



The Lyme Land Conservation Trust

2016 Spring Newsletter

Annual Meeting: Land and Birds

While some in Lyme were finishing up their taxes on the evening of April 15, others were enjoying the Lyme Land Trust's annual meeting: a bit of business and a wonderful slide show.

The membership re-elected current directors John Pritchard, Wendolyn Hill, George Lombardino and Milt Walters. Land Trust President John Pritchard then announced that the PBS *Visionaries* documentary about the Land Trust will soon be aired on PBS, paired with a documentary film also done by the *Visionaries* crew about the threat of development on Plum Island. Exact dates will be posted on the Land Trust website when available.

Several directors also spoke about a property that the Land Trust is currently working to preserve: the 82.5-acre

Hawthorne property between Joshua-town and Brush Hill Roads, south of Whalebone Creek. The Hawthorne property will add important protections to the Whalebone Creek Watershed. Fundraising for the purchase is underway.

Following the business portion of the meeting, renowned wildlife photographer Bill Burt treated attendees to a slide show based on his newest book *Water Babies: the Hidden Life of Baby Wetland Birds*.

Burt travelled from the western prairies to Florida and the Arctic tundra, photographing the young of elusive and sometimes rare birds with a 4 x 5 large-format view camera over a period of seven years.

Burt explained, "Each year for a



Photo © William Burt

Black-crowned night heron young, North Dakota.

week or two the wetlands are replete with the downy young. It is a marvelous chance to capture them with a camera. They are small, quick, and fiercely camouflaged."

The Good, the Bad and the Impassible

By Patricia Young

*Program Director,
Eightmile River Watershed
National Wild & Scenic Rivers*

Most of us don't spend much time thinking about road culverts and bridges. We simply need them to get from one side of a stream to the other side. However, these same culverts and bridges that allow us humans passage may prevent some wildlife from traveling up or downstream.

Fish and other small animals use our local streams and rivers as their own highways, accessing food sources and spawning grounds, and relocating when certain conditions, like water temperature, are too stressful. Pipes or

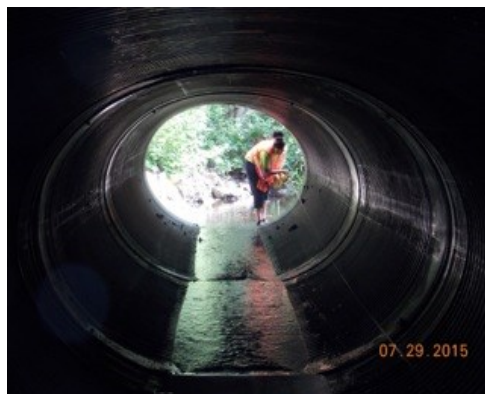


Photo by Patricia Young

Student Fern M. taking measurements inside a culvert.

other structures that are too long, too steep or where the water runs too fast or is too shallow, all present challenges

for movement. The Eightmile River Watershed is relatively undeveloped, which means fewer road miles and therefore fewer stream crossings. However, our mapping indicates that there are about three hundred stream crossings in the watershed on public roads. And more associated with private driveways or abandoned woods roads.

Many road culverts or pipes were originally installed to simply pass water as efficiently as possible, resulting in conditions that are not fish-friendly. The good news is that as these road culverts are replaced, these problems can be fixed. The best fish-friendly designs mimic the undisturbed channels

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Frog Grampa

By John Falstrom

Lyme resident, amateur naturalist

To my four-year-old granddaughter Cora, I am known as “Frog Grandpa.” It differentiates me from her other Grandpa who, through no fault of his own, does not have frogs in his yard. I have found that in any relationship with a four-year-old, it is a distinct advantage to have frogs in your yard.

When Cora visits, we take multiple trips out to our garden pond to see what frogs are visible. They are named: Pretty Boy, Freckles, Junior, Tad, and a baby called Lily. They are all green frogs, although when it hasn’t rained for a while, we might get a visit from a wood frog or a pickerel frog. We also have tadpoles – lots and lots of tadpoles. Strangely though, they are all from gray tree frogs, which spend most of their lives in the trees and use the garden pond only to reproduce in the spring.

