

Fact Sheet: The Middlesex Land Trust's Proposed Acquisition of Meshomasic's Rattlesnake Brook Preserve

The Middlesex Land Trust (MxLT) was incorporated in 1987 with a mission to preserve open space in Northern Middlesex County by identifying, protecting, and maintaining significant natural features such as wetlands, scenic areas, critical wildlife habitats, prime farmland, and unique geological formations. Working in Cromwell, Durham, Middlefield, Middletown, East Hampton, Portland and Haddam Neck, MxLT currently owns and manages more than 1,250 acres in 52 preserves.

The owners of this 147-acre property are interested in preserving their property and MxLT has agreed to pursue preservation of this environmental treasure for three primary reasons:

- Protects endangered and rare species from the Portland Reservoir via Rattlesnake Brook to the Connecticut River:
 - Scientifically documented endangered and rare species are remarkably varied in the area. Experts at the CT Department of Environment and Energy have detailed an extensive list of Federal and State endangered species dependent on this corridor. Please see the attached map from The Nature's Network project.
 - This area is included in a state level National Audubon Important Bird Area and home to the rare Whip-poor-will, which nests in forest habitat with an open understory, a feature of this property.
- Expands the 15,000+ acre Meshomasic Forest Landscape, an area singled out by The Nature Conservancy as one of the Last Great Places:
 - "From nesting, forage and cover for wildlife to water quantity and quality in watersheds, scenic vistas and recreational opportunities to local home-grown forest and farm products, Meshomasic harbors many ecological values and traditional land uses important to the community and biodiversity on an ecoregional scale." Robust carbon sequestration is another benefit of large, mature and unfragmented forest blocks.
- Enhances recreation opportunities as detailed in Portland's Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD):

- Portland's POCD shows a future trail through Meshomasic's Rattlesnake Brook Preserve, connecting to the Airline trail and Portland's trail system.
- Connections are also possible to the Shenipsit trail, a principal hiking trail within Connecticut Forest and Park's Blue-Blazed Trail System.

The State of Connecticut, The Nature Conservancy and the Town of Portland have pursued acquisition of this tract of land over the years but were unable to reach an agreement on price with the owners. Fortunately, this has now changed and funding should be available for MxLT to acquire the site with the help of the State of CT, the Town of Portland, the Meshomasic Hiking Club, local foundations and public support.

A team of individuals with a variety of skill sets represented by a surveyor, two attorneys, an accountant, a graduate of Yale forestry and an environmental expert is working to complete this exciting land acquisition. The State has just announced that applications for OSWA grants are being accepted until September 30, 2021 and your letter of support will form a key part of the grant to help MxLT secure State funding. An illustrative brochure and maps of the proposed preserve property are attached along with suggested language for your letter of support.

Thank you in advance for your support and please let us know if you would like to tour the site or have any questions.