



# ANNUAL REPORT LYME LAND TRUST

2021-2022



Dear Members,

2021-2022 was a year of firsts. We had two Tours de Lyme and we began the process of designing a permanent home for the Trust. These firsts accompanied our primary mission of preserving open space, educating the public and stewarding our preserves.

We said goodbye to one of our most ardent and generous supporters, Andy Baxter, a 13-year Board member who served as our Treasurer and later Vice President. He was a generous contributor to our causes and understood that our obligations to our land stewardship run in perpetuity.

In the enclosed report we have highlighted the many events, activities and work parties which showcase the amazing work of all our volunteers led by our exceptional Board. We thank our community of volunteers, donors, and members for all that you do!

Kristina White  
Executive Director



Andy Baxter

## Rochelle Davis Named Lyme Land Trust Volunteer of the Year

Rochelle Davis, volunteer steward of the Grassy Hill Preserve, was awarded the 2022 Lyme Land Trust Volunteer of the Year Award at the annual meeting on June 17. During the last two years, Rochelle has worked to improve habitat in the Grassy Hill Preserve Meadow to promote biodiversity. She has transformed a field filled with invasive plants to one populated by native plants that support a variety of pollinators and wildlife. She single-handedly removed dense thickets of invasives including autumn olive trees and multiflora bushes. At home she propagates native plants from seeds to replant in the Preserve. She shares detailed reports via the app "iNaturalist" where she started a "Grassy Hill Preserve" virtual project to digitally catalogue the species in the preserve. The project can be accessed by anyone who visits the iNaturalist website or has the app on their device. So far over 130 flora and fauna observations have been documented. She regularly walks the preserve and actively manages what is growing. She has gone above and beyond what we ask of a steward.



Photo by Dan Hulseberg

Rochelle has also actively participated in our project *Imagining Lyme—A Visual Exploration of Lyme's Preserves* since its inception two years ago. She has been awarded for several photos of distinction and won the 2021 People's Vision Award—chosen annually by the public out of all the submissions, with her photo *Mushroom in a Forest*, Beebe Preserve.

**Photos above:** *Vernal Pool Reflections* (Johnston Preserve) by Kip Bergstrom, *Tree Highlighted in Overcast Sky* (Jewett Preserve) by Ann Hafter and *Looking Down and Looking Up* by Rochelle Davis were photos of distinction in our *Imagining Lyme* contest for Winter and Spring 2022. More photos from this year, including more photos of distinction, can be viewed on the website [ImaginingLyme.org](http://ImaginingLyme.org). This program continued for a second year to encourage people to expand their visual awareness and highlight the beauty of our preserves. In October, professional photographer Caryn Davis gave a virtual presentation of her photography and explained her process. Environmental Director Sue Cope (left) and Executive Director Kristina White (right) present Rochelle Davis with the Volunteer of the Year award.



## Education and Events

WENDOLYN HILL, CHAIR



Photo by Ian Deane

**1** Under the guidance of Alan Sheiness and Scott Mallory the Land Trust astronomy program gained followers, promoting appreciation for our precious dark sky and the need to protect it from light pollution. Monthly observation sessions were held and programs were provided to the Boy Scouts and children at the Lyme School. **2** On CT Trails Day in June, Regan Stacey of Awaken the Forest Within led a forest bathing walk to introduce the group to the healthful benefits of immersing in nature. **3** In April we collaborated with the Lyme Public Library and *Estuary Magazine* to invite Joan Maloof of the Old Growth Forest Network to present information about preserving, protecting and promoting the country's remaining and future of old growth forests. **4** Reed Landing: Volunteers planted a native plant rain garden on the bank of the Eightmile River in May 2022 under the direction of New England Pollinator Gardens and funded by the Eightmile Wild and Scenic Coordinating Committee. This garden replaced invasive plants removed during Nix the Knotweed Days. On three days in July and August 2021 and May 2022, volunteers helped remove invasives from land open to the public. Information was also provided about how to manage invasive plants on private land. Invasive plants threaten biodiversity by crowding out native host plants that native wildlife depend upon for survival. **5** We held our annual meeting in the Lyme Public Hall in June 2022. Board member Tony Irving joined Steve Dedman of Plymwood Cowboy to play acoustic music. **6** Diana Fiske helped kids at Lyme school make mandalas from natural objects during the Lyme Land Trust after-school program Curiosity Shop. Monthly outdoor nature programs—the Sapling Club for elementary-aged children, the Hiking Club, and the Tree Collective for Teens—were led by naturalist Regan Stacey. We also collaborated with the Lyme Youth Service Bureau and Pollinator Pathway for the “Bee Lyme to 2022,” a series of pollinator friendly programs. **7** Funded by a grant from the Lyme Land Trust, Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center provided curriculum-relevant programs for each grade in the Lyme School.

