

**EAST GRANBY LAND TRUST
PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT TO THE MEMBERSHIP
NOVEMBER 4, 2010**

The East Granby Land Trust has just completed its 36th year of open space conservation. Approaching the end of my second year as EGLT President, I would again like to thank the board members for their support and hard work during the past year. We accomplish the large number of projects we do because of the EGLT's Board of Directors' dedication to the open spaces of East Granby.

Director Ian Clark continues to share his expertise on native and invasive plants and provides wonderful insights during our hikes and work parties. This year he developed a comprehensive policy on land management practices (see below for details). Vice President Frank Negrotti continues to serve as steward at Eastfield Farms. Tom Howard is co-steward at Pond Lane and also provides leadership, procedural guidance for meetings and records, and helps keep track of the group's history. Cathy Delasco formally serves as our treasurer, but wears many other hats, including steward, hike leader, calendar organizer and publicity liaison. John Erbland continues to serve as the EGLT's Secretary (a thousand thanks) and hosts and updates our website (www.eglt.org). John is also the property steward for the EGLT's property at Coppergate. Amanda Thompson is co-steward at Pond Lane and brings many new ideas to the board, including our new blog, <http://eastgranbylandtrust.blogspot.com>. Program Chair Jeanne Dube organized several well-attended presentations this year. New board member Herb Delasco does it all. He is steward at Great Marsh, boundary locator for several properties and has built the new bike trail kiosk as well as a bridge at Pond Lane. Acquisitions Chair Mary Goodhouse has worked on the CL&P expansion project and provided environmental recommendations to the board on proposed development projects. Michelle Clifford/Bill Grabinsky (and their children) have done a tremendous job as co-stewards at Newgate Farm, and is continuing the work of our WHIP grant. Inland Wetlands Chairman and EGLT Board Member George Cornelius provides us invaluable information on town land issues. Many thanks to all those who volunteer their time to EGLT.

NEWS

A primary of focus of the East Granby Land Trust's activities this year was locating the boundaries of some of our properties, checking for encroachments and addressing them. The process involves getting the legal property maps from the town hall, then walking the boundaries of the properties to find survey pins (we call it "pin hunting"), or placing markers and colored survey tape at boundaries where pins are missing. In the process, we identify locations where neighbors are "encroaching" onto Land Trust property. Encroachments range from planting grass, to piling leaves or construction debris, to cutting trees to erecting structures. There is now a legal statute (CT 52-560a) which makes encroaching on town or non-profit owned open space land illegal and subject to financial penalties.

Property stewards doing this work also introduced themselves to neighboring property owners to let them know about the Land Trust's goals for the properties. Herb Delasco did a tremendous job at Great Marsh, locating the boundaries around the 115-acre property and meeting with all nine abutting property owners. Fortunately, the only concern found at this property was possible flooding being caused by beavers on DEP property downstream.

Michelle Clifford led the charge to locate some very hard-to-find boundary markers around Newgate Farm. An Eagle Scout project to help locate the boundaries of our 40-acre Eastfield Farm property is in the planning stages.

We found some serious encroachment issues at both our Newgate Farm and Pond Lane properties this year, which we are in the process of addressing. We greatly appreciate the assistance of attorney Don Holtman, a Land Trust member and former President, in dealing with these issues.

One other major achievement this year was the development of a comprehensive Policy on Land Management Practices by Ian Clark. The purpose of the policy is to provide guidance to stewards in the care and management of their properties. In addition to outlining the formal process of preparing and reviewing individual management plans for each property, this policy provides detailed guidance on how to handle issues with human and animal visitors and the methods to use for invasive plant control. A full copy of the policy will be on the website once final review is completed.

There was positive news for East Granby concerning the Greater Springfield Reliability Project, which includes building large new power lines on existing Connecticut Light & Power Company (CL&P) rights-of-way that extend through East Granby. The EGLT had a number of meetings with the project engineering team and submitted written comments. The project has now been revised to significantly reduce the impact of the new power lines. While there will be new 80' and 110' towers installed along a newly-cleared 100' right of way, the older, existing towers will eventually be removed and the existing right-of-way will be allowed to grow back into a grass/brush type area. We expect that some new or expanded parking areas along the Metacomet Trail and Farmington Valley Greenway will be provided by CL&P.

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 was 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. The study is nearly complete and the committee's focus now is on completing the management plan to finalize its report. The report will be the basis for proposed legislation in the U.S. Congress for Wild & Scenic designation.

The EGLT Board is currently providing comments to the town's Planning and Zoning board and Inland Wetlands Commission for the proposed Black Bear Run housing subdivision. The proposed project requires a zoning change and proposes placing nine residential lots adjacent to the Land Trust's Great Marsh property. Our greatest concern is the potential negative impact this will have on the Great Marsh, a biologically rich and diverse swamp habitat.

