



Great Meadows Conservation Trust, Inc.
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Celebrating Fifty Years • 1968 – 2018

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Photo by Duffy Schade



Great Meadows Conservation Trust, Inc.
Glastonbury, Rocky Hill, Wethersfield, Connecticut

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Celebrating Fifty Years • 1968 – 2018

The Great Meadows Conservation Trust, Inc., will be celebrating 50 years of dedication to “the preservation of the rural landscape, the floodplain and water resources, marshland, swamps, woodland, farmland, open spaces, the plant and animal life therein, and unique historic and scenic sites” in the Great Meadows, according to the Mission Statement adopted in 2010 and reaffirmed in 2015.

Incorporated in 1968 by “the Meadows Committee,” that had been meeting for 5 years, made up of citizens united by a concern for preserving what was left of the meadows after mining and filling and paving of so much of the meadows for Route 3, the Putnam Bridge and I91. The loss of farmland and habitat to highway construction was followed swiftly by the threat of the Race Track proposal to build a dike around the north Wethersfield meadows, with a marina in the manmade Crow Point Cove.

The Mission Statement follows almost exactly the wording from the Certificate of Incorporation adopted in 1968 with one exception. There was no mention of “farmland” or agriculture, reflecting the post war demise of so many farm operations, including Comstock, Ferre seed growing and one dairy operation after another that sold off their upland to development, and ceased growing hay and silage in the meadows.

Our celebration has to start with appreciation for the revival of so many vibrant farm businesses in each

of our member towns, including many farmers who lease meadowland preserved in perpetuity by GMCT. In Wethersfield Anderson Farms and Winding Brook Turf Farm; in Rocky Hill, Fair Weather Acres, and the Hayes Farm; in Glastonbury, Botticello Farms, Overbrook Farm, Killam & Bassett Farmstead, and the Horton Farm. They are all thriving based on the fertile

flood plains of the Great Meadows, their proximity to farmers markets and farm stands, and the skill, hard work and entrepreneurial spirit of the farmers.

To plan the celebration, a committee of Directors and Operations Committee members has had several meetings and developed an outline of activities through the year, kicking off with our popular **Winter Walk series**. The **Annual Dinner** will be dedicated to sharing the stories and memories of the achievements and adventures of 50 years of environmental activism.

Spring may see a **cocktail party** on the patio of the new River Restaurant, slated to open soon in the Putnam Park Tower. June will begin with the walks and paddles of **CT Trails Day**, and deeper into the summer, a **River Cruise** on the Lady Katherine is being considered. At harvest time in September an old fashioned potluck supper and corn on the cob picnic is contemplated on the River in the Pratt Farm pasture.



March 29, 1968. Far sighted members of the original GMCT Board of Directors, including current Board Member Joe Hickey of Wethersfield, 3rd from left, distinguished environmental law expert Atty. Russell Brenneman of Glastonbury, 3rd from right, and Eleanor Buck Wolf, 2nd from right, in Eleanor's back yard overlooking the Wethersfield Cove.

Renew your membership now or make a year end Contribution!
Send Check payable to Great Meadows Conservation Trust, Inc.
to P.O.Box 171, Glastonbury, CT 06033
Online: <http://www.gmct.org/membership/donate.html>

Source to the Sea Cleanup – 2017



The Annual Source to the Sea Cleanup, organized watershed-wide by the Connecticut River Conservancy, and locally by the MDC and the GMCT with the help of many many volunteers, who not only gathered over a ton of trash, but signed the poster (center) drawn by Phil Lohman with this photo and a message: "We cleaned up the Cove on Sept. 23, Now it's Your Turn! Carry out what you carried in." The sign stood at the edge of the parking lot to pay forward the hard work of the volunteers until high water soaked it and floated it. Working with the Parks and Recreation Department, and Jennifer Lapis of the Silvio Conte NFWS, there is an opportunity to extend Cove Park, add informational kiosks, and to transform the "Road to Nowhere" past the end of the parking lot, under I91 into an inviting portal to the beautiful River for fisherman, bird watchers, and nature lovers. Osprey Way anyone?

DOT Begins Transformation

Before the S2S Cleanup, DOT crews cut back trees and brush, mowed poison ivy, removed furniture dumped over the I91 embankment, and shoveled out the river silt sprouting poison ivy, trapped between the curbs. They also painted over the graffiti on the bridge supports. Thanks to State Rep Russ Morin for his efforts to arrange the substantial DOT work.



Duffy Schade has given 45 Years of her photography talent to the GMCT

It was 1972 when Duffy wrote to Eleanor Buck Wolf volunteering to join the group fighting the Race Track proposal threatening the Wethersfield meadows. Since then Duffy's photos have graced GMCT membership brochures and newsletters. At right, Duffy poses with the trifold display board she created using mostly her photos. Here the display draws the interest of those looking to buy locally grown food at the Wethersfield Farmer's Market.



