

Farming into the Future

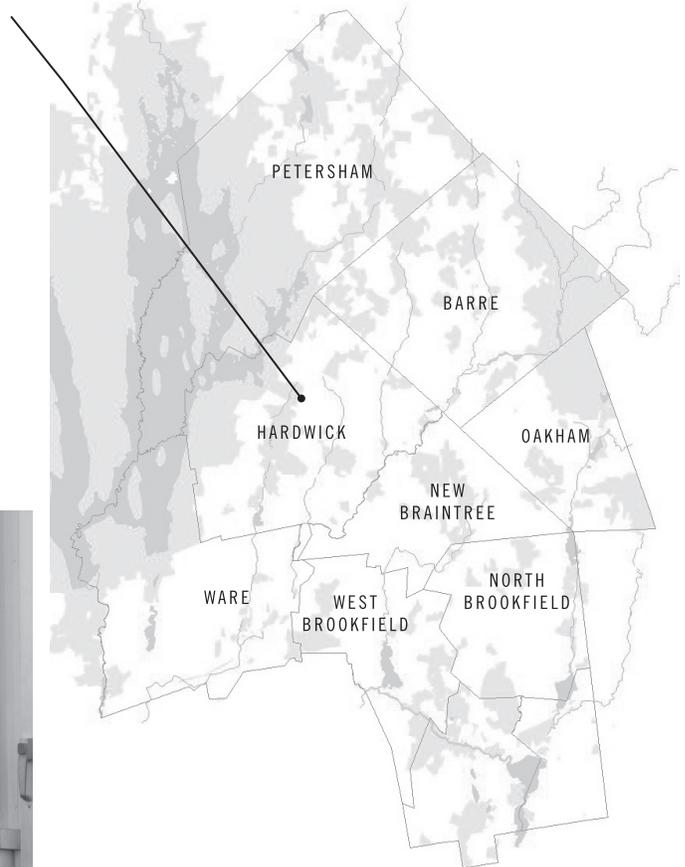
At the end of May, the East Quabbin Land Trust purchased the 138-acre Jakshtis farm to conserve the land and promote farming. The land is in Hardwick, on both sides of Petersham Road, between Breen and Thresher Roads. A young farmer then bought approximately 60 acres on the west side, including the house, from EQLT. This land is protected by a conservation restriction allowing active agriculture into the future. The land trust and the Hardwick Conservation Commission co-hold the conservation restriction. The Department of Fish and Game of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, acquired nearly 80 acres on the east side of Petersham Road for inclusion in the Muddy Brook Wildlife Management Area. Over 1,500 feet of Muddy Brook are now permanently protected.



Curtis Stillman and Helen Jakshtis at the farm on route 32A.

“It’s been our pleasure to work with Helen Jakshtis and facilitate the conservation of the Jakshtis farm,” said Cynthia Henshaw. “The land has a rich farming history. In the future we will see new farming ventures on the land and know that another segment of the Muddy Brook corridor will remain a vital area for wildlife.”

Helen and Ed Jakshtis ran a dairy operation and grew and canned their own food on the land. They sold the cows after the barn burned down about ten years ago. At the moment, farming is limited to having the fields hayed by other local farmers. Mrs. Jakshtis looks forward to living in a smaller home closer to her immediate family.



We welcome Curtis Stillman to Hardwick and look forward to a new farming business in town. As a recent graduate of the University of Massachusetts, with a B.S. in Soil Science and with years of experience on the family farm, Mr. Stillman is well qualified to start his own business on Petersham Road. The farm plan is for a diversified operation including a nursery, berries and fruit trees. Eventually animals will graze in the pastures. Greenhouses, a barn and farm store will be needed to support the growing business. The conservation restriction includes a building envelope around the house and adjacent hay field that permits agriculturally related buildings and infrastructure.

