

CFPA News & Notes

Conserving the land, trails, and natural resources of Connecticut since 1895

Summer 2010

Volume 3 Issue 2

CT Trails Day was a Great Success

More than 2,000 people hit the trails around the state on June 5 and 6.

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New England Trail Marker

See the new official logo for our national scenic trail.

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Thank You for Supporting the Annual Fund

Due to your generosity, the 2009 campaign exceeded its goal.

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Important Forest Pest Alert

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CFPA Advocates for Trails not Trials

CFPA has advocated for many years that municipalities should emphasize the multiple benefits of getting people outdoors and worry less about issues like liability. Sadly, the jury verdict in May of \$2.9 million for a mountain biker who was injured at the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) Reservoir in West Hartford reminds us why towns are often consulting with attorneys before opening recreational facilities.

Similarly, the MDC consulted with its legal counsel and then decided to hold a public meeting of its Water Bureau at the West Hartford Town Hall on July 20th to re-visit its recreational access policy. The public turned out in droves—some estimated the crowd at 800. The auditorium and area outside Town Hall were busting at the seams. Six CFPA board members and staff testified at the meeting and signed-up hundreds of attendees to be a part of both the savethemdctrails.org coalition and GREAT (Grassroots Recreation Email Action Team). CFPA supports the interest in keeping the MDC trails open, but also appreciates the significance of this issue for all municipalities (the MDC is a nonprofit municipal corporation that shares the legal status of a town).

Since 1971, our state's Recreational

Liability Statute has been extremely successful at protecting private landowners (individuals, corporations, nonprofits, and private utilities) against liability as long as they do not charge a fee to access their land. This Statute has been essential when we are talking with private landowners who host Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails on their properties. The MDC also hosts approximately 12 miles of Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails (the Metacombet/New England Trail and the Tunxis Trail), but they clearly do not share the same protection as private landowners.

As it turns out, municipalities once were protected under the Recreational Liability Statute. However, this protection was lost in 1996 through the Conway v. Wilton case where the Connecticut Supreme Court upheld the right of a private individual to sue a municipality when she sustained a leg injury

while competing in a high school tennis tournament on a public tennis court in Wilton. Since the Wilton case, there have been dozens of bills introduced to restore strong liability protection to municipalities. Each time this has been attempted over the past 15 years, the bills were defeated in the General Assembly largely due to opposition from trial lawyers.

We thank the MDC for providing this recreational jewel for the public's enjoyment for many decades. At the same time, we are asking the General Assembly to leverage the strong public interest in this case into fixing the Recreational Liability Statute for municipalities once and for all.



Citizens gather at Town Hall in West Hartford to voice their concern about the MDC trails. Photo: Bill Flood

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From the Executive Director's Desk

CFPA: Conservation Facilitator and Incubator

Since our earliest days, CFPA has served as both a facilitator and incubator for conservation in Connecticut. As you probably know, CFPA has stepped in to provide funding and other forms of support for dozens of notable properties (e.g., Gillette Castle) and lands (e.g., Talcott Mountain) that were then conveyed to the state. You may not realize that we continue to play this valuable role today for many conservation partners.

This January, CFPA began serving as the fiscal sponsor for the Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC)—a coalition of over 90 land trusts, town commissions, garden clubs and other conservation organizations dedicated to increasing the pace and effectiveness of land protection in Connecticut. CLCC's Steering Committee has enhanced this partnership by hiring its first executive director, Amy Blaymore Pater-son. Amy, an experienced land-use attorney who most recently worked for the Trust for Public Land, is an outstanding resource who has been working with us in Rockfall since May.

Friends of Goodwin Forest (FGF) is another unincorporated but energetic group that has benefitted directly from CFPA's role as catalytic incubator. CFPA's history is connected to the Goodwin family in whose name our headquarters (James L. Goodwin Forest and Park Center) and community meeting room (Genevieve H. Goodwin Conference Room) are named. A partnership between CFPA and the CT DEP in managing the Goodwin Conservation Center and State Forest in Hampton was a natural. To further enhance the value of Goodwin Forest as an eastern Connecticut "destination" for its ecological, recreational, and historical significance, FGF was established by an outstanding cadre of volunteers led by FGF President Lynne Warren. With outstanding support from Steve Broderick, CFPA's Forester and Program Director at Goodwin, FGF is doing great work and now features a joint membership with CFPA. Goodwin is also benefitting by adding two new but experienced staff to implement environmental education programs (Juan Sanchez) and to protect and restore the Center and its environs (Jim Poole).

