



# The Lyme Land Conservation Trust

## 2010 Annual Report

### A Year of Achievements, Challenges and Preservation of Open Space in Lyme

*To our directors, staff and the many volunteers whose efforts made 2010 a successful year for the Lyme Land Conservation Trust, I extend my sincere thanks. Because of their enthusiastic work, we accomplished much.*

As I reflect on 2010, a few events stand out. There was the October phone call from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection asking us on short notice, to attend a ceremony where Governor Rell would be announcing land acquisition grants. Earlier in the year we applied for a matching grant, but didn't know if we were successful, and if so, for how much. At the ceremony, we were elated to hear we had been awarded \$140,000 -- half the purchase price for the Talcott property on Sterling Hill. The elation of that day was relived a short time later when an anonymous donor in town informed us they would pledge the matching \$140,000 over three years. Beyond their generosity, what impressed me was these are younger people, just as committed to the timeless goals of preserving our way of life in Lyme as people of my generation. Our future is in good hands!

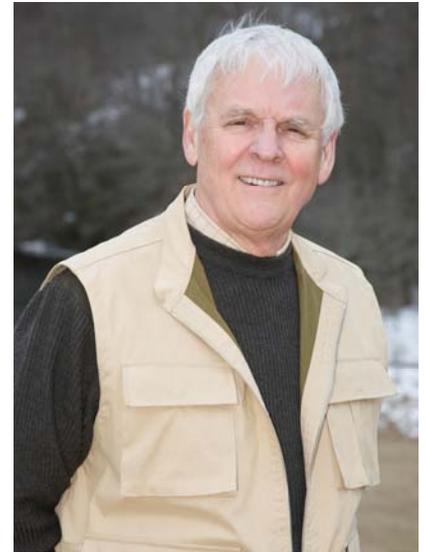
The Land Trust expressed its appreciation to our more than 80 volunteers with a recognition breakfast at Lyme Public Hall at which our honored guests sat at tables kindly decorated in an autumn motif by the Lyme Garden Club. Beautiful images from the Photo Contest were projected for all to see. It was a wonderful way to start the day among friends who share common goals and to thank those who help us with our work.

We added a special property in 2010—the 96 acre Czikowsky property at the southern end of Joshua-town Road overlooking the Eight-mile River and historic Hamburg Cove. It is an excellent example of the effectiveness of our close relationship with our conservation partners, the Town of Lyme and The Nature Conservancy. It might never have happened but for an anonymous conservation foundation that donated much of the purchase price.

Ours is an increasingly complex operation. Stringent new reporting and monitoring requirements placed on Land Trusts by the IRS necessitate accurate record keeping, regular property inspections and maintaining sufficient cash reserves to defend easements. Fortunately, for the last several years we have been steadily increasing our stewardship effectiveness and working with an annual budgeting process to ensure we meet the challenge.

We welcomed five new directors to the Board. While we will miss our colleagues who retired or moved, looking ahead I believe our team of directors is well positioned to continue our success.

A window of opportunity remains to preserve additional open space, but it won't be open forever. It is increasingly expensive to acquire land, even in the current economy.



**George Moore, President**

We will devote more time applying for foundation grants and locating major donors.

We will continue to devote time and resources to our important stewardship program. Resorting to legal solutions to ensure compliance with deeded open space restrictions is time consuming and expensive, but the alternative – that of not fulfilling our fiduciary duty to protect the open space with which we are entrusted-- is unacceptable to the Board.

I would be remiss if I didn't say how necessary the support of our members and the community is to our success. A high percentage of member families sends a convincing message to potential donors: individuals, foundations or government entities that the Lyme community supports land conservation. So, if you are not a member, please join; if you are, please renew.

**George Moore, President**

# LYME LAND CONSERVATION TRUST MISSION STATEMENT

The Lyme Land Conservation Trust preserves the quality of life for Lyme residents by protecting the natural, scenic and historic land and water resources of the town, and by promoting public education and scientific study of these resources.



## STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

- Conserve environmentally sensitive land, historic landscapes and the aesthetic and cultural qualities of Lyme.
- Raise public awareness of Lyme's natural resources and heritage and the benefits of Trust activities.
- Continue to cultivate broad-based support within the community
- Administer a systematic stewardship program to monitor, manage and protect land, and to defend in perpetuity the conservation objectives of Trust properties.
- Carry out the work of the Land Trust in a fiscally and legally responsible manner.

