



East Haddam Land Trust

Celebrating 28 Years of Conservation

Founded in 1979

Official Newsletter

Spring 2007

Preserving Rural Character Through Land Conservation

Now in its 28th year, the East Haddam Land Trust (EHLT) has dedicated itself to conserving the natural resources of East Haddam through land acquisition, environmental stewardship and educational outreach.

In recent years, development pressures have made the EHLT's role in preserving the town's natural resources even more essential. The problems of groundwater contamination, erosion, fragmentation and the loss of wildlife habitat that come with development concern us all. Trees, clean water, open fields and unspoiled wetlands are essential for a healthy environment, not only for wildlife but for our own mental and physical well being. Working together we can preserve the forests, fields and farmlands that protect the quality of our air and water.

We hope you find the articles in this issue of our newsletter informative and interesting. We have tried to answer some of the basic questions of how the EHLT functions for those who are not familiar with us, and have included information on upcoming events, an art contest, recent activities and preserve stewardship. Taking a cue from Middletown's recent "Healthy Lawns for Healthy Communities" initiative, we also offer some ideas on how all of us can help the environment in our own backyard.

OPEN SPACE Q&A

How does the EHLT get land?

Most of the EHLT's property has been donated for conservation, often in conjunction with development. EHLT has also partnered with other organizations to purchase important pieces of open space. Land may be acquired by bargain sale or the purchase of development rights. Donations, endowments and fundraising efforts fund the EHLT's land acquisition fund.

What's the difference between a preserve and easement?

The EHLT owns its preserve properties outright, and maintains them for wildlife and passive recreation. A conservation easement, on the other hand, is a legal document attached to the deed by a landowner, to permanently protect it from development. The easement can designate all or part of a property, and is individually designed to accommodate the landowner's needs and desires in terms of future use and accessibility. The land still belongs to the landowner, who still has the rights and responsibilities of ownership.



Who can use Land Trust preserves?

Preserves are open to the public for passive recreation, such as hiking and wildlife observation. Properties with easements are usually NOT open to the public, as they are still owned privately.

My land is in the Open Space program. Is it protected?

The town's Open Space designation provides property tax benefits to the landowner who keeps his land open for ten years or more, but this designation does not protect it from development pressures. If the landowner sells his land before the ten years is over, he would be subject to penalties. In addition, the designation expires when a property changes hands, so the new landowner could pay a much higher tax rate.

My land is my retirement "nest egg." How can I protect it, and still take care of my future needs?

For many people land is their biggest asset. They might not want to see it developed, but may be unaware of alternatives. It is worth noting that state and federal income tax benefits that are currently available for the sale of conservation land or development rights make this option advantageous to many more people of moderate means. For the tax year 2007, the potential benefit of these deductions is even more advantageous for landowners. Additionally, qualifying farmers and owners of forest lands can deduct up to 100% of their taxable income.

For more info on any of these topics, contact any of the EHLT board of directors. 📧

Two Historic Mill Sites Preserved on East Haddam Land Trust Properties

Remnants of two historic mill sites in East Haddam are located on East Haddam Land Trust properties. The Atlantic Mill located on the Moodus River is on land donated by Merle and Ron Bernstein. The Hammond Mill, on a preserve by the same name, is a gift of John and Barbara Kashanski.

Mills were most widely operated during the 1700's to mid-1800's. They were built of wood or stone along a river or large stream and were powered by water flow, often below a dam where water velocity was greatest. The mill was linked to the river by a channel called a raceway. The headrace delivered water from the river to the mill, either to the top of a huge waterwheel or to a turbine, which were then turned to produce power. The tailrace returned the water to the river.

The Atlantic Mill

Originally known as the Atlantic Duck Company ("duck" is a kind of heavy cotton fabric) the Atlantic Mill was first leased in 1852. Destroyed by fire in 1854, it was rebuilt and operational again in 1857. The stone 125' x 40' structure's maximum output was 250 horsepower. The mill was closed during the Civil War but again operated as a twine/textile mill from 1898 until it burned in 1939 from an electrical cord spark.



Atlantic Mill wheel pit foundation

The Hammond Mill

Two mills originally operated on a site along the Eight-mile River off of Dolbia Hill Road south of Devil's Hopyard State Park. The land on either side of the river was owned by Squire John Chapman. A hub of industry in the late 1700's and early 1800's, Chapman operated a grist mill, a sawmill, a fulling mill, a blacksmith shop, and a flaxseed oil press. Much of the stonework still exists from the old dam and mill site, as do the headrace and tailraces. The old mill house is now at the base of the dam in Moodus on the Johnsonville property.

