

Welcome to our new Stewardship Coordinator: Caren Caljouw

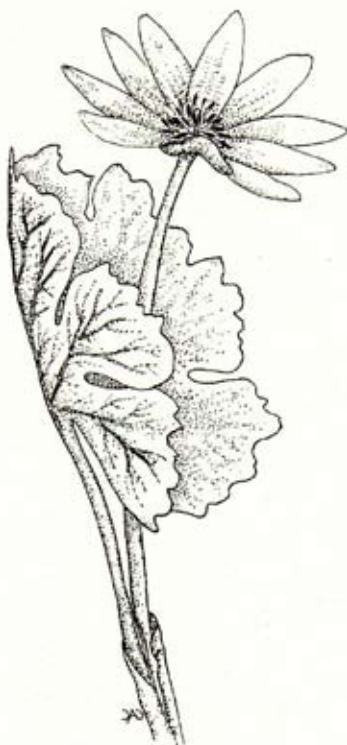
Please join East Quabbin Land Trust in welcoming Caren Caljouw as our new Stewardship Coordinator. Caren will be working part-time in the East Quabbin Land Trust Office in Hardwick. She comes to us with a wealth of experience in land stewardship, conservation planning, and biological inventory. Caren holds a Bachelor of Science from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in Wildlife Biology. She managed the Virginia Natural Area Preserve System, The Nature Conservancy's preserves in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, and worked as a natural resource planner for the Maine Department of Conservation. She has much experience in the use of prescribed fire to manage landscapes and has success with invasive species control, wetland restoration, endangered species recovery, and wildlife habitat enhancement.



Caren Caljouw at ease in the outdoors.

Caren lives in Oakham with her husband Tom Rawinski and 14 year old son Peter, who both enjoy exploring the outdoors as much as she. Her many hobbies include gardening, fishing, field botany, and natural history illustration. Caren is happy tromping over hill and dale, as well as through deep swamps and woods. She looks forward to getting to know and care for EQLT's wonderful properties.

Priority stewardship initiatives Caren will undertake in the office include writing management plans for properties, documenting conservation restrictions, and ensuring our Geographic Information System (GIS) and Property Databases are up to date and readily accessible. She will be busy in the field coordinating prescribed burns, invasive species control, wildlife enhancement projects, and monitoring the effectiveness of our management actions at Deer Park, Frohloff Farm, the Rail Trail and elsewhere. Caren will also help design trails and interpretive facilities to showcase EQLT's properties and highlight the intrinsic value of our natural and working landscape. She looks forward to fun days afield working closely with private landowners and our dedicated volunteers to accomplish the important mission of the East Quabbin Land Trust. ■



Bloodroot, a beautiful spring wildflower found in rich woods throughout the East Quabbin area.

Hand drawn by Caren Caljouw.

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MESSAGE FROM THE Executive Director

Cynthia Henshaw



We are delighted to welcome Caren Caljouw as Stewardship Coordinator. Caren's wealth of experience at other non-profits and knowledge of the natural world is a tremendous benefit for the land trust's progress in stewarding our lands. Some of the first projects that Caren will be tackling include completing management plans for the Baker property and two others, creating trail maps for the Patrill Hollow Preserve and Moose Brook Preserve, and expanding our volunteer steward network. Please join us in officially welcoming her to the East Quabbin Land Trust at the Annual Membership Meeting on May 15th.

More changes will be coming to the Frohloff Farm this year! We are pleased to be working with Margarita Brown, an organic farmer from Ware, who will be growing vegetables at the Frohloff Farm. This spring Margarita will plant a portion of the area behind the barn to strawberries, pumpkins and gourds. Visitors might find chickens too! Other changes planned at include designing and installing a pollinator garden with the help of students from Quabbin Regional High School, improving the drainage around the barn foundation, and more tree clearing to expand the pastureland. We hope that you will join us this summer and fall for special community celebrations at the Frohloff Farm!

Also, work at the Mass Central Rail Trail continues. The lattice-truss bridge over the Ware River is the construction focus for this summer. In April we start removing the existing ties. In addition, a portion of the wood beams need to be replaced with metal beams before the new deck and railing can be installed. Volunteers are needed to paint the metal beams and help disassemble the existing bridge sections. Please let me know if you have some time to help with this incredibly important conservation effort. ■



Honorees at the Tenth Annual Dinner and Silent Auction

*Founders of the land trust: Rick Romano, Lucinda Childs, Huck Truesdell, Bob Paquet, Genevieve Stillman, Jerry Reilly, Stan White and Don Boothman
Not pictured, Warren Johnson*

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 trust, to become a member, or request a change of address, please contact our office 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

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VOLUNTEER PROFILE... A Conversation with Jerry Reilly

EQLT ■ You've been involved with the land trust since its earliest days. What keeps you involved?