### The Lyme Land Conservation Trust, Inc.

PO Box 1002  
Lyme, CT 06371  
info@lymelandtrust.org

#### Officers

George Moore, President  
Templeton Brown, Vice President  
Andy Baxter, Treasurer  
George Lombardino, Secretary

#### Board of Directors

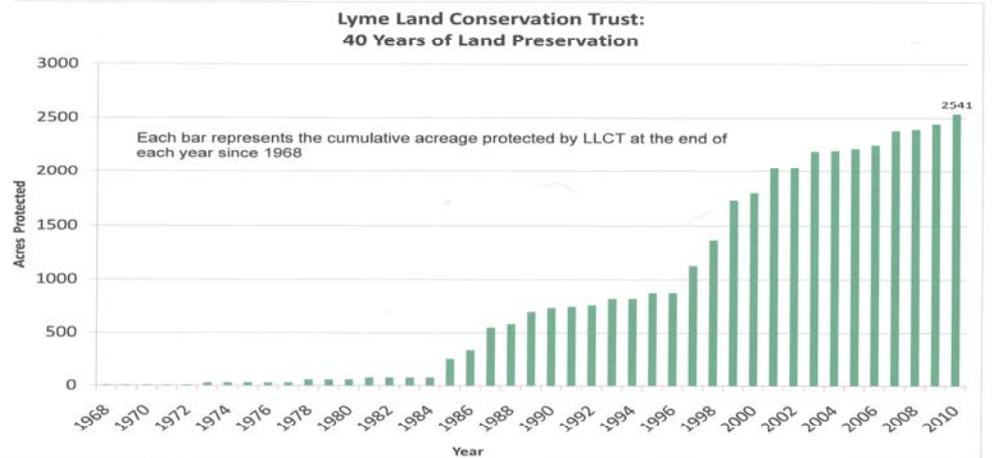
Diana Boehning  
Matt Elgart  
Carrie Ermler  
Don Gerber  
Fred Harger  
John Prichard  
Tom Shoemaker  
Molly Turner  
Humphrey S. Tyler  
Melvin Woody  
Rick Worcester

#### Publications Committee

Richard Melchreit  
Kristen Stadolski  
Tony Sullivan  
Humphrey S. Tyler  
Elizabeth Wyatt

#### Staff

Linda Bireley,  
Executive Assistant  
Lisa Niccolai, Project Manager



## STATISTICAL STEWARDSHIP DATA POINTS

- 2,776 Acres** — Total acreage under LLCT stewardship
- 96 Parcels** — Total number of properties under LLCT stewardship
- MADE UP OF:**
  - 533 Acres** — Total acreage owned and stewarded by LLCT
  - 31 Parcels** — Total parcels owned and stewarded by LLCT
  - 2,008 Acres** — Total acreage of conservation easements held and stewarded by LLCT
    - 64 Parcels** — Total parcels containing conservation easements held and stewarded by LLCT
    - 235 Acres** — Acreage in Pleasant Valley Preserve owned by The Nature Conservancy and stewarded by LLCT
  - 30 Volunteers** — Total number of LLCT members who donate their time to steward property for which LLCT is responsible
  - \$575 per Parcel** — The annual cost in 2010 borne by LLCT for stewarding the open space for which it is responsible..

## Stewardship Committee Report

Chaired during 2010 by Emily Fisher & Don Gerber, the **Stewardship Committee** continued to improve the quality of its property monitoring program.

Visiting different sites each month, all fee-owned and easement-protected parcels were inspected over the course of the year. To demonstrate proper inspection and reporting procedures, committee members and staff often accompanied stewards. Stewardship reports, many produced using new on-line forms, were then uploaded to *Conservation Track*®, our property database. This repository has grown to encompass nearly two-thirds of all Land Trust property documentation. Invasive species management progressed on multiple fronts, including barberry control in cooperation with The Nature Conservancy and the Lyme Fire Department at the Chauncey Eno and Jewett preserves; and the final stage of Phragmites removal at Rams Horn Creek working with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. In addition, the posting of boundaries on Land Trust-owned properties – and on easements, where owners expressed interest – moved forward; a defunct beaver deceiver at Joshua Pond was disassembled and removed; and a new primary trail was designed, constructed and marked for the Beebe Preserve. Funding for these projects was provided through the Land Trust's Rufus Barringer Resource Education and Protection Fund, which supports long term stewardship program costs.



### “In-Raptured”

A young boy is ‘enraptured’ by his experience with this beautiful raptor at a demonstration of birds of prey sponsored by the Lyme Land Trust in 2010. The demonstration will be repeated at the 2011 Annual Meeting on Sunday June 19.