**IT WAS A BUSY YEAR**, with a full roster of programs to fulfill the Trust's goal of educating the public about the value of our preserved open space and the importance of environmental conservation. As COVID restrictions loosened during the year, we began to provide more in-person gatherings in addition to zoom presentations.

Our website extends our reach through up-to date content. Visit the website to learn more about our events and activities. Under the “Explore” tab, find recordings of our zoom programs and educational media. Go to “What We Do” to learn more about ongoing educational programs and projects.

On this page and throughout the Annual Report, we present photographs and details about our many activities.

**Biodiversity Education:** One of our goals this year was to spread the word about the importance of biodiversity, or biological variety, which is vital for a healthy ecosystem. When native biodiversity is lost through land use change—loss of habitat, the spread of invasive plants or fragmentation of habitat—it can affect physical and mental health through negative effects on air, food and water; and can alter the spread of zoonotic diseases like COVID or Lyme Disease.

It is, of course, important to preserve large tracts of land, but we should also remember that everyone can enhance biodiversity in their own back yards. In 2022, we partnered with Lyme Pollinator Pathway to provide several programs to illustrate how to do this. Peter Picone, DEEP Wildlife Biologist, led a guided tour of the Hartman Park Meadow in October and presented an educational zoom program on “To Plant or Not to Plant, Conserving Connecticut's Biological Diversity” in November. In January 2022, we provided a zoom with Jim Sirch about propagating native plants by seed and an in-person program at Ballek's Garden Center, “Plant This, Not That” in June 2022.

**Trail Challenge: Quest for the Quote:** From December 2021 until June 2022, many participated in the challenge to follow clues in the Lyme preserves in order to collect words to form a quote. Those who completed the challenge (listed on our website's Wall of Honor) discovered John Muir's quote: “Come to the woods for here is rest. There is no repose like that of the green deep woods.”



Photo by Gavin Lodge



**IN THE PAST YEAR,** ongoing conservation projects have been undertaken to improve the health of Land Trust preserves and take advantage of the richness of our open space beyond the trails.

In Roaring Brook Preserve, the understory was cleared in the cedar grove to begin eradication of invasives. This is a multi-year project but one that is already remarkable. At the time we acquired the preserve, the understory in the cedar grove had been a dark jungle, mostly autumn olive. Thrashing back the vines immediately made entering Roaring Brook infinitely more welcoming. We've given the cedars, a pollinator-friendly native species, a chance to thrive. The size of the grove also makes it a prime location for a doable, long-term management plan.

Stewardship is also completing a barberry remediation project on Elys Ferry Road and we're in the process of laying out a similar attack on barberry in Banningwood Preserve along Roaring Brook.

Rams Horn Creek is the site of phragmites remediation—a project we take on every few years—which is showing great promise for a healthy future.

Inspired by ideas and support from a long time Land Trust member, we have recently developed a partnership with the Roger Tory Peterson Estuary Center, (RTPEC) part of the Connecticut Audubon Society, to build and install kestrel boxes in selected Land Trust preserves. RTPEC Conservation and Education Coordinator Joe Attwater helped to identify strategic locations for their installation, which is expected to take place within the next year.

On the trails, there were a number of improvements carried out by some amazing volunteers, including two major projects in Brockway-Hawthorne last summer by Dominion Energy and Eagle Scout Candidate Andy Zelek.

Our property stewards now conduct monitoring visits throughout the year rather than just in the fall after leaf-off—a time-saving approach with the added benefit of seeing trail conditions in all seasons. Midway through 2022, nearly half of the boundary visits have been completed. The Stewardship Committee and our volunteers continue to maintain our trail system and have pushed through spring and summer storms, floods, and more winter snow this past year than in years past!

Stewardship of the preserves is essential to our mission, and many duties can only be carried out as a team effort. We are grateful to have so many skilled and energetic volunteers. Our deepest thanks to all.

