

THE LAY *of* THE LAND

Madison Land Conservation Trust

FALL 2016

“Whose woods
these are...”

Will you help us secure this missing link
in hundreds of acres of protected land?

MARY ELLIOT

“Whose woods these are...”

With your help, 64 woodland acres adjoining the Summer Hill Preserve will never become twelve building lots cutting a swath through the town’s open space and threatening the quality of the Hammonasset River Watershed.

THE MLCT, recognizing the critical importance of these uplands and wetlands, has voted to purchase them from the South Central Connecticut Regional Water Authority.

We have promises to keep, after all. Your support enables the MLCT’s mission to conserve our local natural resources and habitats. This particular acquisition, a combination of two wooded areas including a 47-acre parcel on the east side of Summer Hill Road and a 17-acre parcel on the north side of Route 80, will help fulfill the Town of Madison’s plan for achieving a continuous greenbelt with miles of interconnected trails.

Specifically, the new Summer Hill section will link the Bailey Trail along the Hammonasset River to the Indian Rock Shelters Trail, thereby providing more than 300 acres of contiguous open space ensuring safe water, safe passage and a higher quality of life for walkers and wildlife alike.

Our efforts will also enable the state’s vision for environmental sustainability and stewardship. The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection has classified the Hammonasset River and Long Island Sound as areas of high ecological significance.

As Robert Frost once described them, “The woods are lovely, dark and deep” (but we have miles to go before we sleep!).

Your financial contributions of any amount will help fund the acquisition and conservation of this parcel.

You can make a significant difference in sustaining Madison’s uniquely beautiful environment in many ways:

- You’ll ease the town’s financial burden of maintaining services necessitated by additional building and development.
- You’ll protect the Hammonasset River, one of Connecticut’s premier cold-water fish habitats, from runoff contamination and ecological stress as it flows through many wetlands and tributaries on its way to Long Island Sound.

- You’ll provide sanctuary for plants and animals designated as species of Special Concern on CT DEEP’s Threatened and Endangered Species List — the Pale Green Orchid and Whip-poor-will, for instance — will find sanctuary here. And important duck habitat will remain intact.



PHOTO © P.B. PELSER

Pale Green Orchid (above) and the Whip-poor-will (top right), both on Connecticut’s list of species of “Special Concern.”

- Because of you, this fragile, natural area will thrive. And we will continue, for generations, to stop by these woods and love where we live.

Thanks to you! 🌿

By the Numbers

A quick look at the addition to our Summer Hill Preserve

64 acres total—47 on Summer Hill Rd. and 17 on Rte. 80

Directly adjacent to the **77-acre** Summer Hill Preserve (formerly the Bauermeister property), bringing the total in the Summer Hill Preserve to **141 acres**

Directly across Summer Hill Rd. from the Parcels property (**36 acres**), which connects to the Indian Rock Shelters preserve (**29 acres**)

Directly across Rte. 80 from the Bailey Trail and Shepherds Trail complex of **99 acres** of preserved land owned by the Land Trust along the Hammonasset River

 **You can ensure that this gorgeous property is protected!**

To learn more about the project and how you can be a part of this important effort, contact Dave Roach: droach@allhabitat.com Or, **make a gift online now at:** madisonlandtrust.org/make-a-donation



PHOTO TOM BENSON/FLICKR CREATIVE COMMONS



The new additions to the Summer Hill Preserve (in blue), will connect the Indian Rock Shelters land to the north to the Bailey Trails south of Rte. 80 forming a contiguous corridor for wildlife and a future linked trail system.



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Native Wood Frog (left) and egg mass (right) in a springtime vernal pool.

Yale Scientist Studies Wood Frogs in MLCT Vernal Pools

WHILE IT MAY APPEAR that MLCT trails are surrounded by wilderness, in fact, roads and residences are often close.

This year, our annual meeting speaker, Kealoha Freidenburg, will speak about the challenges facing suburban wildlife and how the variability in forest cover, impervious surfaces and lawns in suburban habitats have a profound effect on our local species.

Dr. Freidenburg is part of a group at Yale University studying amphibians that live in suburban wetlands. Her research focuses on the many vernal pools and

red maple swamps on MLCT properties. These wetlands may appear small and insignificant, yet they provide homes for a surprising number of amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates. The wood frog (*Rana sylvatica*) is the subject of much of Dr. Freidenburg's work.

If you've ever heard a spring chorus of quacking in the woods, the performers are most likely male wood frogs trying to woo potential mates. They call on warm, early spring evenings from their vernal pool breeding sites. Once breeding ends,

Hear Dr. Freidenburg speak at our Annual Meeting & Lecture November 16, 7:00 p.m. Memorial Town Hall

the adults head back to the woods, and the eggs are left to hatch into tadpoles. By July, wood frog tadpoles have metamorphosed into tiny froglets that live amongst the vegetation at the breeding pools' edges. Adult wood frogs, which are easily identified by the raccoon-like mask around their eyes, inhabit the surrounding woodlands.

Preliminary results of Freidenburg's research indicate that suburban habitats may affect sex ratios, behavior and morphology of resident wood frogs. Since land transformation for suburban use has increased in the past 50 years, an understanding of the impact on native species provides critical information for conservation measures.

Your support helps protect wood frogs and other native inhabitants of our suburban environments. 🌿