

## Farmland Forever

Fifty-two acres of farmland in Ware along the Ware River is poised for conservation through the Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) program of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. River bottomland is often the richest soil in any region. The high fertility means that a wide variety of crops can be successfully grown for many years. Farm fields along the Ware River are no exception, making them key parcels for farmland conservation.

The rich soils originally attracted Waldo Lincoln to the land in the late-forties after WWII, with the dream of farming and becoming more self-sufficient. Although farming didn't work out for him the "farm" did. "My father loved being outdoors, watching nature and living in the country," said Chandler Lincoln. "I grew up on this land and spent a great deal of time exploring it and getting to know it. I'm gratified to know that once the APR is in place it will be actively farmed forever. My father would be very happy."

The East Quabbin Land Trust (EQLT) is facilitating the APR on the Lincoln farm. "By committing the money to complete the appraisal, we can leverage a tremendous state contribution," stated Cynthia Henshaw, Executive Director of EQLT. "It's also important to highlight that Mr. Lincoln is making a bargain sale making it possible for the APR to move forward. Often the local match must be made by the local community." The EQLT also aids with conversations between Mr. Lincoln, agents of the APR program and the Town to create a smooth process and timely completion of the APR.

"Expanding the amount of permanently protected farmland in

our region is vitally important," stated Stan White, President of the EQLT Board. "The EQLT is committed to land conservation that promotes locally produced food and maintains the aesthetic landscapes of our region."

The Lincoln farmland is currently leased to a local farmer who grows corn and hay for his dairy operation. The APR allows the current agricultural practices to continue and permits other crops and animal husbandry practices to expand in the future as markets for food and related goods change.

The East Quabbin Land Trust looks forward to supporting more farmers and farmland owners with similar conservation initiatives in the future.

"Without the support and assistance of Cynthia Henshaw and the EQLT this APR transaction would never have happened as quickly and efficiently as it has," stated Mr. Lincoln, "I owe a great deal of thanks to all who have been involved in this project."



*Lincoln fields along the Ware River*

## MESSAGE FROM THE Executive Director

*Cynthia Henshaw*



I've heard from many of you in recent weeks that you've asked your friends, neighbors and some times your relatives to become members of the East Quabbin Land Trust. Because of your enthusiasm for the land trust and the work that we do, we are over half way to the goal of fifty new members. We appreciate your support as we expand our membership and reach into our communities.

Membership to EQLT is significant for many reasons.

- First, your generous membership dollars go directly into land conservation and stewardship in our region. That means that we have more available money to invest in conservation of critical landscapes and in maintaining the land that is entrusted to EQLT.
- Second, your membership gives us the opportunity to share ideas and learn from one another. For instance, a member recently called wondering why we were burning brush at the Deer Park Preserve when that contributes to greenhouse gases and climate change. As the Stewardship Committee discussed the issue we learned that brush piles would naturally release their carbon relatively quickly as they decayed. The primary reason for burning is to maintain the nutrient poor soils characteristic of that ridgeline. It's these soil conditions that allow bluestem grasses and low-bush blueberry to compete with other vegetation.
- Third, when important decisions arise we often turn to trusted family and friends to get their opinions. For some, a major decision must be made about how to pass along the family land. In this case you may be the trusted family member or friend, and as a member of the EQLT you know that there are options to be explored. Your recommendation to contact the EQLT provides a positive step towards making a decision.

Reaching this goal is a significant milestone. With fifty new members the EQLT will receive an additional \$5,000 in support. For a small organization, this type of gift can have a dramatic impact on our programming. Thank you for your part in helping us meet the challenge. ■

## HARDWICK FARMERS CO-OPERATIVE EXCHANGE Celebrates 95 Years of Business

The East Quabbin Land Trust salutes the Hardwick Farmers Cooperative Exchange as it nears a century of service to area farmers and homeowners. Judith Jones, Rick Romano, Mick Huppert, Stan White and Cynthia Henshaw had the opportunity to congratulate the members and staff of the Co-Op at their recent annual meeting.