CFPA has also served as the incubator for the Merritt Parkway Trail Alliance (MPTA) since 2005. MPTA is a group of organizations and individuals who advocate for the creation of a non-motorized trail along the entire length of the Merritt Parkway for users of all ages and abilities. We are pleased to announce that Keep Stamford Moving, a project of the Stamford Partnership led by Josh Lecar, has stepped forward to take on the stewardship responsibilities for MPTA and will bring focus to the first step in establishing the trail—implementing a pilot project along a section of the Merritt in Stamford.

Lastly, we wish to recognize many decades of excellent work by the Natural Resources Council of Connecticut (NRCC), which recently decided to phase-out as an organization. NRCC was launched in 1949 with support from CFPA and the Federated Garden Clubs of CT to "educate the public concerning the need to protect the natural resources of Connecticut." NRCC became well-regarded for its visionary annual conferences that raised awareness on critical issues such as the future of Long Island Sound, water management and the use of water utility lands, solid waste management, the importance of family farms, and many other topics that NRCC always addressed in a neutral, fact-based manner. CFPA thanks Otto Schaefer, Claire Bennitt, and the tremendous conservation leaders who dedicated time and energy to the outstanding mission of NRCC over the years. CFPA also thanks the outgoing board of the NRCC for entrusting the remainder of its funds to CFPA. We will continue to facilitate and incubate organizations (which always start as great ideas) in your honor.

Hooray for CT Trails Day!

Despite the inclement weather and forecasts (with tornado warnings), this year's Connecticut Trails Day celebration was a huge success. More than 2,000 people hit the trails around the state on June 5 and 6. With 162 scheduled events offered in the CFPA published booklet, it wasn't difficult to find an outing that fit any taste and desired activity level. Many events took place on CFPA maintained Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails as well as on one of the three national trails found within Connecticut's borders. Among the most popular footpaths was the NET (New England Trail)—the newest national scenic trail in the U.S.

This remarkable celebration would not be possible without strong participation by organizations like local and regional land trusts, town agencies, outdoors-oriented businesses, hundreds of volunteers and event leaders, the CFPA staff, and Connecticut Trails Day sponsors (listed below). Thank you all for your support. We look forward to hitting the trails with you for this fun, nationally celebrated day next year.

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6TH ANNUAL FOREST FORUM

at the UConn West Hartford campus

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2010

9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Join us for the 6th Annual Connecticut Forest Conservation and Research Forum, where we will explore alternative ways the state can achieve its visions for the future of private and public forests.

Morning speakers will include David Foster, Director of the Harvard Forest; Helene Hochholzer, CT State Forest Planner; and Allan Giffen, Maine State Forester. The Forum will feature group discussions of the state visions and ways of reaching them. A special session will consider funding strategies for acquisition of forestlands and conservation easements. The final session will bring the threads of the day together and reach for consensus on next steps. The Forum will be followed by an evening reception.

Registration is \$35 (\$25 for approved students and volunteers). For more information and details on how to register, visit www.ctwoodlands.org. You may also contact Steve Broderick, Director of the Goodwin Forest Conservation Center (sbroderick@ctwoodlands.org) or Bill Bentley, Chair of the CT Forest Forum (billbentley@ctwoodlands.org), with any questions.



Eastern Mountain Sports Hosts CFPA at New Location

Eastern Mountain Sports (formerly called EMS) hosted the grand opening of its new Waterford store the first weekend in May. To celebrate and give back to the outdoor community, Eastern Mountain Sports donated 1% of the opening weekend's proceeds to support CFPA.

CFPA was chosen for funding in part because of the involvement of store personnel in both the use and maintenance of Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails. This first-hand experience with our work

gave the outdoors retailer confidence that their donation would be put to good use. It was gratifying for CFPA staff to be able to talk to shoppers; many knew of our activities, but many more did not. Membership forms and information on programs like WalkCT accompanied customers home; several joined on the spot.

The opening was a positive event for the new store, as sales of outdoor gear topped \$50,000. CFPA will not only financially benefit from participating, but may also find new people using our trails, attending our activities, and joining our organization.



Trail Mix

Marking the New England Trail

The New England Trail (NET), designated just over a year ago as a national scenic trail, now has an official national trail marker. Every trail in the national trails system (30 in all) has trail markers, specific to their trail, posted along their route.



These markers share common features, as in shape (“pregnant triangle”), size (3-inch and 9-inch) and smooth flowing typography.

Mike Krampitz, an avid hiker and logo designer, heard about our struggles in creating an image for the NET trail marker and volunteered to give it a try. Mike was able to capture the

spirit of the trail in a single, simple image of a hiker on a trap-rock ridge. CFPA, Appalachian Mountain Club, and National Park Service staff agreed that this image was sufficiently emblematic of the New England landscape traversed and highlighted by the trail.

