

EQLT ANNOUNCES AMBITIOUS \$1.5 MILLION CAPITAL CAMPAIGN!

On Saturday, February 16th, The East Quabbin Land Trust unveiled their ambitious \$1.5 million dollar capital campaign. Terry Briggs, EQLT Board President, made the announcement during the Twelfth Annual Dinner and Silent Auction at the Eagle Hill School in Hardwick, MA. Mr. Briggs, with great enthusiasm, told more than 180 assembled supporters and guests that the organization has already raised more than two-thirds of its \$1.5 million dollar capital campaign goal. “We have commitments for more than 1.2 million dollars in hand,” stated Mr. Briggs. “These funds will advance the land trust’s capacity and ability to move proactively with land conservation in key landscapes, such as at the Frohloff Farm in Ware with the recent purchase of the farmhouse.”



He explained how the monies will be used: “In order to sustain and expand our work on behalf of the natural vitality and health of our region, we set a goal to raise \$1,500,000 to help our organization serve local farmers, conservationists and landowners. Three separate funds will be supported through this effort, including one million dollars towards Farms for the Future, \$400,000 towards our Sustainability Fund and \$100,000 dedicated to our Conservation Restriction Fund.”

The East Quabbin Land Trust is made up of neighbors, educators, farmers, and landowners who love the sunny pastures, dark forests, and winding rivers of our home in the hills beside the Quabbin Reservoir. Since 1994, it has served our community by protecting the lands that clean our air and water, give wildlife room to roam, history a place to live, and children a place to learn and play.

The East Quabbin Land Trust currently owns over 800 acres of fields, woods and streams across the region and holds conservation restrictions on 700 acres. The land trust takes their role as stewards seriously. Stewardship of each property is guided according to a management plan which details expected activities, such as creating walking trails, expanding early-successional wildlife habitat, conducting a timber sale or clearing debris. A fully funded Sustainability Fund will ensure the ability to have a stewardship coordinator continue to oversee the wide variety of activities that

occur on land trust properties for years to come.

“The land trust has an affirmative obligation to monitor, and enforce if necessary, the conservation values on lands under conservation restriction,” said Stan White, EQLT board member and past president. “Our goal is to maintain good relationships with all participating landowners, and having the financial resources in the Conservation

Restriction Fund is essential for our continued success.”

A conservation restriction is a legal agreement between the landowner and a conservation entity that permanently protects the natural, scenic and open condition of a property by prohibiting any activities that may alter the land. Landowners usually retain the rights to activities such as farming, forestry and wildlife management. Each conservation restriction is tailored to meet landowner goals and specific characteristics of each property. Communities benefit when land is placed under a conservation restriction because public benefits such as scenic roads, quality air and water, and wildlife habitat are maintained and property taxes continue to be paid. Landowners often receive a financial benefit through a tax deduction or payment, and still have the opportunity to continue to steward their land.

“Each week we receive numerous phone calls and emails from individuals wanting to learn more about their land conservation options,” said Cynthia Henshaw, EQLT Executive Director. “Once the funds are in place from this capital campaign, then we will be in a better position to respond to the growing interest from landowners throughout our region.”

Says Henshaw, “The East Quabbin Land Trust is delighted that significant donors and one hundred percent of the board have given so generously to fund this initiative. However, we acknowledge that the hardest part lies ahead—encouraging small gifts of support from many individuals connected with the East Quabbin region. These last gifts to the capital campaign will be the element that secures our common goals and ensures that the work of the EQLT can continue into the future.” ■

MESSAGE FROM THE Executive Director

Cynthia Henshaw



Dear Friends,

At the end of last year we received good news about three land conservation grants from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. With this funding in place we are:

- supporting the Town of Barre in their efforts to conserve the Patterson Farm,
- purchasing a historic mill site with the Town of West Brookfield, and
- protecting nearly half a mile of Muddy Brook and the Town of Ware water supply.

Beyond sustaining agricultural soils, historic sites and public drinking water supplies, each initiative provides the opportunity to get outside and go walking beside our native plants and animals, and to do so into the future. Stay tuned for more details once these transactions are completed.

Not too long ago Jeff Smith was in our office and shared his impressions of *Two Coots in a Canoe*, written by David E. Morine. "It'd be a great book for a book discussion," he said. Now having read it, I agree.

