

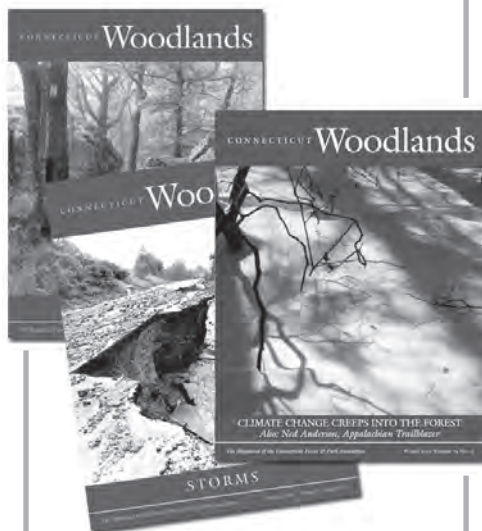
CONNECTICUT Woodlands



BORN TO BE WILD

CHILDREN, MODERN LIFE, AND NATURE

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 web-site, 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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& Park**
ASSOCIATION



Library of Congress

Children in Ledyard (above) and Norwich (below) frolic as only they know how, circa 1940.

Connecting People to the Land

Our mission: 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.

Our vision: 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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Alana Sanchez, 8, romps at the Barn Island Wildlife Management Area in Stonington with her dog, Rufus.

Harold Hanka



CONNECTICUT
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& Park**
ASSOCIATION

Hit the books—then hit the trails

BY ERIC HAMMERLING



CFPA
Executive Director
Eric Hammerling

This fall, I began teaching a graduate-level course at Southern Connecticut State University entitled “The Political and Legal Aspects of Environmental Concerns.” Twelve brave students and I meet on Wednesday nights at Jennings Hall for two and a half hours to discuss historical and current-day conservation issues as well as the state and federal environmental laws that are associated with them.

I have gained a healthy respect and appreciation for how much preparation teachers must do to make the learning experience meaningful for everyone. Many of my students are themselves middle and high school teachers with large workloads of their own, but they are excited enough to learn about these issues that they have been patient with me as I have heaped more than 1,800 pages in reading

assignments on them.

Their dedication inspires me. An added benefit for me has been the chance to reread several environmental classics alongside them. We’ve read *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold (first published in 1949), *Our Stolen Future* by Theo Colborn (first published in 1996), *The Riverkeepers* by John Cronin and Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. (first published in 1997), *Deep Economy* by Bill McKibben (Times Books, 2007), *The Weather Makers* by Tim Flannery (Atlantic Monthly Press, 2005), and *Last Child in the Woods* by Richard Louv (Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2008).

Through these books, we’ve analyzed Leopold’s land ethic, Colborn’s elucidation of endocrine-disrupting chemical dangers, Kennedy’s utilization of the public trust doctrine, McKibben’s argument for localism, Flannery’s encapsulation of climate change, and Louv’s crusade against nature deficit disorder.

Although I believe that many of our readings and discussions have been profound, I am now feeling that I may have let my students down by not taking them on a field trip to get them out of the classroom and into nature. There are ample outdoor opportunities right now as “leaf off” provides a great time to see things in the forest or enjoy vistas that may be hidden from view during the growing season.

To make up for keeping them in the institutional classroom setting, I will encourage them next week to visit some of the 107 state parks, 32 state forests, and 47 wildlife management areas that together cover more than 230,000 acres in Connecticut (about 10 percent of the state’s area). My students can help swell the ranks of the 8 million or more people each year who visit these special places (attendance that is more than twice the total population of Connecticut). I will also encourage them to venture out on some of the 825 miles of Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails maintained by Connecticut Forest & Park Association volunteers who this year dedicated almost 15,000 hours to maintaining the trails. Who knows, some of my students may wish to become volunteers too.

It’s a classic conundrum that I’ve struggled with as a teacher. I want to make sure my students know what the great environmental thinkers say, but if the students truly “get it,” they will conclude that we all need to put down the books and dare to think for ourselves in the outdoors. They will understand that in our forests and parks, and along the trails, people can still feel like they are part of the wild world and “think like a mountain,” as Aldo Leopold so famously said. When they stand up in class and ask if we can head outside, I will acquiesce and feel that I have succeeded.

Eric Hammerling lives in West Hartford.

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THE EDUCATION ISSUE

This issue of Connecticut Woodlands is the result of the collective ideas of a committee convened to introduce ideas, research, and trends in education and the natural world. Its leader was Lori Paradis Brant, the education director at the Connecticut Forest & Park Association. She has devoted the past several years to various projects that connect children and families to the wonders of the natural world—through activities, teacher workshops, and committees that devise environmental curricula.

As I worked on these pages, I felt as if we had just begun to open the lid of a gigantic box of statistics, stories, and trends both thrilling and alarming. We will return often to these topics in coming issues.

Working with Lori and the committee members listed below was a pleasure, and I thank them for their time and creativity.

Lori Paradis Brant
Bill Breck
Caroline Driscoll
Eric Hammerling
Geoff Meissner
Jean Crum Jones, chairwoman
Jim Ritchie
Lauren McGregor
Ruth Cutler
Sally Taylor

—Christine Woodside, Editor
Connecticut Woodlands

COMING IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF CONNECTICUT WOODLANDS

Sentinels of the Environment

*Dangers to amphibians
Bats struggle
Dangers to pollinators*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Bits and pieces

BY DAVID PLATT



CFPA President
David Platt

Do you pause periodically to ask yourself how you are doing on your “bucket list”? I do. Running a marathon was on my list years back, and I managed to check that one off. Now I want to run a trail marathon, perhaps in 2011, when I will hit the half-century mark. Trail marathons are especially tough, as they typically add an hour or more to what is already an unseemly length of time to be propelling oneself forward in some sort of running form. The 2011 Nipmuck Trail marathon has moved from June to October. I like endurance events later in the season so that I don’t have to squeeze in training runs during the colder, darker, months. Maybe . . .

I’d also like to tackle the daunting adventure of hiking the entire 825-mile Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail System—as my fellow Connecticut Forest & Park Association board member Geoffrey Meissner accomplished with his son years back—but I am admittedly leery of this challenge. I have had a couple reminders recently of how some other folks are living life with gusto:

A few weeks ago, at the invitation of CFPA supporter Fred Mullen, I attended a presentation by David Morine, a longtime conservationist and the author of *Two Coots in a Canoe* (Globe Pequot Press, 2009). (A good read!) David lived one of his dreams by paddling with a buddy the length of the Connecticut River from its northern origin to Long Island Sound. After his talk, David told me he is keenly interested in CFPA and the key role we play in the Connecticut conservation world.

I met Jimmy Chin at a CFPA benefit function hosted by Trailblazers in New Haven. Jimmy is a world-renowned alpinist, extreme skier, and photographer whose photography work regularly appears in *Outside Magazine* and *National Geographic*. Chin knows adventure, whether it be skiing from the summit of Mount Everest or tackling the previously unclimbed eastern face of Meru in the Himalayas of India. Jimmy is a disarmingly low-key guy, and he was very interested to hear that the section of the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail on which he did his morning workout (the Quinnipiac) was the first trail founded by the CFPA trail pioneers in 1929.

In October, CFPA Board member Scott Livingston completed the Hawaii Ironman triathlon, the world championship of the Ironman competitions. After qualifying in an Ironman competition in Brazil earlier in the year, Scott turned in a fantastic performance in one of the world’s toughest competitions amid the sweltering lava fields of Kona, Hawaii. How can you not admire a fellow who follows a grueling training ordeal, then swims 2.4 miles, cycles 112 miles, and runs 26 miles, all while managing a manufacturing business and a growing family? And if we know Scott, he is not done yet.

Adventurous people like these, who live the *carpe diem* motto, inspire me.

CFPA is wrapping up its 2010 Annual Fund campaign. As you know, we rely heavily on the proceeds from this campaign to fund our conservation, environmental education, advocacy, and “people and paths” programs. On behalf of the entire CFPA family, I want to extend our heartfelt thanks to all of you who contributed. Without the support of our growing membership base, we could not possibly do the things that we do. Thank you.

And, finally, a word on this issue, which features environmental education. CFPA continues to set paces in this field, led by Lori Paradis Brant, our award-winning environmental educator, and board member Jean Crum Jones, the chair of our Education Committee. Our young people represent the next generation of environmental stewards. Given the largely indoor-oriented distractions presented by the proliferation of television shows, electronic games, and the myriad of Internet-based personal communication programs, we as a society face a great challenge in teaching our children about the wonders of the natural world. It is critical that we reach this audience as effectively as we can to avoid the unhappy (and unacceptable) consequences of losing a generation of caretakers. I trust you will enjoy this issue.

David Platt lives in Higganum.



DOES MODERN LIFE PULL CHILDREN AWAY FROM NATURE?

Distractions, both important and random, get in the way of outdoor time.

BY CHRISTINE WOODSIDE

Let me start with a couple of stories from my childhood in a New Jersey town.

At age 6, I sometimes wandered over to Sycamore Road to meet up with my friend Frances. We'd then walk to school together. One gray morning, Frances announced that she had found a new shortcut to school.

"Well, it's sort of a stupid one," she added, as she led me to a long leafless hedge (this was early winter). I crouched low behind her; we crashed through, inch by inch. A long time later, scratched and dusty, we emerged at the far end, still on Sycamore Road, still two and a half blocks from Riverside School.

One afternoon three years later, my fourth-grade teacher, Mrs. Scibelli, assigned homework to "*take an interesting walk*" home and to write down anything that we had never seen before. (Yes, all of us walked to school every day, so all of us could complete this assignment.)

I lived so near the school that all I could come up with was a bush at the Fischers' house. My classmates told of entire streets, fences, dogs, and manhole covers they'd missed. As we listened to their lists, all of us understood what Mrs. Scibelli was getting at. We were 9 years old now, going on 10, and we were ready to expand our horizons.

*A real crab is worth
a thousand videos.*

Harold Hanka

Factors That Fight with Outdoor Time

These stories wouldn't happen today in the Northeast. Today we'd be ushered to and from school by an adult who would have grabbed us before we got into the hedge. We think back to stories like this, and we're sorry that childhood in 2010 is not the free-spirited ramble that we remember. To give children that kind of simple freedom now requires that we push against the structure of society. We must push against busier roads and deep-seated common attitudes that it isn't safe for children to walk without grownups. Distance complicates daily life, too. Residential neighborhoods have sprawled out, and many more children live miles and miles from school than used to. Distractions such as computers, cell phones, and video games sit front and center at home, making the old debates about television seem quaint. Standardized tests create stress to learn more at school in the already crammed schedules.

