

East Quabbin LAND TRUST



5th Annual Dinner and Auction Tremendous Success

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Nearly 90 East Quabbin Land Trust supporters gathered together at the New Braintree Town Hall to celebrate the tremendous mission of the organization, share in a fabulous meal prepared by Reed's Catering, of New Braintree and bid on a wide variety of auction items. Craig Della Penna,

Executive Director of Northeast Greenways Solutions, treated those gathered to an informative talk about rail trails and how important the Ware River Rail Trail is to the growing network across Massachusetts. All told more than \$6,000 was raised to support the activities of the EQLT. A

big round of applause for board members Magi Durham Ziff and Judith Jones for organizing this excellent event. And special thanks to those who donated time or auction items, helped set up and cleanup and of course, thanks to all who attended who made this event such a success.

Lands Protected: 23 More Acres!

Hardwick, MA—Generous benefactors recently donated 23 acres off the Hardwick common to EQLT for permanent conservation. This parcel expands the corridor of already protected lands, further enhancing the ecological integrity of the east Quabbin. The land is fully forested with a mixture of pine and hardwoods. EQLT anticipates completing a forest stewardship plan in the next year to guide practices. In the future it maybe possible to develop a trail to provide easy public access.

Mark Your Calendar!

- EQLT Annual Meeting Scheduled for June 4th at 4:00 pm at EQLT Headquarters, 120 Ridge Road, Hardwick, Mass.
- Please Come.

EQLT Helps Landowners Secure Habitat Funding

In the autumn of 2005 the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife (MAF&W) launched its *Landowner Incentive Program* (LIP) as a way to assist private landowners throughout the Commonwealth to actively manage their land for wildlife. With the oversight of MAF&W biologists, approved projects work to enhance the landowner's property in a way that directly benefits native wildlife. A particular focus is on restoring and maintaining early successional uplands that support otherwise declining bird populations. One main tool of LIP is to provide cost-share grants to landowners, enabling them to take on large habitat improvement projects that would otherwise prove too costly. The receipt of grant money is dependant upon the landowner agreeing to a ten year Conservation Restriction on their property, along with the submission of a comprehensive management plan that shows a clear strategy to restore/maintain relevant tracts of high quality habitat.

EQLT was pleased to help three separate landowners in Hardwick receive this funding in 2006 by meeting with the landowners, assessing their properties' potential for supporting key species, and ultimately drafting a comprehen-

sive management plan for submission. While having three landowners in Hardwick receive this competitive state funding is exciting, the project's relevance is dramatically increased because these landowners happen to be mutual abutters in the Moose Brook Valley. In all, the properties cover over 500 contiguous acres in this ecologically significant watershed.

Though each landowner is working individually, their goals are very similar, and because their properties are directly linked, their efforts are complementary. Upon completion these projects will provide an open matrix consisting of better than 100 acres each of agricultural grassland for the benefit of Eastern Meadowlark and Bobolink, and low shrub land to support such species as American Woodcock, Blue-winged Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Eastern Towhee and Indigo Bunting. One project even has hopes of reestablishing breeding Whip-poor-Wills to the Valley. And aside from providing critical habitat for these declining birds, the overall ecological integrity of the Moose Brook Valley is greatly enhanced as these projects also work to address invasive species while building sound plant communities.

For more information on the LIP program, visit: www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/dfw_lip.htm.

And if you're a landowner who is interested in habitat management, whether for the LIP program or in general, please feel free to contact EQLT. Our restoration ecologist would be happy to meet with you and discuss an appropriate strategy.

Leave a Legacy!

A future gift to EQLT through your will or other arrangement is an excellent way to leave a lasting legacy for future generations. Including EQLT in your comprehensive estate plan will help meet your philanthropic goals and conservation interests. We welcome the opportunity to talk with you personally and confidentially about legacy gifts to EQLT. Please complete the form below or contact us at 413.477.8229 or eqlt@comcast.net:

New Braintree Completes Open Space Plan

New Braintree—The Open Space and Recreation plan written by town residents is an inventory of natural and recreational assets of the town and makes non-binding recommendations based on the long term needs of the town. In addition to being a very useful planning document the plan also qualifies the town to receive grants from the Commonwealth's Urban Self-help programs.

