



Natural News

A Newsletter of the Hamden Land
Conservation Trust

Fall & Winter
2011/2012

A Message from Our President

Recently, I traveled to midcoast Maine to close up my family's cottage. Since I was a little boy I have been coming to this beautiful part of "The Pine Tree State." To help protect the natural resources of this area I joined the Medomak Valley Land Trust a few years ago. This land trust has been very successful protecting land and currently owns 790 acres of land and holds 2,966 acres of land under conservation easement. In comparison The Hamden Land Conservation Trust owns 15 acres of land and holds 54 acres of land under conservation easements. I admit it really isn't fair to compare these two Land Trusts as they work in two very different types of communities, rural vs. suburban/urban. The opportunities to protect land in rural Maine are much greater than here in suburban Hamden. This is not unique for Hamden; in many suburban areas the pressure from development often limits the chances to preserve land. Such circumstances can easily create a sense of

discouragement. However, as I crossed over the Piscataqua River and entered New Hampshire I found myself filled with optimism and determination to figure out ways to protect more precious land in Hamden. Obviously it is always a huge achievement when a big, substantial parcel is preserved in perpetuity by a land trust. However, in reality this large size is the exception. Particularly in suburban areas, land preservation typically occurs in baby steps, one small parcel at a time. This is not necessarily a bad thing but requires a lot of effort and commitment. HLCT's new chairman of Land Acquisition, Paul Bege-

mann, along with his committee, has been reviewing an extensive list of potential open space parcels in Hamden. In 2012, HLCT will set forth on a major cam-



paign to meet and work with landowners who want to protect their land. This will be a very exciting time for us all. Everyone in Hamden will benefit when additional land is preserved.

If you or someone you know would like to discuss the opportunities available to you with regard to preserving your land, please contact Paul at 203-248-8074-or myself at 203-230-1718.

Andy Brand,
President HLCT

Help Needed after October snowfall

The unusual October snowfall before Halloween pulled down trees and branches on many of our properties. Like everyone else, this means HLCT has unexpected expenses, and we need your help. Won't you consider donating to our Conservation Fund? This helps us maintain the safety and health of our properties.

HAMDEN LAND CONSERVATION TRUST BOARD MEMBERS

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Mayor Jackson on hand to dedicate Servoss/Mather site

The mission of the Hamden Land Conservation Trust is to protect and preserve open space in Hamden through purchase or easements, and to educate the public about conservation issues.



Great turnout for the Servoss/Mather Glacial Kettle Property dedication

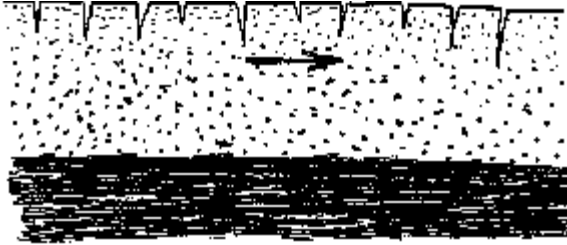


Left to right: Hamden Mayor Jackson, Mary Tyrrell Chair of the HLCT Stewardship Committee, Andy Brand HLCT President

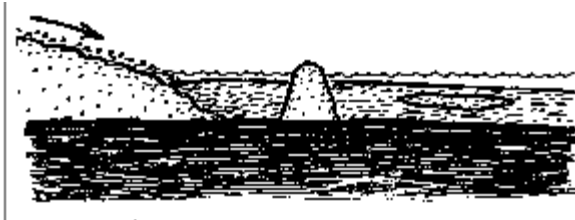


Dr. Copeland MacClintock talking about the geology of the Servoss/Mather glacial kettle

