

# LYME LAND TRUST BULLETIN

## The Lyme Land Conservation Trust

*Mission: To preserve the quality of life for Lyme residents by protecting the natural scenic and historic land and water resources of the town and by promoting public education and scientific study of these resources.*

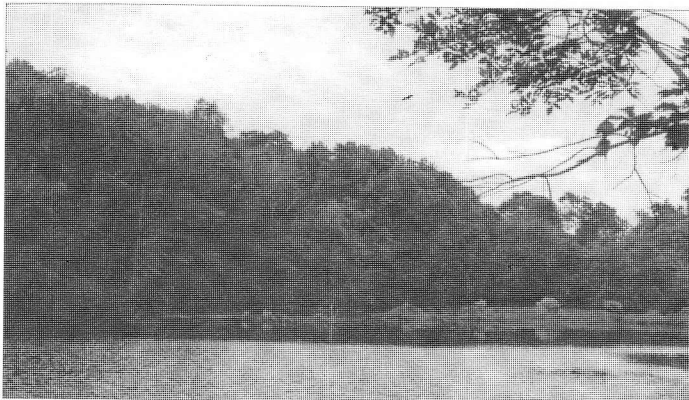
Fall 2003

## Maynard Easement Protects Fish and Wildlife in the Eightmile River Watershed

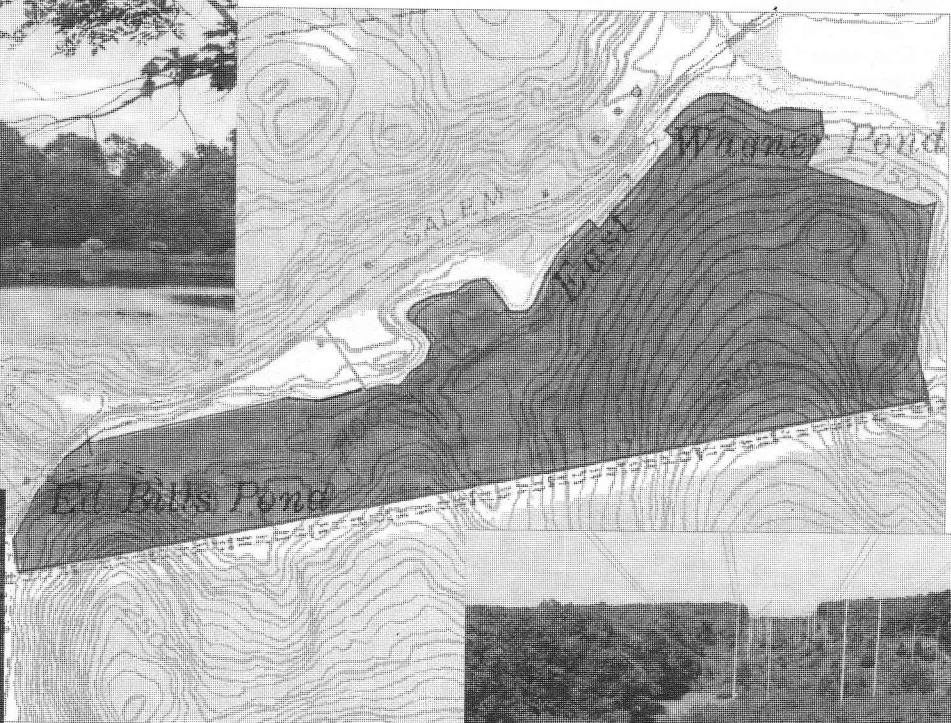
In July 2003, the Lyme Land Conservation Trust received a conservation easement from June E. Maynard on approximately 142 acres located on the southerly side of Salem Road in the north central part of Lyme. The easement ensures that the parcel will remain undeveloped, that its plants, animals and natural communities will be conserved and its ecological integrity will be maintained. "I would like many future generations to continue to enjoy what I, my family and friends have been able to enjoy for many years," said June. "Mother Nature is the Greatest Show on Earth."

The easement covers two parcels of undisturbed mixed hardwood forest, lowland hardwood forest and river buffer along approximately 3000 feet of the East Branch of the Eightmile River. It includes the Ed Bill's Pond, which is the home to a beaver family and one of Lyme's three fish ladders. It also includes a utility right-of-way corridor that is maintained in a permanent "old field" habitat. This habitat contains a distinct community of vegetation, which is not often found in forested environments and provides valuable habitat for many birds and

wildlife species. Remarkably, these now protected parcels are nearly surrounded by other protected properties. The State-controlled Firestone Property lies along the northeastern boundary and the entire one mile long southern boundary abuts 300 acres already under conservation easements held by The Nature Conservancy and the Lyme Land Trust. Thus the easement on these parcels ensures larger habitat areas will remain unfragmented and will contribute to protecting the special nature of the Eightmile River (see Wild and Scenic Update).



