

Summary 03/21/2012
7PM
Lower Connecticut River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange
CRERPA Office
455 Boston Post Road, Old Saybrook, CT
www.lcrclandtrustexchange.org
www.crerpa.org

Attendees:

Kristin Elliott Leas – Westbrook Land Conservation Trust
Gail Reynolds – Haddam Land Trust
Cindy Sullivan – Haddam Land Trust
Melvin Woody – Ct River Land Trust
Rob Smith – East Haddam Land Trust
John Kennedy – Deep River Land Trust
Stanford Brainerd – Lynde Point Land Trust
Linda Bireley – Town of Lyme
David Brown – Middlesex Land Trust
Gregg Mirando – Clinton Land Trust
Wini Olson – Essex Land Trust
Molly Turner – Lyme Land Trust
Errol Horner – Chester Land Trust
Sara Keaney – Old Saybrook Land Trust
Frank Byrne – Clinton Land Trust
David Brown – Middlesex Land Trust

Kristina Vagos, Wildlife Biologist, USFWS and Shaun Roche, Park Ranger, USFWS Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge, Westbrook came to speak to the group concerning the Fish & Wildlife Service's Conservation Partners Program. The program allows FWS to provide technical assistance to help with conservation projects.

Nathan Frohling, Director, CT Freshwater & Conservation, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Shelley Green, Director, CT Freshwater and Conservation Planning, TNC spoke concerning the future plans and intention of TNC in CT and the Lower CT River and Coastal Region.

TNC is endeavoring to look at the global scale of natural systems. There has been a paradigm shift within the organization - people are as important as nature - and that working within the context of the land use planning process and system is critical to their conservation mission. The Ct River Watershed is considered a whole system as well as TNC's Southern New England Coastal Marine System of which Long Island Sound is a part. A major focus of TNC in the Long Island Sound region is the protection and maintenance of this marine system by conserving and protecting its coastal marshes and environments as climate change and rising sea level forces their landward retreat and increases their exposure to more frequent and stronger storms. Information concerning their Coastal Resilience Program can be found at (<http://coastalresilience.org/>).

The Ct River Program includes 4 priorities or 4 main strategies. Ecological flows, connectivity, flood plain forest habitat, and conserving habitats and minimizing impacts on them.

- Ecological flows – TNC would like to work with the River’s large dams which hold 80% of the flow behind them and alters natural flow rates, stream flow regulations, and prioritization of dams for ecosystem health.
- Flood plain forest restoration and reintroducing resistant native Elms.
- Habitat conservation and minimizing impacts - The Salmon River Watershed Partnership, 10 towns looked at land use regulations in regards to water quality. The municipalities are in the process of taking ownership of the partnership.

TNC is still on the committee of Eightmile Wild and Scenic but will not be serving in the same capacity. Their capacity for working in and with the local watersheds of Long Island Sound has not been fully defined. The organization is, and will be, more strategic and conservative in entering into land acquisition and has raised stewardship capacity within the lower River region and may be able to provide technical and scientific expertise. They are also working on phragmites control in the lower river. TNC has been working in partnership with the Conte Refuge and advising Fish and Wildlife.

The Menunketesuck – Cockaponset Regional Greenway has been passed by Clinton, Westbrook, Chester, and Deep River through Resolution by each Municipalities Board of Selectmen. The remaining Towns of Killingworth and Haddam should happen within the next week. It was asked that each land trust from the municipalities within the greenway send a letter of support for the State Greenway Designation Application due May 1st.

The Wildlands and Woodlands Partnership Meeting took place on March 5, 2012. The meeting Agenda was handed out (see LTE website) and the group responded positively to having Mr. Tom Curren, Director, Northeast Land Trust Consortium come and speak with them concerning the capital campaign to purchase Castle in the Clouds overlooking Lake Winnepesaukee in Moultonborough, NH.

CRERPA and Middlesex Land Trust along with 83 other organizations from around New England endorsed the *Policy Agenda for Conserving New England’s Forests – Priorities for 2013* it was asked that the rest of the land trust take note of it for next year.

The Bat conservation program was discussed. Ct DEEP is still collecting data and anyone that has any questions or information concerning the bats can send them/it to dep.batprogram@ct.gov, Jen Pacelli is the contact right now at the CT DEEP. Many of the land trust have had or will have, local meetings concerning the bats and the white nose syndrome. The land trusts were asked to make sure the project is up on their websites. The project can also be found on the LTE website at <http://www.lcrlandtrustexchange.org/Pages/projects.html> .

The next meeting date for the LTE will May 30, 2012, 7pm, CRERPA office.