Simsbury Land Trust 2008 ANNUAL REPORT

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.

CONTENTS

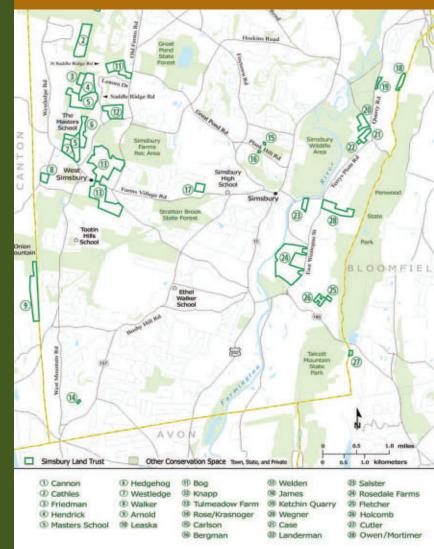
1 Letter from the President

- 2 Financial Highlights
- 3 Why is the work of the SLT important?
- 8 Donor Recognition

Inside back cover

Land Donors Board of Trustees Cover photo: Alexander Anisimov Back cover: Dick Clark, T.J. Donohue Other photos: Rick Warters, Ray Padron, April Smith

The Simsbury Land Trust permanently protects 28 parcels of land totaling 823 acres.



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

2008 was another successful year for the Simsbury Land Trust. Property acquisitions, stewardship of existing properties, many recreation and education activities, and a board leadership transition were highlights of this year.

We continued our strong record of property acquisitions. Funding for the acquisition of the second phase of Tulmeadow Farm — the Triangle and Pasture, was completed, adding another 20 acres to the 167-acre field protected in phase one. In addition, initial work began on the third and final phase of Tulmeadow Farm — the 73-acre Woodlot. The Tulmeadow Woodlot is especially important as it would complete the protection of a corridor encompassing over 8,000 acres, stretching from the Ethel Walker School to the Massachusetts border. We are off to a good start, with approximately \$300,000 in donations and pledges made for this purchase to-date. An application has been filed for the USDA Forest Legacy program for a federal grant that would cover almost half of the purchase cost. The project was selected as the top project from the State of Connecticut. Our grant application successfully made it to through the regional review, so it

now is being considered at the national level. We very much appreciate the strong letters of support we received from other organizations and from political leaders.

Most of the Simsbury Land Trust's 28 properties, however, have been given as outright donations of land or easements. We are indebted to those who donated these properties, and in 2008 we were fortunate to have two such donations. Leland Holcomb donated a conservation easement on his 20-acre property on the ridge in East Weatogue. Laird and Ann Mortimer donated 28 acres of land fronting on East Weatogue Street and extending up to state-owned ridge line property where the Metacomet Trail runs through. Both of these properties are great additions to SLT's current holdings, bringing the total number of acres protected to 823. Their preservation will benefit residents of the town of Simsbury forever. In addition to these acquisition efforts, we have continued with strong stewardship and recreation programs to encourage the enjoyment of these protected properties. Some new trails were completed on the west ridge properties, including 60 Westledge and The Master's School parcels. Several properties were surveyed so we are able to permanently mark some of the boundaries. Over 300 members participated in our hikes, presentations, and other activities including the Tour des Farms, which



had over 100 bike riders participating in a tour of the farms in Simsbury and Granby. Other events included farm tours, winter walks, and guided educational hikes. Most of these are offered free of charge, made possible by the continued generous donations by Simsbury Land Trust members. Many volunteers and members donated their time and talents to help make the stewardship program and recreation events successful, and we thank them for their efforts.

I had the good fortune to be elected as new president of the Simsbury Land Trust in 2008. Dick Davis stepped down after 12 years of service as SLT president, but he continues to serve on the board of

trustees and as chair of our acquisition committee. Other new officers include Ted Almy as vice-president and Karen Brand as secretary. Bob Ellis continues his service to SLT as treasurer. Rob Heagney has volunteered to serve as chair of phase three of the Campaign for Simsbury.

The Simsbury Land Trust has worked hard to earn the support and respect of our members, the residents of Simsbury, and those who have contributed land or funds for our land acquisition projects. We pledge that we will continue to work hard for open space preservation in town, and we hope you will continue to support our efforts.

