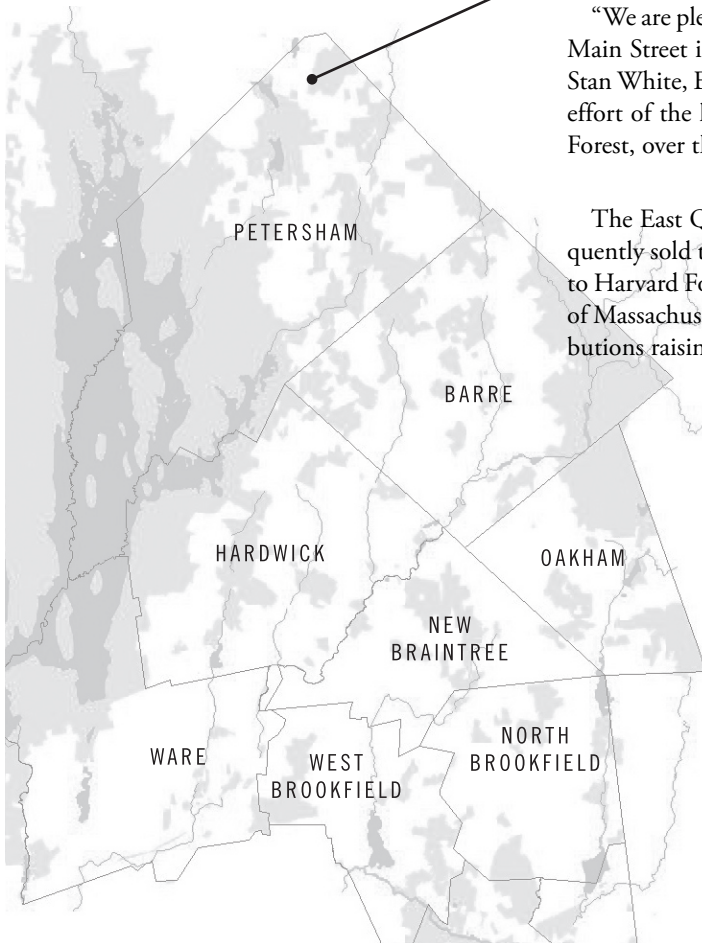


Ernie Gould Woodlot: Conservation Success

North Main Street, Petersham →



“We are pleased to announce that the 87-acre Ernie Gould Woodlot on North Main Street in Petersham was permanently protected from development,” said Stan White, EQLT Board President. “Conservation of this property was a major effort of the land trust and our partners, the Town of Petersham and Harvard Forest, over the past year.”

The East Quabbin Land Trust purchased the property in January and subsequently sold the conservation restriction to the Town of Petersham and the land to Harvard Forest. Many individuals, five foundations and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts supported the conservation initiative through generous contributions raising over \$550,000.



Ernie Gould, long-time Forest Economist at the Harvard Forest

The land can be used for forest management, scientific research and is open for public recreation. A trail network will be built in the near future. Conservation of Nelson Brook and its feeder stream is an important outcome, as these waters contribute to the cold-water fish species in Petersham. The woods along the western slope of North Main Street will remain unbroken, enhancing the aesthetic views and maintaining the wildlife habitat of the area.

The ultimate goal is to establish the Gould Woodland Center for Conservation at the Harvard Forest. Demonstrations of sustainable forest management techniques along with interpretive trails, publications and other displays will inform visitors about woodland conservation and change. A trail network highlighting interesting areas of the Gould property will provide connections to other conservation land in the Tom Swamp Valley, and also further the regional goal of establishing a trail network from Phillipston to Quabbin.

The East Quabbin Land Trust established northern Petersham as a land conservation focus area in 2007. The unbridled success of our first foray in that region is auspicious. The East Quabbin Land Trust continues to work with several other key landowners in the area to build upon the network of conservation lands.

MESSAGE FROM THE Executive Director

Cynthia Henshaw



The land conservation movement was tremendously strengthened in the 1970's when the opportunity for conservation easements (known as conservation restrictions in Massachusetts) became a viable option. A conservation restriction is the appropriate conservation alternative for many families because they want to continue to own and manage their lands, but want to ensure that the woods, fields and waterways remain undeveloped into the future. The grantee, or conservation organization, assumes the rights and obligations for ensuring the conservation objectives are met into the future.