A major milestone was reached in 2008 with over \$4 million in sales, which represents a 15% increase from last year. This trend is expected to increase as the concept of sustainable living catches on in our region.

“Today, the new victory garden movement is inspired by rising food prices and recent food scares. Consumers are making more informed decisions about what goes into their bodies and where it comes from.” Said Mike Pellegrino, Hardwick Farmers Store Manager. “The new consumer today has increased their focus on the pursuit of wellness and pays special attention to the quality and impact of the products and services they consume.”

Hardwick Farmers Co-Operative Exchange plays an important role in the stewardship of the regions farmland and woodland. We applaud this local business and its members on a job well done.

### EQLT BOARD & STAFF

Terry Briggs.....	HARDWICK
Chris Buelow.....	GILBERTVILLE, Clerk
Mick Huppert.....	PETERSHAM
Judith Jones.....	NEW BRAINTREE
Martha Klassanos.....	WARE, Vice President
Jerry Reilly .....	HARDWICK, Treasurer
Ginny Rich .....	BARRE
Rick Romano.....	HARDWICK
Jeff Schaaf .....	WHEELWRIGHT
Stan White .....	HARDWICK, President
Magi Ziff.....	NEW BRAINTREE
Cynthia Henshaw.....	Executive Director
Pattie Rich.....	Bookkeeper

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 or visit our website www.eqlt.org

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE...

### Bill Cole: Gentleman Farmer and Financial Wizard

by Chuk Kittredge

*It was a day of persistent rain, and Bill and I had been playing phone tag all week. When I caught up with him, Bill was hard at work – on a Sunday afternoon. He rolled up his sleeves, put me on speakerphone, and ran me through a whirlwind tour of monetary policy from Galbraith to Greenspan. I weaseled free financial advice out of him (buy low and sell high, he said), gave him my chickens-as-currency spiel (which he listened to, at least for the first eight minutes), and asked him if he wanted to go partners in a gold mine that I knew to be a sure thing (he politely declined). Finally, I rolled up my sleeves, put him on speakerphone, and we got down to it.*

**EQLT:** So Bill, give me the skinny on you.

**BC:** Well, I was born in Illinois, grew up in Florida, came to the northeast in '76. Got a BA from Harvard, in Psychology and Statistics. My wife, Chris Greene and I moved to Hardwick in 1987, when Jackie was 6 months old.

**EQLT:** And what drew you to Hardwick?

**BC:** We loved the character of the town, its community and natural beauty. Chris also wanted to continue her farming, having had a successful business growing culinary herbs for restaurants when we lived in Lunenburg. Now she grows food for us, we raise a few chickens, have a horse and donkey, and of course Lola.

**EQLT:** And what do you do now?

**BC:** I'm a Certified Financial Planner. After 25 years with Paine Webber, which was acquired by UBS, I chose to become an independent advisor in January 2005, founding New Harbor Financial Group with two partners. Basically, I give financial advice to individuals and manage pools of assets.

**EQLT:** How did you first get involved in the land trust?

**BC:** I supported EQLT from the beginning and had a minor role helping them apply to become stewards of the Morss property. I've been helping since, both with investments and volunteering on the finance committee and outdoor workdays.

**EQLT:** Can you give us some specific examples?

**BC:** Sure, we set up accounts to segregate assets and adopted Investment Policy Statements and strong financial protocols. Also, I sometimes help potential donors and landowners understand different ways to work with or to sup-

port the organization. **EQLT:** And how is the land trust surviving the current economic, uh, Armageddon?

**BC:** The land trust has been very resilient and is in a strong position to continue with an active conservation program. Our success, of course, depends on the continued support and motivation of donors and members. Sometimes this involves meeting with landowners interested in conservation, helping them to understand all their options.

**EQLT:** Any thoughts on what is currently happening to the financial markets?

**BC:** I think it's not really a surprise that there are apparent limits to exponential growth, to expansion/development, to the growth of credit and the money supply. This has great bearing on the relative value on currencies and equities – also on real assets. I think it is important to realize that our current difficulties may well represent more than just a painful dip in long-term up-trends. As things change, it becomes all the more important to preserve communities and local economies.

