



# The Lyme Land Conservation Trust

## 2011 Spring Newsletter

### Parents Organize "Lyme Trail Trekkers" For Family Fun Outdoors To Impart Appreciation Of Open Space Preservation To Next Generation

In an effort to encourage younger families to enjoy Lyme's open space, a group of parents have created the "Lyme Trail Trekkers," which is organizing outdoor programs designed for family participation.

The Trekkers, which first met in March, are planning monthly family-friendly outdoor activities on the trails that wind through Lyme Land Trust preserves and other preserved properties in town.

"We have three goals," said Emily Bjornberg, one of the group's organizers. "Number one is to instill a sense of conservation in the next generation. Number two is to help the Land Trust reach out to young families and involve them in the important work of the Land Trust. Number three is to make it easier for families to know which Land Trust activities are appropriate for -- and open to -- young kids."

Land Trust President George

Moore welcomed the creation of the Trekkers. "The Lyme Land Trust was created specifically to preserve our beautiful open space for future generations," he said. "It is gratifying to see the efforts of the next generation of Lyme civic leaders to insure that their children learn to enjoy and value our preserved open spaces."

The initial organizers of the Trekkers include seven families with a total of 20 children ages one to 15.

#### Scavenger Hunt Planned

The Trekkers had several activities planned for the Spring, including a "mud hike & fishing day" in the Pleasant Valley Preserve (to learn about aquatic life in the area's streams), a hike and picnic on the Ravine Trail, and children's author John Himmelman's program "The Stories & Songs of the Crickets and Katydid" at Lyme Public Hall sponsored by the Land Trust.

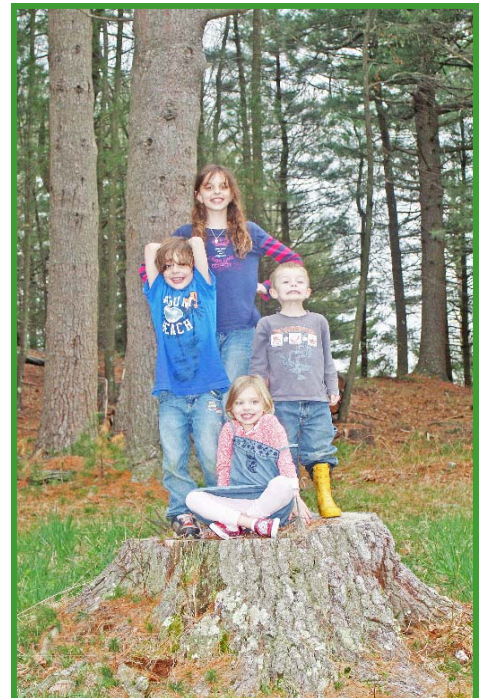
Upcoming plans include a scavenger hunt as part of the National Trails Day & Connecticut Trails Day celebration on June 4 in the Beebe Preserve, a possible "hike-out and paint-out" in connection with Lyman Allyn Art Museum's collection of paintings depicting the Lyme countryside a century ago, and plans to march in the Independence Day Parade in Hamburg.

The Lyme Trail Trekkers have developed their own logo (see to the left), which will be attached to Land Trust event announcements to let families know that the

program has been developed so that at least some aspects of the activities will be designed to interest youngsters.

An important point made by the young families organizing the Lyme Trail Trekkers is that their activities will also be of interest to some of Lyme's older residents who have grandchildren or nieces and nephews who would enjoy the Trekkers' outings.

Anyone interested in joining the Trekkers can email Emily Bjornberg at [ejbjornberg@yahoo.com](mailto:ejbjornberg@yahoo.com) or Lisa Niccolai at [leaf2landscape@gmail.com](mailto:leaf2landscape@gmail.com).



#### Young Lyme Trekkers

Left to right standing: Teddy Richardson, Maddie Richardson, Elliot Bjornberg; sitting: Lily Richardson,.



# Plimpton Preserve: The Best View In Lyme

By Kristen Stodolski

Ten years ago, Mary Guitar returned to her roots in Lyme.

After having lived in frenetic California, coming back to Lyme was a return to a “country” lifestyle without freeways and traffic lights.

Since then, she has enjoyed many hours exploring Lyme’s woodland preserves and is an advocate for conserving open space.

