

# CONNECTICUT Woodlands



## THE COLOR BLUE THE STORY BEHIND CFPA'S TRAIL BLAZES



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CFPA

*Milling Connecticut timber is one of the lessons of the Project Learning Tree summer camp for teachers. See page 24.*

## 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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# CONNECTICUT Woodlands

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STEVE MCGUIRE

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# Individuals, do what you can



BY ERIC LUKINGBEAL

I am sitting down to write on the weekend of Earth Day. Earlier, I listened to the public radio program, *Living on Earth*. My dogs seem to like it, too. Dennis

Hayes (the organizer of the first U.S. Earth Day) talked about the big changes in our approach to environmental action since the first Earth Day in 1970. Now, we are seeing a shift from dealing with the “visible” problems, such as water pollution and dirty smokestacks, to dealing with “invisible” problems. In the early 1970s, the big federal statutory programs were enacted: Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, Endangered Species Act. All were very successful to some degree. “Command and control” strategies worked to clean up rivers and, to a lesser extent, the air. Now, the problems such as rising atmospheric carbon dioxide and methane, toxic effects of chemicals at very low levels and in combination, endocrine disruption, and genetically modified organisms tend to generate more attention, and more controversy.

The other change from 1970 is the role of the individual in solving environmental problems. Earth Day celebrated individual actions, and collective individual action drove politics to produce statutory change

that seems unimaginable today. Who even remembers that the Environmental Protection Agency was created not by Congress but by an executive order signed by President Richard Nixon? Does anyone think that the EPA could be enacted by our present Congress?

These days, conservation-minded folks must feel frustrated that our Congress seems paralyzed, unable to respond to what science considers to be serious problems. This country produces far more than its share of Nobel Prize winners, but citizens can’t seem to inspire lawmakers to let those scientists draft science-based policies to correct the situation. For every Bernie Sanders (the Vermont senator who has called for a climate-change policy), there is a science denier. And I suspect we all know some intelligent people who don’t agree that climate change is largely caused by humans.

But enough whining. Our reliance on Congress to solve problems just leads to frustration. Maybe a better strategy is for us individuals to do what we can, even if it’s small beer, or a drop in the bucket.

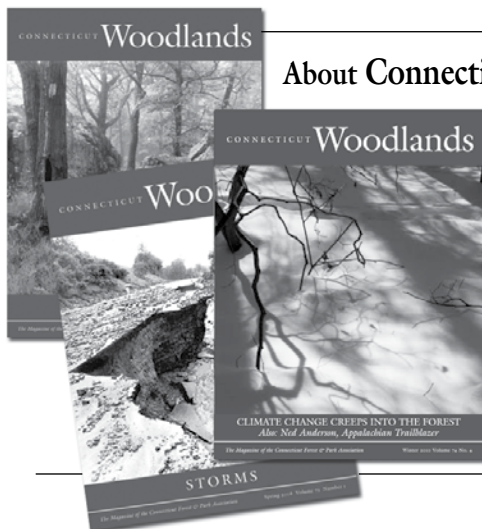
Here is just one idea. Let’s get us off our addiction to convenience at any cost, save a lot of money, reduce noise and chemical pollution, and improve physical fitness. Let’s do lawn care with human power, not gasoline. It can’t be very hard because we used to do it and could perceive it as going backward. In the 1950s, homeowners pushed nonmotor-

ized reel mowers around their grass. Need I point out that we were all skinnier then?

The savings are substantial. You can easily spend thousands on a rider mower. Google “rider mowers.” There are hundreds. We’ve all seen our fellow citizens taking 48-inch swaths while sitting on \$5,000 machines. Confession: My wife does the mowing on our undulating, hilly lot with a riding mower. She enjoys it and says it’s therapy. It won’t be easy to stop this convenience, but if we stop using power mowers, the noise reduction would be impressive. Were I king, I’d ban leaf blowers and weed whackers.

Here’s my last point. What is the healthiest, longest-lived group of Americans? Is it those Colorado folks who ski, snowboard, hike, and run ultramarathons and have the nation’s lowest body fat? No. Try the Amish. They mow their lawns by hand. They rake the leaves. They don’t ride around in cars. They walk a lot.

*Eric Lukingbeal is an environmental trial lawyer for Robinson and Cole in Hartford. He lives in Granby with his wife, Sally King. He is the father of two grown daughters, serves on his town’s planning and zoning commission, and likes to hike, bike, and grow day lilies.*



## 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 website, [www.ctwoodlands.org](http://www.ctwoodlands.org), or call 860-346-TREE.*

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# Finding common ground on trees



BY ERIC HAMMERLING

I recently waxed nostalgic with a member of the U.S. Congress (who shall remain nameless) about the way things used to be in Washington, D.C. We reminisced about

the early 1990s, when Congress used to find common ground fairly regularly (I worked for U.S. Representative Silvio O. Conte as a legislative aide for environment, elderly, and health issues). Democrats and Republicans used to fraternize with each other after hours, and those nonwork relationships often grew into opportunities for political progress. Compromise wasn't a dirty word as it seems to be today. Indeed, a balanced, nonpartisan compromise was worn as a badge of honor. To this day, I believe that the most lasting public policies grow from common ground and not from all-or-nothing conquests.

Last year, I was appointed chairman of the State Vegetation Management Task Force, a collection of 20 professionals whose common ground is a passion for trees. The task force (as I'll call it from here on out) included those whose groups rarely had coalesced on the same side of an issue. We included arborists, municipal tree wardens, town public works directors, utility representatives, utility regulators, forestry scientists, geographic information system specialists, state and federal agencies, conservationists, and a number of outside experts. Meeting every two weeks for less than six months, we worked together toward a set of shared principles: healthier trees, safer roads, and a more secure power infrastructure for Connecticut during future storms.

Our time together on the task force officially ended with the publishing of our final report on August 28, 2012 (the one-year anniversary of Tropical Storm Irene). However, all of us realized that the consensus recommendations that we made together would not implement themselves. So, many members of the task force continue to work together. We are finding common ground as



CHRIS DONNELLY, CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

*Tree workers in Southbury, fall 2012.*

we advocate for several of our recommendations. Following are a few examples:

► One of the primary recommendations in the task force report was that municipal tree wardens should be required to at least have a basic knowledge of trees. We at the Connecticut Forest & Park Association placed this recommendation in our 2013 conservation agenda, and we worked with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Forestry Division, the Tree Wardens Association of Connecticut, and state legislators to make this requirement the law. As this magazine went to press, H.B. 6538, An Act Concerning Arborists and Tree Wardens, has passed both chambers of the General Assembly and is awaiting the governor's signature.

► The task force recommended that municipalities be encouraged to develop roadside forest management plans. A group of task force members and other interested participants are working on a model forest management plan and tools that cities and towns may use to better manage their roadside forests. We are also working to find appropriate incentives to encourage towns to take action.

► The most challenging test so far of our commitment to find common ground has been another bill pending in the state leg-

islature, H.B. 6471, An Act Concerning Tree Trimming by Utilities. When this bill first came before the Energy and Technology Committee, the utility representatives from the task force testified in favor of the bill (favoring more tree cutting by roads). The tree wardens on the task force (and I) testified against it (favoring the concept of cutting the "Right Tree, Right Place"). This kind of split often means the death of legislation in Hartford. But the committee chair asked all of us, "Can you work together to find some common ground here?" I am proud to say that after several weeks of diligent effort, we believe we have struck the right balance. The bill's current language protects landowner rights to notice and appeal, incorporates the concept of "Right Tree, Right Place," and gives the utilities added authority and efficiency when trees are dangerously touching wires. The committee chair deserves a lot of credit for encouraging a compromise, but I believe that it was the history of trust that was built by working together on the task force that gave us the ability to achieve common ground.

The task force's final report is available online via [ct.gov/deep/svmtf](http://ct.gov/deep/svmtf).

*Eric Hammerling has served as CFPA's executive director since 2008. He lives in West Hartford.*





# THE COLOR BLUE

*A history of blue paint on  
Connecticut's hiking trails finds  
a deep connection to the  
White Mountains of New Hampshire*

BY CHRISTINE WOODSIDE



CHRISTINE WOODSIDE

*Left, these trail blazes, captured on the trail up Whiteface Mountain in New Hampshire, are the classic "medium blue" of the Wonalancet Out Door Club. This color was the starting point for Connecticut's blue blazes.*

*Above, in Connecticut, the trail blaze blue trends much, much lighter. CFPA trail maintainer Wayne Fogg studied two tints of blue used on the trails before and after 2006.*

CHRISTINE WOODSIDE



This is the most complete telling—as far as we know—of why Connecticut’s Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails are blazed with blue. The choice of light-blue paint was deliberate, and at least three times during the past 80 years, trail workers have found themselves studying paint chips as they tried to match a new formula to the color. Why blue matters on these trails means more than matching a pretty color. It all began in 1929 with Edgar Laing Heermance, a retired minister who had returned some years earlier to a rural house in Hamden after a career in Minnesota. Mr. Heermance wanted to mark the new trail he’d cut with his family on Sleeping Giant. He chose blue paint because that was what he knew: A trail-maintaining club he’d joined in central New Hampshire, the Wonalancet Out Door Club, used blue. And the story goes he chose it because it showed up so well at dusk.

I thought that the Wonalancet club (WODC) used the same light-blue shade that the Connecticut Forest & Park Association uses—until a few summers ago, when I took a good look. I was wandering down a trail maintained by the WODC on Whiteface Mountain in the southern White Mountains of New Hampshire. I realized that I was on a WODC trail, but the blazes there were not the same blue as ours in Connecticut. Far from it. The blazes on the WODC trails were dark—very dark. They really weren’t the same shade at all.

Mr. Heermance admired the trails he worked on in the southern Whites, but he didn’t think the blue was quite right. So he added white to it. The exercise of blazing trails in the style of New Hampshire trails, which also used paint blazes shaped like dollar bills, highlights an important historical chapter from the annals of CFPA. That history explains that CFPA modeled its trails (starting in 1929) after older trails in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. CFPA was greatly influenced by the national “tramping” movement, as it was called in the 1920s, and by the earliest push for land conservation through hiking.

In the decades since Mr. Heermance first perfected the light blue, Connecticut’s blue blazes have trended sometimes darker, sometimes lighter on the trails. But off the trails, CFPA trail volunteers have always used a medium blue to signify trail work.



*Edgar Heermance chose lighter blue for Connecticut, his daughter said, because it showed up well at dusk. The tint also pops out against darker forest colors of this low-elevation state.*

You see this blue on newsletters, T-shirts and hats, and signs like those the state of Connecticut erects where trails cross roads. That blue definitely resembles the original darker shade of the Wonalancet club.

### Shows Up on Dark Trees

So, why did Connecticut like lighter shades? An early maintainer described the Connecticut blue this way: “The blue color shows up satisfactorily on dark trees and lasts well, especially when thoroughly stirred and well brushed in on the shady side of trees and smooth rocks,” wrote Romeyn Spare, trail manager of the Tunxis Trail. “The bark is smoothed if rough but never taken down to the cambium, which would affect the paint. One of two trail sections tried blue painted discs nailed on trees. Since they are attractive targets to disappointed hunters, their use is

becoming limited to temporary marking, as to correct a blind spot.”<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Heermance had explored the Water-ville Valley, in the southern White Mountains of New Hampshire, starting in college. He and his family helped a couple named Fisher open an inn in Wonalancet, just south of the Whites, in 1911. The next year, he and friends built a cabin on the summit of Whiteface Mountain. They named it Camp Heermance “after the chief engineer,” he later wrote in an unpublished family history. When he retired in 1920, he moved back to Hamden and continued to spend summers in New Hampshire.

He was instrumental in forming the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails in Connecticut. He founded and edited Connecticut Woodlands magazine from its founding in 1936 for many years. He was CFPA secretary for 12 years, from 1936 to 1948. He wrote *The Connecticut Guide* (Meriden, 1935), an early sightseeing book.

