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MANCHESTER-ESSEX CONSERVATION TRUST

P. O. Box 1486
Manchester, MA 01944
www.mect.org
978-890-7153; conserve@mect.org

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MANCHESTER ESSEX CONSERVATION TRUST TURNS 50!

SAVE THE DATE

NOVEMBER 2 & 9 Help with trail work. Gather at 8:30 AM at Cedar Swamp on 11/2 or Upper Pine Street on 11/9. Rain date November 10.

NOVEMBER 3 50th Anniversary Celebration and Annual Meeting. 4:00 – 6:00 PM. Space is limited to

MECT members and pre-registration is required. Join MECT or renew your membership and RSVP today! Call 978-890-7153 or email conserve@mect.org.

SEPTEMBER 22 Fall Equinox Family Picnic. Meet your MECT guides in the Cedar Swamp parking area at 12:00 PM for a short walk to one of Manchester's highest points. Children's treasure hunt. Bring a picnic.

What's In Your Future? An MECT Membership!

Clean drinking water or parking lot pollution? Bright fall colors or unchanging development? Children's nature trips or classroom routine? The fleeting beauty of May birds and flowers or a "silent spring"? Will you enjoy passing through pristine green corridors on Rte. 128 and Southern Avenue? Snowshoeing in a winter wonderland? Quiet walks with your dog? Picnics in the woods? Cool summer shade?

Invest in MECT's future and help us begin another 50 years of protecting the Manchester-Essex Woods. Please "Choose a Tree" and become a member today!

You can return the enclosed envelope or join online at www.mect.org/support.

Is your favorite tree an American White Pine? Your new membership at the American White Pine level will support conservation and education in your town.



MECT announces its Youth Naturalist and Conservationist Award

Do you know a young birder? Does your child love to observe insects, collect feathers or rocks, discover pond life, overturn rotting logs or build “fairy houses”? Would he/she like to “adopt” a beach or a woodland area for regular clean-up or nature study? Every child is naturally inquisitive, a good observer, and, therefore, a budding scientist. The Manchester-Essex Conservation Trust wants to foster and praise these qualities and recognize serious efforts to learn about our natural world. These activities, we believe, will result in a lifetime of good stewardship of the environment. Youths between the ages of 8–15 who live in Manchester or Essex may participate.

To qualify for the award, a project should involve outdoor activity. It can start in your backyard, but we expect that, with the help of family members or other adults, it will involve time spent in the woods, in a meadow, along a stream, or by the seashore. It is preferred that the project focus on the natural history of New England (not collections or observations made on a beach in Florida!). Open space protected by towns and conservation organizations, including the Manchester-Essex Woods, can be used for exploration and observation.

Projects must be conceived and completed between September 2013 and August 2014. A panel of judges (MECT trustees) will award certificates of merit to deserving participants, as well as honorary membership in MECT. Submissions deemed to be “excellent” will receive a special prize. Awards will be announced at MECT’s annual meeting in November 2014.



A young naturalist explores aquatic life at Dexter Pond in Manchester.

Participants are encouraged to discuss a proposed project in advance with a trustee or staff member of MECT, who could offer advice or guidance. However, the project must be conceived and carried out by the youth. You may call Francie Caudill at 978-526-7459 or email fcaudill@comcast.net for initial discussion.

Check our website-www.mect.org-in the coming weeks for more detailed information and suggested guidelines.

Welcome Autumn atop Millstone Hill on September 22

Sunday, September 22, marks the Fall Equinox, the official arrival of New England’s most glorious season. There’s no better time to take a short hike along the Cedar Swamp boardwalk and climb to the heights of Millstone Hill, watching for signs of the changing

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season. Rising to 220 feet above sea level, Millstone Hill is Manchester's highest point and presents a broad, mostly vegetation-free granite "bald" perfect for picnicking with family, friends, and neighbors. Children can take part in MECT's delightful nature treasure hunt. Meet at 12:00 PM at the Cedar Swamp parking area. Bring your own picnic, seating, and beverages. Questions? Email conserve@mect.org.

www.mect.org BOOKMARK IT!

