



July 18, 2006

The Board of Trustees
Middlesex School
1400 Lowell Road
Concord, MA 01742

Dear Members of the Board:

On behalf of the Massachusetts Audubon Society, I write to urge you to reconsider your decision to construct athletic fields in the Estabrook Woods.

The Massachusetts Audubon Society is the largest conservation organization in New England. Since 1896, we have worked to protect more than 30,000 acres of conservation land and are supported by 65,000 member households. We conduct educational programs for 250,000 children and adults annually and maintain 43 wildlife sanctuaries that are open to the public. We know how important preserving green space is to the state's natural heritage and the people of Massachusetts.

As Middlesex's tract of the Estabrook Woods, including the proposed development area, is designated Core Habitat in Massachusetts and deemed vital for the protection of biodiversity, the preservation of that land is paramount. In addition to the endangered and threatened species protected by the Estabrook Woods, the forest also supports a vital bird habitat, containing 159 species that have been seen in the forest over the last 35 years. It is an extraordinary list for a forest, including 5 state-listed species by the Natural Heritage Program and 40 species that are listed as a conservation priority by Partners in Flight. As our viable bird habitats are destroyed with the widespread loss of green space, tracts of land like the Estabrook Woods are critical to maintaining the vitality of our bird populations.

It is therefore critical that the Board of Trustees choose to halt further development in the Estabrook Woods and prevent further degradation of this vital habitat. We urge Middlesex to conserve this invaluable resource and steward Massachusetts's natural heritage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John J. Clarke".

John J. Clarke
Director of Public Policy & Government Relations