

# CONNECTICUT Woodlands



## CHECKING IN WITH THE FARMERS

*Gas pipes explode near a hiking trail | Students try hiking the Nipmuck*

# CONNECTICUT Woodlands

The Magazine of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association

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Scott Livingston

*Blueberries await customers at the Coventry Farmers' Market.*

## Connecting People to the Land

The Connecticut Forest & Park Association protects forests, parks, walking trails and open spaces for future generations by connecting people to the land. CFPA directly involves individuals and families, educators, community leaders and volunteers to enhance and defend Connecticut's rich natural heritage. CFPA is a private, non-profit organization that relies on members and supporters to carry out its mission.

We envision Connecticut as a place of scenic beauty whose cities, suburbs, and villages are linked by a network of parks, forests, and trails easily accessible for all people to challenge the body and refresh the spirit. We picture a state where clean water, timber, farm fresh foods and other products of the land make a significant contribution to our economic and cultural well-being.

## Connecticut Woodlands

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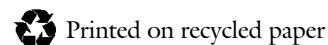
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*The Magazine of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association*

Spring 2010 Volume 75 No. 1

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*On the Cover:*  
*Kristin and Peter Orr in front of the sign for their Fort Hill Farms in Thompson.*

*Courtesy of the Orr family*

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CONNECTICUT  
**Forest & Park**  
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# Volunteers make the world go round

BY DAVID PLATT

Sometimes the most obvious bulwarks of society are hidden right in front of you. Volunteerism, and that most amazing and difficult to describe spirit behind it, have a tendency to be two of these.

When you stop to think about it, volunteers engaged in multifaceted activities permeate the world around us in ways too numerous to count. I don't know whether anyone has ever tried to specifically quantify the economic value of the volunteer activities taking place around us, but the sum total seems to me to be pretty much priceless.

On the world stage, people volunteer their time and resources for numerous causes, many of which are highly visible. The relief efforts in Haiti and New Orleans, Herculean efforts to address disease and famine in third world countries, the Peace Corps, and the doctors who provide much-needed health care in needy communities are just some examples that we all read about on a regular basis. But the volunteer efforts that surround us in our everyday lives, in our own cities and towns, often go unnoticed and underappreciated because we tend to take for granted the sacrifices and benefits that these activities involve.

Stop for a moment and consider what you see around you in Connecticut. Although our towns are run by elected officials and professional staffs, so much of the local fabric is knit by the dedicated volunteers. Every town body, whether it be a planning and zoning or economic development commission, wetlands agency, or school board, is manned by volunteers, elected or appointed. Historical commissions, land trusts, and chambers of commerce all run predominantly on the energy and commitment of people giving their time and energy to important causes. It seems that a set of volunteers is behind virtually every good local initiative to supplement ordinary government services. In my town, for example, a group has formed to organize a local farmers' market and long-range efforts to revitalize our village center. Another group is aggressively targeting the preservation of open space lands that substantially contribute to the quality of life here. Some volunteers commit to these actions for the long haul, but others cycle in and out, contributing new energy and ideas along the way.



CFPA President  
David Platt

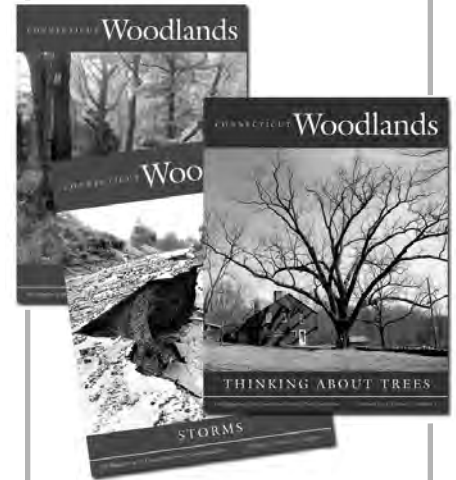
The same holds true on regional and state-wide scales. Our youth are served by Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, boys' and girls' clubs, and Big Brother / Big Sister programs. Our less fortunate neighbors are fed by food pantries, housed by homeless shelters, and clothed by other charities. Increasingly rare farmlands and forests are being preserved one vital piece at a time by charitable organizations. Our businesses are ably assisted on a multitude of levels by chambers of commerce and professional organizations. Are all of these efforts 100 percent successful? No, but where would we be without them?

In our own little niche, the Connecticut Forest & Park Association is no different. CFPA members support an enormously capable staff of professionals who run our environmental education, land conservation, advocacy, and "people and paths" programs. However, without our dedicated corps of volunteers, our mission—"conserving Connecticut, connecting people to the land"—would be unattainable. Members of the CFPA Board of Directors, numbering 29 strong, devote scores of hours annually to our strategic and fundraising work. Our members work hard on the ground in their communities. One shining example of volunteerism at work at its best lies with our trails volunteers. They are charged with the sometimes-daunting task of maintaining our more than 800 miles of Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails throughout Connecticut. In 2009 alone, hundreds of trails volunteers logged more than 12,000 hours in this effort! The unique and irreplaceable Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail System, which celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2004, would be nowhere without these contributions.

I encourage each of us to reflect during quiet moments on how we can make our own contributions. We need to inspire ourselves to contribute. I know that volunteering is a personally rewarding experience, and that the rewards for our communities are boundless.

*David Platt lives in Higganum.*

## About Connecticut Forest & Park Association and Connecticut Woodlands Magazine



Connecticut Woodlands is a quarterly magazine published since 1895 by CFPA, the private, non-profit organization dedicated to conserving the land, trails, and natural resources of Connecticut.

Members of CFPA receive the magazine in the mail in January, April, July, and October. CFPA also publishes a newsletter several times a year.

For more information about CFPA, to join or donate online, visit our newly expanded website, [www.ctwoodlands.org](http://www.ctwoodlands.org), or call 860-346-2372.

Give the gift of membership in CFPA. Contact Jim Little at 860-346-2372.

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# A tough way to make a living

BY ERIC HAMMERLING

**H**ow many trees does it take to make a forest? At what point does a garden grow big enough to be considered a farm? If a tree falls in the forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound? Is forestry agriculture? Some of these questions are tailor-made for late-night philosophical debates, but no matter what you or I might think, there is no ambiguity on this last question under Connecticut law. Forestry is synonymous with agriculture and is considered to be farming (Connecticut General Statutes, Sec. 1-1 (q)):

Except as otherwise specifically defined, the words "agriculture" and "farming" shall include cultivation of the soil, dairying, forestry, raising or harvesting any agricultural or horticultural commodity . . . [also] the production or harvesting of maple syrup or maple sugar, or any agricultural commodity, including lumber . . .

Despite this tightly defined legal relationship between forestry and agriculture, forestry has always felt quite different from traditional agriculture to me. I rarely look at trees as being a "crop" (perhaps with the exception of Christmas trees) because they often take several decades to "ripen." I also tend to differentiate between those products that are derived from trees and the many other "services" that forest systems provide. For example, the ecological services provided by trees—storm water/flood retention, stream shading, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration, air quality improvement—as well as recreational and other values that forests sustain may be much more valuable.

Wandering through a mega-mart illustrates quickly how varied these tree-based products have become. You can find products directly gleaned from tree flowers, fruits, nuts, and seeds (e.g., cloves, chocolate, fruit extracts, and apples and so many other pickable treats); from sap (syrups, gum base ingredients, rubber, pine sol); from tree bark (cinnamon, cork); from leaves (eucalyptus cough drops, camphor rub); from tree pulp (office paper, paper towels, tissues, toilet paper, and turpentine); from wood (lumber, building materials, fire wood, wood chips, etc.); handcrafted products (wooden furniture, bowls, burls, toys, and utensils); and manufac-



CFPA  
Executive Director  
Eric Hammerling

tured products (wooden-handled tools, matches, baseball bats, and flooring). Taking a step back, you'll see that there are literally tree-derived products in every single aisle of the mega-mart (especially if you consider the prolific use of cardboard for packaging). Of course, it's no surprise to you that thousands of diverse and sometimes unexpected products are made from wood, but it does take a bit of a re-frame to view paper towels or baseball bats as agricultural products.

Despite some of the differences in how we may perceive forest- and farm-derived products, those who try to make a living from the land share many challenges. Simply stated, farming and forestry are very tough ways to make a living. A friend of mine in California once said, "The only way to make a little money in the cattle business is to start with a lot of money." That is still true.

In Connecticut, farmers and foresters alike share issues of scale (their operations are often too small to compete anywhere other than locally), high costs of doing business (relatively high labor, energy, and equipment costs), inadequate infrastructure (not having large processing facilities and limited transport abilities for products), and their products may be artificially "cheap" because of subsidies, fluctuating market conditions, and other reasons. The margin enjoyed by those living off the land is rarely large (of course, there are always exceptions).

Connecticut has received some unfortunate notoriety during the past few years as the state that is losing its farmland faster than anywhere else in the nation. This is tragic, but we have to admit that given rising land values, housing development speculation, and the suburbanization of our state over the past 50 years, we are fortunate to have a significant agricultural sector left at all. The Connecticut Forest & Park Association will continue to work with our friends at the Working Lands Alliance, the Connecticut Professional Timber Producers Association, the Connecticut Farmland Trust, and many others to ensure a viable agriculture/forestry sector remains "connected to the land" in Connecticut.

*Eric Hammerling lives in West Hartford.*

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF  
CONNECTICUT **WOODLANDS**  
Summer 2010  
POLICING THE PUBLIC BACKCOUNTRY  
Meet conservation officers  
Analysis of last summer's mishaps  
Also: Warren Doyle, Connecticut hiking legend





*Public's enthusiasm for local produce lessens  
sting of a dismal economy*

## CHECKING IN WITH THE FARMERS

BY CHRISTINE WOODSIDE

**F**our years ago, Connecticut Woodlands talked to farmers about the hardships of holding onto land, and adding land, when development almost always would pay them more than farming. It's a story that spawned a movement to fight for farms—the Working Lands Alliance, now a decade old—and led many farms to close, or change their focus.

Since 1978, Connecticut's government has run a program to help farmers keep their land or add to it, through its Farmland Preservation Program. In the 32 years since the program started, the state has bought the development rights to 268 farms covering a total of 35,518 acres. The program was moving very slowly in the late 1990s, but has picked up in the past few years. Still, it has far to go to reach its stated goal of 130,000 acres. In 2008 and 2009, 17 deals costing \$10.8 million were completed on farms totaling 2,045 acres. Another 23 farms were approved; these just await the funding. The state has also begun a more streamlined method of

*The farmers Jones (from left): Jamie (6th Generation), Samuel (7th Generation), Terry (5th Generation), Jackson (7th Generation), Philip (4th Generation).*

Photo courtesy of the Jones family.

releasing the funds. A decade ago, the Bonding Commission would consider one farm at a time, so the wait for funds could be years long. Today, the commission can release funds for 15 to 20 farms at a time.

The Connecticut Woodlands editor caught up with two of the farmers we talked to in 2006. In an effort to zoom in on their concerns today, here are some of their comments, in their own words.



*Peter Orr, 52, a former research scientist in agricultural biotechnology, runs a dairy and produce farm, Fort Hill Farms, in Thompson, Putnam, and Burrillville, Rhode Island—a total of about 1,000 acres—with his wife, Kristin, and their two children. They bought their first tract from Kristin's parents, Ernest and Norma O'Leary, dairy farmers. Orr is part of the collective that sells milk and other farm products directly to stores under the label The Farmer's Cow. Four years ago, the Orrs were considering applying to sell their development rights as a way to raise cash for more land. They have not applied to the program, which is known as PDR, for "purchase of development right," but Mr. Orr said they keep the idea in reserve.*

We view [PDR] as one of the tools available to help plan for the farm future. It's an option that we actively hold in our thoughts with regard to how we propel our farm into the future. First and foremost, how we view farm viability is to [work for] financial success. That's why we pursued the various farm businesses and enterprises as a means to keep our farm going.

