



Regional Land Trust Proposal  
Information Sessions  
February 8 & February 16

# WLT Mission & Background

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- Mission: To promote the preservation, improvement, protection, and conservation of natural resources for the benefit of the community.
- Incorporated in 1982
- Properties: 25 totaling 300 acres, including 3 working farms (one as easement holder)
- Membership: 161 (annual and lifetime)
- All-volunteer organization (except for very part-time bookkeeper)
- Current BOD membership: 8
- Revenues \$35K, Expenses \$45K, and Cash Reserves \$202K (unrestricted \$154K and restricted \$48K), as of year end 2022

WLT is currently doing well.  
So why are we considering a merger?



*It's the long-term concerns!*

# Challenges for Our Land Trust

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- Limited capacity to recruit board members, committee members and volunteers.
- Concerning demographics: most of our Board Directors, committee members and volunteers are seniors.
- A small number of people do most of the work of the organization.
- Annual budget does not allow for part-time or full-time staff to support day-to-day needs: accounting/finance, correspondence and organizing meetings.
- This limits the ability of Directors and volunteers to focus on program development, stewardship of properties and strategic planning.
- Accordingly, the Board is concerned about the long-term sustainability of the WLT.

# Our Process of Exploration

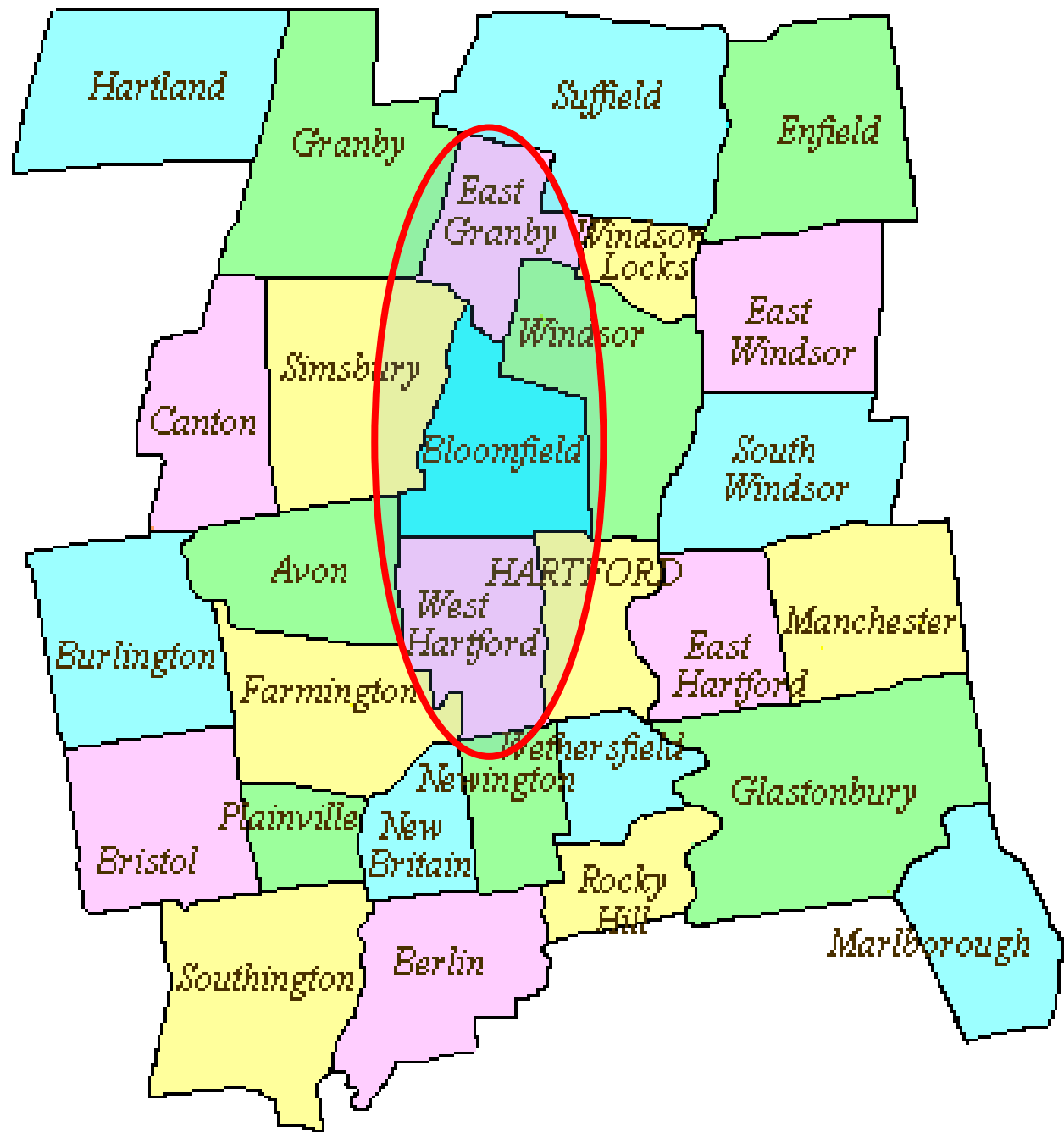
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- Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) presented us an opportunity to participate in workshops about developing strategic alliances.
- In this process we learned that East Granby Land Trust and West Hartford Land Trust were interested in exploring whether we might work more closely together.
- After a year of conversations, discussing how that might work together, we signed an MOU to formally explore whether or not we should merge.
- For the past three months we have been in discussions nearly every week to see if this is the right path for us. We strongly believe it is.

