

# LYME LAND TRUST BULLETIN

The Lyme Land Conservation Trust

October 2000



Winter on the Eightmile River. Pleasant Valley Preserve.

## SHOULD THE EIGHTMILE BECOME A "WILD AND SCENIC RIVER?"

The Eightmile River Watershed Committee called a joint meeting in June of the land trusts of the towns in the watershed, Lyme, Salem and East Haddam, to learn about the National Wild and Scenic River Act as it might apply to the Eightmile river.

The Watershed Committee is made up of The Nature Conservancy's Connecticut Chapter, The University of Connecticut's Cooperative Extension System (UConn CES), officers and appointed representatives of the three towns. For the past five years, the committee has sponsored a scientific and planning study of the river. Nathan Frohling of the Conservancy and Leslie Kane of UConn CES presented a summary of these findings to the Land Trust's spring forum.

The June meeting was the first for the three land trusts and they agreed that they should jointly explore the merits of the federal program.

### What is the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act?

This program was established by Congress in 1968 to preserve the beauty and free-flowing nature of waterways of national or regional significance. The act aims to offset federal demands for water for hydropower, flood control and irrigation with protection of rivers still in a natural and free-flowing state. It specifically prohibits federally assisted or funded water resource projects that would impede the free-flow of designated rivers.

It encourages local initiatives to protect natural and cultural values, and allows existing uses to continue. It also serves as a tool to build partnerships among landowners, river users, and all levels of government. The act fosters local goal setting and management of the river, and provides a modest annual budget for maintenance and conservation. Application may be made for additional funds for special projects such as land acquisition, drainage improvements, enhanced fish habitat.

There is a three fold classification of rivers which somewhat defy the names: *wild rivers* are those free of impoundments, generally accessible only by trail, and representing vestiges of primitive America; *scenic rivers* are also free of impoundments, with largely

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In 1995 East Haddam, Salem and Lyme, the three towns comprising the Eightmile River watershed, signed a compact to study and make recommendations on protecting this outstanding ecological resource. Since then, the information gathered by the watershed committee has only reinforced the original assessment of the river's significance. This spring the committee voted unanimously to look into Congressional designation of the Eightmile as one of the nation's Wild and Scenic Rivers. To qualify, a river needs to meet several criteria. It must be free flowing with no major impoundments or channel alterations, and it must contain at least one "outstanding remarkable resource". The river must also be deemed suitable in that there is sufficient local interest and commitment to conserve its resources. Following up on a Watershed committee recommendation, the land trusts of the three area towns in conjunction with the UConn Cooperative Extension System and The Nature Conservancy's Connecticut Chapter voted to pursue the idea. This is the first time that the land trusts have worked closely together.

Designation includes a number of steps beginning with the U.S. Congress's authorization to fund a Wild and Scenic River Study. The initial phase of the Study determines whether the river meets the scientific qualification criteria. Next, the Study committee made up of mostly local people and using extensive public input, evaluates existing protection efforts, the issues and goals regarding future river protection and public interest commitment. This information forms the basis for a Management Plan that concentrates on how river resources and issues will be addressed. During the study process which can take two to three years, each town votes as to whether or not designation should go

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"WILD AND SCENIC" continued from page 1

undeveloped shorelines, but accessible in places by roads; and *recreational rivers* are those that are readily accessible, have some development and may have some impoundment or diversion.

#### Stress on Local Application and Management

The two-part process for designation begins with a town request to Congress through the local congressman to authorize a study of the river by the National Park Service (NPS). The work of the Watershed Committee might well hasten this process. The NPS study, paid for through the Department of Interior budget, would develop a management plan based on such information as the effectiveness of local river protection ordinances or open space conservation efforts the flow necessary to sustain native fish, and local water needs, etc.

#### Study as First Step

The study is the first step. The final designation, which brings the protection against federal action or funding that would interfere with the integrity of the river, would only come after local support had been strongly voiced through a referendum or town meeting, and the local congressman requests formal designation.

The river must be deemed "eligible", which the land trusts aim to establish, and "suitable" which means strong local support. Nathan Frohling of the Nature Conservancy who has had experience with the program through the designation of the Farmington river, pointed out some issues which were raised there in seeking public support.

Some landowners were understandably concerned how the program would effect them, and feared any federal acquisition. Frohling explained that this is not a federal acquisition program, and protection of the river would likely enhance property values. The program is based on local consensus and local control, and strong landowner support is key. Frohling asserted.

