



# *The* MIDDLESEX LANDSCAPE

Serving the towns of Durham, Middlefield, Middletown, Cromwell, Portland and East Hampton

Volume 21, No. 14

The Middlesex Land Trust, Inc.

Spring 2016

## **DR. NICHOLAS BELLANTONI TO SPEAK AT THE ANNUAL MEETING AND DEDICATION OF THE BRAINERD QUARRY PRESERVE ON SATURDAY APRIL 30TH**

The Middlesex Land Trust is pleased to invite you to our 2016 Annual Meeting and Dedication celebrating our new Brainerd Quarry Preserve. This event will be held at the Haddam Neck Fair Grounds, on Quarry Hill Rd. on Saturday, April 30th. A short business meeting will begin at 9:30am, with a dedication ceremony and presentation by Dr. Bellantoni beginning at 10:00am. Refreshments and conversation will follow, with a hike on the preserve for those who would like to get out on the land.

Dr. Nicholas F. Bellantoni will give a presentation about the Brainerd Quarry and other archeological sites on Middlesex Land Trust preserves in the Haddam Neck area and around our region and the Connecticut River. Dr. Bellantoni serves as Emeritus State Archaeologist with the Connecticut State Museum of Natural History and Archaeology Center and as Adjunct Associate Research Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Connecticut.

In 2015 the Middlesex Land Trust, in partnership with the Connecticut River Gateway Commission, preserved this fifty acre parcel of open space overlooking the Connecticut River in Haddam Neck and we will be celebrating this as our newest preserve.

A new trail system has been created for the public to enjoy hiking and passive recreation. Paths that run along both the ridge and the base of dramatic cliffs, created from the property's historic use as a quarry, offer breathtaking views of the Connecticut River and Haddam Meadows State Park.

*Continued on Page 3*



Hold the date:

**Saturday April 30th**

Starting at 9:30 am

Middlesex Land Trust  
Annual Meeting.

Dedication of the Brainerd  
Quarry Preserve

Haddam Neck Fair Hall

The Middlesex Land Trust Inc. is a non-profit organization whose mission is to preserve open space in northern Middlesex County (Durham, Middlefield, Middletown, Cromwell, Portland and East Hampton)

#### **Board of Directors**

Ralph Urban, East Hampton  
Co-Chair

Stuart Winquist, East Hampton  
Co-Chair

Diane Moore, Durham  
*Secretary*

Donna Monnes, Cromwell  
*Treasurer*

Douglas Bonoff, East Hampton

Kim Diver, Ashford

Thomas Heidel, East Hampton

William Howard, Esq. Middletown

John LeShane, Portland

Ben Shoemaker, Middletown

John Shomsky, Middlefield

Chantal Foster, Portland - Alternate

David Brown, Middletown  
Executive Director

***The Middlesex Landscape*** is published by:

The Middlesex Land Trust, Inc  
deKoven House Community Center  
27 Washington Street  
Middletown, CT 06457

860-343-7537

info@middlesexlandtrust.org  
www.middlesexlandtrust.org

#### **Spring 2016 Contributors:**

Articles: Contributors: David Brown, Alicea Charamut, Kim Diver, Jim McHutchison, Lucy Meigs, Stu Winquist

Photos: David Brown, Lucy Meigs, Jan Liesener, Caren Ye.

Editing/Layout/Design: Jim McHutchison

## **CO-CHAIRMAN'S CORNER**

Dear MxLTers:

Proposals to amend the Connecticut Constitution to seek to ensure that land purchased for long term preservation by the State of Connecticut does not get sold or traded without a thorough, public and wholly transparent vetting process are circulating in the corridors of state power. Frankly, it's high time. The impetus for this of course is the now infamous, almost-implemented so called "Haddam land swap" whereby the State, unbeknownst to many (including many conservation minded folks in and out of government), was going to swap a certain commercially valuable parcel of preserved land on the Connecticut River for a privately held tract of forest land that would have been added to one of the state forests. Luckily the proposed transaction came to light and was revealed to be an inappropriate proposal.

