



The Landmark



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FOUR TOWN LAND TRUST RECEIVES PROGRESS AWARD

As we have each year since the Land Trust was started, several of our members attended the Seventh Annual Land Trust Convocation at the University of Hartford on November 4th. As you may know, every year they present the Green Up Recognition Awards to land trusts which have made outstanding efforts in the past year. Six awards are given, for the most innovative program, the most cooperative project, the most protection done in a year, the highest productivity, the greatest progress and the most creative stewardship program. Not knowing how much acreage would be required to win the protection award, I let the Land Trust Service Bureau know about our 52 acre gift in Somers. As it turns out, the award was won by Joshua's Tract Conservation Trust, which had acquired 112 acres.

We did, however, win the progress award, which is awarded to a new trust or revitalized old trust for making great progress. To quote the award certificate, we received it "for generating positive public awareness and receiving a fifty-two acre gift in the first two years of operation." It would seem we aren't the only ones who think we've done quite well making as much progress as we have!

The convocation had a record 180 in attendance from 75 land trusts. The morning session included a legislative update and a thorough - and very informative - discussion of the Land Trust Standards and Practices promulgated by the Land Trust Exchange. In the afternoon, our members attended three of the four sessions: Coordinating Land Preservation Efforts Between Town and Land Trust, Putting Together a Land Protection Deal, and Community Relations. Each of the attendees will be sharing what they learned with other members, and I know that at least some of it will be put into practice in the near future.

SCOUTS TO USE LAND IN EXCHANGE FOR HELPING OUT

In November, Whit Davis and I spoke to a group of scout leaders at their Roundtable conference about the possibility of working together for our mutual benefit, and the idea was enthusiastically accepted. While no specifics have been agreed on yet, it would go something like this:

In exchange for occasional use of our land for camping and various scout projects, they would do such things as clear and blaze some new trails, clean up some of the junk that has been left there over the years (ranging from soda cans to major car parts), develop and implement an interpretive trail, and develop and implement a management plan. The land trust would clearly benefit from these activities, and the scouts would gain not only a camping area but opportunities for constructive ways to earn badges from the most basic to those for Eagle Scouts.

\$1,000,000 PER YEAR OPEN SPACE FUNDING SOUGHT

I reported in the previous Landmark that we were working on a mailing to encourage new memberships among a targeted audience. That effort has been greatly expanded in scope to become a large scale fundraising campaign/membership drive.

Recent polls indicate that over 97% of the people in the four towns favor the preservation of open space in their towns. There is no reason why the land trust can't tap into that overwhelming feeling. If just 75% of those people were to join the land trust their membership dues alone would generate a net annual income for the land trust of over one million dollars. That astonishing figure can be achieved if just three quarters of the people in the area put their money where their mouths are to the tune of \$20 per individual or \$30 per family.


At an average cost of ten thousand dollars per acre, over one hundred acres per year could be acquired and protected by the land trust. In ten years, that would amount to a thousand acres, averaging 250 per town. Think about it - would the average person be willing to pay \$20 each year to see that the farm just down the street is preserved by the land trust rather than developed?

To that end, the land trust is now reaching out in every way it can to the members of the community. There have been articles in the Hartford Courant, the Journal Inquirer, and the Enfield Press, and articles in other publications with circulation in the area are expected. We are speaking to area societies, associations, etc., and the mailings mentioned before are going ahead. Brochures and membership applications are being distributed wherever it seems appropriate. Once enough money is raised from the initial effort, there will probably be a bulk mailing to every household in the area. Finally, members are talking it up. If any of you know someone who feels that open space should be preserved, talk to them about joining the land trust. They can join without a brochure and membership application, but if you would like to be able to supply them with one, call me at 627-8062 and I'll get some to you.

Additional donations beyond membership dues are, of course, very welcome.

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All comments contained herein are those of the editor and are not necessarily those of the Land Trust.

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