

CONNECTICUT

Woodlands

SPRING 2019

A photograph of a woman with blonde hair, wearing a light blue t-shirt, smiling broadly. She is carrying a young child with blonde hair on her back using a dark blue and tan backpack. They are in a lush green forest with many trees and foliage. The ground is covered with brown leaves.

FAMILY TRAILS

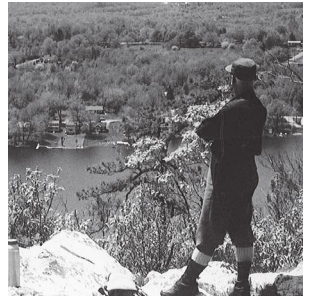
A MAGAZINE OF THE CONNECTICUT FOREST & PARK ASSOCIATION



The Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA) is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that protects forests, parks, walking trails, and open spaces for future generations by connecting people to the land. Since 1895, CFPA has enhanced and defended Connecticut's rich natural heritage through advocacy, conservation, recreation, and education, including maintaining the 825-mile Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails system. CFPA depends on the generous support of members to fulfill its mission. For more information and to donate, go to ctwoodlands.org



On the Cover: Lindsay Suhr, CFPA Land Conservation Director, and her son, Luka, page 10



The Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails turn 90, page 8

CONTRIBUTOR'S *Spotlight*

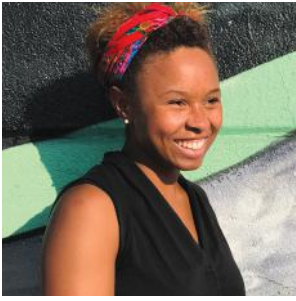


Many people have a fear of snakes, especially venomous ones. But Chad Hussey, a freelance writer and photographer from Farmington, Conn., who has seen venomous snakes in the wild, says that most encounters are peaceful and memorable. We caught up with Chad, an avid rock climber and a member of the American Alpine Club and the American Mountain Guides Association, to learn about how his experiences with snakes have shaped his perspective on the outdoors and life in general.

Were you interested in snakes before seeing the copperhead while climbing at Ragged Mountain?

When I visited Bronx Zoo as a child, I was fascinated by the giant pythons, the majestic cobras, and colorful vipers. I was also glad they were behind the glass. I wouldn't go out looking for snakes, but I was always excited to see them in the wild.

In this Issue



NET Artist-in-Residence, Marisa Williamson creates Monuments to Escape, page 12



Encountering copperheads in Connecticut, page 14

- 4 Editor's Note
- 5 CFPA Updates
- 6 From the Statehouse
By Eric Hammerling
- 8 The Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails Turn 90
- 10 Family Trails
By Timothy Brown
- 12 Monuments to Escape
By Emma Kravet
- 14 Shades of Copper
By Chad Hussey
- 16 From the Land
By Jean Crum Jones
- 18 The Slow Storm
By Thomas E. Worthley
- 23 Pathways

How have your encounters with copperheads changed the way you approach hiking, climbing, and other outdoors activities?

In a word: awareness. Seeing a copperhead or rattlesnake up close is a wake-up call. You realize that you are truly a guest in their world, and you find yourself moving more deliberately and scanning your surroundings for their friends.

Has your experience with the copperhead shaped your life in other ways?




It has helped me want to become more informed about the things, people, and events I learn about and interact with. The most transformative thing about my meeting with the copperhead was not the initial scary realization, but the respectful coexistence in a powerful moment of time.

You spend a lot of time outside. What are some other types of wildlife that you have encountered?

Mostly bear, deer, bobcat, moose, coyote, and rattlesnakes; bison and pronghorn in Wyoming. Some of my most memorable moments include walking to the base of El Capitan in an early morning mist surrounded by a small herd of deer, being stalked by a bobcat in the Southern Catskills, and encountering many moose, including a mother and calf, coming out of the Tetons.

Do you still climb at Ragged Mountain? What advice do you have for other climbers for avoiding snakes there?

Ragged will always be a special place for me. I recommend looking carefully around the cliff base before stacking your rope and sitting down to put on your rock shoes. While on the face, don't reach blindly into cracks or onto ledges. Remember, snakes like to climb, too.

 facebook.com/ctforestandparkassociation
 twitter.com/ctwoodlands
 instagram.com/ctforestandparkassociation
 860-346-TREE
ctwoodlands.org
info@ctwoodlands.org



Editor's Note

When I was a kid, my brothers and I spent countless hours exploring the woods, streams, and fields near my family's home. We often were outside from early morning until sundown—climbing trees, catching frogs, building forts. We would go inside only when the last flickers of sunlight danced low in the sky.

Today's children are growing up in a vastly different world. They are far less likely to spend time playing outdoors than any previous generation, and those kids who do play outside are often tethered to their parents—and to everyone else for that matter—by cell phones that can track their every movement.

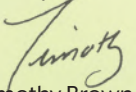
It's easy for me to romanticize my childhood, to wax-poetic for a bygone era when children discovered the natural world through exploration and created adventures with sticks and mud. But as the father of a two-year-old, I am concerned about the amount of time our son will spend living in a virtual world in lieu of the real one, so we get him outside as much as we can. Parents are critically important when it comes to nurturing their child's love of the outdoors. But all too often we adults model poor behaviors for children, constantly checking our email, for example, or texting while on a hike.

When I taught environmental science in western Massachusetts, I organized an annual field trip for the entire ninth grade class to Mt. Tom State Park. Students explored a beaver pond and hiked to a lookout tower where, on a clear day, you could see the all the way to Hartford. For many of these ninth graders, this was their first hiking experience.

One rainy, spring day, several Palestinian students visited the school. When I asked them what they were most looking forward to doing in America, they immediately said they wanted to go for a hike. It was not the response I had expected from a group of teenagers. "You're so lucky to live in such a beautiful place," one youth told me.

Indeed, we are lucky to live in a state with spectacular natural beauty, where over a hundred years ago people had the vision to protect forests and parks for the benefit of future generations. Today, CFPA is working hard to keep that vision alive through advocacy, conservation, recreation, and educational programs for kids of all ages.

I'll see you outside,



Timothy Brown
Editor

The Connecticut Forest & Park Association, Inc.

Board of Directors

President

Eric Lukingbeal, Granby

Vice-President

Starr Sayres, East Haddam

Treasurer

James W. Dombrauskas, New Hartford

Secretary

Eric Hammerling, West Hartford

Forester

Thomas J. Degnan, Jr., East Haddam

Paul Balavender, Canton

Starling W. Childs, Norfolk

Kristin Connell, Killingworth

William Cordner, West Simsbury

R. Richard Croce, Killingworth

Robert Deptula, Ellington

Caroline Driscoll, New London

Seth Huttner, Hartford

Fred Johnson, Coventry

Peter Knight, Bloomfield

Michael Lecours, Farmington

Scott Livingston, Bolton

Jeff Loureiro, Canton

Jeffrey O'Donnell, Bristol

Raymond Radikas, Glastonbury

Staff

Eric Hammerling

Executive Director

Beth Bernard

Program Director Goodwin Forest
Conservation Education Center

Clare Cain

Trails Stewardship Director

Marty Gosselin

Marketing &
Communications Director

Amelia Graham

Development Assistant

Liz (Fossett) Hughes

Manager of Events &
Volunteer Engagement

Emma Kravet

Education Director

James W. Little

Development Director

Teresa Peters

Office Manager

Lindsay Suhr

Land Conservation Director

Brennan Turner

Field Coordinator

Woodlands

Timothy Brown

Editor

David Leff

Poetry Editor

Kolk Design

Graphic Design

Thanks to photo contributions from:
Timothy Brown, Bob Clark, Chad Hussey,
Laura Kolk, Steve Kornfeld, Darin and Mary
Kramer, Lindsay Suhr, Brennan Turner,
Marisa Williamson, Thomas Worthley

Printed on FSC-certified paper from
responsible sources.

