

# The Ridgeline

SUMMER 2025 | trlandconservancy.org



## Volunteers Dig in to Create a Pollinator Haven



*Tucked away in a secluded West Hartford neighborhood, a small roadside patch of grass has been transformed into a haven for pollinators.*

On a gray Sunday morning in early May, a dedicated group of six Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy volunteers gathered to bring the vision to life. Armed with shovels, wheelbarrows, pickaxes, and even a battery-operated root cutter, they planted eight species of plants.

Despite rocky soil and stubborn tree roots, the team made quick work of the project, digging, planting, and mulching 26 plants in just three hours.

Each species was chosen to attract and support bees, butterflies, moths, hummingbirds, insects, and other vital pollinators—many of which are in decline due to habitat loss, pesticides, and climate change.



The plants, which include witch hazel, purple coneflower, and winterberry among others, were funded by a \$500 grant from the Hartford Audubon Society.

You'll find the new pollinator garden along the road frontage of West Hartford's Clark Preserve—a one-acre parcel at 12 Clark Drive.

The preserve itself has a history rooted in community action. In 2008, nearby residents pooled resources to purchase and donate the land to protect it from future development.

Now, more than 15 years later, that same spirit of stewardship is thriving and inspiring others to reimagine what a small patch of land can do.

### Why Pollinators Matter

Pollinators are essential to life on earth. Without them:

- Over 75% of flowering plants would struggle to reproduce.
- More than 1/3 of food crops would decline or disappear.
- Biodiversity would suffer, harming animals that depend on plants.

Protecting pollinators supports food security, wildlife, and the balance of nature. We can't live without them.

### How to Create a Pollinator Garden

Even a small garden of native flowers and shrubs can make a difference.

#### Quick Tips:

- Choose a sunny spot.
- Pick native species that bloom spring through fall.
- Include varied colors, shapes, and bloom times.
- Skip hybrids and double blooms (less nectar).
- Layer low flowers, taller perennials, and shrubs.
- Avoid chemicals — they're harmful to pollinators.
- Enjoy. Keep a journal of what blooms and which pollinators visit.

Also try letting a portion of your property grow wild. Pollinators will love it.

## Contributor Spotlight

# Young Trailblazers Leave Their Mark Among the Trees

TRLC's Notable Tree Trail, which officially opened on April 27, wouldn't be what it is today without the contributions of two 17-year-old high school students: Hayli Graham and Christopher Lloyd.

Hayli designed the graphics for the signs that identify each of the nine trees designated for the trail. Christopher led the team responsible for building and installing the signs throughout the landscape.

**Hayli is a senior at Suffield High School** and a self-taught artist who creates for the joy of it. For this project, she carefully crafted silhouettes of each tree along with their buds and leaves, creating a total of 19 images.

"I've always been interested in the environment," Hayli says. "I loved how this project brought attention to the trees around us, caring for the environment, and making a difference. I never had the

opportunity to be part of something like this. It was fun and educational."

**Christopher, a junior at East Granby High School**, has been in scouting since grammar school. Now an aspiring Eagle Scout, he chose the tree trail sign installation for his Eagle project. With help from three fellow scouts, he built the trailhead kiosk and installed all the trail signage, including those with Hayli's designs.

Christopher has joined TRLC clean-up days and work parties before, but this project held deeper significance.

"I helped create a trail a lot of



Christopher Lloyd and Hayli Graham beside one of the signs featuring Hayli's graphics, installed by Christopher and his team.

people will enjoy, and I also learned a lot about the trees," he said. "I didn't realize we had all these notable trees all around us."

The Notable Tree Trail is now both a scenic and educational walk — and Hayli and Christopher helped bring this trail to life for all to enjoy.

