

East Quabbin LAND TRUST



Butterfly Preserve Protected

Did you know...

- There are 96 species of butterflies native to Worcester County? or,
- Carrots and parsley are important foods for the larvae of Black Swallowtails? or,
- Butterflies, hummingbirds and nectar feeding moths and bees all seek out butterfly bushes because of its rich source of nectar late in the summer?

At year-end, the Groepes donated a conservation restriction to the East Quabbin Land Trust ensuring that their property, minus one house site, will forever remain as fields and forests. In addition to protecting critical habitat for butterflies, the conservation restriction also protects over 600 feet of Coy Brook along the southeastern boundary and a quarter mile of scenic road frontage along North Main Street. The conservation restriction is great news for

The fate of our native butterflies, moths and other arthropods has been a lifelong passion of Ken Groeppe. As a child on the family farm, Ken saw first hand how use of pesticides can decimate insect populations, especially those that are not targeted. The use of pesticides “is symptomatic of the callous disregard for life that our civilization has engendered, especially for arthropods.” said Ken, “Humans do not realize that arthropods are essential to the survival of life on earth and butterflies are among the most sensitive indicators of habitat destruction and pollution we have.”

In 2000, Ken and Genevieve Groeppe decided to make a difference. They purchased a 39-acre property in West Brookfield that includes a four-acre hay field. Since that time the Groepes have focused on diversifying the plants. So far Lupinus, Coriopsis, various mint species, especially Monarda, hollyhock, three species of Helopolis, violets, Asclepias syriaca and a number of aster species are growing very nicely. A number of butterfly species have reacted favorably to the changes. In addition, the Hummingbird moth (*Hemaris diffinis*) is now found at unusually high concentrations. These positive changes are exciting developments for the long-term vision of restoring the variety of butterflies to their rightful place in the environment.



“We want to preserve species which are at great risk of depletion. That there are a number of endangered arthropods is a fact that is little appreciated, even though they are the most essential animal group in the animal kingdom. They are at the base of virtually every food chain, they provide important services to human society in the form of pollination and waste recycling, and many of them are just very lovely to look at. Butterflies, bees and wasps are beautiful, living jewels.”

Executive Director's Report

By all accounts 2007 was a tremendous year for the East Quabbin Land Trust! The completed conservation initiatives include:

- The historic 58-acre Deer Park property was given to EQLT and the Town of Hardwick now holds the Conservation Restriction on the property,
- A 3.2 mile section of the Mass Central Rail Trail in New Braintree and Hardwick was purchased,
- A Conservation Restriction on 36 acres in West Brookfield was donated (see cover story), and
- The EQLT facilitated the conservation and transfer to Mass Fish and Game of 19 acres adjacent to the Winnimisset Wildlife Sanctuary in New Braintree. Many thanks to Carl Nimtz for his commitment to conservation.

The Gould Conservation Initiative (see Summer 2007 newsletter cover story) is on track for purchase by January 30, 2008. The Town of Petersham received a grant from the Mass. Self-Help Program to purchase the Conservation Restriction from EQLT. Fundraising from individuals and foundations continues to raise the remaining \$100,000 needed to cover the shortfall and project expenses. Please consider making a contribution for this tremendous conservation effort before Jan. 30th! You will be reading more about this project in the coming newsletter editions.

Conservation targeted on the Dougal Range (see Spring 2007 newsletter cover story) continues as EQLT is poised to purchase a crucial 48-acre parcel that will provide public access to the western portion of the area. Recent grant awards from the Greater Worcester Community Foundation (\$10,000) and the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts (\$7,500) will support continued conservation efforts in the Dougal Range.

The EQLT received several major contributions in 2007 that significantly advance our conservation mission:

- An \$20,000 challenge grant to fund the Executive Director position,
- A \$50,000 contribution from Judith Jones to establish the Revolving Loan Fund, to advance land conservation projects,
- A \$6,500 anonymous foundation grant to facilitate EQLT's move towards land trust accreditation and establishing a planned giving program,
- An anonymous \$100,000 gift to protect local farmland from development, and
- A \$2,500 gift to establish the Conservation Restriction Enforcement Fund.