Connecticut Woodlands is a quarterly
magazine published since 1936 by CFPA.
The magazine is distributed to members
and donors, as well as public libraries
and other state and local offices.
Advertising local goods or services is
welcome. For specifications and rates,
visit ctwoodlands.org/rates. To advertise,
contact tpeters@ctwoodlands.org or call
860-346-TREE.

New Field Coordinator Hired for CFPA Trails Program

CFPA is pleased to introduce Brennan Turner as the new Field Coordinator for its Trails Program. Brennan replaces Colin Carroll who left CFPA at the end of last year's field season to attend graduate school at Duke University.

As the Field Coordinator, Brennan will work closely with Clare Cain, Trails Stewardship Director, and volunteers throughout the state to implement CFPA's trail stewardship programs. Much of his time will be spent supervising the Summer Trail Crew, a ten-week, paid internship program that provides 18 to 24-year-olds with experience in trail maintenance, repair, and construction. The crew works closely with professionals and volunteers to improve the hiker experience and reduce impacts to natural resources on Connecticut's 825-mile Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails system.

A native of western North Carolina, Brennan earned his geology degree from Appalachian State University in 2014. For his capstone project, he spent more than two months doing geology fieldwork in Italy. After graduation, Brennan moved to Carlsbad, New Mexico, where he worked for a mud-logging company as a soil analyst. It was there that



Brennan Turner, Field Coordinator

he developed his passion for trail work, conservation, and land management. He recently relocated to Connecticut from Steamboat Springs, Colo., where he spent the past several years working for conservation organizations such as the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps and the Colorado Fourteeners Initiative. When he's not working, Brennan is an avid skier, mountain biker, and rock climber, and says he's looking forward to exploring New England's mountains, trails, and crags.

Visit ctwoodlands.org/blue-blazed-hiking-trails, to learn more about CFPA's trails programs.

Gypsy Moth Training for Landowners

Gypsy moths are a serious problem for Connecticut's forests (see "The Slow Storm," page 18). But innovative management practices can help landowners to better manage their woodlots. For example, because oak trees are one of the few species that can sprout new shoots from their stumps, landowners should harvest gypsy moth-infected oak trees before they have died.

In February, the Windham Extension Center hosted a presentation on the status of gypsy moths in Connecticut. Landowners learned how they can better manage affected forests, and about the realities of current timber markets.

On June 8, the James L. Goodwin Conservation Center will offer a field training program where participants will learn firsthand how to identify damage from gypsy moths and other tree pathogens from a professional forester. The program is co-sponsored by the James L. Goodwin Conservation Center, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, UCONN Cooperative Extension, Eastern Connecticut Forested Landowners Association, and The Last Green Valley.

For more information about the training and all our events, go to ctwoodlands.org/events



From the Statehouse

By Eric Hammerling

Change is Constant in State & National Politics

Last year's elections resulted in several changes both here in Connecticut and in Congress that set the stage for an interesting year ahead.

In Connecticut, we have a new governor, new commissioner of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, a Democratic majority in the senate, and several new members and committee chairs. In Congress, there is a new speaker of the house, new House committee chairs, and ongoing uncertainty surrounding the Robert Mueller investigation.

Lobbyists sometimes refer to the opening weeks of the Connecticut General Assembly as "silly season." In some ways, silly season is refreshing because any idea might be proposed as legislation and some of these ideas are good, such as a pilot project authorizing certain towns to raise funds through a local real estate transaction fee dedicated to protect open space and farmlands, or manage town recreational lands. But at the same time, we always have to be on guard to ensure that bad ideas don't gain momentum and that good bills are not blocked for seemingly "silly" reasons.

One of the bad ideas that was recently proposed would require the sale of any state-owned public land between 40 and 60 acres that hadn't been "used" for five years or more. The term "used" isn't defined in the bill, and there is no rationale for the 40 to 60-acre target. Although this bill may just be a placeholder for a more specific proposal, as currently written it would put many valuable public landholdings in jeopardy of being lost.

We always have to be on guard to ensure that bad ideas don't gain momentum and that good bills are not blocked for seemingly "silly" reasons.

The first quarter is also when CFPA and more than 100 trail advocates from across the country "Hike the Hill" in Washington, D.C., to meet with congressional representatives about funding and policy priorities for national scenic trails. CFPA has long fought for national scenic trail priorities by urging Congress to:

- Increase the appropriation in the National Park Service for the New England National Scenic Trail, which has been flat-funded since the trail was designated in 2009;
- Promote incentives for private landowners who host the trail, such as the "Complete America's Great Trails Act," which would give a tax credit to a landowner who donated an easement to protect the trail corridor of a national scenic trail; and
- Support the National Scenic Trails Parity Act, which would ensure that the New England, Ice Age, and North Country national scenic trails are granted the same "unit" status enjoyed by other national scenic trails, such as the Appalachian Trail.

In Connecticut, CFPA has once again put forward its annual "Conservation Agenda." Our top priorities include:

- Protect funds such as the Passport to Parks and Community Investment Act from being raided or diverted to other purposes;
- Reauthorize bonding to continue the successes of the state Recreational Trails & Greenways grants program;
- Maintain the Council on Environmental Quality as an independent state environmental watchdog agency.

CFPA's full conservation agenda for 2019 is available at ctwoodlands.org You can sign-up to receive e-news alerts on these conservation priorities as well as events, workshops, and other opportunities to celebrate forests, parks, trails, and outdoor recreation throughout the year.

Eric Hammerling has served as the Executive Director of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association since 2008.



Nothing Happened

A swarm of goldfinches
stirs into air. When the wind
blows over the meadow
everything is moving,
every leaf, every wing.

I took a photo of a wildflower
with my cellphone
and tried to match it with some images
on Google, to no avail.

At the edge of a stream, minnows
flirted with the grasses.
I tried to count them but there were
too many and they wouldn't stay still,
brushstrokes on a scroll rolling open and on.

At home, in answer to How was
your day?, I say nothing happened,
just one of those days
without an event worth remark.

James Finnegan's poems have appeared in *Ploughshares*, *Poetry Northwest*, *The Southern Review*, *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, as well as in anthologies. He co-edited *Visiting Wallace: Poems Inspired by the Life and Work of Wallace Stevens*. He is the president of the *Friends & Enemies of Wallace Stevens*. His aphoristic *ars poetica* can be found at the blog *ursprache* (ursprache.blogspot.com).



In late December, 1929, CFPA's Trails Committee held its first meeting in New Haven where the nine members designated a section of the Quinnipiac Trail in Hamden as the first Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail. Today, the Blue-Blazed Trail System has grown to more than 825 miles, is hosted on a combination of private and public lands stretching across 96 towns, and is widely considered as CFPA's most tangible, visible asset on the Connecticut landscape.

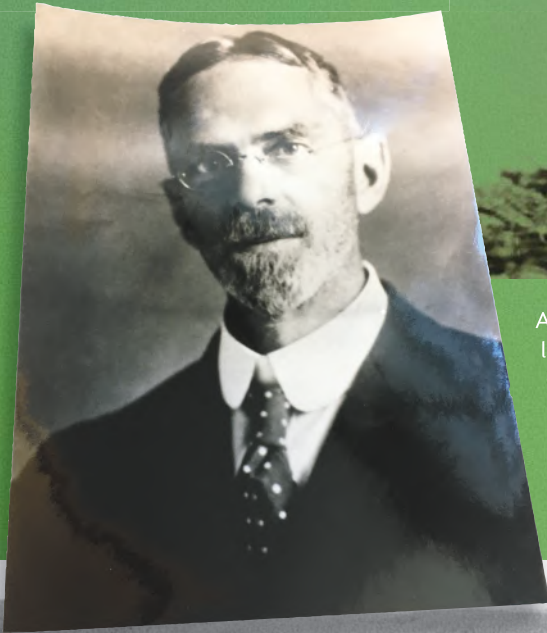
Visit ctwoodlands.org/photo-gallery/90-years-the-bbht to share your photos of the Blue-Blaze Trails.