Research time, signage and printing of brochures about these two mill sites was made possible through a grant from the Rockfall Foundation, Middletown, CT. 📖

KID'S CORNER



Did You Know?

Dead trees benefit wildlife. A snag is a dead tree that is still standing. Birds like to nest in them, and some like to peck holes to find ants or beetles. Many animals use cavities in dead trees for nesting, and squirrels and other animals like to store nuts in them. Some animals, such as black bears and fishers, may use larger holes as dens. Next time you see a snag, look for signs of wildlife activity!

What to do if You Find a Baby Bird

The best thing to do when finding an orphaned baby bird is to help it get back to its parents. If it doesn't have all its feathers yet, try to put it back into its nest. Make a nest using a small tissue or berry box, with soft tissue paper or cloth to keep the baby warm and dry, if you can't reach or find the nest. Put string through holes in each side of the box and hang this "nest" in a tree or bush close to where you found the bird. If the bird is older and has all its feathers, it may be "fledging," or just learning to fly. In this case, just make sure the baby is out of danger. It's OK to touch the baby bird because birds don't have much sense of smell. Watch from a distance to see if the parent comes back. If there's no sign of the parent after two or three hours, you should call a local nature center, resource person or animal control officer for advice.

Letterboxing

Finding letterboxes is like a treasure hunt involving hiking, puzzle solving, and exploration. It is a great way to visit places you've never been to, and often you will learn about the history, wildlife, trees and geographic features of an area in the process. If you haven't heard about this fun outdoors adventure game, check it out on the Internet! There are several letterboxes hidden right here in East Haddam, and you can find them by looking under East Haddam, CT on the Letterboxing North America website at www.letterboxing.org. All you need to get started is a personal stamp, a notebook, and the clues for the letterbox you choose!

Letterboxing 101

Join letterboxing enthusiast Melissa Ziobron at the covered bridge at Devil's Hopyard, June 9th @ 10:30 am. Supplies needed: notebook, stamp and ink. Pack a lunch and enjoy the park. Reservations required, call 873-1153. For children 8 yrs old or younger.

Letterboxing 102

Join letterboxing enthusiast Melissa Ziobron for a hike into Chapman's Pond, June 16th @ 10:30 am. Supplies needed: notebook, stamp and ink. Reservations required, call 873-1153. Pack a lunch and water is a must! For children 8-13 yrs old.

HIKES AND THE LIKES

Spring Birding Walk at Machomoodus State Park

May 26th at 9 AM

For the third year, the EHLT will sponsor a Spring Birding Walk at Machomoodus State Park (formerly Echo Farm). Previous participants have seen migratory birds, including a Cerulean Warbler, at this beautiful spot near the mouth of the Salmon River. EHLT member and avid birder Carol Harrington will lead this hike. Meet at the park entrance, just south of Sunrise Resort on Rte. 151 in East Haddam.

Connecticut Trails Day Hikes in East Haddam

Saturday, June 2nd (rain date Sunday, June 3rd)

Historical Hike at Gillette Castle State Park, June 2nd at 10 AM
Suitable for all ages; easy pace over varied terrain; some relatively steep sections and rough trails. Take an historical tour on the outside of William Gillette's "Castle" home overlooking the Connecticut River. Don Goss, former DEP Park Supervisor and EHLT director, will lead this 1 hour tour around the grounds of Gillette Castle State Park. Wear sturdy shoes; no dogs. Meet at the parking lot by the Visitors Center. Light showers will not cancel or postpone.

Family Hike at Sheepskin Hollow Preserve, June 2nd at 1:30 PM

Join us for this short hike, (+/- one hour) suitable for all ages co-lead by Chad Peterson and Robert Estep. A new beaver pond will be the main attraction on this popular annual hike through one of East Haddam's "hidden treasures." Participants will enjoy close-up views of the beaver activity from the trail. Wear sturdy shoes. Meet at the trailhead at the end of Ridgebury Road (from Mt. Parnassus Road, take Warner Road to Ridgebury on right).

(For more information about these hikes call Barbara Bloomberg, EHLT, 860-873-8758).

Father's Day Canoe/Kayak Paddle

June 17th at 9 AM

You don't have to be a father to enjoy this annual event! Rob Smith will lead the group in exploring Hamburg Cove and the estuaries of the Eightmile River. Check the EHLT website at www.ehlt.org or call Rob at 873-2189 for more info.