Thank you,

Chuck Howard President

1

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS - 2008

Statement of Revenues and Expenses

January 1 – December 31, 2008

	CAMPAIGN	OPERATIONS	TOTAL 2008	TOTAL 2007
Revenues				
Campaign Donations	\$ 324,408		\$ 324,408	\$472,841
Grants	1,135,548	\$ 6,620	1,142,168	187,290
Land Donations	1,375,000		1,375,000	42,000
Annual Appeal Income		1,298	1,298	3,526
Membership Contributions	3	91,188	91,188	84,462
Miscellaneous Income		12,584	12,584	15,855
Total Revenues	\$2,834,956	\$111,690	\$2,946,646	\$805,974
Expenses				
Administrative	28,086	18,051	46,137	65,847
Salaries and Benefits	21,347	21,347	42,694	44,370
Membership		30,916	30,916	23,714
Acquisition Expenses	5,382		5,382	7,508
Stewardship	362	16,139	16,501	9,814
Depreciation		1,367	1,367	994
Total Expenses	55,177	87,820	142,997	152,247
Excess of Revenues				
Over Expenses	\$2,779,779	\$ 23,870	\$2,803,649	\$653,727

Balance Sheet

	December 31, 2008	December 31, 2007
Assets		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash	\$ 419,191	\$ 439,964
Pledges Receivable – net	316,264	165,637
Prepaid Expenses	3,491	10,215
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	738,946	615,816
FIXED ASSETS		
Land	9,427,219	6,747,218
Office Equipment – net	2,652	2,519
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS	9,429,871	6,749,737
TOTAL ASSETS	\$10,168,817	\$7,365,553
Liabilities and Fund Balance		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accrued Liabilities	\$ 1,960	\$ 2,389
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	1,960	2,389
FUND BALANCE		
Beginning Fund Balance	7,160,276	6,508,800
Board Designated Stewardship Fu	nd 30,000	30,000
Restricted Stewardship Fund	2,295	
Temporarily Restricted Net Assets	170,637	170,637
Excess of Revenues over Expense	s 2,803,649	653,727
ENDING FUND BALANCE	10,166,857	7,363,164
Total Liabilities and Fund Balance	\$10,168,817	\$7,365,553

WHY IS THE WORK OF THE SLT IMPORTANT?

Over the past 32 years, the Simsbury Land Trust has acquired land or easements protecting 28 sites totaling 823 acres. These numbers are impressive, but not nearly as much as the quality and variety of this splendid collection of places. Our properties include outstanding examples of traprock ridge, fields, meadows and active farmland, and mountain streams that appear only after spring snow melt or a heavy rain. Also included are vernal pools, significant stretches of Stratton Brook, Hop Brook and Bissell Brook and frontage along the Farmington River, bog, swamp and wet meadows, forested upland and wooded swampland. Each is an experience in its own right. Together they exhibit a rich natural diversity that is rarely found in a single small town.

Not only is this a remarkable collection of individual sites, but if you look at the map you will see that an effort has been made to acquire land that connects other parcels that are already protected by state, town and other institutions. These connections make corridors that create large continuous parks that wind through large portions of the town. The corridors enable species of plants and animals to thrive in a way they never could in smaller pocket parks completely surrounded by homes, allowing easier movement, possibly making the adjustment to global warming more likely for certain species. And these corridors make possible extended walks from one property type to another without having to leave the trail.

The Simsbury Land Trust first and foremost seeks to provide long term protection for these signature examples of diverse land types and continuous corridors. It does this through ownership and through the requirements and prohibitions crafted in its conservation easements. On an on-going basis, through its Stewardship Program, it works to protect, restore, maintain, and improve the natural habitats on the land it owns, and wherever appropriate, it attempts to create and manage public access for passive recreation and environmental education.

No matter where you live, no matter what your street, the chances are good that at least one of your neighbors is a Simsbury Land Trust member. The entire focus of the SLT is on land that has a direct impact on the quality of life here in Simsbury.



We thank you for of your remarkable support that has made the work of the SLT possible. We recognize how financially difficult this time is for many of our friends and neighbors. However, for those of us who have the means and recognize the benefits, there remains no greater need than now to continue the effort.

Over the past several years, our volunteer photographers Dick Clark, Hunter Neal, Ray Padron and Rick Warters, along with many other participants in our Annual Photography Contest have provided a wealth of visual images of the land protected by the Simsbury Land Trust. The following images are a sample of their work and are a good representation of the diversity of habitat included in the West Ridge Corridor that stretches across West Simsbury from the Ethel Walker School to the McLean Game Refuge.

