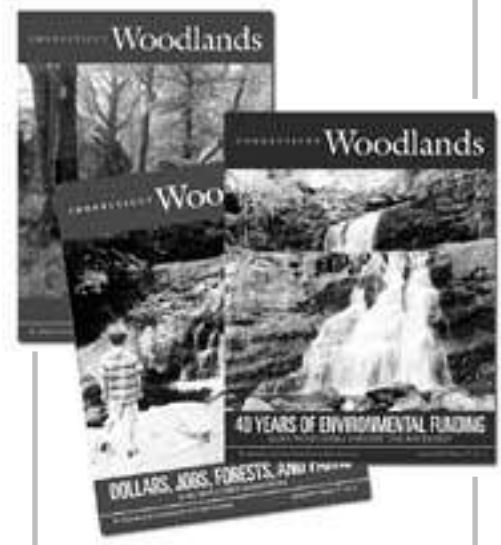
CONNECTICUT Woodlands

FATHER OF THE EVERGLADES: A LANDSCAPER FROM CONNECTICUT

TRACING THE PAST OF THE MATTATUCK STATE FOREST

The Magazine of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association Fall 2012 Volume 77 No. 3

About Connecticut Forest & Park Association and Connecticut Woodlands Magazine



Connecticut Woodlands is a quarterly magazine published since 1936 by CFPA, the member-based, 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.

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CONNECTICUT Forest & Park ASSOCIATION

Diane Friend Edwards

Boulders frame a hiker's view walking the Nayantaquit Trail in Lyme. See page 18.

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 member-based, 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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On the Cover:

Clockwise from top: Ernest F. Coe's signature in his Elm City Nursery catalog; the Everglades landscape he fought to preserve; Coe (in bow tie) leading a boat tour in the Everglades; a map plotting his New Haven nursery near today's Yale Bowl; Coe, standing, visiting a store c. 1925.

Inset images from Florida State Archives; background photos by Christine Woodside.

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DEPARTMENTS

CONNECTICUT Forest & Park ASSOCIATION

MAPLE SUGAR CHART ONLINE:
To see Steve Broderick's guide to tapping maple trees, a supplement to his summer issue article on practical aspects of maple sugaring, see www.ctwoodlands.org.

Connecticut rates high in the way cities meet the wild

BY ERIC LUKINGBEAL

Eric Lukingbeal

Sometimes we are so overwhelmed by environmental data that it's hard to make sense of it. I've found that one of the most useful tools is the Council on Environmental Quality's annual "report card" on Connecticut's environment. This year's report for 2011 is the 40th. It uses a standardized set of 31 indicators to measure progress, or lack of progress. You can read the report on CEQ's Web site in under an hour. Here's what I found most intriguing.

Last year's big storms—the August hurricane and the October snowstorm—revealed some "previously obscure" data. The data concerns the wildland–urban interface, or WUI, a measure of the proximity of dwellings to forest, wetlands, and grasslands. Seventy-two percent of our land area falls in the WUI category, more than any other state. The WUI was originally developed to measure forest fire risk. In another sense, it's a measure of sprawl. But it partly explains our extended power outages.

Connecticut's high standing in WUI has resulted in our taking advantage of this proximity to watch wildlife around the home and to conserve habitat. We do this much more, and we spend much more, than the average American does. On the average plot of ground here, we are "watching" our wildlife more than in nearly every other state. "Watching" includes feeding, photographing, and conserving habitat. In only two other states are there more bird species per square mile. (That's one of the reasons the late bird guide author and artist Roger Tory Peterson chose to live here.)

Connecticut's wildlife watching is quite extraordinary. No other state can beat our residents' preference for watching wildlife around the home (within one mile). We are one of five states where we spend more to watch wildlife than we spend on hunting and fishing. Of course, this may not be an unalloyed good—our hunting and fishing participation rates are falling, especially among the young. And hunters and anglers support conservation efforts.

Outdoor activities and conservation are good in themselves. But they also produce large economic benefits. The 2011 study by the University of Connecticut estimated that 9,000 jobs and $1 billion in economic activity can be traced directly to outdoor activities in just state parks and forests. For every dollar the state has spent on parks, $38 in economic benefits has resulted.

A high WUI score has other consequences, not all of them good. Invasive exotic species follow low-density housing development, which has been the land use pattern here since World War II. Our ecosystems' biggest threat comes from invasives. Yet, as CEQ points out, there is no coordinated statewide program to deal with it.

CEQ's report includes a letter to the governor, urging him to consider that our top WUI rating and our citizens' high rate of watching wildlife make us the "Nature State." It's a persuasive request but coupled with a warning that our high level of volunteer conservation commitment may not continue indefinitely. This is so because so many of our children have no substantial contact with wild nature.

Eric Lukingbeal is a lawyer who lives in Granby.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Drownings at a popular park

Years ago, I worked as a lifeguard, trained in how to rescue swimmers who panic or get into trouble. I knew how to tow a flailing adult to the edge or shore. More important, I was supposed to stop accidents before they happened.

One evening I was teaching two women, both beginning swimmers, at a YMCA in another state. One of them was going along nicely with a kickboard and then began to panic, flailing in the water the classic way all drowning victims do, lifting her arms up and down as if doing jumping jacks, and bobbing. After an eternally long few seconds, I hauled her back to the edge with my rescue pole. A few seconds more of her thrashing and I'd have been doing a full-fledged cross-chest carry.

The two young men who died in 2011 and 2012 while swimming at Millers Pond State Park, in Durham, provide textbook examples of accidents that perhaps could have been prevented if the state had more resources available to post seasonal staffers at popular places like this. A lifeguard, even an old one whose certification is out of date, with knowledge and basic equipment, might have nipped these accidents in the bud.

Richard Bland, a 21-year-old employee of Quinnipiac University who lived in New Haven, went out to Millers Pond to go swimming with his friends on July 6, 2011. It was a nice day, about 85 degrees. The state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's report said that they spent the afternoon in and around the pond near some cliffs. Mr. Bland was not reported to have been drinking alcohol. They jumped in from the cliffs (despite a sign warning not to do this). At around 4 p.m., Mr. Bland and his friends started swimming across the pond. Millers Pond is not large, but it's large enough for a weak swimmer to get in trouble.

The report said that Mr. Bland told one friend, "I'm tired. Let's go back," and then, "I don't think I can make it." His friends tried to push him along. One friend who was on the shore threw a rescue buoy that had no rope. Mr. Bland could not grab it; by now he was thrashing. One friend got so tired from trying to fight the thrashing that he had to swim to shore to rest. Another friend grabbed his hand as he submerged.

Millers Pond is a wooded lake with several access points. Several people watched Mr. Bland struggle. One woman watched from across the lake and called 911. Her friend saw a buoy on a tree but was too far away to throw it.

Less than an hour after Mr. Bland went under, divers from the South Fire District retrieved his body. An ambulance took him away; he was pronounced dead at the hospital.

A few months ago, on April 16, Nicholas Wint, a 22-year-old student at Central Connecticut State University, submerged while swimming on one of this spring's freakishly warm days. Divers from two fire departments pulled him out of the water. An ambulance took him to Middlesex Hospital, then the Life Star helicopter transported him to Hartford Hospital, where he died the next day.

On the Fourth of July this year, I hiked around Millers Pond and watched a few dozen children having a ball in the water while their parents cooked and ate on the shore. Millers Pond is a beautiful spring-fed lake, and the park has no admission fee. What would you do, if you lived in a city, wanted to cool off, and didn't have a lot of money?

This is not a call for a specific solution, but I do hope that citizens—especially those who rescue people at Millers Pond, those who swim there, and those who witness these tragedies—will talk publicly about how to resolve this problem. Lifeguards would have intervened way before these men drowned. Lifeguards are expensive. So are the costs of ambulance and diving teams who rescue the victims. So are the ultimate losses, their lives, which trump all other costs.

— Christine Woodside, Editor

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Connecticut is CFPA's Everglades

BY ERIC HAMMERLING

Eric Hammerling

Since the Connecticut Forest & Park Association's inception in 1895, the forests and natural resources of Connecticut have been our metaphorical Everglades. Connecticut is where we have our roots, we fully appreciate the uniqueness of Connecticut, and CFPA has been successful over many years because of your heroic support and involvement. (Thank you!)

To complement the lead article in this issue, I reflect on some other Connecticut-grown ideas that have influenced the nation. This list combines conservation firsts (in bold) with a few of the firsts listed on the ct.gov Web site.

1656 — first municipal public library in America, a bequest to the "towne of New Haven"

1670 — first survey for the first turnpike in America, between Norwich and New London

1794 — first cotton gin, an invention Eli Whitney of New Haven patented

1803 — first town library, tax-supported and organized in Salisbury

1836 — first revolver

1853 — first ice-making machine

1854 — **Bushnell Park becomes first municipal park in the nation to be conceived, built, and paid for by citizens through a popular vote**

1861 — first PhD degree, awarded in philosophy by Yale University

1903 — **first state forest in New England acquired at Portland/Meshomasic State Forest**

1905 — **Gifford Pinchot (of Simsbury) becomes first chief of the U.S. Forest Service**

1907 — first permanent public planning body, Hartford's Commission on the City Plan

1968 — **Stamford native Benton MacKaye's vision is realized with the designation of the Appalachian Trail as the first National Scenic Trail**

2012 — **Connecticut River becomes first designated National Blueway**

Connecticut is a subtle landscape that never commands the kind of attention that would match its influence on the nation. We think it's time to pay attention. Connecticut is CFPA's Everglades.

