



Old Lyme Land Trust

Our Annual Newsletter: *Tributaries*

Incorporated 1966

www.oldlymelandtrust.org

September 2017

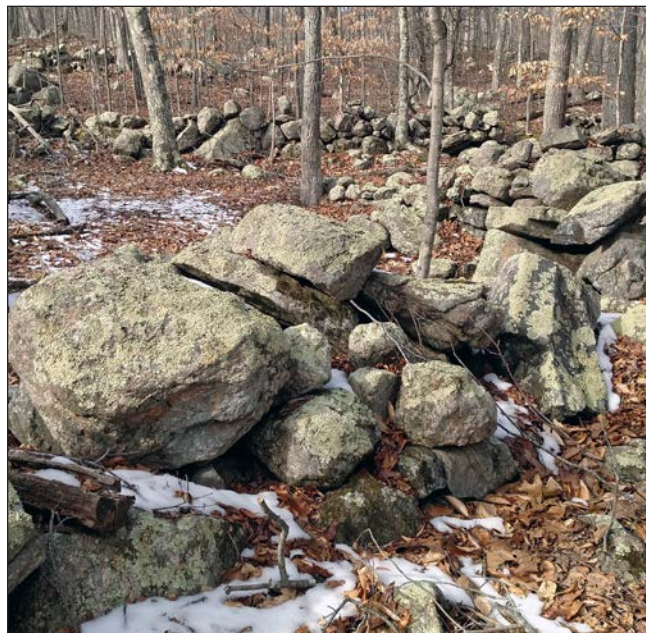
OLLT Upper Three Mile River Preserve Opens to the Public

We have more exciting developments to report on the Upper Three Mile River Preserve (UTMRP). Not only is this area magnificent to behold, it is also our town's principal "headwaters region". It houses the upper watershed of the Three Mile River, an aquifer supplying parallel brooks that seeps up from the ground between high, broken ledges. The waters flow slowly south, merge north of I-95, and then the single brook flows south for a few miles before reaching Long Island Sound. Another set of brooks flows north into Rogers Lake, and from there through Mill Brook to the Lieutenant River. Coyote, deer and other wildlife abound. Last year, Audubon Connecticut and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) included the upper watershed in an enormous 60,000 acre forest block that includes parts of Lyme, East Lyme and Salem. Known as the "Lyme Forest Block", this area is an important habitat to several bird species that are endangered, threatened, or vulnerable in Connecticut or even globally.

But first, a short refresher on its history:

Ten years ago, OLLT purchased a 16-acre parcel of forest located in the northeast corner of Old Lyme-- the wildest and most undeveloped part of town. There was no access to this land-locked parcel, leading to skepticism by some at the wisdom of the acquisition. OLLT, however, recognized the area as "The Grand Canyon of Old Lyme" and saw an opportunity to begin building what could ultimately become the largest nature preserve in Old Lyme -- one that could rival even the 1,000 acres of "The Preserve" in Old Saybrook.

By early 2017, OLLT had purchased five abutting parcels and was bequeathed a sixth by the family of Silvia Marsh. A key acquisition was the purchase of a 40-acre parcel from the Speirs family, funded in large part by a grant from the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition (DEEP/OSWA) Program. This parcel provided the road frontage needed to finally



The stone walls and homestead foundation (not shown) on the Denison Farm property remain as testament to an earlier way of life.

provide access to the preserve. We are pleased to report that, owing in part to Jennifer Hillhouse's earlier generous donation of two walking easements across her land, a loop trail linking OLLT's acreage to 30 additional acres of open space owned by the Town of Old Lyme is now nearly complete.

To add to this good news, the recent acquisition of two more parcels will make the loop trail even more spectacular.

(Continued on page 3)

Roger Tory Peterson Estuary Center Launches Environmental Education Program at Mile Creek Preserve

During the 2016-2017 academic year, the Connecticut Audubon's regional center, the Roger Tory Peterson Estuary Center (RTPEC), launched its award winning, science-based, environmental education program in schools from New London to Essex. To maximize time outdoors and minimize costs, RTPEC ran all of its Science in Nature programs on school grounds or in natural areas accessible by foot from the classrooms. A focal point of the initiative was Mile Creek School in Regional School District 18. Nearly 300 students in grades 3-5 enjoyed nature and learned about Geology,

(Continued on page 2)

Upper Three Mile River Preserve Inaugural Guided Hike

Saturday, Sept. 16 at 10 a.m.