One of her favorite “discoveries” was near her home, the Land Trust’s Elizebeth Plimpton Preserve. After many walks on the 80-acre preserve, she accepted the Land Trust’s offer to be one of the Preserve’s stewards six years ago.

The Plimpton Preserve is located just north of the Lyme Congregational Church on Sterling City Road. It sits on the southwestern slope of what is known as Nickerson Hill above Hamburg Cove and is part of a large interconnected quilt of preserved open space that includes the Niantic State Forest, stretching from Town Woods Road on the south all the way to the East Haddam town line on the north.

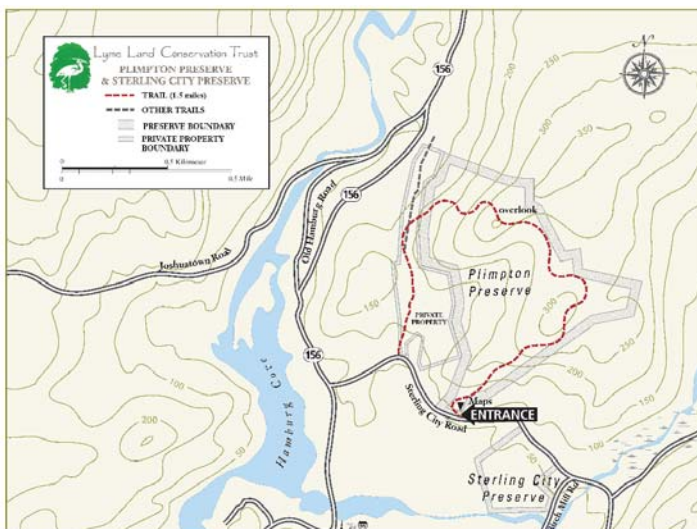
The 1.25-mile trail is of moderate difficulty (fairly steep in places), but climbing it is a great way to see parts of Southeastern Connecticut that can’t be viewed from a car.

As the hiker enters the trail, there is a steep rise that leads to the first overlook, which provides good views, but the true treasure is at the second overlook.

To get there, one must make another steep climb that leads across a large hill. This second overlook boasts a spectacular view of Hamburg Cove and across the Connecticut River to Essex.

## July 9 Guided Hike of Plimpton Preserve

Stewards Peter Weigle and Mary Guitar will guide a hike up Nickerson Hill to one of Lyme’s higher elevations and a view of Hamburg Cove and the Connecticut River. Meet at 9 AM. Park on Sterling City Road and Stone Post Road. Trail is moderately difficult with some steep climbs. The public is welcome.



## Atop Nickerson Hill

Mary Guitar shows the view of Hamburg Cove & Essex

The Plimpton Preserve has a vibrant past with many pieces of Lyme’s history hidden along the wooded trail.

Walking through the property, it’s evident that at one point the Plimpton Preserve was part of a farm. The mixed hardwoods vary in maturity and give ample places for pileated woodpeckers to make homes for themselves, along with turkeys and deer.

The area of Sterling City was vibrant into the early 1800s. Development centered on the activity of the Sterling grist and saw mill, which was powered by the waters of Falls River.

Traffic traveling through Lyme passed through Sterling City along what is now Sterling City Road since there was no Route 156 or bridge over the mouth of Falls River near Hamburg Cove until 1810.

The settlement of Sterling City contributed to the building of the first meeting house in 1728 to serve the growing population of the area, which at the time was known as North Lyme. Leaving the Preserve, the hiker is walking on the old Meetinghouse Hill Road, which dates back to 1724. The meetinghouse, a basic structure, was somewhere on the hill, but no evidence of it remains of it today.

The entire trail is a loop, so emerging on Sterling City Road, hikers are close to where they started.

The property was purchased in 2001 from Ken Plimpton with financial assistance from the State of Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program, The Nature Conservancy and the citizens of Lyme. It was named in honor of his wife, Elizebeth, who grew up in Lyme and was the town historian for many years.

The Preserve is still vibrant today with active stewards, Mary Guitar and Peter Weigle, working diligently to maintain the trails and property.

Currently, Peter has been developing a trail that would allow visitors to walk through the preserve for a shorter hike. Like many properties in Lyme, barberry has invaded portions of the Preserve, but volunteers have worked to control it.