## Stewardship

MAL KARWOSKI, CHAIR

SUE COPE,

ENVIRONMENTAL DIRECTOR

**1** Dominion Energy volunteers built an impressive 180-foot oak-slab boardwalk over a length of wetland along the purple trails in Brockway-Hawthorne Preserve. Dominion also installed two additional crossings: a plank-style footbridge in Pleasant Valley Preserve and adjoining sections of boardwalk along the yellow trail in Banningwood which allow room underneath for turtles and amphibians to move freely in their habitat. **2** Eagle Scout Candidate Andy Zelek came up with a clever plan and assembled a rugged team to move a large, obsolete footbridge in Brockway-Hawthorne to a more strategic location nearly a mile away. **3** Retired DEEP forester Emery Gluck provided three walks to show us forest management techniques. **4** Former CT State geologist Ralph Lewis offered two geology walks in the past year. **5** We released our third full-length educational video, "Spring Emergence: An Exploration of Wildflowers in Pleasant Valley and Jewett Preserves" featuring guide and narrator Mike Zarfos, videotaped in May, 2021. It was launched during a special Earth Day live streaming session. **6** Markham Starr provided two walks to point out several indigenous ceremonial stone structures in local preserves. Dr. Lucianne Lavin gave a presentation, *Our Hidden Landscapes: Stone Cultural Features & Ceremonial Sites*, about the built ceremonial stone landscapes of the Indigenous populations that have inhabited New England for more than 10,000 years. It is important that we learn to identify these structures so we can help protect and preserve them from future destruction.





## Preservation

ANTHONY IRVING, CHAIR

**OVER THE PAST YEAR**, the Land Trust has been in contact with three landowners: two who are considering donating conservation easements and one who is looking at a variety of land conservation options. The three properties vary in size from over 20 acres to over 100 acres and in all cases the goal is to protect the land's conservation values in perpetuity. The Land Trust is available to assist in the decision-making process, one that presents and evaluates different options and is tailored to each owner's objectives for the land and its management.

These properties came to our attention from landowners who wanted to see the conservation values of their lands protected and saw the Land Trust as a viable partner. Time and deliberation are needed to sort through the various protection strategies that will have permanent effects for the specific pieces of land. It is the responsibility of the Land Trust to evaluate the merits of each property and assist with information as to the options available. In fact, the decision-making process can sometimes take years as family priorities may change over time. Only when a landowner is convinced that working with the Land Trust is in their family's and the land's best interest can we formulate the desired outcome that serves all parties involved. Needless to say, these decisions cannot be rushed.

In all cases the Land Trust depends on the caring and commitment of landowners when it comes to land protection. These new properties, if protected, will add to the larger network of open space lands, ensuring their future as providers of ecological services such as clean air, water and enhanced habitat for wildlife. It is the sharing of these goals that makes the relationship between the community and the Land Trust so vital. Bearing this in mind, we are always available to answer questions and guide prospective landowners interested in the protection of their family lands for future generations. For a landowner wishing to discuss conservation options and strategies, contact Anthony Irving directly and in confidence at 860-434-1460 or by email at [anthonyinlyme@gmail.com](mailto:anthonyinlyme@gmail.com).



Photos above: *Bewitching Winter Woods* (Eno Preserve) by Kip Bergstrom was a photo of distinction in our *Imagining Lyme* contest for Winter 2022. Photos submitted, including more photos of distinction, can be viewed on the website [ImaginingLyme.org](http://ImaginingLyme.org). As part of the *Imagining Lyme* program, photographer and LLT Board member Joe Standart gave insight into his creative process during a walk in Pleasant Valley Preserve in June. Hikers on one of our many guided walks reached North Woods Hill in the Johnston Preserve, the highest point in Lyme. The popular Tuesday Treks program ran weekly from September 2021 to June 2022, offering refreshing morning hikes on different Lyme preserves, led by a board or staff member of the LLT.

## Finance

ALAN SHEINESS, TREASURER

**OUR FISCAL YEAR** that just ended June 30, 2022, was a year of outstanding financial performance because of your ongoing financial support. Meaningful contributions were made for our stewardship barn project, both in cash and in conveyance of a land parcel upon which we will build, and we enjoyed two Tour de Lyme events, which contributed greatly to our bottom line. Expenses grew only modestly, with virtually all increases year over year being due to the two Tour de Lyme events, as compared to none in the year prior.

Our balance sheet remains strong with high liquidity and no long-term debt. Our investments, which represent the non-cash portion of our various funds, are

conservatively invested with a prudent allocation across asset classes. These investments decreased in value during the second half of the year, although these decreases were generally favorable to market performance overall.

In fiscal 2023, we look forward to another successful year made possible by your ongoing engagement and financial support. The fiscal 2023 budget contemplates returning to our once-a-year Tour de Lyme, and therefore a corresponding decrease in revenues and operating expenses. We have made adequate provision for our recurring events and programs and stewardship needs. The stewardship barn project is nearing the end of the planning phase, after which timelines will be finalized and construction will commence. Stay tuned for more on that.