Public access was another issue, but there is no requirement for such access, and use of the Farmington did not increase with the program. Access could, however, be part of the local planning effort.

When the study is complete and local support has been demonstrated, the study team and local congressman ask Congress to place the river in the Wild and Scenic River System.

#### Why Now?

Lyme residents have long been used

to the lovely and untouched Eightmile River, and might wonder why we need to do anything. In the discussion by the three land trusts, Anthony Irving pointed out that as population inevitably grows in the larger region, developers will be eyeing water sources, and a free-for-all could be detrimental to the river as we know it. Other nearby towns are already feeling pressures for more water. He reminded the groups of how low the river became in last year's drought. At present there is little protection against excessive withdrawal of water from the river.

#### Next Steps

The Land Trusts of Lyme, Salem and East Haddam have begun discussing the designation of the river with local officials, and will soon be explaining the program to the wider audience of riverside abutters and the broader population. It is felt that a request from the three towns would be stronger than that from one town, but designation in one town is not dependent on approval from all. The time frame is short, as it is hoped to introduce a bill in Congress in January to initiate the first study phase. Otherwise there will be a year's delay.

If the study is approved, residents of the town will have ample opportunity to express their views and direct the study to be undertaken with the National Park Service.

#### NEW BOARD MEMBER

Ron Phillipps has joined the board of the Land Trust. Ron is well known in town as the Third Selectman and

member of the Zoning Board of Appeals. He has been developing a site on Mitchell Hill, and donated nine acres to the Land Trust as well as rights of way to complete the Ravine Trail.

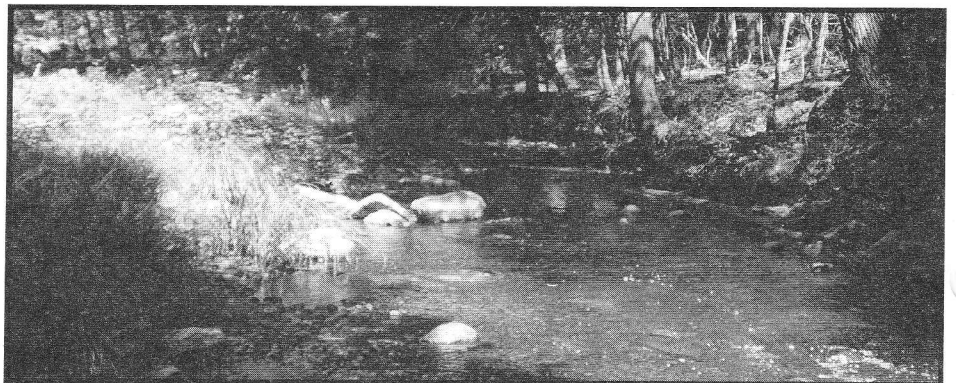
He replaces Mary Catherwood, who retired to chair the Lyme Garden Club.

#### VACANCIES

There will be three vacancies on the board next spring. We urge anyone interested to describe their background and why they would like to join the board, and mail their letter to Box 1002, Old Lyme, 06371. We are interested in a variety of skills: natural sciences, fundraising, publications, knowledge of the town and many other interests.



Chapman Falls, East Haddam



The river in East Haddam Land Trust's Hammond Mill Preserve.