**Meet in the commuter lot at Exit 71 at 9:45 am
(Rain date: Sunday, Sept. 17)**

**Experience nature's splendor in Old Lyme!
Wear footwear suitable for rugged terrain.**



Roger Tory Peterson Estuary Center educators used natural phenomena at the Mile Creek Preserve – a small stream, fallen trees, lichen-encrusted rocks, decomposing logs, and stone walls – as “education stations”.

Roger Tory Peterson Estuary Center

(Continued from page 1)

Adaptations, Weather and Climate, and Bird Ecology in the OLLT Mile Creek Preserve located within walking distance of the school. The 44-acre Mile Creek Preserve was OLLT's first woodland preserve, donated by William and Connie Pike in 1973.

“The Old Lyme Land Trust preserves serve as ideal outdoor classrooms for local schools,” said Eleanor Robinson, RTPEC Director. “Natural areas and trails enable RTPEC educators to conduct outdoor programs for students while unveiling the excitement and importance of nature to our local children.”

Supported by a generous grant from the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, RTPEC taught close to 1000 school children outdoors last year. A grant from the

Lyme-Old Lyme Education Foundation will enable RTPEC to offer these programs in Region 18 schools again in 2017-2018. Each program complies with Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) that are being introduced into Connecticut schools, and helps develop skills in collaborative learning in math, science, writing, and art.

RTPEC hopes to access other Old Lyme Land Trust properties for outdoor education. “Other habitats await these students in various OLLT properties beyond the Mile Creek Preserve”, said Robinson. “We are particularly interested in giving students direct access to the estuary biome. As I have repeatedly reminded them, they are estuary kids.”

Making a Difference: A Profile of Old Lyme's Christina Clayton

The work of every OLLT volunteer helps to accomplish its mission of conserving the open space that makes Old Lyme unique and beautiful, but there's someone whose substantial and sustained contributions warrant particular attention. Christina Clayton is an attorney by training, but a naturalist at heart. If you've ever walked in an OLLT preserve and been greeted by a friendly woman with binoculars and a golden retriever at her side, you may have met Chris.

Growing up in New Canaan, Chris was drawn to the woods and nature. Then, during a particularly fateful study break while in law school, she first saw a hooded merganser and became captivated by the world of birds. Chris in turn hooked her husband, Stanley Kolber, who is now a photographer who has won recognition for his photos of birds.

After retiring from careers practicing law in New York City, Chris and Stanley moved to Old Lyme in 2004. Chris said, “The first thing I did was look for a conservation group to get involved with.” It was a lucky day for Old Lyme when she chose OLLT.

Starting out as steward for the Griswold Preserve (a position she still holds), Chris was soon approached to join the Board of Trustees. In 2010 she became President of OLLT, and fulfilled this role with remarkable energy and skill for six years. During her tenure, Chris played a key part in doubling

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OLLT Board Members:

President:	Michael J. Kiernan
Vice President:	Vacant
Treasurer:	Ellie Czarnowski
Secretary:	Anne Galliher
Trustees:	Susanne Colten-Carey
	Claudio Denoya
	Fred Fenton
	George James
	Ed Silk
	Tom Unger



Christina Clayton with her retriever, Jambo.



It was an exhilarating moment when the Upper Three Mile River Preserve sign was installed on Four Mile River Road at the beginning of the 2.5 mile loop trail. Pictured: Mike Kiernan, Lea Harty, Ellie Czarnowski, Enrique Lopez.

OLLT UTMRP *(continued from page 1)*

One parcel is the so-called Denison Farm, which carries with it interesting local history. Around 1800, Isaac Denison settled in the heart of the Three Mile River watershed, carving out a farm-site in the wilderness. It is likely that sheep were raised here to produce wool for export to Napoleon's armies, as was common in Old Lyme at the time. On his farm, Denison built an intricate network of pens and stone walls which surely required many years and much hard work to complete. By the end of the 1800's, the farm had been abandoned and the forest had grown back. Over the years, potential development of the site was proposed for several uses, including a golf course and an upscale housing sub-division. Luckily, in February of this year, OLLT was able to purchase the 11-acre site and annex it to the UTMRP. Soon, hikers will be able to walk the "ancient highway" that cuts through Denison's farm and appreciate his remarkable system of stone walls. This place is truly isolated, magical, and lost in time. Once again, we have applied to the DEEP/OSWA grant program for partial reimbursement.