The premise of the story is that two friends, who haven't been in touch in twenty years, will spend a month canoeing down the Connecticut River, from the Canadian border to Long Island Sound. Most folks that make the trip plan on camping. Not Bussy and Ramsay. They depend on the kindness of strangers for their overnight accommodations. Each night brings a new situation and new friends. Bussy and Ramsay get themselves into funny situations and crack a few jokes along the way.

An added twist is that Bussy is authorized by a private foundation to make small grants to land trusts working along the River. The idea is to support small organizations that really need these grants and can make each dollar count. During the course of their trip we learn about a number of interesting conservation efforts, and a few insights into other issues, like dam removal and the functioning of a modern dairy farm.

Pick up a book and take the trip with Bussy and Ramsay. Then join me for a discussion on June 8th starting at 6:30pm at EQLT's offices at 120 Ridge Road, Hardwick. If the copy of *Two Coots in a Canoe* is out of your local library, let me know and you can borrow one from us. ■

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.

As a non-profit organization the East Quabbin Land Trust envisions a regional community that continues to care for its natural environment and supports a sustainable local economy, ensuring a high quality of life for generations to come.

We welcome your thoughts, articles, and photographs on events in our area. For more information about the land trust, to become a member, or request a change of address, please contact us at:

East Quabbin Land Trust

120 Ridge Road, PO Box 5
 Hardwick, MA 01037-0005
 413-477-8229 (tel & fax)
 email: eqlt@comcast.net

Visit our website at www.eqlt.org

BOARD & STAFF

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Caren Caljouw	Stewardship Coordinator
Pattie Rich	Bookkeeper
Kelly Wheeler	Service Learning Coord.

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL...

Friday, April 19, 6:30 PM

Flight of the Woodcock, Frohloff Farm, 221 Church Street, Ware – Spring time is when birds return to their breeding grounds ready to find a mate. Male American Woodcocks combine impressive aerial maneuvers and a nasal *beent* call to attract females. The best time to catch this display is at dusk along moist and brushy fields. Meet at the Frohloff barn and we'll walk to the best site for viewing the flight of the Woodcock. Bring a comfy cushion to sit on and flashlight for the walk back.



Sunday, April 29, 3:00 PM

Briefly-Blooming Beauties on the Dougal Range, 25 Hardwick Pond Road, Ware – Spring ephemerals are those elusive wildflowers that appear in the quick break between snow melt and leaf out. We'll take a tour of the Hyde Woodland Preserve and neighboring spots in the search for these briefly-blooming beauties. Wear good hiking boots and bring enough water for a couple hour hike around the Dougal Range.

MAY...

Sunday, May 19, 4:30 PM

Annual Membership Meeting and Potluck, 120 Ridge Road, Hardwick – Tom French, Assistant Director of Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife for Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program will talk about the *The Unexpected and Sudden Decline of Massachusetts Bats*. Bring your favorite dish to share with family and friends of the East Quabbin Land Trust.

JUNE...

Saturday, June 8, 6:30 PM

Book discussion of *Two Coots in a Canoe* by David E. Morine, 120 Ridge Road, Hardwick – This is a wild ride down the Connecticut River, powered by gravity, cold beer, and insight to the state of the largest river in New England. The two coots learn a lot and share their adventures as they rely on the kindness of strangers. Refreshments will be available. Please RSVP to Cynthia at chenshaw@eqlt.org.



Saturday, June 15, 10:00 to 4:00 PM

Garden:s of the East Quabbin: Creative plantings and stonework at eight gardens in Hardwick and Petersham – Eight families generously open up their gardens for this benefit tour to see how they've integrated rocks into the living landscape. Big boulders to small stones define pathways, viewscapes and garden textures. Each gardener has incorporated the ubiquitous rocks of the regions in novel ways. Rain date will be Sunday, June 16. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased on-line at www.EQLT.org under the Events tab or by calling 413-477-8229.



COMING IN OCTOBER...

Sunday, October 13, starting gun at 10:00 AM

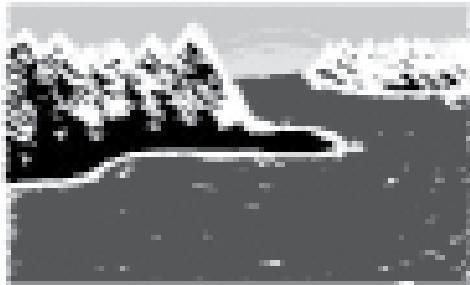
Second Annual Station Loop Ramble 5-miler -

A hilly road and trail race with a flat fast finish on the Mass Central Rail Trail. Entry fee: \$20 for adults and \$10 for children age 13 and under if received before September 13, 2013. For full details and to register go to www.EQLT.org under the Events tab or contact Cynthia at chenshaw@eqlt.org or 413-477-8229.