Time. Child development scholars say that children need time, the sort where the adults aren't leading the action. Scholars have concluded in studies that children learn better when they have breaks to just range around the yard or the woods. Because this is modern life, the free time children do get comes in blocks of time the adults must fight for. All of the things that make modern life wonderful also disconnect children from outdoor, free time that they need so much.

Doctor's Family Inspires New Program

Dr. David Katz, founder of Yale University's Prevention Research Center and a renowned internist and expert in nutrition, activity, and children (he and his wife have five), says that 10,000 years of human ingenuity gave us too many convenience foods and sedentary distractions. Dr. Katz invented a nutritional value system used in hundreds of supermarkets, and he and his wife, Catherine, developed two programs: the Nutrition Detectives and ABC for Fitness, both used by many schools throughout the United States. ABC stands for "activity bursts in the classroom." This is a concept that grew out of the way children really act.

Dr. Katz, who spoke to me by telephone, says that parents and teachers aren't so much to blame as is our general culture, but that adults must take steps to make it easier for kids to follow their natural inclinations to keep balanced by moving around, often.

We have computers and gadgets and hand-helds, and they all compete for time. "We have turned opportunities into obligations," Dr. Katz says. "Everything modern life gives us, we feel obligated to use. We built it, and they came, and I don't think kids get a chance to compare. They think they want to be in front of their computer screen."

Adults know better, he believes. "We are, in a sense, seducing kids with the trappings of modern living. There is sort of a tyranny in technological advance. You feel obligated to play with new age toys. It really requires cultural reorientation to get around it."

The benefits of free time outside are tremendous, and there's much research to prove it. In a 2009 report in the journal *Pediatrics*, three doctors from Einstein Medical Center in New York found that children who had at least one 15-minute period of recess each day performed better in class than did those who did not have recess. Also in 2009, Harvard researcher Virginia Chomitz found that physically fit children perform better on standardized tests (in a study published in the *Journal of School Health*).

A movement backed by research favors moving recess to before lunch,

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HOW PRINCIPALS KEEP RECESS IN THE SCHEDULE

In Connecticut elementary schools, principals work hard to keep free "kid time" on the schedule. Connecticut Woodlands talked to four principals about recess schedules.

At Bugbee School in West Hartford, Principal Noam Sturm can read the weather by how the children act. "I start to get nervous this time of year, because you know the tougher weather conditions are coming," he said. "When you have rain, snow, ice, it definitely impacts them. Their energy level is both higher—in the sense that they have a need to run around—but also lower, because they are not exercising; it's difficult to sustain to the end of the day." Their daily recess is 30 minutes long, and their cutoff temperature for staying inside is 20 degrees. "When we have indoor recess for multiple days in row, if it's 2, 3, 4 days in a row, you definitely notice later in the school day they look like they're dragging a bit."

Recess times vary depending on the grade at Davenport Ridge Elementary School in Stamford, said the principal, Carol A. Puccella. The children usually make it outdoors for 20 minutes, some before or after lunch but others much

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FEDERAL BILL SAYS: GET THEM OUTSIDE

In November 2010, U.S. Representative Ron Kind (D-Wisconsin) introduced a bill designed to connect more children with nature. The Moving Outdoors in Nature Act (H.R. 6426) would start federal, state, and local efforts for natural play areas, outdoor activities, and public health plans. It also would support research on children and the outdoors.

MODERN LIFE

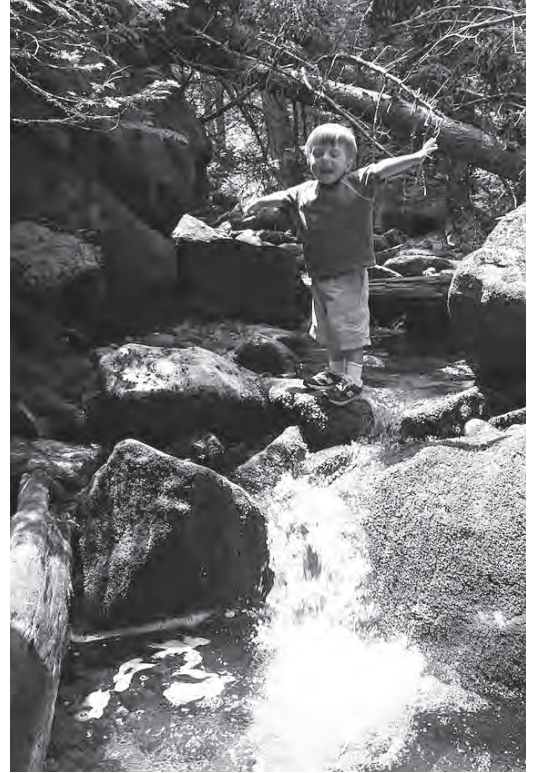
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rather than making children sit and eat before running around. The Centers for Disease Control and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, among others, recommend swapping recess and lunch.

No matter what, it's hard to find time for kids to just ramble around the playground. In Connecticut, most schools offer recess, according to a study of recess at 45 schools last year by University of Connecticut honors student Kristen A. Cocchia, but only 14 percent of the schools she surveyed will nevercancel recess as a punishment, while 70 percent can take away recess.

As a forest ranger working on Mount Mitchell in North Carolina the past three years, Matthew Browning was frustrated that he had to tell young people not to pick up sticks or leave the trails, and other rules. Now that he is in the master's program at Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, he hopes to do his thesis on ways to allow children more freedoms on public land, the kind he remembers from his own childhood in Iowa City.

"I grew up doing probably a lot more damage on my parents' property" than anything kids might do on public lands, said Mr. Browning. A former teacher, he was recruited by Richard Louv's Natural Leaders' Network before coming to Yale. Crashing around his parents' land was worth a little damage, he thinks. It made him love nature. "I think it was a lot of fun running around, breaking sticks. I became very interested in allowing children full access to nature."



Scott Livingston

GETTING MOTIVATED TO *Get the Kids Moving*

Consult these programs to boost
the outside time of children

WALKCT: walkct.org

Connecticut Forest & Park Association's program to connect people to the many wonderful places to walk and to make walking part of life.

DR. DAVID KATZ'S NUTRITION AND EXERCISE PROGRAMS:
davidkatzmd.com

Read about nutrition and activity expert Dr. David Kat's supermarket nutritional scoring system, Nu-Val, and the free ABC for Fitness™ program, which tells how to structure days around brief "activity bursts in the classroom."

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL WALKING PROGRAMS:
cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/

This is a training program for turning a community's mind-set toward safe walking routines for school children. Many links to activists' tools and to research into the benefits of exercise for children.

INTERNATIONAL WALK TO SCHOOL DAY:
walktoschool.org/

Each October, people around the world organize one day when the children walk to school. Walking to school is rare; it used to be ordinary—but fun. At this site, find checklists for safe walks, read about how to organize walks, what to do if the walk is too far, and many other tips.

CONNECTICUT SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL: ctsaferoutes.ct.gov
Information and inspiration for plotting walking routes.

RICHARD LOUV'S PROGRAMS: childrenandnature.org

Author Richard Louv (Last Child in the Woods) co-founded and chairs the Children & Nature Network to connect all those who work with children. The site includes a 2009 study on what Americans think about kids and the outdoors. Teacher and leader training and Louv's blog, Field Notes from the Future, are here.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Programs: fws.gov/letsgooutside/
Contests, games, trip ideas, and career inspiration for children, parents, and teachers from the agency that manages the federal wildlife refuges.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION: greenhour.org
Ideas for unstructured play, interaction with the natural world, a resource for parents looking to make the outdoors part of daily life.

CONNECTICUT SCIENCE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION: csta-us.org

EARTHPLACE, A NATURE CENTER IN WESTPORT: earthplace.org
An extensive list of nature resources for parents and teachers.

CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE: ct.gov/doag
Information about farms and farmers' markets for healthy outings.

INSTANT RECESS: BUILDING A FIT NATION 10 MINUTES AT A TIME:
By Toni Yancey. University of California Press, 2010.

PROJECT LEARNING TREE: plt.org
A resource for teachers to show their students how to think, not what to think, about the environment.

NO CHILD LEFT INSIDE: ct.gov/dep/nochildleftinside
Connecticut was the leader in this now-national movement to introduce children to the wonders of nature.

KEEP RECESS IN SCHEDULE

continued from page 7

earlier or later than lunch. The school's policy is never to punish children by taking recess away. In the bad or cold weather, they're in classrooms playing board games or using computers, she said.

Students at Scotland Elementary School in a rural area of northeastern Connecticut get out to recess twice a day, in the morning and again after lunch for about 20 minutes each time, said the principal and superintendent, Dr. Paul Blackstone. Scheduling this time is challenging, he said, but important. "We're being asked to do more and more, so it does become very challenging," he said. "Obviously, we're trying to focus on academics, but we also understand the importance of children being able to have that physical exercise component plus also have time to socialize and get a break."

Their big gym allows for running around during indoor recess on any day it's held, Dr. Blackstone said. He also said the school has organized walks, sometimes for charitable causes, but that the rural location (lack of sidewalks) makes the perimeter of the school the most ideal walking route. A nature path in the woods behind the school has become overgrown, and he hopes to find a way to fix its bridges over wet areas and clear out a tangle of vegetation, he said.

At Roosevelt School in Ossining, New York, a large town only minutes from the Connecticut border in Westchester County, Principal Liz Wallinger has noticed that the children are frustrated when it is too cold or wet to use their grassy play area. Even after a rain at times, it is too wet to use because the school lacks blacktop. Ms. Wallinger altered the schedule to free the one gym for open playtime indoors twice a week during the dead of winter.

When it's above freezing and not raining, the children get recess every day for about 25 minutes after lunch, she said.

"I think kids need down time, in general," she said. "It's different than when I was raised. It's so structured, with play dates and this and that. Kids need to create relationships on their own, create fun on their own. I just think we feel we need to micromanage things."

One trait all of these principals share is a commitment to free time for their students. They are always watching for new ways to make this work. Some of the principals said they are considering scheduling free recess before lunch instead of after, in response to research showing that children thrive on this.

URBAN YOUNG PEOPLE RUB ELBOWS WITH NATURE

Hartford's natural world changes kids

BY DORIS JOHNSON

A collaboration of the state's environmental justice program and several agencies and community groups is connecting urban young people ages 6 to 17 with the natural world in their own backyard—Keney Park, Hartford.

