

**East Haddam Environmental Roundtable  
Program Minutes  
Saturday, May 10, 2008 9AM-1PM Sportsmen's Club**

1. **Welcome** – Matt Budzik, Land Trust Board Member and chairman of the East Haddam Democratic Town Committee, sponsor of the event welcomed the approximately 50 participants.
  - a) **Focus of the Roundtable:** Protection of the environment and East Haddam's rural character. Public opinion surveys done last year and 10 years ago indicate that what residents overwhelmingly like about East Haddam is its environment and rural character.
  - b) **Acknowledgements & Facilitator Introduction**
    - Thanks to Harvey Thomas and Sue Merrow for organizing the event and to the Moodus Sportsmen's Club for catering and use of their facility.
    - Introduction of Damon Hearne, known for his work with the Eight Mile River project, who volunteered his time to serve as moderator/facilitator.
  
2. **Participant Introductions**

Each participant introduced him (her) self and noted an item to celebrate, including:

  - Concerned, energized citizens and volunteers as evidenced by this gathering.
  - 4500 acres of permanently protected open space
  - Eightmile River achieving Wild & Scenic status
  - Salmon River Compact
  - Habitat protection and species diversity
  - Focus on rural character, views & vistas, scenic roads
  - Strides in water quality awareness & involvement of property owners
  - Formation of the new Green Committee
  - Proactive program of open space acquisition and stewardship
  - Protection of archeological and historic features
  - Acquisition of the Sabine parcel and saving the Haagenson Preserve
  - History of sensitivity to the environment and rural character by the town's land use commissions.
  
3. **Each participating group had a spokesperson describe the group's current goal(s).**
  - **Gateway Commission:** Yankee (CY) resolution, Tidewater Institute – mapping/education

- **Earth Charter:** Summit with Nobel laureate, community garden, foster organic education
- **Conservation Commission:** Move forward with stewardship efforts, boundary marking, developing trails, securing volunteers and advising other boards & commissions.
- **EH Fish & Game:** Maintenance of grassland, bird diversity, maintain true, native brook trout population.
- **Historic District Commission:** Update inventory of historic properties, Venture Smith program, and assist the Goodspeed to achieve its objectives while preserving the historic character of East Haddam Village.
- **EH Land Trust:** Search for landowner partners, develop data base for use open space acquisition, update plant/animal inventory, continue to work with Open Space Committee and Conservation Commission.
- **Lakes Association:** Support Chatham Health District proposed pump out ordinance, educate lakes property owners.
- **Inland Wetlands & Watercourses:** Property owner education about wetlands protection
- **Open Space Committee:** Review Open Space Criteria, continued work with property owners interested in open space preservation.
- **Planning & Zoning:** Town adoption of Plan of Conservation & Development, Review regulations to better preserve rural character.
- **Eightmile River Management Committee:** Secure funding, implement management plan with the 3 towns, property owner education, and celebrate accomplishment of Wild & Scenic status.
- **Garden Club:** Start horticultural therapy program, continue planting program.
- **Green Committee:** Organize the new committee, gather/analyze information, develop recommendations to town about best practices, and develop political will to implement best practices.
- **Moodus Sportsmen's Club:** Continue educational programs and promote outdoor life.
- **Water Pollution Control Authority:** Continue present policies and performance.
- **SOLAR:** Continue advocacy for rural character
- **Board of Selectmen:** Continue aggressive acquisition of open space.
- **The Sanctuary:** Reclaim the Sanctuary's meadow lands, property stewardship.

#### **4. Participants worked together to develop a list of Environmental Opportunities and Challenges facing East Haddam.**

##### **Opportunities:**

- Depressed real estate market provides opportunity to acquire open space.
- Opportunity to educate/involve young people and newcomers.

- Market East Haddam as a “green” community to attract business and tourists.
- Opportunity for local agriculture, organic food, community garden(s).
- Opportunity to implement the vision captured in the Plan of Conservation & Development.
- Opportunity to manage the impact of open space, etc. grants and funding to achieve this vision.

**Challenges:**

- Down economy makes funding everything, including environmental initiatives difficult but still need to be aggressive in down economy and balance needs and costs.
- Need to involve young people and schools in environmental activities.
- Diversify open space funding partnerships so as to have more flexibility in pursuing smaller, more centrally located parcels.
- Work with developers and property owners to communicate town vision.
- Improve communication with citizens concerning environmental issues and objectives.
- Provide education for new owners concerning land use conditions, especially when property is transferred.
- Preserve views & vistas, scenic and gravel roads, buffer impact of new development.
- Preserve, reuse the already built environment.
- Keep East Haddam an affordable place to live.
- Plan for permanently high energy costs.
- How to keep local agriculture sustainable, promote locally grown products.
- Sewer avoidance, in ground system maintenance.
- Implement Plan of Conservation & Development vision.

