

LYME LAND TRUST BULLETIN

The Lyme Land Conservation Trust

vol VIII, no. 1
May 1995

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

WHAT IS A LAND TRUST?

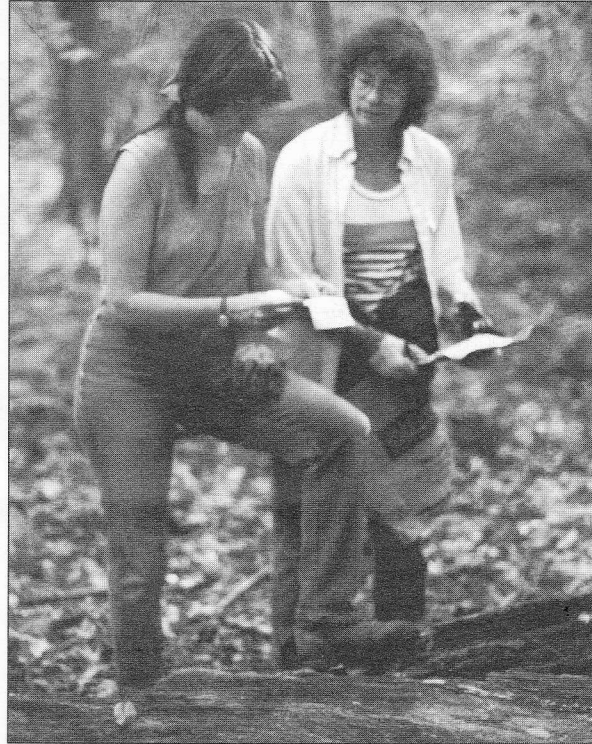
Private land trusts are very common in Connecticut with many people actively involved in promoting land trust objectives. And yet as a percentage of the total population, relatively few people are really engaged in advancing any one land trust's agenda. Even in Lyme, with a larger than normal (26%) of families enrolled as members of the Lyme Land Trust, less than 50 people are directly involved with the Trust at any one time.

Is it any wonder then that most people really don't understand what a land trust does or why it exists at all? Those of us who have been involved with environmental advocacy organizations for any time at all tend to become sheltered from the real world by our commitment to "the cause" and we forget that not everyone may share our commitment. In fact, significant numbers of people either oppose or distrust our motives and actions.

A common myth leading to such opinions is the assumption that land trusts acquire land to "protect" it from all danger, including people. Land which had previously been available for hunting, fishing, hiking, horseback riding or other forms of outdoor enjoyment is suddenly acquired by a land trust and its use restricted or prohibited.

While often the results of land acquisition support this conclusion, it is not and should not be the goal of any land trust to take land completely out of circulation. Rather the goal should be to provide a mechanism for protecting and preserving the

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Bonnie Corey and Beverly Crowther at Honey Hill.

STEWARDSHIP IN ACTION

The old tree which showed the marks of a Piliated Woodpecker was down. The chestnut sapling had succumbed to the blight, although others were seen elsewhere. The trail went through areas that were very wet in fall and winter. So it went as stewardship committee members Beverly Crowther, Bonnie Corey and Anthony Irving checked the Self-Guiding Nature Trail for the Honey Hill preserve that was written seven years ago.

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1995 ANNUAL MEETING

The 28th Annual Meeting of the Lyme Land Conservation Trust will be held on Tuesday, June 20, 1995, in the Lyme Public Hall at 7:30 p.m. Prominent Lyme resident, former State Representative for 30 years and successful dairy farmer, John J. Tiffany III will be the guest speaker. Jack will outline land use and preservation as applied in the real world of farming, drawing from his many years in the business as well as his long-term position on the Legislature's Environment Committee. A possible tour of Tiffany Farm's modern new milking parlor may be arranged at a later date for those attending the meeting.

STEWARDSHIP IN ACTION

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Nature does not stand still. The troop clipped out brush, noted missing signs, rerouted the path around wet spots and revised the guide to note changes in the terrain and find new points of interest. The revised flyer will be available at the town hall and library in the spring.

Hiram Maxim has produced a handsome sign to help people find the preserve on Clark Road, off Route 82, and Roger Smith has tacked up new markers on the trail that takes about 45 minutes walking time.

Stewardship is an important part of the work of a land trust, upholding its legal obligation to guard property from misuse and maintain trails, fields, or dams as the case may be. During the past year the Trust Board has been systematically reviewing its holdings and undertaking improvements as needed.



Bob Wood & Anthony Irving at Joshua Dam.

Joshua Dam

Beavers thought the fish ladder on Joshua Dam an ideal place for their activities. Some sizable saplings had grown up, which in time could undermine the dam. A work crew of John Friday (with his dog, an old hand at brush work) Anthony Irving and Robert Wood set to work clearing the fish ladder, removing an old



The varied habitat of Pleasant Valley.

tire from the spillway and cutting down the offending trees while leaving the wild flowers and a single white birch. The Trust hopes to erect nesting boxes on the property.