In a private history, Mr. Heermance pondered his retirement vocation in Connecticut:

The years pass. A voyager comes back to little Connecticut to carry out his great dream—a life of study and writing. To anyone who, like Ulysses, has roamed with a hungry heart, no subject is alien—the price of pig-iron is as significant as the death of kings. . . . And one’s surroundings, too, are important, more important perhaps than anything else. I know my own small State; I studied its history and worked on a guidebook of its towns and roads. With trail-making as a hobby, I organized a network of hiking trails over the Connecticut hills. I have managed a forestry association, trying to make the woodlot pay. I seem to be always building something.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Heermance built the first of the Blue Trails on Sleeping Giant, near where he lived (after retirement) with his family. His

*continued on page 8*

<sup>1</sup> “Connecticut Trails,” abridged from a speech delivered at the Fiftieth Anniversary Dinner of the Connecticut Forest and Park Association. Printed in two places: Connecticut Woodlands 11, no. 2 (April 1946): 32–37; and Appalachia journal (Appalachian Mountain Club) 26, no. 1 (June 1946): 131–132.

<sup>2</sup> From *The Time Stream*, privately printed, 1942, by Edgar L. Heermance. Chapter 1. Reprinted from an excerpt in Appalachia journal 31, no. 4 (December 1957): 539.

## THE COLOR BLUE

*continued from page 7*

daughter Louise Heermance Tallman wrote in 1957 that he had taken the “basic idea” of the Blue Trails from the trail system in the White Mountains. The work started at their house in the Mount Carmel section of Hamden.

“Even the Connecticut trail blue harks back to the Wonalancet blue blazes,” Mrs. Tallman recalled. “I remember the evening at home when we tested paint shades graded from WODC medium blue to white. The pale blue selected for the Connecticut trails was the shade which showed up the longest at dusk.”

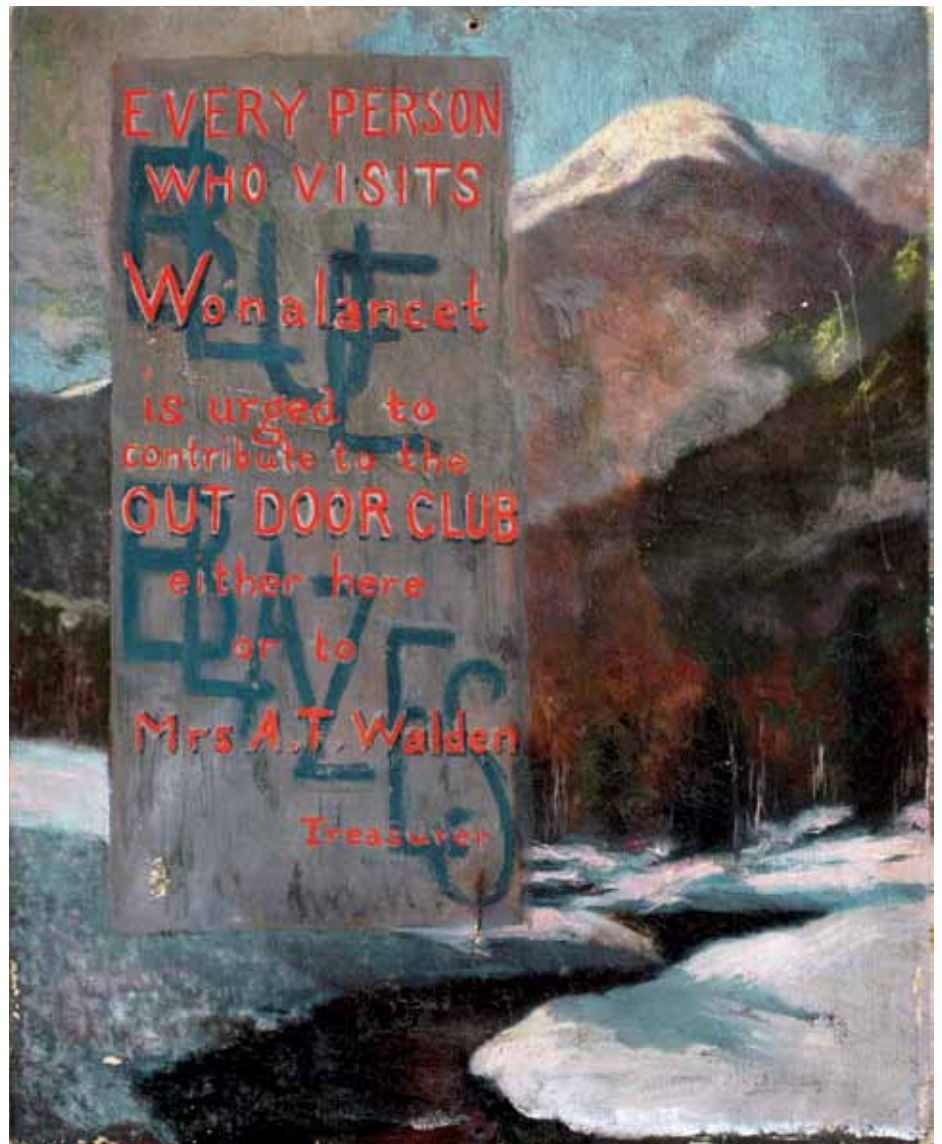
That shade probably resembled what you get when you mix white in with the classic Safety Blue paint. Safety Blue is closest to the shade on the Wonalancet trails, even to this day. Why the club chose this dark shade isn’t clear. Even members ask that question today.

### From Powder Blue to Greenish

The paint Mr. Heermance chose in 1929, and that the Trails Committee approved, was called Witherall’s Atlas Paint No. 137, a light blue closest to what Mr. Heermance chose after his backyard experiments in paint-tinting. As I have written before in Connecticut Woodlands,<sup>3</sup> the Quinnipiac Trail opened near Mr. Heermance’s house two months after that, in April 1930. By the summer of 1932, CFPA trail volunteers had painted dollar-bill-sized blazes on trees along almost 200 miles of trails.

Presumably, the paint formula remained the same until 1948, when a new paint formula entered the trail workers’ supplies. Keeler and Long, an industrial paint supplier in Watertown, provided it, and CFPA trail volunteer Seymour Smith, who lived in Watertown, was named distributing agent. “The new titanium oxide paint, manufactured in Chicago, has been tried out by the Appalachian Trail Conference,” wrote (probably) Mr. Heermance in Connecticut Woodlands.<sup>4</sup> “The color for Connecticut will be the same light blue.” Keeler and Long named the color “Blue Trail 7527.”

The next change came in 1992, when Keeler and Long offered a replacement paint



WONALANCET OUT DOOR CLUB

*In this pre-1950 sign urging people to give money to the Wonalancet Out Door Club in New Hampshire, artist Ernest Lee Major used the club’s trademark dark blue in the words tucked behind the red words: “BLUE BLAZES.”*

in latex instead of the oil-based Blue Trail 7527. The company told former CFPA Executive Director John Hibbard that the new color, called Blue Mist, was a match.

It actually wasn’t. Blue Mist was more of a powder blue. It looked more blue, whereas the traditional blaze color until then had been slightly greener. But Blue Mist prevailed until the day came, in 2006, when the Keeler and Long delivery truck could not get up the curvy driveway of the association

headquarters in Middlefield. The company was getting ready to move all of its stock and delivery headquarters to a far-off state. It was time for another change.

Volunteers consulted with Home Depot (located down the road from CFPA) and came up with Behr Premium Plus satin enamel pastel base No. 96-60. Like the earlier Blue Trail 7527, this blue trended slightly green, or Caribbean. The brief (relatively) 14-year flirtation with a straight pow-

<sup>3</sup> “The Trail Pioneers,” Connecticut Woodlands 69, no. 1 (Spring 2004).

<sup>4</sup> Connecticut Woodlands 13, no. 1 (January 1948): 13.



der blue had ended. But the replacement wasn't a perfect match for the old Keeler & Long Blue Trail 7527 color. We know this because trail manager Wayne Fogg found a can of the old (pre-1992) paint and compared it on a slab of wood. The newer one is not quite as green as the old. But it's close.

At this point, it makes sense to say that to hikers, the differences don't show up. They see light-blue paint blazes on trees, and they don't get lost. But the WODC in New Hampshire still puts out its medium blue.

### Why Blue in New Hampshire?

Doug McVicar, the historian for the WODC, said blue paint is part of the club's identity, just as it is to CFPA, but the origins of the choice are murky. "Blue seems to have been a big deal for the WODC, but I'm not sure why," he said in our lengthy email correspondence.

The club used blue as early as 1908. In the WODC's trail guide from that year, the introduction said, "**Blazes** are spots made on trees by clipping off the bark and a little of the wood. They are placed on the side of the tree that is seen when approaching it. **All Wonalancet Out Door Club Blazes are painted bright blue, the Club color.**" (The boldface and capital letters are original.)

The blazes on trees vary slightly in color, and the club isn't sure of the various colors and tints, Mr. McVicar said. The medium blue

has endured in other club signs. Boston artist Ernest Lee Major, who spent summers in Wonalancet and whose work is in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, was the likely artist of a sign encouraging people to give money to the club. It included the words "blue blazes" tucked below the sign's main fundraising message. He painted it sometime before 1950, the year he died. "It apparently was nailed up somewhere, probably one of the hotels," Mr. McVicar said.

Yes, for these two clubs, the WODC and CFPA, blue counts for something much more than a random trail blaze color. Whether the slightly greenish light blue that guides Connecticut hikers, or the medium blue beckoning Wonalancet walkers, paint was, and is, the guide to their shared history in the person of the Rev. Edgar Heermance. The final proof of their link is in the blue of the trail guides. The 1908 WODC guide cover was printed with a trademark medium blue. The same medium blue colored the covers of CFPA's *Connecticut Walk Book* for many of its past editions. Not to mention the trail workers' T-shirts. I maintain that this was no mere coincidence. It was the deliberate choice of the color blue. In Connecticut, where flatter terrain made way-finding more important, Heermance added white to ensure no one would get lost in low light. Blue paint may yet trend lighter, darker, bluer, or greener in the future. But it will always be blue.



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*Tree workers removed a large roadside tree in Southbury, fall 2012.*

# STORMS PUT TREES IN THE HEADLIGHTS

*Will roadside cutting go too far?*

BY TOM FAGIN

**A**s budget cuts cause reductions in government spending, there is an area where the state of Connecticut is spending more: cutting.

Cutting trees, that is.

In the wake of Hurricane Irene, Superstorm Sandy, and the October 2011 ice storm, utility companies and the Connecticut Department of Transportation have undertaken aggressive tree cutting programs that many drivers in the state have seen along roadsides.

DOT crews labor alongside the mega machine known as the brontosaurus, whose blades will descend upon a full-grown tree and spit it out as chips. State residents might also have seen more utility companies in the neighborhood, trimming branches and cutting down trees near power lines.

The idea is to cut the trees now before they knock down power lines or topple onto roads in the next storm. Even as these projects go

forward, there are some who say that the cutting is going further than it needs to, that the state is not considering more comprehensive tree management techniques that would reduce the risk of tree falls but preserve the roadside charm that trees lend to driving routes.

Drivers have already seen the DOT cutting policies going forward on such roads as the Merritt Parkway and Route 2 where crews have been at work to create a 30-foot buffer between road and forest, going further to take out other trees that pose a risk of crashing down onto the highway, said spokesman Kevin Nursick.

Connecticut has boosted funding for tree management along highways in the DOT, from \$500,000 a year to \$1 million for 2012 and \$2 million for 2013, Mr. Nursick said.

Tree crews have increased from 25 to 50 workers, according to Mr. Nursick, which he said was the necessary number to maintain trees in the state. The money also pays contractors operating big rigs like the brontosaurus.

These measures are not drastic, Mr. Nursick said, but make up for a period when the tree cutters were understaffed and roadside trees were allowed to grow into a serious problem. The three major storms of the past years have showed how serious that problem has become. Tree falls across the Merritt Parkway, for instance, caused two-day delays for each storm.

JoAnn Messina, executive director of the Greenwich Tree Conservancy, agrees that the older trees that could pose a risk should come down, but she believes that the state and utilities have taken things too far. "The Merritt Parkway is just horrible," she said.

Ms. Messina said that along the Metro-North Railroad corridor in her area, state crews' cutting has also been more drastic than necessary. This trades what she sees as an acceptable level of risk for zero possibility that limbs or trunks could fall on the tracks.

What the tree-cutting advocates have missed, she said, is the fact that roads and



urban areas are precisely the place where trees are needed. She pointed to health and psychological benefits that the trees give to people living in urban areas. These people may be removed from Connecticut's larger woodlands and not have the benefit of trees nearby, she said.

