

MIDDLESEX



LAND TRUST

The MIDDLESEX LANDSCAPE

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

Volume 21, No. 4

The Middlesex Land Trust, Inc.

Fall 2010

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECTS ON SELLEW PRESERVE

The 40-acre Sellew Preserve in East Hampton continues to provide opportunities for Eagle Scout candidates to conduct environmental projects that will be of lasting benefit to hikers and outdoor enthusiasts. The central trail on the Preserve is a 19th-century wagon road that extends down to a landing on the former railroad bed now occupied by the Airline Trail. A section of the road was perpetually muddy and difficult to cross due to surficial storm drainage that flowed across the area. Troop 8 Life Scout Aaron Miele undertook to improve this section of trail by constructing a corduroy "bog-bridge" with logs and boulders that provide a raised surface while directing stormwater through narrow channels which drain the footpath instead of flooding it.

Over a dozen scouts from East Hampton Troop 8 assisted with the trail work over numerous summer work



parties. The bog bridge logs were cut from Locust trees recovered from MLT's Palmer Preserve on Middle Had-dam Road in Portland, which had been felled by the tornadoes that passed through the area earlier in the year. Locust is a dense and rot-resistant hardwood with a roughly textured bark that provides wonderfully secure footing. The Eagle Scout project was completed with a happy combination of local materials and Boy Scout energy, and will provide health and recreational benefits to visitors for years to come.

NEW SIGNBOARDS FOR PORTLAND PRESERVES

In July, Dolores Bates, the director of the Portland Parks and Recreation Teen Adventure Camp, made the Land Trust an offer we couldn't refuse: would we like signboards built free of charge for any of our preserves in Portland? The camp does one service project each summer; last year's was building picnic tables for the Brownstone Riverfront Park.

With the help of her staff - Heidi Spohn, Robb Mancini, and Kathleen France - and the teens, the project got started. Alex Bates, Dolores' husband, was the master carpenter who volunteered to design and build the signs, while Michael Olayos, a grounds maintainer for the town, assisted with the installation. Sean Dwyer, the town's dynamic Park and Recreation director, secured the funding for the wood and supplies from the Park and Rec's budget, adding "This is an ongoing effort to increase awareness of the trail systems in town."

The recipients of the signboards were Oak Ledges on South Road, Johnson/Kalinowski on Grove Street and the Roy Huse Collins Preserves on Isinglass Hill Road.

The Land Trust would like to extend our thanks to all those involved in this project for their hard work and generosity.

The Middlesex Land Trust Inc. is a non-profit 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 CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Dear MLTers:

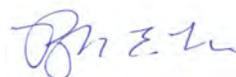
We have just completed a highly contentious political season, so truth seems at times a rare commodity indeed. I have taken particular note of how the same circumstances or phenomenon constitutes one thing to those of a certain political persuasion, and something seemingly entirely different to those of a different persuasion.

One prime example of this is the recent characterizations of the efforts to pass comprehensive energy legislation. Depending on perspective, such efforts are "cap and trade," an "energy tax," or a push for alternative fuels. We are told such efforts are either a boon to clean energy-related jobs, or a heavy subsidy and burden that will further crush a trouble economy.

No matter what your political persuasion, however, one thing appears evident – unless we as a society begin to factor in all the true costs of our economic and strategic decisions in the cost/benefit analyses, we will likely never attain the sustainable social and environmental quality of life that we must achieve. In the starkest terms, if all the costs of continuing to burn cheaper fossil fuels are not accounted for, including the costs to human and environmental health, we may never realize the benefits that cleaner and greener alternatives can provide; so long as short term dollars and cents are considered the only "real" costs, progress that will improve human health and environmental sustainability will likely elude us.

Although we are careful stewards of our funds, your land trust is all about thinking beyond today's immediate monetary costs. As an organization, we are committed to a vision for the future that looks beyond today's account balances to tomorrow's landscapes and quality of life, and the protection of those assets, vistas and places that enrich our lives in ways that defy dollars and cents calculation.

Thank you for your continuing support, and stay with us as we move into MLT's next decade of caring for our collective future.



