



Dec

Rock Root & Trail

2021

The newsletter for
supporters of CFPA



Photo by Bob Pagini

We don't despair, but have hope.

1
VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

2
SUMMER TRAIL CREW

3
AMERICORPS

4
ANNUAL FUND 2021

Volunteer Spotlight

Volunteers Winnie, Linda, Pam, and Liane painting trail signs.



You can find them in the CFPA Community Room, paint brushes in hand bent over the wooden signs. The smell of fresh wood and sawdust in the room.

They've painted hundreds of signs.

Handmade, carefully crafted, the signs are taken out and orphaned in the woods when finished. . . until you come

along and find solace in seeing them, knowing you're on the correct trail.

The iconic CFPA trail sign, as with so much of CFPA's trail work, is done by volunteers. It is selfless people, not wood elves, who take time and care to make the trails experience a positive one for you.



Food for Thought

Monthly or quarterly giving is a great way to support Connecticut's forests, parks, and trails. It is an easy way to increase your giving and not feel it. You might want to support a mile of trail, but the idea of writing a check for \$395, or putting it on a credit card, does not fit into your budget. It might be easier to give \$32.91 a month. It happens automatically and your giving increases painlessly.

Click "Recurring Donation" at www.ctwoodlands.org/donate to start your monthly giving now.

2021 TRAIL CREW



Summer Trail Crew atop the new bridge at Tynan Park.

The COVID 19 pandemic continues to impact all aspects of our lives. The impact for trails is that more people are getting out on the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails--good news. However, since CFPA puts volunteer safety first, we've been limited in the number of work parties that can get out on trails--bad news.

Trails have also suffered during the pandemic because of severe weather driven by climate change. One bright spot has been two trail crew programs that have helped fill some of the gaps left by the lack of volunteer work parties.

Summer Trail Crew

The Summer Trail Crew, a paid internship program, has been particularly helpful in the past two seasons as volunteer work parties were necessarily reduced. The Crew, typically 5-6 members, performs trail maintenance, as well as repair and construction projects on the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail System. They learn by working with professionals and experienced volunteers on projects large and small to improve the trails,



Summer Trail Crew & Alex Bradley installing a new bridge at Tynan Park.

Planned Giving

Donor/members who leave a legacy gift to CFPA during life or in their wills/trusts protect forests, parks, and trail long after they have passed away.

CFPA is grateful for the generosity and foresight of long-time CFPA member, Sidney Skolnick. Mr. Skolnick created a trust at the Community Foundation of Greater New Haven that will benefit forests, parks, trails and CFPA in the future. This year, CFPA received over \$23,000.

If you are interested in leaving a legacy - leaving your trace on Connecticut's land and trails - and have questions, please feel free to email Jim Little at jlittle@ctwoodlands.org or call the office at (860) 346-TREE.

the hiker experience, and to reduce impacts to natural resources along trail corridors.

The trail crew is not for the faint of heart. Trail work is very physical. They are expected to hike up to 5 miles a day, carry their tools and gear, and actively contribute to the work being done. They cut back brush, dig new trail, move lumber for bridges, saw out tree blowdowns, or set stone steps. The Crew works in heat, rain, or beautiful weather. Support from grants and donor/members have kept the Summer Trail Crew working during the recent crisis.



AmeriCorps installing a trail on Lamentation Mtn.

AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps NCCC is a full-time service program that places teams of young adults within a variety of

communities to provide hands-on volunteer service and relief work. We've worked with the organization for several years. They are great and the only risk is that they can be pulled away to work on other emergencies – such as hurricane recovery in other parts of the country.

This crew works full-time out in the field and lives camp-style. This year's crew has been camping on the grounds of the CFPA Headquarters since mid-August, sleeping through multiple tropical storms and ever-changing variable weather. It has been a unique challenge for this AmeriCorps team.

A majority of the trail building projects they've completed in 2021 are trail relocations (trail relos). Certain sections of trails were relocated in order to better represent the nature of the area, as well as to create a usable and sustainable path for hikers to enjoy. Some of the most impactful of these relocations were on the Mattabesett, Tunxis and Quinnipiac Trails.

