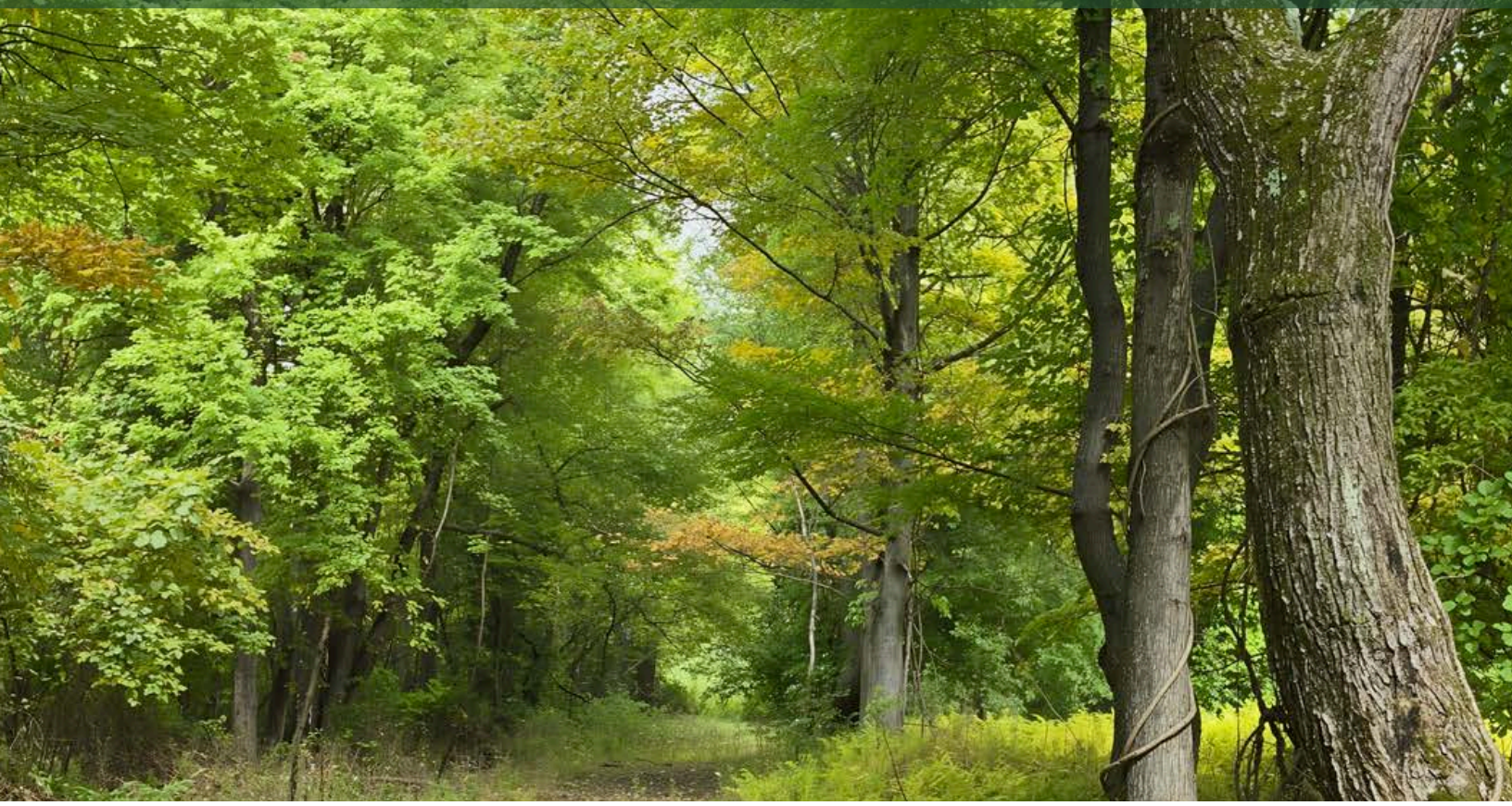
FALL 2026

The Ridgeline



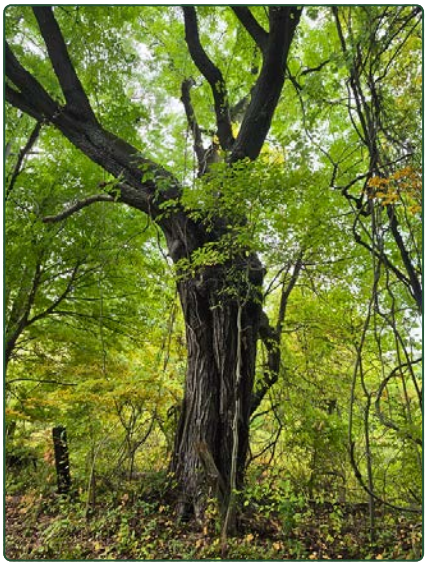
A wooded view of the new 28-acre Cunnane Preserve in Bloomfield.

Cunnane Preserve: A Family Legacy Takes Root on West Dudley Town Road

When Deirdre Cunnane and Eileen Kirschbaum were growing up in Bloomfield, weekends had a rhythm. Their father, John Cunnane, would drive the few miles from the family home on Tunxis Avenue to his brother Mike's farm on West Dudley Town Road, and his children came along.

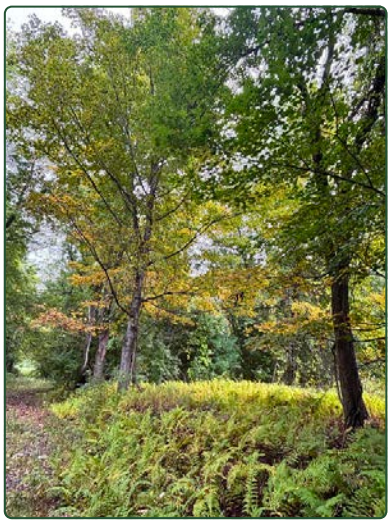
"We always went to visit," Deirdre remembers. "Every weekend, our dad would visit his brother. We'd do chores and hang out. Dad would cut our Christmas trees down from there."

On September 30th, those same 28 acres became the Cunnane Preserve of Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy. The land is a gift from the two sisters, Deirdre, a lawyer in Boston, and Eileen, a dentist in Suffield. They gave it in honor of their uncle, father, and mother who taught them what land can mean.



A large maple tree that has grown over the decades since the property was a farm.

Cunnane Preserve *(continued from page 1)*



A clearing filled with ferns next to a potential trail.

Roots in Irish soil

Uncle Mike emigrated from Ireland in the 1950s, and John followed a few years later. Both had grown up on Irish farms, and so had Margaret, whom the sisters' father married in 1959. For a family with that heritage, owning land in their new country connected them to who they were.

Uncle Mike never used his property as a working farm; he was a Hartford police officer and a U.S. veteran. But there were barns, and for a time, cows, and he was surrounded by a close-knit Irish immigrant community with farms and open fields all around.

