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# THE The Colebrook Land Conservancy NEWSLETTER

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"In Land We Trust"

Volume 20 Number 1, Summer 2010

## NEW LAND

# Back to Nature

IT'S RARE FOR A LAND TRUST to be able to turn back the clock—to remove buildings from a site and allow the land to revert to a wild state. The Colebrook Land Conservancy was recently given this opportunity, thanks to a generous gift from the Faraway Hill Trust.

The Trust donated over seven acres on Sandy Brook Road, extending to the center of Sandy Brook, with the request that a Quonset hut and other small buildings on the property be removed and the land returned to—and forever kept—in its natural state.

The Farmington River Coordinating Committee has awarded a matching grant to the Conservancy of up to \$5,000 for costs associated with acquiring the property and removing the buildings.

This unique property abuts two CT DEP-designated Natural Area Preserves: the Kitchel Wilderness and Sandy Brook. It is a testament to this property's very special location that only about 25 areas in the entire State have received the designation "Natural Area Preserve" signifying they are worthy of preservation in their natural condition because of outstanding scenic value and unique habitat. To abut two of these areas is quite remarkable.

The forested property has streams that feed Sandy Brook, which in turn drains into the Farmington River, making the parcel ecologically significant to the watershed. Preserving the land in its natural condition helps protect its plant and animal resources, as well as those of the adjacent Kitchel Wilderness and the Algonquin State Forest, which surrounds the Kitchel Wilderness.

The streams on the property support robust amphibian populations and the forest land provides habitat for many species. Sightings in the area include Bobcat, American Black Bear, Fisher, Mink, eastern Coyote, White-tailed Deer, Wild Turkey, Raccoon and Porcupine.

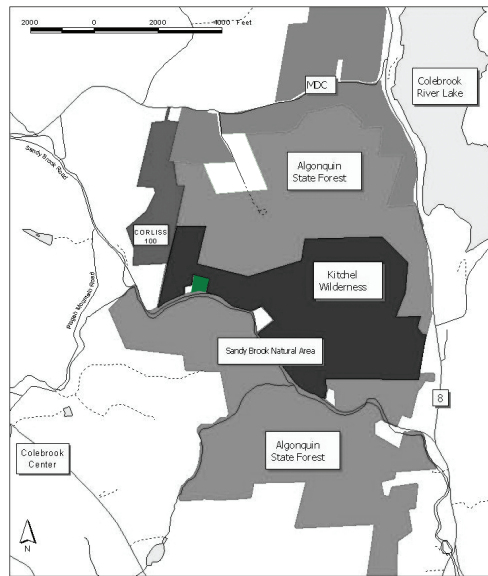
Provisions that prevent development on the two-acre building site and prohibit other activities such as logging and hunting are included in the Deed transferring the property to the Conservancy. These provisions complement a conservation restriction on the remainder of the property held by the Connecticut Conservation Association (CCA).

During the building removal process, the Conservancy is following recommendations for erosion and sediment control from Colebrook's Inland Wetlands Commission and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

It was important to the Conservancy that as much of the removed building material be recycled as possible. This effort was assisted by Bill Eichner of Winchester Excavating Co., which was contracted to demolish the building. In the course of the work, metals were separated to be recycled, cut stone chimneys will be recycled by Leon Harris of Bel Espalier, LLC, as stonework in landscape design, and even the concrete foundation and pad on which the building was built will be crushed and recycled. The Conservancy is pleased that the project was completed on time and as budgeted with significant recycling of what otherwise would have been waste materials.

Trustees of the Faraway Hill Trust are descendants of Helen Binney Kitchel, the original donor of the Kitchel Wilderness to the State of Connecticut. The CLC also benefitted from the generosity of the Kitchel family in 2005 receiving significant funding support through CCA's Happy K. (Kitchel) Egler Memorial Fund for the Kitchel Wilderness for the purchase of the "Corliss 100" acres. This forested tract between Sandy Brook and Beech Hill Road is adjacent to the Kitchel Wilderness and the Algonquin.

If you would like to support this project, please send your contribution to the Colebrook Land Conservancy, P.O. Box 90, Colebrook, CT.  
—Linda Raciborski



**The seven acre donation (highlighted in green) is surrounded by the Kitchel Wilderness.**



WILD LIFE

# Beekeeping

MY WIFE, LYNN AND I became interested in Beekeeping in the Fall of 2008. Lynn had read *A Book of Bees* by Sue Hubbel, and I ran across *The Backyard Beekeeper* by Kim Flottum in a bookstore.