JR ■ It's great working with such a dedicated group of people, both on the staff, the board and on committees. We have a wonderful group of volunteers focused on the land trust and its mission. It's the group dynamic that I find so rewarding. I get to meet and work with interesting people as the committees expand and new people participate in our workdays.

EQLT ■ Are you active in other organizations and groups too?

JR ■ Sure. Part of my background locally was that I was on the first Open Space Committee and Master Plan in the early 1990's. Liz and I were on the school building committee and have been involved with the food booth at the Hardwick Fair for twenty five years. One of the wonderful things about this community is the spirit of volunteerism that is so apparent here. Of course, it's one of the legacies that we are working hard to pass along to the next generation.

One of the other activities I participated in was as President of the Historical Society a long, long time ago. I have become conscious of the history of the area which dates from the 1600's. I'm inclined to value the history of a place.

EQLT ■ Is there a place that you specifically want to see the history highlighted?

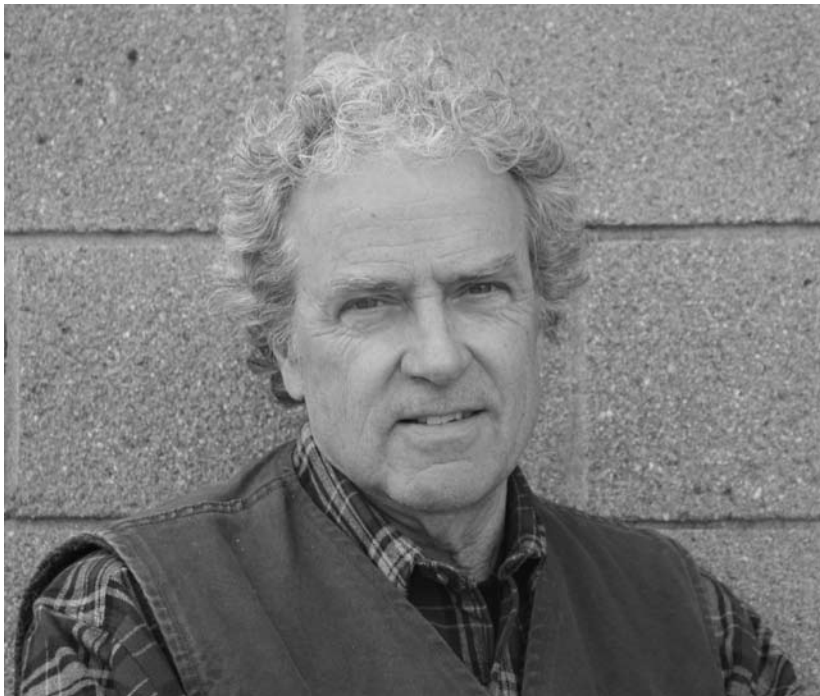
JR ■ Yes, I'm particularly interested in the Moose Brook valley. There are very strong indications that it was the first industrial area of this region. The valley includes Old Furnace, which was responsible for early iron making. The first access to the east was across "The Great Bridge", which is the location of the present Silver Bridge between Hardwick and New Braintree. The Sixth Massachusetts Turnpike used that bridge crossing and there are half a dozen mill sites north of the Turnpike along the Moose Brook. The valley is also a really great area for wildlife. Chris Buelow has said that it's the second best birding area in the Commonwealth.

EQLT ■ Sounds like conservation can bring good results for those interested in our historical landscapes and the wildlife.

JR ■ Yes, absolutely. And conservation is essential to keep our working landscapes too, especially those where the history is still being played out through the actions of the current generations.

EQLT ■ Can you give us an example of what you mean?

JR ■ The Jakshtis farm on Petersham Road is a good example of conservation helping to maintain a farming tradition at the same time it helps transfer land from one generation to another. In that case the property transferred to a young farmer out of the family, but the point is still valid. Conservation of the farm encourages the historical use of the land and leaves the opportunity for farming to continue. Everyone benefited when that conservation effort was finalized.



Jerry Reilly: Conservationist, Founding Board Member and Treasurer

EQLT ■ The Jakshtis farm is one recent success story. Are there others you'd like to highlight or any specific challenges facing conservation to share with our readers?

