

MIDDLESEX



LAND TRUST

The MIDDLESEX LANDSCAPE

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

Volume 21, No. 7

The Middlesex Land Trust, Inc.

Spring 2012

MLT'S 25TH ANNUAL MEETING TO BE HELD SATURDAY APRIL 28TH

Please come join the Middlesex Land Trust in celebrating its twenty-fifth Annual Meeting on Saturday April 28th at the red barn on the Palmer Preserve, 252 Middle Haddam Road in Portland.

The meeting will feature a presentation by Mr. Barry Parrish of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Mr. Parrish is the Wildlife Refuge Manager for the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, a system that presents a vast environmental resource in the Connecticut River Watershed from Canada to the Long Island Sound. Mr. Parrish will discuss the wildlife of the lower Connecticut River Valley and the nearby Salmon River Division of the Conte Wildlife Refuge.

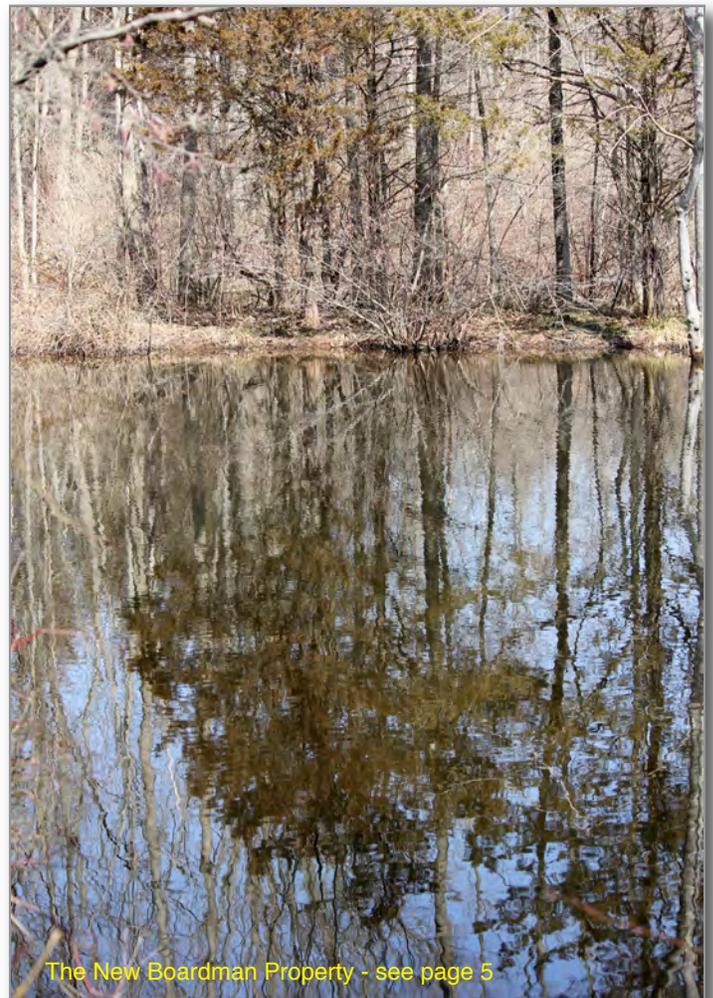
The Annual Meeting will begin at 10AM with a short business meeting after which Mr. Parrish

will give his presentation on the Wildlife Refuge. Refreshments will then be followed by a short walk on the Palmer Preserve for those who would like to get out on to the land.

Please come rain or shine, and don't forget your walking shoes!

2012 MIDDLESEX LAND TRUST MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Strong performance by the Middlesex Land Trust depends on strong and active membership roles. Please fill in the membership application on page five and choose the most effective way you can involve yourself. Conservation work is a very rewarding way to spend time. If you have already joined for 2012 – Thank you!



The New Boardman Property - see page 5

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 Middlesex Landscape is published by:
The Middlesex Land Trust, Inc
deKoven House Community Center
27 Washington Street
Middletown, CT 06457
860-343-7537
info@middlesexlandtrust.org
www.middlesexlandtrust.org

Spring 2012 Contributors:

David Brown, Chantel Foster, John LeShane, George King, Nancy Livensparger
Jim McHutchison and Ralph Urban.

Editing/Layout/Design: Jim McHutchison

THE CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

The political season is upon us again. Candidates are debating. The airwaves are filled with claims and accusations, promises and pledges. It sometimes seems the commentary on the process is as overwhelming as the process itself.

With all the issues being debated and discussed – jobs and the economy, foreign policy, education and taxes – land preservation and conservation issues get very limited, if any, attention. Despite this, if you are reading this newsletter, chances are you care deeply about such issues, no matter what your party affiliation, if you have one, or political leanings. Contrary to what many assert, those who care about conservation and preserving lands in their natural state can be found of all political stripes, and the same is true of elected officials.

