

THE GREENWICH LAND TRUST

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GREENWICH LAND TRUST ADDS TO PROTECTED OPEN SPACE

(Greenwich, CT) - The Greenwich Land Trust, founded in 1976, preserves more than 745 acres of land including woodlands, meadows, orchards, and salt marshes. Conservation lands in the community help protect the air and water, offer scenic vistas, and provide wildlife habitat. With a mission of preserving land permanently and protecting its ecological integrity for the benefit of this and future generations, the Land Trust seeks donations of land parcels that offer conservation benefits for the community. Donors of conservation land to not-for-profit organizations such as the Greenwich Land Trust receive favorable federal tax treatment for their gifts. In 2012, the Greenwich Land Trust successfully completed the requirements to receive national accreditation from the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. This credential is an indicator of the high standards and practices followed by land trusts who receive this designation.

Earlier this year, the Greenwich Land Trust opened its conservation center at The Louise Mueller Preserve at 370 Round Hill Road. The center encompasses four acres and historic farmhouse and barns that are now used for offices and operations. The center will provide new opportunities for the Land Trust's education and outreach activities for families and individuals.

Acquiring and protecting conservation land is the focus of the Greenwich Land Trust. Most recently, the Minguez Trust donated four acres of woodlands on Sterling Road in Greenwich to the Greenwich Land Trust. "We are delighted to receive this beautiful land that provides extensive wildlife habitat while protecting a section of the Byram River watershed," remarked Janice Trebbi Richards, Greenwich Land Trust Board President.

The Land Trust's new Minguez Preserve is heavily wooded with beautiful specimens of sugar maples, beeches and black oaks. The preserve contains numerous native plants in the understory including sassafras, ferns, blue cohosh, mulberry, trillium, and jack-in-the pulpit. The sloping hillside is bordered by an old stone wall linking the property to Greenwich's agrarian past. The southern end of the property includes parts of two ponds which provide important aquatic habitat for plant, microorganism, and fish species along with a major water source for other wildlife.

The property's high ecological values include the native black oaks which produce valuable food for many wildlife species and the craggy rock outcroppings which provide shelter. Conserving this undeveloped parcel protects the watershed area that drains into the two ponds, mitigating issues associated with nitrification such as algae blooms and fish die off caused by development near waterbodies.

The Greenwich Land Trust's professional staff is currently preparing a management plan for the Preserve to address invasive plant removal, native plant preservation and public recreational opportunities while protecting the conservation values of the parcel. This practice of developing a specific management plan to document the important features to be protected now and in the future is a requirement for accredited land trusts nationwide. Management plans serve as the basis for ongoing maintenance, planting, and invasive plant removal by the Land Trust's staff and trained volunteers.

The Minguetz Preserve is located near 30 additional acres of open space permanently protected by the Greenwich Land Trust. By acquiring nearby or contiguous properties, the Land Trust is able to build greenways for wildlife and expand the important conservation values of individual parcels.

For more information on the Greenwich Land Trust or about donating land, please call Executive Director Ginny Gwynn at 203.629.2151.