

D A R I E N



LAND TRUST

SPRING 2008

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS,

It is a privilege to write to the Darien Land Trust membership on behalf of the Board of Trustees this spring. We have much good news to report — land acquisitions and donations, stewardship efforts on numerous properties, successful outreach and lobbying initiatives at the state and local levels. And as always, there are challenges, too.

Recent land acquisitions and donations, such as Brookside Road, Molly Lane, Valley Forge and two properties on Holly Pond, have brought the total number to 187 acres under our care in outright ownership or under conservation easement. On page 2 you will find an update on new properties from our Executive Director, Shirley Nichols. With these wonderful lands come additional responsibilities and expenses, as detailed in the stewardship report on pages 2 and 3. We hope that you have noticed the results of many of these projects that make our properties both visually more appealing for residents and significantly better habitats for the flora and fauna and bird life that naturally reside in our open spaces.

We have reached beyond our own backyard this year as well. The Darien Land Trust was pleased to be able to support the effort in Rowayton to preserve Farm Creek and to marshal our trustees in a lobbying effort to support passage of a real property tax abatement bill at the state level. Once passed, we were again active in communicating to our local officials in Darien the importance of this legislation for land trusts and nonprofit land conservation organizations. We are grateful to the Town's representatives for their support in passing an enabling ordinance for Darien. Trustees attend zoning and EPC hearings, write letters and make phone calls, go to conferences and

training programs — all to serve the interests of open space preservation and protection in our community and region. And we welcome the involvement and support of interested members — join us!

They say time and tide wait for no one, and neither does land. In addition to our current annual campaign "Wilderness keeps life civilized," we have undertaken a capital campaign, our first since the successful acquisition of Mather Meadows, to purchase Waterbury Field on Hollow Tree Ridge Road. Three Darien residents — Bill Bohnsack, John Callagy and Ann McKee — have joined our trustees on the fundraising committee, and all are working tirelessly to raise \$1.3 million to save this unique and scenic example of Darien's early rural history. We hope that our members will join all 24 trustees in supporting this campaign. Saving this lovely open field simply will not happen without all of us working together.

I hope many of you will join us at our annual Stewardship Day (details on page 4). It is always a day of good work, good fun and good people in some of the loveliest open spaces in our community. In the meantime, please visit our (newly updated) website at www.darienlandtrust.org for more information on our properties or projects.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kaye Rabin".

Kaye Rabin, President