Above: Jim Hulton, pictured in this 1956 photo, along with Ned Anderson, laid out the original Housatonic Range Trail, also known as the Schaghticoke Trail, in the 1930s-1940s.

Left: A retired minister, Edgar Heermance, the first Trails Committee Chair, is credited with the creation of your guide—the blue blaze, which shows up better on trees at dusk.

Below: The ledges above the Housatonic River.





Left: Ruth Culter, former CPFA Board member and 2016's "Outstanding CPFA Volunteer," hiking in the 1970s.



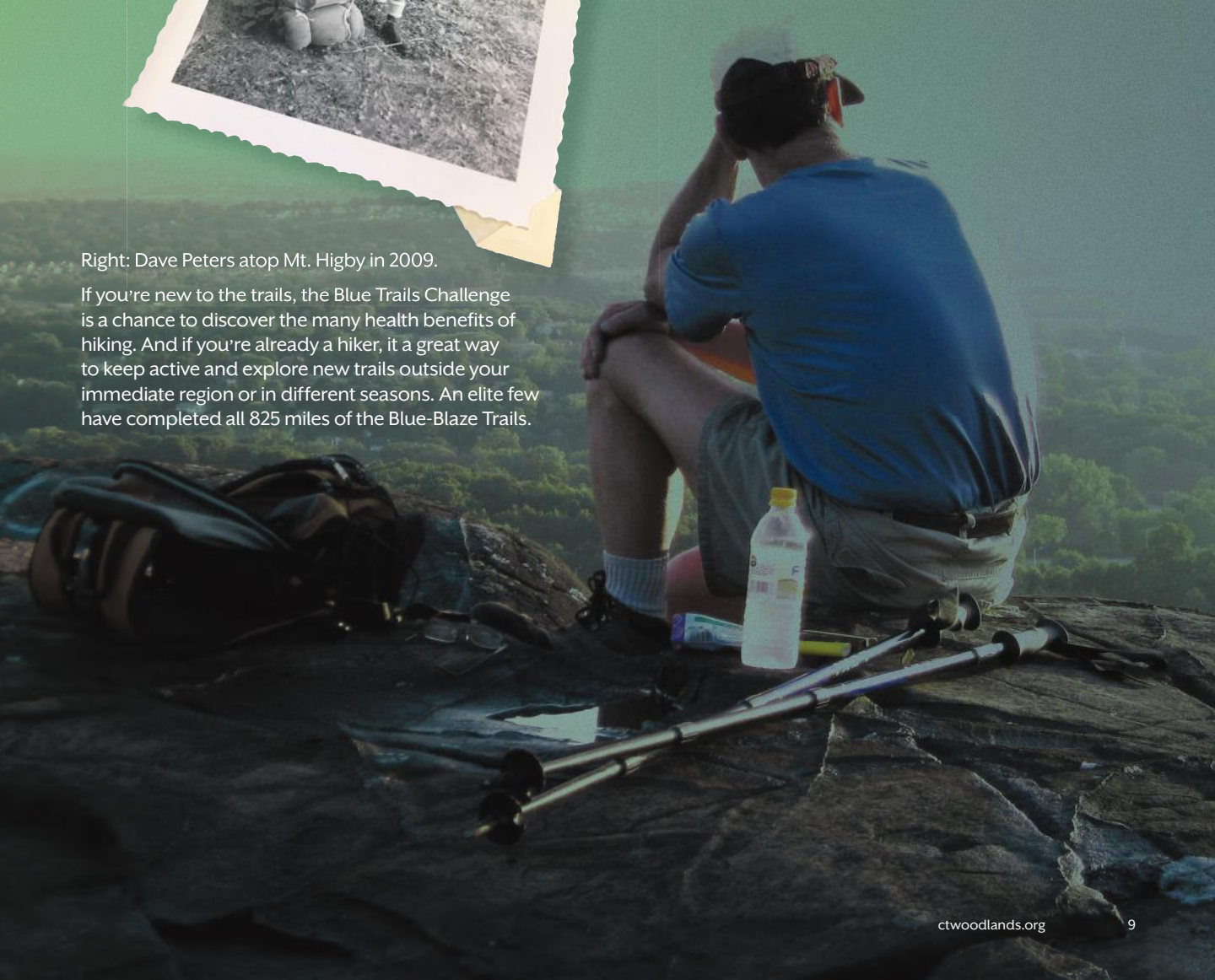
Below: A hiker at St. John's Ledges in Kent in 1964.



Above: Thanks to countless CPFA volunteers, interns, and staff who maintain the Blue-Blaze Trail System, children can explore Connecticut's rich natural heritage.

Right: Dave Peters atop Mt. Higby in 2009.

If you're new to the trails, the Blue Trails Challenge is a chance to discover the many health benefits of hiking. And if you're already a hiker, it's a great way to keep active and explore new trails outside your immediate region or in different seasons. An elite few have completed all 825 miles of the Blue-Blaze Trails.





FAMILY TRAILS

Tuning In By Stepping Outside



Hiking with young children can be challenging, especially for new parents. But it's also a lot of fun and a great way to nurture your child's love of the natural world

By Timothy Brown

Scarlett Kramer was barely 10 months old when her parents, Mary and Darin (pictured at left), took her on her first backpacking trip on the Mattabesett Trail in central Connecticut. They started at Millers Pond with a goal to hike 10 miles to the Godson group camping platforms that first day. Mary carried gear and clothing. Darin carried Scarlett, who was about 20 pounds at the time, plus

their food and Scarlett's waste. Scarlett, who was already accustomed to riding in her carrier, did great for most of the hike. But toward the last mile or so, it started to get dark and cold. Mary and Darin stuffed jackets around Scarlett to keep her warm. Her diaper needed to be changed and she started crying. Mary and Darin were tired and their legs hurt, and everybody was hungry. Then it started to rain. Things improved once they got to their campsite and Scarlett could spread out in the tent, but it still wasn't how Mary and Darin had envisioned their first family backpacking trip.

"We had this delusion that we were going to put her to bed in the tent and we would have time to relax and cook our dinner," said Mary. "It didn't happen like that. She was not going to sleep in the tent without us, so we ended up eating our dinner in the tent."

The next day, Scarlett was in a great mood and happily got back into her carrier. They had planned to do another 10-mile section, but in the end, opted for just three. "It still was great looking back on it," Darin said. "We learned a lot."

Hiking with young children can be fun for the whole family, but it requires a different kind of preparation. In addition to juggling gear, food, and waste, you need to think about how to entertain your child while they're stuck in the carrier. Darin encourages parents to bring a small, inexpensive toy that their child can hold while hiking, and lots of snacks. Bugs can also be a problem, so some sort of netting over the carrier is important. And parents need to stay flexible when hiking with young children. Often one of the hardest challenges for new parents is to adjust their own goals in order to accommodate their child's needs. Kids require more frequent breaks, and the timing of those breaks is critical. If you wait too long to rest, your child may resist getting back in the carrier.

Despite being new to hiking with a young child, the Kramers are hardly what you would consider novice hikers. Before Scarlett was born, Darin and Mary often spent their weekends car camping and exploring Connecticut's trails. They both completed backpacking courses that included overnight trips, and frequently talked about doing a major thru-hike, such as the Appalachian Trail. They continued to hike throughout Mary's pregnancy with Scarlett. In 2017, they heard about the Sky's the Limit Hiking Challenge, a friendly competition sponsored by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection that challenges hikers to complete at least 10 of 14 hikes at designated state parks within a calendar year. They finished about half the challenge before Scarlett was born that June, but were back on the trail just a few weeks

later, making Scarlett the youngest person to complete the challenge. This past summer, the whole Kramer family participated in the New England Trail Hike 50 Challenge. Today, at just 19 months old, Scarlett has already logged over a hundred miles in her Osprey carrier, including the 61-mile Mattabasset Trail, the 27-mile Mohawk Trail Loop, and 13 miles on the Appalachian Trail in Connecticut. She's also done a 12-mile section of Vermont's Long Trail, and five overnight backpacking trips in addition to numerous day hikes.