Eric Hammerling lives in West Hartford.

Father of the Everglades

HOW DID ERNEST F. COE EVOLVE FROM A NEW HAVEN LANDSCAPER WHO CULTIVATED EXOTIC PLANTS FOR CONNECTICUT'S FRONT YARDS INTO THE MAN WHO FOUGHT TO PRESERVE SOUTH FLORIDA?

BY CHRISTINE WOODSIDE

On December 6, 1947, President Harry S. Truman stood on a palm-decorated podium in the Everglades, the huge marsh that makes up southern Florida. There, he dedicated Everglades National Park. The government would protect part of the land of subtropical orchids, poisonous trees, alligators, crocodiles, mosquitoes, anhingas and other bright-colored birds, and more, from ravenous plant collectors and developers.

Sitting near the podium was Ernest F. Coe, originally of New Haven, Connecticut, a tall, white-haired landscape architect who before his move to Florida had grown and sold trees and plants and designed residential landscapes. Tom Coe, as he was called, and his wife, Anna, had fallen in love with orchids and the other-worldly acres of saw grass accentuated by tree islands. Mrs. Coe had suggested that only a park could stop the ravenous plant collectors from destroying it, and Mr. Coe had spent two decades convincing state and federal authorities to make the park.

"Had it not been for Ernest F. Coe, there would never have been an Everglades National Park," wrote Horace Albright, who had directed the National Park Service during most of the decade Mr. Coe lobbied the U.S. Congress. The bill establishing the park passed in 1934, and the state of Florida then spent the next 13 years acquiring the land, with Mr. Coe close behind seeking donors.

By the time the park officially opened, Mr. Coe was so angry that the boundaries had shrunk from his original proposal that he almost skipped the ceremony. But he was introduced that day as "the daddy" of the park, to big cheers. For a while, people forgot his frustration that the park did not include areas

to the north he deemed crucial for water to supply the habitat of the southern area.

In 1996, a new visitors' center at the park entrance near Homestead, Florida, was dedicated in his memory. Anyone who visits the Everglades now walks past a plaque with his likeness—and might wonder who Mr. Coe was. He was a man from Connecticut who'd become a deeper conservationist when he'd moved to Florida. He'd mucked through and supposedly slept in the mosquito-clouded lands among the "river of grass," as journalist Marjory Stoneman Douglas called it.

He'd become a true believer in preserving a natural landscape in ways his Connecticut life quietly foreshadowed. The Everglades was his largest life project. Why did a Connecticut grower of roses, trees, and plants give up landscaping to argue for an alligator-rich marsh? Why did Mr. Coe go to Florida? Originally, because he loved the warm, exotic landscape and hoped he could make money landscaping new houses in the development boom of the 1920s. The boom soon turned bust, though, and within a few years, Mr. Coe began visiting officials in Washington, pressing that the land be preserved.

The tracks Mr. Coe left in Connecticut are faint, but they do offer some clues to his later conservationist bent. Did Connecticut remain the source and the influence on the Father of the Everglades, as he now is known?

Yes and no. Yes, because Mr. Coe had worked for decades in New England recognizing the particularities of exotic plants as he searched the world for specimens he could cultivate in Connecticut. Yes, because Mr. Coe approached his business as a nursery owner in Connecticut with enthusiasm that certainly remained in Florida. But no, because Mr. Coe and Connecticut severed their ties when he left and, as a result, Connecticut has lost hold of a historical figure who cared deeply about landscape.

The Elm City Nursery

It's been widely reported that Mr. Coe graduated from Yale's school of fine arts in 1897. He attended classes there for a year, but did not graduate. No formalized landscape architecture programs existed at that time, but a movement was growing to design outdoor domestic spaces with the same care that architects used to design buildings.

Around the beginning of the twentieth century, Mr. Coe established a nursery in what then was the outskirts of New Haven. The Elm City Nursery covered several city blocks on soil Mr. Coe described in the catalogs as a perfect growing habitat. The nursery thrived just beyond a new Yale University athletic field—today's Yale Bowl. No traces of the nursery exist now.

Although the landscape architecture field was then a new one, Mr. Coe called himself a landscape architect and offered his design services through the nursery's artfully designed catalogs.

"Our nursery has been built up rapidly from a small beginning," Mr. Coe, who also was president and treasurer of the nursery, wrote in the 1906 catalog. He counseled his customers to plant trees and shrubs that would endure from year to year and so create a permanent landscape. He described the growing movement of landscaping parks and parkways. "There is now such a great variety available at a well-equipped nursery to select from that the material for no end of charming schemes can be supplied," he wrote. "This has come about by ransacking the entire world for the many countries' most beautiful trees and plants. Japan alone furnishes a most fascinating available collection, and all the temperate zones, both north and south, have contributed their full share."

The words he chose—"ransacking the entire world"—sound odd in light of what happened when the Coes went to Florida. There, he and his wife went on a trip to Cape Sable, an area where orchids thrived in the wild, and were so horrified at the ransacking of plants by collectors that they started talking about the necessity of the government protecting the land as a national park. So perhaps the Tom Coe who brought Japanese shrubs to Connecticut changed.

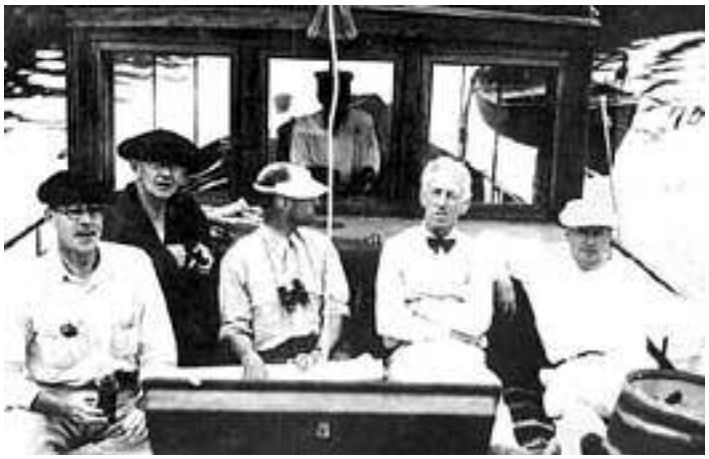
In 1911, Mr. Coe imported bonsai plants from Japan, which he had visited, according to Thomas S. Elias, who wrote a paper, "History of the introduction and establishment of bonsai in the western world (www.bonsai-nbf.org/site/images/Elias_Paper.pdf). Mr. Coe grew the trees for several years, using cold frames in the winter. Around the time he moved permanently to Florida in 1925, Mr. Coe donated his collection to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. The collection is the basis of the public collection of bonsai, one of the oldest, at that institution.

Sometime after 1910, the Coes bought, or had built, a house at 951 Forest Street in New Haven. This house, a short distance from the Elm City Nursery property, still stands across the street from the

continued on page 8

"HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR ERNEST F. COE, THERE WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN AN EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK."

— **HORACE ALBRIGHT,** FORMER NATIONAL PARK SERVICE DIRECTOR



State Archives of Florida

Coe (in bow tie) promoted the national park idea by taking people through the Everglades. Here, in 1929, he hosts a boat tour past tropical plants and animals not seen anywhere else in the United States.

Opposite page, left, Tom Coe (as he was called) visited a storekeeper in South Florida sometime in the 1930s.

State Archives of Florida

private Hopkins School in a wooded, hilly area of the city.

The Everglades Quest

Mr. Coe was not the first advocate for Everglades National Park. The National Park Service, established in 1916, first considered making a park out of portions of the Everglades in 1923. Four Floridians carried the torch for this idea but did not pursue it. Mr. Coe, who took this torch and ran with it, had enthusiastically relocated after visiting by railroad for winter vacations, according to Robert Blythe, who is writing a book about the park's beginnings. Mr. Coe opened a landscape architecture office near his Coral Gables home, but he did not keep it long because of the development slump that hit around the time he arrived.

Michael Grunwald writes of Mr. Coe in *The Swamp* (Simon & Schuster, 2006), "Sixty years old and unemployed, with no outlet for his boundless energy, he began sloshing around the Everglades in canvas sneakers, often wrapping himself in a blanket and sleeping in the middle of the marsh. Coe fell madly in love with this 'great empire of solitude.'"

Mr. Coe, quoted in 1940 in the obituary of his wife, Anna Neumann Coe, credited her with coming up with the idea of preserving the Everglades as a national park. Mrs. Coe was interested in orchids and presided over the Coral Gables Garden Club for years. "At the breakfast table in the spring of 1928, Coe told his wife that a neighbor had invited him to make a trip to the Cape Sable section to collect a truckload of Florida orchid plants. The couple discussed the ravages against the plant by such collectors. Mrs. Coe inquired, "Were the region a national park, would they not be protected?"