Left, Wethersfield High Environmental Club members squeezed the cleanup into their busy schedules, donning T-shirts, gloves, wielding pickers.



Left, Rick Doran, Mike Munroe, Councilman Mike Hurley, Sara Truax, Tim Lewis, and Linda Nielson filled Tim's pick-up with trash from the north side of the Cove.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service sent their landing craft up the River to carry volunteer cleaners across the Cove to the I91 slope where they were observed sitting down on the job...gathering bottle caps, plastic straws, wrappers so small and so thick you could just sit in place and fill your trash bag.



Brisk Winter Walks 2018

Celebrating Fifty Years • 1968 – 2018

This is the schedule for the Great Meadows Conservation Trust winter walks for 2018, co-sponsored with the Connecticut Audubon Society Center at Glastonbury, the Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center in Wethersfield, and Goodwin College.

Monday, January 1, 4:30 pm, Wethersfield. As the New Year's sun sets in the West and the Super Moon rises in the East, meet Jim Woodworth and Bike Walk Wethersfield's Kevin Sullivan, at the Keeney Center parking lot, 200 Main Street, Old Wethersfield. Walkers will stroll down Main Street to Wethersfield Cove Park (about 1 mile), walk through the parking lot to the Cove channel, under the I91 overpass and out to the River's edge. The Super Moon on the breast of the flowing waters will give the luster of mid-day to the river below!

Sunday, January 7, 1:00 pm, Wethersfield. About 1½ hours. Meet Jim Woodworth at 160 Middletown Ave, south of Maple St, on GMCT's **Wood Parcel**. Cross the shiny bridge and follow the trail along the marsh and around the loop past the 18th century house site. Hike will continue across the new culvert by the Pond, and out along the edge of the farm fields that once hosted the original "Pyquag" Native American summer camp, and then along the marsh, across GMCT's newest acquisition: **Frechette Field**, which consists of 3.2 acres of farmland, swamp, and a pollinator garden.



From I-91 south take exit 25 S to route 3 south, or from Glastonbury take route 3 south over the Putnam Bridge. At the second light turn left onto Middletown Ave. From I-91 north take exit 24 to route 99 north. Take route 99 1.3 miles to a traffic light. Turn right onto route 3 north. At the first light turn right onto Middletown Ave. Make a U turn and park on the east side of Middletown Ave

Saturday, January 13, 10:30 am, Glastonbury. About two hours. Meet Larry Lunden at the Connecticut Audubon Center at 1361 Main St. We will meet inside the center. We will take a short hike along the Connecticut River to our **Austin** and **Matava** parcels in Glastonbury Meadows.

Sunday, January 21, 1:00 pm, Glastonbury. About an hour and a half. Meet Larry Lunden behind Glastonbury Town Hall, 2155 Main St. Hike to our **Preissner** parcel and out into the Glastonbury Meadows where we will see our new **First Church of Christ**, Glastonbury, parcel.



Saturday, January 27, 10:00 am, Wethersfield. About 2 hours. Meet Jim Woodworth at 412 Hartford Ave, corner of Jordan Lane, for a short walk through the gate to our **Wolf parcel and DeMille easement**. See habitat improvements made with the help of a WHIP grant and volunteer work. Stay for a longer walk, another two and a half hours, up Hartford Ave. and out along the Hartford dike that divides the Folly Brook Nature

area from the South Meadows Industrial Park. We'll walk through the area slated for "tree removal" for Brainard Airport approach.

Sunday, February 4, 1:00 pm, Rocky Hill. About 2 hours. Meet at 78 Goff Brook Lane, off of Old Main Street. Join Ed Chiucarello and Jim Woodworth on a hike to several of our parcels, including **DiPaola, Brooks, McCann, or Ryan** parcels in the Rocky Hill Meadows.

From I-91, take exit 24, Wethersfield, Rocky Hill, Silas Deane Highway, route 99 south. Take the Silas Deane a short distance to the second traffic light past the interchange. Turn left onto Marshall Rd and follow it to the end. Turn left onto Old Main St, and take the first right onto Goff Brook La. Meet just past the railroad crossing.

Saturday, February 10, 10:00 am, Wethersfield. Meet Jim Woodworth and Goodwin College's Bruce Morton, Program Director of Environmental Studies, at the Putnam Park parking lot, 100 Great Meadow Road, just north of the Putnam Bridge. We'll peel away the centuries to imagine the river bank before the bridge, and explore the 300+ acre **Crow Point** property owned by Goodwin College.

