





For general reference only, 10/22/2012

Local News

Lyme adds forest areas

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November 26, 2012

COMMENTS (0)

Two tracts totaling 128 acres dedicated

Lyme - Two recently dedicated forest preserves have added 128 acres of open space here for wildlife habitats and new trails, according to land conservationists.

The Walbridge Woodlands Preserve, bordered by Gungy Road to the west and the Nehantic State Forest to the east, stretches south of the town-owned Hartman Park. The Philip E. Young Memorial Preserve extends below the Woodlands.

Newly marked walking trails run south from Hartman Park through the preserves, which were acquired this year and dedicated at a public ceremony on Nov. 18.

The Lyme Land Conservation Trust acquired the 46-acre Woodlands Preserve with a monetary donation from the Sargent family while the Young family donated the 82-acre Young Preserve to the town, explained Humphrey Tyler of the Lyme Land Conservation Trust.

The Sargent family made the donation and set up a fund for the preserve's maintenance in honor of the late David Sargent, a conservationist, said John Pritchard, the president of the Lyme Land Conservation Trust. The Young family donated the land for the preserve in honor of the late Philip E. Young.

"These two gifts represent acts of extraordinary generosity by the Sargent family and Ruth Young and her family," said Pritchard, adding that such contributions help preserve the town's "largely rural and scenic character."

Some of the lands north of Lyme's Hartman Park across Route 82 into Salem are also protected areas, said Lyme Land Conservation Trust Executive Director George Moore.

"It's an enormous greenbelt from north to south, east to west," he said.

About 9,000 acres of Lyme - approximately 40 percent of the town - can be considered open space, according to Anthony Irving, chairman of the Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Study Committee. By neighboring other natural areas, the new preserves increase the amount of diverse and protected open spaces for wildlife species to thrive, he said.

Ruth Young and her family had wanted the land her father purchased to remain undeveloped. After her son Philip passed away, Ruth and his children, Cathleen and Patrick, wanted to give the land to the town in his memory as a preserve for open, recreational use.

"We're very pleased that this is the way it is going to be used," said Ruth. The family has allotted an additional parcel of land on which the town can build an affordable house, when needed, she said.

Cathleen Young said her late father, Philip, a computer technician for the Lyme-Old Lyme schools, had a giving spirit and enjoyed the outdoors.

"The more time he could spend outside, the happier he was," she said.