The obituary went on: "From that thought grew the idea for a national park. Mr. and Mrs. Coe discussed it for months before presenting the suggestion to authorities in Washington. A national park association was formed and Mrs. Coe was one of its most faithful workers."

Mr. Coe thought the Everglades was "the Land of the Fountain of Youth." He started an advocacy group. He persuaded the U.S. Congress to study the Everglades, drew up boundaries for a park, and became the head of a Florida state commission formed to buy the land for the park. This is the way national parks were formed in the settled East. "The blaze that had been lighted in him, the purpose and the power of the idea, would dominate his every moment for the rest of his life," wrote Ms. Douglas.

Mr. Coe, who had penned brief letters to customers of the Elm City Nursery, now wrote thousands of letters pushing for the Everglades as head of the state commission to acquire the land. Mr. Grunwald said Mr. Coe's "moral fervor alienated as often as it persuaded, especially in frontier towns like Chokoloskee and Everglades City."

In all the thousands of letters he wrote, Mr. Blythe said, Mr. Coe never mentioned anything about his work in Connecticut, or the Connecticut landscape. His past did not consciously turn the gears of the Father of the Everglades's brain. But he was still much engaged with the north. Every summer, Mr. Blythe said, Mr. Coe drove to Rhode Island for vacations on a family compound. Between 1928 and 1934, he also stopped in Washington, D.C., to confer with officials about the park proposal.

Fish Out of Water

Mr. Blythe said Floridians didn't know what to do with Mr. Coe's brand of enthusiasm. "He was admirable and high principled and stubborn," Mr. Blythe said in an interview. "He had this patrician New England manner, and when he got in with the good old boys in Tallahassee, there was a culture clash. When I was in the state archives, I came across this letter; the governor of Florida wrote to his aide and said, 'I spent a half hour with Mr. Coe; he gives me the jim-jams.'"

Mr. Coe had another plan in mind besides just a park. Mr. Blythe said some thought Mr. Coe would be hired to design a landscape for the park, and that he had sketched a "landscaped parkway" that, if built, would have disturbed the flow of water and would have ruined the ecosystem.

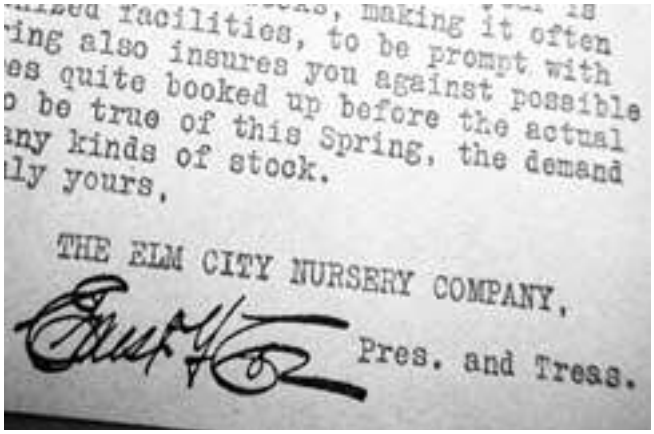
"U.S. 1 runs from Miami down to the [Florida] Keys," Mr. Blythe noted. "His landscaped road would leave 1 somewhere south

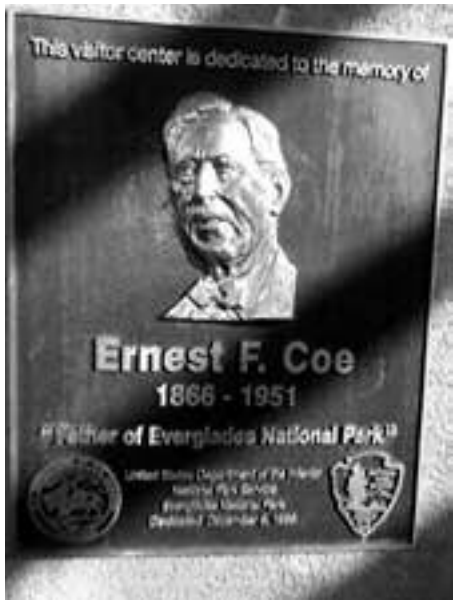
Left, Coe (in white at right) was honored at the dedication of Everglades National Park in 1947.
State Archives of Florida

Below, catalog covers from Coe's New Haven-based landscaping business are filed at Yale University's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.
Christine Woodside

Clockwise from top left, Coe's personal touch set the tone of his Elm City Nursery Company catalogs; the "river of grass"; park visitors' center commemorative plaque; part of the nursery property as it looks today; Coe's former house in New Haven; map showing Coe's nursery company in New Haven around 1910.

Christine Woodside





of Homestead, line the coast, and go back up the Gulf Coast to Everglades City. It would have been disastrous, because you would have had to bring in fill to have anything to build the road on, because it's all marsh."

It's an amazing thought that Mr. Coe—who threw a tantrum when areas that would provide more water to the park had been initially left out of the boundaries —dreamed of building a road around the land where this water met the ocean.

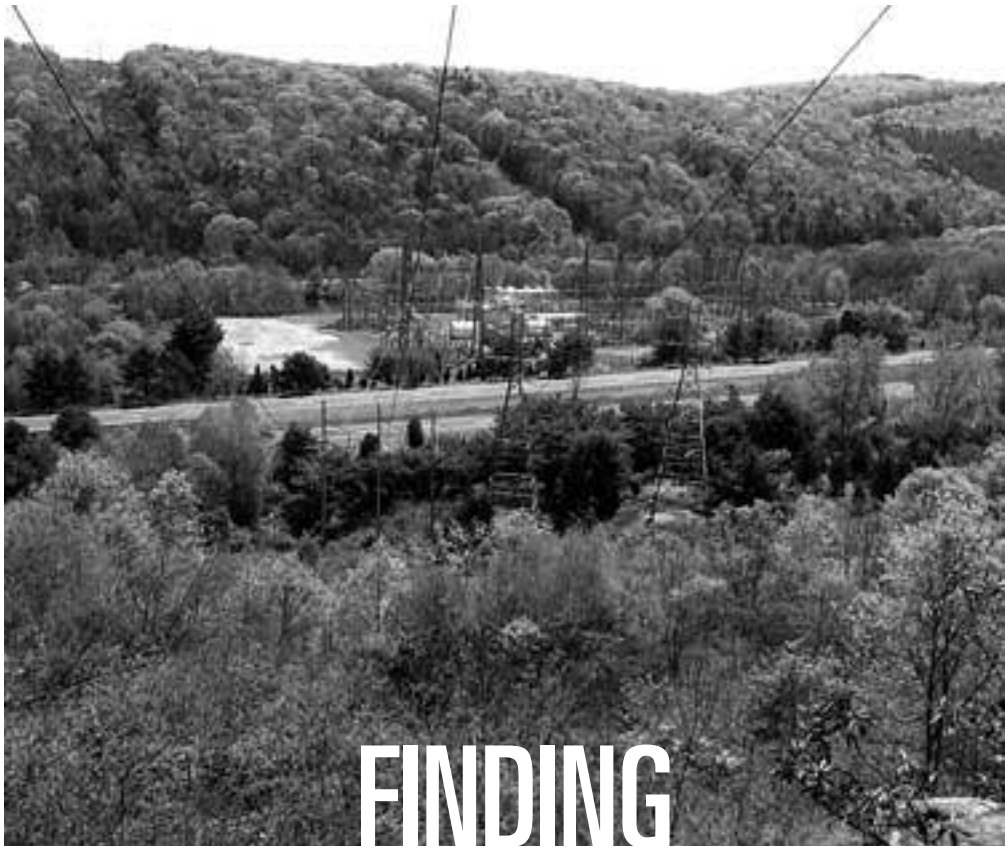
The parkway never came to be. And Mr. Coe, who headed the first state commission to buy land for the park in the 1930s, found himself pushed out of that job several years before it finally all came together in a smaller park.

Mr. Coe had threatened not to attend the 1947 Everglades National Park dedication, but he changed his mind. He must have been happy at the cheers that greeted him there. The next year, the Massachusetts Horticultural Society awarded him its George Robert White Medal of Honor for his work to establish Everglades National Park. The Massachusetts society described itself as the "largest and most active horticultural organization in the United States."

To those who only know Mr. Coe in Florida, his life seemed to coalesce around one goal: preserving the unique habitat of South Florida. That life started in Connecticut, where Ernest F. Coe promoted the act of designing the home landscape using plants. The president of the Elm City Nursery counseled people to change their landscapes using plants from far away. The Father of the Everglades eventually learned that the natural landscape sometimes tells you otherwise.

He grew and changed in the land of alligators and poisonous trees. He learned a deeper respect for the natural landscape. That lesson was hard-won, through arguments and disappointments. Let's take what Ernest F. Coe learned in Florida and bring those lessons to bear in his home state.

Christine Woodside is the editor of Connecticut Woodlands.



FINDING MATTATUCK STATE FOREST

OLD-TIMERS AND OTHERS MAP THE NOT-SO-HIDDEN PAST OF 4,510 ACRES

BY GWENDOLYN CRAIG

Route 8 bisects a section of the Mattatuck State Forest.