But the Kramers, who are expecting their second baby this spring, insist that hiking with young children is not just about mileage or bagging a certain peak. It's about having fun and getting your child outdoors. As parents, it's important to stay flexible and pay attention to what your child needs, such as allowing them to explore on their own. Darin and Mary still set out with a particular hike in mind, but they also now realize that they may not always be able to accomplish what they set out to do.

"You can get wrapped up with your own goals for mileage, but you have to accept that you might have to take an extra break or two," Darin said. "In accepting that you might not make it as far, your kid gets to grab some trees and sticks and explore, as opposed to you just trying to crush miles and get to the next location," he said.

"You've got to let the kid lead some of the hike," Mary said. "Let them tell you what you're actually going to be doing on the hike that day, and be okay with that. It can be so much fun if you learn to go with it."

Continues on page 20



"Hiking with young children is not just about mileage or bagging a certain peak. It's about having fun and getting your child outdoors."

Monuments to Escape

An Interview with NET Artist-in-Residence Marisa Williamson

By Emma Kravet

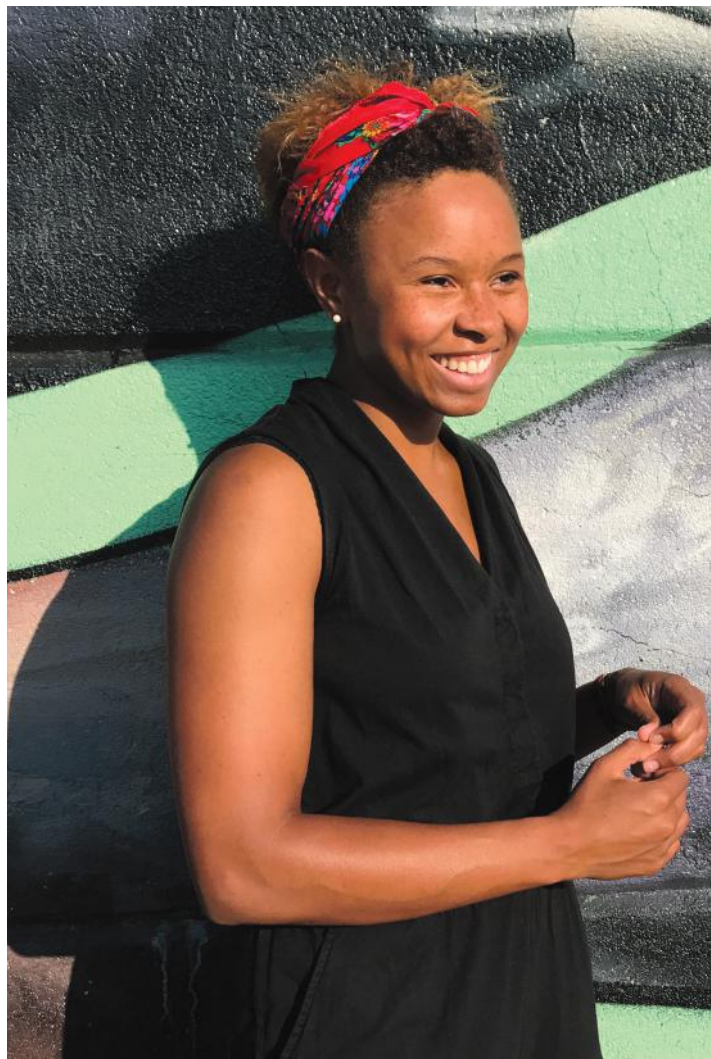
Imagine a sculpture of Harriet Tubman in the woods, leading her followers north along the Connecticut River. Or a Union soldier at a trailhead, frozen in contemplation of fallen leaves and the friends he returns home without. These scenes are part of Marisa Williamson's vision for *Monuments to Escape*, a series of ten experimental and temporary monuments exploring the theme of "escape" that she will stage as the 2019 New England Trail Artist-in-Residence.

As part of Williamson's year-long residency, the New Jersey-based multimedia artist and assistant professor at the University of Hartford will create a series of scenes, installations, events, and digital renderings that, when documented and circulated on Instagram, as postcards, and a limited edition of posters, will serve as speculative monuments to the New England Trail, its hidden histories, mythologies, and impact on the experiential landscape of those who use it today.

The New England Trail Artist-in-Residence program, managed by CFPA, the National Park Service, and the Appalachian Mountain Club, aims to engage communities with the trail in new and exciting ways. Recent artists include composer and pianist Ben Cosgrove, who last year wrote and performed music inspired by the New England Trail, and poet David Leff, whose residency included leading poetry-based hikes and nature poetry writing workshops.

I HOPE TO DRAW PEOPLE OUT OF THEIR COMFORT ZONES AND INTO CONVERSATIONS THEY MIGHT NOT OTHERWISE HAVE. THE OUTDOORS OFFERS SO MUCH IN THIS CAPACITY.

✿ MARISA WILLIAMSON



Emma Kravet, CFPA's Education Director, caught up with Williamson to learn more about her work.

Woodlands: What are your first impressions of Connecticut's trails?

I had a chance to hike the Metacomet Trail near Hartford last fall when the leaves were changing. It was disarmingly beautiful. Teenaged trees, tops bowed created striking hallways through the woods. Shrines of dappled light and lichen-coated stone spurred off the main trail. On the return loop, I could spy the city of Hartford through the foliage. The path opened up into a meadow where a red barn with a tractor seemed painted into the landscape. A young couple were having engagement photos taken. A family—the women dressed in hijabs, the young boys playing football—buzzed around the crest of the hill. The scenes were numerous, a multitude of little apertures opening into the lives of other beings. I think a lot about how the trail experience can be scaled up and understood as a microcosm of the larger trail of interconnected scenes that make up this special region of New England.



Your Artist-in-Residence project is titled *Monuments to Escape*. What do you mean by “escape?”

I recently spent a semester in Charlottesville, Va., trying to understand the area’s relationship to confederate monuments and monumental figures such as Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings. I wondered how habits of memory and dreams for the future could be reimaged to serve the diverse communities I have become a part of. I wanted to continue working in that direction, but I realized that the word, the *idea* of “escape,” could introduce a curious bend in that path. For another project, I was learning about maroon communities of runaway slaves. Their stories are generally lost to history and literature because of their decision to escape and live “off the record.”

Before I had a cell phone, when I went for walks in the woods, I was “off the record.” I wasn’t taking photos or calling home. It was a type of escape. John Brown imagined an outpost of the Underground Railroad along this trail; an escape route. Settlers who were too radical for Boston moved to these parts of Connecticut and Massachusetts to escape. The persecuted among them escaped further.

Indigenous languages, indigenous territories. What has escaped? Who walks, jogs, bikes, gets lost in herself on this path to escape? One response to the problem of the monument itself is to escape it. Is it possible to make something, collaboratively, in honor of the natural world, the trail, the shared path, that resists the pitfalls of traditional monuments? Could we produce something that takes up a minimal amount of physical space, and is instead circulated through social media, on the web, by word of mouth, in the mail, in the classroom, on the trail, and by the users?

Is it important that your art draws people outdoors?