There, young people were able to ramble around the park's more than 693 acres of landscape designed by the Olmsted firm, which designed many nationwide urban gems including: New York City's Central Park, the Boston Commons, the Biltmore Estate, and Brooklyn's Prospect Park.

Now in its fourth year, the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's Environmental Justice Program continues to implement the fundamental goals of Connecticut's No Child Left Inside initiative. It has joined with the Friends of Keney Park, Inc., and a variety of local organizations and state agencies.

In the park, children learn about the environment with hands-on activities: recycling, forestry forensic activities, nature walks, hiking, raised-bed gardening, oil drum art, canoeing, tree and plant identification, camping, wildlife, aquatics, and more.

Children also take field trips to Kellogg Environmental Center, Stratton Brook State Park, Dinosaur State Park, Sessions Woods Wildlife Management Area, and Burlington Fish Hatchery.

"My day at camp was fun," said Tatiana, who took part in the summer program. "We

went fishing. I caught a big fish, but we had to put it back in the pond. My feet were muddy. I liked the camp. Everybody is nice and full of joy. We go on cool adventures and learn about nature."

The No Child Left Inside® Summer Programs were created to produce future environmental stewards who will grow up caring about the environment and who will be motivated to support programs that protect and preserve the natural environment.

Connecticut DEP's Environmental Justice Program has offered summer programs to Warriors for Change Youth Program of Hartford, Christian Community Action Stepping Stones of New Haven, City of Hartford Health and Human Services Parks Division, and Camp Noah in Hartford.

The Friends of Keney Park have worked with federal, state, local, and community groups to develop programs and generate excitement about what Keney Park can offer its users. The group assisted partners to secure more than \$6 million dollars in funding for the upgrade, repair, and enhancement of Keney Park facilities and nature trails.

Doris Johnson is the outreach coordinator for the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection's environmental justice program.

**THE NO CHILD LEFT INSIDE®
SUMMER PROGRAMS WERE
CREATE TO PRODUCE FUTURE
ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDS
WHO WILL GROW UP CARING
ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT AND
WHO WILL BE MOTIVATED TO
SUPPORT PROGRAMS THAT
PROTECT AND PRESERVE THE
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.**



SEND THEM OUT TO THE DIRT PILE

*Childhood and nature expert David Sobel
explains how to do it*

BY LORI PARADIS BRANT

When our son, whom we adopted, first came home to live at age 5, he was aghast when I suggested he take off his shoes and walk barefoot in the backyard.

"But I will get dirty!" he exclaimed.

"Sounds good," I smiled at him. With our consistent encouragement, he found a comfort zone in the natural world beyond our door. He now loves to climb our apple tree and pretend to be a pirate sailing the seas around our backyard. He often ties the jump rope up to the slide and wraps it around a chair, creating all kinds of crazy obstacle courses. When he stands up tall on a tree stump, I think of Dr. Seuss's *The Lorax*—except to pass by my son we must pay him in acorns or hickory nuts.

These nutty games that children make up are the foundation of their environmental training. It's more important that my son run around in the dirt than hear me talk about pollution or toxic wastes or forest fragmentation. I am a follower of the thinking of David Sobel, the outdoor education expert who believes that young children aren't ready to think globally about the environment. "No tragedies before fourth grade," is Sobel's motto. In his book *Beyond Ecophobia: Reclaiming the Heart in Nature Education* (Orion Society, 1996), we learn to honor our children's stages of development by supporting their explorations when they are young and then, during their teen years, helping them take action locally.

"Let's teach empathy and understanding first and not expect children to save the global environment," Sobel says. "Think of the Russian nesting doll model, in which we start with something small and progress outward. Children's idea of place begins with their home and school, grows to include their neighborhood, then their community and the watershed. It's a movement outward." Children first learn how to care about others. Then their sense of adventure grows. Only after these two developmental stages have occurred can children mature to possess a sense of social responsibility.

Sobel is author of the book *Childhood and Nature: Design Principles for Educators* (Stenhouse Publishers, 2008), six other books, and many articles. He is also a professor of education at Antioch University New England in Keene, New Hampshire. In *Childhood and Nature*, he describes several recurrent play forms children use outside. Whether in an urban, suburban, or rural setting, children interact with nature in many of the same ways. They may go on adventures, use imagination and fantasy, become allies with animals, make forts, play hunting and gathering games, create mini-worlds, and follow paths and create shortcuts.

Sobel reminds all who raise and teach children that children need understanding, not to feel overwhelmed by saving the global environment. Better to recycle their crayons and, at the same time, learn how to be responsible for actions within their control, than to worry about things too big for them to control.

Resources

David Sobel Recommends

BOOKS

- ***A Natural Sense of Wonder: Connecting Kids with Nature through the Seasons***, by Rick Van Noy (University of Georgia Press, 2008)
- ***Coyote's Guide to Connecting with Nature: For Kids of All Ages and Their Mentors***, by Jon Young (OWLLink Media, 2008)
- ***Geography of Childhood: Why Children Need Wild Places***, by Gary Paul Nabhan and Stephen Trimble (Beacon Press, 1994)
- ***Hands-on Nature: Information and Activities for Exploring the Environment with Children***, by Jenepher Lingelbach (Vermont Institute of Natural Science, 1986)
- ***Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder***, by Richard Louv (Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2008)
- ***Sharing Nature with Children: A Parents' and Teachers' Nature-Awareness Guidebook***, by Joseph Cornell (Ananda Publications, 1979)
- ***Wild Play: Parenting Adventures in the Great Outdoors***, by David Sobel (Sierra Club Books, due out in spring 2011)

WEB SITES

- **freerangekids.wordpress.com**
"Do you ever . . . let your kid ride a bike to the library? Walk to school? Make dinner? If so, you are raising a Free-Range Kid! Free-Rangers believe in helmets, car seats, seat belts—safety! We just do not believe that every time school-age kids go outside, they need a security detail. Share your stories, tell your tips . . . here's to common sense parenting in uncommonly overprotective times!"
- **outdoorbaby.net**
"For parents to stay connected by sharing stories, reading gear reviews, staying up to date on the latest outdoor happenings that are important for introducing their children to the natural world."
- **connectedroots.wordpress.com**
"A parent who blogs about letting go of answers, seeking wonder, and being present in the experience of living connected to one's surroundings."
- **kidsadventuring.org/blog**
A free monthly family nature club for families in the Roanoke Valley; the blog highlights its three goals: play, nature education, and volunteerism.

Lori Paradis Brant is the education director of CFPA. To read her interview with David Sobel, please visit ctwoodlands.org/educ

SOBEL-STYLE TIPS FOR PARENTS



HELP CHILDREN FIND THEIR OWN SPECIAL PLACES OUT-DOORS. Imagine together you are squirrels jumping from tree to tree searching for buds to eat.

DEVELOP THEIR RELATIONSHIP with the natural world through positive experiences.

PAY ATTENTION to what grabs children in nature, and support those interests. If they like moles, help them watch for moles' signs.

DON'T DOUSE THEIR NATURAL CURIOSITY with too many facts. Children will not be impressed by adults' knowledge of wildlife species or the dead zone in Long Island Sound.

REMEMBER THAT CHILDREN LOVE FANTASY. Find a downed tree with some bounce in it and pretend to saddle it up and go for a gallop across the trail. Encourage them to make up a story of how you found your tree/horse.

ADD INTRIGUE: Cross a stream barefoot, or create clues to hide a letterbox for others to find, or play king of the mountain at the top of a rock scramble.



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- Today's kids spend only four to seven minutes outside per day. They log more than seven hours per day in front of electronic media.
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- Visit beoutthere.org to learn more.



"I pledge to spend time outside, exploring, learning, and playing. I will encourage the kids in my life to get outside more, too!"

x _____

BY MARGARETT JONES

Growing up in a small, rural Connecticut town in the 1960s, most of my early memories relate to nature. I remember lying in a meadow in our front yard listening to a bird call—"Bobwhite, Bobwhite,"—in the distance. I can transport myself back to the very place, feel the tickle of wind blown grass, visualize the bluest of skies, and smell the clean green scent of buttercups, dandelion, and dew.

My sisters and I walked to school, and we walked home for lunch. We always played outside: before school, at school (we had outdoor recess

three times a day), after school, and especially on weekends, when we came inside only to eat.

The hill behind our house had ev-

ENGAGING THEM EARLY

Children's programs at Nature Center make huge impact

everything we needed to entertain ourselves all year long throughout our childhoods. My dad built a big swing in an old sugar maple on the hillside. Swinging way up high in the treetops felt like flying. In autumn, we would jump off into huge piles of leaves below. In winter, the hill was a sledding slope like no other. We took our Barbie dolls on amazing adventures into the wild. They rafted down waterfalls in the brook on little boats we constructed of sticks and leaves. We built houses for them in mossy banks and made furniture out of rocks and bark.

As we grew older, our outdoor adventures and explorations led us further into the woods. We created elaborate tree houses and forts out of fallen limbs and leafy boughs. Mom had a huge bell she would ring to call us back when it was time for dinner; we could hear it from far away. What lessons did we learn from these hours spent outside?

We understood how to read the landscape and navigate streams and woodlands. The physical activity of exploration, climbing over logs and



Scott Livingston

rocks, helped develop coordination, balance, and strength. Discovering a nest of helpless baby birds or exposing a wood frog hidden beneath a rock helped cultivate a sense of wonder, empathy, and respect for other living things. Spending time outside playing around water and making miniature houses and forts taught us skills for life, from problem solving and creative expression to basic principles of biology and physics. We were young architects, artists, builders, and scientists.

Today's Over-Scheduled Kids

Fast-forward a few decades. As executive director of the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center, fostering connections to nature is my life. It is both a personal and professional priority. Somehow, during the last generation and a half—the 1970s, '80s, and '90s—people have grown more distant from nature, or they have grown up without much contact with it. Perhaps they lived in an urban extreme without ready access to nature, or spent free time indoors watching television and playing video games instead of playing outside. Or perhaps they used up all their free time doing sports, music lessons, and other organized and scheduled activities. If there's one thing that I think parents of generation x, y, and z are guilty of, it is over-scheduling. Although a core group of environmentalists, including the folks that read this magazine, support Connecticut Forest & Park Association, land trusts, and nature centers, most out there do not know how to connect to nature.

Nature plays a vital role in the emotional, social, and cognitive development of young children. Childhood experiences in nature



Al Brown

Just being outside stimulates children's natural curiosity. Here, a class from the Denison-Pequotsepos Nature Center explores Glacial Park in Ledyard.

help stimulate curiosity and interest in the world and help us grow intellectually in our desire to better understand the world and our place in it. Our overall health, sleep patterns, moods, and energy levels are linked to natural biorhythms. Spending time in nature also buffers us against life stress. According to a Cornell University study, children given opportunities for wild nature play before the age of 11 are more likely to become environmentally conscientious adults. Mandatory nature-related activities do not have the same impact on shaping attitudes about the environment as free play (Children, Youth and Environment Vol.16:1, 2006).

