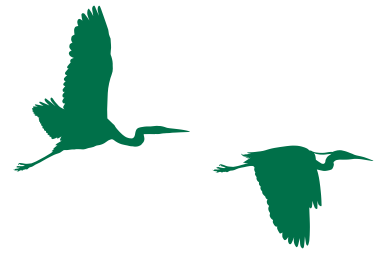


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Lyme Land Trust

SPRING 2020 NEWSLETTER

A Letter from our President and Executive Director

Dear Friends,

The COVID-19 pandemic is having a profound effect on all of us. We hope that our preserves in Lyme have provided many of you with solace and comfort and have eased some of the stress of these uncertain times. We know, personally, how important it is to get outside, hike our trails, breathe fresh air and experience the beauty around us. Indeed, our preserves have never been so popular and widely used. And that makes us very happy! We have heard many of you express your joy and appreciation for our corner of the world, and we want to thank everyone who has supported our efforts to preserve open space in Lyme for the benefit of all.

Research has shown over and over again the importance of reconnecting to the outside world. With children home doing virtual learning and adults having to spend more time on the computer with virtual meetings, nature provides the relief we all need. To see the leaves beginning to emerge and the spring flowers in full bloom provides reassurance that life indeed goes on—and what a spectacular show Mother Nature is giving us all.

We hope this newsletter will inspire you to explore some of the preserves you may have yet to visit. For your convenience we have provided a pull-out map insert of all the open space in Lyme. Visit our website, lymelandtrust.org, for detailed descriptions of the places you can hike. We plan on highlighting a preserve on our website every two weeks that will give you details on what you can expect to see while on your hike.

We would love to hear from you, so please let us know what your favorite walks have been and share with us the pictures you have taken while on them.

Stay safe and be well,

Kristina White, *Executive Director*

John Pritchard, *President*



A stand of old cedars in the Idlewild Preserve on Grassy Hill Road.

Gift of Forty-three Acres to Be Named Idlewild Preserve

By Sue Cope, *Land Trust Environmental Director*

At the end of 2019, the Land Trust was the grateful recipient of a 43+ acre gift from Mr. and Mrs. George Lombardino of Lyme, CT. This preserve, which will be named the Idlewild Preserve, was intended to be a 4-lot subdivision in what is currently an unbroken wild space on Grassy Hill Road.

We will abide by the wishes of the donor by continuing to preserve this new lot as a sanctuary for the flora and fauna native to our region. This conservation method also falls in line with the management ideals of a very large nearby parcel in East Lyme of 1,200+ acres owned by the Yale Sheffield School. Continuing their management methods onto abutting and nearby parcels will directly contribute to the creation of new wildlife habitats by creating large blocks of sanctuary spaces in an otherwise pressured environment.

We are proud and delighted to welcome the Idlewild Preserve to the Land Trust.

Protected Land Benefits Us and Benefits the Ecosystem

By Anthony Irving, *Land Trust Director*

Preserves and trails across our region are seeing quite an increase in visitors as we look for ways to destress and exercise while we stay close to home, following COVID-19 regulations.

Lyme is especially fortunate in that it has many trails and over 12,000 acres of protected lands that can provide a setting in which to find the sense of solidarity and community that we all need now. But while the Lyme Land Trust, the town of Lyme, and other local conservation groups take pride in making these open spaces available for public use, the ability of these protected lands to provide ecosystem services is equally essential.

Open space is critical for protecting habitat, water quality and sustaining biological processes, as well as carbon sequestration and storage. Open spaces help maintain a fabric of stability and resilience.

The component parts of a system work in unison, and the natural world is no exception. Our native wildlife and vegetation are subject to external incursions such as non-native invasive species, diseases, insect pests and pathogens. They must either adapt or fail. Based on the outcomes of past introductions, our native species are often not resilient enough to repel these invaders, and are therefore lost, notably the American elm and chestnut. At present, oak, hemlock, ash and beech are all under assault.

By protecting these woodlands, preserves and parks, we are providing a critical component: space and habitat for species to adapt and to potentially recover. They are the safe houses for our woodlands during a difficult time.



The ravages of the emerald ash borer are evident on this dying tree.

The biological integrity of these protected lands must be maintained to provide habitats that are suitable for many species covering a wide range of requirements, from the meadow vole's 0.06 acres to the bobcat's 14 square miles, from fields and wetlands to wooded hillsides and ridgetops. To sustain viable population levels, a palette of cover, food and living space is necessary, including corridors connecting habitat blocks.