The mission of the East Quabbin Land Trust is to conserve the natural and historical landscape of our region. Our participation in the conservation of the Jakshtis farm achieves all aspects of that mission. We heartily thank Mrs. Jakshtis for working with us on the sale of the property, and everyone else involved in this conservation initiative. It is gratifying to know that another important part of our landscape will remain open to wildlife and active in agriculture into the future.

MESSAGE FROM THE Executive Director

Cynthia Henshaw



Dear Friends,

This spring was a whirlwind of activity. The land trust played an active role in conserving 300 acres, cleaning up from damaging winter ice storms and reopening hiking trails on four properties, hosting several educational events including a Birds of Prey program and discussions on alternative energy sources, and our gala fundraising dinner and auction at the Cultural Center at Eagle Hill. The second half of the year is shaping up to continue a similar pace of land conservation and educational events throughout our region.

On a more somber note, the land trust recently lost several good friends. Myron Goddard participated in the research and evaluation of the historic wall on Simpson Road in Hardwick, which was highlighted in the Summer 2008 edition of the EQLT newsletter. Rose Rabschnuk was a long-time supporter and faithful participant at EQLT events and annual meetings. Achsah Hinkley was a passionate conservationist who loved her land and ensured that the property was permanently protected by selling 119 acres to the Mass. Dept. of Fish and Game in 2007 through bargain sale. Chuck Kidd always shared his passion for the arts by framing posters or artwork for the land trust at little or no cost, and by bringing lots of popcorn to events, like the Life of Bears program a year ago. Myron, Rose, Achsah and Chuck will be missed, but each has left an important conservation legacy in his or her own way.

The family of Chuck Kidd asked that memorial gifts be given to EQLT to honor his life and his love of the Moose Brook valley in Hardwick, which is just around the corner from his home. The Moose Brook valley is an uncommon landscape because of the configuration of the valley and limited number of roads cutting across the area. The valley is a mix of agricultural fields, woodlands and low-density housing. The wildlife thrives in the area and it was one of Chuck's favorite places to walk. There are steep cliffs that give excellent views over the area, and one vista is located on EQLT's Moose Brook Preserve. In the coming months, we will create a trail to the vista in honor of Chuck Kidd. If you want to help with the trail layout or construction, please contact me at 413.477.8229 or chenshaw@eqlt.org. A trail dedication is tentatively planned for next spring.

We started 2009 with a generous membership challenge - once fifty new members join the land trust where we would receive \$5,000. I'm pleased to say that we are four-fifths of the way to the goal. Just ten new members are needed to secure the additional support for land conservation and stewardship in our region! Please encourage your friends and neighbors to become members with a contribution of \$25 or more to EQLT. Enclosed in this newsletter is a reply envelope for that purpose. Your continued support keeps EQLT on sound financial footing in these rough economic times. Thank you! ■

GIFTS RECEIVED

in memory of Chuck Kidd

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Thomas and Candace Anderson | Robert and Susan La Flamme |
| Clarence Burley | Charles and Aline Lemaitre |
| William Cole and Christine Greene | Joe and Donna Lotuff |
| Darlene Colonna | Richard and Patricia Miller |
| Waldo and Shirley Cummings | Michael and Karen Morrison |
| Don and Christina Eaton | Nancy Nykiel |
| Helen and James Foyle | Robert and Barbara Page |
| Ann Gobi | Robert and Linda Paquet |
| Ruth T. Goddard | George and Elizabeth Reilly |
| Howard and Jinx Hastings | Raymond and Pamela Robinson |
| Alan Hodder and Harbour Fraser | Ellen and Bob Smith |
| Michael and Louise Huppert | Joyce Smith |
| Rebecca Ikehara | Richard and Debbie Swiatek |
| Allen and Kyoko Kidd | Hans and Ginna Thoma |
| Ann Kidd and Family | Sylvia Varney |
| | Harold and Michelle Webb |
| | Sandra and Donald Williams |
| | Magi and Howard Ziff |