Ms. Messina served on the State Vegetation Management Task Force, which submitted recommendations to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection on August 28, 2012. The task force, which included representatives from utilities, the Connecticut DOT, U.S. Forest Service, and others (see Executive Director Eric Hammerling's message on page 5), addressed one section of its recommendations on the benefits trees offer when in proximity to people, such as decreased energy bills, increased home and commercial values, flood control, and mental health. The kind of large trees that people worry about when storms near are precisely the kind that give the most support to the ecosystem, according to the report.

Jeffrey Ward, the chief scientist in the Department of Forestry and Horticulture at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, agreed that much of the roadside cutting in Connecticut had been long overdue, but he said the state was being reactive rather than taking a proactive, scientific approach. Although unmanaged tree growth along Connecticut roadsides had created the need for large-scale cutting, better management techniques could have stemmed the problem, Mr. Ward said. These techniques might have included planting smaller-growing trees closer to the road as well as strategic thinning that would allow remaining trees' branches to grow outward so the trees would be less likely to topple in a storm.

Right now, he said, the state's failure to manage trees properly has created the need for drastic cutting and a high price tag to get it done. A more comprehensive, even-paced approach to trimming might have saved more money over the long term, he said.

The Merritt Parkway situation illustrates how years of insufficient cutting have created problems, Mr. Nursick said, not only in storms but also in traffic accidents because the parkway leads the state in vehicle-to-tree crashes.

It's not just that there are too many highway-side trees in the state, Mr. Nursick said; it is also that the trees are growing older and are more likely to snap in the wind. Trees that



CHRIS DONNELLY/CONNECTICUT DEEP

*Although towns like Southbury, above, have made an effort to remove roadside trees, a state task force found that such trees, when healthy, aren't in imminent danger of falling over and deliver a positive benefit to all who see them.*

withstood Hurricane Gloria in 1985 made a mess of roads two decades later. About complaints that the cuts have been too extreme, Mr. Nursick said it had been worth it for travelers' safety and because it would be keeping roads clear. "We're going to do what we need to keep them safe regardless of the criticism," Mr. Nursick said. "If we don't do our jobs right, people can die."

People who were against the tree trimming at first have come around, he said. At first cut, the sides of highways "look like a war zone," he admitted, but when the places have the opportunity to grow green again, many people are satisfied.

Even with budget increases, the DOT still has only a fraction of the budget that utility companies have for tree management. Turning around from criticism following previous storms, these companies' measures to protect infrastructure have included Connecticut Light and Power's \$300 million five-year System Resiliency Plan that includes strengthening wires and utility poles in the state. About half the money goes to trimming and cutting down trees around power lines. The company also announced plans to set aside \$32 million to expand its tree-trimming program in 2013. The CL&P tree-trimming budget for 2013 is 5.5 times the tree-trimming budgets of the 149 municipalities it serves in the state.

As big cutting projects continue to go forward across Connecticut, Mr. Ward still has hope that a new model of tree man-

agement could take root. He cites the recent "Stormwise" project proposal, which would create a different type of managed forest along Connecticut roads as models of how a more intensive approach to forestry could reduce tree damage. Stormwise would include tree stand development—encouraging trees to grow outward instead of up into easily toppled trees. The project proposal, which includes a \$140,000 grant from the federal government and \$85,704 in matching contributions, comes from the University of Connecticut's Department of Natural Resources and the Environment, the university's Cooperative Extension, and the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. Partners include the DEEP Forestry Division, Northeast Utilities (CL&P's parent company), and Audubon Connecticut, to name a few. The project was set to go forward, but now faces uncertainty as a result of the federal budget sequester.

If the project does go forward, Mr. Ward said he hopes it will be a model for better tree management. The project's goal is to provide a roadside environment that creates sturdy trees that would be good for animal habitat and preserve the view for people on Connecticut roads.

Will this new system withstand storms better than any other managed forests? The test will be in which trees stand and which trees fall.

*Tom Fagin, a native of Ledyard, Connecticut, is a journalist based most recently in Gillette, Wyoming.*

# FORESTS

## AFTER NATURAL DISTURBANCES

*Should we clean up nature's messes?*

BY EMERY GLUCK

Severe storms have helped shaped our forests for eons. Before Hurricane Irene and the October 31 snowstorm in 2011 and Hurricane Sandy in 2012, we might have been lulled into thinking this was not the case in Connecticut. The 1938 hurricane, which felled approximately one-half of the larger conifers and one-fifth of the larger hardwoods east of the Connecticut River, seems to be part of the distant past. Those who remember it tend to be foresters, ecologists, and those who lived through it. The 1938 hurricane felled an estimated billion New England trees. Similar-strength hurricanes have hit Connecticut approximately once a century. Weaker hurricanes have occurred more frequently. On average, one minor tornado or microburst (a powerful, localized storm) touches down in Connecticut each year, and significant ones occur once every decade or two. The 1989 Cornwall tornado affected several square miles of forest and uprooted or snapped off an estimated 95 percent of the trees in Cathedral Pines, a Nature Conservancy property. Pines and hemlocks more than 125 feet tall and two centuries old grew in the majestic grove. The Nature Conservancy decided to remove the downed trees only along the periphery of the property, reportedly to address concerns of the local fire department officials, who were concerned about the increased risk of a large fire because of the massive amount of fuel (dried needles, leaves, and branches) created by the blowdown. Historically, large fires have followed large blowdowns and heavy harvests, at least before fire prevention efforts. On the rest of the property, TNC left the downed trees for an ecological study of how nature recovers without intervention.

Leaving blowdowns (large downed woody material) provides important ecological assets that are often found in old-growth forests but lacking in younger forests. Large snags (dead standing trees) provide habitat structure for cavity-nesting birds. Downed logs provide cover for snakes, small mammals, and salamanders. Insects and microorganisms start their work to recycle the wood and return nutrients to the soil. Snags and blowdowns are the basic component of the forest-based food chain.

Cleanup is done mainly to lessen the aesthetic impact and often to recover some of the economic value of the wood. But with several exceptions, many of the damaged trees from the last few storms were



EMERY GLUCK

*Surviving pine remnant in Cathedral Pines, where a 1989 tornado felled most of the forest.*



EMERY GLUCK

*Twenty-three years after the tornado, dead and downed conifers remain among birch, cherry, and hemlock that sprouted that year to replace them.*



## CLEANUP IS DONE MAINLY TO LESSEN THE AESTHETIC IMPACT AND OFTEN TO RECOVER SOME OF THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF THE WOOD.

scattered throughout the forest or in small groups. For a cleanup to be economically feasible, additional trees would likely need to be cut. That was not the case after the 1938 hurricane, when an estimated 3 billion board feet of timber was salvaged in New England.

Wind events and other disturbances establish and develop new generations (cohorts) of different tree species. Black birch seeded after the multiple gypsy moth infestations of the 1970s and 1980s and after the hemlock wooly adelgid infestations. Black birch, yellow birch, and red maple seeded most prolifically 10 years after a study removed trees to simulate hurricane blowdown at the Harvard Forest in Petersham, Massachusetts. Red oak saplings are sparse and unlikely to emerge to the canopy, even though red oak dominated the original stand. Back in Connecticut, after the Cathedral Pines tornado, yellow birch, black birch, cherry, and, to a lesser extent, hemlock have appeared to replace pine and hemlock as the dominant species in the afflicted area. When I made a reconnaissance, I only found pine and oak saplings in the perimeter that had been cleaned up by salvaging the timber. Pine and oak were often historically established after severe wind events (overstory disturbances) followed by fire (usually an understory disturbance). The latter consumed the often-thick needle layer on the forest floor that prevents the germination of acorn and pine seeds.

An assortment of different ecological outcomes occur in forest stands (areas of forest with trees of similar age, species, and density) when the type, severity, and frequency of the disturbances are different. The more severe natural disturbances are stand-replacing events that reset the ecological clock, allowing the rejuvenation of early-successional species and habitat. Relatively minor disturbances speed up natural succession of shade-tolerant species—beech, black birch, and maple. These species can perpetuate and sustain themselves with even a minor flush of additional sunlight reaching the ground. Shade-tolerant species dominate the understory of Connecticut's forests today and are well positioned to replace the oak-dominat-

ed forest under current trajectories. Red maple has already replaced red oak as the most populous species in Connecticut forests.

Severe disturbances favor trees that need lots of sunlight to sustain themselves, especially short-lived species like gray and white birch and aspen. Gray birch trees usually do not live past age 40, and white birch and aspen rarely reach the century mark. Pitch pine, cherry, red cedar, tulip poplar, and oak also require lots of sunlight. Historically, fire was an important disturbance agent in Connecticut that created favorable environments for these trees. Because fires no longer roam the countryside, the future abundance of the disturbance-dependent species is uncertain without intervention unless climate change creates favorable conditions. Pitch pine, gray birch, aspen, and (in many places) white birch and cherry are underrepresented because of the lack of adequate disturbances.

Fires were abundant in pre-colonial Connecticut; most of them set by the Native Americans. They burned the forest for many reasons, including to improve habitat to attract game, increase berry production, clear land for agriculture, and make it easier to collect firewood and acorns. Indigenous management activities, including the use of fire, are considered part of the natural disturbance regime by many ecologists. Native American fires killed shrubs and the tops of small hardwood trees, temporarily opening up the forest. This contrasts sharply with the dense understories of today's forest, which developed in the absence of fire. Without fire or sufficient disturbances, viable new generations of shade-sensitive trees are almost absent in today's forest, except on ridge tops.

Adequate natural disturbances often cannot sustain new oaks if excessive deer browse limits the height growth of new oaks. This gives a competitive advantage to less palatable trees and shrubs, which can then easily overtop the oaks. Once oaks fall behind in the race to get above their competitors, most will eventually die out. Felling overtopping saplings will increase the probability that young oaks will reach the overstory.

Severe natural disturbances also help sustain wildlife that need thick, brushy young

seedling forest for their habitat. It is beneficial to have a majority of the forest landscape at a mature stage. This provides habitat for the majority of wildlife that needs extensive contiguous areas. Young forests are also very important for a suite of 22 bird species and 4 mammal species that use seedling forest as their primary habitat. These include uncommon species such as cedar waxwings, blue-winged warblers, New England cottontail, and bobcat. These populations have experienced drastic declines as early-successional forests composed primarily of seedling and small saplings have been radically reduced. Most of the present forest is dominated by maturing stands. It is more uniform than the historic norm because most of today's forests arose from a wave of clear-cuts, fires, and farm abandonment approximately a century ago. With the precipitous decrease in fires and clear-cuts, very few stand-replacing disturbances have occurred in more than a half century. Consequently, young forest habitat or early-successional forests are uncommon. A landscape of only maturing forests with low-level disturbances will not provide suitable environment to sustain viable populations of the species of flora and fauna characteristics of Connecticut forests. Adequate proportions of all successional stages or habitats are needed in the forest.

To provide a diverse habitat and sustain ecosystems currently not otherwise being produced, the Forestry and Wildlife divisions of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection create critical young forest habitat with clear-cuts and irregular shelterwoods (harvests that retain only a few patches of trees or widely scattered larger trees). Clear-cuts were detrimental when they were ubiquitous. Now, because they are an anomaly in Connecticut, a limited amount of new clear-cuts are very valuable. A relatively frequent infusion of new clear-cuts is needed as they outgrow their usefulness for most of their obligate species (species that occur together in particular conditions) in a short time. For example, cedar waxwings and blue-winged

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## FORESTS

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warblers are abundant in recent clear-cuts but decline after 10 years. Bluebirds decline after only 2 years.

Selective cutting (also known as high-grading) is usually not adequate to create young forest habitat. This type of harvest often degrades the forest because only the largest and more valuable trees are harvested. Oaks, the most valuable trees for wildlife and among the most valuable for timber, are often decimated and not adequately sustained by this regressive practice. The declining trend of oak forests across the United States has been described as an “impending crisis” because of loss of wildlife habitat and ecosystem functions.

Natural and humanmade disturbances increase the likelihood that invasive exotic plants will take hold, especially if a seed source is nearby. Native and exotic vines, often established after a disturbance, can strangle or bring down young trees. It has been reported that the increase in atmospheric carbon dioxide during the past several decades has substantially enhanced vine growth. Although chemical control of invasives and vines is most definitive, repeated cutting or burning (with a propane torch) in the same year shortly after leaves emerge (and again after resprouting) can be effective.

