

LYME LAND TRUST BULLETIN

The Lyme Land Conservation Trust

Spring 2001

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

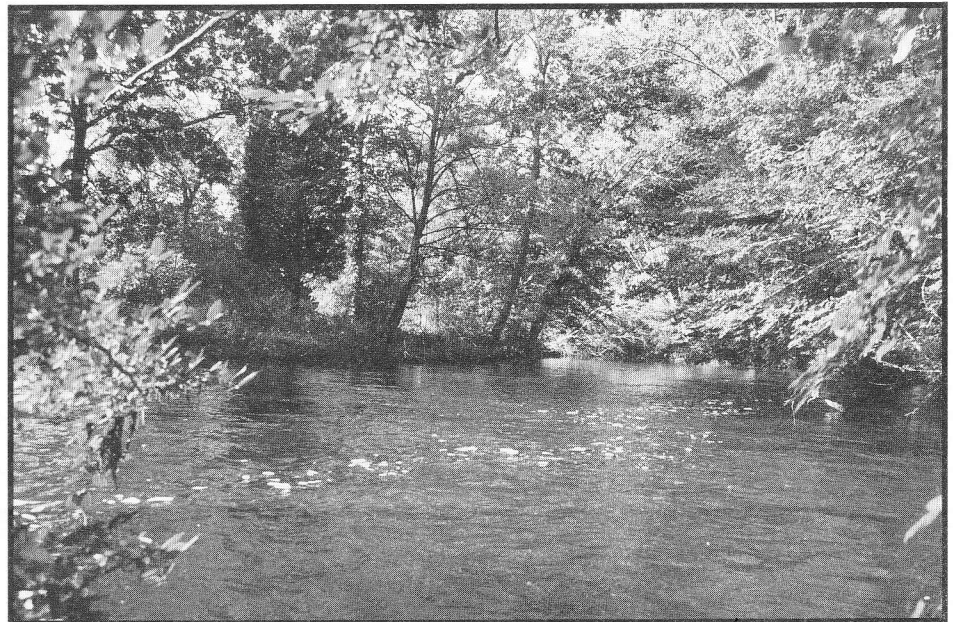
We made an interesting discovery at our house last year. Starting in January we kept a record of our household recycling efforts. As always we took our paper, cans, glass, plastic and cardboard to the town-recycling center, but now we weighed it first. Garbage was also weighed before being put out every Friday night for collection, as was the kitchen waste we threw into the compost every day. By year-end we were shocked to learn our two-person household had produced nearly 1600 pounds of trash - over three quarters of a ton. The good news was that only 460 pounds was thrown out. The balance, over 70%, was recycled.

Did you know that our country accounts for about 5% of the world population, but we consume one quarter of the natural resources used worldwide? Imagine how much we could reduce this consumption if we recycled 50% or more of our waste. With a recycling rate of 25% Connecticut citizens are already among the best recyclers in the country. But we can do better and the effort really needs to begin at home.

Along this recycling vein is there a lesson here that relates to land trust conservation goals? In some ways there is. What recycling means is that something is used over and over again. Another way to look at open space protection is to think of it as "land recycling".

This doesn't mean the land has to be locked up and left alone. Traditional land uses such as forestry and agriculture, when practiced in an environmentally sound manner, minimize the impacts to natural resources, creating a high level of land recycling. Other practices, however, can be more deleterious. Colonial farming methods, especially grazing, were responsible for huge amounts of erosion and runoff filling the wetlands and waterways and stripping the soils of their productivi-

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A calm pool in the Eightmile River

SIMMONS SUBMITS BILL FOR RIVER

"Mr. Speaker, today I introduce my first legislative initiative - a bill to study the inclusion of Connecticut's Eightmile River as part of the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System." So spoke Rob Simmons, newly elected Congressional Representative from the Second District. He had also gained the support of Connecticut's other Congressmen, and is working with Senator Christopher Dodd to introduce a parallel bill in the Senate.

Last fall the land trusts of Lyme, Salem and East Haddam, under the guidance of Nathan Frohling, director of the Tidelands Program of The Nature Conservancy, studied the provisions and benefits of the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1965. Convinced of its application to their goals for the Eightmile River, the board members set forth to gain support from the selectmen of the three towns and other key groups to seek designation.

After the November election, they approached Rob Simmons, who embraced the idea. The bill he submitted to the House of Representatives, H.R. 182, is an amendment to add the Eightmile River to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and requests the Department of the Interior to study the river in accordance with the requirements of the Act. A Senate bill must also pass.