There has been a gradual emergence of people wanting to buy local, people concerned about their food supply, but also concerned about their quality of environment and so forth, and they know in this situation in Connecticut that farms keep Connecticut green.

We've kind of reworked the direct farm marketing focus. We have always had an orientation to invite the public to our farm and tell our story, and hopefully in that interaction they take home a purchase. We have a plant nursery. We have pick your own. Largely blueberries and flowers. This year we're kind of consolidating all of those offerings. We have basically donated our house to be a visitor center for the farm. In that house, hopefully in May or early summer, we're going to offer our ice cream. That will be the Farmer's Cow ice cream.

In the fall, we have a corn maze, and so we basically have a full three seasons worth of offerings for people to come to the farm. And we also

have a calf farm with 50 or 60 calves all the time. [Our visitors learn that] their milk doesn't come from the back room of a supermarket.

*Mr. Orr talks about the family's decision to open a visitors' center in their farmhouse, which meant they had to move out of their house to one across the street.*



Photos by Scott Livingston

We went from one of the world's most beautiful houses, from what we consider a very nice house, to probably the world's ugliest house. It sits diagonally across the street from the [farmhouse]. It was a house that had basically been modernized once, and in its lifetime probably the vintage of it is probably 1850, and it consists of three houses . . . expanded over time with two other pieces of houses that were moved into place. We didn't really know that until we started doing some insulating in the house. And when we opened up the ceiling, we found out that there were roofs inside roofs.

There were several things we sensed as people came to the farm. One, we did not have any undercover area for the public to come to be out of the elements. Until now, we had open-air sales. Also, people do come to our farm and spend some time, and they would like to usually have something to eat and a place to sit down. Between us coming out with the Farmer's Cow ice cream and the need we felt to have the public come to the farm, it all meshed together. And we had lived in the house with the public coming to the farm, and it seemed like a natural progression in the farm market development to donate the house.

Our house that has become the Fort Hill Visitor Center at one time was a commercial creamery building. We have old bottles that say Fort Hill Creamery. We literally found them in the woods.

We do have some farm property in Rhode Island, and we grow forages [grain for cow feed] for our dairy farm.

I can honestly say that we have experienced two years of just incredible financial stress due to the dairy markets collapsing. And it's not just a [problem] in Connecticut; it's across the country. The milk price just collapsed. The price we receive for wholesale milk is determined by some arcane pricing formula that was developed in the 1940s. And it's something that needs renovation. The dairy

industry in Connecticut is not out of the woods yet. It looked like the price of milk was going to move up. But in the last week or two forecasts are for another financially stressful year.

*continued on page 8*

**WHEN TILLAGE BEGINS,  
OTHER ARTS FOLLOW.  
THE FARMERS  
THEREFORE ARE THE  
FOUNDERS OF HUMAN  
CIVILIZATION.**

— DANIEL WEBSTER

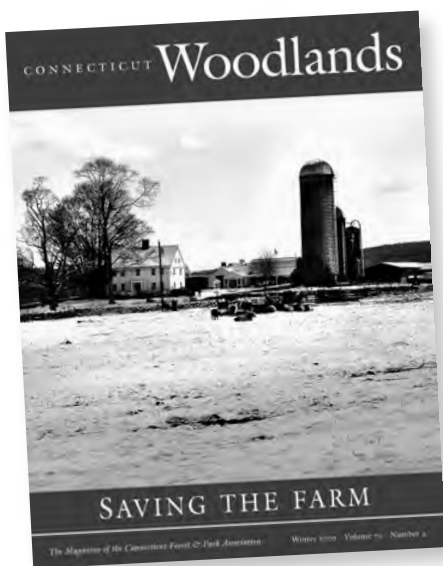


## FARMERS

continued from page 7

For example in 2009, if you convert how we're paid for a gallon of milk, it cost us roughly \$2 to produce a gallon of milk and on average last year we were paid a dollar. We participate in getting some additional monies from the marketplace by putting our milk in a branded container and giving that milk an identity. However, it does not make up for when the dairy markets fall.

We have two daughters, one 16 and one 13. The older daughter is in vocational agriculture [in high school] and she's proclaiming to everyone that she's going to take over the farm. It has given added focus onto what we do and to hopefully plan for long-term future. And the other child is possibly showing some interest. For both of them in the end it's still too early, but there are encouraging signs.



Connecticut Woodlands last talked to farmers for its Winter 2006 issue, which featured Tiffany Farms on the cover. To read this issue, see <http://www.ctwoodlands.org/node/120>.



In the 1990s, Terry Jones, 62, a fifth-generation fruit and tree farmer in Shelton, used the Farmland Preservation Program to save acreage his family had bought at market value a decade earlier. He and his wife, Jean Crum Jones (a Connecticut Forest & Park Association board member who writes this magazine's column "From the Land"), have expanded their operations. Jean started a

kitchen program, the Harvest Kitchen, at the farm. Their son, Philip Jamison Jones, known as Jamie, runs the farm's winery, which has established itself. Terry Jones is also chairman of the Working Lands Alliance, the statewide coalition that lobbies for better farm policies. The Working Lands Alliance held a conference on March 27 at Yale University.

The Working Lands Alliance got its start 10 years ago as the result of a conference at Wesleyan. This is a 10-year anniversary, inviting people to reconvene, looking back and looking ahead. Sometimes you feel I guess it's like watching a baby grow. You see the baby every day; you don't see much progress, but you look back over an increment of time and there's been a tremendous change.

There is a tremendous interest in our society in food, local food, and eating healthily, and recognizing that part of our health care dilemma . . . is that industrial processed food [such as] high fructose corn syrup—people eat so much more of today—is contributing to obesity and type II diabetes.

I think it's a mixed bag. At the one extreme is the difficulty with dairy farms. The University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension had its annual vegetable conference, and the room was packed. One of the speakers was one of the young couples from here in Shelton [Fred and Stacia Monahan of Stone Gardens]. There is an interest in all this.

Last year, the economy and the weather were very difficult in general for farming in New England. There was an onslaught of [wet weather]. As my great-great-grandfather said, better to be too dry and scared to death than too wet and starving to death.

I think one of the things we found is diversity is important. It sort of ensures success.

*He discusses the last five years on the Jones Family Farm, which does a great deal of direct sales.*

They've been OK. We're paying our bills. We're meeting with our staff this week to point out: As we learned a year ago, despite the downturn in the economy, the interest in people coming out to the farm and getting farm products is very high. There may be a tendency to spend, per person, less money but there are more people coming.

We're in a wonderful part of the world

to be direct marketing. I think that is the cornerstone of Connecticut agriculture. Most of the fruit and vegetable farms are involved in direct marketing. I don't think there are many farms that are making all of their sales wholesale [now]. Let's face it: Selling to the big chain stores is, unless you're really big, it's hard. We've always, ever since my great-great-grandfather was peddling farm products down to the local town, done direct marketing. When we were in the milk business it was wholesale, but for the most part, we've done direct marketing. Two things that are flourishing now, the farmers' markets, and another thing that is really on the increase is the interest in many restaurants in using Connecticut locally grown [produce].

Jamie is supplying wine to restaurants. Philip Jamison Jones. He was the wine person of the year in Connecticut for 2009. He was named one of the country's outstanding young farmers [last winter] at a big American Farm Bureau convention. He won a tractor. Usually the winners are from the big farm states, so it's pretty cool.

*He discusses achievements of the Working Lands Alliance.*

We have the credo of fierce cooperation into the halls of the legislature, getting all the environmental and agricultural groups working together for farmland preservation.

One of the most pervasive accomplish-

**THERE IS, OF COURSE, A  
GOLD MINE OR A  
BURIED TREASURE ON  
EVERY MORTGAGED  
HOMESTEAD. WHETHER  
THE FARMER EVER DIGS  
FOR IT OR NOT, IT IS  
THERE, HAUNTING HIS  
DAYDREAMS WHEN THE  
BURDEN OF DEBT IS  
MOST UNBEARABLE.**

—FAWN M. BRODIE



## CONNECTICUT PLACES NAMED AFTER ABSENT FARMS

**Greens Farms** (in Westport)

**Wheeler Farms** (Milford)

**Farmington**

**Moss Farm** (Cheshire)

**Quaker Farms** (Oxford)

**Avalon Farms**, a subdivision in  
Middlebury

**West Farms**, the former name  
of much of Waterford, now the  
name of that town's Land Trust

**Westfarms**, a giant mall in  
Farmington, opened in 1974,  
expanded in 1997, near border  
of West Hartford



*The Coventry Regional Farmers' Market is one of the state's largest. To learn about the 100 markets selling Connecticut produce, see [buyctgrown.com](http://buyctgrown.com) or the Department of Agriculture's Web site at [ct.gov/dag](http://ct.gov/dag).*

Scott Livingston

ments was we got the Community Investment Act, which is the legislation that . . . established a \$30 fee on land deed filings. The bulk of it is split four ways, for farmland viability, farmland preservation, open space/parks, historic preservation. Another was the legislation to establish a Farmland Preservation Advisory Board two years ago, in the Department of Agriculture. Last [legislative] session there was a bill asking that the state review its own state-owned farmlands. They have done the study, ranked the quality of the land and we have made a pitch to the governor this past week that the state should step up and look at each property.

The fiscal situation is so gruesome that we are not expecting expansion in any of these programs. The advisory board has also worked quite a bit on the community farm category, which is the relatively small farm, probably under 30 acres. It gives

them assurance in a town that it will stay open and not developed.



It's not just a story of challenges and worries on Connecticut farms. Connecticut's farm industry cash receipts grew by 6 percent from 2007 to 2009, the Agricultural Statistics Service reported. The state is third in New England in farm cash receipts, behind Vermont and Maine. But looked at another way, Connecticut is also one of the least agricultural states in the nation, at least in cash receipts: It's 42nd in the nation in farm cash receipts, ahead of such states as Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Alaska, and Hawaii. Greenhouse and nursery sales now make up 46 percent of Connecticut farm income. Milk sales are next, holding on

with 12 percent. Behind that are fruits and vegetables (11 percent), chicken eggs (10 percent), aquaculture (5 percent), and broadleaf tobacco, a formerly important farm trade in the Connecticut River Valley now responsible for just under 4 percent.

But Connecticut is not the same landscape as Alaska, or even Massachusetts. Those who farm this land know that Connecticut basks in a more forgiving climate than the other New England states, with fertile soils, ample rainfall, and warm growing seasons. It's easy to understand why farming has long been so important to the state's identity. Ours is a history rooted in farming.

*Christine Woodside is a Deep River-based freelance writer and, since 2001, the editor of Connecticut Woodlands.*



Christine Woodside

*The large building at the future Kleen Energy plant sustained major damage on February 7.*

# FATAL EXPLOSION KILLS WORKERS NEAR MATTABESETT TRAIL

## IS IT DANGEROUS TO HIKE NEAR INDUSTRIAL SITES?

BY CHRISTINE WOODSIDE

A fatal explosion on the sunny, cold morning of Sunday, February 7, during the cleaning of natural gas pipes at the future Kleen Energy Power Plant in Middletown, occurred very close to the Mattabesett Trail, the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail that is part of the New England National Scenic Trail.