The reality is that we can't protect it all. The latest data from UConn Center for Land Use Education and Research show that between 1985 and 2015, 3.5% of the forested acres in Connecticut were cleared; in Lyme it was slightly less, at 2.7%. The most effective method for preserving rural attributes, both cultural and environmental, is through open space protection. Although our forests are under attack from many directions, our efforts at preserving these lands in perpetuity may be enough to buffer them for future generations of all species to enjoy.



David Walker at the Jewett Preserve.

What did you do during the pandemic of 2020?

David Walker and his family took this time to give back by volunteering to help improve the trails on Jewett Preserve near their home, which have brought them joy for many years. They trimmed the edges of the entire red trail, and dealt with problem spots on the yellow, orange and white trails. Each member of the family specializes in certain tasks on the trail, David explains. "Nick is our leaf-clearing man . . . Lucy is a clipping and trail-tamping-down specialist . . . Cary (his wife) is our most educated clipping specialist, clipping while listening to (podcasts) on her phone, and I stick to all things mechanical, chainsaw, and brush cutter, as I am into experiencing power."

David notes that they've seen a marked increase in trail use in the last few months. He said, "The Jewett red trail, perhaps the most remote in the whole Lyme trail system, was almost like a sidewalk a few sunny Saturdays ago!" Most hikers don't have masks on, so they are careful to keep safe distancing, although some folks do wear masks. He would recommend bringing your mask on a hike and being ready to put it on if you encounter hikers who would like that extra touch of safety.

David has almost single-handedly rerouted a section of the white trail along the route of the Tour de Lyme, which turns into a giant mud puddle every spring. David and Cary have signed up to be the stewards of the red trail in Jewett Preserve. The family has also been helping to clear some of the trails in the new Johnston Preserve in preparation for its opening. If you want to find out more about being a trail steward, contact us at Stewardship@lymelandtrust.org.

"In every walk with Nature, one receives far more than he seeks." — John Muir

THE TRAILS OF LYME

This pull-out section (pages 3-6) includes a two-page map spread and accompanying text descriptions of all Lyme Land Trust, Town of Lyme and The Nature Conservancy trails. Each number beside text refers to a trail identified on the map.

Unless noted, trails are fairly easy, suitable for novice hikers, with some moderate inclines and a few steeper sections. Watch for trip hazards, snags, and tree roots on trails. Dogs must be on leash or under close control, especially if others approach. For more detailed information, see maps and brochures at lymelandtrust.org, Lyme Public Library, and Lyme Town Hall.

1. Roaring Brook Preserve, Day Hill Rd., 7.5 acres, Rufus Barringer Interpretive Trail 0.7 mile. Hilly path through a hemlock forest down to walk along boulder-strewn bank of Roaring Brook.

2. Banningwood, 19 Town St., 102 acres, trails 1.7 miles. Brochures provided for self-guided interpretive trail walks. On Honey Hill Fault line, a rock lover's paradise. Upper part of red trail includes some challenging climbs to Parker's Perch. Lower red trail is easy half-mile walk from parking lot along Roaring Brook to Diana's Field, large family-friendly open space with picnic tables. Yellow path is easy 0.7 mile amble along Roaring Brook.

3. Honey Hill Preserve, Clark Rd., 40 acres, trail 1 mile. One-mile loop through mature woodland, with bridge over babbling brook.

4. Selden Landing, Selden Rd., 2.5 acres, Pull in, park by road. Bench on ledge with overlook of Selden Cove provides perfect spot for picnic and/or bird watching. Four-wheel drive vehicles can access old driveway to unimproved launch for small watercraft at high tide. For the intrepid.

5. Hadlyme Hills, 476 acres, trails 6.5 miles: **Brockway-Hawthorne Preserve, Ravine Trail, and Selden Creek Preserve;** parking is on Brush Hill, Rd., Joshuatown Rd., and Mitchell Hill Rd. These three contiguous preserves comprise a wonderful array of habitats and terrain. At end of white and blue trails and along orange connector trail, Selden Creek Preserve offers cliff-top views of wetlands and marshes of Selden Creek. Ravine Trail red trail feels primeval as it travels through a deep hollow with steep ledges on either side. Visit dramatic overlooks of beaver meadow on blue trails. Red and purple trails are challenging with some steep hills and craggy terrain. Yellow trail in Brockway-Hawthorne Preserve leads through savannah-like open area with large old oak trees bordered by beautiful stone walls and quarry. From Brush Hill Rd. parking lot, take a 4-mile trip on white trail through three preserves to overlook at Selden Creek and back.

