

# CONNECTICUT Woodlands



## POLICING THE BACKCOUNTRY

WARREN DOYLE, CONNECTICUT HIKING LEGEND



# CONNECTICUT Woodlands

The Magazine of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association

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SUSAN BARLOW

*Connecticut Forest & Park Association again organized the nation's largest roster of guided hikes on National Trails Day weekend, June 5-6. Here, walkers get ready to hike in Risley Park in Vernon on Sunday.*

## 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.

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## Annual Membership

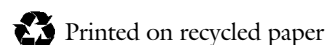
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# CONNECTICUT Woodlands

*The Magazine of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association*

Summer 2010 Volume 75 No. 2

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CONNECTICUT  
**Forest  
& Park**  
ASSOCIATION



*On The Cover*  
*A beautiful scene on Mount Higby in Middlefield—and a giant spray-painted number—bring together landscape and petty crime in central Connecticut.*  
*Photo by Robert Pagini*

# Summer reflections

BY DAVID PLATT



CFPA President  
David Platt

Earlier this year, my family lost our yellow Labrador retriever, River. In the prime of his life, he was hit by a car. It was nobody's fault, and everybody's fault, and I suppose we will all be smarter in the future. I know I will.

River was all that a great dog is supposed to be. He was my faithful companion, whether running or hiking the trails, sharing the front seat of the pickup truck on the way to the transfer station, or just flopping next to me on the rug in front of a Celtics game. He offered love without conditions, and I accepted it greedily. And the bond that he had with our kids—especially with my daughter Sawyer—was unusual.

In the weeks after he died, as River's snowy footsteps in the yard faded away, I expected my sorrow to melt away too. I was surprised at how much he affected me, how deep and persistent my hurt really was. He was a part of me and of my family. I wondered how we could replace him. But a month or so after River died, we adopted a chocolate Labrador puppy, Eli. Too soon? An attempt to replace the irreplaceable? Whatever the answer, it doesn't matter now. Eli is a friendly, plucky little fellow who is fun to watch as he learns the ropes. We took him on his first trail hike not long ago, and he performed like a wee champ. He already has commandeered his rightful position as a member of the family. He is no River, but then again, he is not supposed to be.



Our work at Connecticut Forest & Park Association continues to hum along, sometimes at near breakneck pace: We completed the protection of more than 3.5 miles of the Nipmuck Trail in Willington. Typical of many CFPA efforts, we could not have accomplished this without yeoman's work from a dedicated volunteer, Dan Donahue, and collaboration with partners (the University of Connecticut Norcross Wildlife Foundation and the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection).

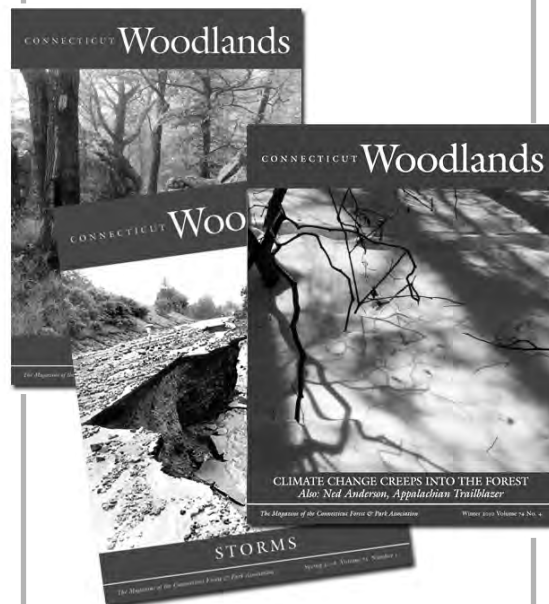
CFPA membership numbers are up—not bad in a down economy. We like to think that this is the result of our renewed focus on telling people about CFPA. A record 426 contributed to our 2009 annual fund. Thank you.

At the capitol, we helped to lead an effort to turn back a controversial doubling of user fees for state parks. And we continue to fight the good fight for more state monies to be made available to care for state lands.

Lifelong learning continues to be the focus of our active education initiatives. Check the CFPA Web site at [ctwoodlands.org](http://ctwoodlands.org) for the schedule of upcoming programs, including our popular WalkCT family rambles. Consider contacting CFPA to explore the myriad of programs and ways to volunteer.

*David Platt lives in Higganum.*

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



Connecticut Woodlands is a quarterly magazine published since 1936 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.  
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CONNECTICUT  
**Forest & Park**  
ASSOCIATION

# Connecticut must find a way to enforce its all-terrain vehicle laws

BY ERIC HAMMERLING

**F**orests, parks, and trails require effective law enforcement. During the past 115 years, the Connecticut Forest & Park Association has helped secure more than 50,000 acres of forests and parks now maintained by the state. CFPA also holds a direct ownership interest (fee and easement) in more than 1,900 acres in 22 towns. We also have an obligation we have earned during the past 80 years: Our volunteers maintain about 825 miles of Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails for the public to enjoy.

In February, CFPA concluded its largest single trail and forest protection project ever by protecting 531 acres of forest and 3.5 miles of the Nipmuck Trail along the Fenton River in Mansfield and Willington. This outstanding accomplishment was the culmination of almost 10 years of dedicated efforts led by CFPA (and its amazing volunteer Land Conservation Committee chair, Dan Donahue) in partnership with the University of Connecticut, the towns of Mansfield and Willington, and the Norcross Wildlife Foundation.

While we celebrated this achievement heartily, we were sobered by the understanding that we also have inherited a responsibility to ensure these areas would be protected against wrong and dangerous uses. To do so will take funding, volunteers, and a permanent organizational stewardship commitment that we hope that you will continue to support.

Wrong and dangerous uses destroy backcountry areas. In fall 2009, CFPA took the unprecedented action of covering over the blue paint blazes marking a section of the Pachaug Trail in Pachaug State Forest. Our Trails Committee did not take this decision lightly. The committee understood that CFPA's commitment to a trail is typically a permanent one, but the committee also realized that it was time to make a statement against the ongoing illegal traffic on that trail by all-terrain vehicles (that is, dirt bikes and quads, which are not legal anywhere in Connecticut except the Thomaston Dam and on private land when the owner has given permission).

Rampant trail abuse has caused serious erosion and made the trail unsafe to follow because of the many crisscrossing side trails that ATVs created. We are encouraged by the legal trail users and residents of the area who would like to see this situation improve, but we are discouraged that abuses by ATVs have continued. The State Environmental Conservation Police, or EnCon, has been both understaffed



CFPA  
Executive Director  
Eric Hammerling

and too poorly equipped to respond adequately. We hope to re-blaze this trail in the future when site restoration and adequate enforcement activities can co-occur.

It's no surprise that the Department of Environmental Protection is unable to effectively protect its lands against illegal ATV use. In March, I testified against a bill that would have forced the DEP to establish ATV trails on state properties by July 1, 2010. The bill was defeated, fortunately. I noted that during the past five years, DEP conservation officers have spent more than 6,000 hours responding to almost 2,500 ATV incidents/complaints. Officers have issued at least 1,500 infractions even though only three officers were dedicated to recreational vehicle enforcement.

The task to stop this illegal riding and to reverse the damage would be great. A recent study by Baystate Environmental Consultants estimated that it would cost at least \$1.45 million to repair the considerable damage created by

ATVs at four Massachusetts state forests.

Of course, more than ATVs damage forest ecosystems. Less intense and more chronic behavior such as littering or defacing signs can be just as deflating to our trail volunteers and trail users. We will continue to advocate for strengthened enforcement capabilities, but I encourage you to actively use the trail you love because your presence is often the best deterrent of all.

***Editor's Note:** CFPA removed paint blazes on a 2.7-mile section of the Pachaug Trail adjacent to Pachaug Pond. The worst damage covers 1.5 miles on this section, from where the trail enters Pachaug State Forest off Latham Road to the trail's crossing with Route 201. The damage includes a spider web of ATV trails crisscrossing the Pachaug Trail; a small race-track with jumps; a dammed-up stream; and a number of side trails to streets and houses. The Pachaug Trail—meant only for foot traffic as all the Blue Trails are—had become heavily rutted, almost impossible to follow, and impossible to maintain. When the damage increased last year, CFPA's volunteer trail manager recommended abandoning the section. The CFPA Trails Committee voted in September 2009 to close the 2.7-mile section from the trailhead on Route 138 to Route 201. Two experienced trail volunteers painted over the blazes on the section and posted signs indicating that the section was no longer maintained and that the new trailhead was at Route 201. If the area can be repaired and ATVs controlled with the aid of state and other groups, CFPA would consider reopening the trail in the future.*

*Eric Hammerling lives in West Hartford.*

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF

CONNECTICUT **WOODLANDS**  
FALL 2010

THE WORLD OF EDWIN WAY TEALE

NATURALIST • PULITZER PRIZE WINNER • CONNECTICUT HOMESTEADER





Photo courtesy of Capt. Paul O'Connell

*Keith Schmieder, Jim Warren, Paul Hilli, Capt. Paul O'Connell, Tate Begley, Mark Sham, John Hey, Erin Crosman.*

BY CHRISTINE WOODSIDE

**O**n July 5, 2009, a yard party in Marlborough halted temporarily when someone realized that they had an uninvited guest. It was a timber rattlesnake, which is endangered in Connecticut but not beloved because its rare bite is poisonous. One of the guests tried to hold down the snake's head with a stick and grab hold to move it. In response, the snake bit him. Someone else at the party took a shovel and killed the rattlesnake. An

ambulance took the victim to the hospital, the State Environmental Conservation Police (EnCon) came to investigate, and a reptile handler took away the carcass.

