

PRESS RELEASE
December 14, 2006

Historic Property Purchased

In an unusual collaboration, two Lyme organizations, the Lyme Land Conservation Trust and the Friends of Grassy Hill, raised funds to purchase a treasured rural field to preserve it from development. The field lies to the north of the mid-19th century Grassy Hill church. The scene, painted in 1900 by the Lyme artist, Guy Wiggins, conveys the sense of community in this early period. In the quiet of a spring morning, the barns of the farm across the street and the parsonage and its apple orchard to the rear of the church, cluster around the church and the hay field.

The scene is remarkably unchanged today, albeit the trees and much brush have grown up in the interim. When news came that the field was going on the market, the neighborhood gathered to address an opportunity to preserve the field and plan for its protection and conservation .The neighbors took their ideas to the Lyme Land Trust, who in turn offered to present a workshop to the Grassy Hill neighborhood.

The Lyman Allyn Museum, which owns Wiggins' painting "Church on the Hill", generously permitted its reproduction in the promotional letter, and it proved an appealing selling point. The plea for help appealed to many town folk as well as to Grassy Hill residents, who all contributed generously to the cause. The final closing took place Thursday, December 14.

The Friends of Grassy Hill, which formed to save the field, will now work with the Land Trust to develop a plan for maintenance. The Land Trust will own the field, and be responsible for its maintenance over time, but the local residents will do volunteer work, and keep a keen eye on the field.

The Lyme Land Conservation Trust was formed in 1966, to conserve the town's natural, scenic and historic land and water resources, and to educate the public about these resources. Since its founding, the Trust has preserved more than 2500 acres, either through conservation easements or outright ownership. This project represents a unique initiative between community and Trust.

For more information about the Land Trust, contact Linda Bireley, president, at 434-9864; or www.lymelandtrust.org; For information about Friends of Grassy Hill, contact Joan Rich 860-434-7091 or Penny Smyth 860-434-3299.