The first trail marker was mounted on the trail at the Bluff Head kiosk on CT Route 77 in Guilford. Trail markers will become more visible on the trail as we move forward with distributing them to trail managers on the NET. You will likely catch sight of them at trailheads and road/trail crossings. We hope the national marker will begin to convey to hikers that they are not visiting just any trail, but a trail that Congress has determined to be worthy of national scenic trail designation. These markers were funded through a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service.

Hit the New Menunkatuck Trail

The Menunkatuck Trail, a new Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail, offers hikers a diverse stretch of trail to enjoy as it weaves its way south towards the Long Island Sound. Approximately one mile east of the aforementioned Bluff Head kiosk and parking area, the Menunkatuck Trail takes a southern departure from the Mattabesett Trail and heads toward CT Route 80. It intersects Guilford Land Conservation Trust properties like Broomstick Ledges and Nut Plains Preserve, town trails in the Timberlands, Cockaponsett State Forest lands, and Regional Water Authority property, and is an official extension of the New England Trail.

After years of route analysis, discussions with property owners, and building community support for the trail, CFPA was able to secure the permissions necessary for trail passage. Thanks to Guilford volunteers and property owners along the trail route, the trail is now blazed and hikeable. Although 10 miles of the Menunkatuck are open for hiking, it is still a work in progress. You can't hike directly to the Sound yet, but you



CFPA Volunteer Trail Manager, Paul Mei, and Trail Stewardship Director, Clare Cain, at the Bluff Head kiosk.

can connect as far south as the Nut Plains Preserve. We estimate the trail, when connected all the way to the Sound, will be 15 miles in length.

The next phase of the project will be defining a walking route through the East River Preserve and through downtown Guilford. Once the Sound is reached, the New England Trail will be complete...with not just two termini, but three! Maps of the Menunkatuck Trail will be available soon from CFPA.

Get the Word Out About Your Trails

Attention CFPA Trail Managers: CFPA's WalkCT website (www.walkct.org) is up and running at full stride. With over 80 hikes now posted on the site, walkers can search for hikes in the state by city or zip code. Many groups have loaded their favorite local walks onto the site. We hope to have the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails well-represented too. Please help us spread the word about your trails to celebrate the work you do. Contact Clare Cain at ccain@ctwoodlands.org for log-in information.

Celebrate National Public Lands Day

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2010

National Public Lands Day is the nation's largest hands-on volunteer effort to improve and enhance the public lands Americans enjoy. In 2009, 150,000 volunteers built trails and bridges, removed trash and invasive plants, planted trees, and restored our water resources. Get involved and host (or take part in) a public lands' project on September 25, 2010. Visit www.publiclandsday.org for more information on this national event.

You did it again: 2009 Annual Fund Exceeds its Goal

We asked you, our members and friends, to be stewards of CFPA and ensure the ongoing vitality of CFPA by giving generously to the 2009 Annual Fund. We are delighted to announce that your response was both wonderful and generous—the 2009 Annual Fund exceeded its goal and generated over \$112,000 to support the Association’s programs. Over 425 members and friends gave to this year’s annual fund. **We are grateful and thank you for your support and stewardship.**

2009 was the 80th anniversary of the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails so the campaign’s theme focused on our trails program. However, your gift also allows CFPA to continue our education, WalkCT, and advocacy programs. Member support and our work is critical and relevant to achieving much needed conservation in the state, as demonstrated by our ongoing efforts to keep MDC and other town lands open for recreation. We thank you for your ongoing financial support and ask that you will continue to help CFPA fulfill its mission to protect the state’s forests, parks, and open spaces for future generations.

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PLT Conference Inspires Educators and Students

CFPA's education director, Lori Brant, was one of over 130 environmental educators from 47 states and Mexico who attended the Project Learning Tree (PLT) International Coordinator's Conference in Lake Tahoe this past May. Lori was able to participate thanks to the funding CFPA received from PLT.

The week began with a warm welcome by PLT Nevada leaders, as well as a representative from Senator Harry Reid's office. American Forest Foundation (AFF) staff also welcomed, recognized, and thanked PLT's program coordinators, workshop facilitators, and educators for their commitment to delivering effective environmental education and improving environmental literacy, both locally and globally.

The conference began in earnest as students from South Lake Tahoe High School's Generation Green Club presented their work on a service-learning project, supported by PLT's GreenWorks! grant program. With technical assistance from the US Forest Service, and the grant from PLT, students are restoring the area affected by the 2007 Angora Fire and teaching elementary students and community members the importance of forest conservation. Following their presentation, other conference sessions covered topics ranging from PLT workshop models to strengthening the capacity of PLT state programs.

PLT's Outstanding Educator award luncheon honored educators from around the nation. Each awardee successfully uses PLT both inside and outside the classroom to enhance student learning. As CFPA continues to build its PLT program, one of the goals is to nominate a Connecticut educator for this recognition.