This is one of the emergencies that kept the EnCon Police running around the state during the warm months last year. The department continues to lose officers and now is at only 47, the lowest number since 1982 (when the state population was about 400,000 fewer than it is

now). On any given day, one-third of the state's backcountry cases are covered by perhaps 9 to 12 officers. They cover state forests and parks and any wildlife encounters whether urban or wild. Besides the breadth of their territory, the breadth of the cases a backcountry and wildlife police officer must handle is astonishing. Most people don't hear about these mishaps when they happen because the reports aren't filed in a central location until many months after the season.

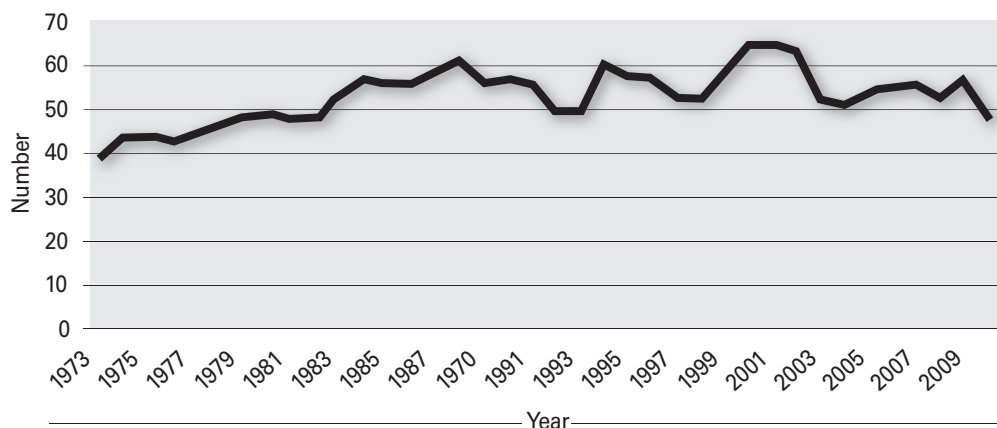
At the Department of Environmental Protection in Hartford, I spent a few hours this spring reading reports of some of the notable backcountry incidents from 2009. These reports make regular suburban and urban police work seem almost dull: They tell of people taunting endangered snakes, setting out to rock climb drunk or high, encountering black bears, and more. I

## POLICING THE BACKCOUNTRY

*Shrinking conservation police must handle astonishing breadth of accidents and crimes*

## Population grows, but conservation officers fluctuate

Number of Conservation Officers in Connecticut



reviewed these cases with two of the three EnCon police captains, who have contributed their insights. I also have used my backcountry experience to suggest how the trail accidents might never have happened.



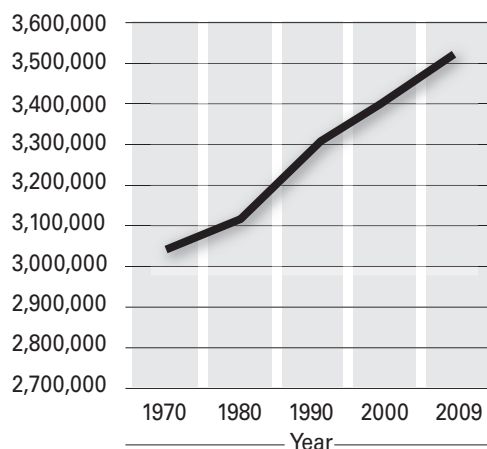
Returning to the snake at the Marlborough yard party:

### What went wrong here?

These are not times of abundant venomous snakes. Rattlesnakes are on the endangered species list in Connecticut. They are vulnerable to poachers and terrified residents alike simply because there are so few of them. Wildlife experts say that the way to handle a snake is not to interfere with it. If it's in your laundry room, well, you may call a reptile expert to safely remove it. (Call a town animal control department or the Connecticut DEP at 860-675-8130.) But if it's outside, and you leave it be, the snake usually will go away on its own, and if it doesn't, call the DEP and they will call a wildlife expert to help. The snake does not want to bite people any more than people want to be bitten. The snake wants only to eat small animals and to sun itself. It bit the man who tried to move it because he had threatened it by holding down its head and grabbing.

Until the 1960s, state DEP biologist Julie Victoria said, many towns offered bounties for rattlesnakes. But today they are endangered. "They've been decimated [first] by colonial persecution, and the pockets we

Connecticut population, 1970-2009



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WHETHER URBAN OR WILD.**

still have, have just managed to survive—and they do get persecuted in those small pockets." State law prohibits killing an endangered animal, but the law does not extend to what people do on their own property.

The snake episode was one relatively tame example of the EnCon Police's regular encounters with reptiles. It shows some of the reasons why reptile encounters remain one of the most difficult of the conservation force's cases: People's fear of snakes even when the snakes are just sitting there (to start), people's sense of entitlement to kill a snake after interfering with it, and—something that did not come up at this party but lurks in the back of every EnCon officer's mind whenever a call comes in about a snake—the gigantic underworld of illegal poaching of rattlesnakes, turtles, bears, and other rare animals. The force planned to take steps to increase its enforcement of snake poaching this year.

A snake runs afoul of humans in Connecticut more often because of an illegal trade whose proportions reach worldwide. Baby snakes are advertised on the Internet for more than \$100 apiece, for instance. Illegal taking of protected wildlife, especially snakes, is "very big," said Capt. Skip Camejo, who heads the western district of the EnCon Police. "The second biggest illegal trade after narcotics is wildlife. Why they want them, I can't figure out. It's a status symbol. They call them hot snakes, the poisonous ones."

Connecticut officials know the extent of reptile poaching, rather than having to guess, partly because of the findings of a two-year undercover operation in New York State that concluded last year. It was called Operation Shell Shock. The New York Department of Environmental Conservation wanted to know if its 2006 law protecting all reptile and amphibians was effective. "What they found was alarming," New York DEC Commissioner Pete Grannis said. "A very lucrative illegal market for these creatures does exist, fostered by a strong, clandestine culture of people who want to exploit wildlife for illegal profit." (See [dec.ny.gov/press/52868.html](http://dec.ny.gov/press/52868.html).)

Heading easterly out of Connecticut, "You can go across the line into Rhode Island and buy almost anything you want," said Capt. Paul O'Connell, head of the Eastern District of the EnCon Police. This means poachers are motivated to get over there and sell. In Connecticut, "We

*continued on page 8*

# BEAR-HUMAN CONFLICTS INCREASING

The Connecticut DEP warns that conflicts between the public and the approximately 500 bears in the state are increasing and that human carelessness is the chief reason. When people fail to remove bird feeders and secure garbage cans or other attractants, bears begin to associate people with food and become dangerous, according to Jason Hawley of the DEP. Between the months of March and December, bear-human interactions are reported to the DEP on a weekly, sometimes daily basis. Although none of these have resulted in deaths or injuries to people, there have been occasions in the past in which food-conditioned bears have had to be euthanized. "If everyone took the necessary precautions, most bear-human conflicts would be avoided," Mr. Hawley said.

—Michelle Jarvis



Connecticut DEP

*A bear on Fox Road in Granby in 2007. Capt. Paul O'Connell did not have to use the shotgun.*

## POLICING

*continued from page 7*

are taking away on average one reptile a week. Some they claim are born in captivity, which makes them legal," he said. Such claims usually aren't provable. What matters is that snake poachers find a great demand worldwide. Sometimes the demand is to possess the creatures—just to own them as pets. "There are a lot of wacky people out there who like snakes. We have taken away cobras," Mr. O'Connell said.



On the afternoon of August 6, 2009, two young men, both 19, and a young woman whose age wasn't recorded set out for a popular cave on the Metacomet Ridge in Talcott Mountain State Park. They drove into the park from the Route 185 access in Simsbury near the Bloomfield line and parked—prophetically—near the landing pad for Hartford Hospital's Lifestar helicopter. As one of the young men later told an EnCon officer, he drank some beer while the three of them scrambled up a well-known but officially unmarked trail less than a quarter mile to a small cave, where the two men shared a marijuana joint as the three sat for about 20 minutes. The two men then used a rope to climb further up the cliff to the larger, and famous, King Philip's Cave. They spent about five minutes in the cave, calling down to their friend not to try to come up. She waited below. When they started down, apparently rappelling down with the use of the rope, one of the men, who did not live in Connecticut, fell about 60 feet, landing face down. The other found him unconscious; the young woman used her cell phone to call 911. The victim was evacuated by the Hartford Hospital's Lifestar helicopter. The unhurt man, the one who had driven the trio to the park, allowed the EnCon officer to search his car, in which was stashed a small amount of marijuana; he said he did not realize it was there but did admit to having smoked marijuana on the rock face. He was charged with possession of less than 4 ounces of marijuana, but the state later "nolled" this case, which means that after 18 months, it will be struck from the young man's record.

### What went wrong here?

Connecticut's cliffs and caves are, perhaps unfortunately, easily accessible from major roads. It is very easy for people to take alco-

hol and drugs into these places and then begin to climb while intoxicated. Rock climbing requires a lot of concentration. "Unfortunately it happens all too often," Mr. Camejo said. "They drink, take drugs, and lack the proper gear to rock climb. We had a kid fall off Sleeping Giant [in North Haven] the other day. They don't have the proper equipment to tackle the technical difficulty of what they are trying to climb."

For the EnCon Police, there are only a few official ways to handle such problems. If such groups were in the woods or on the cliffs after dark, the EnCon Police would either arrest them or issue a summons for a park violation. "It's our version of a trespassing complaint." If they are drinking and underage, they could be arrested on alcohol charges. But there is no charge for being stupid in the woods, and so there is no summons to stop people from almost dying.

The trail to King Philip's Cave is not mentioned in the Connecticut Forest & Park Association's trail guide, *The Connecticut Walk Book*, although the Metacomet Trail (part of the federally designated New England Trail) passes nearby. The trails that go to the cave appear on Talcott Mountain State Park maps, but King Philip's Cave itself is not marked on either of these resource maps. And yet, this area is very popular, proving that guidebook readers are only one chunk of the adventurous. Local lore guides many people to quick adventures of an hour or two. Here, they can drive in, park, and within a few minutes be working their way up this cliff to an incredible view. A rescue worker told a television news station last summer after this accident that he had been there the previous month rescuing someone else who had fallen there.

