



SUMMER 2026

The Ridgeline



Stewardship in Action: Caring for Land, Connecting People

Every acre protected is only the beginning of the story. With the help of our dedicated group of volunteers, Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy is able to care for the lands and habitats you have helped to conserve while creating opportunities for people of all ages to experience the wonders of nature firsthand.

In early June, we celebrated Connecticut Trails Day with a family-friendly hike from Stout Family Fields to Lake Louise in Penwood State Park. Guided by TRLC volunteers Larry Zemel and Gisele Nee, participants slowed down to experience nature through mindfulness activities and learned the history of Stout Family Fields and the legacy of Curtis Veeder, whose vision helped shape Penwood State Park.

Along the trail, children and adults alike were taught to recognize the mushrooms, lichens, and trees that make these forests so diverse. A particularly exciting highlight was when the children watched with fascination as a northern water snake climbed the kiosk near Lake Louise.

Above: Children enjoying Stout Family Fields and Penwood State Park during one of our Connecticut Trails Day hikes this June.

Below: Staff from Swamp Yankee Earthcare pulls a wagon of native plants for planting along the stream at Stout Family Fields.





Stewardship in Action *(continued from page 1)*



A student at University of Saint Joseph helping to clear invasive trees.

Just a few weeks earlier, TRLC volunteers celebrated Earth Day by partnering with students at the University of Saint Joseph to restore a valuable grassland habitat that serves as both a living classroom for students and an important refuge for wildlife. The main objective of the day was to remove invasive ornamental trees - Bradford pear, Callery pear, and Siberian crabapple - that had begun overtaking the grassland. While these trees produce attractive blossoms, they crowd out native plants that support the insects and caterpillars that birds and other wildlife depend upon.

Armed with hand saws and clippers, volunteers spent the day removing invasive trees and transforming the cut branches into brush piles that now provide shelter for small mammals, reptiles, and birds. Visitors also had the opportunity to learn

about local conservation efforts and discover ways to become involved in protecting the landscapes that make our region special.

Whether restoring habitat, exploring local trails, or sharing moments of discovery with the next generation, every volunteer event reflects the impact of your generosity. Your support protects the places where wildlife thrives, where families build lasting connections with nature, and where our community learns that conservation is an ongoing act of care that doesn't end when land is protected.

Thank you for making these experiences - and the stewardship of the lands we all cherish - possible.

Grassland habitat before (left) and after (right) being cleared of invasive trees.



Good news, you can make an even bigger impact!

Right now, there is a special opportunity to conserve more land. When 20 people become monthly donors, or increase their current monthly gift, **a generous couple will donate \$2,000 in honor of your participation.**

A monthly gift is simple to set up, easy to manage, and can be changed at any time. Your monthly gift helps to:

- Conserve more land in our region.
- Care for conserved land and enhance wildlife habitat all year long.
- Provide opportunities for kids, families, and community members to enjoy nature and trails.

As a monthly donor, you'll become part of the **Deep Roots Giving Circle** and receive special updates on projects, programs, and events.

Donate online at trlandconservancy.org or send a check made payable to: Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy, PO Box 734, Bloomfield, CT 06002

Thank you for supporting conservation. Together we can save the special places in Bloomfield, East Granby, West Hartford and Windsor.





Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy

Mission:

Protecting open space and promoting public appreciation of the natural environment *from the ridgeline to the rivers* in Bloomfield, East Granby, West Hartford, and Windsor.

2025 Board of Directors:

Amanda Thompson
President

Paula Jones
Vice President

Dave Sagers
Treasurer

James Kandik
Secretary

Dale Bertoldi

Chip Caton

Catherine Delasco

Stephen Dewey

Jennifer Frank

David Iannucci

Cameron Lloyd

Sree Kolla
Intern

Sebi Prescott
Intern

Varshny Sriganesh
Intern

Staff:

Kathy Blachowski
Executive Director

Laura Graham
Administrator

2025 Annual Report

Last year was an exciting year of growth for **Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy** including the hiring of our first Executive Director. But that wasn't all that happened in 2025; TRLC Committees and volunteers stayed busy all year long. Take a look at some of the highlights below.



Acquisitions Committee

- Started our **pro-active approach** to land acquisition.
- **Strengthened our relationships** with town departments and officials as well as other like-minded organizations.
- Worked to educate the public about options for land conservation.

