

Meeting Summary
The Lower Connecticut River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange
February 15, 2017 / 7:00 – 9:00pm
Lower CT River Valley Council of Governments
145 Dennison Rd., Essex, CT

Agenda items for the February 15th, 2017 meeting of the Lower Connecticut River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange (LTE) included: An update on the RiverCOG Nonprofit bylaws and land trust update; an update on financial shared services and Tom Curren's fund raising workshops/coaching; consideration of adding Audubon's Important Bird Areas to the LTE Conservation Plan; and a review of the LTE Conservation Plan criteria to begin the process of creating a project funding guide/matrix for the LTE funding plan.

A bylaws draft document for the RiverCOG nonprofit has been created and the Gateway Commission and RiverCOG have been reviewing them. Language has been included to ensure the funding for the LTE Committee will only be for use by the Committee and remain with them if they should ever want to become an autonomous organization. There was concern on the part of the LTE members of having the CEO's be the majority of the board of directors for the to be formed RiverCOG nonprofit.

Four land trusts have decided to take the next step in securing shared financial services: East Haddam; Haddam; Chester; and Salem. Paula will be reviewing their financial records in the next few months. Only East Haddam was interested in possibly participating in a Tom Curren's fund raising workshops/coaching.

The group viewed the area in Lyme, Salem, and Old Lyme that has been designated by Audubon Connecticut as an Important Bird Area for inclusion in the LTE conservation plan. A primary rule of the conservation plan is that any data layer used must have been assessed for the entire region. The question is whether or not the whole region has been analyzed by Audubon. Margot will be contacting Audubon for clarification of how the analysis and determination was made.

Discussion turned to the land trusts sharing concerns regarding municipal tax assessments and land trust property.

The process began to create a project funding/guide matrix by reviewing the LTE conservation plan criteria and selecting further guiding factors for the LTE members to discuss with their boards as to whether or not they thought the factors should be considered or not for the project funding/guide matrix in relation to the existing LTE conservation plan for the next LTE meeting. They included:

- Land within a primary or connecting corridor;
- The Index score of the primary or connecting large natural area;
- Is the project connected to existing open space;
- The size of the parcel;
- The number of local criteria contained on the parcel (core forest, hydrology/wetlands, early successional habitat, NDDDB area, critical habitat);

- The area of local criteria contained on the parcel (core forest, hydrology/wetlands, early successional habitat, NDDB area, critical habitat);
- Does the project contain critical habitat;
- Does it contain an NDDB area (endangered species or species of greatest concern);
- Is it in a state designated greenway.

The next meeting date was set for March, 29th.