The Plimpton Preserve is open from sunrise to sunset and provides opportunities for wildlife viewing, hiking, and exercise for leashed pets.



## Annual Meeting June 19

### Features Birds Of Prey

The 2011 Annual Meeting of the Lyme Land Conservation Trust promises to be a special event!

It will be held June 19 at 2:30 PM at 195 Joshuatown Road, Lyme.

After a brief business meeting to elect new directors, there will be a demonstration of falconry using birds of prey – live raptors, such as eagles, hawks, owls and falcons.

The released birds fly high into the sky where they soar overhead before diving back to earth.

They glide in over the audience, returning to the outstretched arm of the falconer. This will be a wonderful entertaining and educational event for children and adults.

The falconer will bring various species of birds of prey to show the audience.

This is a members only event. Attendance will be limited to current members of the Lyme Land Trust and their families.

There will be some seating and plenty of space to stand or spread out a blanket.

If you have not renewed your membership for 2011 or would like to become a new member, go to the [Membership Section](#) of the website at [www.lymelandtrust.org](http://www.lymelandtrust.org). If you are uncertain of your current membership status, email us at [events@lymelandtrust.org](mailto:events@lymelandtrust.org).



## An Exciting & Fascinating Fathers Day Event

### Fun For The Whole Family



## Making Memorial Donations To The Lyme Land Trust

A donation to the Lyme Land Conservation Trust in the name of a deceased loved one or dear friend is often an appropriate way to pay tribute to the life of someone who has cherished the beauty of Lyme.

The Land Trust will acknowledge your donation by sending to whomever you designate a letter from the Trust president documenting your thoughtfulness.

Please mail memorial donations to Lyme Land Conservation Trust, PO Box 1002, Old Lyme CT 06371.

Please tell us in whose memory you are making the donation and to whom we should send the acknowledgement of your consideration.

The Land Trust will also send you a receipt for your records.

## Land Trusts Seek Volunteers To Assist State In Bat Census To Battle Deadly WNS Disease

The loss of bats due to White-Nose Syndrome (WNS), a mysterious malady that has caused a high mortality rate among several bat species, has prompted bat conservation and other organizations, including the state DEP, to conduct a bat census.

The community can provide vital data by observing bat colonies in barns, etc., bats flying in and out of roosts, and those foraging over gardens and yards in the evening. Recording these observations, along with information about whether there seems to be more or fewer bats than sighted in the past, will go a long way to help our environmental groups.

Volunteers from land trusts and other conservation organizations in Connecticut are being asked to assist the DEP in conducting this survey. The survey form can be down loaded from the DEP website at: <http://www.bats101.info/forms-to-download.php>

For more information contact Suzanne Haig at [smhaig@snet.net](mailto:smhaig@snet.net).



# The View From “Huckleberry Hill”

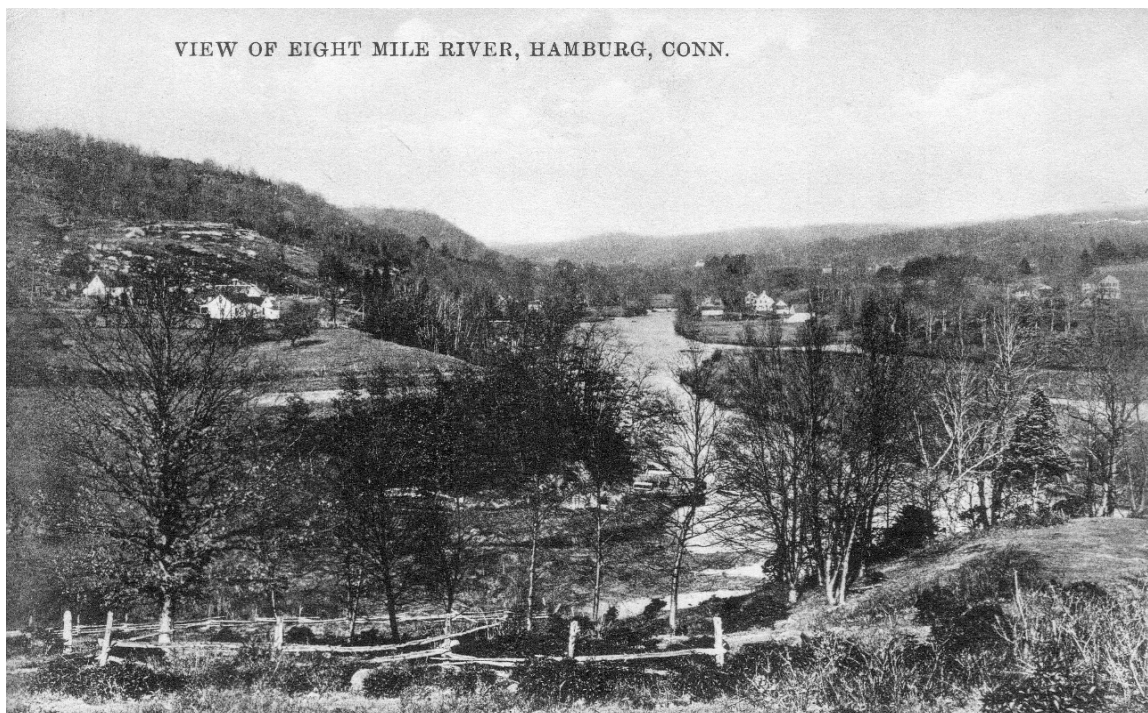
## An Open Space Vista Preserved For Future Generations

