

D A R I E N



LAND TRUST

SPRING 2009

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS,

As winter yields to the promise of spring, the Darien Land Trust is busy with plans and projects. Far from having hibernated over the dark, cold months since last fall, we have been hard at work on numerous initiatives.

At our November Annual Meeting members were treated to the beautiful work of local artists, whose depictions of Land Trust properties were sold to support the acquisition of Waterbury Field. Also featured was a presentation by Stewardship Co-chairs Den Frelinghuysen and Chris Filmer on **habitat restoration efforts taking place** at several of our lands. Within this newsletter you will find more detail on this important and expanding area of focus for the Land Trust.

According to the Land Trust Alliance, each year the U.S. is losing 2,000,000 acres to development, and The Audubon Society estimates that over 3,000,000 acres are lost to invasive species infestation. In a community that is 97% developed, protecting open space must also include **caring for what has been preserved**. With the help of our loyal and growing membership, we are working to enhance the environmental quality of our lands. This year we've focused on expanding previous initiatives that include controlling invasive plants and improving site conditions to encourage and support greater biodiversity within our community.

For us the process begins by assessing each location's existing conditions, features, and characteristics against its potential. We can then determine what actions to take to improve the habitat. Although some locations may be deemed "fine" as is, there are many subtle strategies,

effective on even the smallest sites, that can contribute to **a richer ecosystem**. If we want butterflies, birds and an otherwise healthy ecosystem, we need, for example, to encourage native plants that attract native insects that appeal to birds. (Many of the strategies that we employ on our properties are easily adapted to "typical" suburban landscapes as well.) As always, for us to be successful in these efforts, we depend on the generosity of our members, the partnership of volunteers and the collaborative efforts of other environmental organizations.

In closing, it seems fitting to recognize the recent loss of **a great friend to the Land Trust, Virginia "Jinnie" Oldrin**, a lifelong conservationist and naturalist whose vision and passion for open space provided the Land Trust and this community with a lasting legacy. She served as a trustee for many years, was responsible for raising the funds to acquire the Scott's Cove Woodland Marsh and donated her own family's "Round Meadow" lands to the Land Trust. These two important open spaces in Darien owe the preservation of their natural state in perpetuity to her commitment and generosity.

Thoreau wrote that "[H]eaven is under our feet as well as over our heads." The Darien Land Trust and its members honor Jinnie Oldrin's memory by continuing her stewardship of the earthly sanctuaries she loved so much.

Handwritten signature of Kaye Rabin.

Kaye Rabin, President

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DARIEN LAND TRUST EVENTS

“This Land Is Your Land”

There are always stewardship projects to work on at the Darien Land Trust, and again this year we offer our members, friends, and neighbors the chance to join us as “Stewards for a Day” for our annual Spring Clean-Up on **Saturday, April 25th from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.** We will meet at Olson Woods Nature Preserve at the end of Heather Lane.

All ages are welcome and volunteers need only a pair of garden gloves, comfortable work clothes, and “mud-ready” shoes (the ground can be soft and wet at this time of year).

Please RSVP to Mary Rooney at 655-6235 by April 21st if ypu’d like to join us.

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