

**EAST GRANBY LAND TRUST  
PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT TO THE MEMBERSHIP  
NOVEMBER 5, 2009**

The East Granby Land Trust has just completed its 35<sup>th</sup> year of open space conservation. As 2009 EGLT President, I would like to thank the board members for their hard work and support during this very busy year. AMP Chairman Ian Clark is always there with technical support and plant and animal identification, ensuring optimal care and planning for the properties. Tom Howard provides leadership, tools and muscle power at the many work parties he attends, as well as acting as our historian, keeping track of the EGLT's activities over the years. In addition, Tom builds and delivers the rain barrels that have helped to fund our work. Treasurer Catherine Delasco coordinated this year's calendar contest and keeps the local media informed of EGLT activities in addition to being property steward for our beautiful Griffin Marsh property. John Erbland has served as the EGLT's Secretary, providing concise, accurate meeting minutes. He also serves as our webmaster and has developed a new website, which now includes up-to-date information on work parties, conferences and environmentally-oriented events. John is also the property steward for the EGLT's property at Coppergate. Inland Wetlands Chairman and EGLT Board Member George Cornelius provides us valuable information on Town land issues. Many thanks to all those who volunteer their time to EGLT.

Members! We need your help, please! As you can see, we coordinate many projects and events, and would really appreciate it if you would consider joining us for a work party or hike; join our Board of Directors (we have three openings); or volunteer to be a steward for an EGLT property near your home. Please get involved and help to preserve and enhance the open spaces that make East Granby such a great place to live.

## **NEWS**

EGLT organized a successful calendar contest this year. Residents submitted 166 photos of the beauty of our town and, thanks to the generosity of EG Public Library personnel, the photos were on display at the library for the month of July. Residents voted for their favorite 13 photos, and the most popular pictures, as voted by East Granby residents, were made into a beautiful calendar for 2010, "Landscapes of East Granby." These calendars can be purchased at the EG Library for \$15, with all proceeds benefiting the EG Land Trust. We're looking forward to next year's contest, "Wildlife of East Granby."

Plans continue to progress on the Greater Springfield Reliability Project. This project includes building large new power lines on existing Connecticut Light & Power Company (CL&P) rights of way that extend through East Granby. Working with the Board, Past EGLT President Mary Goodhouse developed a list of suggested mitigation measures and other steps which CL&P might take to compensate for the environmental damage and impact to trails that this project will have. The Land Trust participated in related hearings and continues to work with the Town and with CL&P engineers to further develop these ideas. Suggestions range from donating property or easements on property to adding trails and expanding parking areas near existing trails.

AMP Chairman and Board Member Ian Clark is also a Study Committee Member of the Lower Farmington River & Salmon Brook Wild & Scenic Study. The goal of the group is to determine if the river is eligible and suitable for Wild & Scenic designation and to develop a river management plan with local support for future protection of the river's outstanding resource values. This designation would likely bring Federal technical support and funds to the river towns to help enhance and protect the river. In its evaluation of eligibility and suitability, the Committee has identified five outstanding resource values: water quality, recreation, bio-diversity, cultural landscape and geology. The study area includes ten towns spanning from Windsor to Canton. The Committee hopes that the study and documentation will be submitted to Congress in 2010.

In April 2009, Board Members Ian Clark and Cathy Delasco attended the annual Connecticut Land Conservation Council's meeting at Wesleyan. A seminar on Trail Design provided interesting considerations for planning a new trail on EGLT property. Also in April, Ian Clark assisted the Chelsea Commons owners, providing information regarding planting native plants as part of renovations and improvements made to a pond on the property.

## **PROPERTY CARE & MANAGEMENT**

This has been the East Granby Land Trust's most active year of property care; we held fifteen work parties among three EGLT properties.

At Griffin Marsh (Holcomb Pond) we spent more than 87 hours removing phragmites; clearing out the deer guards around newly-planted shrubs; mowing the meadow on the property; and removing invasive species (multi-flora rose, bittersweet and Japanese barberry). In his December 2008 report, AMP Chairman Ian Clark indicated that phragmites regrowth was reduced by almost 50% after four years of cutting. He also noted the large variety of wetland plants now growing in the reduced phragmites areas. We received another \$1,068 reimbursement as part of the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Project (WHIP) grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This is the fourth year of this important project. The iris and cardinal flowers planted around the edge of the pond are thriving, and the large meadow area which we reseeded is now filled with native grasses and beautiful wildflowers. Our thanks to Property Steward Catherine Delasco for encouraging all of us to enjoy and maintain this beautiful property.



