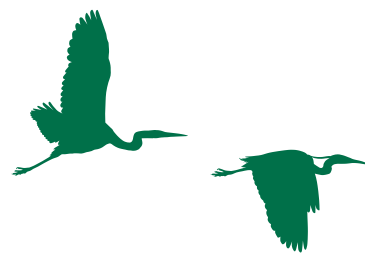


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THE LYME LAND CONSERVATION TRUST

WINTER 2019 NEWSLETTER

George and Rosemary Moore Trail Opens

On December 1, 2018, a ribbon cutting (or rather a grapevine cutting) was held at the Mount Archer Woods preserve for the opening of the newest trail on the Land Trust properties, the George and Rosemary Moore Trail. This nine-mile scenic loop trail honors the Moores' 14 years of service in land preservation in Lyme. The trail follows existing trails in the River to Ridgetop Preserves, passing through several properties owned and/or managed cooperatively by the Lyme Land Trust, Town of Lyme and The Nature Conservancy.

The Land Trust's Treasurer George Lombardino spoke about George Moore's impressive accomplishments during his tenure as Executive Director, including the protection of hundreds of acres of open space, the accreditation of the Land Trust by the national Land Trust Alliance, the expansion and systemization of the stewardship program, the Land Trust's fiftieth anniversary celebrations, and the production of a nationally-aired video for PBS.

"George specialized in strategic and operational sciences, which he relentlessly applied to drive progress and eliminate inefficiencies," Lombardino noted. "In addition, he improved oversight and corporate governance, and strengthened



Land Trust Director Emeritus George Moore, his wife, Rosemary, and their son Chris cut the grapevine to open the Moore Trail. Photo by Mary Guitar.

relationships with key supporters and foundations, especially as Federal and State grants declined."

In closing, Lombardino said, "It took visionaries like Rachel Carson and Roger Tory Peterson to stem the tide of destruction and redirect our focus to conservation. On a local level I think George Moore displayed some of the same courage and foresight in protecting Lyme and guiding your Land Trust toward the future."

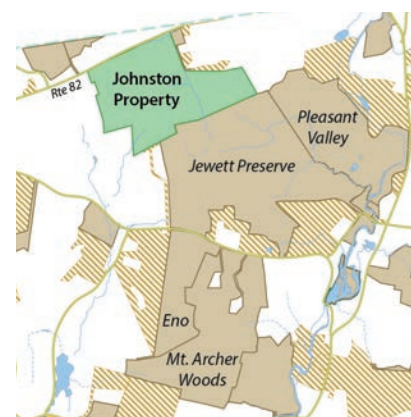
Johnston Property: New Open Space in Lyme

By Anthony Irving, *Land Trust Director*

Just in time for the holidays, the town received matching funding from the state's DEEP Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Fund towards acquisition of the 251-acre Johnston property in north Lyme. This grant, along with funding from the town's open space reserve fund and a contribution from The Nature Conservancy, made it possible to purchase this upland forest that straddles three watersheds, including the federally designated Eightmile River Wild and Scenic River System. The Land Trust prepared and shepherded the state grant application on behalf of the town.

This is a variable landscape, ranging in elevation from 200 to 465 feet—the highest point in Lyme. Due to the property's ruggedness, vernal pools, upland wetlands and spring seeps dot the landscape. There is a small canyon running north to south,

continued on page 3



Johnston property (green); other Lyme open space properties (brown) and conservation easements (striped).

Enhance Your Habitat for Birds and Wildlife

By Wendolyn Hill, *Land Trust Director*

In 2016, Audubon Connecticut, in partnership with Connecticut DEEP, recognized the Lyme Forest Block (LFB), as a landscape-scale Important Bird Area (IBA). This 60,000-acre block includes wooded areas in Lyme, East Haddam, Colchester, Old Lyme, East Lyme, and Salem. It contains habitats important to the cerulean warbler and wood thrush, whose populations are declining drastically, and supports a variety of other woodland-nesting birds identified in Connecticut's Wildlife Action Plan.

Audubon Connecticut, the Lyme Land Conservation Trust, the Town of Lyme, the Eightmile River Wild and Scenic Watershed Coordinating Committee, The Nature Conservancy, other regional land trusts, and other organizations, are joining forces to build awareness and promote stewardship of the Eightmile River, the Lyme Forest Block, and the bird species that these habitats support.