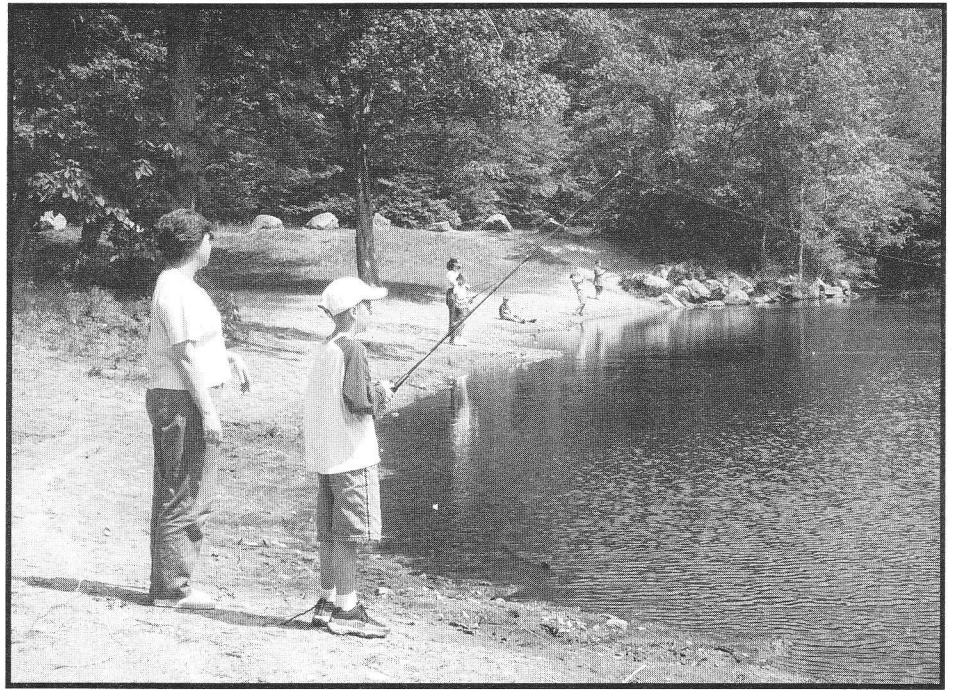
## GONE FISHING

Nine students in the first grade at the Lyme Consolidated School completed the requirements for the Connecticut Aquatic Education (CARE) and are now qualified to fish.

Dr. Linda Bireley, a certified CARE instructor and Land Trust Board Member conducted the course with assistance from fellow Board Member Marilyn Wilkins and Teacher Linda Juras. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Management provided loaner fishing rods and reels, some tackle and all the classroom materials. In addition DEP provided "lawn fish" for students to catch during casting practice.

The material covered the use and care of fishing pole and reel, how to attach hooks and sinkers to the fishing line and how to cast. Students learned about Connecticut fishing regulations and good sporting conduct. During the second class, DEP Fisheries biologist Tom Burrett brought a display of mounted fish and taught the students how to identify them. All the students who participated received a bag of artificial worms as an incentive.

The last day of class was spent fishing at the swimming hole behind the school. The class drowned quite a few worms and lost a few of their own lures, but alas didn't catch any fish. The participating students were: Alison Firgelewski, Josh Firgelewski, Kendall Foxier, Brendan Hallahan, Daniel King, Zef Konst, Brittany Licitra, Eric Mitchell and Sean O'Brian.



*Linda Juras, first grade teacher, Lyme Consolidated School and fishing class at the town swimming hole.*

## PRESERVED JOSHUATOWN ACREAGE GROWS

The Nature Conservancy has purchased the 70 acre Kim-Fellman property on Joshuatown Road, in response to a initiative from the town of Lyme Open Space Committee and the Land Trust. The property lies on the east side of the road, opposite the Conservancy's Selden Creek Preserve and on both sides of the Land Trust's Ravine Trail. It thus links a number of protected open spaces, totaling about 600 acres, for water conservation and habitat protection as well as for human enjoyment. Some years ago the property had been purchased for development.

Noting that the parcel, approved for development, was on the market, Land Trust President Anthony Irving and a Joshuatown neighbor worked with Nathan Frohling, Tidelands Director of The Nature Conservancy's Connecticut Chapter. They secured the support of the town and Land Trust, each of which pledged \$100,000 toward the purchase price and stewardship fund. This strong local backing and other local preservation efforts helped convince the Conservancy board to support the purchase.

Frohling, in a talk to members of the Joshuatown Association, pointed out the important natural resources of the parcel, with its mixed habitat of wetlands, vernal pools, rock outcrops and in addition an

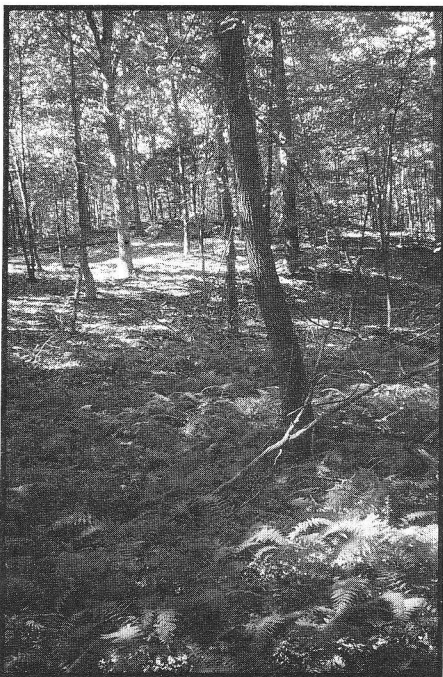
unusual sense of wilderness in what was long a farming town. It is an important contributor to the Selden Creek ecosystem, and thus to the Tidelands of the Lower Connecticut River, a priority for the Conservancy.