## Communications, Education and Membership Committee Report

For most of the year, the **Communication, Education & Membership Committee (CEM)** remained a single unit, but during the second half of the year, it was split into three separate subcommittees.

Chaired by Diana Boehning, the newly created **Events** subcommittee quickly swung into action by sponsoring an extraordinary kayak trip through Lord’s Cove led by Susan Ballek. Janie Davison and Les Cone served as guides and recounted our area’s history. The Land Trust participated in Connecticut and National Trails Day with double-header hikes at Roaring Brook Preserve and on Mt. Archer. The Annual Meeting was held in May at Lyme Public Hall and featured a speaker on wetland restoration and preservation. Post-summer events commenced with *Sky-hunters in Flight*, a demonstration featuring live birds of prey. In late September we were treated to the spectacle of migrating swallows at Goose Island, where Susan Ballek gave a talk. In early November the committee hosted a recognition breakfast at Lyme Public Hall to salute our more than 80 volunteers. Finally, we were privileged to have former president Tony Irving introduce us to the newly-acquired Czikowsky property on a bright November day when he led a group walk up the slopes of Mt. Archer to its prominence overlooking Hamburg Cove.

The **Membership** subcommittee, chaired by Carrie Ermler, conducted a recruitment and renewal campaign that resulted in 427 members. The subcommittee also revamped the membership levels, keeping the \$10 minimum but raising the next level to \$50 and adding a new \$250 membership category. The new dues structure is intended to continue to make membership affordable to all Lyme residents and at the same time encourage higher levels of support for the Land Trust to reflect its increased cost of stewarding the almost 2,800 acres of open land.

By the end of the year, the Land Trust added functionality to its website that allows members to join and renew memberships online using PayPal.

The **Communications** subcommittee, chaired by Humphrey S. Tyler, published the 2010 Annual Report as part of the Spring newsletter, and a second 12-page newsletter followed in the Autumn. Five trail maps (Hartman, Honey Hill, Selden Creek & Ravine Trail, Plimpton & Sterling City, and Roaring Brook) were printed. In addition, the Land Trust initiated an e-mail communications system to improve the timeliness of news and information to members.

(See next page for more committee reports)

## Photo Contest Committee Report

In 2010 the Photo Contest Committee, chaired by Tony Sullivan, conducted its sixth annual event with its land trust partners from Essex, Old Lyme, Salem and East Haddam. The annual photo contest's popularity continues to grow each year. Last year there were over 400 photos entered in the contest.

## Finance Committee Report

The Finance Committee, co-chaired by Andy Baxter and George Lombardino, reported an end-of-year 7% increase in total assets during 2010, driven largely by \$260,000 in fundraising for the Sterling Hill and Czikowsky properties, as well as the reimbursement for the Patrell parcel from the State of Connecticut. Excluding these donations and grants, revenues surged 52% on a year-over-year basis. Expenses grew proportionally, led by higher stewardship and staff costs. For the year, net ordinary income of \$2,000 was essentially unchanged from 2009 levels. Among several process improvements, the Finance Committee streamlined data flows between our membership and general ledger databases.

## Nominating Committee Report

The Nominating Committee chaired by Matt Elgart recruited three new directors: Carrie Ermler, Diana Boehning and John Pritchard. Each made positive contributions in their respective roles leading the Membership and Events subcommittees and the new Development Committee.

## Preservation Committee Report

Chaired by Temp Brown, the **Preservation Committee**, in collaboration with the Town, The Nature Conservancy and a private foundation, closed on the purchase of the 96-acre Czikowsky property, acquiring one of the largest unprotected pieces in a sizeable block of open space on Mt. Archer. The Land Trust will steward this property. Additionally, the Land Trust submitted a successful application for a \$140,000 grant from the State of Connecticut toward the purchase of roughly 40 acres of woodlands off Sterling Hill Road. This parcel will help expand and connect a corridor of existing open space that includes the Nehantic State Forest and two existing Land Trust easements. In an act of great generosity, a Lyme donor later pledged the remaining balance of the purchase price. Separately, the Preservation Committee began a more proactive approach to engaging local landowners with the goal of preserving more open space in town. The first step involved identifying those properties that met our criteria for acreage and road or highway frontage.

## Development Committee Report

The Development Committee, co-chaired by Andy Baxter and John Pritchard, was formed in 2010 to manage major fundraising for the Land Trust. Their work began straightaway with an extensive mail and personal solicitation campaign for the Sterling Hill property purchase, which was expected to close in the Spring.

## Protected Open Space in Lyme