The East Quabbin Land Trust currently holds five conservation restrictions protecting 350 acres. In the coming years, we anticipate the opportunity to cooperate with many more landowners to protect their lands with a conservation restriction.

Each property is visited annually to be sure that the provisions are being followed. Regular contact with the landowners is an essential part of maintaining good relations. Landowners do change over time. With new ownership there may be problems, but hopefully they will be minor violations or misunderstandings. Regardless, the East Quabbin Land Trust is taking steps to ensure that we are prepared to meet our commitment to enforce the conservation restrictions.

First, we have accurate files on the current condition of the land when the conservation restriction was recorded; essentially establishing the baseline to judge any future changes to the land. Second, a dedicated fund is in place to provide the East Quabbin Land Trust with financial resources needed to complete annual monitoring visits and enforce violations through judicial action if necessary.

Currently, the Conservation Restriction Monitoring and Enforcement Fund is under funded. National guidelines recommend that land trusts with less than fifteen conservation restrictions have at least \$50,000 in a dedicated fund. The East Quabbin Land Trust needs to raise an additional \$35,000 to ensure our ability to meet our obligations. Please contact me if you are interested in supporting this vital function of the East Quabbin Land Trust.

This fall, the East Quabbin Land Trust will be spearheading a regional gathering of landowners whose lands are protected by conservation restrictions, whether held by a state agency, the town or non-profit organization. The gathering will include an opportunity to see how others manage their lands and network with other landowners of protected properties. If well received, we anticipate hosting annual landowner gatherings.

Tax Incentives Renewed *Good News for Conservation*

The powerful tax incentive which helped conserve a million or more acres of farms, ranches and natural areas across the US has been renewed. Congress enacted the hotly debated Farm Bill in May with an override of the President's veto. The incentives had expired January 1, 2008, but now are retroactive to the beginning of the year and will last through 2009.

The incentive, which applies to a landowner's federal income tax, will:

- Raise the deduction a donor can take for donating a voluntary conservation restriction from 30% of their income in any year to 50%;
- Allow farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their income; and
- Increase the number of years over which a donor can take deductions from 6 to 16 years.

Landowner donations to conservation organizations, like the East Quabbin Land Trust, have resulted in millions of acres of working lands and natural areas being conserved for the future. According to the Land Trust Alliance, many conservation groups reported an annual doubling of the number of conservation agreements completed in 2007, in response to the same incentive that expired in January. Land trusts in America have together saved more than 36 million acres from development, an area the size of New England.

The Land Trust Alliance credited the success of the measure to the entrepreneurial spirit of the private sector, which has taken the lead in conserving land in recent years. Said Rand Wentworth, President of the Land Trust Alliance "The fact is that conservation in this country now depends greatly on the generosity of individuals. It is the individual rancher, farmer or forest owner, working the land in a way that is conservation-oriented, who will largely define our natural heritage in the future." ■

East Quabbin
LAND TRUST



CANADA WARBLER



EAST QUABBIN LAND TRUST - CHRIS BUELOW - COPYRIGHT 2006

www.eqlt.org

Our website has a new look and more information about conservation. Thank you to Beth Thompson for all of her hard work in putting this together.

On the Shoulders of Giants... An Interview with Judith Jones

by Chuk Kittredge

The boss lady (Cynthia Henshaw) had been after me again, so I was back at it. The members love it, she told me, and sucker that I am for shameless praise, I couldn't resist. Thus, a month after the deadline and three cups of coffee later, I was back on the case.

My subject this time is Judith Jones, one of the EQLT's long-term board members. Judith, 49, is a mother of two and, as she puts it, "my day job is as mother of my two daughters".

With a bachelor's in international studies –French language and literature – from the University of Vermont, and an MBA from the Simmons School of Management, Judith has worked as a marketing exec for a variety of start-ups, most memorably as VP of Marketing for Lexia Learning Systems, Inc.

EQLT: Judith, how recently did you come to town?

