

# The MIDDLESEX LANDSCAPE

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

Volume 19, No. 1

The Middlesex Land Trust, Inc.

Winter 2007

## MLT HOLDS SUCCESSFUL PINE BROOK FALLS FUNDRAISER

On a frigid night this past January, The Middlesex Land Trust held a major fundraising event at the Goff House in East Hampton to raise money for Pine Brook Falls. Thanks to the efforts of many generous people, the event was a grand success. In particular, we want to recognize board member Tom Heidel for conceiving this event and, along with his sister, Kathy Conklin, for countless hours of work to make it happen.

Also contributing time and talent were Ron Brady and the Dixieland musicians, who livened up the event with their upbeat tones; the students from East Hampton middle and high school band, who served as waiters and also helped set up the hall; and the Goff House folks and Angelico's Restaurant, who provided a great deal of support for the event. We are indebted

to all who generously donated items and services to the silent auction, and to Audrey Heidel, who skillfully managed the whole thing.

We are pleased to report that this event, in addition to being a very festive party, raised \$2,000. On top of this, over \$10,000 was donated toward the purchase of Pine Brook

Falls as a result of our fundraising efforts (see donor list on page 3).

A hearty *Thank You* to everyone who helped make the event so successful, including all the fine folks who bought tickets, wine, auction items and came in from the cold to enjoy a fun evening!

## PINE BROOK FALLS CLOSING IMMINENT

The Middlesex Land Trust Board Co-Chairs and Stewardship Chair met with staff from The Nature Conservancy (TNC) recently to finalize plans for MLT's acquisition of the stunning Pine Brook Falls preserve from TNC. In 2003 TNC acquired the property from the Haase family with the agreement that it would be transferred to MLT for one quarter of the purchase price.

This mode of land acquisition and protection allowed TNC to move on the property as it became available, while ensuring the involvement and commitment of a local conservation organization in the property's future. In connection with the transfer from TNC, MLT will be making a legal commitment to maintain the property in its natural state, and use best efforts to ensure this prime piece of natural habitat maintains its special qualities.

Plans for stewardship, maintenance of the simple woods road, permitted activities, and a mutual understanding of the property's boundaries and other attributes were discussed in detail. All of these will be outlined in a baseline environmental report that also reflects that the parcel is adjacent to other significant protected open space. Needless to say, both parties are excited about the partnership in general, and this project in particular. The two hope to cooperate on future projects as TNC continues with efforts to save the lower Connecticut River valley, designated as a "Last Great Place," and MLT forges ahead with preservation efforts in northern Middlesex County.

A closing is expected soon.



Ken Heidel (l) and MLT board member George King pour wine (top), while party-goers enjoy each other's company (bottom)

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:

A few weeks ago, on a chilly Saturday night in a reconstructed historic building in East Hampton, nearly two hundred people got together with friends, both new and old, neighbors, and civic leaders for conversation, live music, hearty appetizers, a wine tasting and a silent auction. It was a mixed group, representing younger and older folks, various political parties, from varying backgrounds and walks of life. If you weren't there, you missed a rollicking good time. The live Dixieland jazz was infectious, the food and wine were excellent, and the company was terrific.

What brought all these people together, besides the promise of a good time? A deserving cause that serves to unite people—the preservation of pristine and irreplaceable open space—in this case some 40 acres of the stunning Pine Brook environs, featuring an old stone mill site, with cascading waterfalls surrounded by hemlocks, a meandering cart path, steep wooded slopes and wetlands. Everyone at the event knew that by attending, donating the entrance fee, tasting the assorted wines, and bidding on the wonderful array of silent auction items, they were supporting your Middlesex Land Trust, in particular, its effort to ensure that this piece of our natural heritage is preserved for all of us, and the future generations that follow. Not only was the event a great time, it was also for a great cause.

Congratulations and thanks to all who made the event possible, hugely successful and so much fun. It was a financial success, a terrific way to “get the word out” about the MLT and this land preservation project, and will be remembered for a long time to come as a great party. We all proved together that doing good can be a good time indeed! Thanks to all for your continuing support.

*Ralph and Diane*



### JOIN THE MLT BOARD!

As you all should know, each year we offer you the opportunity to attend our Annual Meeting, join us on a hike, or help with stewardship of some of our properties. There are many opportunities to participate that never require you to attend a meeting, and we know that many of you prefer it that way.

But, if you would like to get more involved, we are looking for a few good volunteers to serve on our Board of Directors or one of our standing committees, including membership, stewardship or media. We will provide you with an orientation, training and a little history.

If you have an interest, please contact Alan Hurst at 860-267-2799, or the office at 860-343-7537 for more information. We look forward to hearing from you.



