



# FALL 2009 Landlines

SIMSBURY LAND TRUST

Since 1976

## SLT Receives \$1.4 million Grant to Preserve Tulmeadow Farm Woodlot

**Efforts underway to raise  
remaining funds needed**

On October 30, the Simsbury Land Trust received confirmation that Congress had approved funding for the U.S. Forest Service's "2010 Forest Legacy Program" and that the final version of the bill included \$1,415,000 for the 73 acre Tulmeadow Woodlot! This was the culmination of several months of legislative process during which the Tulmeadow application was first in and then out. Thanks to the strong endorsement of the Connecticut Delegation, Senators Chris Dodd and Joe Lieberman, Representative John Larson and particularly the persistent attention of Representative Chris Murphy, the bill's final version included an appropriation for the permanent protection of the Tulmeadow site.

The Simsbury Land Trust applied to the program in June 2008 beginning an arduous series of steps that took sixteen months. Milestones included a #1 ranking by the State of Connecticut, inclusion on the recommendation list from the Northeast States, approval by the US Forestry Service and inclusion on its recommendation list to the White House. From there it was placed #34 out of only 47 projects nationwide that were submitted to Congress. The appropriations bill approved by the House funded fewer than the 47 recommended projects but Tulmeadow was still on the list. The Senate passed an appropriations bill that would fund even fewer projects and our Tulmeadow project was no longer among them. It was at the Conference Committee as the House and Senate appropriation bills were being reconciled that the Connecticut Delegation succeeded in getting the Tulmeadow Woodlot included in the final vote.

*(continued on back cover)*

## 28 Acres on the Eastern Ridge Donated to SLT

The SLT has been the fortunate beneficiary of several significant donations over the past year. One of the most exciting is the 28 acres donated by Ann and Laird Mortimer — the Owen-Mortimer Property.

This is one of the only significant east to west corridors remaining on Simsbury's eastern hillside. It abuts town and state land that runs all the way to the top of the ridge. Not only do such corridors have value for the town's plant and wildlife diversity, but they provide important reminders to us of our geological and historical setting. Like most of the hillside, this site is now completely wooded but stonewalls, rusted strands of wire fencing, tracks of old farm roads and here and there a giant wolf tree remind us that not long ago, this was open pasture. Geologically this property illustrates the transition from the river to the ridge top, the abrupt climb from the river valley up a lower slope to a middle sandstone terrace, and finally the steeper rise to the upper slope and trap rock peak. If you look at photographs from the 1940s and 50s, you will see a view of Simsbury's eastern ridge consisting of horizontal lines of woods running along the steeper upper slopes and of open pasture interrupted by patches of trees along the lower slope and sandstone terrace. A narrow band of streams and associated wetlands divides the lower and upper slopes. All of this is evident on the Owen-Mortimer Property.

*"Now at least this small portion  
of hillside will remain forever  
as a viable natural corridor  
from ridge top to river."*

they were used for pasture and orchard. Beginning in the 1960's, as the lower slope was used less and less for pasture, the grass, juniper and cedar grew into woods and halfway up the hillside, the relatively flat sandstone terrace began to be developed. Over the years, this development progressed along the plateau to the extent that today, there is an almost continuous band of houses from Tariffville on the north to Route 185 on the south. Visually, we still look to the hills and by and large, see ourselves in a town framed by a natural setting. The Town had the foresight to require that trees not be cut on the west side of these homes. However, this development has increased the difficulty for certain forms of wildlife



*Stewardship volunteer Joe Springman recently created a trail on the property following the path of an old farm road.*

There are very few houses on the hill in these early photos. Historically the hills were used to provide, at various times, firewood, lumber, charcoal and quarry stone for the farms nearer the river. In later years

*(continued on page 2)*



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# Letter from the President

— Chuck Howard

We are pleased to report that the amount of land under permanent protection by the Simsbury Land Trust has increased over the past year. We now have 28 parcels of protected land, consisting of over 820 acres. It is gratifying to the SLT that, in addition to our major land acquisition projects, generous people are also willing to donate valuable parcels of land or land interests to us. One recent gift is the Owen-Mortimer property on the east side of East Weatogue Street. This 28-acre parcel was donated to the SLT by Laird and Ann Mortimer. The parcel is important because it runs east from East Weatogue Street all the way to Penwood State Park on the east ridge of town. One of the Simsbury Land Trust's protection strategies has been to protect parcels that fall within larger corridors of already protected land.