In addition, recent grant support from the Greater Worcester Community Foundation/Water and Land Stewardship Fund and the Mass. Riverways Adopt-A-Stream Program will allow EQLT to offer free ecological assessments to landowners within the Moose Brook watershed. These assessments will track a wide variety of plant and animal life found on lands of participating landowners and a final meeting of all participants will highlight the findings of the field research.

In 2008, we will continue to emphasize the land conservation initiatives currently underway, work proactively to foster other conservation opportunities, and focus on organizational procedures and financial stability. Your support is crucial for the continued conservation successes and is greatly appreciated!

Sincerely,

Cynthia Henshaw



Rural Free Delivery - By Charles Kittredge

Being EQLT's chief investigative reporter (sort of), it's mostly run-of-the-mill stuff; interviews, a puff piece or two, the occasional graphic design assignment. And this one sounded like just another meet & greet, until I learned who I was supposed to interview. Myself.

Now, I'll grant you that talking to myself is nothing new. At first I balked. Then I questioned the wisdom of the main office. I put it off for a while; I got nervous, forgot about it, fretted about forgetting about it. But those on high were adamant: they wanted it done, and quickly. Finally, seeing that I had a heretofore-unrealized opportunity for self-aggrandizement, I sat down and got it over with.

EQLT: So Chuk, thanks for sitting down with me. Just had a couple of quick questions for you.

Chuk: Sure. Thanks for coming by.

EQLT: No trouble. Not much of a trip, really. Chuk, how long have you been a member of the land trust?

C: Must be two years by now, I think.

EQLT: And why were you interested in joining?

C: Because, as a child I saw the road I lived on grow from a gravel road with one house to a gravel road with ten houses to a paved road with fifteen houses to a paved road with 23 houses, quarter-acre lots, ATV's, SUV's, and



Chuk Kittredge, Hard at Work

cramped, loveless little slices of Americana. Everybody decided to move out to the country, and they brought civilization and its discontents with them. I grew up with rural free delivery, and now I can order pizza delivery.

EQLT: Is this entirely a bad thing?

C: Well, no. Particularly the pizza delivery (*chuckles*). But I object to the cheap houses on poorly drained back-filled lots quarter-acre lots. I object to spec houses, vinyl siding, OSB sheathing, cheap carpet, modified two-story ranches, garish Christmas lights, wide-screen TV's, and the creation of a neighborhood where everyone knows no-one, even though we all drive by each other's houses every day; simple human decency should demand that we at least borrow a cup of sugar, bring over cookies, or pet each other's dogs.

EQLT: Quite a list. Is that all you object to?

C: Nah, I just paused for air. There's more where than came from.

EQLT: Where does the land trust come in?

C: Well, a land trust exists to conserve land: to create buffer zones where this sort of thing can't happen. The EQLT is, to my eyes, a way to prevent what happened on my street from happening on every street. I joined the land trust because I saw an opportunity to get involved. I saw a way I could help keep our little slice of nature sacrosanct, y'know?

EQLT: And how do you think the land trust is doing?

C: Great. They're doing great. Since Cynthia has come on board, the whole show has shifted into a higher gear. The initiative is there; the desire is there; there's even some money to keep things moving along.

EQLT: What could they do better, to your way of thinking?

C: One thing I'd really like to see is more kids my age getting involved. Granted, these towns are bedroom communities, where the majority of landed residents are middle-aged. But despite that fact, I'd like to see my generation do more. We're the ones who're going to be dealing with massive climate change; we're the ones who'll be dealing with overpopulation and severe pollution and waste disposal and myriad issues that are just now coming to national attention. We'd better start working on it now, so that our kids' kids can still live here when we're all gone.

EQLT: Chuk, we're out of time, but I'd like to thank you for talking with me.

C: Not a problem. Come by sometime. We'll get a cuppa coffee or something.

EQLT: Sounds great. I'm sure I'll run into you again.