Ed Bill's Pond (EBP)



Utility right-of-way maintained  
in "old field" habitat

Old road into  
hardwood forest



Maynard Easement, south of Salem Road

## Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Study Update

By Kevin Case

### Community Meetings Successful

The members of Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Study Committee expanded their efforts to inform municipalities and their residents of the goals and processes of the Eightmile River Wild and Scenic Study by conducting three Public Outreach and Participation sessions in the months of May and June of 2003.

The meetings were held May 19 in Salem, June 13 in Lyme and June 23 in East Haddam. The agendas included an introduction by the First Selectman and a presentation on the Wild and Scenic Study followed by questions. In Salem, Ralph Lewis, Connecticut's State Geologist, provided a short presentation on the unique geology of the region and in East Haddam, Nick Bellantoni, Connecticut State Archeologist, made a short presentation on the cultural/archeological features in the watershed.

Overall, approximately 180 people attended the meetings in the three towns and provided comments in two primary thematic areas: Study Process issues and River/Watershed Protection issues. All of the comments and questions are very important to the Committee and will be helpful as the study progresses. A detailed summary of the comments will be available in early September on the Committee's website [www.eightmileriver.org](http://www.eightmileriver.org)

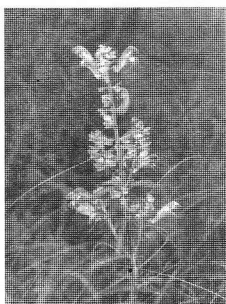
### "Eligibility" Research Moving Ahead

In other news, the Study Committee is focusing on completing the "eligibility" piece of the study, describing what makes the Eightmile River Watershed special and therefore eligible for inclusion in the national Wild & Scenic Rivers System. Research is centering on six areas of distinctiveness including geology, water quality, instream flow, unique species, cultural resources, and the rare condition that the Eightmile River Watershed appears to be an intact naturally functioning system.

One component of the research has resulted in some interesting new information on the botany of the area. The Committee has retained the services of a professional botanist to perform field research, in areas where access is granted, on the unique botany of the watershed and to also assist in mapping the area's natural communities. Overall the research has resulted in a 50% increase in the known state listed (i.e. rare, threatened or of special concern) plant occurrences in the Eightmile Watershed. See related photo for an example of a local botanical gem.

It is anticipated a draft eligibility report will be brought to the public in the winter of 2004, with ample opportunity for public comment and input on these preliminary findings.

Questions, comments and input are always welcome. Please contact either Study Committee Chair Anthony Irving at (860)434-2390 or National Park Service Project Manager Kevin Case at (860)738-1092.



*Scutellaria integrifolia (byssop skullcap)* Until discovered during the Eightmile River botanical survey, there were only two other known populations of this purple-flowered summer perennial in New England. Those known populations, both in Connecticut, occur on unprotected land and are threatened by succession and lack of management. The population newly discovered in the Eightmile River Watershed is larger than the other two, it exists on protected land, where it can be more easily monitored and managed if necessary, and it is in more stable and favorable environmental conditions. Given this discovery, this species has substantially better prospects of survival in New England.

Photo credit: Bill Moorehead

## IN A NUTSHELL

● The ecological sustainability of river ecosystems is threatened by the extensive hydrologic alterations carried out by humans.

● Despite the strong conceptual basis for sustainable river management, scientists are challenged to define ecosystem needs clearly enough to guide policy formulation and management actions that balance competing demands and goals.

● An alternative model of collaboration between scientists, managers, and other stakeholders to perform large-scale river experiments is emerging around the world.

● Innovative funding partnerships between government agencies, not-for-profit foundations, and the private sector are required to advance the scientific basis of water management.

*Reprinted with permission from the Ecological Society of America, from Poff, et al. 2003, "River flows and water wars: emerging science for environmental decision making" in: Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment, 1 (6): 298 - 306.*

**Editor's note:** Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment, is a monthly publication from the Ecological Society of America that aims, among other things, to provide important scientific information to policy makers, resource managers and other decision makers. The main points of articles that review and synthesize recent research in ecology and related disciplines are summarized "In a nutshell" to allow the non-specialist to quickly understand them. From time to time a "nutshell" relevant to a particular *LLCT Bulletin* article will be placed in a "sidebar", to enhance the reader's understanding of the issue. For more information, the reader is encouraged to visit [www.frontiersinecology.org](http://www.frontiersinecology.org).

