



Rising TO THE CHALLENGE 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



Dear Friend,

This year, one sentiment echoed over and over: Rise to the challenge. Our history, longevity, and deep expertise positioned us to lead the way for nature as One Conservancy, and your trust and support in this work made it possible.

We are indeed heading to higher elevations as our Connecticut team works in the Appalachians landscape and mountains of Mongolia with leaders like Gala Davaa. We are restoring important habitat at landmarks like Rocky Neck State Park. We are at the Capitol, both in Hartford and in Washington, D.C., as we advocate for nature.

And we will continue forward together because nature needs us. It is not an option or a choice, it is simply what we must do. When you contemplate taking action for nature, take action with TNC—we are here alongside you.



Dr. Frogard Ryan
STATE DIRECTOR
THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
IN CONNECTICUT

PHOTO: SUSAN WOLLSCHLAGER



Gala Davaa
COUNTRY DIRECTOR
THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
IN MONGOLIA

PHOTO: TED WOOD

Hello to Connecticut supporters!

The Nature Conservancy is dedicated to tackling the dual crises of climate change and nature loss. Our mission compels us to work across countries and cultures to rise to these global challenges. My work doesn't just stay in Mongolia. And Connecticut's work goes beyond the Northeast's boundaries. We collaborate across geographies and generations through cross-learning and sharing experiences.

This created the opportunity to host Erica Anderson (from TNC in CT) in Mongolia. Erica is contributing to our Snow Leopard Conservation Project. Her presence and expertise were invaluable. The exchange underscored the importance of mutual learning and support across the world, strengthening our efforts and conservation goals. We find inspiration in the spirit of this shared mission, and hope you do, too.

STEPPING UP AT THE CAPITOL

*"What we need
to do for climate
is also what we
need for our
health and living
more affordably."*

— Nathan Frohling,
Director of External Affairs



Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont, Connecticut Land Conservation Council Executive Director Amy Blaymore Paterson, and TNC's Nathan Frohling and Frogard Ryan.

How do we create a more sustainable future? State climate bill HB5004 has solutions, and The Nature Conservancy in Connecticut backed it since day one—Director of External Affairs Nathan Frohling helped create it. Passed on the 2025 legislative session's final day after multiple years of advocacy, the bill strengthens CT's key climate goals, renewable energy like solar canopies, energy efficiency programs, and heat pump programs for residents, schools and state buildings. Overall, TNC

testified on 30 local bills, including some that help modernize the energy grid across CT and New England.

Policy efforts are even going global: TNC's Forest Pest and Pathogen program, housed within the CT chapter, accelerated policy research and implementation on international trade regulations to prevent new insects and diseases from entering North America. This protects trees at all scales— from Connecticut to across the world.



HAPPIER TRAILS

*A*cross Connecticut, The Nature Conservancy's land stewards are the quiet force behind 150+ preserves and easements. Their work is deeply hands-on—maintaining trails and bridges, targeting invasive plants, monitoring rare plants like the yellow lady's slipper, and spotting wildlife like baby porcupines. They rise to any challenge, from trekking into Rock Spring Preserve with backpacks of tools to marking boundaries for places like Devil's Den. Some days involve local partners or volunteer crews, all to ensure nature and visitors are supported. With their leadership, our wild places thrive.

The team has also transformed Burnham Brook Preserve into a more open and welcoming place, thanks to a new all-terrain wheelchair and universal access trails that carry it. All visitors now experience grassy meadows, vernal pools and a towering forest canopy, with support from staff and trained volunteers. Nature is for everyone.

"Getting out in nature is therapeutic. This allows people to do something they've never done before. The chair is a game-changer!"

— Austin Wheaton, all-terrain wheelchair user



MAKING CONNECTIONS

Connecticut's northwest corner holds a piece of the Appalachian Mountains—one of Earth's most ecologically important and climate-resilient regions. It's also part of Southern New England's most intact forest ecosystem. With further land protection essential to maintaining the ecosystem's resilience, The Nature Conservancy in Connecticut contributed financial and logistical support to the Salisbury Association Land Trust's acquisition of 277 acres in 2025. The land's location within the Appalachians made it a priority parcel as TNC partners with communities around the globe to conserve 1.6 billion acres by 2030.

TNC continues identifying other strategic land protection opportunities and officially completed a final acquisition for Lucius Pond Ordway-Devil's Den Preserve. The 102-acre Granskog property in Redding had been a long hoped-for addition because it's adjacent to Devil's Den. The Granskog acreage will provide additional buffer and protection to the preserve. At 1,800 acres, Devil's Den is included in a landscape of more than 15,000 acres of contiguous forest with high conservation value.



FREE FLOW

On their nicest days, they're calm and inviting. On their stormiest, they show their true power. Our waters are pleading for connection, with us and each other.

The Nature Conservancy in Connecticut is working with our freshwater and coastal ecosystems—as they sustain our way of life, and themselves—so that water is unimpeded and free to flow as TNC works to conserve 620,000+ miles of river systems globally.

