliance

D.13  Social Media – You Can Do It!
All levels

This peer-to-peer round table discussion is for anyone looking to start or improve the social media presence of their organization. Social media has the potential to bring new donors and visibility to your organization with virtually no cost to your organization. Little changes and improvements to your social media presence can make a big impact. This roundtable will provide participants with the basics of using social media in a land trust; including platforms, posting and fundraising. Resources will also be provided for the creation of graphics and curation of content. Finally, there will be time for discussion and sharing with other participants.

Kailyn Murphy, Development Administrator, Joshua’s Trust