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*Columbine on west side of the ridge.*

*A vulnerable world atop the sparsely covered ridge top.*
For most of the past 30 years, the Simsbury Land Trust has focused on protecting ridges, wetland and field habitats. It has given priority to land parcels that by themselves, or combined with adjacent land, contribute to a meaningful habitat or scenic vista. Including the Tuller fields and Arnold ridge transactions that were completed in 2005, the SLT has helped secure the protection of 25 parcels of land totaling 665 acres. The value of these lands is the contribution that each makes to the town’s overall natural environment. Their value is measured by how they relate to adjacent land, to past and future uses, and to corridors of habitat and scenic vistas that in some places stretch beyond town lines.

Several land parcels under current discussion are particularly important because in each case, their loss would either severely encroach upon or fully partition an important existing corridor of protected land. These are important efforts that will take significant time, effort and money. In each case, we are not likely to have a second chance.

Land protection is a two step process. Without the essential first step of acquiring the land or easement, there can be no permanent protection. But an equally important second step is the ongoing work to maintain, enhance and in some cases, restore the natural features for which we are acquiring each site. This second step requires an equal amount of time, effort, understanding and skill.

During 2005, Don and Sally Rieger, Bill Howard, Arch Edgar, Ted Almy, Anupam Tantri, Karen Brand, Steve Osborn and several dozen volunteers enhanced trails with bridges, benches, narrative signs, and removal of substantial storm debris. They began efforts to control invasive plants, train land stewards, and maintain boundaries. They established forms and procedures to monitor and maintain our conservation easements enabling the first annual landowner meeting, property inspection and easement review at Rosedale Farms.

None of this or other important work would occur without the many volunteers, the in-kind product, the 775 membership donations, the annual support and the campaign gifts, and of course, all of those who over the years donated their land. On behalf of the Simsbury Land Trust and the community, I want to thank each and every one of you for another step forward!

Dick Davis

President
The Simsbury Land Trust mission is to protect those scenic vistas, geological features, and natural habitats that visually define Simsbury’s character and provide healthy habitats for local wildlife and plants.

We believe that this protection is most effectively achieved by acquiring property, preferably ownership of the land, but in certain circumstances, ownership of a conservation easement. We also recognize that ownership, although it is the essential first step in protection, is only the first step. What we do with our land and how we use it is the important second step.

**ACQUISITION**

We are currently operating under a 10-year campaign to protect approximately 1,000 acres of additional land. Our focus is on several scenic and natural corridors that include the town’s primary ridges and wetlands, as well as on scattered farm fields and natural meadows. Within these corridors, we give weight to parcels that will connect an otherwise partitioned area, expand or complete a partial habitat, or improve the buffer around a protected area.

To this end in 2005, SLT formally closed on two of its most important acquisitions: the first a conservation easement on 168 acres of Tulmeadow Farm (the Tuller fields north and south of Farms Village Road) and second a conservation easement on the 65-acre Arnold Property (adjacent to and south of Onion Mountain along the town line with Canton).
**Stewardship**

Permanent protection of conservation land requires not only acquisition, but reasonable ongoing steps to ensure that the features for which the land was acquired are maintained, enhanced, and in some cases restored. This part of land protection requires that we take the following steps on an ongoing basis. Over time, these steps can require as much time, effort, and money as the actual acquisition.

Planning

Each property or corridor of properties needs a multiyear plan to provide guidance, long-term continuity, and a means of measuring achievement. These plans include legal description of the property, statement of purpose for which the land was donated or purchased, baseline inventory of natural features and condition, any actions needed to restore, maintain, or enhance its condition, and a schedule of action steps. We began efforts to establish these in a more consistent and thorough manner in 2005. These plans are currently in various stages of completion. The Stewardship Committee is compiling these revised plans and recommending them to the Trustees for approval.
Scientific Research

SLT believes that these stewardship plans should be based on as thorough an understanding of each parcel as is reasonably possible and that this need for learning will be an ongoing responsibility. Over the past year SLT made the decision to more thoroughly study two areas that include land it owns. Professional botanists have been engaged to study the Case/Wegner fields and wetlands off Terry’s Plain Road as well as the SLT land within the ridge corridor from Westledge to Firetown Roads.