Many people object to cutting trees because they don’t want humans to interfere with nature until nature creates a mess. Whether to clean up often is partly a matter of expectations and personal preference. Visitors from Germany—where forests are meticulously groomed—thought it was a shame that the mess from the hurricane was not cleaned up in the Highlawn Forest behind the Connecticut Forest & Park Association’s office. For several hundred years, natural disturbances were probably not the dominant force in shaping Central European forests. These circumstances may have led the late Dr. David Smith of the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies to suggest that Germans do not know what a natural forest is.

The cleanup of all of nature’s messes would derail a process of ecosystem enrichment that takes place as forest stands age and break apart, allowing new cohorts to become established. Letting nature rule in a



EMERY GLUCK

*A patch clear-cut in Bartlett Brook Wildlife Management Area, Lebanon, stimulates oak seedlings (with brown leaves) and grasses with the extra sunlight it brings and helps 10-year-old oak saplings at the edge of a maturing forest. Grass seed in forests provides an important source of food for forest birds during their fall migrations.*

**NATURAL AND HUMANMADE DISTURBANCES INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD THAT INVASIVE EXOTIC PLANTS WILL TAKE HOLD, ESPECIALLY IF A SEED SOURCE IS NEARBY. NATIVE AND EXOTIC VINES, OFTEN ESTABLISHED AFTER A DISTURBANCE, CAN STRANGLE OR BRING DOWN YOUNG TREES. IT HAS BEEN REPORTED THAT THE INCREASE IN ATMOSPHERIC CARBON DIOXIDE DURING THE PAST SEVERAL DECADES HAS SUBSTANTIALLY ENHANCED VINE GROWTH.**

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WILDLIFE IN FORESTS, VISIT

[WWW.CT.GOV/DEEP/LIB/DEEP/WILDLIFE/PDF\\_FILES/HABITAT/YFSHRUBINITIATIVE/CLEARCUTBENEFITS.PDF](http://WWW.CT.GOV/DEEP/LIB/DEEP/WILDLIFE/PDF_FILES/HABITAT/YFSHRUBINITIATIVE/CLEARCUTBENEFITS.PDF)

significant part of Connecticut’s forests will increase the ecological complexity of individual stands.

At the same time, actively managing the remaining forest to restore similar conditions historically produced by fire and other natural disturbances would increase the overall complexity of forest landscapes. Without restoration efforts, the natural world would become more impoverished as the absence of disturbances or their proxies will likely yield a more homogenous landscape.

European Americans have and are still affecting the forest and natural disturbance regimes. Through our actions, as well as our inactions, we have significantly altered the ecological trajectory of the forest. The use of a natural disturbance model of management, incorporating retention of dead standing and down trees and mindful cutting of large and small trees in appropriate places, should help sustain the ecological diversity of our forests.

*Emery Gluck is a forester for the Connecticut DEEP.*





## *Planning for the future of the trails amid the march of development*

BY LINDSAY MICHEL

**E**scape. I find myself looking to flee the hustle and bustle of cars, people, and everyday life more and more as time goes by. There is nothing more cleansing and innocent than surrounding myself with the sights and sounds that nature brings. But will my precious getaways remain intact for future generations?

Last fall, I went hiking along the New England Trail in Farmington. Initially, I was surrounded by woodland, but as I continued north I came out on Poplar Hill Drive in the middle of a recently subdivided parcel, bound for four new houses. The trail continued on the road for a quarter mile passing houses on either side before reentering woodlands on the Hill-Stead Museum property. Gone was the tranquility of nature that this section once had.

Once back in the office, I pulled up our geographic information system mapping system and realized that along my 2- to 3-mile route I had crossed 22 properties, 20 of which are privately owned and only one of which is permanently protected. As Clare Cain said in the Summer 2011 issue of Connecticut Woodlands, “The threat to our Blue Trails is obvious. A subdivision or a change in ownership could sever any of our beautiful, remote hiking trails.”

As the economy recovers and development again makes a forward push, the

pace of forestland and open space loss will increase, causing expanded fragmentation and the loss of many treasured natural landscapes. So what are we to do? Step aside or put our best foot forward?

Here at Connecticut Forest & Park Association, we have always prided ourselves on leading the push for the future of conservation whether through trail work, education, advocacy, or land protection. With the limited resources of organizations and governments across the state, creativity and partnerships will become the future. Working jointly with municipalities, land trusts, state government, and various partners, we are able to join forces and access funding and expertise previously unavailable to any one group working alone.

CFPA is embarking on several joint projects and partnerships that we hope will position us for land protection opportunities in the future. Through a 3-year \$165,000 grant from the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, CFPA will collaborate with local land trusts, town planners, and local trail managers to develop a strategic protection plan for the northern part of the New England Trail. The hope is to create a model that can be used throughout the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail System to formalize existing handshake agreements and conduct extensive landowner outreach that will increase the permanent protection along the route.

Also, through regional partnerships such

*Above, development meets the Metacomet Trail in Farmington.*

CHRISTINE WOODSIDE

as the MassConn Sustainable Forest Partnership and the Litchfield Hills Greenprint Collaborative, we have regular dialogue about protection priorities, share resources, and apply jointly for funding sources. These partnerships look to engage and teach landowners and local leaders about conservation and management options to help influence land use codes and make sure all are aware of the array of conservation options available when managing lands and planning for the future of family estates.

Working together has already aligned Farmington and CFPA priorities, which is starting to show some progress. Along Poplar Hill Drive, the town has voted to acquire a property for open space that would reroute the trail off 16 private properties back into the woods. Decision and action is expected in the coming months and we are hopeful for this valuable asset to become a reality.

The road is long and may be steep at times, but nothing worth saving comes easily. With collaboration and strategic conservation planning, I hope we can preserve your favorite natural escape long into the future.

*Lindsay Michel of North Haven is the land conservation director for CFPA.*

## CONNECTICUT FOREST & PARK ASSOCIATION HISTORIC MILESTONES

- 1895 Connecticut Forestry Association founded in the Weatogue section of Simsbury, Connecticut, on December 30, 1895, at the residence of Reverend Horace Winslow.
- 1901 Facilitated establishment of the first state forester position in the nation.
- 1901 Initiated a state forest acquisition policy, making Connecticut the first state in the nation able to acquire land for state forests.
- 1903 Encouraged the acquisition of the Portland (now Meshomasic) State Forest, the first state forest in New England.
- 1905 Secured enactment of the Connecticut Forest Fire Law, the first such law in New England.
- 1913 Secured enactment of the 10-Mill Law, the first reducing taxation on land committed to forestry.
- 1920 Envisioned, acquired, and donated Peoples State Forest to the state of Connecticut.
- 1921 Secured enactment of a bill authorizing state purchase of the first 100,000 acres of forest.
- 1923 Secured enactment of a bill requiring spark arrestors on railroad locomotives.
- 1928 Became incorporated as Connecticut Forest & Park Association.
- 1929 Established the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail System. The Quinnipiac Trail was the first.
- 1930 Established the prototype for the Civilian Conservation Corps at Peoples State Forest.
- 1936 Published the first issue of Connecticut Woodlands magazine.
- 1937 Published the first volume of the Connecticut Walk Book.
- 1963 Secured enactment of Public Act 490, the first law in the nation to allow forests, farms, and open space to be taxed based upon use rather than development value.
- 1971 Secured enactment of the Landowner Liability Law to protect landowners hosting trails.
- 1986 Established the James L. Goodwin Forest & Park Center in Middlefield.
- 1986 Coordinated Project Learning Tree in Connecticut.
- 1991 Secured enactment of the Connecticut Forest Practices Act.
- 1993 Began as Connecticut coordinator of National Trails Day, the American Hiking Society's initiative. Connecticut Trails Day features more hikes than any other state.
- 2002 Secured enactment of the Metacomb-Monadnock-Mattabesett Trail Study Act of 2002, directing the National Park Service to study the feasibility of making these trails a National Scenic Trail.
- 2009 The federal government designated the 220-mile-long MMM Trail in Connecticut and Massachusetts as a National Scenic Trail, called the New England Trail.
- 2011 Led efforts to amend the state Landowner Liability Law to restore liability protection to municipalities on recreational lands.

## CONSERVATION PROGRAMS



### CONSERVATION ADVOCACY

Every year since 1897, CFPA has provided legislators with an Agenda for Connecticut's Land and People. CFPA's advocacy priorities have included securing adequate resources for the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to manage state parks and forests; support the preservation of working forests and agricultural lands; and lead efforts to secure national scenic trail designation and ongoing support for the New England Trail.

### BLUE-BLAZED HIKING TRAILS

The Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail System, established in 1929, is one of CFPA's most visible and lasting contributions to recreation. The Blue Trails total more than 825 miles in 88 towns. The infrastructure for managing this massive area consists of CFPA's trail stewardship director, the CFPA Trails Committee, and 100 volunteer trail managers who through work parties and ongoing maintenance activities donate more than 15,000 hours of volunteer time each year.

### ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Three elements make up CFPA's Environmental Education program: (1) CFPA co-sponsors the nationally acclaimed Project Learning Tree (PLT) Program and offers hands-on professional development workshops for teachers and non-formal educators on forests and related natural resources topics; (2) The James L. Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center in Hampton features native plant wildlife gardens, an 80-acre demonstration forest, a museum, hiking trails, and a classroom to provide forestry, wildlife, and general conservation education programs for youth and adults; and (3) CFPA has long been known for its conservation-themed publications such as Connecticut Woodlands (published since 1936), the *Connecticut Walk Books* (published since 1937), and *Forest Trees of Connecticut* (recently republished in 2012).

### LAND CONSERVATION

Over the past 100 years, CFPA has been instrumental in the acquisition of more than 100 state parks and forests for public use and enjoyment. CFPA owns properties or holds conservation restrictions on approximately 2,000 acres. The conservation priorities for the program are in lands associated with working forests and/or hiking trails.

### WalkCT

Describing 130 walks and growing, CFPA's WalkCT.org website provides information on places to walk within 15 minutes of any residence in Connecticut. CFPA sponsors WalkCT Family Rambles. Leaders are trained to connect families to the outdoors with fun, engaging, family-friendly walks every month of the year.

**Visit [ctwoodlands.org](http://ctwoodlands.org) for more information on CFPA programs and activities.**



# MEET THE CFPA BOARD MEMBERS

The members of the **Connecticut Forest & Park Association's Board of Directors** serve as guardians of CFPA's mission. They also act as ambassadors for the organization and in the communities and networks where they live and work. CFPA is fortunate to have some amazing, dedicated members of the Board of Directors like **Astrid Hanzalek** and **Scott Livingston**. Following are brief biographies that give a flavor of their commitment.

The **Honorable Astrid Hanzalek** joined CFPA's Board in 1985 after the late John Ellsworth recruited her during the planning and fundraising for CFPA's Middlefield headquarters. She served as both assistant majority leader and assistant minority leader in the Connecticut General Assembly from 1971-1981, when she served as a Republican representative from Suffield. Astrid has served on the Council on Environmental Quality, the Connecticut Greenways Commission, the Commission on Culture and Tourism, and on the boards of the Connecticut Water Company, Connecticut River Watershed Council (which she chaired), and the Antiquarian and Landmarks Society (for which she served as president).

Astrid is a founding board member of the Suffield Land Conservancy, a board member of Riverfront Recapture, a member of the Connecticut Nitrogen Credit Advisory Board, and she represents Connecticut on the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission. Astrid received an honorary doctorate from Charter Oak College, and bachelor of arts degrees from Concordia College and the University of Pennsylvania. Astrid has lived in Suffield with her husband, Frederick, since 1956.



**Scott Livingston** has been a member of CFPA's Board of Directors since May 2010. He is the President and CEO of Horst Engineering & Manufacturing Co. He is a Boston College graduate and completed the Harvard Business School OPM (Owner/President Management) program. He is a member of the Young Presidents' Organization, an international group for CEOs under age 45. He was chair of the YPO-WPO (World Presidents' Organization) Family Business Network.