The other parcel is a six-acre woodland tract recently donated to OLLT through the generosity of Nunzio and Irene Corsino, whose Four Mile River Farm abuts the UTMRP preserve. Aside from its raw beauty and ecological value, this is

A Very Special Donation

The Old Lyme Land Trust is very grateful to Nunzio and Irene Corsino for the donation of a six-acre woodlot which is now part of the Upper Three Mile River Preserve. We acknowledge their vision and generosity.

a valuable keystone parcel for OLLT, joining sectors of the preserve and making the loop trail possible. With the Corsino and the Denison Farm acquisitions, protected lands in the watershed now total 187 acres, making this one of the largest groupings of protected open space in Old Lyme.

And now looking ahead:

In September, 2017, OLLT's UTMRP will be officially opened to the public for hiking and passive recreation. Thanks go out to the many volunteers who participated in our trail-building work parties, and especially to Rob Evans, UTMRP Steward. We will continue conservation efforts in this area, including the pursuit of a connection with the nearby 185-acre OLLT Lay Preserve, which would be a major step towards the realization of OLLT's vision of a town-wide trail system.

The trail begins across from the town transfer station on Four Mile River Road. Parking is available at the Commuter Parking Lot located a few hundred yards south at I-95 Exit 71. Please keep in mind that this is a large, rugged, and isolated preserve. Completion of the entire loop trail is recommended for experienced and seasoned hikers only.

Combating Invasive Plants: Meet OLLT Intern Peter Hine

Over the years, a variety of non-native species of plants, animals, and other organisms have been introduced into Connecticut. Those that exhibit an aggressive growth habit and can out-compete native species are referred to as "invasive species". Invasive plant species not only displace native plants, but by dominating an area they can create imbalances in the ecosystem that affect the fauna as well.

(Continued on page 7)



As part of OLLT's efforts to tackle invasive plants, Andrea Griffis Inglis plants ferns that she donated near the Mary Steube Fishway in an area where mugwort was removed.

We acknowledge OLLT's generous donors

(July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2017)

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Thank you all!

The Trust thanks and acknowledges Attorney Michael J. Wells of the Hudson & Kilby law firm in Centerbrook for his pro bono work as attorney to OLLT.

OLLT Preserve Stewards



A blue heron rookery on the Lay Preserve.

All major OLLT preserves have at least one Steward who visits the preserve regularly and reports problems or management needs. Stewards also often pitch in by picking up litter and participating in trail and other maintenance activities. They fill a very important role in OLLT's daily life, so if you have a favorite preserve please consider becoming its Steward!

Belton Copp Preserve:

Fred Fenton

Bob and Esther Heller

Preserve: Vacant

Boggy Hole Preserve: Vacant

Elizabeth B. Karter Watch

Rock Preserve: Sandy Downing;

Lori Gruen; Jerry Grady

George and Woodward H.

Griswold Preserve:

Andrea Inglis-Griffis;

Christina Clayton

Goberis-Chadwick Preserve:

Charlie Beal

Hatchetts Hill Preserve:

Rob Evans

Hoffman-Matthiessen-

DeGerendy Preserve:

John Christiano; Leanne Jolin;

Jack Hine

Jericho Preserve:

Russ Fogg; Lea Harty

John Lohmann Connecticut

River Preserve:

Anne Galliher; Ted Mundy

Lay Preserve:

George James

Lohmann Buck Twining

Preserve: Hank Golet;

Edie Twining

Mile Creek Preserve:

Cindy Kovak; Bobbie Padgett;