6. Thach Preserve, 131 Brush Hill Rd., 12.7 acres. This preserve packs a variety of vibrant natural habitats into a small space. Follow orange trail less than ½ mile to picnic table on edge of beaver pond with an abundance of birds and other wildlife. Bench with beautiful view on rock outcrop above pond. Yellow trail is short diversion along sparkling stream.

7. Clucas Preserve, Brush Hill Rd. 23.84 acres, parking along the road. No trails on this preserve, but all are welcome to wander large field, walk along Joshua Creek and climb wooded rock ledges.

8. River to Ridgetop North (north of Mt. Archer Rd.), 920 acres, trails 13.5 miles: **Pleasant Valley Preserve, Jewett Preserve, Johnston Preserve;** parking at MacIntosh Rd., north side of Mt. Archer Rd. (cemetery entrance) and Rte. 82. These three preserves share with River to Ridgetop South Preserves a network of more

than 18 miles of trails and 1,314 acres. Non-motorized bicycles and horses allowed on white, yellow, purple and fuchsia trails, except in Pleasant Valley Preserve. The Eightmile River flows through Pleasant Valley preserve and is featured as spur off red trail. Red trail and blue trail travel through a series of fields with cedar trees, birds, wildflowers and butterflies, a pine tree grove, and along rim of kettle hole. Yellow trail in Pleasant Valley rewards hikers with bench and spectacular view after long walk up moderate incline through mature woodland. Enjoy breathtaking overlooks on Jewett Preserve red trail and Johnston Preserve white trail. Yellow trail in Johnston Preserve traverses North Woods Hill, the highest point in Lyme. Evidence of past human activity on all preserves.

9. River to Ridgetop South (south of Mt. Archer Rd.), 394 acres, trails 4.8 miles: **Mt. Archer Woods, Eno, and Pickwick's Preserve;** parking at Mount Archer parking lot on south side of Mt. Archer Rd., Jewett cemetery entrance on north side of Mt. Archer Rd., and at 183 Joshuatown Rd. (drive down long driveway and park in front of Pickwick's Preserve sign). Non-motorized bicycles and horses are allowed on white and yellow trails. Though these preserves are on top of Mount Archer, one of the highest hills in Lyme, trails are mostly flat and easy. On white trail in Mt. Archer Woods, ruins of an old colonial farm are visible. Once prime grazing land, abandoned more than a century ago, has now become mature forest. An impressive stand of large poplar (tulip) trees on white trail in Eno Preserve. From yellow trail, seasonal views of Connecticut River.

10. Patrell Preserve, Baker Lane, 109 acres, red trail 1 mile. Lyme Land Trust shares this property with East Haddam. Horses and non-motorized bicycles are allowed. Part of larger East Haddam property called Chapal Farm. Part of red trail is paved and suitable for mobility-impaired nature lovers. Red trail follows more than 3,000 feet of frontage on the Eightmile River. A sturdy footbridge crosses the Eightmile River to Boot Rock Preserve in East Haddam.

11. Riverside Preserve, Salem Rd., 6 acres. Follow 600-foot path around wildflower meadow to view butterflies in season. Small pavilion with picnic table overlooks the Eightmile River.