## Fifth Graders Plant Trees to Commemorate Earth Day

Lyme Consolidated School's fifth graders celebrated Earth Day by planting evergreen trees. Lyme Land Conservation Trust Board members Marilyn Wilkins and Marta Cone provided trees and planting instructions and the students planted seedlings on the school grounds. Students learned what conditions trees need to grow strong and healthy and were allowed to take two trees home to plant and nurture.







*Approximately 60 people attended the Annual Meeting of the Lyme Land Conservation Trust at the Lyme Public Hall on June 13, 2003. At the meeting President Irving reported on the Land Trust activities during the past year, and the membership elected three new Board members (see below). The members also heard a presentation on the Wild and Scenic designation process and provided input to that process (see page 2 for status).*

## NEW BOARD MEMBERS

At the annual meeting you elected three new members to the Board of Directors, Templeton Brown, Emily Lerner and George Moore.

**Templeton Brown** spent 40 years in the Chicago area before he and his wife moved to the Sterling City section of Lyme. "This is an exciting community to live in and I would like to do what I can to help preserve its character and beauty," he said. Temp has a lifelong and profound interest in the natural surroundings that grew from his boyhood experiences in rural Missouri and later experiences fishing in Wisconsin and canoeing in Canada. He and his wife Suzie enjoy paddling their way from their property into Hamburg Cove. They played a key role in putting together a group that enabled the Land Trust to purchase what is now the Sterling City Preserve.

**Emily Lerner** grew up on Becket Hill and, when she and her husband moved into one of her family's houses last November, her one-year old daughter became the fifth generation to live on their property. "Returning to live on the land where I grew up has encouraged me to become actively involved in protecting the integrity of the landscape of our

town and region," she said. Emily inherited a deep sense of stewardship for the land from her family—her grandmother transferred 260 acres abutting the Nehantic State Forest to the state, and her father is an ecology professor. In addition to her formal education in ecology, agriculture and social change, Emily has lived and worked on farms in Massachusetts, Maine, Oregon and Israel and participated in many community groups, developing skills of cooperation and communication.

**George Moore**, of Joshuatown Road, has owned property in Lyme for some time but became a full time resident two years ago. George commented, "Our love for this town and the realization that it is special kept us from selling and transferring while we worked elsewhere." He is currently self-employed after gaining considerable executive experience in companies that manufacture professional photographic equipment. George brings to the Board good oral and written communication skills that he acquired developing newsletters, news releases and advertising copy. He enjoys the outdoors, especially sailing, and is looking forward to stewarding some of the lands of Lyme.

## George Trescher Leaves Land Trust \$50,000

When George Trescher, a consummate New Yorker who lived in Manhattan and maintained a residence on Bill Hill Rd., in Lyme, died in early June, he left \$50,000 to the Lyme Land Conservation Trust.

Mr. Trescher was known as a formidable fund raiser who, over three decades, organized glittering fund raising celebrations and other special events for some of New York's top charities and companies. Among the nonprofit organizations he worked for were the Juilliard School, the Shakespeare Guild, the Animal Medical Center, New York Presbyterian-Cornell University Medical Center, the New York City Opera and Vassar College. His corporate clients included the New York Stock Exchange, The New Yorker, Time, Esquire and The New York Times.

The Lyme Land Conservation Trust is grateful to have been remembered in this way.

## President's Message

When the land trust protects land as open space, we do so for a variety of reasons: to preserve the rural and historic character of Lyme, to save natural resources, and to ensure that traditional uses of the land are retained such as agriculture, forestry and recreation activities. Sometimes, however, this effort appears to conflict with other community concerns or priorities. For example:

Does preserving open space drive up land prices because there is less land available?

Does protected open space raise surrounding property values, driving up real estate costs?

Does preserving open space make Lyme unaffordable?

When the town spends money on open space, is this the best use of taxpayer dollars?

Don't we have enough open space?