The original asking price for the property was \$1.2 million. The Conservancy acquired it for \$800,000 with additional tax benefits going to the owners. While the Land Trust and town pledges spurred the purchase, these pledges, if met, would have reduced the on-hand assets of both parties.

Fortunately good fairies oversaw the project. Barbara David of Joshuatown Road donated \$500,000 to kick off the fundraising, followed by many generous local contributions, and the state has recently awarded \$400,000 to complete the purchase price through its open space fund.

### ENVIRONMENTAL FUNDS

In urging support for the fund for the Kim/Fellman property, Lynn Travis of The Nature Conservancy noted that while Americans donate \$175 billion to all types of charities, only three percent of this sum goes to environmental causes. Gifts are the only source of funds for the Conservancy or the Land Trust.



*A glen in the Annex to the Selden Creek Preserve.*

forward. If voting is in favor, the study committee completes the Management Plan, votes to accept it and recommends designation to Congress. A bill is prepared and if voting in the House and Senate is favorable, it is sent to the President for his signature.

What are the benefits of undertaking the study?

- It is paid for by Congress — not the town, but relies on local control for design and direction;
- The study provides concrete scientific information on river resources — how to sustain them and what potential threats there are now and into the future;
- The study process encourages and facilitates coordination between Salem, East Haddam and Lyme on all issues relating to river management;
- The management part of the study plan relies on extensive local input in that management objectives reflect what each town's citizens want;
- The study is an information gathering and exploratory process. It does not commit any town to go forward with designation.

What are the benefits of Wild and Scenic River Designation for the Eightmile River?

- It allows existing uses of the river to continue while facilitating the protection of its natural and cultural qualities;
- Control of local water resource issues remains with the towns;
- Designation adds a layer of protection against projects that would threaten the free flow of the river such as impoundment, channel alteration and water withdrawal;
- It overrides any future federal programs that would impact the river;
- Federal money is made available for local programs, projects and open space funding with no requirement for federal land ownership or control.

Wild and Scenic designation represents a stand by the community that the river is important and that we feel that alteration of any kind has to be carefully looked at. Proposals whether public or private will have to work especially hard to show that new land and water uses will not adversely impact river resources. Wild and Scenic Designation lets everyone know that this is our river and that we are serious about protecting it now and for a long time into the future.

Anthony Irving



*Opening in forest for new growth and wildlife habitat.*

## THE CONNECTICUT COVERTS PROGRAM

At 6:30 a.m. the sun is shining, birds are singing and it looks like a great day as I decide whether to get up or go for another half hour in the sack. I'm in a small cabin for two in the middle of the woods at the Yale Forestry School in Colebrook, CT attending the "Coverts Program".

Each September the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System, in Cooperation with the Ruffed Grouse Society and Yale Forestry School runs a three day seminar (from Friday afternoon through Sunday) on woodlot, wetland and forestry management for Connecticut land owners and conservation-ecology minded citizens. It consists of morning classroom lectures on woodland management, wildlife habitat, biology, ecology, forestry and financial stewardship programs available in the state.

Afternoons are spent in the field with a state forester, a biologist and a wild-life manager identifying trees and shrubs, locating wild-life habitat, tracing wetland water ways and trail management. After dinner the day's experience is summarized by the Extension Service forester and a lecture or video tape is shown of one or two aspects of the day's learning.

The meals and accommodations are rustic but first class.

Best of all, it is paid for by the UConn Cooperative Extension System and the Ruffed Grouse Society. The program is designed to help owners of larger woodlots to manage and improve their undeveloped land, to educate conservation-minded individuals who wish to learn more about woodland ecology.

Landowners learn how to manage their property to accomplish their own specific objectives such as: scenic preservation; wildlife improvement; recreational usage; timber sales for income; waterway improvement and a variety of other uses.

If you are a landowner who would like to preserve the wilderness and yet could use some extra income, the Coverts Program would offer alternatives and show you how. If there were a stand of sugar maples near an accessible roadway, you could lease it seasonally to a local sugar maker. Cutting mature timber trees to prevent crowding or to provide needed wildlife open space could result in a nice profit for both you and the licensed forester you hire to do it. Clear cutting is vastly misunderstood and doing so in patches, particularly when leaving seed trees, can greatly improve your forest for generations to come.

Participants learn about evaluating their land, trail building, erosion control, natural bridge building and a variety of other wood craft projects. Upon completion you become a Coverts Co-operator. You serve as an adjunct to the state foresters in advising other land owners of the options they have, financial aid stewardship programs and how they can improve their land. In return you have to agree to be a co-operator for one year. Doing this is both rewarding and fun.