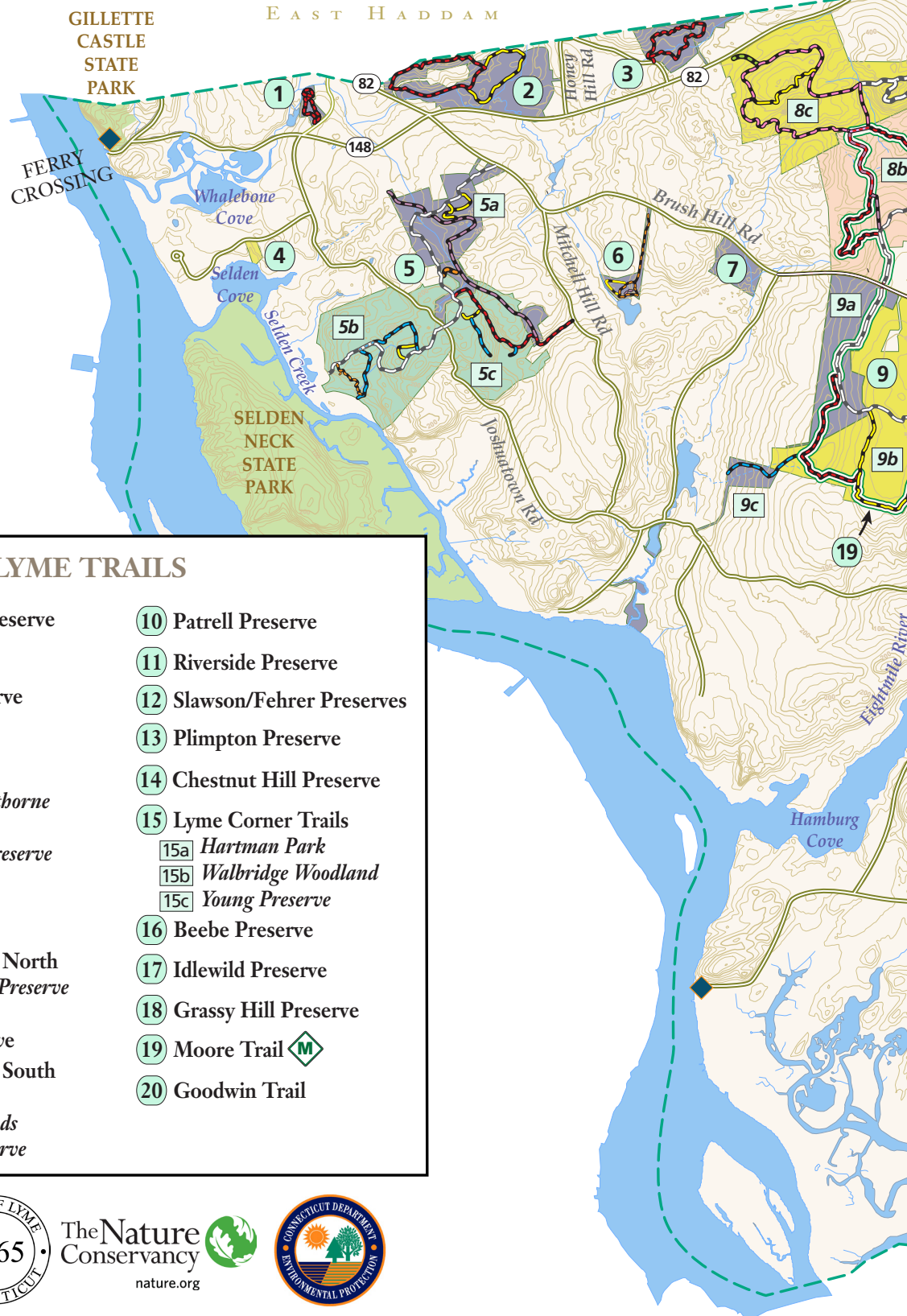
12. Slawson/Fehrer Preserves, can be accessed through Nehantic State Forest. No blazed trails or official parking but hikers are welcome. A showcase for creation of young forest habitat that benefits New England cottontail rabbit and many other endangered species. Lyme Land Trust has partnered with the State of Connecticut and adjacent landowners to harvest mature trees in succession in order to offer a variety of habitats as trees grow back.

13. Plimpton Preserve, Sterling City Rd., 80 acres, red trail 1.5 miles; park on side of Sterling City Rd. across from entrance. Some steep hills but view at overlook on summit is worth the climb.