The Land Trust acquired the lower pond on Joshua Creek from the state in 1988, repairing the dam which had washed out in the 1982 flood. The State Bureau of Fisheries in the Department of Environmental Protection put in the fish ladder. The dam is accessible only over private property, so it is not open to members, but the dam and pond with its wildlife can be seen from Joshua-town Road near the junction with Tantomoratum.

Pleasant Valley

When the Nature Conservancy acquired the 235 acre Fehrer property behind the schoolhouse, along the Eight Mile River, the Land Trust agreed, as a local organization, to act as stewards. This property provides one of the most diverse habitats for wildlife in town, with the river, ponds, a small stream, hard and soft woods and fields. It has also proved a popular spot for townspeople to walk and bird watch.

Fields have a habit, however, of reverting to woodland over time. The Land Trust is anxious to maintain the grassland which adds to the range of habitat, but also to keep the cedars, wild rose and other growth that provide food and cover for a variety of birds and animals. What to do? An organized effort at hand trimming a year ago barely made a dent in the tangle.

To the rescue came Tom Bischoff and His Amazing Machine, which neatly cut down rough brush and heavy grasses, chewing them up for compost while saving the bushes and trees which wildlife favor. The resulting landscape is a pleasing one for both people and birds.

Clucas Property

A recent acquisition for the Land Trust is a 24 acre parcel near the corner of Brush Hill and Mt. Archer Roads. The field has been well maintained over the years, and will be kept open. The rest of the property consists of ledge and woodlands. Small for a nature trail, the Trust is reviewing the suggestion that the ledge might provide a picturesque small picnic site.

Beebe Property

William Beebe's donation of some 80 acres, in several pieces, along Grassy Hill, Beaverbrook and Gungy roads, is the largest the Land Trust has received. Most of the land was formerly pasture for the Beebe family, which came to Lyme in the mid 18th century. Now grown to woodland, there are still remnants of farm structures, rock piles and a maze of stone walls. There are also rock outcroppings, which together with a tangle of laurel and other growth make access difficult. The Land Trust will explore with the East Lyme Land Trust jointly developing a trail from the Beebe land into an adjacent area which they hold, and establishing a picnic spot on the Lyme section of Beaver Brook.

PRESIDENTS CORNER

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unique values of the land while encouraging use which is compatible with those values. Often this mechanism doesn't require any outright land acquisition at all. Rather the land trust buys or receives as donation certain land use rights such as housing sub-division, highway construction, industrial development or other commercialized use, thereby restricting or prohibiting those specified uses only. All other uses not restricted or prohibited can and should continue. For example, this technique has become a very successful way to protect valuable agricultural land from such things as shopping mall development, while ensuring that the owners can continue to afford to farm the land. The Vermont Land Trust has been particularly successful using this method to protect farm land from exploitation while strengthening the agricultural use of the land.

This technique of restricting certain uses while permitting the owner and others to continue all uses not restricted is accomplished through a device called a conservation easement or restriction. Because the technique involves tax advantages for the property owner, the IRS has created rigid regulations on how to qualify for these advantages. Fortunately a properly incorporated land trust is one of the few vehicles legally authorized to supervise conservation restrictions on land.

Thus a land trust, while often engaged in many activities, exists primarily to preserve the land-friendly uses of properties in town and to encourage all town residents to be aware of both the friendly uses as well as the unfriendly ones. In this way, the geophysical features of our town, which are so important to us all, will always be there. The Lyme Land Conservation Trust hopes all Lyme residents can share their endorsement of this mission.

Hiram Maxim
President

TRUST RECEIVES BLOOD STREET EASEMENT

The Land Trust has accepted a conservation easement from Trust president Hiram Maxim for a property on

the South side of Blood Street. Adjoining the Harding Farm, which is part of the state's farmland protection program, the plot adds fifty acres to the area of protected open space.

The property is largely wooded, and crisscrossed with several trails and eighteenth century stone walls. A small seasonal stream flows from the upper part of the property to nearby Rogers Lake.

Because the Land Trust holds only a conservation easement, not fee simple ownership, the Maxim property will not be open to the public, except by invitation but it will provide habitat for upland song birds, wild turkey, pheasant, deer and a variety of plant life and add to the open space scenery of Blood Street. ■

MEET YOUR BOARD

The fifteen member Board of Directors bring a broad range of experience to the task of conserving Lyme's open spaces. They come from all sections of the town. We hope you will get to know your neighbors.

Hiram Maxim*, in his second year as president, has had a long career in land conservation. While employed as an executive in manufacturing companies in the Hartford area, he was a director and sometime president of the Farmington River Watershed Association. At the same time he was on the board of the Farmington Land Trust, also serving a term as President. He was on the Governor's Environmental Policy Committee in 1970 and in the 1980s was a Trustee of the Connecticut River Watershed Council, serving as chairman from 1985-1988. His grandfather settled on Blood Street where Hi now is restoring the 18th century house and caring for 115 acres of family land.