Ralph Urban

Think Globally – Act Locally

NEW ACQUISITION: PINE BROOK MARKHAM PRESERVE

The Middlesex Land Trust recently purchased two adjacent parcels, totaling 26 acres, in the Pine Brook Corridor in East Hampton. This newest acquisition by the Land Trust will be called The Pine Brook Markham Preserve.

We are very excited to be adding critical protection to important existing conservation areas. This new purchase will continue the work towards the goal of securing a wildlife corridor and maintaining the water quality of Pine Brook, while providing passive recreational access to this hidden gem.

As you can see from the attached map of existing protected open space, these two parcels lie just a short distance upstream from our Pine Brook Falls Preserve. Riparian frontage on this section of the lower brook is critical for maintaining water quality, because this area is below the last major wetland on the brook before it flows into the Salmon River. Any sediments or excess nutrients that enter the water below the major wetlands on this brook will not get filtered out and will seriously degrade the downstream water quality critical to many aquatic and avian species.

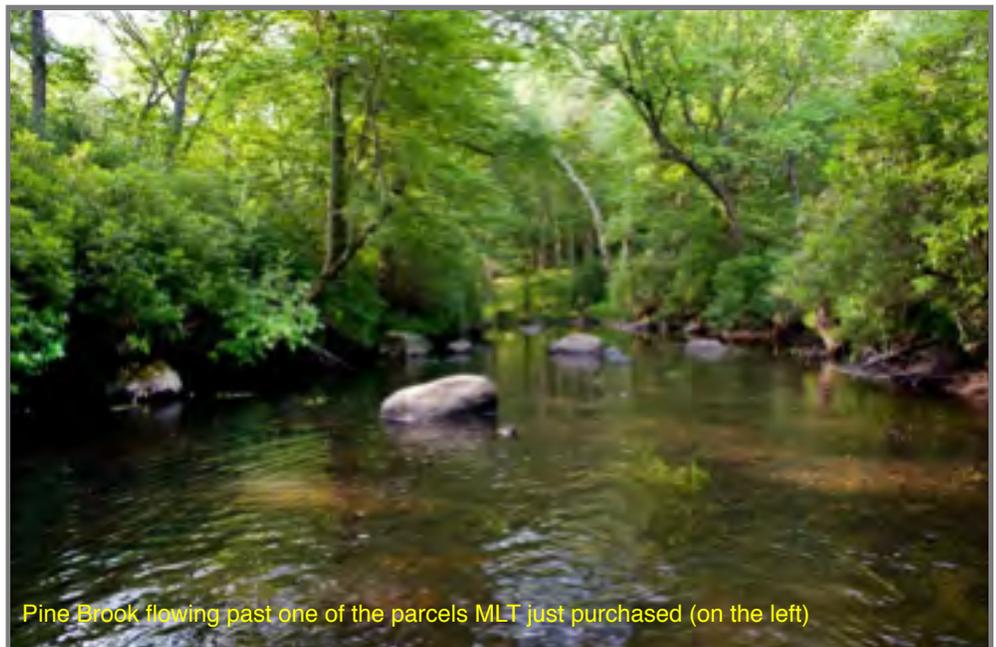
This purchase assures protection of another piece of the puzzle connecting Meshamosic State Forest to the Lower Salmon River, helping to build core forest protection around the Pine Brook Falls Preserve and an adjacent 54 acre Forest Legacy property (private property protected under a federal conservation easement).

The Pine Brook Watershed stretches from Meshamosic Forest at its headwaters to the north, to the lower freshwater tidal basin of the Salmon River to the south. Its lower reaches flow through the recently established Salmon River Division of the Silvio O. Conte U.S. Fish and Wildlife Refuge. Land in the lower watershed lies between the