Many of the great pieces of legislation creating our national parks, forests and wildlife refuges were the result of legendary bipartisan efforts. Truth is, preserving undeveloped land helps hold down taxes and spending, particularly at the local level, and the joys of outdoor recreation know no political boundaries or preferences. When the Trust organizes hikes on its preserves or elsewhere, the diversity of those who attend can be remarkable -- the very young, the elderly, blue collar, white collar, long time locals and new area residents. They all share a love of the outdoors and preserving our special part of the planet.

So don't hesitate to ask the candidates about their positions on these issues. Let them know you care, you're watching and you vote. Working together, we can convey the message loud and clear that we expect support and advocacy for open space preservation, and we will hold elected officials accountable for their actions or failure to act on such issues. We will all be better for it.

As always, the leadership of your land trust wants to hear about your goals and concerns around preserving open space. We are listening, so let us know too.

Ralph Urban
Chairman

Think Globally – Act Locally

Bye, Bye Silent Spring

By George King

Maybe optimists should be put on the endangered species list. For generations those of us who treasure woodlands, meadows and rivers have decried the degradation wrought by economics, chemicals and inattention.

But take a moment and look at the cues from those with whom we share the natural world. Connecticut River fish are again edible. Bald eagles are back. Bears are back. Deer and coyote are back. The odd moose and panther are back! Our natural environment is improving, perhaps even healing.

Thanks to you and the generosity of people like you, the Middlesex Land Trust has helped make this happen. At times on our own, and at times in partnership with like-minded organizations, we are preserving the open spaces and assembling the long habitat corridors that wildlife must have to live and to thrive.

We are winning a race, but can never stop running. Continued progress demands continued commitment of time and money from each of us. But in this season of renewal, let's raise a cheer for our progress. Does a force of nature deserve less?

George King is a "life" member of the Land Trust.

PRESERVING THE RED BARN

After decades of weathering New England winters, the Red Barn at the Palmer Preserve will be getting a protective coat of stain. Red of course! Thanks to fundraising by the MLT Stewardship Committee the barn will get its first new coat in many years, as well as some much needed repairs to windows and doors. And with continued fundraising success like the tag sale in May, we hope to be able to put a second coat on this Fall. We couldn't preserve this wonderful old barn without your support... Thanks!

FRIENDS OF CONTE MEET IN CONNECTICUT AT CABELA'S

Previously active in Northern New Hampshire and Vermont, the Silvio Conte National Wildlife Refuge has been working its way South and is now well established in Connecticut with the recently formed Salmon River Division and purchase of over 300 acres, some of which was purchased from Middlesex Land Trust.

On Friday, March 30th for the first time, the Friends of Conte met in Connecticut at Cabela's in East Hartford. Friends of Conte is an organization dedicated to guiding the actions of the Conte Refuge from a local perspective. The group is made up of representatives from The Nature Conservancy, Trust For Public Land, The Connecticut River Watershed Council, Audubon Connecticut and several others as well as personnel from US Fish and Wildlife, the Conte Refuge and representatives from its various divisions. The Salmon River Division is represented by Jim McHutchison of Haddam Neck.

The calibre of the various represented organizations and the fact that the Friends of Conte covers four states (Eight Senators) gives the Middlesex Land Trust a direct connection to a powerful force in Washington to the extent our activities involve the Connecticut and Salmon River Watersheds.



STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE BEGINS SPRING WORKPARTIES

Another season of working in the woods has begun for the members and volunteers of the MLT Stewardship Committee! Lots to do including cleaning up trails, posting signs, building bridges and doing all the myriad of tasks to make our preserves user friendly for our members and the public!

The more the merrier and we welcome anyone to come join us who would like to participate. Come volunteer to help, whether you are an old trail hand or never tried it before, there is surely something you can contribute to the effort. Good times and satisfying accomplishments are always the order of the day!

To confirm the Workparty and get directions, or simply to find out more – call or email the land trust office, or call John LeShane at 860-342-0658 or email him at oakledges@yahoo.com. We will be happy to fill you in on the details of being a land trust steward and answer any questions you might have. For all work parties, it is good to call the day before to make sure that plans have not changed and for specific directions to the preserve.

If you can please bring your own tools and gloves, and food and beverage for yourself. We often use loppers, hand saws, maddox and grub hoes, and the like. If you don't have your own tools however, we will be happy to provide them.

Spring Workparty schedule:

Saturday, April 14th, 9am – Storm damage clean up on the 36-acre Harris Preserve in Middletown. Meet at the preserve entrance on Wilcox Road off Millbrook road. Following the work party we will visit the 20-acre South Farms Preserve to inspect beaver activity and damage.

