

**EAST GRANBY LAND TRUST**  
**PRESIDENT'S 2011 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE MEMBERSHIP**  
*January 26, 2012*

2011 was the 37<sup>th</sup> year for the East Granby Land Trust, and it was a busy one. We continued to locate and mark property boundaries; we worked to clear invasives, sponsor hikes and host educational speakers and events, and; we got involved with a number of land use issues affecting our town. It was a year of hard work, but also of fun and exploration and learning.

All of the good work described below was accomplished with the help of a very dedicated and hard working Board of volunteers. I would like to thank and briefly describe the work of each Board Member.

Vice President Michelle Clifford is co-steward of our Newgate Farm property, for which we currently have a Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) grant. Michelle and her husband and children have been working tirelessly on the property to rid it of invasives and to convert part of the forest to successional woodlands, working with a neighbor to remove larger trees and return part of the land to shrubs and grasses in an effort to create a more diverse habitat for birds and other wildlife. Michelle is also researching East Granby's large property owners for possible land donation or acquisition.

Treasurer Cathy Delasco oversees the EGLT finances, as well as organizes and leads hikes, puts together our photo calendar contest, and provides media contact for all the great publicity about our events. Secretary John Erbland takes meticulous minutes of our meetings, maintains and organizes our website ( [www.eglt.org](http://www.eglt.org)), and is steward of our Coppergate property. Board Member Ian Clark leads hikes, coordinates our WHIP grants, oversees Eagle Scout projects and provides invaluable information on local plants and the best ways to care for our properties. Program Chair Jeanne Dube again found great speakers for several EGLT presentations. Tom Howard continues as Pond Lane co-steward and was very helpful with his chainsaw this year. Jeanne and Tom also handle nominations and elections for EGLT officers. Acquisitions Chair Mary Goodhouse helped us evaluate several offered properties this year and guided the land trust with her excellent advice and valuable research. Board Member Herb Delasco continued to assist at work parties and arranged bus transportation for several hikes. Frank Negrotti shares his extensive woodland knowledge (teaching us about edible mushrooms).

Amanda Thompson is Pond Lane co-steward with Tom Howard. She has also been the creative source for many of the EGLT's new projects, including our August stargazing event, the Fairy House Building Event we held at the library and at Pond Lane this year, as well as the new EGLT-sponsored Nature Story & Craft Time held in conjunction with the East Granby Public Library at 3:30 on the first Monday of every month. Amanda also created and maintains EGLT's blog, <http://eastgranbylandtrust.blogspot.com>.

We welcome Jennifer Kovaleski, our newest board member who, with Amanda, runs the library story time session each month. Conservation Commission Chairman George Cornelius continues to keep us informed of town meetings, issues, and policies that affect EGLT properties and interests.

We thank past Board Members Kim Stuhr and Allison Vicuna for their help. Our Board currently has three vacancies and we always welcome new, active Board Members.

## Property Care and Protection

Dates, times and locations for work parties on our different properties are listed on our website ([www.eqlt.org](http://www.eqlt.org)). We always have a few laughs and some fun at every work party. You may get your feet wet, literally, but you will see and learn new things, and help improve our open spaces. We are ALWAYS looking for a few good volunteers.

Our Newgate Farm property again received the most attention this year, with nine work parties (totaling 57 work hours). We worked to locate boundaries and remove invasives (mostly giant multi-flora rose bushes). Our thanks to the Clifford/Grabinsky family, including children Chris and Jessica, who put in many hours and received many scratches in their wrestling matches with the mighty roses. We marked trees for cutting as part of the ongoing WHIP grant (Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program from the U.S. Department of Agriculture).



We held six work parties at Griffin Marsh this year, all to remove invasives. Thanks to Ian Clark for mowing the access paths to keep the property accessible. We also contacted the town's Building Department to report an inadequate silt fence for a new residence being built along Route 20, adjacent to Griffin Marsh, in an effort to keep the site runoff from clogging the marsh.

Eagle Scout Nick Mollica completed his project that included locating and marking the boundaries of our 40-acre Eastfield Farms property. He provided a full notebook report documenting his work, and a perimeter trail there is now a possibility. We very much appreciate the work that went into this project and congratulate Nick on becoming an Eagle Scout.



The EGLT Policy on Land Management Practices developed by Ian Clark has been formally adopted and can be found on the EGLT website. It includes useful guidelines on handling invasive species, especially adjacent to sensitive wetland areas.

Board Members continued to acquire beneficial property-management training by attending workshops offered by the Connecticut Land Conservation Council, the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, and the Farmington River Watershed Association.

### **New Property Opportunities**

The EGLT was contacted by a homeowner of the Ridge Association regarding possible donation of a 63-acre property west of Ridge Boulevard, close to the Metacomet Ridge. Although the property was identified as desirable and abutted the town-owned East Granby Farms, there were too many legal/surveying/clean-up problems relative to the donation that prevented it from going forward.