The pictures below were taken from what was once known as “Huckleberry Hill.” Most of the land in these scenes has been preserved as open space through the cooperation and partnering of the Lyme Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Town of Lyme and the State of Connecticut. The fenced hill, wetlands and pasture along the northern bank of upper Hamburg Cove in the foreground of the postcard are now protected by Land Trust conservation easements. The second prominence of Mt. Archer and the flood plain at its foot along the Eightmile River are protected by joint ownership of TNC, the Town of Lyme and the Land Trust, and much of the land on the right horizon on Nickerson Hill is owned by either the Land Trust, the state or TNC.

### 85 Years Ago

This postcard is in the archives at Lyme Public Hall. Archivist Carolyn Bacdayan believes it was probably printed about 1925.

The view is looking up at the mouth of the Eightmile River as it enters upper Hamburg Cove. The old Joshua-town Road bridge (destroyed in the 1936 flood) can be seen in the center of the photo.



### April 2011

Taken from a spot about 100 feet south of the postcard view, the scene today is much the same as it was a century ago, the primary difference being a mature canopy of hardwoods, cedars and pines covering the hills of Lyme. Most of the houses and buildings in the postcard are still standing but can't be seen through the woody shroud of trees and brush.





# Founders of the Lyme Land Conservation Trust

## Arthur Howe Jr.

By George Moore

Art said he was a country boy, working in New York, looking for some land for weekend enjoyment. In 1968 he and his wife Peggy bought a small parcel on Old Hamburg Rd and before building, they would picnic there.

One day, Harvey Stevenson, a Land Trust supporter and future director, stopped by to chat. They learned they had in common, The Century Association, a venerable old New York club favored by artists and writers. They became good friends.

Shirley Howard (then Shirley Moore) a founder, invited Art to become a Land Trust member. In 1974 he joined the board and then became the third Land Trust president, serving from 1976 until 1984.

Like his predecessors, Art continued to exercise patience, working to earn the respect of long term land owners. He spent many hours talking with them and (with their permission) walking their land.

Art frequently walked the 235 acre Fehrer property and courted sisters Catharine and Elizabeth in the hopes they might donate it to the Trust. He helped them by removing junked cars and debris from their land. (He also discovered a hippie camp with a crop of marijuana under cultivation).

Eventually, in 1992 the sisters donated their land to The Nature Conservancy. Named the Pleasant Valley Preserve, it is managed by the Lyme Land Trust and is one of the most popular preserves in Lyme.

With the assistance of Louise Ames, wife of the then president of Connecticut College, the Land Trust organized a summer program for about 12 Lyme youngsters for three or four weeks to walk and map the Fehrer property. The largest white oak they discovered, 16 feet in circumference, was named "Arthur's oak." Another initiative under Art's leadership was the organized spring cleanups on town roads.

Art Howe was a true volunteer. He served the Land Trust for ten years, was on Planning & Zoning and was an officer of the Lyme Fire Company.

A review of the names of those who served on the Board with Art reveals a

gradual change in its make-up. The strategy of patience had worked; some of the family names that appear on the roster of past directors during his presidency are: Thach, Jewett, Czikowsky, Harding, and Tiffany.

