

The MIDDLESEX LANDSCAPE

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

Progress Made on Kruger Farm Fundraising

Good news! We have made significant progress toward our goal of raising funds to match the State of Connecticut Open Space Matching Grant awarded to The Middlesex Land Trust in November 2007 for the Kruger Farm Project. This has been made possible by a great effort from our partner on the project, the Haddam Neck Spirit.

At a January 9, 2008 joint meeting of the Town of Haddam Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance, we made a formal presentation and request for a \$40,000 donation from the town in support of this project. The request was well received by both boards and many of the residents at the meeting. It is a good investment for the town; less than 10% of the purchase price will help preserve this property adjacent to the Elm-Camp Johnson parcel owned by the town and The Nature Conservancy. The request has made it into Haddam's budget and we are hopeful that the funds will be intact when the town residents pass the budget in late spring.

We want to say a huge thank you again to all of our donors. At this point we can say closing on the property is a certainty, although *we are still raising funds*. MLT originally committed up to \$125,000 of existing funds for this project, but our goal is to reduce that requirement, so we have funds to kickoff our next preservation project. Donations for the Kruger Farm Project are still welcome. Preservation of this 50 acre parcel is an exciting and important addition to the natural areas already protected in the lower Salmon River/Pine Brook area.

This attractive rain garden is at the Tolland Agricultural Center (photo courtesy of Vivian Felten, NRCS)



Plant a Rain Garden, Save a Stream!

Did you know that only 1% of the earth's water is available for human needs and uses? As I sat in a Master Gardener class recently learning about water consumption, I realized that I am not as good a conservator of water as I had thought. I have a rain barrel and use soaker hoses on my flowerbeds...but I learned I could also be using the rain from my roof and directing it into a rain garden.

First, a little background on precipitation, runoff, and infiltration. In the forested landscape, 10% of precipitation runs off, and 50% infiltrates in the soil and becomes groundwater. On the other hand, in urban areas, 55% runs off and 15% infiltrates in the soil.

Polluted runoff, or nonpoint source pollution, is a major problem in developed areas. As water washes over our lawns, driveways and roads, it picks up nonpoint sources of pollution. Residential lawns cover 14-25 million acres in the Northeast. And what is the number one source of nonpoint pollution in residential areas? You guessed it – our lawns! Lawn care and garden products (fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides), pet waste, motor oil, household and auto care products from our yards and driveways can all contribute nonpoint sources of pollution to storm water. Storm water is then carried directly, or via the nearest storm drain system, into our local streams, ponds or wetlands. The bottom line is, the more water we can get to infiltrate in the soil, the less storm water runoff we have with its associated pollution problems.

So how can we reduce runoff as homeowners? Two easy ways are to use a rain barrel like I do – *and plant a rain garden!* Rain gardens are shallow basins or channels (4-8 inches deep) that capture the water from roofs, driveways or other impervious surfaces, allowing it to pond and filter slowly into the ground instead of running off. They are planted with deep-rooted perennials that don't mind getting their "feet wet" intermittently. And rain gardens are more than just

(Continued on page 3)

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:

To quote Tom Ladny, who wrote and edited "*A Decade of Trust*," a reflection on the first 10 years of The Middlesex Land Trust,..."It was a perceived need that led to the formation of The Middlesex Land Trust in 1987..."

Our Land Trust had its unofficial beginning on March 16, 1987. Middletown Attorney William Howard convened a meeting to explore the possibility of forming a land trust for the purpose of accepting a specific parcel of land. We didn't end up preserving that parcel, but we have accepted a large number since that time.

The Middlesex Land Trust was formally organized on May 11, 1987 at the first "official" Board of Directors meeting held at the deKoven House in Middletown. A Certificate of Incorporation was filed with the Secretary of the State on May 13, 1987 and, as they say, the rest is history.

We have continued to meet at the deKoven House since our first meeting in 1987, and now also have our office there. We acknowledge that if not for a startup grant from The Rockfall Foundation (which owns the deKoven House) it would not have been as easy for us to file our nonprofit organization paperwork and be certified by the Secretary of the State.

We are ever indebted to – and have formally recognized – Bill Howard for his role in helping to establish The Middlesex Land Trust and serving as an ongoing resource to our organization. It is interesting to note that though he was one of the catalysts that brought about the organization, he did not become a Board member until 1992.

In our first decade we acquired 24 parcels totaling approximately 290 acres. In our second decade we have acquired an additional 26 parcels totaling another 332 acres.