The episode was not, shall we say, Connecticut's finest moment, but it was an important wake up call for vigilance by all those who cherish and seek to protect open space for the public's enjoyment and the ecological and quality of life values such preservation enhances. Those who give or sell open space land to the State should be able to rest assured that the land will be held and stewarded to achieve and uphold these values without being a pawn in some deal or arrangement made to serve the short term interests of only certain citizens.

As a nonprofit organization, your Middlesex Land Trust's guiding principle is the preservation of suitable open space lands in perpetuity to promote ecological health and diversity and the public's enjoyment of all the benefits such lands provide. We want those benefits to accrue to ourselves, our families and our neighbors, and indeed to all who may come after us. Whatever the final resolution of these proposals is, the impetus behind them is commendable. When -- through the hard work and dedication of conservationists, whether public or private -- land has been committed to open space, those who come after them must respect and honor those commitments.

Ralph Urban, Co-chair

***Think Globally – Act Locally***

## BRainerd QUARRY PRESERVE (CONTINUED)

The land has been named the Brainerd Quarry Preserve to reflect the historic importance of the Brainerd Family in Haddam. Daniel Brainerd was one of the 28 founding settlers of Haddam in 1662, and a century later, in 1762, Deacon Ezra Brainerd opened a quarry on this now preserved site. The quarry operated for more than 150 years, shipping stone down river to New York and as far south as Maryland, Virginia and New Orleans.

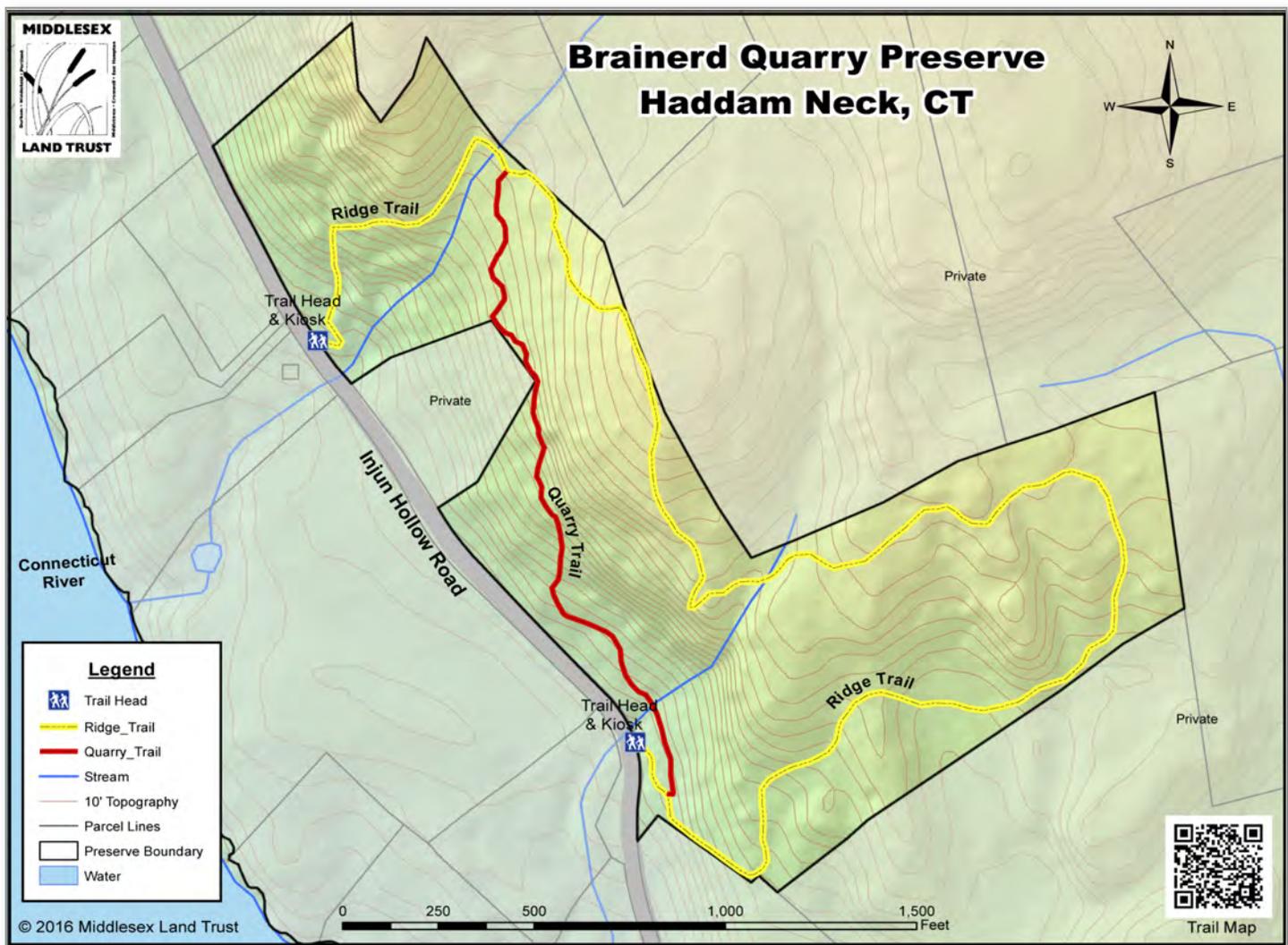
This significant property above the Connecticut River lies along Injun Hollow Road just north of the 544 acre Connecticut Yankee property, and is accessible from two trailheads located along the road.

