

## FARMHOUSE PURCHASED, REHAB UNDERWAY!

The East Quabbin Land Trust is extremely pleased to announce the recent purchase of the Frohloff farmhouse at 236 Church Street in Ware. "With this acquisition, we are putting the farm back together into a viable unit that can sustain a vibrant agricultural enterprise," stated Jerry Reilly, EQLT Board Member. This purchase was made possible through generous grants from the Donovan Foundation and Amelia Peabody Charitable Fund.

Land trusts play a critical role in promoting meaningful agriculture within our service communities. Protecting and providing viable farmland are critical pieces that land trusts are uniquely set up to do. Sometimes more is needed.

Providing housing is a vital component to any successful farming venture at the Frohloff Farm. Being close to livestock and produce is essential for successful farming, for instance, to ensure that watering and feeding can happen in the midst of winter storms; to allow for quick retrieval of escaped animals, or regularly engaging with visitors to the farm. Integrating housing into the farming unit expands the diversity of potential farmers and saves their precious initial capital for building a sustainable viable farm business. Although historic preservation may not often be associated with land trust activities, the preservation of historic landscapes and the relation of the built environment to the natural environment can be an important community signpost that a well-known and perhaps well-loved property is again being cared for.

The East Quabbin Land Trust has identified a group of farmers interested in undertaking the rejuvenation of the Frohloff Farm in the form of a diversified family farm with crops, value added products (such as cheese and canned goods), and a traditional barnyard mix of income producing livestock. As low-income farmers with limited capital resources, they have presented a strong, staged-growth proposal that includes a balanced mix of meat, egg, orchard and crop production enterprises that are thoughtfully tailored to

build the carrying capacity of the land.

The farmers are led by an experienced farmer and agrarian consultant whose 25-year Cornell University background includes an undergraduate degree in International Agriculture, professional work in Community and Economic Development, and graduate work in Adult and Extension Education. The remainder of the group is made up of second and third year beginning farmers. Together, these farm-



ers are passionate about community supported agriculture, holistic land management practices, and sustainable organic farming. We feel that they have the knowledge, passion, business and management skills needed to enable Frohloff Farm to succeed in its mission.

Starting soon you will see more changes at the Frohloff farmhouse as contractors begin the renovation process. The farmhouse has good bones, but lacks most features for modern living, including central heating, septic system, insulation and air tight windows and doors. A new kitchen will be installed suitable for teaching sustainable, healthy food preparation. New bathrooms will meet current building codes. In addition, upgrades to the electrical and plumbing at the barn are essential for expanded use.

On Saturday February 2<sup>nd</sup> we are hosting our annual workday and bonfire at the Frohloff Farm. From 3:30 pm until dark the Frohloff house will be open for visitors to view the house. The bonfire with hotdogs and s'mores will start at dark. We hope to see you there.

## MESSAGE FROM THE Executive Director

*Cynthia Henshaw*



When I was in forestry school we spent a lot of time reading dry, scientific articles. It wasn't until I got my degree that I discovered a landowner-friendly book on forest management. And now that text is updated and improved upon by Stephen Long, with *More Than a Woodlot: Getting the Most From Your Family Forest*. This is a wonderful book that tackles critical stewardship concepts with accessible language for today's woodland owner.

The very first sentence reads, "This book is written for woodland owners who would like to learn more about their forest, manage it with sensitivity, and leave it in a better condition than they found it." Reading through the book, that's exactly what you'll get. From thinking about how your woods fit into the broader landscape, to what things to look for when you walk through the woods, Mr. Long arms family forest owners with relevant information to help make decisions on what to do now and how to plan for the future.

Mr. Long comes at this topic sensitively, both from the landowner perspective and the natural resource perspective. "Our forests, despite a long history of exploitive use, are not something to be squandered, but rather a boon to be nurtured. Land ownership, whether accidental or not, provides the opportunity for people to learn the great pleasures of tending a piece of land, improving its capacity for wildlife, increasing the value of its crop of wood, ensuring that it protects water quality and quantity, and guaranteeing that it plays its role in purifying the air and sequestering carbon." (pg. 18) It's clear from the writing that Mr. Long revels in his time out in the woods and loves to share his enthusiasm with fellow family-forest owners.

Certainly the trees are the "defining characteristic" of a family forest. What you're starting with greatly impacts what you can hope to accomplish. After a chapter on learning more about what you have in your woodlot and another chapter on various products from your woodlot, Mr. Long steers the conversation to putting together a written plan. The plan puts the current reality into context and "then describes the future actions that will be taken on the land to steer it toward accomplishment of certain goals and objectives." (pg. 83) Each family-forest owner will have their own goals and therefore different actions might be recommended for the same woods.