Scott also is a passionate journalist and photographer. In addition to his published articles, Scott's written and photographic musings may be found on his blog at [www.scottlivingston.net](http://www.scottlivingston.net). He also serves on the Appalachian Mountain Club's Board of Advisors. He is an endurance cyclist, trail runner, and triathlete. He and his spouse, Debbie (also a renowned endurance sports enthusiast), train regularly on the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails. They hiked the Long Trail and the New England 4,000 footers; they live with their two children in Bolton.



# THE REPLACEMENTS

*What to plant when storms topple trees*

BY KATHLEEN GROLL CONNOLLY

Soon the excellent tree planting months of September and October will raise the important questions: Replace trees that have toppled? And with which trees? As a landscape designer and member of the Old Saybrook Tree Committee, I went in search of a good list of wind-resistant native trees and couldn't find exactly what I wanted. My quest led to three worthwhile resources, however, and now I share the list of replacement trees that evolved. My research also led to some new ideas, the best of which is that we may need to get rid of some old ideas.

New England streets have long been tree-lined with

elm (a century ago), maples (later), and, more recently, apple, cherry, and the ubiquitous Bradford pear. Each has proven to have its specific problems as a street tree, but one problem is common to all: the physics problem when a deciduous tree in full leaf encounters the force of high wind. No matter its scientific name, the crowns of most deciduous trees behave somewhat like boat sails in the wind. That can lead to a capsizing.

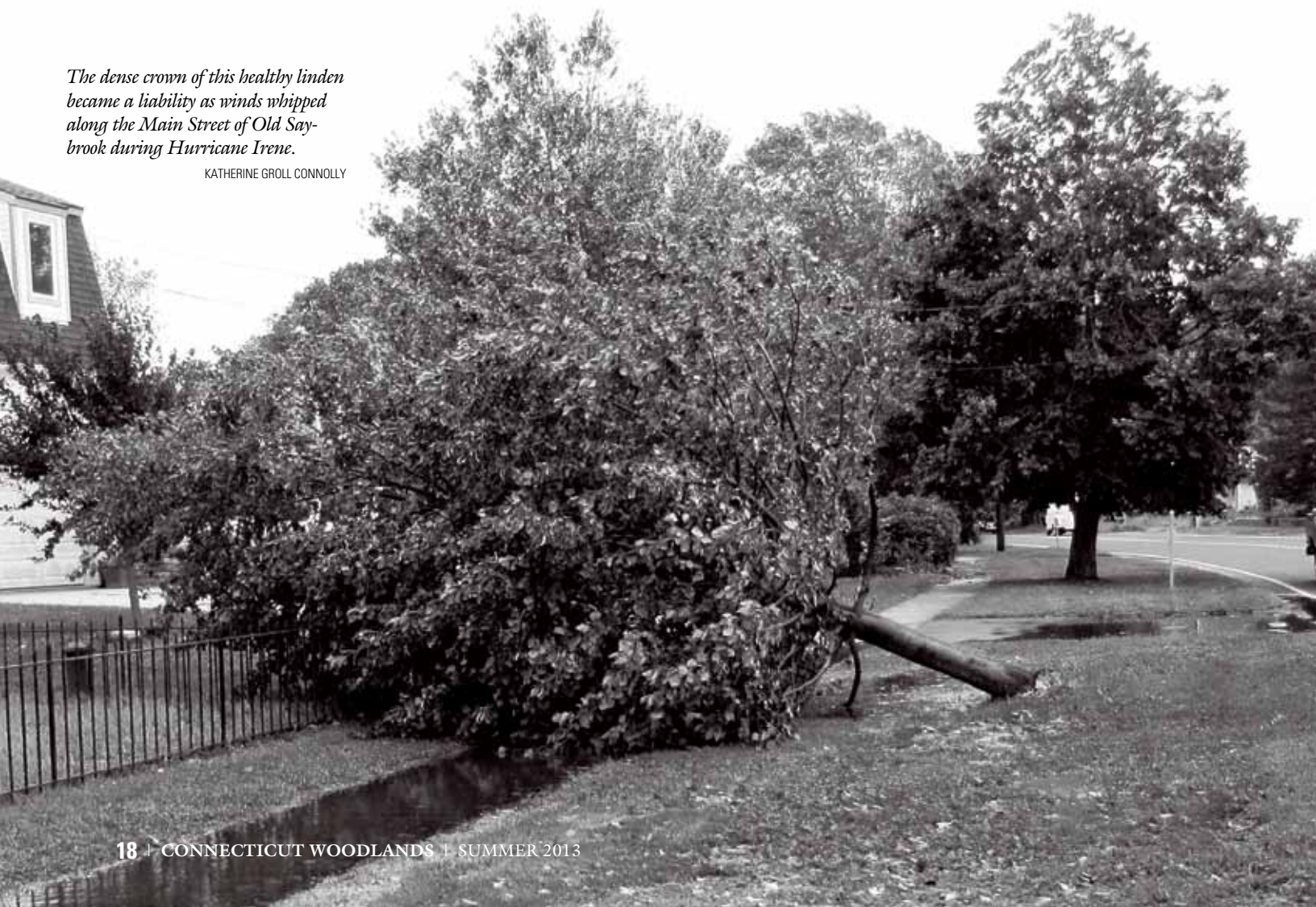
## RESOURCE 1:

### **Lessons in Outmoded Planting Designs**

The first resource I found is an excellent study published by the University of Florida's Extension System: "Wind and Trees: Lesson Learned from Hurricanes" by

*The dense crown of this healthy linden became a liability as winds whipped along the Main Street of Old Saybrook during Hurricane Irene.*

KATHERINE GROLL CONNOLLY





Mary Duryea and Eliana Kampf (See [edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/FR/FR17300.pdf](http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/FR/FR17300.pdf)).

The study summarizes the fate of 150 urban tree species over more than a decade during 10 hurricanes and offers a number of lessons that are entirely applicable to Connecticut. Perhaps most important, the study offers a thought-provoking idea for street tree committees, which is that their traditional tree planting designs may be outmoded.

“Our research showed that trees growing in groups survived the winds better than individual trees,” Ms. Duryea and Ms. Kampf write. “A group was defined as five or more trees, each growing within 10 feet of another tree, but not in a row . . .” In other words, the trees found strength in circles and in numbers. Tree groups with mixed species survived better than did same-species plantings, they conclude. Multiple heights and widths apparently contribute to the overall strength of the group.

Note to street tree committees: If replanting, consider mixed-genus circular groups rather than repeating the soldiers-on-a-march design practiced during the past century. Yes, this may result in blank spaces along the street. (Perhaps some native flowering shrubs can fill in and recreate the illusion of the curbside allée.)

Second note to tree committees: The University of Florida report names Bradford pear, tulip poplar, and Chinese elm among the worst performers in hurricanes.

#### RESOURCE 2:

##### **Windbreak or Wind Hazard?**

A second resource comes from the Natural Resources Conservation Service in “Windbreaks: Their Use” by Morris Houck. Mr. Houck names trees selected for their performance in very dry, windy, and unprotected places. Just as important, Mr. Houck reminds us that in some places trees are considered a defense against the wind rather than a liability. (Compare this with the occasional opinion around the state that all street trees should be removed because of the danger they pose.)

Mr. Houck’s report suggests a number of trees of different sizes that are also native to southern New England, and this formed

part of the list offered in the sidebar to this article. See this report at [plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/pubs/txpmcot5584.pdf](http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov/pubs/txpmcot5584.pdf).

#### RESOURCE 3:

##### **Think Local, Think Native**

Connecticut’s urban foresters have been hard at work on this question of storm-worthiness and street-worthiness, too. The extensive report by Connecticut’s Two Storm Panel offered a lengthy list of recommendations for managing the urban forest in our changing weather environment. The Connecticut Nursery and Landscape Association also offers a list, “Right Tree, Right Place,” that guides tree planters toward genera, species, and cultivars that will perform well in the state. This list contributed to the trees named in the sidebar. Find it at [flowersplantsinct.com/RightTree.htm](http://flowersplantsinct.com/RightTree.htm).

Finally, though, I felt it was important to determine which of these wind-tolerant trees are also native to southern New England. Why native? The simplest explanation is that native plants are key to supporting other native life—insects, microbes, birds, and larger animals as well. People have written many books on this topic. One of my personal favorites is Douglas Tallamy’s *Bringing Nature Home* (Timber Press, 2009).

To verify the native status of the trees on the list, I used the excellent and authoritative online database “Go Botany” ([gobot-any.newenglandwild.org](http://gobot-any.newenglandwild.org)). The database is sponsored by the New England Wildflower Society. Before you read the list, here’s a final note: Glenn Dreyer, director of the Connecticut College Arboretum, reports they’ve had very good luck with pin oak and river birch during all the recent storms. It’s good to know that both of those excellent natives are holding up well.

But Mr. Dreyer adds, “Be sure to keep in mind that all trees perform better when they are properly pruned and cared for.” That is perhaps the most important point of all.

*Kathleen Groll Connolly’s landscape design business is called Speaking of Landscapes. Her experience choosing street trees goes back several years through her work on the Old Saybrook Tree Committee.*

## 20 NATIVE TREES TO CONSIDER

*Here’s my list of native trees based on the reports I’ve talked about. Keep in mind that the very heavy snow of February 2013 created a problem of a different sort and was not specifically addressed in this research. I noted sources by 1 = University of Florida study, 2 = Natural Resources Conservation Service report, and 3 = Connecticut Nursery and Landscape Association.*

### NATIVE TREES UNDER 20 FEET TALL

Chickasaw plum, *Prunus angustifolia* 1, 2

Flowering dogwood, *Cornus florida*  
(CNLA names “Appalachian Spring” and “Appalachian Blush” cultivars) 1, 3

Redbud, *Cercis canadensis* 1, 2

River birch, dwarf *Betula nigra* “Little King” 1

Serviceberry, *Amelanchier canadensis*  
(CNLA recommends “Rainbow Pillar”) 1, 3

Serviceberry, *Amelanchier laevis* 1, 3

Sweetbay magnolia, *Magnolia virginiana* 1

### NATIVE TREES 20 TO 40 FEET TALL

American holly, *Ilex opaca* 1

American hophornbeam, *Ostrya virginiana* 1, 3

American hornbeam, *Carpinus caroliniana* 1, 3

Arborvitae, *Thuja occidentalis* 2

Chokecherry, *Prunus virginiana* (CNLA recommends “Canada Red”) 2, 3

Eastern redcedar, *Juniperus virginiana* 2

Hackberry, *Celtis occidentalis* 2, 3

Hawthorn, *Crataegus viridis* (CNLA recommends “Winter King”) 1, 2, 3

Hawthorn, thornless cockspur, *Crataegus crus-galli* var. *inermis* (CNLA cites “Cruzam”) 1, 2, 3

### NATIVE TREES OVER 40 FEET TALL

American sycamore, *Platanus occidentalis* 2

Blackgum, Tupelo, *Nyssa sylvatica* 1, 3  
(CNLA recommends “Wildfire”)

Burr oak, *Quercus macrocarpa* 2

Pin oak, *Quercus palustris* (recommendation from Connecticut College Arboretum)

River birch, standard *Betula nigra* 1



INGIMAGE

## — A BELOVED TASTE OF SUMMER IN CONNECTICUT

BY JEAN CRUM JONES

**M**y most desired food experience for summer is to eat a perfect sun-warmed, fully ripe, just-picked Connecticut peach.

Connecticut sits near the northern rim of the Atlantic seacoast crescent peach region that extends south to Georgia, an area capable of producing this most delicious delight of summer. The peach is a fruit of the temperate zone. Though it prefers warmer areas, peach trees can survive temperatures as low as -15 degrees Fahrenheit. Peach trees require a resting period—a chilling time—for at least two months before they can produce leaves and flowers in the spring.

The Spaniards brought peach trees and honeybees to the New World and planted peaches at their coastal settlements in Georgia and Virginia in the 1500s. The trees quickly naturalized to their new environment. Native Americans were smitten with the new sweet fruit, and the peach tree spread quickly in North America. After 1600, new American settlers formed the idea that peach

trees were native to the United States.

In Connecticut, the first English settlers planted peach trees and other fruits. It is recorded that George Fenwick of Saybrook had started a fruit tree nursery by 1641. The geography of Connecticut is well suited to these European trees, which long ago originated in South China and were brought to England during the Roman conquest. Our rich, deep loam soil with good moisture proved a nourishing home for fruit tree roots. The high hills allowed for air drainage and reduced frost risk. Abundant, bright sunshine, moderate winters, and nearby large water bodies to balance air temperature fluctuations enabled fruit trees to thrive. Overseas visitors during the 1700s commented on the variety of fruit trees planted along the fence lines of most rural homes in Connecticut.