Just the First Step

If the funding is approved, the National Forest Service, in conjunction with a local advisory board, would assess the river's ecological value, ascertain the degree of support in the three towns for a final designation, and develop a management plan. This could be a several year process, although work already completed by the UConn Cooperative Extension System should hasten the process. There will be ample opportunity for public involvement. A final designation would require a second Congressional vote.

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HILLES MAKES A THIRD DONATION

Frederick W. Hilles Jr. has donated a conservation easement on 31 acres of woodland to the Land Trust. The property runs 1773 feet along the eastern side of Old Grassy Hill Road. Approximately 12 acres are in the town of Lyme, 19 adjacent in the town of East Lyme.

This is the third donation Mr. Hilles has made to the Land Trust for a total of 111 acres. By donating an easement (called a conservation restriction in Connecticut law) a property owner gives up the right of development but retains other uses for the land while protecting the ecological resources. He keeps ownership of the land and receives a tax benefit for a charitable gift at the value of the development rights. An easement does not confer public access, but benefits the public by protecting open space and rural quality.

An earlier donation also protects the west side of the road from development, from the East Lyme border almost to Grassy Hill Road, making this one of the most rural in Lyme. With stately tulip poplars close to the road edge and no telephone poles, the road recalls the earlier, narrow country lane.

The donation is also important by adding a significant link to other open spaces on Grassy Hill, thus creating wildlife corridors. To the north are some 60 acres donated some years ago by William Beebe: to the East is the very large Yale University property in East Lyme; this in turn links to the protected land owned by Richard and Shirley Rosseau.

The property includes the highest point on Grassy Hill. A fragipan lower layer of soil makes water drain slowly, creating patches of wetland, and wetland related tree species, red maple, white ash, tulip poplar and black cherry.



Tulip poplars line Old Grassy Hill Road

SAVE THE DATE

This year's Annual Meeting will be Friday, June 8 at 7:30 at the Lyme Public Hall in Hamburg. After nominations and awards, the meeting will hold a discussion on the Lyme Town Plan of Conservation and Development recently completed by the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Association.

This document is more than a general expression of town sentiments. It provides the rationale and teeth for zoning ordinances that will be based on its goals, and provides greater strength to town decisions or any court challenges that might occur. "We hope our fellow residents will give it careful consideration," remarked Anthony Irving.



Jim Thach on one of many rock outcroppings

A DOUBLE BRUSH HILL PARCEL

In a first for the Lyme Land Trust, two neighbors have worked together to donate easements on about 57 acres along the lower slope of Mitchell Hill, thereby preserving a quarter mile of rural scenery along Brush Hill Road, about opposite to the town land.

James and Margaret Thach of Mitchell Hill have contributed 32 acres with reservation of one building lot. Mr. Thach is chairman of the town's Open Space Committee and comes from a long-time Lyme family. He said forthrightly, "I decided it was time to put my money where my mouth is!"

Elevations on the property range from 100 to 190 feet, with numerous rock outcrops. On the higher sections fine, sandy loams predominate, which foster red, black and white oak and black birch. There is also a variety of other species including white ash, tulip poplar, yellow birch, mockernut hickory and beech.

Drainage from the slopes create a large wetland system, with a stream, its associated wetlands and two vernal pools. Red maple and ash are the upperstory, while tussock sedge and sphagnum moss create small islands which support the trees. Blueberry, sweet pepperbush and winterberry make up the understory.

Many years ago, Mr. Thach began a systematic program of forestry management, working with a qualified forester to take advantage of the natural sequence of forest development. The first phase, 25 years ago, entailed extensive cutting of mostly older trees, leaving some dead ones for woodpeckers. The forest then was in poor health, and the cutting opened space for new growth to diversify the age and species of the woodland. This was, Thach said, profitable both to him and the forester.

There was second lighter cutting a few years ago, and the next one will come in another quarter century.

