2013 Annual Report

Celebrating 100
Years of Connecticut
State Parks
Dear Friend of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association,

Thank you for joining us at CFPA’s Annual Meeting at Sherwood Island State Park on June 9, 2013!

During today’s event, you will hear stories about the Old Connecticut Path, the State Parks Centennial, and about the historic struggle involved with establishing Sherwood Island State Park.

The Connecticut Forest & Park Association has deep connections to each of these stories, and we have chosen to amplify the storytelling of today with some additional stories about the conservation accomplishments that, with your support, continue to drive CFPA’s mission forward. The following are intended to give you a quick flavor of some of our proudest moments of 2012. We also intersperse some testimonials from some of our many partners who helped make it all possible. At the end, we include CFPA’s Financials as prepared by Dixon & Associates to tell the story of our organization’s financial health and well-being.

If you have any questions or would like to share a story about CFPA’s conservation work that is more meaningful to you, please contact me via ehammerling@ctwoodlands.org or 860/346-TREE.

Thank you for your great support of CFPA!

All the best,

Eric Hammerling, Executive Director
ADVOCACY

Background: Since 1897, CFPA has published an annual “Agenda for Connecticut’s Land and People” for State and Federal legislators detailing forest, park, trail, open space, and other conservation priorities. Putting these priorities forward and following-up on them throughout the session with legislators and staff gives CFPA one of the most respected conservation voices in Connecticut. CFPA’s Executive Director, Eric Hammerling, coordinates this program with strong support from the Public Policy Committee and contract lobbying work by John Larkin.

Featured Story from 2012: CFPA Chairs State Vegetation Management Task Force

Tropical Storm Irene and the October/Halloween Nor’easter of 2011 devastated Connecticut with an estimated $5 billion in damages. These disasters highlighted that 1) Connecticut is not well-prepared for hurricanes (neither of these storms rose to hurricane force); and 2) better management of trees along the roadside may be the most important way to both maintain safety on the roads and keep the power on. When CL&P reported that 9 out of 10 power outages were caused by collisions between trees/tree limbs and wires, CFPA and others needed to act quickly to ensure policymakers would understand: 1) trees provide great benefits to communities and individuals; 2) roadside trees have generally not been well-managed; and 3) investments in roadside forest management should sustain the benefits of trees into the future.

CFPA provided testimony to the Governor’s Two Storm Panel, and later was asked to Chair the State Vegetation Management Task Force to make recommendations on ways to better manage our roadside trees to both maintain community character and protect our state’s power infrastructure. The Task Force was comprised of 20 representatives from electrical and telecommunications utilities, tree wardens, departments of public works, private arborists, state and federal forest land managers, environmental organizations, and forestry scientists. The Task Force met intensively every 2 weeks over a period of 5 months and published a consensus final report on August 28, 2012 (the one year anniversary of Tropical Storm Irene).

The recommendations from this Task Force have become the focus of CFPA’s conservation agenda for 2013 as well as an implementation priority for the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection’s urban forestry program and other Task Force members. This year, Task Force recommendations have led to a new law that requires municipal tree wardens to become “qualified” either by taking coursework or being a licensed arborist. Until this new law, there was nothing to ensure that tree wardens had even a basic understanding of trees.

BLUE-BLAZED HIKING TRAILS

Background: CFPA works with hundreds of dedicated trails volunteers to create and maintain over 825 miles of blue-blazed hiking trails in 88 towns across Connecticut. Trail volunteers contributed over 20,000 hours of time in 2012 to keep the trails as a treasured resource for all. There is one full-time Trails Stewardship Director, Clare Cain, who orchestrates and organizes the annual trail maintenance effort with invaluable support from the Trails Committee and Office Manager, Terri Peters.

Featured Story from 2012: CFPA Builds the Highlawn Forest Trail System

In 2012, CFPA worked in partnership with many supporters to build and open 3.5 miles of new trails in the Highlawn Forest located behind CFPA headquarters in both Rockfall and Middletown, CT.
Situated on approximately 254 acres of protected land, this special property has been a natural classroom and demonstration forest for years. Under the leadership of volunteer Rob Butterworth, 70 volunteers of all stripes donated over 900 hours of labor to open a new trail system that invites further exploration on the property. College groups, corporate partners, high school students, and other volunteers all pitched-in to bring this project to fruition. The trails were official opened on Trails Day weekend 2012.

By laying out and designing the new loop trails, digging in the tread, clearing brush, sawing downed trees (and more downed trees, and more downed trees), blazing, and installing new signage, the trails can now be travelled and enjoyed by hikers.

From beginning to end, this project epitomizes what CFPA does along all its trails in tandem with landowners, volunteers, and great leadership. The Highlawn Forest Trails are a 3.5 mile microcosm of our 825-mile long trails success story!

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

**Background:** CFPA assists educators in three ways: 1) leading Project Learning Tree workshops for educators along with the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection; 2) demonstrating how educators can utilize outdoor classrooms at Highlawn Forest, Goodwin Forest, and other locations; and 3) promoting environmental literacy in the standards for students and teachers as set by the CT Department of Education. There is one full-time Education Director, Lori Paradis Brant, who leads this program.