Judith: We moved to New Braintree in 2000, and I became involved with the land trust immediately. Magi Ziff invited me to a meeting, and I've been on the board since that first evening in the unheated Hardwick Town House. I've served as clerk, president for two terms, vice president multiple times, and now as a regular board member.

EQLT (nods): Great. Now, what about the land trust got you involved in the first place?

Judith: When we moved here, it was partially for the beauty of the landscape. Where we had come from, every single farm went out, and developments went in. We said to ourselves: let's have an active role in keeping our open spaces open.

EQLT: Quite so. And in your tenure with the organization, what have been some of the major accomplishments?

Judith: One major success was the conservation of the Lubelczyk parcel in Hardwick and Barre. Within the organization, we've come a long way. We wrote a strategic plan for ourselves, and received the Morss endowment and property. Additionally, Cynthia has come on board, as our full-time Executive Director, and Marion Cooper has come on part-time to keep everything organized.

EQLT: Are you satisfied with the progress the land trust has made?

Judith: I'm very pleased with the direction we're moving in; we've become a very pro-active organization. We've conserved and helped conserve a great deal of land, and we're working harder to preserve farm land – farmland is more and more a critical part of our work in this area. When we came to New Braintree, we wanted to keep the gateways to these towns open and beautiful. So, I feel our work is preserving a way of



EQLT Volunteer and Board Member Judith Jones of New Braintree

life and a sustainable community.

EQLT: Anyone you'd like to give a shout out to, as they say?

Judith: I'd like to give credit to the people on the board who had the vision in the beginning to get this organization off the ground. There was group of original founders, I don't know them all personally, but I want to give credit to Rick and Stan and Jerry who have remained active and dedicated to this group since 1994.

EQLT: Fantastic. Now, do you have any particular initiatives that you'd like to talk about?

Judith: We are working on several exciting projects conserving land in the Dougal Range in Gilbertville and Ware. And a forest aggregate project you'll be hearing more about soon. But I am personally interested in building up our revolving loan fund and monitoring fund so that we have money on hand to borrow from to act quickly when time is of the essence. I also want to see money raised for Cynthia's position. She makes all these projects come together and it is she who has brought our organization to a new professional level.

EQLT: That's great, Judith. Got any pithy closing remarks or erudite summations?

Judith: Actually, no. I haven't had time to prepare any remarks.

EQLT: Can I make something up for you?

Judith: Sure. I think. Wait, actually...

EQLT: How about: "If everyone grows a part, we can all grow together"?

Judith: How about: "Be a local hero, support your local land trust."

EQLT: Okay! Thanks so much, Judith.

Judith: Thank you.

Moving Forward...

This is the second in a series of four detailed discussions of the EQLT goals and strategies for moving forward to meet our mission and reach our vision for the region; specifically describing our strategies to conserve the best farmland, woodland and waters in the East Quabbin region.

Our Vision

The East Quabbin Land Trust envisions a regional community that continues to care for its natural environment and supports a sustainable local economy, ensuring a high quality of life for generations to come.

Our Mission

The East Quabbin Land Trust works to foster the sustainable use of our natural and historic resources for the benefit of all generations through the conservation and stewardship of the farmlands, woodlands and waters in our region of Massachusetts.

Goal 1: Conserve the lands that represent the best farmlands, woodlands, and waters in the East Quabbin region.

Goal 2: Manage all EQLT owned land and CR stewardship responsibilities effectively to manage natural resources, promote biodiversity and educate visitors.

Goal 3: Manage EQLT's resources and assets in an efficient and responsible way to maximize the input from volunteers, staff and financial capital.

Goal 4: Expand support for the EQLT through effective communications and solicitations to our membership, community members and others interested in the east Quabbin region.

One of the end results of land conservation is that some times the land trust accepts long-term responsibility for the land, either the outright ownership or the development rights, also called a conservation restriction. How these properties are managed into the future is an opportunity and obligation that the East Quabbin Land Trust takes very seriously. With good reason! The way lands are stewarded impacts how other landowners perceive land conservation and whether or not the East Quabbin Land Trust is an organization they will want to work with to conserve their own lands.