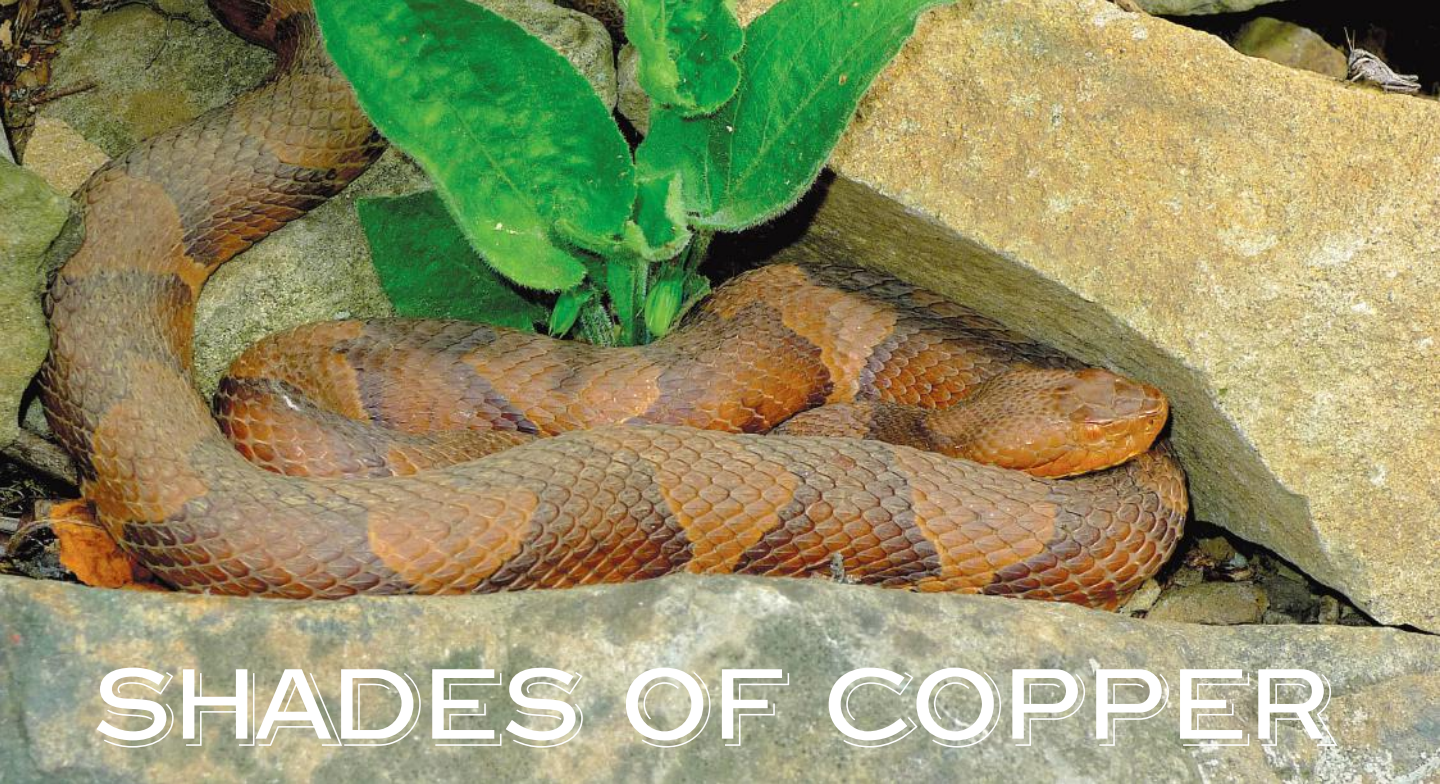
Definitely! In general, I hope to draw people out of their comfort zones and into conversations they might not otherwise have. The outdoors offers so much in this capacity. I’ve camped and hiked the Grand Canyon and Zion in fellowship with strangers, arguing with loved ones, meeting my own limits. I believe in art that draws people out of pain, out of misinformation, isolation, and institutional neglect, and into communion with nature and good health.

How do you see this project connecting the public to the NET in new and different ways?

One of the first five monuments will be completely crowd-sourced. I hope that people will follow the project on Instagram and Facebook, and offer suggestions for what the monument could be. I’m going to make a blank postcard template that people can illustrate and send to my “studio on the trail.” I’ll repost people’s ideas online. In this way, individuals—different and yet interconnected—will be able to see the trail as a shared creative space. I think it’s already a space in which people make personal memories. I’m interested in these, as well as the scope and depth of public memory. I want people to connect with each other and feel networked through this unique landscape and webscape.

How can readers of *Woodlands* experience your work?

The first five postcards will launch on March 30th. Following that event, I’ll be leading guided tours (site-specific artist talks) at locations along the trail. But, as with almost every aspect of this project, I need to hear from the public, from *Woodlands* readers, and supporters of CFPA, AMC and NPS, to find the right method, the right words to guide my research, to celebrate these valuable resources, to capture the disarming imagery, and to find, in the sublime murmur of the trail, the answers I’m looking for.



SHADES OF COPPER

A local rock climber encounters Connecticut's most common venomous snake.

By Chad Hussey

My late-afternoon climbing session at Southington's Ragged Mountain was about to get interesting. I carefully inched my way up one of the cliff's classic routes. It was late August, a warm day, yet surprisingly clear. The near-vertical face was bathed in a glowing rose light.

Only a short, steep headwall stood between me and the top. I pulled a cam off my harness and plugged the protection into a solid crack as I had many times before, clipped in the rope, then laybacked sideways to get my feet up high. Once I stood up, I peered around a shallow corner to scope out my next piece of gear. An unfamiliar flash of color caught my attention. But it took a moment for my eyes to focus on what was right in front of me.

Something wasn't right. The texture and color of the rock were off. Slowly I noticed a neck and a head. I could see an eye, jawline, and eventually a hollow pit set into a snout. I was face-to-face with a northern copperhead (*Akistrodon contortrix mokasen*). We were both acutely aware of each other's presence. Still, while the snake's appearance was menacing, it wasn't agitated or threatening. I retreated back around the corner, my hand still clinging to the exposed vertical edge.

Again I poked my head around the corner, but the snake hadn't moved. I decided to forego a final piece of protection and moved slowly to the top, relieved to be out of the "strike zone." My partner lowered off after removing the final piece. "Yeah, I'm good," he said. So there we were, two climbers, man and reptile, looking far out over the valley towards a red sun sinking in the west.

Copperheads are Connecticut's most common venomous snake, and there's no reason to be alarmed if you see one. "Encountering a copperhead is a cool thing," said Brian Hess, a biologist with the Wildlife Division of Connecticut's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. "Seeing one will not do you harm. They will give you every opportunity to back away or go around. They are very shy by nature and rely on their natural camouflage, so they will often stay still and go unnoticed."

**There we were,
two climbers, man and reptile,
looking far out over the valley
towards a red sun
sinking in the west.**

Today copperhead snakes are appreciated for their ecological role, which includes preying on small mice and voles that can spread Lyme disease. But this wasn't always the case. In colonial days, towns offered a bounty paid in shillings for both copperheads and timber rattlesnakes (*Crotalus horridus*), Connecticut's other venomous snake.

According to W. H. "Marty" Martin a field biologist who has worked for the National Park Service and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, climate models suggest that both timber rattlesnakes and copperheads have probably been in the Northeast for some 6,000 years. "That represents hundreds of generations of snakes living in communal dens over the winter and following age-old scent trails to navigate to prey runways, water sources, and shedding rocks." Sometimes the snakes make strange bedfellows. Martin has even seen timber rattlers, copperheads, and black racers overwintering together in the same den.

In Connecticut, the snakes emerge from their dens in mid-April to forage and mate. "Early in the season, they 'leaf hide' in order to stay warmer at night, and for camouflage. They are ambush predators that hunt primarily at night because their pits, which function as directional thermal sensors, are more precise when the air cools," said Hess. Copperheads also use their tongue to smell and taste in conjunction with the Jacobson's organ at the roof of their mouth. This is how they navigate and track down their prey after envenomating it.

Copperheads are *ovoviviparous*, which means they gestate in eggs inside the mother and are born live, usually in litters of six to eight. Young copperheads are entirely self-reliant and must catch their own food starting on day one. Their bright yellow-green tail attracts small insects and amphibians within striking distance. As the snakes



mature and their diet transitions to warm-blooded prey, this bright tail fades away.

Copperheads are formidable predators. They even have been known to climb trees to gorge on cicadas. But they're also on the menu for a surprising number of creatures, including hawks, owls, coyotes, foxes, bobcats, skunks, and other snakes, such as the northern black racer. "I once witnessed a broad-winged hawk swoop down and snatch an adult copperhead right off of a highway retaining wall in the Shenandoah National Park," Martin noted.