“It is something none of us really want to think about”

Yes, Estate Planning. You may even say to yourself ‘what estate?’ Most of us do not realize the true value of our assets once we are gone. Add together the value of your home, land, insurance policies, and other assets and yes it is time to start thinking about it. Making the hard decisions now and working with a professional will give you the peace of mind that all of your wishes will be accounted for at the time of your passing.

Last November the East Quabbin Land Trust along with EQUAL, NOFA Mass, and Listening, A Wellness Center, sponsored an evening workshop with Attorney George Dresser and Certified Financial Planner William (Bill) Cole, entitled ‘Leaving a Legacy’. The workshop covered the basic laws regarding estates, and some of the most common mistakes and misconceptions of Estate Planning. Bill and George also outlined how you can often save money by proper planning and philanthropy.

Bill outlined the ten most common misconceptions of estate planning. The list included these classic mistakes: Not having an up to date estate plan, not funding your trusts, not using the full exemption equivalent credit, not sharing your estate plan’s contents with your family, and leaving an unorganized mess of financial records.

Estate planning is not only about you and your wishes, but about those you will leave behind. George pointed out that he often works to encourages parents to think about their children and grandchildren and how these decisions made now will have an impact on them into the future.

Beyond estate planning, George outlined some more creative ways you can give to your favorite charity. An incentive in 2007 included the gift of assets from an IRA (see insert). A senior who is eligible to collect on their IRA may give to a local charity a direct contribution of those assets and receive the full value of the funds as a tax deduction without having to pay the tax on the IRA. There are a variety of incentives that change from year to year, so it is best to talk to your tax advisor to find out what types of giving will work best for you.

For landowners, Conservation Restrictions (CR’s), are a very effective way to decrease either now or at the time of your death the value of your land for tax purpose. The benefits of a CR go beyond the tax incentives; they also give you the peace of mind of placing permanent restrictions on your land to your specifications.

Remember to review and update your estate documents approximately every five years, you will want to update these documents to ensure that the individuals or groups listed are still who you would choose today.

Remember the East Quabbin Land Trust as you make decisions regarding your estate planning. If you have any questions regarding our organization please contact us at 413-477-8229.

A tax law for 2007 permitted individuals 70 ½ years of age or older to make direct contributions from your individual retirement accounts to a charitable organization of your choice. These contributions satisfy your IRA’s required yearly minimum distribution and are excluded from your federal taxable income. Recently, Diana Wood made a major gift to EQLT by assigning a portion of her 2007 IRA distribution. She benefitted by not paying income taxes on the distribution and supported the conservation mission of EQLT. Thank you Diana for your contribution to EQLT.

This incentive is currently not available for 2008. Talk to your advisor to see what incentives are available in upcoming years to learn of more ways you and a charitable organization such as EQLT can benefit..

Thank you to George and Bill for taking the time to conduct this workshop. George Dresser may be contacted at Bourgeois, Dresser, White & Beard, Counselors at Law, 4 Dix Street, Worcester, MA 01609 Phone: 508-798-8801. Bill Cole may be contacted at New Harbor Financial Group, 10 Monument Square, Suite 202, Leominster, MA 01453 Phone: 978-537-7701.

Thank you to our 2007 Donors, we cannot do it without you.

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EQLT Upcoming Events:

The Life of Bears, Saturday, January 20, 2:00 p.m. at the New Braintree Town Hall

Please join Bill Byrne as he shares his amazing photographs and insights into the life of bears. Mr. Byrne will share the findings of the ongoing 35 year Black Bear research project of the UMass Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit and MassWildlife biologists. Mr. Byrne has been a professional natural history photographer for over 30 years and published in magazines such as *National Wildlife*, *Smithsonian*, *Sanctuary*, *National Audubon*, *Sports Afield*, European publications, and many others. He is the Feature Photographer for *Massachusetts Wildlife* magazine, and a long time employee of MassWildlife. To register or for more information, contact the East Quabbin Land Trust at 413-477-8229 or chenshaw@eqlt.org.

Rail Trail Ski, February 9, 9 a.m.

