

Avalonia Accepts Three Land Donations for Conservation

We are very happy to announce the addition of three new properties to our conservation holdings. Thanks to the generosity of generous individuals, and to the support of our sister organization, The Nature Conservancy



L to R: Atty Frank Eppinger, VP Sue Sutherland, Mimi Borden, Pres. Dennis Main, Brad Borden
Photo by Valerie LaFleur.

Mimi and Brad Borden deserve special thanks for their generosity, which will ensure that ninety-four acres of their spectacular and ecologically significant land remains in a natural state. Located in North Stonington, it will be called the **Benedict Benson Preserve** in honor of Mimi's grandfather who purchased and loved the land and its wildlife. The property is known amongst birders as being home to cerulean warblers, a small sky-blue bird which is "one of the species of highest concern in the eastern United States because of a small total population size and significant declines throughout its range." (Cornell Lab). The Benedict Benson Preserve will be open to the public later this year for passive recreation. Once Avalonia has completed signage and trails, introductory guided hikes of the property will be offered.

Another key parcel in North Stonington has been transferred from **The Nature Conservancy** to Avalonia. This 79 acre property is next to Avalonia's Bell Cedar Swamp and will expand this existing preserve to almost 140 acres of rare and varied habitats, including a beautiful trail starting on Boom Bridge Road. The trail winds through forests with rocky ridges and meadows to a glacial area bordering the Bell Cedar Swamp. The Atlantic white cedar tree, a uniquely majestic and a globally rare species, is a feature of the Bell Cedar Swamp, as are the native rhododendrons, but both were difficult for people to access and enjoy until the addition of The Nature Conservancy's upland parcel, known as the **Bell Cedar Preserve**, to the existing swamp preserve we acquired in 2013. There will be guided hikes in the fall.

The third parcel is a 6 acre meadow on Shewville Road in Ledyard donated by **William Forsberg** and will be called the **Samuel Lamb and Forsberg Preserve**. It adjoins Town open space and is bordered by Williams Brook and shrubby wetlands habitat. Because of its environmentally rich mix of ferns, native berry shrubs and wildflowers, the Connecticut listed blue-winged warbler may be heard there, and you can often see Baltimore orioles and Eastern towhee.

While Avalonia is working diligently to purchase many environmentally rich habitats, it is generous donations like these through the years that have enabled Avalonia to become the largest land trust on the Connecticut shoreline. Avalonia now conserves 92 parcels comprising over 3,500 acres in New London County, and islands in New York and Rhode Island.



Cerulean warbler.
Photo by Niall Doherty.