Eightmile River Stream Walk

July 28th at 1 PM

Join Steve Gephard, fisheries biologist with the DEP, on a walk along the Eightmile River to discuss the fish that live there (notably Atlantic salmon, trout, and American eel) and what constitutes good fish habitat. Natural river dynamics, mussels and a recent dam removal a couple of miles downstream will also be discussed. At least one shin-deep stream crossing will be necessary so attendees are encouraged to wear either rubber boots or old shoes that can get wet. Meet at the Hammond Mill Preserve entrance off Dolbia Hill Road.

Earth Day Celebration & Hike, Salmon River State Forest

May 5th. *For info contact the Meshomasic Hiking Club or go to www.geocities.com/meshomasic.*

Go Wild in the Eightmile

May 19th at 9:30 AM

Join The Nature Conservancy in the Eightmile River Watershed. *For info tgrady@tnc.org or 860-344-0716.*

The Hows and Whys of Organic Lawn Care

May 22nd at 6:30 PM, Hubbard Room at the Russell Library, Middletown, CT

Program and book signing with Paul Tukey, author of "The Organic Lawn Care Manual." Come learn how to have a lush healthy lawn that is safe for people, pets and the earth. Space is limited at this free program, so please call the CT River Coastal Conservation District at (860) 346-3282 to sign up.



Binoculars in hand, bird watchers enjoy wildlife

NEWS AND VIEWS

An Update from the Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Coordinating Committee

On February 8, 2007, Rep. Joe Courtney held a press conference to announce the introduction of his first bill as a recently elected Congressman – the designation of the Eightmile River as a federally recognized Wild and Scenic River.

H.R. Bill #986 is intended to designate segments of the Eightmile River as part of the federal Wild & Scenic Rivers system, and is supported by Congressman Courtney, Senator Dodd and Representative Shays. The federal designation process is lengthy and by no means automatic. Once designation is attained the watershed area will be eligible for federal funding and grant opportunities for future preservation efforts.

Congressman Courtney's efforts to introduce the Wild & Scenic legislation follow a busy winter for the Eightmile Coordinating Committee. In addition to releasing the official Draft Study Report and Environmental Assessment (a National Park Service publication), the Committee also published the final Watershed Management Plan, that includes a set of color fold out maps and outlines the specific goals of the Coordinating Committee.



Red Mill property on the banks of the Eightmile

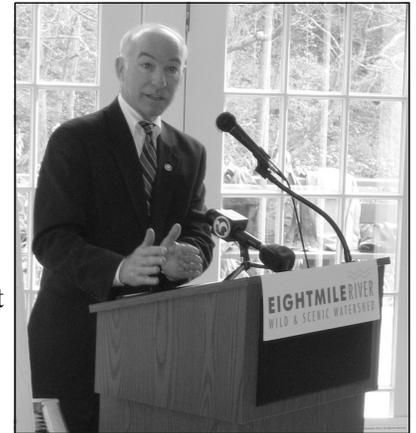
The Committee recently heard a report from Dr. Piotr Parasiewicz, a UMASS professor, presenting his findings from a large study of Eightmile River hydrology and fish habitat availability (in laymen's terms "what the fish think of what we are doing to their river"). He described the existing fish population, their instream habitats, the impact of water flow rates, water temperatures, and similar criteria necessary to assess the viability of a given stream. One interesting trivia point: a single fresh water

mussel (which are very abundant in the river) filters five gallons of water daily. Based on his study, Dr. Parasiewicz was able to offer many suggestions about how to protect and improve the current ecological health of the river system.

Official bound copies of the Watershed Management Plan and Study Report are available from the Eightmile Coordinating Committee office at the UCONN Extension Center in Haddam or from the website at www.eightmileriver.org.

The committee is currently on the verge of releasing a newly designed website that will offer many great new resources. Please pay us a virtual visit this summer and check out the fruits of our important work.

Submitted by the Eightmile River Wild & Scenic Coordinating Committee. 🏠



Representative Joe Courtney at the recent press conference

The Ballek's Garden Center Proudly Supports the East Haddam Land Trust

Ballek's Garden Center



Anita M. Ballek
Nancy Ballek Mackinnon
George F. Ballek
Richard A. Ballek

90 MAPLE AVENUE
E. HADDAM, CT 06423
Tel. (860) 873-8878
Fax (860) 873-3252

Spring Courtship of the Woodcock: The Timber-Doodle's Spiral Dance

On Monday, March 28th, Salem resident Dr. David Bingham introduced a group of EHLT members to the fascinating spring courtship rituals of the American Woodcock. Dr. Bingham first described the mating ritual and behavior of this seldom-seen, strange-looking bird, and then led the group to observe the courtship first hand in the field. Bob Ballek generously provided the location – and refreshments – for this interesting event.