2nd Annual  **Station Loop Ramble 5-miler**

TWELFTH ANNUAL DINNER AND SILENT AUCTION

The Board of Directors sincerely thanks everyone who supported our annual fundraising dinner and silent auction on February 16, 2013. The event was attended by over 180 people from throughout the East Quabbin region, representing all eight member towns plus others! Everyone had the opportunity to make new friends, renew acquaintances and greet old friends. We are especially appreciative of the financial support received from the following underwriters.



NEW HARBOR
Client-centered financial guidance



THE CULTURAL CENTER AT EAGLE HILL

R.C. KEDDY
BUILDING AND CONTRACTING



BERUBE Real Estate
Petersham, MA 01366



Dresser & McGourthy, LLP
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Please support these businesses and thank them for underwriting the Land Trust dinner!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

This wonderful evening would not have been possible without the support of many individuals and businesses. The silent auction raised over \$10,000 in support of the programs and activities of the East Quabbin Land Trust.

Thank You!

Silent Auction Item Donors:

Harrison Achilles
Gus Block and Bruce Lockhart
Pat Bock
Wendy Bolognesi
Kaye and Don Boothman
Charlie Burnham
Dave Cameron
Cheryl and Steve Mancini
Colleen Cody
Judith Jones
Sharyn Corton
Melinda Durham
Sarah Durham
Lindsay Ellison
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Megan and Joe Raskett
Sue and Ed Reed
Jerry and Liz Reilly
Pam Robinson
Trish Smith and Michael Holland
Joyce Smith
Jeff Smith
Steve St. Jean
Doria Steedman
Genevieve and Glenn Stillman
Ginna Thoma
Jessica Lang
Susie Townsend
Katie Tyler

Dorothea Vitrac
Harry Webb
Bill Welsh
Stan and Abbie White
Glen Wojcik
Diana and David Wood
Matthias Waschek
Octavia Taylor

MANY THANKS TO:

Rose 32 Bread for donating bread
Robinson's Farm for donating cheese
Ginna Thoma for donating the flowers in memory of Magi Ziff
Judith Jones and **Nancy Grimes** for organizing the event and all those who volunteered to set-up and clean-up for the event.



Corporate Donors:

Clover Hill Country Store
D&D Fitness Factory
Hunt Road Berry Farm and Forest
The Kitchen Garden
Gardener's Supply Company
Garrett Wade
Louise Garwood Landscapes
Glidden Landscaping Services
Hardwick Farmer's Coop
Great Rock Alpacas
Frames Ink
Lyon Iron
Rose 32 Bread
Golden Egg Farm
Russian Icon Museum
Leaders Home Center
Hardwick Sugar Shack
Reed's Country Store
Robinson's Farm
Ruggles Hill Creamery

St. Jean Package Store
Stillman's Farm
The Centered Place
Tower Hill
Pioneer Valley Environmental
Worcester Art Museum



BREAKING BREAD AND BUILDING COMMUNITY

By Kelly Wheeler

Kelly prepared the following Great Story as part of her MassLIFT-AmeriCorps volunteer service while leading youth service learning programs and the East Quabbin Land Trust.

Food is much more than a tool for survival; it is also a source of pleasure, comfort, and security. And, while it nourishes our bodies, it can also nourish our families and our communities. Sharing food with friends and family is one of the most primal, intimate, loving acts one can participate in. Food not only provides us with the fuel to propel our bodies through our daily actions, but allows us the time to sit with others, laugh, and build eternal relationships. My most precious memories of my Babci are deeply intertwined with food. As a child, I remember coming into her house and being hit by the smells of home-cooked applesauce simmering on the stove. Babci would be diligently kneading dough for perogi while Dzadziu quietly peeled potatoes and apples. He would offer me a slice of the crisp, sour apples he had just picked that morning. I would sit down by his feet hoping to get another slice and he would tell me stories of peeling potatoes for hours during his years of service in the Philippines in WWII. I assume this was a punishment for some mischievousness on his part. Meanwhile, Babci's hands would be effortlessly kneading. She seemed to have no recipe but a sense of what the dough needed. When the dough was ready we would all sit around a large table filling the perogis and telling stories. The amount of tedious work was erased by the joy we felt to share our time with each other and further nullified when we had browned butter dripping from our chins.