The Kleen Energy plant, located on barren land that was once a feldspar mine, lies behind secure chain-link fences. Residents 10 and more miles away heard and felt the blast. Houses within a mile of the plant suffered damage such as broken windows that day, but so far no authority knows of anyone on foot in the vicinity. The accident, which killed 6 workers and injured 26, raises the question of whether it's safe to be near industrial sites, even while doing something like walking. No one can really answer this question. Many hiking trails and parks around the country lie near industrial areas. For that matter, many people live next to

industrial sites. The answer to that question would be manyfold, and complicated, depending on the industry. Nevertheless, what happened on February 7 near the banks of the Connecticut River, and what authorities have to say about the circumstances leading to the blast, is a reminder that there is a price to pay for making electricity to meet the growing demands.

February 7 was a very cold day, with snow on the ground—not the sort of day you find people on Connecticut trails. Whether anyone was out isn't known. Al Santostefano, deputy fire marshal for the Middletown Fire Department, acted as the public information officer for the three fire departments that went to the scene on the hilly land above River Road. "As far as I know, nobody has checked around the area to see if anything was done to the wooded area," he said. "I know there were some houses 2,000 feet away that had some damage to them. That was mostly from the vibration. I wasn't aware of any hikers who were in the woods at that time."

He said that damage was confined mostly to within a mile of the plant, but that he himself, sitting in his living room five miles away, had felt the vibrations just before the emergency call came in.

"As we say in the fire service, this was a once-in-a-lifetime event for most of us," he said. "I have been in the fire service for 30 years, and I've never encountered anything like this."

Four workers died instantly. A fifth died at the hospital on February 7. A sixth died on February 19 from injuries suffered in the blast. The city of Middletown is conducting a criminal investigation into whether negligence led to the accident. Emergency workers closed River Road, off which the plant is located, a few times in the week after the accident, Mr. Santostefano said, while they were venting the pipes, but the road (which hikers also use to reach the small parking area for the eastern terminus of the Mattabesett Trail) has been open since.

*continued on page 14*



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## THE WEST BRANCH AND WOLF ROCK

BY JEREMY KATZ

The Nipmuck Trail extends 37 miles from Mansfield Hollow State Park to Nipmuck State Forest in Union. Named for the Algonquin word that referred to the land that became Massachusetts and northeastern Connecticut, the Nipmuck Trail runs through land owned by towns, the state, and land conservation trusts including Joshua's Tract Conservation and Land Trust.

The diversity of sights and relative ease of travel make the Nipmuck Trail's west branch, located near the Willimantic Reservoir, a particularly appealing hike. Along the trail sits Wolf Rock, a large glacial erratic atop a sheer cliff, a landmark that was created thousands of years ago.

Wolf Rock was named for the animals that used to dwell in the caves below, although no wolves have lived in them for a long time, as chronicled in the classic book by Eugene Keyarts, *Short Nature Walks in Connecticut* (published in many editions, most recently Globe Pequot Press, 1999). Wolf Rock became the first acquisition of Joshua's Trust in 1969 as part of Bradley-Buchanan Woods purchase.

### The Hike

The trail, a mostly flat section with a few climbs and dips, begins near a few boulders alongside a small clearing on Puddin Lane. When you enter the woods, Sawmill Brook soon appears on the right. The ground is covered with rocks, and larger glacial erratics dot the sides of the trail among white birches, pine, and oak trees. One stone on the left side of the path is a large vertical rock perpendicular to a ledge resembling a leaf-covered table, providing a chance to sit and rest.

The trail crosses a power line right-of-way with a meadow of mountain laurel. To the right, a steep climb uphill is rewarded with a beautiful view of the reservoir and surrounding area.

As you continue through the clearing, a large beaver pond appears on the right. A few houses are visible to the left of the trail, as it turns sharply right and across a small bridge, with ferns lining the edge of the trail.

After you walk a little more, the large face of the cliff on which Wolf Rock sits becomes visible on the left. After a mildly steep climb, you quickly reach the top of the cliff. A unique sight awaits the hiker atop the roughly 50-foot-high cliff: A large rock is perched near the



*A leaf-covered rock formation, resembling a table or bench along the West Branch of the Nipmuck Trail.*

Jeremy Katz

## TRY THIS HIKE, SPECIAL EDITION

*Exploring the Nipmuck Trail*

edge of the cliff, overlooking the surrounding landscape. The view stretches for miles, as brown farmlands appear among the green trees and pale sky. A large metal hook protrudes from the top of the cliff, inviting rock climbers to attempt the moderate climb along the flat vertical surface.

Following the trail down the other side, the hike continues to Crane Hill Road and Browns Road. After crossing the roads, the trail travels into Mansfield's Schoolhouse Brook Park, with many other trails connecting along various paths. The park is

home to Bicentennial Pond, and a small brook follows the trail.

This portion of the hike takes about 1 hour and 45 minutes, with some time allotted for stopping to appreciate the various sights and breathtaking views.

### Directions

Off Route 84: Exit 68. Take Route 195 south through Mansfield, until the intersection with Route 6. Turn west onto Puddin Lane, opposite the Willimantic Reservoir. About half a mile down the road, the trailhead is on the north side of the road, next to a large boulder. There is parking along the road for about five vehicles.

*Jeremy Katz is a journalism major at the University of Connecticut.*

## RAMBLING BY THE RESERVOIR, KETTLE PONDS, AND THE DAM

BY JOHN KENNEDY

Glacial deposits left after the last ice age formed the land that today is a civilized array of fields and trails in Mansfield Hollow State Park. Kettles and eskers, two formations created by retreating glaciers, can be found along the extensive hiking trails that sprawl across the park.

Taking a hike of 4.7 miles along the Nipmuck Trail, you will see kettles, which appear as holes in sand or gravel, sometimes filled with water. Modern river erosion does not normally create steep, circular holes, so the only way these kettles could have been formed was when sediments collapsed on top of melting glaciers, forming steep-sided holes. You also will see eskers, long gravel ridges that were created by high-velocity streams carrying large boulders through a tun-



nel within the glacier. A human-built feature that dominates the park is the 47-foot-high Mansfield Hollow Dam, built by the Army Corps of Engineers in the early 1950s. The dam flooded a swamp located at the intersection of the Fenton, Mount Hope, and Natchaug rivers, creating the Mansfield Hollow Reservoir.

## The Hike

This section of trail begins at the back of a picnic area in Mansfield Hollow State Park. Walk northwest into the forest, where a steep hill leads into a grove of young pines with the reservoir visible through trees on the right.

After descending this hill via a wide, root-encrusted path, the trail forks right, before quickly turning left up a steep, winding path into another stand of young pines.

Wander through these evergreens until the trail opens up and descends to a four-way intersection with a large pine in the middle. Go straight, heading uphill once more, and follow the trail along the side of a hill with a steep slope into a valley on the left.

When you reach level ground, the canopy opens up and the trail borders a stand of dead trees with grass sprouting among the leaves and underbrush. The trees, stretching their bare limbs above the smaller, younger growth and the trunks of fallen comrades, give this area an eerie feel.

The trail ascends and descends through now-familiar young white pines before reaching a ski trail. After that, it skirts a ball field and crosses Route 89.

Plunging back into the woods, the trail crosses a small paved path and a wider dirt one, before exiting the trees to a meadow at the base of a large stone dam. Cross two wooden footbridges over a shallow stream and the surrounding swampy area before following the trail back into the woods.

The trail winds gradually downhill. To the right, a metal bridge crosses the Fenton River, which flows smoothly and quietly under the bridge before tumbling over a small barrier of stones. Make a sharp left after crossing and walk a narrow, occasionally muddy, path through overgrown wetlands, where the trees eventually interlock overhead.

The trail curves out of the marsh and into a grove of tall pines where it begins to follow a ridge with great views of the Fenton on the left and a marsh on the right. After gradually descending, turn left at a fork and walk along the Fenton shore.

Turn left and cross another metal bridge, where the river runs deeper. Turn right off the bridge and follow a narrow path along the opposite bank of the Fenton, with a meadow on the left and the slow-moving river on the right.

When the meadow ends, cross a wide path and ascend steeply, crossing Chaffeeville Road and descending a very steep, rocky path into a very thick, dark stand of spruce. Wind steadily upward with the exception of a brief dip to a bubbling stream.

After crossing the stream, the trail becomes more ambiguous. Climb steadily upward, stepping over a nearly stagnant stream, after which the incline increases before flattening out at the top of a 50-foot rock, which offers a great view of rolling hills and a steep vertical drop.

The trail doubles back along the top and reaches a natural gas pipeline right of way. From here, it is a short walk along a rocky path through open woodland to the end of the trail at Mansfield Historical Society.

## Directions

From Route 195 turn on to Bassett's Bridge Road in Mansfield. The park entrance is about a mile down the road on the left. Parking is available here and at the Mansfield Historical Society on Route 195 at the end of the trail.

*John Kennedy is a journalism major at the University of Connecticut.*

# NORTH/SOUTH JUNCTION TO GURLEYVILLE GRISTMILL

BY ELLIS SANT'ANDREA

The Gurleyville Gristmill was built in 1835, and today it has few equals in New England. Owned by the Joshua's Tract Conservation and Historical Trust since 1979, the mill is preserved the way it was when it last functioned in 1940. Before the gristmill, a sawmill operated there on the site beginning in 1723.

The gristmill is constructed of local rocks, including garnetiferous schist, gneiss, granite, pegmatite, and quartzite. Inside the building are two sets of grinding stones in the same position as they were when they were last used. The mill also features conveying devices, a silk bolter for flour sifting, shafts, and several huge gears. The most unusual part of the gristmill is in the basement, where a river current once turned the large water wheel.

Wilbur Lucius Cross, a four-term governor of Connecticut, oversaw the gristmill with his family for a few years. He was born in the nearby miller's cottage, which includes a small museum.

The gristmill is at a key location along both the Nipmuck Trail and the Fenton River, a tame body of water with several babbling brooks and still pools. Most of this portion of the trail is along the Chaffeeville Road, close enough to feel safe but far enough away so it does not interfere with nature. The trail repeatedly fords portions of the stream on stepping-stones. A sturdy hiking stick can be useful. For hikers who are interested in fishing, the river is home to wild trout. It also offers several peaceful picnic areas atop soft, shaded moss overlooking the water.

This portion of the trail measures 2.5 miles, starting behind the Mansfield Historical Society and ending to the northwest at the Gurleyville Gristmill. Hikers who choose the trail on Sundays will find that from the third Sunday in May until the second Sunday in October that the gristmill is open from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free.

## The Hike

The trail begins in the parking lot of the Mansfield Historical Society. Enter through a break in a stone wall. For the first 0.3 miles, the trail will be wide and easy to walk along. Cross over a wooden bridge and continue to follow the trail north.

Shortly after passing through a wooded area with water visible in the distance, hikers get their first up-close look of the Fenton River when they arrive at a rugged ledge. The ledge overlooks several serene pools of water.

Hikers wading down a little further can see flowing water with a series of fallen trees in the water's path.

A large concrete tunnel is ahead. The path continues over the bridge. A walking stick is helpful for climbing fairly steep rocks to the top of the tunnel, where the river can be viewed.

Follow the trail to the next landmark: the "Special Trout Area" sign. Fishing is allowed if the fish caught is over 9 inches. Look to the right and see a huge stone wall, about 10 feet high.

