

CONNECTICUT **Woodlands**

INSIDE CFPA'S LEGISLATIVE
AGENDA *for* 2014



KEEPING PARADISE UNPAVED

IN THE TRENCHES OF LAND PRESERVATION

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JEFFREY BRADLEY

This pond lies in a state park few know about. See page 10.

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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Chris Cryder, at right with cap, leads a 2-mile public hike on the privately owned 1,000-acre tract in Old Saybrook called "the Preserve." After many years, the owners have agreed to sell it for public open space. See page 6.

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“Get the land and get it now”: Remembering William H. Whyte



BY ERIC LUKINGBEAL

In 1956, one of the most influential books of the 20th century (according to New York Times columnist David Brooks) was published. *The Organization Man* (Simon and Schuster) quickly

sold more than 2 million copies. The book was a classic study of American corporate life. One quote from the book will suffice to convey its theme: “They are the ones of the middle class who left home, spiritually as well as physically, to take the vows of organization life . . . and it is these values which set the American temper.”

The author was William H. Whyte, an editor at *Fortune* magazine. Only six years later, in 1962, Whyte wrote something far shorter but just as influential, although in a smaller venue, the state of Connecticut. Mr. Whyte’s effort was only 32 pages long, titled, “Connecticut’s Natural Resources: A Proposal for Action.” It has become known as the Whyte Report.

Mr. Whyte wrote it at the request of Joseph N. Gill, commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources (the predecessor of our Department of Energy and Environmental Protection). It isn’t clear whether Mr. Whyte was even paid for his work. Mr. Gill acted at the request of Governor John Dempsey, who wrote him in early 1962. Mr. Dempsey’s letter began, “Our recent review of Federal and State Legislative action in the conservation field indicates that now is the time for Connecticut to move swiftly to save our dwindling open spaces and our great heritage of natural resources for the use and enjoyment of future generations.” The letter also refers to Whyte as a “leading authority on both national and state open space conservation programs.”

A few days ago, I spent an hour reading the Whyte Report. It is part of Connecticut Forest & Park Association’s archives at the

IT IS NO STRETCH TO SAY THAT THE REPORT LED TO THE ENACTMENT OF P.A. 490, TO THE CREATION OF A SEPARATE AGENCY DEVOTED TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, TO THE WETLANDS ACT, TO WETLANDS COMMISSIONS AS WELL AS CONSERVATION COMMISSIONS, AND TO CONNECTICUT’S STATUTORY PUBLIC TRUST DOCTRINE FOUND IN THE CONNECTICUT ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ACT.

State Historical Society. I had not heard of it, but acted on the recommendation of former CFPA Executive Director John Hibbard and others. Some of them even suggested that we need another Whyte report. The report is eloquent, but the language is often spare. “The people are ready.” And this: “Get the land and get it now.” What struck me most was how many of Mr. Whyte’s calls for action the legislature heeded. It is no stretch to say that the report led to the enactment of P.A. 490, to the creation of a separate agency devoted to environmental protection, to the Wetlands Act, to wetlands commissions as well as conservation commissions, and to Connecticut’s statutory public trust doctrine found in the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act.

The other thing that struck me was that Mr. Whyte’s priorities remain priorities today. His priorities list included wetlands, flood plains, pollution abatement, park development, forest acquisition, ridgelines, farmland retention, natural areas, and the Connecticut River. But some of the things Mr. Whyte emphasized have proven more difficult to achieve. He stressed coordinated planning among towns, as well as coordination between towns and the state. With our 169 towns each enjoying home rule, this has rarely happened.

Mr. Whyte was opposed to large lot zoning (he called it a “sprawling mess”) as a means to protect open space; he favored cluster development. Clusters have been a hard sell in most towns, and large lot zoning still dominates.

He favored development where recre-

ation was built in as a part of the environment, including parks. As he put it, “Walking could become a habit again.” Were he still around—he died in 1999—he would be happy to see our Rails to Trails in many towns, but I suspect he would still see walking as a habit of the few, not the many. He foresaw the role of private organizations such as the Nature Conservancy in preserving the Connecticut River. No doubt he would be pleased to see that the kayaker’s view from the river (to which I can personally attest) is not much changed from Colonial times, at least in the lower parts. He believed that “prime land should remain in farming, with only marginal land going into development or reverting into forests.” As we know, the record is mixed, as we have lost much of the best farmland, as well as the core forests. (The Council on Environmental Quality’s reports document the latter quite well.) Mr. Whyte was not anti-growth at all. He thought that the Merritt Parkway was “one of the best investments Connecticut ever made.” In the final analysis, he was practical. He recommended that the planning and acquisition of land be done “while the land is decently priced, or, more to the point, available at all.”

Our records do not record whether Mr. Whyte was a CFPA member. I like to think he would have been one of us.

Eric Lukingbeal is an retired environmental lawyer. He lives in Granby with his wife, Sally King. He has two grown daughters. Besides the land trust, he serves on Granby’s planning and zoning commission.

We need a constitutional amendment to protect public lands



BY ERIC HAMMERLING

In January, the Connecticut Council on Environmental Quality released an outstanding report entitled “Preserved But Maybe Not: The Impermanence of State Conservation Lands.” This opening of the report frames the issue well: “When Connecticut residents visit a beautiful state park or wildlife area they often are contented by the knowledge that the land is set aside for forests, wildlife and all people for all time. Except usually it isn’t.” Among its recommendations, CEQ calls for a constitutional amendment that would more securely protect state lands from being traded, sold, or given away by the legislature.

Connecticut Forest and Park Association’s two interns, Jordan Giaconia and Carl Hoffman, are digging through the land files (deeds, correspondences with land donors, etc.) at the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to document how many state parks and forests have something on the land records that would protect them. So far, our interns have verified that a vast majority of your state parks and forests have nothing in their deeds that would protect them in perpetuity, nor do they contain language that describes what the intended uses of the property should be. There are exceptions, such as the Centennial Watershed State Forest, which is protected through a conservation easement held by the Nature Conservancy (TNC) and is jointly managed by TNC, DEEP, and Aquarion Water Company. But this is a rare exception. Your public lands in Connecticut will continue to be vulnerable to being sold, traded, or given away—unless together we make a change.

Connecticut state lands are vulnerable in many ways, including these:

► **In 2011**, a developer proposed giving the state 87 acres of upland forest in exchange for 17 acres of public land along the Connecticut River in Haddam. Despite

OUR PUBLIC LANDS SHOULD NOT BE SO VULNERABLE. CFPA IS WORKING IN THE STATE LANDS WORKING GROUP WITH SEVERAL OTHER PARTNERS TO FIND A SOLUTION TO THIS VEXING PROBLEM.

public controversy and outrage, the General Assembly and governor approved this land swap. The deal fell apart when the developer was unwilling to come up with the additional \$1 million or so that was the difference between the values of the properties.

► **In 2012**, wind energy developers proposed to DEEP a swap of 11 acres near a highway for 140 acres of the Nipmuck State Forest in Ashford. In their proposal, the developers neglected to mention that this area is renowned for being part of the beautiful Mountain Laurel Sanctuary. DEEP turned down the developers, who might turn to the Conveyance Act process in the General Assembly to pursue this swap.

► **In 2013**, the state gave 8 acres of Hammonasset State Park to the town of Madison for access to the town’s Constitution Park near Route 1. Although the deal included protective restrictions of how the land could be used, the donation was approved in the waning hours of the 2013 session, with no public debate.

► **Also in 2013**, 30 acres of the state’s first forest, the Meshomasic State Forest in Glastonbury, was proposed for the site of a new State Police firing range. Fortunately, the governor withdrew this proposal because of significant public outrage.

The state has given away land many times over the last 80 years. Few people know anything about these gifts. For example:

► **In 1946**, George Dudley Seymour bequeathed 850 acres of the Nathan Hale State Forest to the state. Total acreage of the forest has grown to 1,500 acres. Several decades later, 17 acres of the Nathan Hale State Forest were given to the Fife and Drum Corps in Coventry for their building (through this, the state also lost dry access to another 20 acres of state forest land).

► **Almost 700 acres** of the Nye-Holman State Forest were donated to the state in

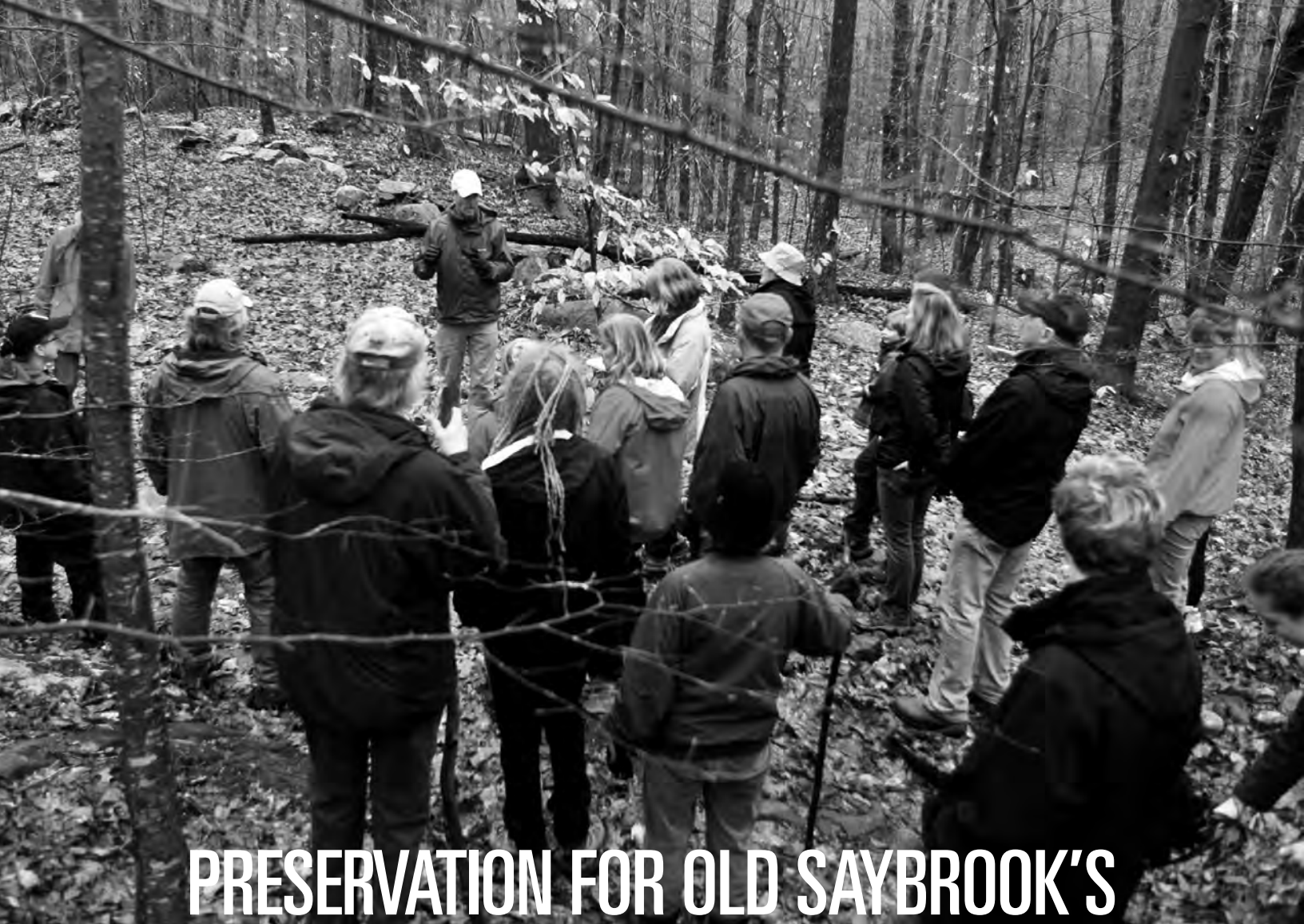
early 1931 through a gift from Alice Henry Hall, who named the forest for her great-grandfather, Samuel Nye, and her father, William Holman. Total acreage has grown to 818 acres. During the past 20 years, about 40 acres of the state forest have been converted through the Conveyance Act to athletic fields in Willington (about 14 acres) and Connecticut State Police barracks in Tolland (about 25 acres).

