

What We Accomplished in 2010



State Legislation & Policy

The **2010** state legislative session was **RI Land Trust Council's (Council's) 7th consecutive year of success at the Rhode Island Statehouse**. We pursue legislation to support land trusts and land conservation and to safeguard our State's protected lands.

In 2010, the RI Land Trust Council worked with General Assembly sponsors, Attorney General Lynch's staff, and Conservation Law Foundation to introduce and pass **legislation** that:

- **Explicitly authorizes the Attorney General to enforce conservation easements;** and
- **Enables land trusts to recoup the legal costs they incur while defending their conservation easements against violations.**

Rhode Island is now the 8th state in the nation to have this legislative authority for our Attorney General. This legislation is the culmination of work that began 2 years ago with Roger Williams University law students. The Council thanks the sponsors: Senator Sosnowski & Representative Kilmartin.

- Council initiated legislation to safeguard land trust properties from adverse possession was recognized by the Land Trust Alliance in a national magazine article.

In December 2010, RI Department of Environmental Management and State Properties Committee **adopted rules to implement legislation that establishes a no net loss of state protected open space lands policy**. This is legislation that the Council initiated in 2005 (adopted in 2006) after the state proposed to build a new state police headquarters on state protected open space land in Big River Management Area.

The Council provided **coaching to assist grass roots leaders** from the Rocky Point Foundation and Head of the Bay Gateway Committee with their efforts to **place a state open space bond referendum on the ballot** to provide funding to protect the remainder of Rocky Point and Harbor-front property in Providence. These are iconic Rhode Island properties that will provide public access to the Bay.

Additional State Policy Highlights

- Agriculture Conservation.
 - **Convened Farm RI 2.0 – Crafting the Next Generation of Farm Conservation Strategies** – a day long forum in February that brought together farmers, land conservation leaders and others involved in agriculture to discuss the existing farm conservation programs and developed recommendations for improving the programs. Prior to the forum, RI Land Trust Council researched the issues that arise with efforts to preserve farmland and working farms.
 - **Presentations during the forum were videotaped** and are on line at the RI Land Trust Council website: www.rilandtrusts.org
 - **Agriculture in Rhode Island** – video based on issues from Farm RI 2.0. RI Farmers tell their stories and the importance of protecting the state's remaining farmland.
 - Sponsored a **workshop on Farm Conservation at the National Land Trust Rally** in October and at Grow Smart's Power of Place Summit.

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- Representing the land trust community in Agriculture Partnership which has is developing a strategic plan for agriculture in Rhode Island.
- Participating in a New England project led by Land for Good to improve farm conservation. RILTC is one of 2 representatives from Rhode Island.
- RI Land Trust Council alerted the state's environmental community to a proposal by RI Dept. of Environmental Management (RIDEM) to build commercial wind turbines on state-protected open space lands at Black Point. This proposal was being advanced to develop land that was condemned by the State to prevent condominium development on a scenic shoreline. Yet, RIDEM's proposal was without an adequate review and decision making process. Our concerns led RIDEM to:
 - ✓ remove Black Point from consideration for development of wind turbines; and
 - ✓ revive their process for drafting and adopting regulations required by legislation RI Land Trust Council initiated in 2005 to protect state-owned open space lands (see above).

Networking, Partnerships & Collaboration

- **Conservation Stewardship Collaborative (CSC)** - RI Land Trust Council represents the land trust community as one of seven partners in this coalition that is working to improve stewardship of Rhode Island's protected lands. CSC initiatives are supported by an endowment at the Rhode Island Foundation.
 - The Council helped the state's land conservation community exceed a challenge grant – challenge to raise \$1,000,000 in stewardship funding for protected lands. Over 1,300,000 was raised for stewardship – with participation by the Council and several land trusts, to exceed the challenge.
 - Most initiatives supported by the CSC endowment are beneficial for land trusts and their stewardship work. Specifically, CSC gave grants in 2010 and 2011 to support RILTC state policy work. See the CSC website for details of projects funded: www.ricsc.org
 - **CSC Baseline documentation pilot project funded consultants' work with 4 land trusts** to prepare a baseline document on properties they own using a protocol developed by Scott Ruhren at Audubon Society of Rhode Island for the CSC (Richmond Rural Land Conservation Trust, Foster Land Trust, Prudence Conservancy, and Weekapaug Foundation for Conservation).
- **Land Trust E-news.** RI Land Trust Council continues to promote networking and communications among the state's land trusts through a periodic e-news and related action alerts. The e-news enables the state's grass roots land trust leaders to stay informed about the latest workshop and funding opportunities as well as other timely information and land conservation news.
- RILTC continues to represent the state's land trust community in statewide coalitions and partnerships so that our interests are included in decisions and initiatives.

Capacity Building Workshops & Resources

- **Land & Water Summit** – March 27, 2010. Record attendance: 325 people-32 workshops.
Keynote Speaker: Tom Horton - Saving the Chesapeake Bay's Land & Water: Lessons learned after 25 years.
- **Major Donor Workshops for Your Board**
 - Part 1: **Keep Your Donors: Building Profitable Relationships That Last** (Sat.) Feb. 6
 - Part 2: **Asking for Gifts: Yes, you can do it!** March 9
- **New IRS Reporting Requirements for Land Trusts** October 26
- **Rhode Island Land & Water Partnership website: www.landandwaterpartnership.org**
Check it out for the workshop information you missed and an **on line stewardship library**.

How We Accomplished this: Grants & Funding Support

The RI Land Trust Council's work is made possible by the contribution of 100s of hours of volunteer time and expertise by the Council's Board members and land trust leaders around the state. The Council's work is funded by generous contributions from land trusts (our members), foundations and other organizations and individuals. We appreciate this support that makes our work possible!

Land Trusts Supporting RI Land Trust Council in 2010

- Aquidneck Land Trust
- Barrington Land Conservation Trust
- Block Island Conservancy
- Block Island Land Trust
- Charlestown Land Trust
- Cumberland Land Trust
- Foster Land Trust
- Gloucester Land Trust
- Hopkinton Land Trust
- Land Conservancy of North Kingstown
- Lincoln Land Trust
- Mill Cove Conservancy
- N. Smithfield Land Trust
- Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust
- Prudence Conservancy
- RI Farm Bureau Land Trust
- Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust
- Sakonnet Preservation Association
- Smithfield Land Trust
- South Kingstown Land Trust
- Southside Community Land Trust
- The Westerly Land Trust
- Tiverton Land Trust
- The Watch Hill Conservancy
- Weekapaug Foundation for Conservation
- West Greenwich Land Trust
- Westerly Municipal Land Trust

Grants & Major Donations

Thank you to these foundations, organizations and individuals for their generous contributions to the RI Land Trust Council in support of land conservation and land trusts' work across the state:

van Beuren Charitable Foundation

The Rhode Island Foundation

Helen Walker Raleigh Tree Care Trust Fund

Conservation Stewardship Endowment @ The Rhode Island Foundation

Prince Charitable Trusts

Sharpe Family Foundation/ Julie & Henry Sharpe III

RIDEM – Division of Agriculture

Hazard Family Foundation

Woodcock Charitable Fund

Conservation Stewardship Collaborative Match Grants

- Mr & Mrs. Dudley A. Williams
- Peter August

Audubon Society of Rhode Island (In Kind)

Board Members of RI Land Trust Council

Thank YOU!