The trail continues, only a few feet adjacent to the river in some spots. There are more fallen trees, several of which block the entire width of the river. This creates small waterfalls, and in the autumn it forms a place for the endless amount of fallen leaves to gather.

While walking through heavily shaded areas, notice how dramatically the amount of water in the lake decreases. Sometimes, the river is only 3 feet wide, reduced to just leaves and mud.

This part of the trail offers peaceful picnic areas right beside the trail, complete with shade, flat moss, and a perfect view of the water.

Pass by more fallen trees and come to one of the more prominent

*continued on page 14*

## HIKES

*continued from page 13*

waterfall areas of the river. Rounded rocks across the width of the river create a classic babbling brook. There is a small area to the left of the trail where hikers can stand and observe the water.

Cross over a small wooden bridge. It's sturdier than it looks. On the other side, the trail gets extremely muddy, but the ground is solid on the left side.

After passing by more beautiful little waterfalls, stepping-stones allow hikers to cross the river. The stepping-stones are not as easy to balance on as they appear.

Shortly after, there is another series of stepping-stones, except a tree has fallen across the water right next to them. Again, use the stepping-stones. Walk uphill and come to a dirt road. Turn left on the road and pass by a white house.

Continue down the road, and you will finally see a stone building beside a bridge. This is the gristmill. The hike continues over the bridge and crosses through private property for those hikers who wish to continue the hike.

### Directions

Take Route 195 to the Mansfield Historical Society and pull into the parking lot in the back. The trail entrance is clearly visible from the parking lot.

*Ellis Sant'Andrea is a journalism major at the University of Connecticut.*

## THE FENTON RIVER'S INDUSTRIAL PAST AND TROUT-LADEN PRESENT

BY JACK SULLIVAN

The trout-laden Fenton River is a designated greenway in the state where early industries operated: the Gurleyville Gristmill, the Chaffeeville Silk Mill, and Mason's Mill. A local body, the Naubesatuck Watershed Council, has been developed to acquire and preserve additional historic tracts along the Fenton River Greenway.

The Fenton is also locally notorious. In early September 2005, a quarter-mile portion of the river went bone-dry. The nearby University of Connecticut is permitted to draw as many as 844,300 gallons of water a day from wells near the Fenton. In the fall, the combination of a short-term drought and the water demands of students returning to campus were too great for the wells and the Fenton. Fishermen and those concerned with the Fenton were outraged and UConn officials were embarrassed. The university has vowed to do better in the future about its water management policies.

Fortunately, the water is back, and you can walk near the Fenton on the Nipmuck Trail. The hike described follows 2.3 miles from the Fenton River on Gurleyville Road to Route 44 in Mansfield.

### The Hike

To hike south to north, park at the lot on the left side of Gurleyville Road, right before it crosses the Fenton River. Start looking for light blue blazes. The trail for the first minute or two is tightly surrounded by brush and small trees until it comes to the Fenton. The river will remain on the right for most of the hike. Every now and then, an open clearing allows hikers to step up to the river.

Cross a wooden bridge over a small estuary, briefly away from the river before reconnecting. The trail widens under a canopy of trees. Pass a fire pit, then come out briefly onto the road, soon returning to the woods, winding uphill, then steeply down to the river and across another stream.

The trail enters a clearing filled with tall grass and vernal pools. Exiting the field, the trail again hugs the river. Soon the trail veers to the left of the river and comes to a parking lot on Old Turnpike Road. Turn right and cross a bridge to the end of this section on Route 44.

### Directions

On Route 195, near the University of Connecticut, turn east onto Horsebarn Hill Road. Bear right immediately onto Gurleyville Road, and drive about 1.3 miles. Parking will be on the left, just before crossing the Fenton River.

*Jack Sullivan is a journalism major at the University of Connecticut.*

## FATAL EXPLOSION

*continued from page 10*

### A Routine Practice

Before the accident, the Kleen Energy plant was 96 percent complete and was due to begin operating in fall 2010, officials said. The U.S. Chemical Safety Board, which is studying what happened, said that workers were conducting a "gas blow," a common method of readying natural gas pipes. To remove air and debris, workers vented natural gas at high pressure (650 pounds per square inch). The gas was vented about 20 feet off the ground, adjacent to the main generating building's south wall.

The CSB reported in a statement that gas blows took place intermittently all morning on February 7 and that there were places inside the building, where construction was going on, they identified as "ignition sources." Such sources are abundant at industrial worksites, the CSB said. But the real hazards apparently were in the releases just outside. The CSB calculated that in the 10 minutes before the explosion, enough natural gas was released fill a pro-basketball arena, from floor to ceiling, with explosive natural gas mixed with air.

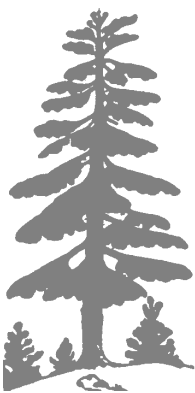
"We strongly caution natural gas power plants and other industries against the venting of high-pressure natural gas in or near work sites,"

Don Holmstrom, CSB investigations supervisor, said in the February 25 statement. "This practice, although common, is inherently unsafe." Alternatives to venting with natural gas are using air, steam, nitrogen, water, or flares to consume the vapor as it's vented.

Only three days before the Middletown explosion, the CSB had warned that the gas-blow method of purging pipes is dangerous and recommended changes to the National Fuel Gas Code to prevent accidents with natural gas pipes. This was in response to a June 2009 accident during pipe cleaning at the Slim Jim beef jerky factory in Garner, North Carolina, in which 4 workers died and 65 were hurt.

"The type of purging described in that code is different from the gas blows used in the power industry," the CSB said, "and power plants remain exempt from the National Fuel Gas Code. However, gas purging as defined in the code has certain similarities to gas blows, in that gas is applied at one end of a pipe and gas is intentionally vented at the other end to the atmosphere."

"There is an underlying common theme among the tragic accidents at Kleen Energy, the ConAgra Slim Jim plant in North Carolina, the Ford River Rouge power plant in Michigan, the Hilton Hotel in San Diego, and many other purging-related accidents," the CSB said. "Companies must ensure that flammable gases are not vented into close proximity with ignition sources and workers. That is a vital safety message from all these tragedies."



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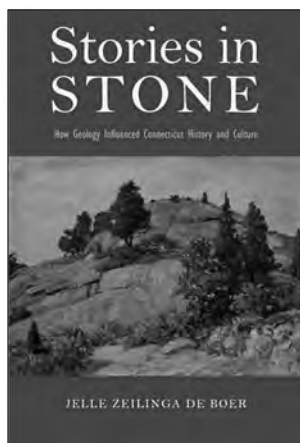
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# HOW ROCKS MADE CONNECTICUT AND THE OUTDOORS FORMED TEDDY ROOSEVELT



**Stories in Stone:  
How Geology Influenced  
Connecticut History and  
Culture,**  
by Jelle Zeilinga de Boer.  
Wesleyan University Press:  
Middletown, Connecticut,  
2009.  
206 pages.

BY DAVID K. LEFF

Jelle de Boer has evidently never encountered a stony silence. Rocks have tales to tell, and the author is adept at teaching us to read earth history in the fractures, folds, grain, colors, and other elements of the geological alphabet. Like a poem, the language of our ledges and soils is crammed with meaning and nuance because “more rock types of different composition, texture, and origin are exposed in relatively small Connecticut than in most other states in the nation.”

Dr. de Boer, a professor emeritus of earth science at Wesleyan University, is best when demonstrating how pervasively the state’s geology has influenced its culture, history, and economic fate. Rich soils in the state’s Central Valley made Connecticut a colonial breadbasket. Soft and hard rock gradients created swift running streams that powered textile and metalworking industries yielding great wealth and shaping the state’s ethnicity by the workers who were hired. Iron and lead mines helped win the Revolution, and brownstone quarried from Portland and granite from Stony Creek built many East Coast cities. In colonial times, the glacial erratic boulders that form Judges Cave hid political refugees on New Haven’s West Rock. Hudson River School, impressionist, and other artists have drawn inspiration from Connecticut’s geological formations.

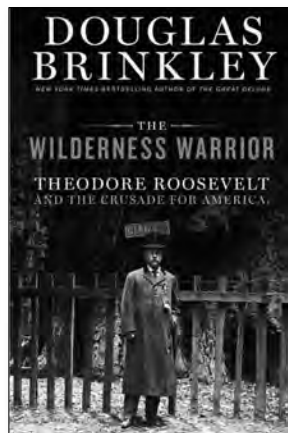
Unfortunately, extended discourses on the history of geologic discoveries, competing theories, and their advocates slows the narrative. The book would also have benefited from a glossary. Finally, a number of minor factual errors sap some of the work’s strength. Gilbert Heublein, for example, was not a brewer, but a producer and distributor of liquor and food. Meriden’s Castle Craig was erected in the late nineteenth, not eighteenth century. John Winthrop was Connecticut’s sixth governor, not its first.

Hikers will appreciate the chapter on the Metacomet Ridge, host to the newly designated New England National Scenic Trail. Dr. de Boer refers to the ridge of traprock as “Connecticut’s volcanic remains,” but in addition to describing the origins and composition of the rocks, he covers the political and cultural impact of the old lava flow. He delves into the economic value of the area as reservoir sites and sources of building material; the ecology of windy, dry summits and cool talus slopes; tower building; and the looming presence of those indomitable cliffs as a subject of world renowned paintings.

This book makes a valuable contribution to our understanding of the world around us because it clearly ties the evolution and nature of this small patch of planetary integument to the unfolding of human culture. Readers will be well rewarded long after they put the

book down by the new connections they’ll make among diverse phenomena they experience daily in the landscape. We need teachers and writers like Dr. de Boer who help us see extraordinary things in objects most people take for granted. Let’s embrace his suggestion that “a common rock or mineral . . . should sit on everyone’s mantelpiece, bookshelf, or windowsill to remind the whole family of the beauty that exists in the thin crust that supports our civilization.”

*David K. Leff is a writer, member of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association Board of Directors, and former deputy commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection.*



**The Wilderness Warrior:  
Theodore Roosevelt and  
the Crusade for America,**  
by Douglas Brinkley.  
Harper/HarperCollins  
Publishers: New York, 2009.  
940 pages, illustrated.

BY ROBERT M. RICARD

Between 1901 and 1909, 234 million acres were set aside as federal forest reserves, national parks, national monuments, and national game reserves. Forester Gifford Pinchot, conservationist John Muir, and naturalist John Burroughs have received justifiable attention. Less appreciated—and sometimes ridiculed—is the one person who caused these lands to be held for posterity by simply saying “I Do So Declare” coupled with a stroke of a pen. With this book, history might now show more appreciation to that man.

Award-winning historian Douglas Brinkley has given us an inspiring epic on the exploits of one of America’s greatest naturalists: Theodore Roosevelt. This massive book is an important one, but it certainly will upset some environmentalists and environmental historians with its simple and direct thesis—that Mr. Roosevelt was the most important person in the history of American conservation. (Mr. Brinkley calls him T. R. throughout. We learn that being called “Teddy” angered him.)

Mr. Brinkley asserts that environmentalists and historians have neglected the 26th president’s contributions to conservation, noting that T. R. was a contradictory figure. He was an enthusiastic big-game hunter, a nationalist, a Darwinian, and an U.S. expansionist who was quick to anger over the mistreatment of animals. The author asserts the evidence has long been in plain sight but has been blocked by “a left-leaning bias against aristocratic hunters, nation builders, and nationalistic imperialists.”