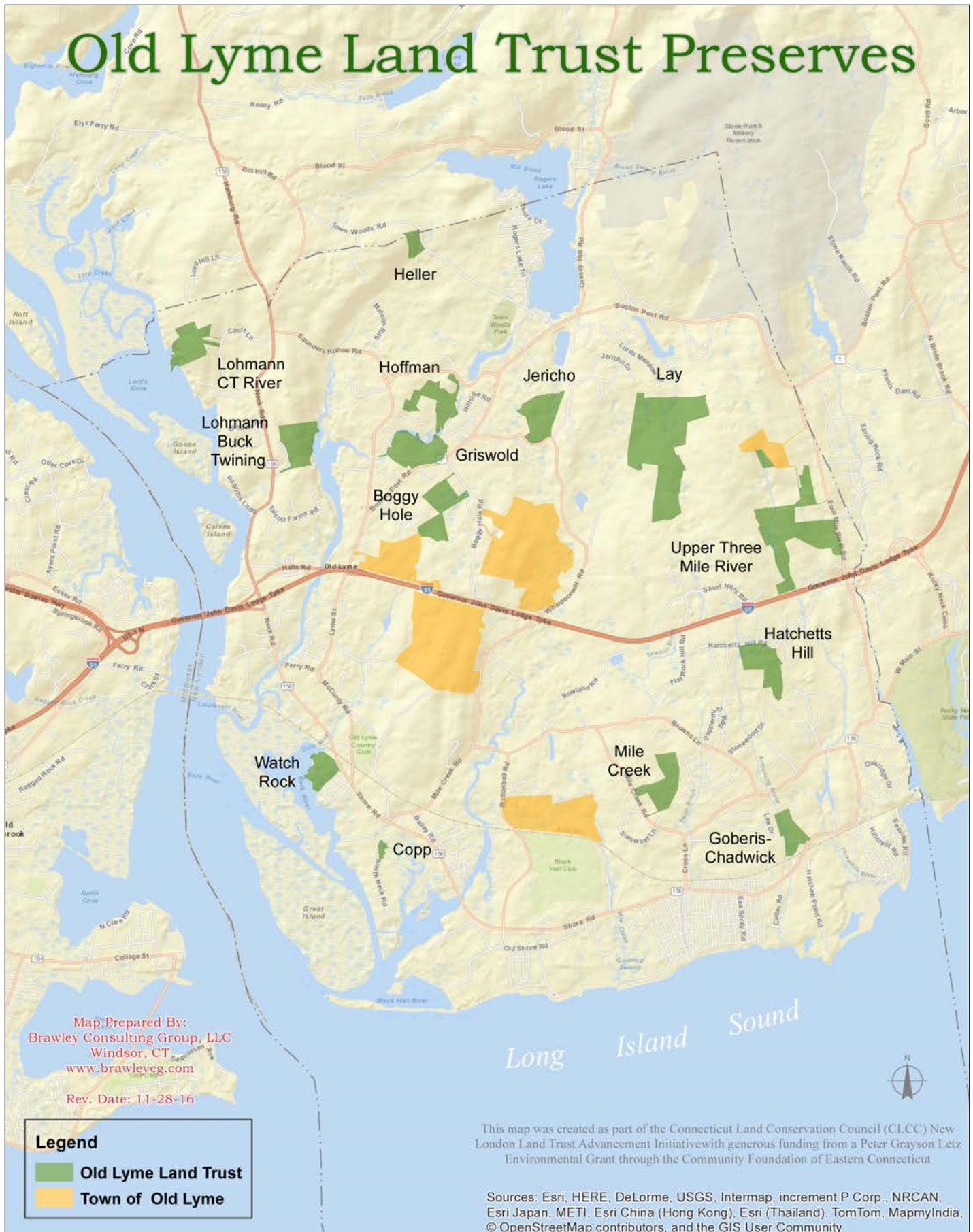
Ron Lee

Upper Three Mile River

Preserve: Rob Evans;

Michael Kiernan

Old Lyme Land Trust Preserves



See reverse for descriptions of the preserves and directions.

Visit www.ouldlymelandtrust.org for downloadable trail maps, land history, and other information. Enjoy!

Old Lyme Land Trust Preserves

Boggy Hole – 45 acres. Northern part has wetlands and abundant wildlife. Southern section has wonderful ledge outcrops and an old cart path through open woodland with large trees. Directions: Boston Post Rd to Boggy Hole Rd, trailhead about 600' from intersection on right, OR enter via the town-owned Champlain North Preserve: Boston Post Rd to Rose Ln, right at T onto Hillwood Rd, park in cul-de-sac at end.

Belton **Copp** – 4 acres. Borders a state-owned 32-acre tidal marsh, with views of sunrise and marsh wildlife. Wind chimes and a grove of fairy houses in a garden adorned with fanciful objects are along the “Whimsy Walk” created by local girl scouts. Directions: Rte 156 to 14 Smith Neck Rd, on left 0.25 mi. from turn. Walk through the grassy clearing with a granite bench under a lone cedar tree to the trailhead.

Goberis-Chadwick – 25 acres. Bordered by Armstrong Brook. Features rock ledges, huge boulders and stone walls. Alive with spring peepers in early spring and red-tailed hawks year round. Directions: Take the gravel drive at 372 Shore Rd (Rte 156), bear to the left to the parking area. There is a private home on the right; please do not park in the driveway.

George & Woodward H. **Griswold** – 51 acres. Contains forested uplands and ledges, vernal pools, and riparian lowland. Also the site of a CT DEEP fish ladder. There are beavers in the pond and several species of ducks. Many migratory birds visit. Directions: Parking area off Boston Post Rd, directly opposite Stoneleigh Knoll, 2 mi. west of Rogers Lake.