We're letting the birds keep their jobs tweeting and twittering, but MECT's enhanced website is a work in progress. More photos, bright pages, easy navigation, and interactive features that let you stay in touch with us are all part of the site's on-going renewal. We hope you'll check in frequently for news about events, conservation updates, seasonal photos and nature sightings, and of course you'll enjoy the convenience of renewing your membership and contributing to the Annual Appeal using the secure online donation tool. www.mect.org—it's your link to the great outdoors.

EnTrust Fund Gift Boosts Land Protection

Last spring the Manchester-Essex Conservation Trust received a very generous quarter million dollar donation from The EnTrust Fund, which has now ceased operating. For many years The EnTrust Fund supported numerous organizations' conservation projects, especially in Essex County. Thanks to EnTrust funding, MECT commissioned a habitat survey for a portion of the Wilderness Conservation Area. This report includes conservation management recommendations and will help MECT protect the ecology of the woods.

In 2012 The EnTrust Fund awarded another grant enabling MECT staff and volunteers to conduct research that can lead to protecting additional woodland in rugged areas of Essex that include Manchester and Gloucester watershed lands. (See "Volunteer Spotlight" p. 3.)

In June, the Board of Trustees voted to restrict the latest—and last—EnTrust gift for land acquisition,

reaffirming MECT's mission to protect the natural beauty, wildlife, and resources in Manchester, Essex and surrounding communities. MECT is grateful to The EnTrust Fund for supporting our mission.

Festive Annual Meeting Planned at Special Location

This year's Annual Meeting, on Sunday, November 3, gives MECT a special chance to thank members and friends for 50 years of enthusiastic and unwavering support. Your volunteer contributions, financial donations, and gifts of land have rewarded MECT's trustees and staff with an enormous sense of accomplishment. But, your larger, more long-lasting, and most important legacy is the contiguous stretch of pristine woodland open space joining Manchester and Essex, as well as many smaller, yet well-loved green spaces throughout the community. Thanks to a generous Manchester resident, our celebratory Annual Meeting will be held at a lovely ocean-front home, where we will enjoy a festive gathering with wine, beer, hors d'oeuvres, and even a birthday cake!

After a very brief business meeting, Dr. Thomas French, Assistant Director of Massachusetts Division of Fish and Game and Director of the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program, will give an illustrated lecture highlighting our region's biodiversity and the significance of habitat protection as the best way to protect native species. Dr. French is a relaxed and entertaining speaker. The Annual Meeting begins at 4:00 PM. The meeting is free and open to all members, (new members welcome!) but space is limited and pre-registration is required. Directions to the venue will be sent to registrants. To reserve a spot or if you have a question, please email conserve@mect.org or telephone us at 978-890-7153.



Manchester Troop 3 Boy Scouts enjoyed a 2013 winter camping trip to the Scout Nature Preserve, deep in the Manchester-Essex Woods. A scout or group leader wishing to obtain a camping permit can contact MECT by email at conserve@mect.org or by phone at 978-890-7153.

Volunteer Spotlight: Fred Wales

Manchester resident Fred Wales compares the volunteer work he does for MECT to his service aboard US Navy nuclear submarines; an apt title for both jobs, he says, would be “Collector and Analyzer of Intelligence.” During his Navy days, Wales participated in deep ocean surveys; now, he’s piecing together the complex puzzle of land ownership and parcel location in the Manchester-Essex Woods.

Wales says he helps MECT identify conservation opportunities by employing the same techniques developers use to scope out new project sites. He studies old and new deeds and surveys, tax rolls, and historic maps and spends hours walking the land. In the field, his sharp eyes observe physical evidence of human presence: scarred trees, old roads, ancient coppicing, stone walls, even stone circles that once marked the corners of colonial woodlots by surrounding now-disintegrated trees. These signs help clarify the location of parcels that have not been surveyed, or perhaps even visited by an owner in over 100 years. Fred spots new survey and wetland delineation flags, perhaps indications of a developer’s interest. And he can’t help noticing abuses like wetlands destruction, dumping, unauthorized campsites and fires, off-road vehicle intrusion, and misuse of conservation land. All this data gets entered into a handheld GPS unit (global positioning system) and eventually transferred to his home computer. He then uses sophisticated software to transform the data he has collected and information from other sources into maps and data sheets.