# THANK YOU TO OUR PINE BROOK FALLS CONTRIBUTORS



*If we have misspelled a name or failed to list a donor correctly, please let us know and we will correct it!*

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Best Cleaners  
Citizen's Bank  
Connecticut Forest & Park Association  
Creations Framing & Gallery  
Governor's Tavern  
Lynne Alyson Photography  
Marcie Loffredo Yoga  
Marlborough Barn  
Massage at Snug Harbor  
Meshomasic Hiking Club  
Middle Haddam Garden Club  
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The Nature Conservancy  
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## PRESERVING THE PINE BROOK CORRIDOR

The January silent auction and wine tasting event held at the Goff House in East Hampton raised money for Pine Brook Falls Preserve, but the event marked more than an effort to save a beautiful waterfall and historic mill site. It highlighted a larger endeavor to secure one more thread in a tapestry, helping to insure the ecological value of a string of other parcels in a Class I watershed. It is about making connections and keeping the weaving around us from unraveling. This is the beginning of what we hope is an increase in momentum for protection of the Pine Brook Corridor.

While the waters of Pine Brook have not always been pristine due to historical industrial and agricultural pollution, its waters run clear today, due largely to the fact that it has very little development along its course. Pine Brook has its origins at the southeastern edge of Meshomasic State Forest near Clark Hill Road in East Hampton. Here, where it is still a small stream, it is known as the Green River. It tumbles over ledges and boulders and flows gently through several wetland complexes before it empties into the Salmon River across from Machimoodus, one of Connecticut's newest state parks located in East Haddam, and not far from the confluence of the Salmon River and Connecticut River at the tip of Haddam Neck. So why is The Middlesex Land Trust interested in this corridor and how did it all begin?

For The Middlesex Land Trust (MLT), it began with the 1998 donation of 3.5 landlocked acres on the Pine Brook by Alice Gordon. We would not have clear access to this property until 2001, when we received a second donation on Pine Brook that fronted on Chestnut Hill Road and abutted the original three and a half acres across the brook. This 24.4-acre parcel was donated as an open space set aside as part of a subdivision on Chestnut Hill, but was larger than that required by the regulations because the original landowner, Lily Petersen, wished to protect the brook.

These weren't the first or the last parcels protected along this ribbon of green. Currently, 762 acres are preserved in the corridor. Starting near its source and at the edge of the Meshomasic State Forest, Peter and Arlene Bergan, owners of Peaceful Hill Tree Farm, have 36 acres protected under the Forest Legacy Program, a federal program administered by the state, which purchases conservation rights to protect forested property. Just south of Route 16, a 179-acre town property contains a large, open wetland known as the Pine Brook Aquifer, nestled in between the Hog Hill and Chestnut Hill ridges. Below this, between

Hog Hill and Pine Brook, are two parcels, 0.9-acre and 35-acre, acquired recently by the Town of East Hampton with a matching Open Space Grant from the State of Connecticut.

A ways downstream is our 37.9-acre Pine Brook Preserve. Skip a few more miles downstream and you have the 40-acre Pine Brook Falls Preserve, which was a collaborative land protection effort led by The Nature Conservancy and supported by the MLT. Pine Brook Falls abuts another 122-acre privately owned parcel that is also protected under the Forest Legacy Program. Farther down, Pine Brook leaves East Hampton and crosses into Haddam Neck, where the Haddam Land Trust has 22 acres forming a long narrow strip on both sides of the stream. This is abutted by the 289-acre Johnson Preserve owned by The Nature Conservancy and the Town of Haddam.

If 762 acres of protected natural areas along one stream corridor are not impressive enough, consider that it provides a link from Meshomasic State Forest to Haddam Neck, the "Land Between the Rivers," and the Lower Salmon River. Within Haddam Neck and along the Salmon River, the State of Connecticut holds the significant natural areas of Hurd State Park, George Dudley Seymour State Park, Wopowog Wildlife Management Area, Machimoodus State Park, and the Salmon River State Forest.

With so much land protected along Pine Brook already, why the urgency to protect more? Ecosystems fail to function fully when they become fragmented, and degraded water quality can impact downstream preserves. Invasive plants and encroachments that can alter significantly the ecology of the area are a more immediate threat to smaller natural areas. Numerous species of wildlife require large tracts of unbroken and linked natural areas. Interconnected parks and preserves provide the opportunity for greatly enhanced outdoor recreational experiences. Many of these connecting parcels are at risk for development in the very near future as their owners are pushing into their later years, and significant tracts of land in this area are changing or will change hands soon. No single entity or method will be able to preserve this natural area alone; the progress to date is a great example of the face of conservation today, a quilt work of efforts by private individuals, local and national land trusts, and local, state and federal governments.

As individuals, there are several things you can do to help preserve the Pine Brook Corridor.

Funding at both the state and federal levels is in a

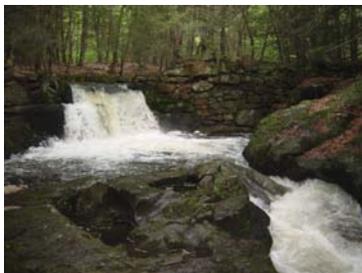
*(Continued on page 6)*



## A FAMILY HIKE AT PINE BROOK FALLS

On a clear afternoon on the Sunday after Thanksgiving, 23 people gathered at the entrance to Pine Brook Falls Preserve in East Hampton to “walk off the turkey” and enjoy nature. The Middlesex Land Trust Co-Chair, Ralph Urban, welcomed the group, shared some history of the 40-acre parcel, and explained the property’s importance as part of a corridor of natural lands stretching from Meshomasic State Forest to the Salmon River.