Hatchetts Hill – 44 acres. Boardwalks cross Armstrong Brook, which originates here. Land is flat, easy walking through woods of large oak, beech, and maple. The blue trail crosses wetlands that are a haven for amphibians. Directions: Four Mile River Rd to Hatchetts Hill Rd just south of I-95. At Machnik Dr (0.65 mi. from turn) the road goes straight but becomes much narrower. Preserve is 0.15 mi. further on left.

Bob and Esther **Heller** – 16 acres. Flat ledges along the uphill trail are thought to have been used by Native Americans for ritual ceremonies. Directions: Boston Post Rd to 80 Town Woods Rd, on the left just before the big curve where the road enters Lyme.

Hoffman-Matthiessen-DeGerenday – 40 acres. Open woodlands with laurel stands and soft patches of ferns. There is a pond formed by an earthen dam, where you may see beavers. Many species of birds present. Directions: Boston Post Rd to 95 Sill Ln (0.3 mi. from turn if Sill Ln is taken from the east, or 1.5 mi. if taken from the west.)

Jericho – 50 acres. Dramatic ledge outcrops and thick conifer stands. Ladyslipper orchids in June. Wonderful views from the high points. The fieldstone-clad house is OLLT owned and rented; please respect the tenants' privacy. Directions: Boston Post Rd to Whippoorwill Rd, 0.5 mi. on the left at 44 Whippoorwill Rd.

Lay – 185 acres. OLLT's largest preserve. High secluded woodland with considerable wetlands in the lower sectors. Blue heron rookery on site. Directions: Boston Post Rd to Lords Meadow Ln. then straight into planned Lords Woods development. Trailhead at 3rd asphalt driveway apron on right.

John **Lohmann CT River** – 42 acres. Lovely terraced fields with a few huge trees, edged by stone walls, leading down to Whaleback Point and frontage on Lords Cove in the CT River. Directions: Trailhead at 33 Coult Ln, off Neck Rd (Rte 156). Park along Coult Ln, but please do not park in front of or directly across from driveways. Can also be accessed from the river by kayak or canoe.

Lohmann-Buck-Twining – 46 acres. Includes 2,000 feet of Lieutenant River frontage. Panoramic views of the CT River (west) and the Lieutenant River (east) from the top of the ridge. Bald eagles are often seen here. Directions: Rte 156 to Riverview Dr (right turn at mailbox that says #79). Park in the graveled area at the sharp bend of the road.

Mile Creek – 44 acres. Secluded woodland with wetlands created by Swan Brook. You might see turkey, deer, amphibians, and other wildlife here. See website to download a fun self-guided tour along the Mile Creek Educational Nature Trail. Directions: Trailhead parking near mailbox at 191 Mile Creek Rd, 0.2 miles west of Mile Creek School.

Upper Three Mile River – 160 acres. Part of the largest remaining undeveloped block of land in Old Lyme. Varied terrain includes cliffs, open ridges, a long piece of the Three Mile River, amazing stone walls, thick conifer groves, stands of laurel, wetlands, and woodlands. A very special place! Level: moderately difficult. Directions: Trailhead across from town transfer station on Four Mile River Rd. Park at the I-95 Exit 71 Commuter Parking Lot a few hundred yards south.

Elizabeth B. Karter **Watch Rock** – 25 acres. Bordered by the Duck River on two sides. Spectacular views from rocky shoreline across the water and tidal wetlands to the CT River and Long Island Sound. Varied habitats of woodlands, meadow, and spruce grove mean there is plentiful wildlife. Directions: McCurdy Rd from Old Lyme town center, cross Rte 156, right turn on Joel Dr, then a left and a quick right to the parking lot. Also accessible by water via kayak or canoe.

Conscript Turned Volunteer of the Year: Jonathan Lathrop



Jon Lathrop at the ready for preserve maintenance work.

At its 2017 annual meeting, OLLT recognized the wife and husband team of Anne Galliher and Jon Lathrop as Volunteers of the Year. Anne volunteered with OLLT first. Wanting to spend more time outside after her retirement from AT&T in 2015, she became the steward for the John Lohmann Connecticut River Preserve (JLCRP). While Anne knew she could count on Jon's assistance with an occasional chore, she did not anticipate the enthusiasm he would develop for the work.

