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### Mission Statement

The Simsbury Land Trust is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to protect the 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.



# Two and a half years ago

we set out together to reach what many in our community felt was an unattainable goal: protecting 1,000 additional acres in 10 years. Since then, we have acquired protection for 350 of these additional acres: Rosedale Farms, Tulmeadow Farm (scheduled for spring 2005 closing), the Arnold property, and several smaller parcels.

The cost of this accomplishment has exceeded \$4 million. Of this, the Simsbury Land Trust obtained 64 percent from sources outside of Simsbury. This is an enormous benefit to our town from federal, state and foundation sources. But a substantial amount has been paid for directly by this community: \$300,000 by the Town of Simsbury, \$125,000 by the Ensign-Bickford Foundation and an unbelievable \$1 million plus by individuals like you.

The following pages credit the many individuals, the public and private sources, and the untold amount of time and effort that has made this huge initial achievement possible. I hope that each of you takes the opportunity to pause for a moment, to pat yourself on the back for all your support and to appreciate our great good fortune. You have our sincere thanks.

This is truly a tremendous start.

Having said this, please remember that a number of critical parcels of land still need protecting. It is important that we move ahead with these while we still have the opportunity. These key parcels of unprotected land include highly visible parcels along the ridges, valuable wetlands, productive fields, and woodland corridors, each of which has a meaningful impact on our scenic landscape and diverse environment. We will also continue working hard to improve and extend the trail network connecting several of our more popular properties, to increase their passive recreational use, and to develop an educational program to explain how each of them is special.

The town that we leave to our children's children depends on how much we accomplish before we run out of time and this handful of properties is put to other uses. As always, our future success is up to each of you. In the meantime, I want to thank you once again for the tremendous support that has made our work of the past few years possible.

Diel Davi

DICK DAVIS,

President



## Thank you, thank you, thank you!

In 2003, the Simsbury Land Trust established *The Campaign to Preserve the Natural Beauty and Character of Simsbury*. The purpose of this effort was to marshal the resources needed to permanently protect a number of specific properties critical to Simsbury's scenic beauty and environmental health. We believed that a formal campaign was necessary because of the magnitude of the goal, approximately 1000 acres, and the urgency; almost all of these properties were at risk of development within the next five years.

With your help, *The Campaign for Simsbury* progress to date has been exceptional.

During the early months of 2004, the Simsbury Land Trust completed the purchase of its first-ever conservation easement, permanently protecting the 109-acre Rosedale Farms at the foot of Talcott Mountain on East Weatogue Street. This involved creating a sophisticated partnership with the landowner, the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. It involved working closely with the Town of Simsbury and its officials. It involved the broadest community based financial support of any SLT project up to that time. It involved developing media exposure and the coordination of dozens of volunteers. We celebrated the completion of the project in June with a community

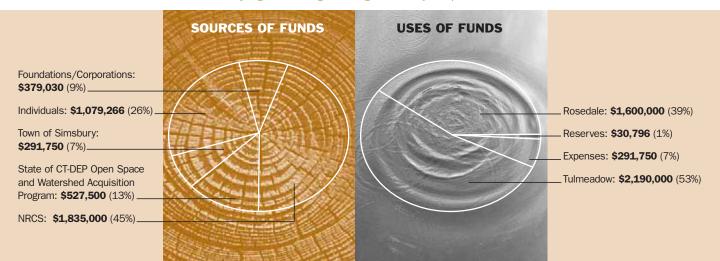
celebration at the farm, with over 500 people participating in the festivities.

A few months later the Simsbury Land Trust helped engineer the protection of 67 acres of the west ridge by obtaining a purchase option, transferring the option to the Canton Land Trust, taking back a conservation easement and supporting the CLT in its successful application for funds from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.

By year-end 2004, the Simsbury Land Trust had successfully assembled the funds needed to purchase a conservation easement permanently protecting 177 acres of the 260-acre Tulmeadow Farm in West Simsbury. In addition to substantial funds from the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Town of Simsbury, the Ensign-Bickford Foundation, and the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, hundreds of individuals from throughout the community contributed to this effort.

Altogether, *The Campaign for Simsbury* was able to add protection to over 350 acres efficiently, effectively, and creatively. The magnificent achievement of *The Campaign* to date would not have been possible without the unbelievable support of each and every one of you. Thank you. Thank you!

