



PRESERVING WORKING LANDS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

A Message from the Management Team

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your faith in the mission of Connecticut Farmland Trust.

The financial health of our organization is good. Despite the challenging economic times, CFT finished 2012 with the operations budget in the black and the organization continues to be debt-free. That is a tribute to all of you, and to the committed work of our staff and Board of Directors.

It was a year of consolidating past achievements and building a stronger foundation for the future. We marked the tenth anniversary of our founding by achieving Accreditation, national recognition of our adherence to the standards and practices that assure the longevity of our organization and our capacity to faithfully steward the farm conservation easements we hold. We have continued to fill the “land protection pipeline” with outstanding farm conservation projects that validate your generous support of our work.

2012 was also a year when we faced some difficult operating challenges and made hard choices that will make us stronger in the future. Foremost among those challenges are the complications our public agency partners have encountered with closing land protection projects. Funding for conservation is secure but staff reductions at the Connecticut Department of Agriculture and

staff and procedural changes at the USDA have slowed the work considerably. Four farmland protection projects that we forecast to close in 2012 did not. Fortunately, we are facing only delays in closing – not the loss of valuable farms.

The hardest choice of the year involves our beloved Celebration of Connecticut Farms. The 2012 Celebration was hosted by Chip and Carol Dahlke at Ashlawn Farm in Lyme – it was a delightful day and a success, with special guests Faith Middleton of NPR and Steve Liesman of CNBC in attendance. After long deliberation, however, the Board has determined that it will be the last of its kind – at least for a while. There will be more wonderful times to come, wrapped in new packages, and we can't wait to share them with you.

We'll close with thanks. Your steadfast support spurs us on; we make a wonderful team. Please read on below for more information about the year that was 2012, projects we have “in the pipeline,” and other initiatives underway for 2013.

Very best regards,

Michael Fotos, President

James K. Gooch, Executive Director

2012 at Connecticut Farmland Trust

Here are just a few of the highlights from last year:

Conservation

One of the four delayed projects from 2012, the 113-acre Szegda farm in Lebanon, was successfully closed this April and is now among the properties we steward. While three other projects were “pushed” to 2013, we were far from idle. Kitchen-table conversations, negotiations, and due diligence have filled our “project pipeline” and the outlook for closings in 2013 is brighter. We are ready to protect seven farms now, the three remaining from the 2012 backlog and four more that are new in 2013 – watch for details about them as the year nears its close. We are unconditionally enthusiastic about the conservation value of these farms and remain cautiously optimistic that the wheels of government will turn over at least a few times before year-end.

Stewardship

Eventually, all of the farms CFT protects will acquire new owners who will themselves be new to the conservation easements that protect their properties. Our duty is to educate those new owners and help them find the value of managing their properties in compliance with the terms of their respective easements. Farmland conservation is a perpetually renewing partnership between the landowner and the land trust. We have been blessed to enjoy some wonderful partnerships.

Because that obligation is literally without end, we set aside a small portion of the money that we raise for each transaction in a dedicated



Stewardship Fund. That money helps to pay for yearly monitoring visits and attendant costs. It is also a requirement of Accreditation. We continue to work to build that fund to a suitable level. While our strong relationships with our landowners have helped us to avoid high stewardship costs, no one can predict the future. The conservation community has seen litigation over easements financially ruin otherwise sound organizations.

Knowing that possibility exists, CFT was an early supporter of Terra Firma, a mutual insurance company for land trusts created by the Land Trust Alliance. Terra Firma was fully capitalized in 2012 and CFT has enrolled all of our easements in the program. The premium we pay provides us with an emergency backstop in the unlikely event that misunderstandings with a landowner become a matter of legal action. We can be confident that our obligation to protect the land will not harm the permanence of our organization. Terra Firma and Accreditation buttress our mission for long term success.

Advocacy and Education

We continued to share knowledge and offer guidance with the broader conservation community through our role with the Connecticut Land Conservation Council. CFT staff serve on its board, and both Jim and Elisabeth Moore presented seminars at CLCC's yearly conference in Middletown.

