



November 2009

Volume 6, Issue 1

New Hartford Land Trust

preserving our community's natural resources and rural heritage



Monday, November 30th Talk

'Keeping the Harvest in Early New England' (Or, 'The Old Ways are Still Good Ways!')

Please join us on the Monday after Thanksgiving (11/30) at 7 p.m. for a presentation by noted food historian Sandy Oliver at Beekley Library. Ms. Oliver will talk about ways that early New England households kept themselves in fresh and preserved foods year round including cellar-ing, salting, pickling, fermenting, preserving in alcohol, and more. Some of these techniques still work today, and Oliver will talk about how to apply them in modern life.

Sandy Oliver was born in Torrington and now lives on an island in Maine. She is the founder and publisher of Food History News and is the author of *Saltwater Foodways: New Englands and Their food at Sea and Ashore in the 19th Century*. Check out her website at www.food-historynews.com. The New Hartford Land Trust and the New Hartford Historical Society are co-sponsoring this presentation. Current members of either organization may attend free of charge. Non-members will be asked to pay a nominal fee of \$4.00 at the door. Bring a jar of your favorite preserved or pickled food to share!

NHLT Awarded Capacity Building Support

The NHLT has been awarded nearly \$8,000 in consultant support for organizational assessment and strategic planning. The Land Trust Alliance and the Connecticut Land Conservation Council gave a thumbs up to the NHLT application to the CT Land Trust Challenge Fund and will pay for consultant time to support an assessment of standards and practices and board planning. The NHLT will provide an in-kind land cash match of 25%.

President's Message

Dear Friends,

Recently, the New Hartford Land Trust (NHLT) has been very fortunate to receive gifts from two longtime residents who cared deeply about preserving our rural and agricultural heritage. Lillian Ludlam and Alfred Sabolcik lived on opposite ends of town and were very different individuals but they both included NHLT in their estate planning. Lillian Ludlam was an entrepreneur and early board member of NHLT who helped the organization grow. Alfred Sabolcik was a dairy farmer who was profoundly attached to the land where he grew up.

Open space preservation and protection of our natural resources is an issue that brings people together from across all walks of life and political party lines. Surveys and voting on open space preservation in New Hartford have shown this time and again as does the current support in the U.S. Congress for making the current conservation easement tax incentive permanent (see p. 2).

In early October, I attended the national Land Trust conference with more than 2,000 colleagues from around the United States. The energy and enthusiasm of the group and the opportunity for learning were truly awesome. Through the national Land Trust Alliance, the field has been working very hard to develop a common set of standards and practices and help conservation organizations across the nation learn why these are important and how to make them part of our everyday practice. Your Land Trust is working hard to bring our work in line with these policies.

As we head toward the end of the year, I want to thank you for your support of NHLT. For those who are not members or volunteers yet, please consider making a contribution of time or money in the spirit of Lillian Ludlam and Alfred Sabolcik. There is much to do and we look forward to working with you in 2010.

Happy holidays and a prosperous new year to all!

Madeline McClave

Taking a Stand for Land in Our Nation's Capitol

The 2008 Farm Bill extended a 2006 incentive that enhances the federal tax benefits for landowners who donate a conservation easement on their land. But unless Congress acts, the enhanced incentive will expire on December 31st and will revert back to a lower level.

Fortunately, there is widespread bipartisan support in Congress to make the incentive permanent. If enacted, the recently introduced Conservation Easement Incentive Act, H.R. 1831, and its companion bill in the Senate, S. 812, will make this valuable conservation tool permanent. We thank Senator Joe Lieberman and Representative John Larson for co-sponsoring the respective senate and house bills to make the incentive permanent, as well as Representative Chris Murphy for his leadership role in the Land Conservation Caucus. As this newsletter goes to print, we encourage Senator Dodd to join them.

This incentive enables land trusts to help more landowners protect natural resources and their rural livelihoods in perpetuity. Under previous law, modest income landowners were only able to deduct a small portion of the value of their gift. Now, a conservation donor can deduct up to 50% of their adjusted gross income in any year (up from 30%), and, if most of their income is from farming, ranch-

ing or forestry, they can deduct all of their income. More important, they can carry forward the remaining value of their donation for up to 16 years (up from six).

Generous landowners who donate voluntary conservation easements to a land trust or other conservation organization are inspired by many things: they love the rural heritage of our area, they feel connected to their land, and they wish to leave a legacy for future generations. This inspiration is central to our work to permanently protect valuable natural resources. But, for many donors, contributing development rights is a major decision and it often takes a long time before a conservation easement is executed. Landowners considering a perpetual commitment of their land, and land trusts considering whether to accept property to protect and steward 'forever' should not be pressured by an artificial deadline. Many donors will not begin the process without the reassurance of a permanent incentive.

The New Hartford Land Trust applauds our elected officials in Washington who are co-sponsoring the bills to make this important tax policy permanent before the end of 2009. To learn more about the latest developments with this issue, visit www.LandTrustAlliance.org.



NHLT board members and stewards walking the Moreschi property, one of our conservation easements, with property owner, Marie Moreschi (left)

Property Stewardship

Caring for our properties is one of the most important operations performed by the land trust. Protecting and preserving our land requires more than just its acquisition. We also monitor for land erosion, flooding, invasive species, dead and dying trees, deconstruction of stone walls and undesirable use or encroachment and work to maintain good relationships with adjoining property

owners. Effective stewardship is also required to maintain the legal non-profit status of the organization, and the respect and confidence of donors and the general public.