After Uncle Mike died in 1979, the fields slowly gave way to forest. Today, the land is fully wooded, with wetlands and a stream that offer rich habitat for wildlife. It's bordered by industry, including Kaman Aerospace, and a residential neighborhood lies to the south.

A legacy for the family

After the brothers passed, Margaret held the land in a living trust. The sisters inherited it when she died in January 2024. "We were always considering donating the land, making it a legacy for the family," Deirdre says. "Bloomfield is such a big part of our lives."

And Bloomfield meant a lot to their parents. They were always volunteering and contributing, Eileen says. Margaret served on the town council and board of education, and taught knitting at the Bloomfield Senior Center, where a special knitting room now bears her name. John was president of the Irish Club.

The sisters first thought of donating the land to the town, then discovered Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy. They reached out in early 2026, and within months the transfer was complete. "We're so happy we did it," Eileen says. "We're privileged to be able to do this, and it's been a great experience with Traprock Ridge."

A place to walk

This winter, TRLC will build a trail through the property. There will be an opening celebration in late spring or summer to formally dedicate and welcome walkers to the preserve, located at 58 & 62 West Dudley Town Road.

The trail is a particularly fitting tribute. "Dad loved to walk, and he walked with others from Bloomfield," Eileen says. "So having a place to walk is a great way to honor his name."

To families considering a similar gift, Deirdre offers encouragement: "It is a nice way to honor your family and your connection to your town, and it adds green space and trails for everyone to enjoy for generations to come."