Traditionally, school recess was a time for uninhibited play. Recess time has diminished over the years, and school playgrounds are usually fenced-in areas of asphalt and round-ed plastic play sets designed to meet state health and safety guidelines, not the needs of children. Children are born with a natural sense of wonder about nature, yet in many places, particularly schools, nature is fenced out, and with it the opportunities for creativity and free play that children crave.

It is here that the role for environmental education organizations such as Denison Pequotsepos (DPNC) has expanded. We offer academic programs to supplement science curriculum, and we provide opportunities for outside play and exploration—the things you cannot teach in schools, but that we all need to learn to feel connected to nature. For DPNC, our mission is the same: *to inspire and nurture an appreciation and scientific understanding of the natural world and foster a personal environmental ethic*, but our customers have changed. Our new customers want to be shown how and where to experience nature and guided to places where nature abounds. They want to feel safe, and they need to be nurtured. This is a dramatic shift from the days of Boy Scouts and bird-watchers, where we catered more specifically to groups who already had an interest in science and nature.

Environmental education in the new millennium helps foster lifelong learning and environmental stewardship. It also helps overcome fears about nature, something that has become more prevalent in our increasingly urban society. At DPNC, our programs begin with very young children and their parents; parents who were children in the 1970s and 1980s. By spending time in nature, away from cell phones, television, and the hectic pace of life on the go, parents and children learn how to awaken their senses to the outdoors. Parents come with their babies in backpacks or front carriers, toddlers in tow. Places like DPNC offer opportunities for all



Al Brown

Denison-Pequotsepos Nature Center kids climb boulders at Ledyard's Glacial Park.

the outdoors while exploring on their own. As humans, we have the sensory tools we need: eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and hands. Nature tunes our senses. Our educators offer guidance, answer questions, and provide such accessories as pond nets and buckets, but the learning is in the experience.

Scared Kids

Fear of nature, of the unknown, is a powerful force. Two recent situations illustrate this. I received a broken but frantic phone call from a man who was lost on one of our trails. He had been walking in circles for over an hour, he was frightened, and he was embarrassed. We started a small search party and found the poor guy sitting by a sign post along a main trail less than 200 yards from the Nature Center. He was completely disabled by his inability to relate to the landscape, to sense direction, to pick up sounds or other environmental cues to lead him back to his car. We have become so dependent on electronic devices showing us the way and giving us the answers that we are losing the ability to figure things out for ourselves. Had he stopped to listen, he would have heard the sounds of children playing around the center.

Last spring, we received reports about a red-tailed hawk allegedly on a rampage in a small neighborhood where it had swooped down on a couple of unwary pedestrians that ventured too close to its nest. The situation had been grossly exaggerated, even televised. Neighbors were vilifying the poor bird to the extent that we recommended removing the nest (for the bird's safety). The real tragedy of this story occurred at an elementary school more than a half mile away where the principal cancelled recess, the only

outdoor play break during the entire day, for several days. Bus drivers dropping children off after school instructed the kids to cover their heads and run for home as quickly as possible! An entire community felt traumatized by a two-pound bird, and media attention helped spread that fear statewide. After the ordeal was over, DPNC conducted free bird of prey programs at the school in an effort to calm fears and address misunderstandings. We brought live birds into the classroom to educate adults and students about raptors and their ecological role. Dealing with anti-nature emotions, usually based on fear and misunderstanding, is one of the most difficult challenges we face. Similarly, concerns about Lyme disease, rabies, West Nile, and Eastern equine encephalitis have left young parents timid and fearful about exploring outside on their own, especially if they think it puts their children at risk.

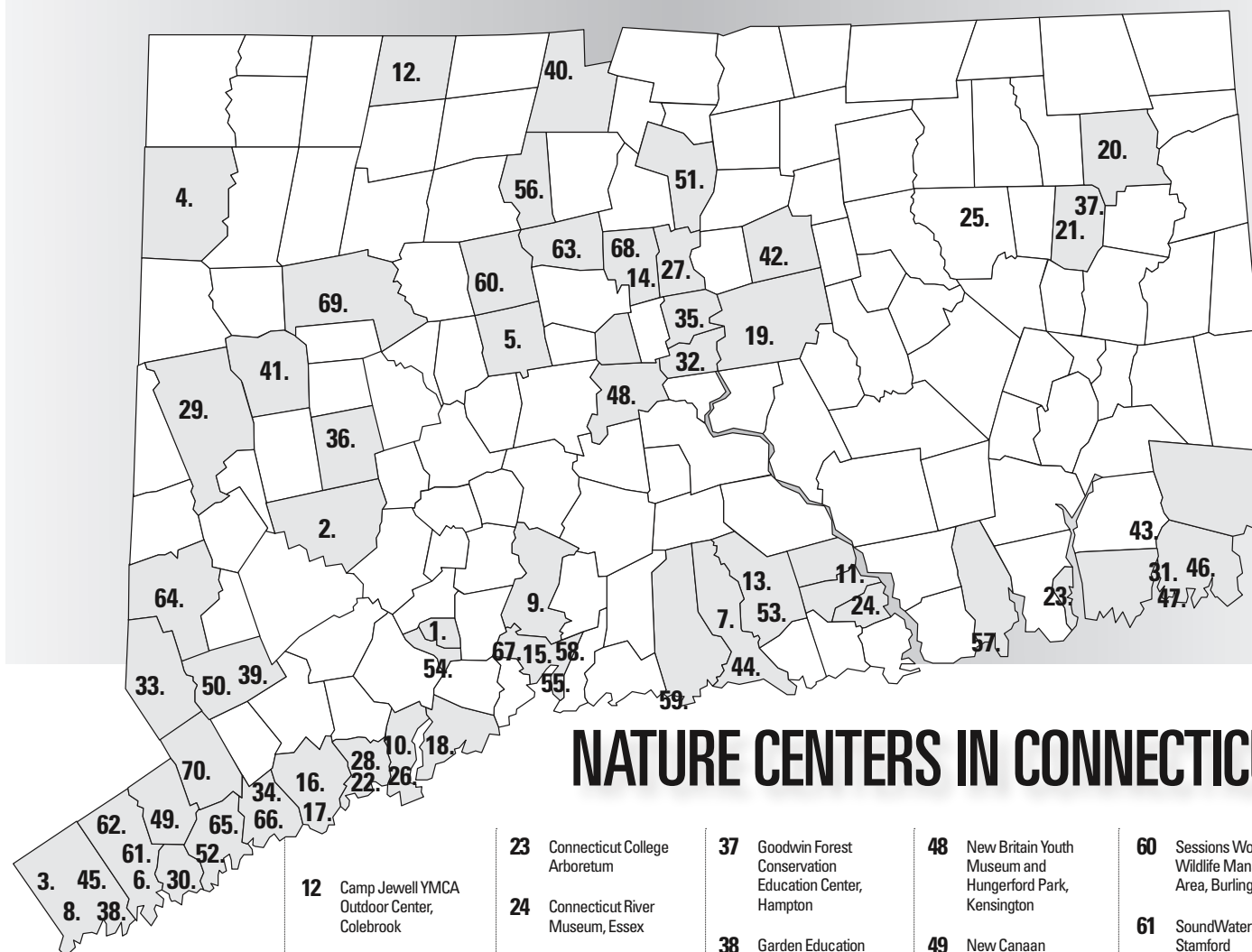
Newborns on Waiting List for Preschool

In our state-licensed, nature-based preschool for children ages 3 to 5, students spend 80 percent of the school day outdoors. The pace is unhurried. Nature provides the resources children need to develop skills they will use in school and in life, from way-finding and gross motor skills to creativity and social skills. Our basic perceptions of color, pattern and symmetry, the passage of time, and change of seasons all originate in, and bind us to nature. Sticks, acorns, leaves, trees, ferns, and rocks serve as teaching tools in a classroom where bird song, wildflowers, sunlight, shadow, and trickling streams stimulate the senses. The preschool is so popular that some parents put their newborn children on the list. We have been fortunate to have full enrollment, and often a waiting list, since we opened it in 2006. For the last two decades, we have had a steady demand for early childhood programs year round. We recently expanded our Summer Nature Camp, traditionally aimed at elementary school-aged children, to include ages 3 to 5.

DPNC continues to offer experiential learning for elementary, middle, and high school age children. Our programs meet Connecticut State Science Standards. Our educators reach thousands of children every year in their school classrooms and on field trips to the Nature Center and other natural areas. These include classes on soils, ecosystems, plants, life cycles, animal adaptations, water chemistry, and much more.

During a time when schools face major budget cuts, we help save the costs of buses by using school grounds for on-site field

continued on page 15



NATURE CENTERS IN CONNECTICUT

- 1 Ansonia Nature and Recreation Center
- 2 Audubon Center at Bent of the River, Southbury
- 3 Audubon Center of Greenwich
- 4 Audubon Center and Miles Wildlife Sanctuary, Sharon
- 5 Barnes Nature Center and Indian Rock Nature Preserve, Bristol
- 6 Bartlett Arboretum, Stamford
- 7 Bauer Park, Madison
- 8 Bruce Museum of Arts and Science, Greenwich
- 9 Brooksville Recreation Park, Hamden
- 10 Boothe Memorial Park & Museum, Stratford
- 11 Bushy Hill Nature Center, Ivoryton

- 12 Camp Jewell YMCA Outdoor Center, Colebrook
- 13 Chatfield Hollow State Park and Nature Center, Killingworth
- 14 Children's Museum, West Hartford
- 15 Common Ground High School, Urban Farm, Environmental Education Center, New Haven
- 16 Connecticut Audubon Birdcraft Museum, Fairfield
- 17 Connecticut Audubon Society Environmental Center at Fairfield
- 18 Connecticut Audubon Coastal Center at Milford Point
- 19 Connecticut Audubon Center at Glastonbury
- 20 Connecticut Audubon Center at Pomfret
- 21 Connecticut Audubon at Trail Wood, Hampton
- 22 Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo, Bridgeport