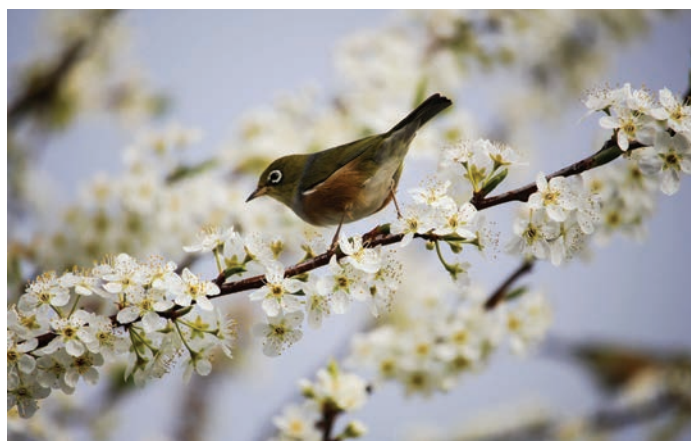
The project's goal is to engage landowners in the IBA, give them information about natural resources, and encourage them to actively participate in conservation efforts. Intact forests and other healthy habitats provide ecosystem services, from cleaner air to the psychological benefits provided by access to natural spaces. The variety of habitats in the LFB, and connectivity between those habitats, provides a wider area for species to thrive, and to adapt to climate change.

As part of a series of presentations being given over the next year, CT DEEP wildlife biologist Peter Picone presented an informative program last fall at the Lyme Public Hall about changes that individual landowners can make to increase habitat for forest birds and other wildlife. Even a small parcel can have an impact on wildlife populations.

The top priorities for good habitat are food, water, and shelter. These can be tailored to the specific needs of the bird or animal species you wish to attract, or for a diverse variety of wildlife.



Cerulean Warblers breed in the high canopy of forests in the eastern United States and migrate to the Andes in the winter. Breeding Bird Survey data estimates that their populations have declined 70% since 1966 due to habitat loss. *Photo by Charlie Trapani / Audubon Photography Awards.*



White Eyed Vireo

Members of each species have unique requirements for land area. While the wood thrush requires 30 to 50 acres of maturing forest, the robin is perfectly content with three to five acres. Turkeys have a territory of four square miles, while top predators have more extensive space needs. Even with the large amount of preserved forested land in Lyme, a fragmented landscape broken up by cleared lots with houses and manicured lawns makes it less hospitable. Landowners can minimize the effect of fragmentation by creating a corridor between favorable habitats.

Adding even a few native trees and shrubs to your yard can be beneficial, as they provide the most nutritious food: leaves, nectar, and seed. Some that are easy to grow and attractive to song birds include flowering dogwood, black cherry, viburnum, serviceberry, sweet pepperbush, and highbush blueberry.

Many species of birds and other pollinators rely on grasses and herbaceous plants that grow in open meadows. Consider reserving only a small area of lawn for regular mowing, and allow the rest to grow into a meadow; or carve a meadow area out of your woodlands. Native and beneficial plants will eventually populate the field on their own, but you can get a head start by planting native species such as milkweed for monarch butterflies; or purchase a pollinator seed mix to plant a butterfly garden. Plant native flowers among non-natives in your ornamental gardens. Learn to recognize the native plants that are already growing on your property and let them be. Nurture the many beneficial native plants that are often considered weeds, including staghorn sumac, goldenrod and aster. Native plants attract butterflies; their eggs hatch to become caterpillars that feed on the plants, which is a great way to attract birds. In landscape management, use chemicals sparingly, if at all, to avoid polluting the environment and damaging the birds' health.

You will need to be vigilant in keeping invasive plants from creeping into your plantings. (See more information in our "Invasive of the Season" feature.) Removing them once they have taken hold is difficult but not impossible. Bittersweet is a particularly persistent invasive. Unfortunately,



Audubon volunteers working on invasive plant removal/forest habitat conservation. *Photo by Maddie McGarvey / Audubon*

some invasive plants, such as Japanese barberry and winged euonymus (burning bush), are still available for purchase in nurseries. Avoid any plants that are considered invasive and be vigilant about removing them from your property. You can find a complete list here: cipwg.uconn.edu/invasive_plant_list/

If there is not a water source nearby, provide a bird bath or other water feature. Bird feeders benefit birds by offering an alternative food source when natural supplies are scarce. Use high quality feed and place the feeder near vegetation that provides protection for birds. It is recommended that you suspend feeding in the warmer months if bears are in the area.