There is even a chapter on silviculture, or the study of how trees grow, that presents general concepts about measuring wood volume, regeneration techniques and stocking guides. Following that is a look at different approaches to management, with key decisions focused on natural diversity, sawlogs, firewood, wildlife and birds. Mr. Long points out that "whatever our focus in forest management, all of our choices have consequences beyond the decision to cut a certain set of trees for whatever reason we're cutting them. Being aware of this shouldn't paralyze us, but it should serve notice that all actions have further implications." (pg. 113)

After a discussion about taxes and the IRS, the book concludes with a chapter on *The Future of Your Forest*. Mr. Long suggests scenarios where landowners talk with their heirs, possibly set up a limited liability corporation, or use a conservation agreement to meet their long-term goals. Mr. Long concludes by stating "The best time to start thinking about all these options is now." pg. 178. I highly encourage everyone to read *More Than A Woodlot* to advance stewardship on your family forest today.

## 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 our office at:

### East Quabbin Land Trust

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## W. NEIL DAWSON: Making Connections Through Sweat Equity

By Cynthia Henshaw

Neil, and his wife Paula, moved to Hardwick as their first child was about to be born. They only meant to stay a few years at most. Incredibly, they are coming up on their thirty year anniversary of living in Hardwick and now can't imagine living anywhere else. As Neil said "Hardwick turns out to be a great place to live."

Through the years Neil has helped shape community affairs by being involved in local town government and especially as Treasurer of the Hardwick Community Fair. More recently Neil got swept into the land trust pool of volunteers by his love of being outdoors and getting some exercise.

Getting back onto a mountain bike about seven years ago with Rick Romano (an EQLT founder and Board Member), convinced Neil that the land trust was a real asset because our land was still accessible, not held as a museum. Of course putting in some sweat equity is another great way to get connected. And Neil has done just that, combining his passion for mountain biking and the Hardwick Community Fair.

Several years ago a mountain bike race was added to the Fair program. In preparation for that Neil and Rick put together a series of trails that crossed land trust properties and private lands creating a ninety minute bike ride. Neil commented that "We get compliments from racers and others because it's a challenging course. Strenuous because this is Hardwick where nothing is flat, and the trail is pretty bony." Increasing the number of riders and expanding the trail network is on his mind.

To that end, Neil and Rick are clearing trail on the north side of Barre Road. This summer we will be officially opening a trail network that weaves through the Deer Park Preserve and increases accessibility to the Coxhall Kitchen Garden. They are working on how to include this trail section in the 2013 race.

One feature of the trail is a 150-foot long boardwalk that carries visitors over several fingers of Fish Brook as it leaves a pooled area. The planking is three inch thick hemlock boards, "heavy stuff", donated by the Cersosimo Lumber Company. Neil is the Chief Financial Officer at Cersosimo, which is one of the largest privately owned lumber manufacturers in the northeast. They produce 45 million board feet of hardwood and softwood lumber a year from three sawmills in New Hampshire and Vermont. Cersosimo also

owns three dry kilns, including Hardwick Kilns located in Wheelwright. Lumber produced at Cersosimo sawmills and dried at Hardwick Kilns is recognized around the world for its exceptional quality.

Neil shared the real-life success story of the public-private partnership that created the Hardwick Kilns (HK). Supplementing the founder's own equity investment and traditional bank financing, HK accessed a federal government grant to provide the construction and startup financing for this new business. Essentially a grant to the Town,

these funds were then loaned to HK. The Town retained 100% of the principal and interest as the loan was repaid. The local trickle-down effect of this synergy has been measurable. In addition to the grant funds and annual property tax revenue to the Town, since 1984 HK has provided 20-30 good manufacturing and administrative jobs. Neil has seen many employees join the company as young people and as the years passed start families, build homes, and become active locally. It's a perfect model.

From the environmental perspective, what's happening at the Hardwick Kilns and Cersosimo Lumber is fascinating. A high tech combustion control system on the wood waste fired boiler combined with a wet-scrubber system on the smokestack that captures the fine ash means that emissions are composed primarily of water vapor. A kiln needs a tremendous amount of energy to heat the lumber to remove excessive moisture. Sawdust waste from Cersosimo sawmills are the primary energy source, nearly 20 tons each day, to maintain required steam pressure. That's the equivalent of 1,000 gallons of oil each day is averted.

Recently Neil was part of a team at the Brattleboro plant whose 18-month project was to capture excess steam energy from the wood waste fired boiler there and use it to spin a turbine generator. The electricity generated roughly equals what is used at this facility. The project was partially funded by an A.R.R.A. 1603 grant (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) targeted toward renewable energy. That makes good business sense and reduces their environmental footprint and greenhouse gases at the same time.

When asked what's next, Neil is thinking about more connections. Specifically more trail connections to create a broader network to the land, which means putting in a little more sweat equity. Says he, "It will be fun!"