- 23 Connecticut College Arboretum
- 24 Connecticut River Museum, Essex
- 25 Connecticut State Museum of Natural History, Storrs
- 26 CRRA Garbage Museum, Stratford
- 27 CRRA Trash Museum, Hartford
- 28 Discovery Museum and Planetarium, Bridgeport
- 29 Elliott Pratt Education Center, New Milford
- 30 Darien Nature Center
- 31 Denison-Pequotsepos Nature Center, Mystic
- 32 Dinosaur State Park, Rocky Hill
- 33 Discovery Center at Ridgefield
- 34 Earthplace, Westport
- 35 Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center, Wethersfield
- 36 Flanders Nature Center and Land Trust, Woodbury

- 37 Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, Hampton
- 38 Garden Education Center of Greenwich/Montgomery Pinetum Cos Cob
- 39 Highstead Arboretum, Redding
- 40 Holcomb Farm Environmental Learning Center, West Granby
- 41 Institute for American Indian Studies, Washington
- 42 Lutz Children's Museum and Oak Grove Nature Center, Manchester
- 43 Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center, Mashantucket
- 44 Meig's Point Nature Center, Hammonasset Beach State Park
- 45 Montgomery Pinetum and Caldwell Wildlife Sanctuary, Cos Cob
- 46 Mystic Aquarium and Institute for Exploration
- 47 Mystic Seaport Museum and Planetarium

- 48 New Britain Youth Conservation Museum and Hungerford Park, Kensington
- 49 New Canaan Nature Center
- 50 New Pond Farm, West Redding
- 51 Northwest Park and Nature Center, Windsor
- 52 Norwalk Seaport Association, South Norwalk
- 53 Platt Nature Center, Killingworth
- 54 Osborne Homestead Museum and Kellogg Environmental Center, Derby
- 55 Peabody Museum of Natural History, New Haven
- 56 Roaring Brook Nature Center, Canton
- 57 Rocky Neck State Park and Nature Center, Niantic
- 58 Schooner Inc., New Haven
- 59 Shoreline Outdoor Education Center, Guilford

- 60 Sessions Woods Wildlife Management Area, Burlington
- 61 SoundWaters, Stamford
- 62 Stamford Museum and Nature Center
- 63 Talcott Mountain Science Center, Avon
- 64 Old Quarry Nature and Science Center, Danbury
- 65 The Maritime Aquarium at Norwalk
- 66 Sherwood Island State Park and Nature Center, Westport
- 67 West Rock Nature Recreation Center, New Haven
- 68 Westmoor Park, West Hartford
- 69 White Memorial Conservation Center, Litchfield
- 70 Woodcock Nature Center, Wilton

ENGAGING THEM EARLY

continued from page 13

trips. This approach helps children and teachers realize that nature is everywhere—in a thicket or patch of woodland outside the school fence. Many Connecticut schools back up to salt marshes, rivers, and forests, ideal settings for outdoor classroom experiences. With the help of environmental educators, students and teachers can better appreciate the value of their school's property as a place for fostering connections and nurturing an interest in nature, wildlife, and science.

Parents and teachers want to make environmentally responsible choices based on science. At a time when there is a need for improved mastery of science on a societal level, DPNC is having a positive impact by increasing ecological literacy and empowering citizens to be good stewards of the environment. We also know that we help people connect with nature through non-academic firsthand experiences when we encourage free play and exploration in our neighborhoods, schoolyards, fields, and forests.

This morning, while working on this article, something caught my eye outside. I watched a young girl, maybe 11 or 12, gallop through the woods, leap over a stone wall, and scramble up a leaning oak tree. She sat on a branch about 25 feet up, tucked in next to the main trunk. She stayed there for the longest time, with no idea that she was being watched. Was she contemplating the view from her perch? Listening to the rustle of leaves? Hiding? I felt I was looking through a window into my own past. Or was it a window into the future? I could feel her senses tuning. This was a future environmentalist for sure.

Margarett Jones lives in Mystic. In addition to directing the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center, she is an avid distance runner and the mother of two children.



Scott Livingston

CONNECTICUT Forest & Park ASSOCIATION

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BY THOMAS WORTHLEY

Using a portable standing display, a collection of handouts, pamphlets, and assorted literature, a woman participates in a public event at her local library as a volunteer, spreading the word about the importance of wildlife habitat and forest stewardship.

A woodland owner who has taken advantage of federal and state government assistance is completing the work of clearing a few acres to create “early successional habitat”—that is, an open landscape with no trees and a few plants, perfect for certain ground birds. Eventually, he knows that young trees will take over the field. Very young, dense forest growth is something not found on his land before. He will be hosting a tour and workshop for other landowners to share his experiences.

A man known as a passionate expert on birds is adding explanations about habitats to a talk he gives each year for gardeners and landscapers from around the state.

A woman works closely with a Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection service forester to complete a stewardship plan for a forest owned by a conservation organization. Her purpose is as much to make the plan as it is to teach the organization’s directors about the benefits of such plans.

Although all these activities are different, and each of the individuals has different motivations, what links them is a common interest in wildlife and its need for habitat, along with each person’s desire to share what they know.

These people belong to a growing network of volunteers engaged in the conservation and stewardship of wildlife habitats in Connecticut. They have learned about habitat management and have made a commitment to share their knowledge with other interested people in their communities. They are motivated by conservation interests and united as “cooperators” under the banner of the Coverts Project.

Steve Broderick’s Inspiration

Initiated more than 20 years ago by now-retired Extension Forester Steve Broderick, and supported by generous contributions of time, energy, and resources by organizations such as the DEP, the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, Highstead Arboretum, and anonymous donors, Coverts (pronounced like “cover” with a “t,” and referring to a thicket that shelters animals) has educated hundreds of people to the benefits of caring for forests, particularly privately owned forests, which make up most of such land in Connecticut.

The Coverts Project attracts people with a passion for the land who are willing to apply what they learn and become advocates in their community.

All Coverts cooperators attend a free, intensive, three-day seminar about forest stewardship and wildlife habitat management. They learn



Connecticut Coverts Program

Tom Worthley shows a class of Coverts cooperators how to look at forests in new ways.

UNDER COVERTS

Adults learn how to care for private land and share their passion with others

about diverse topics ranging from early successional habitat management to forest products marketing to public outreach and education by academic and agency experts.

Classroom presentations, outdoor field trips, and interactive sessions combined with great food, social time, and a library of reference materials are made available in a setting where participants can view the very techniques they are learning right outside the door. Recent Coverts Seminars have been held in Chaplin at the Eden Institute’s Camp WAWA and at the Yale Forestry Camp at Great Mountain Forest in Norfolk.

Promising to Share Knowledge

Following the weekend seminar, new Coverts Cooperators are asked to make a three-part commitment: (1) to put what they have learned to

practice on their own land or another parcel with which they are involved, such as their local land trust; (2) alone or in a team with other cooperators, to plan and conduct at least one outreach activity to share what they have learned with others; and (3) to be willing to be a resource in their community for at least a year, available to answer questions and provide information to other interested landowners. Coverts Project educators and staff are available to assist provide support.

Key to the success of the Coverts Project over the years has been the educational and outreach commitment made by cooperators. Landowners are extremely receptive to honest and forthright information obtained from another landowner, and this peer-to-peer education has been demonstrated repeatedly to lead to real positive habitat and conservation outcomes. Many Coverts cooperators choose to remain active long after their yearlong local commitment is complete. They arrange programs, conduct tours, work one-on-one with other landowners, speak to school groups, write articles, and serve on land trust boards and local commissions. They can be found in practically every town in the state. This successful program has been copied, modified, and instituted in at least 18 other states around the country.

Through the generous financial support of an anonymous donor who believes strongly in the Coverts Project mission, and the time and resources devoted by other program sponsors, the Coverts Project will recruit and inspire another class of new cooperators in 2011.

Beginning in the spring, a call will go out for new applicants to join the 200+ still-active veteran cooperators who are doing good work on the land. For more information, contact CFPA, the DEP Wildlife or Forestry divisions, Highstead, or the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension (860-345-5232) or thomas.worthley@uconn.edu.

Thomas Worthley is a forester with the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension in Haddam. He also has directed the Coverts Project for three years. Among its graduates, during Steve Broderick’s era, are Connecticut Woodlands editor Christine Woodside.



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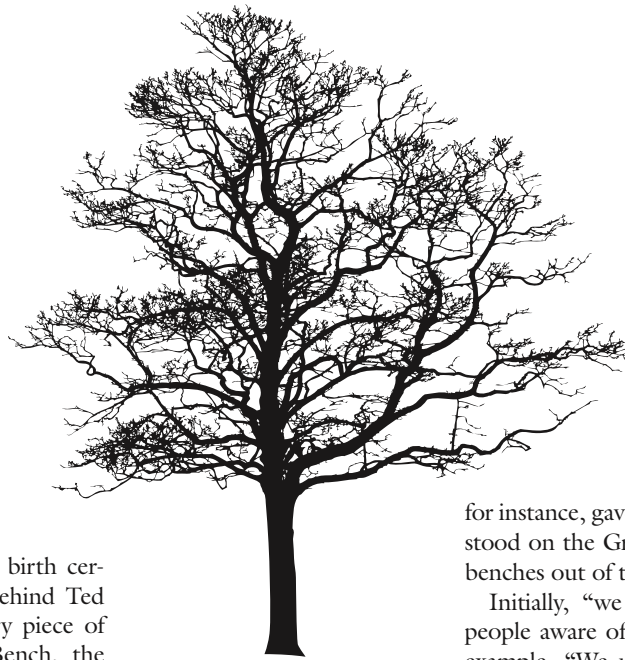
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BY DIANE FRIEND EDWARDS

Furniture usually doesn't come with a birth certificate—unless it's made in a barn behind Ted Esselstyn's house in Higganum. Every piece of furniture fabricated there by City Bench, the company Ted and his brother, Zeb, started earlier this year, comes with a certificate telling the origin, significance, and story of the tree from which the piece was made. "Every one of these trees has a story," Ted said.

The stories begin in a Connecticut city. City Bench salvages urban trees destined to be disposed of in a landfill, cut into firewood, or chopped into mulch, and crafts them into unique furniture for use in the local community. Nationwide, hundreds of thousands of urban trees come down each year because of storms, age, insect damage, disease, or construction. In Connecticut, the city of New Haven alone, where City Bench gets much of its wood, removes more than 600 trees a year. "Our goal is to upcycle them, or repurpose them," Ted said.

Many urban trees are historic, he noted. One of those City Bench has used, for instance, was the largest elm in the state when it was taken down in September 2009 because it had become a hazard. City Bench "made a bench from it that is now in Bradley Airport's A Terminal," he said. Another slab from that elm stands outside Ted's barn awaiting its own transformation into furniture that is meaningful as well as beautiful and functional.

