

The MIDDLESEX LANDSCAPE

Serving the towns of Durham, Middlefield, Middletown, Cromwell, Portland and East Hampton

Middlesex Land Trust Partners to Save Pine Brook Preserve

Pine Brook Preserve, the Middlesex Land Trust's latest project, is a magnificent 40-acre property in the southeast section of East Hampton. In the fall of 2002, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) approached the Middlesex Land Trust (MLT) about partnering with them to purchase this pristine land along Pine Brook, a tributary of the Salmon River. When TNC Tidelands Conservation Manager Shelley Green guided MLT board members on a hike of the property, significant features spoke for themselves: the impressive stand of hemlocks, the historic mill ruins, the beautiful waterfall and clear stream. Considering its pristine quality, convenient access and proximity to large parcels of protected land (a 122 acre Forest Legacy easement, and the 471 acre Wopowog Wildlife Management Area), the MLT Board of Directors voted enthusiastically to join the effort to purchase the land.

In August 2003, TNC purchased the property from Richard and Sally Haase of Haddam for \$250,000, with an agreement that the MLT would raise a quarter of the purchase price. Later, ownership and management of the property will be transferred to the Land Trust. This



Tom Wells

This eye-catching waterfall and pool were major selling points in bringing MLT on board to save Pine Brook Preserve.

wonderful property, approved for development, will now be preserved for all time.

While the property is truly a marvel and a pleasure to visit, preserving it will not be without its challenges. The old mill's pool and falls mark the upstream terminus of the migratory fish species that use this brook for spawning. Its clean water and cobble bottom make the brook ideal for this purpose. Great care will need to be taken by work parties and visitors alike to ensure that the brook remains sediment free.

The Land Trust also has a heavy fundraising responsibility to fulfill our obligations toward the purchase of this property. We hope that we can rely on the strength and generosity of our members and the community to help us meet our goals. Please consider making a special donation toward the Pine Brook Preserve. You may contact the MLT office for more information or to make a pledge at 343-7537.

In This Issue:

Pine Brook Preserve	1
Chairpersons' Corner	2
MLT – Then and Now	2
MLT Receives \$5000 Grant	3
Trail Work at Temkin and Sellew	3
Upcoming Hikes	3





The Chairpersons' Corner

Dear MLT Members:

As the summer season draws to a close and we all put away the beach towels and sunscreen, many of us experience that perennial feeling of nostalgia for the glory of those gorgeous summer days, tinged with the excitement and challenges of returning to work and school with renewed enthusiasm and energy. Despite the days of rain, it has nonetheless been another lovely summer in southern New England.

During the summer idyll, your land trust did not rest on its laurels. As you will read in this issue, stewardship projects and new land acquisition efforts continued to move forward. Trails were cleared and repaired, new signage was designed and ordered, and most importantly, in partnership with the Connecticut Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) we committed to preserving a stunning 40-acre parcel. The property features hemlock forest, pristine waterfalls and an old mill site along Pine Brook, a magnificent and important tributary of the Salmon River near the East Hampton/Haddam Neck line. This natural jewel will link up with hundreds of acres already protected through the Forest Legacy program and state ownership. Other important acquisition efforts are also in the works.

Your land trust has also made an important organizational decision to redouble our efforts in certain areas. We are pleased to announce that Katherine Winslow, with her extensive experience with conservation organizations, including most recently TNC, has agreed to assist the Board with our membership and grant writing efforts. We look forward to harnessing her enthusiasm and expertise.

This summer the Middlesex Land Trust was also the proud recipient of a \$5000 grant from the Peter Jay Sharp Foundation through the "kindness of strangers" (see article on page 3). This money is to be used as matching funds for land acquisition adjacent to the Meshomasic State Forest, to expand the reach of that remarkable ecosystem in our own backyards.

The Land Trust also received a \$1000 grant from Northeast Utilities for preserve signage, thanks to the efforts of John Greeno, who retired from the Board recently. Signs will be used to mark boundaries of our preserves.

It's been a great summer for the Middlesex Land Trust! As always, we'd love to hear from you. Contact information is available in this newsletter and at our website, middlesexlandtrust.org. We always welcome new members, and welcome back returning members. Watch for your membership renewal information in the mail soon. We are counting on you to help us keep the preservation engine running!

Ralph and Diane

MLT Preservation: Then and Now

Looking back on the Middlesex Land Trust's progress in terms of preserving lands over the years, we are pleased to report that we have made important strides. Take a quick look at the Middlesex Land Trust eight years ago and now — *see our progress!*

Then: In 1995, after its first eight years, the Middlesex Land Trust had 15 preserves in Middletown, Portland, East Hampton and Durham. Properties totaled just over 100 acres. This was an impressive start for a young, all volunteer organization.

Now: Eight years later, MLT has 45 preserves with

acreage totaling well over 500 acres, with more acquisitions in the works. This year for the first time the Trust partnered with The Nature Conservancy to preserve another 40 acres of pristine forests, streams and meadow. Many of our newer acquisitions are greater in size; they, in turn protect larger areas of contiguous habitat.

Your support and enthusiasm have made such growth and success possible. Let's keep up the good work!



