

# The MIDDLESEX LANDSCAPE

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

Volume 18, No. 1

The Middlesex Land Trust, Inc.

Spring 2006

## Geocaches Have Arrived!

Our fall 2005 newsletter announced that "letterboxing" had arrived on Middlesex Land Trust land. Now, thanks to MLT member Don Guilmette we have **Geocaching!** Presently, there are geocaches hidden at the *Mica Ledges* (Durham) and *General John Hoar* (Portland) preserves, with more on the way.

A geocache (pronounced, *Gee-oh-cash*), is similar to a letterbox as it is a hidden waterproof container with a logbook, the location of which is listed on a website; but, the similarities fade there. The name combines "geo" for geography and "cache," a term used for hidden provisions. Rather than descriptive directions to the cache, as with a letterbox, hikers are provided with geographical coordinates, both longitude and latitude, requiring a hand-held Global Positioning System (GPS) to find it. Wow! Sounds complicated. But, it's not.

For under \$100 one can obtain a GPS capable of pinpointing a specific spot on the planet within 6-20 feet. A GPS unit is no more difficult to use than a cell phone. The cache itself may be clearly visible, or it may be cleverly hidden in an endless assortment of ways. A cache may simply be a small (micro) container such as film canister with a log and pencil to record your visit, or a (regular) cache containing "trade items." The sky's the limit on what you will find in a cache, the only rule being that items must be family friendly. A player is asked to "take something or leave something." This aspect is particularly fun for kids since most caches hold an assortment of toys.



A typical cache

Finding the location of a geocache is not always the end of the hunt, however. Some are multi-part, as are the MLT geocaches mentioned above, meaning the first stage rewards you with the coordinates to the next. Once the cache is found, players "log" their visit on the

## MLT Annual Meeting to Feature Preserve Dedication and Hike

The Middlesex Land Trust will convene its annual meeting at **10:00 am on Saturday April 29, 2006** at the Pine Brook Preserve on Chestnut Hill Road in East Hampton, rain or shine. The preserve is located approximately two miles south of the intersection with Route 16 directly east of the Route 66/16 merge. Parking is located on the west side of the road directly before a steep drop to the end of the passable highway.

The meeting will include a dedication of two adjacent parcels donated recently to MLT. **Pine Brook Preserve** includes about 26 acres of second-growth forest sloping down to the east side of the brook. The three-acre **Gordon Preserve** is located deep within the watershed on the west side of the brook. Both properties contain colonial-era surface quarries where exfoliation flakes were cut and shaped for building stone.

Following a brief business meeting and dedication ceremony, we will lead a walk and exploration of both properties. Our new hiking trail connects the highway with an ancient quarry road along the east side of the brook. If the water is not impassable, the tour will cross the brook and take in a bushwhack route through the Gordon property. Footwear suitable for wet and rough travel is recommended. Appropriate refreshments will be served along the way.

If you plan to join us, RSVP at the land trust office, 343-7537. Thank you.

geocaching website ([www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com)).

There is much more to this popular activity, which can be explored by visiting the geocaching website. If you are wondering just how popular the game is, here are the statistics from the home page as of this writing: "There are **242329** active caches in **221** countries. In the last 7 days, there have been **148297** new logs written by **24629** account holders." Every day more people are getting off of their couches and getting outdoors. The best part?...discovering places you never knew existed. So come out and visit your local MLT preserve and make sure you're equipped to find the geocache. But, be forewarned, it's addictive!

The Middlesex Land Trust, Inc. is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve open space in northern Middlesex County (Durham, Middlefield, Middletown, Cromwell, Portland and East Hampton).

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## The Chairpersons' Corner

Dear MLT Members:

Supply and demand. It's the basic, unrelenting rule of the market. When supply is up and demand is steady, price goes down. When demand is up and supply is steady, the price goes up. Even an unwarranted fear that supply will tighten or demand will outstrip supply can drive major price changes, especially in volatile market sectors. We all live by these inexorable rules in our daily lives. Sometimes it's readily apparent (think gasoline), and sometimes it sneaks up on us (think property revaluation). It's often a two-edged sword – we're perhaps wealthier than we thought, but life just costs more.

