

EHLT NEWS

Land Trust Receives Two Donations

This summer, the East Haddam Land Trust received two gifts of land. These friends of the Land Trust have exhibited a strong commitment to open space and to keeping East Haddam the beautiful town we know.

The **Kay and Logan Clarke** donation, which will be designated the Clarke Preserve, lies to the north of Gillette Castle State Park and abuts the park property. The Clarkes have been long-time supporters of the Land Trust, and Logan was a Director for several years. The Clarkes' desire to limit further development of their riverfront property required them to seek a variance to reduce the zoning-mandated minimum frontage. With the ZBA approval, the Clarkes split a 2-acre lot off the larger property and then donated it to the Land Trust.

The property has 250 feet of frontage on River Road and consists of a small meadow that, in the spring, is full of daffodils. A small area of mixed hardwood forest lies west of the meadow and an intermittent stream. Because of its location, there is the potential for a foot trail through the property and onto the Gillette Castle State Park property, although trail construction is not currently planned.

Mr. Wilson Brownell generously gave a Conservation Easement to the Land Trust on his entire 15.5 acre property. Mr. Brownell's goal was to maintain the property in its present state and to prevent further

development along the shores of Bashan Lake and Colchester Turnpike. He hopes that others will follow his example and consider donating property or easements to the Land Trust so that East Haddam will always maintain its beautiful rural character.

The public will not have access to this easement, as the property is the home of Mr. Brownell. The property has 400 feet of frontage on Bashan Lake and close to 300 feet of frontage on Colchester Turnpike. It is approximately 2,000 feet deep. A mixed hardwood forest with some dense areas of mountain laurel covers most of the property. The property also contains scattered wetlands and vernal pools. The Bashan Lake Association supported this gift with monetary assistance to help defray survey costs and attorney's fees.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Stewardship Activities: November 13 & December 18 9AM - Noon

Location and more details will follow.

Night Sky Watch: November 12, 7-9PM

Enjoy and explore the November sky as we look at the moon, Jupiter and the fall constellations. Rain date is Saturday, November 13, same time. Two telescopes will be available for enhanced viewing.

**Monthly Hike: November 28, 1-3PM:
Devils Hopyard State Park**

Meet at Greer Pond (top of hill) on Mitchell Road, which is off Hopyard Rd, south of the park (opposite Jones Hill Rd.)



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EAST HADDAM LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER



Fall 2010



EAST HADDAM LAND TRUST

White Nose Syndrome Continues to Decimate Bat Populations: Outlook for Connecticut's Bats is Bleak

A syndrome that attacks hibernating bats continues to kill them at alarming rates both in Connecticut and in expanding areas range-wide. The massive die-off of the bat population that it is causing is also likely to have serious impacts on agriculture, forestry and other sectors of our economy. White Nose Syndrome continues to have a catastrophic effect on bats. Just three short years ago, one of Connecticut's largest hibernacula had over 3,300 wintering bats. This past winter, fewer than a dozen remained—all but one showed active signs of WNS. The outlook for their survival is grim.

Visits to other winter hibernacula – caves and mines where bats hibernate—revealed similar mortality rates. Another large site showed a 95% decline in bat numbers since a winter count in 2007. WNS continues to kill some of our most common, backyard bats including the little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*), the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), and the tricolored bat (pipistrelle; *Perimyotis subflavus*), but has spread to other species.

Given the massive die-offs in our hibernacula and the continued spread of WNS in the northern hemisphere, the news for bat conservation is not good.

Bats live long lives and reproduce in small numbers – so there is no doubt that WNS will have a major impact on our bat population. After first being discovered in caves in New York in the winter of 2006-2007, it is now in two Canadian Provinces and 14 states from New Hampshire south to Tennessee and west to Oklahoma.

Bats with WNS often have a white fungus on their noses and occasionally other parts of their bodies that is only visible during hibernation. The identity of the cold-loving fungus responsible for this white bloom, *Geomyces destructans*, was confirmed late last year. It has been genetically linked to a European fungus. There are strong indications that this fungus is a non-native, invasive species that has had a deadly impact on native populations of bats. The exact role of the fungus in bat deaths is still unclear, but it is well-documented to alter normal sleeping patterns of hibernating bats causing them to use all of their stored fat reserves before winter ends. It invades the skin of bats and also causes wings to become brittle and wing tissue to be lost. These factors trigger uncharacteristic behavior in hibernating bats. Instead of sleeping through the winter, bats venture out into the cold in a desperate search for

food and water—an action that results in almost certain death.

Please report any unusual bat behavior—notably bats out and active from November through the winter months—by calling (860)675-8130 or via email to Wildlife Technician, Christina Kocer at christina.kocer@ct.gov.

Jenny Dickson, Supervising Wildlife Biologist, CT DEP



Photos (from top): Eightmile River at Hammond Mill Preserve; Eightmile River at Ayers Preserve; Pond view at Sheepskin Hollow Preserve