Fred’s investigations help MECT understand how the land has been used since European settlement, where land protection opportunities may lie, and what threats to conservation have emerged. Land abuses get reported to the appropriate municipal authorities.

Since 2008, Fred applied his skills to preparing a map of the Wilderness Conservation Area that is probably the most accurate representation of parcels and ownership in that area of Essex and Manchester. Now, his attention is on the more challenging task of sorting out the location and ownership of lots east of Southern Avenue in Essex, to the Gloucester line. The terrain is rugged and documentation is sketchy. There is a lot to discover.

For Fred Wales, a Beverly native who grew up exploring the woods and went on to earn a degree in civil engineering before his Navy experience, the challenge is exciting. He notes that 21st century technology makes the job faster and easier than it was for Manchester Conservation Trust founder Frances Burnett, but the questions that need answering and the research fundamentals remain the same.

MECT would be unable to afford the services Fred Wales provides, and therefore staff and trustees are extremely grateful for the time and expertise he contributes.

Successfully protecting the Manchester-Essex Woods depends on the generosity of volunteers like Fred Wales. Please contact us to let us know how you would like to help! Email conserve@mect.org.

Wales uses a handheld GPS unit to collect survey data for maps and data sheets.



An Amazing Half-Century — with More to Come!

By Helen Bethell, Director of Land Acquisition & Protection

Picture Manchester and Essex fifty years ago: two small coastal towns roughly twenty-five miles from Boston known as delightful summer destinations — one for its magnificent beach and sea breezes, the other for its delicious clams and quaint antique shops. Extensive, little-visited woodlands, with a single paved road overhung with branches, linked the two villages.

A large state road project had just been completed, one that augured major changes for the North Shore. Cutting through Manchester's woodlands, it opened up convenient automobile access to the west and south. With an end to relative isolation, many benefits were touted. But were all the possible changes desirable? What that was irreplaceable might be lost?

The future of the woods themselves was the big question. Some saw in the new highway an opportunity for large-scale commercial development of "vacant" land, such as was occurring further south — development that would greatly expand the town's tax base. Others demurred, citing the beauty of the woodlands as a key element in community character. Town Meeting appeared ambivalent. It zoned the area for light commercial use, yet declined to promote such use. It created a town Conservation Commission, yet gave it no funds with which to acquire woodlands for conservation.

If the woodlands were to be saved, private action would be needed. A few landowners who shared a conservation urge gave their parcels to Frances L. Burnett, a dedicated nature lover who had begun a lifetime of research into woodlot ownership as she sought to preserve a section of the woods she had often visited with her recently deceased sister, Anne Burnett Gallagher. Albert M. Creighton and George G. Loring joined with Frances in forming a trust to hold title to the parcels that had been entrusted to her and to seek further gifts and purchases. This was the beginning of what is now the Manchester-Essex Conservation Trust.

Within three years the Trust owned more than 200 acres north of Route 128 (half in Manchester and half in Essex). Frances's research assisted the fledgling Manchester Conservation Commission in protecting 400 acres of tax-title woodlands. By 1990 more than 900 acres in both towns formed a Wilderness Conservation Area (WCA); a decade later nearly 1,100 acres in the Manchester-Essex Woods had been saved.

Other wooded areas of Manchester were not overlooked. The Trust acquired title or conservation restrictions in central Manchester (Powder House Hill, Winthrop Nature Preserve, Millet's Brook Reservation), in eastern Manchester (Kettle Cove, Long Hill, Hooper-Trask Pasture), in the West Manchester hills (Wyman Hill, Wolf Hill, Great Hill, Christian Hill,

Owl's Nest, Brookwood area), and coastal areas (Marsh Island and Day's Creek, Norton's Point, Singing Beach backdrop, House Island). By 2000 the Trust had responsibility for more than 900 acres of woodlands in the two towns (437 in Manchester and 467 in Essex).