Our public lands should not be so vulnerable. CFPA is working in the State Lands Working Group with Audubon Connecticut, the Connecticut Land Conservation Council, Rivers Alliance of Connecticut, the Sierra Club’s Connecticut chapter, and several other partners to find a solution to this vexing problem.

CFPA supports intermediary steps we believe the General Assembly could put into place this year (see the Conservation Agenda in the middle of this issue of Connecticut Woodlands for more details), but the ultimate protection for state lands, we believe, must be a constitutional amendment. The state constitution has been amended 31 times since 1965, so this is not unprecedented. However, it is not easy and will take significant time. To amend the constitution will take a three-fourths vote in both chambers of the General Assembly, and then a ballot vote by the people of Connecticut in the next even-year election.

One of CFPA’s greatest assets is our staying power, and through your support and involvement, you can protect your public lands together with us. After all, these lands are not owned by the prevailing party in power or by the legislature—they are owned by you, the people of Connecticut.

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



PRESERVATION FOR OLD SAYBROOK'S "THE PRESERVE"?

*Decades after controversy started,
land trust partners begin huge fundraising effort*

BY GAIL BRACCIDIFERRO MACDONALD

Sue Ellen McCuin often has hiked through the 1,000-acre Old Saybrook tract called the Preserve. As a newlywed in 1998, she attended grassroots meetings about the parcel's significance. She was a founding member of the Alliance for Sound Area Planning, a group formed specifically to help ensure its conservation. In 2004, while she was pregnant with her now 9-year-old daughter, she was rallying support to preserve the land as open space.

Yet she, and others who have become so familiar with this land just north of Interstate 95 in the northwest corner of Old Saybrook, say that on each visit they discover new facets of the parcel's environmental significance. They say its natural beauty and biodiversity continues to impress them. The sprawling, undulating parcel unfolds like a flower's petals, slowly revealing its

vernal pools; dry, hot trap rock ridges; dense forest; and sweet meadows. In one area, flowering dogwood seem reminiscent of Virginia, and in another, stands of maples transport a visitor to Vermont, said former Essex First Selectman and now State Representative Philip J. Miller.

Besides its flora and geology, there is its wildlife: 25 species of amphibians and reptiles, 30 species of mammals, and 57 species of birds. Even stealthy bobcats and fishers have been spotted on the property, which lies near the mouth of the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound.

"It's so exciting to be out there," Ms. McCuin said. "The significance of the property has kept revealing itself more and more. In my heart, I've always believed they [developers] would never get a shovel in the ground."

Mr. Miller said, "It's the only parcel like this between New

Left, Chris Cryder of the Connecticut Fund for the Environment and Save the Sound, explains the developers' proposal to build 225 houses and a golf course on the 1,000-acre coastal maritime forest in Old Saybrook and portions of Essex and Westbrook.

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York and Boston. This is our number one concern for preserving.”

For almost 25 years, activists have lobbied to preserve the 1,000-acre forest. Punctuating their quest have been lawsuits, foreclosures, development proposals, and petition drives. The many individuals and groups campaigning for public open space instead of development now say they feel more hopeful than ever that their tenacity will pay off. The Trust for Public Land, with its 28-year history of land preservation success in Connecticut, secured an option in June 2013 to buy the land. The trust considers this project the last opportunity to conserve a large, intact block of coastal forest amid the suburban sprawl that characterizes most property between Boston and New York City.

The agreement between the Trust for Public Land and Lehman Brothers Holdings, Inc., is valid until June 2014. Conservationists are scrambling to line up both the money and the key players needed to make preserving the land in perpetuity a reality at last. The trust is striving to raise between \$10 million and \$12 million to buy the land and set aside funds for continued stewardship of it.

Alicia Betty, Connecticut state director for the Trust for Public Land, said the campaign's success relies on fundraising from three sectors. As much as \$3 million should be raised from individuals, foundations, and philanthropists. The trust will ask that \$4 million be bonded by the town of Old Saybrook, and the remainder will come from state grants funneled through the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

Ms. Betty said the trust has been buoyed by the amount of support it has seen for the effort even as the more public phase of fundraising was only beginning early this winter. For example, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Acres for America program donated \$250,000, she said.

“We've raised \$750,000 in pledges and gifts by talking to just a very few people,” Ms. Betty said. “A thousand acres in Connecticut does not come along very often. This is the first time in a generation we've had this opportunity.”

The sheer size of the parcel is one reason many groups with similar but sometimes competing interests—from local land trusts to the towns of Old Saybrook, Westbrook, and Essex to Audubon Connecticut to the Nature Conservancy—have worked through the years to protect this land. By way of comparison, since 1986, the Trust for Public Land has completed 77 projects in the state to protect 6,204 acres.

The Preserve, together with abutting parcels, form a relatively unfragmented forest block of more than 6,000 acres, making it an important flyway and stopover for migratory birds. It also provides significant protection to drinking water supplies in the area because it encompasses the headwaters of three watersheds.

“The state is committed to this,” said Graham J. Stevens, office director of constituent affairs and land management for Connecticut DEEP. “This is a parcel that comes along once in a generation. It is a parcel of statewide significance. If it can be preserved, it will be a big win for the state as a whole.”

If the current campaign succeeds, the town of Old Saybrook would



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Top, Chris Cryder.

Above, Bob Czepiel, left; Mindy Hill, center; and Cathy Malin study a map of some of the 20 miles of trails and 18th-century cart paths on the land known as the Preserve.

own most of the land. The Essex Land Trust would own 70 acres. DEEP would hold a conservation easement to the entire parcel.

Even as perpetual preservation inches tantalizingly closer, however, the long and torturous history of the efforts to protect the land add a tinge of caution to the general atmosphere of confidence. Although the rugged nature of the parcel for years put off developers who might have tried to build on it, Old Saybrook officials also rejected offers to buy the land on at least two occasions in the 1990s, declining to take the offers to a vote. The second time, in 1996, the asking price was only \$2.5 million. It wasn't until near the beginning of



Frozen runoff near a path on the 1,000-acre Preserve in Old Saybrook.

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the 21st century, when a new owner named Timothy Taylor proposed to develop it, that both the state and the Nature Conservancy tried unsuccessfully to purchase the land.

By 2002, Lehman Brothers had foreclosed on Taylor, and the new owners contended the parcel was worth nearly four times its then appraised value of \$6 million. Lehman, through its subsidiary River Sound Development, proposed building 248 upscale houses and an 18-hole golf course. Developers at the time also said Old Saybrook would be given 483 acres of the parcel for open space preservation, and conservation restrictions would be imposed on an additional 59 acres.

Controversy over the development proposal dragged on for years, and the plans were challenged in court several times. Then, in 2008, conservationists again saw renewed hope to protect the parcel when Lehman Brothers declared bankruptcy.

Since then, representatives of the Trust for Public Land and other conservation groups continued to communicate with representatives of the surviving Lehman Brothers Holdings, according to Kate Brown, Trust for Public Land project manager. At the same time, River Sound Development brought its modified development proposal of 224 housing units before Old Saybrook planners. A special exception that allows the firm to apply for a wetlands permit—a permit that in the past was denied—will remain valid until March 2015, said David M.

Royston, the Old Saybrook attorney who represented River Sound.

One key difference between earlier efforts to protect the land and the current campaign is that no developer seems poised to build today. No representative from Lehman Brothers Holdings could be reached to comment for this story, despite numerous attempts to seek one. Meanwhile, some who have worked for protection for many years say that they worry people will forget about the fight. They say it has dragged on for so long that key figures in the struggle have moved away or died, and some residents might think the parcel already has been preserved.

Old Saybrook First Selectman Carl Fortuna said in January that although no formal municipal meetings had yet been scheduled to discuss the possibility of bringing an open space preservation bond proposal to the town's voters, in the past town officials had supported spending as much as \$3 million to protect the Preserve. Because the Trust for Public Land has asked for a spring referendum on the issue, Mr. Fortuna said the decision was not his alone to make. But he was not a supporter during his campaign in 2011, when he said development of the Preserve would be bad for Old Saybrook, both fiscally and environmentally.

Old Saybrook Conservation Commission Chairman Walter Smith said the commission considers the Preserve extremely important to protect because it connects to



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Ice seizes a fallen beech leaf.

other protected land.

“It is rare that a community is given the opportunity to demonstrate such support for conservation in a relatively well-developed area, which makes it a very important issue for the identity of the town,” Mr. Smith wrote in an email.

Although Old Saybrook plays a key role in the campaign, Ms. Betty at the Trust for Public Land emphasizes the statewide significance of the parcel. She said residents outside the coastal town should support the land's preservation. For this reason, she said she was thrilled when some 200 people turned out for an educational hike of the land in November. And then, on a nasty, chilly January day when heavy rain threatened, about 70 more people came out to hike the land.

Chris Cryder, special projects coordinator for Save the Sound, who has been active for a decade in the campaign to protect the Preserve, said more hikes and many small group meetings were planned through the winter and early spring. The purpose of meeting with groups ranging from historical societies and parent-teacher organizations to neighborhood groups is to raise awareness about the property, its environmental significance, and the campaign to protect it, Mr. Cryder said.

Ms. McCuin said that through the many years of work to protect the Preserve, her confidence that the cause would ultimately prove successful has not wavered. “I’ve been a perennial optimist on this,” she said. “Everyone said, ‘you’re never going to beat Lehman Brothers,’ but the market has worked in our favor. I feel like it will be protected. We have enough people in key places to get this to where it needs to be.”

Gail Braccidiferro MacDonald first covered the Preserve controversies for the New York Times in the 1990s. She teaches journalism at the University of Connecticut.

BY TOM FAGIN

In Connecticut, one of the most developed, urban states, farming has long been a livelihood under pressure. Many of yesterday's food-producing fields have grown up into housing developments, shopping centers, and industrial parks. Many farmers are looking to retire and feel hard-pressed to do so while passing the land on to farmers.

Between 1985 and 2006, Connecticut lost 39,522 acres of agricultural fields, a 14.5-percent decrease in farmland, according to the Working Lands Alliance, a statewide farming advocacy group. Recently, however, as Connecticut's Farmland Preservation Program celebrated its 35-year anniversary, farm advocates report that new money and new partnerships from municipalities and land trusts have injected new hope into the program.

How Has the Program Done So Far?

In its lifetime, the program has helped secure almost 38,000 acres of farmland in the state with about 417 acres secured in 2013 and plans for anywhere from 2,000 to 2,500 acres for 2014, according to Lance Shannon at the Connecticut Department of Agriculture. This came at a total cost of \$2.2 million

for the state. All told, the program receives \$10 million a year.

Fresh public interest in farmers' markets, undeveloped landscapes, and sustainable agriculture has joined a growing movement to ensure enough land for food production in Connecticut. For 40 years, this push has been a fight to save agriculture. "We have precious little farmland to preserve, and its preservation will leave plenty of land for our other needs," states the 1974 report from the Governor's Task Force on the Preservation of Agricultural Land. The document identified 500,000 acres of agricultural land left in the state at the time. Even then, half of Connecticut farmland already had disappeared underneath development during the previous quarter century.

Chief among the report's recommendations were a farmland preservation program, in which the state would buy a farmer's development rights to the land—meaning that the farmer would continue to own the property but lose the option of selling it to developers. The state would pay the difference between the use value of the land and its fair market value—thus simultaneously making sure that the land stayed agricultural and providing money to help farmers support themselves.

Farm Products More Important Than Runaway Growth

Purchase of development rights, or PDR, became the cornerstone of the Farmland Preservation Program, which took effect in 1978. "These programs give the people of the state—all of us—the right to control our destiny, said former Connecticut Forest & Park Association Executive Director John Hibbard, who helped lay the groundwork for PDR as a member of the task force.