**EQLT:** Bill, in what direction do you see the land trust heading?

**BC:** Cynthia's presence has made us dramatically more effective in leveraging support, and in accessing foundations and government funds. This is of continued importance in terms of working farmland – a lot's being done to keep farmland in production, even beyond the working years of the owners.

**EQLT:** Are you and Chris working on this at a personal level, as well?

**BC:** Well we did start the Hardwick Farmers Market here two years ago, with the help of others. Making Hardwick one of the 140 or so towns in Massachusetts to have one. We believe that this is important that communities do what they can to "shorten their supply lines". It's a type of "homeland security".

**EQLT:** That's fantastic. I'm sorry to say we're running out of time. Any final thoughts?

**BC:** It's pretty straightforward. The land trust is a great organization doing really important work. There is a role for each of us and a benefit for all.

**EQLT:** Thanks again, Bill.

**BC:** Take care.



Bill Cole with Lola



## MY SATURDAY FIELD TRIP

by Lucinda Childs

*The volunteers of the East Quabbin Land Trust are a valuable resource and instrumental in conservation and stewardship initiatives. Each year there is a day-long Massachusetts Land Conservation Conference that provides detailed technical knowledge on a wide variety of subjects, tremendous inspiration and excellent networking opportunities. Following are lessons Lucinda Childs learned at the workshops titled Acquiring Land with CPA Funds: Advise and Perspective from a Land Trust, Building a Coalition to Pass the CPA, and Current and Future Issues with the CPA.*

I went to the session on the Community Preservation Act, because I think the Act can be a valuable tool for my town, Hardwick, to assist in guiding its growth over time. The Community Preservation Act was passed in 2001 as a way for communities to invest in their towns for the long term. To invest in the preservation of historic buildings and landscapes, not just as pretty places but for use, as an alternative to their degradation or demolition. CPA funds can be designated to support renovation for more energy efficiency of the beautiful buildings in our midst. The Act's purpose is also to improve the availability of affordable housing. We learned that housing costs increased 42% in the past 13 years, but the average wage increased only 21% in the same time period. Historic preservation and creating affordable housing could be incorporated in the same project. The funds raised can also be used to retain a town's rural character by having funds available to help keep the most important parcels of working farmland or woodland in their best current uses. As another example, towns could protect water quality around public wells and water sources from possible contamination from inappropriate development through land acquisition or purchasing restrictions on neighboring lands.

As the economy declines and our normal systems waver, it behooves us to be creative in maintaining our town's ability to support ourselves in our everyday survivability. This Act enables the town to add a surcharge to the real estate tax bill whose proceeds would be dedicated to the above efforts and would be

matched by the Commonwealth from a fund that is separate from the state budget and whose existence is entirely for the support of this Act. There are exemptions to the tax surcharge available to avoid an undue burden on taxpayers that may be unable to contribute: for people over 60 with low and moderate income and folks with low income as well as the exemption of the first \$100,000 of value on the tax bill. There are 140 communities that have voted in the Act since 2001 with 3300 affordable housing units created, 10,274 acres of open space preserved and \$286 mil-



*Harry Webb, Lucinda Childs, Cynthia Henshaw and John Goodrich attended the annual Massachusetts Land Conservation Conference*

lion matched by the state. This Act is intensely local with the voters at Town Meeting deciding how and where the money is spent with the only requirement being that 10% of the total funds be spent (or set aside) for each category of land, housing and historic preservation with the remaining 70% to be spent on any of the categories. There is also a provision for outdoor recreation projects like trails, new playing fields, playgrounds. It's not a perfect piece of legislation and there's a bill pending to address some of the shortcomings. The bill would, if passed, guarantees a 75% match annually; make the Act more equitable for all the communities in the Commonwealth (to include more cities); and to include more recreation in the list of acceptable projects. For anyone interested in learning more, there's lots of information on the website [www.CommunityPreservation.org](http://www.CommunityPreservation.org).