It is a risky business for any animal that would make a meal of a copperhead. Few are immune to their deadly venom, and predators must rely on precision and quick reflexes to catch the snake. There are times, though, when things don't go according to plan. If the snake strikes a fleshy part of the bird or mammal, it can be fatal. In fact, there are times when both combatants have been found dead.

Connecticut's Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails travel through some ancient and important copperhead habitat. Day hikers, trail runners, bird watchers, and rock climbers seeking the spectacular views and accessible wilderness of the state's traprock ridges should know that mid-April until late-September is when the snakes are most active, even if they are seldom seen.

Copperheads may have a reputation for being mild-mannered, but bites still happen, usually by accident and normally to hands and feet. That's why it is a good idea to always look where you are going and to take a moment to survey an area before you sit or set down your pack.

Anyone with a family knows that children and pets like to charge ahead of the group. Consider having an adult lead the way and keep your dog on a leash and under control.

If you do happen to get bitten by a copperhead, call 911 immediately. Remove all rings, jewelry, and other items that could complicate swelling. Stay calm and avoid exertion, and keep the bite area lower than your heart. Still, Hess insists that most encounters with these snakes are peaceful and memorable experiences.

"People and copperheads have coexisted for centuries," he said. "Sometimes observing and understanding a wild animal just using our eyes is the best and most rewarding thing we can do."

Chad Hussey is a freelance writer, photographer, and communications consultant from Farmington. He is an avid rock climber and has been climbing in Connecticut since the 1980s.

Page 14 photo by Bob Clark, page 15 photo by Chad Hussey.

From the Land

An herb garden is the perfect way to add fresh flavors to your springtime meals

By Jean Crum Jones

Weeks before the first spring vegetables are ready for harvest, my perennial spring herbs poke through remnants of last year's soggy brown leaves in my dooryard herb box. The zip of fresh herbs is a pleasant jolt to my weary winter palate. After the blandness of stored potatoes and shriveling root vegetables, the intense green colors and the tart, tangy flavors revitalize our farm-based meals.

I love my spring herbs. The first taste of freshness with little effort. I am a passionate scratch seasonal cook, but a black thumb gardener. My spring herbs—chives, sage, oregano, thyme, and mint—are tough, tenacious plants that bring delight in mud season when we are still weeks away from fresh asparagus and rhubarb. It amazes me how well these herbs pair with other early spring foods of Connecticut—eggs, dairy creams, fish, lamb, veal, peas, and lettuces. Chive omelets, sour cream herb dips, lemon thyme fish fillets, lamb oregano, veal chops with sage dressing, peas and mint, Boston lettuce with green goddess dressing.

Like most suburban Americans in the 1950s, the herbs I grew up with were dried plant bits that came in little tin cans marked "Schilling" or "McCormick." I remember no distinct herb flavors with the exception of the dried oregano my mother used on her homemade pizza. My interest in fresh herbs was awakened in the early 1970s when I joined other food professionals at a spring luncheon and lecture program by Adelma Simmons, a nationally-known authority on herb cooking, gardening, and herbal

lore. In the 1930s, Adelma and her parents established a goat farm on 50 acres in Coventry called Caprilands (*capri* means "goat" in Latin). After the goat enterprise soon went bust and Mrs. Simmons began planting herbs. When our bus arrived at the farm, Adelma, who was wearing a long skirt, a cape and an exotic cap, greeted us. She guided us through a couple dozen-herb gardens organized by different themes, such as the Shakespeare, Butterfly, and Lemon gardens. She spoke about the planning and planting of herb gardens and about the myriad uses of herbs as medicines, fragrances, dyes, charms, and decorations. Lunch was served in her 200-year-old farmhouse, which was beautifully decorated with antiques, herbs and flowers. A leisurely multi-course meal featuring canapés, soup, breads, vegetable casseroles, a main entrée, Caprilands salad, and dessert was served. All dishes featured an abundant use of various herbs and edible flowers which Mrs. Simmons described while we ate. After lunch, we strolled through the rest of the gardens and visited the bookstore. Adelma wrote 35 books and pamphlets on herbs. Her most famous, "Herb Gardening in Five Seasons," published in 1963, established her as a national authority on herbs. She died in 1997 at age 93 at her beloved Caprilands home.

I was inspired by my visit to Caprilands, and modeled my Harvest Kitchen Cooking Studio after Adelma Simmons' model of teaching in the garden followed by a garden fresh meal.

Spring

After my visit to Caprilands, I became very excited to have an herb garden. In the 1970s, the place to go for herb plants was Sal Gilbertie's Herb and Garden Center in Westport. Sal had started growing vegetables and herb plants in 1959 to supplement the family's cut flower business. Interest in the use of fresh herbs soared in the 1960s after Julia Child began teaching Americans how to use a bouquet garni, a bundle of herbs that are added to French soups, stocks, casseroles, and stews, and Gilbertie's became the largest supplier of potted herbs to East Coast garden centers of the era, supplying up to 800 accounts. These days, big box stores have replaced many small retail garden centers. Sal has diversified his business to include microgreens and cut herbs, and now has the largest organic greenhouse system in New England. But he still sells potted herbs at his garden center in Westport, and is a popular speaker at area garden clubs. He has excellent advice for growing herbs in containers, inside and out, and for creating specific flavor gardens.

I used several cookbooks by Sal Gilbertie and by Adelma Simmons to learn how to cook with herbs, and visited the historic herb gardens planted at Hancock Shaker Village, Plimoth Plantation, and Sturbridge Village. But in the early 1980s, I became busy raising a family, working as a dietitian-nutrition educator, and developing our harvest-your-own farm. Growing fresh herbs fell by the wayside and my herb use was confined to parsley, often the only fresh herb available in supermarkets at the time. When our son, Jamie, graduated from Cornell in 1998 and moved home to help with the farm, I was eager to start an herb garden again. We planted informal clusters of hardy perennial herbs by the kitchen dooryard and put annual herbs, such as basil, dill and cilantro, amongst the vegetables in the summer garden. I agree with the herb experts that say, "The closer your herbs are to the kitchen, the more they will be used in your cooking."

Add fresh herbs to your cooking, it's fun, fragrant, and takes dishes from ordinary to extraordinary. You can find a great source of herbs at your local farmer's market and at farm stands throughout the state.

Goddess

Herbal Dressing

The Green Goddess Salad Dressing developed in San Francisco at the Palace Hotel in the 1920s inspires this loose recipe. Use whatever combinations of fresh herbs are available and adapt this vivid green dressing to your taste. In spring, I like a watercress, chive, tarragon, and young spinach version, while during the summer I use a parsley, basil, and cilantro herb mix. This dressing can be served over salad, as a crudité dip, or as a sauce for seafood and chicken entrees or with roasted vegetables.

Ingredients:

1 cup Greek yogurt
1 cup chopped fresh herb(s), or more, to taste
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 scallions
2 cloves garlic
Juice of 1 fresh lemon
Kosher salt and pepper to taste
Optional: 2 anchovies fillets, 2 teaspoons capers

Preparation:

Add all ingredients to a food processor and blend until smooth. Yields about 1 cup of dressing.

The dressing is best enjoyed fresh, but can be refrigerated for up four days.

Jean Crum Jones lives in Shelton with her farming family.



THE SLOW STORM

A deadly combination of drought and invasive insects is threatening oak stands in eastern Connecticut. But despite these threats, our state's forests are resilient and will ultimately weather the storm.

By Thomas E. Worthley

Most tree-related news stories highlight major storm events that cause power outages, transportation disruptions, and property damage. Less sudden and dramatic, but no less serious is the “perfect storm” of changing weather patterns, invasive insects, and opportunistic pathogens that have caused severe tree mortality in recent years. In eastern Connecticut, we are witnessing a landscape-scale change in forest species composition, age structure, and stand condition that has not been seen in a generation.