**45
Properties**
**642 Acres
Protected**

Protected Acres **642** **+150**



Land Conservation Committee

1,200 Volunteer Hours
58 Volunteers
60 Work Parties
20 Properties



2025 Education & Outreach Events

- Held **7 events** with schools in our community.
- Continued the Nature Lecture Series with the Town of Bloomfield.
- Our volunteers led **16 hikes**.
- Created the Hawk Hill Farm Notable Tree Trail.
- Hosted or co-hosted **9 educational events** on environmental topics open to all.



Photo above courtesy of Chris Graham Photography.



Development & Membership

- Launched inclusive membership model, *every donor is a member*.
- Published three print newsletters.
- Made upgrades to our website.
- Hosted Wojan Woods' Woodland Restoration Celebration.
- Welcomed 90+ attendees to our Annual Fall Gathering.

Results by the Numbers

- 25% Membership Growth
- 81% Member Retention
- 67% Increase in Monetary Support (including grants)



2025 Financial Summary

Income

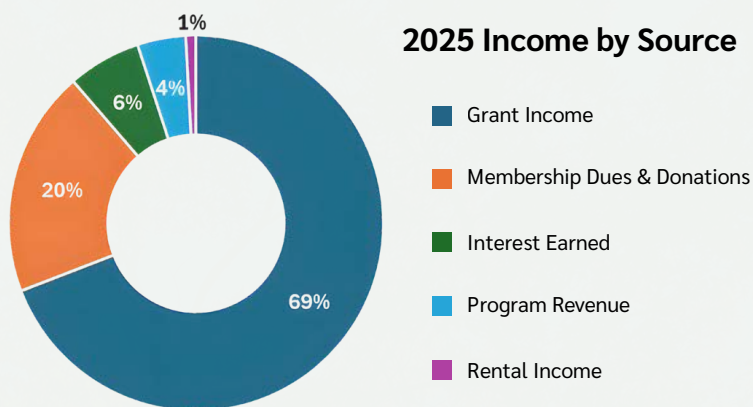
Fundraising Events	\$ 9,640.00
Grants	\$ 159,862.01
Interest Income	\$ 14,615.00
Membership/Donations	\$ 45,067.53
Rental Income	\$ 2,000.00
Grand Total	\$ 231,184.54

Expense

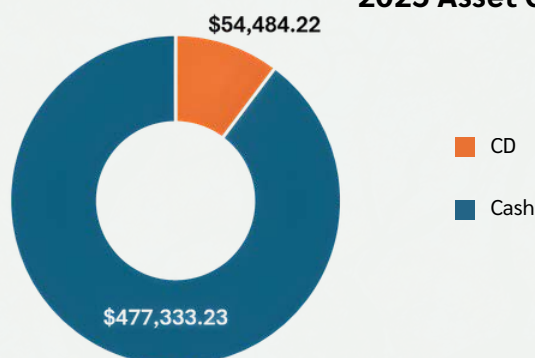
Fundraising	\$ 6,445.00
General and Administrative	\$ 14,499.04
Programs	\$ 5,610.54
Stewardship	\$ 32,430.71
Operations/Office	\$ 41,347.66
Grand Total	\$ 100,332.95

Net Revenue **\$ 130,851.59**

2025 Income by Source



2025 Asset Growth: 32%



Looking forward to the rest of 2026:

At the Annual Meeting in April, the Board of Directors for 2026 was officially elected. Pictured below (*top left to bottom right*): Dave Sagers, Jennifer Frank, Meg Harvey, Stephen Dewey, Chip Caton, Amanda Thompson (*President*), David Iannucci, Laura Graham (*Staff: Administrator*), James Kandik (*Secretary*), Cameron Lloyd, Paula Jones (*Vice President*), Kelly Ku (*Treasurer*), Kathy Blachowski (*Staff: Executive Director*), and Bianca Prescott (*not pictured*).

We would like to thank Catherine Delasco and Dale Bertoldi for their many years of service on the Board, and for their continued dedication to TRLC on various committees and in volunteer roles. We also are welcoming three new interns in 2026: Asher Scarlato, Oliva Dallesander, and Maddy Lundell.

We have 5 properties that we are actively working on protecting in 2026. These properties are a combination of donations and conservation easements that will protect more than 150 acres of diverse land including forests, wetlands, and agricultural use.