We spent some time researching what all that was involved in beekeeping that fall and then took a beginning beekeeping class that winter. The class was great, taught by a retired commercial beekeeper, it was 8 sessions, about 20 hours total.

We did a bulk order with the class for our beehives and equipment. Its about \$300 - \$350 to get started with a beehive. That may seem high, but once you buy the hardware and equipment, the yearly expenses are minimal. Adding additional hives and bees is less expensive, since you already have a lot of the equipment.

We started two hives in the spring of 2009. We put one hive in our yard, in a shed to protect it from bears, and the other hive at our friend's farm, surrounded by an electric fence.

The hive in our yard was what beekeepers call 'under performing', so we moved it to the farm as well. Because we live surrounded by woods, I don't think there was enough food sources, plus there wasn't enough morning sunlight to warm up the beehive.

The location of your hives is very im-

portant. You want the hives to get morning light, to warm up the hive, and then, ideally, dappled shade during the heat of the day, then sun again in the evening to warm the hive again before nightfall. Protection from winter winds is crucial as well. Your hives must also be near a water source, if not, you must provide them water. I've seen where some people put out a watering tray similar to those for chickens (if your water source is nearby a horse trough, float some pieces of wood in the trough, as bees don't swim )

Bees are amazing to watch. Many times we get a sandwich and just sit and watch the bees fly in and out of the hive. You get to where you can identify the different bees, which ones are foragers, which are guard bees, drones, etc. Foragers land with big balls of pollen on their rear legs, and other bees at the entrance remove this pollen, and the foraging bee goes back out.

In mid-August you can harvest some honey from your established hives. Don't plan on taking honey from a first year hive. Your whole goal with a new hive is to get it through the winter, and the bees need all the food they have collected through the summer. You will read in beekeeping books about people harvesting honey twice a year, but my experience has been its once a year around

here. Those with longer seasons can expect more honey.

Bees don't hibernate, they cluster. All the drones (male bees) are kicked out of the hive in late fall, the queen lays fewer eggs, and as it cools, the bees group together in the hive to maintain warmth. The bees move in a group thru the hive eating their food stores. We wrap our hives with a black insulation to help them get through the winter.

Bees are not the kind of animals that you can just set out and ignore them until its time to harvest the honey, you have to check in on them every few weeks, depending on the season. If you don't maintain your hives, your bees will die.

People ask me what is killing all the bees, and I believe the experts now think it is the cumulative effect of pathogens, mites, pesticides, and a few other things, all combine to weaken a hive.

We belong to the Backyard Beekeepers Assoc., [www.backyardbeekeepers.com](http://www.backyardbeekeepers.com). There are other beekeeping groups nearby, and their web site has a list of them.

We've documented our first years of beekeeping with a series of Beginning Beekeeping videos, which you can watch at [www.GardenFork.TV](http://www.GardenFork.TV), click on the Bee TV link . You can Email me questions : [eric@gardenfork.tv](mailto:eric@gardenfork.tv) —Eric Rochow

HISTORY

# Helen Binney Kitchel

from ‘Three Generations of Land Saving’

*The following excerpt is from an article entitled “Three Generations of Land Saving” written by Betsy Potts, which first appeared in Connecticut Woodlands, the magazine of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, in Summer 1990. The Colebrook Land Conservancy thanks the Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA) for permission to reprint a portion of that article in honor of an approximately 7 acre gift to the CLC of land adjoining the Kitchel Wilderness along Sandy Brook by descendants of Helen Binney Kitchel. Please see our front page “Back To Nature” article for detail about this special gift.*

*The CLC is honored to accept conservation responsibility for this additional land in an area of remarkable pristine beauty and ecological importance. In addition, we are delighted to honor the memory of Helen Binney Kitchel in this publication as a person of extraordinary generosity and foresight regarding land conservation. We are in her debt for the protected beauty of the Algonquin State Forest and the Kitchel Wilderness Preserve, and the related recreational opportunities, fresh air and clean water her gifts provide to us and to future generations.*

HELEN BINNEY KITCHEL’S INTEREST in land preservation began in her early childhood. She grew up in Old Greenwich when it was a lovely natural setting of fields, low shrubs, thickets and rock cliffs. There was a notable and welcome absence of roads and “cared-for” gardens or lawns. This environment nurtured her love of the out-of-doors. Vermont vacations on Lake Saint Catherine, with its dark pine groves, deepened her appreciation of forest.