The Simsbury Land Trust continues to improve and enhance the stewardship program. In addition to the routine maintenance and trail work that is undertaken on many of our properties each year, we also look for ways to tackle larger issues. For example, this past summer extensive efforts were made to eliminate barberry, an invasive plant, on a large section of the Owen-Mortimer property. Much progress was made and the effort will continue in 2010.

We are also thrilled to report that our application for a \$1.4 million Forest Legacy Grant has been approved by Congress. Obtaining this grant is a major victory for the Simsbury Land Trust and the residents of Simsbury. It was made possible by the strong support of the Connecticut Congressional Delegation (Congressmen Murphy and Larson, and Senators Dodd and Lieberman).

Now the burden shifts back to us to do the remaining work and make this final project a reality. We need your help and financial support to help us finish this last remaining parcel of Tulmeadow Farm.

It is time to renew your membership or join the SLT for 2010. Membership numbers are vital for current and future grant applications. While our membership base remains significant with over 760 members, it has slipped somewhat in recent years from a high of 880 in 2006. Your membership is important to us! Please take a minute to renew or join the Simsbury Land Trust today.



## 28 Acres Donated

(continued from page 1)

that need to migrate up and down the slopes. Now at least this small portion of hillside will remain forever as a viable natural corridor from ridge top to river.

The Owen-Mortimer Property is also a good example of the connection of people to the land. One of the interesting things we have learned in working with land donors, neighbors, people that walk or otherwise use the land and people who simply enjoy the view is that each individual sees the land from a different perspective and each of these perspectives provides a different but very real sense of ownership.

In the case of this property, there are people in town who still remember this as Eno land where they explored and picnicked and had grand adventures in their younger days when the fields were open. More recently, Marty and Candace Owen built their home here and first voiced an interest in protecting the surrounding land. And the current owners, Laird and Ann Mortimer, continued to discuss this plan with the SLT and finally made it happen. The Mortimers retained an additional area around their home so they will be able to continue to live here as neighbors to the SLT and continue to enjoy their former property. There are several individuals who bow hunt this hillside every year and who probably understand the nature on this land better than



# Rosedale Farms Gets a New Greenhouse

If you have driven past Rosedale Farms recently you will have noticed a new greenhouse or “hoop building” behind the parking lot at the farm store. You might have asked, “Why is such a visibly modern structure allowed on a protected farm?” The simple answer is that such temporary greenhouses are a normal part of successful farming in today’s Connecticut.

In crafting its agricultural conservation easements, the Simsbury Land Trust set out several objectives. Foremost among these was to preserve the long term economic viability of the working farm. We recognized that without a farm, there is no practical means of maintaining large scale fields. All around us are examples of owners who no longer had the means or the energy to keep their fields mowed and these fields have grown to brush and then to trees. The once dominant open field habitat in town is now the scarce habitat. Without fields there are no vistas, there are no grassland birds, plants nor animals, there is no valuable agricultural harvest and an important piece of our town’s rural character is gone.

A farm is a local business and as such it pays taxes, provides employment, makes purchases and produces a valued product – fresh, locally grown food. Preserving the long term economic viability of a farm includes supporting owners who continually expand their customer base, who remain on the cutting edge of farming methods and technology, and who pursue these operations in an environmentally compliant manner.

The Rosedale greenhouse is a sophisticated method of producing fresh vegetables for its customers throughout the year, potentially expanding the farm’s income beyond the typical six month growing season. It is a temporary structure and does not sit on a concrete slab. It can be removed when it no longer serves its function and the underlying soil can be replanted. The structure is expensive and it has to be set on perfectly level ground near utilities, road access and the farm store. There is no location that meets these needs that is not at least partially visible from the road.

Anyone who sees the crowds that have gathered daily at the Rosedale store this summer can appreciate the current success of the farm. To us at the SLT, this success represents security for 100 acres of field and the long term continuation of all the benefits it provides to the community and its environmental diversity.



*A farm is a local business and as such it pays taxes, provides employment, makes purchases and produces a valued product — fresh, locally grown food.*

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anyone else. (Note: This property is closed to the public during all or portions of the hunting season.) Abutting homeowners who share the woodland view and privacy appreciate the protection that the donation of this site provides. And finally, people who have never seen this part of the hillside will walk the newly cleared trail and create their own connection to the land.

