

The Rhode Island Foundation

2009 YEARBOOK

Cumberland Land Trust Endowment Fund



According to the Cumberland Land Trust website, Otis Smith Farm Preserve “protects 55-plus acres of scenic landscape and road frontage...and is significant for its biologically diverse array of wild plants considered rare in Rhode Island.”

High Rock Farm is comprised of “69 acres of protected property (that) boasts a diverse habitat of open fields, upland forest, and a large wetland system supporting 14 rare species of plants.”

The farm and preserve are just two of 17 properties totaling 340 acres currently protected by the Cumberland Land Trust. Incorporated in 1989, the land trust is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization with goals of significantly increasing its land acquisition and stewardship. Included in the “vision plan” is the creation of continuous protected open space that runs from the Monastery Grounds to Diamond Hill State Park, a distance of four miles (approximately 2,400 acres). This vision of open space includes properties owned

by the town and two water supply boards.

“The most logical way for local people to fund land acquisition and stewardship is through an endowment,” states Joe Pailthorpe, treasurer of the land trust board.

He and a core group of other donors contributed the initial funds to establish this permanent endowment and have embarked on a campaign to raise additional funds. “Every opportunity I get, I recruit (for members and supporters). I promote the land trust based on my passion and knowledge,” Pailthorpe explains.

“Development that reduces open space directly impacts the quality and availability of clean air and water. Reservoirs and public wells depend on clean surface and groundwater that is sustained only by an adequate supply of forest and wetlands,” Pailthorpe says, noting that many properties protected by the trust include brooks, streams, and wetlands that flow directly into the reservoir system, protecting drinking water not only for Cumberland, but also for Pawtucket and Central Falls.

“We want our future generations to enjoy a healthy environment balanced with smart growth. Investing in the Cumberland Land Trust at the Foundation is an investment in the future,” Pailthorpe concludes.