CFT also continued its work with the AgVocate program, which exists to help municipalities establish Agricultural Commissions and then help those groups to promote and protect farming in their towns. Together with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Eastern Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development Area, Inc., and The Last Green Valley, and supported by a grant from the Connecticut Department of Agriculture, we are working to expand AgVocate statewide.

Related to that work – and thanks to additional help from the Connecticut Department of Agriculture – CFT has been systematically reaching out to targeted municipalities to educate them about their options for protecting farmland and to prepare them to participate in the new Community Farms Preservation Program run by the State's Farmland Protection team.

Finally, but by no means least, we continue to work closely with the Working Lands Alliance to advocate for increased farmland access, improved land

preservation policies, and a comprehensive rejuvenation of Connecticut's approach to its agricultural resources. They are an essential piece of the puzzle.

Events

Our first Celebration in 2000 helped to launch CFT and did launch the farm-to-chef movement in Connecticut. Now we are into our second decade of saving farms and the farm-to-chef movement is vibrant and widespread. It is time to re-calibrate our outreach and redirect our message. After careful consideration and several long conversations, the Board elected to discontinue the Celebration for the time being and reimagine the way we reach out to new members and celebrate with old friends. We remain eternally grateful to our hosts, volunteers, friends, supporters, and staff who over more than a decade made the Celebration of Connecticut Farms the flagship of farm-to-table events in the northeast.

In 2013, we have conducted three farm picnics and, in October, we will hold a more intimate farm-to-table dinner with Chef Michel Nischan of Wholesome Wave, hosted by Chamard Vineyards in Clinton. In November, we will hold another farm-theme dinner party at ON20 in Hartford. These smaller events have allowed us to increase the focus on the farms and the soil – the core of our mission.

New Partners

We conclude this report by highlighting a new partnership, one that shows we should all be confident that the future of farming in Connecticut is bright indeed. CFT has entered into an agreement with a fledgling organization, the New Connecticut Farmer Alliance, to help them get established on their mission of providing community, education, and outreach to the next wave of Connecticut farmers. These men and women enter our fields across a generational gap; the Alliance exists to provide them with the professional community and social support that eroded as farms went west. Our mission is to preserve Connecticut's working farmland for future generations and we are thrilled to note in this report that we are working on both parts of the mission: the farmland and the future generations.



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PRESERVING WORKING LANDS
 FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Treasurer's Message

In 2012 CFT made significant gains in its operating fund despite a challenging economy. This increase was most welcome as during certain times in past years our margin for operating funds has been somewhat narrow. With these additional funds available we can carry on our mission without the pressing need of worrying about tomorrow's operating capital. In addition, greater liquidity permits us to be more programmatically nimble should the need arise.

We also increased our Temporarily Restricted Assets last year, raising \$257,000 for our Acquisition and Stewardship Funds. The majority of this

money was raised for the acquisition of easements on specific farmland conservation projects. While we were able to raise the funds needed and process all of the documentation to make these easements into a reality during the year, staff reductions at the state level and policy changes at the Federal level prevented CFT from closing those projects during the calendar year. "Pushing" those projects into 2013 distorted our overhead costs as a percentage of our expenses for 2012: We incurred the costs for securing the easements without being able to disburse the program funds.

Statement of Financial Position As of September 30, 2012

Assets

Current Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents - Unrestricted	262,498
Cash and Cash Equivalents - Temporarily Restricted	1,049,716
Cash and Cash Equivalents - Permanently Restricted	10,335
Prepaid Expenses	2,657
Total Current Assets	1,325,206

Noncurrent Assets

Equipment Net of Depreciation	1,411
Total Noncurrent Assets	1,411

Total Assets	1,326,617
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Liabilities

Accounts Payable	6,798
Accrued Expenses	7,178
Total Current Liabilities	13,976

Net Assets

Unrestricted	
For Current Operations	252,730
Board Designated for Acquisition	24,000
Temporarily Restricted	1,025,576
Permanently Restricted	10,335
Total Net Assets	1,312,641

Total Liabilities and Net Assets	1,326,617
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