The answers to these questions center on market forces and town priorities. The first has to do with supply and demand. Lyme is one of the last remaining rural outposts in the region. In fact, Lyme may be the last rural, near-coastal community between Boston and Washington. Add in its natural beauty and proximity to the Connecticut River, and its real estate appeal is unmistakable. And our real estate values will only increase as development surges in neighboring towns. Between 1980 and 2000 Salem's population shot up 65% (from 2,335 to 3,858) and East Haddam's jumped 48% (from 5,621 to 8,333). During the same period Lyme grew 11% (from 1,822 to 2,016). Lyme is becoming an anomaly in our suburbanizing landscape, which makes it only that much more desirable for those trying to escape the homogenization that plagues so much of the state. There is a dwindling supply of rural land left in the region, whereas the pool of prospective buyers continues to grow.

So on the one hand open space does contribute to higher real estate values because it adds to the town's worth as a rural commodity within a region succumbing to sprawl. Lyme's desirability as a place to live outside of the area's larger suburban context puts a premium on land values. And because there are no other towns in the area like it, the demand for land outweighs the supply. However, open space preservation by itself is not what is driving land values higher. It is because so much of Lyme still remains in private ownership and there just is not much land available for development.

If over time all property suitable for development was put on the market,

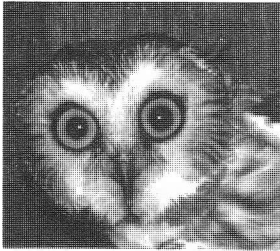
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## Wind Over Wings' Raptors Charm Young and Old



Standing room only crowd at workshop featuring Wind Over Wings.

On March 22, 2003, five fascinating raptors from Wind Over Wings enraptured and educated over 170 people who crowded into the Lyme Public Hall to attend the Lyme Land Conservation Trust's annual spring workshop. The raptors were accompanied by certified wildlife rehabilitator Hope Douglas, founder and president of Wind Over Wings, and volunteer Sue Farlow. Wind Over Wings, Inc. is a nonprofit, wildlife rehabilitation and education center.



"Teddy", a Saw-Whet Owl was the first bird of prey to charm the audience. Hope described these tiny owls as

primarily nocturnal and particularly fond of mice. She also commented that although they are the size of a beer can, they have the personality of a bank president.

Commercial companies do supply food for birds of prey in rehab. One company is called "Gourmet Rodent" and is located in Florida.



**Queen Solomon**, a five year old Great Horned Owl, fascinated the audience next. These are the largest owls in New England and call "who-ah-whoo, who-ah-whoo".

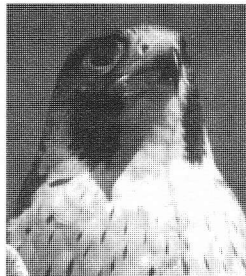
"Sollie", as she is known to friends, fell out of her nest and was "rescued" by

a well-meaning human. The baby owl imprinted on the human, didn't learn to hunt or who to "marry" and cannot be released into the wild.

Great Horned Owls have exceptional senses. One ear is located higher on the head than the other allowing the owl to pinpoint sound precisely. The bird can also read the bottom line of an eye chart from one mile away. However, it must move its whole head to see a different direction. This is because their eyes are so large for gathering light, that there is no room left inside their heads for muscles to move the eyes from side to side. To compensate the birds can move their heads 270 degrees.

A Great Horned Owl might live 40 years in captivity, but only 20 years in the wild. One reason they don't live as long in the wild is the owls may die eating rodents that have been poisoned but not died.

All owls fly silently because their feathers have fringe. When the audience asked, "Sollie, flap your wings", she did and the motion was silent.



"Isis" is a Peregrine Falcon that hatched in Hartford about two years ago. During a dive for food, she was hit by a car and her wing didn't mend properly.

Because Isis can't fly well enough to catch food, she cannot be released.

Peregrine Falcons are the fastest animal on earth and designed for speed. During a dive they can reach 240 mph. The dark spots under a Peregrine Falcon's eyes reduce glare from sun in the same way the dark spots under football player's eyes help.

Peregrine Falcons were extinct east of the Mississippi 30 years ago because DDT affected their eggs, which softened and broke under weight of an adult bird. Once the DDT was eliminated from the environment, the Peregrine Falcon population has been recovering. Cities make great habitat for peregrine falcons because the buildings are similar to cliffs that falcons prefer for nesting and the abundant pigeons are a good source of food.