Come join us to cross-country ski the recently acquired 2-mile section of the Mass Central Rail Trail in New Braintree and Hardwick. This is a level section of the trail that runs through pine forests, skips along agricultural fields and crosses the Ware River. The trip will be a 4-mile cross-country ski, but for those that prefer a shorter distance a shuttle can be arranged with advanced notice. Meet at the Old New Braintree train station at the intersection of Hardwick Road and West Road in New Braintree. Contact EQLT at 413-477-8229 for directions.

Benefit Game of Texas Hold'em, Saturday, February 16, 7 p.m.

Experience the thrill of victory or the agony of defeat during this evening of lively card play. Tickets are \$35, doors open at 7pm with play beginning at 7:30pm. Call 508-867-6679 for tickets or more information.

Work day at Deer Park, Invasive Plant Removal, Saturday March 8, 9:00 a.m.

Please come, whatever the weather! Bring your lunch, work gloves, rakes and clippers as we tackle the thorny Japanese barberry and multiflora rose in the historic wall enclosure at the Deer Park Preserve. Time permitting, work on the loop trail will begin.

7th Annual Gala Auction and Dinner, Saturday March 29th

This years festive dinner and silent auction will be held at the New Braintree Town Hall and catered by Reed's Catering of New Braintree. Cash bar available. Sneak preview of the auction items is Friday night 5 to 7 p.m. Tickets are \$55 per person. Call 413-477-8229 to buy tickets. Don't miss this great evening.

EQLT Annual Meeting: Saturday, June 1, 4:30 p.m.

Celebrate five years at the Morss estate and take a guided tour of the recent field expansion at Mandell Hill. Bring a dish to share and catch up with other conservation enthusiasts! Meet at the entrance to Mandell Hill at Barre and Ridge Roads, Hardwick.

EQLT Benefit Garden Tour: Saturday and Sunday, June 7 & 8, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Explore area gardens in with their glorious spring colors. Tickets are \$15.00 and box lunch is \$15.00 and can be purchased by calling (508) 867-6679.

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On the Land...

Indian Rock Trail at Smokey Field Farm, owned by the Stelmokas Family, Barre

The trail leads the visitor up the ridge to the scenic vista at Indian Rock. Indian Rock is a large erratic boulder; viewed from the right angle it appears to have the facial outline of a native American.

Thirty years ago Indian Rock was surrounded by blueberry barrens. Today, thirty-foot tall white pines are the backdrop for this unique geologic feature. An area to the east was cleared to restore the view over the Moose Brook valley towards Mt. Wachusett and Boston. The adventurous hikers can scramble up Indian Rock to see the central Massachusetts landscape below. Brush around Indian Rock will be cleared throughout 2008.

Start and Ending Location: The designated pull-off is on the east side of Spring Hill Road, 1¼ mile south of the intersection with Old Dana Road.

Getting There: From Barre Common, go west on Rte. 122 north towards Petersham. Follow approximately 2½ mile and turn left onto Old Dana Road. After about 2 miles take the second left onto Spring Hill Road and follow 1¼ mile to parking area.

Route Description: From the parking lot, follow the Orange trail markers. The trail initially parallels Spring Hill Road, then turns uphill just before a stone wall. The trail climbs steeply for 200 feet and then levels off to a modest incline till the top of Ridge Hill. Continue following the Orange trail markers over the height of land and bear slightly to the north and east. Indian Rock is just ahead. To return to the trailhead follow the orange trail markers in reverse. The trail is approximately ¼ mile.

Please stay on the trail and respect the farming practices on adjacent fields.

Terrain: Gentle slopes with one 200-foot area of steep incline and a few rocky sections.