The Rice University historian claims that Mr. Roosevelt is too complex to stereotype. A sickly child born to an affluent family, Mr. Roosevelt was largely home-schooled until he went off to Groton School, and later to Harvard. At a young age, he was reading, and grasping, Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* and George Perkins Marsh’s



*Man and Nature.* These influenced his views on conservation, morality, and politics. Mr. Roosevelt collected insects, birds, and mammals (often dead) and set up a museum with his cousins. Many of his specimens ended up in schools and museums. He also read novels by Mayne Reid and James Fenimore Cooper. These inspired the sickly youngster to adopt the strenuous life he argued should be the norm for the "real American man."

Mr. Roosevelt saw conservation as a national imperative. He believed that natural wonders, such as the Grand Canyon and Devil's Tower, were more significant than were more cultured landmarks abroad. He believed that such landscapes made the United States great and that the federal government should protect them. For this opinion, he was often called a socialist. Mr. Roosevelt also believed the Western spirit was a morally superior ideal—he viewed cowboys, mountain men, and pioneers as more American and "manly" than industrialists, bankers, and politicians.

The book is not without flaws. Mr. Brinkley repeats himself and makes several factual and writing errors, but these do not get in the way of the importance of this history.

*Robert M. Ricard is a senior extension educator in urban natural resources and public policy with the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System.*

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# NEW MILFORD HOSPITAL PROGRAM CONNECTS ITS TOWNSPEOPLE TO HEALTHY LIVING

BY LESLIE LEWIS

Anyone who has been out and about on a Saturday morning in the summer knows that farmers' markets have been flourishing during the last several years. With more than 100 operating around Connecticut, these markets are bustling with activity as people enjoy quality time outdoors while buying healthy, minimally processed foods and supporting local agriculture. With the success of farmers' markets growing, many communities are looking for ways to offer more healthy options. In one town, the link between food and health is resulting in a new and different kind of partnership.

Launched by New Milford Hospital in June 2007, Plow-to-Plate™ is believed to be a first for the health care industry. The hospital formed a community coalition of physicians, farmers, chefs, restaurateurs, community leaders, land preservationists, and state and local government officials to sponsor public education and to support the hospital's commitment to transforming its own food service to one that provides wholesome food that is locally and regionally produced, whenever possible. P2P, as the program is known,

**P2P, AS THE PROGRAM IS KNOWN, TOOK ROOT WHEN THIS DIVERSE GROUP BEGAN TO SHARE IDEAS ON ADDRESSING THE PROBLEMS OF ESCALATING OBESITY AND DIABETES RATES AMONG CHILDREN.**

took root when this diverse group began to share ideas on addressing the problems of escalating obesity and diabetes rates among children. The group quickly attracted others and formalized itself as the Plow to Plate Community Coalition. New Milford Hospital provides leadership and organizational support for its public education and advocacy efforts.

The initiative is focused on promoting local agriculture and involving the community in experiences that highlight the many benefits, individual and collective, of eating farm-fresh food. The goals include improving the community's physical health, increasing ecologically sound and sustainable agriculture, encouraging preservation of farmlands, and bolstering the local economy. The coalition now has more than 150 individual and group members supporting the initiative.

One of P2P's projects is to add music and entertainment, children's programming, and an information center to the farmers' market in New Milford. Working with the town, the Plow-to-Plate Farmers' Market gives a boost to the New Milford village center, a small town with character and vibrancy. In the past two years, the New Milford market has doubled its number of vendors and greatly increased consumer demand. This year organizers will help other communities in establishing farmers' markets and community gardens. P2P also promotes the farmers' market in nearby Kent.

P2P also puts on a series of public education events, team-taught by farmers, health care providers, and chefs. At one event, children learned to cook healthy meals. In 2010, this "food learning" series will extend to those who have suffered cancer, in a special program based on the work of Rebecca Katz, author of *One Bite at a Time* (Celestial Arts, 2008).

In fall 2009, P2P commissioned and published a special edition of the popular Tractor Mac series of children's books, entitled *Tractor Mac Farmer's Market* (2009). Author Billy Steers, medical advisor and pediatrician Dr. Diane D'Isidori, community pediatrician Dr. Evan Hack, and chef Anne Gallagher all created a story, told through animal characters, that includes recipes and "tips for kids to tell



their parents."

P2P's Farm Bucks program seeks to reestablish dialogue between pediatricians and family medicine physicians and their patients about healthy diets. A specially designed "\$5 bill" is given by participating physicians to their patients on well child/annual check up visits, along with nutritional information. These "farm bucks" can be redeemed for fruit and vegetables at the many farm stands and markets that support the program.

In partnership with a local farmland preservation group and land trusts, P2P promotes farm-friendly amendments to municipal codes and works with local towns to incorporate a "health impact statement" (not unlike an environmental impact statement) into land use development and planning initiatives. P2P is involved in a federally funded inventory of the region's agricultural capacity and a demand analysis for area institutional markets to gauge the feasibility of a regional distribution system. Leaders of the P2P initiative speak frequently at national and state level conferences.

Other initiatives of P2P include an after-school program with the New Milford Youth Agency that includes visits to local and regional farms and fisheries; an online video at [www.plowtoplate.org/](http://www.plowtoplate.org/); and another year of the P2P Youth Advocate Chef Program, which began in March.

The Plow-to-Plate Community Coalition has shown how a community can work to bring healthy living back into its everyday life.

*Leslie Lewis is the WalkCT director for the Connecticut Forest & Park Association.*

# SPRING BREAK CAN INCLUDE WATCHING BUD BREAK

BY THOMAS E. WORTHLEY

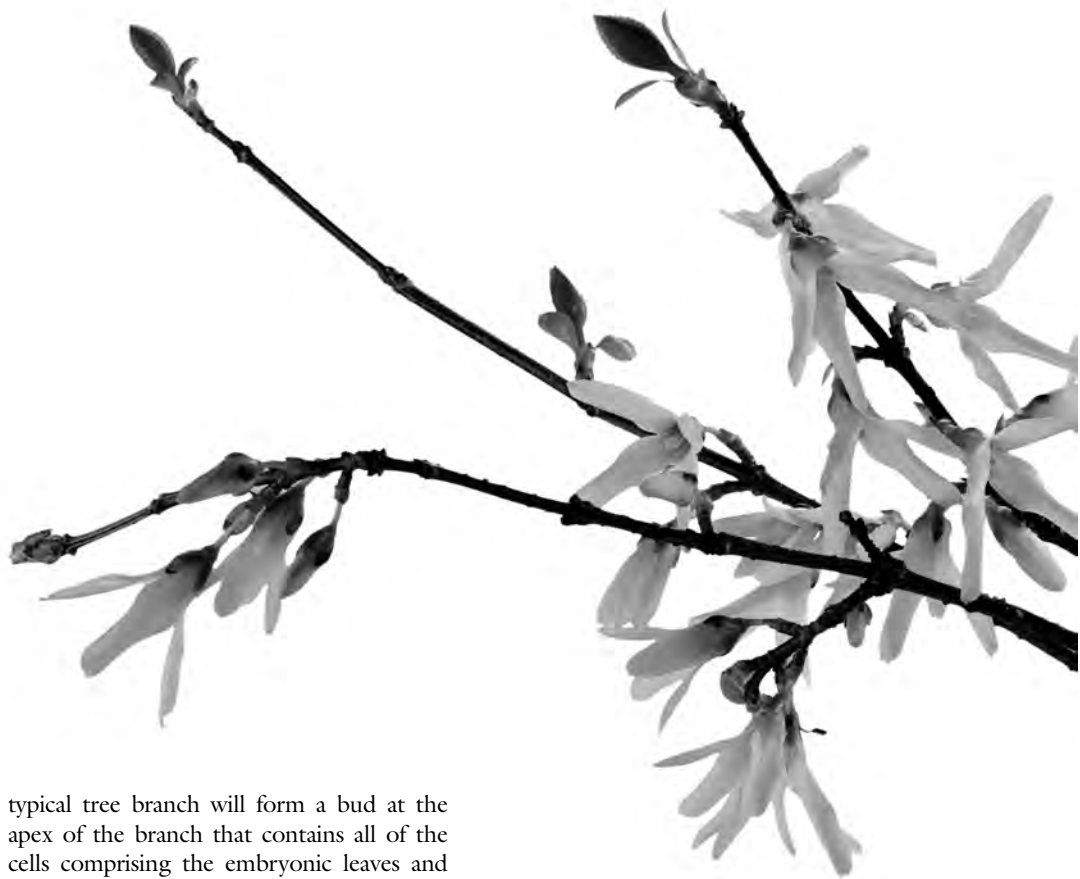
The display of crocuses and daffodils in well-tended spring gardens notwithstanding, I suggest that folks also look up and enjoy the display of spring color in tiny red maple flowers, dangling birch catkins, and the white pine's elongating shoots. A close-up or hand-lens view of a little flower from a common red maple tree will reveal a structure and color every bit as fragile and lovely as flowers from the garden.

Stand where there is a high elevation view in the spring and count the different shades of green you see as the leaves of different forest canopy species emerge and develop.

Not all types of trees flower or begin the growth of new leaves at the same time. Trees and shrubs in different canopy positions and different elevations exhibit differences as well. Even different individuals of the same species may not leaf out or produce flowers at exactly the same time.

"Bud swell," "bud break," "bud burst," "leaf emergence" and other similar phrases all refer to a complex set of circumstances and processes when winter ends. Not all of the internal processes associated with bud break and leaf emergence are fully understood for most species. Therein lies some of the magic in it for me. But one can generalize. In trees, cell division and enlargement takes place only in discrete zones called "meristems." One meristem is the area along the trunk and branches (where woody growth and the inner bark form). Another is at the very tip or "apex" of every branch and root (where cell division allows leaves or flowers to form, shoots and roots to elongate, and eventually for buds to form).

At this point it is key to understand that plant cells are "totipotent." That is, they contain the entire genetic information necessary to become any type of cell, tissue or organ structure for the plant. Apical cells have the ability to differentiate into various cell types and form different types of tissues depending on the physical and chemical conditions present and how they are genetically programmed to respond to those conditions. At the end of the growing season a



typical tree branch will form a bud at the apex of the branch that contains all of the cells comprising the embryonic leaves and new shoot that will develop the next spring. The tree then undergoes internal chemical processes that enable it to withstand cold conditions, an adaptation we call "cold hardiness," and growth is dormant through the winter.

External factors trigger cell division that forms tree buds. These factors are increasing length of daylight (the photoperiod), increasing daytime temperatures, and moisture availability. Trees native to temperate zones all display an intermittent growth pattern, and the type of pattern or period of shoot growth is generally determined by genetics, but growth periods always occur during periods of favorable moisture and temperature conditions.

The interaction of genetic factors, the environment, and chemical constituents in tree tissue all determine when and how a tree or shrub will break bud and leaf out. A slight variation in one or another growth hormone may be enough to permit a sugar maple in the understory of a forest to leaf out a few days earlier than the oak above it. A radically different genetic code allowing

bud break and leaf-out to occur earlier in the spring, under a much shorter photoperiod than native shrubs, may give the alien Japanese barberry the competitive advantage.

deeper investigation into the science of tree physiology would reveal how these processes work, where the hormones come from and how they are transported within a tree. But it is beyond both the scope of this space and the capabilities of this dirt forester and former mechanical engineering student to embark on the necessary exploration of organic chemistry and cell biology. I have discovered, however, that the deeper I look into these subjects, the more questions I ask. I have many more questions than answers. And that, I think, is one of the beauties of nature.