Like Cora, I’ve loved frogs from childhood. Now, when visiting my backyard pond, I remember those days. If I observe quietly and provide a little food such as gypsy moth caterpillars, frogs will more than tolerate my presence. One day, while sitting near the pond one of the frogs turned and began to hop toward me. When he got close enough, he jumped up and grabbed a caterpillar crawling on my blue jeans. I think he thought my leg was a branch.

Our garden pond fills from a cold spring up the hill. To successfully breed, frogs need water that can warm with the summer sun, so it’s not well suited for frogs to complete their life cycle. After years of trial and error, I installed a rubber liner, which warms the water and prevents it from drying up in the summer. The frogs and tadpoles now prosper.

Frogs and toads are under threat from many directions, especially from loss of wetlands and other habitat. I believe preserving and creating habitat

for amphibians is as important as the help we offer birds or other native creatures.

Following is a brief guide to the seven kinds of frogs that may be found in Connecticut. In general, they live on insects, worms, and other small invertebrates, and sometimes



Photo by Mary Guitar

The green frog, *Rana clamitans*.

fish, or other small vertebrates.

The green frog, *Rana clamitans*, is the most common and sounds like a loose banjo string. It is 3 to 4 inches long, often green, but can also be brown, black or grayish, often with a bright green upper lip. A dorsolateral ridge extends from the tympanum to the pelvis, distinguishing it from a small bullfrog. It lives in or near permanent bodies of fresh water, such as ponds, rivers, streams and lakes.

The American bullfrog, *Rana catesbeiana*, is much larger than the green, measures up to 8 inches, and has a distinctive deeper croak. Most are green to dark green, with a white belly. Males have larger tympanic membranes than females. It lives in freshwater ponds, streams and rivers.

The northern leopard frog, *Rana pipiens*, reaches 3 to 4 inches. Its voice is a quacking trill. As the name implies, it has irregular brownish spots on its greenish dorsal surface. A well-defined dorsolateral ridge extends from the tympanum to the pelvis, often lighter in color than the background. Its belly is white or cream. It

favors wet grasslands with streams or ponds.

The pickerel frog, *Rana palustris*, resembles the leopard frog. Its call sounds a little like a snore. About 3 inches in length, it is greenish-gray above with dark spots forming rectangles in two longitudinal rows on the back. The white or cream dorsolateral ridge extends from ear to pelvis. The belly is white, and the groin and underside of the hind legs is yellow or orange. It lives in high grass near temporary pools, favoring shallow water in bogs, rivers, streams and ponds.

The wood frog, *Rana sylvatica*, is 2 to 3 inches, and well-adapted to blend with the leaves on the forest floor. Dorsal coloration ranges from gray, to pinkish, to nearly orange. A brown patch extends from the eye to the tympanum. A dorsolateral ridge extends from the tympanum to the pelvis. It lives in moist woodlands, usually with oaks, beeches and maples. It has a soft clattering call. It also has the ability to complete freeze in winter and thaw in spring with no ill effects.

The gray tree frog, *Hyla versicolor*, not a true frog, reaches 2 inches, and changes color readily. Its call is a resonating trill, a little like a hairy woodpecker. Most are grayish with black markings on the back, with a white line from the eye to the corner of the mouth. It can be found in moist deciduous forests, upland habitats, or resting on cliff faces. It is well camouflaged on both tree bark and lichen-covered rock.

The spring peeper, *Pseudacris crucifer*, the smallest frog species in CT at 1.5 inches, is not a true frog. It gives a high-pitched peeping trill. Pale red with brownish or tan spots and blotches that form an X on its back, it is found in woodland areas with marshes, vernal ponds or bogs.

For more information, see websites for: FrogWatch USA, Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, CT DEEP.