## THE ECOLOGY OF AN EAST QUABBIN CLEAR-CUT

by Chris Buelow

Clear-cutting, the forestry practice of harvesting all canopy trees in a given area, is a term and a practice that means many things to many people. Often when people hear the word “clear-cut” they think of barren areas where biodiversity was sacrificed for the sake of short-term financial profit. In particular, images of leveled old growth forests in the Pacific Northwest and displaced Spotted Owls typically come to mind. To better assess the role of clear-cutting in the East Quabbin area it is important to understand both the historical ecology of the Massachusetts landscape and the reasons and goals behind clear-cutting as a forestry practice.

From the perspective of greater forest ecology, the Massachusetts landscape evolved in response to a rich and frequent set of natural disturbances. Hurricanes, ice storms, beaver activity and a historic level of wildfire shaped our woods and encouraged the native plants and animals to be dynamic and adaptable. Historic agriculture further altered our landscape by clearing as much as 80% of the Massachusetts landscape by the late nineteenth century. Today, nearly every woodlot in the East Quabbin landscape is less than one hundred years old, and in most cases, was grown, cut and regrown several times. These changes shifted the species composition of the area, and each stage of land use supported a different suite of species that evolved to rely upon each of these specific successional stages. When looking at clear-cuts as a disturbance event, like hurricane or beaver activity, the cutting provides critical habitat for those native species adapted to fill these niches. In fact, as certain disturbance events like wildfire and beaver activity become increasingly unusual in New England, many of these adapted species, especially early successional birds, are declining dramatically. In response to these declines, clear-cuts are an important management tool to provide necessary habitat.

There is a common misperception that the presettlement Massachusetts landscape was a continuous closed-canopy forest that covered the eastern seaboard. The reality is that early explorers described vast tracts of grassland and shrubland throughout New England that supported a diverse suite of early successional and grassland birds. In fact, the eastern seaboard even had its own endemic grassland bird, the Heath Hen, a relative of the Sharp-tailed Grouse found today in the mid-western prairies. The Heath Hen was once a common species of coastal plain grasslands and became extinct in the early twentieth century due to fire suppression and over hunting.



*The Eastern Towhee is a classic example of a declining bird that is bolstered by properly placed clear-cuts*

in sharp decline mainly from to a loss of breeding habitat due to forest succession and development. In many towns, the cuts of power line right-of-ways are the only places left where you can still find these species. Landowners interested in sustaining the early successional birds often employ often thoughtfully placed clear-cuts that reflect large-scale natural disturbance such as hurricane damage. The surrounding wooded areas continue to support populations of other common native species.

Clear-cutting is also a widely used tool for managing rare and endangered species. Most rare and endangered species in the Commonwealth are highly specialized to disturbance-dependant habitats, especially fire adapted natural commu-

To understand the naturally plastic nature of the central Massachusetts forest is to understand the reasons why clear-cuts are prescribed in certain situations. An increasing use of clear-cuts in Massachusetts is for the purpose of creating habitat for declining, rare, or even endangered species. Native early successional birds, such as American kestrel, American woodcock, chestnut-sided warbler, eastern towhee and indigo bunting, are



## ON THE LAND... The Patrill Hollow Preserve

The Patrill Hollow Preserve is a 136-acre property in the heart of Hardwick. The land was gifted to the East Quabbin Land Trust in 2007. Since that time volunteers created a mile-plus trail loop on the north and eastern parts of the land. A red maple wetland divides the property from the northwest to southeast corners. Historic stone crossings remain from past agricultural uses and will eventually be incorporated into a second loop trail.

**Getting There:** From the Hardwick Common, go west on Greenwich Road approximately 1/4 mile. Turn left onto Patrill Hollow Road (there is a granite post marking the intersection). Follow Greenwich Road approximately 1/4 mile and the Patrill Hollow Preserve sign and kiosk are on your left. If you come to Czeski Road you've gone too far.