*Rick Romano and Neil Dawson after a full day of clearing trail and installing boardwalk resting on more planking for the trail network.*

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## HARDWICK ELEMENTARY GETS COOKING

By Kelly Wheeler

In the week before Thanksgiving, many students are daydreaming of having the day off from school to eat pie and watch football. Hardwick Elementary School students, however, were engaged in cooking for their community. Mr. Carey's 3<sup>rd</sup> grade class participated in a Service Learning Project in which the students learned about the Wampanoag people and their relationship to maize. Jessica Geary began by telling the children about the Wampanoag and their culture. They were able to see wampum, the shell they used as currency and some birch bark crafts. The students were given some dried corn and a mortar and pestle to grind the corn into cornmeal as the Native Americans would have done. Other students were given a Mason jar filled with heavy cream to shake into butter. Finally, the students worked together mixing batter to make cornbread muffins. These muffins were donated to the Hardwick Community Supper for their Thanksgiving meal. The Community Supper offers delicious meals every Wednesday, made from local produce and sometimes even local meats such as venison. It is a great opportunity to share good food and interact with your neighbors in an atmosphere where all are welcome.

Shortly after this project, I was back in the school cafeteria with Ginnie Reed working on her annual Stone Soup event. Ginnie was the impetus in creating and maintaining the Hardwick School Garden last summer as the head of the summer school program. Together we planted a bed of potatoes that were harvested and stored until we were ready to make Stone Soup. Both Nicole Ricchiazzi and Rachel Brunell's 1<sup>st</sup> grade classes read many cultural versions of Stone Soup and joined together to cook a healthy lunch for each other.

The students all worked together washing and chopping the vegetables and adding them to the soup pot. The children who had participated in the planting and harvesting of the potatoes were so proud of what they had grown to contribute to this feast. The next day, the soup slowly simmered all morning until lunchtime. The students pushed their desks together to form a long dining table which they covered with hand decorated table cloths they had made the day before. The children practiced proper

table manners and they were all so polite. Everyone loved the soup. Well, except a small group who said they don't like vegetables. I tried to convince them that we should call it French Fry Soup because potatoes are what French Fries are made of. It didn't fly! They saw right through my well intended trickery.

In my experience, children desire a deeper connection with nature and their food. This desire has been muted by years of chemically-derived convenience foods and hours



indoors doing worksheets and playing video games. The key to developing healthy, ecologically-conscious future adults is to allow them to get dirty and give them the space to discover the natural world. Growing food and cooking it with children provides them a better understanding of the interconnection of all life on Earth. What we are calling for is a revolution in public education: "When the hearts and minds of our children are captured by a school lunch curriculum, enriched with the experience in the garden; sustainability will become the lens through which they see the world." -Alice Waters

Above all, I have realized that children need to be taken out of the classroom to create, discover, build and do things with their own hands. To quote a Native American Proverb, "Tell me and I'll forget. Show me and I may not remember. Involve me and I will understand." Getting children involved in simple tasks like gardening and cooking will teach them valuable skills they will use to better their lives. Perhaps, more importantly, it has an enormous potential to create adults who are stewards of the land who will strive to protect the soil, air, and water that sustains us.

### Friendship Cornbread

<i>Combine in Large bowl:</i>	<i>Combine in small bowl:</i>
1 cup flour	4 Tbs. honey or maple syrup
1 cup corn meal	2 eggs or 1/2 cup yogurt
1/2 tsp. salt	1 cup milk
2 tsp. baking powder	4 Tbs. oil

Mix the dry ingredients in one bowl and the wet ingredients in the other. Combine the two with as few strokes as possible. Place paper liners in a muffin pan. Pour the batter into the liners. Bake at 400 degrees for 10-15 minutes.

## THE POWER OF NETWORKS IN LOCAL CONSERVATION

By David Kittredge, Harvard Forest, UMass Amherst, and EQLT member

Many people in New England live by the proverb that if things don't appear broken, they don't really need fixing. And they apparently apply this philosophy to not only their cars, plumbing, and computers, but to their woods, as well. Most family or private owners of woods don't have a management plan prepared by a licensed forester. They don't perceive a need for a plan, since their land provides many of the things they desire -- privacy, wildlife, a place to walk, hunt, or take the kids, and a little cordwood or exercise. Their woods don't really change that much, and it's easy to assume that if there isn't a problem, who needs a plan and professional advice? Their woods aren't apparently "broke", and don't need "fixing".

But every now and then things happen in life, and a little extra cash could make a difference. For example, an expensive medical procedure isn't fully covered by insurance. Two or three tuition bills arrive in the same week. Death or divorce requires dividing up some assets. Several drivers in the family mean an extra car would be helpful. The furnace fails, or the time has come to put in some new energy efficient windows. Out of the blue comes the need for cash, and a possible solution is the sale of timber or land.

