

# The Ridgeline

SPRING 2025 | trlandconservancy.org



Hawk Hill Tree Trail Grand Opening

## Come Meet Some Notable Trees



### On the Trail...

Trees designated as “notable”

- White Oak
- Amur Cork
- American Elm
- Pignut Hickory
- Black Birch

Remarkable mature species

- Northern Catalpa
- Black Walnut
- Swamp White Oak
- American Sycamore

The Hawk Hill Tree Trail, marked in yellow, is about a 1-mile walk out and back. Five of Hawk Hill’s notable trees are on the trail.

Connecticut celebrates its “notable trees,” the state’s largest and most historic as identified by the Connecticut Notable Trees Project. Hawk Hill Farm in Bloomfield, a Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy protected property, is home to seven of these remarkable trees along with many other mature specimens.

When a member made a generous donation to support tree maintenance and access, creating a tree trail featuring Hawk Hill’s “notables” was a natural choice.

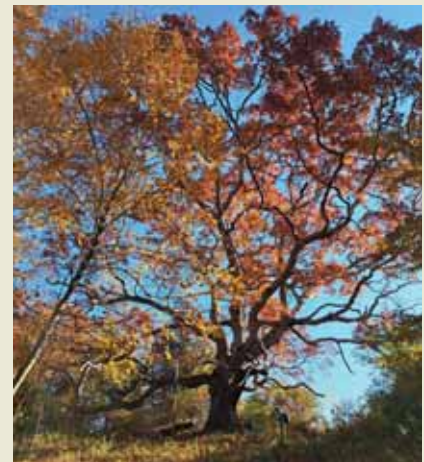
A committed crew of volunteers worked diligently over the past year to clear brush and invasive plants around the trees designated for the trail. A trail kiosk and educational signage for each tree are being installed, and the grand unveiling is scheduled for April 27, the same weekend as Arbor

Day, a national holiday recognizing the importance of trees.

**Please join us.** The festivities begin at 1 p.m., and feature dignitaries from our four member towns, poetry by Bloomfield poet Tom Nicotera and a ribbon-cutting by Diana Hughes, whose generosity made the trail possible.

Light refreshments will be served. You’re welcome to stay for a guided hike and an informative “conservation conversation” about land preservation and local ecology with the Connecticut Land Conservation Council.

Hawk Hill Farm is located at 20 Duncaster Road, Bloomfield. TRLC purchased the 45-acre farm in 2015 with partial funding through the Connecticut Open Space and Watershed Acquisition Grant Program.



A notable White Oak dwarfs mapmaker Steve Perry.



Many thanks to the brush-clearing crews

## Earth Day 2025

# Around the World and In Your Neighborhood

Every year on April 22, we celebrate Earth Day, a global event dedicated to raising awareness about environmental issues and inspiring action to protect our planet.

This year's theme, "Our Power, Our Planet," emphasizes the collective responsibility we all share to shift to renewable energy.

**This year is also Earth Day's 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary.** The Earth Day tradition was sparked in 1970 by growing pollution concerns throughout the United States. Millions of people took to the streets on that first Earth Day to demonstrate against the harmful effects of industrialization. This set the stage for a global movement that now mobilizes more than one billion people in 193 countries.

**Earth Day is a call to action.** From tree planting to advocacy,

people worldwide will be taking steps to protect our planet.

TRLC is leading the charge in our member towns with guided hikes, town cleanups and a vibrant festival with a special trout release at Granbrook Park organized by East Granby's Youth Action Council.

**"We're excited to connect with the community for these events,"** says Amanda Thompson, TRLC's president. "Earth Day is an opportunity to intentionally step back and remember that we all



*TRLC President Amanda Thompson with the East Granby cleanup crew on a previous Earth Day.*

share a home, a home we must actively protect."

**Come celebrate Earth Day with us — and let's make every day Earth Day!**



### Member Spotlight

## Michelle Clifford Inspires Stewardship & Community

For over 16 years, Michelle Clifford has been a dedicated advocate for land conservation with both the East Granby Land Trust and now TRLC. Her many contributions include serving as:

- A current member of the TRLC Land Conservation Committee.
- Steward of the 17+ acre Donald and Barbara Algren Preserve in East Granby.
- Past stewardship chair for the East Granby Land Trust.
- Past steward of the Ian Clark Preserve.

At Ian Clark, Michelle helped build a series of bog bridges, creating a half-mile loop that became the East Granby Public Library's beloved "story-book trail" walked by many local families.

Michelle loves the outdoors — and the

TRLC community.

"The camaraderie is what keeps me coming back," Michelle says. "You meet new people, hear their experiences, and learn about native habitats and how to support them. The work is extremely rewarding and beneficial to our environment."

Michelle learned of the land trust through a local newspaper. She brought her two young children to a work party where a bridge was being built at a pond outlet. They enjoyed it so much they kept coming back.

Michelle's dedication to conservation has left a lasting legacy with TRLC and the community, and inspires future generations of land stewards.





### Why Walk Boundaries?

- Check and mark property lines.
- Identify damage and maintenance needs.
- Detect encroachments, illegal dumping and other unauthorized activities.
- Monitor health of habitats and ensure conservation is effective.
- Be a visible presence with neighbors.
- Fulfill our legal obligations to protect the land.

### Conservation

## We Walk the Lines in Winter

Maintaining our properties is a year-round endeavor. In the warmer months, we focus on habitat improvement. In the winter, we walk our boundaries.

This winter, volunteers braved bitter cold and icy conditions to survey 11 of TRLC’s 40-plus properties in East Granby, Bloomfield and West Hartford.

Winter boundary walks have distinct advantages. Foliage-free sightlines make markers easier to spot, and frozen ground provides more stable footing, especially in wetlands.

Volunteers also revel in the quiet beauty of the winter landscape with its brisk air, visible animal tracks and glistening snow.

And there’s much to do. Tasks range from checking the state of the land to verifying boundaries and marking them as needed with pavers, spray paint or ribbons. This requires precision that can sometimes be challenging.

“We used to fumble around

with metal detectors, trying to find pins in the ground,” says Land Conservation Committee Co-Chair Catherine Delasco.

“Now, if there’s any doubt, we use onX Hunt, an app originally created for hunters to prevent them from trespassing on private land. It’s accurate within 15–20 feet and perfect for our land trust needs.”

For properties with uncertain boundaries, TRLC is enlisting the expertise of professional surveyors.

We’re also installing new signs to mark our land trust properties that feature a QR code linking to our land use policy. This will foster greater awareness of our conservation mission and promote respectful enjoyment of our properties.

With spring’s arrival, the work shifts from boundary walks to hands-on work parties. Join us if you’d like to help maintain trails, remove invasive species and make a tangible difference in our natural spaces. All are welcome.



*Catherine Delasco beside a new TRLC property sign*



*Boundary marking at William Capewell Greene Preserve in Bloomfield*