# Advantages of Forming a Regional Land Trust

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- Stronger organization with new partnerships and friendships
- Increase in volunteers and donors
- Protect and preserve more land
- Create connectivity across towns
- Greater local impact on climate change
- More regional visibility
- Stronger financial health and stronger fundraising with more members
- Greater ability to steward our existing properties
- Ability to have paid staff (anticipated grant for operations)
- Longevity/sustainability – ensuring the perpetuity of our entrusted lands



# East Granby Land Trust (EGLT)

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- Founded in 1974
- 322 acres preserved
- Membership: 87
- Board membership: 15
- Includes portions of Metacomet Trail and Farmington Valley Green Way
- Farmland adjacent to Seymour School
- Award-winning high school internship program





# West Hartford Land Trust (WHLT)

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- Established in 2002
- 8 properties totaling 20 acres
- Membership: 15 (lifetime)
- Board membership: 4
- Active recycling program
- Large, environmentally conscious, community



# We Envision a New Entity with a Profound Purpose

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- Vision: A world where we all work together to protect natural resources.
- Mission: To protect open space and promote public appreciation of the natural environment across the region.
- Shared Values:
  - Integrity in all we do
  - Respect for all people, animals, resources and nature
  - Collaborative in our approach
  - Inclusive in all we do
  - Always conservation-minded

# How it Would Work

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- EGLT and WHLT transfer assets to WLT (WLT is the surviving entity).
- A new entity with a new name created (but with the same tax ID #).
- WLT members (lifetime & annual) automatically become members of the new entity.
- By-laws ensure representation from each of our towns. (Drafted by-laws have been reviewed by our respective attorneys.)
- Every existing board member is invited to join the new entity's board. Committee members and volunteers are invited to participate as they have in the past.
- All existing properties transfer to the new entity with the donor restrictions and covenants of each property identified and protected in the process.
- Financials combine with donor restrictions identified and preserved.
- Existing programs continue, e.g. farms and leases.

# Merger Agreement

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*Each land trust identified additional items important to them to protect in the process.*

## **East Granby**

- Preservation of student internship program.
- Properties not sold unless express permission in deed.
- Continued lease of farmland to Nourish My Soul.
- Commitment to connect Seymour Elementary School to Howard Preserve.

## **West Hartford**

- Recognizing the town is more urban, make an active effort to acquire land and keep existing lands that would not necessarily be preserved if it were in the other towns.
- Continue the plastic film recycling program.

# Merger Agreement

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*Each land trust identified additional items important to them to protect in the process.*

## **Wintonbury**

- Preservation of all farms, and continuation of associated farm leases.
- Commitment to the LaSalette Trail initiative.
- Commitment to continued use of lands for public use, i.e. passive recreation.
- Maintain ability to sell, if needed, specific small parcels of land that were received without restrictions.

# Process Going Forward

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- Today is to share the news and invite questions.
- March 8 each land trust board, separately, will take votes to merge.
- If approved, March 10 WLT would send notice of a special meeting to current members.
- March 29 WLT would hold a special membership meeting to vote on resolutions to merge and adopt new bylaws (requiring 2/3 approval of those present), and if approved, elect a new board of directors.
- April 10 the attorney would begin filing necessary papers with the State, e.g. signing authority for the revised Certificate of Incorporation.

# Future Funding

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- The new land trust is estimated to have combined operating revenue of \$50-60K/year.
- Combined unrestricted funds: \$227,000.
- Combined restricted funds: \$65,525.
- Peter and Carmen Lucia Buck Foundation (PCLB), which has funded this merger exploration process, has agreed to provide additional funding of \$50K per year to support the newly merged entity (pending grant approval).

This will help ensure our future, and give all of us  
the ability to protect the land and resources we cherish!



# What would be the new name?

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Should reflect the nature of our mission (e.g. nature, conservation, recreation), combine aspects of all three towns, and be recognizable at least to some extent.

## *Traprock Ridge Land Conservancy*



- Most prominent rock formation running through central CT.
- Forms the bedrock of the popular Metacomet Trail.
- Connects our three towns!







Questions?