Putting the "Tree Back into the Wood"

Besides bearing "birth certificates," City Bench's furniture itself helps tell the trees' story. The pieces are made from slabs that retain an obvious tree shape. A "live edge"—one still bearing the bark—may outline a tabletop or bench seat. Grain whirls throughout the wood. Knots, checking (cracks), scars, and other "imperfections" form prominent design features. In essence, "We put the tree back into the wood," said Ted.

Emphasizing the furniture's origin as a local, unique tree imbues it with a sense of place and helps the people who use it feel a stronger connection to the community, Ted said.

The urban communities themselves benefit too. Cities usually have to pay someone to dispose of their downed trees. "Cities give us the trees. We save them money and we get wood," he said.

In some cases, the city or a community organization also winds up getting a piece of furniture from the arrangement. New Haven,

for instance, gave City Bench the Christmas tree that stood on the Green last year. City Bench is making benches out of the tree.

Initially, "we started doing giveaways to make people aware of what we could do," said Ted. For example, "We used Red Oaks from Yale to make tables and benches for Yale Farm, part of the Yale Sustainable Food Project." The Esselstyns donated a walnut conference table to the Connecticut Forest & Park Association for its library. City Bench is also showing tables and benches at It's Only Natural, a natural-foods restaurant in Middletown. "They emphasize using local foods. Ours are local tables," he said. "It's all about bioregionalism."

So Many Opportunities for Sustainability

Ted got the idea for City Bench after reading about companies out West, especially in Seattle, that were using local street trees to build furniture.

He was already an accomplished artist, sculptor, and woodworker who had been creating whimsical displays for children's spaces in public settings, such as museums (including Kid City in Middletown), libraries, hospitals, and nature centers. "But the recession meant communities had less money to spend. So I started making furniture."

Initially, he asked people if they had any unusual wood on their property. "But it was hard to find enough wood that way." He then began contacting cities, concentrating on New Haven, which he said "has done a superb job keeping the vitality of their urban forest intact."

He and his brother, Zeb, a journalist and former carpenter, created City Bench and later brought in Tim Spratlin, a woodworker and furniture maker, and JJ Addison.

At a mill owned by a friend's company, Family Tree Care, in North Guilford, Zeb and JJ mill the logs into slabs up to two inches thick. The slabs are air dried there for six months. Ted then transports the slabs to his Higganum property, where they are kiln dried for two to three weeks. After that, they are ready to be crafted into furniture, which Ted designs and he and Tim fabricate.

Ultimately, "Our goal is to mill, fabricate and sell in New Haven," Ted said.

At the moment, "We're fine-tuning a contract with New Haven," he said. "They're staging their trees [at the Department of Parks, Recreation and Trees]. We've negotiated to pick them up several times a year, depending on how many trees come down and how

SALVAGED CITY TREES REBORN

*Esselstyn brothers
make beautiful
furniture*



Diane Friend Edwards

Ted Esselstyn with one of his unique wood pieces.

many we can handle.”

Brimming with enthusiasm and optimism, he said, “There are so many opportunities for this,” not only with municipalities. “We’re also trying to work with institutions such as Yale and Choate-Rosemary Hall in Wallingford that are deepening their commitment to sustainability.”

As Yale President Richard Levin wrote in a letter thanking City Bench for donating the Yale Farm tables and benches, the furniture “is not only practical and beautiful, it also provides an important lesson in responsible stewardship of our precious natural resources.”

But the biggest opportunities lie with the cities. In the past, urban trees weren’t considered commercially usable because they often have embedded metal from nails and other objects that can dull saw blades. “But in the 1990s, the advent of portable band-saw blades made this economically viable,” Ted said. “It’s going to be matter-of-fact that in a number of years, urban trees will be valued and upcycled.”

Meanwhile, he and his City Bench partners will continue telling the story of the trees in the benches, tables, and other items they make.

Diane Friend Edwards is a writer and photographer from Thomaston. This is her second article for Connecticut Woodlands.

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AN UPDATE ON CFPA'S WORK IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

BY LORI PARADIS BRANT

For two years, I have served on the steering committee for the Connecticut Environmental Literacy Plan (ELP). This committee formed after the federal No Child Left Inside bill was proposed. To clear up potential misunderstandings, that bill took the name of a program that started in Connecticut. Here, we are lucky to have the No Child Left Inside program, facilitated by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). This engaging program works to connect residents and visitors to the state forests, parks, and open spaces found here. The highlight has been five years of the Great Park Pursuit, in which families venture to different parks and forests for seven weekends each spring as part of an outdoor recreational adventure.

This productive and mindful ELP steering committee includes people from the state Department of Education, DEP, the state university system, nature centers, outdoor learning centers, and museums. Our charge has been to draft a plan in which Connecticut's residents may become environmentally literate. It is no small task. The group has led informational sessions, forum meetings, and writing workshops to draft a plan with three main segments: education, community, and government.

The federal No Child Left Inside bill would amend the national education act known as No Child Left Behind to include environmental education as part of a school's curriculum. No Child Left Inside proposes funding to states that have a qualifying ELP in place. The ELP addresses problems that teachers have voiced and informal educators have heard: With high stakes in the standardized tests, there is little time or opportunity to teach about the environment.

I have often heard over the years, as have colleagues across the nation, that No Child Left Behind deters teachers from using the outdoors as a tool on the standardized tests. Schools do not want to lose federal funding, which could cut a teacher's job. No Child Left Inside seeks to reverse this trend in decreased environmental education. This act will allow state education agencies to distribute funds for teachers seeking professional development programs in environmental education, as well as funds for the providers of such instruction.

CFPA can offer these programs. We already train teachers to integrate their local environment into their curriculum. Through the Project Learning Tree program, we provide activity guides, lesson plans, storyline development, outdoor and indoor learning opportunities, as well as environmental connections to the state standards in science, language arts, math, and social studies.

Connecting People to Forests

There are wider avenues for teachers and other educators to use their local environment. This year has been proclaimed the International Year of Forests by the United Nations. In the United States, the goal is to promote public understanding of forest benefits. The UN partnered with the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival to celebrate the importance of forests around the world and their connection to people by creating the International Forest Film Festival. During the early February launch of the International Year of Forests in New York City, the films will be made public, and screenings will be offered around the country throughout 2011.

At CFPA, we are working with our partners at the American Forest



Al Brown

Children look for bugs during a program at the Denison-Pequotsepos Nature Center in Stonington.

Foundation to help celebrate forests. The American Forest Foundation works for healthy forests and quality environmental education through the American Tree Farm System and Project Learning Tree. As our partner in coordinating Project Learning Tree in Connecticut, the Connecticut DEP is ready to celebrate Connecticut's forests with us. We are creating a forest exchange box that is slated to be shared at the New York City kick-off event in February after being presented to our state governor. The box itself, donated to all the states by Jim Bland, a fiber supply manager with International Paper, will hold items that can be used to teach others about Connecticut's forests. After the UN presentation, the boxes will be showcased in Washington, D.C., before traveling around the states so others may learn about the unique characteristics of our nation's forests, including the many benefits forests provide. We'll also be holding specialized workshops throughout the year, including a summer teacher tour of working forests in Connecticut. A special presentation on reading the clues found in a forest will be presented to CFPA members and WalkCT Family Guides in April. Stay tuned via ctwoodlands.org for ways you, too, can celebrate forests with us throughout the year.

Lori Paradis Brant is the education director of CFPA.

WALKCT



LET'S MOVE: Michelle Obama's program and CFPA's counterpart

BY LESLIE LEWIS

In recognition of the growing number of American children facing health problems caused by overweight and obesity, First Lady Michelle Obama recently announced her "Let's Move" initiative. Nearly one in three children in America are overweight or obese. One third of all children born in 2000 or later will suffer from diabetes at some point in their lives; many others will face chronic obesity-related health problems.

Let's Move helps schools and families reach the goal of reducing or eliminating childhood obesity:

► **THE HEALTHIER US SCHOOLS CHALLENGE PROGRAM** establishes rigorous standards for schools' food quality, participation in meal programs, physical activity, and nutrition education—the key components that make for healthy and active kids—and provides recognition for schools that meet these standards.

► **A FAMILY ACTIVITY GUIDE** provides tips for parents on incorporating movement into daily routines.

► **LET'S MOVE OUTSIDE** offers events and locations that offer opportunities to get back to nature. Local leaders can use the Active Community information to make their cities and towns more bike- and foot-friendly. Mrs. Obama had a fruit and vegetable garden planted at the White House to showcase what people can grow at home.

At Connecticut Forest & Park Association, through the WalkCT program, we are already involved in the promotion of active lifestyles and healthy diets incorporating fresh, locally grown foods. We developed doctors' prescription pads for walking. The WalkCT Family Rambles offer families and individuals of all ages a free and safe way to explore the outdoors, with the hope that this will be the first step in fostering a new active generation with a strong connection to the natural world.

"The physical and emotional health of an entire generation and the economic health and security of our nation is at stake," said Mrs. Obama. "This isn't the kind of problem that can be solved overnight, but with everyone working together, it can be solved. So, let's move." To find out more about the program, go to letsmove.gov.

Leslie Lewis directs the WalkCT program of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association.

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- **SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2011**
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- **SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2011**
Connecticut College, New London
- **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2011**
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THE STORY OF FRANCES OSBORNE KELLOGG: EDUCATION PATRON, CONSERVATIONIST, FARMER

BY JEAN CRUM JONES

Frances Osborne Kellogg was keenly attached to the natural world her whole life—from her 19th-century childhood on a farm through her business and farming careers both brought on by circumstances and tragedy. In middle age, she joined the board of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, where she served for two decades, often as the only woman in the room.

But a decision she made a few years before she died cemented Mrs. Kellogg's legacy in environmental teaching. In her 70s, she bequeathed her family's beloved estate and farm in Derby to the state of Connecticut with an endowment for a "nature education" center.

She died in 1956, and the state took over the property in the early 1980s, after a friend, the last resident of the house, died.

For the last quarter-century, Mrs. Kellogg's commitment to the Connecticut landscape has been an education center for young people that stands near her former horse barns. After receiving the property, the state felt the best use of Mrs. Kellogg's trust funds would be to build the barn-style, multiuse education building. Today, the Kellogg Environmental Center teaches thousands of students, teachers, and other visitors about environmental challenges. Flower gardens allow a time for wonder, relaxation, and reflection. Mrs. Kellogg's trust funds also support another big interest, dairy education and research at the University of Connecticut. In 1991, UConn built the Frances E. Osborne Kellogg Dairy Center, an open-stalled barn, open to visitors, with computerized milking technology.