**Route Description:** The trail loop at the Patrill Hollow Preserve is marked with blue tags. The path winds through mixed woods, past a vernal pool, and along a dry ridge with several huge beeches and oaks that remain along stone walls that served as shade trees when animals grazed on the hillslopes. The trail skirts the hayfield visible from Gilbertville Road (Route 32A)

and then ducks back into the woods as you return back to the parking area. On the way, visitors will see an area where white pines are being removed to encourage the red cedar and juniper bushes. Also, keep an eye out for an old foundation along the trail. ■



*The Patrill Hollow Preserve entrance on Patrill Hollow Road. More work is planned to accomodate off-road parking.*



## BIRDS OF PREY...

On March 29th, the professional raptor rehabilitators from Wingmasters shared seven birds of prey with over 200 audience members. The program was hosted by the East Quabbin Land Trust at the Cultural Center at Eagle Hill.

Pictured here is Jim Parks holding a Red-tailed Hawk. These birds frequent highway medians and open fields because they use their keen eyesight when searching for small rodents. Occasionally birds get hit by cars which can leave them with damaged wings, such as the bird shown here. Because of her injury she is unable to survive in the wild.

Other bird species highlighted during the presentation included the golden eagle, merlin, kestrel, saw-whet owl and barred owl. The color patterns, eye acuity, calls, and feather structures were some of the differences demonstrated between the birds of prey in the program.

...continued from page 5

nities. In the recent absence of fire on the local landscape most of these habitats shifted away from highly specialized plant communities, such as open pitch pine barrens, and moved toward generalist stands that no longer support the specialized rare species. The dramatic decline of the Whip-poor-Will, as one example, is attributed to this phenomenon. In this particular scenario clear-cutting is used to mimic the effect of wildfire, removing the stands of generalist species like white pine, and allowing land managers to once again manage these areas as specialized natural communities that support highly specialized species.

Other reasons for employing clear-cutting are for more purely forestry related purposes. These include such reasons as overcoming poor harvesting practices of the past as part of a long-term sustainable forest management plan, or to release and promote desired tree species that are shade intolerant. Though the goals of these practices may not be directly related to wildlife management, it should be noted that the result of these actions will benefit early successional species in the same ways as a wildlife cut designed to mimic hurricane disturbance. Forestry is a regulated practice in Massachusetts, and all cutting plans, including clear-cutting, is reviewed by state Service Foresters, local Conservation Commissions, and if in rare species habitat, the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program.

For more information about woodland management:

- The East Quabbin Land Trust and the Opacum Land Trust are co-hosting a Woods Forum with UMass Extension on May 28<sup>th</sup> at the West Brookfield Town Hall at 6pm. The session pulls together woodland owners to share their experiences with management and an Extension Specialist will be on hand to answer questions.
- Visit [www.masswoods.net](http://www.masswoods.net) for more detailed information about your woodlands and links to find contact information for your service forester or a consulting forester. This website also includes case studies to illuminate decisions that other woodland owners made about management and long-term conservation.

The East Quabbin Land Trust has Forest Management Plans on all of its larger wooded properties. These plans call for cutting the trees on portions of several parcels to improve wildlife habitat, increase timber stand health and to provide a modest, sustainable income. The recent cutting at Mandell Hill, for example, was a project to bolster both local agri-

culture and a declining suite of grassland birds. In the near future a harvesting project will remove generalist tree species, like white pine, to restore the fire adapted Oak-Hickory Natural Community on the ridge of the Deer Park Preserve. Cutting is also in the future at the Patrill Hollow Preserve in conjunction with control of invasive plant species. The East Quabbin Land Trust has acted in an advisory role to assist many landowners in developing habitat improvement projects designed to provide early successional and grassland habitat.

## A Citizen's Guide to Reducing Emissions

*The East Quabbin Land Trust provides the following information from the Union of Concerned Scientists for those individuals and families that want to become more aware of their impact on climate change and ways to reduce emissions.*

1. Become carbon-conscious. The problem of global warming stems from a previous lack of awareness of our "carbon footprint" and its effect on climate. Individuals and families can start by using one of several publicly available carbon-footprint calculators that will help you understand which choices make the biggest difference.