**5. Participants were divided into 5 sub-groups to select priority issues (which general topics to tackle), discuss strategies and report back to whole group.**

**6. Sub-group Reports**

a) Top Priorities

Group 1:

Top Priority: **Continue preservation and use of open space**

Issues:

- Pace & scale in light of economy
- Identify and select land to preserve
- Appropriate funding
- Future of Real Estate Conveyance tax
- Stewardship/management of preserved open space

- Communication: Open space history, town goals, voter approval

Strategies:

- East Haddam, state, TNC, TPL, other town partnerships
- Explore special assessments
- Communication & education
- Submit good, workable grant applications: State wants-Greenbelts, good location, water quality, wildlife habitat.
- Need Real Estate Conveyance tax renewal

Groups 2 & 4:

Top Priority: **Local agriculture/Food Production/Food Security**

Issues:

- Inadequate marketing opportunities, retail outlets for local agriculture
- Affordable farmland and agricultural supports
- EDC interest, expertise and support

Strategies:

- Communicate availability of farmers market, enlarge farmers market
- Explore/establish marketing infrastructure for local agriculture, retail sites, etc.
- Affordable Farmland
  - Inventory East Haddam's farmland
  - Preserve working land/acquire development rights, etc.
  - Ensure farmers rights through legislation, local regulation and education of residents.
  - Establish community garden(s).
  - Educate first time growers
  - Utilize all available resources ( State expertise, State funds, FFA, Master Gardeners, Land Use Commissions, EDC, the Green Committee, Durable Community Alliance, Farmland Trust, etc.)

Group 3:

Top Priority: **Town wide communication concerning environmental and other issues.**

Issues:

- Decline of traditional print media, inadequate newspaper coverage of East Haddam.
- How to establish communication of in-town initiatives and actions
- How to develop an alternative communication vehicle for issues of town wide importance/interest.

Strategies:

- Web based communication
  - Upgrade town web-site
  - Include links to local environmental groups
  - Include consistent, up-to-date info about board and commission meetings, agendas, minutes and activities.
- Print Media
  - Include an environment section in town magazine
- Face to Face Communication
  - More meetings like this one
  - Environmental groups ask to attend and brief other town social, religious, etc groups
- Signage
  - More sandwich boards in other, outlying parts of town

Groups 4 & 5:

Top Priority: **Incubate right kind of Economic Development in the right place(s).**

Issues:

- Use/protect town resources
- Affordable housing compatible with land

Strategies:

- Incubate economic development in light of environmental concerns
  - Incentives for “green” businesses
  - Stay local to ensure businesses can survive/grow
  - Develop eco-tourism guide services (e/g., hiking, canoeing/kayaking, etc.)
  - Encourage B&Bs
  - Use town resources such as water power, renewable resources – do not lay waste
  - Rejuvenate resorts (e.g., festivals, partnerships, etc.)
  - Explore water power opportunities
  - Drive incorporation of energy savings into town plans – bike lanes, public transportation
  - Involve/collaborate with EDC
  - Utilize available resources (CT Dept of Arts & Tourism, ERWSC-Mystic coast and country, Eightmile River Management Committee, SCORE, etc.)

**7. Discussion: Next Steps**

- An outline of what was covered and accomplished by today's gathering will be distributed to the attendees (one promise kept!)
- Plan to get together again in the fall and include the EDC, FFA and representation from the school system.
- Sue Merrow volunteered to arrange for a program with a speaker to learn more about topics such as local agriculture, affordable housing, smart growth.
- After receiving the meeting notes, each group to determine:
  - How each group can get involved with the priority issues identified
  - How each can cooperate/interact with other groups to accomplish the individual group goals outlined in 3 above.

## **8. Contact Information**

- **Connecticut River Gateway Commission**  
P.O. Box 778, Old Saybrook, CT 06475 (860) 388 - 3497
- **Earth Charter**  
ECCoLoV, 9 Westwood Drive, Moodus, CT 06469 (860) 873 - 1251
- **East Haddam Board of Selectmen**  
7 Main Street, PO Box K, East Haddam, CT 06423 (860) 873 - 5020
- **East Haddam Conservation Commission**  
7 Main Street, PO Box K, East Haddam, CT 06423 (860) 873 - 5031
- **East Haddam Fish & Game Club**  
P.O. Box 59, New London, CT 06320
- **East Haddam Historic District Commission**  
7 Main Street, PO Box K, East Haddam, CT 06423 (860) 873 - 5031
- **East Haddam Land Trust**  
P.O. Box 122, East Haddam, CT 06423
- **East Haddam Lakes Association**  
199 East Shore Drive, Colchester, CT 06415 (860) 537 - 6070
- **East Haddam Inland Wetlands & Water Courses Commission**  
7 Main Street, PO Box K, East Haddam, CT 06423 (860) 873 - 5031
- **East Haddam Open Space Committee**  
7 Main Street, PO Box K, East Haddam, CT 06423 (860) 873 - 5031
- **East Haddam Planning & Zoning Commission**  
7 Main Street, PO Box K, East Haddam, CT 06423 (860) 873 - 5031
- **Eight Mile Wild & Scenic Coordinating Committee**  
PO Box 70, 1066 Say brook Rd, Haddam, CT 06348 (860) 345 - 8700
- **The Garden Club**  
Ellen Friedman, P.O. Box 41, East Haddam, CT 06423 (860) 873 - 8081
- **The Green Committee**  
P.O. Box 459, Moodus, CT 06469

- **Moodus Sportsmen's Club**  
P.O. Box 11, Moodus, CT 06469
- **The Nature Conservancy**  
45 Main Street, Essex, CT 06426 (860) 767 - 7706
- **NEMO**  
1066 Saybrook Road, Box 70, Haddam, CT 06438 (860) 345 - 4511
- **SOLAR**  
SOLAR, attn: Todd Gelston, 50 Bogel Road, East Haddam, CT 06423
- **East Haddam Democratic Town Committee**  
P.O. Box 357, East Haddam, CT 06423