Helping Create a Homegrown National Park® in East Granby

What if the path to healthier forests, cleaner water, and thriving wildlife began right in our own neighborhoods?

Thanks to people like you who care about protecting the natural world, Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy volunteers are helping bring that vision to life in East Granby through the growing Homegrown National Park® movement.

Entomologist, ecologist, and conservationist Doug Tallamy has inspired communities across the country with a simple but powerful idea: if half of America's lawns were replaced with native plants, together we would create the equivalent of a 20-million-acre national park. Native plants provide food and shelter for birds, butterflies, bees, and countless other species while reducing the need for mowing, fertilizers, pesticides, and excessive watering. They also improve air and water quality and support healthier habitats and wildlife.

Inspired by one of Tallamy's presentations this spring, Hartford Audubon Society members Vicky and Paul Margiotta saw an opportunity to make a difference at the Greenstone Hollow Nature Preserve in East Granby. While most of the 38-acre preserve consists of forest and wetlands, a three-quarter-acre mowed lawn at the property entrance offered the perfect place to demonstrate how native plantings can transform wildlife habitat.



Some of the volunteers who planted native species at the Greenstone Hollow Nature Preserve.

With support from the Hartford Audubon Society and the dedication of volunteers including members of Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy, the area is being transformed into a vibrant native landscape. Volunteers planted 14 native trees along with 37 native shrubs and perennial plants chosen to support pollinators and birds throughout the seasons.



TRLC Work Party Coordinator and former Board member, Catherine Delasco, watering the new plantings.

Oaks were selected because a single mature oak can support thousands of insect species, forming the foundation of a healthy food web. Native shadbushes and mulberries will provide spring blossoms for pollinators and late-summer fruit for birds such as Cedar Waxwings. Eastern Red Cedars will offer year-round shelter and nutritious berries for wildlife. TRLC member Chris Fisher arranged irrigation from a neighboring property to help the young plantings become established during their first growing season, while volunteers from both organizations continue to water and care for the site.

Perhaps the greatest impact will be felt by the next generation. The neighborhood children who gather nearby each day to catch the school bus will watch this landscape change over the coming years -

from a mowed lawn into a thriving habitat alive with butterflies, songbirds, and native plants. Because of your commitment to conservation, they will see firsthand how small actions can create lasting change for wildlife and our communities.

This project is a wonderful reminder that conservation doesn't always begin with protecting hundreds of acres. Sometimes it starts by transforming a single lawn into a place where nature can flourish.



Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy

Serving the towns of Bloomfield,
East Granby, West Hartford, & Windsor

OUR MISSION: *To protect open space
and promote public appreciation of the
natural environment across the region.*



Marsh marigolds at Ian Clark Preserve.

Upcoming Events

SAVE THE DATE

TRLC's Annual Gathering:
Celebrating Land, Legacy, and Community

Sunday, October 4th, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Wintonbury Hills Golf Course,
Bloomfield

*Come celebrate the success of our
growing organization and the people -
like you - who make land conservation
in our region possible.*

HIKES

August 8th, 9:00 a.m.

TRLC Hiking Club:

Mary Edwards Mountain Property
200 Mountain Rd, North Granby

**For more details and the latest TRLC
events, visit trlandconservancy.org**

Join Our New Book Club

This May, TRLC launched its first-ever book club in collaboration with Westmoor Park in West Hartford.

Over three weeks, ten attendees read *The Serviceberry* by Robin Wall Kimmerer, sparking rich discussion, including how we might build a gift economy in our own neighborhoods. TRLC member Kathy Simpson facilitated the gatherings, and a park naturalist brought depth and knowledge to the conversation.

"We're delighted to be building a partnership with Westmoor Park," says TRLC Executive Director Kathy Blachowski. "This spring, we hosted a bird walk there and are excited to partner on the book club, helping our community deepen its understanding and appreciation of the natural world."

The book club will resume in September. **You can help us decide what to read next.** Send your pick to: admin@trlandconservancy.org.

- *The Accidental Ecosystem: People and Wildlife in American Cities*
- *Astonished by Beauty: A Field Guide to the Practice of Paying Attention*
- *Dirt: The Ecstatic Skin of the Earth*

We can't wait to gather again this fall. Hope to see you there!