**Featured Story from 2012: CT Publishes its first Environmental Literacy Plan**

You know that environmental education is important, but the Department of Education had to be convinced. One important study of 39 schools by Lieberman and Hoody demonstrated that 92% of the students who were taught using the environment as the integrating context “academically outperform their peers in traditional programs.” Other observed benefits include: better performance on standardized measures of academic achievement in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies; reduced discipline problems; increased engagement and enthusiasm for learning; and greater pride and ownership in accomplishments.

CFPA served on the drafting committee that assembled the first Environmental Literacy Plan for Connecticut. CFPA did this ultimately to benefit children and the future stewards of our state’s natural resources, but the former Commissioner of Education, Mark McQuillan said it perfectly below:

”As educators and parents, we have a responsibility to instill in the next generation an appreciation of the great natural resources we have in our state and nation and of the impact humans have on them. Of course, there is no better way to establish a connection with the environment than to be outdoors, observing and learning about how air, water and soil sustain an amazing diversity of life. It is also important to note that environmental science will play an important role in shaping careers in the green economy predicted in our future. Environmental education can be an inspiring and relevant context for assuring that today’s students are prepared to respond to the environmental challenges of our times.”
GOODWIN FOREST CONSERVATION EDUCATION CENTER

Background: The Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center and Goodwin State Forest were gifts to the people of Connecticut from James L. Goodwin, one of America’s first professional foresters and a long-time CFPA Board Member. Together they include 2,000 acres of forests and habitats, 14 miles of trails, 3 large ponds, a native plant wildlife garden, and a nature museum. The Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center is managed jointly by CFPA and CT DEEP with a mission to provide forestry, wildlife and general conservation education to youth and adults.

Featured Story from 2012: Junior Forester Day sets Goodwin Attendance Record

In 2012, overall attendance for conservation education activities at Goodwin increased by 15% over 2011. The largest single program was “Junior Forester Day” which attracted 867 participants. This program, organized in partnership with CT DEEP’s Great Park Pursuit, rotated children amongst several stations to answer questions at each in order to qualify as “Junior Foresters.” It was an amazing experience!

In 2012, the Goodwin Forest Conservation Education Center had many accomplishments:

- One hundred workshops, guided hikes, short courses and other educational programs were taught to a total of 2,375 youth and adult participants.
- A total of 2,736 volunteer hours were donated, primarily by FGF members. This represents the equivalent of 78 weeks of full time staff annually, with an estimated value of $75,979.
- 13 scout groups with a total of 421 scouts utilized the Goodwin Youth Camping Area. Ninety-three scouts received field training sessions/workshops given by Center staff.
- Six hundred thirty youth received leadership, teamwork and other training through our partnership with EASTCONN, utilizing the Goodwin Forest Ropes Course and other facilities.
- In total, an estimated 10,920 hikers, skiers, equestrians, workshops and short course attendees, scouts, school groups and others recreated and/or learned about conservation at the Goodwin Conservation Center and State Forest.

LAND CONSERVATION

Background: Similar to a land trust, CFPA both owns land and holds conservation easements on properties of interest. Currently, CFPA owns 351 acres of properties and holds easements on 1,784 acres spread across 20 towns. CFPA has one full-time Land Conservation Director, Lindsay Michel, who works with the Forest and Trail Conservation Committee and volunteer land stewards to maintain and monitor activities on CFPA properties and easements in perpetuity.

Featured Story from 2012: Highlawn Forest Management Plan Update

CFPA worked with landowners George and Camille Camp, students at the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, and volunteer land steward (and CFPA Board Member) Rob Butterworth to develop a new management plan for Highlawn Forest. CFPA also held a public input and information session with neighbors of Highlawn Forest that was well-attended.
The Camp Family has played a key role in the development of Middletown dating back to the late 1800s when they donated the family homestead for the future site of the Middlesex Memorial Hospital. In 1907, Herbert and Bessie Camp purchased “Highlawn” and enjoyed a spectacular view of the Connecticut River Valley, while farming and raising dairy cows.

In 1960, John R. Camp and his wife Ruth inherited the property and managed the 254 acre forest as a wildlife refuge and tree farm, being named Connecticut’s Outstanding Tree Farmer in both 1975 and 1989. John R. Camp was an enthusiastic and loyal supporter of CFPA, serving as a Board Member from 1971 to 1989 and as an Honorary Board Member from 1989 until his death in 1995. In 1981, John generously donated the land for the construction of the CFPA headquarters and also granted a conservation easement to CFPA for Highlawn Forest in his will.

Despite regular calls from developers, Mr. Camp said he would never sell his land, stating “I think it’s too precious to be allowed to be developed for houses and I’m glad it’s going to continue to be a forest after I’m gone.”

Today, Mr. Camp’s son, George, and his wife, Camille, reside on the property and remain supporters of CFPA. George and Camille worked closely with CFPA and graciously allowed the trail system to be expanded and opened to the public, even naming the different trails in honor of members of the Camp family.

