

Annual Report

President's Message

Once again it is my privilege to thank the Directors, volunteers and members for helping to make 2009-2010 a successful one for the Lyme Land Trust.

Success can be measured in many ways but I have long believed it is best defined as the progressive realization of one's goals. As part of our annual budget and planning exercise, we ask each committee to establish goals and encourage them to make them lofty yet attainable.

A high priority goal for the Land Trust is the continued preservation of land through new conservation easements or property acquisition. This past year was no exception as you will see in the report by

the report by the Preservation Committee Chair.

One of my goals as President was realized this past year. We recognized the need to increase our cash reserves for protecting and defending our large property portfolio – both easements and fee properties. To address that need, Board members committed to a personal donation to our Rufus Barringer Fund and then we appealed to a gathering of community leaders to do the same. We will soon reach out to our membership to help match this amount.

Looking ahead, one of our important goals is to continue to build a strong

Board. Attracting talented people to serve as directors is an ongoing process. We strive to create a diverse Board and, increasingly, we feel the need to attract men and women who have widespread contact in the community. We presently have a great deal of talent serving on our Board, but because of term limits, a lot will be leaving over the next few years; fortunately a great deal of talent will remain.

Sincerely,
George Moore
President of The Lyme Land Trust

Finance Committee Andy Baxter , Chairman

The **Finance Committee**, through upgraded controls implemented in 2008, brought a greater transparency to the Land Trust's finances. Quarterly reporting and roundtable reviews encouraged the ownership of P&Ls by committee chairs, instilling a deeper understanding of both financial trends and the monetary impact of decisions.

By year-end, the program development efforts of the Communication, Education & Membership and Finance committees had pushed revenue well beyond budget, while at the same time, recapitalizing the Rufus Barringer Resource Education and Protection Fund, an endowment created in memory of a prominent Lyme conservationist and

former Land Trust president. Expenses declined proportionately - influenced, perhaps, by the constant emphasis on spending restraint.

With bottom-line results thus leveraged to near break-even, the land trust's fiscal health, measured by cash and current assets, improved marginally over prior year.



Preservation Committee Temp Brown, Chairman

The **Preservation Committee** added to our portfolio land through conservation easements and property generously donated by town residents. These included the grant of an easement covering 26 acres owned by Barbara David on Brush Hill Road; a 17-1/2 acre conservation restriction on the Crowley parcel located along Grassy Hill Road; and a six-acre easement opposite Ed Bill's Dam on Eightmile River, contributed by Catherine Spencer and Mary Schroeder. We also received from Road.

Robert Thomas a one-acre gift in fee of Eightmile River frontage on Joshuatown Road.

Finally, in a long-sought acquisition, the Land Trust Partnered with the Town, the Nature Conservancy (TNC) and an anonymous donor to purchase the 98-acre Czikowsky property, expanding a large clock of contiguous open space on Mt. Archer. The Lyme Land Conservation Trust will become the steward of this property.

2010 Photo Contest
First Place - Cultural/Historic
Jean Callan King of East Haddam

Annual Report

Stewardship Committee - Emily Fisher, Chairwoman

The **Stewardship Committee's** overhaul of property management practices continues to progress. All fee-owned and easement-protected parcels were inspected last year; stewardship reports were then uploaded to *Conservation Track (CT)*, our new online property database. The committee then uploaded to *Conservation Track (CT)*, our new online property database. The committee provided individual training, including CT instruction, to new stewards.

In response to our requests for additional resources and expertise, Lisa

Niccolai, a local forester, was hired as a part-time staff member of the Board.

Taking the initiative against invasive species, the Land Trust launched, along with The Nature Conservancy, a joint venture for controlling Barberry at the Eno and Jewett

Preserves, and working with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, a contract was negotiated for the removal of *Phragmites* at Rams Horn Creek, due to begin in 2010.

The posting of boundaries on Trust-owned properties and on easements,

where owners expressed interest, moved forward. We've scanned and loaded to CT a preponderance of our documentation; this multi-year project should be completed next year.

To fund on-going stewardship costs, a financial reserve was established, along with a policy approved by the Board, assigning a defined cost to the perpetual maintenance of new acquisitions.

Communications, Education & Membership Committee - Humphrey S. Tyler, Chairman

The former Communications and Education Committee's responsibilities were expanded in 2009 to include the duties of the former Membership Committee; it's name, therefore, is now **Communications, Education & Membership (CEM) Committee**.

The committee is the Land Trust's primary liaison to its members and to the community. A host of events were presented during 2009, beginning in February with *The Extraordinary Lives of Owls* program by Wind Over Wings, attended by an overflow crowd at the Lyme Public Library. CEM also organized a tour of a maple syrup operation in town (including hot pancakes!), lead a cross-country trek from Pickwick's Preserve to Pleasant Valley; and, offered guided hikes at Seldon Preserve, Honey Hill Preserve, and the Ravine Trail. To keep constituents abreast of Land Trust activities, the committee published an Annual Report for members and issued two newsletters to all postal patrons of Lyme.

Adding to our collection of nine existing trail maps, the "River to Ridgetop" map depicting five contiguous preserves was completed.

At the end of 2009 our member base totaled 422, a decline of 18 percent. This drop undoubtedly reflected the severe economic conditions, coupled with a timing discrepancy consequent to the change of membership terms to a calendar year basis. A new software

application for tracking membership and donor data, *Giftworks*, was purchased and brought online; going forward, membership processing on this platform should improve the response and the yield of solicitations.



2010 Photo Contest First Place - Wildlife
Scott O'Donnell of Old Lyme