Campaign Funding Through January 31, 2005



Statement of Revenues and Exp	atement of Revenues and Expenses January 1 – December 31, 2004			
	CAMPAIGN	OPERATIONS	TOTAL	TOTAL FY 2003
Revenues				
Campaign Donations(1)	\$ 997,341		\$ 997,341	\$ 431,585
Grants	1,267,500		1,267,500	10,000
Land Donations	200,000		200,000	5,000
Membership Contributions		\$76,070	76,070	65,876
Miscellaneous Income	1,440	402	1,842	121
Total Revenues	2,466,281	76,472	2,542,753	512,582
Expenses				
Administrative	42,938	18,019	60,957	44,861
Salaries and Benefits	17,954	17,954	35,908	27,542
Membership		24,681	24,681	19,753
Acquisition Expenses	5,549		5,549	1,953
Stewardship		3,992	3,992	1,122
Depreciation		3,936	3,936	3,526
Total Expenses	66,441	68,582	135,023	98,757
<b>Excess of Revenues Over Expenses</b>	\$2,399,840	\$ 7,890	\$2,407,730	\$ 413,825

<sup>(1)</sup> Campaign donations not counted here are grants of \$1,095,000 from the USDA-NRCS Farmland Protection Program, \$150,000 from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving and \$200,000 from the Town of Simsbury because the monies were received subsequent to year-end.

Balance Sheet	December 31, 2004	December 31, 2003
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash	\$ 689,297	\$ 341,310
Prepaid Expenses	26,372	27,885
Pledges Receivable	284,004	59,729
Total Current Assets	999,673	428,924
Fixed Assets		
Land	3,921,916	2,086,285
Office Equipment – Net	5,452	5,290
Total Fixed Assets	3,927,368	2,091,575
Total Assets	\$4,927,041	\$2,520,499
Liabilities and Fund Balance		
Current Liabilities		
Accrued Liabilities	1,568	2,756
Total Current Liabilities	1,568	2,756
Fund Balance		
Beginning Fund Balance	2,517,743	2,103,918
Excess of Revenues over Expenses	2,407,730	413,825
Ending Fund Balance	4,925,473	2,517,743
Total Liabilities and Fund Balance	\$4,927,041	\$2,520,499

# The Acquisition Committee's purpose is fivefold:

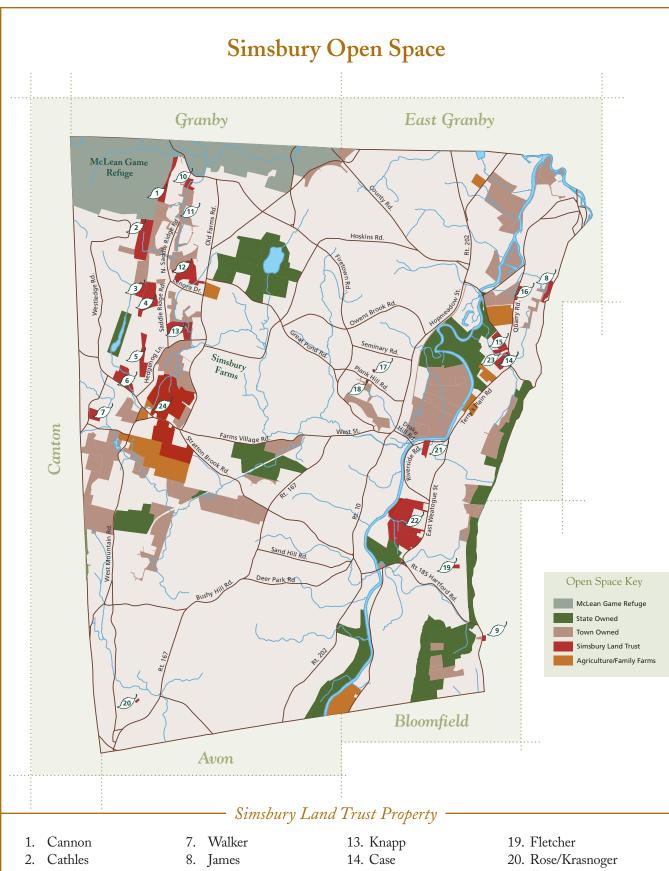
- Help the Simsbury Land Trust identify parcels of undeveloped land that would most benefit the community as permanent open space
- · Recommend priorities
- Solicit gifts of identified properties from current owners
- Craft creative protection solutions in instances where a gift is not possible
- Execute transactions to complete acquisitions.