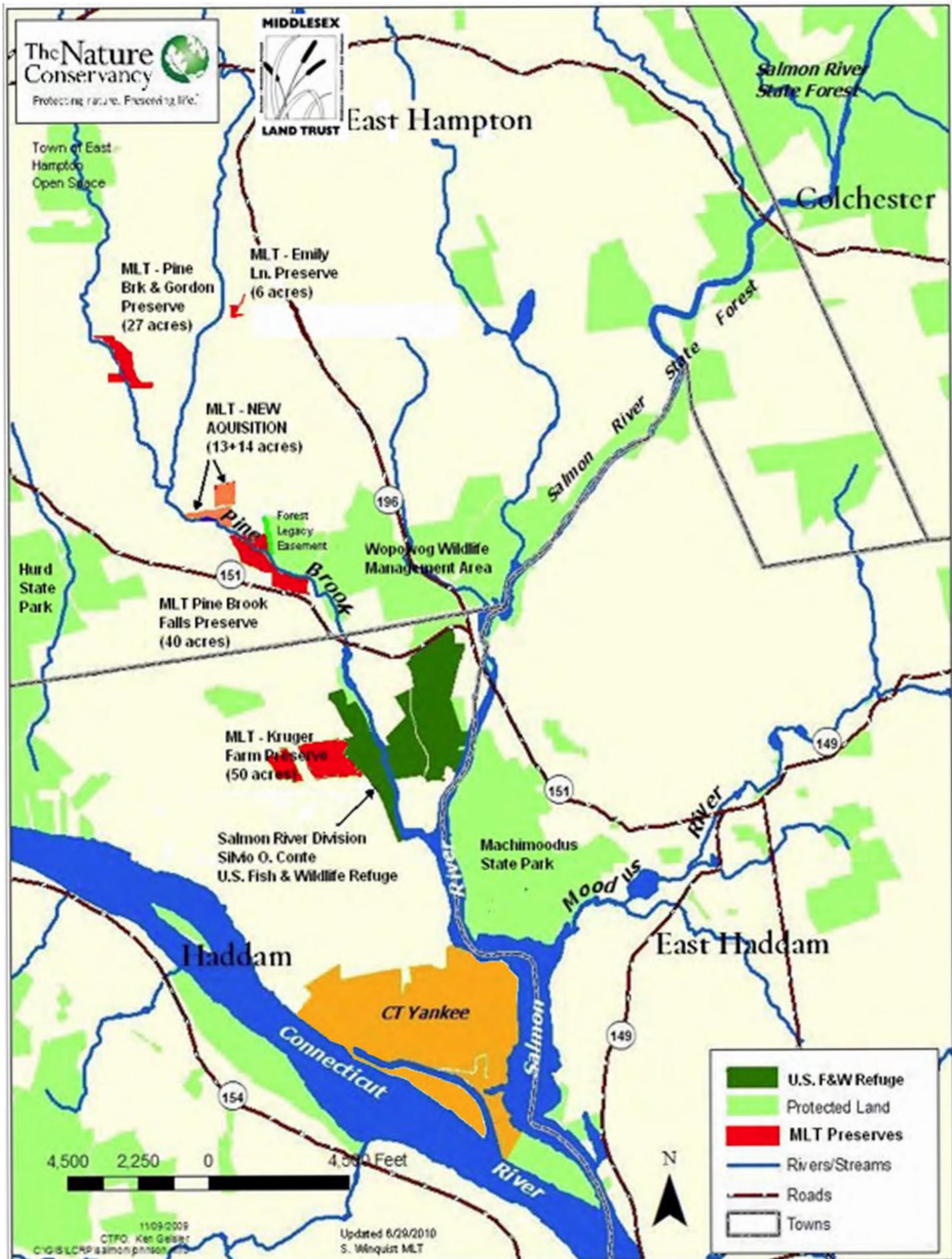
considerable State of Connecticut conservation holdings of Hurd and Dudley Seymore State Parks on the Connecticut River to the west and the Wopowog Wildlife Management Area Salmon River State Forest and Machimoodus State Park to the east. This watershed still has many large privately held, undeveloped parcels which serve as connections between these ecologically and recreationally important areas. Preserving the integrity of these connections, and maintaining the superior water quality in this stream, is a priority for the Middlesex Land Trust and many other organizations and government bodies at the local, state and national levels.