The crowd gathered at 9:30am on a beautiful Saturday September 17 at the corner of Servoss and Mather Streets to celebrate the completion of improvements at the HLCT's Servoss/Mather property, a glacial kettle and beautiful natural area in Whitneyville. With the help of Bob Pattison, Alan Graham, and the Whitneyville Civic Association and local neighbors, the HLCT board and members, under the leadership of Mary Tyrrell, the chair of the HLCT Stewardship Committee, completed a major clean-up, installed a beautiful split-rail fence, and added an interpretive sign about glacial kettles. These improvements were made possible by the generous "Green Power Grant Program" provided by Pratt & Whitney Company and in partnership with the Whitneyville Association. The plan is soon to have a small native plant garden on the corner as well. Mayor Jackson was there to help kick-off the celebration with his words of support and appreciation for the work of the Trust and the Whitneyville Civic Association. Then Dr. Copeland MacClintock, from the Yale Peabody Museum's Division of Invertebrate Paleontology fascinated us all with his talk about the geology of the area. 19,000 years ago our local area was covered by a mile of ice! With the melting and retreat of the ice around 16,900 years ago, vertical projections of ice amid the deltaic sediments (visible in the center of the chart illustrated, one of the many he showed) would soon melt to form the undrained depressions known as kettles. Enthusiastic listeners followed Cope, as he is known, down into one such kettle formed at the corner of Servoss and Mather. Visible at the top edge of the kettle is a drainage pipe, a man-made modification of the area. But alerted by the HLCT blue sign to this now dedicated conservation area (no dumping, foot traffic only), local citizens, the HLCT, and the Mayor look forward to continued enjoyment of this beautiful site.



Glacier removing pieces of bedrock and carrying them south as its sediment load.



Glacier melting away leaving Lake Connecticut deltaic deposits with isolated chunks of ice in them



All ice melts, leaving deep Servoss/Mather kettle, and shallow Johnson's Pond kettle.

A Tale of Two Kettles

by Copeland MacClintock

About 19,000 years ago, during the last phase of Pleistocene glaciation in our area, the ice had moved south to Long Island, picking up a load of sediment as it moved. As climate warmed the ice melted back to a point several miles north of Hamden, leaving behind a freshwater lake (glacial Lake Connecticut) in what is now Long Island Sound. Sand and gravel freed from the melting ice were washed south onto deltas of that lake.

In places, large chunks of ice remained isolated in the deltaic sediments. As the lake drained away these chunks melted, creating voids into which the surrounding gravel collapsed, forming undrained depressions called *kettles*. Tall, narrow ice chunks attached to bedrock, left deep depressions with steep sides such as the kettle at Servoss and Mather Streets. Wide, thin, horizontal ice slabs encased in gravel left wide, shallow depressions such as the nearby Johnson's Pond kettle off Thornton Street, also a Hamden Land Trust property.

This article is a follow-up to the opening of a kiosk at the Servoss/Mather kettle on September 17, 2011.

November-December Phenology

By Jim Sirch

- ◆ The blue jays that we see now are not the same as the ones here this past summer. Blue jays migrate and ones we see now have migrated here from the north and the others that nested have flown further south.
- ◆ Look for bird nests now that the leaves have fallen. You can identify the type of bird who made the nest by looking at the size of the nest, nest materials and height above ground. The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology can provide help. <http://www.allaboutbirds.org/page.aspx?pid=1327>
- ◆ The smallest bird of the winter woods, the golden-crowned kinglet, is now spending the winter with us. Listen for its high-pitched “tsee-tsee-tsee” call as it looks for insects and their eggs among tree bark and branches.
- ◆ White-tailed deer switch from their spring and summer diet of grasses and other herbaceous plants to acorns, buds, twigs and bark of woody plants.
- ◆ A long-tailed weasel’s coat changes from brown to white, even if there is not much snow during the winter.
- ◆ Raccoons and striped skunks have spent the fall eating and storing fat for fuel during the cold, winter months. Both are not true hibernators like the woodchuck and woodland jumping mouse. Unlike those deep sleepers, raccoons and skunks take naps for weeks during very cold weather but are out and about during milder weather.
- ◆ Adult mourning cloak butterflies are now hibernating under loose bark. The last brood of monarch butterflies, the brood that migrates, has matured and is spending the winter high in the Oyamel fir forests in the Transvolcanic Mountains of central Mexico.
- ◆ Now that the leaves of most trees have fallen, you can still see leaves on young red oak and American beech trees.
- ◆ In some streams and ponds, you can still see adult eastern newts. Though they slow down, they are active and feeding all winter.