EQLT BOARD & STAFF

- Terry Briggs.....HARDWICK
- Chris Buelow.....GILBERTVILLE, Clerk
- Mick Huppert.....PETERSHAM
- Judith Jones.....NEW BRAINTREE
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- Jeff SchaafWHEELWRIGHT
- Stan White.....HARDWICK, President
- Magi ZiffNEW BRAINTREE
- Cynthia Henshaw.....Executive Director
- Pattie Rich.....Bookkeeper
- Marion Cooper.....Special Projects

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In a New York Minute... An Interview with Magi Ziff

by Charles Kittredge

It was a lazy Sunday, and I'd been shirking my duties. Boss told me we were on a deadline, but I'd left the cigar smoke and clack of typewriters and snuck out for a shave and an egg cream. There's a place on East 42nd where they comb the Wildroot right in for you, and next door is the sweetest soda fountain this side of the Battery. I was halfway there, stepping right along, when the copy boy caught up with me. Big story sir, he said. I liked that – sir. Big story, he said. Something about a will, and a black bird, and a little sleepy town in the Berkshires. Well, I stepped right into the nearest callbox, flipped open my pad, and let it tell itself.

EQLT: So Magi, start with your personal history.

Magi Ziff: I was born in London, and raised there during the war. I lived in France for a while, and came to the States in 1961. I thought I was going to work my way around the world, but I fell in love with New York.

EQLT: And what did you do?

Magi: I produced television commercials and music videos from 1961 to 1996. I actually bought the house in New Braintree in 1969, as a weekend house. When we retired, we moved here.

EQLT: And when did you meet Howard?

Magi: I met him on my 4th day in New York, but we had a few detours in between. We've only been married 27 years.

EQLT: That's okay. I've only been alive for 27 years.

EQLT: So, what first interested you in the land trust?

Magi: In a strange irony, in the War my father was in the service -- stationed in a town called Braintree (England). We used to visit him there when we could. When I discovered New Braintree, USA I fell in love with the beauty of the country and after we moved here I was delighted to be asked to join the Board. That was 11 years ago.

EQLT: That was pretty early on. Was it still the -- the HACT or something then?

Magi: As a matter of fact, yes. That early, we were struggling -- we had no money, and very few members, but it felt like something I wanted to do. So, I was on the board, and then, eight or nine years ago, I offered to be a fundraiser. Frankly, they were amazed that someone would offer -- amazed.

EQLT: And is that still what you do?

Magi: I arrange and plan the annual dinner and auction -- that has been my baby -- and more recently, the poker nights and the garden tours. I pretty much focus on fundraising, and two times a year, I organize and host the land trust retreat. We meet all day, and have lunch. I think it's a good thing that we all break bread together. Truthfully, we're all fundraisers -- we've all had to do that to enroll members. These days, I'm



basically the social secretary.

EQLT: And what's this about a will?

Magi: Well, I've left a legacy gift.

EQLT: Right. How does that work?

Magi: Well, you leave them money when you die.

EQLT: Oh. Right.

Magi: I wanted it to be my legacy. My daughter will inherit my house, and I want my grandchildren to have something of what I've had.

EQLT: And this is similar to what Betty Morss did?

Magi: Actually, Betty Morss had no children, and left the entire estate to charity. She did not specify who would get the house. In order for us to get the house, we had to make a presentation, and work up a business plan. We were competing with other land trusts. It gave us a place, and it gave us a real presence -- a visibility. Gave us a real legitimacy.

EQLT: And where do you see the land trust going, Magi?

Magi: I see us becoming an ever-growing presence, and I see our area of influence increasing, too. We now have new projects in Ware and West Brookfield. Hiring Cynthia was an incredibly important thing. She has totally revitalized the organization. Everybody on the board appreciates what she has brought. Before, our meeting used to last four and five hours. Cynthia is incredibly good at what she does.

EQLT: Any final thoughts, Magi?

Magi: It's just that I'm very proud to be a part of the organization, and I'm glad to have been a part of it during its formative years.