Unfortunately, the harsh realities of the market, especially in our corner of the world, operate even more harshly with respect to undeveloped land. The fact is, while what's on the market may fluctuate based on other economic conditions, the commodity itself is finite, and no mortal has as yet figured out how to manufacture more. What this means for all land trusts, including The Middlesex Land Trust, is that when a suitable acquisition opportunity arises, we must be prepared to act. Waiting until tomorrow may not be an option. Your continued commitment of time, effort and money is more valuable than ever. Remember – with respect to open space, it cannot be said enough – once lost, gone forever!

*You are the local grassroots support for open space in northern Middlesex County and we are grateful for your continued support.* Please be sure to renew your membership if you haven't already done so, and consider asking your friends and family to join you in support of MLT and its mission.

*Ralph and Diane*

### MLT Co-sponsors Ivory-billed Woodpecker Program

We are pleased to be a sponsor of an exciting Earth Day program this year: *Obsessed with the Ivory-billed Woodpecker.*

Please join us at the Wesleyan University Exley Science Center in Middletown on **Saturday, April 22, 2006 at 7:30 pm** to learn about the rediscovery of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker, once thought extinct. Bobby Harrison, one of the two qualified observers who positively identified the ivory-bill last April, will tell the story of the ivory-bill's near demise and miraculous resurrection, and how it was rediscovered.

*This program is being presented free to the public through a partnership of Mattabesec Audubon Society, The Middlesex Land Trust, Wesleyan University Public Lecture Series, The Rockfall Foundation, Potopaug Audubon, Menunkatuck Audubon, Middletown Public Works Department, Connecticut Forest and Parks Association, and the Inn at Middletown.*



Painting by Mike DiGiorgio

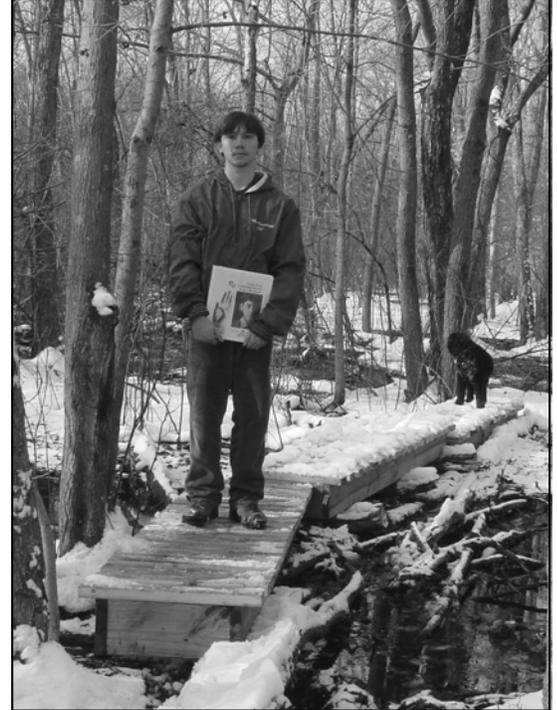
## Eagle Scout Project Improves MLT's Christopher Brook Preserve

East Hampton's Christopher Brook Preserve now has a boardwalk that crosses both the wetlands and brook, thanks to Eagle Scout Mike Kowalczyk. Mike, an East Hampton High School (EHHS) Senior and member of Boy Scout Troop 57, completed the project on December 31, 2005 as part of his requirements for earning Scouting's highest award of Eagle Scout. The Eagle Scout service project requires that the scout not only contribute his own time and energy to a community project, but also lead others in a team effort.

Mike got the idea for the project as a runner on the EHHS cross-country team, whose training route crosses the preserve. The boardwalk consists of seven sections totaling about sixty feet. With the help of local carpenter Bob Cleaver, twelve scout volunteers built the sections in garage space provided by St. Patrick's Church. Lumber was donated by The Lyon and Billard Co. and the EHHS Senior Class (lumber was reused from their Trick or Treat Street project). Four more volunteers helped Mike install the sections, for a total effort of 84 man-hours for the project.