Having worked on the unsuccessful enterprise to save Laddin’s Rock Farm [in Greenwich, CT], land she referred to as “that wooded sanctuary of my youth”, Helen knew the obstacles to saving open space. The Forest and Park Commission toured Laddin’s Rock Farm in 1924 at the owner’s invitation and found the wooded property both suitable and desirable for a park. But the Commission reported that the state lacked the resources to purchase it. Efforts to persuade Greenwich and Stamford to buy and transform the farm into a joint town and city park were also thwarted by cost.

Unable to protect the land that had meant a great deal to her, Helen quickly redirected her energies. “I want a forest of my own”, she told Forester Austin Hawes. This family friend ac-

cepted her challenge. By the time a mutually convenient date to search for a forest could be arranged, it was a snowy morning in December 1924.

Hawes introduced Helen to a remote piece of rugged land located in Colebrook, property the state also had under consideration. The forested tract contained a mountain, brook, marsh and waterfalls. Helen fell in love with the land, envisioning possibilities for trails and family outings. The remoteness of the forest also underscored a special requirement. In what her daughter described as the “robber baron mentality and lumbering craze” of her mother’s day, Helen felt that forested land received too little attention. Even as she took title to the forest, she considered herself not so much owner as steward. This land was

to be “cherished, enjoyed and protected.” In 1937 she quietly gave this 600-acre property, which she named Algonquin Forest, to the State of Connecticut.

Hawes encouraged Helen to purchase at least 400 additional adjoining acres. She agreed to a transaction totaling 500 acres. From this second parcel Kitchel Wilderness Preserve was established in 1961. The gift of land was made over three years, providing a tax credit for Helen.

The family cabin and ten acres were

deeded to Helen’s children and grandchildren to use for as long as they desire. If at some future time the family has no interest in owning the property, a reverter clause guarantees the land will become property of The Nature Conservancy.

In the almost 25 years between Helen Kitchel’s two gifts, the public developed an interest in and an appreciation for land preservation. These are summarized in her words:

Although our first gift to land to the State in 1937 had been made with no fanfare (merely my request that the property be a forest, not a park, and that no lumbering be done in my lifetime), the situation in 1960 was very different. Because of a new concept of the environment and the realization of the importance of preserving our woodlands whenever possible, the State was able and eager to accept my Faraway Hill as a wilderness! A few hundred acres of unusually interesting and beautiful forest which had been privately owned and protected for over 30 years was a truly valuable bequest.

A CFPA member for 65 years, Helen Kitchel died on February 12, 1990 at the age of 99.

*“This land was to be “cherished, enjoyed and protected” ’*

*—Helen Binney Kitchel*

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# THE NEWSLETTER

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In honor of Earth Day 2010, the CLC donated the following books to the Colebrook School library. We are able to do this annually through The Robert B. Lisle Memorial Fund, which was established by Elizabeth Lisle in memory of her husband, who was particularly fond of reading.

*The Bumblebee Queen* by April Pulley Sayre, *There is a Tree* by Marti Richtmyer Nash, *Woodland Wildflowers* from The Children's Museum

of Hartford, *Roaring Brook Nature Center*, *The Vegetable Alphabet Book* by Jerry Pallotta and Bob Thomson, *Discover Nature in Water and Wetlands* by Elizabeth P. Lawlor, *Woods Walk* by Henry W. Art and Michael W. Robbins

Be sure to visit our newly redesigned web site [www.colebrooklandconservancy.org](http://www.colebrooklandconservancy.org), where donations to support the conservancy can be made using Paypal. Also please send us your Email to [colebrookland@gmail.com](mailto:colebrookland@gmail.com) so we may more effectively communicate with our members

*The Colebrook Land Conservancy*  
P.O. Box 90 Colebrook, CT 06021

The Colebrook Land Conservancy Newsletter is produced in the public's interest. Comments and suggestions for articles are welcome.



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Annual Dues: \$25 family, \$20 individual, \$10 senior.  
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P.O. Box 90 Colebrook, CT 06021

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