EQLT: Thanks so much, Magi.

Magi: You too. Cheers.

Leave a Legacy

We welcome the opportunity to talk confidentially about your interest in a philanthropic bequest to the East Quabbin Land Trust.

For further information please contact: Cynthia Henshaw, Executive Director at 413-477-8229 or chenshaw@eqlt.org.

Benefit Garden Tour



Sincere thank you to our 2009 garden hosts:

The Petersham Historical Society

Peter George

Abigail Rorer and Charles Buell

Bruce Lockhart and Gus Block

Ellen and Peter Burnham

Hartman's Herb Farm

Tom and Lisa Gaskill

Doug Anderson and Daniel Salvucci

ABOVE LEFT: Abigail Rorer and Charles Buell's garden was featured on the Garden Tour held Saturday June 13th.

ABOVE: Supporters enjoy Peter George's garden.

BELOW: Participants began the Garden Tour, 'Solar, Small, Rocks, and Old Favorites' at the Petersham Historical Society.



Supporters enjoy Ellen and Peter Burnham's home and garden.

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

Facilitating Conservation

We often get calls from landowners, or others interested in conservation of a specific property, wondering if we can help. Our role is to facilitate land conservation. In all cases that means providing information about a landowner's options. A basic question that all landowners need to decide is if they want to continue ownership or not. Long-term conservation focuses on two basic choices: a permanent conservation restriction that eliminates development, or the transfer of ownership to an entity whose mission is conservation. Researching the implications of either choice is essential to reaching a positive outcome for all parties. There are booklets, fact sheets, websites and detailed conversations to have throughout the decision making process.

Facilitating conservation may mean that EQLT purchases the property, such as with the Jakshitis farm or the Gould woodlot. In other cases, EQLT may accept a conservation restriction, as was the case with Spring Hill Farm. EQLT does not need to hold a property interest in order to meet its mission. Often the logical owner of the land or conservation restriction is a state agency, municipality or other conservation organization. The key is to work with the landowner to evaluate which scenario best meets their goals.

Many landowners need to be fully or partially compensated for the value of their land or conservation restriction in order to proceed with permanent conservation. Part of EQLT's role as a facilitator can be to raise money for priority conservation initiatives. The Board of Directors adopted broad guidelines to assist in determining which conservation initiatives are priorities for EQLT action.

When possible, EQLT prefers to work proactively, reaching out to landowners before they decide to sell or develop their land. Highlighting the possible tax benefits if there is a gift component to the land conservation transaction can be a critical benefit for both sides. EQLT focuses its proactive work on lands that fit into the following categories:

- Land with significant natural, historical, agricultural or recreational values
- Land adjacent to or near existing permanently protected lands to expand conservation corridors in the region
- Land actively stewarded
- Land in large contiguous blocks
- Land identified in town open space plans
- Land in an EQLT focus area, such as the Dougal Range or Moose Brook valley

The Land Committee discusses each conservation opportunity and considers questions such as:

- What are the conservation values of the property?
- Are there water resources, wildlife and special natural areas, scenery, recreation opportunities, prime agricultural soils?

- What are the benefits and risks of protecting or not protecting the property to those values?
- What are the benefits and risks to EQLT of protecting or not protecting the property? Issues to consider include: financial, legal, community relations, public access and likelihood of success.
- What are the benefits and costs to the community?
- How does the property relate to other conserved land in a larger landscape context?
- What is the most appropriate role for EQLT in this project?
- What is the best and most cost-effective method to use?
- Can EQLT meet future stewardship obligations of this project?
- Can the effort expand conservation partnerships?

The above list of questions is fairly standard for most conservation organizations. A key difference between organizations is where the emphasis lies. Some examples that distinguish land conservation organizations include: actively stewarded lands versus not active management, an emphasis on rare plants and animals versus general wildlife habitat conditions, or the requirement for public access versus the interest in public access.