This all suggests that there's an opportunity for schools or outdoor education programs to teach rock-climbing skills to those who don't normally seek out the outdoors—those people who are more likely to wait until a nice August afternoon, jump in the car with some rope, and take off for a locally known cliff.



Three friends, two men and a woman all in their early 20s, set out for High Rocks in Naugatuck State Forest in Naugatuck late in the afternoon of September 24. Before they drove to the forest, they stopped at Wal-Mart, the young woman later told the EnCon Police, to buy supplies: knives, rope, carabiners, and spray paint. They stopped at a package store, where the one man who was over 21 bought a 30-pack of Natural Ice



beer.

One of the men told an EnCon officer later that he wanted to get drunk for his birthday, and by all accounts, he succeeded, as he reported, downing several cans of beer before and during the adventure. The other two reported that they drank five or six beers apiece on the trail. They headed up the rocks and the men, using ropes, positioned themselves to spray paint some messages.

Sometime after 7 p.m., it began to get dark, and the trio, carrying no flashlights, decided to head down a steep route toward the railroad tracks, the woman leading the way. "It was dark in the woods and we did not have flashlights. We could barely see the railroad tracks down below the lookout and proceeded to try and keep them in view instead of going back the way we came up," the woman said in her statement to the police.

"If you know the area, it's almost straight down by the river there," Mr. Camejo said. The men heard a scream when the woman fell off the edge of a cliff. The men tried lighting a shirt to use as a torch, but one of them fell, also. The third managed to grab a tree. Meanwhile, his mother told the police later that she had received a call from her son asking for a flashlight. An EnCon officer stopped her on the way into the park after dark and told her the park was closed; she said she would wait. Later, after the two injured had been evacuated, she told the officer that if he had done his job, the young people would not have fallen.

"They expect us to stop everything bad from happening before it happens. It's physically impossible," Mr. Camejo said. "I don't have enough officers to have people in every state park. The biggest thing is: common sense. Don't overextend yourself. You know when the sun starts going down, you have got a half hour or 45 minutes before it gets dark."

#### **What went wrong here?**

First, the three set out too late in the day to get out before dark. They didn't carry flashlights. They tried to navigate steep terrain and climb rocks with ropes after drinking. Finally, their recreation of spray painting the rock, a common activity on accessible cliffs of Connecticut, is actually against the law. If they'd been caught doing this, the fine would be \$77 to \$87. It might be the kind of risk people are willing to take. But, although I sometimes admire the stylish lettering of urban graffiti, spray painted block letters on low Connecticut cliffs won't find their way into an art history

*continued on page 10*



Robert Pagini

*Spray paint immortalizes its stencil artist on South Mountain.*

## **TIMELINE: PARK AND FOREST LAW ENFORCEMENT**

- 1895** The state creates the Commission of Fisheries and Game, appointing backcountry police officers known as special game protectors.
- 1971** The Department of Environmental Protection is formed, overseeing environmental laws and regulations, wildlife, and parks; it oversees both state park police officers and conservation officers.
- 1993** Park police and conservation officers are consolidated into one force of conservation enforcement officers.
- 2004** Duties of the conservation officers expand to include laws on boating, snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, and motor vehicles. The personnel are now called state environmental conservation officers.

**ENCON OFFICERS I MET TOLD  
ME THEY LOVE THEIR JOBS  
BECAUSE PEOPLE ARE USUALLY  
GLAD TO SEE THEM (NOT TRUE  
FOR MOST POLICE FORCES)  
AND BECAUSE THE CASES VARY  
SO MUCH. BUT WITH THIS  
PRIDE GOES STRESS.**

## POLICING

*continued from page 9*

book in 500 years.

This case was pending in court; the charge of distributing alcohol to minors was pending against the legal adult of the three. Whatever the outcome, of course, no wilderness expert advocates drinking alcohol while climbing, even if it's allowed in that area—which it isn't in Naugatuck State Forest. I do not mean to sound flip when I say that there is a kind of peace that comes over a person from the top of a cliff, but it doesn't come from the beer buzz. It comes from a sort of clarity of mind. If it weren't so easy to drive in and park so near this cliff, people might be better prepared to pay attention to their safety. They'd have to work harder to reach it, work harder to see the view, and they wouldn't find it convenient to start drinking until they stopped for the night. In any case, these three caused themselves and others a great deal of trouble. The young woman suffered a dislocated shoulder and was in great pain while waiting for the rescuers to evacuate her.



On September 25 at about 10:30 a.m., the EnCon Police were sent to assist in pre-

venting a moose from wandering onto Interstate 84 from Route 188 in Southbury. About a dozen moose now live in northern Connecticut, mostly near the Barkhamsted Reservoir, but this one had wandered significantly south. Four officers tranquilized the 677-pound animal with one shot and further injections of tranquilizers into its right rump. Wildlife staffers from the DEP arrived to move the moose to East Hartland, where they released it.

### **What went wrong here?**

This highlights a relatively new problem that will make defensive driving a new art. As moose find themselves comfortable in the wooded areas of northern Connecticut and have young, these young then wander around trying to find new territories. Even a young moose is so large that if a car hits it, the outcome could be tragic for the occupants. "If you've never seen a full-grown moose up close, take a full grown horse and make its legs longer," Mr. Camejo said. "The moose's stomach is even with the windshield." Suburban landscapes aren't for moose. The moose, fragile and sensitive as they are big, don't know that. We have to somehow avoid them.



On July 6, shortly before 4 p.m., someone spotted a bear in a suburban backyard in Enfield. Before the officers could get there, the bear headed into the woods. They believed that it was a bear seen the previous week in Suffield, a few towns away. Two days later, the same bear was still in Enfield, along busy Route 5, but now he was hurt and had taken refuge in a tree. The Enfield police department asked for help from the EnCon officers, who euthanized the animal and took him to the DEP wildlife office in Sessions Woods.

### **What went wrong here?**

It's more a matter of not enough going right. There are several hundred bears doing well in Connecticut today, but this is a tearjerker story. The bear was just trying to make his way in northeastern Connecticut, a relatively undeveloped area. But because he had latched onto peopled areas, and then became injured, he could have become dangerous. Mr. Camejo, who sees his fair share of bears in the western district, said they might be very large but in their natural habitat, the woods, they're usually not threatening. "Personally, I'd rather deal with a black



Robert Pagini

*More spray paint, this time on rock below West Peak along the Metacomet Trail in Meriden.*



Connecticut DEP

DEP EnCon Officer Dean Wojcik with "Luna."

bear than any raccoon," he said. "Pound for pound, a raccoon is a lot meaner than a bear." EnCon officers are skilled at tranquilizing bears so that they may be moved to less populated areas when they get stuck.

"A few days ago, a guy came into here," Mr. Camejo said, "and said, 'I've got five bears in my yard. Do you care?'"

They care by trying to tell people how to avoid trouble. "The biggest thing is: Don't surprise the bears." He added, "The best thing I can tell people to do with bears is hopefully you have a camera and get some pictures."



And this is just a little sampling. EnCon officers I met told me they love their jobs because people are usually glad to see them (not true for most police forces) and because

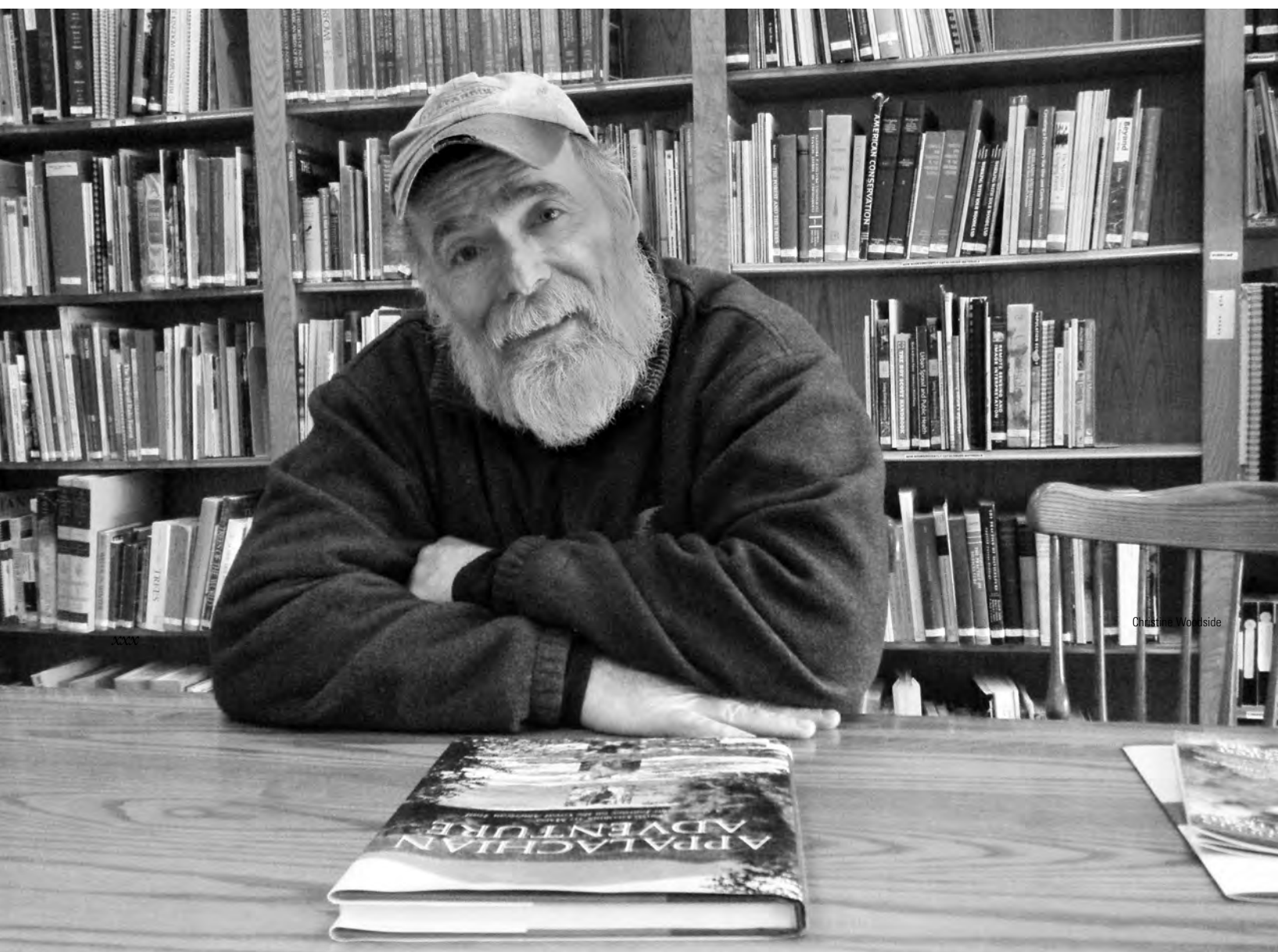
**THEY (BEARS) MIGHT BE VERY LARGE BUT IN THEIR NATURAL HABITAT, THE WOODS, THEY'RE USUALLY NOT THREATENING. "PERSONALLY, I'D RATHER DEAL WITH A BLACK BEAR THAN ANY RACCOON," HE SAID. "POUND FOR POUND, A RACCOON IS A LOT MEANER THAN A BEAR."**