"Noah", a Bald Eagle, was born in Unity, Maine in the spring of 2001. He was only a few days old when he fell from his nest, fracturing his skull and permanently damaging all vision in his left eye. Remarkably, his parents did not abandon him. They fed him on the ground until he was rescued and brought to Tufts University in Massachusetts. Noah was given a CAT scan, which showed severe head trauma. In spite of the seriousness of his injuries, Noah began to respond to medical treatment and caring individuals. Because of his

injuries, his head drifts and is blind in one eye. Since he is still immature, his head is dark—it will get white in four to five years.

Bald Eagles are found throughout North America and can be as large as 16 pounds. They are scavengers and steal from other birds of prey. Immature Eagles stay with their parents a long time and are known to play with toys. Some items that had been found in nests included a baseball, light bulb, a candle in the shape of an egg and golf ball. In captivity eagles can live 50 years, but only 25 years in the wild.

Volunteers provide fish for the eagles. Some farmers also provide sheep. It costs \$1000 per year to feed an eagle.



Wildlife rehabilitator Hope Douglas with Golden Eagle, Skywalker

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## Fragmented Forests Could Raise Risk of Lyme Disease

Recently researchers found that patchy woods, common in cities and suburbia, may have more Lyme disease carrying ticks than other forested areas. Felicia Keesing, from Bard College and her research team reported in the February 2003 issue of *Conservation Biology*, that forest fragments may contain fewer species than continuous habitat but that some of those species may fare better in these fragmented habitats. Lyme disease carrying, blacklegged ticks appear to be one of these species.

They conducted their study in Dutchess County, which is located in southeastern New York and is the location with the highest number of people infected with Lyme disease in the United States. The research team studied blacklegged ticks in 14 forest patches made up mostly of maple trees, and ranging from 1.7 to about 18 acres. Forest patches that were smaller than three acres had an average of three times as many ticks than did larger fragments and seven times more infected ticks. As many as 80% of the ticks in the smallest patches were infected, the highest rate the scientists have seen.

The results suggest that creating forest fragments less than five acres increases the risk of Lyme disease. It also indicates that human health can be affected by the local ecology and by land-use practices. The National Science Foundation funded the research.

### WIND OVER WINGS...continued from page 4

As a special bonus for the Lyme Land Conservation Trust audience, Hope brought a Golden Eagle, the "King of Birds".

"Skywalker" had been intentionally shot and left for dead in Nebraska. The bird was rescued, but its left wing had to be partially amputated. The Raptor Recovery Center in Nebraska requested that he come to Wind Over Wings because of his exceptional personality and Wind Over Wings' orientation towards training. Wind Over Wings staff do not withhold food, and all resident birds are free in their aviaries as opposed to being tethered to a perch on the ground. Upon arrival, "Sky" appeared to be suspicious of people. After 2½ years of being read to, touched and coaxed, Skywalker finally trusted humans enough to go on a glove.

Golden eagles like to hunt live food rather than scavenge like bald eagles. Their favorite food is rabbit.

Want to learn how you can help?  
Visit <http://www.windoverwings.com/>  
or <http://www.raptor.cvm.umn.edu/>

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE...cont'd from page 3

land values in town would still be high, and we would be just another suburban town, albeit a lovely one, but not a rural one. If Mount Archer Farms had made it to the marketplace, there would have been 27 new homes and there would have been nothing affordable about them. Remember, within a 20 year period, population in East Haddam rose by 2700 and by over 1500 in Salem. In fact, in 1970 Salem's population was less than Lyme's.

Outside of preserving traditional land uses and the town's historic and cultural resources, a primary land trust mission is to protect the landscape for all species. Conserving our natural resources is vital if we are to maintain intact and functioning ecosystems. Each species requires a certain quality and quantity of habitat. The large blocks of connected open space in Lyme are key to the survival of the great wealth of birds and other animals that would be otherwise absent in a more suburban setting. This is one of the reasons why the land trust is working with the Eightmile Wild and Scenic River Study Committee, to coordinate protection efforts beyond town borders. Connecting our open spaces both inside and outside of town means that species such as bobcat, fisher, coyote and bear have sufficient suitable habitat and that these areas are connected for dispersal and migration. A few isolated individuals does not constitute a viable population, and if we do not maintain their habitats and keep them connected their long-term survival is doubtful. Open space protection is critical to their success.