To get invited to the Coverts Program, write to Steven Broderick, UConn Cooperative Extension Forester at Cooperative Extension Service, 139 Wolf Den Road, Brooklyn, Ct. 06234.

Russell Shaffer,  
Land Trust Board Member





Old Stone Bridge in Hartman Park

## HARTMAN PARK: DID YOU KNOW?

By Carol Hardin Kimball

Most Lyme residents know that in 1988 John and Kelly Hartman magnanimously donated 302 acres of prime, varied habitat on Gungy Road to the Town of Lyme for recreational purposes. They also had previously gifted 60 adjacent acres to the Town of Salem. Because Hartman Park borders the north section of Nehantic State Forest, it significantly extends that Green Belt of unfragmented forest. Over the past twelve years birders, bikers, hikers, strollers, photographers, cross-country skiers, Scouts, and children of all ages have reaped the benefits of their generosity, exploring the area's ten miles of trails - year-round, from dawn to dusk.

It's also widely known that, in addition to its natural beauty, Hartman Park abounds with evidence of three centuries of land use including a saw mill, miles of stone walls, 17th century stone foundations, and a curious network of stone enclosures called "Three Chimneys" (perhaps the remains of one of Lion Gardiner's forts?), cairns and charcoal kilns.

But did you also know that...

- Hartman Park needs our financial support? In addition to donating the land, John and Kelly Hartman created The Hartman Park Endowment Fund, with \$20,000 initial seed money. The sole use of its income is to reimburse the Town of Lyme for park maintenance expense. The Hartmans also hoped that visitors, too, would wish to contribute to the park's upkeep through the endowment. To encourage such gifts, they committed to match all contributions, up to \$1,000 per person, thereby doubling their impact.

A number of people have sent gifts, often accompanied by an appreciative note (embarrassingly, they've mostly been grateful out-of-towners.) The endowment fund has grown, but — as pointed out in Lyme's 1999 Annual Report — contributions are lagging and income is insufficient to cover

the Town's modest expense. Probably this stems from a simple lack of awareness. The Hartman Park Endowment Fund is administered by the Community Foundation of Southeastern Connecticut. Tax deductible contributions can be mailed to the Foundation, to the attention of Alice Fitzpatrick P.O. Box 769, New London, Ct. 06320.

- *The Heritage Trail, A Walk in Hartman Park* is available at North Cove Outfitters? Marianne Pfeiffer's 30 page booklet details the archeological sites along the three mile trail and points out natural history highlights including unusual geologic features humorously named Laughing Rock, Bald Nubble, Turtle Rock, Snout, and Coyote Cliffs. The cemetery with its unmarked gravestones provides a poignant note. Early impoverished settlers are probably buried there, along with other marginalized folk - paupers, slaves, Native Americans and tenants of absentee landlords.

- In 1998 1,737 visitors signed the Registration Book — nearly three times 1994's number? Bob Buyak, part-time Park Superintendent, estimates that at least 2,500 visited in 1998. Many don't notice the Registration Book (on the Bulletin Board at the open air School Room/Picnic area) or simply fail to take a moment to sign. Bob, who maintains the trails and generally monitors all Park activity, notes that there has never been any serious vandalism.

- Hartman Park is included in the 1996 Fourth Edition of the Hardy's *50 Hikes in Connecticut*? It, too, is available at North Cove Outfitters.

- The Heritage Trail is only one of seven trails created by Marianne Pfeiffer and Jeanne Thomson, as volunteers in their "spare" time? They spent a decade laying out the ten miles, then flagging, cutting and attaching colored tin markers. They still hand-color each of the trail maps, available at the Lyme Town Hall. They also created the tiny booklet "Gnomelet, The Mini-Elf" to guide small children along the green Childrens Nature Trail. It provides clues to discovering the Fairy Circle, Bunny Rocks, Leprechaun's Cave, or the Root Trolls. The Gnomelet also alerts young explorers to miniature natural phenomena they might encounter such as baby spiderlings riding on their mother's back, or a red eft "waiting to grow up into a red spotted newt."