One individual who is rapidly creating his own ties to this property is Joe Springman, a volunteer steward for the SLT. During the summer, he has created a trail through portions of the property along the path of an old farm road. This trail provides a good walking experience through some of the primary features of the site. In addition, under Don Rieger’s

supervision, the SLT has hired a contractor to remove large sections of invasive plants from portions of the property, much of this along the trail. The first phase of this initial clearing has been recently completed and more will be done next year.

The only entrance and exit to the property is marked and is located on East Weatogue Street just south of the intersection of Riverside and Terry’s Plain Roads. There is parking for one or two cars at this intersection and the parking lot adjacent to the Bridge of Flowers is a short walk down Riverside Road. As with all SLT land, please be considerate of our neighbors by staying on the marked trails and by not crossing onto neighboring property. And remember that this property will



*Laird and Ann Mortimer*

be posted and closed to the public during hunting season.

We thank the Mortimers for their support of the idea of protecting this land and their great generosity in donating it to the Simsbury Land Trust.

# We Have Moved!

## *Simsbury Land Trust has new downtown Simsbury office*

The Simsbury Land Trust has a new home! We moved our office in September to the Old Probate Court Building on the grounds of the Phelps Tavern Museum. The central downtown Simsbury location and the opportunity to be in a freestanding building were among the main reasons for the move. For the past five years the office was located in The Mill at Tariffville.

The building comes with an impressive history. Simsbury was one of many towns across the Nation that constructed a "Centennial Building" in 1876 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. This was Simsbury's Centennial Building and it still has the original walk-in safe and a number of features distinctive to Victorian design.

It was built two blocks south on Wilcox Street behind the home of Jeffrey Phelps, the then current Probate Judge. It remained in active use as Simsbury's Probate Court until the court outgrew the building and moved its operations to the new Eno Memorial Hall in 1939. At some time after Jeffrey Phelps, the property was acquired by Henry Ellsworth. For a number of years after the probate operations were moved, we are told that the main room was utilized for household storage and the safe for storing family valuables when the family was away. In the 1950s, the newly established Child & Family Services operated its first Thrift Shop there and in 1966 the home and ancillary buildings were sold to the Simsbury Bank.

The bank built its office where the home had stood and the old courthouse was donated in 1970 to the Simsbury Historical Society with the provision that the SHS remove it from the site. For many years, however, the SHS was unable



to move the building and rented it to a series of small professional businesses. During that time the building was not maintained and by 1998, the slate roof, wooden members and mortar had badly deteriorated. At that point, the bank (by then, through subsequent mergers, the Connecticut National Bank, now Bank of America) told the SHS that it would have to move the Old Court House or the bank would have to demolish it.

After much discussion and analysis, the Simsbury Historical Society decided that it could, in fact, move and preserve this important historical treasure. At that time, the Town owned the southeast quadrant of the current green of the Phelps Tavern Museum. The old Phelps dairy barn had burned down in the mid 1900's and its foundation had been roofed over for use as a shed. For years, the Town had used it for the garage and storage of its trucks and equipment. The garage had reached the end of its useful life and the Town had made a Request for Proposals for the site. The SHS entered the RFP and was successful in purchasing the site for \$98,000. Upon acquisition, the SHS demolished the

*SHS had been thinking recently about a more active use for the Old Probate Court House and when it heard that the SLT was considering a new location, it offered to lease the building.*

garage (the original barn foundation was repaired and acts as a retaining wall today), lifted the brick courthouse onto wheels, rolled it down the street past the old One Way Fare, set it on its current site and meticulously restored the building and grounds to the condition you see today.

Fortunately for the Simsbury Land Trust, the SHS had been thinking recently about a more active use for the Old Probate Court House and when it heard that the SLT was considering a new location, it offered to lease the building.

The building is easily accessed off of Phelps Lane from Iron Horse Boulevard and Hopmeadow Street, with ample parking near the building. Next time you are in the downtown area, stop in and see our new office!



### ***Special thanks to the following people who helped with our move:***

- \* Steve Stang, who was our generous landlord in The Mill at Tariffville for five years.
- \* Joyce Howard for donating her interior design skills to plan our new office space.
- \* Scott Cassin Custom Countertops for assistance in repurposing our old office cabinetry.
- \* The Simsbury Historical Society for being willing to share this wonderful space.
- \* BKM Furniture for their help and discounts on used office furniture and carpeting.