Increasingly, a broad effort was undertaken to bring environmental awareness to local schools and youth groups.



A 1986 Conservation Award: The Nature Conservancy's Caren Caljouw and Laura Johnson honored Al Creighton, Frances Burnett, Helen Bethell, and Gid Loring for working to save the Wilderness Conservation Area.

The Trust asked Mass Audubon to work with local teachers in designing curriculum-related lessons requiring field trips to conservation areas. Eventually, we switched to a grant program that allowed teachers and youth group leaders to choose providers. We now also support joint projects with the high school's Green Team.

A Fuller Appreciation of Nature's Bounty

Over the years, the foresight of a few alert citizens in 1963 had been strongly reinforced through scientific research. We now know more about the woods' biodiversity (rare plants and invertebrates, birds) and critical roles in community well-being (drinking water quality, coastal water quality, flood control, air quality, climate adaptation), as well as community aesthetics and quiet recreational activities.

The more than 3,000 acres represented by the Manchester-Essex Woods are highly regarded by leading environmental organizations, such as The Nature Conservancy, The Trustees of Reservations, the Massachusetts Audubon Society, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program.

The state's Biomap2, published by NHESP in 2010, identifies the 3,000-plus-acre Manchester-Essex Woods as "core habitat" for biodiversity — the highest category of land that should be protected.

Reorganization and Renewal

As the 1990s drew to a close, it became increasingly apparent that the Trust had outgrown its simple operating structure and needed to be reorganized to deal with growing responsibilities. Also, reflecting our major landholdings in Essex, a name change was in order. Thus in 1999 Manchester-Essex Conservation Trust, Inc. was created, with officers and a board of trustees.

Soon the first big opportunity to define and preserve the integrity of the Wilderness Conservation Area presented itself. More than 100 acres in the heart of the Manchester-Essex Woods was put under agreement for residential development. MECT negotiated acquisition of the land for conservation, but the price was steep



Beaver on Cedar Pond.
Photo by Dennis Curtin

(\$1.4 million). Never before had such a large sum been needed. The highly successful Save Our Woods campaign was launched, yielding more than \$3 million toward land purchases to complete the central portion of the WCA.

What Lies Ahead

Given the broadly acknowledged environmental importance of the Manchester-Essex Woods, our prime goal is to finish the task of preserving this treasure. With community support, that will be accomplished! Meanwhile, we remain alert to new opportunities to save critical lands and to work with town governments to meet community environmental goals.

We must also devote more attention to scientifically informed land management. We are now entrusted with responsibility for almost 1,200 acres in both towns. More than 225 public-spirited individuals, companies, and other organizations over fifty years signed deeds with the intent that their land retain its wildness under our care. We must honor their choice.

The recently completed management plan for the WCA (reviewed in the Spring Newsletter) is a beginning. Further studies will add to our knowledge base. Meanwhile, we must be prepared to meet forcefully any threats to diminish the integrity of conserved lands.

At the same time, we will continue to promote awareness and appreciation of local environmental values and to expand the environmental knowledge of succeeding generations.