"The Land Trust formed in 1994 in response to the unnecessary loss of farmland and wildlife habitat to unplanned sprawl."

EQLT Garden Tour Benefit: Saturday, June 10th, 10-4:00

Hardwick and New Braintree—This farm and garden tour will feature four gardens in Hardwick and four in New Braintree. Visitors will be encouraged to wander at their leisure through these hidden jewels in the heart of the east Quabbin region. Proceeds support EQLT. A boxed lunch will be provided at the land trust headquarters and eaten on the terrace overlooking one of the most

beautiful views in the area. Tickets are \$15 and box lunch is \$15. To purchase your tickets please leave a message at 413.477.8229. Gardens are open from 10 AM to 4 PM.

Rain Date: Sunday, June 11th.

Ware River Rail Trail Update: Your Support is Needed

In November, 2005, a sympathetic supporter of the EQLT agreed to provide interim financing for the purchase of the abandoned 3.2 mile Mass Central rail corridor for conversion to a multi-use recreational path. The section purchased by the Central Highlands Conservancy, L.L.C. (CHC) runs from the Hardwick Elementary School to New Braintree and on to Wheelwright along the scenic Ware River and contains four historic bridges. The trail, when developed further, will connect to Gilbertville, Ware and is part of a larger vision of a Boston to Northampton trail corridor along the old Central Mass Rail line. In the near

term, the EQLT has one year to raise \$75,000 to purchase the land from CHC. An additional \$80,000 is needed to revamp bridge decking and railings. In the near future we will be asking for your support to make this tremendous recreational opportunity a reality.

The trail purchase and construction will cost over \$1.1 million dollars. A coalition of public and private funders is essential to fully fund the trail. The federal and state governments have earmarked \$750,000 for the Hardwick-New Braintree-Wheelwright portion of the Ware River Rail Trail. Your support is needed to match those committed dollars.

East Quabbin Bird Club & Website Launched

Hardwick—Launched in January of this year, the East Quabbin Bird Club has enjoyed early success and hopes to further expand its membership and activities. The mission of the Club is to foster a greater local understanding of the area's ecological resources through the active participation of the community's citizens. The intention is to create a central base where people can come together to learn about the region's ecology, share ideas, and work together to support mutual goals of conservation. Learning and conservation will be pursued through such avenues as monthly birding trips, educational workshops, lectures, club-coordinated bird surveys, the com-

pilation of member's field records, and volunteer workdays on habitat improvement projects. So far we've wandered a moonlight January landscape in pursuit of owls, watched Quabbin eagles establishing territories at Gate 35, and have begun preparing for the upcoming vernal pool season. However, this is just the beginning. Upcoming events include a full day guided exploration of Hardwick's Muddy Brook watershed, an open discussion with nationally renowned bird-conservationist Wayne Petersen, and near weekly bird trips to local destinations to observe returning and breeding birds. All events are free an open to the public. Please visit our site at eastquabbinbirdclub.com to see the calendar of events and become a member.

Get active with EQLT! Upcoming Events:

Vernal Pool Walk: Saturday, April 22, 7AM— Please note date change from Sunday

As a follow-up to the Vernal Pool Talk, join us in the field as we see vernal pools first hand, observe and discuss the behavior of the pools' animals, and finally go through the documentation process to officially certify a vernal pool. Rain or shine event. Please RSVP in case rescheduling is necessary. Meet at the EQLT headquarters at 120 Ridge Road in Hardwick at 7:00 AM and plan to carpool to a local site. Bring waterproof boots. Public welcomed.

Moose Brook Earth Day Clean-up: Saturday, April 22, 1-5PM

Hardwick, Brook Road—Bring gloves and trash bags pick up litter along the road and stream. Meet just south of the bridge at 1:00 PM. Clean-up will finish by 5:00 PM.

Exploring the Muddy Brook Valley: Saturday, April 29, 6AM

Join the East Quabbin Bird Club in exploring the Hardwick section of the Muddy Brook Valley. This trip will focus on the ecology and geology of this special watershed, providing a great opportunity to see this feature as an entire system composed of its many related parts. Meet at the Hardwick Pond boat launch on Hardwick Pond Road at 6:00 AM. Please RSVP with an email for a detailed itinerary and indicate if you have your own canoe or kayak. This trip is free to the public.