### **Nineteenth-Century Peach Craze**

During the 1800s when New England began to industrialize, some farmers began planting fruit tree orchards for commercial

production. A poor farm boy, born in South Glastonbury in 1853, grew up to transform the orchard fruit business in America. At the height of his career, John Howard Hale owned 325,000 peach trees in Connecticut and Georgia, and because of his pioneering marketing methods as well as the quality and the quantity of the fruit he produced, he was called the “Peach King of America.”

J. H., as he was known, was born on a rundown farm that had been in his family for generations. At a young age, J. H. began experimenting with growing strawberries and vegetables with the help of his older brother George on their family’s acres. J. H. learned early through peddling their produce the value of neat, clean packages and the importance of tasteful display. He also learned that fruit growing was much more profitable than vegetable farming.

Aware of some robust seedlings growing along the farm’s fences by his grandfather’s old peach trees, he decided to plant a peach orchard in 1876. His trees produced a very large freestone peach with a yellow skin



**THE SPANIARDS BROUGHT PEACH TREES AND HONEYBEES TO THE NEW WORLD AND PLANTED PEACHES AT THEIR COASTAL SETTLEMENTS IN GEORGIA AND VIRGINIA IN THE 1500S. THE TREES QUICKLY NATURALIZED TO THEIR NEW ENVIRONMENT. NATIVE AMERICANS WERE SMITTEN WITH THE NEW SWEET FRUIT, AND THE PEACH TREE SPREAD QUICKLY IN NORTH AMERICA. AFTER 1600, NEW AMERICAN SETTLERS FORMED THE IDEA THAT PEACH TREES WERE NATIVE TO THE UNITED STATES.**

blushed with red and little fuzz. The peach had yellow flesh with a good flavor and aroma. As well, it had hearty disease- and cold-resistant characteristics. He named it the J. H. Hale peach. Within a few years, it became a very popular variety. In 1880, he had 3,000 trees; by 1892, there were almost 12,000 trees in his orchard. Expansion of the orchard was limited in Glastonbury by the lack of available land and the threat of unpredictable spring freezes. So, he bought one thousand acres at Fort Valley, Georgia, in 1895 and planted them with numerous varieties of peach trees. George became the manager of the Fort Valley plantation.

Some of the state's first planted peach tree orchards were producing fine fruit in the Naugatuck Valley. The leading landowner of Seymour, Marcus Davis, planted the trees in the Great Hill area and sold his peaches in New Haven. At a Grange meeting in Shelton, J. H. Hale met the son-in-law of Marcus, Michael Coleman. Michael described the family's success with growing peaches. Intrigued, J. H. decided to look for additional orchard lands nearby and bought 100 acres in the Oxford-Seymour area in 1896. He established a partnership with Michael, and they had 18,000 peach and apple trees planted on Moose Hill by 1902.

An article in the Hartford Courant said, "The special value of the Hale peaches is in their absolute freshness, the care with which they are cultivated, picked, sorted, and marketed. It is hard to imagine anything better than their 'Red Label' baskets now being offered." J. H. Hale was famous for a statement on his fruit label, which read "U C Top-U C All." He is acknowledged to be the first American orchardist to sort and label fruit according to grade.

He inspired other Connecticut farmers to grow peaches. Charles Lyman of Middlefield planted 500 acres of peaches; Elijah Rogers of Southington planted 7,000 trees; and William Arnon Henry, agricultural dean at the University of Wisconsin, came to Wallingford to plant peaches on 300 acres. Because of J. H. Hale's influence, Connecticut became

the second largest producer of peaches in the United States, behind only Georgia.

### **The Decline**

The golden age of Connecticut peaches ended abruptly after the severe winter of 1917–1918. The frost went 4 feet into the ground and basically killed every peach tree in the state. When the orchardists replanted, most put in apple trees, which were hardier. Further challenges awaited Connecticut's peach farmers as the century progressed. Before World War I, 87 percent of fruit sold in the United States was consumed fresh. After the war, California planted massive acreages of peaches, most of it for processing. The canned peaches could easily be transported throughout the country by railroad without refrigeration. There was a great enthusiasm for commercially canned peaches because they could be eaten conveniently year-round at home and because it saved the housewife the burden of putting up her own peaches. After World War II, "modern" homemakers embraced the new "consumer society" and relished the convenience of food shopping at large supermarkets. Fresh peaches, the fruit most sensitive to pressure, were picked firm, before they were ripe, for shipping long distances to supermarkets and, consequently, never developed a strong peach flavor, nor the aroma and juiciness of a classic tree-ripened peach.

Fresh peaches declined in popularity for a period. By 1970, as consumer preferences moved away from that sort of fresh fruit, some Connecticut fruit growers abandoned their farms.

### **A Return to Fresh**

Toward the end of the 1990s, consumers began thinking more about their food choices. They wanted better flavor and better nutrition. Farmers' markets began returning to cities and towns with old farmers and new farmers having the opportunity to sell their just harvested farm foods. Consumers began finding time to visit farm stands at local farms as well as to do some personal

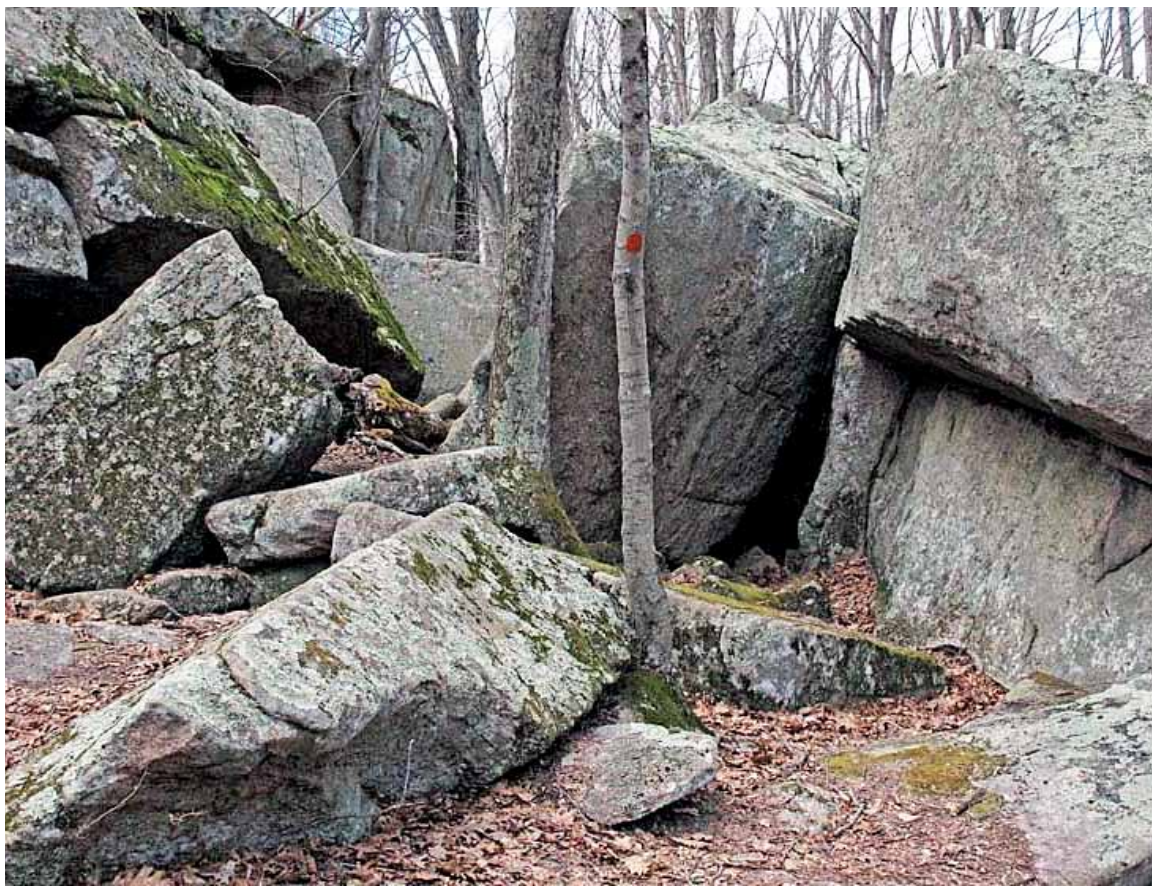
harvesting at pick-your-own farms.

Fresh peach consumption is increasing, and canned consumption is declining. These trends are encouraging Connecticut fruit growers to establish new peach orchards. Old-time orchardists who kept small peach orchards as a support crop for their apple orchards are increasing acreage, and some are experimenting with new techniques of raising peaches to increase their output. Peach trees are being trained on metal wires and rods. With this system, trees can be planted closer together and branches encouraged to grow in such a way that maximizes airflow—reducing problems with moisture and pest pressures. These high-density plantings should result in significantly higher quality yields. Some of the great-grandchildren of farmers who were peach disciples of J. H. Hale are still innovators in producing peaches, though apples remain their primary crop. Lyman Orchards, Rogers Orchards, and Blue Hill Orchard are leaders in their commitment to "Eco Peach" production, a responsible farming method that relies on the stringent guidelines of Integrated Pest Management, reducing the use of high-toxicity pesticides and improving soil and water quality.

Connecticut now has about 450 acres of peaches in production. Farms selling peaches can be located by checking out [buyctgrown.com](http://buyctgrown.com). Peaches are classified as clingstone or freestone. In Connecticut, early-season peaches are ready in July and are clingstone, meaning the fruit clings close to the pit. By mid-August, freestone peaches are ready for harvest; their flesh separates easily from the pit. Peaches have either a white flesh that is sweeter or a yellow flesh, which is more tart. Try the amazing varieties and try to pick your own. Enjoy as many fresh peaches as you can while the season lasts!

*Jean Crum Jones works with her family running the Jones Family Farms and Jones Winery in Shelton. She is a registered dietician and serves on the Board of Directors of Connecticut Forest & Park Association.*

## TRY THIS HIKE



*Left, the Orange Rectangle Trail leads through a jumble of huge rock blocks.*

*Right, Paul Edwards pauses while hiking through a mini slot canyon on the Orange Circle Trail.*

*Below, towering walls and slabs of rock dwarf a hiker on the Green Rectangle Trail.*

DIANE FRIEND EDWARDS

# WESTWOODS TRAILS: FANTASTIC ROCK FORMS MAKE FOR A FASCINATING TREK

BY DIANE FRIEND EDWARDS

**S**lot canyons in Connecticut!" That was my delighted reaction to the "massive rock forms" (so identified on the trail map) in the Westwoods preserve in Guilford. Well, maybe "slot canyons" in the sense of those in Arizona was an overstatement. But considering that Connecticut is a lot smaller than that state, these narrow, winding pathways through high rock walls seemed scaled just right: not too narrow (bringing no sense of claustrophobia), not too high, and safe from the dry West's flash floods after a quick rain. But a whole lot of fun to hike through.

"This is so cool," I kept saying as I peered into crevices and around corners to see what might be hidden from sight. I saw a rock wall clad in moss and ferns; a downed tree pointing, like a giant's finger, toward the next turn in the trail; and a fantastical rock formation resembling a huge, prehistoric reptile—which I dubbed a "rockasaurus."

Other sections of my hike that day also revealed fascinating features: caves and overhangs, boulders of pink granite (so abundant in the area





that it's still being cut from the nearby Stony Creek Quarry), and jumbles of huge rock slabs.

There's much to wonder over in Westwoods. The preserve encompasses 1,200 acres situated on lands owned by the state (in Cockaponset State Forest), private owners, the town of Guilford, and the Guilford Land Conservation Trust, which manages the nearly 39-mile trails network.

The trails form a web with numerous loops. The blazes—in blue, orange, green, white, yellow, red, or violet—are shaped like rectangles, squares, or circles, depending on a trail's overall direction. For example, circle trails run generally north-south; rectangle trails run east-west. In Westwoods, the shape of the painted trail blaze matters as much as the color. Pay close attention to both.