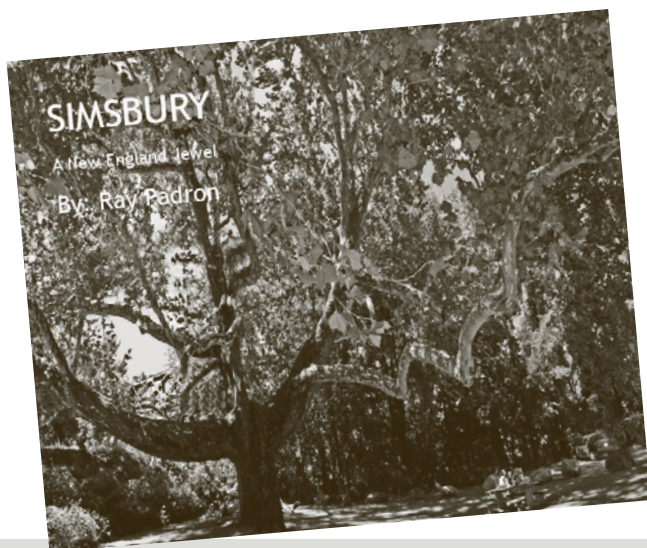
# SIMSBURY - A New England Jewel

## A Photographic Essay by Ray Padron

This is the title of a photographic essay highlighting what makes Simsbury such a wonderful town to live and work. The book was designed and photographed by Ray Padron, one of Simsbury Land Trust's regular volunteer photographers. There are a number of references in the book to the Simsbury Land Trust, as well as many photos of SLT protected properties.

Ray tells us that many residents may not realize the breadth and depth of the character, history, features, attractions, and architecture of this lovely town. Ray had two goals for this book — to summarize through photography some of the town's greatest assets, and to exhibit some of his photographs. This project took him several years.

Every member joining or renewing Simsbury Land Trust at the \$500 level will receive a free copy of Ray's book. The 40 page color book is also available to preview or purchase on the internet through the publisher's website, <http://www.blurb.com/user/store/raypadron>.



*The SLT has a copy of Ray's book on display in our new office.*

*Stop in when you see our lights on and take a look for yourself!*

## Interested in Joining a Hiking Group?

Several people who attended the June hike that Simsbury Land Trust sponsored for Connecticut Trails Day asked about ongoing hiking groups. Although the SLT cannot offer weekly hikes, we can facilitate the organization of an independent hiking group which would set its own schedule and choose its own routes. If you are interested in being part of such a group, call the Simsbury Land Trust office at 651-8773 and leave a message including your name and contact information. If there are enough interested people we will offer a time and place for an organizational meeting.

*Photo captions, clockwise from top left:*

*Simsbury Land Trust members were treated to a guided tour of the farming operations at Tulmeadow Farm at our June Membership Celebration.*

*Hikers enjoy the view from the western ridge at a Connecticut Trails Day event sponsored by the SLT.*

*More than 200 Simsbury residents attended a June Membership Celebration at Tulmeadow Farm.*

*Attendees ate ice cream, went on hikes and took hayrides on a warm early summer day.*

*Congressman Chris Murphy chats with SLT members Jackson and Carol Eno at the Annual Membership Dinner in April at Hop Meadow Country Club.*





*Great Pond is also a great place for bird watching.  
The park is a frequent SLT hike location.*

## Winter Family Hike ~By Fred Feibel

*"In the Woods Is Perpetual Youth" - Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Winter is a great season to enjoy the peace and solitude of some of Simsbury's popular trails. The surroundings take on a very different look after the leaves have fallen and a chill has settled in. A light coating of fresh snow will allow you to catalogue the purposeful movements of the local wildlife much more easily than at any other time of year. Great Pond State Forest (Simsbury Land Trust Walkbook page 38) is flat with wide, easy to navigate trails in any weather. A trip around the pond takes less than an hour. Enjoy the rich green of the high pine canopy and the cathedral-like quiet that it exudes. Watch for year round winged residents searching for leftover seeds and berries. Appreciate the trees for their shapes and textures. Getting around is relatively easy. Great pond is conducive to skiing, snowshoeing and even skating if the ice is well frozen (be very careful with children and pets near the ice). Have fun!