HONOR ROLL OF MECT LAND GRANTORS 1963–2013

• denotes multiple deeds over multiple years

1960s

Frederick L. Smith*
 Moses Knowlton*
 Elizabeth B. Knowlton*
 Richard P. Floyd*
 Otilie M. Floyd*
 Frank A. Willis*
 Abbie Floyd Willis*
 George C. Rice*
 Alice F. Rice*
 Chester C. Smith*
 Horton K. Banks*
 Paul L. Magnuson*
 Dorothy A. Magnuson*
 Hazlett W. Floyd*
 William S. Floyd*
 Elizabeth A. McCall*
 Henry W. Floyd*
 Ruth A. Hoare*
 Frank M. Norton*
 A. Florence Norton*
 Ethel S. Hooper
 Joyce Hooper Hewitt
 Henry Shields Hewitt
 Charles Hooper, Jr.
 Elizabeth G. Hooper
 Kernwood Trust
 Frances L. Burnett*
 Roger W. & Frances Hanners
 Walter G. Brown
 Agnes C. & Ralph Burnham
 Leonardo W. & Maud Carter
 Marion K. Noyes
 Roland H. & Dorothy Knight
 Bertha Durkee & Finlay D. MacDonald
 Ella S. Cameron
 Ethel W. & George W. Cann
 Marion A. & Joseph E. Batchelder
 Dorothy Smith
 Roy C. Norton
 Ralph L. & Dorothy Hanners
 Dwight E. & Eleanor Hanners
 Roland W. & Margaret Smith
 Agnes M. & Beresford Waller
 James MacG. & Helen Means
 Highwood Homes, Inc.
 Ruth E. & Warren D. Card
 Emma Low
 George G. Loring*
 Burton E. Andrews*
 Helen L. Burnham
 Emogene E. Johnson
 Raymond G. & Ruth S. Putnam
 Webster F. & Ruth C. Putnam
 Janice A. Putnam
 Marian P. & Claud H. Rowlette
 S. Arthur & Elizabeth G. Henry
 Helen H. & Mitchell Benedict
 Mary Alice & Clyde C. Dawson
 Estate of Randall E. Adams
 Ethel Adams Sprague*
 Eloise P. Adams*

Bernice J. Andrews
 G. Colkiet Caner
 Henry P. & Mary P. King
 Wilmot G. & Margery Pope
 Jane C. & William Saltonstall*
 Kenneth A. & Eleanor J. Cummings
 Adele Q. Ervin*
 Richard W. & Anna F. Southgate*
 Ruth W. Cotton
 Commonwealth of Mass
 Harriet Adams
 Joan M. Adams
 Jesse E. Brown
 Emma L. Paynter
 Evelyn F. Huger
 Town of Manchester*
 Richard K. Knowlton
 Philip W. Knowlton
 Robert B. Knowlton
 Donald L. Knowlton
 Harrison C. Cann
 Samuel Knight's Sons Co.
 Roland H. Knight

1970s

Estate of Clara B. Winthrop
 Highwood Homes, Inc.
 Carl E. & Priscilla B. Johnson
 Marion F. Knox*
 Harland R. Knox, Jr.
 John B. Knox
 Mary K. Mackie
 Patrick J. Noonan
 Jeremiah J. Noonan, Jr.
 Thomas G. Cagney
 Austin C. Morley
 Herbert E. Harrington, Jr.
 Betsy A. Sinnicks
 Mary Caroline Herter
 Suzanne C. Treadway
 Gardner & Vail P. Read
 Estate of Henry P. King

1980s

Homer F. & Grace L. Priest*
 Enoch S. Follett
 Samuel S. Mitchell
 Henry C. Mitchell
 Mary I. Mitchell
 Robert L. Mitchell
 Doris H. Willmonton
 Mary C. Cutler*
 John C. Babcock
 Peter & Mary A. Piona
 Augustus P. Loring
 Frederick L.W. Richardson, Jr.*
 Donald G. Allen
 Katherine H. Putnam
 Iris Hill Burnham
 Robert Forbes Perkins
 Russell P. Fears
 Herbert I. Harris*
 David P. Foss*
 Ann W. Brewer

1990s

F. Murray Forbes, Jr.
 Peter Arms Wick
 Kathleen Lord Wick
 Abby B. Stoddard
 Hallie Appel
 Thomas A. Halsted
 Charles H. Shurcliff
 Archie Roy Butman*
 Burnham W. Riggs
 Francis B. Lothrop, Jr.
 Kristin C. Lothrop
 John J. Coughlin
 Nancy E. Hogan
 William M. Maciel
 Raymond C. Gillis
 Archie Lee Gillis
 Deirdre Henderson
 Estelle B. Bolles*
 Russell S. Bolles*
 Jane B. Dan*
 Sally B. Clancy*
 Elsie P. Youngman
 Beatrice S. Woodbury
 Robert A. Mansfield
 Frances A. Mansfield
 Charles W. Mansfield
 Joanne Eysell
 Jeanette Philpot
 Parlee Wood, Jr.
 Robert Wood
 Merle Soffron
 Frank B. Nelson
 H. Loring Mears
 Ann Mears
 Frank C. Canney
 Mark C. Said
 Rebecca A. Said
 Gladys Dailey
 Andrew Robert Aldo
 Suzanne Sullivan Silva
 Kathleen O'Rourke
 Sheila Fink
 Mary C. Mehlman
 Emily C. Parkman
 George C. Caner, Jr.
 Wilmot T. Pope
 Margery M. Pope
 Philip Y. DeNormandie
 Stephen J. Wedlock*
 Kim M. Pedersen*
 George P. Beal
 John D. & Donna M. Hunter