The Stewardship Committee, currently seven members, is charged with evaluating all the management actions on EQLT lands and monitoring the conservation restrictions. The goal is to effectively manage the natural resources in ways that promote biodiversity and educate visitors.

Conservation Restrictions

A conservation restriction is a legal agreement between a landowner (the grantor) and a conservation organization or public agency (the grantee). The fundamental purpose of a conservation restriction is to permanently protect the natural, scenic and open condition of a property by prohibiting any activities that may alter the landscape



Ware River, Lower Road, Gilbertville

Craig Sibley Photo

and the biological function of its component systems and species. Conservation restrictions are granted in perpetuity and apply to the land regardless of who may own it in the future. The grantee agrees to hold, but not use, the development rights; effectively, extinguishing the development

rights. The grantee also agrees to enforce the terms and conditions of the conservation restriction from anyone else using the development rights in perpetuity.

The stewardship committee and other volunteer property stewards all play a critical role in EQLT's land stewardship practices.

Regular contact with each landowner is the most effective way to ensure the integrity of the conservation restriction is maintained. The EQLT annually monitors each conservation restriction. That means physically walking all or a portion of each property, and preferably with the landowner. A follow up letter is also an opportunity to share thoughts or concerns about the conservation restriction. The EQLT needs the financial resources to ensure that the annual monitoring and more importantly, any future legal action to enforce the terms of the conservation restriction. Recently, the Conservation Restriction Monitoring and Enforcement Fund was established and donors of conservation restrictions are asked to consider making a contribution.

Stewardship Planning

A key element of good land stewardship is to have a plan! The EQLT Board agreed that our general stewardship goal is to effectively manage the natural resources to promote biodiversity and educate property visitors. But how does this general principle apply to a specific situation? First, are there specific goals for each property. For instance Mandell Hill is managed for agriculture, grassland bird habitat and non-motorized recreation, whereas the Moose Brook Preserve is managed for biodiversity of woodland species and non-motorized recreation. Second, is a gathering of information about the land through mapping and

on-site investigations. Forest management plans and ecological inventories are completed where appropriate. Third, is meshing the goals and the physical possibilities into a set of management recommendations that guide stewardship activities. This type of planning, investigation and discussions lead to the clearing of the 5-acre wedge at Mandell Hill that is scheduled for completion this fall. The stewardship committee and other volunteer property stewards all play a critical role in EQLT's land stewardship practices.

Visitors Welcome

To date, all EQLT properties are open for public visitation, though some are more suited for visitors than others. The EQLT is committed to facilitating appropriate recreational and educational opportunities on its lands. In fact, visitors to the Patrill Hollow Preserve and Moose Brook Preserve will notice new signs and kiosks. In addition, there is a new



Cut Rock, Mandell Hill, Hardwick

Craig Sibley Photo

Mandell Hill property brochure and one for Moose Brook is in the works. Volunteer workdays and trail walks are other ways that our members and the general public are invited to the lands. Spending time outdoors, exploring the woods, fields and streams is the best possible way to stay connected to the natural world and enhance our understanding of the value of open lands in our region.

Discovering Coxhall

Simpson Road, Hardwick

Here at the East Quabbin Land Trust we not only work to protect diverse habitats for wildlife, and support local agriculture, we also work to protect and learn about historic landscapes. In 2006 EQLT was gifted two different parcels of land on Simpson Road in Hardwick. The northern end of these parcels includes an imposing walled structure. This area is locally referred to as 'Deer Park'. Recent historical research shows that the walled area was not intended to enclose deer.

Some have often questioned the purpose of the one-acre area surrounded by a very large stonewall, up to 5 feet, 4 inches high with only one entry way about eight feet wide. Area residents Myron Goddard, Carol Andrews, and Susan Gainley, came together to research this historic area and have discovered the area was never intended as a park for deer, but rather a kitchen garden. There is evidence that a deer park may have existed on a property once owned by Timothy Ruggles. It is believed that this property was on Upper Church Street and was an enclosed twenty-acre park.

"The East Quabbin Land Trust would like to thank Carol, Myron, and Susan for all of their hard work in helping us discover more about this unique property" stated Chris Buelow, chair of EQLT's Stewardship Committee. The report compiled shows that Brigadier-General Timothy Ruggles left Hardwick in 1774 before completing the planned homestead, which was to include the kitchen garden, house, terraced lawns and area for 'Nines' or lawn bowling.