JR ■ Last weekend I attended the Mass Land Conservation Conference and attended several informative workshops. It's pretty clear that entry level farmers, with their limited resources are not going to have sufficient capital to purchase land. It was interesting to learn that at the present time about 40% of all agricultural land in the country is rented or leased. So with that context, it puts the notion of the land trust as

an agricultural land bank higher in my priority. We need to work harder to conserve our critical farmland and keep it available for farmers. With the current state of the economy and land values we can't expect farmers to continue working the land if they have to pay a huge mortgage on top of making a living.

EQLT ■ Any final thoughts?

JR ■ With my treasurer hat on, I want to emphasize that we need to continue to broaden our appeal to conservation minded folks within our eight town region. We do have wonderfully generous supporters now, but it's imperative that we continue to meet new people and that we share our vision for a community that cares enough for both our history and a quality future for all.

TRIBUTE TO MAGI

by Judith Jones

Magi Durham Ziff was an amazing friend to the East Quabbin Land Trust. She came onto the board in the fall of 2000 and brought with her, her signature grace, humor, and energy. She was not particularly interested in walking the boundaries of the properties or counting bobolinks in a pasture, but she saw clearly our need to raise money to accomplish our goals. Luckily, for us, she had the initiative and charisma to build the fundraising side of the organization and co-chair the Development Committee.

Magi loved to socialize and she was a consummate hostess. She took her interest in people and her love of entertaining and used it to make the land trust's fundraising events fun and exciting. The Annual Dinner Auction was her baby. With her imagination and powers of persuasion, she convinced her extraordinary friends to part with their extraordinary possessions and built an auction that was filled with curios that made each auction unique. She was an excellent "Master of Ceremony" encouraging bidding and laughter, selflessly bidding on items that had come from her own house, and routinely out-bidding her husband Howard just so that the show was a success.



Margaret (Magi) Durham Ziff

We learned a great deal from Magi, and the dinner auction is now an institution. She also took the initiative to run two extensive and successful garden tours that included her own beautiful English country garden in New Braintree. For the board, she made her house and delicious cooking available for our annual strategic planning retreats. She would always say that you make better connections with people if you break bread with them. Magi was a producer, in her career and in her life. She was happiest providing for others and using her talents to put the right people together to make something good happen. We will always be grateful for her friendship and the lessons she taught us, and we miss her sorely. ■



Margaret (Magi) Durham Ziff 1937 - 2011

Margaret Durham Ziff died on January 13, 2011 at the age of 73. She is survived by her husband Howard Ziff, daughter Sarah Durham, step-daughters Debby Ziff Cook and Amy Ziff, her three devoted sons-in-law, her brother Tony Compton, niece Jane Compton, and six grandchildren. Her radiance, warmth, wit and wisdom will be missed terribly.

Known to her friends as Magi, she was born in a pub in London, just before the Second World War. She grew up in London and its environs before moving to New York City in the 1960s. She was a pioneering female advertising executive who worked at agencies such as Tinker, Gray, Della Famina, and others during Madison Avenue's heyday. In 1996, she retired to New Braintree, MA where she devoted her energy to local politics and served for twelve years as a member of the town's

select board. She proudly served as a board member for the East Quabbin Land Trust for many years, helping raise money and preserve farmland in the rural community she adored.

Magi was a devoted and open-minded friend who inspired deep loyalty and caring in others. She adored playing cards, cooking, gardening, music, and a good laugh shared with friends.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations in her memory be made to the East Quabbin Land Trust, P.O. Box 5, Hardwick, MA 01037 or www.eqlt.org. All donations received will be used to advance land conservation in New Braintree in honor of Magi and her love for the community. ■

GOODBYE COLD WINTER, HELLO WARM SPRING!

by Sarah Mildren

Two of the coldest days of the winter happened to be on days when service learning projects were scheduled. The first was the Quest to End Hunger event on January 22. Chrisoula Duros did an excellent job with the planning and execution of this event. Even though the weathermen were warning people not to go outdoors on this day, Duros and her crew of 15 volunteers from Quabbin Regional High School showed up ready to take on the cold weather. Although there were only a handful of people that came out to try out the quest it was a successful event, and the volunteers had lots of fun playing in the snow. The Mandell Hill Food Web Quest is available on the EQLT website for people to print up and try at their leisure.

On February 19 the Hardwick Tiger Cubs braved the wind chill on yet another one of the coldest days of the year. All the boys were bundled up and excited to participate in the Great Backyard Bird Count. Bird watchers Jeff Smith, Chris Buelow, and Jenna Garvey lead this bird watching adventure. We met at Mandell Hill, but quickly made the decision to move the bird watching event to Gate 43 of the Quabbin so that we would have better wind cover. As we hiked, and had our eyes peeled for birds, we noticed a bird's nest, some tracks, and even some scat! The most exciting part of our trip was when we saw 5 Ravens soaring high above the treetops. After the trip was done, the data was submitted to the Audubon Society and Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The Tiger Cubs and I are planning another bird watching event and a trail maintenance project.