TRAILS OF LYME

properties with free public access



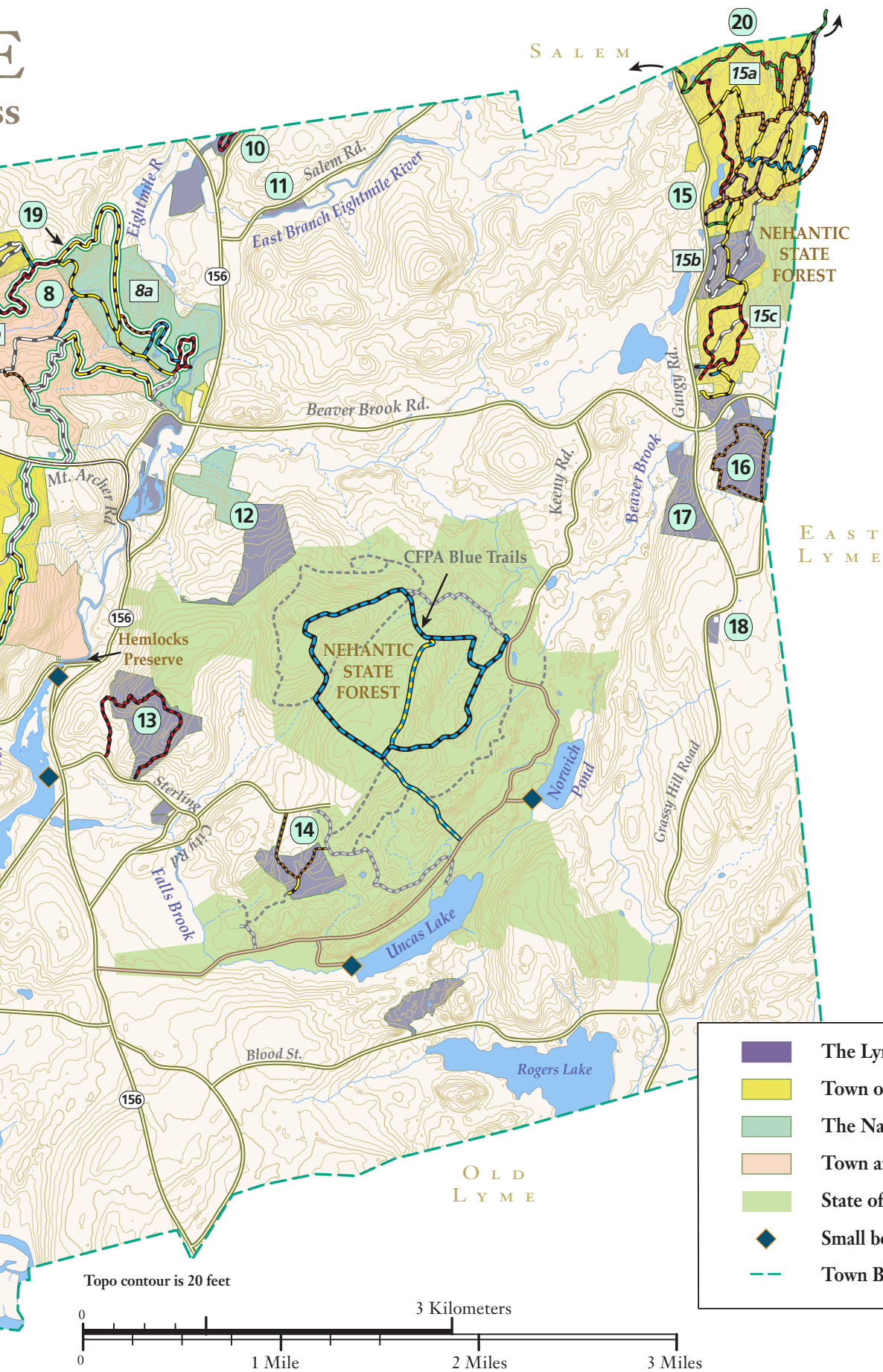
LYME TRAILS

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Roaring Brook Preserve | 10 Patrell Preserve |
| 2 Banningwood | 11 Riverside Preserve |
| 3 Honey Hill Preserve | 12 Slawson/Fehrer Preserves |
| 4 Selden Landing | 13 Plimpton Preserve |
| 5 Hadlyme Hills | 14 Chestnut Hill Preserve |
| 5a Brockway-Hawthorne | 15 Lyme Corner Trails |
| 5b Ravine Trail | 15a Hartman Park |
| 5c Selden Creek Preserve | 15b Walbridge Woodland |
| 6 Thach Preserve | 15c Young Preserve |
| 7 Clucas Preserve | 16 Beebe Preserve |
| 8 River to Ridgeway North | 17 Idlewild Preserve |
| 8a Pleasant Valley Preserve | 18 Grassy Hill Preserve |
| 8b Jewett Preserve | 19 Moore Trail |
| 8c Johnston Preserve | 20 Goodwin Trail |
| 9 River to Ridgeway South | |
| 9a Eno Preserve | |
| 9b Mt. Archer Woods | |
| 9c Pickwick's Preserve | |



The Nature
Conservancy
nature.org





14. Chestnut Hill Preserve, Sterling Hill Rd., 43 acres, orange trail connects with trail in Nehantic State Forest for 1 mile round trip. Horses and non-motorized bikes allowed. Walk for miles on connecting Nehantic State Forest network.

