



Photo: M. Burns, Looking South from Devils Hopyard State Park Look Out

Lower Connecticut River Land Trust Annual Report 2021

The Lower Connecticut River Land Trust works to conserve, study, steward, and promote the unique values and scientific significance, natural and working lands, and historic, ecologic, cultural, and scenic resources of the communities of the Lower Connecticut River Valley Region.

2021 Board Members

- * President – Lauren Gister, Chester
- * Treasurer – Kristina White, Lyme Land Trust
- * Secretary – Ed Bailey, Middlefield
- * David Brown, Middlesex Land Trust
- * Michael Zarfos, Deep River Land Trust
- * Gail Reynolds, Haddam Land Trust
- * Dr. Melvin Woody – Ct River Gateway Commission, Alternate Claire Matthews

2021 Permanent Members

- | | |
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| * Jenny Kitsen, Chester Land Trust | * Angus McDonald – Deep River |
| * Gail Reynolds, Haddam Land Trust | * Laura Francis – Durham |
| * Jim Denham, Essex Land Trust | * Rob Smith – East Haddam |
| * Tom Elliott, Westbrook Land Conservation Trust | * David Cox – East Hampton |
| * Michael Urban, Old Saybrook Land Trust | * Norm Needleman – Essex |
| * Michael Zarfos, Deep River Land Trust | * Bob McGarry – Haddam |
| * David Bingham, Salem Land Trust | * Cathy Iino – Killingworth |
| * Margot Burns, Lower Ct River Valley Council of Governments | * Steve Mattson – Lyme |
| * Anthony Salvatore – Cromwell | * Ben Florisheim - Middletown |
| * Karl Kilduff – Clinton | * Carl Fortuna – Old Saybrook |
| | * Tim Griswold - Old Lyme |
| | * Susan Bransfield – Portland |

It was another steadfast year for the Lower Connecticut River Land Trust in spite of a second year of difficulties due to Covid19. The 2021 permanent membership met virtually, on a monthly basis while also working with the Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) on an Advanced Collaboration and Merger Assistance Program, a project made possible by a grant from the Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation. The program consisted of a series of meetings and exercises to explore opportunities to achieve stronger organizational health and effectiveness and greater community impact through advanced collaboration, structural realignment, or merger with other organizations in our region and ran through December with CLCC. The subcommittee will continue working into 2022. More consultation support from CLCC is available as LCRLT works towards consensus on its future direction and bylaw revisions. The land trust works to support our member organizations and our communities through its project selection.



Photo: J. Preston, Lord Cove, Lower CT River

In September the land trust held a meeting with the land trust's informal congress of regional land trusts, the Lower Connecticut River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange (LTE). The meeting was held to let the LTE know what the land trust has been working on as the LTE group had not met since the beginning of Covid and present the *Who We Are* document developed as part of the



Photo: J. Preston, Wild Rice, Lower CT River

CLCC project, discuss the CLCC project itself, and a service needs assessment survey sent to the LTE members over the summer. The survey revealed the 3 services needed most were fund development, legal services, and help with stewardship. The land trust is working to try and fill these needs through grants and possible shared service models.

Projects that will be carried forward include website development;

endowment creation for both the LTE land trusts and the LCRLT; due diligence funding; and proactive land owner outreach. The pop-up grant flyer that was developed 2 summers ago by

RiverCOG's Sustainable CT interns was used this last summer for the duration of the Community Foundation of Middlesex County summer pop up grants program. It is a good project to not only promote the region's land trust but also the Community Foundation.



Photo: M. Burns, Clinton Land Trust, Elliot Preserve

Over the course of 2022 the land trust will continue to explore its vision and goals over the long term including, an evaluation of its current status, its capacity to grow, its vision for the future and how a strategic alliance of some form with land trusts and/or other groups in the region can further its mission.