Taken as a whole, preserving open space is a guarantee that pieces of our historic, cultural and natural resources will remain into the future. If we believe that retaining these values is truly important we have to invest in them. This does not mean that the purchase of open space should be our only priority, but up until the town's participation in the acquisition of Mt. Archer Farms substantial town funds had not been required for open space protection. At the same time, over the last 5-8 years, the State, The Nature Conservancy, The Lyme Land Trust and private individuals spent over \$4,000,000 for open space protection in Lyme. And this does not include the hundreds of acres of gifts of land and conservation easements that Lyme citizens have made. The point is that, until recently, taxpayers have not been called upon to financially endorse these efforts. But when asked, as seen by the wonderful turnout and overwhelming support at the town meeting to expend funds for Mt. Archer, it is evident the town cares deeply about its open spaces.

But at what point do we say we have invested enough in open space? It

depends upon our goals. Although Lyme appears relatively static from a development perspective 142 housing permits were issued over the last 10 years, not including the 27 lots that were approved for Mt. Archer. If we are to anticipate the impact of incremental growth on the town's future it is necessary to look ahead 25 to 50 years. It is when we start to think about what 700-1000 new homes can mean to our community that the need for targeted open space protection becomes so apparent. Lyme is growing and our vision of the future has to take this growth into account.

The good news is that we have done much already to protect the natural resource landscape and rural character we enjoy today. In fact about 35% of Lyme is in protected open space. This may sound like a lot, but it isn't enough. To appreciate why, consider Cape Cod. If you have been there recently you may have come away dismayed by the fragmentation, congestion and the loss of character...and yet one third of Cape Cod is protected.

Lyme is blessed with both natural resources and a community willing to protect them. Indeed, we are one of the few towns remaining for whom the option to preserve rural character even exists. And while, undeniably, there are other community concerns we must address, including the need for affordable housing, these concerns need not be in conflict with the overarching goal to save our open spaces. Once gone, they are lost forever.

## Volunteers Needed

The Lyme Land Conservation Trust is always interested in including enthusiastic volunteers in the challenging and rewarding work of conserving open space. While there are many tasks to be done, the following are priorities:

**Board of Directors:** We have one opening to complete the term of a member who had to step down. After the appointed term finishes, the appointed Board Member would be elected at the next Annual Meeting to serve a three year term. The Board meets bi-monthly and helps oversee existing properties and acquire new ones. Submit letter of qualifications to Russ Shaffer, Nominating Comm. Chair, 68 Brockway Ferry Road, Lyme, CT 06371, 434-2527.

**Newsletter:** Are you a photographer? A writer? We would love to include your work in our Bulletin. Call Linda Bireley, Newsletter Editor, 434-9864.

**Education Committee Workshops** Do you have some interest or knowledge related to conservation or the natural landscape? Would you like the opportunity to share it? Contact Emily Lerner, 434-3626.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Fall Field Day  
October 4

### People's State Forest in Barkhamsted

Connecticut Forest & Park Association and the Connecticut DEP are holding a Fall Field Day to celebrate 100 years of state forests and all the good things connected to them. For more details see <http://www.dep.state.ct.us/burnatr/forestry/centen/centennial.htm>

### Mt. Archer Dedication

Saturday, October 25, 10 am

The recently acquired open space at the crest of Mt. Archer will be dedicated at an on-site ceremony. This town sponsored event will feature refreshments and several speakers. Come one, come all and celebrate our accomplishment.

### Lyme Land Conservation Trust Fall Walk November 1, 9:30-11:30 am

Anthony Irving and Ralph Lewis will lead an informational hike on the Ravine Trail. Participants should park at the Selden Preserve on Joshuatown Road. Rain date is November 2. Contact Prescott Littlefield at 434-7758 for directions to the start.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### LYME LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

Anthony Irving, *President*

Ralph Lewis, *Vice President*

Anthony Sullivan, *Treasurer*

Linda Bireley, *Secretary*

Templeton Brown      Emily Lerner

Thomas S. Childs, Jr.      Prescott Littlefield

Marta Cone      George Moore

Judy Davies      Betsy Morgan

Steven Hoyt      Russell Shaffer

### 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 Linda Bireley, Editor, at 434-9864.

## Using SNET Long Distance Supports the Lyme Land Conservation Trust

If you are a SNET long distance subscriber, you can now designate the Lyme Land Conservation Trust to receive, as a donation from SNET, 5% of your monthly long distance charges at no cost to you. Simply call SNET at 1-800-635-7638, give them your 13 digit account number plus the code number 3855, and designate the Lyme Land Conservation Trust to receive the donation.

## 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 a name and address.

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

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

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*Don't miss the  
Mt. Archer Dedication!*

## LYME LAND CONSERVATION TRUST, INC.

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