H. Morrow Long/Wikimedia Commons

The tip of a quartz knife, charcoal mounds, pine trees planted in rows, an empty factory building on the Naugatuck River—these faint signs of past times hide in the Mattatuck State Forest. They give a glimpse of fading histories of forest, farm, wood lot, and home. The forest's 4,510 acres that spread through parts of Harwinton, Thomaston, Plymouth, Watertown, Litchfield, and Waterbury are ground on which the American Indian, farmer, industrialist, classics scholar, jobless, and forester all flourished during certain moments in history.

The Mattatuck, like all of the land in Connecticut, was once composed of woodlands untouched by human or machine. Then we made our mark hunting, tilling, planting, burning, and building. Human ties to this land have morphed and expanded and evolved until they have let the land reach almost full circle. Almost. It will never be the virgin forest it was in the beginning. We cannot erase the work done by the eras of settlement, agriculture, and industrialization, but we are moving into an era of conservation. We have conserved the Mattatuck for our love of nature, to decrease our carbon footprint, to preserve native species, to have a place outside where we can hike or camp or picnic or just get away from the bustle of life. We conserved places like the Mattatuck to protect the forests we may have taken for granted and were once at risk of losing.

The story of Mattatuck's preservation goes back to 1925, but the story of the forest starts long before that.

Nicholas Bellantoni, Connecticut state archaeologist, found a few records of American Indian archaeological sites in the Mattatuck State Forest, but not many. The few places were probably hunting grounds or camps. He could tell this based on the location of the sites—the confluence of a stream into the Naugatuck River— and the items that were found there: knife tips made of quartz as well as some pieces of flint. Nothing is certain, however, not even what tribe was there.

"You get a biased picture because what survives in the ground is

basically stone," Mr. Bellantoni said. Not to mention the fact that most of the sites were not discovered until the 1970s. Watertown was founded in 1684 and Thomaston in 1875, the two towns the majority of the state forest spans.

"By the time Europeans were in the area, most of the Native Americans had dispersed or left. For the most part, to the Europeans, they were basically invisible," Mr. Bellantoni said.

Industry Takes Over

With the arrival of European pioneers came the arrival of farming. That meant clear-cutting huge sections of land, cutting down trees that had never before felt an ax or a saw. In the 1880s, when the farming boom subsided, industries took charge. Thomaston became the home to a prominent lamp manufacturing company, Plume & Atwood. The company maintained a wood lot on a large section of what is now Mattatuck State Forest. Other industrial companies had similar parcels of land up and down the Naugatuck River.

"The furnaces were so hungry for wood, they were tearing through acres. It was pretty much a clean sweep," said Alan Levere, a spokesman for the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. Factories were not just cutting down trees. They were making charcoal. To do this, workers would clear-cut a section of land and slowly smolder the timber by covering the burning stack with dirt or sod. This prevented the wood from burning completely. It also decimated forests.

By the time Harley F. Roberts had the idea to conserve some of his local area for a state forest, the land was in rough shape. In the 1950s, S. E. Parker, a district forester, and W. F. Schreeder, state forester, wrote in a report: "The growth of the forest is generally of mediocre character, having been cut frequently for cordwood for the Brass Mills in Waterbury. This, together with the frequent fires, has resulted in poorer growth than on many of the other forests." On December 19, 1925, Parker and Schreeder reported, the Latin master of the private Taft School in Watertown, "appeared before the Commission on Forests and Wild Life and stated that some interested conservationists in his community were anxious to acquire a tract of land between Thomaston and Watertown on the Thomaston Road, of over 600 acres with a view of presenting it to the state for a state forest."

Suddenly the state forest began to take shape. In just three months, Mr. Roberts, along with the Black Rock Association, a local community group interested in conservation, raised $13,000 for the purchase of the land, which is equivalent to about $170,400 today. Alain White, the legendary conservationist for whom the White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield is named, agreed to give one dollar per privately purchased acre.

WE HAVE CONSERVED THE MATTATUCK FOR OUR LOVE OF NATURE, TO DECREASE OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT, TO PRESERVE NATIVE SPECIES, TO HAVE A PLACE OUTSIDE WHERE WE CAN HIKE OR CAMP OR PICNIC OR JUST GET AWAY FROM THE BUSTLE OF LIFE. WE CONSERVED PLACES LIKE THE MATTATUCK TO PROTECT THE FORESTS WE MAY HAVE TAKEN FOR GRANTED AND WERE ONCE AT RISK OF LOSING.

After two years of combined state and private purchases and fundraising, 2,453 acres formed the new Mattatuck State Forest. Mr. Roberts was a member of the League to Enforce Peace, an organization that led to the League of Nations. He was a trustee of the Connecticut Junior Republic, an institution aimed at helping troubled young men become good citizens. Despite his active involvement in the community, Mr. Roberts' idea for Mattatuck State Forest upset many people in the region. He was buying thousands of acres to give away for a purpose many people did not understand.

Going Against the Grain

Edwin Ives Jr., 93, grew up in the Thomaston and Watertown area on the Tibbals and Ives dairy farm, run by his father and father's good friend, George Tibbals. Their farm covered approximately 75 acres and a nearby wood lot. With 30 milking cows, chickens for laying, horses, an apple orchard, and a regular potato crop, every inch of the land was put to use—including the house.

"My mother got the bright idea of taking tourists because we had room," Mr. Ives said. "There were five bedrooms upstairs. In the summertime we used to sleep downstairs and take the tourists in so we made some extra money. We got three dollars a night for people staying over night. It was a good life, really. You worked, but you didn't really think of it," he said.

Mr. Ives remembers men from the state coming to his house when he was just a boy in the late 1920s. They wanted to buy some of his father's farmland to be incorporated into the state forest.

"I had to be maybe 10 years old," he said. "They came to bicker the price to buy the land. And, they had, I don't know, quite a time over it. Of course, some of the people, the surrounding people, didn't want the state, the park, to buy Black Rock Pond. My father and Mr. Tibbals didn't like the price. One time I know they had to get appraisers, and they came up with a little higher price, but by the time they got through paying the appraisers, they ended up with the same price the state offered."

Mr. Ives said that the state may have threatened to take some of the farms by eminent domain if a price agreement was not reached. "Most people didn't want to sell their land," he said.

"The state did take land when they felt they needed it for the public good," Mr. Levere said. "That was not a rare thing. What you could get away with then, you certainly wouldn't do now."

After purchasing or taking acres and acres of clear-cut land for the public good, the problem left facing the state was the fact that there were no trees.

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Mattatuck, like nearly all forests in New England, is a secondary forest, which means that the land has been cleared and replanted. This is important because no matter how you try to bring back the forest, you cannot replicate the original.

One tree species affected, perhaps fatally, by the clear-cutting has been the slow-growing hemlock. David Foster, an ecologist and professor at Harvard University, said Connecticut has lost nearly 50 percent of its hemlocks. This tree species grows best in shade, and with most forests wiped out by the 1920s, they had a difficult time coming back. To add to the hemlocks' problems was (and still is) the invasive insect, the wooly adelgid, which showed up on the East Coast in the 1950s. The bug destroys hemlocks by sucking up its vital nutrients. These bugs could mark the final blow to the few hemlocks in Mattatuck and New England.

Hemlocks are important because they are nature's relief in winter. As do all evergreens, they have dense foliage. The snow becomes stuck in between the needles and branches, protecting the ground underneath. These nearly snowless patches provide shelter or easier scavenging for all kinds of creatures in the woods. These patches also provide a kind of thermal cover, insulating the area under it with its snow-packed branches, explained Christopher Craig, a Connecticut certified forester.

To bring back some of the trees, especially to the many fairly new state forests in the country, President Franklin D. Roosevelt organized what some historians call Roosevelt's Tree Army, or the Civilian Conservation Corps. The country was in the midst of the Great Depression. Thousands were unemployed, and many families struggled to make do. The CCC set up camps across the country and gave jobs to nearly 600,000 men between the ages of 18 and 25 nationwide. They tended the timber and soil, while earning some money to send back home.

"In general, the places where the Civilian Conservation Corps planted trees were places that were fields," said Dr. Foster, who has written several books on the changing New England landscape. The CCC workers planted conifer trees, mostly because of their lightness and strength.

On March 5, 1933, the CCC set up Camp Roberts, named after Harley F. Roberts, near Route 6 and Black Rock Lake. The camp started with 212 men. There were three barracks and a mess hall. To learn what life must have been like for the CCC workers, I interviewed Harold Mattern, 96, of Storrs. (*Mr. Mattern died in June. His obituary appears on page 22,*) He worked in eight of Connecticut's CCC camps and delivered milk to Camp Roberts. "Those were some of the best years of my life," he said. "It gave us something to do and some money to spend. It helped the economy, too." He sent $25 of his monthly $30 salary home to his family, which ran a chicken farm.

The CCC job sites were all over Connecticut, and the work varied. Sometimes it was thinning out forest; other times it was planting trees. CCC workers built picnic tables and toilets for recreation areas, cut cordwood for fuel, built fire roads, and shoveled snow in the winter. Some camps had additional idiosyncratic jobs as well, such as dealing with invasive species.

