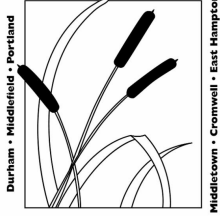


MIDDLESEX



LAND TRUST

The MIDDLESEX LANDSCAPE

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

Wesleyan Students Conduct Assessment of Sawmill Brook

By: Kate Miller, PhD — Middlesex
Land Trust Board Member

Later this year, the Highland Pond Dam, located on Middlesex Land Trust (MxLT) property along Sawmill Brook in Middletown, will be removed to reinstate connectivity within the stream. That's important for fish communities and the watershed's ecology. Dam removal can be messy business: sediment that has accumulated over decades may move downstream, and stream flow may be altered, which could impact the banks and streambed. Post-removal, it may be helpful to assess the stream to ensure any necessary steps are taken to restore or enhance quality. It's best practice to be able to compare the post-removal state of the stream to pre-removal conditions to see what has changed.



To that end, and in order to learn about various field assessment techniques, Wesleyan students of a new community-engagement course, *Strategies in Conservation and Environmental Action*, conducted field work along the stream below the dam last fall (September, 2024). They gathered data on three aspects of the stream: physical habitat (e.g., streambed, banks, and water quality), and fish and benthic macroinvertebrate communities. The students reported and explained their observations in a report that was delivered to the Land Trust at the December board meeting by board member and course instructor, Kate Miller, along with Leo Heller, one of the students.

[Read more...](#)

Invest in the future of our planet. Join us as a member or renew your 2025 membership today.

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Hands on the Land: Robb Evans

Meet the Volunteers Who Steward Our Preserves

Welcome to *Hands on the Land*, our new series spotlighting the dedicated volunteers who give their time and energy to caring for our natural spaces. Throughout the series, we'll introduce you to a land steward who plays a vital role in preserving the beauty and accessibility of the preserves we all enjoy.

This month, we're pleased to feature Robb Evans, a longtime steward with the Middlesex Land Trust. From repairing bridges to tackling invasive species, Robb shares his journey, favorite moments, and advice for anyone looking to make a difference.

What inspired you to become a volunteer land steward, and what do you enjoy most about it?

"I have lived in the suburban part of Middletown since 1973. I raised my family here. We have always enjoyed being in the outdoors and we visited local state parks, town open space, and land trust properties. I didn't think much about who or how these areas were maintained.



"When I retired in the early 2000s and my sons were grown and gone, I heard about the stewardship program at the Middlesex Land Trust (MxLT). I joined the group. I learned that a small group of men and women, who enjoy the outdoors like I do, maintain the existing MxLT properties. They are a diverse group with many outdoor skills. I have enjoyed learning and working with them to maintain the many MxLT properties."

[Read more...](#)

Help Us Care for Our Beautiful Preserves

We are always looking for new stewardship volunteers. No experience is necessary, and training will be provided. If you're interested in helping to care for Middlesex County's natural treasures, please contact the Land Trust at stewardship@middlesexlandtrust.org.

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

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