Cunnane Preserve donors: sisters, Eileen Kirschbaum and Deirdre Cunnane.

Exciting Developments at Howard Preserve in East Granby

There's a lot happening at the Tom & Ginnie Howard Educational Preserve in East Granby! With a new bridge, new stairs, a new trail, and a new farming partner growing flowers and vegetables, this 15-acre property is becoming an even more welcoming place for the community to explore and enjoy.

Nestled between Granbrook Park and Seymour Elementary School, the 15-acre preserve features open fields, wooded trails, and the scenic Salmon Brook. Visitors can follow trails through the woods to the brook and a 7-acre field, enjoying a peaceful natural setting right in a local neighborhood in East Granby.



The recently completed stairs connecting Howard Preserve to Seymour Elementary School - a project by Eagle Scout candidate Timothy Lloyd.

One of the most important improvements is the addition of a new bridge and stairs connecting the preserve to Seymour Elementary School, giving students and teachers easier access to the natural world right outside their classrooms. The preserve will serve as an outdoor classroom where students can explore local ecosystems, observe wildlife, learn about native plants, and discover the importance of conservation firsthand.

We're also delighted to welcome Country Garden Oasis as our new farming partner. With plans to continue growing flowers and vegetables at Howard Preserve in 2027, Country Garden Oasis will bring seasonal color and new agricultural activity to the fields. Seymour Elementary School students will also have the chance to learn directly from the farmers about growing food and flowers, caring for the soil, and learning where their food comes from.



TRLC volunteer, Sander Hamilton, took the lead on the bridge and stair projects at Howard Preserve.

These improvements are helping fulfill the original vision for Howard Preserve - **bringing conservation, education, recreation, and local agriculture together in one remarkable place.**

None of this would be possible without our generous supporters, volunteers, and community partners. Your commitment helps turn conservation plans into real opportunities for students, families, and neighbors to experience and appreciate the land around them.

We hope you'll visit soon and see what's new!

Help Us Reach Our Monthly Giving Goal - Just 3 More Donors Needed!

From building trails and bridges to protecting forests, farms and wildlife habitats, TRLC's work depends on the generosity of our volunteers and donors. And right now, **if just 3 more people become monthly donors, a generous couple will donate $2,000 in honor of your participation.** Any amount counts.

Visit **trlandconservancy.org** to set up monthly giving online and to learn more about other ways to give. Thank you for supporting conservation. Together we can save the special places in Bloomfield, East Granby, West Hartford, and Windsor.

TRLC Deep Roots Giving Circle

Traprock Ridge
Land Conservancy

P.O. Box 734, Bloomfield, CT 06002
(860) 251-9650

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

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



A black bear checking out one of our trail cameras.

Upcoming Events

HIKES

Wednesday, November 11th, 10:00 a.m.
TRLC Hiking Club: Beyond the Northern End of West Hartford Reservoir #6
3070 Albany Ave., West Hartford

RAY ASSELIN FILM SERIES

TRLC is proud to join several community partners in presenting this special film series.

Thursday, November 19th
Old Growth Forest: Nature's Biotic Water Pump

Thursday, December 17th
Pro Forestation: Letting Forests Grow Old

Each evening begins with a reception at 6:00 p.m., followed by a film at 6:30 p.m. and a brief Q&A with Ray Asselin. Registration is available through the Simsbury Public Library website.

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

A Note of Gratitude

More than 60 members and guests gathered at Wintonbury Hills Golf Course in Bloomfield on October 4th for a beautiful autumn evening at our 2026 Annual Gathering, **celebrating our conservation successes and the people who make them possible!**



Patricia Connolly and Catherine Lyons, gathering flowers for the event at Country Garden Oasis.

A heartfelt thank you to our event sponsors, attendees, donors, and volunteers - and to everyone who volunteered, contributed, shared ideas, or participated in our events and programs throughout 2026. **As a community-supported organization, conservation happens because of people like you!**

Special thanks to our event sponsors: The Richard P. Garmany Fund at the Greater Hartford Gives Foundation, Seabury & Seabury at Home, Duncaster Foundation, The Bluebird Fund at the Greater Hartford Gives Foundation, Windsor Federal Bank, Northwest Community Bank, The Green Machine, and the University of Saint Joseph; and Event Chair: Jennifer Frank.