The EGLT has partnered with the East Granby Middle School in a project that will be taking place in Spring 2010. In an effort to control the Purple Loosestrife plant at Griffin Marsh, EGMS students will raise Gallarucella Beetles this winter to release at the marsh in the spring of 2010. A \$500 WHIP grant was received for this project, which will be turned over to the school by EGLT.

We received a generous \$700 Community Grant from CL&P in December 2008. We used it at the Pond Lane property in April to purchase native bushes to replant areas where we had removed invasives the year before. After planting, we built deer guards around all the bushes to protect them from grazing and winter damage. We held a second major weeding/cleaning party in June. To date, no beavers have returned to the property, and pond water levels have stabilized. Thanks to Property Stewards Tom Howard and Steve Holt for their many hours of hard work, coordination and planning at this property.



The Land Trust's most exciting new project is at Newgate Farms on Kimberly Road. We received another WHIP grant for \$4,700 over the next four years to help remove invasives on several acres, thin trees and create a large successional woodland area (7 acres). Selected trees (greater than 4" diameter) were marked for removal, and a local resident has volunteered to help the EGLT to remove the trees. Our plan is to plant shrubs which will provide wildlife food and cover once the trees are removed. We are building a small bridge to allow crossing of the larger of several streams on the property. Wildlife spotted on the property includes a bobcat, a fisher, and bears. Property Stewards Michelle Clifford and Bill Grabinsky and their children, Chris and Jessica, are taking a leadership role in this major project.



We adopted a tree-cutting policy for EGLT properties this year, partly due to unapproved tree cutting on one of our properties by adjacent property owners. We still have work to do to make sure all our property boundaries are clearly marked, and our properties are regularly visited to prevent damage or misuse. Local RPI Engineering student Kevin Berlinger, assisted by Joe Dippel, donated some time and helped locate property boundaries this year. Our second new policy adopted this year requires us to have clear objectives for land and trail management before starting new trail construction or trail alterations. We also suggested to the town management that they not mow non-recreational fields between April 15 and August 1<sup>st</sup> to allow nesting for birds such as Bobolinks and Meadowlarks.

## **HIKES**

Board Member Frank Negrotti led a winter hike January 14<sup>th</sup> on our Eastfield Farms property. Normally too wet to traverse, the frozen marsh areas allowed travel through much of the marsh's inaccessible areas. We observed several types of animal prints in the snow.



Property Steward Kevin Boushee and Ian Clark led another winter hike February 14<sup>th</sup> through the Great Marsh property, which is another normally inaccessible property.

Kevin Boushee organized, publicized, and led our June 6<sup>th</sup> hike as part of Connecticut Trails Day this year. We headed up a less-traveled section of the Metacomet Trail, leaving from the power line right of way on Hatchett Hill Road to Holcomb St. Halfway through the hike, Tom Howard pointed out a historic small pox cemetery along the trail. He was interrupted by the sighting of a large bear strolling through the forest.



In October, Catherine Delasco organized a Fall Hike at Cowles Park. The planned October 18 day was rained out, but the hike took place October 25. Colorful fall foliage was enjoyed by all.



## **LOOKING AHEAD TO 2010**

Next year, we plan to continue building on this year's good work, organizing work parties that are educational and beneficial for the participants as well as the property. We hope to involve more students and community members. There will always be plenty of phragmites and other invasives to challenge us.

We will continue to work with CL&P on the Greater Springfield Reliability Project, to assure that environmental concerns are addressed and the Town is compensated for the affects of the project.

Goals for 2009 included increasing EGLT membership and getting members to be more active. We need to work harder on this, so even more can be accomplished. Our Board could use more members to help with tasks like grant applications and property stewardship. Please consider joining the board.

Jennifer Frank, President, East Granby Land Trust

Attachments: 2009 Treasurer's Annual Report, Amp Chair Annual Report, EGLT Board of Directors List