*Thomas E. Worthley is assistant extension professor for forest stewardship with the Middlesex County office of the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension.*

## EXPLORING THE NEW ENGLAND NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL

BY CLARE CAIN

I've spent the last few weekends hiking the northern section of the New England National Scenic Trail in Connecticut. The weather has been cold, the ground hard, but the hiking has been beautiful. Nearly every weekend for the past two months, Wayne Fogg, Appalachian Mountain Club hike leader and Connecticut Forest & Park Association trail manager, has led a north-to-south hike on the trail. As we've worked our way down the spine of Connecticut's traprock ridge system, we've enjoyed sites from Penwood State Park to the Hublein Tower and Rattlesnake Mountain near Plainville.

The New England National Scenic Trail, designated in March 2009, is receiving new attention and care from volunteers and town representatives in both Massachusetts and Connecticut. The trail joins the Metacomet-Monadnock, Metacomet, and Mattabesett trails in Massachusetts and Connecticut. It has expanded the National Scenic Trail family to 11 trails, placing it in the company of the Appalachian Trail and Pacific Crest Trail. This esteemed designation is a testimony to the unique natural and scenic qualities of southern New England.

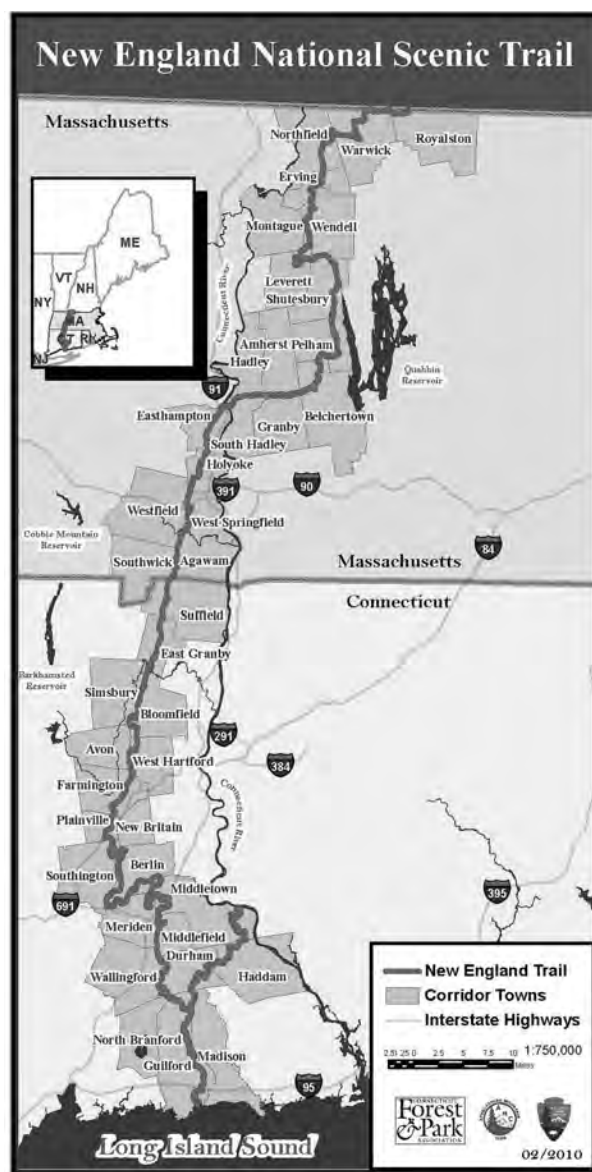
Following a rugged traprock ridgeline that stretches from the Long Island Sound to the Massachusetts-New Hampshire border, the trail—designated for passive, nonmotorized recreation—travels a green corridor touching 39 New England communities. As an avid hiker whose boots have walked miles of trails all over the country, I have been pleasantly surprised by the rugged traprock, the bucolic views, and the deepness of the woods through which the trail runs.

But the trail is not all tumbling creeks and panoramic vistas. Trail committees in both states have begun meeting regularly to tackle tough management concerns: How do we protect the trail corridor from development? How do we ignite enthusiasm in trail communities? How do we correct areas that suffer annual erosion? How do we prioritize trail reconstruction projects?

The New England National Scenic Trail's management plan is unique in that it invites participation from a spectrum of trail constituents on an advisory state Trail Stewardship Council. CFP, the Appalachian Mountain Club, and the National Park Service share management responsibility; administration doesn't rest with a sole authority. This democratic approach to trail management invites volunteer and municipal involvement in a way that sets this trail apart.

Every weekend that I am out hiking I can't help but marvel at the opportunity to hike across the heart of Connecticut, someday uninterrupted by road or development, connecting from our shoreline to our ridgetops. I encourage you to learn more about the trail, gather your friends for a day hike, volunteer for a work party, or participate in one of our planning meetings. What we do at these meeting tables improves what we can enjoy on the trail.

*Clare Cain is the director of trail stewardship for the CFP.*



**EDITOR'S NOTE:** For more information on the New England National Scenic Trail or to view upcoming events and meeting dates, please visit [www.newenglandnst.org](http://www.newenglandnst.org). Hikers can find trail information for the Connecticut portion, which runs up the middle of the state, can be found in both volumes of CFP's *Connecticut Walk Book, East and West*. To order the book, visit [www.ctwoodlands.org](http://www.ctwoodlands.org). For trail information on Massachusetts portion, see Pat Fletcher's online guide to the Massachusetts section of the trail (visit [www.amcberkshire.org/mm-trail/guide](http://www.amcberkshire.org/mm-trail/guide)).

## SPRING TRAIL RACES

**Grand Tree Series, 2010**

Runners accumulate points in a series of races around New England. Full schedule (which includes some of the races listed below) [www.runwmac.com](http://www.runwmac.com).

**Traprock 50K**

[www.traprock50.com](http://www.traprock50.com)

**Bimble's Bluff**

[mrmbimble.com/WordPress/bluff/](http://mrmbimble.com/WordPress/bluff/)

**Twilight Trail Run**

[www.twilighttrailrun.com/](http://www.twilighttrailrun.com/)

**Northern Nipmuck Trail Race**

**Soapstone Mountain Trail Races**

**Nipmuck Trail Marathon****Soapstone Assault****People's Forest Trail Race****Breakneck Trail Race**

Info on these six races at [www.shenipsit-striders.org](http://www.shenipsit-striders.org) and [www.runwmac.com](http://www.runwmac.com).





Connecticut DEP

*Camp Filley, in Haddam, as it looked in the 1930s.*

## CCC CAMP FILLEY DESIGNATED A STATE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRESERVE

BY NICOLE CHALFANT

**C**ivilian Conservation Corps Camp Filley has been designated a state archaeological preserve and placed on the State Register of Historic Places, becoming the first CCC site to be so protected and honored. The 9.7-acre camp is located in Cockaponset State Forest, about three quarters of a mile to the east of the Cockaponset Trail, at the corner of Filley Road and Turkey Hill Road in Haddam. The young men who lived there for nine years, from 1933 through 1941, established the Cockaponset Trail as one of their many projects.

The U.S. Army and Navy were brought in to set up and run the CCC camps. Camp Filley is an excellent example of a CCC camp. It was among the first of Connecticut's CCC camps to be established and among the last to close. Named in honor of the first Connecticut state forester, Walter O. Filley, Camp Filley's personnel built forest roads and trails, fire ponds, fire observation towers, and picnic areas and produced charcoal.

Five barracks buildings measured roughly 100-by-25 feet and housed almost 250 enrollees and officers. The structures were laid out around a parade ground with a flagpole and stone marker bearing the camp name. Other buildings in the camp included the mess hall, infirmary, offices, supply rooms, garages, latrines, and a blacksmith shop. All over America, "CCC Boys" worked 8- to 10-hour days planting trees, eradicating insects and pests, fighting forest fires, constructing roads and buildings, and generally developing what are now the state and national forests and parks.

When Camp Filley closed on July 30, 1941, the Army removed most of the buildings and supplies to be used in World War II. The land was left to return to a natural state. What remains is one of the best-preserved footprints of a CCC camp in Connecticut. The trees and underbrush have grown up, but it is easy to see the indentations where the ground was leveled for each building. Still visible are all building foundations, connecting roads and paths, the camp dedication monument, and three cobblestone chimney stacks. Cellar depressions clearly mark the location of the barracks, recreation hall, wash/supply room, mess hall, infirmary, and smaller ancillary structures.

It took many months of documentation by the State Historic Preservation Office of the Connecticut State Archaeologist and members of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Division of State Parks and Public Outreach before last winter's official designation.

Designating the camp as a state archaeological preserve gives the site a degree of protection from unauthorized excavation or other disturbances. Metal detecting (ground penetrating radar, resistivity, etc.) on this site requires an archeological permit from the SHPO. (Connecticut General Statutes 10-386 and 10-390 cover permitting and penalties on State Archaeological Preserves.)

Camp Filley joins 25 existing state historic sites, of which only 8 are on DEP property. For more information on state archaeological sites, go to the DEP Web site located at [www.ct.gov/dep](http://www.ct.gov/dep) and search for "archaeological preserves."

*Nicole Chalfant is the museum curator for the Connecticut DEP Parks Division.*

**John Olsen**, a forester and Christmas tree grower who was long active in the Connecticut Forest & Park Association and with statewide efforts to protect forests, died on February 2 at his home in Voluntown. He was 82 years old. He was born April 4, 1927, in New York City, the son of the late Knut and Olava Olsen. Mr. Olsen and his wife, Anne LeDoyt Olsen, were married on July 5, 1952.

Mr. Olsen was a native of Mansfield and graduated from Windham High School in 1945. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1945 through 1946 and in 1951 graduated from the University of Connecticut, where he majored in forestry. For 31 years, from 1951 to 1982, he was employed by the Connecticut Park & Forest Commission, later renamed as the Department of Environmental Protection, as a forest ranger, nurseryman, service forester, area forester, and regional manager. In that last job, he was active in the effort to save Haley Farm (now Haley Farm State Park).

He was active in many community and forestry groups, including the Connecticut Christmas Tree Growers Association, of which he was a charter member and the executive director. After he retired in 1982, he became a private consulting forester. His favorite pastime was the expansion and tending of the family Christmas tree plantation. He traveled across the United States with his wife and visited his family in Norway. A memorial service took place February 7 at Voluntown Baptist Church.

Among his survivors are his sister, Constance Hrenek of Willimantic; two daughters, Gail Kulesza of Preston and Linnea Olsen of Alexandria, Virginia; a son, Ronald Olsen of Griswold; and a grandson, Chris Kulesza of Preston.

—Source: Death notice, *Norwich Bulletin*

**Douglas Grahn Christie**, for many years an active trailsman for both CFPA and the Appalachian Mountain Club, died December 3 at Hartford Hospital. He was 85, a retired educator who had lived in West Hartford for 35 years. He was the widower of Margaret Brown Christie. Born in Florence, Massachusetts, he attended high school in Middletown, Connecticut, served in the U.S. Navy during World War II, and graduated from Middlebury College in 1949. Mr. Christie's school positions included principal of Conard High School, director of continuing education for the West Hartford schools, principal of Parish High School in Chaplin, and teacher at Roger Ludlow High School in Fairfield. He leaves two daughters, Anne S. Christie of East Middlebury, Vermont, and Jean Christie Mejia of Arlington, Massachusetts; a son, James G. Christie of Hartford; and a grandson, Tano Mejia of Arlington. A memorial service took place December 12.