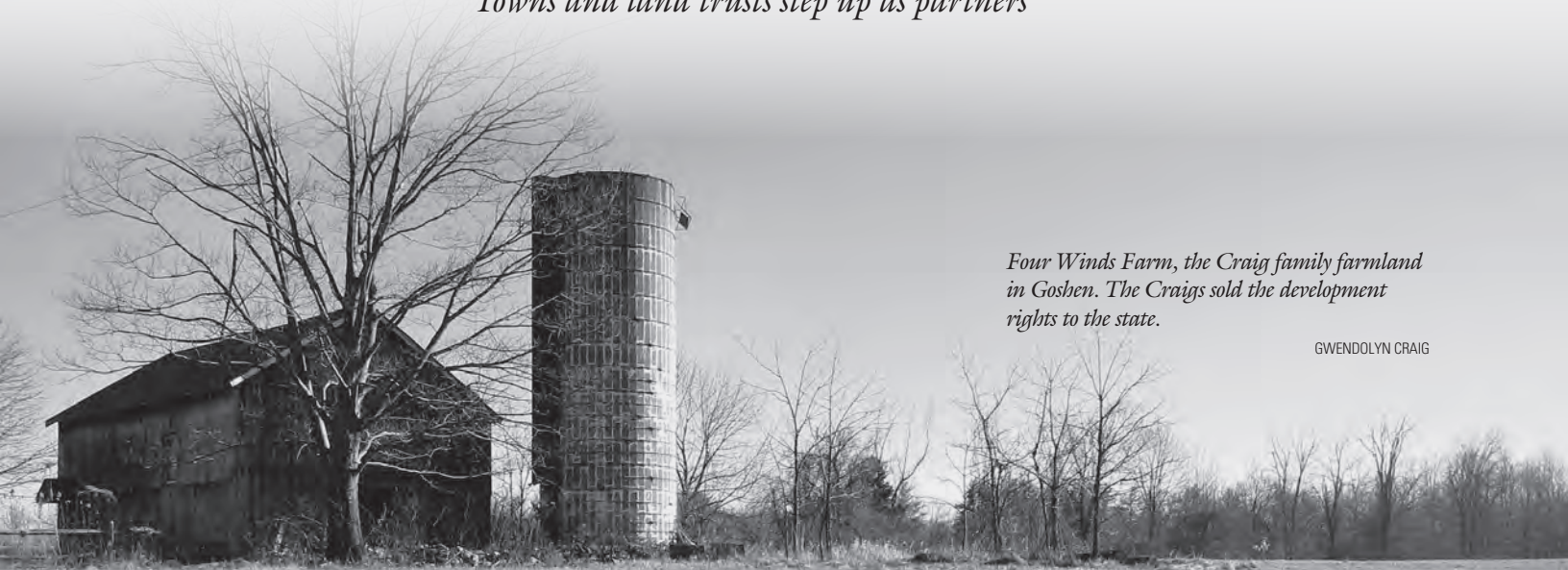
He remembers that the oil crisis of the 1970s had been on people's minds when the task force met. The crisis showed that simple economic growth in the form of development could not supersede the importance of basic resources. When it came to farmland, it was apparent that this resource was in dwindling supply for Connecticut, which was leaving the state vulnerable.

To offset this, the report recommended that the state preserve 325,000 acres of prime agricultural soil by raising \$500 million through a 1 percent tax on real estate transactions. The proposed real estate tax fell through, however, and the program didn't get the money it needed to enact a measure of that scale. Since the program went into effect in 1978, its goal has been to use PDRs to set aside 140,000 acres in the state. It has

continued on page 27

NEW ENERGY BOOSTS 5-YEAR-OLD CONNECTICUT FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM

Towns and land trusts step up as partners



Four Winds Farm, the Craig family farmland in Goshen. The Craigs sold the development rights to the state.

GWENDOLYN CRAIG

Why doesn't the public know about a beautiful tract in Killingworth?



JEFFREY BRADLEY

Forster Pond in the mysterious Forster Pond State Park, which is mostly closed to the public.

THE MYSTERY OF FORSTER POND STATE PARK

BY CHRISTINE WOODSIDE

In the opinion article starting on page 13, Jeffrey L. Bradley expresses frustration at the condition of historic houses in the little-known Forster Pond State Park in Killingworth. I spent a few hours with Mr. Bradley this winter and, listening to him and doing my own research, I felt a little like a modern-day Nancy Drew, the amateur detective, stumbling upon a neglected estate with a dark past. Except that this is a mystery that has yet to be solved.

Forster Pond State Park is named for architect Frank Forster and his wife, Mary, who bought 92 rugged acres in the 1920s. The park now totals 148 acres in Killingworth directly across Route 80 from the popular Chatfield Hollow State Park. Forster Pond State Park's driveway has no sign, and the state of Connecticut, which has owned the land since 1963, does not encourage people to visit it.

Mr. Bradley, the activist who wants to

restore the houses in the park, is a builder who specializes in the restoration and moving of historic buildings. He taught himself to build barns starting at age 24. He is 64 now. Thirty years ago, the estate manager for Mary Forster, who had just died, invited Mr. Bradley to remove the barns for reconstruction elsewhere. This Mr. Bradley did.

"In my first week of operations," Mr. Bradley told me, "I went up to the loft of the main barn, and it was swayed out like a horse." He discovered deep piles on the floor of architectural files and photos, Mr. Forster's life work. Mr. Bradley said that the estate manager and caretaker at the time, Glen Partridge, gave him the papers, which Mr. Bradley has stored on his properties in Westbrook, Clinton, and, most recently, Ivoryton. He consulted with Columbia University about the papers and learned that Mr. Forster was a renowned architect, born in 1886 and trained at Cooper Union in New

York City. Mr. Bradley became “completely smitten” with the architect’s story.

Mr. Forster was admired for his work designing houses and redeveloping them in New York City. He designed houses in Connecticut and New York for wealthy industrialist families such as the Vanderbilts, Astors, Chryslers, Tiffanys, Guggenheims, and, in 1928, for the publisher of *The Day* newspaper, Theodore Bodenwein. (The Bodenwein house is a French Norman farmhouse style at 625 Pequot Avenue in New London.)

Mr. Forster had a 32-acre pond dug and designed three rustic houses, one of which was for his neighbor, the inventor Oscar Swenson. Mr. Forster also designed a structure for Mr. Swenson’s hydroelectric plant on the Hammonasset River. Also standing on the property was the original Chatfield farmhouse. The architect wrote in 1931 that houses “are a natural outgrowth of the soil on which they stand and of the lives of the people who built them.” He and his wife lived there together until Mr. Forster died at age 62 in 1948. Fifteen years later, Mrs. Forster agreed to sell the property to the state for \$125,000 and life tenancy. She died in 1980.

Today, most of the buildings left on the Forster property have deteriorated. Two of the houses are in use, one as the home of state fisheries employee Tom Bourret. The other houses a children’s fishing program Mr. Bourret runs, called Connecticut Aquatic Resources and Education, or CARE.



JEFFREY BRADLEY

An aerial view of Forster Pond State Park, which lies south of Route 80 in Killingworth.

Unmarked Entrance

The park isn’t closed, said Tom Tyler, the director of Connecticut state parks. But it is not marked, either. A Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail, the Chatfield Trail, goes through the land; that’s well marked with blazes. (Connecticut Forest & Park Association volunteers maintain this trail.) You must park across Route 80 at Chatfield Hollow, then walk across.

“There’s a road into the property,” Mr. Tyler said. If any sign is visible, it doesn’t identify the land as a public park. “It cer-

tainly sends a signal that you should not be driving down this road,” he said.

Following the road, you come to a number of buildings, Mr. Tyler said. Some of them are dilapidated and in very bad shape. “We don’t want people to go too close to them and create unsafe conditions.”

None of the buildings are open to the public, Mr. Tyler said. “It is kind of a slightly odd situation.”

Mr. Tyler said that deteriorated buildings on state lands number at least 400, and many of these have no official purpose. “It is absolutely true that we have dozens of structures across the state that we struggle to find the resources to maintain,” he said. “It is certainly difficult to keep buildings in good repair when they do not have a purpose.” But when buildings have an interesting history, as the Forster buildings do, “you’re certainly reluctant to tear it down. You can’t practically tear it down, and you can’t repair it and keep it in good repair moving forward and eliminate vandalism or deter vandalism. You need presence. You need people in and around the building, having some life to it.”

Resident Curator Program Dormant

Some years ago, Mr. Bradley and others formed the Friends of Chatfield and Forster Pond State Parks. Mr. Tyler said the state is open to its ideas, but, “There re-



JEFFREY BRADLEY

ally hasn't been any conversation at my level with them." (Mr. Bradley is no longer associated with the Friends group and does not speak on behalf of it.) Bill Austin, a Wallingford park and land use consultant who serves as vice-president of the one-year-old Friends group, said Connecticut's regulations are so strict that "you'd probably need a \$50,000 study of any chicken coop" anyone would want to fix, and that he worries anything could get done before the buildings further deteriorate.

The state set up a program about four years ago that would allow building restorers to take on dilapidated properties as restoration projects, live there, hold extended leases of 25 years or so, fix them up, and maintain them. Modeled on other state's similar offerings, it's called the Resident Curator Program. Mr. Tyler said the program is in its infancy but has advertised for curators for houses at Osbornedale State Park in Derby and Enders State Forest in Granby, but not Forster State Park, which besides its falling-down buildings also presents the problems of a substandard wooden bridge and a failed septic system.

"Theoretically, it's a candidate for this, but it's got these additional burdens. We're certainly open to it," Mr. Tyler said.

Of Mr. Bradley, Mr. Tyler said, "He's very dedicated to the legacy. He's very interested in the property, and he's probably in the front of the line of people who are concerned about the condition of the buildings out there. He is critical of our management of them, which is certainly fair."

Could We Canoe There?

Mr. Tyler said there is no legal impediment to walking back into Forster Pond State Park. "We certainly don't encourage or really give you the opportunity to bring your canoe back there," he said, "but I'm not sure it's a violation of anything. People certainly do come in, whether it's on the trail or traipsing around the property. You're certainly welcome to do it. If you are in and around the buildings, someone will come out and say hello and ask you what you are doing.

"We certainly don't encourage folks to come out."

OPINION

"DEMOLITION BY NEGLECT"



JEFFREY BRADLEY

A restoration advocate criticizes state's handling of Forster State Park

BY JEFFREY L. BRADLEY

When New York City architect Frank J. Forster died in 1948, he had amassed hundreds of acres in rural Killingworth. Fifteen years later, in 1963, Mr. Forster's widow, Mary, sold the estate "for use as a state park and for the inviolate protection of wildlife" that would be named after her late husband. That land remains one of the least-known Connecticut state parks, because the public has almost never been allowed to go there.

Forster State Park sits on the south

side of Route 80 in Killingworth, directly across from one of the most-used parks, Chatfield Hollow State Park. The story of Forster Pond State Park started in 1927, when Mr. Forster (1886–1948) began purchasing large tracts of woodland in the pristine Chatfield Hollow Valley section of Killingworth.

Mr. Forster's vision was to create a summer retreat that offered his family and friends relief from the hectic summer social scene that characterized the Long Island suburbs in the early 20th century.

The small rustic houses Mr. Forster designed and built in Killingworth were worlds apart from the large medieval European stone and brick homes he designed for his wealthy clients. Each of the small houses had a central gathering room with high ceilings and hand-hewn beams built around a large

hearth. The homes had a concern of human scale and cozy spaces that were also present in his larger works. Forster's respect for the environment is clearly evidenced by his rambling designs that were beautifully sited, making the house appear as if it were grown from the site rather than built there. In the first house built (northwest house), Forster left behind a notable architectural epitaph above the north room's fireplace—in red and black Gothic lettering are painted these words: "If Thee Would Reflect Thy Surroundings, Thee Could Do No Better."