Spring has sprung, which means that vernal pools will soon be full of life! The kids from the Hardwick Youth Center are coming on a trip to explore the vernal pool at Patrill Hollow Preserve. The kids will get to see some cool amphibians such as wood frogs and spotted salamanders. Even if we don't see any of those critters,

I am sure we will see egg masses (which kids always think are super cool). Teaching kids about the importance of vernal pools, and exploring vernal pool life is one of my favorite springtime activities. If you know of a youth group that is interested in participating in an event like this, please contact me at servicelearning@eqlt.org.

An activity series that will provide the local children with something free, fun, and educational to keep them busy outdoors over the upcoming April vacation week. Activities will include a pond study, wildlife tracking, trail maintenance, invasive species removal, and environmental education games. Detailed information will be distributed through the schools.

Right now I'm collaborating with teachers from Quabbin Regional High School to expand the curriculum for the summer MCAS Enrichment program to include several service learning opportunities. Activities include water quality testing, calculating the stream velocity, basic stewardship, nature journaling, writing a children's story, and several other experiential learning activities. It is going to be a great program, and the kids will learn a tremendous amount. ■



Some youngsters getting help stamping their Food Web Quest at Mandell Hill.

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 Abby Weintraub
 Marjorie Wissiup
 Dorothy Wood
 Howard and Harriet Zabusky
 Barry and Barbara Ziff
 Lori Ziff and Jerry Dowgewicz

10th Annual Dinner and Silent Auction

The Board of Directors sincerely thanks everyone that attended and supported our annual fundraising dinner and silent auction on February 19th. The proceeds from the event support the varied programs of the East Quabbin Land Trust. The silent auction raised \$11,200. A challenge was presented to attendees where each additional gift to the land trust made that night would be matched, dollar for dollar. That challenge raised \$18,620 from attendees and will be doubled! Many thanks to all our generous supporters.

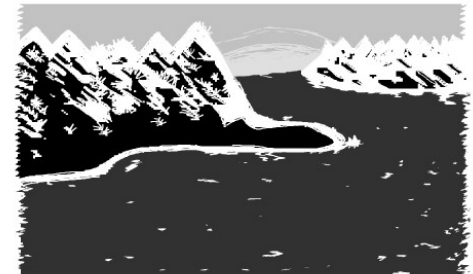
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Please support these businesses and thank them for underwriting the land trust dinner!

A special thank you to **Rose 32 Bread** for donating bread for the dinner.

ON THE LAND...

Creating Early Successional Habitat at Deer Park Preserve, Hardwick

by Caren Caljouw

In late January you may have seen or heard a “brontosaurus” – a large land clearing machine that devours and mulches vegetation – busily working at Deer Park Preserve in Hardwick. The brontosaurus helped reclaim 11 acres overrun with tall dense vegetation bordering Fish Brook and Barre Road. The rolling hills and level uplands adjacent to Fish Brook had grown into thick impenetrable patches of multiflora rose, oriental bittersweet, tall grey birch, and red maple after farmland abandonment and cessation of grazing some 20 years ago. This ambitious habitat restoration will recreate and maintain early successional shrubland on a portion of Deer Park that will eventually be used by a variety of nesting songbirds, small mammals, reptiles and amphibians dependent on a mosaic of low shrubs, sapling trees, grasses, forbs, and bare ground. This work is the culmination of extensive stewardship planning articulated in a Forest Stewardship Plan and Early Successional Habitat Management Plan completed for Deer Park Preserve in 2007 and 2009 respectively.

The brontosaurus is a fascinating machine to watch as it reduces tall vegetation to mulch with amazing rapidity. It is essentially a modified excavator with a cutting head attached on a long arm. The cutting head is composed of a drum with sharp triangular teeth arranged in parallel rows. The drum rotates outward at high speeds and is used to efficiently grind small diameter trees, tall brush, and vines from the top downward into small wood fiber mulch. The operator of the brontosaurus is able to selectively choose vegetation, allowing favorable trees including apple, elm, hickory and oak to be left in place as food and cover for wildlife. Large trees over eight inches in diameter with low economic and wildlife value are cut and moved off site. Soon the sound of heavy machinery at Deer Park will be replaced with the cheerful songs of field sparrows, prairie warblers, chestnut-sided warblers and towhees – all native birds dependent on a mosaic of early successional habitats. Mowing, prescribed burning, or light grazing will be used on a rotational basis at Deer Park to maintain the low stature and diverse structure favored by these birds and other wildlife species recently documented as declining throughout the northeastern United States due to development, reforestation, and expansion of invasive plant monocultures.

