

## Lifetime Member Appreciation Event

### Lifetime Member Appreciation Event at On The Rocks Restaurant

On a lovely evening in late September 2013, EHLT's board of directors said "thanks" to the Land Trust's Lifetime Members. More than 60 people gathered at On The Rocks restaurant to listen to founding member Anita Ballek reminisce about early Land Trust days and president Rob Smith update the group on more recent EHLT activities.

Surrounded by the lovely scenery of Fox Hopyard Golf Course and views of the surrounding 230 dedicated open space acres, lifetime members were the first to learn of the finalization of the Bogan purchase, now called the Hidden Valley Farm parcel of the Moodus River Preserves. EHLT board members shared photos and maps of existing Land Trust preserves and demonstrated EHLT's new interactive website.

EHLT is extremely grateful to On The Rocks for donating the venue and appetizers, and to the anonymous donors who funded the evening's libations - donations that preserved EHLT's limited coffers.



New Blue trail at Hidden Valley Farm preserve. Photo by J. Hendry

## The Moodus River

### The Updated Moodus River Preserves

Establishing the Moodus River Preserves has been a long-term EHLT goal. Three previously protected properties - the Bernstein Preserve and two trail-less parcels, The Dombroski-Meadow Brook Preserve and a half-acre parcel currently listed as The Moodus River Preserve - all helped toward this goal. Now, with the addition of a conservation easement on 45.5 acres of property owned by Gary and Donna Bogan - known as Hidden Valley Farm - as well as the separate outright EHLT purchase of 1.3 acres of adjacent land bordering Grist Mill Road, EHLT has made great progress toward preserving more land along the Moodus River. The updated 'Preserves' page at [www.ehlt.org](http://www.ehlt.org) now lists all preserves and protected parcels as part of the Moodus River Preserves.

The Hidden Valley Farm parcel protects 4200 feet of Moodus Riverfront. Newly established hiking trails meander through woods, meadows, wetlands, and along the Moodus River where remnants of the historic gristmill and East Mill dams are visible. The trails offer easy hiking plus fishing along the Moodus River. Access marked trails from a small parking area off Gristmill Road. The parking lot and trails are works-in-progress, still needing signage and demolition of an existing cottage. If you can help move this work along, email Rob Smith at [president@ehlt.org](mailto:president@ehlt.org).



Postal Customer

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# EAST HADDAM LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER



Hidden Valley Farms parcel of the Moodus River Preserves. Photo by S. Thurmond

*December 2013*



# EAST HADDAM LAND TRUST

## 2013 - A Look Back

Have you ever wondered where your East Haddam Land Trust dollars go or how its volunteer Board of Directors directs? A look back at 2013 answers these questions.

With land preservation a main goal, EHLT obtained a bridge-loan from The Conservation Fund to complete the Bogan (Hidden Valley Farm) property and easement purchase (see related article), adding 45.5 acres to EHLT's 113 easement-protected acres and increasing EHLT-owned property to 231 acres. EHLT also funded \$40,000 of the purchase and closing costs of East Haddam's open-space Pages and Zeiller purchases, as well as a town-wide mailing in support of these purchases. A small but determined group of Stewardship volunteers helped care for EHLT's existing preserves by blazing and maintaining trails at the Sheepskin Hollow, Duncan, Ballahack, Hammond Mill, and Hidden Valley Farm Preserves and clearing many Hurricane Sandy-damaged trees around the Sheepskin Hollow Preserve bridge.

Land Trust-led hikes and paddles engaged many in outdoor activities and helped educate participants about area lands and waterways. These events explored the Dean Easement, Hatch Lot and Patrell preserves, Devil's Hopyard, Hurd State



EHLT paddle to Chapman Pond. Photo by J. Hendry

Park, Nehantic State Forest, EHLT's Sheepskin Hollow Preserve, the Connecticut River and Chapman Pond, Salmon River, Whalebone Cove, and the Great Island and Lieutenant River waters. EHLT also hosted a Kite Fly and a demonstration on eliminating invasive Japanese Barberry shrubs; participates in the newly formed Environmental Club at Nathan Hale-Ray Middle School, and partnered with other organizations for a photo contest, a mushroom hunt, a stone wall lecture, and trail marking.

EHLT continues to sponsor its popular Nature Calendar as well as fund the Anita Ballek Scholarship which, in 2013, went to Hunter Humble to pursue environmental studies.

EHLT's 12-member Board of Directors hosted a get-together thanking Life Members (see related article) and took on some internal reorganization by establishing a new committee structure, and reviewing and reestablishing EHLT's mission and vision. To increase knowledge

of land preservation tools and practices, half the board attended the annual Connecticut Land Conservation Council Conference. In addition to mailing newsletters, such as this, maintaining the EHLT Facebook page, and holding monthly meetings, EHLT's board created a new **website** ([www.ehlt.org](http://www.ehlt.org)) that allows for online membership and improved email communication, plus listings of EHLT preserves, events, and news.



EHLT Lifetime Member Appreciation Event. Photo by S. Thurmond

## 2014 - A Look Forward

EHLT's board of directors plans to continue the hikes, paddles, and other public events and, with members' help, EHLT's stewardship committee will maintain and improve access to our current preserves. Most importantly, the entire board will continue to work to preserve East Haddam land for current and future generations. However, 2013's land purchases significantly depleted EHLT's coffers -

coffers that are not replenished by membership dues alone.

Land is expensive, even in the current real estate market. *To ensure adequate funds are available for EHLT's future land preservation work, we ask you, our loyal membership, to donate beyond your membership level.* No donation is too small ... or too large.

Don't miss the opportunity to benefit from any tax breaks that may disappear in 2014, such as retirement account donations. Don't let a chance to preserve more of East Haddam's natural beauty slip away. **Send your donation to EHLT, P.O. Box 122, East Haddam, CT 06423 or donate online at [www.ehlt.org](http://www.ehlt.org).**

**Annual Meeting - January 10, 2014 7:00 pm at East Haddam First Church, 499 Town Street**

Business meeting and election of directors at 7:00 pm followed by a presentation on Mountain Lions. Are they establishing in Southern New England? Refreshments and goodies will be served. Check [www.ehlt.org](http://www.ehlt.org) and East Haddam Land Trust on Facebook for updates on the annual meeting and other EHLT happenings and news.

Newsletter content written by Joene Hendry