

Lyme Land Conservation Trust Turns 40!

The Lyme Land Conservation Trust, a non-profit group dedicated to helping conserve Lyme's natural, scenic, and historic land and water resources, is entering its fortieth year of existence. The Trust was founded in 1966 by a group of dedicated and far-sighted Lyme residents who believed in the value of preserving the land and heritage of Lyme as a gift for future generations. As part of this mission, and to help preserve the quality of life in the town of Lyme, the LLCT has acquired and managed properties; supported open space acquisition; promoted the scientific study of natural resources; and educated the public.

Today, as it was 40 years ago, the LLCT is an all-volunteer organization. Individuals serve as board directors, educators, Information Technology support, trail stewards and publicists. It is because of the efforts of these many, many dedicated volunteers that the LLCT has flourished over the past 40 years. The LLCT now owns more than 70 properties, totaling over 500 acres, and holds easements on 54 more properties, protecting an additional 1750 acres.

We would like to extend a deep and heartfelt thank you to these volunteers and to the first directors who had the vision, energy and fortitude to create the Lyme Land Conservation Trust. Included below is an edited version of the Minutes from the First Annual Meeting of the LLCT.

Minutes of the First Annual Meeting of the Members of the Lyme Land Conservation Trust, Inc., May 26th, 1967:

The first annual and information meeting of the members of the Lyme Land Conservation Trust, Inc. was held at the Lyme Fire House, Lyme, Connecticut on Friday evening, May 26th, 1967. Sixty members attended.

The President made the following opening remarks, then introduced the speakers and then when all the questions had been answered, the motion was made and seconded that the meeting be adjourned.

[President's Remarks (Frank B. Stephenson):]

Welcome to the first meeting of the Lyme Land Conservation Trust. — An infant that's gotten off to a very exciting start!

You'll be interested to hear that almost one out of every 4 letters inviting Charter Membership brought back a \$50.00 check — more often than not accompanied by an enthusiastic letter.

I don't have to tell you that this is a highly unusual and encouraging response — and it's not that we're such dandy letter writers, but rather that the Land Trust idea is such a sound way of preserving the best features of Lyme.

How did the Land Trust get started?

It was almost a kind of spontaneous generation... Some of us who were particularly interested in Conservation were doing quite a bit of study on the subject — And when you read enough of the things written about Conservation, you begin to find that many of the most constructive and effective local conservation action has been accomplished through Land Trusts.

The fact is that a legally constituted, non-political, non-profit Land Trust can achieve things that can be achieved in no other way. We heard about what Land Trusts in other towns were able to do we asked representatives of those Land Trusts to come and

talk to us and help us benefit from their experience. The more we heard about Land Trusts, the more worthwhile we felt it would be to start one in our town.

After a series of informal meetings last Summer, we were sufficiently encouraged to start formal, legal organization. On October 3, 1966, the Lyme Land Conservation Trust was incorporated, and a Board of Directors elected.

The Directors are:

William Daniells

William G. Moore

Clifford Hall

Frank B. Stephenson

Robert Fiske

William R. Taylor

On November 18, 1966 a meeting of the Board of Directors elected officers of the Trust. The following were elected:

President - F.B. Stephenson

Vice-Pres - William R. Taylor

Secretary - Shirley Moore

Treasurer - Clifford Hall

A person who sends in his membership fee to the Land Trust is not making a contribution to charity – he is joining a group of his neighbors to *work* for the preservation of his own town...

Treasurer's Report – Cliff Hall

[Guest Speakers: Mr. Joe Ward, Chief of the Soil Conservation Division of the State of Connecticut Department of Natural Resources and Agriculture.

Mr. Russel Brenneman, lawyer of the firm, Copp, Brenneman and Tighe of New London, CT. Mr. Brenneman [lawyer for the LLCT] is a foremost attorney on the subject of land gifts.]

...By forming the Land Trust we are in essence saying that we are neither blind to the beauty of Lyme, nor blind to our responsibilities in keeping it beautiful....

In concluding this first Annual Meeting of the Lyme Land Conservation Trust, all of us who have been working to get the Trust off the ground want to thank all of you for your help, your encouragement, and your concrete support. With so many good people behind it, our Land Trust surely must succeed! Thank you, all.