

The Ins and Outs of Trail Work at the Lay-Allen Preserve



A scenic area in the Bayberry Ridge section of the Lay-Allen Preserve.

The current popularity of the Lay-Allen Preserve has made its previous designation (as recently as 2020) as Old Lyme Land Trust's "Quiet Giant" obsolete. On many occasions the parking area on Lords Meadow Lane is full, with additional patrons who live nearby arriving on foot. This change can be attributed in part to two exciting developments trumpeted in the 2020 edition of *Tributaries*: The Trust's purchase of a 30-acre abutting parcel previously owned by the Greenfield-Leet-Frazier family and the preserve's new connection to the Town of Old Lyme's McCulloch Family Open Space. Both were great developments, but each presented some challenges.

The new parcel off Bayberry Ridge Road was lovely and ripe for a new trail connecting it to the existing 180-acre Lay-Allen Preserve, but it did not come with road access. Also, the new connection to the McCulloch Family Open Space property highlighted the need for trail signage and an improved trail blaze system to integrate it with the Open Space trails. Although it took more time

than expected, the Trust accomplished both goals this spring.

The Ins

The Trust is thankful to Bayberry Ridge neighbors, Ann and Gary Dacek, for working with us to acquire road frontage for a new trailhead. As of February, OLLT has direct access off Bayberry Ridge Road. We are also grateful to the Daceks for volunteering to steward the new parcel.

In part to prevent future encroachment issues, another step in the process was to walk the new parcel's official survey boundaries and post Old Lyme Land Trust property signs along the perimeter. That chilly mid-winter trek by Trust volunteer Stewardship Committee members and Lay-Allen Preserve stewards Cheryl

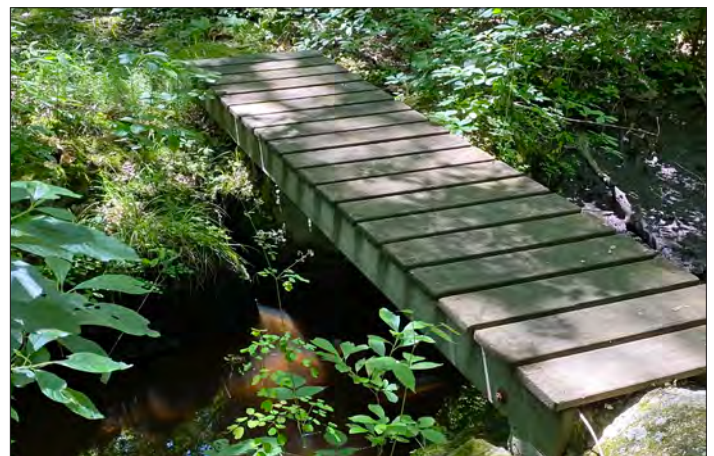
(Continued on page 2)

The Goberis-Chadwick Preserve: A Secluded Place to Connect with Nature

It's not the easiest preserve to find, but once you're on the trails you won't be disappointed! This 26-acre property off Route 156 quickly transports visitors to tranquil woodlands. The land is traversed by quietly flowing waters and dotted with mushrooms of many shapes, sizes, and colors. If you're looking for a place to walk in solitude, this preserve offers an experience that differs from that of the more well-known OLLT holdings.

Most of the trails are moderately strenuous, with a few short steep sections. Segments run along and over lovely Armstrong Brook. The place is alive with the sounds of peepers and bullfrogs in the spring, while other wildlife can be spotted year-round. You may experience a close encounter with white-tailed deer, and the sounds of hawks, blue jays, and other birds are welcome chatter.

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One of the charming bridge crossings over Armstrong Brook on the Goberis-Chadwick Preserve's White Trail.

The Ins and Outs of Trail Work

(Continued from page 1)

Bucior and Jay Campbell was challenging in parts, but helpful in providing a good sense of the boundary locations to be monitored and where to put (and *not* put!) trails.

Finally, we scouted out and marked a new trail from Bayberry Ridge Road into the preserve. An attractive loop connecting to an existing Lay-Allen trail was quickly established by two volunteer work parties.



Bayberry Ridge Road residents and volunteers Bob and Karen Archer (left) and Gary and Ann Dacek (center) teamed up with OLLT Chief Steward Anne Galliher (right) and others to establish the new Orange Trail on the Lay-Allen Preserve.