The Lyme Land Conservation Trust Newsletter

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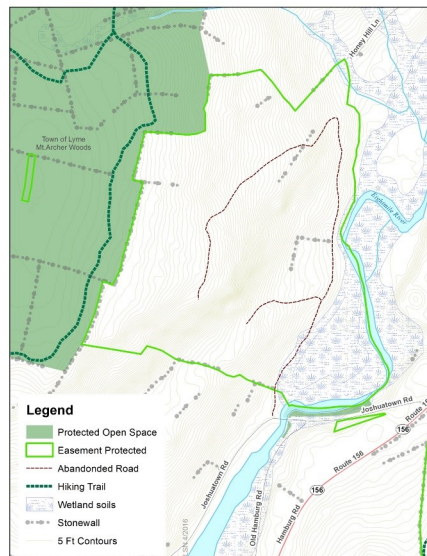
May Hike on Czikowsky Property from River to Ridgeline

By Tony Irving

*Lyme Land Trust Director,
Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Watershed
Board Member*

On May 28 at 9:30 a.m., join me on a walk on the 96-acre Czikowsky Preserve, beginning at the entrance just to the west of the Old Hamburg (Joshuatown) bridge. This hike is moderately strenuous. There are no trails on the property but we will make our way to the top for a view. Register at openspace@townlyme.org.

In 2010, this property on the Eightmile River was purchased through a joint effort of the Connecticut Nature Conservancy, the Town of Lyme and the Lyme Land Conservation Trust, along with a substantial contribution from a private foundation. This property had been on the front lines for acquisition for many years, but an agreement between the bank holding the property in trust and the conservation groups could not be reached until 2010. After its purchase, two small, derelict houses were removed, but the property still retains the remnants of a macadam road that



Map courtesy of Lisa Niccolai

**Property is inside green outline
to the east of Mt. Archer Woods.**

winds its way to the top where, in the 1960s, a house was proposed and rejected by the town. The 1982 flood, ten inches of rain within a 24-hour period, washed out much of this road.

This land has changed significantly over the years. The lower field along the 2,500 feet of river frontage was

even more open and the adjacent uplands, now wooded, were in pastureland, with the steeply wooded areas to their north grading back again to pastureland on the highlands of Mount Archer. Today most of this pastureland has reverted back to forest.

What makes this parcel special is the range of habitat types, from river and moist lowlands with their deep sandy soils, to the dry, thin soils and large rock outcroppings on top, with an altitude change of nearly 400 feet.

This is a unique example of an uninterrupted river-to-ridgeline system that, when seen in combination with adjacent protected lands, creates a large mosaic of habitat types totaling some 700 acres on Mt. Archer alone. Go across Mt. Archer Road to the Jewett Preserve and other connected conservation lands and a block of over 1,500 acres is created. Not exactly an ark, but substantial enough to provide for the lifecycle needs of a number of species. It is also one of the buffering parcels at the mouth of the Eightmile River, part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Land Trusts Photo Contest Winners

The 10th Annual Land Trusts Photo Contest winners were announced at a March 11 reception highlighting the winning photos and displaying all entered photos. Land trusts in Lyme, Old Lyme, Salem, Essex and East Haddam jointly sponsor the annual amateur photo contest to celebrate the scenic countryside and diverse wildlife and plants in these towns. The ages of the photographers ranged from children to senior citizens.



Hank Golet won the top prize, the John G. Mitchell Environmental Conservation Award, with his beautiful photograph of a juvenile yellow crowned night heron in the Black Hall River in Old Lyme. Alison Mitchell presented the award, created in memory of her late husband John G. Mitchell, an editor at *National Geographic* who championed the cause of the environment.

William Burt, a naturalist and wildlife photographer who has been a contest judge for ten years, received a special mention. Judges Burt; Amy Kurtz Lansing, an accomplished art historian and curator at the Florence Griswold Museum; and Skip Broom, an award-winning local photographer and antique house restoration housewright, chose the winning photographs from 219 entries.