15. Lyme Corner Trails, 424 acres, trails 12 miles: **Hartman Park, Walbridge Woodland, Young Preserve,** three parking areas on Gungy Rd., main Hartman Park entrance is for access to Hartman Park and Walbridge Woodlands. Horses and non-motorized bicycles allowed except on white trails. Three adjacent preserves offer interesting natural, historical and geological sites. Large expanse of open space, including adjacent parcels, is valuable wildlife corridor. Three-mile orange Heritage Trail in Hartman Park features self-guided tour of historical remnants from past inhabitants. Sites are described in the map and brochure, on infographic signage at select sites, and in the Hartman Park Heritage Trail Booklet. Beavers have been very active in preserves and are constantly altering landscape and creating new habitat. Bird-watchers visit to see rare birds, such as cerulean warbler and wood thrush. Red trails in both Hartman and Young have some steep rocky areas and meander along ridges and ledges. The Fairy Circle on the green trail is an easy, less than .25 mile walk, to a kid-friendly destination.

16. Beebe Preserve, Old Grassy Hill Rd., 83 acres, orange trail loop, 1 mile, evidence of past agricultural activity can be seen in the two miles of stone walls. Orange trail loop takes hikers past network of old stone walls and a mysterious organized and very

large rock pile. Yellow trail provides a short side trip to a wildlife viewing platform on edge of vibrant beaver pond.

17. Idlewild Preserve, Grassy Hill Rd., 43 acres, no trails. This newest acquisition has no trails but walkers are welcome. It is an important link in a large wildlife corridor of open space.

18. Grassy Hill Preserve, Grassy Hill Rd. next to Grassy Hill church, 4.26 acres. This historic field is a popular subject for painters on one of highest points in Lyme. No blazed trails, but walkers are welcome.

19. George and Rosemary Moore Trail, named to honor their years of service towards land preservation in Lyme: enter loop at preserve entrances on Mt. Archer Rd. and MacIntosh Rd. 9-mile trail loop: follow “M” blazes to traverse connecting trails through contiguous preserves of **River to Ridgeway** complex. Shorter sections: 3-mile loop south of Mt. Archer Rd. (with return section on road). Start and return at Mt. Archer Woods parking lot, an easy flat walk through mature forest and some wetlands. 6-mile loop north of Mt. Archer Rd., start and end at Jewett cemetery lot on Mt. Archer or lot on MacIntosh Rd., a moderate walk through various habitats, with some hill climbs and rocky areas.

20. Goodwin Trail, entrance on Gungy Rd. for Lyme’s 1.7 mile segment through Hartman Park. 14-mile trail in East Haddam, Salem, East Lyme and Lyme administered by the Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Coordinating Committee. For a map and rules see: eightmileriver.org.

New Easement Sets Example for Conservation Practices

By Sue Cope, *Land Trust Environmental Director*

Conservation easements benefit whole communities and regions if they’re done right. One of our most recent easement acquisitions is a beautiful 46-acre parcel in the Grassy Hill section of town. For the landowners, this 46-acre portion of their property was most valuable to them in its current wooded and wild state. For them, the solace in knowing that it would forever remain in a predominantly wooded condition was invaluable—plus they received a little tax break.

But they aren’t the only ones who love this property. Abutting neighbors have matching large wooded parcels and are equally pleased to know the 46 acres next door are protected in perpetuity. Another neighbor just down the road is likely one of the more invested of the community members, as he has hunting rights for the property. I walked the easement with him this spring and was delighted to learn how much he values the land and its conservation. He takes great pride in the protection and care of this easement and has volunteered with the Land Trust as the new property steward, conducting regular visits and submitting an annual report to the Land Trust.