The schedule was similar in every camp. "They woke you up at about 6 o'clock and you'd get up, clean up, and shave," he said. "Then about 7 o'clock you'd go over to the mess hall and have a good, full breakfast, a variety of food, healthy food. After you'd finish breakfast, around 8 o'clock, you'd get called to work. You'd climb on the backs of trucks, even in the cold weather, and you'd go out to the job site. At noontime they'd bring you out a hot lunch in big army containers. You'd have hot coffee, beef stew, things like that. Then you'd come back about 4 o'clock, back to the barracks, and you'd have time to get cleaned up for supper at about 5 o'clock. Then you'd have the evening to yourself to play cards,

The Blue-Blazed Jericho Trail leads to this serene view at Crane's Lookout.

H. Morrow Long/Wikimedia Commons

games, listen to the radio. There were night watchmen to keep the fires going and make sure nothing caught fire."

An invasive species several Connecticut camps faced was the gypsy moth, which was introduced first in Massachusetts in the 1860s. The insects devastated oak and aspen trees. Mr. Mattern remembered having to find egg clusters in the trees and paint them with creosote, a wood treatment made from the distillation of wood or tar, to kill them.

Mr. Mattern, who served in World War II after the CCC ended in 1942, and who became a forest ranger in northeastern Connecticut, built a CCC museum in Shenipsit State Forest in Stafford. He donated dozens of items of corps memorabilia from pictures to handsaws to axes. The only relics from the Mattatuck State Forest's Camp Roberts are two black and white photographs and two worn-out hats on faceless busts. Mr. Levere, who helps manage the museum, searched for more information about the camp, but could find very little.

There is nothing left of Camp Roberts, which some have said was between Route 6 and Black Rock Lake. Mr. Ives, who lives just down the road from where he grew up, goes out driving with his son sometimes, trying to find where it used to be, where he sold his milk to Roosevelt's Tree Army as a young boy.

Today the forest, at least, is protected, and protects the history it holds. It is a sanctuary for nature lovers and the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails (established and maintained by the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, publishers of this magazine). The forest is not just rows of trees. There are cliffs to climb, lookout points unfolding panoramic views of Thomaston and Watertown's slight hills and valleys, caves and ledges covered with folios of green-blue lichen, and hidden hints of times past—a crumbling stone wall, a charcoal mound, streams that unfurl into the Naugatuck River. There are deer, owls, woodpeckers, wood thrushes, white pine, a few hemlocks, black birch, white oak, sugar maple, witch hazel, beech, and mountain laurel, just to name a few things that thrive in these woods.

Conservation is no longer just the dream of Roberts and a few other individuals. It has become a movement, part of law, part of our recreation, and part of our history. Local land trusts, CFPA, the Connecticut DEEP, and other organizations are working now to preserve the land. Whether it will continue to be so important to us, only the future will tell.

We all need space.

What the Mattatuck State Forest will be for somebody else tomorrow is another story. For now, its conservation will continue to mean something to us, and for now, that is all that matters.

Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Peddlers in the late 1800s probably sold nutmeg along with tin graters. But how Connecticut became the Nutmeg State remains a bit of a mystery.

A CONNECTICUT NUTMEGGER

BY JEAN CRUM JONES

After the fall harvest of our vegetables and Christmas trees, I yearn to return to the winter kitchen. Intensive outdoor farming comes to a halt, and I have the time to bake my favorite New England desserts—pumpkin pie, blueberry crisp, and gingerbread—and to have the time to enjoy the aromas released by the cooking of hearty meat and root stews—all enhanced by freshly cracked nutmeg. From my mother's Dutch heritage, I learned to use nutmeg in holiday eggnog and homemade cakes and cookies; from my German-influenced 4-H leaders, I saw how to put nutmeg in creamed cauliflower and spinach as well as poached dried fruit; and like my Swedish mother-in-law's example, I add nutmeg to meatballs, mashed potatoes, blueberry muffins, and rice pudding.

There is something almost hypnotic about the warm, sweet, musky flavor of that spice from a small island in eastern Indonesia. Nutmeg is a universally favored and widely employed in Chinese, Malaysian, Indian, Middle Eastern, European, and Caribbean cuisine.

How did Connecticut come to be known as the Nutmeg State? People ask me this at the small cookery studio I operate on our farm.

The most common explanation for our state's unofficial nickname is that in the early 1800s, peddlers from Connecticut traveled around America selling wooden nutmegs to unsuspecting customers. By the time, the buyer realized the fraud the peddler was on his way to his next victim. I always find this flippant explanation discomfiting because I could see myself considered a "country bumpkin" who would be fooled. I feel most country housewives would know the value and appearance of real nutmeg because it is such an important ingredient for their baking. The wooden nutmeg story is thought to originate from a Canadian writer, Thomas Halliburton, who wrote in a style that would be similar to how Mark Twain came to write. Mr. Halliburton's pseudonym was Sam Slick and he wrote humorous stories about a shrewd, colorful Yankee clockmaker in the late 1830s. I think many Connecticut residents enjoyed the spicy cleverness associated with the "wooden nutmeg" story and, like the song Yankee Doodle, took a potential insult and turned it around to be a positive descriptor.

Most people don't realize that nutmeg is the pit of a tropical apricot-like fruit that grows on tall evergreen trees, mainly found on warm tropical volcanic islands far from Connecticut. The spice is released by grating the hard wooden-like "nut" to make a powder. Another spice is actually a part of the same fruit: mace, which is a red lacy filament that covers the pit. Mace is removed by hand and dried before being crushed. It changes

to a dull yellow-tan color. Mace has a stronger flavor than nutmeg and is used primarily for savory purposes, such as in sausages and other preserved meats. In medieval times, mace was used as a meat preservative.

The Nutmeg nickname did come into popularity at the time peddling was being used as a new way of marketing. Connecticut's inventors and entrepreneurs had discovered the magic of interchangeable parts and began producing more tinware and wooden clocks than their local neighbors could use. A new method of selling was introduced in which young men were contracted by a merchant to sell items on a prescribed route in rural areas. So much was being produced in these new factories that these Connecticut peddlers fanned out extensively around America. A less romantic story about our Nutmeg nickname that may be closer to the truth is that these peddlers liked to carry nutmegs with them. They were small, light, and profitable. Tin makers were producing small nutmeg graters for the a plentiful supply of nutmegs would enhance the sale of graters. At the time, Connecticut shipowners and merchants were heavily involved in the Caribbean trade. Connecticut timber, cornmeal, onions, livestock, and horses were exchanged for molasses, rum, and spices. A plentiful supply of nutmeg was available to Connecticut merchants. It is not likely that wooden nutmegs were ever sold, for they would have been too time consuming to make. The availability of nutmeg was probably associated with the Connecticut peddler.

An Expensive Commodity

At one time, nutmeg was the most expensive commodity in the world. Nutmeg was prized for its use in cuisine, and it was considered to have medicinal and aphrodisiac qualities. There are records of the use of nutmeg dating back to the Romans in the first century. At the time of the bubonic plague, it was thought to help ward off the plague if one carried a small sack of nutmegs around the neck. (There may have been some validity to this as substances in nutmeg may have repelled fleas.)

Through the Middle Ages, the Arabs carried spices to Venice, whose people sold them throughout the Mediterranean world. Nutmeg was very popular and very expensive. When the Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople in 1453, the traditional trade routes were blocked. The race was on by European shipping powers to find an alternative route to the Spice Islands. Initially, the Portuguese rounded the horn of Africa and were the first to control the Spice Islands. The Portuguese could transport spices far more cheaply in the hold of a ship than the camel caravans could. Spanish, Dutch, and English explorers tried westward routes to reach the Spice Islands. These explorers ran into the Americas, which presented other opportunities, but all these countries wanted access to the spice trade. By the beginning of the 1600s, both the Dutch and British broke into the East Indian spice trade business.

THE STORY OF NUTMEG AND CONNECTICUT IS ABOUT WAR, PEDDLERS, STORYTELLERS, AND RIDDLES.

At the time, the only source for nutmeg was on one island in the Banda Islands of Indonesia. There was fierce competition for control of this island that was managed by the British, while the Dutch controlled all the other islands in this group. Meanwhile, the Dutch and English were also struggling over land in Connecticut and New York. The Dutch were conducting a lucrative fur trade with the Native Americans while the English wanted to establish farms on these mid-Atlantic lands and wanted them free of "savages." So in a move that seems absolutely amazing today, the two warring countries signed the Treaty of Breda in 1667, in which the Dutch surrendered their land in North America for control of the little island of Run so they could maintain a monopoly on the nutmeg trade. The island of Manhattan for a little volcanic outcropping in Indonesia! As well, the western portion of Connecticut might still be Dutch, if not for nutmeg. (There was a 1650 Treaty of Hartford that put all the land 50 Dutch miles west of the Connecticut River in Dutch hands.)

Wesleyan University professor Johan Cornelis Varekamp has suggested that the Nutmeg nickname could also refer to the early Dutch influence at the core of Connecticut's early settlement. In an article written for Connecticut Sea Grant's magazine Wrack Lines in 2006, Varekamp and his daughter Daphne wrote that the plant is native to the Banda Islands in Indonesia, where Dutch people lived at the same time they were settling what became New York and Connecticut. John Seabrook, writing in a New Yorker magazine article on Indonesia and nutmeg, opined that perhaps our state's nickname was derived from the fact that in colonial days, "A house that smelled of nutmeg smelled like money." Connecticut was a prosperous colony and would have had access to nutmeg.