## Pest Alert: The Asian Longhorned Beetle

*By Joan Allen*

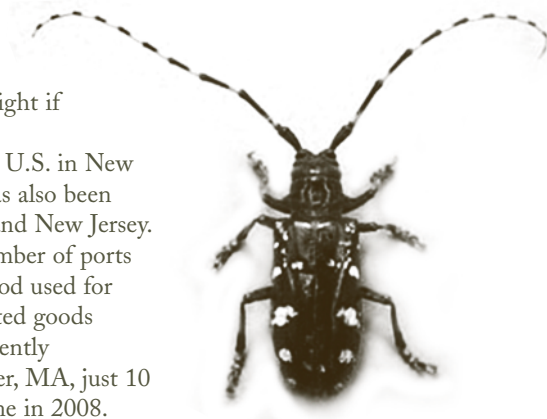
The Asian longhorned beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*) is a non-native, introduced pest of hardwood trees. When it is detected in the United States, infested trees are removed and destroyed by chipping or burning. To prevent further spread, quarantines are established to avoid transporting infested trees or wood from the area. It is believed that the impact of the Asian longhorned beetle (ALB) could surpass that of Dutch elm disease and Chestnut blight if allowed to spread unchecked.

The ALB was first found in the U.S. in New York City in 1996. Since then, it has also been detected and eradicated in Illinois and New Jersey. It has also been intercepted at a number of ports and warehouses, arriving in hardwood used for crates and pallets containing imported goods from Asian countries. The most recently confirmed infestation is in Worcester, MA, just 10 miles from the Connecticut state line in 2008.

Following this discovery, a thorough investigation was done to determine the extent of the infestation and all infested host trees and preferred host trees within a designated buffer zone were required to be removed and destroyed. There is a ban on transporting wood, including firewood, from the 64 square mile quarantined area. The preferred hosts of the ALB in the United States are maples (*Acer* spp.). Other known hosts are alders, birches, elms, horse chestnut, poplar and willow.

The ALB has one generation per year. The adult beetles are present from July to October. Adults are 3/4 to 1-1/2" long. Antennae are 1-1/2" to 2-1/2" times the body length with distinctive black and white bands on each segment. Females chew out oval to round pits in the bark where a single egg is deposited. Eggs hatch in 10-15 days and the larvae tunnel under the bark and into the wood where they eventually pupate. Coarse sawdust may accumulate around the base of infested trees or in crotches where branches meet the main stem. In summer, sap may flow from egg niches, especially on maples. Adults emerge from 3/8" round exit holes and either remain on the same tree or disperse a short distance to a new host.

Early detection of infestations and rapid containment and eradication are crucial to successful eradication of the beetle. Residents suspecting they have seen the ALB should report their findings to the University of Connecticut Home & Garden Education Center Diagnostic Lab at (877)486-6271 or the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station at (203)974-8474.



## Eagle Scout Repairs Knapp Property Observation Platform

Eagle Scout candidate David Knecht led a team of Simsbury scouts in rehabilitating and re-engineering the observation platform at the Simsbury Land Trust Knapp Property on Hedgehog Lane. Built some years ago, the waterside platform had begun to subside into the mud. Working at times chest deep in murky water, the scouts installed new underpinnings and a high tech leveling system. Simsbury Land Trust Stewardship Committee chair Don Rieger said, "David stepped up to an unusually challenging project. He should be very proud."





## "People and Places of the Simsbury Land Trust" Annual Photography Contest

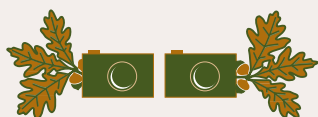
It is never too soon to take photos for the Annual SLT Photo Contest. Inspired by last year's annual meeting video presentation, this year our event is titled "People and Places of the Simsbury Land Trust." Two things make our organization special: the places we protect and the people who help us do that. This year's photo contest focuses on these two important parts of the SLT.

### Photography Contest Guidelines

- Open to all members of the Simsbury Land Trust.
- Enter up to 3 pieces in the following categories:
  1. People
    - ~SLT Events
    - ~People in Nature
  2. Places
    - ~Landscape
    - ~Close-up
  3. Student photographers
    - ~Students may enter in any of the categories.
    - ~Students are exempt from the membership requirement.
- Work must be in the form of prints 8 x 10 or 5 x 7, b/w or color. Entries will not be returned. All work must be clearly marked with your name, address and phone number, along with the category and location of photo.
- All photographs must be taken on Simsbury Land Trust Properties or at an SLT event — see our website's Properties & Maps section for a map of properties.
- All winning photographs may be used for promotional purposes by the Simsbury Land Trust. Photographers retain rights to the photograph.
- Winners will be announced at the SLT Annual Membership Dinner.

**Deadline for Entries: Jan. 31, 2010**

Please submit your entries to:  
Simsbury Land Trust  
P.O. Box 634, Simsbury, CT 06070.