Clearly, the success in protecting Lyme's open space through the late 80's and 90's was helped by the relationships cultivated by the earlier Boards.

Art is a charming man with a quick smile and a sparkle in his eye. He is modest and quick to talk about Lyme. He speaks only sparingly of himself, except when the subject is his childhood in New Hampshire.

He defines himself as an ardent fisherman and outdoorsman. Professionally, he said he had a mixed background: ½ education, ¼ business and ¼ environmental non-profits.

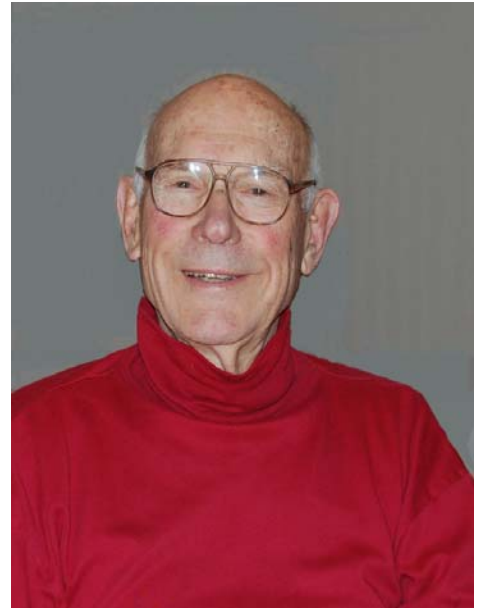
As a youngster, he spent a lot of time at his grandmother's on Squam Lake, NH. His grandmother wanted to protect the area from development and bought as much land as she could around the lake.

It is obvious that time spent with her greatly influenced Art. He still speaks of her dedication to conservation, environmental issues and her deep - rooted social consciousness.

These same values ran in the family. His brother, Sydney, was president of the Conservation Foundation and was an organizer of the first Earth Day on April 22, 1970. His brother, Harold Howe II, served as Commissioner of Education in the Johnson administration and fought against segregated schools. Art's son has made a career in New Hampshire protecting the environment and is a Senior Director of Land Protection at the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests.

After our talk, I "googled" Art and gained even more insight into the extraordinary man who made Lyme his home for many years.

Born in 1921 in Watertown CT., Art graduated from Hotchkiss. In 1941 he



Art Howe

volunteered as an ambulance driver attached to the British Eighth Army in North Africa and rose to the rank of Major. In 1944, in recognition of his service, he was awarded the OBE (Order of the British Empire) by the Crown.

That experience resulted in a lifelong association with the American Field Service, an organization of volunteer ambulance drivers founded in 1915 that later became an international student exchange organization. He is a Life Trustee and served as its President from 1964-1972.

Howe graduated from Yale in 1947, taught Latin, History and Mathematics at Hotchkiss, became Director of Admissions at Yale in 1953 and in 1956 became Dean of Admissions and Student Appointments. Art played a pivotal role in helping to change Yale's admissions criteria to attract a more diverse student body.

After digesting all this, I recalled Tom Brokaw's book, *The Greatest Generation*, and thought, Tom, too bad you didn't meet Arthur Howe Jr., educator, environmentalist, fisherman, outdoorsman and the third president of the Lyme Land Trust.

I am glad I did.

## Photo Contest Winners Announced

By Tony Sullivan

The land conservation trusts of Lyme, Old Lyme, Salem, Essex and East Had-dam announced the winners of their jointly sponsored 2010-11 amateur photo contest in March.

The purpose of the annual contest is to celebrate the scenic countryside in those towns and its diversified wildlife.

There were over 350 photos submitted from 85 photographers all over Connecticut. The ages of the photographers were from 7 to 91. All the winning photographs will be available for public viewing at Phoebe Griffin Noyes Library at 2 Library



**1st Place Landscape  
Skip Broom of Hadlyme**

Lane in Old Lyme during the month of May and during the following months at the public libraries of Lyme, Salem and Essex.

The photos can also be seen at <http://landtrustsphotos.shutterfly.com/> or on the web sites of each of the sponsoring conservation trusts.

The Seventh Annual Photo Contest is now underway.