If you are or someone you know is, considering long-term conservation of land, the first step will be to find the right conservation partner. That means thinking through your goals and the conservation values of the land, and then reaching out to the appropriate conservation organization. EQLT is delighted to assist you throughout that process. Please contact Cynthia Henshaw at 413-477-8229 or chenshaw@eqlt.org to start the dialog. ■

Mandell Hill in the Movies

"Polly and the Murderers"

In May of 2009, a small film crew came out to Mandell Hill to film a scene for a short film titled "Polly and the Murderers." The film, written and directed by Shelly Lanciani, is intended for submission to film festivals in the fall. The scene involved one of the main characters riding his bike down a path and meeting up with the main character on a picnic blanket. The main character, Polly, is an agoraphobic woman with a vivid imagination. The bike path is a place she dreamed up where she can meet up with her local UPS man, someone whom she has a crush on in real life. More information about the film can be found on www.pollyandthemurderers.com. The shoot went well as the weather cooperated nicely. A big thank you to EQLT for allowing us to use the property for filming!

--Shelly Lanciani ■

On the Land... Exploring the southern Dougal Range

As we go to print, the purchase of the 100 acre Hyde parcel at the southern end of the Dougal Range in Ware is complete. This is great news for the entire East Quabbin area and the Dougal Range as the purchase begins to tie together a number of conservation properties in that area, including the 66-acre Ware Town Forest to the south.



A trail leading into the property

“The property is mostly wooded, with a nice stretch of frontage along the Muddy Brook. I would like to see the bottom section cleared, approximately seven acres, along part of the muddy brook boundary. This clearing would connect two areas currently open, expanding wildlife habitat locally.” Brian continues, “We began clearing some of our property about three years ago through the Mass Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) and already there is an increase in the number and variety of birds. This piece being added to the clearing would increase the habitat area tenfold.”

The Hyde property includes frontage on the Muddy Brook, a pond, a marsh, and a couple of certified vernal pools. The wildlife in the Dougal Range is abundant. Some of the known wildlife includes: bears, bobcats, eagles, gray and red fox, moose, turkeys, and a large number of migratory birds. The property is open for hunting, fishing and passive recreation.



The Muddy Brook River from the Hyde Property

The property has not been farmed or logged in nearly 100 years. Trails do exist throughout the property but a formal trail network and signs need to be developed in the coming years. This summer we expect the EQLT intern to map the existing trails to include in planning for stewardship activities.

The Hyde property is part of the Dougal Range, a 2,000 acre+ area of nearly unfragmented forest. The Dougal Range has emerged as an impressive and recognized regional landscape by three major ecological metrics: the Important Bird Area project, the BioMap Project and the Living Waters Program. The Impor-

tant Bird Area project designated the Dougal Range as a landscape important to global bird conservation because it supports documented high density of interior nesting species otherwise experiencing sharp population declines. The Dougal Range was identified by the BioMap project as Supporting Natural Landscape based upon the integrity of the Range’s unfragmented forests and its direct association with other ecologically important landscapes. The Living Waters program has identified sections of the Ware River and Muddy Brook as Core Habitat and nearly all of the Dougal as Critical Supporting Watershed because of the rare aquatic species found in the area.

Populations of four terrestrial state-listed rare species are documented to be dependant upon the Range. Surveys have also found several examples of unusual Natural Plant Communities associated with the Range, including Rich Mesic Forests, Circumneutral Talus Slopes and Hickory Hop-hornbeam Communities. These Communities are expressions of unusual geology and soil chemistry for our region, and often harbor rare species themselves. A third major component that is important to the Range’s biodiversity is the large concentration of vernal pools found throughout its entirety; there are two on the Hyde property. ■

Massachusetts Landowner Incentive Program

Wildlife management often ranks high as a management objective for landowners. Since more than 80% of the land in Massachusetts is owned by families and individuals, the future of many of our wildlife species is in the hands of private landowners. In fact, most rare species and species in decline in Massachusetts are found on privately owned lands. In order to help these species survive, it is important to find ways to help private landowners.