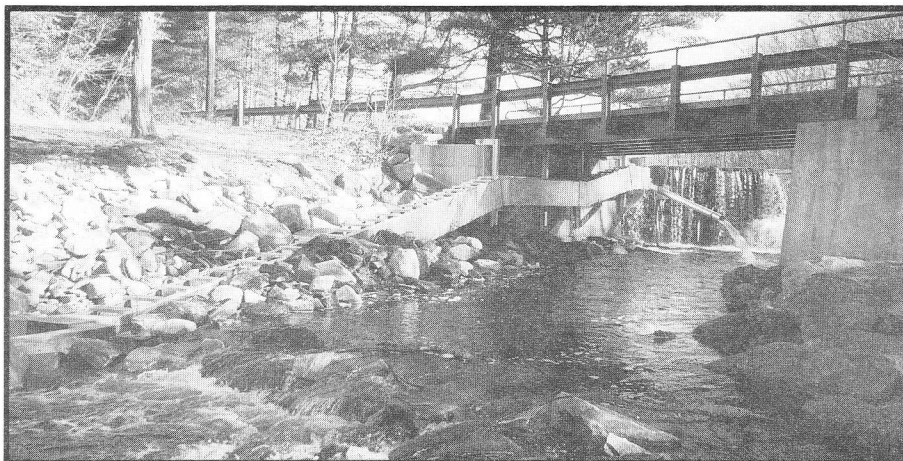
Neighbors Talk

James and Betsy Morgan are likewise conservation minded and have for ten years loved the seclusion and wildness of their 28 acre homesite. They agreed that they never wanted to see another house nearby, and when Jim Thach broached the easement idea, they saw the solution to their problem. The easement will cover all their land but for 2.5 acres for the homesite.

The Morgan land is a so-called "flag lot" behind the Thach property. Both the houseslot and the preserved land are reached by a narrow strip from the road. The border of the preserved parcel on the north is the small brook/wetland marking the valley between Mitchell and Brush hills. The terrain and flora are similar to those of the Thach property. The two easements will protect the wildlife of this watershed land.



Putting in the fishway



The completed fishway

ED BILL'S POND FISHWAY OPENS EAST BRANCH

This past fall, the Lyme Land Trust cooperated with a private landowner, non-profit organizations, businesses and state and federal agencies to complete construction on Lyme's newest fish ladder, the one at Ed Bill's Pond on Salem Road. For the first time in hundreds of years, migrating fish like alewives, blue-back herring, American shad and Atlantic salmon have a way over the Ed Bill's Pond dam to the upper reaches of the East Branch of the Eightmile River, all the way to Salem.

June Maynard, owner of the dam and the property on which the fishway is located, donated an easement for the fishway. Tom Maloney, Connecticut River Steward for the Connecticut River Watershed Council, took the lead on the project, coordinating activities with all the parties such as the land trust, raising funds from a variety of sources, and dealing with the engineers, biologists, and the contractor. "We are most appreciative of the hard work by Tom and the Watershed Council for the assistance to the land trust," explained land trust president

Anthony Irving, "we could not have pulled off this project without their involvement."

The land trust also is very grateful to Nathan Jacobson of Nathan L. Jacobson & Associates, Inc., a civil and environmental engineering firm in Chester, who donated engineering services for the design of the structure. The firm also managed the construction, which started in late October and was complete by the second week in December. The CT DEP/Fisheries Division provided technical assistance.

Funding was provided by: The Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership (CWRP), Pfizer Corporation, Fish America, the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Environmental Protection Agency and National Marine Fisheries Service.

The Lyme Land Trust holds the easement and will monitor the fishway, in conjunction with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Fisheries Division (CT DEP). Although the property is not open to the public, the fishway can be easily seen from the bridge

on Salem Rd. just east of its terminus with Rt. 156.

"The first year the Ed Bill's Pond fishway operates we don't expect to see any spring migrations of river herring, shad or salmon", CT DEP fisheries biologist Steve Gephard explained to Linda Bireley, Lyme Land Trusts' steward for the property. "It will take a few years for populations of these fish to expand into the reaches of the Eightmile River between the Moulson Pond Fishway and this one. This first year, we should monitor the fishway primarily for resident species of fish and to ensure it remains free of trash and water flows through it freely", Steve explained. The CT DEP and the Lyme Land Trust have agreed to monitor the fishway jointly from March 15 through July 15, and October 15 through November 15 each year. The fishway will be closed during other periods.

"I hope a few residents might be interested in joining the Moulson Pond Fishway stewards to help monitor this new fishway. Even though we might not see any migratory fish at Ed Bill's Pond this year, we could see some resident fish like white suckers, yellow perch and trout," Linda added. Stewards can expect to spend 10 to 15 minutes observing fish and clearing any trash from the top of the fishway each time they visit the site. Visits can be scheduled at the steward's convenience. If you would like to become a fishway steward and help record the success of this and future fish ladders in Lyme, contact Linda Bireley, 60 Mt. Archer Rd., Lyme, 434-9864, email: LindaBIOTA@att.net.

Current Fishway Stewards: Linda E. Bireley, Karen Dahl, Judy and Tom Davies, Fritz Gahagan, Sue Hessel, Anthony Irving, Chris Juhl, Prescott Littlefield, Chris McCawley, Betsy and Jim Morgan, Bobbie Nidzgorski, Jean and Valinn Ranelli, Polly Richter, Dave Williams, and Bob Wood.