— Capt. Skip Camejo, who heads the western district of the EnCon Police.

the cases vary so much. But with this pride goes stress. This fall, as they do every year, EnCon officers will patrol areas where hunters carry shotguns, and they still think about the illegal nighttime hunter who shot and killed EnCon Officer James Spignesi shortly after dark on November 20, 1998. Spignesi became a conservation officer after a stint as a state wildlife biologist, specializing in deer. A few months before his death, Spignesi helped a teenage boy who was reported to be suicidal out of a hiding place in laurel bushes in Nachaug State Forest. For this, Mr. Spignesi was awarded the DEP Medal for Meritorious Service. His picture hangs at every EnCon office I saw, probably because he was a selfless man who tried to prevent problems before they happened.

*Christine Woodside of Deep River is the editor of Connecticut Woodlands and a freelance writer.*





## WARREN DOYLE, CONNECTICUT HIKING LEGEND

BY CHRISTINE WOODSIDE

Until this March, when he planned to complete another section hike of the Appalachian Trail, Dr. Warren Doyle Jr. had walked the AT, the footpath from Georgia to Maine, 14 times, in a combination of section hikes and thru-hikes that started in 1973. A native of Connecticut who received his PhD in education from the University of Connecticut, Mr. Doyle is today an assistant professor of education at Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, North Car-

*“Super hikes”  
and his UConn  
dissertation  
altered teacher’s  
career path*

olina. This summer, the tireless 60-year-old will lead a group of AT hikers he trained through his Appalachian Trail Folk School, formerly called the Appalachian Trail Institute, something he started in 1989. With a van as support, the group plans to hike the entire 2,175 miles in four months.

Mr. Doyle, the father of a grown daughter and son, now lives in Tennessee. His wife, Terry, is also a teacher. Mr. Doyle has lived in the south for so many years that, famous as he is in hiking circles, his Connecticut roots

## THIS SUMMER, THE TIRELESS 60-YEAR-OLD WILL LEAD A GROUP OF AT HIKERS HE TRAINED THROUGH HIS APPALACHIAN TRAIL FOLK SCHOOL... WITH A VAN AS SUPPORT, THE GROUP PLANS TO HIKE THE ENTIRE 2,175 MILES IN FOUR MONTHS.

don't always come up. But he gets up here a few times a year. He had hoped to make a public appearance at the Connecticut Forest & Park Association in March after finishing another section-hike on a stretch of the AT in Connecticut. He had to postpone that trip because someone had vandalized his van when it was parked at a trailhead near where he lives.

In January, he visited CFPA to talk about his unusual sideline career leading group hikes of the entire AT in a season, and about his Connecticut childhood. Mr. Doyle's father, Warren Doyle Sr., was a toll collector on the Connecticut Turnpike at the now-closed Stratford tollbooths and, until his death last year, had helped his son with driving and planning his hikes since the 1970s.

Mr. Doyle grew up in Shelton. "My parents took me to state parks," he recalled. "They weren't necessarily hikers. I liked hiking and hiked on the Blue Trails." He had one sister, but she died suddenly of a brain aneurysm at age 15; Mr. Doyle was 13. "That had a big effect on my life," he said. "I became an achiever after that. I didn't want to do anything to make my parents ashamed of me, because I was the only surviving child."

His first big mountain trip was during his freshman year at the University of Connecticut. "My friend had a mobile home and he was a little bit wealthier than me. He invited me to go up." Later, at 23, Mr. Doyle climbed Katahdin, the northern terminus of the AT, in Maine, with his then-fiancée. So he and a friend decided to try hiking the Long Trail in Vermont, "because it's like a miniature AT. We survived. All the mistakes we made—I still wanted to keep on walking. The next summer I did the AT and because I had that achiever in me, I did it in record time. 66 days."

His father took some vacation time and drove from Connecticut to Cloverdale, Virginia, and was a support driver until his son reached the Mahoosucs, just over the border into Maine. His father did not hike, but he made it possible for his son to learn a style of hiking—light, without much gear, with a support vehicle meeting you at night—that led to Mr. Doyle's unique leadership role. Since 1975, when he led a group of University of Connecticut students on a van-sup-

ported thru-hike of the entire AT, Mr. Doyle has been a demanding leader who nevertheless inspires devotion and sympathy from his disciples. This summer, he was planning to be out leading the eighth, and probably last, of these thru-hikes.

He believes that long-distance hiking changes people for the better. It certainly changed him. When he finished his first thru-hike, "It was a relief. I also felt that I didn't have to prove anything to anybody else anymore in my life. Especially to society's expectations."

He was then being groomed to be the youngest PhD graduate in education at the University of Connecticut. He was 23. But he changed his dissertation project when he returned from his first thru-hike in 1973. Over the next year, he began leading outing club hikes in Connecticut. The group did an eight-Sunday series of the AT in Connecticut, a distance of about 7 miles each hike. "On the last day, up on Lion's Head, we were looking down. I said, 'We can't even see where we started. I wonder how it would be to do all that in one day?'" The group did its first "super hike" of the entire Connecticut section of the AT on April 20, 1974. He remembers the date. "I had people write," he said. "We had a little preparation period for it. I asked them what their pre-hike expectations were, what their fears were, and how it affected them. This wasn't even for a credit, for a grade. That was very powerful. I said, 'This is not just me feeling this way.'"

"One day in May I woke up and had this vision. It wasn't just one day, but we were doing the whole trail. Once we had this vision, it had to be done." He then called his academic advisor and said he was not going to study students in northern Vermont for his dissertation, but instead he wanted to do field research on the hikers he led on the entire AT. The advisor called him in and said this was a disgrace. But Mr. Doyle went on to write "An Outdoor Challenge Experience and the Affective Development of College Students," published in 1981 and now available from Dissertation Abstracts International (volume 42, no. 3).



For the rest of his adult life, he has lived in

these bursts of energy. As a college teacher, first at George Mason University and more recently at Lees-McRae College, he has incorporated the eastern mountains into many of his courses. He ran an outdoor center while at George Mason, and today he invites students of his Appalachian Trail Folk School to a house near the trail in Tennessee.

He and his first wife separated in 1989 and were divorced in 1995, but he has been a hands-on father. His daughter, Heather, is a dancer in Washington, D.C. His son, Forest, is working towards a master's degree in library science. He and Terry met at a contra dance in Saratoga Springs, New York, and have been married for seven years.

Now Mr. Doyle said he is getting tired of hiking. He is planning to retire from leading disciples on epic mountain adventures. He also said he has not left a legacy except in the particular individuals he trained and led on the trips. He does not believe that anyone could take his place. Which suggests that what he has people do will never become more than something for a few rare men and women. "It'll never be, again," he said.

Then he quoted Edward Abbey: "The expectations will never be the same. 'Obey little, resist much.'" I asked him when the outdoor guru Mr. Abbey said or wrote that, and he didn't know. It turned out that Walt Whitman said, "Resist much, obey little," and Mr. Abbey invoked this line so often that his followers have always associated it with him.

Mr. Doyle is a bit of an outlaw. He wants it that way. He has challenged park rangers on group sizes when he comes through with 20 people. A junk food lover, he has been known to help himself to the leftovers on uncleared restaurant tables. He scoffs at those who say it's dangerous to ford the Kennebec River along the AT route in Maine. On a day off, he likes to go to the movies and "movie stealth," paying for the first movie and watching movies all day without buying another ticket.

He also has no patience for filtering or treating water to avoid giardia, and he thinks that drinking bottled water from plastic bottles is madness. He takes his own bottle when he sits on panels and fills it up with the tap. He stopped carrying water in the backcoun-

*continued on page 19*

**I.** It is tiring work to roll a 300-pound rock end over end with a 20-pound rockbar. It is tougher still when your destination for that rock is uphill of your present location. Introduce the rock's attitude of indifference, overexcitement, or complete distaste for the situation to the equation, and you can consider yourself exponentially challenged.

**II.** What is the penalty of removing the heart of the hillside? Could this rock be the one elusive, but critical, keystone to the entire mountain? Might this single hard-edged piece of stone be a vertebral link in the rolling spine that unites an entire mountain chain?