Studies in other communities suggest that often 10 years or more elapses from the time a land trust indicates interest in a property to the time the owner actually donates it. It is, after all, a difficult decision to part with land to which we have become emotionally attached. The Simsbury Land Trust's experience also suggests that such a gift is sometimes opportunistic, so part of the acquisition job is to understand individual wishes and to remain alert to their changing needs. And in a few cases we need to be realistic and acknowledge that no matter how motivated an owner is, the choice sometimes is between leaving a property vulnerable to development or spending a large sum of money.

Recognizing it was in part the result of past years' efforts, 2004 was nonetheless a fabulously successful year for the Simsbury Land Trust. We made substantial progress on purchases and qualifying gifts:

- Completed purchase of the 109-acre conservation easement from Rosedale Farms
- Executed option and negotiated a 177-acre conservation easement from Tulmeadow Farm
- Executed option on the 65-acre Arnold Property on the ridge south of Onion Mountain, transferred option, and took back conservation easement
- Accepted gift from Preston Case of his residence and two acres of land adjacent to his 13 acres previously donated to the SLT (residence subject to a life estate)
- Accepted gift of a two-acre conservation easement from Neal and Laura Landerman connecting the Case Property to Joe Hall Farm, both protected properties
- Accepted a bequest of \$325,000 from the late Marie Dugan to advance the Simsbury Land Trust mission.

Over its 28 years, the Simsbury Land Trust has acquired 24 properties, 19 of which were donated outright and three of which were purchased at meaningful discounts. We recognize the extraordinary generosity this represents and depend on continued gifts of this scale for our future progress.



- 3. Friedman
- 4. Hendrick
- 5. Hedgehog
- 6. Westledge
- 9. Cutler
- 10. Leaska
- 11. Cannon
- 12. Bog

- 15. Wegner
- 16. Ketchin Quarry
- 17. Carlson
- 18. Bergman
- 21. Salster
- 22. Rosedale Farms
- 23. Landerman
- 24. Tulmeadow Farm (Closing in Spring 2005)



#### **Rosedale Farms**

Clockwise from upper right:

Trustee T.J. Donohue, farm owners Marshall Epstein, Edith Epstein and Sandy Bourke, SLT President Dick Davis and Herman Fonteyne, Trustee and Co-chair of The Campaign for Simsbury, at the June SLT community celebration at Rosedale Farms. (Hunter Neal)

Rosedale Farms in the early summer. (Rich Wagner)

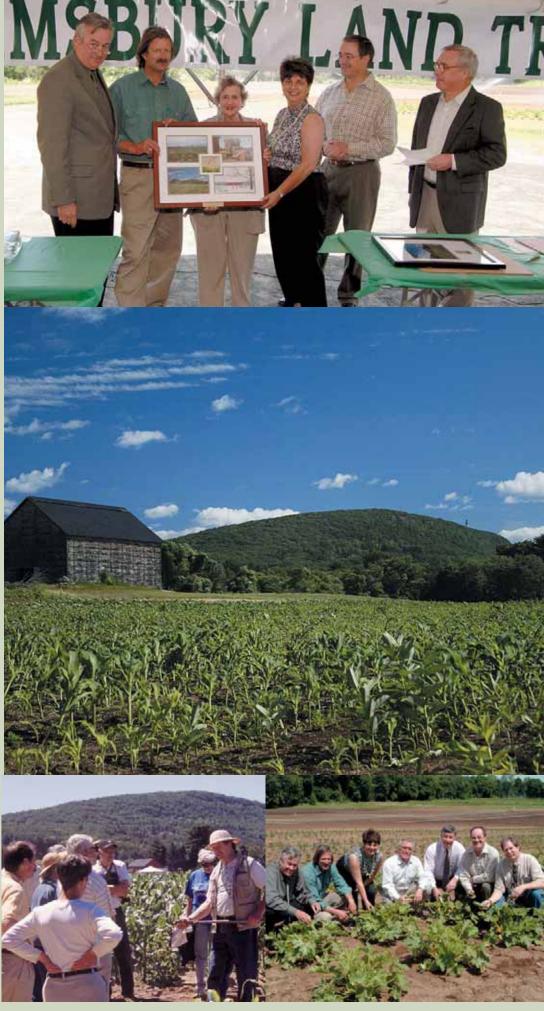
Trustee T.J. Donohue, farm owners Marshall Epstein and Sandy Bourke, Campaign Cochair Herman Fonteyne, Simsbury First Selectman Tom Vincent, SLT President Dick Davis and Kip Kolesinskas, U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service, in the fields at Rosedale Farms.