Robert Barney is a retired marketing Executive for Mobil Corporation. In his 34 years with the International Division, he worked mainly overseas. He and his wife moved to Sterling City Road a decade ago. He is currently treasurer of the Land Trust.

John C. Bugbee Jr.* from an old-time Lyme family, lives on Blood Street. After leaving the Navy, he was in the railway mail service, then became U.S. postal service mail carrier for Route 2 (Mitchell Hill area) in Lyme. He is steward of the Blood Street property of the trust.

Ward Burian began his career in the Federal Reserve Bank, going on to establish his own firm on Wall Street and in London to deal with national and international money markets. He began his weekending on Bill Hill in 1983, and in 1986 became a co-owner of Dunham Realty.

Bonnie Corey* calls herself a teacher-naturalist. She conducts field trips at the Bushy Hill Nature Center, where Nature Conservancy and the Audubon Society frequently call on her. She has lead tours on Lyme Land Trust and Nature Conservancy property in Lyme. Bonnie is also an artist with an interest in primitive technology, such as use of old stone tools, cordage and rawhide.

Beverly Crowther's* love of the outdoors was spurred by ten years in Switzerland where she wandered the Alps in her spare time from jobs at the International Labor Organization and World Health Organization. Her hiking has stood her in good stead as she has marked many a Land Trust boundary line. She is currently a research assistant at the Yale Child Study Center and lives on Beaver Brook Road.

Betsy Dill has lived on Route 156 for almost two decades. An Assistant Vice President of Union Bank, Betsy runs the Old Saybrook branch. She is treasurer of the Southeastern Connecticut Women's Network of Women in Business. She balances her business interests with her "four legged children"—two horses, a pony, two dogs and several cats. Her particular interests are in land conservation and public education.

Judith Duran* acts as business manager for her architect husband, and is also a member of the town's Board of Finance. Her interest in nature has been spurred by living in a house overlooking Moulson's Pond. Originally from Chicago, she has lived in Lyme eleven years. She has served as Land Trust treasurer.

John Friday* retired to Beaver Brook Road in 1987 after a career as investment banker in New York. He is currently on the town's Board of Finance, and a former chair of the Board of Tax Review. He has served as vice president of the Land Trust.

Anthony Irving earned a masters degree in Environmental Science from Yale in 1988, and with two partners runs EECOS, a consulting service on land use planning which is based on environmental considerations. He is a member of the town's Conservation Commission and Hartman Park Commission.

Ruth Perry is well known to Lyme residents as town clerk, a position she's held for six years. Prior to that she was a teacher in the Lyme Consolidated School. Believing in commitment to her community, she has served on the Youth Services and Education Commissions, and the board of the Florence Griswold Museum.

Joan Hitchcock Rich was on the staff of a non-profit historic preservation organization before retirement, and has a master's degree in community planning. She has summered on Grassy Hill since childhood.

Roger Smith, former head of Aetna Capital Management, the pension and financial services branch of the insurance company, Roger retired to Blood Street a decade ago. He and his wife now run an organic farm for flowers and produce, which is sold locally.

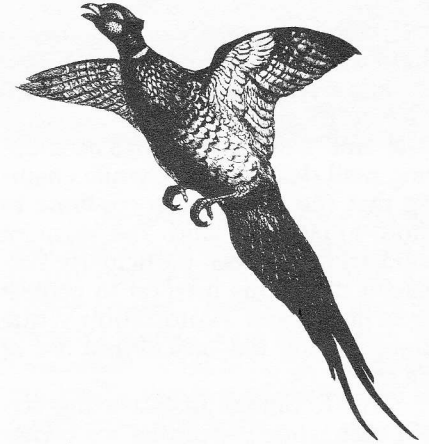
Robert Wood spent most of his working life with the Aetna Life Insurance Company, retiring to Lyme almost a decade ago. He has been a stalwart of the Stewardship Committee of the Land Trust.

* Term ends this spring. There is currently one vacancy on the board.

FINANCIAL RESULTS			
	1993	1994	1995 Plan
Income			
Dues	\$3,510	\$6,785	\$6,785
Other	820	320	827
TOTAL	<u>\$4,330</u>	<u>\$7,105</u>	<u>\$7,612</u>
Operating Expenses			
Programs	\$1,082	\$1,165	\$2,160
Insurance	300	96	820
Postage	392	414	610
Educational	388	206	800
Stewardship	0	0	750
Association Dues	450	500	500
Other	497	551	618
TOTAL	<u>\$3,109</u>	<u>\$2,932</u>	<u>\$6,258</u>
Surplus / (Deficit)	\$1,221	\$4,173	\$1,354

The Lyme Land Trust Bulletin

is published several times a year by the Lyme Land Conservation Trust, Inc. as a matter of interest to its membership and to the general public in Lyme. Readers are invited to direct questions and suggestions to John Friday, Editor, at 434-9051.



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