Vary the height of vegetation to provide a variety of shelters for wildlife. Many species require dense thickets created by mid-story shrubs and berry bushes to provide protection from predators. Consider creating thickets of native plants, such as winterberry and black chokeberry, along the edges of your woodland. Piles of brush and fallen branches can provide similar shelter. Native evergreen trees, such as red cedar and white pine, provide cover for birds in the winter.

Tall grasses and plants in meadows furnish places for many species to shelter from the late spring to fall, while they raise their young and forage. Other animals require mature forest with high canopies. Native white and red oak provide valuable upper story shelter, as well as nutritious food. Dead trees or snags provide nesting places for owls and other wildlife. You can find more information about native plants here: <https://www.audubon.org/native-plants>

More information about the LFB: <http://ct.audubon.org/lyme-forest-block-conservation-project>
<http://ct.audubon.org/lyme-forest-block>

Johnston Property: New Open Space in Lyme continued from page 1

surrounded by steep outcrops and ledge. Rising 200 feet from floor to ridge top, this deep ravine creates drainage from the headwater wetlands down to the Eightmile River.

Most of the property was pastureland until its abandonment over 100 years ago. The land was then purchased in various parcels between 1924 and 1932 by Henry Selden Johnston, a lawyer from New York. Signs of the property's varied past management, including a selective timber cut from 40 years ago, are shown by the presence of old woods roads and stonewalls. The forest today grades from a mix of hardwood species on lowlands to mostly white oak and scattered red cedar on drier upland sites.

All wildlife requires a mixture of resources, and the Johnston landscape is notable for its variety of ecological niches. When looked at together with the surrounding open space, its significance is greatly magnified. In Lyme alone, the property is bounded by numerous open space parcels, creating a nearly undivided protected block of over 1,700 acres running from river to ridgeline on the west side of the Eightmile River watershed and extending nearly uninterrupted down to Hamburg Cove and the Connecticut River. These open space parcels connect in turn with a number of others, forming a forested matrix of more than several thousand additional acres.

Since the Johnston property is on the northern boundary of Lyme, its importance is magnified by its adjacency to thousands of acres of open space in East Haddam and Salem. These blocks, when taken together, not only create a complex habitat landscape, but also provide for the extensive home ranges and dispersal needs of our top carnivores, such as bobcat, coyote and fisher. Additionally, Audubon Connecticut recently designated the Eightmile River watershed, including the Johnston property, as its largest Important Bird Area.

Over the next year, the town will implement a trail system highlighting the property's diverse landscape as well as connections with the Jewett Preserve. When seen as a whole, the new 251-acre Johnston Preserve adds a large piece to the puzzle of fostering habitat resiliency on a landscape scale.



Looking south over the Jewett Preserve from Johnston Property. *Photo by Anthony Irving.*

A BUSY FALL AND WINTER!

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1 November opening celebration for the new Thach Preserve on Brush Hill Road, named in honor of Jim and Margaret Thach for their advocacy of open space in Lyme. Photo by Sue Cope.

2 Volunteers learned tips on trail maintenance, invasive plant control and how to track locations for trail reports. Photo by Wendolyn Hill.

3 Volunteer breakfast in October 2018.
Photo by Mary Guitar.

4 New Years walk in Pleasant Valley, and up to the overlook (the whole group appears at the top of the page). Photo by Humphrey Tyler.

5 Parker's Perch: completed in December for Banningwood Preserve's NaturePlace. The custom sit-spot with a view is on the Blue Loop off the upper Red Trail. It was inspired by Parker Lord, and designed and built by Block Design-Build.
Photo by Wendolyn Hill.

6 Tony Irving and Dave Johnston at Johnston Preserve. Photo by Wendolyn Hill.

7 Chi-Wu Su and Mal Karwoski at a November work party in Hartman Park. Photo by Wendolyn Hill.

Calling all Volunteers

“Meet like-minded people, enjoy the outdoors and learn more about our natural environment.”

—Lyme Land Trust volunteer

Did you know that the Lyme Land Trust owns and/or manages over 3,000 acres in Lyme? And did you know that the overwhelming majority of it is cared for by volunteers like you? We want you to know that we greatly appreciate all the support we get from the community. Volunteers are the engine for the organization. We depend upon volunteers to help us accomplish as much as we do . . . and there is always more to do . . .

