

## EHLT News

### Meet Your Newest Board Members!

At our January 17th Annual Meeting five new board members, each bringing along their own expertise, were elected to serve varied terms for our Land Trust. As a welcome to them and to introduce each to members, below is a brief bio.

**Art Merrow**, who is our **new President**, and his wife Susan moved to East Haddam 41 years ago and soon became involved in open space issues. During the 70's and 80's, Art was a member and then Chair of the East Haddam Conservation Commission. During that time, the Commission hosted meetings which led to the formation of the East Haddam Land Trust. Art is proud to have been an EHLT founding member. After its incorporation, he served as Director, Treasurer, and President. Prior to retirement, Art worked for 33 years as an engineer for Pratt & Whitney Aircraft. He and Susan reside in an old farmhouse on Haywardville Road, along with two retired horses, a goat, an elderly cat and an even more elderly John Deere tractor. In his spare time, he can be seen bicycling local byways.



**Kathy Golec** has had a love of nature and for all things outdoors since childhood. She pursues hiking, her special passion, in places as near as Machimoodus State Park, and as far as Slovenia and the Alps. A member of the Appalachian Mountain Club, Kathy has studied hike leadership and leads hikes for the Land Trust. Kathy's goal is to encourage people of all ages

to explore and appreciate the outdoors right here in East Haddam. She currently works in Human Resources at Liberty Bank.

**Pete Govert**, currently an Instructor and Chair of the Humanities Department at Franklin Academy, has had a long professional and volunteer history in management, education, and community development. He worked as a Training Manager for the Peace Corps in East Africa for 14 years, wrote the Civic Engagement Training Manual for AmeriCorps, and served as East Haddam's Selectman for 8 years. As Selectman, Pete initiated the Clean Energy Task Force, the Municipal Green Committee and the Agriculture Commission. Pete enjoys the outdoors and is often spotted riding his bike to work, kayaking in Chapman's Pond, or hiking one of our preserves.

**Gary Laskowski** has lived on Smith Road since 1997 and sits on the Board of the Bashan Lake Association. His experience in matters of governance and community work is significant. Currently, he's a Trustee of the Independent Day School in Middlefield. Previously in Berlin, he served as Chairman of the Zoning Board of Appeals, was a member and chairman of a number of Charter and Charter Revision Commissions, a member of the Police Commission, and served as Democratic Town Committee Chairman. He is currently a principal and founder of Venture Partners, a [GML] private equity and investment management firm.

**Dorothy (Dot) Millen**, a resident of East Haddam for over 25 years, brings development expertise from her work at The Nature Conservancy. There she planned events, directed fundraising appeals, and handled membership matters. Committed to land and species preservation, Dot and her daughter enjoy hiking the preserves of East Haddam, bringing along her dogs and cat when the location allows. She is a Certified Nursing Assistant as well as an Emergency Medical Technician, and is working as a Medical Assistant at Obstetrics Gynecology and Menopause in Essex.

EAST HADDAM LAND TRUST  
P.O. Box 122  
East Haddam, CT 06423  
[www.ehlt.org](http://www.ehlt.org)

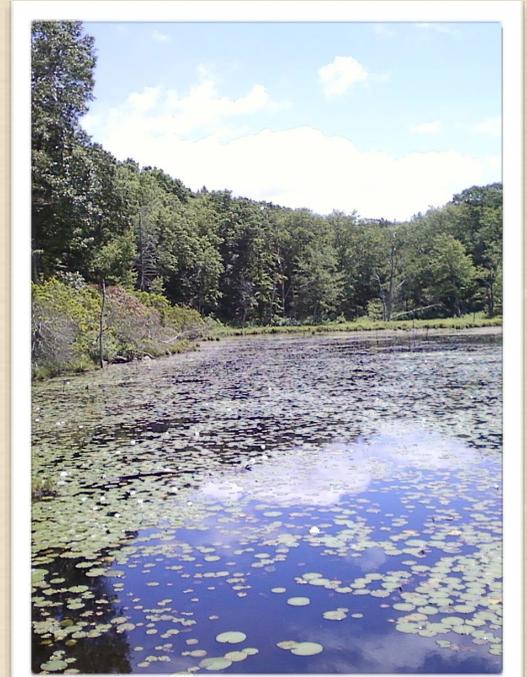


Bulk Rate  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Permit # 25  
East Haddam, CT



Postal Customer

# EAST HADDAM LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER



Cover photo: Sheepskin Hollow Preserve

Summer 2012



# EAST HADDAM LAND TRUST

## The Haddam Land Swap! Could it happen in the EHLT?

By Rob Smith

Thirty-three years ago, when the East Haddam Land Trust was created, it had a singular charge: protect important open space land in East Haddam. Every land trust board since then has worked toward that goal and has defended our properties from trespass and misuse. In these efforts, we have made national news. The EHLT continues to set a standard that other land trusts have emulated. We are continually re-evaluating our by-laws and standards and soon expect to adopt the standards of the Land Trust Alliance.