This preserve helps protect the lower Connecticut River valley, one of the “most important ecological landscapes in the United States” according to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The preservation of this property ensures that these lands will forever remain as open space for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

“Conservation is a state of harmony  
between men and land.” ”

Aldo Leopold



## MIDDLESEX LAND TRUST PARTNERS WITH EVERYONE OUTSIDE TO GET THE KIDS OUTSIDE!

Most of us spend more time working and in front of a monitor than we spend outside. I would guess that all of us who are members of the Middlesex Land Trust enjoy spending time in the woods. For most of us, this love of spending time in the natural world grew from our childhood experiences. If we were lucky, we spent many hours a week outside building forts, playing imaginary games, exploring, wandering, climbing trees, etc. Today there are very few children who are fortunate enough to have any unstructured time outside. The statistics are staggering. In the movie *Mother Nature's Child*, Stephen Kellert of Yale University reports that that kids today typically spend 44 hours a week in front of a monitor and less than 40 minutes outside. At most schools, science education is inside and is primarily focused on global rather than local ecosystems. Kids today often know more about the creatures of the rainforest than their own back yard. They have lost interest and understanding of their local ecosystem.

Recent studies have shown the key factors that lead to adult environmental stewardship behavior are a childhood with enjoyable time spent in nature and an adult mentor. This was far more important than education about the environment where direct interaction and touching is generally discouraged both for environmental protection and safety. There are of course risks to letting kids spend time outside in the woods. However, given the recent studies and the rise in childhood obesity, asthma, inattention, etc., we need to carefully think about what risks we are taking if we don't let kids spend time outside.

Many of us are passionate about the natural world and have worked hard to take family members, friends and others we know out into the woods. In 2008, Lucy Meigs created Everyone Outside ([EveryoneOutside.org](http://EveryoneOutside.org)) to provide opportunities for more people to spend time outside developing a deeper understanding and appreciation of the natural world. This year, Lisa Leisener joined Everyone Outside as their Enrichment Program Director and Financial Officer. With Lisa's assistance Everyone Outside has recently become a non-profit organization that, like the Land Trust, is based in northern Middlesex County.

To get more kids into the woods, Middlesex Land Trust and Everyone Outside have teamed up in a new education collaboration to bring more outdoor programming to our schools and communities. This joint effort is intended to get more people, especially children, outside and into nature, and to bring more families to know the Land Trust and our Preserves. With Everyone Outside's teaching knowledge and experience and the Land Trust's land and support, we will be working together to provide more opportunities for outdoor education with a focus primarily on the children in our communities.



*Everyone Outside boy and volunteer*

Partnering with the Land Trust, Everyone Outside will be working to offer guided hikes, enrichment programs both during and after school, and training for teachers and volunteers (who assist with programs). For one of our first joint events, Everyone Outside staff will be leading two hikes at Middlesex Land Trust's Mica Ledges Preserve in Durham for Trails Day weekend this coming June. (A family hike is scheduled for June 4th, and a women's hike on June 5th). We hope you will come join us for some time outside, at a land trust preserve.