The East Branch of the river

THE PURCELLS ADD TO PROTECTED AREA

Bradford and Ellen Purcell have added 8.5 acres to the land already protected on their 82 acre Tantomorum Road property. This segment is located on the west side on the road, about 1500 feet south of the road junction with Mt. Archer and Brush Hill Roads. It was one of the approved building lots in their three-lot subdivision.

A previous owner of the land donated a 19 acre easement five years ago, and a subsequent donation by the Purcells added a further seven acres for a total of 34 protected acres. Collectively these segments make a major contribution to resource conservation in the Mt. Archer area. To the north, the Purcell land abuts the 24 acres on Brush Hill Road which Peggy Clucas donated to the Land Trust in few a few years ago. Across Tantomorum, lies 200 acres formerly belonging to the Eno family. Of these, the Land

Trust now owns 100 acres as the Eno Preserve. Another 50 acres has been protected by Dr. Paul A. Armond, jr. who will build one house. Mac Godley owns the remaining 50 acres.

The first protected segment of the Purcell property consists of open field, woodlands and wetland, while the recent addition is a rocky hill. Here the soils are primarily droughty as they receive little upland runoff. The vegetation is therefore dry-loving plants, with red and white oak, black birch and beech in the overstory, and laurel, huckleberry and some highbush blueberry in the understory. Overall in the protected areas, there is a variety of habitats.

The remainder of the 82 acres is divided into two lots, of which the Purcells house is one. The other lot to the west of the new easement area is also owned by the Purcells.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *continued from page 1*

ty. This was a bad job of recycling and one of the reasons for the decline in New England Agricultural activity that led to the western migration in the 1800's.

Development is the biggest threat to land recycling today and has long term consequences that far exceed the land use degradation of colonial farming practices. Unlike the recycling center where waste is remanufactured into new products, once the land is developed it's very difficult to turn it back into productive open space. Obviously, people need places to live. But as we all know when hearing about sprawl and the need for smart growth, we are not doing a good job of preserving the land. Each new home or business, road or parking lot means another piece of the land is lost and can't be recycled for future generations.

This is the reason that land trusts were originally formed. Farsighted people realized that we need strategies to conserve

our open spaces and cultural heritage. Conservation easements, bargain sales, gifts and purchase can all succeed so that land trusts and landowners can together protect the land. But what has made the movement so successful, especially in Lyme, is that the awareness and desire to recycle our open spaces is shared by so many landowners.

To date about 30% of the land in Lyme is in permanently protected open space. This is one of the highest recycling rates in Connecticut, but is it high enough? Nothing would give the land trust board greater satisfaction than to close down our operation because we as a town had successfully protected all the important parcels of open space. But there is a ways to go, and we don't have much time. Even with all the wonderful accomplishments of so many in Lyme we still have a job of recycling to do.

Anthony Irving, President

TREASURER'S REPORT

The year 2000 was a good one for the Land Trust as measured in terms of finance, membership and acres protected.

Operating income exceeded expenses by nearly \$36,000, which was added to the Acquisition Fund. Additionally the Fund benefited by significant gifts from three generous donors.

Income rose by 17 percent to more than \$43,000 thanks to the increase in dues and interest income of 32 percent and 16 percent, respectively. Expenses in 2000 were lower than in 1999, which included a grant to another organization towards the purchase of land in Lyme, and a professional survey of the Chauncey Eno Preserve. These were large expenditures.

Looking forward to 2001, income is projected to be the same as in 2000, with somewhat higher expenses due to cost increases and provision for another grant.

Membership reached 575, a remarkable 15 percent increase over 1999, representing nearly 50 percent of Lyme families. The size of the representation sends a strong message that protecting the rural and historic character of Lyme is a priority

for residents. Interestingly, the percentage of membership is probably the highest in Connecticut.

Land owned by the Trust, or under easement protection totaled 1728 acres, an increase of 66 acres compared to 1999.

Thanks to the continuing generosity and support of the residents of Lyme, the Land Trust enjoyed an excellent year and is looking forward to an even better 2001.