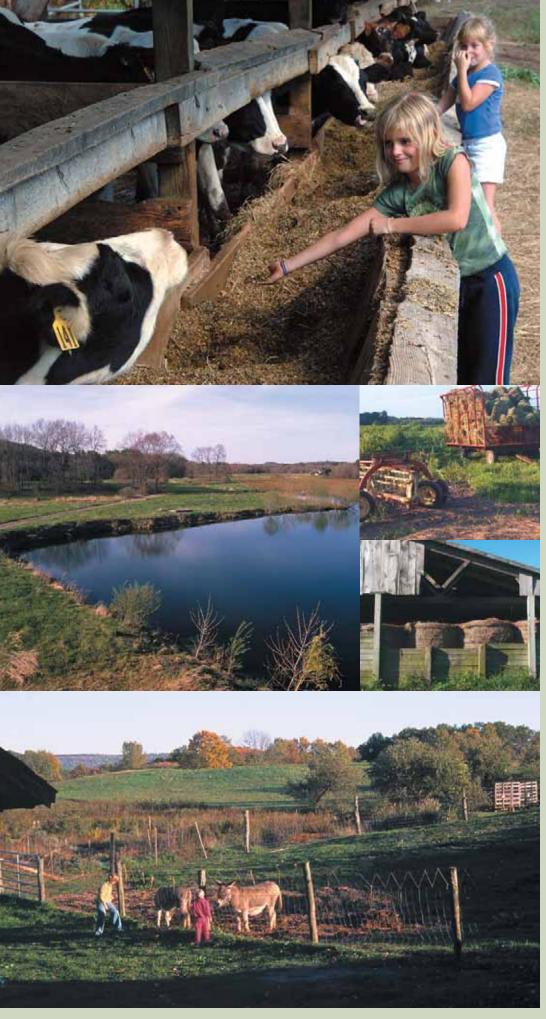
(Hunter Neal)

NRCS Soils Scientist Kip Kolesinskas showing members the different soil types found on Rosedale Farms. (Jim Watso)

Sunflowers in full bloom at Rosedale Farms. (Rich Wagner)

Winter at the Rosedale Farms vineyard. (Rich Wagner)





#### **Tulmeadow Farm**

Clockwise from upper right:

An aerial view of the 260-acre Tulmeadow Farm.
(Hunter Neal)

Simsbury Land Trust
Trustees Fred Feibel,
Candace Fitzpatrick and Jim
Veltrop with Tulmeadow
Farm owners Buzz Tuller
and Don Tuller. (Laura Soll)

The Tulmeadow Farm store in full bloom. (Rich Wagner)

Some of the many plants for sale at the store during the summer season.

(Rick Warters)

Watching the animals on the farm. (Hunter Neal)

Hay bales inside a barn at Tulmeadow Farm.

(Rick Warters)

Some farming equipment.
(Rick Warters)

A small pond out on the farm fields. (Hunter Neal)

Taking a closer look at the Tulmeadow Farm cows are Emma Neal and friend Megan Auger. (Hunter Neal)







### The Recreation and Education Committees

work closely together to encourage Simsbury Land Trust members and the community at large to actively enjoy and appreciate the varied natural settings of our town. These groups plan activities appealing to a broad range of the population — large and small, young and not so young. They provide a framework for participants to stimulate their minds and bodies, hoping that the end result is not only a day's good fun, but a deeper understanding of our environment and the SLT's commitment to preserving it.

The Recreation Committee had its most active schedule yet during 2004. Hikes and other recreational activities drew more than 200 participants from Simsbury and surrounding communities. Depending on the subject, we try to limit each group to 20 to 30 participants. When larger groups turn out, we try to offer more than one hike so that everyone has a chance for a meaningful experience. Experts from our membership, our town, or surrounding areas are brought in to lead these events and provide the group with insights into the history, geology and wildlife of the town.

In 2004 we offered a wide range of activities. Local photographer Hunter Neal led a snowshoe excursion and his popular outdoor photography hike. A group of curious amphibian seekers hiked to a local vernal pool where they discovered rare salamanders. A cooperative effort with the Granby Land Trust brought noted forest authority Sheila Conner to hike Holcomb Farm and discuss local tree populations. Nearly 50 bikers took a trip through Ethel Walker School trails to Tulmeadow Farm. Hayrides and guided walking tours of Tulmeadow Farm attracted more than 75 area residents.