Board Member Catherine Delasco organized our second annual calendar photo competition, "Wildlife of East Granby." We received 132 photographs from local photographers which were on display at the East Granby Library during June and July. Residents voted for their favorite photos, and the thirteen with the most votes were made into this year's calendar, which is currently on sale at the library for \$15. This is a fundraiser for the Land Trust. We're looking forward to next year's contest, "Wildflowers of East Granby."

Our thanks to Board Member Jeanne Dube for organizing two educational presentations for Land Trust members and EG residents. On September 21, Amherst naturalist John Root presented "Songbirds of the Northeast" at the town library. On October 8, CT DEP's Todd Mervosh presented "Fall Foliage" at a senior luncheon at the EG Senior & Community Center.

We have a special “rescue story” to share with you this year. In September, following a long, dry summer, EGLT board member Herb Delasco spotted a large snapping turtle on Hatchet Hill Road, near a now dry marsh area. Thinking quickly, and assisted by a willing mailman, Herb was able to load “Mr. Snaps” into his truck and relocate him to Pond Lane, where the turtle is now enjoying plenty of water.



Another noteworthy event was our “A Night Under the Stars” held August 27 at East Granby Farms. Many local families with young children joined Ian Clark for a guided walk through the meadow and around the pond, followed by a marshmallow roast and stargazing with a telescope provided by local astronomer Bill Fournier. His telescope allowed us to see five of the moons around Jupiter as well as the surface of Earth’s moon. Our thanks to Amanda Thompson for creating and planning this exciting event.



We’ve been working hard this year to get the word out in town about the EGLT and publicize our hikes, work parties and other events we sponsor. Our thanks to Catherine Delasco for submitting articles to the Granby News, the Reminder and Let’s Talk Turkey.

PROPERTY CARE & MANAGEMENT

This has again been a very active year of property care; we held twelve official work parties among three EGLT properties. Many additional hours were given to locating property boundaries and meeting with neighbors on various concerns.

We held four work parties at Griffin Marsh this year. The new plantings are now well-established, but we continue to battle phragmites within the marsh area and multiflora rose and Asian Bittersweet around the marsh edges and in the meadow on the property. Property Steward Catherine Delasco, along with several committed board members, continue their ongoing battle against the invasives at this property.



The greatest amount of work done this year was at Newgate Farm on Kimberly Road, where Property Co-Stewards Michelle Clifford and Bill Grabinsky located boundaries, cut mountains of invasive plants, and carefully painted stems with herbicide. The EGLT received a Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) grant from the U S Dept. of Agriculture for this property. Thanks to Michelle's family's efforts, we have qualified for our first payment for the grant. As part of the grant, Michelle and her family are thinning trees, removing evergreen seedlings, and replanting them along the property line at Pond Lane. Michelle and Bill and their children Chris and Jessica have put in many hours of work to clear and improve this property.



We held several work parties at Pond Lane this year. Again, we removed invasives and maintained existing pathways and new plantings. This year we had help from EG Middle School teacher Robert Pasciewicz and several students over three work parties. The students helped us to weed cages around new plantings, with poison ivy always abundant. Herb Delasco built a bridge on one of the side paths connecting our property to our neighbors on Sweetbriar Road and has assisted with mowing and clearing. Co-stewards Tom Howard and Amanda Thompson continue to work hard at this property.



HIKES

This year's hikes started with a winter hike through Eastfield Farm, led by Ian Clark in late January. It was a beautiful sunny day, with great views throughout the frozen swamp areas.



Our next hike was February 14, led by Cathy Delasco and Ian Clark. The hike started at East Granby Farms and went up the back way to the Newgate Ridge, to the cliffs.

On June 6, the Land Trust participated in the annual Connecticut Trails Day program with another hike up from East Granby Farms to the Metacomet Trail in honor of its designation as a National Scenic Trail. Ian Clark and Cathy Delasco led this hike, as well, but in much different weather!



Our annual fall hike on October 16 took us along the Farmington River off Rt. 189 up to the ridge overlooking Tariffville amid 200-300-year-old oak trees. We were joined by 18 land trust members and visitors, and enjoyed beautiful autumn weather, with great views of the fall foliage and the mills in Tariffville. We descended by following the power line to the Tariffville gorge area. Our thanks to Catherine Delasco for planning and leading the hike.



LOOKING AHEAD TO 2011

Next year, the Board will work together to develop our goals. We will continue the focus on visiting the properties, locating the boundaries and continuing the thoughtful stewardship of the land. We will continue our outreach to the community, hopefully involving more Town residents in the important work of caring for East Granby's open spaces. We also look forward to enjoying these spaces during hikes.

Hope to see you soon at a hike or work party. Look for information at: www.eglt.org or <http://eastgranbylandtrust.blogspot.com> .

Jennifer Frank, President, East Granby Land Trust

Attachments: 2010 Treasurer's Annual Report, Amp Annual Report, EGLT Board of Directors List