One of Anne's first tasks was to walk the JLCRP boundaries to ensure there were no property encroachments. Conveniently, Jon has past experience as a professional civil engineer and surveyor. As if reliving college summers on a survey crew, he bounded into the thickest of thickets and uncovered even the most obscure boundary markers.

Other diverse requests followed. He helped remove an abandoned and presumably stolen canoe from a swampy section of the property and delivered it to the Westbrook State Police barracks. Soon after that, he shimmied up a tree branch hanging over the river to remove a swing near Whale Rock. Next he formulated drainage plans for the gradually eroding trail road, which was followed by leveling mounds in the upper field, and finally by hauling away discarded tires.

An unintended consequence of

this activity was the development of a fondness for weed-whackers and chain saws, tools Jonn never imagined owning during 30+ years of living on a one-fifth acre lot. But now he sees applications, both at JLCRP and at other OLLT preserves. He even presented Anne with a birthday gift that enables her to share his joy of power tools: her own set of ear protectors!

Jon is retired from Electric Boat where he was a Principal Engineer/Project Manager. When he is not helping out on OLLT preserves, he likes to play jazz guitar and "mess about" in sailboats, including a 39-foot boat he designed and built called, coincidentally, "Volunteer".

Combatting Invasives

(Continued from page 3)

OLLT is pleased to have summer intern Peter Hine applying his knowledge, skills, enthusiasm, and energy toward protecting our properties from the negative effects of invasive plant species. Among the most common invasive plant species in OLLT preserves are Japanese barberry (*Berberis thunbergii*) and Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*). Peter's efforts will be focused on controlling and, if possible, eliminating these invasive plants from high priority areas in four preserves: the Boggy Hole Preserve; the Elizabeth B. Karter Watch Rock Preserve; the John Lohmann CT River Preserve; and the George and Woodward H. Griswold Preserve. While OLLT has dedicated individual work parties to invasive plant control in the past, Peter's intensive 10-week campaign is expected to have a much greater impact.

Peter, an Old Lyme native, is an undergraduate student at Denison University majoring in biology with a concentration in plant biology and ecology. He comes by his interest in plants and environmental conservation honestly—he is the son of Pamela Hine, a Senior Lecturer in botany at Connecticut College and former OLLT President. Peter plans to pursue a Ph.D. in plant ecology. In the meantime, we are grateful that he has chosen to apply his talents to an important issue in his hometown!



Osprey nest platforms don't last forever, and require regular maintenance. OLLT contributed to a fund to maintain several platforms on Great Island at the mouth of the Connecticut River.

Making a Difference

(Continued from page 2)

the number of OLLT preserves from six to 12. Altogether, she helped secure or make accessible more than 330 of the 754 acres OLLT currently has open to the public. The work required to realize these achievements is equivalent to a demanding full-time job. Chris Clayton did it with intelligence, grace, and a smile that won support and built consensus.

Chris still walks every day, listening for birds while trying to keep Jambo, her retriever, from playing in the muddier spots. If you should see them, you might want to stop and say "Thanks". Christina Clayton has given Old Lyme a gift of incalculable worth that will be enjoyed by many generations. Old Lyme is indeed fortunate to have such a dedicated and generous volunteer among us.

Fourth Annual OLLT Kayak Regatta: September 10

Attention all kayakers and canoers: On Sunday September 10th at 1 p.m., we will depart the Lieutenant River boat launch (located on Route 156 near Ferry Road) on a rising



Paddlers of all ages and abilities enjoy the scenic Lieutenant River during the OLLT Kayak Regatta.

tide to explore the Lieutenant River. Once a thriving center of boat-building activity, it is now a serene protected waterway surrounded by salt marsh and cliffs.

Boaters can put ashore at the Morning Glory Café for lunch or to meet with friends, or can continue upriver to view the natural beauty and features of the Lieutenant River. It passes OLLT's Lohmann Buck Twining preserve and the Roger Tory Peterson Refuge, and the picturesque grounds of the Bee and Thistle Inn and the Florence Griswold Museum are on the eastern bank.

At high tide, you can also explore the Mill Brook River and see beaver dams and two fish ladders before it terminates at Rogers Lake. At 3 p.m. we will catch the outgoing tide and paddle our way back to the starting point, aiming to return at 4 p.m.

The Regatta will be led by OLLT Trustee Fred Fenton, an experienced kayaker. Donations to the Old Lyme Land Trust will be gratefully accepted. Personal Flotation Devices a.k.a. life jackets are **REQUIRED**.

For more information or in the event of rain, please contact Fred Fenton at fredfenton16@gmail.com.