**III.** Under the dirt, moss, and animal litterings, under what we call the forest floor, is the domain of the mountain stone. Here, hidden by mud and clay, covered with heavy branches and badger dens, lie the ancient souls of the land. These stones, once themselves part of the mountaintop, now lay scattered across the mountain's side.

**IV.** What an insult it must seem to dig into the mountain to unloose these stones from their warm beds. When well-intentioned trail builders hitch up their Carharts and decide to apply themselves to plucking a rock from the mountain, the whole surrounding nest of life seems to revolt. Neighboring rocks tumble loose, taking great offense. Excavating a single stone for a staircase becomes a disrupting affair, an unearthing.

**V.** As stair builders, we're forced to till the mountain soil looking for any orphan stones. If we're lucky, they'll have one flat face for a step and one heavy bottom to help anchor it in the staircase. In the name of preservation and in the hope of constructing sustainable trails, we've decided to employ these stones so that hikers may travel to unknown heights.

**VI.** Although stones possess a native passivity, we still force them into submission. Aligning and installing the staircase demands a certain obedience from these stones. They are arranged just so, forced to accept their role as a single step in a much greater stairway. We may think, What greater fate is there than to be an integral part of a stairway that leads to the summit of The Mountain?

**VII.** Not one rock will make it back to the top of the mountain. No rock will again feel the rough pushing of the glacier or the lengthy lick of the wind along a summit. Those days are ancient and lost. No, these rocks are low-elevation now. Their only connection to the life that once was is to participate in an unfolding staircase that requires a pinned piouness.

**VIII.** Once the clouds reached only the mountain's navel. Once the oceans licked at its ankles, once it could watch the sear-



Clare Cain

# THIRTEEN WAYS OF LOOKING AT A STONE STAIR

BY CLARE CAIN

ing spit of the volcanoes. It was a time when the earth was full of forming, eroding, and erupting. The mountain was, and still is, a witness. It has sewn its darkest memories into the heavy and rock-strewn soils.

**IX.** We attempt to re-puzzle these stones along our flag line. One day they will rise in a quirky flowing stair alley up the mountain. These same rocks used to be ridge, used to be high cirque. They intimately knew the passages of the moon, the features of the sun's hot face, the rabid whims of the wind, and the grizzling frost of winter's ice. These rocks have slept amid the Appalachian hillsides, quietly remembering. What an event it is to unveil the earth-etched lines of their old faces.

**X.** It is the hardness and hardening of the years that is revealed in the upturned face of the rock. That face is a testament to the most effective use of pressure and heat. It is a true confluence of efforts—the geologic, volcanic, and unknown collaborating forces converging to create a single stone.

**IX.** To walk and to climb mountains has become our spiritual exercise. We walk on the bent and weathered backs of these stones en route to our own enlightenment. The pumping hearts of these pilgrims, the bending and unbending of muscles, the quick bloom of circulating blood fuels a purpose that even the most faithful hiker finds hard to define.

**XII.** When the rock mover meets the rock, the extremes of motion and immobility are revealed. The worker is often distracted by sweat, thirst, and crew conversation. But if she can rest a moment, peel off a work glove, and simply lay bare hand on rock body, something may be revealed. If at this moment she is mindful, she may hear of the Appalachians' secret lineage—and how a trail came to slip its way along their ridges and valleys.

**XIII.** The rocks have all been excavated, hoisted up, winched over, and finally reset in the staircase, and the trail continues in an unbroken ribbon up the mountain. As hikers stand at the summit in awe of the surrounding sky and land, they may just hear, if they listen closely enough, the whispering of an old Zen proverb: "When you reach the top of the mountain, keep climbing."

*Clare Cain has moved rocks on trails around the Northeast. She is the director of trail stewardship for CFP. Her inspiration for this essay was a poem by Wallace Stevens (the Connecticut poet), "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird."*

For more trails articles, see page 16.





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# MIND YOUR TRAIL MANNERS

BY LESLIE LEWIS

In this small, densely populated state, thousands of people using several different modes of transportation must share trails. Many trail users, both novices and experienced, head out to Connecticut's pathways without a full understanding of the etiquette that can make everyone's outing more enjoyable. Here is a refresher course in trail etiquette.



Obey all rules and regulations for the trail you will be using. That means no motorized vehicles are allowed anywhere except those areas listed in the article below, as well as on private land with the written permission of the landowner. No bikes or horses are allowed on designated hiking-only trails, which include all of the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails.

Respect other users; expect other users. Show courtesy. Anticipate other trail users around corners and blind spots. Respect wildlife—you're traveling through their homes. Respect public and private property. Leave no trace (see [lnt.org](http://lnt.org) for the principles). Do not expect to find trash containers on trails: Pack out all of your trash, even fruit peels.

Be friendly and courteous. Greet other folks with a simple "Hello!" or "Nice day today!" Avoid greetings that may be misconstrued such as "On your left."

Know when to yield. Runners and hikers yield to equestrians. Bicyclists should yield to everyone. Downhill traffic should yield to uphill traffic. When in doubt, give other users the right of way.

Announce yourself when approaching others, especially from behind. It's often helpful to tell them what else to expect, such as, "Two more behind me." Slow down and use your voice to warn people on horseback. Don't use bells or horns, which may frighten horses, especially if

you are coming from behind. When a horse approaches, stop and move to the safest or most open side of the trail or ask the rider for instructions (typically the downhill side). If you're in a group, avoid blocking the trail. Use caution and stay extra alert if using headphones or earbuds—you may not be able to hear others.

Stay on the trail. Creating your own path or cutting switchbacks creates erosion, damages habitat and natural resources, and creates new trails, which can't be maintained.

You might sometimes end up hiking in the rain, but avoid setting out to hike when trails are saturated. Try to give the trails a chance to dry out and recover after rainstorms. Hoof marks, wheel tracks, and footprints have drastic effects on wet trails and can begin the process of erosion, which is difficult to reverse.

Operate within your ability at all times. For example, if you're new to mountain biking, keep your bike under control; if you're new to hiking in the woods, take a map and compass and back-track immediately if you lose the trail. Remember that situations can get out of control fast if you're not attentive.

Keep dogs leashed and under control at all times. Be considerate; other trail users don't know your dog is friendly.

Be prepared. Don't become a casualty by heading out unprepared. Bring water, snacks, maps, a light source, matches, and other equipment you may need. Think ahead and bring the essentials. Cell phones can be an excellent way to call for help, but don't rely on them too much. Batteries can die, and accidents can happen in areas with no cell reception. Know where you're going, and tell someone else your plan.

If all trail users keep these basics in mind, everyone will be able to have a safe and enjoyable journey.

*Leslie Lewis is the director of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association's WalkCT program. Through its Web site ([walkct.org](http://walkct.org)) and events, the program steers residents to walking for transportation and recreation.*

## A BRIEF GUIDE TO USING TRAILS IN STATE FORESTS AND PARKS

**State parks and forests are open to the public between sunrise and sunset. Keep in mind the following regulations from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's recreational trails program.**

► **Motorized vehicles** are not allowed on trails. Trails and service, logging and other roads are open to foot travel, mountain bikes, and horses unless posted closed.

► **Connecticut Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails and the Appalachian Trail**, a national scenic trail maintained by the National Park Service, are limited to hiking except where they overlap a multiple use trail.

► **Public roadways** in state parks and forests are open to registered motor vehicles (including registered dirt bikes) and non-motorized multiple uses unless posted closed.

► **No quads allowed anywhere.** Effective January 1, 2006, riding an all-terrain vehicle (quad) on state or municipal property may result in charges of criminal trespass. (See Connecticut Public Act 05-234) At the current time, Connecticut does NOT have any public areas open to quads.

► **Dirt bikes** are limited to the motorized trail at Pachaug State Forest or at the Thomaston Dam (visit [nae.usace.army.mil/recreati/tmd/tmdhome.htm](http://nae.usace.army.mil/recreati/tmd/tmdhome.htm)).

► **Trail building and maintenance is illegal unless authorized.** To request permission to put in a new trail contact DEP's Trails Coordinator at 860-424-3578. For permission to perform trail maintenance contact the Park Supervisor.

► After it rains, please be aware of fragile areas that should be avoided such as wetlands and steep slopes. For your safety and to prevent erosion and habitat disruption, always avoid travel through streams that have no bridges or stepping stones.

If you see an illegal activities please call the State Environmental Conservation Police at 860-424-3333.

### ESSENTIAL FOR SAFE TRAIL USE:

- Always let others know where you are and when you expect to return.
- Be aware where hunting is allowed and if hunting season is open. Wear bright orange for extra protection.
- Remain on trails that are blazed.
- Cyclists and motorized users yield to pedestrians and equestrians. Pedestrians yield to equestrians.
- Park in designated areas only.
- Keep your dogs on a leash.
- Respect private property - when you are leaving State Land you may no longer have permission to recreate.
- Plan your route. Trail maps are often found trail heads and always found on the DEP Website: <http://www.ct.gov/dep/parkmaps>. For the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails, check the two volumes of the *Connecticut Walk Book*, available through CFPA. (See the Store Page.)

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# SHIVER ME TIMBERS

BY THOMAS WORTHLEY

It is a rare chance indeed when an old landlubber like myself, who spends his days fretting over the future of the forest, gets to ponder the nautical past. But ponder I did when several pieces, laden with historical significance and meaning that stirs the imagination, landed on my desk last summer. Pieces of wood, that is.

University of Connecticut student Jon Stewart was serving an internship at Mystic Seaport, where he is assigned to work on the restoration of the *Charles W. Morgan*, a wooden whaling vessel from the early 1800s that has been a key part of the Mystic Seaport collection for many years. A portion of the ship under restoration is the lower part of the hull near the bow, or front, of the ship, mostly below the waterline. Records do not indicate any restoration work having been done on this part of the ship in the past, so the parts in that area are thought to be original. A great deal of effort is made during restoration to replace any parts with material as close to original as possible, and Jon collected a number of samples from portions of the ribs of the hull, called futtocks and brought them to me for some assistance in identifying the species of wood.

