



For immediate release

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Essex Land Trust Announces Donation of Turtle Creek Preserve by The Nature Conservancy in Connecticut

The Essex Land Trust (ELT) is pleased to accept the donation of Turtle Creek Preserve from The Nature Conservancy in Connecticut (TNC). The transaction was completed on April 25th, 2024.

ELT recognizes and values TNC's stewardship of this protected natural resource since it was donated by Dorothy S. Bowles, wife of former Connecticut Governor and U.S. Secretary of State Chester Bowles in 1971 and by Charles and Dorothy Mills in 1978. ELT shares TNC's mission of advancing effective, lasting conservation.

The 96-acre preserve, located in Essex and Old Saybrook, protects wooded uplands and tidal marshes with direct frontage on the Connecticut River. Turtle Creek winds northward through extensive wetlands to a narrow strip of beach along the Connecticut River. Higher ground to the west borders South Cove in Essex. Access to the preserve is from Watrous Point Road, off Route 154.

After signing the donation agreement, Essex Land Trust President, Jeff Croyle commented: "The Essex Land Trust's relationship with The Nature Conservancy dates to 1985 when it gifted 97 acres of the Canfield-Meadow Woods Preserve to us. We are thrilled that it is now donating Turtle Creek Preserve to us and we look forward to providing local stewardship to this iconic Connecticut River property."

"Turtle Creek possesses historical and environmental significance, but it also holds importance as a place where people of all ages connect with nature. To now be stewarded by its very own neighbors and visitors is a fantastic win for this land. We are so pleased to partner with the Essex Land Trust and to support its conservation work," said Sarah Pellegrino, TNC in Connecticut's Land Protection and Strategies Manager.

NEWS RELEASE

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Turtle Creek has a long history. Indigenous Peoples drew water from the spring off the main trail. It was later known as Hayden Point after the property's owner Uriah Hayden, who built the war ship Oliver Cromwell. The area was used as grazing land while Deitch's Pond was created for ice production.

Animal life includes turtles and amphibians in the old ice pond. Bald eagles and osprey frequent the river and cove, which is also home to ducks, and wading birds. The wetlands abound with plant life, including jewelweed, Joe-Pye weed and buttonbush shrubs. Mountain laurel, oak, birch, and beech trees dominate the higher ground with an occasional pink lady's slipper in the understory.

The Essex Land Trust would like to acknowledge that due diligence expenses for the Turtle Creek Preserve Transfer were supported with funding from the Connecticut Land Conservation Council's Transaction Assistance Grant (TAG) Program.

The Essex Land Trust is a Connecticut non-profit corporation nationally accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. Its mission is to acquire, preserve, and manage its open space to protect the environment and small-town character of the villages of Centerbrook, Essex, and Ivoryton. It provides recreational and educational opportunities built upon strategic acquisitions and responsible stewardship of properties. With the addition of Turtle Creek as its 24th preserve, the Essex Land Trust owns and manages 752 acres of preserves with 35 miles of trails.

The Nature Conservancy is a global conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, TNC creates innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that nature and people can thrive together. Working in more than 70 countries and territories, TNC uses a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners. The Connecticut chapter of TNC has protected more than 53,000 acres of land and is engaging with communities throughout the state to help build and conserve a more resilient, livable world. To learn more, visit: www.nature.org/CT.

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