Stewardship Chair John LeShane then led an easy hike along the old roadbed through the hemlock forest, and down the hillside to the banks of crystal clear Pine Brook. A short distance upstream beside the stone ruins of an old mill, a beautiful waterfall cascades over the rocks.



After exploring the site and remarking on the abundance of moss on seemingly every surface, the hikers – children and seniors included – turned and followed the old road back to the trailhead. For those wanting to see more of the Preserve, John led them on a longer loop to another section of the property.

Several hikers remarked that they live nearby yet had never visited the preserve. They were happy to go on a guided hike their first visit, and planned to return on their own and share the experience with others so that they, too, would enjoy this local natural treasure.

## MLT HIKES AND WORK PARTIES



Join us for a hike or help out at one of our work parties!  
Phone John LeShane at 342-0658 to confirm and for details.

### HIKES

**Wednesday, April 18, 2007, 9AM.** 6-mile hike through Abe Temkin Preserve and Wangunk Meadows. Visit a heron rookery. Meet at the Hemlock Grange near Rte 17/17A jct.

**Friday, May 4, 2007, 3PM.** 5-mile hike through Benson Preserve and over Lamentation Mountain: vistas, secluded pond and stream valley. Campfire to follow. Meet at Portland Police Station on Main St. (phone re alternate location).

### WORK PARTIES

*Please bring your own work gloves, tools, and food and beverage. John will inform workers of special equipment needed.*

**Sunday, April 1, 2007, 10AM-1PM.** Okumsett and Palmer Preserves, Portland. Meet at the barn on Middle Haddam Road. Heavy trail work.

**Saturday, April 14, 2007, 9AM-12PM.** Abe Temkin Preserve, Portland. Meet at the entrance on Cedar Terrace. Side hilling and trail work.

**Saturday, April 28, 2007, 9AM-12PM.** Highland Pond, Middletown. Meet at the gate on Bell Street. Install signboard and trail work.

**Saturday, May 19, 2007, 9AM-12PM.** Sellow Preserve, East Hampton. Meet at the end of Dogwood Drive. Spread gravel and trail work.

**Saturday, June 9, 2007, 9AM-12PM.** Coginchaug Quarry and Mica Ledges, Durham. Meet at the Coginchaug Quarry preserve entrance on Meetinghouse Hill Road. Trail work.

**Saturday, June 23, 2007, 9AM-12PM.** Highland Pond, Middletown. Beaver dam removal and trail work.

### 2007 MIDDLESEX LAND TRUST MEMBERSHIP FORM

YES—I would like to help protect open space in northern Middlesex County in 2007!

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!*

Pine Brook Corridor (Continued from page 4)

critical cycle as you read this. The Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge was established in 1997 to protect migratory fish and bird populations, and endangered and threatened plant and animal species throughout the Connecticut River watershed. Haddam Neck, in particular the Pine Brook and Salmon River watersheds, has been identified as one of only two areas in Connecticut approved for land acquisition as part of the Refuge at this time. Future purchases for the Silvio O. Conte Refuge require funding. Refuge holdings in Connecticut (31 acres), lag far behind protected areas in Vermont, New Hampshire and Massachusetts (32,000+ acres). Contact your U.S. Senators and Congressmen to let them know how important this area is to us.

State level funding is important for the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant Program, among other programs. Since its inception in 1998, the state has assisted in the purchase of about 22,000 acres across the state, but future funding is not guaranteed. A coalition of state and national conservation and historic preservation organizations have just launched "The Face of Connecticut Campaign" to increase significantly state funds available for preservation and stewardship of both historic and natural landscapes and sites. Contact your local politicians and state senators and representatives to show your support for

this priority.

Contribute to The Middlesex Land Trust. Funding enables us to be proactive. In addition to raising money for our commitment on Pine Brook Falls, we are active in pursuing other opportunities in the corridor. If you are a landowner, consider leaving a legacy by donating conservation easements or portions of your property to a conservation organization such as The Middlesex Land Trust. Don't hesitate to contact us to discuss options. Landowners often take years to research options and decide on a course of action, so it's never too soon to start thinking about it.

Combined, our efforts, both large and small, can make a difference in this landscape we call home.

**MLT TO CELEBRATE 20 YEARS AT  
2007 ANNUAL MEETING**

Please join The Middlesex Land Trust as we mark 20 years of land preservation at our 20th Annual Meeting on Saturday April 21, 2007. We will assemble at 10:00AM at the barn/parking area of the Palmer-Taylor Preserve on Middle Haddam Road in Portland. A short guided hike through the Palmer Preserve to the adjacent Kelley Preserve and a preserve dedication will follow the business meeting. For more information, including directions, please phone the office, 343-7357.

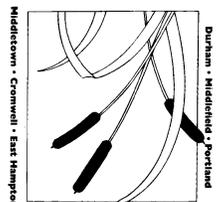


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Save the Date!  
MLT's 20th Annual Meeting  
April 21, 2007



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