Since its reorganization in 2008, the Stewardship Committee has developed new policies and procedures, recruited many new volunteer stewards, and is working to update the files for all our properties. We currently have 30 volunteers assigned to steward our properties. This fall we are holding an in the field training session for our stewards at one of our properties.

NHLT joins the Litchfield Hills Greenprint Collaborative

The NHLT recently joined the Litchfield Hills Greenprint Collaborative, a "partnership of land trusts and community leaders committed to strengthening local conservation efforts and protecting more land of regional significance across Northwest Connecticut." Its goal is to develop a broad-based and strategic approach to protect Litchfield County's most precious resources; its prime farmland, large forests, clean water and rural character of its communities. The collaborative works on regional
(continued on p.3)

Land Trust Funds Foot Bridge at Jones Mountain

When Thomas Smith, an Eagle Scout candidate, contacted the New Hartford Land Trust to fund his Eagle Scout Project, board members unanimously approved a \$500 contribution toward supplies for his project, a foot-bridge spanning a streambed on the trail at Jones Mountain Open Space Preserve. The NHLT donation came from a small pot of money reserved for developing and maintaining the Jones Mountain Open Space Preserve. NHLT's 2005-06 Campaign for Jones Mountain closed the funding gap for the town to purchase the property and exceeded its \$119,000 target by several thousand dollars that have been set aside for needs at the Preserve. Thomas' father, Edward Smith, and Conservation Commission member Paul Mahoney contributed used lumber. The Kingdom Game Club, an abutting property owner, helped get the materials to the project site.

The bridge makes it easier for hikers and is wide enough to allow emergency access to the trail. Next time you are at Jones Mountain, check out this new improvement!



Boy Scouts from Troop 19 building the bridge under the leadership of Eagle Scout candidate, Thomas Smith

Greenprint (cont. from p. 2)

land preservation involving more than one land trust, as well as providing of its local land trust members access to a range of professional resources.

By joining this collaborative the NHLT will have access to a geographic information system (GIS), local conservation leaders, new funding resources and a network of affordable professional services. The Collaborative has already completed GIS mapping of the area providing a store of information to aid our conservation efforts.

Town of New Hartford Open Space Preservation Program Update . . .

A Resounding Yes! To Preserve Phillips Farm

Nearly 60 acres of sweeping meadows, rugged woodland, streams and pristine, open wetland near New Hartford's southwestern corner have become a permanent agricultural and natural preserve for the public to enjoy. Town residents voted overwhelmingly in favor of preserving the Phillips Farm at a referendum last December. The property, a former dairy farm, on East Cotton Hill Road links to other town lands to create a greenway that spans some 300 acres between Antolini School and the highest hill-top in New Hartford, near the Harwinton town line.

Early in 2009, the town purchased a conservation easement to the property that allows public access for passive recreational use such as hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Other uses will be determined by the stewardship plan that is under development by the town's Open Space Preservation Commission (OSPC). The town's Conservation Commission will share responsibility with OSPC for implementing and monitoring the plan and the easement, but the Phillips family continues to own and farm the property as they have done for generations. A small parking area will be in place by next spring along with signage and trail markers. A trail will also be opened up to connect this parcel with the Goula Open Space Preserve.

The New Hartford Land Trust strongly supported the preservation of this property, as it helps to define the town's rural character, celebrates its agricultural heritage, provides protection for the Nepaug watershed and opens up possibilities for education and recreation.

Jones Mountain Parking Built with Private Dollars

Thanks to funding from the 'Friends of New Hartford Fund' at the Community Foundation of Northwest CT, a parking area has been established at the Jones Mountain trailhead on Steele Road. The Fund was created by longtime Land Trust supporter and former board member, David Childs. Thank you!

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NHLT Upcoming Walks and Talks

Mark Your Calendars!

Monday, November 30 at 7 p.m.

Keeping the Harvest in Early New England

(Or, 'The Old Ways Are Still Good Ways'!)

Sunday, February 21 at 4 p.m.

New Hartford Land Trust Annual Meeting

Thursday, March 4 at 7 p.m.

Invasive and Native Plants – Slide Lecture

Sunday, April 25

Annual Earth Weekend Cleanup

Postal Patron

NHLT Annual Meeting Set for Sunday, February 21 at 4 p.m.

Come out for our annual business meeting and to hear your land trust and experts from the Farmington River Watershed Association and the Northwest Conservation District speak about their work to protect our local water resources and how our everyday decisions as New Hartford homeowners, builders, and land use groups, and our town policies, affect water quality.

Please mark your calendars now!



Photo by Charles Richmond

Wetlands feeding streams to the
Nepaug Reservoir.



New Hartford Land Trust 2010 Membership Form

☐ Yes! I support the permanent preservation of key open space, farmland and forests in New Hartford.
Sign me up as a member of the New Hartford Land Trust for 2010 at the level noted below.

☐ Junior: \$10.00 ☐ Individual: \$20.00 ☐ Family: \$35.00 ☐ Sustaining: \$50.00 ☐ Patron: \$100.00 ☐ Benefactor: \$250.00+

My check **payable to NHLT** in the amount of \$_____ is enclosed.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

e-mail: _____ Phone: _____

NHLT is a 501(c)3 organization. Your gift is tax-deductible as allowed by law.

Please contact me about volunteering. The activities that interest me are:

☐ Spring Cleanup ☐ Fundraising Event ☐ Trail Maintenance ☐ Property Stewardship

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