During the early summer of 2018, it gradually became apparent that tens of thousands of oak trees throughout central and eastern Connecticut did not produce leaves that spring, having died sometime during the winter. While it's not unusual to lose one or two trees to natural causes at any time of year, the scale and extent of oak tree mortality was striking and concerning. Field surveys and aerial imagery revealed thousands of dead trees along roadways and acres of affected oak stands. The combination of drought



Large dead trees can be hazardous along many local roadways.

conditions followed by widespread and intense gypsy moth (*Lymantria dispar*) infestations and defoliations is believed to be the primary cause of the die-off.

In some places a secondary mortality phenomenon is also evident. Early and mid-season browning of leaves on individual trees out indicates that other pests and diseases, such as the two-lined chestnut borer (*Agrilus bilineatus*), a native pest, and armillaria fungus, also known as “shoestring” fungus (*Armillaria mellea*), continue to affect previously stressed trees.

Combined with the anticipated loss of ash trees due to the invasive emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*) moving across our state, the numbers of large standing dead trees throughout the state presents a slow-moving environmental disturbance.

A long period of detection sampling raised awareness about emerald ash borer, and we've been somewhat prepared for its impacts on our forests. But the degree and

“The risk of brittle broken limbs falling and causing injury to a person cutting a dead tree is extremely high. If a dead tree needs to be removed, and you are not properly equipped and trained, seek the advice of a professional.”

Thomas Worthley

extent of oak tree mortality was both unexpected and unprecedented and has overwhelmed many homeowners, Tree Wardens, and foresters.

Large dead trees with wide-spreading crowns can be found along many local roadways in rural Connecticut. Field observations and satellite imagery by University of Connecticut researchers and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection have identified numerous forest stands with severe mortality rates—some in eastern Connecticut with as much as 90 percent canopy loss. These are not necessarily poor-growing and uncompetitive trees, but rather tall magnificent trees that were otherwise robust and healthy. Twenty to 50-acre stands with severe canopy loss are not unusual. Preliminary studies suggest that possibly 100,000 acres east of the Connecticut River have experienced more than 75 percent canopy loss.

Some woodland owners may experience serious economic losses due to the die-off. Dead trees have a low commercial value and the total volume of commercially useful standing dead timber may exceed the capacity of the timber industry to salvage. From a public safety standpoint, dead trees may impact roadways, buildings, and power lines. Stands may also become dangerous for hikers and hunters due to the potential for falling woody debris. Dead branches and limbs can fall at any time, even in calm conditions. Temporarily closing some popular recreational sites to the public might be advisable. Think twice before acting on the temptation to salvage that dead tree.



In stands that experience partial oak mortality, maples, beech, and birch will benefit from additional sunlight.

Continued oak mortality can be anticipated in Connecticut in 2019 and in coming years from two-lined chestnut borer and armillaria fungus, and gypsy moth egg masses remain abundant in some areas of the state. A wholesale loss of oak forests is not expected, but the structure and composition of oak stands will change. Some mature oak-dominated stands will become young oak stands in upland settings. Other stands that experience partial oak mortality will transition to mixed-species stands. With additional sunlight, sub-canopy maples, beech, and birch will grow and occupy canopy gaps left by dying oaks.

These changes to the forest structure will affect wildlife as well. Birds that require large areas of unbroken forest canopy and animals that depend on abundant acorns will migrate to areas where those conditions still exist. Rabbits, rodents, and insect-eating birds will move into young stands. And as dead trees slowly decay over the next several years, amphibian and reptile populations will benefit from the unique habitat and food sources associated with decaying wood.

“Forest”—in all its variations—is the natural vegetative cover for most of southern New England. Indeed, despite widespread clearing for agriculture, charcoal, and fuelwood during the 19th century, it’s estimated now that 75 percent of Connecticut is under some sort of tree canopy. Forests are also resilient, relentless, creative, and patient. Trees will ultimately find a way to grow back. While we can’t control the effects of slow or sudden storms, we can observe and enjoy the dynamics of re-growth. We can encourage what’s

desirable and control what’s not, slow down, and be part of the process.

Thomas E. Worthley is Associate Extension Professor at the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension Service and the University of Connecticut Department of Natural Resources and the Environment.



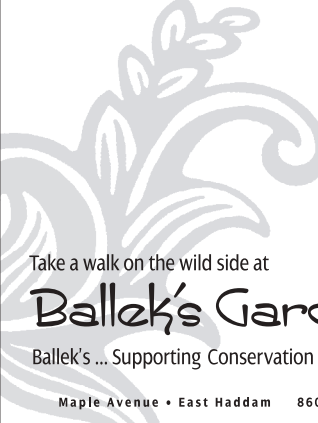
“You’ve got to let the kid lead some of the hike. It can be so much fun if you learn to go with it.”
Mary Kramer

These days, it’s increasingly rare for children to spend time outdoors, especially at such a young age. Researchers suggest that only 10 percent of children today regularly play in natural areas compared with 40 percent a generation ago, and an estimated 40 percent of children don’t play outside at all. According to the Children & Nature Network, kids aged 6 to 16 spend on average seven hours a day engaged with some sort of electronic media, and twice as much time playing video games as they do outside. This sedentary, indoor lifestyle has serious negative mental and physical health implications. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that more than a third of America’s children and adolescents are overweight or obese. And research by the University of Illinois’ Human-Environment Research Laboratory suggests that children

who watch a lot of television and play video games have significantly shorter attention spans than children who spend that same amount of time playing outdoors.

Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods*, coined the term “nature-deficit disorder” to describe the cumulative psychological, cognitive, and physical effects of humanity’s alienation from nature, particularly for children. While nationwide surveys suggest that adult participation in outdoors activities such as hiking and skiing has risen slightly in recent years, participation in those same activities by children aged 6 to 12 has plummeted by more than 10 percent. Moreover, studies suggest that young children can routinely recognize over a thousand corporate logos, but struggle to name just ten native species in their home area.

 Connwood Foresters, Inc. Serving CT, MA, RI & NY Since 1945	
Forest Stewardship Plans Property Tax and Cost Savings Baseline Documentation Reports Wildlife Habitat Improvements Permit Acquisition	Expert Witness Services Timber Sales and Appraisals Boundary Location/Maintenance Invasive Species Control GIS & GPS Mapping
USDA NRCS Technical Service Provider for Gov. funded stewardship plans/activities for land trusts & individuals	
860-349-9910	CONNWOOD.COM



- Native trees and shrubs
- Woodland wildflowers and ferns
- Hummingbird, butterfly & bird attractants
- Water garden & bog plants
- Environmentally friendly products

Take a walk on the wild side at

Ballek's Garden Center

Ballek's ... Supporting Conservation and Preservation

Maple Avenue • East Haddam 860-873-8878 Open year round

As if to underscore the apparent futility of natural history education, in 2007 the editors at the Oxford Junior Dictionary replaced more than 50 nature-related words such as “acorn,” “beaver,” and “conifer” with “attachment,” “broadband,” and “cut and paste.” Oxford University Press defended its decision by insisting that the dictionary is meant to reflect language “as it is used” rather than to promote certain word usages, and those who fault the Press’ decision have often been criticized as nostalgic and stuck in an outdated, romanticized notion of childhood.

Still in an era when the natural world is changing at an unprecedented rate, one could argue that connecting children with nature is more critical now than ever. How will today’s children become the stewards of tomorrow if they don’t have the language to describe the natural world? How will they come to love, or at the very least appreciate, nature if they’re so disconnected from it?

The good news is that the last decade has seen a significant growth in the number of nature and outdoors-based schools—so-called “forest schools”—across the country. These schools, part of the “No Child Left Inside” movement, provide children with considerable time to play outside and explore the natural world on their own terms. Kids learn about nature not just from textbooks and the internet, but through interactive lessons and hands-on discovery. Throughout Connecticut, there are now more than a dozen nature-based schools, and many other “traditional” schools have implemented outdoors-based programs into their curricula.

But simply spending time outside as a family is still the best way to nurture your child’s innate curiosity and love of the natural world. For Mary and Darin Kramer, it was an easy decision to include Scarlett in all of their adventures, even at a young age.