My Babci would tell us about her parents who came to this country from Poland and bought farmland in Palmer, MA. Her parents went on to have 15 children and eventually built the Palmer Metropolitan Airport. Her mother had a huge garden where she grew most of the food for her large family. At this time, eating seasonally wasn't a new movement; it was a normal part of life. Babci remembers being sent out to pick wild blackberries and blueberries for her mother to turn into pies and jams for the leaner winter months. They were very poor but always had an abundance of food to eat. Babci's mother would raise pigs, make keilbabsa and bring it to town on a horse drawn buggy to trade for the foods she couldn't grow herself. When the mills came, the children left the farm and got jobs in town. There was less time to farm and cook from scratch. Convenience foods took the place of more time consuming, farm fresh

meals. This trend is the beginning of the fast food culture in which we find ourselves so deeply entrenched.

The preservation of traditional knowledge and skills is as fundamental to our survival as the conservation of our land. As our grandparents' generation ages, the knowledge of self reliance they possessed begins to erode. To maintain the expertise of growing one's own food and preparing it we need to provide opportunities for children to engage with community members who possess these skills. Recently I had the chance to do just that. I was able to bring my Babci into a local Youth Center and teach the kids how to make traditional Polish food. We took what we learned and cooked a Polish Community Supper for the people in need in that area. As we were preparing the food, we did as I had done growing up. We sat around a large table working and sharing stories about our food traditions. During my AmeriCorps service, I have had the opportunity to accomplish my dream of starting school gardens to educate youth about food. However, I would have to say that the simple act of sitting around the table with my Babci and these wonderful kids sharing stories and making traditional food was by far the most meaningful experience during my service. Regardless of the generation you belong to or any other personal differences that exist, food is our common ground. It is a universal language we all speak. It can illicit strong feelings of nostalgia, comfort, joy, and love. To this day, when I bite into a crisp, sour apple I don't just taste; I see my Dzadziu tending his apple trees, my Babci kneading dough, and I feel a deep connection to my past that will always be with me.

We have reached a time when children don't form connections with the food they eat or the people that provide it. Ask a child where food comes from today and be prepared to hear responses such as "the store" or worse yet blank stares. Their experience of food comes from a box, a can, or a bag from the freezer. Many children lack the skill to use silverware properly because we have decided to form all the food they eat into a nugget. The further we allow our society to devolve into a culture that is fueled by cheap, processed, convenience foods the closer we will come to disaster.

Through my service in AmeriCorps, I have had the opportunity to address the disconnect people experience toward food, environmental stewardship, and the history that unite us to the land. Food is an integral part of every human's life. ■



*Kelly and her Babci
preparing the polish supper*

HEALTHY FOOD REQUIRES HEALTHY ECOSYSTEMS

Stewardship to Improve Biodiversity on Farms

By Caren Caljouw

This is the first of a two-part discussion of stewardship practices on local farms.

The East Quabbin Land Trust thinks deeply about how to keep land productive and ensure healthy sustainable food, while also improving biodiversity. Conserving biodiversity on a farm is vitally important as it helps with the formation of healthy soils, the cycling of nutrients and carbon, flood and erosion control, protection of clean water, increases in beneficial insects and native pollinators, and wildlife conservation.

Connecting and sustaining food systems and ecosystems at EQLT's Frohloff Farm and Mandell Hill is a balancing act that requires a thorough evaluation of each property to determine where zones of more intensive farming may occur while natural landscape features and corridors for wildlife are protected and stewardship practices are in place to conserve biodiversity on the larger landscape. Over time, these measures help each farm remain viable, better able to withstand severe weather events and adapt to climate change.

Frohloff Farm and Mandell Hill are unique in their landscape position, farming history, and abundant natural resources. Frohloff Farm, a 90 acre property on Upper Church Street in Ware, slopes gently to the banks of the Ware River. The property includes farm fields, forests, wetlands, and recreational opportunities along the Rail Trail. It abuts important agricultural land to the north. A portion of the property is considered priority habitat by the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. Mandell Hill sits atop a scenic plateau in Hardwick. This 200 acre property abuts significant farmland to the west and contains pasture, hay field, and forest. The property is a working farm with grazing cattle, a maple sugar operation, recreational trails, scenic vistas and historical landmarks. The grasslands are important habitat for regionally declining birds, bobolinks and eastern meadowlarks.