With this purchase the Middlesex Land Trust will have protected more than 750 acres in northern Middlesex County, and we couldn't have done it without our members and supporters. The Land Trust is fundraising to cover the costs of this acquisition, and donations would be gladly accepted to help make this and other future strategic purchases possible. Tax deductible donations for land acquisition may be sent to the Middlesex Land Trust, 27 Washington Street, Middletown, 06457.

Thank you for your continued support of our conservation efforts. You can be proud of the legacy you are building through your contributions and membership in the Land Trust.



Pine Brook flowing past one of the parcels MLT just purchased (on the left)



Connecticut Yankee Conservation Progress

The effort to preserve the 582 acre site of the former Connecticut Yankee Power Plant Site at the mouth of the Salmon River continues. The six person advisory board meets weekly by phone. Jim McHutchison, a board member, reports that the appraisal has been completed and is now under review by involved parties.

The complexity of this undertaking is impressive. Defining the scope of work for the appraiser, a joint effort with CY took several months. The appraisal itself required six months resulting in a 500+ page document, astonishing in its detail. This authoritative "Yellow Book" appraisal gives interested parties a solid base from which to move to the next level.

While the CYCP has received good financial support, we would like to expand our donor base to illustrate public support. Small contributions are all that are needed (We don't rank them) and are tax-deductible. Checks should be made to "The Middlesex County Community Foundation," a 501(c)(3) public charity, and mailed to "Connecticut Yankee Conservation Project, c/o Stanford Brainerd, 282 Quarry Hill Rd., Haddam Neck, CT 06424." Mark the memo line "Connecticut Yankee Project (MLT)"

Continued from back page

From the top of Blueberry Hill, the eight hundred ninety seven foot Meshomasic Mt - the highest hill in Portland - can be seen. Oak Ledges offers visitors a one hundred year old oak and hickory forest with quaint spots such as Possum Sniff Knob where, in 1980, an opossum sniffed my foot as I waited to see a big buck that I had seen the night before.

I built Meditation Shelter in 1989 from salvaged dead red pines on Jouncer Hill, so named when I used an oak uprooted by Hurricane Gloria in 1985 to jump and bounce (thus jounce) just for fun. Oak Ledges has a three quarter mile orange-blazed loop trail along with several unmarked ones. The newly installed signboard is on South Road, a half mile north of its junction with Cox Road.

by John LeShane



2011 MIDDLESEX LAND TRUST MEMBERSHIP FORM

YES – I would like to help protect open space in Northern Middlesex County in 2011!

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 and contributions are tax deductible
Don't forget your employer's matching gift form! Thank you for your support!

THE TURKEYS OF OAK LEDGES

On a cool October evening, I sat enjoying a cheery campfire on the ledge in front of my Portland home with my friend Chuck. Beyond the flickering light of the fire was the Land Trust's eight acre Oak Ledges Preserve. Just before six pm, we heard the all-too-familiar rattling cluck of turkeys down by the Cranberry Bog.

"They're coming," I quietly told Chuck and less than five minutes later, eighteen turkeys, the 'South Road flock' as I have dubbed them, marched past our campfire. One larger bird paused to check us out from his perch on a glacial boulder only thirty feet away before moving off with the rest of the troop. Five minutes later, each in turn flew up into the tops of the oaks on the eastern slope of the preserve to roost for the night.

For the past year, I have had the pleasure of watching the flock of two adults and sixteen chicks live and grow up, on and around our preserve. Almost every day this

month, I have been able to follow them as they worked the woods surrounding Blueberry Hill, the three hundred fifty foot summit of Oak Ledges, scratching for this year's bumper crop of acorns and insects. I would venture to say that Natasha, my Malamute-Husky mixed breed, and I have almost been accepted into the flock which, on occasion, allowed us to come within twenty to thirty feet.

I donated Oak Ledges to the Middlesex Land Trust in 2000, knowing I would never build on it, viewing it as a piece of the preserved lands that surround it. Compartment 17, a sixty acre block of Meshomasic, abuts it to the south and west. The thirteen acre Helen Carlson Nature Sanctuary, known locally as the Cranberry Bog, sits beside South Road to the east, with the nine thousand acre Meshomasic State Forest just beyond.

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