Robert W. Barney,
Treasurer

OPERATING BUDGET		1999 actual	2000 actual	2001 plan
INCOME				
Dues		13,675	18,040	18,000
Interest		11,563	13,368	14,400
Matching Gifts		3,205	2,929	3,100
Private Gifts		8,075	8,567	7,500
Other		500	500	500
Total		37,018	43,494	43,500
EXPENSES				
Programs		2,797	2,949	3,525
Education		535	478	725
Stewardship		424	145	250
Assn dues		600	600	650
Insurance		838	894	1,000
Postage		930	1,205	1,300
Fees, Admin.		1,036	1,268	1,625
Other		3,554	61	2,175
Total		10,714	7,600	11,250
Surplus (Deficit)		26,304	35,894	32,250
OPERATING DATA				
Membership		501	575	—
Land owned, acres		418	418	—
Land easement, acres		1159	1225	—



On the flood plain field of the Firestone land

AN AUTUMN DAY OUTING

On a brisk, sunny October day last fall, the Land Trust led the first organized public walk on the Firestone property off Salem Road. This 300 acre site, which straddles a border between two towns was acquired by the state with the financial help of the towns of Lyme and East Haddam, The Nature Conservancy and the East Haddam Land Trust. The Lyme Land Trust was instrumental in writing the grant application and the planning.

Standing in the charming, small Sisson Cemetery which is on a hillock above the road, Ralph Lewis and Anthony Irving of the Land Trust gave an overview of the geologic history and the ecological changes of the land as it was used by the

Indians, the colonists, later farmers and the recent reversion to woodland. The group then entered the large flood-plain field below the cemetery before breaking into groups to explore the rocky hills and wetlands of the property. There was not time to walk the mile of the East Branch of the Eightmile River which runs along the southern edge of the field.

The Firestone land has become a state forest. There are no plans for further development at the moment as the state is using its money for open space acquisition. However, old logging trails offer easy access through the area. Tiffany Farms will continue to cultivate the large field.



Walking a Firestone lumber trail

HOUSEKEEPING DUTIES

The Stewardship Committee has completed some needed housekeeping projects on Trust lands. Building a stonewall looks an easy task until you try it. Somehow those odd shaped chunks just don't fit together. But board member Linda Bireley assisted by Ed Bireley and Tom Wing did the trick in repairing the wall at the entry of the Eno Preserve on Mt. Archer Road.

As stewards for The Nature Conservancy-owned Pleasant Valley Preserve, the Land Trust replaced the rotting bridge that crossed the small brook on the green trail. Board members Ralph Lewis, Russ Shaffer, Anthony Irving welcomed the assistance of volunteers Anthony Sullivan, Hugh Taggart and Alvin Von Wagganen as they hoisted the old bridge away and put together a new one. Like the bridge at the entrance, this one is made of Enviro Board, a recycled plastic material that looks like wood, is long lasting, and is more environmentally kind than pressure treated wood.

The crew also created a short-cut from the south arm of the green trail to the field on the north arm by laying stepping stones across the brook above the new bridge. It is hoped walkers can now keep their feet dry. Marilyn Wilkins has added to the amenities with a new bench in the field.

We are saddened to learn of the recent death of William Beebe who was an early and generous benefactor of the Land Trust, donating outright 75 acres in 1987-90. We send regrets to his family.

A JOINT MUSEUM. LAND TRUST EVENT

In conjunction with its current exhibit on the Lyme artists, the Florence Griswold museum has invited the Lyme Land Conservation Trust to participate in one of several events related to the show. As Director of the museum, Jeffrey Andersen, pointed out these artists were primarily landscape driven. The show itself focuses on pure landscape, people in the landscape, human changes to the landscape.

After some discussion how to convey this in a real setting, the two organizations agreed to focus on Guy Wiggins' painting of the Grassy Hill Church, titled "Church on the Hill". While the artists painted many scenes of woodlands, pastures, rocks, laurel bushes and other features of the two Lymes, few of these

scenes are now readily identifiable. But the Church has changed little, and provides an opportunity to explore the many ways to read a landscape, and what it was like to live in that landscape at the beginning of the century when the painting was made.

Mr. Andersen will discuss the painting itself, and refer to salient remarks made at the time for further insight. Anthony Irving, Land Trust president and trained ecologist, will explain how the land has been used over time, and the changes this has brought about.

The event will be held at the Grassy Hill Church. The tentative date is July 1. For further information nearer the time, the museum website is: www.flogris.org.



Mountain Laurel, a frequent artists' theme

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.

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

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

SIMMONS continued from page 1

If the Eightmile is designated a Wild and Scenic River, existing uses would remain the same, but the river would be protected from any federal action, such as dams or water diversion, or funding of such projects by others, that would threaten the free flow of the water. Local authorities would continue to determine land uses and control water resources. Federal funds would become available for management and special river improvement projects.

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The Lyme Land Trust Bulletin

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