What's in it for you?

- A chance to meet like-minded people who are working to help the Land Trust and its partners, including the town of Lyme, to fulfill the mission of enhancing the quality of life in Lyme and the larger community by conserving our natural, scenic and historic land
- Learn transferable skills: training in conservation easement and land stewardship, computer and database programs, website updating, office and event organization and management skills
- Add your expanded knowledge to your resume

Interested?

Please visit our Volunteer page on the Land Trust website to find updated volunteer job descriptions. We have opportunities at all levels: from stewardship, trail maintenance, philanthropy, administrative support, and Tour de Lyme, to assisting with events. We welcome any time you can offer. Please fill out our new Volunteer Application Form to let us know your interests. Visit: lymelandtrust.org/volunteer/



Volunteer work party in January at Hartman Park's Stone End House ruins. Photo by Wendolyn Hill.

KNOW THESE INVASIVES

FIRST IN A SERIES

Burning Bush *Euonymus alatus*



Invasive plant species are non-native plants that were introduced from another country and have thrived here. Although birds eat them, they do not provide good nutrition. They compete with native plant species, spread indiscriminately if not controlled, and will eventually crowd out everything else. The best practice is to remove invasive plants from your property before they get out of control.

This alien invasive, planted widely in landscapes for its bright red fall leaves, is also known as winged euonymus. A large shrub (5-10 feet tall), the corky, wing-like ridges on its stems make it easily identifiable in the winter. Wildlife eat and spread its red-purple fruits and red seeds. Young plants should be uprooted. Larger plants can be cut at ground level, but will require repeated cutting of new sprouts. As a last resort, spray small plants with either glyphosate or triclopyr. These chemicals can also be applied to freshly cut stumps of larger plants. Good native alternatives include arrowwood, bayberry, chokeberry, highbush blueberry, and smooth and winged sumac.



Anadromous Alewives Spawning In Rogers Lake

By Mary Guitar, *Newsletter Editor*

On January 9, David Post, Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Yale, spoke at the Rogers Lake clubhouse in Old Lyme. He detailed the research that he and his lab members have carried out over the past 14 years about the effects of landlocked alewives in Rogers Lake on the restoration of migrating (anadromous) alewives in the lake. One of the questions they are studying is will the reunited alewives co-exist and will they reproduce with each other.

Alewives are an important forage fish, providing food for many animals. A federally listed species of conservation concern, they are found from Canada to the Carolinas. Their numbers are now dropping due to habitat loss, dams, predators, and factory fishing.

The alewife population in Rogers Lake most likely became landlocked by the late 1600s, after dams were built for mill power on Mill Brook (which connects Roger's Lake to the Connecticut River) in 1672 and 1677. The dam to create Roger's Lake was built in 1798. Over the last 350 years, the landlocked form of the fish have become genetically different from their anadromous cousins, who used to move up from the Connecticut River to spawn. They are now about 3.5 inches long, while the anadromous form is about 12 inches long. The two types



of alewives have also diverged in spawning times and feeding zones, although there is some overlap.

When a third fishway between the Long Island Sound and Rogers Lake was installed in 2014, it became possible for anadromous alewives to make it all the way from the Atlantic Ocean to the lake. Although this has not happened yet (because the fish are not imprinted to return to Rogers Lake), the restoration was jump-started by stocking the lake with anadromous fish from Bride's Lake from 2015 to 2017.

In 2017, a sampling of juvenile fish indicated that the anadromous and landlocked alewives are coexisting, and that anadromous production is high enough to start the process of restoration. Future sampling will track the numbers of each form to understand how the restoration is proceeding, and to see if alewives that spawned in Rogers Lake and migrated are returning to the lake.



Win/Win Opportunity For You/For the Environment

Are you worried that your savings may run out? Troubled by volatile markets: up one day, down the next? Safe haven bonds that offer minuscule returns?

A charitable gift annuity could offer a solution. A high fixed return for life. Examples of age-based payouts are: 75 (6.2%), 80 (7.3%), 85 (8.3%).

The Lyme Land Conservation Trust offers a charitable gift annuity in partnership with the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut. As a bonus, there are tax savings too.

