

TRIBUTARIES

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE OLD LYME LAND TRUST

Incorporated 1966

www.oldlymelandtrust.org

August 2011

Watch Rock Management Plan Adopted

At its May 2011 meeting, the OLLT Board voted to adopt the Elizabeth B. Karter Watch Rock Preserve Habitat-Based Management Plan. The plan was provided free of charge by Erica Larner and Wendy Goodfriend of the CT River Coastal Conservation District (CRCCD), and Juliana Barrett of the CT Sea Grant & UConn Extension NEMO Program. The plan describes the 25-acre preserve's natural, cultural and recreational resources, and provides management recommendations for protecting and preserving these resources while allowing for continued public use and enjoyment of the property. Most of the practices will require multi-year efforts, and will depend on funding, volunteer efforts, etc.

For its small size, Watch Rock contains an amazing diversity of natural habitats including coastal moist and dry deciduous forest, conifer grove, open field, vernal pool, brackish marsh and creek, and rocky shoreline. The open field provides food and cover to wildlife such as ruby-throated hummingbirds, broad-winged hawks, deer, red fox, chipmunks, turkey and songbirds. The plan recommends mowing the field annually in order to maintain this habitat.

The understory of the coastal moist forest has been overrun by non-native invasive species. OLLT recently convened a work party to remove Oriental bittersweet. Steward Ed Sopneski led these efforts and has made considerable progress to date. Surveillance programs are recommended to monitor other habitats for invasive plant species before they get established.

The two tidal marsh areas have been invaded by the non-native common reed. Coordinating with state and federal

agencies, such as the CT Department of Environmental Protection and the US Fish and Wildlife Service, to include the preserve in ongoing common reed control efforts may be the most expedient means to address this management issue. Finally, to encourage preserve visitors to properly dispose of fishing and crabbing debris, a monofilament recycling program is being considered.



Children show off the mountain laurel seedlings they planted in pots they decorated at the OLLT Booth at Old Lyme's Midsummer Festival. Some 200 plants were taken home to be transplanted.

OLLT Adds Heller Preserve to its Holdings

In late 2010, Robert and Esther Heller generously donated 15.81 acres on Town Woods Road to the Old Lyme Land Trust, to be kept in perpetuity in its natural state. The land previously had been protected by a conservation easement put in place by the Hellers, who are former Old Lyme residents, in 2003.

The protected property is a relatively undisturbed area which is a portion of the watershed of Mill Pond Brook and the Lieutenant River. The character of the land is dominated by mixed woodlands and ledge. It is believed that rock formations on the property were used for seating around an open amphitheatre-like area where Native Americans held ritual ceremonies. In addition, artifacts from early settlers have been found on the property. The age of old, open grown pasture oaks on the property indicates the land was in open pasture at least as early as the mid 1700s, and reverted to forest after World War II.

The OLLT intends to blaze hiking trails on the property in the near future, consistent with the Hellers' wishes that the property be enjoyed by Old Lyme residents.

Join Us For A Swallows Cruise Sept. 23

Join us for a fabulous natural spectacle on the Connecticut River. In the late afternoon during the fall migration, hundreds of thousands of tree swallows gather over the river from 30 miles around and create beautiful sweeping formations in the sky. Just as the sun sets they converge into a huge funnel over Goose Island and disappear into the reeds to roost for the night.

OLLT will host a cruise on the Connecticut River to view the swallows in action on Friday, September 23rd from 5-8 pm. Tickets are \$40 each. Wine, beer and soft drinks will be provided. You may bring a picnic supper. Call Ted Mundy (860-434-5674) or Chris Clayton (860-434-6294) for tickets.

Featured Preserve: The Lohmann-Buck-Twining Preserve



An osprey nest at the Lohmann-Buck-Twining Preserve.

John Lohmann, a founder of the OLLT, donated to OLLT, along with Kinsley “Bud” Twining and Edith Buck, what is now the 46-acre Lohmann-Buck-Twining Preserve (LBT) on the Lieutenant River. Lohmann bought the LBT acreage from Walter Zuk, the developer of River View, in December of 1962. The story is that John was house-sitting for Bud and Cynthia Twining, whose home sat almost directly across the river, and saw some bulldozers starting to cut an access road through the forest. He literally stopped them in their tracks. John later sold part of the land to Bud Twining and Bud’s sister, Edith Buck. The three of them held the land until 2004, when they made the donation.