A Legend Is Born

Another interesting twist to the history of nutmeg is the Pierre Poivre story. Very briefly, he was a French merchant with commercial interests in India, China, and Indochina around the mid-1700s. He earned his nickname, the Robin Hood of Nutmeg, by locating the islands where nutmeg grew, despite the deceptive maps the Dutch had created so navigators could not find the islands. Poivre smuggled more than 3,000 nutmeg plants plus other fruit trees off the island and took them to the French island of Mauritius, off the coast of eastern Africa. He, therefore, effectively broke the Dutch monopoly on the nutmeg trade, and soon growers were planting nutmeg elsewhere in the world. Not long after, nutmeg began to be cultivated in the West Indies. The Anglicized version of his name is Peter Pepper—which became the Peter Piper who picked a peck of pickled peppers. Back then, the term, pepper, referred to any spice nut, and the Dutch would "pickle" their peppers by rubbing the seeds with lime juice so they would not germinate if they were planted. He must have picked up some pickled peppers on a few occasions!

In cynical moments when I think about our state's strange nickname, I just think the term Nutmegger rolls off the tongue a whole lot easier than the awkward suggestions that we be Connecticotians or Connecticans. The story of nutmeg and Connecticut is about war, peddlers, storytellers, and riddles, and I think it suits us just fine. We just need to adopt nutmeg as the state spice and all use more of it.

Jean Crum Jones is a registered dietician. She serves on the Connecticut Forest & Park Association Board of Directors. Her family runs the Jones Family Farms and the Jones Winery in Shelton.

DISCOVERING THE GREAT OUTDOORS:

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN THE LIFE OF THE YOUNG CHILD

BY LORI PARADIS BRANT

EDITOR'S NOTE: *This is an excerpt of Lori Paradis Brant's keynote speech on March 12 for the Keefe-Bruyette Symposium at the School for the Young Child at Saint Joseph College in West Hartford. This symposium, geared toward the early childhood teacher, was celebrating its 10th anniversary. View her slide show at ctwoodlands.org/educ.*

Lori Paradis Brant

When it comes to learning about salamanders, nothing compares to holding one.

Awareness is an important foundation of environmental education for the young child. It stems from curiosity and wanting to see, hear, sense, and learn more. As children handle objects themselves, they make their own observations and draw their own conclusions. By focusing on the experience, not the facts and details, they remember what they did and how they did it. They get excited and joyful for the learning about the things they can see, hear, and touch. Ownership over learning begins in a positive manner. This sense of wonder cultivates lifelong learning. Wonder gives us sparks of joy and nurtures our engagement in the moment.

As Rachel Carson wrote in *A Sense of Wonder* (Harper & Row, 1965), "A child's world is fresh and new and beautiful, full of wonder and excitement. It is our misfortune that for most of us that clear-eyed vision, that true instinct for what is beautiful and awe-inspiring, is dimmed and even lost before we reach adulthood."

How do we engage the families of our children? Environmental education is a great strategy to connect with parents and caregivers and keep the thread of wonder moving from the child to the rest of the family. We can encourage them to explore with their children, share classroom and program explorations through notes and e-mails, ask caregivers to help collect natural materials for art or science activities, invite family members on neighborhood walks, and encourage families to help with a schoolyard garden (especially over school break times). We reach out and invite them with specific measures to be a part of their children's experiences.

Interactive Play and Self-Discovery

Jean Piaget, the highly influential psychologist and philosopher, wrote that interactive play and self-discovery make the best learning experiences in his 1952 book *The Origins of Intelligence in Children* (International Universities Press). Sue Bredekamp and Carol Copple confirmed Piaget's ideas in their 1997 study, *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs* (National Association for the Education of Young Children).

Here is a very interesting tidbit about the renowned Piaget: Before becoming a developmental psychologist, Piaget was a biologist who studied wildlife and researched mollusks. When Piaget was young, he collected and studied shells of all shapes, sizes, and colors. Although he wrote more than 60 books in his lifetime, he wrote his first paper when he was only about 10 years old, about an albino sparrow that he observed. During his high school years, Piaget worked part-time at a natural history museum. It is easy to make the connection that Piaget's childhood of playing in the outdoors helped develop his skills in observation and awareness. His curiosity of the natural world was tapped.

As a room full of early childhood educators, we all understand that play is an important factor in childhood development. Unstructured play builds imagination and expands curiosity. Unstructured play in the outdoors has an endless range of things to explore. I ask you, in what ways can unstructured, outside play build imagination and expand curiosity? (Ants, leaves, forts and shelters, rocks, clouds,

Wonder is an important motivator for lifelong learning.

— Edward O. Wilson, *Biophilia*

sticks, logs, birds, bark, colors, shapes, building snowmen, mimicking sounds ....) Let's tap into our own interest in being engaged through hands-on activities and act out Growing from a Seed by using guided imagery and our imagination. [Five volunteers from the audience are called up to the stage; the descriptive text they read guides the audience to imagine they are seeds growing into tall trees.]

Think about ways we just grew from a seed and how that growth compares with how trees can be a lot like people. How are we different? Do we need sun just like trees? Water? Food? How are our body parts the same—trunk, limbs, roots/feet, and hands/leaves? Hands-on activities like this develop vocabulary, help children form new ideas, compare and contrast, express themselves, and make connections to themselves. Taking a walk in the neighborhood exploring tree parts, making a buffet table of snacks such as pretzel logs, celery sticks, raisins, carrot strips, and more to build a "snack tree;" painting one's hand to make a tree mural—these are also great ways to compare how trees are like people and encourage exploration of tree parts.

The Outdoors as Developmental Tools

Using the outdoors to teach engages children in experiential learning—this is a fantastic tool with many great outcomes. They include the exploration of appropriate risk-taking, an increased level of physical activity, and the building of motor skills and sensory development.

Learning and playing outside is right on track with healthy childhood development. Research suggests that a high level of vitamin D in the bloodstream, most of it from sunshine, boosts memory—what a great tool for future learning. Outdoor play also contributes to an understanding and concept of self: *How high can I climb? What are my limits? Can I go higher?* Children need to physically move their bodies throughout the day, which helps their bodies develop appropriately. Group play in the outdoors—such as hide and seek, tag, scavenger hunts and other group games—foster social skills including cooperation, assertiveness, compromise, and expressiveness.

Outdoors is a tool for better health for our children. Daily access to outdoor areas has been shown to reduce attention deficit hyperactivity disorder symptoms. Contact with nature and in natural play areas can reduce stress levels.

Flying a kite, playing in sand, jumping the waves, and other physical activities build a child's sensory motor coordination. Play in the outdoors motivates physical activity, which lead to weight control. According to the Centers for Disease Control, 17 percent of American children ages 2 to 19 are obese, so weight control is a good practice. Learning how to reduce stress, focus attention, and become physically active are great lifelong skills that begin in outdoor play.

Outdoors as a Tool: Simple Steps

Follow simple steps in using the outdoors as a teaching tool:

► **Planning:** Make a plan for weather, bathroom needs, plants (poison ivy), bugs, sun, snacks, and safety. Keep gently used clothing on hand from a local Goodwill or consignment shop. This will keep young children happy if they get cold, wet, or muddy during their outdoor explorations. Extra clothes, rain coats, boots, coats, gloves can ensure that children get to experience the outdoors even if they are not prepared with the proper outerwear that day.

► **Ensure time for the children** to choose an activity that is unstructured, and ensure they are allowed to have free time.

► **Activities** that are teacher led could include reading a story outdoors, searching for life in the leaf litter, making twig collections, and so on. The teacher introduces the activity, facilitates the outdoor learning, and makes the connections to the child and activity.

► **Learning about nature in the outdoors** is intrinsically multidisciplinary. Whether the topic at hand is about bugs, weather, five senses, leaves, color, or butterflies, tying the lesson in to learning objectives helps educators assess children's learning.

Developing a Relationship with Nature and Animals

According to David Sobel's book *Beyond Ecophobia: Reclaiming the Heart in Nature Education* (Orion Society, 1996) and Stephen Kellert's *Building for Life: Designing and Understanding the Human-Nature Connection* (Island Press, 2005), the main goal of environmental education for children ages 3 to 7 is to teach them to develop empathy for the natural world. Play in nature, along with experiences with animals, creates a foundation for deeper exploration and social action in later years. As they connect with animals and develop relationships with animals, empathy, an emotional connection, is fostered. Why animals? Children learn to care for and about other living beings. How often have you heard a young child talking with an animal? They develop an emotional relationship with animals—this relationship fosters a sense of wonder, caring attitude, and a sense of responsibility. Catching frogs with a net at the local pond or chasing fireflies at night, caring for a pet bunny, or digging up worms from the soil are developmentally appropriate, animal-related activities. They can hear the frogs peeping, see the flash of light blinking, feel the worm's squirminess in their hands.