—Source: Death notice, *The Hartford Courant*

# ASPARAGUS, THE SWEET GIFT OF SPRING

BY JEAN CRUM JONES

Each year I can hardly wait until the first purplish tips begin poking through the soil. In mid-April, I begin to prowl around our asparagus bed looking hard for signs of the dainty stalks. Tentatively, at first, they begin to appear hither and thither. Then, with the cues of more sunlight and warmer temperatures, the whole graceful corps seems to suddenly arise, and thin and sturdy spears are everywhere. Now, the daily challenge begins of capturing these delicious creatures at the right size and preparing the bounty in as many ways as possible. It's another asparagus performance.

As many of my readers know, we still live a somewhat traditional farm life, eating what's in season and, as much as possible, what we produce on our farm. In April, as we finish eating last season's stored squash, potatoes, roots, and other vegetables, we begin to long for something fresh. We can hardly wait for the ephemeral four-week asparagus harvest. Asparagus is such a worthy reward—its soft buttery texture and sweet succulent flavor just melt in the mouth when it is tender and fixed straight from the garden.

Eating it daily, it's good that asparagus is so versatile. We enjoy it in many guises and with many companions—sautéed, stir-fried, roasted, grilled, and steamed, and sometimes, just raw. If we get tired of it, we prepare batches for freezer storage, so we can have some asparagus off season.

## The Asparagus Parties of Old

People a century ago went crazy over fresh asparagus, in the same way they did when the strawberries first ripened. Friends would enjoy long picnics to welcome springtime and the asparagus. Churches would hold asparagus suppers (with ham, strawberry shortcake, and potato salad). Well-to-do families and restaurants used special bowls, such as the Majolica asparagus plates, earthenware dishes decorated with rich colored glazes. American etiquette writers would debate how to eat asparagus—with fork and knife or, as in Europe, with one's fingers? In communities with commercial asparagus farms, students would work before school harvesting the day's crop. These towns would celebrate the season



with asparagus festivals because of the importance of this crop to their economies.

Asparagus is an expensive crop to grow, requiring three years from the planting of crowns until a crop emerges. You must pick it by hand, daily. Pest management can also be a challenge. But as history shows us, it's worth the trouble. Asparagus is a perennial plant of the Lily family and was being grown more than 2,000 years ago in the eastern Mediterranean region. Asparagus thrives in cool weather and prefers a maritime or riverside climate. It has been grown in New England and on Long Island since the arrival of the first Europeans in the 1600s.

Thomas Jefferson planted his favorite vegetable at Monticello. Asparagus remained a popular "herb" in Northeast kitchen gardens and was widely tended. Outside of larger cities in New England, some market gardeners began producing asparagus for city markets in the early 1800s. Commercial growing began with the wave of Italian and Eastern Europeans who settled in the San Joaquin valley of California in the mid-to-

late 1800s. They grew a high-quality asparagus that canned well and traveled by train across the country to the growing urban population. The New England truck farmers adopted the culture of asparagus for the fresh market. At one time, there were several sizable asparagus farms along the Connecticut River in the 1940s, many in Connecticut and the largest in Hadley, Massachusetts.

Then, the devastating soil-borne fungus, known as *Fusarium*, attacked and began destroying the Mary Washington roots and crowns during the 1960s. It happened across the country but Connecticut was hit very hard. Field after field was plowed under. These farmers began growing potatoes, corn, tobacco, and onions or sold their land to developers. Later, after disease-resistant varieties were developed in the 1980s, farmers replanted a limited amount of asparagus, but it remains a local crop, sold mostly at farm stands. Of course, if you grow your own, you have your own fresh harvest.

I find it sad that at the markets, asparagus is no longer a harbinger of spring in North America. The market is now flooded with asparagus year-round, as the result of the Andean Trade Preference and Drug Eradication Act (first enacted in 1991) that eliminated all import tariffs on South American asparagus and some other vegetable crops. The idea was that Peruvian farmers would stop growing cocaine and would start farming high-value vegetable crops. The United States also agreed to spend about \$60 million a year in Peru to help farmers develop an asparagus industry. Proponents of the Peru asparagus trade initially claimed that the fresh asparagus imports from Peru would complement the domestic asparagus industry by allowing consumers to get fresh asparagus in winter months, when U.S. asparagus was not in season. However, Peru became a year-round producer and exporter of fresh asparagus, even shipping fresh asparagus during the U.S. harvest season at prices that discouraged American producers from even harvesting their crops. Asparagus fields have been cut in half in the United States. But the story isn't over: Peruvian growers are currently dealing with an intractable fly, *Prodioplosis longifolia*, a tiny midge that has been doing a lot of damage in their asparagus fields, which is leading them to explore other crops, such as avoca-

dos and citrus. (It is also unclear after all these years whether there has been any reduction in the production of coca leaves being grown in Peru.)

With all these imports, per capita consumption of asparagus in America has increased to more than one pound annually, almost double what it was a decade ago. And so things change again: Astute U.S. farmers are beginning to grow more asparagus for the local market, where the emphasis is on freshness and flavor.

And, in what seems a good omen, significant asparagus production may be returning to Connecticut. The largest asparagus farm in New England, begun in 1995, is located in eastern Connecticut—Falls Creek Farm, where 30 acres of asparagus are distributed to the wholesale specialty market and to farm stores and markets. About two-dozen farms scattered throughout the state grow small acreages and sell directly to consumers. Check the helpful Connecticut Grown Web site ([www.buycctgrown.com](http://www.buycctgrown.com)) to find a fresh asparagus source near you.

If you want to grow your own, some Connecticut nurseries sell crowns and will provide planting advice. And for gardening groups that want a speaker to explain more about asparagus production, we are fortunate to have an expert at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station in New Haven, Dr. Wade Elmer, who has done extensive research on asparagus cultivars and diseases in Connecticut.

*Jean Crum Jones is a registered dietician who, with her husband Terry Jones, runs Jones Family Farms in Shelton. She serves on the Board of Directors of CEPA.*

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*to the members, volunteers, staff and board of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association  
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# VISITING FARMS TEACHES CHILDREN WHERE FOOD COMES FROM

BY LORI PARADIS BRANT

**I**t can be a thrilling experience for a family to milk a cow, pick berries, bottle-feed lambs, ride in horse-drawn wagons, card wool, make ice cream, and produce maple syrup. These are just a few of the delights that children and their caregivers can experience on family farms.

From east to west in Connecticut, farms invite families to visit farms, learn about their products, and even to try their hand at the farm chores. What better way to begin to understand where our food comes from than to actually perform the farm duties?

Many children think their food just happens to appear at the grocery store, and they can have difficulty understanding the connection their lunch has to agricultural lands and animals. By visiting a farm and experiencing some of its activities, families can learn how the land feeds them while having a lot of fun.

Do your children drink milk or eat ice cream or yogurt? Get them jazzed up to milk a cow with you. In Cornwall Bridge, R Local Farm offers half-day workshops for adults and families to learn how to care for a dairy cow. From relaxing “Betsy” so she’ll drop her milk to making ice cream, hands-on work is enjoyable. If you aren’t sure you are up for the actual practice but would like to satisfy your curiosity, visit their Web site, <http://rlocalfarm.com> for a photographic journey through one of the workshops.



*Education Director  
Lori Paradis Brant*

Families are welcome to help Farmer Travis at New Pond Farm ([www.newpondfarm.org](http://www.newpondfarm.org)) in Redding. At this nonprofit educational farm and center, families can help care for the chickens, calves, and sheep. If members of your family love syrup on their pancakes, bring them down to learn how to tap a sugar maple and play a part in the maple sugaring process. Did your child wear a wool hat or sweater this past winter? Trek down to Ambler Farm ([www.amblerfarm.org](http://www.amblerfarm.org)) in Wilton to watch the sheep being sheared and then give wool carding a try. Carding is the task of readying wool for spinning into yarn, using a “card” tool to separate the fibers.

Perhaps you are interested in taking the farm chores a bit further and making a vacation out of it. Last summer, my girlfriend took her children to upstate New York’s Hull-O Farm ([www.hull-o.com](http://www.hull-o.com)) for a “farm family vacation.” Their unforgettable trip included bottle-feeding calves and lambs, collecting eggs, and pitching hay bales. After eating a good family-style dinner at the farm table each evening, they and the other farm guests enjoyed s’mores together by the campfire. They learned a great deal from farmer Frank at this National Bicentennial Farm (so designated in 1988 to mark the bicentennial of the ratification of the Constitution) and enjoyed the farm-fresh food they took back to Connecticut. They actually did a taste-test one night of beef brought from a large grocery store and the beef from the farm. I’ll let you guess which one they preferred.

Not ready for actual farm chores but interested in visiting a farm? Many of Connecticut’s farms offer programs and tours that can give you a look at farm life. Venture north-west of Norwich to the Blue Slope Farm in Franklin. Blue Slope ([www.blueslope.com](http://www.blueslope.com)) welcomes visitors to explore its nearly 400 acres of farm and forest on a horse-drawn wagon. Visitors can enjoy campfires, square dancing, and visiting the farming museum.

Whether you visit Jones Family Farm in Shelton or Common Ground in New Haven, many incredible experiences are waiting for you. Just pull on comfortable clothes, take your camera, and get ready for an invigorating and memorable family outing that is simply matchless.

*Lori Paradis Brant is the education director of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association.*



Denise Belmont

*Nine-year old Ryan tries his hand at milking a goat.*

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Denise Belmont

*Julia, age 4, meets a calf.*

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[www.freshnewlondon.org](http://www.freshnewlondon.org)

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New Milford, CT 06776  
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[www.youthagency.org](http://www.youthagency.org)

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West Simsbury, CT 06092  
860-658-5070  
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STAMFORD MUSEUM  
AND NATURE CENTER'S  
HECKSCHER FARM**  
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Stamford CT 06903  
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[www.stamfordmuseum.org](http://www.stamfordmuseum.org)

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TERRA FIRMA FARM**  
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Stonington, CT 06378  
860-535-8171  
[www.terrafirmafarm.org](http://www.terrafirmafarm.org)

**STORRS  
UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT  
ANIMAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT**  
3636 Horse Barn Road Ext.  
Storrs, CT 06269  
860-486-2413  
[www.canr.uconn.edu/ansci/barn-tours.htm](http://www.canr.uconn.edu/ansci/barn-tours.htm)

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WESTMOOR PARK**  
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West Hartford, CT 06117  
860-561-8260

**WEST REDDING  
NEW POND FARM**  
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West Redding, CT 06896  
203-938-2117  
Program Director, Kristen Allore  
[www.newpondfarm.org](http://www.newpondfarm.org)

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AMBLER FARM**  
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[www.amblerfarm.org](http://www.amblerfarm.org)

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NORTHWEST PARK**  
Friends of Northwest Park, Inc.  
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Windsor, CT 06095  
860-285-1886  
[www.northwestpark.org](http://www.northwestpark.org)

### Colleges and Universities

**UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT  
AGRIHUSKY ECOGARDEN CLUB**  
UConn Plant Science Department  
1376 Storrs Road, Unit 4067, Storrs,  
CT 06269

**WESLEYAN  
LONG LANE FARM**  
Middletown, CT  
Long Lane Farm started with a student seminar in 2004, and continues to be powered by student energy, commitment, digging, tilling, and planting. Students involved with Long Lane still meet weekly to talk about farm planning and issues

around food security, but now also have regular potlucks and make jam, pickles, and tomato sauce.