Recreational and Educational Use

Within the context of scientific research and present and historical use patterns, stewardship plans will include guidelines for using each property. Recommendations may range from limited use to easily accessible foot paths. In part, the long-term protection of a particular area will depend on the broader community understanding of its natural value and what is needed to maintain the characteristics that create that value. This understanding will never occur unless people get out and experience the land. SLT offers on a regular basis guided walks led by knowledgeable speakers, narrative signs or written material for self-guided walks, research field trips, photography excursions, bike tours in selected locations, evening snowshoe adventures, and other activities focused on building community commitment to conserving the land.
Restoration and Physical Maintenance

This covers a wide range of important activity. Sometimes we acquire land that has potential for adding diversity to an established conservation area. A good example is our restoration and maintenance of an open meadow as part of an extensive wetland area on the land donated by Preston Case. In areas that provide particularly good examples of natural features, SLT provides access trails, sometimes requiring bridges and narrative signs. These have been installed at the Bog, at the Ketchin Quarry and at Rosedale Farms. Trails must be carefully sited to minimize damage to the natural features we are trying to protect. This work has occurred along the ridge where SLT has also erected two bridges to provide safer access and to help prevent erosion along stream beds. Where study suggests that action might be effective in controlling invasive species, such as along the ridge, SLT is considering the use of supervised volunteers to remove them. SLT has supported efforts by the Farmington River Watershed Association and Rosedale Farms to restore wildflower buffers around several farm ponds to enhance water quality and create more habitat for butterflies and birds. It has also participated in the selective introduction of beetles by the CT Extension Service in an attempt to control the spread of purple loosestrife. Finally, existing trails need continual maintenance to repair erosion, clean up storm debris, and remove litter as the trail areas draw increased use.

Maintenance of Property Lines and Conservation Agreements

We have all read recent news articles on purposeful or unintentional encroachment on conservation land. Such encroachments take the form of establishing unauthorized paths or roadways, cutting trees or brush, expanding neighboring lawns, and dumping debris. These can be prevented by installing visible boundary markers, by initiating regular communication with adjacent landowners, and by monitoring boundaries. During the past year, SLT began the considerable task of verifying all of its boundaries. Once this is complete, we will solicit the help of neighbors to ensure that the boundaries are appropriately marked and to reintroduce them to SLT. During 2005, the Stewardship Committee also drafted its first Conservation Easement Annual Inspection Form and completed its first annual inspection of Rosedale Farms. A similar inspection form and initial inspection of the easements acquired over the past year will be completed in 2006.
## Financial Highlights – 2005

**Statement of Revenues and Expenses**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Campaign Operation Total FY 2004</th>
<th>January 1 – December 31, 2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenues</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Donations</td>
<td>$ 458,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>1,095,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Donations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Appeal Income</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership Dues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Income</td>
<td>3 746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenues</strong></td>
<td>1,553,243</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expenses</strong></td>
<td>93,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>27,065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries and Benefits</td>
<td>27,345</td>
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<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>26,706</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acquisition Expenses</td>
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<td>Stewardship</td>
<td>5,964</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depreciation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td>93,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excess of Revenues Over Expenses</strong></td>
<td>$1,459,923</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Balance Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>December 31, 2005</th>
<th>December 31, 2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CURRENT ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>$ 191,457</td>
<td>$ 687,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounts Receivable</td>
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<td>1,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pledges Receivable – Net</td>
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<td>284,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepaid Expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FIXED ASSETS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>6,131,937</td>
<td>3,896,498</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office Equipment – Net</td>
<td>2,868</td>
<td>5,452</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL FIXED ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>6,134,805</td>
<td>3,901,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
<td>$6,391,363</td>
<td>$4,901,623</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Liabilities and Fund Balance** |                  |                  |
| **CURRENT LIABILITIES**        |                  |                  |
| Accrued Liabilities            | $ 4,849          | $ 1,568          |
| **TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES**  | 4,849            | 1,568            |

| **FUND BALANCE**               |                  |                  |
| Beginning Fund Balance         | 4,900,055        | 2,517,743        |
| Excess of Revenues over Expenses | 1,486,459        | 2,382,312        |
| **ENDING FUND BALANCE**        | 6,386,514        | 4,900,055        |
| **Total Liabilities and Fund Balance** | $6,391,363       | $4,901,623       |
DONOR RECOGNITION