With unstructured outdoor time, a naturally curious child, and adults who care, children can discover the magic of nature and the outdoors.

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

A PRETTY LOOP IN LYME:

Alone, but not lonely, on the Nayantaquit Trail

BY DIANE FRIEND EDWARDS

Hike one of Connecticut's more well-known trails—for example, on Sleeping Giant or Mount Higby—and you usually will have company. Sometimes, that's fine with me; I like meeting other hikers and chatting about the weather, the woods, or the views. But there are times when I'd rather enjoy nature alone.

That was the case one Saturday this past July. While preparing to move from the house my husband and I have lived in for nearly 24 years, I really, really needed a break from packing and painting. So I flipped through the Connecticut Forest & Park Association's trail guide, *Connecticut Walk Book: East* to find a place to hike that would not be very long or challenging (I needed a rest, after all) but would provide a rejuvenating dose of "vitamin N" (a term coined by Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods* [Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2005] and *The Nature Principle* [Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2011]).

I chose the Blue-Blazed Nayantaquit Trail, in the Nehantic State Forest in Lyme, lured partly by the *Walk Book*'s description of the "forestry for birds" practiced there by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. DEEP staff employ selective cutting, managed burns, and occasionally clear-cutting to maintain the diverse forest habitats needed by various bird species. As a result, along the trail you can see several stages of forest development: mature trees (I came across a huge old oak and a massive maple), seedlings and saplings, fairly dense underbrush, as well as areas with open understories. Nehantic State Forest in springtime is a birding hot spot, attracting many migrants. But on a sweltering afternoon in late July, I didn't expect to see or hear many birds. To my delight, the calls and songs of a few birds, including wood thrush and titmice, wafted through the otherwise silent woods.

Except for the birds and a few squirrels and insects, I had the woods to myself. Even though it was late morning on a sunny Saturday, the parking area was empty when I arrived. I saw not another soul on the hike until I returned to the parking area, where a man walked his dog.

NEHANTIC FORESTERS ENCOURAGE BIRDS

To learn more about the "forestry for birds" being practiced in the Nehantic State Forest, see the "Tales from the Trails" video about the Nayantaquit Trail on the Web site of the Connecticut Forest and Park Association. Go to http://www.ctwoodlands.org/TalesfromtheTrailsPreview.

Left, sunlight makes patterns on an old stone wall on the Nayantaquit Trail.
Diane Friend Edwards

The Hike

The Blue-Blazed Nayantaquit Trail consists of a 3-mile loop plus a 0.2-mile segment between the loop and the parking lot. The 0.7-mile Crossover Trail, blazed in blue and yellow, bisects the loop, providing several ways to vary walks here. A 1.1-mile trail connects the loop to the northeast end of Uncas Pond, site of a picnic area and another parking lot.

The loop trail, which I followed, has mostly easy terrain. It sometimes snakes through boulder fields, often follows stone walls, and occasionally crosses small streams. At one point, a massive erratic—a boulder carried to the spot by a glacier—looms through the trees on a rise. At another, the trail passes through the remains of an old homestead. The stone walls and foundations left me wondering about the farmers who once toiled here. Like beavers, they used the materials nature provided to create their preferred habitats.

The Nayantaquit Trail begins just past a yellow gate at the edge of dirt parking lot off Keeny Road. (The Uncas Pond parking area is also off Keeny Road, south of the Nayantaquit Trail lot.) Almost immediately, the trail turns left into the woods. You soon come to the glacial erratic, a boulder the size of a box truck, off to your left. When you reach the beginning of the loop, stay to the left and walk in a clockwise direction.

The trail climbs and descends several times, crosses two streams, and passes between boulders. Near the southern end of the blue- and yellow-blazed Crossover Trail, you come to the ruins of the old homestead. You soon arrive at the intersection with the blue- and green-blazed Uncas Pond Connector trail, on your left. As you continue around the loop trail, you go up and over Brown Hill (elevation: 350 feet), just past the Uncas Pond Connector trail, and Nickerson Hill (elevation: 452 feet), a little more than halfway around the loop. Just beyond Nickerson Hill, a rock ledge topped with two boulders provides a view to the south, which in summer is obscured by trees. Continuing around the loop, you cross a small wooden footbridge over a stream—as I did this, several frogs squeaked and plopped into the water—and pass orange-and-white signs marking the path of an underground gas line. Walk on, keeping an eye out for blue blazes; they're sometimes hard to see. Pass the northern end of the Crossover Trail, which will be on your right. Complete the loop, then head back to the parking area.

Directions

From Connecticut Route 156: *If coming from the north*, turn left onto Beaver Brook Road, then right onto Keeny Road. In 1 mile, enter Nehantic State Forest, where pavement ends. Dirt parking lot will be on your right. *If coming from the south*, turn right onto Keeny Road. After about 3.5 miles, parking lot will be on your left. (Along the way, you will pass two boat launches and the Uncas Pond picnic area.)

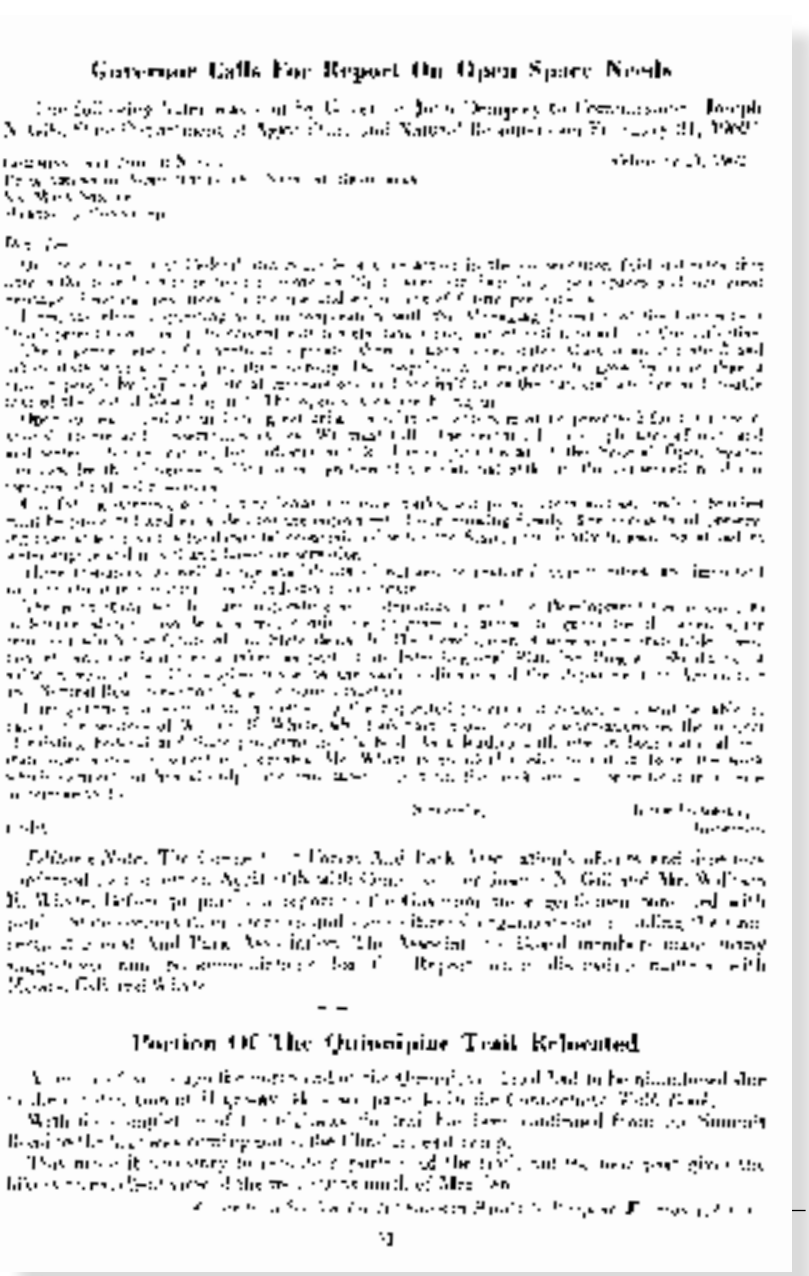
Diane Friend Edwards is a freelance writer, nature photographer, and lifelong lover of the outdoors. She lives in Harwinton with her husband, Paul.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

THE GOVERNOR CHAMPIONS OPEN SPACE: 1962

Governor John Dempsey demonstrated leadership and foresight in 1962 when he wrote this letter to his commissioner of agriculture and natural resources, insisting that "now is the time for Connecticut to move swiftly to save our dwindling open spaces. ..." One result of this directive was a report by William H. Whyte, "Connecticut's Natural Resources—A Proposal for Action." The Whyte report recommended "mindful polices of the state and municipalities" to preserve natural resources, which would be lost without such policies. Over the years, conservation commissions and land trust have multiplied throughout Connecticut and Public Act 63-490 was enacted along with major water-pollution legislation. The Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis found in a 2011 report that state parks and forests generate at least $2 billion from a stagnant yearly investment of less than $30 million. Fifty years have passed since Mr. Dempsey wrote that open space attracts industry. We hope that Gov. Dannel P. Malloy can reinvigorate this debate.