## MIGRATION

Off the coast near Block Island, the harbinger of spring in Connecticut is gathering. River herring will soon be making their way inland to spawn in our fresh waters before returning to sea. This annual migration of alewives and blueback herring will span 4 months, and bring the bounty of the sea home to feed ospreys, river otters and striped bass.

There has been significant progress in reconnecting habitat for river herring in the Connecticut basin over the last decade, with important runs opened by dam removals and the installation of fish passage. Despite this initial progress, populations remain in decline. We have too little information about the status of river herring following the loss of a robust monitoring program due to budget cuts and staff reductions in the Inland Fisheries Division of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental protection.

The Connecticut River Watershed Council is launching a citizen science project in collaboration with Steve Gephard of the CT DEEP to monitor the lower Connecticut River tributaries for river herring activity. Two lectures on river herring were held at the end of February and a training for volunteers was held in March. The call for citizen scientists brought about an enthusiastic response. More than 20 volunteers will be monitoring streams several times a week from April 1st through June 30th. For more information about the program, visit CRWC's website at [www.ctriver.org/get-involved](http://www.ctriver.org/get-involved).

Also mark your calendars on May 21 as World Fish Migration Day. This is a international day of celebration, education and awareness of migrating fish that are so critical to both our marine and terrestrial ecologies. In support of this day, CT DEEP will be holding open houses at a few fish ladders/fish elevators around the state. It is fascinating to watch fish use these devices, which allow them to reach historical habitat beyond the dams. Stay tuned for more information. We'll pass it along as soon as DEEP announces details.

## FEET TO THE FIRE FESTIVAL - MAY 7

Come spend a spring afternoon with the Middlesex Land Trust at the Feet to the Fire: Riverfront Encounter, Middletown's second annual eco/arts festival celebrating the rich culture, history, and science of the Connecticut River.

This free event will be held Saturday May 7 from 12-5 in Harbor Park (rain or shine). This year's festival will feature a world music stage with five bands, newly-commissioned art installations, a kids' activity zone, food trucks, craft and food vendors, as well as roving puppeteers, circus performers, science workshops, pottery demonstrations, and much more - a real feast for the senses! Central to the festival are more than 25 environmental exhibitors who will be showcasing their knowledge about everything from Connecticut River ecosystems to Middletown's upcoming riverfront development, to backyard composting and home energy efficiency.

The festival is part of Feet to the Fire, an 8-year initiative at Wesleyan University, created to examine critical environmental issues through multiple lenses, from science to art. Feet to the Fire: Riverfront Encounter is made possible by Wesleyan's Center for the Arts, with support from the Connecticut Office of the Arts, the City of Middletown, the Middletown Commission on the Arts, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Community Foundation of Middlesex County, and many other community partners.

For more information visit the event web page: <http://www.wesleyan.edu/cfa/events/2016/05-2016/05072016feet-to-the-fire.html>



## ON THE CALENDAR

### April 30th:

Middlesex Land Trust Annual Meeting  
& Brainerd Quarry Dedication

### May 7th:

Feet to the Fire: Riverfront Encounter Festival

### May 21

World Fish Migration Day

### June 4th: Trails Day Hike

Brainerd Quarry Preserve Nature Hike with  
the Middlesex Land Trust

### June 4th: Trails Day Hike

Mica Ledges Family Hike with Middlesex  
Land Trust and Everyone Outside

### June 5th: Trails Day Hike

Mica Ledges Women's Hike with Middlesex  
Land Trust and Everyone Outside

## GEORGE KING REMEMBERED

The Middlesex Land Trust lost a former board member and longtime friend George King in 2015. George served as a Director on the Board from October 4th, 1999 to April 26th, 2014. We miss his steady presence and wry sense of humor. He often joked that as a former Minnesotan, he was descended from a long line of Norwegian bachelor farmers. He and his wife, Eleanor, donated a 6.7 acre wooded parcel in Middletown in 1999, now the known as the King preserve. This small preserve provides cover for wildlife and encompasses a small brook between houses off of Sisk St., the end of Cimarron Rd. and Knox Blvd. It's the kind of preserve that ensures that residents near it see a wider variety of wildlife in their neighborhood, and provides more riparian protection to its brook than most streams in Middletown enjoy. George helped guide our organization for more than a decade and his work for the Trust has helped leave a legacy of conservation. The great outdoors was one of George's passions. And we will miss him.