So there they lay, a dozen samples nice and neatly labeled and in their respective plastic bags, chunks of wood carved from the ribs of a ship built in 1841. If they were original, here was wood that would have been felled and dressed by hand, transported by horse or oxen, carefully formed by skilled craftsmen and placed in service in a working vessel to withstand 165 years of waves, work, weather, and water, and to ultimately land on my desk with the question, "What kind of wood do you think it is?" Humbling.

Coming as they did from a vessel that worked for many years in the whaling fleet, from the lower part of the hull near the bow, close to or below the water line (think "bilge"), they obviously had been exposed to many years of seawater, whale oil, blood, smoke, debris from above decks and who knows what else. They were discolored,



*The hull of the Charles W. Morgan.*

Courtesy of Mystic Seaport, The Museum of America and The Sea

strange-smelling, odd-textured; not at all like any other wood sample with which I am typically confronted, but still relatively solid and sound (humbling). The usual means and methods of wood identification (color, texture, odor) were not particularly useful, so anatomical features were going to have to provide the primary evidence, along with some knowledge of forest and wood-use history.

Nine of the samples were the same species, white oak (*Quercus alba* L.). The first clue was the "heft" (mass, weight). The samples felt like pieces of green (fresh-cut) oak in my hand, and they had a distinct ring-porous cross-section and radial ray structure visible to the naked eye. A look at the pores through the microscope, however, provided confirmation. White oak derives its well-known strength and rot-resistance to an anatomical feature called "tyloses," which are tiny bubble-shaped outgrowths of parenchyma cells that develop as inclusions into the hollow springwood pores, almost completely obstructing the pores. Although other species are known to have tyloses, within the oak genus, only white oak has them as densely packed and abundant. White oak was commonly used for hull framing during the days of wooden ships and was abun-

dantly available throughout the eastern part of the country. It can very well be expected that an East Coast shipbuilder crafting a whaling fleet vessel in 1841 would have wanted white oak for framing members, and would likely have had it available.

This then leads to the question of the other three samples, which were not oak by any means, not even one of our hardwood species at all. These samples came from the same part of the ship, from similar futtocks, or rib portions of the frame, and so were put to the same use as the white oak pieces, but they were some variety of softwood. The cellular structure of softwoods consists primarily of thin-walled tracheids (early wood) and thick-walled tracheids (late wood), and softwoods do not have the vessel elements or pores found in hardwoods. In these samples, the presence of resin canals or "pitch pockets" indicated some type of pine, spruce, or larch (tamarack). Close examination of the rings indicated an abrupt transition from early wood to late wood, ruling out eastern white pine or spruce.

Some softwoods, although lighter in weight and easier to nail than hardwoods, are known for strength and rot resistance, and are known to have been used in wooden shipbuilding. Portions of stump and root sections of tamarack, or larch, were often

THE USUAL MEANS AND METHODS OF WOOD IDENTIFICATION (COLOR, TEXTURE, ODOR) WERE NOT PARTICULARLY USEFUL, SO ANATOMICAL FEATURES WERE GOING TO HAVE TO PROVIDE THE PRIMARY EVIDENCE, ALONG WITH SOME KNOWLEDGE OF FOREST AND WOOD-USE HISTORY.



Courtesy of Mystic Seaport, The Museum of America and The Sea

*The hull of the Charles W. Morgan.*

used for angle-braces, or “knees,” connecting deck framing to hull framing. Certain of the southern yellow pines are also well regarded for strength, durability, and rot resistance. In both groups, there is an abrupt transition from early to late wood, but a key difference is numerous small knots often present in tamarack, which were not evident in my small samples. History of the samples themselves prevented any reliable color or texture comparisons.

In the end, this investigator concluded that the samples were one of the southern yellow pines, most likely either longleaf pine (*Pinus palustris* Mill.), also known as “hard pine,” or shortleaf pine (*Pinus echinata* Mill.) because of growth ring uniformity and absence of small knots. The wood characteristics of these species are similar, both known for strength and durability, not as prone to longitudinal splitting as tamarack, and quite likely could have been viewed as a suitable substitute for white oak for use as futtocks, if white oak were unavailable.

These species were common throughout the southern coastal plain and, given the development of coastal shipping at the time, could very well have been readily available in shipyards.

So the question remains whether a different species was used for 3 of the 12 futtocks during some later repair never recorded, or whether they placed in the hull during the original construction of the ship. Perhaps the shipbuilder was just a bit shy of the white oak material needed and used the southern pine as a suitable substitute, and it stood up just as well over the years. If that is the case, then given the timing of the construction and the ultimate source of the material, then these pieces were also felled, transported, and shaped by hand, but in this case more than likely by slave labor.

Humbling indeed.

*Thomas Worthley is an extension educator for the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension in Haddam.*

## WARREN DOYLE

*continued from page 13*

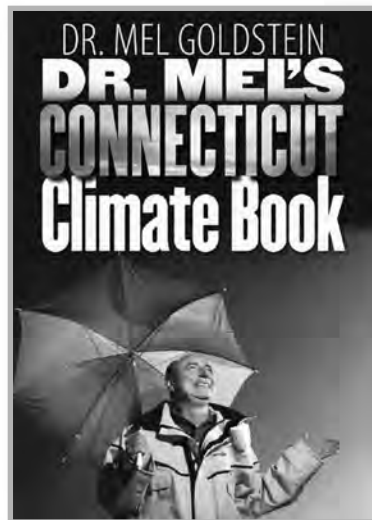
try about a decade ago. He started noticing deer. They knew where to find water and how to pace themselves between sources. “They don’t carry canteens because they know where the water sources are and they move in a way that’s not going to get them thirsty. . . . I stopped carrying water. If I’m walking through Connecticut, there’s a few side streams near the Ten Mile River and several streams between Mount Algo and the Schaghticoke Reservation.”

“Every time I go out on a long-distance hike, I try to make a fact into a myth and a myth into a fact,” he said. He had giardia for years and claims that his body simply adjusted to it. “I really wish I could get a decal that said: Giardia infested.”

He has run into scout leaders who suggested he was a bad role model for drinking right out of a stream, but Mr. Doyle’s feeling is that risk is not a bad thing.

The eighth and last group hike of the AT this year would be for 127 days, or just under four months. This is relatively fast hiking, and Doyle insists that everyone who starts will finish. Only one person has quit one of his long-distance hikes. This year, he already knew before they left for the first day that on Day 96, the expedition would take its first rest day, in Hanover, New Hampshire. While the others rest, Mr. Doyle planned to go to the Dartmouth library to plan his fall classes. Why such a rush? It’s a practical matter. He said that his first groups in 1975 were all University of Connecticut students who could take only the summer off. Most who hike the entire Appalachian Trail take at least four months, and just as likely five or six. But this year he, like many of his group, still did not have that luxury. He knew he would have to get back to work in early September. He is, above all, a teacher.

## DR. MEL'S BOOK ON WEATHER AND THE WILY COYOTE.



**Dr. Mel's Connecticut Climate Book,**  
by Dr. Mel Goldstein.  
Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2009. 229 pages.

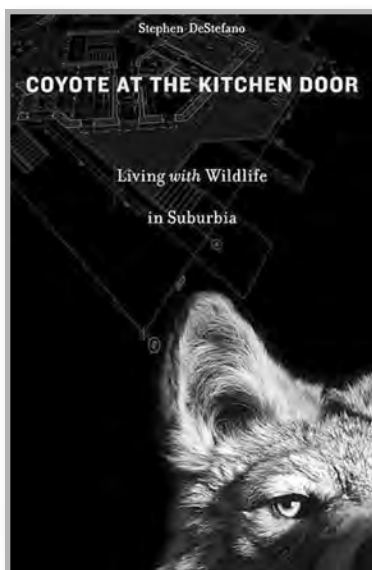
BY DAVID K. LEFF

**M**ark Twain's claim to have counted 136 different kinds of weather inside of 24 hours while living in Hartford always gets a chuckle, but anyone reading Dr. Mel's Connecticut Weather Book will find the 19th-century humorist's comment as pertinent as it is funny. "Connecticut is on the meteorological superhighway," according to

Mr. Goldstein, and "what it lacks in size it makes up in weather . . ." with "just about every variety . . . known to Planet Earth."

Situated in the midst of the middle latitudes with the Gulf Stream just 200 miles offshore and lying in the zone of the prevailing westerly air flow, Connecticut is "at the hub of the Earth's great energy-transfer machine" that produces wide variability and extreme storms. Furthermore, because our state is so thickly settled, the damage caused by harsh weather can match the devastation experienced anywhere in the nation with potential for loss of life, property destruction, and high financial cost.

Writing in a lively, accessible style, Mr. Goldstein is best when recounting the grand storms



**Coyote at the Kitchen Door: Living with Wildlife in Suburbia,**  
by Stephen DeStefano. Cambridge, Massachusetts:  
Harvard University Press, 2010.  
196 pages, illustrated.

BY ROBERT M. RICARD

**C**onnecticut is the fifth most densely populated state, located between two major cities forming a portion of the eastern megalopolis. If you asked outsiders to characterize the state, they would not say a place full of wild animals. But they should. States even as suburban as Connecticut have seen a resurgence of wild critters. People regularly clash with deer, bears, turkeys, coyotes, foxes, and beavers. Anyone who has lived in this state for 50 or more years has to marvel that now we see animals and birds that used to be rare.

It's happening because of reintroduction programs during suburbanization. People's attitudes and behaviors—fewer hunt or approve of hunting, for instance—have also had an impact.

