

Meeting Summary

The Lower Connecticut River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange
May 17th, 2017 / 7:00 – 9:00pm
Lower CT River Valley Council of Governments, 145 Dennison Rd., Essex, CT

The next LTE meeting is scheduled for September 20th, 2017 in our new office space at 7 Dock Rd., Haddam, CT.

Agenda items for the May 17th, 2017 meeting of the Lower Connecticut River and Coastal Region Land Trust Exchange (LTE) included: A presentation and conversation concerning the tax assessment of land trust easement and fee properties and other open space with Catherine Rawson, Executive Director of the Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust in Kent, CT and Chair of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council; a presentation by Lisa Wahle, Program Biologist, CT DEEP concerning the Regional Conservation Partnership Program; information from Audubon CT concerning their Important Bird Areas for the group to consider, and a discussion concerning the results of the funding matrix/guide survey from the 3/29/17 and weighting considerations of the agreed to criteria and next step weighting options.

Catherine presented on CLCC's project by Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies students Andrew Greaves and Tory Grieves on researching issues, policies and practices with respect to municipal assessment of land protected by conservation easements. Discussion included 490 farm, forest, and open space properties.

Lisa's presentation explained the CT DEEP Regional Conservation Program which can be found at http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2723&q=591990&deepNav_GID=1655. This program focuses on creating habitat (at least 6 acres) for Woodcock and New England Cottontail. Land trusts interested in forest management plans that have some focus on early successional habitat should investigate this program for possible funding for management planning.

Results for the second survey found that the majority of participants wanted to include all the criteria voted on to be included in the funding matrix/guide. It was decided that the criteria chosen for the funding guide/matrix should be grouped into four levels of importance for weighting purposes. It was agreed that a worksheet, guide, and survey would be sent out to the LTE representative for each land trust so that they are able to discuss the weighting with their boards and fill in the weighting survey so that Margot is able to have a draft funding guide available for the September meeting.

Approved criteria include:
February 15, 2017 meeting

- 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, critical habitat);

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

March 29, 2017 meeting

- Historic significance;
- Accessibility for the public;
- Status of development application/approvals;
- Viewsheds both in and out;
- Prime Agricultural Soils;
- Is it a multi-town project;
- Cost;
- Does it overlap with town plans for open space;
- Is it suitable for education or scientific purposes;
- Are there any site concerns from historic property usage Ex. – Brownfield concerns?

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