The sponsoring land trusts – Lyme Land Conservation Trust, Essex Land Trust, the Old Lyme Land Trust, Salem Land Trust, and East Haddam Land Trust – thank the judges as well as RiverQuest/ CT River Expeditions,

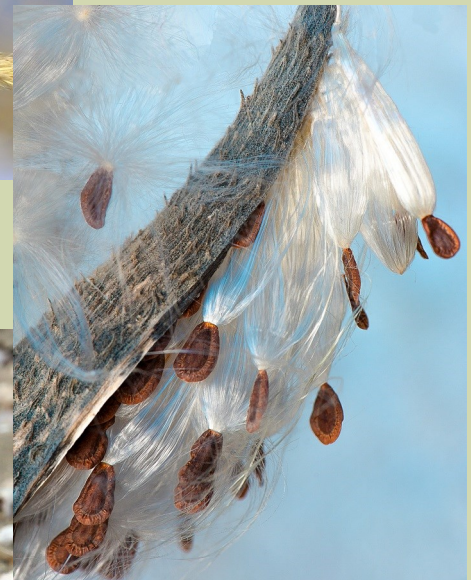
Lorensen Auto Group, The Oakley Wing Group at Morgan Stanley, Evan Griswold at Coldwell Banker, Ballek's Garden Center, Essex Savings Bank, Chelsea Groton Bank, and Alison Mitchell in honor of her late husband John G. Mitchell, all generous supporters of this annual amateur photo contest.

The winning photographers are:

John G. Mitchell Environmental Award,
Hank Golet, Old Lyme



**left, Hank Golet, Mitchell Award
below, Harcourt Davis,
2nd place, Wildlife**



**left, Chris Pimley, 1st place,
Wildlife
below, Mary Waldron,
1st place, Plants**

Youth

First Place: Patrick Burns, East Haddam
Second Place: Judah Waldo, Old Lyme
Third Place: James Beckman, Ivoryton
Honorable Mention: Gabriel Waldo, Old Lyme
Honorable Mention: Sarah Gada, East Haddam
Honorable Mention: Shawn Parent, East Haddam

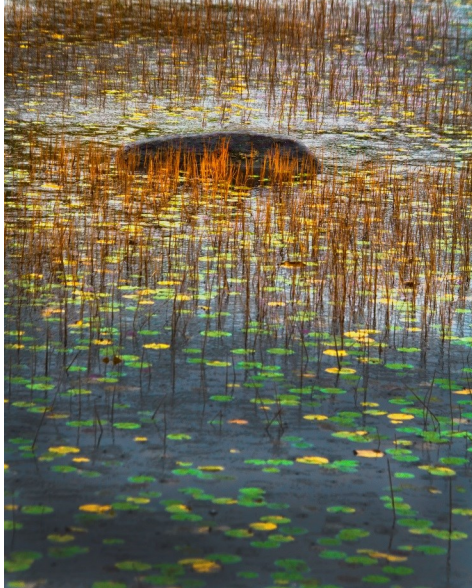
Cultural/Historic:

First Place: Marcus Maronne, Mystic
Second Place: Normand L. Charlette, Manchester
Third Place: Tammy Marseli, Rocky Hill

Land Trusts Photo Contest Winners



left, Patrick Burns, 1st Place, Youth
below, Courtney Briggs, 2nd Place, Plants



above, Cheryl Philopena,
1st Place, Landscape



above, Marian Morrisette,
2nd Place, Landscape



left, Judah Waldo,
2nd Place, Youth

Honorable Mention: Jud Perkins, Salem
Honorable Mention: Pat Duncan, Norwalk
Honorable Mention: John Kolb, Essex

Landscapes/Waterscapes

First Place: Cheryl Philopena, Salem
Second Place: Marian Morrisette, New London
Third Place: Harcourt Davis, Old Lyme
Honorable Mention: Cynthia Kovak, Old Lyme
Honorable Mention: Bopha Smith, Salem
Honorable Mention: Pat Duncan, Norwalk

Plants

First Place: Mary Waldron, Old Lyme
Second Place: Courtney Briggs, Old Saybrook

Third Place: Linda Waters, Salem
Honorable Mention: Pete Govert, East Haddam
Honorable Mention: Marcus Maronne, Mystic
Honorable Mention: Marian Morrisette, New London

Wildlife

First Place: Chris Pimley, Essex
Second Place: Harcourt Davis, Old Lyme
Third Place: Linda Waters, Salem
Honorable Mention: Thomas Nemeth, Salem
Honorable Mention: Jeri Duefrene, Niantic
Honorable Mention: Elizabeth Gentile, Old Lyme

The winning photo display will be in the Old Lyme Library during the month of May. Winning photos can be viewed at: <https://landtrustsphotos.shutterfly.com/>

ooooooooo The Good, the Bad and the Impassible ooooooooo

Continued from front page

above and below the pipe being replaced, ideally with open bottoms. Where closed pipes are needed, however, using a wider pipe that allows some exposed streambank and burying the pipe to create a natural bottom and maintain the natural stream depth, is also a good solution. Since fish-friendly designs are closer to natural conditions, they also function better in larger storm events, keeping roads safer and reducing expensive repairs.

