



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2024

### ADMINISTRATION

We have been fortunate enough to find Laura Graham as our new part-time administrator. She has been a help with everything from media communications to membership and generally keeping us well organized. She helped us find (and furnish) our new office space in the historic Mill at Tariffville. We also now have Live Life Bookkeeping, LLC assisting us with our financial record-keeping.

### WE ARE GROWING

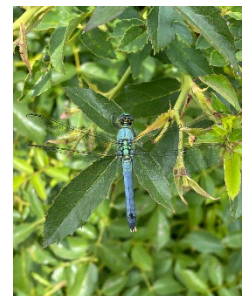
The town of Windsor is the newest addition to the Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy (TRLC) region. In November, the Town of Windsor officially became a part of the TRLC region, increasing our member towns from three to four and expanding our reach from the trap rock ridge to the Connecticut River. We look forward to working with our Windsor neighbors and expanding our abilities to preserve and protect the wonderful open spaces of our region.

### MEMBERSHIP

We are growing here, too! We have our wonderful 106 lifetime members and a total of 196 regular members for 2024. This includes 43 new members and 74% renewing members, for an overall membership growth of 28%.

### PROGRAMS

We continued our partnership with Bloomfield Parks, Recreation & Leisure Services offering nature lecture series on topics including: Geology from the Ridge to the River, Chasing Dragons (about dragonflies and damselflies), Turtles of Connecticut, and Threatened and Endangered Birds of Prey (with live falcons and owls). All programs are free. Check our website for upcoming programs.



## HIKES AND WALKS

We had many great hikes and walks this year:

- 93 people joined our New Year's Day Hike at Wintonbury Hills Golf Course.
- In May, we led our annual kindergarten nature walk with each of the East Granby kindergarten classes. Each class walks through the Allgrove Nature Trail learning about different plants and animals.
- We again participated in the statewide Connecticut Trails Day Hike in June, hiking through the Newgate Wildlife Area in East Granby.
- In October we finished up with the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Over the Mountain Hike in partnership with the Simsbury Land Trust and Bloomfield Parks, Recreation & Leisure Services. The 5-mile hike started at Tanager Hill property in Simsbury, went through Penwood State Park and ended at the Oliver Filley House in Bloomfield.
- There was a much shorter nature hike with the Salmon Brook Girl Scouts and Brownies, where they learned compass skills and about native and invasive plants along the trails of their local park.



## OTHER ACTIVITIES

In April, celebrating Earth Day, we participated in programs in all three towns:

- In East Granby, young people teamed up to help in the Earth Day Road Cleanup program, removing trash from a one-mile road section.
- In Bloomfield, we volunteered for the town-wide Bloomfield Clean Up! Working at several town park areas, we found some interesting discarded items.
- In West Hartford we staffed a table at the Earth Day Eco Fest with educational materials about tree types, birds' nests and other things that can be discovered in the woods.





Also in April, the North Central Conservation District held its three-day native plant sale at Hawk Hill Farm in Bloomfield. Activities included a guided walk of the property to show off the invasive plant reduction work that is being done at the farm.

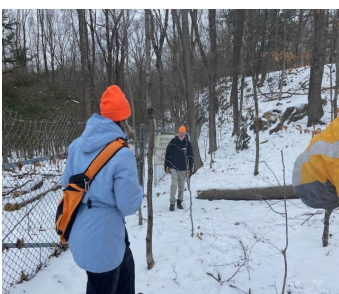


At the April Connecticut Land Conservation Day of training and workshops, we were honored to receive the 2024 Excellence in Conservation Organization Award.

We continue to expand our high school student intern program with three students from Bloomfield joining the East Granby students. Student responsibilities include being co-stewards for a property and joining one TRLC committee. After a year of committee experience, some students join the TRLC Board and participate in meetings and activities.

## PROPERTY STEWARDSHIP

It was a really big year for property stewardship. We held 75 work parties on 21 different properties across our three towns. Over 1,500 volunteer hours were expended doing tasks ranging from boundary inspections to invasives removal, trail maintenance, new plantings and putting up new TRLC signs. We are getting better acquainted with all of our properties and their neighbors.



Howard Preserve in East Granby received a lot of attention this year. The property includes a small organic farm operated by Alicia Cruz and her Nourish My Soul program. She provides a variety of educational programs for students of all ages. The vegetables grown on the farm are shared with the community.



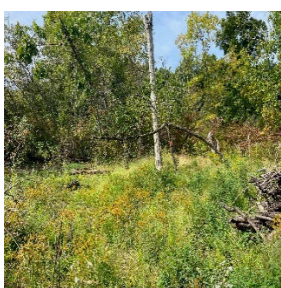
The Salmon Brook running along the south side of the property has sandy banks that were thickly covered with Japanese knotweed, an invasive plant. Several large work parties have helped with its removal. 70 students from Kingswood Oxford School came in for a four-hour session of river study, invasive plant removal and learning about the farm. Large groups employees from AXA XL and Indus Realty came for their second annual community service day and set up a water collection system, removed invasive plants, helped with weeding and did some planting.

Our dream for this property is to be able to complete a half-mile trail that will connect the nearby Seymour Middle School to the farm, the Salmon Brook and the woods so we can offer fun, hands-on educational programming.



A group of 5 Loomis Chaffee students showed up dressed in full work gear, with tools, and helped with removal of invasive vines from native trees at Van Otterloo in Bloomfield.

At Stout Family Fields in Bloomfield, the hard work last year of removing the invasive buckthorn trees from the area between the fields, known as the "island," has paid off. With a grant from the Hartford Audubon Society, native bushes beneficial to wildlife were purchased and planted. These include: high bush blueberry, winterberry, swamp azalea, purple aster and ironweed. Open areas were planted with a mix of native grasses and wildflowers. Other native plants are also popping up.



In West Hartford, there have been four work parties to remove invasive plants at the Orchard Preserve. The focus has been on removing the larger buckthorn trees, winged euonymus (also known as "burning bush") and multiflora rose. Work is wrapping up at Wojan's Woods. The new plants are thriving and the neighbors are enjoying their restored trail.

We cannot actually fit all of the news from 2024 in these few pages. If you would like to learn more, please visit our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/trlandconservancy/> or our website <https://www.trlandconservancy.org/>.