East Haddam is fortunate to still have opportunities to observe this interesting bird. In the northeastern United States, old farms reverting to forests often provide some of the best habitat for the American Woodcock. However, habitat loss through changing land use patterns and forest maturation has caused a decline in population numbers. The drainage of wetlands and natural plant succession in former farmland has eliminated valuable woodcock habitat, forcing the birds to utilize marginal areas or move in search of new habitats to occupy. Threats also come from household pets where habitat is near human development. Today, few people have the opportunity to observe this once common bird.

The American woodcock, or "timber-doodle," is a short legged, plump bird, with a two and one-half inch long bill, which it uses to probe the soil in search of earthworms. The bill is flexible and can be opened near the tip even when below the ground surface. The woodcock's large eyes are set high and far back on the head for increased peripheral vision, and the wings are short, wide, and rounded to facilitate flight in dense cover. The mottled brown back, with its "dead-leaf pattern," provides excellent camouflage against the forest floor. Sexes are similar in appearance, but the female woodcock is slightly larger than the male.



Woodcock are primarily active during the daylight hours, feeding and resting in areas that generally have dense overhead cover, fairly open ground for good visibility, and moist fertile soil which supports earthworms. At dusk, the birds walk or fly to open fields or forest clearings where they roost on the ground.

In late January and February, Woodcock begin to migrate north, arriving in the Northeast in March and early April to begin courtship and breeding. The male's unusual courtship flight, which occurs only during a short period in the early springtime, is amazing to see and hear.

Males begin performing this aerial mating display called the "Spiral Dance" at dusk in forest openings and field edges. The display consists of a series of spiraling flights interspersed with ground-strutting during which the male utters a nasal "peent" repeatedly. Each evening's activities may last 30 to 60 minutes and may consist of 10 to 20 such performances.

Nesting begins in April and May. The nest is extremely well camouflaged, a shallow depression lined with leaves, usually located less than 100 yards from the singing ground and constructed in young stands of hardwoods or mixed hardwoods and conifers. Generally, four brown, pink, and gray mottled eggs are laid and incubated for 19 to 22 days. The females hold tight on the nest, relying on their protective coloration, flushing only when almost touched.

The young leave the nest one day after hatching and are fully feathered and capable of flying at two weeks of age. Appearing almost full-grown at four weeks, they tend to remain in the nesting area until the fall migration begins in October. 🏠

HOME MADE, SIMPLY PURE DOG BISCUITS

INGREDIENTS: Pulverized chicken and/or turkey bones, giblets and meat, broth (fat removed), sunflower seeds, corn meal, whole wheat flour, yeast + lots of love, no salt, no preservatives

Training treats • Bones, 2"-5 1/2" • Hearts

MARTHA McLAUD TONUCCI

Maker of gourmet dog biscuits, and proud supporter of the
East Haddam Land Trust

Phone: 860-873-9187

The Anita Ballek-East Haddam Land Trust Scholarship Fund

The fund continues to financially support East Haddam students pursuing environmental studies in higher education. The scholarship is awarded to one graduating high school senior who has demonstrated civic mindedness, and who has submitted an essay on why he or she intends to pursue the environmental sciences. Past recipients have gone on to pursue 'green' careers such as horticulture.

In 2006, Wayne Schwab, whose family are long-time residents of East Haddam, was the scholarship recipient. In his application essay Wayne discussed working with his father, a carpenter who builds environmentally-friendly homes, one at a time.

The process for selecting this year's recipient is already underway. Applications and instructions have been sent to the high school. Please remind any potential candidate you may know that it's time to work on that essay! 📄

Town-Wide Clean Up Day

Members of the East Haddam Land Trust joined the Moodus Sportsmen's Club, the East Haddam Rotary, and East Haddam scout troops in the Annual Town-Wide Clean Up Day held on Saturday, April 7, 2007. The goal of this coordinated effort was to clean trash and other debris from the streets, lakes, streams, and other public access areas in the Town of East Haddam. Land Trust participants focused their efforts on the streets, roadsides and streams within the Eightmile River watershed.