One project that the Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Coordinating Committee (ERWSCC) worked on in 2015 was the completion of data collection for public road culverts in the watershed.



Photo by Patricia Young

The outlet on this old culvert is too high to allow fish to jump into it.

Two students from Three Rivers Community College were hired through a grant from the Society of Women Environmental Professionals.

Field measurements collected were uploaded to the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaboration database, a thirteen-state initiative that ranks each road crossing in terms of severity of barriers for passage.

This data will allow ERWSCC to work with local town departments to identify which culverts are particularly vulnerable to large storms and which ones could also act as better fish highways.

Want to Get Rid of Ticks? Get Some Opossums

By Doug Nielson
Lyme Resident

That furry gray animal with beady eyes and a rat-like tail that you might see in your backyard is the Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*), a species with a number of unique characteristics: it is the only marsupial in North America, has a prehensile tail like New World monkeys, is immune to venomous bites, resistant to Lyme disease, botulism and rabies, and, when threatened, it plays dead.

Now we can add one more: opossums are one of the chief natural enemies of ticks. In a study at the Cary Institute for Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook, New York, six animals — three rodents, two birds, and our fuzzy marsupial — were captured and exposed to ticks. The opossums far out-performed all the others.

There are two major reasons for this. One, their thick coat attracts ticks; and two, opossums are fastidious, as clean as cats. When they aren't foraging, mating or taking care of their young, they're grooming them-

selves. They catch more than 95 percent of the ticks that try to feed on them. A single animal can catch and eat over 5,000 ticks a week.

They are beneficial in many other ways. They rarely disturb your plants, and often eat plant-eating insects and slugs. They eat berries and other fruits, dispersing the seeds. They also eat rodents and poisonous snakes.

There are many misconceptions about 'possums. Because they often hiss and spit when approached, people think they may be rabid. Because they play dead when confronted with possible violence, people think that they are stupid. Neither is true. They are naturally resistant to rabies, and in clinical studies have shown that they are more capable of finding food and remembering its location than rats, dogs, or cats.

Opossums have been around for nearly 65 million years, since the dinosaurs died out. After the native North American marsupials died out, about 20 million years ago, the 'possum crossed through Panama to come north.

Unlike many animals that need to survive freezing weather, 'possums can't add a lot of subcutaneous fat before winter, and are in danger of freezing at temperatures below 19 degrees F. They often favor urban areas because human settlements tend to be warmer and provide more food.

Although intelligent, 'possums are slow and near-sighted, easy prey for large owls, coyotes, dogs and cars. They are among the shortest-lived animals of their size. Most die before nine months and few live past three years.

So be kind to that four-footed bug-eater. He's helping you, and his life is not easy. Keep your hedgerows dense, let large old tree trunks stand, make brush piles for shelter, and tolerate him if he rests in your woodpile or under your shed. And watch out for him in the road.

To read more:

Ostfeld, Richard, *Lyme Disease: the ecology of a complex system*, Oxford University Press, 2012.

The National Opossum Society:
<http://www.opossum.org/>

En Plein Air Paint-Out Celebrates Lyme's Beauty

By Susan Henderson,
Lyme Land Trust Director

The Lyme Land Trust will again sponsor "Celebrating Lyme's Beauty," an *en plein air* paint-out in conjunction with the Lyme Art Association (LAA). The event is scheduled for the weekend of June 4-5, with a rain-date weekend scheduled for June 11-12.

The paint-out will run from sunrise to sunset each day, with registration starting at 9:00 a.m. Contact email is info@lymelandtrust.org.