Considered by some to be one of Connecticut's first green architects, Mr. Forster's designs made extensive use of reclaimed beams, wide boards, barn siding, and stone, rescued from Connecticut historic buildings that were slated for demolition. Forster also had a rather interesting passion and understanding of water that he put to work in Killingworth when he built a dam at the south end of the property to create a 32-acre pond. In 1930, Mr. Forster did it again when he tapped into nature's energy by raising the dam of a 19th-century water-powered sawmill and installed a hydroelectric generating plant to power his first home. It makes one wonder what the folks around town thought about the first electric light the pristine valley had seen in its more than 10,000-year history.

To further the green thought process, Mr. Forster reclaimed the 19th-century historic Chatfield farmhouse that he moved in one piece (with the central fireplace intact) to a secluded pond-front location. A short distance from the house, guests would stay in what could be described as "Connecticut Rustic Guest Cottage" reminiscent of those built in the Adirondack style in New York state at about the same time period. Mr. Forster's guests had to have been charmed by the rustic tones of repurposed weathered barn siding, hand-hewn beams, multilight window sashes, and the 19th-century stone and brick fireplace that would take the chill off an early spring or fall morning.

Mr. Forster's philosophy toward architecture was unmistakable. In a 1931 interview he said, "They [houses] are a natural outgrowth of the soil on which they stand and of the lives of the people who built them." When Mr. Forster retired to his Connecticut retreat, the completed work looked like a well laid-out environmental community that easily could have qualified as a national park—yes, it was that well done.



JEFFREY BRADLEY

The Chatfield house with its breathtaking views of the pond became the final act in Mr. Forster's life. In the Chatfield house, his wife, Mary, brought Frank breakfast in bed one morning to find he had died peacefully in his sleep in a place that he loved so much.

More than 50 years after the state created it, Forster Pond State Park remains closed and "restricted for public use." In an effort to understand the restriction, a group of concerned citizens contacted the park supervisor in November 2011. What we witnessed was horrible: All but one of the state-registered historic buildings in the park had fallen into complete states of disrepair because of lack of maintenance. The only building in good condition is where a state employee has been allowed to live on a prime 32-acre pond-front location ideal for boating, fishing, and summer picnics. Even Mr. Forster's "large abbey" house, run by the state as an educational fishing center, has been allowed to fall into a state of disrepair. If not maintained, it too would be on a list for demolition in the very near future.

We discussed the problem with our state representative and state senator, who told us the only way to get the attention of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection was to send a formal proposal to then Commissioner Daniel Esty. In March 2012 as our proposal was being readied for delivery, we were handed some very bad news: Two historic Forster homes and a guesthouse that we had hoped to restore had been *demolished!* Tom Tyler,

* The National Trust for Historic Preservation published a study that concluded, "It can take between 10 to 80 years for a new energy efficient building to overcome, through efficient operations, the climate change impacts created by its construction. The study finds that the majority of building types in different climates will take between 20–30 years to compensate for the initial carbon impacts from construction." For more, see preservationnation.org and search on "building reuse."

head of our state parks, told us the federal government was somehow involved with the demolitions. I asked how that could be when so many in Hartford were aware of our proposal.

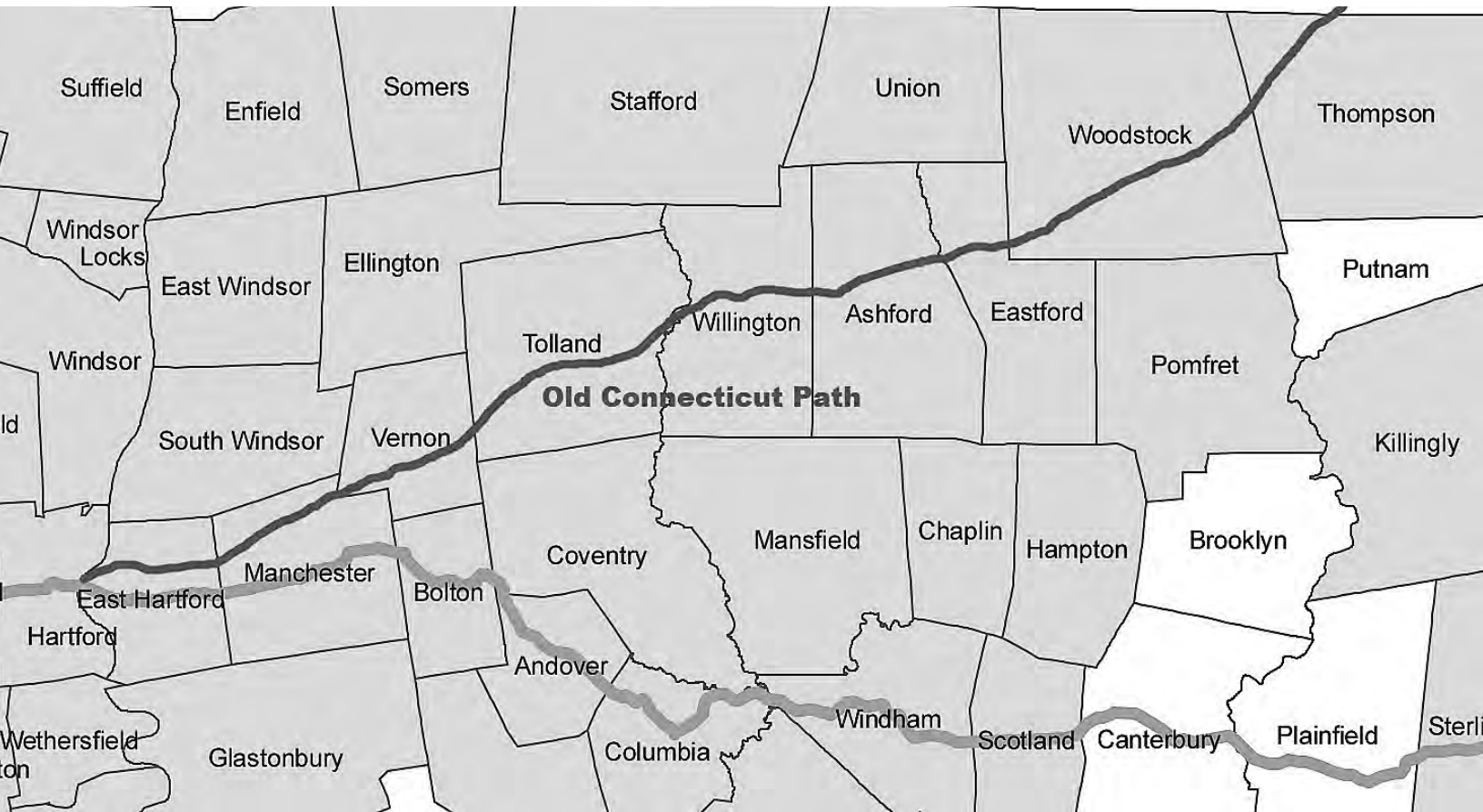
Demolitions are expensive, dangerous, and unsustainable practices. A structure holds a tremendous amount of "embodied energy" that includes the energy that went into manufacturing, transporting, and assembling it originally. Much more energy goes into disassembling a building and transporting its pieces to a landfill. The National Trust for Historic Preservation's sustainability initiative explains the energy savings in reusing buildings instead of demolishing them. Its website may be the best source on the web for green preservation.*

Demolition by neglect is defined as the destruction of a building through abandonment or lack of maintenance. In Connecticut, the Environmental Protection Act has provided preservationists with a powerful tool to assist in the struggle to preserve historic buildings.

I believe that Forster Pond State Park is a disgrace and a prime example of demolition by neglect. In 50 years, the managers of Forster Pond State Park have not installed a shingle or developed a program to save its historic buildings. At the core, it's a rather simple problem—the state continues to order (and pay for) costly studies rather than installing a new roof on a building. The cost of a new roof is far less expensive than any report and in fact will add 10 to 25 years or more to the life of a historic structure.

What our parks managers in Hartford don't seem to understand or have forgotten is that historic buildings in state parks belong to the citizens of Connecticut. The current level of stewardship is not acceptable. There are real solutions to save our historic treasures, and the issue needs to be addressed head-on before any more historic properties in our state parks are neglected or demolished.

Jeffrey L. Bradley has spent his career restoring and cataloguing historic structures in New England. He founded the Friends of Forster Pond & Chatfield Hollow State Parks.



CFPA RENDERING OF STATE MAP

The Old Connecticut Path cut a southwesterly path from Thompson to the border of Hartford. The other trail is the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route.

EXPLORING THE OLD CONNECTICUT PATH

A 400-YEAR-OLD ROUTE IN TWO STATES

BY JASON NEWTON

My search for the path of my ancestors led me to the place where the Natchaug and Nipmuck trails converge in Natchaug State Forest in Ashford, Connecticut. I set out to rediscover the route followed by my ancestor, the Rev. Thomas Hooker, across the wilderness from Newtown to Hartford, and other ancestors migrating to Windsor and Wethersfield in 1635 to 1636. The search for their path through 24 towns across two states led me to this place of remote beauty. Here, the Nipmuck Trail follows the ancient path laid by the native tribes, the Old Connecticut Path, which is at least 400 years old.

Newtown Migration

I thought it would be easy to follow the route of one of the first westward migrations in American history. The 1636 migration of Mr. Hooker and his congregation was recorded in Governor John Winthrop’s journal on May 31, 1636: “Mr. Hooker, pastor of the church of Newtown [Cambridge, Massachusetts]), and most of his congregation, went to Connecticut. His wife was carried in a horse litter; and they drove 160 cattle, and fed of their milk by the way.”

The story of “Hooker’s march to Hartford” across the unsettled wilderness is memorialized in a relief sculpture on the Connecticut state capitol. Mr. Hooker’s leading role in the founding of Hartford and the

adoption of the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut, America’s first constitution, earned him accolades as a “Father of American Democracy.”

Bypassed Ways

Searching the histories and archives for clues to the route of the historic journeys by John Oldham and “adventurers” to Wethersfield in 1633, the Rev. John Wareham and the Dorchester congregation to Windsor in 1635, and Mr. Hooker and the Newtown congregation to Hartford in 1636 yielded a surprising result. The Old Connecticut Path appeared to have been largely forgotten and faded from memory. Though

continued on page 19



2014 CONSERVATION AGENDA FOR THE PEOPLE & LAND OF CONNECTICUT

This year, CFPA's Conservation Agenda focuses on the critical question: Will the State maintain the public's trust by protecting and managing your State lands?

Protecting and managing conservation and recreation lands requires both 1) skilled people, and 2) legal protections. Currently, the State is losing skilled state land managers (mostly from attrition through retirement without replacement), and is not using available legal mechanisms to protect your public lands from being traded, sold, or given away.

The State is failing in its land management obligations. If further losses of State land managers occur, some State Parks, Forests, and Wildlife Management Areas will be closed; and without legal protection of these lands, the future of our public lands is uncertain.

We ask the General Assembly and Administration to take action now 1) to authorize the Commissioners of DEEP and DoAg to place conservation restrictions on their high value conservation lands; and 2) to prevent the State workforce essential to manage Forests, Parks, and other State lands from plummeting below the levels that are already at all-time lows.

Let us mark the 100-year anniversary of the State Parks with the resolve to do better!

Sincerely,

David K. Leff, Chair
Public Policy Committee

Eric Lukingbeal, President
CFPA Board

** If you would like to become part of CFPA's Public Policy Conservation Team or sign-up for Advocacy Alerts, please visit our website (www.ctwoodlands.org) and/or contact our Executive Director, Eric Hammerling, via 860/346-TREE or ehammerling@ctwoodlands.org.

CFPA Public Policy Committee Members:

Russ Brenneman, William D. Breck, The Hon. Astrid T. Hanzalek,
John E. Hibbard, David K. Leff, Eric Lukingbeal, Lauren L. McGregor,
Eric Hammerling (CFPA Staff), and John C. Larkin (Lobbyist)

PROTECTING YOUR STATE PARKS AND FORESTS

Connecticut owns over 255,000 acres of State Parks, State Forests, and Wildlife Management Areas that have been donated or acquired over the past century and are now held in public trust for the enjoyment of all.

