

## ANNUAL REPORT – 2009

*Our Mission: To engage in and otherwise promote for the benefit of the general public the preservation of the natural resources of the Town of Madison, including water resources, marshland, swamps, woodland and open spaces, and plant and animal life therein and the preservation of unique and historic sites.*

**LAND ACQUISITION:** David Skelly, Chair. When the MLCT purchased the Neck River Uplands (NRU) southern parcel from the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority (SCCRWA) in 2003, the 45-acre parcel resembled a donut in that it surrounded a 7.2 acre parcel, or “inholding” which was privately owned. The MLCT recently purchased the inholding with a generous grant from the Summer Hill Foundation. This increases the size of the southern parcel to 52 acres, and the entire NRU (including the 70 acre northern parcel) to 122 acres. Hikers who want to view the newly acquired “donut hole” can locate it on our NRU trail map at [www.madisonlandtrust.org](http://www.madisonlandtrust.org).

**STEWARDSHIP:** Joseph Oslander, Chair. In order to fulfill our obligation to the public, we have the duty to protect the MLCT’s nearly 1600 acres of land. This year, members of the Stewardship Committee worked hundreds of hours, successfully resolving encroachment issues on seven MLCT properties. In most cases, we work with our neighbors to resolve inadvertent encroachments. This year, however, two matters involving the cutting of numerous mature trees without MLCT permission required further action. After unsuccessful talks with the respective property owners, the MLCT hired Connwood Foresters, Inc. to assess the damage caused by the tree cutting, which included the destruction of a magnificent Black Oak with a stump diameter of 41”. The MLCT retained environmental attorney Keith Ainsworth who filed court actions and, with the help of a highly protective encroachment statute passed by the State legislature in 2006, facilitated settlements of \$40,000.00 and \$25,000.00 respectively. The money will be used by MLCT to restore the damaged areas and monitor them to prevent the growth of invasive species where the trees once stood.

**The TRAILS COMMITTEE:** Terry Kensler, Chair. The Trails Committee hosted trail hikes, including its annual Ground Hog Day hike in February, and Moonlight Walk in October. The Committee also conducted a number of work parties to clear, blaze, and monitor trails and to remove hazardous trees. The Committee also organized volunteers for Madison’s annual Green Up Clean Up Day in April.

**FINANCE:** Fillmore McPherson, Vice-President – Finance and Frederick Pechar, Treasurer. The Madison Land Conservation Trust (MLCT) weathered the financial downturn and remains on solid financial footing, thanks to vigilant monitoring of our investments and operating budget. As of October 31, the Trust had \$746,000.00 in investment accounts with Morgan Stanley-Smith Barney and the Vanguard Group, up from \$709,000.00 at the beginning of the year. These funds are invested as follows: Cash and FDIC insured bank CD's -75%; Investment Grade Corporate Bonds – 20%; S&P 500 Stock Index Fund - 5%. The funds include the final payment of \$440,000.00 on the Neck River Uplands mortgage which is due in August 2010.

**MEMBERSHIP:** Andrea Hopkins, Chair. Membership in the trust held steady at approximately 600 members. The MLCT welcomed 45 new members this year largely as a result of the Membership Committee's third town-wide membership solicitation. Membership dues, general donations, and income from trail guides through the third quarter totaled \$27,131.76.

**OUTREACH:** Deborah Heinrich, Chair. The Outreach Committee held its first annual photo contest with 22 entrants and generous sponsorships from numerous local businesses. In keeping with the theme, the Committee sponsored a kids nature-photo hike in July led by professional photographer Ruthana Terreri that drew 25 children and parents. The photo contest entries were displayed at the Scranton Library during the month of October, and prizes were awarded at the MLCT Annual Meeting in November.

**EDUCATIONAL AWARD:** Joseph Oslander and David Skelly, Presenters. The MLCT again presented a \$1,000.00 Environmental Science Award to Daniel Hand High School's Science Department. The grant was used to purchase equipment for two classes titled "Principles of Ecology" and "Marine Science and Technology".

**GRISWOLD AIRPORT INITIATIVE:** The Board of the MLCT voted in October to publicly support the Griswold Airport Initiative. Purchase of the airport land by the Town offers the opportunity to conserve a substantial parcel of land along the shoreline, including salt marsh, woodlands, and river bank, in close proximity to Hammonasset State Park. The Board believes that there are few areas of coastal Connecticut that could be more perfect for such a project.

**LTA STANDARDS COMPLIANCE:** Sandra Bialos, Secretary. The Board continued to monitor its compliance with standards developed by the Land Trust Alliance, a nationwide land trust organization based in Washington, D.C. MLCT Committees this year reviewed and improved existing records policies to comply with LTA standards and to ensure clarity and consistency in MLCT recordkeeping.

Diana Insolio, President  
November 11, 2009