MLT Receives Grant to Protect Meshomasic Land through the “Kindness of Strangers”

In April 2003 the Connecticut River Watershed Council alerted the Middlesex Land Trust and other land conservation organizations in the Connecticut River Valley about an intriguing opportunity. Two affable, retired men, Ramsey Peard and David Morine (dubbed the ‘gray-haired paddlers’), were paddling the 400 miles of the Connecticut River from source to sea, stopping each day to be hosted for the evening by a different group of strangers. During their trip the river paddlers were to meet with local land trusts and other grassroots organizations to discuss land protection projects and consider grant proposals. Funds were being made available by an anonymous foundation.

MLT and others hosted the paddlers at a potluck dinner in Middletown’s Harbor Park, and submitted a proposal to these adventurers to relay to the anonymous granting organization. We were thrilled to learn recently that \$5,000 was awarded to MLT for the Meshomasic Forever Wild Fund. The money will be matched one to one by funds raised by MLT and the Meshomasic Hiking Club, and used for land acquisition in proximity to Meshomasic State Forest. Mr. Henry Lord, conservationist and photographer of New Haven, CT, generously donated \$1000 toward the required match.

We are grateful to the “Kindness of Strangers” for supporting our efforts to add more land to Connecticut’s oldest State forest and central Connecticut’s largest

preserved forest ecosystem. Any donations to help us meet the remaining match would be gratefully received.



David Morine (left), author of “Good Dirt: Confessions of a Conservationist,” and Ramsay Peard (a.k.a. ‘the gray-haired paddlers’) pose with MLT Co-Chair Diane Moore before embarking on the final leg of their journey down river.



Tree Trail in the Works for Temkin Preserve

Drew Rusnak from South Glastonbury was looking for an Eagle Scout project. At the same time, the Land Trust was looking for an Eagle Scout to help build an interpretive trail on our 33-acre Abe Temkin Preserve. It turned out to be a perfect match. Two years ago, MLT had received a grant from the Rockfall Foundation to establish a trail for school children to learn about nature. We chose the Abe Temkin Preserve with its beautiful ravine, brook, and likely past use by Native Americans.

Eagle Scout Drew Rusnak contacted Ed Richardson, the famous fellow Glastonburyite who has collaborated and identified most of Connecticut’s notable and record trees, and together they are turning our newly built 2-mile Abe Temkin Trail into a tree identification trail. In addition to identifying over 25 different species, Ed has found some near record size hickories along the route. When it is completed next spring, the general public will have the opportunity to walk the trail. Maps and tree information will be available at the trailhead. For more information, contact the Land Trust at 343-7537.



Preserve Hikes—Please Join Us!

November 30, 2003, 1-4 PM. Bucktown Preserves Hike. A 3 mile stroll through Helen Carlson and Oak Ledges Preserves and Meshomasic State Forest. Meet at the Oak Ledges Preserve, 98 South Road in Portland. Contact John LeShane, 342-0658, for more information.

December 21, 2003, 10 AM. Hike on the Airline Trail and Sellow Preserve. A six mile walk through the 31 acre Sellow Preserve to the Airline Trail and the 135 foot high Lyman Viaduct over Dickenson Creek, co-sponsored with Meshomasic Hiking Club. Meet at the commuter parking lot at the junction of Rtes. 16 and 66. Contact John LeShane, 342-0658, for more information.

Trails Extended on Sellow Preserve

Land Trust members have been busy extending and restoring the two-mile trail system on East Hampton’s 39- acre Sellow Preserve. Several work parties have been held throughout the spring and summer to repair the damage and erosion caused by the illegal trespass of ATV bikers. A loop trail has been blazed where the preserve’s steep topography and water features could be better viewed and appreciated. With its proximity and connection to the famous Airline Trail, the Sellow Preserve will be a wonderful addition to the area’s trails.



MLT Shows the Flag at Local Fairs

The Middlesex Land Trust staffed informative and eye-catching booths at this year's East Hampton Old Home Days festivities, as well as the Haddam

Neck and Portland Fairs. Stunning photos of land trust properties, action shots of MLT work parties, as well as hikes and boating outings graced the display, along with informative maps, pamphlets and other materials. These celebrations always bring out lots of folks from the area and surrounding towns, and this year was no exception. Many visitors, as well as some old friends, stopped by to review the information, ask questions, provide comments and show their support and encouragement. New names were added to our mailing roster and some spoke of their plans to donate land to MLT. Many enjoyed sharing memories of outdoor outings in this "neck of the woods." If you know of a community event MLT should be represented at please contact us at 343-7537.

Specials thanks to Katherine and Carlton Winslow, Stewart Winquist, John Greeno, Ralph Urban, John LeShane and Diane Moore for a job well done.

The Middlesex Landscape Contributors:
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Articles: Bill Hincks, John LeShane, Diane Moore, Ralph Urban

Middlesex Land Trust Membership Application

Name(s) _____
Address _____

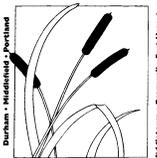
Phone _____
E-Mail _____

- This is an address change
- Annual Membership..... \$10
- Sustaining Membership.....\$35
- Patron Membership.....\$100
- Life Membership\$1000
- I would like to learn more about donating land or conservation easements.
- I would like to donate time.
- Stewardship Fund \$ _____
- Pine Brook Preserve \$ _____
- Meshomasic Forever Wild Fund \$ _____

Please make checks payable to:
Middlesex Land Trust, and mail to
27 Washington Street, Middletown, CT 06457

*The Middlesex Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) organization so your dues & contributions are tax deductible
Don't forget your employer's matching gift form!*

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