## Ode to a White Oak

*Bloomfield poet Tom Nicotera was inspired to write this poem upon first encountering the Hawk Hill Tree Trail's notable white oak. He later read the poem at the trail's opening ceremony on April 27.*

At an uprise of the trail  
there you are on the right,  
a king of the forest  
spreading limbs as if to welcome all,  
a ruler of the horizon  
standing on the eastern hill  
at the borderlands of fields  
where goats and sheep graze.  
You look ancient and wise  
as indeed you are for your girth  
and the wide reach of your branches  
reveal it, and you are still alive  
after 300 years at least,  
a monument to the energy of life,  
a guarantor of robustness,  
a lesson to all of us,  
we who seek to prevail, to rule, to  
conquer.

Oh, it would have been easy  
to cut you down in your youth  
but a farmer spared you  
in the boundaries of his fields,  
no doubt to provide shade  
for his livestock grazing.

But you are preserved  
and your wisdom spared  
and now we in this century  
see you, and your welcoming  
arms receive us as we  
in our subservient lives  
walk this trail and marvel  
at your age, your strength,  
your sustainability of presence,  
your magnificent beauty,  
that we may be humbled,  
that we may know awe,

that we may  
see God in  
you before us,  
that we may  
bow our heads and pray.  
Ancient Druids heralded the oak  
as sacred  
and today even those who follow  
no religion  
follow the unmistakable wonder  
of who you are.

Some things are beyond us,  
some things dwarf us,  
some things amaze us,  
and we thank them for  
their revelation.

© Tom Nicotera, March 17, 2025





## TRLC Annual Meeting Recap

# Together for the Land We Love

On May 12, thirty-nine members and guests gathered at Windsor's historic town hall for Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy's annual meeting. Representatives from all four member towns—Bloomfield, East Granby, West Hartford, and Windsor—were present to celebrate a year of shared success and to look ahead to future growth.

### Highlights from the Evening

**A Warm Welcome from Windsor**  
Board Member Jim Kandik opened the meeting with a brief and heartfelt history of the Town of Windsor, which officially joined TRLC in late 2024. Jim spoke of Windsor's long-standing commitment to land stewardship and the value of uniting efforts with TRLC.



### 2025–2026 Board Members and Interns

**Back row:** David Iannucci, President Amanda Thompson, Treasurer Dave Sagers, Stephen Dewey, Intern Sebi Prescott, Catherine Delasco, Jim Kandik, Dale Bertoldi, Chip Caton **Front row:** Intern Varshny Sriganesh, Jennifer Frank, Cameron Lloyd, Intern Sree Kolla, Vice President Paula Jones (not pictured: Secretary Christopher Shepard)

*“Under all is the land, as they say in the real estate industry. We don’t really own the land. We hold it in trust.” – Board Member Jim Kandik*

### Looking Ahead

TRLC President Amanda Thompson outlined exciting initiatives for the year ahead, including:

- New property signage
- New trail kiosks
- More programs and hikes
- Strategic acquisitions of land and development rights to protect wild and working landscapes.

Amanda also applauded the tireless efforts of committee members to unify our 4 towns.

### Committee Reports

Committee chairs provided updates on their respective committees:

- Land Conservation
- Education and Outreach
- Finance
- Land Acquisition
- Development and Membership

### Elections and New Youth Involvement

Six board members and officers were unanimously re-elected for second terms. TRLC also welcomes three students from East Granby High School who will serve as interns on the board.

### Call to Action: Get Involved!

In her closing remarks, Amanda emphasized the importance of active membership. She encouraged everyone to share TRLC's mission with family and friends, participate in upcoming events and hikes, and volunteer at work parties.

*Together, we’re protecting the natural heritage of our four towns—and creating a legacy for generations to come.*

### TRLC Receives Beautification Award

We are thrilled to learn that TRLC has received the **Fred D. Parker Memorial Beautification Award** from the Windsor Chamber of Commerce.

This award recognizes individuals, businesses, and organizations that enhance the beauty of Windsor through their commitment to maintaining and improving local properties. It was presented at the chamber's annual meeting on June 18.

We're grateful to the Windsor Chamber for this meaningful acknowledgement of our mission and efforts in land conservation and stewardship.