“I think one of the best things we did was we got her out there early. Even though Scarlett was small, she got used to the front carrier and eventually the back carrier,” said Mary. “That’s really important.”

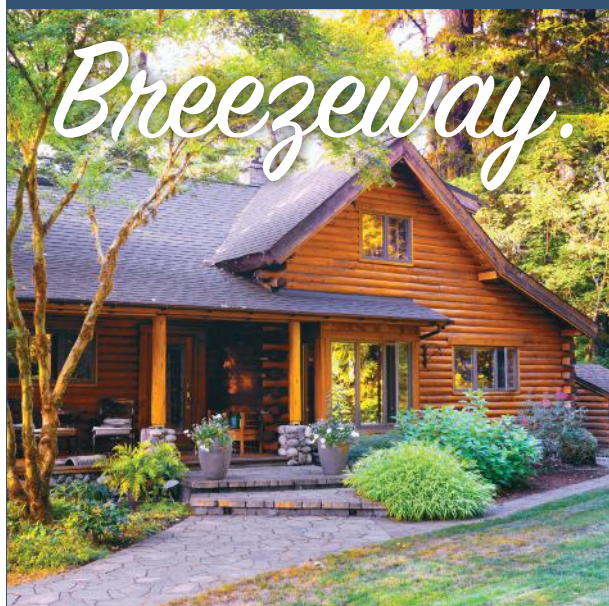
Scarlett talks and sings as they hike. She loves being out on the trail, looking at things, discovering the world. And at the end of the hike, she loves to run around the campsite and get dirty.

“Nature is the video game,” Darin said. “Let kids play and explore nature on their own.”

Timothy Brown is the editor of Connecticut Woodlands and a former high school environmental science teacher.



Country Living
from Farm Credit East



LOANS FOR BUILDING A COUNTRY LIFE HOMES • HOME CONSTRUCTION LAND • TIMBERLAND



Sandra Pearson

MLO NMLS No. 255034
240 South Rd., Enfield, CT
800-562-2235 x8177
Cell 413-348-4210

Sandra.Pearson@CountryLivingLoans.com



Heather Allen

MLO NMLS No. 550995
78 Hartford Pike, Dayville, CT
800.327.6785

Heather.Allen@CountryLivingLoans.com

Farm Credit East NMLS No. 522993
CountryLivingLoans.com





Give the Gift of Belonging!

Membership at CFPA is about being included. Whether it's an education program, a trail work party, or just hiking with a group of friends, YOU create the CFPA community. Invite your friends to join in on the fun by becoming a member, or better yet, give them the gift of membership.

Join, renew, or give a membership at www.ctwoodlands.org/join



Scotland Hardwoods is a premier lumber manufacturer/sawmill facility located in N.E. CT and services the New England region and countries throughout the world.

Our product listing consists of Veneer logs/Saw Logs, Hardwood Lumber, Hardwood by-products (chips, sawdust, all natural bark mulch), Playground Safety Fiber, Pallets / Industrial Lumber, and Forestry Services

We offer competitive rates and a staff of Certified Professional Foresters who will provide personal forestry consultations which will help you meet your objectives. Give us a call today and see what we can do for you.

Call or email today for all your hardwood needs:
Scotland Hardwoods, LLC
Toll Free: 877-209-9906
SCOTLANDHARDWOODS.COM
Visit our website to find out all that we offer.



117 Ziegler Road, PO Box 328
Scotland, CT 06264
Scotlandhardwoods.com

Hull Forest Products Inc.

Serving The Needs of Forest Landowners
Since 1972.

Providing Numerous Forestry Services:

- Four Certified Foresters On Staff*
- Forest Management Planning*
- Tree Farm Certification*
- Wildlife Habitat Management*
- Timber Stand Improvements*
- CT Forestland Property Tax Classification*

Purchasing Standing Timber.

For A Free Initial Consultation or Sawtimber Appraisal Please Call:

Hull Forest Products Inc.

101 Hampton Road, Pomfret Center, CT 06259
(860) 974-2083 or (800) 353-3331
www.hullforest.com



Ferrucci & Walicki, LLC

Land Management Consultants

Environmental Stewardship
and Land Management since 1982

- Forest & Open Space Management Services
- Property Tax Work (PA 490 & Chapter 61)
- GIS & GPS-based Mapping
- Forest & Wildlife Habitat Improvement
- Timber Inventories & Appraisals
- Professionally Managed Timber Harvests
- Environmental Oversight
- Watershed & Utility Land Management
- Recreation Plans & Implementation
- Forest Stewardship Plans

6 WAY ROAD
MIDDLEFIELD, CT 06455
860-349-7007 FAX: 860-349-7032
EMAIL: FW@FWFORESTERS.COM
WWW.FWFORESTERS.COM

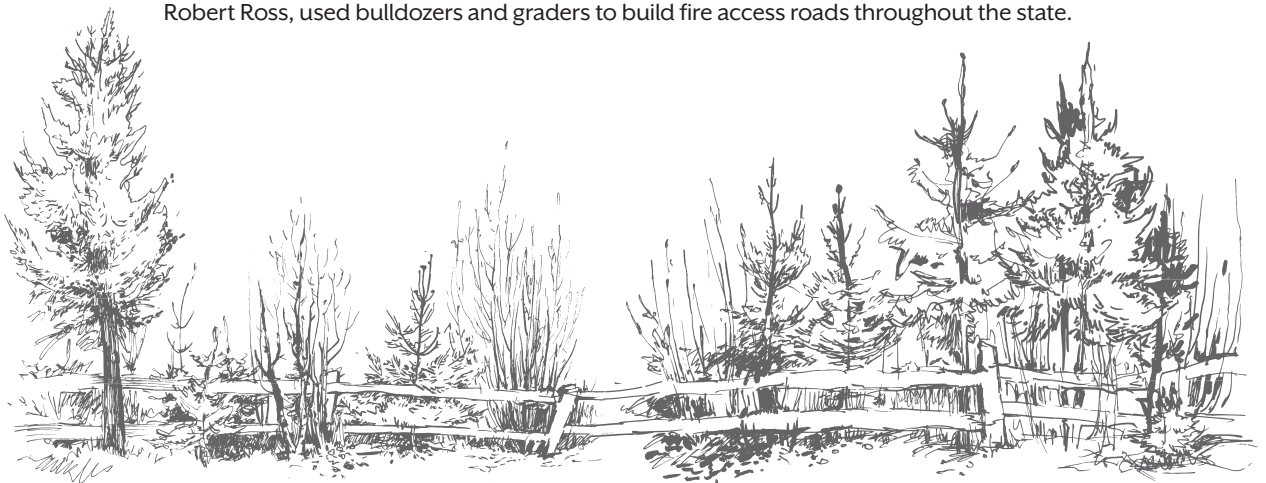
Satellite Offices in Connecticut:
COVENTRY, NEW HAVEN, MADISON

Senior Staff:
DAN PERACCHIO, ERIC HANSEN
TOM WALICKI AND MIKE FERRUCCI

Pathways



In 1910, a series of forest fires in Montana, Idaho, and Washington burned some 3 million acres in just two days. The devastating fires, known as the “Big Blowup,” profoundly changed national fire policy to one of total fire suppression, and fire access roads were cut through forests across the country. A series of severe fire seasons in the 1930s heightened the urgency for fire suppression. Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) workers in Connecticut (pictured above) led by state forester Austin Hawes and CFPA forester Robert Ross, used bulldozers and graders to build fire access roads throughout the state.





16 Meriden Road
Rockfall, CT 06481-2961

Nonprofit Organization
US Postage
PAID
Hartford, CT
Permit #1121



The WINSLOW  SOCIETY

You Are Invited to Join CFPA's Winslow Society

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. They believe they can make a difference for Connecticut forests and trails through yearly giving at the \$1,000 level or higher.

Join Today. It can be as easy as setting up a gift of \$84.00 of month.

Act quickly and attend the next Winslow Art & Nature Gathering held this June at the Florence Griswold Museum.
For more information visit ctwoodlands.org/winslow or call Jim Little at 860-346-TREE.