

PUTNAM COUNTY LAND TRUST

Putnam County Land Trust: Save Open Spaces
P.O. Box 36, Brewster, N.Y. 10509

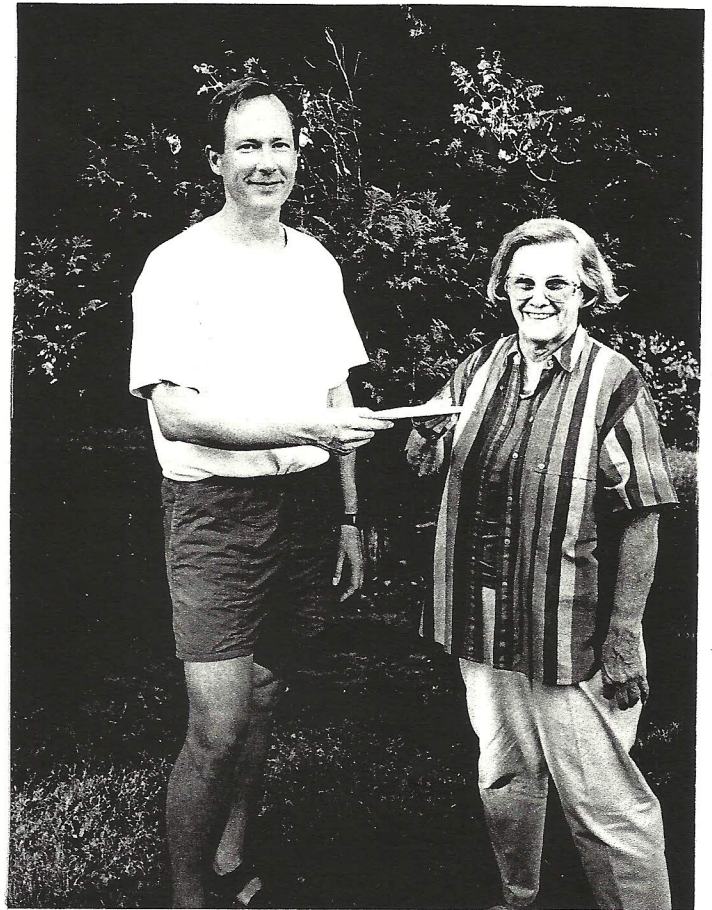
Fall 2001
Volume 12 No 3

PCLT Receives Tract in Great Swamp from Helen Sprague

An important tract of pristine Red Maple Swamp Forest in the Great Swamp was donated to the Putnam County Land Trust by Helen Sprague. The four plus acres of former farm woodlot is a section of the largest Red Maple Swamp Forest in New York State. The mature red maples provide nesting areas for Wood Ducks, Pileated Woodpeckers, Rose Breasted Grosbeaks, Cerulean Warblers and Scarlet Tanagers.

The donated parcel was the woodlot section of a former upland farm. The original owners were members of the DeForest and Pugsley families. Many of the farmers who owned farms consisting of upland fields and meadows also owned sections of woodland in the Great Swamp as woodlots so they could cut the family's wood in the winter. These sections were *not* always contiguous with the main portion of the farm. The Swamp, which was flooded in the spring and often in the summer, usually froze in winter so the trees could be cut and the wood hauled out by horses and oxen.

Helen grew up on Bullet Hole Road in Patterson and went to a one-room schoolhouse there. She remembers going down to the Ice Pond to fish when she was young. For her high school years, Helen gathered with other students from the Towners and Big Elm areas at the Towners RR Station to catch the train to Brewster to attend Brewster High School. At that time the present Garden Street School housed grades 1-12.



Helen Sprague handing the deed to the new Preserve in the Great Swamp to Hunter Pollock, President of the Putnam County Land Trust.

The donated parcel is a portion of mature Red Maple Swamp Forest that supports the largest breeding bird diversity in the Great Swamp. This deeply treed haven supports over sixty species of breeding birds.