Do you take the first offer of cash for your timber or a building lot carved out of your woods? Since most landowners don't sell timber or land very often, how do they know it is a good price? Maybe there are other alternatives to cutting all the timber larger than 12 inches in diameter, or punching in that house lot. Unless owners know their alternatives, it is hard for them to make an informed decision, and avoid a hasty, reactive one. "Look before you leap" is another saying that seems relevant in this case!

Of course owners who do have a management plan and experience with a forester know who to turn to for advice. Owners who have worked with Cynthia Henshaw at EQLT know what their options are for land and understand what a Conservation Restriction is. Our research at UMass Amherst and the Harvard Forest tells us, though, that most landowners don't know a forester or their local land trust. Most people wouldn't feel comfortable representing themselves in court alone without a lawyer. Most people want a lawyer involved in an important real estate transaction.

Many people rely on tax professionals and accountants for advice in making the right tax, retirement, or investment decisions. The question is: How can landowners be connected to the right land trust or forest professionals when the time comes to make a decision about their land?

The answer lies not in more courses, books, or magazines for landowners, or more government cost sharing programs or free management plans, but in the power of networks.



*Landowners Harry and Michelle Webb of Hardwick are interviewed by Harvard Forest summer interns Laura Bartock and Emma Schnur about decision making and sources of information about their land.*

Connecting landowners who have experience with those who do not can be extremely helpful in encouraging informed decisions. Our studies show that while landowners with experience in timber or conservation restriction decision making might not be licensed professionals, they can speak from personal first-hand experience about what they did, and how it worked out. They can also pass on advice about who they worked with and other sources of helpful information. This advice and experience from a peer or fellow landowner can be very helpful. The results of

interviews and surveys of landowners show that though they are not professionals, other landowners are often as involved, helpful, and trusted as professionals. And, they can provide that important connection to a professional, or serve as a source of encouragement or moral support. Some landowners don't necessarily trust a professional at first, since they believe there is a possible conflict of interest and might stand to personally gain from the timber or land transaction. Again, connecting with another peer landowner can help overcome this hesitation.

As long ago as 1935, famous biologist and forester Aldo Leopold said: "Relegating conservation to government is like relegating virtue to the Sabbath. Turns over to professionals what should be the daily work of amateurs." Leopold knew that conservation was too important, and especially in landscapes owned primarily by private families and individuals, it couldn't be left to the government or professionals alone. There is a powerful role for landowners, volunteers, and others to participate formally and informally in "the network" and connect landowners with other sources of information. The more connected this loose, informal network is, the higher the likelihood of landowners being reached and encouraged to make informed rather than reactive decisions. And the more informed decisions on the landscape, the higher the likelihood of more conservation happening in the East Quabbin region.

*Conserving the land, Preserving our heritage*

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## FARMHOUSE PURCHASED

WINTER 2013 | VOLUME 10 | ISSUE 1

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### JANUARY...

**Saturday, January 19, 7:00 PM**

**Owl Prowl** – Join Chris Buelow and Jeff Smith for this evening of owl hooting and quiet listening. This year is sure to be the year to hear some owls!! We'll be traveling to a variety of locations to have the best chance for success. Meet at the EQLT office, 120 Ridge Road in Hardwick, to carpool. Be sure to dress warmly.

### FEBRUARY...

**Saturday, February 2, Starting at 10:00 AM**

**Workday, House Tour and Bonfire at Frohloff Farm, 221 Church Street, Ware** – Join us for all or part of the day at the Frohloff Farm to welcome in 2013. Starting at 10am we will be working around the farmyard, burning brush and general clean up. We'll offer the opportunity to walk through the Frohloff house between 3:30pm and dusk, for any visitors interested in seeing the house before renovations begin in earnest. At dusk we'll have a roaring bonfire, including hot dogs, s'mores and hot cocoa. Bring the whole family and explore the Frohloff Farm.

**Saturday, February 16, 5:00 PM**

**Twelfth Annual Dinner and Silent Auction, at the Cultural Center at Eagle Hill, Hardwick** – Come join us for a festive dinner and silent auction at the Cultural Center at Eagle Hill with a buffet catered by Reed's Catering of New Braintree and bread from Rose 32. Tickets are \$55 per person. Tables are set for eight or ten people and you can reserve your tickets by responding to the invitation mailing or at [www.eqlt.org](http://www.eqlt.org). Please respond by February 8th.

**Saturday, February 23, 9:30 AM**

**Eagle Watching at Quabbin Gate 35, Hardwick** – Join Chris Buelow and Jeff Smith to explore parts of the Quabbin Reservoir for overwintering Eagles. Don't forget your binoculars and dress warmly!