Interested amateur photographers should email [landtrustsphotos@yahoo.com](mailto:landtrustsphotos@yahoo.com) for a copy of the rules and entry form.

Financial support for the 2010-11 contest was provided by Lorensen Toyota, Oakley/Wing Group at Smith Barney, Evan Griswold at Coldwell Banker, Essex Savings Bank, ChelseaGroton Bank, Ballek Garden Center and Murtha Cullina LLP.

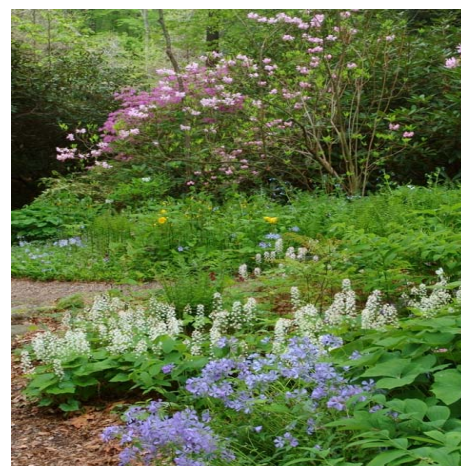
**John G Mitchell Award  
Mark Bailey of Essex**



## Where To Get Native Wildflowers

The New England Wild Flower Society has a native plant nursery, Nasami Farm, off I- 91 in Whately, MA.

Nasami is open in the spring and autumn for retail sales. It has the widest selection of native plants in New England. Many can be found nowhere else. To learn more, go to the Society's website: [www.newenglandwild.org](http://www.newenglandwild.org).



New England Wild Flower Society's botanical garden, Garden-in-the-Woods, Framingham, MA

## First Annual Spring "Paint-Out" at Grassy Hill Preserve

Robert Beers of New London, left, and Ken Dorros of Glastonbury were among the 40 artists who registered to enter the for the first annual Lyme Spring "Paint-Out" & Exhibit at the historic Grassy Hill Preserve on April 29. Sponsored by the Lyme Land Trust, The Lyme Art Association and the Lyman Allyn Art Museum, the event is to celebrate the beauty and preservation of the landscape immortalized by Guy Wiggins famous 1900 painting "Church on the Hill." The winning work will be exhibited at Lyman Allyn Art Museum.





# Land Trust Partnering to Control Invasive Plants in Lyme

The Lyme Land Trust, the Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Coordinating Committee (ERWSCC), The Nature Conservancy, other local land trusts, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Conservation, and town governments are working together to try to control invasive plants in the area.

ERWSCC has formed the Eightmile River Invasive Species Management Area (ERISMA) to coordinate the attack on invasive species within the watershed.

This group, which includes both the town of Lyme and the Lyme Land Conservation Trust, is focusing on invasive plants that are new to the watershed. Assistance from local residents in identifying, reporting and controlling these plants will ensure our natural areas remain in good condition.

ERISMA is targeting three new invasives to eradicate before they get established — Japanese Stiltgrass. Pale Swallow-wort and Black Swallow-wort. If you find these invasives, contact: Linda Bireley, Lyme Open Space Coordinator, [LindaBiota@Comcast.net](mailto:LindaBiota@Comcast.net); or David Gumbart, The Nature Conservancy, [dgumbart@tnc.org](mailto:dgumbart@tnc.org), (203) 568-6290. If you are unsure of an identification, send a digital photo.

## Japanese Stiltgrass Spreads Fast In Lyme

By David Gumbart, Asst. Director Land Management  
The Nature Conservancy—Connecticut Chapter

The most threatening new invasive species in Lyme is Japanese stiltgrass, which is widespread throughout the town.

With approval of First Selectman Ralph Eno, the town launched a stiltgrass control program along town roads in the Eightmile River watershed last year under the direction of Public Works Director Don Green.

Outside the Eightmile watershed, stiltgrass is dense in the Hadlyme area, particularly along Route 82, Route 148, Joshuatown Road and Brush Hill Road. Residents are urged to learn how to identify and eradicate this plant.

On one parcel in town stiltgrass threatens two plants on the state's list of rare species, *Pedicularis lanceolata* (Swamp Lousewort; on threatened list) and *Platanthera flava* (Pale Green Orchid; on special concern list).