- "Letterboxing" is alive and well in Hartman Park? Introduced in England to encourage people to explore the Dartmoor moors, letterboxing is now an international activity combining hiking, clue-solving, orienteering, and treasure hunting. The Park has several frequently visited letterboxes; more are planned. Information about letterboxing is available at its Connecticut Headquarters at Eastern Mountain Sports in the Crystal Mall, as well as on line at [www.letterboxing.org](http://www.letterboxing.org)

Phil Miller, Director of Ivoryton's Bushy Hill Nature Center and board member of the Essex Land Conservation Trust, is a long-time fan, visiting Hartman Park many times each year. In addition to leading bird walks for the Potapaug Chapter of the National Audubon Society, Phil annually teaches natural history at the park's open air School Room to groups of Home Schooled children, as well as to the Lyme/Old Lyme 4th graders.

He comments, "the Park is a marvelous facility and one of Connecticut's better birding areas where you might observe least flycatchers and cerulean warblers. It combines wetlands, upland forest that has reverted back from agricultural use, vernal pools, and vanishing open-field habitat beneath the power lines. It offers, as well, unusual archeology sites such as the cemetery. The Hartman family is to be commended on their conservation ethic."

## CALENDAR

**Saturday October 28, 10 a.m.** A tour of the recently preserved 300 acre Firestone property on Salem Road, in the towns of Lyme, Salem and East Haddam. Anthony Irving, ecologist and Ralph Lewis, state geologist will lead the group. Meet: At Sisson Cemetery. From Rte 156, turn onto Salem Road, go 1.2 miles (just past 90 Salem Road). The Cemetery is on the right, somewhat above the road.

## FINDERS SHOULDN'T BE KEEPERS

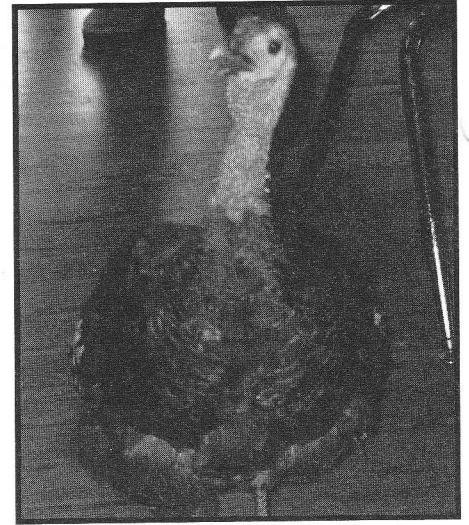
State Archaeologist Nicholas Bellantoni gave an overview of his discoveries and professional responsibilities at the Land Trust Annual Meeting in June. He stressed the importance of pinpointing the location of any found artifacts, as the context is far more important than any monetary value of the objects; indeed the most worthless looking shards can often be significant in determining the way of life of early inhabitants. He urged that any "finds" be reported to his office.

While he could not divulge specific sites he has studied in Lyme, Bellantoni noted that he had found five Indian sites along Beaverbrook, others on Hamburg cove, and Seldon Island with a total of 55 sites identified in the town. Some of these date back a thousand years, while in the state as a whole, there are sites indicating habitation 8,000 years ago. These digs indicate the native diet, type of housing, contemporary animal species and other

insights into an earlier way of life. There are also prehistoric fossil sites.

Bellantoni's explorations include colonial sites. As anyone digging a garden in Lyme may know, our ancestors threw their garbage out the window, into the swamp or lilac bush, where the remains indicate how our ancestors lived. Most recently there are studies of the New-Deal-era Civilian Conservation Core (CCC) camps in the state.

The meeting was enlivened by a tame turkey which settled down in the central aisle to hear the talk — perhaps hoping to hear about its ancestors.



*A visitor to annual meeting.*

### JOIN NOW

If you are not already a member of the Lyme Land Conservation Trust, won't you consider joining. Send tax deductible contributions to Box 1002, Lyme CT 06371. Be sure to include name and address.

Contributions to the Stewardship / Acquisition Fund also welcome. Consider including the Land Trust in your will.

Senior .....	\$5.00
Family .....	20.00
Contributing .....	50.00
Individual .....	10.00
Subscribing .....	25.00
Sustaining .....	100.00

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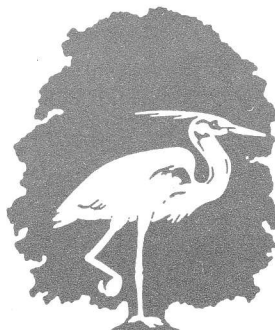
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### *The Lyme Land Trust Bulletin*

is published several times a year by the Lyme Land Conservation Trust, Inc. as a matter of interest to its membership and to the general public in Lyme. Readers are invited to direct questions and suggestions to Joan Rich, Editor, at 434-7091.

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