Thursday, April 19th, 5pm – 40 acre Highland Pond Preserve. A cleanup of downed trees by resident beaver and some trail work. Meet at preserve entrance on Bell Street near junction with Sawmill Road.

Thursday, May 3rd, 5pm – 6 acre Okumsett Preserve in Portland. Clean up of fallen hemlocks on the preserve trail. Meet at the preserve entrance on Middle Haddam Road.

Thursday, May 17th, 5pm – Trailwork at the 12-acre Roy Huse Collins Preserve in Portland. Meet at the preserve entrance on Isinglass Hill Road near junction with Thompson Hill Road.

Sunday, May 27th, 9am – Trail work at the 90-acre Mica Ledges Preserve in Durham. Meet at the preserve entrance on Cream Pot Road.

Thursday, May 31st, 5pm – Trailwork at the 20-acre Pocotopaug Preserve in East Hampton.

The Stewardship Workparty schedule can also now be found on the web at: www.middlesexlandtrust.org.



John LeShane and Stu Winqvist head out on a mission

DONATION TO THE MIDDLESEX LAND TRUST EXPANDS THE BOARDMAN PRESERVE

The Middlesex Land Trust is pleased to announce the addition of 32 acres of open space to expand the Boardman Preserve in Middletown, thanks to the generous donation of land by Middle Boardman Associates, LLC.

In 2010, in collaboration with the U.S. Army, the Middlesex Land Trust purchased 54 acres of the former farm on Boardman Lane in Middletown creating the Boardman Preserve. The Army provided the funding for the purchase of the open space and is managing a wetlands restoration project on the land as mitigation for the loss of habitat destroyed by the development of a new Army base built on another property.

This year the owner of the initial parcel that was sold, Middle Boardman Associates, LLC lead by Pedro Wasmer, has kindly donated the remaining portion of the Boardman Lane parcel to the Middlesex Land Trust. This additional open space

substantially increases the size of the Boardman Preserve and will provide added protection for the Sawmill Brook watershed.

With this newest parcel the Boardman Preserve now includes both sides of Sawmill and Richards Brooks, creating a significantly larger preserve. In addition to the streams, riparian and wetland areas, this donation includes a 5 acre trade-land site, a parcel of land donated with the intent to support the land trust mission through its lease or sale, rather than as conserved property. While the Middlesex Land Trust has no plans to sell the trade-land, it may be used in the future to help fund the protection of additional critically important open space.

We give our thanks to Mr. Wasmer and Middle Boardman Associates, LLC for their wonderful gift and support of the Land Trust. As a community we all benefit from their generosity.

YES! I'd like to help conserve open space in northern Middlesex County in 2012!
Please enter my membership at the level noted here:

<input type="checkbox"/> Gift Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> New Membership	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal		<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$20
			<input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining	\$35	
Name _____			<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$100	
Address _____			<input type="checkbox"/> Guarantor	\$250	
Telephone (optional) _____			<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$250	
Email _____			<input type="checkbox"/> Endower	\$750	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Life	\$1000	

I would like to volunteer for the following

<input type="checkbox"/> Stewardship (maintenance of preserves)	<input type="checkbox"/> Office work (assist with mailings)
<input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising (membership & grants)	<input type="checkbox"/> Educational programs
<input type="checkbox"/> Land Acquisition (conservation planning)	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)

Please mail this form with your check, made payable to The Middlesex Land Trust, Inc.,
at deKoven House, 27 Washington Street, Middletown, CT 06457
Or join on-line using PayPal or your credit card on our new website at www.middlesexlandtrust.org

Membership dues and other monetary contributions are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law. If you have any questions, please call 860-.343-7537 or email us at info@middlesexlandtrust.org

Thank you for your support!

RED BARN TAG SALE TO BE PART OF PORTLAND TOWN TAG SALE DAY ON MAY 12TH

On Saturday, May 12, the Middlesex Land Trust will hold a tag sale as part of Portland's Annual Town wide tag Sale Event. The sale will be held at MLT's Palmer Preserve Red Barn on Middle Haddam Road in Portland.

The proceeds will benefit the mission of the Middlesex Land Trust, including our goal to preserve the Palmer Barn and establish a community garden at the Palmer Preserve.

We are looking for donated tag sale items. Anyone who would like to donate items for the sale can drop off items during the week of May 7th to the 11th. We would ask that you not donate any clothing or electronics, but salable items in good condition and looking for a new home are welcome.

If you have questions please call John LeShane at 860-342-0658 or the Land Trust office at 860-343-7537. And be sure to come by the Tag Sale on May 12th!



John Shomsky and Chantel Foster at the Red Barn

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27 Washington Street
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