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Conserving Connecticut since 1895

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ORGANIZATION

The Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA) is a private non-profit, membership organization founded in 1895 as the Connecticut Forestry Association. It is the oldest conservation organization in the State of Connecticut.

VISION

We envision Connecticut as an inviting place in which to live and work, a place where the quality of life is grounded in the quality and care of the land. Our vision is of forests that yield clean-running water, timber, and habitat for wildlife, and of farms that yield a rich variety of agricultural products. We see graceful public parks, streets lined with stately trees, and scenic country byways interwoven with a network of trails where all may freely walk.

MISSION

Our mission is to conserve the land and natural resources of Connecticut. We consider it our ethical responsibility to future generations to ensure the sustainable and prudent use of Connecticut's woodlands, farms and wildlife habitats, through stewardship, education and advocacy. We seek to foster a sense of community endeavor around land conservation values through outreach to grassroots organizations, government agencies, and to our members and friends. A high priority is the operation and maintenance of CFPA's 700-mile Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail System, the embodiment of an historic objective to bring people together with their natural surroundings.

PRINCIPLES

The Association works within the state's political system to conserve and protect Connecticut's landscape and natural resources. It is the operating philosophy of the Association to guide the conservation dialogue toward balanced and reasoned solutions. The Association maintains a working relationship with state agencies and many other conservation organizations, while preserving its own autonomy as an independent membership organization.

PROGRAMS

Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail Program

The Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail System was established by the Association in 1929. It is operated and maintained by CFPA with volunteer labor at no cost to the State of Connecticut. There are 700 miles of Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails open to the public and passing through 69 Connecticut towns. Roughly seventy-five percent of the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail System is on private land unprotected by easements or conservation ownership. Current projects include:

- ✦ Completion of GPS/GIS mapping of all Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails.
- ✦ Publication of the 19th Edition of *Connecticut Walk Book* in 2004.
- ✦ Identification of priority trails for conservation.
- ✦ Identification of and outreach to all trail landowners and abutters.
- ✦ Documentation of all existing trail easements, agreements, etc.
- ✦ Communication of trail conservation issues and goals to appropriate state, regional and local government agencies, landowners and private organizations.

Land Conservation Program

CFPA and its membership have a long history of involvement in the creation of state parks and forests by purchasing key properties and subsequently donating or selling them to the State of Connecticut. Nimble and decisive, the Association has been able to conserve for the citizens of Connecticut such well-known parks as Gillette Castle State Park, Sleeping Giant State Park, Sherwood Island State Park, Bluff Point State Park and Peoples State Forest. In honor of longtime Executive Director John Hibbard, CFPA created the Hibbard Trust for Land & Trails to continue the work of acquiring conservation land.

The Association currently owns 283 acres of conservation land and holds conservation easements over 992 acres of land. CFPA has expertise in protecting, managing and providing stewardship for working lands. We believe the Association fills a unique niche in Connecticut through its focus on the conservation of working forestland and farmland. In addition, the Association has successful experience in protecting the land beneath the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails, as well as in trail maintenance and development. Current projects include:

- ✦ Development of stewardship and monitoring plans for all properties and easements held by CFPA.
- ✦ Creation of a volunteer stewardship program.
- ✦ Development of land acquisition policies and criteria.
- ✦ Advocacy and assistance to the State of Connecticut in the expansion of its parks and forests.
- ✦ Regular communication of CFPA's conservation goals to federal, state, regional and local government agencies and conservation groups.
- ✦ Creation of appropriate language for conservation restrictions, rights of first refusal and purchase options.
- ✦ Identification of priority properties for conservation by CFPA.
- ✦ Procurement of fee ownership of and conservation restrictions over lands that meet CFPA criteria, through donations or purchase.

Legislative Program

Since 1897, no session of the General Assembly has occurred without some attention from CFPA. Within the limits assigned to non-profit organizations, CFPA continues to advocate for conservation with considerable success in Hartford and with the Connecticut Congressional delegation. Each year the Association recommends to the Legislature a set of conservation policies for Connecticut in its *Environmental Agenda for Connecticut's Land and People*.

Education Program

The Association has long sought to educate the public about forestry and natural resource management. Educational articles feature prominently in the Association's quarterly magazine, *Connecticut Woodlands*. CFPA has developed an interpretive trail and Project Learning Tree curriculum for its John R. Camp Outdoor Classroom and Demonstration Forest. The Association supports Connecticut students of forestry through our *Goodwin Scholarship Program* and sponsors the Coverts Project of the University Cooperative Extension System. CFPA has a Board-level Education Committee and holds regular field meetings and educational events for its membership.

PUBLICATIONS

During the first half of the 1900s, the Association was the primary publishing house of the conservation movement in Connecticut, producing numerous booklets on topics ranging from highway trees and roadside improvement to how to cut and burn wood. CFPA's quarterly magazine, *Connecticut Woodlands*, first published in 1936, offers timely articles on environmental and conservation issues written by scientists, staff and members. A second continuous publication with a long history is the *Connecticut Walk Book*, a guide to the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails, first issued in 1937, and now in its 18th edition. CFPA publishes the tree identification guide *Forest Trees of Southern New England* and has published its own history book, entitled *Connecticut Woodlands—A Century's Story of the Connecticut Forest and Park Association*.