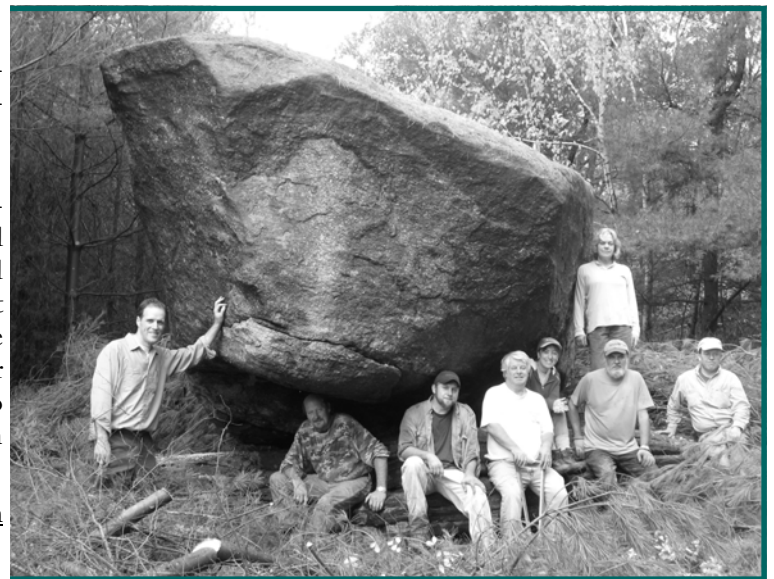
General Comments: Indian Rock is located on the Smokey Field Farm, owned by the Stelmokas Family, a private dairy farm that is permanently protected from future development by a conservation restriction. The 255-acre Smokey Field Farm runs along Spring Hill Road in Barre with expansive views of the Quabbin and is a highly scenic, compact farmstead bounded by stonewalls. The brothers,

James and William, had worked the farm for their aunts and uncles for many years and wanted to continue the family farm tradition. In the 1990's several members of the older generation passed away, leaving the farm's future unclear. Jim and Bill approached the Hardwick Area Conservation Trust (now called the East Quabbin Land Trust) to see if they could help. HACT enlisted another conservation organization, The Trustees of Reservations, and formulated a plan that made it possible for Jim and Bill to keep the family farm. HACT and The Trustees bought the development rights on the farm, which allowed continued farm uses and the option to build another residence. The family achieved their financial goals and Jim and Bill became owners of the family farm. This arrangement means that the property continues to be available for farming. All parties came out winners and a beautiful corner of our community remains intact.

Hunting is allowed on the property.



Indian Rock, Barre



Tim Silva, Ray Buelow, Chris Buelow, Jack Kelley, Patty Kelley, Jeff Smith, Lucinda Childs, Jim Moore at the Indian Rock Trail Clearing Day.

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

"Conserving the Land, Preserving Our Heritage."

Postal Patron

Hardwick, MA 01037

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.

Moose Brook Ecological Assessments to be done Two Grants Fund Research

The East Quabbin Land Trust is pleased to be able to offer **FREE ecological assessments** for interested landowners of properties in the Moose Brook watershed of Barre and Hardwick. Many landowners are interested in learning more about the wildlife that uses their lands. Here is a chance to learn more and connect with other landowners in the region.

Participating landowners will receive property specific information about the wildlife on their properties and participate in a summary meeting to learn more about how their lands fit into the ecology of the Moose Brook watershed. This information will help landowners make land stewardship decisions that will benefit the wildlife of our region.

The ecological assessment will consist of three visits throughout the winter and spring. First is a look for animal tracks and other winter sign. Second, is an inspection for amphibian and vernal pool activity, plus ephemeral wildflowers and other early spring plant life.

The third site visit will focus on identifying which birds are breeding in the area.

The Moose Brook watershed is a focus area for EQLT because this is a distinct region of steep valley slopes, unbroken forests, wetlands and agricultural property that host a wide diversity of ecosystems. The Moose Brook watershed and its associated supporting habitats are listed as an Important Bird Area by a panel of international conservation organizations due to its high density of breeding Neotropical species that are otherwise experiencing serious population declines.

If you own land in the Moose Brook watershed and want to participate, please contact Cynthia Henshaw at (413) 477-8229.

Many thanks to the Greater Worcester Community Foundation/Water and Land Stewardship fund and the Adopt-A-Stream Program of Mass. Riverways Program for underwriting this effort.