Wildlands and Woodlands Talk: Wednesday, May 3, 7PM, Brimfield, MA

Keith Ross, conservationist and forester, will present the findings of the Harvard Forest white paper on the value of wildlands and woodlands. EQLT is co-sponsoring this talk which will be at the Brimfield Town Hall at 7:00 PM.

Rail Trails in Massachusetts: Saturday, May 13, 2PM

Join the Hardwick Historical Society and Craig Della Penna, Executive Director of Northeast Greenway Solutions, for an informative talk on the historical significance of railroads and key factors in converting these transportation corridors into vital greenways. Meet at the Hardwick Town Hall at 2:00 PM.

Annual Meeting Set for June 4, 2006, 4PM

Please join fellow EQLT members and supporters for the annual cookout and potluck dinner. This is an excellent opportunity to reveal in the beautiful view from the Morss property and to see a camellia tree growing in New England. A guided tour will highlight the recent agricultural changes to the Morss property. Meet at EQLT headquarters

Donors to Annual Appeal January-March, 2006

Thomas and Candace Anderson
Elizabeth Coe
William Cote
Stephan and Gina Deibel
John Dieckmann
Douglas and Julianne Frost
Howard Hastings
Judith and Tim Jones
Martha and Brian Klassanos

Judith Lane and Mark Mattson
Astrid and Jon Liland
Red-Barre, LLC
Ray and Pam Robinson
Daniel Salvucci
Jonathan and Priscilla Vincent
Stan and Abbie White
John M. Woolsey, III

The East Quabbin Land Trust fills a special niche that only local land trusts can serve.

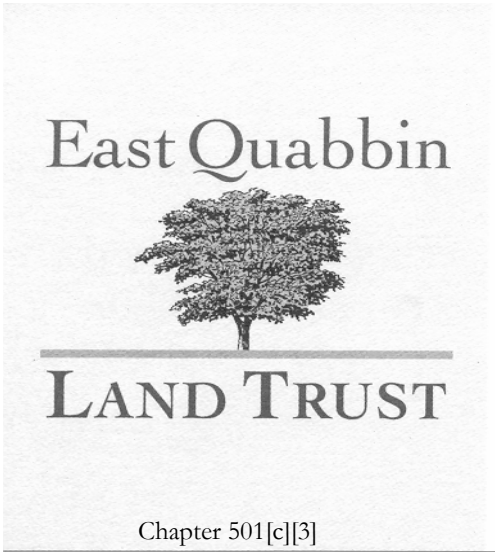
Posters for Sale

Every year the Land Trust publishes a beautiful commemorative poster featuring the photography of local photographer and board member Chris Buelow. These posters are for sale for \$15.00. Past-year posters are available. The proceeds help support the important work of the EQLT. Please call for details and to place orders: (413) 477-8229.

EQLT Board of Directors & Staff

Jason Benoit—Barre, Treasurer
Chris Buelow—Hardwick
Judith Jones—New Braintree, V.P.
Martha Klassanos—Ware
Jerry Reilly—Hardwick
Rick Romano—Hardwick, President
Jeff Schaaf—Wheelwright
Stan White—Hardwick, Clerk
Ken Wolanin—New Braintree
Magi Ziff—New Braintree
Marion Cooper, Staff

EQLT Wish List:
Microwave Oven
Digital Answering Machine
New Telephone
Floor lamps



East Quabbin Land Trust News

P.O. Box 5
120 Ridge Road
Hardwick, MA 01037
Phone/Fax: (413) 477-8229
www.EQLT.org
Email: eqlt@comcast.net



"Preserving Rural Character Since 1994."

Our Mission :

The East Quabbin Land Trust exists to conserve the natural, historical, agricultural, and recreational character of our region.

To this end we gather resources, educate, and develop and implement land-protection strategies.

East Quabbin



LAND TRUST

Chapter 501[c][3]

Yes I Want to Help!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TOWN _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE (____) _____

Make checks payable to: East Quabbin Land Trust
P.O. Box 5, Hardwick, MA 01037 • (413) 477-8229

Contributions to East Quabbin Land Trust are tax deductible under federal regulations. We do not share our mailing list.

Benefactor . . . \$500
Patron \$250
Guardian \$100
Supporter \$50
Member \$25
Other . . . \$ _____

Can You Volunteer Some Time?

Yes No