The walls were built to keep the animals out, not in. Hardwick residents Ed Hood, of Old Sturbridge Village, and Nan Wolverton were consulted regarding the use and history of the enclosed area. According to Nan Wolverton, who teaches classes on historic landscapes and gardens at Smith College, "Walls around kitchen gardens (usually board fences) were mainly for keeping animals out and for creating micro-climates for plants. The warm southern side of the fence was used for early spring sowing and the cool northern side would be planted later to extend the cool-season crops into the hotter summer season."

Coxhall kitchen garden was constructed between 1771 and 1774, under the guidance of Timothy Ruggles. In the journal of Elihu Ashley¹, entry on July 6, 1774 describes the area being worked by Timothy Ruggles: "He has a piece [sic] of Ground about three Quarters of an Acre Enclosed with a Noble piece [sic] of stone wall, the height of it about Eight feet, under half his Wall runs a Brook which he lets out upon a piece of Mowing. This Garden he designs for a Kitchen Garden and South of where he designs to set his house he is fitting a piece [sic] of Ground for Nines." All

who have ventured down Simpson road are impressed by the size, design and construction of this "Noble Wall". This wall and the area is drenched in historical lore, due in part to the association with Brigadier-General Timothy Ruggles, who was a major figure in the French and Indian wars, and a controversial Loyalist in the Revolutionary War.

The Simpson road land area was once cleared for pasture and is now largely forested. Other interesting aspects include the views

of Hardwick Common to the west and Mandell Hill to the southeast which are possible from atop a large glacial erratic upon the upper ridgeline of the property. Beavers are expanding a wetland complex along the eastern boundary. Invasive plants abound throughout the property and will be controlled when feasible. The ownership and conservation of this area fits the East Quabbin Land Trust's mission by expanding the corridor of conservation lands in Hardwick and protecting diverse habitats and historic landscapes.

EQLT plans to continue to work to control invasives and create a trail system for hikers on the Simpson road properties. Simpson Road is located off of Barre Road or Ruggles Hill Road

in Hardwick. The property is open to all for exploration, Simpson Road does require a four wheel drive vehicle in many areas, so you will want to plan to park at one of the ends and walk in.



The 'Noble Wall' structure today, originally built as a kitchen garden for Timothy Ruggles' proposed homestead Coxhall

1. Amelia f. Miller and A.R. Riggs, eds., *Romance, Remedies, and Revolution: the Journal of Dr. Elihu Ashley of Deerfield, Massachusetts, 1773-1775.* (Amherst University of Massachusetts Press. 2007) 86.

OUR MISSION

The East Quabbin Land Trust works to foster the sustainable use of our natural and historic resources for the benefit of all generations through the conservation and stewardship of the farmlands, woodlands and waters in our region of Massachusetts

ON THE LAND...

Moose Brook Valley, Barre & Hardwick

Wildlife abounds in the Moose Brook valley! The fact that there are resident predators, like bobcat and fisher are indicators of high quality habitat. It's not just the dry land that's important either. The stream itself, the Moose Brook was home to insects, such as water pennies, stoneflies and dobsonflies, which can only survive in clean, cool waters.



Moose Brook Volunteer
Macro Invertebrate Stream Survey

Tom Lautzenheiser of the Ecological Extension Service at Mass Audubon completed the Moose Brook Valley Wildlife Ecological Assessment. Fourteen landowners who own nearly a third of the 3,500-acre valley opened their lands to the study. These landowners joined the exploration, by tracking in the snow and searching for stream insects. "It was a wonderful opportunity to go looking for wildlife with knowledgeable people beside you," stated Dedie King, a participating landowner.

"The earlier bird surveys showed the Moose Brook area is really important for many types of birds." Said Cynthia Henshaw, EQLT Executive Director. "It's great to have the importance of the valley confirmed for other animals, insects and plants. The animal tracking and search for vernal pools that Tom Lautzenheiser conducted provides a really critical look at the overall watershed."