### The Hike

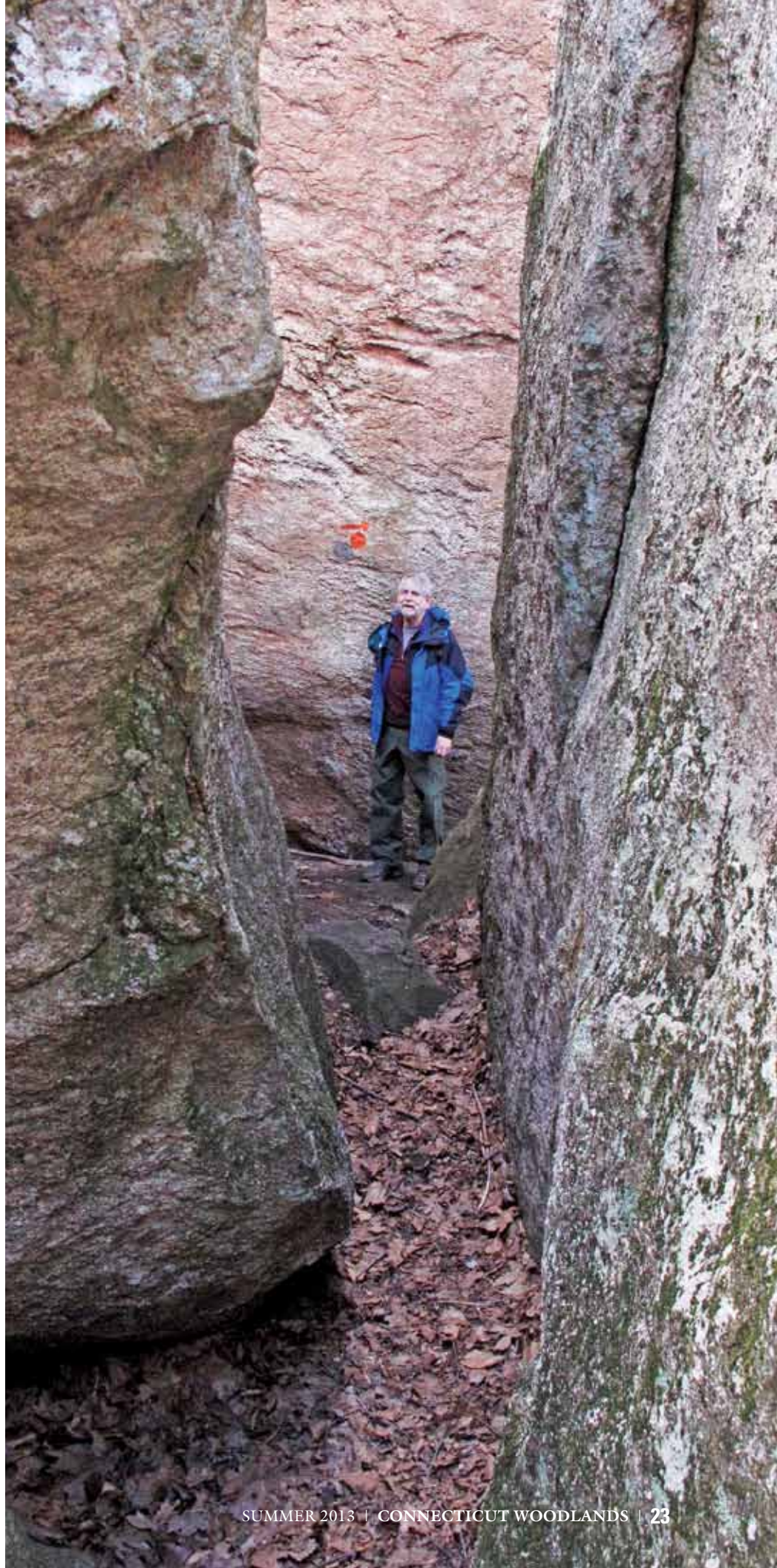
Looking at the map in the Connecticut Forest & Park Association's *Connecticut Walk Book*, I had a hard time deciding where to start. Trails begin from four parking areas, one each on the north, south, east, and west sides. The map notes nine natural features with intriguing names: Massive Rock Forms, Colonial Cave, The Rift, Natural Monument, Rock Canopy, Great Fallen Cliff, Indian Cave, Carved Rock Sculptures, and Lost Lake.

I chose an approximately 3-mile route that would talk me past four of those features. The hike covered mostly easy to moderate terrain. I came to a few rocky spots where anyone with short legs (like me) would either need a hand or use the "fanny approach": sit down and slide off, feet first.

To follow my route, start at the western parking area, on Moose Hill Road, and head east on a trail blazed with a blue rectangle—the Blue Rectangle Trail. After a short, pleasant stroll through a hardwood forest with a smattering of hemlocks, head northward on the Violet Circle Trail. You will see many downed trees (none blocking the trail), a stone wall, a few easily avoided wet spots, and a big glacial erratic.

At a trail intersection, turn right onto the Green Rectangle Trail. Check out the Colonial Cave and a pink-granite boulder from which a big slab has broken off. Continue following the trail between high rock walls and under a rock overhang. The green trail briefly joins the Yellow Square Trail before heading left and generally eastward. Continue on the green trail, passing the intersection with the White Circle

*continued on page 27*







CFPA

Teachers go to learn how to be Project Learning Teachers at summer camp in the Yale-Myers Forest.

# SUMMER CAMP: PLT-style

BY LORI PARADIS BRANT

**S**ummertime! For many, this is the season of summer camp. A time to explore the outdoors, develop new friendships, sleep in rustic cabins, and write home about the different activities. At the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, our summer camp is for teachers. Based on the success of a previous one-day teacher tour of Connecticut's forests, our Project Learning Tree Connecticut program created our first three-day summer camp exclusively for K-12th-grade teachers. During a busy and exciting, workshop, 15 educators will have a look into the world of sustainable forestry in Connecticut through field trips to private and public forests, lumber yards, and forest-product companies.

Our base camp will run out of Yale Myers Forest in northeastern Connecticut. We will lodge with students from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. After settling in to camp and choosing our bunks, we offer an introduction to CFPA; the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (our partner in this project); and PLT, the cornerstone piece of

*"Wonderful tour. I am still digesting it all. Many ideas are spinning in my brain for Earth Club. I think I will start with forest management and why, and then encourage families to attend the open house at Hull. Then a review of what we studied about the Asian longhorned beetle, and go to researching the emerald ash borer. Nice way to start the school year . . . Thanks for the tour and the ideas!!!!*

—Third-grade teacher

environmental education. We will also learn the goals of our Summer Camp for Teachers: Tour Sustainable Forestry in Connecticut.

Our outdoor camp experience will begin with a trek through Yale Myers Forest, during which we'll learn how the characteristics of Connecticut forests and ecological con-

cepts form the foundation of forest management plans. The next day we will visit a family-owned tree farm and a state forest. Seeing firsthand several lands managed for multiple use, timber, and wildlife provides a holistic view of Connecticut's forests. Our last field trips will provide an in-depth venture into the forest products industry. We'll enjoy a tour of a hardwood lumber mill to understand the place a Connecticut commercial enterprise has in both the local and worldwide economy and markets. We'll also tour the softwood products manufacturer to learn about sales of buildings and paneling using local woods.

Each day, we'll return to base camp for classroom and schoolyard activities from the PLT curriculum that relate to the day's field trip and learning adventure. Time for lesson planning and learning state and national standards will be provided so that teachers return to school with lessons and resources that meet their curricular goals while they teach about Connecticut's forests and forest products industry.

Instead of writing home about camp, teachers will write to their classroom of students about the activities they tried, what





CFPA

*Studying all the information available in cross-sections of trees.*



CFPA

*In hard hat, a teacher learns the workings of timber machinery.*

they learned about sustainable forestry, and what they are excited to bring back to the school. As newly trained PLT educators, these teachers will be eligible to apply for service-learning grants through PLT's GreenWorks program. These grant funds are to help implement youth action projects that help develop a sense of responsibility toward one's community while increasing students' understanding of their relationship to the environment.

In talking about the myriad forest tours available across the states, Vanessa Bullwinkle of PLT said, "The goal of these tours is to provide K-12 teachers with knowledge, skills, and tools to effectively teach their students about forest ecology and forest resource management practices. They provide balanced, science-based education vital to the understanding of how decisions are made about management of forests and the natural resources upon which we depend."

In Connecticut, we have found childhood summer camps a way to train environmental educators. There in the forest, we teach curriculum standards across many subject areas, including science, social studies, language arts, and math. We hope that our participants, as well as our numerous presenters, will leave with a list of professionals who research, manage, and teach about Connecticut's forests. The contacts will continue to grow. We'll make new friends, try new activities, and have lots of laughs along the way. Isn't that what summer camp is about?

#### **Summer Camp for Teachers: Supporters**

CFPA thanks the Connecticut DEEP, the American Forest Foundation, Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center, Hull Forest Products, Sigfridson Wood Products, Town Line Tree Farm, and the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies for their support. For a full list of supporters and a photographic journey of our Summer Camp for Teachers, visit [ctwoodlands.org/educ](http://ctwoodlands.org/educ).

*"The visits into the woods and mills were a wonderful experience that gave me a whole new perspective on forestry, and the dedication to stewardship by those working in and managing the forests."*

—Middle school teacher

*"Our district serves a high percentage of minority, ethnic, and low-income students. The combination of the PLT Outdoor Classroom and the science curriculum for K-3 would really be a huge benefit to these children. It would give them firsthand experience in the woodland habitat and environment, something they don't generally get in the classroom."*

—First-grade teacher

*Lori Paradis Brant is the education director for CFPA. She has been instrumental in the growth of the Project Learning Tree program in Connecticut.*





*Paul Mei, a volunteer trail manager and resident of Guilford, marks the New England Trail's route through downtown.*

CLARE CAIN

# THE GATEWAY TO GUILFORD AND THE NEW ENGLAND TRAIL

BY CLARE CAIN

**W**hat happens when you link a National Scenic Trail and an Estuary of National Significance? You create a gateway to hiking adventure.

Chittenden Park, a Guilford town park situated on the shore of the Long Island Sound, is the official terminus or “gateway” to the New England Trail (NET). If you visit, you’ll notice that the shoreline at Chittenden offers a totally different atmosphere from what visitors experience at other, more-developed beaches on the Sound. And this makes the park a special place to begin or end a journey on the NET.

Since President Obama signed Pub. L. 111-11, the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, and officially designated the NET as a National Scenic Trail, the Connecticut Forest & Park Association has pursued the goal of developing a gateway to the NET that is representative of the trail’s tremendous recreational and scenic significance. An undeveloped beach on the Long Island Sound, designated as an Estuary of National Significance by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, is a most-wor-

**CHITTENDEN PARK, A GUILFORD TOWN PARK SITUATED ON THE SHORE OF THE LONG ISLAND SOUND, IS THE OFFICIAL TERMINUS OR “GATEWAY” TO THE NEW ENGLAND TRAIL (NET). IF YOU VISIT, YOU’LL NOTICE THAT THE SHORELINE AT CHITTENDEN OFFERS A TOTALLY DIFFERENT ATMOSPHERE FROM WHAT VISITORS EXPERIENCE AT OTHER, MORE-DEVELOPED BEACHES ON THE SOUND**

thy entrance to a 215-mile hiking journey through New England.

If you’ve been in downtown Guilford recently, you may have noticed that change is underway. New NET trail blazes have begun to take up residence on utility poles. The blazes reveal themselves along the trail’s route through town. Paul Mei, a Guilford resident and CFPA’s lead local volunteer, has been hard at work closing the gap between the NET in the 583-acre East River Preserve and the Sound. A blue/green side trail has also been blazed and leads hikers to the historic Guilford Town Green.

But the Guilford Green is not the only significant historical stop on the new trail route. The trail links to other landmarks such as the Henry Whitfield State Museum (the oldest stone house in New England and a National Historic Landmark), the Hyland House, the Thomas Griswold House, the Guilford Fairgrounds, and the Guilford Covenant. Hikers and walkers are now able to accent their longer hikes on the NET with a walk back through time among the deep and rich colonial history of the town.