Rocky Neck State Park holds one of those ecosystems: the degraded, disrupted Bride Brook tidal estuary and salt marsh. It's our turn to protect this threatened coastal habitat and its vital role as a water-purifying, carbon-sequestering, storm-buffering biodiversity hotspot. TNC in CT aims to reconnect the marsh and renew flow between Bride Brook and Long Island Sound with local partners, new strategies, and tried-and-true techniques TNC has deployed in the Northeast. Communities are sharing input, and research is taking off on the ground and sky-high with drones.

Small bodies of water are challenged, too. Culverts and bridges disconnect streams and disrupt natural flow of water and species. With over 25,000 known culverts across CT, which should be upgraded first? TNC in CT is leading a new project to inventory and map all culverts in the Long Island Sound Coastal Watershed boundary, train partners in assessing conditions and fish passage, and assess 300 culverts in southeastern CT. Let's ensure roads, water, and wildlife move full stream ahead.

NEW HEIGHTS

From planting new trees to supporting others in city parks and neighborhoods, The Nature Conservancy in Connecticut continues growing urban conservation across the state.

TNC, the City of Groton and volunteers planted 40 native trees this spring and fall to aid in flood reduction as part of the community's Five Corners Stormwater Assessment. The partnership previously resulted in the Southeastern Connecticut Regional Framework for Coastal Resilience and the city's Community Resilience Plan, and focuses on nature-based solutions.

Efforts by TNC and partners also got a boost with Yale Conservation Scholars Corey Huebner and Skyler Nix, who conducted door-to-door outreach in New London and a tree inventory in Bridgeport to support local urban forests. "From cooling streets to creating habitat, urban forestry is the kind of integrated conservation work I hope to contribute to," Nix said.

This is what a new urban forest network (facilitated by TNC) looks like in practice—collaborating with government agencies, nonprofits, and residents involved in urban forestry, and connecting them with each other, too. The statewide network, launched last year, aims to inspire greater participation, share knowledge, grow capacity, and steward a more robust tree canopy in Connecticut for the health of people and our environment.

COREY HUEBNER MEASURING A TREE BY SKYLER NIX/TNC

FROM CONNECTICUT → MONGOLIA



Erica Anderson and Mongolia community member

"I wanted to use my GIS skills to support nature, and I'm fascinated by animal behavior. TNC in Mongolia had data on snow leopards, so I geared the work toward wildlife corridors and overlap with herding communities."

– ERICA ANDERSON
Conservation Information Manager
for The Nature Conservancy in Connecticut

Erica Anderson understood that expanding her expertise in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) from the Nutmeg State to Mongolia's formidable mountains would be worth it...for incredible, mysterious snow leopards, ecosystems, and herding communities. She visited this summer for research. What paths do snow leopards travel? Can community-led conservation improve habitats? Would that prevent snow leopards from heading toward livestock? Anderson is working to connect wildlife corridors for species on the move—in Connecticut and across the globe.

TNC CAMERA FOOTAGE OF SNOW LEOPARD

TOGETHER, WE FIND A WAY

The popular Nature Talks event series brought together more than 170 people for its latest edition, "The Ocean's Future is our Future." Held at UConn's Avery Point campus in Groton, the program featured scientist and writer Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, Meteorologist Rachael Jay, and Sally McGee of TNC's Global Aquaculture Program. Our relationship with the ocean is deep, and each of us has the power to make radical change for our shared future.

Lights, camera, action... Long Island Sound! The Nature Conservancy in Connecticut helped produce a docuseries about collaborative pollution solutions called "Tackling Pollution in Long Island Sound," with a premiere at the 2025 Long Island Sound Summit at Housatonic Community College. Both initiatives were organized by the Long Island Sound Coastal Watershed Network, which is coordinated by TNC in partnership with Save the Sound and Citizens Campaign for the Environment.



TNC IN CT TRUSTEES (L TO R): Darin Latimore, MD; Robert Javonillo, Ph.D.; Eric Bauman; Keitha Kinne; Anne M. Mulcahy; Susan Lehman; Amy van der Velde; Philip O. Livingston, MD; Ama Amoah; Eunice Burnett; and Mark O. Winkelman.



TNC IN CT STAFF (back row): Jessica Cañizares, Eve Robinson, Erica Anderson, Kyle Suprenant; (middle row) Tebben Gill Lopez, Ann Budzynski, Martha Rice, Christian Schluter, Caitlin Cleary, Heidi Ihrig, Nathan Frohling, David Gumbart, James Cramer, Justin Cragan, Kieran Runne, Adam Whelchel, Cary Lynch, Tim Clark, Frogard Ryan, Arcadia Davies, Michael Davidow, Sarah Pellegrino, Shelley Green, Joshua De-Anda, Eli Terris, Rupa Datta; (front row) Drew Goldsman, Laura Shail, Anjali Khanna, Melissa DeFrancesco, Wayne Woodard, Emma Groves Baldacci, Susan Wollschlager, Holly Drinkuth, Minna-Marie Murphy, and Leigh Greenwood.

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STATEWIDE WORK AND IMPACT



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The mission of The Nature Conservancy is
to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends.