

INHERITANCE

A REMARKABLE CONSERVATION LEGACY

The Lower Connecticut River and Coastal Region



This is the story of a remarkable conservation community with a plan and the conviction to carry it forward.



Essex Village (photo: RiverCOG)

The Lower Connecticut River and Coastal Region is one of the most fruitful and attractive natural systems in the temperate world. Ocean frontage, rich fresh and saltwater wetlands, fertile fields, productive forests, trap rock ridges, and cedar swamps all gather here around the final watersheds of the Connecticut, one of the continent's great rivers. Unlike nearly all the other major river mouths on the planet, the lower Connecticut culminates in Long Island Sound through a largely unspoiled natural landscape that still retains most of its inherent integrity and its function as an intact ecosystem.

The dynamics that preserved this legacy began to coalesce at the close of the last Ice Age. When the last glacier retreated, it revealed a corrugated landscape, not only of fertile bottomlands, but also of marshes, ledges, boulders, and a complex pattern of soil types. Without doubt this is a Yankee landscape, but perhaps more than any other subregion in New England, it orients southward where the sun beams in broadside all winter, and where the reviving winds of spring come first every year to the coastal northeast.

Native peoples have lived here from time immemorial, taking their sustenance from the varied life systems of the rich and forested tidal estuary. During the Colonial period, the Connecticut shore was peopled by enterprising immigrants, and towns sprang up within this remarkably rich natural landscape. Fishing, boatbuilding, farming, and crafts followed the early trade in beaver pelts. Merchants, artisans, farmers, schoolmarms, freed slaves, fishermen, traders, and boat builders all found homes and workshops along the Connecticut. Situated along what would become the Boston Post Road between New York and Massachusetts, the region settled and prospered early, and saw nearly a hundred and fifty years of steady growth before the battles of Lexington and Concord. The trials and triumphs of the Revolution were succeeded by the *Era of Good Feelings*, when American technology and industrial progress began to transform the landscape of the continent.

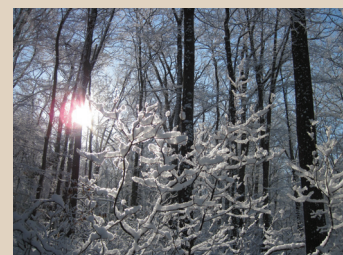
It was right about that time the ancient influence of the geological underpinnings of the region began to be felt.

Mammoth steamships carrying huge machinery could not navigate over the changing maze of sandbars of the Connecticut where schooners and barges had gone for generations. Sprawling tidal wetlands, on a scale too massive to fill in, frustrated industrialization of the shorelines. Ledges and boulders limited large-scale agricultural endeavor, and led much of the undeveloped landscape to either remain on the scale of sheep-farming or revert to young hardwood forest and charcoal production to fuel the State's iron furnaces. Except for small enterprises along the River's tumbling tributaries, many of the excesses of the Industrial Revolution passed over the mouth of the Connecticut, and thus much of the culture and the landscape survived unscathed. When antiquarians of the 19th century began to search for what remained of a ravaged New England landscape, they found much to celebrate in the lower Connecticut River valley. As early as 1914 the State's first Park Commission identified the lower Connecticut River as a priority area for conservation.

In consequence, the region became attractive to artists, authors, and academics, all of whom discovered something of a "best of both worlds" within easy steamship and railroad access to New York and Boston. An ethic of cultivated naturalism



Shad Fisherman on Hamburg Cove
(Painting: Winfield Scott Clime, courtesy of the Florence Griswold Museum)



Photos, counterclockwise from top:

The Mouth of the River (photo: Long Island Sound Resource Center / LISRC)

Boaters in Lord Cove (photo: Judy Preston)

Fledgling Osprey (photo: USFWS)

Salt Meadow Unit, Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge (photo: USFWS)

Winter trees, Salt Meadow Unit, Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge (photo: USFWS)

Through the work of Old Lyme resident Roger Tory Peterson, perhaps America's premier ornithologist, and local activist Richard H. Goodwin, early pioneer of The Nature Conservancy, the lower valley can be said to have been a key incubator of modern American conservation.



RIVER & COASTAL

Griswold Point Preserve, TNC, eastern shore, mouth of the Connecticut River (photo: Kim Curry, Old Saybrook Land Trust)

bloomed throughout selected portions of New England and New York in the Victorian era; nowhere was this flowering more pronounced and better expressed, celebrated, and enshrined, than along this stretch of the lower River. Generations of artists were joined, and then to a degree succeeded, by the conservationists, and ecologists of the 20th century who could not only appreciate the undiminished natural legacy of the area, but also came to measure it, catalog its species, and have endeavored to protect the natural birthright of all its living things. Through the work of Old Lyme resident Roger Tory Peterson, perhaps America's premier ornithologist and local activist Richard H. Goodwin, early pioneer of The Nature Conservancy, the lower valley can be said to have been a key incubator of modern American conservation.

To the casual visitor today, the region is attractive and intriguing, but in no way would it be considered a howling wilderness. Along the beaten paths, those seeking a gas station, a good meal, museum day trip or a night out at the playhouse will not have far to look; all the common conveniences and much more are near at hand. But one does not have to venture far off scenic Connecticut Route 9 or Interstate 95 to find villages with homes and businesses that don't have to contrive to look authentic for the simple reason that they still are the real thing. Visitors can stay and recreate in authentic lodgings, and find that they have the opportunity

to explore the valley and its coastal environs on foot, kayak, vessel, and by train. Once out in the wild, the visitor finds themselves in the presence of a peaceful landscape that is going about its business in substantially the same ways it did before Verrazano and Hudson made their ways towards the great North River to the west, looking for a passage to China.

Today, this wild inheritance is protected by landowners, municipal bodies, regional, state, and federal agencies and, to an increasingly crucial extent, by private citizens who, to put it simply, really love this place. Eighteen towns make up the lower Connecticut River and coastal region, and fourteen cooperating conservation land trusts strive, through personal dedication and private initiative, to keep the natural faith hereabouts. This is the story of a remarkable conservation community with a plan and the conviction to carry it forward. We tell it in the hope that you, too, will share with us the joys of a natural legacy that will be here for our children as long as we embrace it along the winding course of our own lifetimes. We know that we love the lower River valley and its coast, and we know that we need your help to secure this natural legacy.

Butterfly Walk
(photo: Salem Land Trust)



THE ELLIOT PRESERVE Clinton, Connecticut

The Elliot Preserve is a newly donated iconic symbol of conservation along the Connecticut coast, not only because of the beauty of the land protected here, but also because of its connection to the Native American heritage of the Mohegan tribe. The property was acquired by the Elliot family directly from Chief Uncas in the 1640s, and has remained in family hands ever since. On October 31, 2015, it was deeded as a gift in fee to the **Clinton**

Land Conservation Trust, which will now manage it as a conservation resource in perpetuity. Future title searches will reveal that this parcel had only three owners of record between 1640 and 2015, truly a remarkable record of heritage and stewardship. On behalf of her family, Lucy Elliot said simply that the family wanted the property "to be maintained as a meadow, so that's what we're going to do!"

"We wanted the land to remain wild and be used for research and educational purposes," stated Josie Elliot, the donor's daughter. And so it will be: uplands and wetlands that follow the Indian River's course to Clinton Harbor, including accessibility from Clinton Landing. "This is a jewel, and it really is a wonderful thing for the town," stated Clinton Land Trust President Michael Houde in accepting the generous gift of the deed. The rich history of the lower Connecticut River valley has no more vital a witness than the provenance and beauty of this remarkable parcel.



Elliot Preserve (photo: Margot Burns)

Lucy Elliot and Mike Houde, President, Clinton Land Conservation Trust (photo: Amy Paterson, CLCC)



THE EIGHTMILE RIVER WILD AND SCENIC WATERSHED Primarily Salem, Lyme, and East Haddam, Connecticut

The **Eightmile River** is a clean and largely unspoiled watercourse that flows into the Connecticut River after passing through parts of Salem, Lyme, and East Haddam, Connecticut. More than 3/4 of the watershed area is forested land and 40% of it is permanently protected; the river itself and associated ecosystems provide habitat to hundreds of varieties of wildlife species as it wends its way across a natural landscape and into the Connecticut River. In addition to protecting local water supplies, the river is a major recreational resource for fishermen and women.

Beginning in 1995, a coalition of local citizens, municipal officials, and local land trusts began constructing an effort that would preserve this natural treasure while retaining local control over decisions made and actions taken. An Eightmile Wild and Scenic Study Committee was formed in 2002. Members included the First Selectmen from the communities of East Haddam, Lyme, and Salem, representatives of local land trusts, and representatives from land use commissions in each town. Other members included a representative from the Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, and The Nature Conservancy. The National Park Service provided staff support and overall coordination.

Waterfall, Devil's Hopyard State Park
(photo: State of Connecticut, DEEP)



The group worked together to secure a Wild and Scenic Designation for the watercourse, and created the Eightmile River Management Plan as the basis for the work of local land use planning and regulatory commissions. They identified six special "resource values" are present in the Eightmile River Watershed, including: Watershed Hydrology, Water Quality, Unique Species and Natural Communities, Geology, the Watershed Ecosystem, and the Cultural Landscape. Preserving and enhancing these values is the basis of the cooperative efforts of all the agencies concerned, for the benefit of the citizens of Salem, Lyme, and East Haddam as well as the wildlife that makes its homes in the borders of this remarkable resource.

Today this effort is led by the Eightmile River Wild and Scenic Coordinating Committee established after completion of the Study and as part of the designation process. The Committee works with and largely depends on landowners, town boards, commissions and their associated local communities, the state, user groups, and federal agencies to all have active roles in the implementation of the management plan and the protection of the outstanding resource values.

A UNIQUE AND MIGHTY REGIONAL ECOSYSTEM

Wild Geranium (photo: Thomas Wells) Eastern Phoebe (photo: USFWS)



The Lower Connecticut River is the crowning stretch of a massive 7.2 million-acre watershed that descends more than 400 miles from near to the Canadian border down to Long Island Sound. In this, its final run, it broadens to create the most extensive fresh and brackish tidal wetland landscapes in the Northeast, containing one of the least disturbed and most pristine large-river tidal marsh systems in the nation. Among the millions of living creatures and plants in residence here are



Eastern Box Turtle (photo: USFWS)

23 bird species, 3 types of fish, 10 invertebrates, and 20 varieties of plants considered to be at some degree of risk: a remarkable concentration of sensitive species located in the middle of the populous Northeast. It has been recognized as a vital conservation resource by state, federal, and international authorities.

The character of the Connecticut's flowage transitions from tidal fresh water down through Portland, Cromwell and Middletown through Haddam, Chester, Lyme, and Deep River to a brackish mixture of fresh and salt water from Essex down to Old Lyme, and then a final two and a half miles of salt water from Old Saybrook on into Long Island Sound. In its final 30 miles, the southward median flow of 20,000 cubic feet per second is reversed by the northerly tidal forces of ocean water from the Sound, with water levels shifting twice a day throughout a system of 115,000 acres of wetlands. What results, in the aggregate, is an extraordinarily

rich, dynamic, and diverse wildlife habitat, set in a stunningly beautiful landscape that transition from forested uplands through meadow, marsh, and wetlands to the River and the sea.

Along the banks and marshes of the Connecticut and along coastal tidal rivers like the Hammonasset, the Menunketesuck, and the Black Hall is a rich and varied tapestry of grasses, plants, flowers, shrubs, and trees that carpets the natural landscape. Each responds to the broad characteristics of a diversified habitat, and each, in turn, contributes to the ecosystem of the region.

Making their way through the channel, veins, and arteries of the Connecticut and the region's coastal rivers are millions of fish, ranging from minnows, alewives, herring, shad, perch, and bass up to Atlantic salmon, flounder, catfish, and sturgeon, among a total of more than 75 species.

A rich portfolio of plant species and natural communities makes the lower Connecticut River valley and coast one of the premier bird habitats in the world. The mouth of the Connecticut serves as an unmistakable landmark, a rich and protected food source and nesting ground, and a place of refuge and winter habitat and highway north for those species whose summer destinations lie in Vermont, New Hampshire, or Canada. American black duck, mallard, mute swan, Virginia rail, piping plover, osprey, snowy egret, and bald eagle all find homes in the lower River valley.

Animal species abound here in marsh, field, and forest, ranging from the rare diamondback terrapin to ubiquitous species like beaver, fox, and white-tailed deer.

CONNECTICUT RIVER GATEWAY COMMISSION Haddam, East Haddam, Chester, Deep River, Lyme, Essex, Old Saybrook, Old Lyme, Connecticut

In 1973, the Connecticut General Assembly passed legislation providing for the establishment of a state and local commission for the protection of the lower Connecticut River valley. The mission of this body has been "to preserve the unique scenic, ecological, scientific, and historic values of the lower Connecticut River valley for the benefit of future generations." This 30-mile section of the river and its environs have received national and international attention, including designation by The Nature Conservancy as one of the Last Great Places; the recognition of the River's tidelands as internationally significant under the terms of the Ramsar Treaty; the recognition of the River as "one of the most important ecological landscapes" by the Secretary of the Interior, the designation of the Connecticut as an American Heritage River by the President of the United States, and inclusion in the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.



Haddam Meadows State Park looking north (photo: State of Connecticut, DEEP)

THE PRESERVE Old Saybrook, Essex, and Westbrook, Connecticut

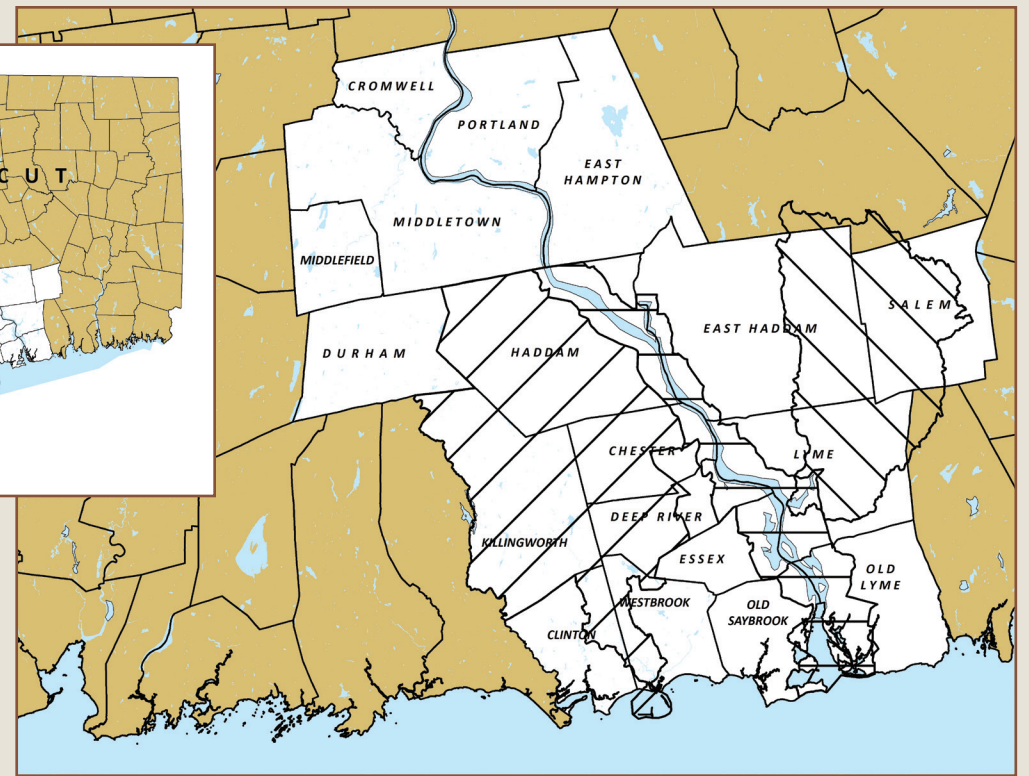
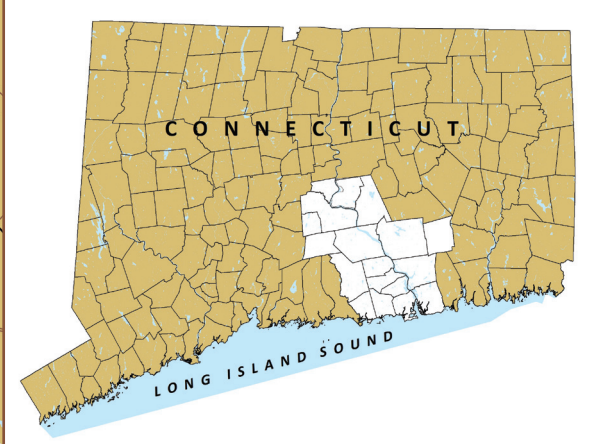
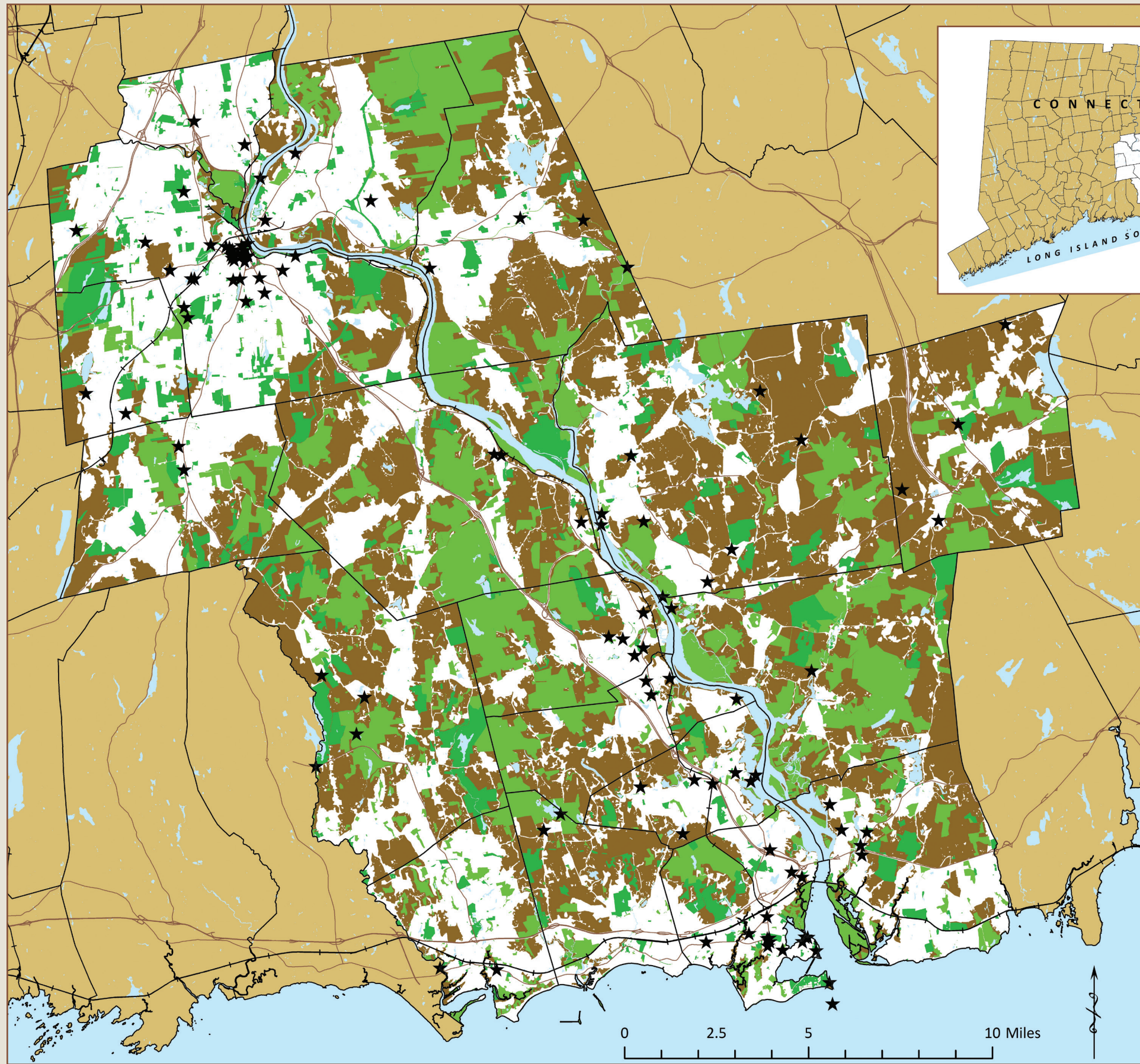
Between the mouth of the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound, an undeveloped nearly 1,000-acre parcel of land known as The Preserve was the focus of a successful conservation effort involving a coalition of local, state, and national conservation groups. This forested wildlife habitat is strategically located near both the salt water of the Sound and the lower Connecticut River estuary, and plays a key resource role for 57 species of migrating birds in both spring and fall. Prior to conservation, it was the largest unprotected coastal forest land between New York City and Boston, and includes 38 vernal pools (a key collection of amphibian habitat), the 30-acre Pequot Swamp (vital habitat for migratory birds), and a total of 114 acres of wetlands, in addition to its forested areas.



The Preserve (photo: The Trust for Public Land)

Approvals for a 221-unit housing development and accompanying golf course were being sought that would have resulted in the "build out" of the parcel. Local and regional conservationists began to envision and promote a different future for the property: keeping it in its natural state in perpetuity and protecting the 25 species of reptiles and amphibians; 30 species of mammals; and the many rare wild plants that live on this land. Local municipalities began to become more aware of the benefits that would accrue from the protection of the property—which was called "the last of its kind" by one state official. In 2015, a 17-year conservation effort came to fruition with the purchase of The Preserve by a coalition of land conservation groups, government and municipal agencies, and local land trusts. Included in the effort were the Trust for Public Land, the State of Connecticut, the Town of Old Saybrook, **Old Saybrook Land Trust**, the **Essex Land Trust**, The Nature Conservancy, and the Connecticut Fund for the Environment. Joining forces, these entities and scores of private citizens saw to it the parcel would be secure for the future, providing not only for the preservation of wildlife habitat and miles of trails, but also for the protection of portions of three vital watersheds: the Oyster River and the Patchogue River which flow to Long Island Sound, and Falls River which flows to the Connecticut.

Wild Rice in Whalebone Cove (photo: Judy Preston)



Priority Lands for Conservation

- Lands to Conserve
 - Conserved Lands
 - Municipal, Water Supply and Utility Lands
 - ★ National Historic Sites
 - Eightmile Wild and Scenic Watershed
 - Menunketesuck Cockaponset Regional Greenway
 - Connecticut River Gateway Conservation Zone
- Water
 - Railroad
 - Primary Roads

This map should only be used for planning purposes.
 Data Sources: CT DEEP, RiverCOG, UConn CLEAR.
 Conserved Land 2013 CAMA in fee data. Conservation Easement data best available.
 Map created 4/2016 by M Burns. Refer to: Lower CT River and Coastal Region Land Trust
 Exchange Natural Resource Based Strategic Conservation Plan, A GIS Overlay Analysis, www.rivercog.org.

STEWARDING OUR FOREST

Mushrooms
(photo: Thomas Wells)



After recovery from 19th century deforestation, we now have a second chance to establish and maintain a healthy forest system here in the lower Connecticut River region. The area is fortunate to be the site of a remarkably large number of state forest preserves and parks, including the majority of both the Cockaponset State Forest (16,696 acres) and the Meshomasic State Forest (6,270 acres), whose management plans reflect the diversity of resources contained in each tract. These park and forestlands provide the backbone of the region's conservation portfolio and key educational opportunities for students, landowners, and naturalists. Their forestry and naturalist personnel are prime resources for interested parties for residents and visitors alike.

Some of the most important potential conservation opportunities are in the hands of private landowners who hold title to forested properties. These tracts are of enormous value as wildlife habitat, as stabilizing influences on a changing landscape, and as the nurseries where the forests of the future will sprout and grow. Modern management

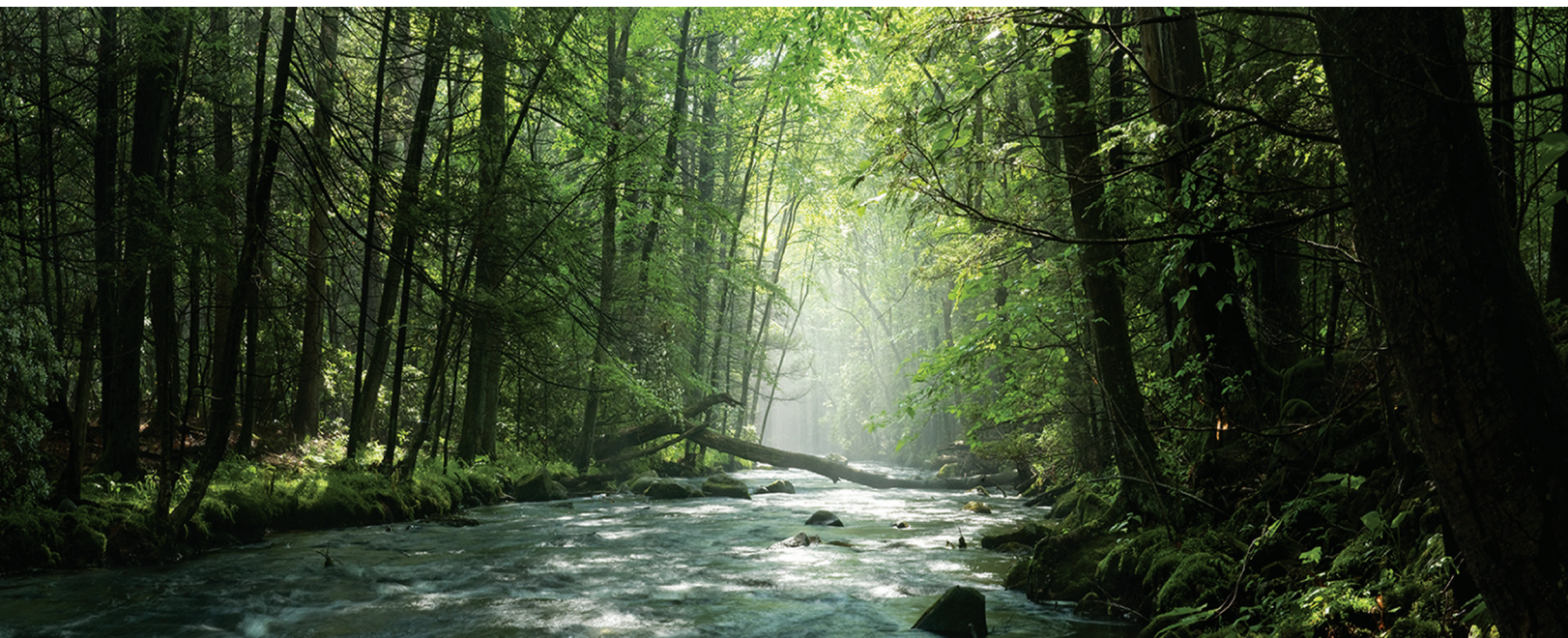
challenges include overbrowsing by deer, predation by invasive insect species, and the results of haphazard or counterproductive harvest practices.

In this region, foresters and land trusts help landowners gain insight into the health, status, and potential of their woodlands, and of the consequences of management options open to them. Land trusts can help landowners plan for the long-term protection of family lands, and can help identify wildlife resources. Working together they protect and enhance the health of the critical forest landscapes that define and protect the uplands and borders of the valley.



Whitney Pond (photo: Middlesex Land Trust)

Pine Brook (photo: Thomas Wells)



MICA LEDGES Durham, Connecticut

This 88-acre forest preserve was purchased and protected in the 1990's by the Madison and **Middlesex Land Trusts**, acting in concert to preserve a remarkable collection of natural features, trails, and viewpoints. The property is the southernmost tip of the Bolton Range, and its elevation 400-feet above the nearby Coginchaug River provide views south to Long Island Sound, west to nearby trap rock ridges, and north towards Mt. Pisgah. In addition to forest and mountain laurel growth, the parcel features ledges, rock formations, cliffs, and a number of caves, as well as a five-acre pond.

A mile of the Mattabesett Trail is protected within the boundaries of this parcel, together with additional trails that create hiking loops and that provide access to the many town-owned and managed open space areas surrounding the preserve, including Mount Pisgah Conservation Area, the Braemore Preserve, and the Rockland Preserve.



Mica Ledges (photo: Middlesex Land Trust)

MENUNKETESUCK-COCKAPONSET REGIONAL GREENWAY Westbrook, Clinton, Deep River, Chester, Killingworth, and Haddam, Connecticut

This remarkable river land conservation resource is a State designation and project of the Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments and all cooperating local land trusts, town and state agencies, and federal resources. The focus of the effort is to encourage the conservation of an 18-mile long forested corridor as a designated greenway, protecting a cultural and historic landscape along one of Connecticut's last great contiguous coastal areas.



Cedar Lake, Chester (photo: Sandy Prisloe)



Messerschmidt Pond, Cockaponset State Forest, Westbrook
(photo: Margot Burns)

Linking city to country, and village to village, protecting these lands will help reconnect people to their communities, enhancing the sense of place that helps define the quality of life in Connecticut. The greenway will function as a wildlife and multi-use corridor connecting the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge - Salt Meadow Unit in the Town of Westbrook to Cockaponset State Forest, the Quinimay Trail, surrounding private forest land, and public recreational resources through the municipalities of Westbrook, Clinton, Deep River, Killingworth, Chester, and Haddam.

FOREST

HONORING OUR LEGACY OF FARMLAND AND HISTORIC LANDSCAPES

Over the long course of the 19th century, the Northeast lost the ability to feed itself locally. The past several decades have seen a steadily increasing interest in the preservation of farms, in a deeper understanding of our local agricultural birthright, and in the production, marketing, and benefits of local food. Through conservation easements and other tools, our land trusts can assist landowners in planning for the future of their homesteads, fields and pastureland, and can act as catalysts for an increase in self-sufficiency that is available to communities that keep faith with our agricultural heritage.

“Sustainability” is not a novel idea here. It is an indigenous concept, one that can be said to be something of an angle of repose on a landscape that rejoices in fertile soils, adequate



Naple's Farm, Durham (photo: Margot Burns)

rainfall, a temperate balance of seasons, and a rich agricultural history. Our fellowship of conservation trusts stands ready to work with farm families and with landowners from all walks of life to explore and define options for the permanent preservation of our New England agricultural traditions.

Venture Smith Gravestone (photo: David C. Nelson, connecticuthistory.org)



FARMLAND & HISTORIC



View of Connecticut River (photo: Margot Burns)

BRAINERD QUARRY PRESERVE and HADDAM NECK Haddam, Connecticut

In 2015, the **Middlesex Land Trust**, in partnership with the **Connecticut River Gateway Commission**, preserved this 50-acre parcel overlooking the Connecticut River. Located on Haddam Neck, the property was originally settled in 1652 and was operated by the Brainerd family as a quarry for hundreds of years, supplying cut stone to locations as far away as New York, Virginia, and New Orleans.

The tract is accessible from two trailheads, and pathways provide visitors with forest vignettes and expansive views of the River and its natural environs. Haddam Neck is created by the course of Salmon River as it flows through Salmon Cove into the Connecticut, and is a focal point for natural conservation, ancient archaeology, and early American history. The area was frequented by native peoples for thousands of years, who left behind pottery fragments, arrowheads, and spear points that bear witness to their lives and culture. In turn, these lands were populated by settlers who developed farmland and wharves, including African Venture Smith (c. 1729-1805) who was kidnapped and brought to America as a slave, eventually bought his freedom and that of his family, and created a thriving storehouse, wharfage, and river trading center on Salmon Cove.

The combination of conservation and preservation values makes these environs a high priority for conservation, including wooded lands, shore frontages, wetlands, and a former power plant location of ecological significance in the estuary system that has been restored to its natural state. The area is a key component of the Connecticut River watershed, referred to as one of the “most important ecological landscapes in the United States” by the United States Secretary of the Interior.



Johnson Farm and Family (photo: Essex Land Trust)

THE JOHNSON FARM Essex, Connecticut

This farm and oak forest is a beautiful agricultural resource, consisting of 50 acres of rolling meadowland, a small stand of white oak trees, and a lowland forest. The property was farmed for years, with Border Leicester sheep, chickens, vegetables, fruit trees, berries, and hay grown and harvested annually for generations of the Johnson family. The **Essex Land Trust** purchased an easement to the farm in 2008, and then in 2015 acquired ownership of the parcel in fee from Polly Johnson, the wife of long-time farmer and state dairy inspector Murwin Johnson, who had bought the old place from his family in 1955.

Situated above Ivoryton, the Johnson Farm is open for public access, with a parking area along Read Road. The Essex Land Trust plans to develop walking trails in the wooded section, paths in the open fields have already been marked. The farm is a “priceless piece of open space in the heart of the village,” and now a legacy shared with the family that cared for and farmed it for generations.



Palmer Barn (photo: Middlesex Land Trust)

CONSERVATION TRUSTS OF THE LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER AND COASTAL REGION



"In all my long lifetime of birding I have never witnessed a spectacle more dramatic than the twisting tornadoes of tree swallows I saw plunging from the sky after sundown this past October. And this was within four miles of home near the Connecticut River, where this had probably been going on every October all the forty years I have lived here. I have seen a million flamingos on the lakes of East Africa and as many seabirds on the cliffs of the Alaska Pribilofs, but for sheer drama, the tornadoes of tree swallows eclipsed any other avian spectacle I had ever seen." ~ Roger Tory Peterson, All Things Reconsidered

This publication, like much of the conservation work now underway in the valley, is a collaborative venture of the fourteen private, nonprofit land trusts that are active in the lower Connecticut River valley. To date, these organizations and other agencies have helped to preserve thousands of acres in the lower valley. In some ways as unique as the landscape is, these volunteer-driven organizations act as the bridge, the diplomatic corps, and the guide service between the wild and the settled neighborhoods in the lower valley. To an increasing degree, they serve as partners and resources for families and communities who wish to leave an enduring and a just legacy.

Think of these land trusts, if you will, as being in the nature of Carnegie libraries; privately supported legacies at the local level that preserve both access to significant research, while, at the same time, actually restoring and protecting precious old "volumes," in this case, actual tracts of conservation land, in perpetuity.

The land trusts endeavor to protect the most sensitive, iconic, and important natural habitats in the region. With a long-lived conservation ethic and a very hard-working conservation community, a great quantity of outstanding work has been accomplished in the past century by the State, land trusts, municipalities, federal agencies, and important national conservation organizations. Much pioneering work has been done, but an increasingly crucial role is being played by local conservation trusts who work with landowners and municipal officials in their communities to identify conservation priorities, provide the ways and means to achieve them, and take on the faithful work of stewardship of

protected properties in perpetuity. To fully realize our conservation goals, 85,000 acres are left to conserve. The region's work is far from done.