Thank you for your trust and support!

# STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

(Unaudited)

|                                     | As of June 30,    |                   |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|                                     | 2022              | 2021              |
|                                     | (\$ in 000s)      | (\$ in 000s)      |
| <b>ASSETS</b>                       |                   |                   |
| Cash in Banks                       | \$ 1,266.2        | \$ 583.1          |
| Conservation Land                   | 7,080.0           | 6,940.0           |
| Long-term Investments               | 1,550.0           | 1,713.0           |
| Other Assets                        | 74.6              | 23.2              |
| <b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>                 | <b>\$ 9,970.8</b> | <b>\$ 9,259.3</b> |
| <b>LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b>       |                   |                   |
| <b>Liabilities</b>                  |                   |                   |
| Accounts Payable and Payroll Liabs  | \$ 39.5           | \$ 10.4           |
| Other Current Liabilities           | 98.8              | 169.3             |
| <b>Total Liabilities</b>            | <b>138.3</b>      | <b>179.7</b>      |
| <b>Equity</b>                       |                   |                   |
| Retained Earnings                   | \$ 6,369.8        | \$ 6,180.3        |
| <b>Fund Balances</b>                |                   |                   |
| General Fund                        | 449.3             | 364.9             |
| MJ Walters Endowment Fund           | 815.5             | 892.2             |
| Enforcement Fund                    | 120.7             | 144.1             |
| Brown Preservation Fund             | 489.7             | 444.7             |
| Barringer Stewardship Fund          | 225.7             | 254.6             |
| Barn Building Fund                  | 567.4             | 0.0               |
| Other Funds                         | 41.5              | 41.5              |
| <b>Current Change in Net Assets</b> | <b>752.9</b>      | <b>757.3</b>      |
| <b>Total Equity</b>                 | <b>\$ 9,832.5</b> | <b>\$ 9,079.6</b> |
| <b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY</b> | <b>\$ 9,970.8</b> | <b>\$ 9,259.3</b> |

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

(Unaudited)

|                                     | Year ended June 30, |                 |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
|                                     | 2022                | 2021            |
|                                     | (\$ in 000s)        | (\$ in 000s)    |
| <b>Operating Revenues</b>           |                     |                 |
| Membership Dues                     | \$ 42.7             | \$ 81.9         |
| Fund Donations                      | 858.2               | 217.4           |
| Tour de Lyme                        | 199.3               | 0.8             |
| Other Revenues                      | 13.9                | 17.0            |
| <b>Operating Revenues</b>           | <b>\$ 1,114.1</b>   | <b>\$ 317.0</b> |
| <b>Expenses</b>                     |                     |                 |
| Compensation                        | \$ 162.0            | \$ 150.4        |
| Communications & Events             | 81.1                | 26.7            |
| Stewardship                         | 31.4                | 32.3            |
| Other Operations                    | 20.0                | 13.2            |
| G&A                                 | 39.5                | 32.6            |
| Misc Expenses                       | 3.6                 | 7.3             |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>               | <b>\$ 337.7</b>     | <b>\$ 262.4</b> |
| <b>Net Operating Income</b>         | <b>\$ 776.4</b>     | <b>\$ 54.7</b>  |
| <b>Land Donations</b>               | <b>140.0</b>        | <b>448.9</b>    |
| <b>Net Investment Income/(Loss)</b> | <b>(162.6)</b>      | <b>254.7</b>    |
| <b>Other Income/(Expense)</b>       | <b>(1.0)</b>        | <b>(1.0)</b>    |
| <b>Change in Net Assets</b>         | <b>\$ 752.9</b>     | <b>\$ 757.3</b> |

## WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS

### Over \$10,000

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Baxter, Andy  
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Bladen, Ashby & Ginger  
Bowdren, Catherine  
Boyd, Thomas & Jane  
Brainard, Newton & Mary  
Broom, Lorraine  
Buccheri, Stephen & Wendy  
Burnham, Rika  
Bussmann, Andrew & Laurie  
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Furgueson, Michael & Sherley

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Tennant, Foster & Goodall, Susan  
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Waldo, Mark  
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Ward, Howard & Laura  
White, Peter & Kristina  
Wilson, Thomas & Mary  
Winter, Steven & Brenda Cartmel  
Woods, Alison  
Wyand, Susan