Our Stewardship Plans provide an inventory of resources including prime agricultural soils, sensitive wetlands, rare species' habitats, troublesome invasive plants, historic landscape features, and recreational opportunities. By working with experienced local farmers, wildlife biologists with the Mass Fish and Wildlife, and soil conservationists with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, we are able to set realistic goals to improve biodiversity and guide management on these farms.

The following are some strategies the East Quabbin Land Trust uses in sustaining our farmland and building biodiversity:

Utilize rotational grazing practices. When visitors come to Mandell Hill, they see grass and lots of it! Bobolinks and Savannah Sparrows may be flitting around in one field while cattle graze in another. The Land Trust determined that converting and restoring much of Mandell Hill to grassland

best promotes local agriculture, conserves biodiversity, and preserves scenic and historic values of the landscape. We continue to clear trees, shrubs, and invasive plants and expand the size and configuration of the grasslands. Local farmer and rotational grazing expert, Ridge Shinn, was instrumental in getting cattle back on the land and working with the Land Trust to improve the grasslands. Portable electric fences are used to divide fields into paddocks and cattle are moved regularly to a new paddock to prevent overgrazing and distribute manure evenly across the fields. Rotational grazing not only sustains grassland habitat for declining Bobolinks to nest but also works to improve soil quality and reduce soil erosion. These farm fields have higher organic content, higher carbon content, and improved water quality in nearby streams and waterways.

Adjust seasonal mowing schedules and mowing techniques in hayfields for wildlife. Large hayfields also provide important nesting habitat for ground nesting birds such as bobolinks and meadowlarks. These birds are declining more precipitously throughout the region due to shifts in farming practices. Many fields are shifting to cultivation of row crops and the demand for wet hay and new haying techniques has increased, changing mowing schedules to more frequent rotations. Consider delaying the first cut in large hayfields supporting bobolinks until after the 1st week in July when birds have fledged young.

This detailed discussion will continue in our Summer Newsletter.

Strategies to Improve Biodiversity on Farms

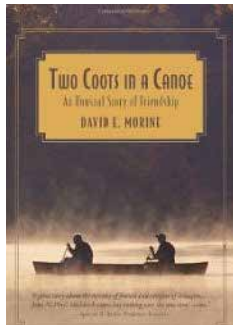
1. Utilize rotational grazing practices
2. Adjust seasonal mowing schedules and mowing techniques in hayfields for wildlife.
3. Utilize crop rotations, companion plantings, and plant a winter cover crop.
4. Remove invasive plants.
5. Maintain orchards and wild fruiting trees.
6. Establish hedgerows.
7. Install nest boxes and reserve natural habitats for insectivorous birds, bats and other wildlife.
8. Maintain vegetated buffers around ponds, streams, and drainage areas.
9. Minimize runoff from animal waste and storm water.
10. Maintain wet meadow, marshes, and other unusual wetland habitats
11. Maintain and restore forested riparian buffers and corridors for wildlife movement along the Ware River.

Conserving the land, Preserving our heritage

P.O. Box 5
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www.eqlt.org

EQLT News | INSIDE...



Book Discussion:

Two Coots in a Canoe,
by David Morine

Saturday, June 8th
6:30 PM

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GARDENS OF THE EAST QUABBIN

Creative Plantings and Stonework at Eight Gardens in Hardwick and Petersham

Saturday, June 15, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Big boulders to small stones define pathways, viewsapes and garden textures. Each gardener has incorporated the ubiquitous rocks of the regions in novel ways. Come explore these beautiful gardens and bring your family and friends.

Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased on-line at www.EQLT.org under the Events tab or call 413-477-8229. Buy two tickets and get a third free.

Tickets may be pre-ordered until Tuesday, June 11th to be mailed.



If purchased later, they will be available for pick up at the Hardwick Common on June 15th between 9:30 and 12:30. Tickets may also be purchased that morning.

Rain Date is Sunday, June 16. In the event of inclement weather please call 413-477-8229 to confirm the date change.