Nature Note: Lady Slippers

If you’re lucky, a late-May or early June walk in the woods can bring you a glimpse of one of our most beautiful wildflowers, the rare Pink Lady Slipper orchid. Lady Slippers are choosy about where they grow—they demand very acid soil, light shade, and dry sites, so pine stands and pockets of humus along rocky ridges are likely spots.

Lady Slippers are also less common than other wildflowers because of the way they grow. Their seeds are tiny – one gram contains more than half a million dust-like seeds! Lady Slippers depend on ants to disperse the seeds. Each seed has an elaiosome, a fleshy attachment that causes the ants to carry clumps of seeds underground as food for their larvae.

Fungi in their roots, called mycorrhizae, help the seedlings absorb enough nutrients and water. When the plant becomes photosynthetic, the fungi get a share of the sugars in return. Other plants will form mycorrhizal associations with a number of different fungi, but again Lady Slippers are very choosy – if the right species of fungus is not present, they don’t grow.

A Lady Slipper takes 8-10 years to bloom for the first time. The flowers are pollinated by bumblebees that are trapped for short periods in the blossom’s sac-like petals. It’s not an effective method, so only about one in ten Lady Slippers pro-

The Lohmann-Buck-Twining Preserve is located on the west side of the Lieutenant River at the confluence of its two branches—one flowing south at Saunders Hollow through Canoe Swamp, and the other flowing southwest from Rogers Lake through what is known as Mill Pond and Mill Brook. (For a fascinating history of the Lieutenant River and the industry carried on along these two branches, including shipbuilding, sawmills and farming, see the Lyme Historical Society publication, “The Lieutenant River,” by Susan Ely and Elizabeth Plimpton). The preserve has 2000 feet of frontage along the river. The land rises from the river to a forested granite ridge in the northwest. The ridge affords a spectacular, panoramic view of the Connecticut River, including the Old Saybrook and Lynde Point lighthouses. On a clear day, you can see all the way to Guilford.

The preserve is home to numerous birds, mammals, amphibians and reptiles during the four seasons of the year. Hank Golet, the OLLT steward of the preserve, keeps a list of his sightings. Hank has seen at least 87 species of birds, and 5 species of amphibians and reptiles in the vernal pool at the trailhead. For the last five years, bald eagle sightings have been frequent, as a pair of eagles has nested across the river from about February to June. An exciting recent sighting is river otter. River otter were fairly common many years ago and would slide down the bank to a large rock at the edge of the river in winter.

For more information about the LBT Preserve, including directions and Hank Golet’s list of animal sightings, go to www.oldlymelandtrust.org.



Lady Slippers in bloom on the OLLT Jericho Preserve.

duces seeds. These are plants to treat with great care; not only is their reproduction slow and chancy, but their roots are extremely delicate and spread over a very wide area, so that even the most careful transplanting virtually never works and the plants die within a few years. Poaching of wild plants and browsing by deer contribute to the Lady Slipper’s rarity. Should you see one, enjoy, but don’t touch!

Calling all Volunteers!

The Stewardship committee hosts a work day on one of our preserves the third Sunday of the month, weather and holidays permitting. We are always in need of volunteers.



OLLT Board members Charlie Beal, Bobbie Padgett, and Randy Robinson stand on the newly built bridge on the Goberis Chadwick Preserve.

We're constantly at work on our properties, clearing trails, marking trails and creating new trails, working to remove or control invasives, building bridges over streams or boggy areas, and noting and recording various types of plants, trees and wildlife. All this toward preserving the beauty of, and access to, our OLLT preserves. These work parties provide enormous gratification to all those involved who love open spaces and believe in the protection of our treasured resources here in Old Lyme!

We've also recently installed Pet Waste stations at two of our most heavily visited sites: the Elizabeth B. Carter Watch Rock Preserve, and at the George and Woodward Griswold Preserve. These provide visitors with canine companions 100% biodegradable bags which with which they can pick-up after their dogs, keeping the trails free of waste and sanitary for all.

Please, consider joining us. Our work days are always led by a steward or OLLT board member, and no special skills

are needed other than a willingness to help out. For more information, please contact Bobbie Padgett: jnbpadgett@aol.com, or call 860-434-5475.

Kevin Reidemeister is 2010 Winner of Twining Scholarship

Kevin Reidemeister, a 2010 graduate of Lyme-Old Lyme high school, is the winner of Old Lyme Land Trust's Kinsley Twining Memorial Scholarship. The \$1000 scholarship is awarded to a graduate of LOLHS who is pursuing a college degree in environmental science or a related field. Kevin is a student at the University of Connecticut's College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. He describes himself as a person fond of nature walks with friends through the beautiful hills of Lyme. Good luck Kevin!