HISTORIC MILESTONES

¹⁹⁰¹ Facilitated establishment of the office of State Forester, making Connecticut the first state in the nation to appoint a State Forester.

¹⁹⁰¹ Initiated a state forest acquisition policy, making Connecticut the first state in the nation able to acquire land for state forests.

¹⁹⁰³ Encouraged the acquisition of the Portland State Forest, the first state forest in New England.

¹⁹⁰⁵ Secured enactment of the Connecticut Forest Fire Law, the first such law in New England.

¹⁹¹³ Secured enactment of the first bill reducing taxation on land committed to forestry.

¹⁹²⁰ Envisioned, acquired, and gave to the State of Connecticut the Peoples State Forest.

¹⁹²¹ Secured enactment of a bill authorizing state purchase of the first 100,000 acres of forest.

¹⁹²³ Secured enactment of a bill requiring spark arrestors on railroad locomotives.

¹⁹²⁸ Became incorporated as the Connecticut Forest and Park Association.

¹⁹²⁹ Established the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail System, with the Quinnipiac Trail as the inaugural trail.

¹⁹³⁰ Established the prototype for the Civilian Conservation Corps at Peoples State Forest.

¹⁹³⁶ Published the first issue of *Connecticut Woodlands* magazine.

¹⁹³⁷ Published the first volume of the *Connecticut Walk Book*.

¹⁹⁶³ Secured enactment of Public Act 490, redrawn from the original enactment in 1913 to encompass farm and open space lands.

¹⁹⁷¹ Secured enactment of the Landowner Liability Law.

¹⁹⁸⁶ Established the James L. Goodwin Forest & Park Center in Middlefield.

¹⁹⁹¹ Secured enactment of the Connecticut Forest Practices Act.

²⁰⁰² Secured enactment of the Metacomet-Monadnock-Mattabesett Trail Study Act of 2002, directing the National Park Service to study the feasibility of making these trails, of which the Metacomet and Mattabesett are Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails, a National Scenic Trail. The bill was signed in December 2002, by President George W. Bush.

FACILITIES

The Association is headquartered at the James L. Goodwin Forest & Park Center on Route 66 in Middlefield, Connecticut. The Center houses office space for Association staff and directors, a library and a large meeting room. The Camp-Ellsworth Library contains an outstanding collection of forestry, wildlife, trail and other conservation books and periodicals. The Library also contains bound volumes of Association minutes and records dating back to the early 1900s, folios containing decades of press releases, and bound volumes of *Connecticut Woodlands* going back to the first volume in 1936. The Center is also home to the Genevieve H. Goodwin Meeting Room, a space that seats 50 people, contains a

built-in projection screen and features a working kitchen. A well-stocked tool crib contains trail tools that volunteers use to carry out a variety of trail maintenance activities. In addition, Center grounds include the John R. Camp Outdoor Classroom and Demonstration Forest available to schools and other groups for educational purposes. The Center has ample parking and is easy to access from Routes 66, 9, 15, I-691 and I-91.

AFFILIATIONS

The Connecticut Forest & Park Association is the Connecticut affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation and the National Woodlands Owners Association, and is a member of Earth Share. Other affiliates and partners include:

The American Forest Foundation
The American Hiking Society
The Appalachian Mountain Club
The Appalachian Trail Conference
The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station
The Connecticut Botanical Society
The Connecticut Tree Farm Committee
The Connecticut Christmas Tree Growers Association
The Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection
The Connecticut Forest Stewardship Council
The Connecticut Greenways Council
Connwood Foresters, Inc.
The Council on Foundations
The DEP Citizens' Advisory Council
The Eastern Connecticut Forest Landowners Association
The Experiment Station Associates
The Forest History Society
Friends of Connecticut State Parks
The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
The Knox Parks Foundation
The Land Conservation Coalition of Connecticut
The Land Trust Alliance
The Land Trust Service Bureau
The Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce
The Natural Resources Council of Connecticut
The Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor
The Rails to Trails Conservancy
The Rivers Alliance of Connecticut
The Rockfall Foundation
The UCONN Cooperative Extension System
The Wilderness Society
The Working Lands Alliance
The Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

The Connecticut Forest & Park Association is an Association of members who share a common interest in and concern for the conservation of the natural resources of Connecticut. Membership in the Association is open to all. Every member is entitled to vote at the Annual Meeting and at any Special Meeting of members. The Association offers a variety of membership categories, including Life Membership, and a range of benefits. We believe the primary benefit to all members rests in the knowledge that, through their support, the Association continues its long history of effective advocacy, education, and land and trail conservation work. CFPA also encourages non-profit organizations and corporations to join the Association or to provide support through sponsorships or grants.

SUPPORT

The Association is funded by dues, donations, grants, sales of the *Connecticut Walk Book* and other publications, sponsorship of activities, advertising, and a conservatively-invested endowment.