We have all assumed that these special places will be protected forever. Not true.

That's right, iconic state lands like Hammonasset Beach State Park, Gillette Castle State Park, Peoples State Forest, Sessions Woods Wildlife Management Area, and many other state treasures are at risk of being sold or given away. The same is true of state-owned agricultural lands.

How could this be? Most State lands are not protected for two primary reasons:

1. There is nothing recorded in the deeds and town land records that either requires permanent protection, or clearly references the intended use or purpose of the land.
2. The General Assembly uses a mechanism every year known as "The Conveyance Act" whereby State lands are put forward to be traded, sold, or given away to a private corporation, town, or other entity for uses that may be completely at odds with preservation for public enjoyment. Sometimes this bill is so vaguely written that it is unclear which properties are in jeopardy, and the opportunities for public knowledge and comment are minimal.

We are recommending three initial steps to better protect your State lands:

1. The Commissioners of the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP) and the Department of Agriculture (DoAg) must be authorized to place a conservation restriction (such as a conservation easement) on high conservation value lands they own. This is a logical step to implement a recent open space law (P. A. 12-152) which requires DEEP to define and develop strategies for permanent protection of lands with high conservation value;
2. The Conveyance Act process must be more transparent and provide an opportunity for public input and debate before state lands are traded, sold or given away; and
3. DEEP's policy on land exchanges (officially expressed in the 2008 Directive on Exchanges and Conveyances) is protective and reasonable; it should be codified into statute.

In addition, CFPA agrees with the recommendation by the CT Council on Environmental Quality for a State constitutional amendment that would protect State lands in a way that would be difficult for the General Assembly to circumvent. Your State lands should not be so vulnerable, but they are. Your involvement and support is essential to protect these lands for today, and for the future.

For more information about preserving State lands, visit www.ctwoodlands.org/advocacy

MANAGING YOUR STATE PARKS AND FORESTS

Managing Your State Parks: There are only 68 full-time field staff (51 Maintainers and 17 Park Supervisors) responsible for the year-round management of 107 State Parks. Fifteen of these field staff are currently eligible for retirement and as staff leave only 1 out of every 5 positions lost is being refilled. In stark contrast, the respected 2003 Clough Harbor & Associates infrastructure study recommended 204 full-time staff and 1,943 seasonal staff at a time when there were only 101 State Parks.

The decision to invest or not in the State Parks is extremely important both to Connecticut's economy overall and to the many communities that host State Parks. Your State Parks attract 8 million visitors every year, and according to a 2011 UConn economic study, the State Parks generate almost \$2 billion in annual revenues and support 9,000 jobs.

To adequately sustain these benefits is not a high cost item. Every year, the State Parks bring in ~\$6 million in revenues to the General Fund from parking, admissions, and camping fees. The expense of running a bare-bones State Parks System is currently ~\$12 million/year. So, the net annual cost to the State is only ~\$6 million. To provide staff in all State Parks, it would probably take another \$4 million. The Legislature should be eager to allocate an extra \$4 million to protect an annual return of \$2 billion and 9,000 jobs!

A report released on January 23, 2014 by the Program Review and Investigations Committee provides some good recommendations for new and improved funding mechanisms for the State Park system. Following are a few key recommendations from the PRI report:

- A portion of the annual fees collected from cabin rentals should be deposited into the Maintenance, Repair, and Improvement account for parks with such cabins and be used to help offset cabin maintenance costs.
- Between 25% and 50% of revenues generated in State Parks shall be appropriated biennially to the Parks Division ... The shared park-generated revenue shall not supplant the General Fund obligation to the Parks Division.
- DEEP should use a portion of its bonding authorization for car counters to validate and improve the data used to generate estimates of Park attendance and use.
- An additional 6 Park Supervisors and 6 Park Maintainers are necessary for management units to return to a more acceptable, ongoing staffing level. This would ensure 1 Park Supervisor for each of 23 management units and support basic maintenance functions.

Managing Your State Forests: Trees dominate the Connecticut landscape, covering almost 60 percent of its total acreage. Connecticut is the 5th most forested state in the nation, and has a higher percentage of its citizens living in close proximity to forests than any other state. As a forest-dwelling people, we recognize that trees provide numerous societal and environmental benefits. Would it not make sense to invest in better management and care of our forests? Sadly, this is not the case.

The DEEP Forestry division has 18 staff, 10 of whom are eligible for retirement within the next 5 years. There are only 6 staff dedicated to the management of 160,000 acres of State Forests (many more acres than in our State Parks), and there are only 4.5 staff to assist private forest landowners and municipalities that together own over 1.5 million acres of forests (approximately 85% of the total forests of Connecticut). The current level of Forestry staff support is clearly inadequate to maintain and provide expertise on the wealth of forests we have in Connecticut.

Funding to hire additional Forestry expertise could be generated through the better management of State Forests; however, under the current system most of these funds go to the General Fund. A 2008 Yale Study suggested that DEEP could sustainably harvest and generate revenues at 3 times the current rate (they are bringing in \$500,000/year through harvests). Sadly, DEEP only has the Staff capacity to have active Forest Management Plans on about half of the acreage of the State Forests. According to several studies, State Foresters return more value to the General Fund than their staff positions cost the State, but we are not investing in needed staff. Without that investment, we are allowing our State's greatest natural asset to remain a liability instead of a revenue-producing asset.

Environmental Law Enforcement: Unfortunately, there are only 34 Environmental Conservation Police (EnCons) along with 10 support staff at DEEP to protect the entire state. As a comparison, the police department in the city of Stamford has a roster of 315.

EnCons are responsible for enforcing commercial and recreational fishing, hunting, and wildlife laws, and are involved in wide range of other activities such as nuisance wildlife, search and rescue, boating enforcement, and the illegal use of recreational vehicles such as ATVs. Our EnCons are well-trained and heroic, but they are severely under-resourced and the resultant problems of increased trash in the parks, increased damage from all-terrain vehicles, and others such as illegal drug activities are going unaddressed.

For more information about the need for better management of your State lands, visit www.ctwoodlands.org/advocacy

CONNECTICUT FOREST & PARK ASSOCIATION CONSERVATION PRIORITIES FOR 2014

1. Manage Your State Parks and Forests
 - a. Support the recommendations of the Program Review and Investigations Committee that provide a new funding mechanism for State Parks such as capturing revenues from cabin rentals to help offset cabin maintenance costs.
 - b. Appropriate \$5 million to DEEP for the purpose of re-filling and increasing positions for Park maintainers, Foresters, and EnCons.
2. Protect Your State Parks and Forests
 - a. Authorize Commissioners of DEEP and DoAg to place conservation restrictions (conservation easement or other mechanism) on high conservation value lands.
 - b. Reform Conveyance Act process and information to better recognize conservation/agricultural values of DEEP and DoAg properties.
 - c. Promote CT Constitutional Amendment as best way to protect public lands.
3. Make Technical Corrections to Public Act 490
 - a. Fix dates that currently frustrate assessors.
 - b. Require certified forester's report when P.A. 490 lands change ownership.
4. Require Municipal Planning and Zoning Commission to consult with Municipal Tree Warden to ensure that roadside tree planting plans utilize Right Tree/Right Place standards.
5. Provide a tax incentive for the removal of invasive plants or pests under the direction of a certified forest management plan, wildlife management plan, or farm plan.
6. Remove the 70% cap on federal/state matching grants for open space and agricultural land preservation as required in C.G.S. 7-131g(c).
7. Provide ongoing support for State land acquisition programs, notably the Community Investment Act (keep intact), Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program (\$10 million), Farmland Preservation bonding (\$10 million), and the Recreation and Natural Heritage Trust (\$10 million).
8. Provide continued support for Federal land acquisition programs, notably the Land & Water Conservation Fund, Forest Legacy, and USDA Farm Bill Conservation Title programs.
9. Continue to support appropriations for National Park Service/National Scenic Trails program, particularly the New England Trail.
10. Provide continued support for the U.S. Department of Transportation/FHWA Recreational Trails Program.

For more information about CFPA's Conservation Agenda, visit www.ctwoodlands.org/advocacy



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COURTESY OF JASON NEWTON

Jason Newton at the spot where the Old Connecticut Path crosses the Nipmuck Trail.

there was agreement that parties lead by Mr. Oldham, Mr. Wareham, and Mr. Hooker traveled to Connecticut on foot, disagreements have arisen about how they found their way to their new homes along the Connecticut River.

Mr. Hooker and the Newtown congregation entered an unsettled wilderness just a few miles west from their starting point. In 1636, the land beyond what is now bordered by Route 128 outside of Boston was the wilderness where few traveled. They entered territory unknown to the English. The intimate knowledge of the land and guidance of the native tribes ensured that the migration to Connecticut followed a safe and sure route. Mr. Winthrop noted in his journal after meeting with “Wahginnacut, a sagamore upon the River Quonehtacut which lies west of Naragancet . . . was very desirous to have some Englishmen to come plant in his country, and . . . is not above five days’ journey from us by land.” Unfortunately, those early travelers recorded no maps or descriptions of the route. The Rev. John Eliot’s missionary work among the Indians and later English settlement along the path helped identify places along the route. The oral traditions of the places of the path were passed down through time and recorded by later historians.

Over time, different versions of the journey have arisen. Massachusetts Governor Thomas Hutchinson’s *History of Massachusetts* (Thom-

as C. Cushing, 1795) described the migration of Mr. Hooker’s congregation as “near a fortnight’s journey, having no pillars but Jacob’s, and no canopy but the heavens, a wilderness to go through without the least cultivation, in most places no paths nor any marks to guide them, depending on the compass to steer them by, many hideous swamps and very high mountains, beside five or six rivers or different parts of the same winding not everywhere fordable, which they could not avoid.” Mr. Hutchinson’s description of Mr. Hooker’s crossing the trackless wilderness contrasts with the romantic, “walk in the park,” vision of the journey portrayed in Frederick Church’s painting, “Hooker and Company.”

Heated debates regarding the path’s route across Connecticut continue. The Connecticut Historical Commission has concluded that this path followed by Connecticut’s founding families probably went through the hills of northern Windham County between Thompson and Willington. An earlier route remains little understood. Historians may be able to learn more through old property records.

Reconnecting the Path

Reconciling the differences between the views of historians with the oral histories and local traditions of the townspeople required a different approach. It required reconstructing the route that would have been

followed before English settlement when the land was the territory of the native Indians. If the sachem Wahginnacut could walk from Hartford to Boston in less than 5 days in 1631, then there surely was a way known to the natives that was direct, efficient, and safe for those walking to Connecticut. Finding a way to enter the world as the earliest pioneers might have experienced it along the path would require a place where the story of the path was strong and the landscape had reverted to woodland. The best place to pick up the traces of the path was in the hills of Windham County. The best way to connect the traces to reconstruct the route of the path was to walk across the hills and woodland of Windham County.

Fortunately, though the history of the Old Connecticut Path faded from memory, the story of the Old Connecticut Path lives on through the oral history passed down through time in the towns along the path. The history of the towns along the way is strongly connected with places along the path and the story of those early pioneers. The connection of the people with the historic passage of Mr. Hooker and others is visible in the monuments erected by townspeople along the way help reconnect the path.

Treasure Hunting in Windham County

The easiest way to find buried treasure is to discover a buried treasure map. A hidden treasure map was found in Ellen Larned’s “Map of Ancient Windham County” that was inserted in her *History of Windham County* published in 1874. Walking the route of the Old Connecticut Path shown on Ms. Larned’s map leads off the modern roads road into the woods to rediscover ways of travel that have been bypassed and forgotten across Thompson, Woodstock, Eastford, Ashford, Willington, and on to the Willimantic River crossing. Taken with local traditions and oral histories from towns along the way, Ms. Larned’s map capturing the earliest traditions of Windham County pointed the way for an ancient path that provided an efficient, safe course.