Stephen DeStefano, research professor at the University of Massachusetts, Department of Natural Resources Conservation, and leader of the U.S. Geological Survey's Massachusetts

Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, vividly describes the wonder of his encounters with wild animals in this book.

Writing in witty, factual, down-to-earth prose, he grippingly conveys why even suburban coyotes deserve respect. He lays out scientific evidence that light, noise, traffic, road building, and other human activities hurt wild animals. Only his explanation of urban sprawl is a little too academic for the rest of the book.

Mr. DeStefano, an urban biologist, has worked mostly on wildlife ecology in cities. He is eminently qualified to speak to this topic.

The coyote is not the only character important to the narrative, but it is the most intriguing one. The coyote may be the animal in our midst again that represents wildness to many suburbanites today. Its behavior seems unencumbered. It streaks across fields in broad daylight and darts across our headlights on almost any type of road at night. It has boundless energy and howls.

Thus, *Coyote at the Kitchen Door* can improve human-wildlife relations as well as bring us to wilder places, at least if only in our imaginations. We also might rethink our place alongside the wily coyote.

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

of yesteryear. He clearly relishes heavy weather, and his enthusiasm jumps off the page. Chapters are devoted to blizzards and ice storms, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, and heat waves.

Mr. Goldstein explains more than the causes of storms. He sets landmark events on a continuum "that shows tremendous fluctuation in both summer and winter conditions." He also provides some incidental cultural context, observing, for example, that some rail lines and factories destroyed by the hurricane of 1938 never returned to operation and that the unprecedented high waters of 1955 led to many flood-control projects.

Individual stories of tragedy, audacity, and courage resonate throughout the book. Despite the distance of more than two centuries, you can feel the heartache of a family watching their boy, trapped in a West Simsbury mill, as he's swept downstream in raging floodwaters. During a 1967 snowstorm, an inmate escaped from the state prison farm in Enfield, leaving but a frozen piece of his glove in the barbed wire atop the fence. Unforgettable to anyone old enough to remember, Mr. Goldstein recounts Governor Ella Grasso's mile-long trudge down Hartford's Farmington Avenue to the state armory at the height of the 1978 blizzard after her police cruiser became stuck in traffic.

The book is amply illustrated with informative black-and-white photographs ranging from towering snow banks and flooded city streets to images of tornado strewn aircraft at Windsor Locks in 1979 and a lone national guardsman standing watch over a devastated Winsted Main Street following the 1955 flood. More than 80 pages of statistics cram the appendices with data on temperature, heating and cooling degree-days, snow totals, freeze possibilities, and other information. The text includes some minor errors as when it confuses the late actor Dudley Moore with Mr. Twain's friend Charles Dudley Warner, asserts that Connecticut has 138 rather than 169 towns, or that Wethersfield was the area's only settlement in 1635. Fortunately, such mistakes do little to diminish the overall value of the work.

This book is welcome as the successor to an outdated report published in 1965 by the State Geological and Natural History Survey and because Mr. Goldstein provides insight into our climate at a time when the issue is not just the subject of idle chitchat but a significant matter of national and global public policy. Mr. Goldstein sets the issue in context by explaining first how climates have changed naturally over time. In typical fashion, he ably presents difficult concepts in lay terms, noting that he agrees with reports that "recent greenhouse gas emissions far outweigh . . . natural [climate] forcing mechanisms."

We experience weather daily. Our lives are continuously affected by wind, precipitation, temperature, and storms. After reading Mr. Goldstein's book, we will also experience the delight of better understanding these ever present and fickle phenomena.

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

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# A CHEESE COMEBACK FOR CONNECTICUT YANKEES?

BY JEAN CRUM JONES

**A**t a 2010 winter farm meeting I attended on specialty foods, a New England buyer for the Whole Foods supermarket chain stood up and asked the room, “Where are the Connecticut cheeses? I can’t buy enough of them!” Connecticut is eminently suitable for producing fine cheeses. A few producers are already proving that. We have a great history as a dairying region, and we still have outstanding, high-quality grasslands to support livestock. Sufficient water, benign weather, and especially fine grazing soils would enable serious production of high-quality, natural cheeses.

In another era, Connecticut was the cheese capitol of the United States, from 1800 to 1850. By the time the first English settlers arrived, Britain had developed a sophisticated cheese industry and cheeses with such names as Cheshire, Gloucester, and Banbury were well respected. When the first settlers arrived in Connecticut from Britain and the Netherlands, they brought their cows and their cheese know-how. Most every family had at least one cow to meet the family’s milk, butter, and cheese needs. Without refrigeration, most milk production went into cheese making. The whey that was drained from the curds after the cheese process began was highly desirable for feeding the family swine, also essential farm animals for the first comers.

Dairying was performed by the women of the household. One woman has been credited with helping create the first epicenter of cheese production in New England in the late 1600s. This dominance lasted until the American Revolution. She was Esther Smith, wife of Richard Smith, Jr. Her family had a trading post in North Kingston, Rhode Island, with thousands of acres of good grazing land. She used her family recipe for cheese (she hailed from Gloucestershire, England) to make small batches for her family and her friends, the family of John Winthrop Jr., governor of Connecticut, being among her circle. The surplus went for trade and was so well admired that she shared the recipe with neighboring farm women. Soon, “Narragansett” cheese was being supplied to markets up and down the



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eastern seaboard, as well as to some of the islands in the Caribbean.

What did her cheese taste like? We don’t know, but most of the cheeses made in this era were variations of cheddar (named for a town near Bath, England): firm, smooth, pressed cheeses that aged well. The Rhode Island cows were thought to be a breed derived from mating the Dutch cows (which were productive but ill suited to the New England environ-

ment) with the English cows (which were hardy but produced less milk). Dairy connoisseurs are well aware that an animal’s diet influences its milk and the cheese made from it. A large portion of the diet of the Smith cows was salt hay, which grew along the western shore of the Narragansett Bay, and which lent a special saltiness to the cheese made from the milk. The quality of the “Rhode Island cheese” was so superior that it was favored wherever it was exported. When merchant Richard Smith, Jr., died in 1692, he was likely the richest man in New England.

After the American Revolution, Connecticut overtook southern Rhode Island as the cheese-making capital of the United States. In 1792, Alexander Norton of Goshen, went down South to deal with his declining health. In typical Yankee fashion, he took along several thousand pounds of Connecticut cheese to pay his way. His cheese was very well received, and his health improved. Mr. Norton returned home to Connecticut and began to buy and pack cheese for the southern market. Women on small-scale farms were the primary makers of the valued farmhouse cheese. Lush northwestern Connecticut was transformed into an extensive dairying region, and Goshen became its cheese center. An associated business also grew and that was the making of cheese boxes. Nowadays, remains of cheese box factories can be seen in the American Legion Forest

and elsewhere.

After the Civil War, farmstead cheese production in Connecticut declined. Cheese began to be produced in northern New England and the Midwest, at a distance from their markets, because railroads made it possible to ship less perishable foods from a distant location. With the advent of refrigeration and rail transport, southern New England dairies began concentrating on fluid milk production for the growing population of emigrants and urban folks working in the manufacturing mills in cities. Cheese was made in factories, pharmacies began mass-producing rennet, and scientists sought more standardization in the form of pure microbial cultures for curdling and ripening cheese.

In 1915, J. L. Kraft discovered a method of using discarded, leftover cheese remnants by a reheating formula and then bottling the “process cheese” in jars. Just in time for World War I, this unrefrigerated product was very useful in feeding the troops overseas and became a profitable start for the young cheese company. This desire to transform farm food to edible, convenient foodstuffs, making the same amount of money with less work and cheaper ingredients, became the goal of the modern U.S. food industry. Since the advent of pasteurized processed “cheese food,” which is now ubiquitous at every fast food restaurant in America, we have gone on to create a monolithic food system that overproduces a multitude of cheap, standardized foodstuffs without any distinctive flavors.

Fortunately, a couple decades ago, a few food pioneers realized what was happening in modern America. These isolated voices of alarm and concern have turned into a chorus. Some farmers are responding to this new desire for real, authentic foods. Some farmstead cheese operations have begun again in Connecticut after a long absence. Farmstead cheeses come from farms that feed the animals, produce the milk, make and age the cheese, and then sell the product.

One of the most successful of the new Connecticut farmstead producers is Cato Corner Farm in Colchester. Begun by Liz McAlister in the late 1990s, the farm manages a 25- to 30-cow herd, mostly Jerseys. Her son, Mark Gillman, is the cheese maker and market man. They produce exceptional cheeses that have won awards.

In Lyme, Beaver Brook Farm, operated by the Sankow family, mainly produces sheep’s milk cheeses. In addition to the large herd of sheep, they also have some Jersey cows. They make cheeses called Stracchino, Pleasant Cow, Abby, and Pleasant Sun. At Beltane Farm in Lebanon, Paul Trubey makes his farm-style cheeses from the milk of LaMancha and Oberhasli dairy goats. Most acclaimed are the fresh chèvre logs and the Danse de la Lune discs. Other goat dairies are Meadow Stone Farm in Brooklyn, Rustling Wind Creamery in Falls Village, Mountain Spring Farm in North Granby, and Bush Meadow Farm in Union. A couple of farmstead cheese dairies maintain heritage species. The Abbey of Regina Laudis in Bethlehem milks Dutch Belted cows, and Woodbridge Farm in Salem produces cheese from milking Devons.

Two well-established Connecticut artisanal cheese makers of note are former Italian immigrants who introduced cheeses of their home regions in the 1960s and continue to make wonderful authentic products: the Luizzi family of North Haven and the Calabro family of East Haven. They purchase their milk from regional dairies.

When New Amsterdam was becoming New York in the mid 1600s, the British used to put the Dutch down, saying, “Look, it’s John Cheese,” because cheese was a staple of the Dutch diet. The Dutch responded angrily by calling the British “Jahn Kees,” which became “Yankees.” So let’s proudly be Connecticut Yankees and make Connecticut farmstead cheese a staple part of our diet.

