



# East Haddam Land Trust Newsletter

Fall 2015

Since 1979 ... continuously working to preserve and hold in trust the beautiful, vital lands and waterways of East Haddam.



Make your investment for now and the future at [www.ehlt.org](http://www.ehlt.org) or mail your investment to **East Haddam Land Trust** P.O. Box 122 East Haddam, CT 06423.

### Inside this issue:

- A Member's Story 1
- A Member's Story (cont.) 2
- What Does EHLT Do? 3
- Membership 4
- Grab Your Camera! 5
- Joys of Cold Weather Hiking 5
- Upcoming Events 6

## NATURE'S PLAYGROUND FOSTERS A LIFELONG PASSION ~A MEMBER'S STORY~

*Martha McLeod Tonucci, the force behind EHLT's annual Nature Calendar, maintains a life-long passion for the natural world and sharing nature's lessons with others.*

When growing up as the youngest of eight children in rural northwestern Pennsylvania, I didn't know we were poor. My childhood was extraordinarily rich in so many ways.

Following the depression and WWII, my family often didn't know where the next dime might come from. As a family, we tended a Victory and two other gardens, picked wild berries all summer and gathered hickory nuts and walnuts in the fall, and preserved fruits and vegetables. We kept a "root cellar" of winter hardy vegetables, made sassafras and black birch tea, butchered hogs we raised, drank fresh milk from our cow, and dined on chickens that no longer laid eggs.

Our playground consisted of treks "over back" where my siblings and I devised games and home-made toys, made whistles from maple saplings, climbed trees, built forts and shelters in the woods, and extracted wild honey from a "bee tree." A hollowed-out old chestnut tree became our airplane, flying us to places we learned about from *National Geographic*. The tree had fallen across a ravine over a small stream - a crick - where we caught frogs, salamanders, crayfish, and minnows for fishing.

In the midst of family activities, we kept a bird feeder in the winter and learned to identify birds. I observed downy woodpeckers mating; when the male downy drew blood on the back of the female's head, he "interpreted" the female as a male and a skirmish ensued. I recall a male rose-breasted grosbeak move his brilliantly-colored breast feathers to catch sunlight and attract his dull greenish mate.



*Nuthatch pair on pine. By Martha McLeod Tonucci*

I documented my mammal, plant, and bird observations in drawings and through notes in a nature diary. (continued next page)

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**1800 PIECES  
OF ORIGINAL  
ARTWORK,  
MOSTLY DRAWN  
BY  
EAST HADDAM  
STUDENTS,  
PUBLISHED IN  
EHLT  
NATURE  
CALENDARS  
TO DATE**

**53,000  
EHLT  
NATURE  
CALENDARS  
DISTRIBUTED  
SINCE 2006**

2006-2009  
4000 COPIES  
PER YEAR

2010-2014  
5000 COPIES  
PER YEAR

2015-2016  
6000 COPIES  
PER YEAR

## MEMBER'S STORY CONTINUED ...

Fast forward to adulthood. At Thames Science Center, New London, I illustrated and contributed to a monthly publication, *Nature's Notebook*, and later became its editor. At the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center I initiated a self-sustaining monthly nature calendar and edited its quarterly *Pequot Trails* science magazine. Living in Preston then, I was also a Director to the new Mashantucket Land Trust, now Avalonia Land Trust.

These exposures introduced me to Connecticut College botany professors Dick Goodwin and Bill Niering, conservationists who both were my mentors. Niering later became my graduate school major professor at Connecticut College.

In 1974 after making East Haddam home, I worked with other founders to form East Haddam Land Trust. At incorporation in 1979, EHLT had little or no money, and no land; only founders with a lot of hope and optimism.