The Education Committee also sponsors talks and classroom walks; but most important it researches subjects, creates self-guided tour materials, develops narrative signs for Simsbury Land Trust properties, writes articles, and advises other committees and the Trustees on stewardship and acquisition policy. The committee produced educational signs for the Quarry and Bog properties in 2004, and those will be installed in early 2005. Work is also underway on signs for the soon-to-be-completed Rosedale Farms trail. Activities planned for 2005 include a beetle farming workshop to help control invasive species and a guided birding walk.

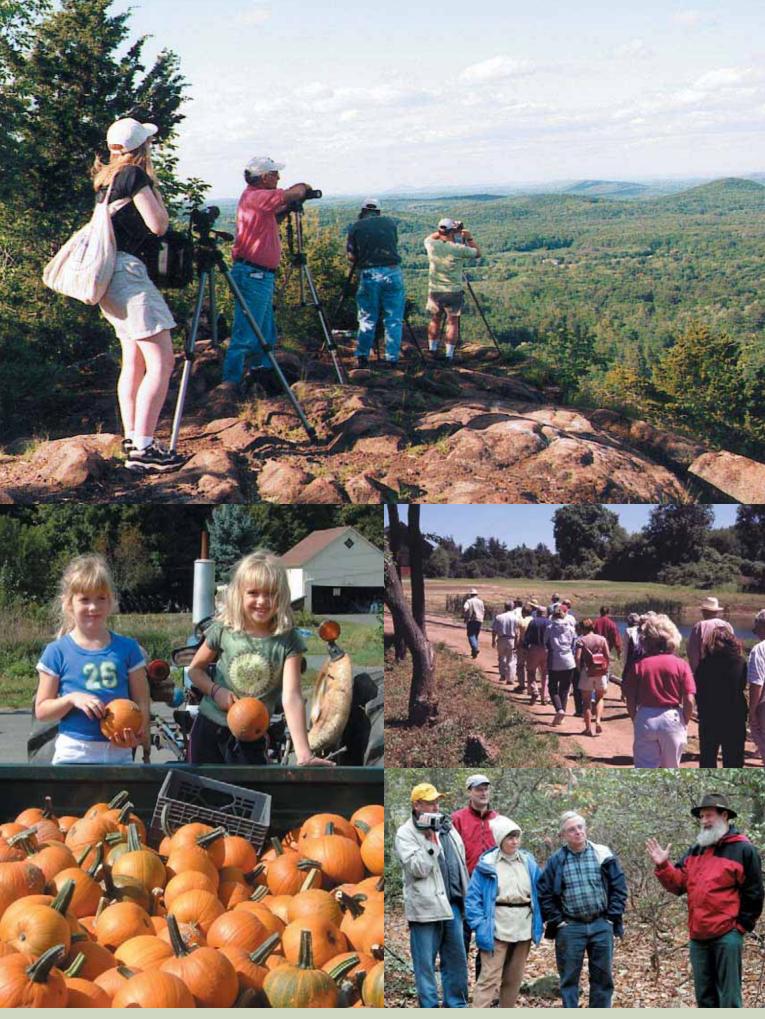
Clockwise from top:

A photography hike gave avid photographers an opportunity to practice their skills while enjoying the scenery.

Over 500 people attended the Rosedale Farms community celebration in June. Natural Resources Conservation Service scientists led more than 100 people on informational talks to show them what types of soils are found at Rosedale Farms. (Jim Watso)

Annual meeting speaker
Tom Wessels, author of
"Reading the Forested
Landscape", took SLT
trustees and volunteers
on a guided tour of the
properties on Westledge
Mountain this fall. Trustees
T.J. Donohue and Bob
Bingham, and volunteers
Sally and Don Rieger enjoy
the talk. (Hunter Neal)

Megan Auger and Emma Neal found perfect pumpkins to take home with them. (Hunter Neal)



# When many people think of land trust stewardship,

they think of building and maintaining trails, annual clean-up days, boundary marking, and scout projects. These activities are very much a part of the Simsbury Land Trust. But our growing Stewardship Committee's land management involves much more.