Ms. Larned’s map helped point the way, and a detailed map compiled by David Chism across Eastford and Ashford helped pinpoint today’s places that were once crossed by the Old Connecticut Path. Mr. Chism’s map (ca 1930) preserved by the Connecticut State Library reflected his collection of stories and places of the path as

it crossed ancient Ashford (i.e., modern Ashford and Eastford). David's brother, Charles, augmented the map with descriptions of places along the path and family stories that were documented by Herral Ayres in his book *The Great Trail of New England* (Meador Publishing, 1911) and letters written by Mr. Ayres found in the Woodstock Historical Society archives.

I ventured into the woods on the course of the Old Connecticut Path mapped and described by the Chism brothers from Crystal Pond in Eastford to Westford Hill in Ashford and on to Moose Meadow in Willington. The journey passes through a portal of time to enter an extraordinary expanse of wilderness. Here, it is possible to experience a world of natural beauty with a sense of wonder and to imagine the journey of Connecticut pioneers across a vast wilderness.

Blue-Blazed Connecticut Path

Rediscovering the route of the Old Connecticut Path led to discovering the extraordinary Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails of the CFPA. I found that the Blue-Blazed Natchaug and Nipmuck trails provide public access to places directly on or closely parallel to the Old Connecticut Path from Pine Hill to Westford Hill in Ashford.

The Old Connecticut Path diverges from the Nipmuck Trail, crossing over the southern slope of Grass Hill to "The Trail" monument on Route 89. The Nipmuck Trail parallels the route of the path across the Mount Hope River and uphill along Oakes Road to Westford Hill where they meet again before diverging once again.

The blue-blazed Natchaug and Nipmuck trails provide the way for people today to connect with the path of Connecticut's pioneers and the wilderness majesty of the land that is open for all to enjoy today.

If You Post It, Will They "Like" It?

I found that words and pictures alone were inadequate to tell the story of the special places where the Old Connecticut Path coincides with the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails in Natchaug State Forest. To encourage others to discover the path, I posted "you are there" videos on YouTube. The response to one on the Natchaug Forest crossing amazed me. What started as one person walking the Old Connecticut Path has aroused the interest of people from across the United States, Canada, England, and more than 30 other

countries. Old Connecticut Path videos had more than 9,000 viewings, and the Web site received more than 15,000 visits during 2013. Who knew that the story would connect with so many people?

Rediscovering the Old Connecticut Path and sharing the story has moved beyond connection with the land crossed by the path. It has opened the door to direct connection with people, those whose ancestors came down to Connecticut long ago and those who see history as the story of people. And, people near and far want to come to experience the path for themselves. The story of the path brought more than 80 people of all ages to step back in time to the world of the Connecticut's pioneers during the "Walktober" 2013 interpretive walk along the Old Connecticut Path sponsored by the Ashford Conservation Commission and Last Green Valley.

CFPA Connecticut Path Connections

Although the oral traditions and histories of the towns provided directions for rediscovering the route of the path, our age of social media brought forth stories of the path shared by landowners across Eastford and Ashford showing a connection that continues. Response to the Old Connecticut Path Web page, YouTube videos, and Facebook page has come from people who treasure the places in their lives connected with the path. Among the many who have shared their connection to the Old Connecticut are two longtime CFPA members.

Steve Broderick, CFPA Forester & Program Director, recalled that he learned the story of the Old Connecticut Path crossing his land in Eastford and Woodstock when he bought it from University of Connecticut Professor of Forestry Edgar Wyman. Dr. Wyman's grandfather purchased the land in 1877, and the family held onto to the land for three generations. The story Dr. Wyman heard from his grandfather was of an ancient stone bridge, not wide enough for a cart, that stood on a small stream on his land near Crystal Pond that was part of the path followed by Mr. Hooker. Mr. Broderick is now working with the Camp Nahaco Commission and Eastford Conservation & Historic Preservation Commission to share the site as part of a historic interpretive trail along Crystal Pond.

Ruth Cutler, CFPA board member, shared her family connection with the path and Mr. Hooker. Ms. Cutler lives along the Old Connecticut Path on Westford Hill in Ashford.

She also has photographed runners on the Old Connecticut Path during the annual Nipmuck Marathon as they crossed Boston Hollow Brook. Ms. Cutler's advocacy for connecting people with the heritage of the Old Connecticut Path and beauty of the land opened the way for sharing the story of the path with the CFPA, heritage and conservation groups, land trusts, and community groups.

Keepers of the Path

The story of the path has not vanished. There is still a connection to the path, the places along the path, and the powerful story of the pioneers who came through the wilderness to Connecticut. The CFPA has a special role in connecting people with the Old Connecticut Path through its Blue Trails. The Natchaug and Nipmuck trails in Ashford along with the Shenipsit Trail in Tolland and Vernon provide places to enter the woodland world along the Old Connecticut Path as it might have been experienced by Connecticut's pioneers.

Walking the Blue Trails and meeting trail volunteers along the way, I feel a deeper appreciation for the work of volunteers whose dedication ensures that places along the path are accessible for all who wish to enter. Natchaug Trail Steward Bob Schoff exclaimed, "That's my trail!" as he shook my hand on meeting for the first time. His pride in the Natchaug Trail was like that a proud parent. Nipmuck Trail Steward "Nipmuck" Dave Raczkowski expressed his pride that the Nipmuck Trail he cares for is also a piece of the Old Connecticut Path and that the Nipmuck Marathon, which he coordinates, brings runners to the path each year as they run uphill from Boston Hollow Brook. The commitment of CFPA trail volunteers such as these and the many other unsung trail heroes clear the way for others to enter Connecticut's woodlands and find special places along the path.

CFPA volunteers, members, and staff have lent their hands to reinvigorate the memory of the path's past, reconnecting people with the path today along the Blue Trails, and conserving the heritage of the land for future generations.

Jason Newton spoke on his work to identify the Old Connecticut Path at the 2013 annual meeting of CFPA.

NOW YOU CAN WALK FROM LONG ISLAND SOUND TO NEW HAMPSHIRE

BY CLARE CAIN

The gateway is open. The New England Trail has finally reached the water, officially. Join the Connecticut Forest & Park Association for the opening and dedication of the NET's southern terminus in Guilford's Chittenden Park on June 8 from 4 to 6 p.m.

Five years ago, two Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails, the Mattabesett and Metacomet trails in Connecticut, and the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail in Massachusetts, were designated as a national scenic trail known as the New England Trail (NET). Volunteers for CFPA worked with landowners to create a new 14-mile trail, the Menunkatuck Trail, completing the route from the New Hampshire border to Long Island Sound. In conjunction with National Trails Day events and the town of Guilford's 375th anniversary, CFPA will open the NET's southern gateway.

Chittenden Park, a Guilford town park situated on the shore of the Long Island Sound, 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.

After 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, CFPA 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-worthy entrance to a 215-mile hiking journey through New England.

In downtown Guilford, the blue blazes marking the NET's path through town reside on utility poles. 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 town bought the surrounding land that 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 drive-in access to the water exists. The park remains a quiet connection to the water.

The NET follows a short, elevated boardwalk over the dunes to an overlook platform. From the open platform, walkers can view Falkner 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 & Economic Development, these improvements will soon become a reality.

Clare Cain is the trail stewardship director of CFPA.

NEW ENGLAND TRAIL HIKES AND OTHER EVENTS IN GUILFORD, JUNE 6-8

Note: For more events and details, see ctwoodlands.org or guilford375.org

FRIDAY JUNE 6

- ▶ **Paddle at East River State Boat Launch, 10–2.**
- ▶ **Historic walk and mural viewing,** East River Preserve, Sullivan Drive, 4 p.m.

SATURDAY, JUNE 7

- ▶ **Family-friendly hike,** 2 hours on the NET, Timberland Preserve, Route 80, 1:45 p.m.
- ▶ **Family-friendly hike,** 1.5 hours on the NET, Clapboard/East River Preserve (across from Guilford Riding School), 9 a.m.
- ▶ **Hike,** 7 miles through East River Preserve, park at Clapboard entrance, 10:30 a.m.–2:30 p.m.
- ▶ **Paddle:** From Chaffinch Island Park 1:30–4 p.m.
- ▶ **Little Folks Fair:** Town Green, 11 a.m.–4 p.m.
- ▶ **Historic walk,** Town Green, park at the Town Hall, 11 a.m.

SUNDAY, JUNE 8

- ▶ **Hike:** 3 hours on the NET in Cockaponset State Forest, Route 80, 8:45 a.m.
- ▶ **Paddle:** East River State Boat Launch, Neck Road, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.
- ▶ **Harbor cruises,** all afternoon, Guilford Marina.
- ▶ **Historic Walk:** from Town Green to the NET dedication at Chittenden Park (park at Town Hall), 2 p.m.
- ▶ **New England Trail Dedication Event:** Chittenden Park, 4–6 p.m.
- ▶ **Folk music by the Rosenthals,** Chittenden Park, 6–7:30 p.m.

INTERACTIVE BLUE TRAILS MAP ONLINE

<http://www.ctwoodlands.org/www.ctwoodlands.org/BlueTrailsMap>

Whether you're a devout hiker of the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails or a walker looking for a local escape, the Connecticut Forest & Park Association's new online trails map will help you plan your outing before your boots hit the ground. As a companion tool to the *Connecticut Walk Book*, this map will allow you to zoom in and see the latest trail locations, learn trail names and distances, and fully discover all that Connecticut hiking has to offer.



MATTABESSETT TRAIL IN GIUFFRIDA PARK

*Diane Edwards on the
summit of Chauncey Peak.*

PAUL EDWARDS

Traprock ridges reward your effort with splendid views

BY DIANE FRIEND EDWARDS

After spending too many days indoors in December, my husband and I longed to head into the woods on our cross-country skis. But right after Christmas, the weather turned almost springlike, and rain washed away the snow. So instead of skis, we grabbed our daypacks and hiking boots and set off to explore the Mattabesett Trail through Giuffrida Park in Meriden. The *Connecticut Walk Book West's* description of the trail's "rough terrain" (a chance to burn off some holiday calories!) and "unsurpassed views" intrigued us.

The book didn't exaggerate: There are wonderful vistas from many spots atop the traprock ridges—views of the park, two lakes, and in the distance, hills, Castle Craig, and even the Hartford skyline. These views should be especially pretty in early spring, when the trees begin to leaf out in soft shades of green

and red. Reaching a few of the vistas, though, does require a steep, rocky climb—in particular, the hike up Chauncey Peak. (You can avoid the steepest part by taking a short side trail.)

If, like us, you're not up for the entire 13-mile hike from Higby Mountain to Chauncey Peak to Lamentation Mountain, as described in the Walk Book, you can try our much shorter (about 4 miles) circular route by combining the Blue-Blazed Mattabesett Trail and two other Giuffrida Park trails. Our hike, including stops to take photos, enjoy the views, and eat lunch, took 3.5 hours.

The Hike

From the parking lot in Giuffrida Park, we crossed the meadow below the dam forming Crescent Lake (aka the Bradley Hubbard Reservoir). At the far end of the dam, we entered



PAUL EDWARDS

Right, heading down, stepping around oose traprock.

**THE BOOK DIDN'T EXAGGERATE: THERE ARE WONDERFUL VISTAS FROM MANY SPOTS ATOP THE TRAPROCK RIDGES—
VIEWS OF THE PARK, TWO LAKES, AND IN THE DISTANCE, HILLS, CASTLE CRAIG, AND EVEN THE HARTFORD SKYLINE.
THESE VIEWS SHOULD BE ESPECIALLY PRETTY IN EARLY SPRING, WHEN THE TREES BEGIN TO LEAF OUT IN
SOFT SHADES OF GREEN AND RED. REACHING A FEW OF THE VISTAS, THOUGH, DOES REQUIRE A STEEP, ROCKY CLIMB—
IN PARTICULAR, THE HIKE UP CHAUNCEY PEAK**

the woods and almost immediately turned right to follow the Blue-Blazed Trail toward Chauncey Peak. Soon the trail started going uphill.

“That’s a pretty steep start to this hike,” I thought.