## MAPPING OF UPPER PINE BROOK PRESERVE

The Middlesex Land Trust has had a successful community-based service learning partnership with Wesleyan University GIS students since 2010. GIS (geographic information systems) is a powerful software tool that allows users to manage, analyze, and visualize geographic data. Many of the preserve maps on the website and at trailheads were created using a GIS.

This fall in the introductory GIS course, a group of three students (Siri McGuire, Caren Ye, and Eric Hagen) created a map of the Upper Pine Brook Preserve that includes trails and noteworthy features. This 27.88 acre preserve runs along the Pine Brook and is located off Chestnut Hill Road in East Hampton. David Brown and Doug Bonoff worked with the students, both with data and on-site, to orient the students to the environmental and cultural history of the preserve. For example, the map includes the location of stone



*Eric Hagen and Siri McGuire conferring with David Brown*



*Doug Bonoff hiking with Siri McGuire and Eric Hagen.*

ruins of a small Antebellum era cabin and a carved lye-stone for making soap. When completed, the trail map will be included on a trail-head kiosk at the preserve and on the Land Trust's website.

The students also conducted spatial analyses of the preserve and surrounding properties to address concerns about property encroachment and pollution in Pine Brook. They created a "story map" of the preserve as part of an interactive on-line project with photos of the trail and interesting features to photographically and cartographically enhance enjoyment of the pre-



*Eric and Siri using a GPS to digitally mark the trail.*

serve. The interactive nature of the online map enables readers to click on photos in different parts of the map to encourage a glimpse into the preserve and its natural beauty. The students work on the Upper Pine Brook Preserve will be included as part of a larger "story map" project soon to be up on the website, but can be seen online at: <http://arcg.is/21Kv8U9>

With help from Wesleyan Professors and students, the Land Trust has been learning about and incorporating more technology, such as GIS and interactive "story maps", into our conservation work and finding new ways to reach out and connect people with our preserves. We hope you will join us both online and out on the land.

## 2016 Annual Membership Drive

January 1, 2016 - December 31, 2016

Please Join or Renew your membership with  
The Middlesex Land Trust

Mail your check in the enclosed envelope  
or join on-line using PayPal or your credit card  
on our website at

[www.middlesexlandtrust.org](http://www.middlesexlandtrust.org)

Contributions are tax deductible to the full extent  
allowed by law. If you have questions, please call  
860-343-7537 or email us at  
[info@middlesexlandtrust.org](mailto:info@middlesexlandtrust.org)

## HADDAM NECK CONSERVATION PROGRESS

After two major successes, the acquisition of the Brainerd Quarry Preserve and acquisition of the unbuilt 11 house Meadowood subdivision, progress in Haddam Neck is less dramatic at the moment.

MxLT partnered with the Gateway Commission on the Quarry Preserve and assisted the Haddam Neck Spirit and USFWS on Meadowood. Recently



Lucy Meigs with Everyone Outside kids

**CONSERVATION PROGRESS (CONTINUED)**

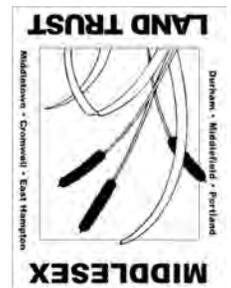
USFWS acquired three small cottage lots on the Salmon River, roughly opposite Sunrise State Park. There is more in the works.

Core members of The Connecticut Yankee Conservation Project continue to meet weekly by phone to monitor the effort to conserve the 544 acre CY property, subject to the safe and secure storage of the spent fuel. MxLT supports this effort as well.

Very recently progress was realized when Ever-source removed the power lines, along with their steel towers, running from the site of the former plant, over the ridge to the sub-station on the East side of Haddam Neck .

There is a good working relationship between principals of USFWS and CY. CYCP maintains contact with our elected officials to keep them informed and watches for ways to help facilitate a transfer.

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER



The Middlesex Land Trust, Inc.  
 27 Washington Street  
 Middletown, CT 06457

NONPROFIT ORG.  
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
 Permit No. 273  
 MIDDLETOWN, CT  
 06457