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Benevity Causes  
CIME  
Horst Engineering  
Network For Good  
Olberg Charitable Trust  
Panoram Foundation  
Pfizer Foundation Matching Gifts Program  
Raytheon Technologies

### Heritage Society Members

Charitable Gift Annuity Inclusions  
Anonymous (6)  
Baxter, Andy\*  
Cushman, Katherine Rose\*  
Hessel, Susan & Dahle, Karen  
Howard, Shirley  
Irving, Anthony & Lees, Deborah  
Lord, Parker & Diane  
Millerbernd, Donald  
Moore, George\* & Rosemarie  
Pritchard, John & Lee  
Rich, Ann  
Simon, Nissa  
Tyler, Humphrey & Susan  
Ulmer, Gordon\*  
Walters, Milton\* & Caroline

\*Deceased

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## Two Tours de Lyme This Year

**FOR THE FIRST TIME** in Tour de Lyme history, we held two Tours in one fiscal year. Covid had forced us to cancel the tour a few times over the 2020-2021 period and we finally were able to have it in September over the Labor Day Weekend. It was not the usual Tour, due to cancelled mountain bike rides and last-minute food truck cancellations, but we did have a great day. The riders came and had a wonderful ride through the hills of Lyme.

2022 brought back the Tour at its usual time in the spring with a picture-perfect day in June. Everyone had a smile on their face and enjoyed the roads and trails of Lyme. Dan Stevens and his band entertained the crowd, while riders enjoyed the food, beer and great atmosphere. Our volunteer crew makes this event a well-oiled machine and it would not happen without them—bravo! To our sponsors who stood by us through the pandemic and continue to support what we do—you are our backbone. And to the riders, your enthusiasm and joy in riding make all we do worthwhile.

A special thank you to Carol Adams and Bill Donovan for allowing us to use Ashlawn Farm for this fundraising event. The farm is what makes this Tour a truly special experience for the riders.



Photos above taken by Joe Standart and Warner Swain.



**THE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE** is in its second year. The committee has oversight and compliance responsibilities for the Board and the organization as a whole in accordance with our Governance Committee charter and in alignment with the national accreditation organization, The Land Trust Alliance.

Last year, the Governance Committee implemented board recruitment procedures to better identify the needs of the Board and recruit appropriate candidates with corresponding skills. We have focused this year on increasing Board engagement and succession planning. We are pleased to announce that David Frankel, a long-time resident of Lyme and teacher, has been voted onto the Board at the Annual Meeting in June 2022.

Special thanks to the members of the Governance Committee for their contributions.

## Governance

DAN HULSEBERG  
LYNN RICHMOND  
CO-CHAIRS



Photos above: Sue Cope led a wildflower walk in May to find spring ephemerals. Here, she is showing the group *Arisaema triphyllum*, Jack in the Pulpit. Birds and mammals eat the berries of this plant. CT Trails Days in June included a meadow walk. In June, farmer Baylee Drown at Long Table Farm taught us about sustainable agriculture and climate resilient farming.

Unless otherwise noted, photos throughout this report were taken by Sue Cope, Wendolyn Hill and Kristina White.

Check our website [lymelandtrust.org](https://lymelandtrust.org) for upcoming events, walks and work parties.

Follow us on:   

860/434-5051 ■ [info@lymelandtrust.org](mailto:info@lymelandtrust.org)

## Our 2021-22 Board of Directors

John Pritchard, *President*  
Wendolyn Hill, *Vice President*  
Alan Sheiness, *Treasurer*  
Lynn Richmond, *Secretary*  
Brantley Buerger  
Jonathan Butler  
Scott Gravatt  
Dan Hulseberg  
Anthony Irving

Mal Karwoski  
Nancy Newcomb  
Joe Standart

### OUR STAFF

Kristina White, *Executive Director*  
Sue Cope, *Environmental Director*  
Chris Curcio, *Accountant*



## Mission Statement

To conserve in perpetuity for the public benefit Lyme's natural, scenic and historic land and water resources by: acquiring and stewarding real properties and conservation easements; supporting open space acquisition by third parties; facilitating scientific study and management of our resources; and educating the community regarding the natural world and the benefits of conservation.

## LONG RANGE PLAN

- Conserve land of environmental, cultural or historical importance
- Carry out work of Trust in an operationally, fiscally, legally and ethically responsible manner
- Increase substantially the Trust's educational offerings to youth and adults
- Facilitate scientific study of the natural resources present on selected Preserves for educational and land management purposes
- Strengthen the Land Trust financially and through increased and more effective use of volunteers
- Continue strengthening the Land Trust's stewardship program