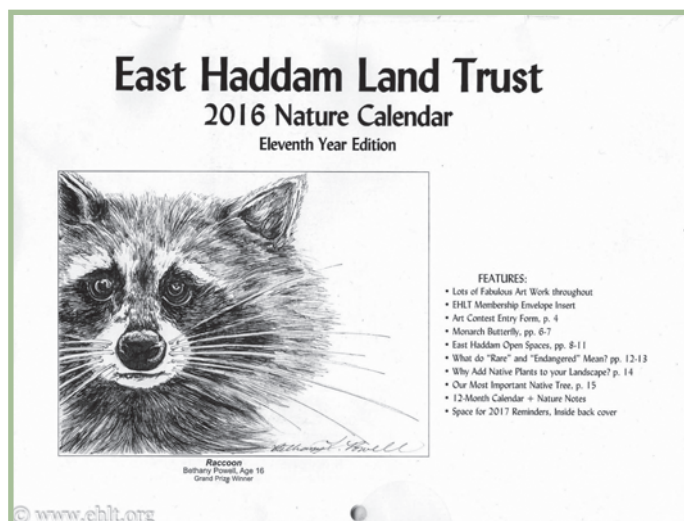
***We founders passionately realized the importance of preserving open spaces to maintain East Haddam's bucolic wild areas and preserve its heritage for generations to come.***

The subsequent two decades were filled with volunteer activities with EHLT, the Connecticut Botanical Society and the New England Wildflower Society; graduate school; raising two children; and teaching biology and earth science in Hebron.

After retiring from teaching in 2002, I envisioned the EHLT Nature Calendar. The original version was literally a cut-and-paste, photo-offset publication using many of my old illustrations, my daughter's illustrations, bits of clip art, and nature notes from my childhood diary. When material became scarce I started the EHLT-sponsored nature art contest to feature East Haddam student and adult artwork in the calendar.

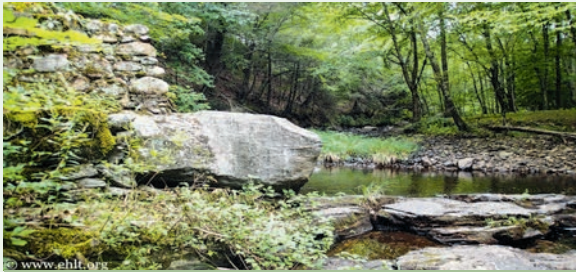
Complex software has since replaced the old cut-and-paste process. The calendar now fills 40 pages with over 250 original illustrations, nature notes, and information about the Land Trust and the importance of protecting open space.

East Haddam Land Trust is an exceptional organization whose work by many volunteers will live forever as a model for towns in other



places. I am proud to have been a small part of that journey.

## WHAT DOES EAST HADDAM LAND TRUST DO?



Hammond Mill Preserve—EHLT's first parcel

**PROTECTS  
450 ACRES OF LAND  
(32 ACRES ADDED SO FAR IN 2015)  
9 PARCELS HAVE PUBLIC USE TRAILS  
5 PARCELS HAVE PUBLIC ACCESS  
WITHOUT TRAILS**

**MAINTAINS 6 MILES OF TRAILS**

**500+ VOLUNTEER HOURS  
USED IN 2015 TO MAINTAIN  
EHLT PRESERVES**



Sheepskin Hollow Preserve trails

*East Haddam Land Trust is your local, all-volunteer, non-profit, tax-exempt organization that conserves irreplaceable land and waterways for the enjoyment of current and future generations of humans and wildlife.*

### PLUS - SO FAR IN 2015 - EAST HADDAM LAND TRUST:

Held 10 hikes, paddles, and public events engaging as many as 600 individuals.

Supported a new multi-town trail; blazing trails, raising and donating funds, and volunteering hours to build a new footbridge.

Raised \$2400 in a silent auction to support the Anita Ballek/EHLT Scholarship Fund.

Worked diligently supporting East Haddam's open space purchases.

Purchased and began installing new signs at EHLT preserves.

Worked with East Haddam Conservation Commission on new town trail maps.

Planned and trained with local and state-wide land conservation groups.

Obtained a \$49,500 State grant to add 12.5 acres near EHLT's new Golet Farm Preserve.



Our Musical Bridges concert mobilized 31 musicians to help EHLT raise \$3500 towards a new footbridge.





## MEMBERSHIP

### LEVELS

Guardian

\$500

Sustaining

\$250

Contributing

\$100

Family

\$50

Basic

\$20

Other

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

## MATCHING DONATIONS:

Does your employer match employee donations to non-profits?

**Consider East Haddam Land Trust as your match.**

Ask your employer for matching donation forms.

## MEMBERSHIP ~ THE LIFEblood OF EAST HADDAM LAND TRUST

This marks the beginning of East Haddam Land Trust's 2015-2016 membership campaign. Please don't roll your eyes or toss this note into the recycle bin ... membership campaigns work.