Energetic as a Bobbin

Frances Eliza Osborne, born May 14, 1876, had a privileged and happy childhood in a farmhouse in Derby Neck. Her grandfather, John Osborne, was one of the founders of the country's brass industry in the Lower Naugatuck River Valley. Her parents, Wilbur Fisk Osborne and Ellen Davis Osborne, doted on her, their only surviving child. Her father, who had served as a major in the Union Army, managed the family businesses very successfully. He called Frances by the nickname Bobbin because he said the bobbins of his factory's knitting machines were the only thing he knew that moved up and down faster



Osborne Homestead Museum archives

During her time on the Connecticut Forest & Park Association Board, Mrs. Kellogg was often the only woman in the room.

than his daughter.

Frances spent many solitary hours on the family farm, which her mother managed while her father traveled for business. Frances loved her mother's flower garden and picking the profuse wild berries around the farm's edges, but she was not isolated from a cosmopolitan world. She corresponded with, and visited, an aunt, Helen Krehbiel, who had a publishing background and lived in New York City with her music-critic husband, Henry. Books and writing were important at home, too.

Sadly for us, Frances instructed her staff to burn all her correspondence and personal papers after her death in 1956. But during the home restoration, workers found a half-barrel of letters under some rugs in a corner

of the attic. Those letters hold some clues about the personal lives of the family.

A vital interest was music. Her father and grandfather played the violin, and at age 10, Frances began studying violin in New Haven, traveling by train. Her paternal aunts were church organists. Frances absorbed the lessons of the Methodist church, which advocated improving workers' conditions and halting industry's destruction of natural environments.

Loses Vision at 16

At age 16, an accident destroyed the vision in one of Frances's eyes. An eye specialist treated her in New York; she was blindfolded for weeks. Frances never returned to public school but continued violin and music theory lessons, some of them at the University of Musical Art, now called the Juilliard School of Music. She probably began attending the opera then with her opera-expert uncle, cementing a lifelong interest.

In her 20s, she began teaching violin to students in the Naugatuck valley. In 1901, she started a women's choral group that grew into a mixed chorus of 250 voices directed by a Yale music professor. For 16 years, the group performed in Derby. She began accompanying her father on his many speaking engagements at patriotic events and graduations. She traveled herself, independently, and attended Daughters of the American Revolution conventions.

Her life took its next startling turn at age 31. Her beloved father died,

and when the family's bankers advised Frances and her mother that they could live comfortably if they sold the family businesses, Frances declared, "But I'm not going to sell the business! I'm going to run it." She never forgot the look of horror on the judge's face. Despite bitter opposition from the minority stockholders, she persevered.

From Business to Dairy Farming

Shrewdly and tirelessly, she overcame obstacles to reorganize the companies and ventured to become a partner in the firm of Steels and Busks, Ltd. of Leicester, England. Her business savvy was well rewarded when her earnings in the first year with the English firm exceeded her entire original investment.

She finished her late father's project to build a public library for Derby Neck. Frances engaged the library architects to remodel and enlarge her house. After seeing workers' housing in England, she decided to build cottages for her employees in Derby. It is likely that she met Waldo S. Kellogg, a noted architect, while working on this project. Soon after, the two were married; she was in her early 40s. She and Kellogg became interested in dairy herds, eventually specializing in breeding Holstein-Friesian dairy cows in an operation known as Osborndale Farm. The Kelloggs also developed a model dairying operation, Lakeview Dairy Farm, at the Osborne family land, where Kellogg had joined her.

When her husband died after only 10 years of marriage, Frances carried on the management of Osborndale Farm, breeding one of the best-known Holstein bulls of all time, Osborndale Ivanhoe. She was so proud of her work in farming that she recorded her occupation as "executive and farmer" on her World War II ration card.

She became the first woman bank director in Connecticut (of the Birmingham National Bank). One of her favorite projects was presiding over the Women's Club of Derby, Ansonia, and Shelton, for 20 years. She sponsored educational and cultural events beyond the means of the small industrial community, including appearances by the leading classical music performers, the poet Edna St. Vincent Millay, and aviator Amelia Earhart.

To view the current list of programs at the Kellogg Environmental Center and the Osborne Homestead Museum, visit ct.gov/dep/kellogg.

Inspired by a Forester's Speech

Her interest in Connecticut conservation may have come about as a result of a lecture at one of the women's club meetings. The speakers were State Forester Austin F. Hawes and Henry F. Graves, dean of the Yale School of Forestry, on January 27, 1909. Around this time, Frances joined CFPA, and later she served as a director for 20 years and as vice-president from 1934 to 1938. During this period, CFPA began publishing booklets and this magazine.

During her time of service, CFPA members worked to preserve land for state parks and forests. She witnessed the contributions of land to the state by many generous board members. This may have inspired her own future gift. These contributors included Curtis H. Veeder (who donated the land for Penwood State Park), George Dudley Seymour (Nathan Hale State Forest), Mrs. Allan F. Kitchel (Algonquin State Forest), Alain C. White (Mohawk State Park), and Edith M. Chase (Topsmead State Forest). Frances was of the generation to witness the reforestation of Connecticut and saw something special about public forests and state parks.

Frances's first donation of land for the public came in 1917, when she donated her lakeside land for a swimming camp conceived by Derby industrialist Irving H. Peck. Thousands of valley residents have learned to swim at the ongoing popular "Rec Camp," short for Recreation Camp.

Meanwhile, she bought several small farms near her homestead farm, which combined with 400 acres to make up the future Osborndale State Park. Her idea was to preserve a rich and diverse natural habitat near a valley of industrial towns where young people could appreciate the outdoors she had as a child.

In 1951, when she conceived the plan to turn her farm into a state park, she had to act quickly to outwit the city of Derby. It is believed that Derby planned to invoke its power of eminent domain to condemn some of her prime farmland to build low-cost housing. The story goes that the day before the condemnation papers would be served, she deeded her farm to the state. The then-governor, John Lodge, accepted the gift.

Frances Osborne Kellogg was an amazing woman for her time. She succeeded superbly in a man's world and insisted on sitting at the decision table. She was an environmentalist before the word came into common usage. She continues to amaze us today with her spirit of hope, generosity, and civic responsibility. Let's enjoy and use Frances's gifts to preserve scenic Connecticut and appreciate her example of living a full life despite tragic setbacks.

The gracious home Frances and Waldo created is a special feature of the Osborndale State Park and is open for house tours. It is remarkable that little has changed since Waldo's death, and it remains today a lovely example of Colonial Revival taste.

Jean Crum Jones is a registered dietician and, with her family, runs the Jones Family Farms in Shelton. She extends grateful appreciation for background information on Mrs. Kellogg to Patricia Sweeney, archivist of the Osborndale-Kellogg papers at the Derby Neck Library, and Christiana Soares Jones, curator of the Osborne Homestead Museum.



Osborne Homestead Museum archives

Frances Osborne Kellogg with one of her prize-winning bulls.

THE TRAIL CALLED, AND HE ANSWERED

Hiking from Middletown to Mount Monadnock

BY TOM TELLA

Five years after I had climbed all of the 4,000-footers in New Hampshire, sporting a beer belly, and approaching age 60, I felt the trail calling—indeed, screaming. I was overweight, and my life was too hectic. The obvious answer was for me to get out onto the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails. I had set my sights on the Mattabessett Trail, but then the federal government designated the New England National Scenic Trail, which includes the Mattabessett and Metacomet trails in Connecticut with the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail in Massachusetts. (The trail continues into New Hampshire, to the summit of Mount Monadnock, but that section is not part of the official National Scenic Trail.)

Formerly known as the MMM Trail, this fantastic thread of paradise begins with the Mattabessett Trail at the Connecticut River in Middletown, Connecticut, which heads east and then south to Guilford. From there, it swings north, following the long trap rock ridges of the Connecticut River valley into central Massachusetts. There, it swings northeasterly. Including the continuation of the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail to Monadnock in New Hampshire, the route covers more than 240 miles.

The recent addition of the 11-mile Menunkatuck Trail extends the route south from that southernmost point of the U-shaped Mattabessett Trail, connecting it almost to the coast of Long Island Sound if you are willing to walk four miles on pavement.

On Saturday, June 27, 2009, I set out from the River Road trailhead in Middletown, Connecticut, the very beginning of the Mattabessett Trail. My destination was Mount Monadnock in New Hampshire.

Along the Mattabessett, I was soon treated to the first of many traprock ridgelines. In Berlin, Connecticut, the Mattabessett met the Metacomet Trail, and shortly after, I came to Castle Craig and the hanging Hills of Meriden. Onward north, the Metacomet Trail led me over Ragged Mountain, through the Metropolitan District Commission lands, and then onto Talcott Mountain and past the Heublein Tower, then over more traprock ridges.