The Simsbury Land Trust’s Board of Trustees and staff gratefully acknowledge the support we receive from our members and friends, which enables us to continue our land protection efforts and membership program. The following individuals, families, businesses and other organizations contributed gifts in the year 2005.

Membership Donations

Star $1,000 and above
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Sponsor $100-$249
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Camilla and Paul Thompson

This hard working crew built the bridge at Rosedale Farms over a fall weekend.

We are pleased to report that this was yet another record year for Simsbury Land Trust membership with 775 households making an annual contribution during 2005.
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Bob and Diane Davis
William and Lenore Davis
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Louis and Janet Zarchen
The Zellman Family
Amy and Lary Zeiner
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Anonymous
Susan Anawender
Charlotte Bidwell Bacon
Charles and Gertrude Baier
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Julia Barcelo
Catherine Barnard
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Beverly M. Drees
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Paul J. Fetherston
Patricia S. Fienmann
Clavin C. Fisher
Dr. and Mrs. Carl Fola
Charity P. Folk

Don Tuller and friends celebrate the protection of 168 acres of Tulmeadow Farm.

PHOTO: DICK CLARK
LAND DONORS

The Board of Trustees gratefully acknowledges those who have permanently protected the community’s open space by donating their cherished land to the Simsbury Land Trust.

Ramani and Louise Ayer
Ilva Bergman
Dr. John and Doris Cannon
Jon and Patricia Carlson
O. Preston and Estelle Case
Lawrence and Elizabeth Cathles
Lee Ann Eustis
Leslie Pomeroy Eustis
Evan David Eustis
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Neal and Laura Landerman
George Leaska
Estate of William Rose
Madeleine Salster
Virginia Simonds
John Simonds
Helen and Marion Walker
Patricia and Arthur Wegner
Ensign-Bickford Realty Corporation

MISSION STATEMENT

The Simsbury Land Trust is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to protect scenic vistas, geological features and farmland that visually define Simsbury’s character and provide healthy habitats for local wildlife and plants. Our goal is to consistently craft, support and implement creative land conservation solutions for the benefit of present and future generations.

The Simsbury Land Trust seeks to accomplish its mission through:

**Acquisitions**: Soliciting and accepting gifts of land and interests in land from individuals and businesses.

**Partnerships**: Partnering with individuals, organizations, and governmental entities to accomplish our goals.

**Advocacy**: Participating in public policy dialogue at the local and state levels, in public and private forums.

**Stewardship**: Managing and using acquired properties in a manner consistent with our mission.

**Legacy Building**: Soliciting donations from individuals, organizations, foundations and businesses.

STAFF

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Patricia Hazelwood, Director of Finance and Membership

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John Johnson Art Direction & Design

EDITOR
Nancy Boynton

PHOTOGRAPHY
Dick Clark, Conway School of Landscape Design,
Hunter Neal – Hunter Neal Photography, Ron Provost,
Kate Rieger, Sally Rieger, Rick Warters

FRONT COVER PHOTO: "Cathles View in Snow", taken by Rick Warters, was a First Place winner in the Landscape Category for the 2005 Photography Contest. “The effect of the wind on this hillcrest snow helps us understand why this cedar reaches to the east.”

BACK COVER PHOTO: Hunter Neal

Simsbury Land Trust
P.O. Box 634
Simsbury, CT 06070
Phone/Fax 860-651-8773
www.simsburylandtrust.org