2000s

Crombie Street Church
 Congregational Church*
 The Trust for Public Land
 George L. Needham
 Katherine L. Babson, Jr.
 Susan Babson Young
 David L. Babson, Jr.
 Florence C. Perkins
 Paul H. Mugford
 Rebecca B. Richardson
 Virginia B. Woodman*

Elizabeth J. Randazza
 Judith E. Reed
 Ralph C. Pino
 Kathleen M. Pino
 Barbara C. Paradis
 Ann E. Kenney
 Adina Skane
 Sally P. Bower
 Carolyn K. Christopher
 Cynthia Hirtle
 Alberta Gamble
 Diana E. Richards
 Town of Essex
 Ralph W. Drinkwater
 Anne L. Drinkwater
 Ethel Febiger Hall
 Marion M. Boe
 Everett A. Major
 Aurelia A. Toeller
 Massachusetts Audubon Society
 George J. Anderson
 Daniel P. Richardson, Jr.
 Randle B. Richardson
 Essex County Greenbelt Assn.
 Gregory Crockett
 Kathy Crockett
 Michael Cataldo
 Vickie Hartung
 Rolf Madsen
 Kristina Madsen Estes
 Mary H. Carpenter
 Samuel & Martha Hoar
 Yankee Clipper Council,
 Boy Scouts of America
 John Walker
 Geoffrey Harris
 Theresa D. Killam
 Donna Crandall
 Wesley Choate Burnham
 Michael Herve Burnham
 Dana Everett Burnham
 Everett P. Burnham
 Nancy C. Lutts
 John Mullen
 First Congregational Church
 of Essex
 SPC Essex Land LLC
 Stanley & Susan Bialek
 George P. Smith
 Estate of Sandra A. Parsons
 Mary K. Baker
 Patricia Jane Baker
 Kelly Rachel Maman
 Charles E. Raymond*
 Richard H. Cobb

2010s

Elaine A. Miller
 Douglas K. Woodman

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Help with Trail Work, November 2 and November 9

November 2 Gather at 8:30 AM at the Cedar Swamp parking area off School Street. No rain date.

November 9 Gather at 8:30 AM on Upper Pine Street, (Pipeline Road) Manchester. Rain date November 10. Questions? Email conserve@mect.org.

Fall Equinox Family Picnic, September 22

Gather with friends and neighbors at the top of Millstone Hill to bid a fond farewell to summer and welcome glorious autumn. Meet your MECT guides in the Cedar Swamp parking area at 12 PM for a short walk to one of Manchester's highest points. Children can enjoy a nature treasure hunt. Bring your own picnic. Questions? Email conserve@mect.org.

Ocean-Front Home the Site of Annual Meeting, November 3

MECT members! Join the celebration of MECT's 50th Anniversary at this year's festive Annual Meeting. Guest speaker is Dr. Thomas French who heads the Massachusetts Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. Gather at one of Manchester's fine private homes for wine and hors d'oeuvres and a Happy Anniversary cake. 4:00-6:00 PM. Space is limited and pre-registration is required. RSVP today! Call 978-890-7153 or email conserve@mect.org. Become a member now to enjoy this special event. Send in the enclosed envelope or join online at www.mect.org/support.



KEEPING BUSY WITH MECT
MECT provides many opportunities to explore and volunteer.

(Top) School children exploring tidepools at White Beach in Manchester. Funding provided by MECT supports the program.

(Right) Student volunteer Patrick McDonagh installs a new trail sign.

(Below) Hardy volunteers set off to spend a morning maintaining trails in the Wilderness Conservation Area.