The team also installed and repaired a number of footbridges, many of which needed to be rescued and re-set after the hurricanes. They also hauled in material to build over 500 feet of bog bridging in remote trail locations, as well as cut back brush and re-blazed trail sections that needed a bit of TLC. During this difficult time of pandemic delays, CFPA is incredibly grateful for the AmeriCorps team's service, their hard work and their commitment to conservation and trails.



Clare the Vampire Slayer?

No...Clare gave up vampire slaying as a hobby a long time ago.

Clare and the AmeriCorps crew were shaping large stakes to drive into a wet area as bridge supports, not extra-large stakes for dispatching giant vampires. Bridge building is an ongoing task for the trail team and trail volunteers. In September, five bridges were washed out. For this project, the team designed an elevated boardwalk in an area that historically has standing water most of the year. Shaping the stakes made them easier to drive into the mud and deep water with a pounder. The result is a boardwalk that keeps you dry booted!

The Hill-Stead Museum

An art and nature event with The Winslow Society.

A wonderful group of supporters, members of the The Winslow Society, board members, and trail volunteers, took a hike and enjoyed an outdoor brunch at the Hill-Stead Museum on a lovely mid-September day. It was one of CFPA's first events since the pandemic started. Invitees were also able to view the fantastic art collection in the Hill-Stead before the hike.

The group walked a section of the Metacomet (a section of the New

England Trail) that is on the Hill-Stead property. The hike illustrated the importance of trail hosts and partners like the Hill-Stead Museum.

The Winslow Society is a group of individuals who share a deep dedication to conservation and who know their higher level of financial support can have a substantial effect. Winslow Society members believe they can make a difference for CT forests and trails through yearly giving at the \$1,000 level or higher.



AmeriCorps installing stakes at Sessions Woods.



Blue-Blazed Forever

Keep Our Trails Unbroken

Maybe this has happened to you. . .

You're hiking one of our Blue-Blazed Trails. The deeper you go into the woods, the more the stress of your daily life fades. The sharp, musky smell of forest envelops you, filling your mind with peace. You can feel your energy rising. And then you see it: A yellow sign.

TRAIL CLOSED.

There's a detour. It takes you out to a nearby road. You'd almost forgotten about cars and roads. But now you're

walking on pavement. Cars roar by. So close. So loud. Each one leaves a swirl of dust behind.

You can feel those muscles in your neck and shoulders start to tighten up as you walk along the road. Half a mile. One mile. Another half mile. By the time the detour ends and you're heading back into the woods, you're hot, tired, and frazzled.

All because one small parcel of land closed access to the trail and forced the detour.

WHY

Most people who enjoy the soul-satisfying experience of walking, hiking or running the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails are surprised that many trails are in danger of closing and being pushed onto a road walk.

Trails are vulnerable. 40% of Blue Trails (up to 380 miles) go across private, unprotected land. Private property, where owners have every

right to ask that we remove the trail from their property. When they do that, we hikers have no choice but to comply. The work-around is to re-route the trail to the nearest road. Whole sections of some of the most beautiful trails in the state could be blocked. It could happen any time.

The Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails--and you who walk trails--have greatly benefitted from the generosity of close to 2,000 landowners who allow trails on

their property. The problem often occurs when the property changes hands. We know that 7%-10% of properties along the Blue-Blazed Hiking System are potentially for sale at any given time. Every day property changes hands. An owner passes away. A buyer from out-of-state snaps it up. They may not understand the power of the trails.



We want unbroken walks through the forest. Quiet. Cool. Safe from traffic. Where you can take even young kids and know they can let off steam, run ahead, feel the wonder of nature. . .and be transformed by the experience. But too many trails are in extreme danger of being broken.

We don't despair, but have hope. There are many solutions. We can work with local communities and land trusts to buy key properties. We can get "trail easements" that protect a trail forever

even though it's on private property. All these actions have a cost.

This year's Annual Fund focusses on building awareness of this risk, the danger of broken trails, with member and the public. You know how important it is for people to get outdoors and experience the forest and nature first-hand. It makes you a better person. It makes Connecticut a better place.

If you're inspired to give right now, use this QR code and help today.



Please support the Annual Fund today.