## What's New at the Old Town Farm Dairy?

By Joan Allen, SLT Trustee

The property long known as the Town Farm Dairy on Wolcott Road in Simsbury has both an interesting past and an exciting new future. The property was originally donated to the town by Amos Eno in 1883, "to be used for the occupation and maintenance of the town poor" according to the deed. Over the years, the town has managed the property in various ways, all with meeting this requirement as a guideline. The new Community Farm of Simsbury, Inc., in cooperation with other nonprofit organizations and the town, will be establishing programs in the areas of farming, education, community service, historic preservation, and agricultural conservation and land management. The charitable mission of the deed will be met through some of these programs.

Originally, the 140-acre farm and its farmhouse housed poor residents of Simsbury who also worked on the farm, the men doing farming and the women doing housework. Since the 1940s, the residents were not required to work and the cooking and cleaning was done by a resident manager who received accommodations and a salary. After World War II and through the 1950s, a dairy farm was run on the land. In 1970, Baker Nursery leased some of the land for several years to grow nursery stock. The last indigent resident moved out of the farmhouse in 1981 when the town decided to close the poor farm. At this time, town officials explored different options for the property that would fulfill the charitable intent of the deed.

Most recently, the farmhouse has been used as affordable housing and the land again used by a dairy farmer. The Town Farm Dairy began operations in 1989 and was certified organic in May of 2005. Since the closing of the dairy, a new group has emerged to fulfill the mission of the Friends of Town Farm Dairy. The group responsible for the management of the farm is the Community Farm of Simsbury, Inc (CFS). The CFS has exciting plans for the property that will enrich the lives of the people of the town of Simsbury, the Greater Hartford area, and the state of Connecticut. Eighty acres of the property will be leased and managed by CFS.

Educational programs will be developed to teach youth and people of all ages about nature, farming, nutrition and environmental stewardship. Both summer and year-long programs will be offered to students in local public and private schools and in Hartford and neighboring communities through outreach programs. CFS is working in collaboration with The Ethel Walker School on curriculum development.

Various types of organic farming will be conducted, including growing vegetables, fruit, grain, and flowers. The charitable mission will be accomplished in part by participating in the national "Plant a Row" program in which volunteers plant and care for rows of vegetables that are destined for those in need. Other farming practices may include beekeeping and honey production in cooperation with a local beekeeper. A farm market building already existing on the farm is available for selling produce grown on the farm possibly along with produce and related products from other farms in the area.

The CFS is committed to preserving and maintaining the historic structures on the site. These include a 200+ year old farmhouse and a barn with an original section built during the Civil War. It is also intended to continue the practice of farming organically and maintaining the organic certification on the property. This will protect the Farmington River which adjoins the property.

*(Editor's note: Joan Allen is also the SLT representative on the Community Farm of Simsbury Board.)*





## SIMSBURY LAND TRUST

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Simsbury Land Trust Membership  
for 2010!**

**Your membership provides crucial financial  
support for continued land preservation in  
Simsbury. Please use the enclosed envelope  
to send in your 2010 membership today!**

## SLT Receives \$1.4 million Grant!

*(continued from page 1)*

The Simsbury Land Trust and the Tuller families have already completed the placement of conservation easements on 187 acres of the farm in prior transactions. This Forest Legacy Program will afford similar protection for the farm's remaining 73 acres. \$1,415,000 represents 50% of the funds required to put this program in place. In addition, the SLT has already gathered cash and pledges of almost \$400,000 from generous individuals and it has approximately one year from now to assemble the remaining match from a variety of public and private sources.

The Forest Legacy Program provides for the permanent protection of privately owned forest for the active production of timber. This program is a perfect fit for the 73 acre Tulmeadow Woodlot which the Tullers have managed for many years under an approved forestry management plan.

The Simsbury Land Trust is anxious to preserve the Tuller Woodlot for several reasons. It is an important part of farm operations in that it produces a timber harvest every seven to ten years. This provides a needed source of capital for farm improvements. It is a valuable recreational resource. Its logging roads provide a network of trails and hundreds of children and parents visit these woods each year for Flamig Farm's Annual Halloween Hayrides. The Town has no comparable venue for this event. It is the final link in a corridor of protected properties from Ethel Walker School to the McLean Game Refuge. Finally, periodic logging maintains a permanent succession forest, one of the few remaining. This constant regeneration of younger growth provides a rich variety of habitat for a broader range of plants and wildlife than we would otherwise have.

***This is truly an opportunity that we will never have again.  
Please join us in this effort!***

