



# The MIDDLESEX LANDSCAPE

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

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## News

### The Rewilding of Highland Pond

By: Stuart Winquist

Our primary focus for the Highland Pond dam removal was for restoration of freshwater habitat for diadromous (migratory) fish species. It will improve the hydrological cycle in Sawmill Brook after well over 100 years of degradation from the dam. Water temperatures will fluctuate less and remain lower in the summer, allowing the water to carry more oxygen. This benefits native freshwater fish and aquatic insect populations as well. The extended wet meadows that grew from the shallows of the former pond will filter out pollutants that wash in from the road following rain and snow melt. This benefit will be felt by the whole downstream watershed, including the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound. [Read more...](#)



## Public Input Wanted

**Trail Accessibility Improvements at Highland Pond: Share Your Voice!**

With the completion of the dam removal and restoration of Sawmill Brook at **Highland Pond Preserve**, the Middlesex Land Trust is now exploring creation of a **new parking area and trail accessibility enhancements**.

We are specifically looking at creating a **universally accessible** (designed for wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers) segment along the Blue-Blazed New England National Scenic Trail where it follows the former trolley line through the preserve. Our goal is to ensure that everyone—regardless of mobility—can enjoy the benefits of nature.

**We want your input.** Whether you personally face accessibility barriers or simply care about local conservation and inclusion, your perspective will help guide our next steps.

👉 [Click Here to Take the Public Input Survey](#)

## Nature Note

### Fragmented Forests and the Future of Our Landscape

By: Catie Resor

Last September, we held the Middlesex Land Trust annual meeting. We hosted a speaker, Dr. Tracy Rittenhouse from the University of Connecticut, who studies large carnivores in the state, including our booming population of black bears about which she spoke. It was a compelling topic, as everyone who lives in Connecticut hears about the increasing bear population and now frequent human/bear interactions. It's also a complicated issue, the fantastic story of the recovery of one of our iconic species as well as the conflict that can arise when living in close proximity to a large wild creature. The take-away of the day, in my mind, was her surprising conclusion that the highest concentrations of bears are to be found in our fairly dense suburbs, not in the more rural and forested areas of the state. Presumably, the reason for this abundance is not so positive, as it is likely due to increased food resources to be found around human habitation—garbage and bird seed.



At the following Board of Directors meeting, we discussed how much we had enjoyed the speaker and how engaged everyone is with this topic. During our discussion, an interesting question arose: What do her results mean in terms of preservation of land? Is it still just as important to think about preserving large contiguous parcels where possible or do wildlife not need this? [Read more...](#)

Get Involved

Are you interested in getting involved with the Middlesex Land Trust? We want your help! Here are some ways you can make a difference:

**Help lead a hike.** We're looking for folks that may be interested in leading family or group hikes.

**Do you have a creative streak?** Like to write or take photos? We'd love to feature your content in future newsletters, our website, or Facebook/Instagram. Submit your creative works, including essays, narratives, photos, photo essays — even poems!



**Volunteer with us.** Whether it's helping maintain our trails and preserves or pitching in with creative or administrative tasks, we could use your help!

**Tell us your stories:** How have our preserves or conservation work touched your life — share a memory, a feeling, or a story that shows why protecting these places matters.

[Get Involved Today!](#)

## Make a Difference

### Our Annual Fundraising Appeal is Happening Now.

It's not too late to make a donation. Your support helps keep northern Middlesex County wild and thriving.

[See why your gift matters – read our appeal letter.](#)

[Make a Donation](#)

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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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