WALKCT

Background: The WalkCT Program was started as a response to the obesity crisis that the nation has been experiencing since the 1990s. Envisioned as a way to promote healthy lifestyles for all ages, the WalkCT.org website was established in 2009 for “one-stop shopping” on walking locations and activities around the state. Today there are over 120 different walks listed, and the site is visited over 2,000 times per month. The program is staffed by part-time WalkCT Director, Leslie Lewis with assistance from part-time WalkCT Coordinator, Jen Benner.

Featured Story from 2012: WalkCT Family Rambles Reach 500 Participants

The WalkCT Family Rambles were designed to get people outdoors with safe and fun activities led by trained volunteer WalkCT Family Guides. During 2012, these events were held monthly during the last weekend of each month in various locations. About 500 people -- both children and adults -- participated in our WalkCT Family Rambles in 2012. Over 30 Family Guides are now trained by CFPA staff and are leading walks in their communities and in new locations.

Each Family Ramble creates its own story. Following are some highlights:

- “With children along, the hike seemed easier to lead – I was able to engage the children in a search for wildflowers immediately, and their youthful curiosity seem to drive more discussion than with adults from a previous hike.” Riley Flanagan-Brown, Mt. Higby Ramble

- “It wasn’t just the little hands all over the bark, twigs, and leaves! There was much discussion and enthusiastic comments and questions, especially when we were correct in the tree IDs. Many participants mentioned future CFPA events they wanted to attend. Those with young children look forward to more WalkCT events.” Lynn Kochiss and Ed Richardson, Wesleyan Tree ID Ramble.

- “Families of special needs students attended this custom event. We heard and saw red-winged blackbirds, woodpeckers, ducks and geese. We stopped to identify trees, flowers, invasive species. One child and her mom stayed after the hike and asked me to join them. We found tadpoles next to my car in the little brook area! Families are planning to come back again on their own, and we are thinking of where we want to try next.” Lynn Kochiss, Ramble for children with special needs.

With several new guides and a more flexible schedule, CFPA is on track to have many more participants in the Family Rambles in 2013!
CT TRAILS DAY

Background: CFPA has been coordinating CT Trails Day activities since 1993 as the Connecticut affiliate of the American Hiking Society (AHS promotes national trails day activities across the country). As CT Trails Day has grown over time, it has become one of the most anticipated outdoor events in Connecticut, and it is typically the largest trails day celebration in the nation … and it keeps growing through the efforts of part-time Trails Day and WalkCT Coordinator, Jen Benner; Office Manager, Terri Peters; and support from the Trails Day Committee.

Featured Story from 2012: Trails Day events exceed 200 total events

Connecticut Trails Day Weekend is like New Year’s Eve in June where thousands of people from all backgrounds, ages, abilities, and interests come together with a simple goal in mind—to celebrate trails. AHS recognized Connecticut nationally in 2012 as being “The Trails State”.

In 2012, there were 202 Trails Day events scheduled for the first weekend in June. Across the state in 123 towns, event leaders and organizers came together to lead the largest National Trails Day celebration in the nation, offering hiking, biking, paddling, letterboxing, and trail experiences of all kinds stretching across over 500 miles. It’s a grassroots effort with CFPA at the helm to rally outdoor enthusiasts to lead events, create and distribute the annual Connecticut Trails Day Weekend booklet, supply leaders with t-shirts and planning materials, promote the celebration throughout the state, and even help with re-scheduling events when weather intervenes as it did last year.

•  “I am passionate about getting families out in the woods. I spent my childhood on a Blue-Blazed Trail on the Northford-Durham town line. Now, I lead hikes on these trails to help kids to appreciate the outdoors too.” Janet Ainsworth, Appalachian Mountain Club

•  “It’s fun to join with others who also love being outdoors walking, enjoying nature, exploring either new or old favorite trails, or just learning about how one might link public open space trails to create longer hikes locally and right out our backdoors.” Joellen Anderson, Avalonia Land Conservancy

•  “I love being out in the woods for almost any reason. I especially love helping others get out and enjoy the woods. Some participants are already avid hikers looking for a new place to hike and I enjoy leading them through woodlands I especially like. Some participants want to start hiking and Trail’s Day is an easy and safe way for them to begin. It’s also fun to see friendships formed on a hike. Hopefully we are also helping to foster advocates for maintaining woodlands and open space.” Jan Gatzuras, CFPA Volunteer Trails Manager
CFPA Income: 2012 Total=$1,112,611

- Grants, $293,536
- Private Contributions, $323,936
- Endowment Income, $308,734
- Miscellaneous Income, $22,552
- Sales Revenue, $34,890
- Fee for Service, $13,962
- Special Event Revenues, $115,001

CFPA Expenses: 2012 Total=$1,000,823

- Staff Salaries, $482,110
- Program Consultants, $114,359
- Program Expenses, $137,866
- Headquarters O & M, $84,305
- Fringe/Benefits, $90,608
- Professional Development, $10,713
- Travel/Mileage, $7,981
- Event Expenses, $7,846
- Printing & Postage, $50,760
- Equipment/Tech, $14,275