Other conference sessions included community relationships, PLT's new Early Childhood program, maintaining a core facilitators' network, environmental education public policy, and much more. A field trip to Taylor Creek gave

Leaving a Legacy

James Shattuck passed away in 2005, but last year he donated over \$20,000 to support CFPA's programs. His legacy will live on in 2010, 2011, and forward because he carefully crafted an estate plan that benefitted his family as well as the organizations and causes that enriched his life. CFPA and the future generations that benefit from our work are fortunate beneficiaries of his generosity.

Member generosity, sharing time, talent, and treasure, has made CFPA a force for conservation in Connecticut. Help secure the future of CFPA and its programs by considering a legacy gift to the Association. For more information, please contact Jim Little at jlittle@ctwoodlands.org or call 860-346-2372.

Emerald Ash Borer ALERT

New York Department of Conservation (NY DEC) announced on July 22, 2010 that U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has confirmed the finding by NY DEC of the presence of Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) in Saugerties, NY. Saugerties is 25 to 30 miles west of Connecticut's northwest corner. EAB, unlike Asian Longhorned Beetle (ALB), is very host specific and poses a significant threat to white, black, and green ash trees in Connecticut—approximately 3% of all trees in the state or 22,408,000 trees. Unlike ALB, however, EAB is highly mobile and very difficult to detect. There are no known cost effective options to eradicate it.

Adult EABs are roughly 3/8 to 5/8 inch long with metallic green wing covering and a coppery red or purple abdomen. They leave distinctive D-shaped exit holes in the outer bark of branches and the trunk. They may be present from late May through early September, but are most common in June and July. Visit na.fs.fed.us/fhp/eab/index.shtm or www.emeraldashborer.info online for more information. IMMEDIATELY call the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station at (203) 974-8474 if you think you have seen one.

attendees a chance to hike along sandy shores with a majestic view of Mount Tallac. At the site of the Angora Fire, South Lake Tahoe High School students led the group in assessing the survival of tree seedlings they planted last year. They also modeled several PLT activities as examples of the educational programming they use to teach elementary children environmental concepts. In addition, Hugh Safford, Zone Ecologist for the Forest Service, spoke about the Angora Fire and its effects on the wider community.

Back at the conference site, middle school students from Iowa and Ne-

vada demonstrated steps they've taken to reduce their school's environmental footprint as part of PLT's national GreenSchools! program. Their initiatives included everything from reduced electric and water usage to bicycle safety and cycling's environmental benefits. The students and their presentations are always the most inspiring part of the conference. CFPA has four schools that are involved in GreenSchools! and are working with Lori on energy and schoolyard investigations. In celebration, the conference culminated with a beach-themed dinner aboard the M.S. Dixie on Lake Tahoe.

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March 1 – June 30, 2010

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Hip Hip Hooray!

CFPA wishes to celebrate, and thank the following long-term members:

Spring Glen Garden Club (members for 77 years)

Mr. Leavenworth Sperry, Jr. (member for 51 years)

Mr. Joseph W. Voboril, Jr. (member for 50 years)

Be sure you remain a part of a lasting legacy and renew your membership today at www.ctwoodlands.org



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CONNECTICUT FOREST  PARK ASSOCIATION

CFPA News Notes

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 2

Local Author Lecture Series

“Creating the Nonstop Garden” with Jennifer Benner

Wednesday, August 25, 2010

6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

at the CFPA Headquarters Meeting Room

Put down your weeder and recharge your gardening batteries! Jennifer Benner (CFPA staff member, horticulturist, author, and a former editor of *Fine Gardening* magazine) will give a lecture exploring strategies for creating a four-season garden—the subject of her new book, *The Nonstop Garden* from Timber Press. After the lecture, attendees will be able to ask questions and have books signed. This is the first of a three-part lecture series.

This event is FREE for CFPA members, \$5 for non-members. Members are also invited to attend a members-only reception in the Camp-Ellsworth Library (at the CFPA Headquarters) from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Find event times, details, registration information, and the latest events at:
www.ctwoodlands.org/events

Upcoming Events

Thur, Sept 9 Project Learning Tree: Facilitator’s Luncheon & Recertification Workshop
9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at CFPA

For educators trained as PLT facilitators or adults interested in becoming a leader in the PLT program. E-mail lbrant@ctwoodlands.org, for details or to RSVP.

Sat, Sept 11 WalkCT Family Guide Training
9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at CFPA

If you enjoy children and love being outside, join us. New, potential volunteers will learn about the guidelines of being a WalkCT Family Guide. Current guides will learn tips for leading outdoor family hikes and walks. Questions or to RSVP, contact info@ctwoodlands.org or 860-346-2372.

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