2. Drive change. For most people, choosing a vehicle (and how much they should drive it) is the single biggest opportunity to slash personal carbon emissions. Each gallon of gas used is responsible for 25 pounds of heat-trapping emissions.

3. Look for the Energy Star label. When it comes time to replace household appliances, look for the Energy Star label on new models (refrigerators, freezers, furnaces, air conditioners, and water heaters use the most energy).

4. Choose clean power. Consumers in Massachusetts can purchase electricity generated from renewable resources that produce no carbon emissions from your local utility. If your local utility does not offer a "green" option, consider purchasing renewable energy certificates.

5. Unplug an underutilized freezer or refrigerator. One of the quickest ways to reduce your global warming impact is to unplug a rarely used refrigerator or freezer. This can lower the typical family's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions nearly 10 percent.

6. Get a home energy audit. Take advantage of the free home energy audits offered by many utilities. Even simple measures (such as installing a programmable thermostat) can each reduce a typical family's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions about 5 percent.

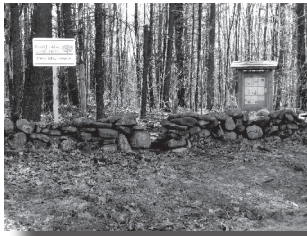
7. Lightbulbs matter. If every U.S. household replaced one incandescent lightbulb with an energy-saving compact fluorescent lightbulb, we could reduce global warming pollution by more than 90 billion pounds over the life of the bulbs.

8. Buy good wood. When buying wood products, check for labels that indicate the source of the timber. Forests managed in a sustainable way are more likely to store carbon effectively – thus helping to slow global warming.

9. Spread the word and help others. A growing movement across the country seeks to reduce individual, family, business and community emissions while inspiring and assisting others to do the same.

10. Let policy makers know you are concerned about global warming. Elected officials and candidates for public office at every level need to hear from citizens. Urge them to support policies and funding choices that will accelerate the shift to a low-emissions future. ■

EQLT News | INSIDE...



Patrill  
Hollow  
Preserve

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## UPCOMING EVENTS 2009

### APRIL...

Friday, April 24, 6:30 PM

**Small Scale Wind Power In Our Region** – The wind blows across our fields and woods seemingly ceaselessly. Come learn how the Ash Lane Farm of New Braintree has tapped into that energy source with a small scale wind turbine and is generating their own energy. The program will be held at the New Braintree Town Hall.

### MAY...

Thursday, May 28, 6:00 PM

**Woods Forum** – Many of us don't think about our woods on a day-to-day basis, except to enjoy the privacy, scenery, and the tranquil environment to live in and raise a family. However, at some point in every landowner's life, decisions about what to do with our woods arise. Should I harvest timber on my land? How do I address ice storm damage on my property? What will happen to my land in the future? When faced with these decisions, it is important that woodland owners know about their options and know where to find information. You are invited to attend a meeting of local landowners to discuss issues relating to owning and managing woods. The program will be held at the West Brookfield Town Hall.

### JUNE...

Saturday, June 13, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

**Benefit Garden Tour** – Small hidden jewels, magnificent rock gardens and ever changing favorites are highlighted in this benefit garden tour. The trip will take visitors through Petersham, Barre and Hardwick. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased by calling the EQLT office at 413-477-8229 or email at [eqlt@comcast.net](mailto:eqlt@comcast.net). Advanced lunch reservations can be made for \$15 for a box lunch at Hartman's Herb Farm. On June 13, tickets can be purchased at the Petersham Historical Society on the Petersham Common.

### FIRST SATURDAYS...

On the first Saturday of each month throughout the warm weather we will be doing maintenance on EQLT properties. We welcome your help at the Moose Brook Preserve on May 2 and at Indian Rock on June 6. Please call 413-477-8229 or email the office at [eqlt@comcast.net](mailto:eqlt@comcast.net) for more information and directions.