The Outs

Given the extensive trail network, the need for a more intuitive trail blazing system and new signage to help hikers find their way around and back out became apparent. A logical plan proposed by Cheryl Bucior was implemented. This scheme eliminated confusing double-colored trail sections as well as instances of discontinuous trail segments labeled with the same color. Accomplishing this goal required modifying the trail colors of many Lay-Allen trail sections, which was performed by Trust volunteers during a “blazing blitz” in a few hours on a Saturday morning. Now there are clear paths to return to each parking area: Blue to Lords Meadow Lane, Orange to Bayberry Ridge Road, and Green to the Town Open Space lot off Whippoorwill Rd.

The new Bayberry Ridge parcel is a beautiful wooded area featuring a stream, boulders left behind by retreating glaciers, and occasional wildflowers. It provides habitat for many native animals and birds. Together the Lay-Allen Preserve and the Town of Old Lyme’s McCulloch Family Open Space parcels protect almost 500 acres of forest and provide many miles of trails. Old Lyme is lucky to have this vast contiguous undeveloped area. We know it is well used and we hope your experience here is even better thanks to this spring’s improvements.

Those interested in a guided hike on the new Orange Trail can join our Hikers Happy Hour event on September 7th (see back page) or go to www.OldLymeLandTrust.org for details).

Milkweed Patch Update

You may have noticed flagging tape in the Watch Rock Preserve meadow and wondered why it is there. Old Lyme Land Trust is trying to establish a stand of milkweed plants to provide a food source for pollinators, particularly the monarch butterfly caterpillar which only feeds on milkweed leaves. We began in 2021 by planting seedlings and this year used two other methods: direct seed sowing and transplanting mature plants. We are pleased to report that milkweed plants are happily growing in this space! (The area is not open to the public; please stay on marked trails when visiting the preserve.)



Seedlings planted in May, 2021 by the Lyme-Old Lyme Environmental Club successfully overwintered and are now growing on their own.



Enthusiastic volunteers planted seeds of milkweed and other native wildflowers on Earth Day 2022.

OUR MISSION

The Old Lyme Land Trust is a non-profit organization dedicated to conserving Old Lyme’s natural, scenic and historic land and water resources for the benefit of the public now and for generations to come. The Trust accomplishes its purpose by acquiring land through donation and purchase, managing the land and by providing education to the public.

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2022 Volunteer of the Year: Lynn Thoma



Dedicated volunteer Lynn Thoma at work building benches.

Some people are born with enthusiasm—lots of enthusiasm! OLLT is grateful that one of them, Lynn Thoma, has chosen to devote her time and energy to her local land trust.

Lynn can be counted on to sign up for every work party she's able to attend. She's become very enthused about removing invasive plants, tackling them with great gusto. These intruders'

numbers have been greatly diminished at the Lay-Allen, Jericho, Upper Three Mile River, and Hoffman-Matthiessen-DeGerenday Preserves and a lot OLLT owns on Sill Lane. Last fall she and her husband, George, used a battery-powered blower to clear leaves from steep, slippery trails at the Lohmann Buck Twining Preserve. She also helped reinstall a bridge at the Goberis-Chadwick Preserve that had been swept downstream on Armstrong Brook by storm Isaias. Recently she shared her expertise to build, and teach others to build, benches for our preserves.

Lynn has lived in Old Lyme for a total of 44 years including from 2003 onward with George. They are long-time OLLT members and active hikers of all the local preserves. Her recent retirement from her career as a commuter airline pilot has afforded more time to volunteer, although she has not given up flying altogether—she still enjoys soaring in her small plane. Now that she's learned to identify invasive plants, she is cultivating a natural environment on her own property to benefit native plants and animals.

Volunteers like Lynn are hard to come by. She says “yes” to almost every request and shows up with all the right tools, a smile, and lots of energy! In the spirit of “leave a place better than you found it”, Lynn asks everyone to yank out one (or more, if so inclined) invasive plant each time you hike.

Beech Leaf Disease

Beech Leaf Disease (BLD), characterized by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station as “widespread and prevalent” in much of Connecticut, is not sparing Old Lyme. For example, trees on several OLLT preserves, particularly the Boggy Hole Preserve, are currently afflicted by Beech Leaf Disease. Its effects are believed to be exacerbated by a dry spring and a hot, dry summer the preceding year.

First discovered in Ohio in 2012, BLD has since spread throughout the region. Its distribution is sporadic and variable. At some sites, it is present in nearly every beech tree, whereas dense clusters of saplings with only a few affected leaves on a single tree have been observed elsewhere. It can kill trees within several years of detection, with smaller trees seeming to be most susceptible.

The American beech plays an important role in forest ecosystems. The canopies and cavities of this hardwood provide nesting sites and shelter, bear nuts that are an essential food source for many animals, modulate light levels in the forest understory, and contribute to nutrient cycling on the forest floor through leaf litter.