The physical layout of the Moose Brook, a compact and linear valley with few cross roads, is relatively unique in Massachusetts. The largely forested watershed with interspersed farmland provides a lot of diversity in the plants that the animals rely on for food. In addition, there were 13 vernal pools found on the properties part of the survey with many more in the watershed. Vernal pools are critical areas for many salamanders, frogs and insects since they need the fishless water holes for breeding in early spring, but then spend the rest of their year in the nearby woods.

Areas where a ridgeline is near a wetland are often hot spots for wildlife activity. Frequently there is a talus slope, where large boulders have broken off and tumbled down hill leaving crevices and caves. The ridge and wetland tend to funnel animals walking through the area into the narrow pass between them. A walk on Sunday July 13th will go visit one such area and we will visit a porcupine den and look for other wildlife sign (see event listings for specific details).

Maintaining the watershed in its relatively pristine condition is essential to keep the high wildlife diversity. Landowners interested in keeping their lands as woods or fields can consider a conservation restriction, which is a legally binding agreement that ensures the conservation values are maintained into the future. Additionally, the EQLT is interested in promoting property stewardship practices that enhance wildlife diversity much might include keeping fields from reverting back to woods or increasing the amount of woody debris in the stream.

Funding from the Riverways Program of the Department of Fish and Game and the Water and Land Stewardship Fund at the Greater Worcester Community Foundation made this ecological assessment possible.

To review the report check out our website at www.eqlt.org

EQLT BOARD & STAFF

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- Chris Buelow.....GILBERTVILLE, Clerk
- Elizabeth CoePETERSHAM
- Judith Jones.....NEW BRAintree
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- Stan White.....HARDWICK, President
- Magi Ziff.....NEW BRAintree
- Marion Cooper.....Staff
- Cynthia Henshaw.....Executive Director

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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Support Land and Water Conservation with the new Land and Water license plate.

The Massachusetts Environmental Trust is launching a new "Land and Water Conservation" license plate that will support the conservation of land critical to the protection of the commonwealth's water resources. Land conservation plates in other states have helped conserve tens of thousands of acres in recent years. The cost of the new plates is \$40.00. The portion of the plate cost (\$28.00) which goes directly to protect land is tax-deductible. Your plate may not be available immediately, M.E.T will collect, but not cash checks for reservations until 3000 applications are collected. This may take up to one year. You can find the form and additional information about how to get the plate for your vehicle at www.MassEnvironmentalTrust.org. We encourage you to show your support of conservation and sign up for this new license plate. ■

Conserving the land, Preserving our heritage

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EQLT News | INSIDE...



**On the
Land**

Moose Brook Valley

SUMMER 2008 | VOLUME 5 | ISSUE 2

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UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY...

Sunday, July 13, 2:00 PM

Moose Brook Exploration – Please join us to investigate several of the special wildlife habitats documented in the “Moose Brook Valley Ecological Inventory” report. We will be meeting at Juniper Farm, the White / King homestead, at the end of Clark Road, Hardwick. To register or for more information, contact the East Quabbin Land Trust at 413-477-8229 or chenshaw@eqlt.org.

AUGUST...

Friday and Saturday, August 15 & 16

Hardwick Fair – Join the us at the 246th Annual Hardwick Fair, on the common in Hardwick. www.hardwickfair.com The East Quabbin Land Trust will once again be operating the Dunk Tank, so come and give someone a swim. This year will also feature the First Annual Mountain Bike Race / Family Fun Mountain Bike Ride. The ride will take off from the Common for a 5-mile loop trail through the spectacular hilly open farmland and forests surrounding Hardwick Center. The course will highlight our local protected open space and historical lands, many of which are owned and managed by the East Quabbin Land Trust. Plan to stop by our booth on the common Friday night and Saturday to say hi and hear about some of our exciting projects.

SEPTEMBER ...

Saturday, September 20, 9:00 AM

Work Day at Patrill Hollow Preserve – The Patrill Hollow Preserve located off of Patrill Hollow Road in Hardwick was gifted to EQLT in 2006. We have been working to establish a trail system on this property. Please come and bring your work gloves, rakes and clippers as we tackle a new trail. For more information, contact the East Quabbin Land Trust at 413-477-8229 or chenshaw@eqlt.org.