Applications for the 2011 Scholarship are due by August 31, 2011. More information including an application can be found at www.oldlymelandtrust.org.

OLLT Contributes to Town Ames Purchase

In October of 2010, OLLT was awarded a \$38,650 grant under the DEP Open Space & Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program towards the purchase of Sheep's Ledge and another small parcel owned by Steve Ames. OLLT had filed its grant application in May. While the application was pending, the Town of Old Lyme worked out a deal with Mr. Ames to purchase as open space over 100 acres of land contiguous to the parcels that OLLT was to buy. Given this development, it was decided that it made sense for Mr. Ames to sell Sheep's Ledge and the other parcel to the Town as part of the larger transaction, with OLLT contributing the grant monies that it had procured for the smaller pieces.

The Town's purchase will open up to the public a beautiful tract of land with ridges, forest and old Indian caves of archeological importance. In addition, because this piece of land is contiguous to other conservation land, it will be possible to hike all the way from Champlain North through the OLLT Boggy Hole Preserve to the existing Town Noyes and Ames Preserves.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Complete form and return to: **Old Lyme Land Trust**, Post Office Box 163, Old Lyme, CT 06371

Name

Address

Town State Zip

Telephone Email

☐ YES, I would like to volunteer. Please call/email me.

My employer has a matching Gift Program: ☐ Form Enclosed Company

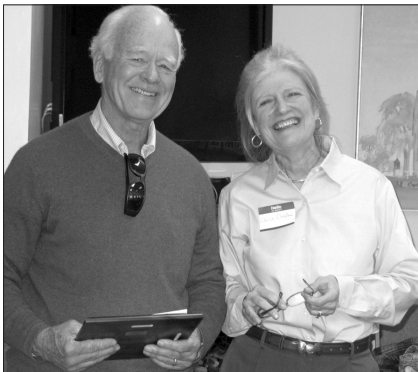
Please consider Old Lyme Land Trust in your estate planning. ☐ Check here if you would like more information.

Enclosed is my contribution: ☐ \$25 ☐ \$35 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other \$

Please make check payable to: **Old Lyme Land Trust**. Your gift is tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. *Thank You.*

In Recognition

George James received the 2011 OLLT Landsaver Award for his significant contributions towards land preservation in Old Lyme. A 43-year resident, James is a former OLLT Trustee and has been active in town affairs, serving as Chairman of the Old Lyme Conservation Commission and Open Space Committee among other roles.



George James receives the Landsaver Award from OLLT President Chris Clayton at the OLLT 2011 Annual Meeting.

James has blazed most of the trails on the OLLT and Town preserves, and has marked and maintained them. Said OLLT President Christina Clayton, "George does not do this for recognition or acclaim. He does it because he feels passionately that the land should be saved."

Bruce and **Tammy Noyes** were recognized as 2011 Volunteers of the Year for their work marking trails on the Boggy Hole Preserve.

The OLLT thanks retiring Trustees **Connie Tapper, Suzanne Colten-Carey, Peter Babin, Randy Robinson, and Steven Glass** for their work and generosity with their time over the past

years. We also welcome new Trustees **Pam Hine** and **Fred Fenton** to the Board.

Special thanks to **Summer Hill Nursery** in Madison for the donation of mountain laurel seedlings for our planting event at the Midsummer Festival.

The Trust would like to acknowledge and thank **Mike Wells** and **Milton Allen** for their pro bono work as attorney and financial advisor, respectively, to the OLLT.

Hiking Trail Easements Granted to OLLT

Jennifer Hillhouse recently granted easements to the Old Lyme Land Trust to create hiking trails on her property in the Upper Three Mile River area. The trails will permit hiking from and to adjacent OLLT properties and to a Town of Old Lyme property. Jennifer is a past President and a long term supporter of the Trust and is involved with many other civic activities benefitting the Town of Old Lyme.

OLLT property in the Upper Three Mile River area extends northerly from Interstate 95 for nearly one mile. The preserve, together with a neighboring Town of Old Lyme property, is a contiguous area of over 100 acres. The preserve includes a variety of terrain including wooded hillsides, impressive rock ledge, scenic views and extensive wetlands with water plants and moss covered rocks, and abundant animal wildlife common to this area.

At the present time the preserve is not open to the public due to difficult access. The Trust has ongoing initiatives to improve access and blaze hiking trails. For more information, please contact a Board member.