*Jean Crum Jones is a Registered Dietitian and a member of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association Board of Directors. She and her husband, Terry, and their family, operate the Jones Family Farms in Shelton.*

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Christine Woodside

*Clyde Brooks leading a hike on the Salmon River Trail in 2002.*

## CLYDE S. BROOKS, LONGTIME TRAIL MAINTAINER

Clyde S. Brooks, 92, formerly of Glastonbury, died March 9 at St. Barnabas Medical Center in Gibsonsia, Pennsylvania. Mr. Brooks was a volunteer trail manager for Connecticut Forest & Park Association of a section of the Shenipsit Trail from Great Pond in Cobalt to Route 94 in Glastonbury, Connecticut. He also developed the Salmon River Trail at Day Pond State Park and the connector to the Comstock Bridge near the Colchester-East Hampton town line.

His wife, Ruth Bolton Brooks, predeceased him. His survivors include a daughter, Suzanne B. Taylor of Jefferson, North Carolina; a son, Philip L. Brooks of Wexford; four grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Mr. Brooks was born May 1, 1917, in Wilkinsburg and graduated with a bachelor of science in chemistry from Duke University in 1940. His work at Mellon Institute between 1941 and 1949 was interrupted while he served in the U.S. Navy, in the Pacific theater, from 1944 to 1946. He also served in the U.S. Naval Reserve through 1969. He worked as a research chemist for Shell Development Company in Houston, United Technologies Research Center in East Hartford, and his own consulting firm, Recycle Metals of Glastonbury. He was coauthor of the 1991 book *Metal Recovery from Industrial Waste* (CRC Books) and published many articles, most of them on catalysis. He was appointed by Connecticut Governor William A. O'Neil in 1984 to a task force to classify hazardous waste categories for safe land disposal.

Besides volunteering on the trails for CFPA, Mr. Brooks also served as chairman of the Connecticut Chapter of the Sierra Club, chairman of the Glastonbury subchapter of the Nature Conservancy, and in other capacities for other groups. He was an avid photographer, watercolorist, and hiker.

A memorial service took place in Pittsburgh on March 20. Online condolences may be offered at [mcdonald-aerberlie.com](http://mcdonald-aerberlie.com). The family asked that memorial donations be directed to the Nature Conservancy.

—Source: Death notice and CFPA

## ED MERRY, LONGTIME TRAIL MANAGER, WHO BLAZED NEW TRAIL OVER MOUNT PISGAH

Edward Ernest Merry, 82, a volunteer trail manager for the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, who cared for a 13-mile section of the Mattabesett Trail for 30 years, died in his home state of Maine on November 10. Mr. Merry had moved to Benton, Maine, from Clinton in 2003.

Mr. Merry started trail work in 1973 with his three sons and continued after they had grown and after he had retired from his job in the trucking and shipping business. He knew the stretch between Route 79 and Route 17 so well and was out on it so often that he was always aware of changes in land ownership or impending development as soon as they came up. He was always ready to

talk to new owners or work with developers to reroute the trail. He was proud of the new trail he built up Mount Pisgah in Durham. In 2002, he was awarded an outstanding trail manager award from CFPA.

He was born in Waldoboro, Maine, the son of Ernest and Edna Post Merry. He grew up in Cornville, Maine, and served in the U.S. Army Signal Corps during World War II. He lived most of his adult life in Connecticut. He was active for many years in the Boy Scouts of America here.

Mr. Merry hiked often throughout New England and climbed Katahdin several times. An avid whitewater canoeist, Mr. Merry escorted his niece and her son on their first

whitewater trip three years ago, when he was 79.

He leaves his wife of 51 years, Barbara Dexter Merry; his sons, Donald Merry of Connecticut, David Merry of Florida, and Peter Merry of Ohio; a daughter, Linda Kilian of Virginia; a sister, Alice Chapman of Benton, Maine; a brother, Ernest Merry of Madison, Connecticut; four grandchildren; and many other nieces, nephews, and in-laws in Maine, Connecticut, and elsewhere.

A memorial service took place in Maine on November 27, 2009. Memorial donations may be directed to CFPA, 16 Meriden Road, Rockfall, CT 06481.

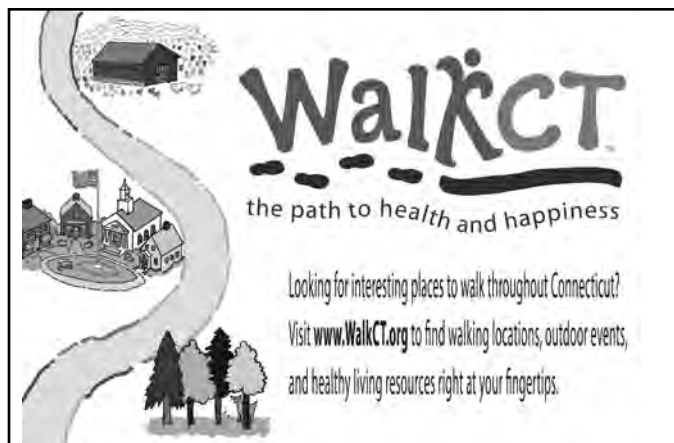
—Source: Death notice and CFPA

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—Kathleen Groll Connolly



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Courtesy of Joel Stocker

*The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection recently burned seven acres at Harkness Memorial State Park to sustain what is considered to be the last remnant of eastern prairie in Connecticut. The controlled burn took 18 minutes. The burn sustained uncommon native warm season grasses while inhibiting re-growth of cool season grasses, brush, and trees, said Emery Gluck, a state forester.*

## Multi-use Charter Oak Greenway will grow longer for \$1.7 million

This summer, the Charter Oak Greenway will be extended easterly from its existing terminus at Gardner Street in Manchester through Wyllys Street. The proposed extension, which will cost about \$1,750,000, is less than a mile but it is an important extension of the greenway, according to William Grant of the state Department of Transportation. Besides connecting the Connecticut River front in East Hartford to the Hop River Trail in Bolton, the trail will also become part of the East Coast Greenway, which would connect the Florida Keys to the Canadian border. Mr. Grant said the extension will feature a 10-foot wide paved section with 2-foot graded shoulders. Design work was completed in January with construction scheduled for this summer. The work is being financed by federal transportation and stimulus money as well as funds from the town of Manchester.

—Jack Sullivan

## State monitors beaches for bacteria counts

Will this season be better or worse than last? Nine of the 23 beaches monitored by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection were closed for one or more days last summer, and the DEP is scheduled to regularly test those beaches through Labor Day. The DEP began monitoring for *E. coli* and enterococci bacteria beginning on Memorial Day. According to DEP environmental analyst Guy Hoffman, if two tests exceed the maximum amount of bacteria, the beach will close and more tests will be conducted the next day. If only one test exceeds the maximum amount, the DEP and State Health Department will discuss the closing of the beach. Tests require an 18-hour period for *E. coli* and 24 hours for enterococci. Mr. Hoffman said people rarely become sick but the closures can create inconveniences. Chatfield Hollow Beach was closed last summer for 19 days.

—Mike Tidmarsh

## After a bad year, gray squirrels rebounded

For a while, gray squirrels seemed to have vanished. Christina Kocer of the Connecticut DEP said a small acorn crop in fall 2008 was the most likely reason. "When food isn't readily available, squirrels have to travel longer distances in search of food, making them more vulnerable to predators and accidents," said Kocer. But the acorn crop was better in 2009. Ms. Kocer said, "Most of the squirrels were in good shape going into winter, and this summer females could have two litters with up to seven young in each, resulting in a quick population rebound." The acorn drop may have affected other species that feed on acorns, including deer, as well as the predators of those species.

—Ellis Sant'Andrea

## Superior court awards \$2.9 million to victim of bicycle accident on MDC land

A six-person Superior Court jury found in May that the Metropolitan District Commission, the regional water and sewer authority for the Hartford area, was wrong to erect a steel gate across a path leading to reservoirs in the Talcott Mountain Recreation Area, in 2002. It awarded Maribeth Blonski of Rocky Hill \$2.9 million. Ms. Blonski, then 35, broke four vertebrae after hitting the gate, which the MDC placed to block motor vehicles from the water. In June, the MDC was considering closing its lands to recreational access. Watch future issues for more on this topic.

—From a report by  
The Hartford Courant

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### Connecticut Woodlands,

A Century's Story of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, by George McLean Milne, published by the Connecticut Forest and Park Association in 1995. A fascinating history, not so much of the Connecticut Forest and Park Association as it is of the dedicated men and women who have cared about Connecticut's forests and fields, hills, valleys, and parklands. Scattered through these pages are inspiring accounts of courageous struggles to protect the rich and varied natural environment of the state.

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### A Shared Landscape,

A Guide & History of Connecticut's State Parks and Forests, by Joseph Leary, published by Friends of Connecticut State Parks, Inc. in 2004. Richly illustrated in four-color with maps and photographs, this 240-page guide offers an intimate look at Connecticut's public lands and tells you everything you need to know about where to go if you love to hike, bike, camp, fish, swim, hunt, watch birds, learn about ecology or cross-country ski.

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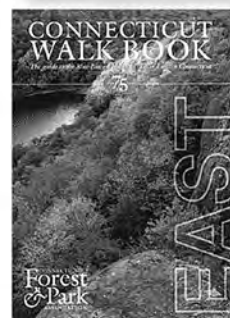
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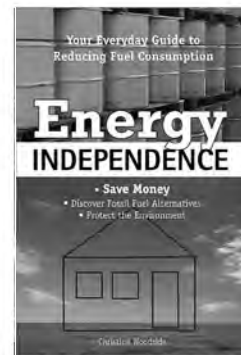
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