

# The MIDDLESEX LANDSCAPE

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

## In This Issue:

- **Nature Note:** How Snow Cover Affects Our Forests
- **Join Us:** Our Annual Membership Drive is Happening Now!
- **Conservation News:** Announcing our Newest Land Acquisition
- **2025 Stewardship Recap:** A Look Back at Stewardship in 2025
- **Get Involved:** Share your talents, time, or stories
- **Upcoming Event:** Live Bluegrass and Folk Music for a Great Cause

## Nature Note

### How Snow Cover Affects Our Forests

By: Jeff Dickey-Chasins

If it's winter in Connecticut, it is likely that you will experience snow. However, how much snow, when, and for how long has changed over the past 300 years – and climate change is accelerating those changes. Yet many of us may not understand how snow cover in Connecticut affects the plants and animals that live in our forests. Let's take a closer look.



Snow cover provides several key benefits: it recharges groundwater, rivers, and reservoirs; it provides thermal insulation from freezing for tree seedlings and roots; supports tourism and winter recreation; and benefits the plants and animals that have adapted to it over hundreds or even thousands of years. For example, fruit trees in Connecticut need the protection of snow cover as well as enough chilling hours to produce buds at the right time of the season. [Read More...](#)

## Membership Drive Happening Now

What kind of landscape will we leave for the next generation? The answer depends on what we do today to protect our remaining woods, clean waterways, and wildlife corridors. Once a forest is paved over, it is gone forever. **That's why your membership matters right now. There's no minimum to join—every contribution makes you a 2026 member. Join or renew today!**

[Become a Member](#)

## Conservation News

### Announcing our Newest Land Acquisition

In conservation, impact is not always measured in acres. Often, the greatest value lies in protecting the right land in the right place. With that in mind, we are pleased to announce the permanent protection of 2.1 acres strategically located in East Hampton near Wilkes Road.

Though modest in size, this parcel plays an outsized role in the landscape. It sits directly adjacent to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Pine Brook Falls unit of the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge and abuts land we already protect, expanding a growing block of permanently conserved open space.

By conserving this property, we strengthen habitat connectivity and add lasting protection to core forest within the Salmon River watershed.

The land includes forested wetlands, a section of Pine Brook—a tributary of the Salmon River—and mixed hardwood forest. These habitats support sensitive species including wood turtle, eastern box turtle, tri-colored bat, and the state-listed tidewater mucket, a freshwater mussel. Conserving this land protects riparian habitat, improves water quality, enhances flood storage capacity, and ensures that this important wildlife corridor remains intact.

Projects like this demonstrate how even small parcels can deliver meaningful conservation impact when they connect and reinforce the lands around them.

*This project was supported with funding from the Connecticut Land Conservation Council's Transaction Assistance Grant (TAG) Program.*



## 2025 Stewardship Recap

### [A Look Back at Stewardship in 2025](#)

By: Matt Marrotte

With 2025 officially in the rearview mirror, we wanted to share more about the work we do throughout the year to keep trails open and expand the space where wildlife can thrive on the Land Trust's preserves. Stewardship is more than just trail checking — it's a way of giving back by bringing people together in nature to learn, care for the land, and connect with the outdoors.

One example of our work this past year is at the Kruger Preserve in Haddam Neck, where a pollinator garden was created through a collaboration with a local group, *Haddam Neck Spirit*. A pollinator garden is a garden filled with native flowers and plants that provide food and shelter for bees, butterflies, and other beneficial pollinators. We assisted with planning and designing a new space using donated plants along a stonewall welcoming you at the trailhead. It's a simple example of how thoughtful stewardship can strengthen both habitat and the visitor experience. [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!](#)

## Upcoming Event

🎵 **Live Bluegrass & Folk Music for a Great Cause!**

Join Trinity Brownstone Church for an  
afternoon of music with  
**Seat of Our Pants**

Sunday, May 3 at 4:00 PM  
345 Main Street, Portland

 Tickets are \$15 at the door.



Enjoy bluegrass, folk, and more. **Proceeds benefit Middlesex Land Trust to help preserve open space for future generations.**

Questions? Call 860-463-6444 or email [trinityvitalconnections@gmail.com](mailto:trinityvitalconnections@gmail.com).

Come out for great music and a great cause!

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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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