After the trash pickup, participants were invited to picnic at the Moodus Sportsmen's Club. Aside from the day of fun, food and camaraderie, this community effort serves as a reminder that all of us should strive to keep our landscape clean and beautiful. 🗑️



Village Pizza & Restaurant
Nathan Hale Plaza
Rt. 149 Moodus, CT 06469

Phone: (860) 873-1416 Fax: (860) 873-1417



ADRIANA'S HAIRSTYLING

25 Falls Rd.
Moodus, CT 06469

PHONE: (860) 873-3494

Hair, Tanning & Waxing

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Tips for Having a Healthy Lawn and a Healthy Environment

- ☼ Avoid Weed-and-Feed programs – they spread fertilizer and herbicides too widely and frequently.
- ☼ Use 100% organic fertilizer only when needed.
- ☼ Leave the grass clippings on the lawn – they are one of the best natural fertilizers.
- ☼ Reduce compaction (and weeds) by aerating 2/yr..
- ☼ De-thatch when thatch is more than ½ inch deep by power raking, top-dressing or aerating.
- ☼ Hand pick pests and pull weeds.
- ☼ Use safe, non-toxic alternatives – e.g., soaps, oils, and plant-based insecticides.
- ☼ Encourage white clover, it attracts pollinators and is an excellent, time-honored ground cover.

NATHAN HALE PHARMACY

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M-F 9 AM-8:30 PM
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SUN 9 AM-1PM

PHONE: 860-873-1481
FAX: 860-873-2490



East Haddam Nature Calendar Art Contest



Deadline Extended to May 15th

The East Haddam Land Trust will again publish a Nature Diary Calendar for 2008 since the 2006 and 2007 calendars were so well received! We are once again looking for illustrations for next year's calendar.

THERE WILL BE SEVERAL PRIZES AWARDED IN BOTH STUDENT AND ADULT CATEGORIES.

★First place \$100★Winning entries chosen by EHLT special committee★All entries may be used in the publication★

All illustrations must be black and white, with no gray tones. Entries will be judged on artistic quality, scientific accuracy, and seasonal appropriateness for the calendar. Illustrations may be reduced to accent or enhance the nature diary notes on the bottom portion of the calendar. See previous calendars for ideas.

Calendar size and general format remain the same from year to year, but new nature notes will be written for the upcoming calendar year. Calendars will be mailed to EHLT members and distributed free at local area businesses.

Rules for entry:

1. Illustration themes should be *nature oriented*. This may include flowers or other plants, mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, outdoor scene, astronomy, etc. Preference given to local, native species.
2. *Original*, 5" x 6 1/2" pen and black ink photo-ready illustration on white paper, unmated and unframed, vertical orientation only. *No half tones* (pencil or charcoal) will be accepted.
3. *Illustration must be signed by the artist*. Full name will be given credit for the month(s) that an illustration appears.
4. Illustrations will be judged on originality, artistic quality, realism, and appropriateness for the season and month. *A calendar cover* will also be chosen. Calendar editors reserve the right to determine where and how illustrations will be used.
5. An artist can submit more than one entry. Please submit a separate entry form for each illustration.
6. Entries become the property of the EHLT and may be used for future promotional occasions. However, entries may be returned to the artist by special arrangement *in advance* of publication.
7. Winners of the contest will be notified by mail, email or phone, and with a check via mail.

For further information contact Martha at 873-9187. If you are unfamiliar with the previous calendars, copies are available at Ballek's Garden Center. Neither the EHLT nor any member will be held responsible for damaged or lost artwork.

**DEADLINE:
MAY 15, 2007**

EHLT CALENDAR ART CONTEST ENTRY FORM

One form per entry, please *print* clearly

First and Last Name _____

Mailing Address, street, town + zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____ Category (student or adult) _____

Subject or title of the 5" x 6 1/2 illustration _____

Your preference for which month of the calendar? _____

I have read the rules for entry, and agree to the terms and conditions stated above.

Printed first and last names _____ Signature _____ Date _____

Attach form to back of artwork and hand-deliver or mail entry to:
Martha McLaud Tonucci, 16 Mt. Parnassus Road, East Haddam, CT 06423

There's still time to become a 2007 East Haddam Land Trust Member!!

All donations are tax deductible. Membership is good for the 2007 calendar year.

Name _____

Street Address _____

Town, State, Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Providing your email address is a cost-effective way of keeping you informed of EHLT events.

Renewal *Thank you!* New membership *Welcome!*

Membership Levels:

\$10 Student \$20 Individual \$30 Family \$50 Contributing
 \$100 Sustaining \$200 Major \$300 Lifetime

Please send your check and this form to:
East Haddam Land Trust Inc.
P.O. Box 122
East Haddam, CT 06423

Additional gift to the Land Acquisition Fund: \$ _____

Anita Ballek Scholarship Fund: \$ _____

I would like to help with:

Stewardship Fundraising Events Membership Publicity

East Haddam Land Trust Inc.
P.O. Box 122
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