When the so-called Haddam Land Swap was proposed this past year, we actively supported the "Stop the Swap" group, Citizens for the Protection of Public Land (CPPL), in their efforts to derail this ill-conceived legislation. For the first time in the history of the State of Connecticut, legislation would transfer state owned, protected open space (part of a state wildlife management area) to a private corporation, for that corporation's profit and gain. Unfortunately, our efforts and the efforts of over thirty other land protection organizations as well as thousands of letters of protest failed to stop the passage of this legislation. EHLT recognized the terrible precedent it created, not just on "protected" open space land owned by the State of Connecticut, but the suspicion or cloud of doubt that would be placed on every land protection organization in the state and even the United States. Yes, the Swap is over for now, but due to the legislation remaining in place this may not be the case in perpetuity.

### How are we working to prevent this from happening in East Haddam?

EHLT former president and CPPL member Rob

Smith immediately proposed an amendment (addition) to the Land Trust's by-laws that would further clarify and guarantee that the protected open space properties of the EHLT would forever be protected. Most importantly, it spelled out the principles and policies to continue that protection should the EHLT be dissolved for any reason. This amendment (included below) was approved by the membership, January 21, 2011.

*Section 6. Protection of Properties. It is the charge of this organization to protect important parcels of property in East Haddam for open space. As such, property acquired as open space by this Corporation shall in perpetuity remain as open space. Should circumstances ever occur where the management of the open space would better be served by consolidating the East Haddam Land Trust's land with another conservation organization, then the necessary protections (conservation easements) shall be placed upon those lands prior to transfer. The only property owned by this Corporation that may be sold for monetary gain to a non-conservation organization is property that was sold to, donated to, or otherwise acquired by the Corporation as a trade property. All properties managed under a conservation easement by this Corporation will be properly managed and monitored as required by the policies and procedures adopted by this Corporation and that may be mandated by local, state or federal law. Should this Corporation ever be dissolved, then the Corporation shall transfer all properties and easements prior to dissolution to another conservation organization in order to continue the protection of the properties as open space.*

With these protections in place and the East Haddam Land Trust's record of stewardship and defense of open space, you can be assured that the protected land of the trust will never be SWAPPED.

## Sheepskin Hollow Preserve

by Rob Smith

### New Bridge in Sheepskin Hollow Preserve

East Haddam Land Trust's largest preserve will soon have a new all-season access point. The Sheepskin Hollow Preserve has been cut off during heavy water flows from Sheepskin Hollow Road by the (sometimes) Roaring Brook. Many visitors to the Preserve logically believe that the access would be from Sheepskin Hollow Road and not the neighboring Woodmond Circle and Ridgebury Road.

The new bridge addresses this issue and looks to the future. Several hundred acres of town-owned open space lay just to the west of the preserve. One hundred feet from the access point, Sheepskin Hollow Road becomes a hiking path. The hope is that the conceptualized links between the various parcels of open space will be realized and that this new bridge will be the first connection to the many miles of proposed trails in this area of East Haddam.

After years of preparation and planning and a couple of false starts because of funding concerns, the bridge construction started in earnest late last fall. The Land Trust stewardship work group has constructed an easy trail from a new small parking area down to the bridge site. The group continued with construction and the multi-span bridge is approximately 75% completed, with the major 28-foot center section completed. The approach sections, which will bring the bridge to grade on each side, will be completed within the month. Connecting trails to the existing Preserve trail system have already been constructed.



Volunteers working on the new Sheepskin Hollow Bridge. A special thanks to all that helped out.

This bridge has been a long awaited goal of the EHLT. The completion of this bridge will provide a multi-use access point to the preserve and an inter-connection to the town's expanding open space and trail system.

**Sheepskin Hollow Bridge Opening Celebration!** Mark your calendars for September 9th at 2:00 for the opening of our new bridge at Sheepskin Hollow and a hike through the preserve. Further details will be forthcoming.

### Upcoming Events

**Celebrate 350 years of land stewardship** at Ballek's Garden Center! Visit our Land Trust booth under the tent to view a map of our preserves as well as join in and enjoy the stewardship happening of the day! Saturday, July 7th 9:00 - 5:00 & Sunday July 8th 9:00 - 4:00.

**Watch our website** at <http://www.ehlt.org> for hikes and work parties which will resume again in September! (Note, work parties will be held the third Saturday of the month September - thru June and hikes will be held the last Sunday, except July August and December).

**"Aliens In Your Yard"** Land trust member and master gardener, Lynn Wilkinson, will be hosting two invasive plant nature walks at Gillette Castle. Walks are Sunday July 15th and Tuesday July 24th. There will be two walks a day, 1:30 and 3:00, rain or shine. Meet at the visitor's center. (Hosted by the University of Connecticut Master Gardener Program).

**August Sky Watch** Join Land Trust Board member Bob Ballek on Friday night, August 24th to view the planets and stars. Meet at the field behind the Ballek's house at dusk. Cloud/rain date is August 25th.

**September Sky Watch** Join Land Trust Board member Bob Ballek on Friday night, September 21st to view the planets and stars. Meet at the field behind the Ballek's house at dusk. Cloud/rain date is Saturday, September 22nd.