Complementing the mechanical restoration work at Deer Park is an invasive plant management program initiated in late 2010. The goal of this program is to control aggressive nonnative plants

such as Asiatic bittersweet, bush honeysuckle, Japanese barberry, and multiflora rose, which often form large almost impenetrable thickets providing little benefit to wildlife and reducing native plant diversity. Many of these invasive plants require a combination of cutting and selective herbicide treatment to reduce heavy infestations. Unwanted invasive plants were mapped, flagged, and herbicide treatments carefully carried out by experienced licensed applicators contracted by EQLT. A second year of follow-up treatments will occur this summer. Since the seeds of many invasive plants remain viable in the soil for years and seedlings and hardy resprouts are likely to continue to emerge after the initial treatments are completed, our stewardship staff and volunteers will annually inspect the property for invasives and remove small infestations as necessary.

The land trust is working very closely with the Hardwick Conservation Commission to ensure that Fish Brook, the wet-

lands, and adjacent wetland buffer zone are not damaged by heavy equipment and vegetation management actions during the course of this work.

We are fortunate to have the monetary support and technical assistance of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in implementing this project. The agency’s Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) provides critical seed money for our restoration efforts. The land trust would not have been able to quickly address our stewardship needs for Deer Park without the help of NRCS. Seventy-five per cent of the installation costs for conservation practices at Deer Park, roughly \$28,000, are provided by NRCS to help restore early successional habitat for declining birds and wildlife. The land trust has entered a ten year cooperative agreement with NRCS to accomplish this ambitious project. EQLT will provide the critical oversight and long term stewardship of early successional habitats at Deer Park Preserve.

This habitat restoration effort will also greatly enhance the natural beauty of Deer Park Preserve. The restoration not only increases wildlife diversity but improves our access and views of the picturesque woodlands, forested swamps, wet meadows, shrublands, fields and cultural features on site. Better panoramic views of the surrounding farmland allow us to observe current farming practices and better interpret the rich agricultural and landscape history of the area dating back several hundred years. ■



The brontosaurus at work in Deer Park Preserve mulches standing trees up to six inches in diameter and dense thickets of invasives such as multiflora rose and oriental bittersweet.

Conserving the land, Preserving our heritage

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Meet Caren Caljouw

SPRING 2011 | VOLUME 8 | ISSUE 2

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL...

Thursday, April 28, 6:30 PM

Bobcat Basics, at the Merriam-Gilbert Library, West Brookfield – Are you curious about cats? Laura Hadjuk, Furbearer and Black Bear Project Leader with MassWildlife, will share her knowledge about bobcats in Mass, including the biology, ecology and habits of a secretive and elusive predator. Co-sponsored by the East Quabbin Land Trust and Opacum Land Trust. Please register by contacting the East Quabbin Land Trust at 413-477-8229 or chenshaw@eqlt.org. Suggested donation of \$3/ind. or \$5/family.

MAY...

Saturday, May 7, 10 AM to 2 PM

A Celebration of Local Foods, Farms and Gardens, at the Haston Free Public Library, North Brookfield – The East Quabbin Land Trust will be one of numerous organizations, farms, nurseries, and others sharing their locally produced products and information. This gathering is just in time for you to come pick up a special gift for your mother to celebrate Mother's Day.

Sunday, May 15, 4 PM

Annual Membership Meeting, Potluck Dinner and Botanical Tour, at EQLT office, 120 Ridge Road, Hardwick – Caren Caljouw, botanist and EQLT's new Stewardship Coordinator, will lead participants on a botanical tour of the Morss grounds highlighting many interesting plants and herbs originally planted by Betty Morss. After the potluck supper and annual membership meeting there will be a botanical slide show with other fascinating plants from Massachusetts. Please bring a dish to share.

JUNE...

Saturday, June 18, 9 AM

Wildflower, Wild Critters and Wonderful Old Trees, meet at intersection of Gaffney and New Braintree Roads, Oakham – Join us for a nature walk exploring interesting woodlands, wet meadows, and forested swamps of the MA Division of Fish and Wildlife's Oakham Wildlife Management Area. Rain date is June 25. Bring binoculars, bug spray, and rubber boots. Guides will be local naturalists Caren Caljouw, Tom Rawinski, and Ron Wolanin. Walk is co-sponsored by the East Quabbin Land Trust and the Oakham Open Space Committee.