The Tulmeadow Woodlot

This 73-acre Woodlot is the remaining unprotected portion of the 260-acre Tulmeadow Farm. For decades it has provided a steady harvest of timber that has supported the farm. It is the site of Flamig Farm's Halloween Hayrides in October and other community activities throughout the year. It is one of Simsbury's last wooded areas actively managed as a succession forest and is the





last link in a continuous natural corridor stretching from Ethel Walker School to the McLean Game Refuge.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

- > Actively managed for sustainable timber harvest, regular cutting creates a mix of trees of different types and ages. Not only does this keep the woods healthy, but it provides a varied habitat for a wider range of plants and animals.
- > Old logging roads enable easy access for winter walks, summer hayrides and other passive recreation throughout the year (with permission of owner).
- > Forest trees reflect on the surface of one of the vernal pools on the farm that provides needed habitat for both the aquatic and the land forms of wood frogs, spotted salamanders and other amphibian species.







The Tulmeadow Farm Fields

With your support, the Simsbury Land Trust has worked with the Tuller family to provide permanent protection for the 187 acres of fields at Tulmeadow Farm, preserving valuable agricultural soils, spectacular scenic vistas and a local business. A walking trail established by the SLT provides an opportunity to see the fields up close and educational signs along the way provide a better understanding of the valuable community asset that this and other nearby farms provide.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT

> Spring plowing just north of the Woodlot. This well-drained, high ground allows for early planting and ensures a plentiful yield in wet summers. Lower, less well drained land in the north fields provides for late crops when summer rain is scarce.





- > Simsbury Land Trust members celebrate in the south fields.
- > Summer grass as seen from the Woodlot looking north. This is one of the best views of the West Ridge (The Hedgehog and Saddle Ridge), a two mile ridgeline protected by the SLT and the Town.
- > The Tulmeadow gardens and cattle barns are sheltered by Hedgehog Mountain in West Simsbury Center.

The West Ridge

Over 200 million years ago, when Simsbury was a tropical jungle and dinosaurs roamed, volcanic material formed a layer of what became basalt and was tilted downwards to form a remarkable traprock ridge that

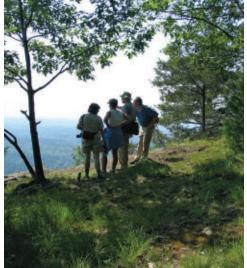


stretches from Barn Door Hills in Granby to Onion Mountain in Canton. Two trails maintained by the Simsbury Land Trust follow the ridge from Westledge Road, just west of the Tulmeadow Triangle, one along the ridge top and the other along the base of the west side of the ridge.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

- > The ridge trail provides insight into the different plants that grow along the top where soil is sparse and tends to be warmer. A number of plants typically more common further south in Connecticut grow here.
- > Both trails begin across Westledge Road from Pasture Lane. One of several SLT bridges facilitates access across Hop Brook near the start of the trails.
- > The ridge trail also provides great birds eye views of Simsbury and is the venue for several SLT-sponsored walks each year.
- > The trail at the base west of the ridge is a unique habitat. The meeting point here of the volcanic ridge and the much older schists of the Western Highlands forms a well defined, narrow ravine. Talus slopes to the left capture ice in the winter that remains all summer long cooling the ravine. Hillside rivulets feed the beginnings of Hop Brook.











The Bog

The SLT's 40-acre bog is the only sizeable bog in Simsbury. Halfway up the West Ridge Trail, the ridgeline dips sharply to form a "saddle" through which Bissell Brook tumbles to the base on the east. A branch of the trail follows the brook down to the North Saddle Ridge Drive cul-de-sac. Several houses down the street, a SLT trail heads east along a glacial esker to its 40-acre bog. An elevated walkway and observation deck affords visitors an opportunity to enter the bog and appreciate the geology, plants and animals of this unique habitat.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT

- > Within the moss and over time, woody plants such as high bush blueberry, swamp azalea, and red maple saplings become established. Larger shrubs and trees die out as they grow and their roots hit the water below (see dead trunks in background). Stands of mature white pine line the high and dry esker bordering the bog.
- > Various grasses (including the white "cotton grass") grow in patches throughout the bog. A wide range of dragon fly varieties frequent the bog in summer and a number of bird species nest in the thick bushes.
- > A bog is a spring-fed pond with a mat of sphagnum moss (in this case about 18" thick) that keeps the water dark and cool. Bogs are common in the far north but are rare in Connecticut.



This rich mix of wildlife habitats and visual adventures can be experienced here in a single continuous collection of land types.

DONOR RECOGNITION

We want to thank the community for its generous support this past year. None of the Simsbury Land Trust's accomplishments in 2008 would have been possible without our membership and its many remarkable volunteers and donors.

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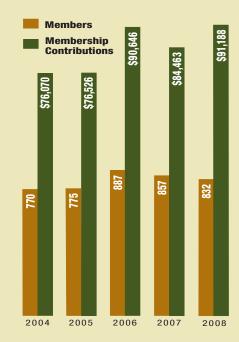
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