To do this, MassWildlife offers a program called the Landowner Incentive Program or LIP. The goals of LIP are to:

1. Identify and reclaim appropriate sites for management of declining habitats (especially open land: old field and early-successional forest, wetlands, coastal habitat and pine barrens).
2. Manage and control exotic and invasive plants.
3. Enhance wildlife habitat for species-at-risk. A species-at-risk is defined for LIP as any fish or wildlife species that is federally or state listed as threatened or endangered, is a candidate for listing as threatened or endangered, or is listed on the NHESP Official State Rare Species List.
4. Provide technical and financial assistance and guidance to landowners on how to manage their property for wildlife.

LIP is a competitive grant program. Applications are reviewed by a technical team from MassWildlife and ranked based on the project’s potential benefit to target species or habitat. Information on the exact criteria can be found on the LIP website.

http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/dfw/habitat/grants/lip/lip_home.htm

EQLT Dinner & Auction

Spring has been very busy at the East Quabbin Land Trust. On April 11th the Eighth Annual Dinner and Auction was held at the Cultural Center at Eagle Hill School in Hardwick. The evening was enjoyed by all with great food from Reed's Catering and a large number of both silent and live auction items. The auctions were once again a great success, raising over \$10,000 for land protection. EQLT honored Senator Steve Brewer for his years of support for land conservation. A Save Farmland Poster framed by Chuck Kidd was presented to Senator Brewer.

A special thanks to our underwriters for this event, The Cultural Center at Eagle Hill, www.centerateagle-hill.org, and FIVESTAR Services, Your Professional Plumbing and Heating Solution [Call: 1-866-FIVESTAR], for making the evening possible. ■



ABOVE: The 8th Annual Dinner Auction was a great success, Aline Lemaitre looks over some of the many donated auction



ABOVE: Abbie White and Betty Lincoln enjoying the Eagle Hill School's new Cultural Center.



RIGHT: Massachusetts State Senator Steve Brewer (Barre) is presented with a framed "Save Farmland" poster in recognition of his many years of support for land conservation and protection.

EQLT News | INSIDE...



**Exporing
Dougal**

SUMMER 2009 | VOLUME 6 | ISSUE 3

POSTAL CUSTOMER

UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY...

Wednesday, July 29, 6:30pm

Butterfly, Bee and Wasp Walk – The most important thing to attract butterflies, bees and wasps is to have the plants they need for feeding and breeding. Come explore Ken and Jen Groeppe's plantings specifically designed to attract a broad array of arthropods and learn more about the arthropods in our area. Group size is limited to 20, so please RSVP early to Cynthia Henshaw at 413-477-8229 or chenshaw@eqlt.org. Wednesday August 5th is the rain date.

AUGUST...

Friday and Saturday, August 21-22

Hardwick Fair – Come join us at the Hardwick Fair. We will be selling a 16 month, 15th anniversary calendar of the East Quabbin Land Trust. The calendar will highlight many of the properties and programs of the land trust over the past 15 years. The dunk tank will be in full swing again this year, so come and give a dunk to a friend and support EQLT. More information about the fair can be found at www.hardwickfair.com.

SEPTEMBER...

Thursday, September 17, 6:00pm

Timber Sale Walk – Come join Harry Webb on his property as we explore his woods to see the result of a timber sale during the winter. This thinning has improved the growth conditions of the remaining trees, provided modest income and enhanced wildlife habitat. A quick check on a neighboring area of woods shows the changes over 10 years from a prior harvest. Please RSVP to 413-477-8229 or chenshaw@eqlt.org. The walk will begin at 1451 Petersham Road in Hardwick. Wear boots and long pants.

SATURDAY WORK DAYS...

Throughout the warm weather, on the first Saturday of each month we will be doing maintenance on EQLT properties. We welcome your help on July 11th at Patrill Hollow, and on August 1st and September 12th at Moose Brook where we will clear trails and build a bridge.