### YALE YALE SUSTAINABLE FOOD PROJECT

309 Edwards Street,  
New Haven, CT 06511-8261  
203-432-2084  
[www.yale.edu/sustainablefood](http://www.yale.edu/sustainablefood)  
The Sustainable Food Project directs a sustainable dining program at Yale, manages an organic farm on campus, and runs diverse programs that support exploration and academic inquiry related to food and agriculture. Education Programs for Children and Adults  
Connecticut 4-H Program  
For list of local offices, see:  
[www.4-h.uconn.edu/](http://www.4-h.uconn.edu/)

### CONNECTICUT AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION FOUNDATION

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[www.ctaef.org](http://www.ctaef.org)

### CONNECTICUT AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION—

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### CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATORS

[www.caaeonline.org](http://www.caaeonline.org)

### CONNECTICUT FARM BUREAU

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860-298-4400  
[www.cfba.org](http://www.cfba.org)

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MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM  
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[www.ladybug.uconn.edu/mastergardener](http://www.ladybug.uconn.edu/mastergardener)

### NORTHEAST ORGANIC FARMING ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT

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203-888-5146  
[www.ctnafa.org](http://www.ctnafa.org)

### PROJECT FOOD, LAND, & PEOPLE SUE QUINCY CONNECTICUT DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION KELLOGG ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

P.O. Box 435, Derby, CT 06418  
203-734-2513  
[www.foodlandpeople.org](http://www.foodlandpeople.org)



Library of Congress

*Land set aside next to the Merritt Parkway in the 1930s will become a multi-use trail.*

## Highway Officials Agree to Create a Trail Next to the Merritt Parkway

The Connecticut Department of Transportation has signed on to the long-discussed idea of creating a multi-use trail along the Merritt Parkway. State highway officials have agreed to create the trail along the Merritt right-of-way after acknowledging that it will be impossible to widen the thoroughfare. The 37.5-mile trail would become part of the East Coast Greenway, a traffic-free path spanning from Florida to Maine. William O'Neill, chairman of the Connecticut Greenway Council, said the first step in building the greenway would be to obtain a permit for a hiking trail from the Connecticut DOT. Mr. O'Neill said that there is a growing need for this trail because pedestrians continue to dangerously bike and run on the sides of the road.

—Stephanie Bousquet

## Connecticut Joins Ten States to Seek Low-Carbon Options

Connecticut has agreed to work with 10 other northeastern states to find new ways to produce low-carbon fuel supply options. The states hope to find an alternative to reduce the region's reliance on fuels that contribute to greenhouse gases. In 2007, nearly 90 percent of Connecticut's greenhouse gas emissions came from fossil fuel combustion and 43 percent of the state's carbon-dioxide emissions came from transportation. The state recently signed the cooperative agreement with Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The states want to lower these emis-

sion numbers significantly by using new low-sulfur technologies.

—Kelsey Bongiovanni

## Biologists Fear White-Nose Syndrome Still Killing Bats

Wildlife biologists fear the worst this spring as bats emerge from hibernation. Northeastern states such as Connecticut are seeing bat mortality rates of more than 95 percent. White-nose syndrome has infected the bats, mostly by coating their noses with a white fungus. "Sometimes, the fungus isn't readily apparent if we have changes in humidity or warmth, but fungal spores can still be present," said Jenny Dickson, wildlife biologist for the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. The disease reduces the fat reserves bats have during hibernation and wakes them prematurely to search for food during the winter when insects are not out, causing the bats to die of starvation. Though the fungus weakens the bats, it is uncertain if it is a primary reason for the deaths because the fungus doesn't have the same mortality impact in Europe as the U.S. bat population has experienced, said Ms. Dickson. The disease is thought to have been spread via human transmission from Europe, which has reported seeing the fungus for a long time.

—Kelly Sullivan

## Madison Votes to Preserve Griswold Airport Land

Madison voters approved buying and renovating a 42-acre former airport for walking trails, fields, and wildlife viewing. The vote on January 27 was 3,275 to 2,444 in favor of spending \$9 million to buy and renovate the

Griswold Airport property on Boston Post Road. The property has 456 feet of frontage on the Hammonasset River and a 2,000-foot marshland border with Hammonasset Beach State Park. Landowner LeylandAlliance had proposed a condominium development. A group formed to oppose it, and after the Trust for Public Land brokered a deal to buy the property, the referendum took place.

—Based on reporting by  
Regine Labossiere, the Hartford Courant

## New Haven Printer Breaks Ground for Wind Turbine

Brian and Kevin Driscoll, co-owners of New Haven-based Phoenix Press, broke ground in January for a 150-foot-high wind turbine on the banks of the Quinnipiac River. The Driscolls said the turbine would provide one-third of their energy needs. A grant from the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund made possible what is currently the largest wind turbine project ever in the state.

—From press release

## Connecticut Water Co. Takes Over Two Small Waterworks

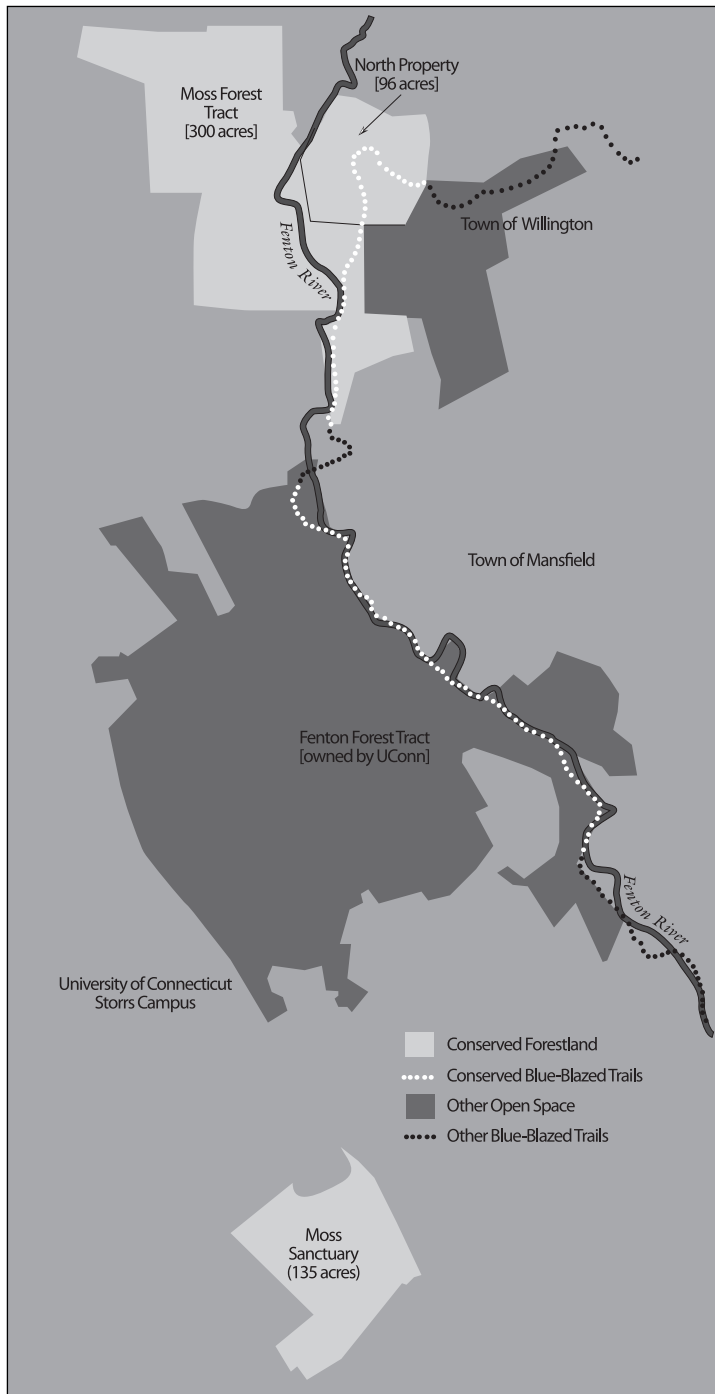
The Connecticut Water Company of Clinton has purchased for \$297,400 the water systems of two residential water systems serving 1,000 people in Killingworth and Mansfield. One of those systems, Beechwood in Killingworth, had exceeded the standard or maximum containment level for uranium. The other, Rolling Hill, was in compliance. The CWC also has agreed to acquire the Hawk's Nest Beach Water Company in Old Lyme, Connecticut, for \$300,000. That plan must be approved by the Connecticut Department of Public Utility Control.

—From press release and report in the  
Waterbury Republican-American

## DEP proposes rules for rivers

A fight has been underway over the question of whether Connecticut's rivers can supply water without hurting wildlife. The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection proposed new regulations last fall that would allow for them to balance the water needs of humans with those of wildlife. These regulations came up because of legislation passed in 2005 that required the DEP to consider a way to provide better conditions for rivers. Companies that supply drinking water have voiced some of the strongest objections because they are concerned about how the new regulations will affect their ability to deliver water. Environmental groups are supporting the DEP and the proposed new rules.

—Jennifer Lewis



### State puts sophisticated maps online

Connecticut has a new online resource that provides a wealth of information about wetlands, farmlands, endangered species and protected areas. The website, [cteco.uconn.edu](http://cteco.uconn.edu), is called Connecticut Environmental Conditions Online or CT ECO. It was created by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and the University of Connecticut Center for Land Use Education and Research. DEP spokesman Dennis Schain said it took several years and \$300,000 to gather the information and build the site. CT ECO offers sophisticated mapping capabilities, guides, and data on Connecticut natural resources that would be difficult for citizens to access otherwise.

—Farrah Duffany

### Deal conserves 3.5 miles of the Nipmuck Trail near the University of Connecticut

*See map at left.*

A deal announced in February by the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, the Norcross Wildlife Foundation and the University of Connecticut assured the conservation of 531 acres of forestland and 3.5 miles of the blue-blazed Nipmuck Trail in the towns of Willington and Mansfield.

CFPA initiated the project, several years in the making, with funds from its Hibbard Trust for Land and Trails, established in 2001. CFPA also used an open space grant from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and a no-interest loan from Norcross to acquire the tract of forest from the town of Willington.

After the various stages of the deal were completed, the entire project cost about \$350,000. This is the largest trail protection deal CFPA has ever made. Norcross was long interested in the project, too, because of the habitat around the Fenton River.

The map on this page shows a light gray-shaded tract at the top. This northernmost land in this deal consists of the Moss Forest tract, owned by UConn and now protected by an easement granted to CFPA, and the North property, a forest tract CFPA has owned since 2005; it surrounds the Fenton River.

To the south is a darker gray-shaded block signifying the UConn Fenton Forest. The Nipmuck Trail through this forest now is protected by a permanent easement UConn granted to CFPA.

A third tract, the Moss Sanctuary, to the southwest, has been conveyed to the town of Mansfield and CFPA holds the easement that guarantees no development will take place.



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The trails live only because CFPA members and friends give their *financial support* as well as their time and talent. The Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails are the best maintained, largest trail network in Connecticut. They are a treasure given to us and future generations by CFPA, civic-minded landowners and hundreds of caring trail volunteers. Please keep the trails you enjoy alive by giving today to CFPA's Annual Fund.

With your financial support CFPA can keep the trails you love open and safe, assist landowners to keep trails in the woods where they belong, advocate for trails and conservation in the Connecticut legislature, and recruit and train trail volunteers.

The health of our state's trails and land is directly linked to the strength of CFPA. Please support the one Association exclusively committed to protecting Connecticut's trails, forests, parks and open spaces for future generations.

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or call (860) 346-2372 to donate.**