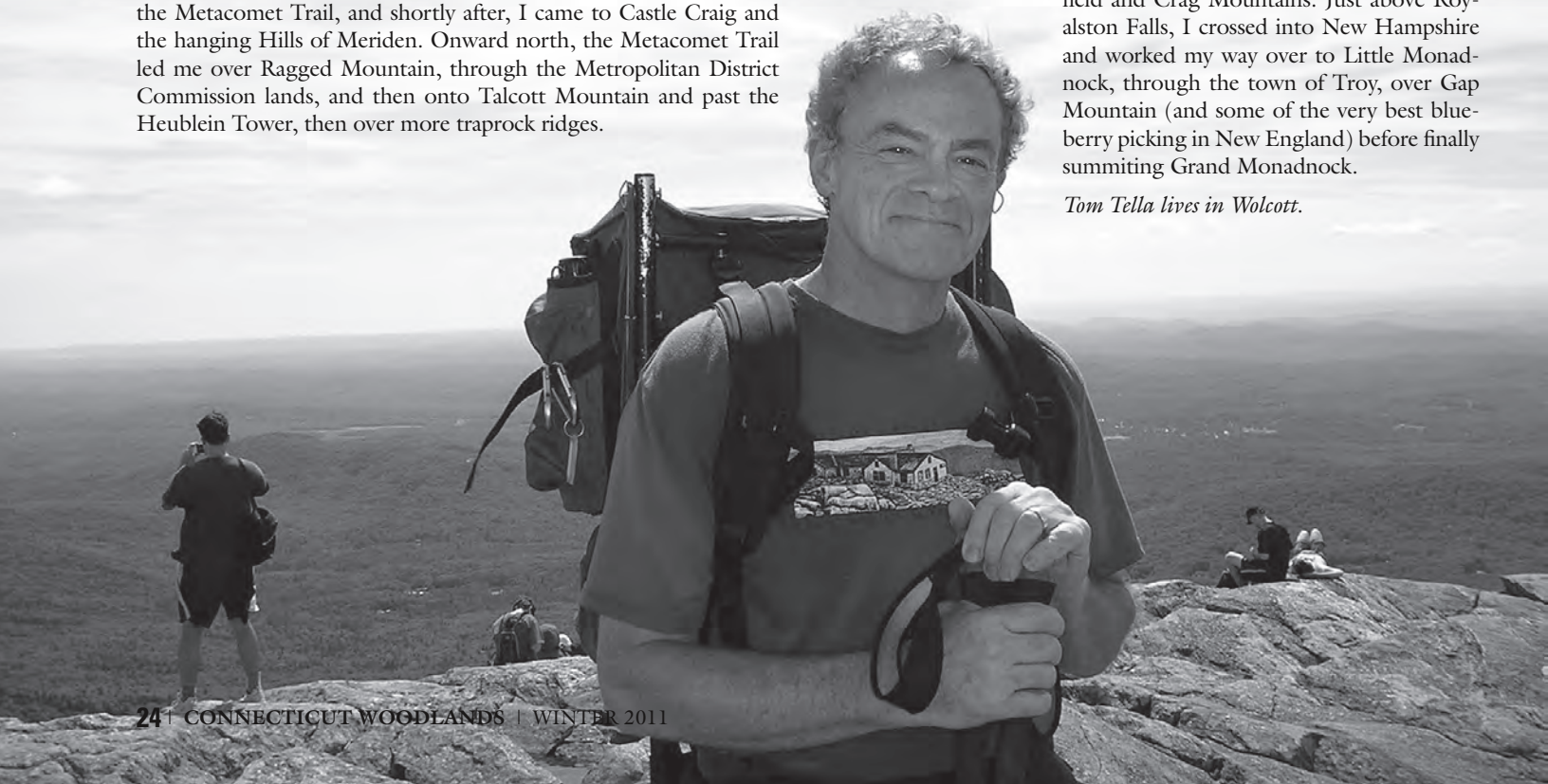


Tom Tella

Following the traprock ridges north on the New England Trail in Connecticut and Massachusetts and the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail in New Hampshire gave Tom Tella many sweeping views. Below, Tom at the end of his journey, on the summit of Mount Monadnock.

Well into Massachusetts, I summited Mount Tom, crossed the Connecticut River, and then hiked across the Holyoke Range before swinging north again toward Northfield and Crag Mountains. Just above Roy-alston Falls, I crossed into New Hampshire and worked my way over to Little Monadnock, through the town of Troy, over Gap Mountain (and some of the very best blueberry picking in New England) before finally summiting Grand Monadnock.

Tom Tella lives in Wolcott.



TEACHERS BECOME STUDENTS, PUSHING UP THE TRAIL

Forging memories in the heat of the summer

BY KIMBERLY WILLIAMS

Threat of severe thunderstorms, humidity so thick you could part it, and a 500-foot elevation gain over a mile did not deter 10 teachers. They represented multiple schools, communities, and states along the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. These teachers are part of Appalachian Trail Conservancy's and the National Park Service's coordinated Trail to Every Classroom (TTEC) Program, which is a professional development program for K-12 teachers. The program promotes conservation, civic participation, and healthy lifestyles by using the Appalachian Trail as an educational resource. TTEC gives teachers the tools to create multidisciplinary and "whole school" curricula around the trail or the trail experience.

At the weeklong summer institute in West Virginia, teachers chose from multiple workshops. Ten signed up for an overnight hike on the Appalachian Trail. For many, this was their first overnight camping trip, their first time lugging a 30-pound pack all day, and their first jaunt out on the trail. For all, it was a firsthand experience to learn about the culture of the trail, Leave No Trace ethics in practice (see Int.org), and a miniature experience of the day in the life of a person hiking the entire Appalachian Trail.

With determination, the group prevailed, making it three miles to the top and to the Ed Garvey shelter, the first shelter north of Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. As temperatures soared into the 90s on that in mid-July day, these teachers bonded as they ascended, with laughter, conversations, and inquisitiveness about the trail and the surrounding environment.

Teachers were broken into groups, each with an assignment and discoveries to make: preparing meals on gas-powered stoves, hanging bear ropes, the wonders of composting privies, siting and setting up tents, and a half-mile, several-hundred-foot descent to filter water for the entire group. Ridgerunner Faren MacDonald joined the group at the shelter and answered questions and discussed her experience on the trail.

One of the teacher's greatest discoveries was to meet a teenage group (led by young adults) on an overnight trip. Because the group was the same age group as their students, the teachers conversed and built a friendship with the younger camping companions. Later into the night, the young teens listened through the rungs of the loft of the shelter as the teachers told ghost stories. One told the travails of her hobby as a ghost hunter.

The next day all remarked that the three-mile hike out seemed to take no time. There is something about an overnight backpacking trip that can bond a group together. It's a magical mixture of communally forged memory, shared sweat and laughter, sharing tent space, and hearing the wild noises of the dark of night. Whatever the mixture was, it put smiles on the faces of this group of 10 as they rode back together in the Appalachian Trail Conservancy van. The experience surely imparted a sense of love, respect, and curiosity about the trail to these teachers and will be passed on to their students.

Kimberly Williams is a landscape protection coordinator for the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. The ATC is a volunteer-based group dedicated to preserving and managing the resources of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. To learn more, see appalachiantrail.org. This article first appeared in the Fall 2010 edition of the ATC's Trail to Every Classroom newsletter.

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ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATE: NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE

CLIMATE CHANGING, BUT SNOWFALL STEADY

With summers around the world getting hotter and glaciers melting, should we be seeing less snow each winter in Connecticut? Although scientists have predicted that the amount of snow that stays on the ground through the winter is declining, the amount falling out of the sky is not.

“Even with climate change, our snowfall has remained fairly constant, because we have not warmed to that extent,” said Samuel Sampieri, air quality meteorologist at Connecticut’s Department of Environmental Protection. Snowfall fluctuates each year, but there have not been any drastic changes in Connecticut’s snowfall in the last 100 years. The average snowfall in Connecticut is 45 to 46 inches of snow per year based on a 30-year average.

Based on his college study on snowfall and temperature, Mr. Sampieri says there is no correlation between climate change and snowfall. Rather, storm track determines snowfall in Connecticut, he said. Depending on where a storm hits in relation to us will determine whether we get snow or rain and how much, he said.

—Nicole Guzzardi

DEAD ZONE GROWING IN LONG ISLAND SOUND

Western areas of Long Island Sound have been experiencing hypoxic conditions or so-called dead zones caused by excess amounts of nitrogen, which can cause fish and other aquatic organisms to die. The Department of Environmental Protection started monitoring the dead zones in 1991. This condition afflicts the Sound from early July to early September.

The excess nitrogen is entering the Sound through waste and sewage treatment plants. Matthew Lyman of the DEP and environmental analyst for the Long Island Sound Study said, “The goal is to reduce the amount of nitrogen in the effluent by 58.5 percent by the year 2014.” Already nitrogen levels entering the sound per day are less than the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), according to the DEP.

Although about \$314 million in state and federal funds designated over the last two years is projected to be spent upgrading sewer facilities, that is less than what was anticipated. State officials say it may be difficult to meet the 2014 goal.

—Gwendolyn Craig



Christine Woodside

Connecticut Forest & Park Association trail volunteers finish up placing rocks on a new section of the Mattabesett Trail at the 2010 fall trail workshop.



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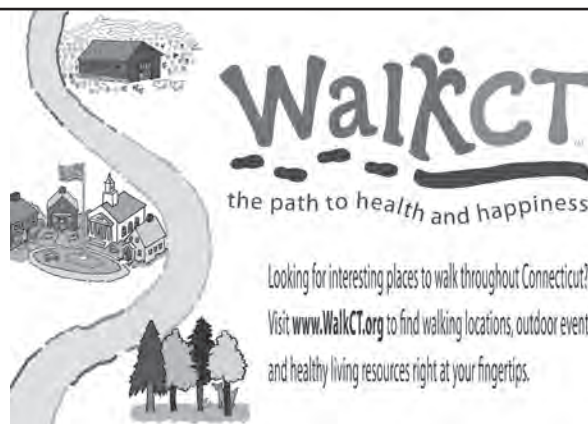
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NATE DORPALEN: Young man died hiking in Norway; son of CFPA Trails Committee member



Courtesy of the Dorpalen family

Nate Dorpalen on a backpacking trip through the Polychrome Mountains, Denali National Park, in 2007.

Nathan Dowd Dorpalen, the son of Connecticut Forest & Park Association Trails Committee member Peter Dorpalen and his wife, Mary-Louise, died in a hiking accident in northern Norway on October 6. He was 26 years old and a candidate for a master's degree in environmental agroecology at the Norwegian University of Life Sciences in Aas, Norway.

Mr. Dorpalen, known as Nate, earned his bachelor's degree from Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, in 2006. He graduated with honors from Farmington High School. He loved hiking and traveled as far as Siberia and Mount McKinley (Denali) in Alaska. He learned about farming, forestry, and carpentry in an apprenticeship in Maine during college and previously worked for the U.S. Bureau of Land Management assisting with gold mine cleanups and monitoring peregrine falcon nests on the Forty Mile River near Tok, Alaska.

A memorial service took place October 23 at the First Church of Christ, Congregational, in Farmington, followed by a lunch and hike up Rattlesnake Mountain. Donations in his memory may be directed to Foodshare of Greater Hartford or The Orion Society.

ELMER BAXTER

Elmer L. Baxter, who managed a section of the Metacomet Trail as a Connecticut Forest & Park Association volunteer for many years, died on November 21 in Bar Harbor, Maine. He was 91.

Mr. Baxter lived for 60 years in Newington, where with his late wife, Elizabeth Sweetser Baxter, he raised three sons. They were active members of the Church of Christ, Congregational. He worked for the Travelers Insurance Co. in Hartford for 40 years.

A graduate of Colby College, he served as a meteorologist in the U.S. Air Force in both World War II and the Korean War, forecasting for trans-Atlantic military flights and shipping. He was stationed in Newfoundland and Greenland, where he spent a year on the Arctic Circle and flew over the North Pole in 1952.

He is survived by three sons, Ledyard S. Baxter of Aquebogue, New York, David S. Baxter of Orono, Maine, and Benjamin A. Baxter of Bar Harbor, ME; four grandchildren; and one great-grand child. The family plans a memorial service in the spring.

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