These local land trusts not only provide natural refuges, they are also among the richest examples in the nation of opportunities for volunteer service, support, and leadership. Donors, trustees, kayakers, hikers, birders, historians, and other naturalists can find rewarding volunteer opportunities at every level of interest, in the company of a genial cohort of nature enthusiasts who, in the words of one trustee, constitute "a roomful of people who don't know how to say 'no!'" If you have the volunteer ethic, a measure of free time, and some combination of talent and zeal, we want to get to know you! Please join us.



Lord Cove Preserve, TNC (photo: Kim Curry, Old Saybrook Land Trust)



Bamforth Wildlife Preserve (photo: Haddam Land Trust)

THE BAMFORTH WILDLIFE PRESERVE Haddam, Connecticut

This meadowland parcel is part of a priority wildlife corridor delineated in the region's strategic conservation plan, and, as such, it is an important and desirable link in the preserved landscape. In 2004, the **Haddam Land Trust** was honored to receive the property as a gift from Jean Bamforth, in memory of her parents, Harry and Marion Bamforth, and her sister, Betty Jane Bamforth, M.D.

The Bamforth Wildlife Preserve is a 33-acre parcel of rich grasslands sloping down from Bamforth Road on the west to the banks of a bordering brook to the east. There is a parking area, and hiking trail constructed by local volunteer Nate Clark as an Eagle Scout project; visitors are treated to a peaceful meadow landscape framed by nearby hills and forests. The property is being managed by the Haddam Land Trust as a place for thoughtful recreation, propagation of warm weather grasses, and habitat for ground-nesting birds.

Bamforth Wildlife Preserve (photo: Haddam Land Trust)



SUMNER BROOK CORRIDOR Middletown, Connecticut

The **Middlesex Land Trust** has worked to assemble and protect a total of 81 acres of wild land along the floodplain and watershed of Sumner Brook. The parcels that comprise the corridor were the gifts of thoughtful landowners who sought to preserve a strategic swath of terrain between remaining agricultural land and spreading housing developments. The corridor is a mixture of forests, fields, wetlands, and scrublands converting from old hayfields back into wooded environs.

By its varied nature, the parcels protect a variety of wildlife, including a multitude of bird species, deer and other native mammals, and brook trout.

In addition to wildlife habitat, the properties are being managed for healthy forest growth, removal of invasive species, maintenance of the meadow fields, and as the focus for low-impact recreation and educational opportunities. Conservation properties of this nature have a disproportionately large and positive effect on young persons living nearby in settled areas who may not otherwise have the opportunity to explore intact natural communities in protected and stable long-term ownership.



Sumner Brook
(photo: Shane Hetzler)

WETLAND & GRASSLAND



(photo: Old Saybrook Land Trust)

*I feel most comfortable outside in the cool
Shade of trees and in the moist grass
Where the animals graze.
I feel most comfortable on fresh, clear ice
and in my crib where my snowmen play.
I feel most comfortable under my apple tree
where the worms like to be.
The birds fly by eyeing me because that's
where they get all their mighty fine feasts.
I am most comfortable on cot number three.
When nap time comes to be I want a back
rub from Bethy, that's what I need.
I am most comfortable when there are dead
Brown corn stalks not brand new leaves and
The crunch of candy fills my teeth.
I am most comfortable when dinner time
is burgers and corn on the grill, eating
outside at the picnic table under the
pumpkin orange leaves.
But in the end I am most comfortable with me.*

~ Meara Burns, Chester

**We need a generational transfer of these ideals.
And we need your help.** We invite you to join forces with us in seeing to it
that this remarkable landscape is protected for generations of children and adults to come!

Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments
145 Dennison Road
Essex, Connecticut 06426
860-581-8554
rivercog.org

CONNECTICUT
Land Conservation Council



© 2016 Lower Connecticut River Valley Council of Governments

Cover photo: King Rail nesting in Old Lyme, © William Burt.
Grateful thanks to many photographers for allowing us to use their images to tell this important story.
Narrative: Thomas Curren Design: Margaret Baker, bakersalmondesign.com

This publication for the RiverCOG Lower CT River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange was made possible by the Connecticut Land Conservation Council's Land Trust Advancement Initiative through a grant from the USDA-NRCS Conservation Technical Assistance Program. All land trusts involved in this partnership are members of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council and the Land Trust Alliance and adhere to its standards and practices.

LOWER CONNECTICUT RIVER AND COASTAL REGION LAND TRUSTS

Chester Land Trust
Clinton Land Conservation Trust
Connecticut River Land Trust
Deep River Land Trust
East Haddam Land Trust
Essex Land Trust
Haddam Land Trust
Lyme Land Conservation Trust
Lynde Point Land Trust
Middlesex Land Trust
Old Lyme Land Trust
Old Saybrook Land Trust
Salem Land Trust
Westbrook Land Conservation Trust