And it was *quite* a steep climb to the summit. Fortunately, the rocks provided plenty of hand- and footholds for the scramble to the top. (To avoid the last steep section, turn left on the blue-and-red-blazed side trail. This brings you back to the Blue Trail on the ridgeline.)

After catching our breaths and admiring the view, we continued following the blue blazes off the summit and onto the ridge, heading north. To our right, we could see Higby Mountain. The trail went over some rocks, down into a little gully, and passed a rock outcropping. Just after the junction with the side trail, we came across another high spot with a fantastic view of Giuffrida Park and Crescent Lake below. Near the

end of the ridgeline, a second lake—Silver Lake—came into sight.

Descending from the ridge was nearly as steep as going up had been, and the talus (broken-off pieces of traprock, or basalt) on the trail made it crucial to watch where we stepped.

At the bottom, we crossed a footbridge over a small canal. This is where we temporarily left the Mattabesett Trail. We took a red-blazed trail to the left for just over a tenth of a mile, and then a yellow-blazed trail to the right for a little over half a mile. That led us up the south end of Lamentation Mountain. At the top, we rejoined the Blue-Blazed Mattabesett Trail, which we followed south along a ridge (more good views!) and down to a small dirt service road. The blue blazes followed this road for a short distance. We passed two right-turn blazes (the trail/road curves to the right; it doesn’t actually turn right). Soon after that, the trail headed left into the

woods. A few minutes later, we arrived at the shoreline of Crescent Lake and gazed up at the rugged ridgeline we had hiked after leaving Chauncey Peak. I felt a satisfying sense of closure. To my husband, I said, “At the beginning of this hike, you get views of where you’re going, and at the end, you can see where you’ve been.”

A short stroll through what looked like an avenue of pines led us back to the parking lot.

Directions

The entrance to Giuffrida Park is on Westfield Road (a continuation of Country Club Road) in Meriden, 2.8 miles west of exit 20 on I-91.

For more information: See the Meriden Land Trust’s brochure about Giuffrida Park at meridenlandtrust.com/Giuffrida_quad.pdf.

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



The Enfield Shaker settlement became one of the first commercial American seed enterprises.

OLD POSTCARD /
WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

CONNECTICUT'S IMPORTANT PLACE IN THE AMERICAN SEED BUSINESS

BY JEAN CRUM JONES

Over the past year, I have been thinking a lot about seeds, from Connecticut's role in the American seed business to the genetically modified labeling issue before the Connecticut General Assembly. While in New Hampshire last summer, my husband and I visited the Canterbury Shaker Village. The tour guide explained the Shakers' profitable seed business and, as an aside, mentioned that the Shakers of Enfield, Connecticut, had invented seed packets, which they called "papers."

Back home, prowling the Internet, I was amazed to discover an illustrious story. Colonists brought seeds from their home regions in the British Isles. At harvest time, they saved seeds for planting the following year. Farmers also traded with other farmers to obtain their needed supplies. They grew mostly corn, wheat, rye, and barley. Except for the corn, all the varieties came from Britain and did not yield as well in Connecticut as they had in Britain. Using seeds from the American Indians, the colonists successfully grew pumpkins, melons, beans, and peas.

After the American Revolution, farmers here wanted a viable commercial farming industry. Seed houses, run by merchants who bought and sold the supplies, began to

appear in large cities, such as Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. The merchants obtained most of their seeds from European seed houses or from naval captains who gathered seeds at their ports of call. In general, the seed performance was inconsistent, and so the Shakers seized this opportunity to grow and sell native seeds. The Enfield Shaker settlement began in 1792. In 1802, with Brother Jefferson White's founding of a seed business, this became one of the first commercial American seed enterprises. The Shakers raised and saved the seeds with utmost care. They succeeded for two reasons: The seeds were of superior quality, and the Shakers placed them in packets, an innovation that still defines the seed business.

Enfield seeds became recognized throughout the many routes the Shaker seed peddlers traveled. The Shaker salesmen delivered a supply of seed packets, and they provided a convenient, brightly painted display box that could sit right on the shopkeeper's counter. Previously, seeds had been packed in large cloth bags or barrels. A store could now stock dozens of kinds of seeds in less space than a single bag occupied. Putting seeds into small packets kept them fresher, and customers could experiment with different varieties. The Shakers allowed dealers to take the seeds on consignment,

and during the annual visit, merchants paid only for those seeds they had sold. The seed business of the Shakers from Enfield peaked in the 1840s. Seed sales declined during the Civil War because of the loss of many Southern customers. By the 1870s, the Shakers could no longer recruit enough new members, especially young men, to keep up with the work of growing, packaging, and selling seeds. At its zenith, about 200 Shakers owned nearly 3,000 acres in Enfield. By 1917, they sold the land, and the remaining members moved to other Shaker communities. In 1931, the state of Connecticut bought 1,400 acres of the former Shaker property to accommodate the Osborn Prison Farm. Most of the Shaker buildings and their contents were demolished.

The Wethersfield Seed Company began about 1820. James L. Belden, who lived on Main Street, sold at least 60 varieties of vegetables and herbs. His gardens, seed houses, and seven barns stretched along Church Street to Garden Street. He developed a successful seed business from fertile riverfront land that also lay at a transportation hub. A devastating fire in 1834 destroyed most of his outbuildings, but he persevered. In 1838, William Comstock and his son bought Mr. Belden's seed gardens. By 1845, with another partner, their operation was thriving

and their seed gardens filled acres throughout Wethersfield, the Great Meadows, and Griswoldville. They called themselves Comstock, Ferre, and Company. They followed the Shakers' business model. Seed salesmen, called "travelers," traveled to the American west along the lines of the developing railroads. By 1853, they were selling roots, fertilizers, and tools as well as seeds. A traveler who eventually became company president was Steve Willard. For the next one hundred years, the Willard family managed the company specializing in wholesale seeds.

Demand for Seeds

In the late 1800s, six other seed companies established themselves in Wethersfield. This was a time of great agricultural land expansion, interest in vegetables for a good diet, and the growth of gardening as an upper-class hobby. Mail order became much more common because of improved transportation networks and postal reforms in the 1860s that made it cheaper to ship seeds and plant materials, as well as catalogs. Catalogs began featuring enticing illustrations and descriptions and became potent marketing tools for seeds.

A nursery wholesaler from Kensington purchased Comstock-Ferre in the early 1990s as a retail outlet for his plants. When Pierre Benerups decided to retire in 2009, there was great angst in Wethersfield because it seemed the historic seed business would change drastically. Fortunately, saviors arrived by the names of Jere and Emilee Gettle, owners of Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds in Missouri, who purchased the business in June 2010. They are an energetic young couple who are eager to revitalize the retail seed trade and who want to create a living agricultural history center in one of the antique warehouses.

Today, besides Comstock-Ferre, the only other surviving seed business in Wethersfield is the Hart Seed Company. Charles C. Hart started his seed business working out of his home kitchen in 1894. He had worked at another seed concern in Wethersfield for 14 years. Within a few years of his start, he was able to purchase the buildings of his former employer. His sons became involved and the business flourished. As the years passed, they acquired a number of seed businesses in Wethersfield and elsewhere. In 1943, the old original wooden building went up in

flames and everything was destroyed. The family regrouped and built a brick warehouse on the same site, directly across from Comstock-Ferre. Now, a fifth-generation family member manages the full-line seed company serving the home gardener, commercial grower, and the lawn, landscape, and golf course market. The red HART seed display rack emblazoned with red hearts on a white background was a familiar sight to most Americans born before 1960 who bought seeds at garden and hardware stores.

A Short History of Seed Development

Sexual reproduction in plants was not fully understood until the early 19th century. In 1839, Connecticut native Henry Leavitt Ellsworth, the U.S. patent commissioner and former president of Aetna Insurance Company, petitioned the U.S. Congress for funds for agricultural research. Mr. Ellsworth, an advocate of crop rotation and other good farming practices, anticipated that cross-pollination of different varieties would improve plants. He had long advocated improving agriculture. He graduated from Yale University and practiced law, but he was also a gentleman farmer and active in the Hartford County Agricultural Society. While patent commissioner, he obtained congressional funding for agricultural activities and established a department to collect and distribute seeds.

After the Civil War, Everett B. Clark and his sons, who farmed in Milford and Orange, began producing high-quality seeds of corn, sweet peas, and beans for the new vegetable canning industry. Canning farmers wanted seeds that would grow superior yields and quality crops. The price was of secondary importance. The Clark family company did its own experiments and breeding, and by 1900, it kept breeding seed on its 800 acres in Orange but expanded some of its operations west to Michigan, Wisconsin, Colorado, Idaho, and Montana. By 1957, the Clarks joined with a couple of their competitors to form Associated Seed Growers, Inc., also known as Asgrow; they set up headquarters in New Haven. Upjohn Corporation of Kalamazoo, Michigan, a major pharmaceutical firm, bought Asgrow in 1968. Seed development had met the future. Today, Asgrow continues soybean research and produces sunflower, corn, alfalfa, and canola seeds. Monsanto purchased

Asgrow in 1996; under its ownership, Asgrow produces Round-Up Ready Soybeans, which have been bred to be hardy in fields where the pesticide Round-Up is sprayed and which are the primary variety grown in the United States.

The Woodruff family operated two other important seed companies in Orange. Stiles Woodruff started his seed business in Orange after his return from the Civil War. He and his son formed S. D. Woodruff and Son, which became well known for vegetable and grass seeds. The Hart seed company purchased the S. D. Woodruff operation in the 1950s. F. H. Woodruff & Sons Seed Growers, the other company, merged with Everett B. Clark in the 1950s and then became part of Asgrow.

A couple other seed companies are active in Connecticut, besides the two already mentioned in Wethersfield. The New England Seed Company is based in Hartford and was established in 1987. John Scheepers has been located in Bantam since 1908. All of the modern Connecticut seed companies have taken the Safe Seed Pledge that includes the statement, "We pledge that we do not knowingly buy or sell genetically engineered seeds or plants."

First Hybrid Seed Developed in Connecticut

Modern plant breeding began in earnest after World War I, mainly at land grant universities and agricultural experiment stations. The first wave of hybrid seeds provided seed companies with the opportunity for increased profits because the farmer had to return to the distributor each year to purchase seeds. Although the plants hybrid seeds produce can't be used as seed for the next generation, most farmers preferred hybrids because they produced crops of greater uniformity, higher yields, and improved resistance to pests and diseases.

Probably the most significant hybrid seed was developed in New Haven at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) in the early 1900s. Building on the work of a couple other corn geneticists, Donald F. Jones made the practical discovery of a double-cross method to dramatically increase corn yields. Mr. Jones published his results in 1919 and actively campaigned for the adoption of his economical technique by commercial seed producers. Henry A. Wal-

lace of Iowa (who later became vice president under Franklin D. Roosevelt), a publisher of a farm newspaper, established the Pioneer Hi-Bred Seed Company in 1926. It became the largest seed company in the world and forever changed the nature of row-crop farming and American agriculture. Unfortunately, lack of plant patent laws at the time meant no financial compensation to the discoverer, Mr. Jones, or to CAES.

Plant breeding techniques of today include the use of molecular genetics. Through the tools of genetic engineering, genes can be moved from one organism to another with preciseness. In July 1990, in Mystic, Connecticut, DeKalb Genetics, a research arm of a hybrid corn company that had coupled with Pfizer in 1982, was the first group to publish in a scientific journal its successful creation of a viable, genetically engineered corn plant. In the highly competitive field of genetic scientific research, biotech plant breeders around the world were concurrently making similar breakthroughs. Within six and seven years of the DeKalb discovery, corn seed modified with Bt insect resistance

and corn with Round Up herbicide resistance was approved by U.S. government regulators and was put on the market. Most corn farmers eagerly embraced the new varieties. Monsanto purchased DeKalb Genetics in 1998. Then, the public backlash began against genetically modified organisms, or GMOs.