Scientists still have many questions about this disease which affects many beech species. It is attributed to a tiny (<0.1 mm) nematode. Investigation into how it infects trees and spreads is underway. It is believed that the nematodes infect buds in the fall and overwinter. Insect, bird, and human activities are being studied as possible modes of dispersal. The nematode can move through water, and this potential mechanism for moving within and among trees is also of interest. It is unknown whether some trees have natural resistance to the disease. There are no established treatments at this time, although injections of emamectin benzoate



A telltale sign of infection is dark striping between leaf veins. Other signs of BLD include: aborted leaf enlargement; cupping, browning, and yellowing of foliage giving it a crinkled and shrunken leathery appearance; branch and tip dieback; and premature leaf drop.

(used to prevent pine wilt nematode infection) and application of polyphosphate to the soil are being pursued.

Information sources:

CT Agricultural Experiment Station

U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service



A bench was dedicated in memory of former steward, environmentalist, and nature photographer Hank Golet on a crisp February morning. The bench is sited on the Lohmann Buck Twining Preserve where visitors can enjoy a view of the Lieutenant River.

Hikes and More Hikes



Monotropa uniflora, commonly called Indian pipe, ghost pipe, or ghost plant, is a native flower that is abundant at the Goberis-Chadwick Preserve.

The Goberis-Chadwick Preserve

(Continued from page 1)

Theodora (Teddy) Goberis generously donated this property at 372 Shore Road to OLLT in 1998. She lived in a cottage at Point O' Woods and taught art at Norwich Free Academy for 44 years.

The other half of the preserve's name – Chadwick – has historical significance. The Chadwick family was locally prominent during the early European settlement era. They were initially farmers and later mariners and ship captains. In 1767, Reuben Chadwick and Martha Miller married in South Lyme. Tragically, their first child, a daughter born the following year, lived for only two days. Her gravestone is located in a small cemetery adjacent to the preserve, along with those of seven other people whose names are unknown.

The preserve is maintained by steward Wayne Ashton. There is a sign-in book at the trailhead in which visitors can add notes about their experience at the preserve. More than one page records the sight or sound of an owl. As one entry attests, it's a "Nice quiet place to take a leisurely hike".

Visit our website (www.oldlymelandtrust.org) for the trail map and directions to the preserve.



Top photo: Mike Aurelia (center) and Denise Savageau (center right) led a hike on the Bogy Hole Preserve on CT Trails Day. They spoke about the unique features of the preserve and shared facts about the fauna and flora. Bottom photo: The October Hikers Happy Hour had a great turnout at the Griswold Preserve. Mark Terwilliger gave an informative talk about the fish ladder.

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Nature Note: Raccoons

One of the most distinctive animals found in both rural and urban parts of Connecticut is the raccoon. Its “bandit’s mask”, ringed tail, and dexterous front paws make it easy to identify. The mask and tail rings are thought to aid in intraspecies recognition, with the mask playing a dual role by enhancing light vision by reducing glare. There are many more interesting characteristics of this common mammal, some of which have led to misconceptions. Let’s explore a few of them.

Do raccoons wash their food before eating it?

The raccoon’s Latin name, *Procyon lotor* (which means “before-dog washer”), is based on a well-known raccoon behavior: dousing. Raccoons often feel around for underwater food near the shoreline. Some of their favorite foods are crayfish, mollusks, frogs, and fish, although corn, fruits, nuts, eggs, rodents, birds, and other small creatures may comprise a large proportion of their diet depending on what their environment has to offer. Raccoons will pick up an underwater food item with their front paws and rub it, using their most heightened sense – touch – to examine it or remove unwanted parts. Because water softens the hard layer of their paws, underwater rubbing increases their tactile sensitivity. Thus, raccoons are not actually cleaning dirty food when they douse. For this reason, the raccoon’s English name is more fitting than its Latin name. “Raccoon” is derived from the Algonquian Indian word “arakun”, which translates as “animal that scratches with his hand”. Another reason it is more appropriate is that raccoons are most closely related to bears and weasels – not dogs.

Do raccoons hibernate?

Following the breeding period during late winter and early spring, raccoons get to work storing body fat during the summer and fall. Up to half of a raccoon’s body weight may be made up of fat by the time it enters the winter denning period. Winter denning, which can involve sleeping for weeks at a time, serves to conserve energy when food is not easily available. However, unlike hibernating animals, the raccoon’s body temperature does not drop. Thus, this period of inactivity is not true hibernation.



