

Summary 01/20/2010
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
John Kennedy – Deep River Land Trust
John Bellows – Chester Land Trust
Sarah Keaney – Old Saybrook Land Trust
Jane Zirlis – East Haddam Land Trust
Mark R. Leas – Westbrook Land Conservation Trust
Kristen Elliot Leas – Westbrook Land Conservation Trust
Tom Elliot – Westbrook Land Conservation Trust
Melvin Woody – Ct. River Land Trust
Cindy Sullivan – Haddam Land Trust
Wini Olson – Essex Land Trust
Judy Preston – Tidewater Institute, Sea Grant
Christina Clayton – Old Lyme Land Trust
David Brown – Middlesex Land Trust
Margot Burns – CRERPA

The Connecticut River Estuary Regional Planning Agency (CRERPA)/Gateway Land Trust Collaboration Initiative meeting covered: The Connecticut Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program Plan; reviewed with each land trust how their boards felt about participating in the collaborative initiative; reviewed with each land trust present their experience with, and results and conclusions from the SWOT analysis for record keeping, stewardship, and fundraising; explored what some of the goals of the collaborative could be; discussed possible structures for the collaborative; and discussed funding for the near future.

David Kozak, Senior Coastal Planner with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Office of Long Island Sound Programs presented the draft Connecticut Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program Plan. He is looking for land protection projects to include. Projects must include properties that offer very high intrinsic wildlife and habitat protection opportunities within the coastal zone or coastal area as defined by the plan. The geography of this area is still being defined.

All land trusts present agreed that some type of collaboration would be beneficial to all, but allotting the volunteer time to participate would be a hardship for the organization. The land trusts that had completed their SWOT analysis found that it was a worthwhile exercise in determining where their operational strengths were and in what areas their management and business practices could be

improved. They found that, for the most part, they all had similar concerns. Finding volunteer resources to maintain records and perform stewardship responsibilities were common themes as was addressing fund raising responsibilities.

Goals for the collaborative were discussed and some ideas emerged: there was agreement that working towards LTA accreditation was not a goal that should be pursued through this group, at least in the near term. However, the opinion was that the LTA standards and practices should be used as guidance towards practicing best management principles. Discussion leaned towards the goals of the collaborative as becoming a networking, education, information sharing, and strategic planning entity. Different approaches to community outreach were discussed.

Margot Burns reported that the initiative had received funding from the Eastern Connecticut Resource, Conservation, & Development Area for 2 more meetings to be held in the spring and summer. The initiative did not receive funding from grants applied to from the Middlesex Community Foundation (although they encouraged applying again next year), or the Department of Environmental Protection Recreational Trails Program for the trail mapping and atlas project. CRERPA is still waiting to hear concerning the Rockfall Foundation grant application.

The group decided that they have common interest and should continue meeting but feels there needs to be defined goals. For now perhaps each meeting could be an educational and information sharing forum with related expertise invited to present and participate. The group was reminded that CRERPA hopes that one of the goals of the group should be a strategic conservation plan for the region. The group decided that fund raising would be the topic for the next meeting. Barbara Edwards of Essex should be called and asked to participate.

The next meeting date was set for March 24th, 7:00pm, at the CRERPA office.