### Identifying Stiltgrass



**Japanese stiltgrass** can reach 5 feet in height, but tends to grow 1 - 3 feet in a branching, sprawling, mat-like manner. Its pale green leaves alternate along a branched stalk, resembling a small, delicate bamboo. Leaves are narrow, lance-shaped, up to 3 inches long and lightly hairy with a pale, silvery stripe of reflective hairs along the midrib of the upper leaf surface. Flower spikes - 1 to 3 inches long - appear in September and produce seed by early October.

Stiltgrass can be controlled by cutting (after Labor Day, before seed production), spraying and even pulling by hand.

Stiltgrass is an annual, requiring seed production to perpetuate itself and spread. It spreads rapidly along roadsides and riparian corridors, where it crowds out spring wildflowers and the next generation of trees, essential to maintaining forest productivity and carbon dioxide absorption.

Subsequently, stiltgrass decreases the natural habitat of pollinators, wild turkey, deer, songbirds, and other small wild animals and other natural ecosystem organisms that rely on greater native biodiversity for survival.

## Swallow-worts Are A New Threat

By Heather Gilbert, Intern  
The Nature Conservancy—Connecticut Chapter

Swallow-worts are perennial vines that survive in shaded habitat, but prefer sunny areas such as fields and roadsides.

They tend to grow in clumps with multiple stems. Swallow-wort seed pods mature in late summer and release a downy seed that is dispersed by the wind.

Swallow-worts are closely related to native milkweed species and attract Monarch butterflies. However, butterfly larvae, which develop naturally on native milkweed, cannot survive on swallow-wort.

The plants can form extensive patches that crowd out native plants, disrupting natural succession and altering the physical structure of those habitats.

Thick infestations in full sun can produce up to 2,000 seeds per square meter. In Groton, Pale Swallow-wort is displacing two rare native plants; Scotch Lovage and Yellow Thistle.

Early identification allows for easy control and removal. Small infestations may be removed by digging. (Get out the full root system.) Or remove seed pods before they mature.

Even mowing/cutting in July, when there are small, immature pods on the plants can prevent seed set. Check the area a few weeks later, and cut again if needed. Hay with swallow-wort, if harvested in late summer, may aid in its spread.

### Identifying Swallow-worts

**Swallow-wort** leaves are oval shaped with pointed tips, 3-4 in. long, occurring in pairs along the stem.



#### Black Swallow-wort

Black Swallow-wort flowers have shorter petals and appear dark purple to black.



#### Pale Swallow-wort

Pale Swallow-wort has clusters of small, star-shaped flowers with 5 petals, and are creamy pink to reddish brown in color.



Address Service Requested

# The Lyme Land Conservation Trust

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## Lyme Land Conservation Trust Calendar of Events

All events subject to change. Consult Upcoming Events page at the Lyme Land Trust website [www.lymelandtrust.org](http://www.lymelandtrust.org) for latest information.

### JUNE

Saturday June 4 - 10 AM

#### Trail Hike

#### New Beebe Preserve

National Trails Day

&

Connecticut Trails Day



#### SPECIAL KIDS EVENT SCAVENGER HUNT!



The Beebe trail is a moderate 1-mile loop that leads past beautiful stone walls, wetlands, and woodlands. This hike will be fun for all ages. Open to members and non-members alike. Difficulty -- moderate (Gently rising terrain with the likelihood to encounter occasional obstacles).

Check website for updates & directions.

### JUNE

Sunday June 19 - 2:30 PM



#### Annual Meeting



&

#### “Birds of Prey” Demonstration

Business meeting to elect new directors.

Demonstration of falconry using birds of prey – live raptors, such as eagles, hawks, owls and falcons. The released birds fly high into the sky where they soar overhead before diving back to earth. The falconer will bring various species of birds of prey to show the audience. This will be a wonderful, entertaining and educational event for children and adults.

195 Joshuatown Road, Lyme

**A members only event.**

### JULY

Saturday July 9 — 9 AM

#### Trail Hike

#### The Plimpton Preserve

Peter Weigle and Mary Guitart will guide this walk to one of Lyme’s higher elevations, where the views are wonderful. Moderately difficult trail with steep portions. Park on Sterling City Road and Stone Post Road. Open to both members & non-members.

### AUGUST

Saturday August 13

#### Kayak & Canoe Outing

#### Lord’s Cove

Led by Susan Ballek.

Time to be determined by tides.