Under its mother’s watchful eye, a raccoon kit peeks out of its den at the Watch Rock Preserve. Raccoons have multiple dens for sanctuary during the non-winter months, with a preference for hollow trees, stumps, logs, vacant groundhog or fox burrows, and buildings such as barns. Soon the **babies will follow their mother in a single-file line to learn important skills** such as hunting, swimming, and climbing. *Photo by Jeffrey Vlaun*

Does a daytime raccoon sighting mean the animal has rabies?

It’s true that raccoons can carry and transmit the potentially deadly rabies virus through saliva. The main signs of a rabies infection include abnormal vocalizations, overly aggressive behavior, and impaired mobility. Because raccoons are largely nocturnal, an appearance during the day provokes speculation – could it be due to rabies? Raccoons have other motivations for coming out during the day. Mother raccoons may want time away from their increasingly demanding babies. Also, because male raccoons may kill babies to bring a female back into heat, in the spring females will adjust their schedules to hunt during the daytime in order to keep close guard over their young at night. So, seeing a raccoon during the daytime does not necessarily mean the animal is rabid.

If your curiosity has been piqued and you want to learn more about raccoons, see:

<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/raccoon-nation-raccoon-fact-sheet/7553/>

<https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/wildlife/Fact-Sheets/Raccoon>
www.hww.ca

<https://mammalfacts.com/>

www.wildlifeinformer.com

www.wikipedia.org



We gratefully acknowledge those who have generously donated to OLLT

(July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022)

Over the past year, your support has made it possible to maintain and enhance the preserves which are open to the public as well as engage the community in activities focused on the environment. We especially thank our long-time supporters!

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Old Lyme Land Trust thanks the Essex Savings Bank (ESB) for once again supporting our work through its Community Investment Program. Grant amounts are based in part on the number of ESB account-holders who vote for OLLT. This year we received \$392, and hope to be awarded even more next year through the support of our members.

Thank you, Volunteers!

Volunteers are essential to OLLT's operations. In fact, nearly all the work done to keep the Trust humming along is done by volunteers. We are grateful to those who commit their time and skills. If you are interested in joining a work party, serving as a preserve steward, helping with events, or assisting in other ways, please contact ollandtrust@gmail.com.

We are especially indebted to the preserve stewards who monitor and care for their preserves:

Belton Copp Preserve: *Peter Engelking*

Boggy Hole Preserve: *Ned Coffee*

Goberis-Chadwick Preserve: *Wayne Ashton*

Griswold Preserve: *Josh Edmed, Winnie Edmed,*

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Hatchetts Hill Preserve: *Jeff Ballachino, Mary Ballachino*

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Upper Three Mile River Preserve: *Mike Kiernan, Pierre Rougny*

Watch Rock Preserve: *Sandra Downing, Ted Freeman,*

Sarah Foley, Liam Celic, Luke Celic

OLLT thanks Attorney Thor Holth of Holth & Kollman, LLC for his counsel and professional photographer Jeffrey Vlaun for permitting the use of his images taken on OLLT preserves.



Top: Carpenters of all ages gathered to build four durable benches. Bottom: The benches offer hikers a place to rest and appreciate their surroundings, including at the marsh viewing area on the Belton Copp Preserve.

UPCOMING EVENTS



Hiker's Happy Hour is a partnership of the Old Lyme Land Trust, the Town of Old Lyme Open Space Commission, and the Old Lyme Inn.

Hiker's Happy Hour

Stretch your legs after work on a weekday hike! Hiker's Happy Hours occur on Wednesdays twice in both Spring and Fall. The format is simple: a 45-minute hike beginning at 4:15 p.m. at a local trailhead followed by happy hour from 5-7 p.m. at the Old Lyme Inn. (You can join for either or both components.) The next event is on September 7 at the Lay-Allen Preserve, starting at the trailhead on Bayberry Ridge Road. The guide will share information about its interesting features and history. October's event will be announced in Lymeline, on our websites, and via posters around town.

9th Annual Kayak Regatta

The 2022 Old Lyme Land Trust Regatta is coming! On Sunday, September 11 at 1 p.m, we'll begin our approximately 2-hour excursion on a beautiful, largely sheltered waterway in town. Our guide, Fred Fenton, is an experienced kayaker who has led many of the Trust's past regattas.

Paddlers of all ages are welcome. Use of a USCG-approved life jacket or vest is required. Space is limited and pre-registration is necessary. Email: ollandtrust@gmail.com to RSVP. More details of the event will be provided upon confirmation.

The event is free. Donations to support the non-profit OLLT's work are appreciated.