At the start of October 2014 EHLT membership stood at 267. Exactly one year later our membership grew to 323 ... a 21% increase. For this *we thank you!*

Your investment enables EHLT to build and maintain many trails such as those at Sheepskin Hollow, our most visited and hiked preserve.



Goldenrod by the Sheepskin Hollow Preserve footbridge.

Your investment puts EHLT in position to protect key parcels—Hidden Valley Farm Preserve along the Moodus River, Hammond Mill and Ayers Preserves along the Eightmile River, and EHLT's new Golet Farm Preserve along Great Hillwood Road. Such parcels sustain our town's rural character, help protect key waterways, and build greenway corridors so vital to the diversity and health of our environment.

**WHEN YOU INVEST IN EAST HADDAM LAND TRUST  
YOU CAN ACTUALLY PUT YOUR FEET  
ON LAND OR IN WATERS  
YOU HELPED PRESERVE AND PROTECT.**

Your EHLT membership gives you stock in our town and region.

***Please use the enclosed envelope  
to mail your investment.***

**THANK YOU!**

## GRAB YOUR CAMERA!

### *Amateur photographers take note ... gather your shots of our region's beauty.*

Youth and adult photographers are invited to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Land Trusts Photo Contest. Submit photos that capture the beauty and treasures of the towns of Lyme, Old Lyme, Essex, Salem, and East Haddam. Land Trusts of these towns sponsor the contest.

Youth—14 years or younger at the time the photo was shot—may submit photos depicting landscapes, waterscapes, plants, wildlife, or cultural and historic scenes from one of the five towns.

Adults—15 years and older—may submit photos in the categories Landscape/Waterscape, Plants, Wildlife, and/or Cultural/Historic.

### **Submission Deadline is January 31, 2016**

Winning photos are selected by a panel of judges. Cash prizes are awarded to winners in each subject category, in the Youth category, and for one photograph chosen as best promoting biodiversity and the environment.

All photos will be displayed at a spring 2016 reception, where cash prizes will be awarded.

Visit <http://www.lymelandtrust.org/news/photo-contest> for contest rules and entry forms.

## JOYS OF COLD WEATHER HIKING

### *EHLT vice president Pete Govert loves cold weather hikes. Here's why ...*

The crisp, fresh air fills your nostrils and your lungs, then makes your toes tingle.



© www.ehlt.org

EHLT's Annual New Year's Day Hike, January 2015

Expanded vistas reveal contours of the land, while once hidden stone walls emerge from forest floors.

Summer's leaves no longer mask a tree's structure or hide the texture of tree bark.

Once bland-looking hues of brown, tan, and gray now glisten and glow in the sun's light.

Bugs are few and ticks are less active.

Hawks, eagles, and winter birds are easily spotted soaring against the backdrop of clear, blue skies.

With senses invigorated by crisp, clean air, food tastes better and a well-deserved warm drink and rest feels extra fine.

Visit [www.ehlt.com](http://www.ehlt.com) Preserves page for trail information.

**EAST HADDAM LAND TRUST, INC.**

P. O. Box 122  
East Haddam, CT 06423

**Membership  
Renewal  
Fall 2015**



**www.ehlt.org**



**GET EHLT UPDATES BY EMAIL**

**SIGN UP AT [www.ehlt.org](http://www.ehlt.org).**

**“Last Sunday” Hikes**

last Sundays of  
Sept-June, 1-3 pm

**New Year’s Day Hike**

January 1, 2016 1-3 pm

EHLT hikes are  
generally easy to moderate in  
difficulty.

Hike with us—everyone is  
welcome.

**Stewardship-  
Trail & Preserve  
Maintenance**

3rd Saturdays  
Sept-June  
9 am–noon

Add EHLT trail work to your  
cold weather  
exercise regimen.

All workers welcome!

**Annual Meeting  
January 15, 2016**

6:30-9:00 pm  
East Haddam Senior Center,  
Great Hillwood Rd, Moodus  
Folklorist  
Stephen Gencarella speaks  
on Myths & Legends of the  
CT River Valley,  
plus a  
Natural Science Book  
Auction to support  
the scholarship fund

**CHECK EVENTS AT [www.ehlt.org](http://www.ehlt.org) ~ Like EHLT on Facebook**