

Summary 03/24/2010
CRERPA/Gateway Regional Land Trust Collaboration Initiative
7 P.M.
CRERPA Office
455 Boston Post Road
Old Saybrook, CT

Attendees:

Gregg Mirando – Clinton Land Trust
Frank Byrne – Clinton Land Trust
John Bellows – Chester Land Trust
Julie Peace – Old Saybrook Land Trust
Sarah Keaney – Old Saybrook Land Trust
Mark R. Leas – Westbrook Land Conservation Trust
Kristen Elliot Leas – Westbrook Land Conservation Trust
Tom Elliot – Westbrook Land Conservation Trust
Cindy Sullivan – Haddam Land Trust
Gail Reynolds – Haddam Land Trust
Wini Olson – Essex Land Trust
Christina Clayton – Old Lyme Land Trust
David Brown – Middlesex Land Trust
George Moore – Lyme Land Trust
Betsy Morgan – Lyme Land Trust
Harvey Thomas – East Haddam Land Trust
Melvin Woody – Ct River Land Trust

True to its new name the LTE's 4th meeting focused on the sharing of expertise and experiences between the land trusts concerning different types of fund raising. The development of major donor programs, sustainable fund raising, stewardship funding, and on line donations were explored. Burgeoning New England and New York region forest conservation efforts were explained and discussed. In response to offering support for the Wildlands and Woodlands forest conservation initiative the group decided on their new identity and name – The Lower Connecticut River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange or the LTE. The topic for the next meeting will be how to approach property owners when asking them to consider protecting their land. We will also begin to identify each land trusts conservation priorities to begin the process of creating a regional strategic conservation plan.

Barbara Edwards of Essex Land Trust was to be our contributing guest but she was not able to attend due to illness. However, Margot Burns of CRERPA did speak at length with her concerning her experience with fund raising for Essex Land Trust and in particular the Falls River Preserve. Barbara's experience underlined the themes delineated in the Land Trust Alliance article that was passed out entitled Major Donors published in the spring 2010 LTA magazine **SAVINGland**. Emphasis was given to relationship building; knowing who lives in your town; how much they might be able to donate; what their interests are; sharing not only your short term goals, but your long term goals as an organization; remember you have to ask for donations; and publicize your cause. Barbara's bottom line was that it is a lot of hard work, that you must be attentive to your members, and that building a donor base takes time. At all events you must remind people that the land trust is only able to operate through donations and membership and always have your membership sign up forms available at all of your events. She em-

phasized the fact that many people do not realize this. The more people you involve the more people will donate, you need to have your Selectmen on your side and have a fund raising plan in place so that the organization can act quickly when it is necessary. Others offered that you need to talk with those that will be most affected by a purchase; you need to know the tax impacts of a particular project; explain to people how they can save money by giving money; and maintain a relationship with major organizations that can help you like the Trust for Public Land. Conversation ensued to help Clinton Land Trust with their efforts to protect the few remaining large parcels suitable for protection left in Clinton.

Discussion turned from how to fund raise for a particular project to fund raising for stewardship and sustainability of the organization. Lyme has undertaken a fund raising campaign explaining why, after protecting the land they have, they now need support for its further stewardship. The campaign they have undertaken is based on the principle of matching donations. Other methods discussed to ensure the future ability to steward a property were collecting payment for future stewardship by a developer of open space given by that developer, and requiring endowments from property owners wishing to donate. Collecting donations on line was discussed. The only land trust in the group to currently do this is East Haddam. We will find out more about that at the next meeting. PayPal and Acceptiva were 2 examples given.

A publication *Your Land, Your Choices* created by the Trustees of Reservation of Massachusetts for the Highland Communities Initiative was passed out as an example of how a regional identity can be created. It was generally agreed that creating something along the same line our region would be beneficial. Regional fund raising was introduced as an idea to consider in the future.

The group discussed the new name of the initiative "The Lower Connecticut River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange". It was decided that, although it was long it did describe who the group is. The group decided to keep it. (CRERPA has taken to calling it the LTE)

Discussion then turned to the burgeoning New England and New York region forest conservation efforts. It was explained how the New England Wildlands and Woodlands Vision, the New England Governors Blue Ribbon Commission on Land Conservation, and the U.S. Forest Service are looking at how it will be best to conserve forests as forests on a landscape or regional basis. The group was introduced to this audience as a supporter of these initiatives at a Wildlands and Woodlands meeting held at Harvard Forest the beginning of March. There will be a New England Wildlands and Woodlands Conference on June 4th, 2010 in Concord, NH. In support of the LTE position of the regional keeping forests as forests initiatives the CRERPA region land cover data analyzed for its changing characteristics from 1995 to 2006 was handed out. It was found that the CRERPA region during that time period loss close to 3,000 acres of forest land, much of it to development. The Regional Plan Association's recently acquired a Doris Duke Foundation \$400,000 grant to help integrate wildlife conservation with land use and infrastructure investments in the northeast was briefly introduced.

Information concerning a possible Trout Unlimited habitat protection grant and on a conservation finance course offered through the Yale Center for Business and the Environment, *Yale Finance Camp 2010*, being offered from June 14 – 18, 2010. It was decided the next meeting will be Wednesday May 19th, 2010, 7:00pm at the CRERPA office.