Originally known as Chittenden Beach, the park was purchased by the town in 1945 and became the first public beach for Guilford residents. In the 1960s, the surrounding property was also purchased and now hosts a ball field, soccer games, and bocce courts. Although the beach has always been used more for sunning than for swimming, it remains an attraction for beachcombers, birders, and anglers. No formal access to the shore currently exists. Because of this, the park is relatively undisturbed and remarkably unknown. This piece of the shoreline offers a tremendous spot for visitors to connect with the Sound and the surrounding natural environs in a quiet, untarnished way.

Our vision is to construct a sustainable walking trail over to the park’s dunes. Imagine a short stretch of elevated boardwalk out to an overlook platform. From the open platform, visitors will be rewarded with beautiful views of Faulkners Island, Chaffinch Island Park, and the West River. The hope is that these recreational improvements at Chittenden Park will invite the public to



experience and appreciate the Sound and the surrounding habitat in a new and sustainable way. What more appropriate place for hikers to begin or end their journey on the NET than at such a scenic spot overlooking the Sound?

Thanks to committed funding from the Guilford Foundation, the National Park Service, the Town of Guilford, and the state's Department of Community and Economic Development, these improvements will soon become a reality. The gateway to the NET will be officially dedicated next year, on Trails Day Weekend (the first weekend of June 2014) in conjunction with Guilford's 375th anniversary celebrations.

Get ready for a unique adventure. Follow the new trail blazes on the NET to the dynamic downtown of Guilford. Slip down to the shoreline, stop to discover and sample some of the local lore, enjoy the winding and pastoral back roads, and disappear into the woods and unblemished open spaces that make the area so attractive. The gateway is open to you!

*Clare Cain lives in Niantic. She has hiked thousands of miles in New England and elsewhere. She is the trail stewardship director of CFPA and has spent the last few years working on the extension of the NET to Long Island Sound.*

## TRY THIS HIKE

from page 23

Trail as well as the intersection with the Orange Square Trail. At the next intersection, turn left (northwesterly) onto the Orange Circle Trail and enjoy the fun!

Here are the slot canyons and a maze-like area of rocks. You'll also see the "rockasaurus," a huge boulder with a wedge-shaped notch seemingly gouged out by a giant's ax, and a narrow passage past a moss-and-fern-draped wall.

Next, backtrack along the Orange Circle Trail and the Green Rectangle Trail as far as the intersection with the White Circle Trail; turn left here. Follow the White Circle Trail south to the Natural Monument, a large block of rock clinging to the top of an outcropping. Shortly, you will come to a decision point. The white trail now becomes a small loop. Going left takes you up and over a hill; going straight takes you below the hill. I took the high route. At the top, the trail becomes very narrow and hugs the edge of a precipice—not a comfortable spot if you have a fear of heights. The trail then goes steeply downhill before rejoining the main White Circle Trail.

In no time, you will be back at the Blue Rectangle Trail, which you follow westward. It joins the Yellow Square Trail for a while before that trail heads south. A short distance down the yellow trail is the Rock Canopy, a diagonal slab. Finally, go back to the Blue Rectangle Trail and head west to return to the parking lot.

## Driving Directions

To reach Westwoods, take exit 57 from I-95 to Route 1 southbound. From Route 1, turn right (south) onto Three-Mile Course, which becomes Wild Rose Avenue. Turn right (west) onto Route 146, then right (north) onto Moose Hill Road.

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

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## WARM WATER AND PESTICIDES FOUND RESPONSIBLE FOR LOBSTERS' DECLINE

BY MICHELLE MUNSEY

A new study by the state of Connecticut has revealed that high water temperatures and pesticide exposure are contributing factors to the precipitous decline in the American lobster population in Long Island Sound since a massive die-off in 1999.

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection began the study last year, looking for stress factors in the water. DEEP Marine Fisheries Biologist and Project Manager Colleen Giannini said that in September 2011, DEEP received reports from LIS lobstermen in the western basin about distressed and dead lobsters appearing in their traps. A preliminary study with the University of Connecticut Veterinary Medical Diagnostics Laboratory found the lobsters had been exposed to minimal amounts of resmethrin and methoprene, two mosquito control agents.

Although the lobsters exhibited signs of exposure to these pesticides, Ms. Giannini said all the different tissues from sample lobsters that the researchers examined were in active stages of defending their bodies against the contaminant, a physiological process called phagocytosis.

"They were miniscule amounts," Ms. Giannini said, "but they were there. The important thing is we don't know what that means. Physically, the lobsters' bodies were doing exactly what they were supposed to do."

She explained that after the 1999 lobster die-off, much research was conducted on pesticides in Long Island Sound, and one of the results was the discovery that the most common sublethal effect of contaminants was the lobsters' inability to physiologically defend themselves. But the 2011 preliminary study showed the lobsters were indeed fighting the pesticide infection. This unique factor, she said, was a major catalyst for the 2012 research.

After collecting 90 samples of lobster from four different locations within Long Island Sound and another 40 samples from outside the Sound to use as a comparison, the 130 total samples were sent to the UConn lab to undergo analysis. The goals

of the study were to gather necropsy information about the lobster tissue, test the toxicology of the samples for the presence of five different pesticides, and examine particular organs and meat of the lobster to determine whether the current human health consumption advisory needed to be reevaluated.

Though much of the study focused on the investigation of lobster exposure to pesticides, the warm Long Island Sound water temperatures are a perpetual contribution to lobster mortality.

Long Island Sound is generally known to have high water temperatures but is now experiencing these temperatures for prolonged periods, a factor that continues to stress the lobster population.

"It doesn't kill them outright, but it stresses them out to the point where maybe they can't defend themselves against things that naturally occur" or contaminants they are exposed to, Ms. Giannini said. The increased water temperatures and the pesticide exposure combined can produce a lethal outcome for the American lobster and was a key discovery.

Nancy Balcom, associate director of the federal Connecticut Sea Grant College Program at the University of Connecticut's Avery Point campus, agreed the water temperature and other environmental concerns make it more difficult for the lobsters to take refuge from warmer waters and, in turn, protect themselves from infection.

"Usually when the water temperatures warm up in the summer, lobsters move to deeper water. It's become harder to make those moves," she said. "It could be an ongoing problem with above-average water compared to what they're used to."

Ms. Balcom noted that the lobsters never rebounded after the disastrous die-off of 14 years ago. "They have shown no recovery. It may be that the population was knocked so far back that there's not enough of them to recover," she said. Even with the stress factors afflicting the crustaceans, Ms. Balcom said, "I'm hopeful that maybe someday we'll see a recovery."



Ms. Giannini is optimistic as well, expecting the DEEP study to be completed by the end of June, and the final results to be in shortly after in July. A slight legislative funding issue in December 2012 halted the study for a two-month period; however, Ms. Giannini is hopeful to get the completed results on time.

The UConn laboratory will send blind samples of its toxicology reports to Michigan State University to confirm the results. Pending these toxicology results and the overall reports on the physical health of the lobsters, Ms. Giannini said the next steps in studying the declining population will be to determine how widespread the pesticide exposure reaches and how exactly the lobsters are exposed. Researchers also will determine whether they should update the lobster human health consumption advisory.

Though the results are not currently finalized, Ms. Giannini said, "We don't expect the human health consumption advisory to change, but both the Department of Health and Energy and Environmental Protection are very interested in making sure" the current advisory is accurate.

*Michelle Munsey of East Hartland holds a degree in journalism from Keene State College and works as a paralegal.*

### Paint Recycling Starts in July

Residents will be able to drop their unused or leftover paint at several pickup spots starting on July 1, when a new state law requiring paint recycling takes effect. PaintCare, a Washington, D.C.-based product stewardship organization for the paint industry, and the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection began the program. Paint manufacturers must create and pay for a place and method for handling paint.

Created by the American Coatings Association, a membership organization of



paint and coatings manufacturers, PaintCare is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization tasked with working with state and local government to develop paint product stewardship legislation; secure permanent, year-round drop-off sites; conduct public outreach and education; and operate ongoing programs in each state that passes legislation for the recycling of post-consumer paint.

Most new PaintCare drop-off sites will be at paint retailers that are permanent and open year-round. This will reduce the need for homeowners, paint contractors, and others with unwanted paint to rush out to participate in their municipal one-day-only household hazardous waste collection events in their area. Waste transfer stations and select municipal household hazardous waste locations across Connecticut will also serve as drop-off sites.

"We are so excited to be establishing our program here in Connecticut," said PaintCare Executive Director Marjaneh Zarrehparvar. "The positive support and feedback we've received from the state legislature, the DEEP, the municipal household waste programs, the paint retailers, and the local chapter of the Painting and Decorating Contractors of America has been overwhelming."

For information on PaintCare and paint recycling in Connecticut, please visit [paintcare.org](http://paintcare.org).

—From press release

## August Is Tree Check Month: Check for Asian Longhorned Beetle

Mark your calendars: August is Tree Check Month. It's the time to set aside a few minutes to help save trees in your backyard or favorite park that could be at risk from a devastating pest called the Asian longhorned beetle. Since its discovery in the United States in 1996, the ALB has been responsible for the loss of more than 80,000 trees in Massachusetts, Ohio, New York, New Jersey, and Illinois.

Anyone can help in the effort to stop this beetle. Hardwood trees such as maple, ash, and birch are among those at risk. It can take as little as 10 minutes to check your trees for the ALB. Here's what you need to know to protect your trees. Look for the following:

- ▶ Round, dime-sized exit holes that can be found on trunks and branches.
- ▶ Shallow scars or chew marks in the bark where the beetle has laid its eggs and any sawdust-like material found around the tree.

The beetle itself can be found on the tree trunk or branches. It is a large, shiny, jet-black beetle with white spots, and two long, black-and-white antennae. Its body is 1 inch to 1.5 inches long and bullet shaped, and it has six legs.

Report any signs of beetle damage to your trees or if you see the beetle. Try to take pictures and capture the insect if you can. Reports can be made online at [Asianlonghornedbeetle.com](http://Asianlonghornedbeetle.com) or by calling 1-866-702-9938.

Unfortunately, once a tree is infested, it must be removed. Our best line of defense is by you conducting an annual tree check in the month of August and reporting any signs before the beetle can spread further.

The ALB arrived here by hitchhiking aboard solid wood packing material from its native Asia. Once in an area, the ALB can spread further through the movement of firewood, which is why it is best not to move firewood.

—From press release



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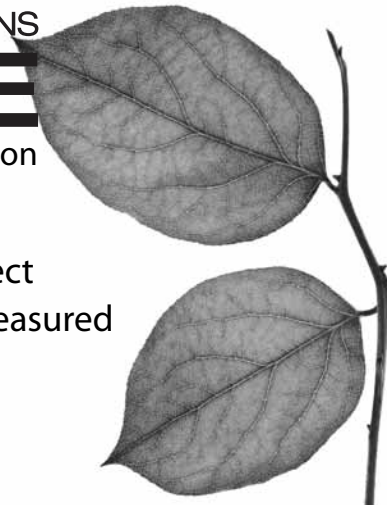
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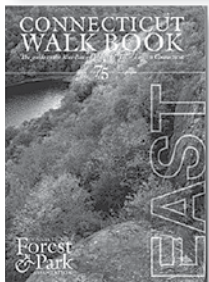
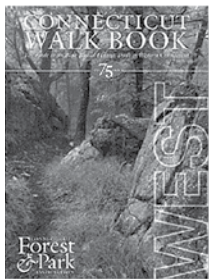
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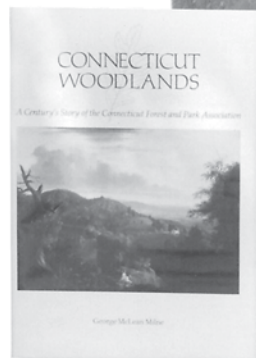
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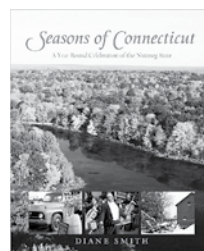
A Century's Story of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, by George McLean Milne, published by the Connecticut Forest and Park Association in 1995. A fascinating history, not so much of the Connecticut Forest and Park Association as it is of the dedicated men and women who have cared about Connecticut's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

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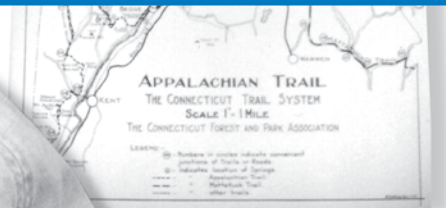
### A SHARED LANDSCAPE

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



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