—James Little



Governor Calls For Report On Open Space Needs

Portion Of The Quinnipiac Trail Relocated

OBITUARIES

HENRY TOWNSHEND

Henry H. Townshend Jr., an honorary member of the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, died July 28. He was a fifth-generation member of his family in New Haven. Born on March 27, 1920, to Henry Townshend Sr. and Hannah Osgood Townshend, Mr. Townshend grew up on Hillhouse Avenue. His father was a lawyer, and his mother was the first woman to serve in the Connecticut General Assembly. Mr. Townshend attended Hamden Hall Country Day School and Hopkins Grammar School. He attended Dartmouth College and served as a second lieutenant and captain during World War II.

Mr. Townshend ran the JT Manufacturing Co. and was active in many community causes in New Haven. The life-sized model of the giant squid that hangs in the entrance hall of the Peabody Museum was his project, conceived, constructed, and financed by him. Townshend's devotion to city affairs brought him many accolades: the Society of Architects Lay Person award, the New Haven Historical Society's Seal of the City award for contributions to the community, Hamden Hall School Alumni award for his civic involvement, and a Certificate of Merit from CFPA. He belonged to the First Church of Christ in New Haven. A part-time resident of his 1,200-acre Ragged Hill Farm in Pomfret since 1956, Mr. Townshend shared the property for the New England Bird Dog Championship and invited summer campers and the state archeologist to visit the site of a lost village there.

He was married for 70 years to Doris (Deb) Biesterfeld Townshend. He also leaves 5 children, 10 grandchildren, and a dozen great-grandchildren. A memorial service was held August 18. Funeral arrangements were through the Hawley Lincoln Memorial, 493 Whitney Ave., New Haven.

—From published death notices

Another obituary appears on page 22.

GUIDES CRITICAL TO SUCCESS

BY LESLIE LEWIS

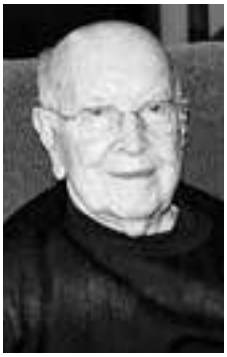
Can we ever thank our volunteers enough? We are about five years along with our program of WalkCT Family rambles, so I want to take some time to reflect on this effort and to publicly thank the people who are critical to its success. Dozens of these events have taken place, with hundreds of people participating. Trained volunteers lead the rambles the last weekend of each month all year long. They offer adults and children opportunities to get outside for free and easygoing fun.

Through WalkCT, Connecticut Forest & Park Association is committed to connecting people with the land, and the Family rambles are a big part of that commitment. Many Connecticut Woodlands readers are familiar with outdoor adventures, but many more people out there haven't reached that comfort level. The cornerstones of the rambles are the WalkCT Family guides, who offer to share their time and enthusiasm with the public. Trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) first aid, and interpretive skills, Family guides let their own interests dictate the literal and figurative pathways for their events. These range from exploring local history to local amphibians, from a variety of locations for some guides to a single area over the range of seasons for others. The common thread is a love of Connecticut's natural landscape and a dedication to CFPA's mission.

If you haven't yet experienced a WalkCT Family ramble, give one a try. Go to www.walkct.org/events for a complete schedule. Even if you have worn out dozens of pairs of hiking boots through the years, you can find something new in looking at our trails with a neophyte. Bring a friend or family member along to introduce them to outdoor recreation. Maybe you can go further and become a WalkCT Family guide yourself. To get started, go to www.ctwoodlands.org/volunteer and fill out a volunteer information form. Our goal is to have at least one walk in each Connecticut county every month of the year. Ambitious, yes, but we like to dream big. So thank you WalkCT Family guides, and many happy trails to all of you!

Leslie Lewis retired from the state DEP (as it was called) in 2007 after almost three decades in various programs, most recently running the recreational trails program. She now directs the WalkCT program of CFPA.

HAROLD MATTERN



Harold Everett "Matt" Mattern, 97, a career forester for the state of Connecticut whose work left a lasting impression on many, died on June 8 at his home in Storrs. He was born May 10, 1915, and grew up in Mansfield. Initially trained as a plumber, he joined the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1934 and served in seven of the CCC camps in Connecticut through 1941. He served in the U.S. Army in Australia and New Guinea during World War II. He married Virginia James Mattern on October 23, 1943.

Also in 1943, Mr. Mattern began his long career with the state, then under the Connecticut Park and Forest Commission, later the Department of Environmental Protection. He worked as a skilled tradesman and forest ranger and retired as a forester in 1987, having worked in 16 forests and parks. Matt Road in Nathan Hale Forest, Coventry, bears his name. He was much beloved by his fellow foresters. He had belonged to CFPA since 1948. After he retired, when he was 72, he volunteered extensively for the Windham Area Interfaith Ministries and for other causes, including cancer research following his own bout with bladder cancer. In 2001, Mr. Mattern received the John E. Peck Community Service Award from the Senior Resources Agency on Aging.

Mr. Mattern's expertise on forest and CCC history made him a resource for others. (See the article by Gwendolyn Craig on the history of the Mattatuck Forest in this issue.) In 1997, he appeared in a documentary about the 1938 hurricane on Connecticut Public Television.

He lived for 40 years in Natchaug State Forest in Eastford. The last seven years of his life, he lived with his daughter, Lee Mattern Edwards-Salina. He also leaves two granddaughters and three great-grandsons. A memorial service was held September 18.

After years of dread, it's here: Emerald ash borer found

A destructive beetle, the emerald ash borer, was found in Connecticut on July 16, the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station and the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection said. CAES staffers found the beetle *Agrilus planipennis* while observing beetle-eating wasps in Prospect. This is the first record of this pest in Connecticut, which joins 15 other states with infestations.

The emerald ash borer has killed or weakened tens of millions of ash trees from the Midwest to New York State and south to Tennessee. Ash trees compose 4 to 15 percent of Connecticut's forests and are common in cities.

The EAB is a small, metallic green beetle approximately ½-inch long and ⅛ inch wide. Adults emerge from the bark of infested trees leaving a small D-shaped exit hole roughly ⅛ inch in diameter. This insect is native to Asia and was first discovered in the Detroit, Michigan, and Windsor, Ontario, regions in 2002. It has since spread through the movement of firewood, solid-wood packing materials, and infested ash trees and by flying.

CAES director Louis A. Magnarelli said the stepped-up statewide surveys for the pest were the reason they had been able to find it. For several years, Connecticut officials and entomologists have been hunting for the beetles.

State and U.S. Forest Service staffers found the EAB in Prospect by placing and then observing a ground-nesting, native wasp (*Cerceris fumipennis*), which hunts all beetles in the family *Buprestidae*. The adult wasp feeds the beetles to its developing larvae. The wasp provides a highly efficient and effective "bio-surveillance" survey tool and does not sting people or pets.

The University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System and the U.S. Department of Agriculture set 541 purple traps loaded with a chemical lure across the state. These traps caught EABs in Prospect and Naugatuck.

"This is a disturbing discovery and one that has the potential for great environmental harm in the state," said DEEP Commissioner Daniel C. Esty. "Connecticut has more than 22 million ash trees. The presence of EAB here could have a devastating effect on the beauty of our forests, state and local parks and neighborhoods, as well as the state's wood product industries."

Officials said residents should

► Never move firewood and buy only local firewood. Moving firewood has been shown to spread the EAB the quickest.

► Report any sightings of the EAB to the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. Call 203-974-8474 or write to CAES. StateEntomologist@ct.gov.

► Study photos and descriptions of trees infested with this pest. See www.emeraldashborer.info.

—From state press releases

Middletown passes ordinance against all-terrain vehicles

On May 7, the city of Middletown Common Council passed a broad ordinance banning most uses of all-terrain vehicles and snowmobiles on municipal and private residential land and restricting their use on other private land.

ATVs—including four-wheel ATVs, two-wheel dirt bikes, motocross vehicles, motor scooters, and snowmobiles—aren't outright banned from nonresidential private properties, as long as owners give permission, but even on those lands, the ordinance bans ATVs that "would cause nuisance, annoyance, alarm, or harassment of any kind to persons, domestic animals, or game."

Illegal ATV use is already common in some areas of Middletown. State laws ban ATVs from most state properties, including state forests, except the occasional special events such as the "enduro" races in Pachaug State Forest, in Voluntown. But ATVs have been observed on private and state forest land in the rural Maromas area.

—Christine Woodside

CONNECTICUT Forest & Park ASSOCIATION

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Competition for our children's minds is fierce. Millions are spent each year to keep them inside in front of TV, computers and video games. The result is inactivity, passivity and a path to obesity.

Some of the most important work we do at CFPA is to open the outdoor world to a new generation. You can help us enliven their minds and fire up their passion for the natural world.

You can ignite the imagination and creativity of these young people by joining this year's Annual Fund to support CFPA. Your donation will help all our programs including those that work with educators to get children outside and teach them how to think…not what to think.

Make their lives alive with discovery!

Look for the Annual Fund request in the mail or give today via www.ctwoodlands.org

CONNECTICUT Forest & Park ASSOCIATION