In June 2013, Connecticut became the first state to pass a bill that required food manufacturers to label products that contained genetically engineered ingredients. The bill has a trigger clause that says the law cannot take effect unless four other states, at least one of which shares a border with Connecticut, passes similar regulations. It is unclear when this will happen, but it seems it may in a year or two. It is beyond the scope of this article to delve into the situations and controversies that led to the passage of this legislation, except to say it indicates the deep unease consumers have with current food production methods and with multinational corporate ownership of many agricultural inputs.

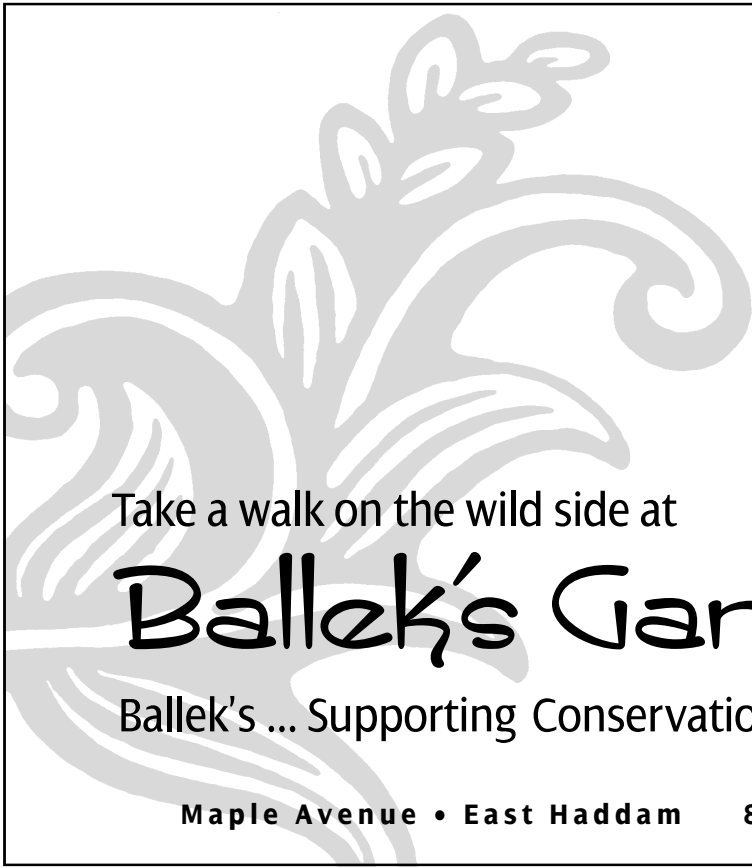
I am proud to realize we have strived

to produce good seeds for more than 200 years in Connecticut—wholesome, productive seeds that will improve our gardening and farming. As farmers ourselves, we are personally very thoughtful from whom and where we get our seeds. Choosing a regional seed house is important to get the best seeds for one's biozone—a geographically similar environment. Our farm vegetable seeds come from Connecticut, New York, and Maine. Good seed houses are very forthright with information and can be helpful as one tries to make selections.

All else being equal, buying local is a good idea with seeds, as with everything else.

This spring, let us gratefully plant some Connecticut seeds and continue our state's rich seed heritage.

Jean Crum Jones, a registered dietician, works with her family in Shelton running the Jones Family Farms. She served on the Connecticut Forest & Park Association Board of Directors for many years and has written this column for almost a decade.



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Farmland preservation
continued from page 9

yet to get there. The program is about a third of the way to its goal. The program has spent \$127 million since it started buying up development rights in 1978, according to Mr. Shannon.

Towns and Land Trusts Step In

The current program strongly emphasizes partnership, whether with towns or land trusts. About half of the preservation programs that the state is working on have other collaborators contributing money, Mr. Shannon said. Farmers have also turned to the Federal Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program to secure their properties.

Despite the price tag on a PDR, taxpayers save money when land remains in agriculture instead of converting to housing. For every dollar of local tax revenue that comes from farms,

the municipalities would pay back only 31 cents, according to a cost of community services study cited by Plowing Ahead. In residential areas, every tax dollar municipalities collect requires \$1.11 paid out in services. Farms cost less to take care of than do neighborhoods, which require more water lines, fire trucks, or new schools to handle a population influx after a new development goes up.

Meanwhile, the state has been trying to gather new parcels through measures such as the Community

Farms Program, which will allow the state to protect smaller plots than the 30-acre minimum of cropland the Farmland Preservation Program requires.

Mr. Shannon said the Community Farms Program received \$2 million from the Community Investment Act.

People who want farmland must continue to advocate for it, according to Lisa Bassani, director of the Working Lands Alliance project. "Those development pressures are always there," she said.

The farms secured in 2013 included Ronald Szegda's 100-plus acres in the town of Columbia. Mr. Szegda has had the farm for four decades and has used it for raising hay and keeping dairy cattle. Just as in many recent land purchases, this sale involved multiple buyers, including the town of Columbia and the Connecticut Farmland Trust, paying about \$8,000 an acre, Mr. Szegda said. In the years before the recession, he said that he had multiple developers approach him. He saw selling the development rights to his farm as a way to support himself in retirement without having to sell the farm.

"For most farmers, their land is their retirement account," said Mr. Szegda, who is 70. He has now stopped selling hay but cultivates just enough for his own livestock. For now, that is what he plans to continue doing, on his farm.

Tom Fagin is a journalist who grew up in Connecticut and has worked for media outlets here and in Wyoming.

THE CURRENT PROGRAM STRONGLY EMPHASIZES PARTNERSHIP, WHETHER WITH TOWNS OR LAND TRUSTS. ABOUT HALF OF THE PRESERVATION PROGRAMS THAT THE STATE IS WORKING ON HAVE OTHER COLLABORATORS CONTRIBUTING MONEY,

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CAROLIE EVANS,

former Nature Conservancy land protection staffer

Carolyn Kneen Evans, who from 1984 through 1996 was responsible for protecting more than 6,100 acres and adding another 5,000 acres to the land registry program of the Nature Conservancy in Connecticut, died January 4. She was 82.

Known as Carolie, Mrs. Evans was born in Cleveland, Ohio, on July 8, 1931. She graduated from Cornell University in 1953.

She believed that volunteers formed the fabric of a community and helped set up a volunteer bureau in New Haven and then for schools in Guilford. While her children were young, she helped with scouting and school field trips and set up Guilford's community gardens on Nut Plains Road.

Mrs. Evans in a friendly and straightforward style effected change in many ways. She organized the formation and incorporation of Guilford Recycling in 1974, 12 years before recycling became mandated by the state. The town donated its glass and aluminum earnings to the Guilford Land Conservation Trust. She served as chair of the Guilford Land Acquisition Committee, and in 1977, she was appointed to the Guilford Conservation Commission and was one of two members who developed the town's first open-space map.

Mrs. Evans was also named to the National Land Trust Council. She was instrumental in negotiating the town's protection of the 600-acre East River Preserve. Her husband, Robert O. Rawson, and her former husband, Gordon A. Evans, predeceased her. She leaves a brother, Brewster Kneen, of Ottawa, Ontario; a daughter, Nancy Wolff of Bridgewater Center, Vermont; her son, Gordon Alan Evans, Jr., of North Haven; a daughter, Sally Harold of Fairfield; seven grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

—*From death notices*

LOIS BARLOW COX QUERY

Lois Joyce Schurmann Barlow Cox Query, whose will specified a donation of 100 acres near the Shenipsit Trail to the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, died January 16. A native of Hartford and one of four daughters, Mrs. Query became a nurse who managed and organized disaster shelters for the American Red Cross.

She was widowed three times. Her first husband was Malcolm W. Barlow, whom she married in 1953; her second was William Cox; and her third was Paul Query.

Among her many volunteer activities was service on the Tolland Conservation Commission. Restoring and maintaining trails and open space was a great love of hers. She leaves 2 sisters, 15 nieces and nephews, and 5 stepchildren. A memorial service took place February 2.

In addition to the acreage in Tolland, Mrs. Query provided CFPA with a stewardship gift. The property hosts a section of the historic route known as the Old Connecticut Path and some grassland reserve acreage.

—*From death notices*



Carolie Evans, *a remembrance*

BY STEPHEN GEPHARD

The blues song “Six Strings Down” commemorates the death of guitar legend Stevie Ray Vaughn and notes that heaven is building a stellar blues band with the likes of Jimi Hendrix, Muddy Waters, T-Bone Walker, and other bluesmen who passed on previously. Following that train of thought, heaven is gathering a strong team of land conservationists, bolstered by the death in January of Carolie Evans of Guilford. This follows the death of other prominent conservationists over the past few years, including Dr. Richard Goodwin, a founder of the Nature Conservancy and East Haddam Land Trust and a collaborator of Carolie. Carolie was the director of land protection for the Nature Conservancy's Connecticut chapter during the 1980s and 1990s—a “golden era” for land conservancy in our state when TNC preserved some of the crown jewels along the lower Connecticut River: Chapman Pond, Selden Creek, Whalebone Creek, and Lord's Cove. Carolie was a major factor in these acquisitions. When she retired from TNC, she remained active in her hometown of Guilford, protecting land for the town and the Guilford Land Conservation Trust, something she had been working on for nearly 40 years. She was keenly interested in the Westwoods parcels and played an important role in protecting the superb Goss Preserve along the East River.

Carolie epitomized the successful land conservationists of the time. Like these other Connecticut conservation saints, she was knowledgeable, clever, persevering, passionate, and personable. Carolie had an undeniable charm that always embraced old friends and welcomed newcomers—and landowners. Former U.S. Representative Tip O'Neill is credited with the phrase “all politics are local.” Carolie understood

that ultimately all land conservation is local and quite often intensely personal. She relied on personal relationships and a vast network of landowners, politicians, technical experts, schoolteachers, sailing partners, bird watchers, and wealthy business people. Today, we give lip service to this kind of networking, but in these times of multitasking and digital social media, I wonder if we are able to personally connect with landowners and dealmakers the way that Carolie, Dick Goodwin, and others did—often culturing these relationships for many years before finally closing a deal.

I mourn the loss of a great conservationist, but it is more than that. I mourn the loss of a wonderful person. Carolie was a lovely person who

reminds us that we don't do all of this work just for trees, rock outcrops, fish, birds, or salamanders. At the end of the day, it is for us and the human emotions that bind us all together with the land.

The intent of this brief note was not to provide a comprehensive eulogy for Carolie Evans or to list her many accomplishments. That can be offered by those who knew her best: her many friends in Guilford and at the Guilford Land Conservation Trust; Les Corey, Jr., former chapter director of TNC in Connecticut; and her daughter Sally Harold, a dedicated conservationist currently with TNC and a source of great pride for Carolie. Instead, I hope to raise her memory as an inspiration to many of us

who carry on the work of preserving land. Remembering Carolie strengthens the sense of community among all of us, whether we work for a government agency, a statewide nongovernmental organization, a land trust, or if we are local volunteers who are fighting to preserve our corner of town. Such reminiscing also recalls the collective euphoria of great conservation victories of the past and emboldens us for future campaigns. I urge us to not only press on with our efforts but also to remember to recruit and mentor younger folks as Carolie and others of that generation of land conservationists mentored us. Someday we will join that heavenly band of conservationists and the ones who follow us must not fumble along solely under their own devices but must benefit from the path cleared by the conservation saints who preceded them such as Carolie Evans.

Stephen Gephard is supervisor in the state of Connecticut's diadromous fish program and habitat and conservation enhancement program.

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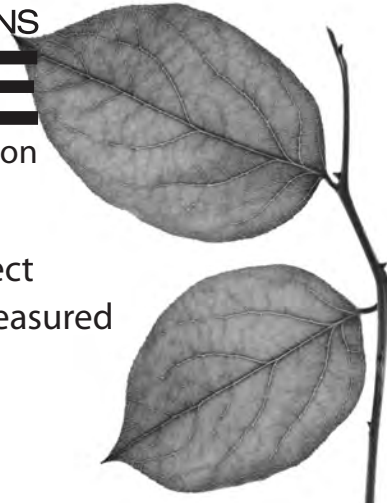
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