The developer of the proposed Black Bear Run residential sub-division offered the EGLT two adjacent parcels totaling over 8 acres as part of the “open space” requirements for the sub-division, but the properties did not meet EGLT-established criteria for open space land acquisition.

The Owner of the Creamery Brook development also approached the EGLT about a possible parcel donation, but again, the property did not meet the EGLT’s Land Acquisition Policy.

### **Community Issues**

A proposed residential development called Black Bear Run, adjacent to the EGLT Great Marsh property, was the subject of several Town meetings. The EGLT provided suggestions to minimize the environmental impact and protect the marsh from the effects of tree clearing and having runoff from new, fertilized yard areas draining into this pristine ecosystem.

Members of the EGLT attended and spoke at several town meetings regarding zoning changes that would eventually lead to a 75-acre expansion of the Galasso rock mining operation. Although we recognize some economic benefits to the town, the EGLT is extremely concerned about the continuing extensive environmental damage and future impact to the Metacomet Trail as a result of this proposed expansion.

The EGLT, led by Ian Clark, provided comments to Town Planner Gary Haynes on the new Low Impact Development Regulations which are being considered for East Granby.

In 2011 we made donations to several neighbors whose lives were affected by major health problems and a home fire.

The bill for the Lower Farmington River Wild & Scenic (W&S) Designation is in the hands of the U.S. Congress. It has been written but has not yet been taken up by the Congress. The bill will probably go to the Senate first this year as part of an omnibus lands bill. The W&S Study Report will be included in the Federal Register for Public Comment. When that document becomes available the W&S Study Committee will be publicizing how to comment on it. The W&S Management Plan has been printed and is being distributed. This document is also available at: [http://www.lowerfarmingtonriver.org/?page\\_id=188](http://www.lowerfarmingtonriver.org/?page_id=188)

## Hikes and Special Events

Our first winter hike in January, 2011 drew 25 cross-country skiers and snowshoers as we made our way around the woods at Newgate Farm and through the Newgate Wildlife Management Area. Our second winter hike in February was much colder, and drew only five hardy board members. We hiked north from East Granby Farms and were treated to beautiful frozen waterfalls and unique rock formations.



Our June 2<sup>nd</sup> Connecticut Trails Day Hike drew 54 hikers of varying fitness levels. We divided up into three groups, starting at Hatchet Hill and ending near the Tariffville Gorge. Our thanks to our driver, Herb Delasco, and the generosity of Sterling Viets and Rainbow Bus Lines, Inc. for providing bus transportation to and from the trailhead.



Our Fall Hike on October 22<sup>nd</sup> started at Phelps Road in Suffield and ended 5.2 miles later at the Route 20/Newgate Road intersection. Our thanks again to driver Herb Delasco and Rainbow Bus Lines for providing transportation.



Our newest event this year was a “Fairy House Building Project” organized by board member Amanda Thompson. The first fairy houses were built at the East Granby Library July 6<sup>th</sup>, accompanied by a reading of Tracy Kane’s book, Fairy Houses. The second event was held July 16<sup>th</sup> at the EGLT Pond Lane property, attended by 21 children and several adults. Using found and natural materials, the children built forest homes designed to attract woodland fairies. It is a way to introduce children to woodland areas while having fun and being creative. Board Members Amanda Thompson and Jennifer Kovaleski have organized a new monthly reading activity for young children at the EG Library, as well. The EGLT buys books for Amanda & Jennifer to read each month and then donates the books to the library.



Solar System Ambassador Bill Fournier was again kind enough to join us for an August 13 Stargazing and Moonlit Meadow Walk event. Bill presented a slide show on meteor showers, since the cloudy skies did not allow viewing of the real Perseids meteor showers that evening. Ian Clark led the meadow walk and Michelle Clifford brought the s’mores!



Board Member Catherine Delasco organized our third annual calendar photo competition. This year’s theme was Wildflowers of East Granby. Photographs were displayed in the East Granby Library, with those photos receiving the most votes being selected for the calendar. This is a fundraiser for the Land Trust. Calendars are for sale at the East Granby Library for \$15. Please note that next year’s theme will be “Gardens of East Granby.”



Our thanks to Board Member Jeanne Dube for organizing two educational presentations for EGLT members and town residents at the EG Library. On May 20th, Amherst naturalist John Root presented "Wildflowers of the Northeast." On July 14<sup>th</sup>, John gave a presentation on edible plants.

### **Looking Ahead to 2012**

The Board will work to review current goals and develop new goals for the coming year. Cutting and laying down partially fallen trees will be a major activity at several properties. We will focus on monitoring our properties and providing thoughtful stewardship of the land. We will continue our outreach to the community, finding new Board Members and more volunteers for our work parties. We look forward to your continued support and participation. Working together, we can keep the open spaces of East Granby safe and in their natural state.

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

Jennifer Frank, President, East Granby Land Trust

Attachments: 2011 Treasurer's Annual Report, Amp Annual Report, EGLT Board of Directors List