As well as the community spirit surrounding this easement, it has an added advantage: the northwestern portion of the property abuts over 100 acres of town-protected land, and the southwestern portion borders the over 2,000 acres of state park land comprising the Nehantic and Beckett Hill State Parks. This type of conservation of abutting lands can most easily be referred to as “blocking.” A forest conservation block is an area or region containing intact contiguous woodlands and preserved lands. By continuing to acquire and conserve lands that abut other preserved parcels, we can immediately contribute to a reduction in forest fragmentation while providing for the long-term protection of pressured habitats for our New England flora and fauna. Indeed, this community-strengthening easement is also a direct contributor to a large block of protected New England woodlands and wetlands, increasing our impact on local and regional conservation. Thank you to these kind landowners for this gift of preservation.

If you are interested in learning more about conservation easements, please contact Tony Irving, Preservation Chair, anthonyinlyme@gmail.com

THE LYME LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER

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Sue Cope, Mal Karwoski,
Wendolyn Hill

New Board Member Alan Sheiness

Alan Sheiness has recently joined the Lyme Land Trust Board and will be taking over as Treasurer. He is looking forward to having the opportunity “to connect better to nature in my hometown, but to do so ‘hands on and hands in.’ LLCT has an amazing track record and it is a privilege to contribute to the continuation of that legacy.”

Alan and his wife retired to Lyme in late 2011 after a two-year search for a peaceful, spacious retreat from decades of living in cities and suburbs. After working for ADP for 30 years in various capacities, with corporate relocations taking them to New York, New Jersey, Georgia, Paris, and California, they were ready for Lyme!

In his spare time, Alan is an amateur astronomer, guitar debutant, small-scale woodworker, and a pilot. He is also a co-founder of a nonprofit (PALS) that arranges free flights to distant necessary medical care for persons in need.

Welcome, Alan!



Thank You to All the Volunteers Who Have Been Working Hard in Our Preserves

Here's a shout-out to Bob Cope, Tony Irving and Nick White who have been working on projects throughout our preserves, including a new bridge in Pleasant Valley and reroutes in Brockway-Hawthorne and Selden Preserves. And thank you to all the other (sometimes anonymous) volunteers who have helped so much in the past months. We appreciate your efforts!



Bob Cope, Mal Karwoski, Nick White and Tony Irving survey the beautiful new bridge.

Wild Wednesdays!

We have recently launched a new social media campaign to engage our followers through virtual programming. Every Wednesday we will post a message of nature inspiration—a DIY adventure, a nature craft idea, maybe even a photo challenge or a scavenger hunt—who knows?! They will be easy, local, and feature the natural world all around us. Most of these adventures you can do in your own backyard. If you venture into the preserves, be sure to keep a safe social distance and not gather in groups. In the first week of #wildwednesdays, we had Earth Day and National Go Birding Day. We challenged our followers to dust off their binoculars, find a sit spot, and connect with nature. Follow us on Facebook or Instagram to join in the fun!



Lyme Land Trust

PO Box 1002, Lyme, CT 06371



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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. Contact: education@lymelandtrust.org (unless otherwise noted below)

Lyme Land Trust Annual Meeting by Zoom

Time: June 26, 2020, 6:00 p.m.

Via computer: zoom.us/join/86393141385

To dial in: +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

Meeting ID: 863 9314 1385 Password: 517285

Agenda will include by-laws amendment, re-election of board members, and Volunteer of the Year award.

A Remote Exploration of Spring Forest Plants

Video tour of the Ravine Trail Preserve led by Michael Zarfos, a conservation biologist from SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. Michael will identify trees and plants in their spring raiment, explain how to identify several prominent species, and share interesting facts about their human uses and natural ecology. Videotaped on May 30; check lymelandtrust.org website for availability.

Ravine Trail Preserve parking is located on the west side of Joshuatown Road, about 4 miles north of the intersection of Joshuatown Road and Route 156. Please feel free to enjoy this trail while following posted and current State and Federal safety guidelines.

Opossum Program:

This will be rescheduled in October 2020.

Tour de Lyme 2020

Rescheduled for Sunday, September 13, 2020

Save the date for the eighth annual Tour de Lyme at the always spectacular Ashlawn Farm. For more information, visit the Tour de Lyme web page at tourde Lyme.org.

New Signs on the Heritage Trail

New illustrated informational signs are up along Hartman Park's Heritage Trail which include information about the archaeology and history of sites along the trail. Detailed descriptions can be found in the Hartman Park Heritage Trail Booklet created by Marianne Pfeiffer and available on the Lyme Land Trust website.