The Christopher Brook Preserve is a 3.4 acre parcel on Christopher Road, a few hundred yards down and across from Sears Park at Lake Pocotopaug. This land, donated to MLT in 1998 by Linda Cabral, protects wetlands, woodlands and a short section of Christopher Brook. The preserve is within the Lake Pocotopaug watershed, where increased development has threatened the lake's health, and protecting land is critical to the lake's water quality. MLT has preserved a total of 21.85 acres in the Pocotopaug watershed.

We at The Middlesex Land Trust express our gratitude to Mike and all the volunteers who made this project a reality, and congratulate Mike on achieving the rank of Eagle Scout. The boardwalks enhance this small preserve significantly by making it much more accessible to the general public.



Mike Kowalczyk at MLT's Christopher Brook Preserve

### 2006 MIDDLESEX LAND TRUST MEMBERSHIP FORM

YES—I would like to help protect open space in northern Middlesex County in 2006!

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

- Renewal                       New membership
- Individual Membership..... \$20
- Sustaining Membership.....\$35
- Patron Membership.....\$100
- Guarantor Membership .....\$250
- Benefactor Membership .....\$500
- Endower Membership .....\$750
- Life Membership .....\$1000+

- I would like to give an additional donation for: land acquisition \$\_\_\_\_\_ land stewardship \$\_\_\_\_\_
- I would like to donate appreciated stock.
- I would like to learn more about donating land or conservation easements.
- I would like to donate time for stewardship, fundraising or office work: please specify \_\_\_\_\_
- I would like to give a gift membership: Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to: The Middlesex Land Trust, and mail to  
deKoven House, 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! Thank you for your support!*



## MLT Work Party Schedule

Check our website at [www.middlesexlandtrust.org](http://www.middlesexlandtrust.org) for our preserve work party schedule for the 2006 season. If you would like to be on the volunteer list to receive work party reminders, please contact us at 343-7537 or [info@middlesexlandtrust.org](mailto:info@middlesexlandtrust.org).

If you have questions, contact Board member John LeShane at 342-0658.

## Join the MLT Board!

Do you care about open space, want more recreational opportunities, and hope to see this a priority in your town and region? Have you been looking for a way to put your thoughts into action? Think about joining The Middlesex Land Trust Board of Directors. Nominations will be acted upon at MLT's next Annual Meeting on April 29, 2006. The Board meets bimonthly the first Tuesday evening at the deKoven House Community Center in Middletown. If you'd rather get your feet wet first, consider putting your expertise and talents to work on one of our Committees: Finance, Land Acquisition, Stewardship, Nominating, Media or Membership. Committees meet monthly and Committee members are not required to serve on the Board of Directors.

For more information, please contact Board member Alan Hurst at 267-2799 or the office at 343-7537.

## In Memoriam

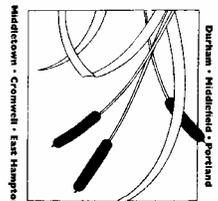
John Henry Friar, 78, of Middlefield and Naples, FL, died January 18, 2006 in Florida. John joined the Board of Directors of The Middlesex Land Trust at its first annual meeting on May 18, 1988, and served on the Board through June 13, 1994. He was elected Chairman, succeeding Susan Cooley, in June 1990 and served for two years as Chair. John Friar also served as Vice President and Chairman of MLT's Membership Committee and served on MLT's Coginchaug River Planning Committee while on the Board. Active with MLT and as co-chair of Middlefield's task force for the Coginchaug River corridor, he helped plan for, seek public and private support for, and implement conservation improvements in efforts to make the entire corridor a model of river management.

John was instrumental in the Land Trust's formative years and received an Appreciation Award for his dedication and leadership while serving on the Board at the seventh annual meeting in June 1994. His contributions to land conservation in northern Middlesex County are appreciated very much.

John most valued his faith and his family. He volunteered extensively in both Connecticut and Florida and will be missed by all who knew him.

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