For an example of what's available just for you, contact Milt Walters at 203-485-6070, or Milton.Walters@LymeLandTrust.org

THE LYME LAND CONSERVATION TRUST NEWSLETTER

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The Tree Collective: Field Notes

By Jane Scheiber, *Lyme-Old Lyme High School student*

The Tree Collective is a program designed to engage young conservationists ages 14-18 in outdoor fun and education, while working to maintain trails in Lyme. It is sponsored by the Lyme Land Trust, as part of the NaturePlace Education program.

In the last few weeks, the Tree Collective has been busy keeping public trails clear throughout Lyme while learning about the land and contributing to a new addition for the Fairy Circle at Hartman Park.

Since our beginning in the fall, we have cleared about fifteen trees, along with an endless number of branches, from the trails of Beebe, Hartman, Ravine, and Brockway-Hawthorne preserves. At Brockway-Hawthorne, we re-routed the purple trail around a wetland area, making for a safer and less muddy passage. Additionally, we headed off invasive species and encountered wildlife.

We learned about hibernation through the discovery of a family of shrews and several salamanders (including the marbled salamander) in an old tree stump. We also found artist's conk mushrooms, among others, and worked on identifying trees in the winter, when the branches are bare. Finally, we learned about land-use history, wolf trees, and red cedars.

At our last meeting we walked the Ravine Trail, and observed ice formations in the mud and cattails in the beaver meadow. Many of the cattails were beginning to disperse their seeds in the wind. Did you know that cattail leaves were used to make rush seats and other woven objects? Most of the plant is even edible! Their rhizomatous root system also provides shelter for waterfowl and other birds, as well as small fish and aquatic creatures that wildlife depend on for food.

We will be donating a kids' picnic table to the Fairy Circle in Hartman Park. We spent our holiday meeting in December painting and decorating the table with natural imagery. It will be placed in the preserve this spring.

The Connecticut Forest and Park Association was kind enough to donate their book *Forest Trees of Connecticut* to the group; each of us received a copy. These books will be very handy in the spring to help us identify trees by type of flowers, seeds, and leaves. In February, we hope to take a trip to the Peabody Museum to learn more about our natural world.

If you would like to join the Tree Collective, please contact Regan Stacey at reganstacey@gmail.com.



L to R, Jack Conley, Calvin Scheiber, Jess Kegley, Will Bartlett, Chase Reneson, Jane Scheiber (not shown).
Photo by Regan Stacey.



LYME LAND CONSERVATION TRUST
PO Box 1002, Lyme, CT 06371

Events Calendar

All events subject to change. Dates and times will be announced by press release and email, and posted on the Land Trust website and Facebook page. Consult the Upcoming Events page at lymelandtrust.org/news/events/ for the latest information.

Snowshoeing at NaturePlace

Sunday, March 10, 10 a.m.

Banningwood Preserve, Town Street, Lyme

Please join us at NaturePlace for snowshoeing through a winter wonderland with Lyme Land Trust Executive Director Kristina White. Bring your snowshoes and a bottle of water. Weather permitting. Please RSVP to stewardship@lymelandtrust.org with a way to reach you in case we need to reschedule.

Supermoon & Spring Equinox Bonfire at Diana's Field

Wednesday, March 20, 6:00-8:00 p.m.

Banningwood Preserve, Town Street, Lyme

Join LLCT Environmental Director Sue Cope for a Spring Equinox bonfire (with marshmallows, of course!). A Supermoon is due to rise at 5:40 p.m. With a little luck in positioning and weather, this will be a really neat wrap on winter! Weather pending. RSVP to stewardship@lymelandtrust.org with a way to reach you in case we need to cancel.

Bird Walk at Hartman Park

Saturday, April 27, 8:00-10:00 a.m.

Hartman Park, Gungy Road, Lyme

Join us for a bird walk featuring woodland birds in Hartman Park, part of the Lyme Forest Block Important Bird Area. An Audubon expert birder will show us a diverse selection of bird species, including the worm-eating warbler, wood thrush and cerulean warbler. Don't forget your binoculars! Contact email: openspace@townlyme.org. This event is part of the Lyme Forest Block Project (see article pg 2). Check for more upcoming regional programs: <http://ct.audubon.org/lyme-forest-block-conservation-project>

SAVE THE DATES

2nd Annual Earth Day Festival

Sunday, April 28, 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Banningwood Preserve, Town Street, Lyme

Tour de Lyme 2019

Sunday, May 19, starts at 8:00 a.m.

Ashlawn Farms, Bill Hill Road, Lyme • TourDeLyme.org