The Land Trust has partnered in the past with the LAA, which has strong ties to our local landscapes.

The Land Trust's efforts to celebrate the region's history as a mecca for artists and to preserve significant local landscapes is one objective of the Land Trust's mission.

This year's chosen location will be the Hamburg Bridge Historic District, the community surrounding the bridge on Joshuatown Road. The District was granted a place on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983. Celebrated landscape and portrait artist George F. Bottume painted the District circa 1850, when it was known as Reed's Landing. It will be the exhibition's focal piece.



Photo of painting courtesy of the Lyme Local History Archives

Reed's Landing by George Bottume.
The original painting hangs in the Lyme Town Hall.

Works from the artists participating in the competition will be offered for sale at LAA's Goodman Gallery. An opening reception for the exhibition will be held on July 22, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The exhibition will run through August 26.

A Talk and Walk of the Czikowsky Hill Preserve led by Land Trust Director Tony Irving will take place on Saturday, May 28, at 9:30 a.m. on Joshuatown Road. (**See article on page 3 for details.**) Artists are invited to attend this Talk and Walk to familiarize themselves with the area before the Paint-Out.



Photograph of painting courtesy of the Lyme Local History Archives

Old Hamburg Bridge, Jesse Beebe. The original pencil drawing is in the Lyme Local History Archives in the Lyme Library.

Used Bike Drop-Offs for Bikes for Kids

The Lyme Land Trust is pleased to again host used bike drop-offs along with Reynolds Subaru for Bikes for Kids, Old Saybrook. Drop-offs can be made from May 9 to May 21, at Reynolds Subaru, 286 Hamburg Road (Rte. 156) in Lyme. Registered riders for the Tour de Lyme can drop off used bikes for donation on May 15 on arrival at Ashlawn Farm's parking lot prior to signing in for the cycling

event. For Early Bird home pick-up, contact: Dave Fowler, 860-388-2453 or davefowler05@gmail.com.

The bikes will be refurbished and distributed, along with new cycling helmets, to kids in need. Any sized donated bike is welcome.

David Fowler, President of Bikes for Kids, said, "With the help of the Tour de Lyme, we collected 150 bikes in the last two years. We hope to deliver and collect more this year." For additional information on Bikes for Kids, go to www.bikesforkidsct.org.

My Town Trails App

Never be lost again. The Town and Land Trust have teamed up with My Town Trails to provide an interactive map for mobile device users. Each preserve map displays all the trails in an aerial or road view with the ability to track your location on a trail. Go to www.mytowntrails.com to download the app. Let us know what you think.





Lyme Land Conservation Trust, Inc.

PO Box 1002, Lyme, CT 06371

Lyme Land Conservation Trust Calendar of Events

All events subject to change. Dates and times will be announced by press release & email, and will be posted on the Land Trust website and Facebook page. Consult the Upcoming Events page at www.lymelandtrust.org/news/events/ for the latest information. To reduce costs & paper, the Land Trust no longer mails postcard notification of all events. To receive email notifications, send an email to: info@lymelandtrust.org with a request to be added to the events email list.

Talk and Walk

On Czikowsky Hill Preserve

When - Sat. May 28, 9:30-11:30 a.m.

What - Walk to the top of this 96-acre property.

Where - Meet at the entrance just to the west of the Old Hamburg (Joshuatown) Bridge. *See full story on page 3.*

Paint-Out

"Celebrating Lyme's Beauty"

When - Sat. and Sun., June 4-5.

What - *En plein air* painting weekend, in conjunction with the Lyme Art Association.

Where - Hamburg Bridge Historic District. *See full story on page 7.*

Woodlands Tour

Wildlife Habitat Management

When - Sat., June 18, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

(Rain date Sun., June 19)

What - Tour of private woodlands that illustrate active management to enhance wildlife habitat for various species. Learn how these concepts can be applied to your own property. Co-sponsored by the Land Trust and the Town of Lyme.

Where - Location and directions to the event provided after registration. Space is limited. To register, email openspace@townlyme.org with your name and the number of people in your party.

Sunday, May 15, 2016



For most current information on Lyme Land Conservation Trust events: www.lymelandtrust.org