The purpose of the Stewardship Committee, first and foremost, is to see that no harm comes to the SLT properties. This means preserving boundaries, preventing inappropriate use, protecting special features and rare or unusual species, minimizing erosion, and the meaningful contribution of its land to a healthy and diverse natural habitat throughout the town.

Beyond this basic responsibility, the Stewardship Committee strives to restore and improve the natural health and vibrancy of each parcel. This includes partnering with other like-minded individuals and organizations and using their greater skills and experience to better understand our properties. We can then better judge when to remove weak and diseased growth, whether to remove or control invasive species, and how to encourage healthy and diverse growth, maintain or restore fields and meadows, and improve wetland buffers.

Over the past year the Stewardship Committee has examined the selective thinning of a disturbed section of one of its properties, maintained two fields (one of which was reclaimed from brush thicket) and examined the invasive species on several properties with an eye toward determining how it might have a meaningful impact on the problem.

In addition, with the recent acquisition of several conservation easements, this committee is establishing a permanent subgroup to regularly monitor compliance with the terms of these agreements.

Most important, the SLT looks to its Stewardship Committee for ways to use its land for passive recreation and educational purposes. The challenge is in determining how to best use each parcel without doing harm to the natural features and overall health of each habitat. Particularly in a town like Simsbury, which is essentially an already heavily developed suburban community, there is tremendous potential with our open space to provide families an unusual opportunity to enjoy and learn about the natural world just down the street. A major project underway in 2004 and continuing into the future is the trail network linking several SLT properties to better accommodate activities of the Recreation and Education Committees.

It is a major accomplishment to preserve important portions of the natural environment around us. The Simsbury Land Trust is also working hard to use this land as a means for all of us, young and old alike, to better understand and appreciate the world around us.



## The single most important action that you can take to further

the success of the Simsbury Land Trust is to become a member and to renew your membership each year. Of all the factors needed to ensure that the SLT is able to continue its good work, an active, vibrant and strongly committed membership is the one critical ingredient.

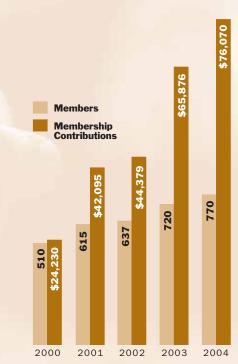
"What do I get out of being a member?" Besides the obvious satisfaction of being part of an organization with solid, on-going and lasting accomplishment, a broad range of activities becomes available. For example, over the past year members and their families have gotten to know others with similar interests by organizing, leading or participating in outdoor recreational activities, taking part in informative lecture discussions, learning new skills like nature photography and snowshoeing, leading or taking part in trail or other property maintenance projects

Simsbury or by writing, designing or photographing for one of our pamphlets or regular publications.

You should also know what a real difference each membership makes in ensuring that future generations have the same natural beauty and healthy environment that we have all enjoyed. Your annual membership donations provide virtually 100% of the funds we need to operate. Primary expenses covered by annual membership donations include the salaries of its part time Executive Director, its part time Finance Director, the rent for its office and insurance. Another ongoing expenditure has always been its newsletter, annual report, and various membership mailings and other publicity that are so critical to increasing the community's awareness of the SLT mission and its activities. Equally important, many of you provide the primary source of skills, time and efforts that get our work done. Each year, dozens of volunteers make Simsbury Land Trust's work possible by donating their time and talents.

We are pleased to report that this was yet another record year for Simsbury Land Trust membership with 770

We are pleased to report that this was yet another record year for Simsbury Land Trust membership with 770 households making an annual contribution during 2004.



households making an annual contribution in 2004. Without each of you, none of the recent SLT achievements would have been possible and we thank you for this most important support. Without you, over 650 acres of prime scenic and conservation land in the Town of Simsbury would still be at risk or gone forever. And a major voice for the enjoyment of our community's wild places would not exist. Thank you.

#### 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 2004.

#### **Membership Donations**

#### Star \$1,000 and above

Custom Printing and Copy, Inc. The Gryphon Fund Hermann Family Charitable Foundation

Ernie Ballagh and Vicki Pittenger Mr. and Mrs. Steve Ballentine Richard and Theresa Buggy, Jr. O Preston Case Herman and Letty Fonteyne Katie French Rona and David Gollob Scott and Lisa Johnson Att'y. and Mrs. F. John Kearns David and Cheryl Pedersen James and Carroll Veltrop Mr. and Mrs. Richard Wagner The Werth Family Foundation

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