What does the next decade bring? It will be an interesting story to follow and be a part of. Join us at our annual meeting as we celebrate the beginning of our third decade of trust.

Alan

MLT Annual Meeting—Please Join Us!

The Middlesex Land Trust will convene its annual meeting at 10am on Saturday, May 3, 2008 at the Cassa Preserve in Middletown, rain or shine. The preserve is accessible through the Guida Farms Conservation Area. From Route 17 south, turn left on Round Hill Road, then go about 1/2 mile to the intersection with Coleman Road. Park in the Guida Farms lot, on your right.

A brief business meeting will be followed by refreshments and a family hike on the preserve.

If you plan to join us, RSVP at the land trust office, 343-7537. We hope to see you there!



Upcoming MLT Activities



Join us for a hike, or help with important preserve maintenance activities at our work parties. For more information, including directions, contact John LeShane, 342-0658. Please note that heavy and steady rain cancels all activities.

HIKES

Friday, May 16, 2008, 5PM – Sellew Preserve, East Hampton. A 5-mile hike on our 40-acre preserve and the Airline Rail Trail. Dogs are welcome. Hiking boots are preferable, but sneakers are OK. Bring snacks and a beverage; pizza to follow. Meet at the Sellew Preserve entrance at the end of Dogwood Drive. RSVP to John LeShane at 342-0658.

Friday, June 13, 2008, 5:30PM – Cobalt Mine and Junga arcel, East Hampton. A 5-mile hike through an old mine site and the most recent addition to Meshomasic State Forest. Dogs are welcome. Bring snacks and beverage; pizza to follow. Hiking boots are preferable. Meet at the Rte 16/66 commuter lot in Cobalt. RSVP to John LeShane at 342-0658.

WORK PARTIES

Thursday, May 8, 2008, 5PM – Pine Brook Falls Preserve, East Hampton. We will be building a loop trail to connect with the existing old mill road on our 40-acre preserve. Bring loppers and saws. Meet at the preserve entrance on Sexton Hill Road.

Saturday, May 31, 2008, 9AM – Highland Pond Preserve, Middletown. We will be installing a signboard for our 40-acre preserve. Meet at the preserve entrance on Bell Street.

Saturday, June 28, 2008, 9AM – Pocotopaug Preserve, East Hampton. We will be installing a signboard for our 18-acre preserve. Meet at the preserve entrance on Bay Road.

Rain Gardens *(continued from page 1)*

useful for managing storm water – they also beautify and diversify your landscape, adding color and texture and providing habitat for wildlife.

Here are a few design pointers. Rain gardens should be sited at least ten feet from your house, and not over a septic system. It is best to perform a soil permeability test before constructing your rain garden. Dig a hole about 6" deep where the rain garden will be placed, and

fill it with water. If it takes more than 24 hours for the water to soak in, the soil is not suitable.

Are you ready to add a rain garden to your yard? There are many useful resources, in particular, *Rain Gardens in Connecticut: A Design Guide for Homeowners*, published by UConn. This guide, which has all of the information you'll need to get started, can be accessed at <http://nemo.uconn.edu/tools/publications.htm>.

Enjoy your rain garden!

– Donna Monnes

2008 MIDDLESEX LAND TRUST MEMBERSHIP FORM

YES—I would like to help protect open space in northern Middlesex County in 2008!

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 \$_____

donate appreciated stock

learn more about donating land or conservation easements

donate time for stewardship, fundraising or office work: please specify_____

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!*



Letters to Harry, by Prudence and T.J. Palmer—Now Available for Purchase

The Middlesex Land Trust is excited to report that the book *Letters to Harry* is now published and available for purchase. As we wrote in our Fall 2007 issue of *The Middlesex Landscape*, the generous gifts the late Prudence and T.J. Palmer gave to The Middlesex Land Trust (MLT) included their manuscript for *Letters to Harry*, a labor of love for many years for T.J. and Prudence. The book price is \$20, plus \$5 for shipping and handling. If you would like a copy of the book, please complete and send in the order form below. All proceeds for the book will go to MLT to support our land preservation efforts. If you have questions, please phone Donna Monnes at (860) 635-7099.

Letters to Harry Order Form

Name _____

Address _____

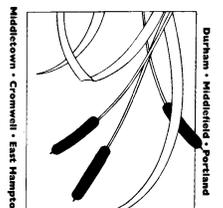
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Please send \$25.00 (\$20 plus \$5 for shipping & handling) to:
Donna Monnes, MLT Treasurer
28 Reiman Drive
Cromwell, CT 06416

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