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From the Meadow View Archives: Vol I, no. 1, February 1989

Wethersfield Meadows Hayride

By Ellie Revill

On Sunday afternoon, Nov, 13th, (1988) 21 hardy (or foolhardy) members and guests climbed onto Frank Morris's hay-laden flat bed trailer beside the Putnam Park building and set off on a 5 mile ride through the Wethersfield Meadows behind Frank's tractor. It had been advertised "rain or shine." There was a light drizzle as we began to move, optimists all, including our guest, DEP Commissioner Leslie Carothers. We were sure the weather would clear. We bumped along, stopping occasionally, so former town councilman and farmer Frank Morris and John Lepper could comment on what we were seeing: illegal dumping by the roadside, the Connecticut

Ellie Revill and her late husband Peter, were long time Board Members and Officers of the Trust. Peter authored the Land Book of maps and descriptions of Parcels, and Ellie was Secretary for many years. She and Peter resided on Old Main Street in Rocky Hill. Ellie resides at Greenridge in Rocky Hill.

River, farmed fields, some of the Trust's properties, earth removal for the building of I-91 and other changes to the landscape, The weather did not clear. In fact the rain came down harder. We were all in rain gear of varying degrees of water-proof quality. One couple sat on beach chairs above the high water mark. The rest of us sat on the hay-strewn flat-bed, which had a 2 inch rim around the edge, just enough to hold water, so we were sitting in a puddle for a good portion of the trip. The last part of the trip took us across Maple St. where some sensible riders in cars gave astonished looks at this hay wagon load of voluntarily soaked people. Nobody caught cold from this adventure, as far as we have heard.

Winter Walks 2018 — Continued from Page 7

We'll observe the process of nature reclaiming the land and waterways excavated for fill to build the highway across the ancient farmland and wetlands of the great meadows. From I91 N, take exit 25/26 and bear right on Exit 26 to Wethersfield. At the end of the ramp, turn left under the Putnam Bridge to the parking lot. From I91 S, take exit 26, Marsh St. / Old Wethersfield. At the end of the ramp, turn left under the highway, and right at the T toward the Putnam Park lot. From Route 3N / Maple Street, take the exit toward I91 north, but bear right to exit onto Great Meadow Road, and turn right toward the parking lot. From Route 3S, take the I91N exit at the end of bridge, but bear right to exit onto Great Meadow Road, and turn right toward the parking lot.



Saturday, February 17, 10:00 am, East Hartford. Meet Penny Rusnak Rick Doran, and Goodwin College's Bruce Morton, Program Director of Environmental Studies, at Hockanum Park, 324 High St. Explore our **Wilson-Carvalho** and **Hockanum Meadows** parcels in the "Wethersfield Triangle" of land marooned on the east side by the meandering of the river. We'll explore the new trails that Goodwin College is constructing along the River from South Meadow Road along the River toward Putnam Bridge. From Route 2 west, take exit 5 A, Main St. At the second traffic light take a left, and then another left and under the highway onto High St. From route 2 east, take exit 5 A, High St. Once on High St, follow it south, past the elementary school, to the park on the left

Dress for the Weather and ground conditions. Many places might be muddy, icy or snow covered. Weather and water conditions may revise or cancel. This area is used for hunting, so wear an orange vest if you have one. Call Jim Woodworth for the latest information, 860-808-9968. Free. www.GMCT.org

Great Meadows – IBA



The 2017 Annual Dinner marked the official designation of the Great Meadows as a "landscape scale" Important Bird Area covering nearly 5000 acres. Above, speaker and CAS IBA manager Corrie Folsom-O'Keefe presented outgoing Pres. Tom Kehoe, and newly elected Pres. Chris Duff with the official plaque. Flanking the three are Stewardship Chair Jim Woodworth and Land Manager Larry Lunden, holding an IBA sign to post. The Great Meadows met IBA criteria of varied habits important to species of global, regional and state concern, concentrations of waterfowl, landbirds, and shorebirds during migration, for breeding and wintering. Rare and threatened habitats include floodplain forest, riverine beach shore, and fresh water marsh, all within a large metropolitan area.

Holidays on Main 2017



Linda Nielson forks fresh leeks from Fair Weather Acres field in the Rocky Hill meadows in preparation for Holidays on Main. All told, Jim Woodworth and Linda harvested, washed, and prepared fresh leeks, green onions, golden and red beets, carrots, red and green cabbage, kohlrabbi, and parsnips donated by FWA for GMCT fundraising at this year's Holidays on Main booth at Comstock, Ferre. Three new memberships and over \$140 were raised to support GMCT's programs. A weighty basket of vegetables and a \$25 gift certificate to the FWA farmstand fetched \$50 at the Chamber of Commerce silent auction.

Ospreys choose the Meadows

Nest #1 – Buckeye Terminal Dock Nest #2 – Woodhouse Parcel

Osprey Nation, a collaboration between Jenny Dickson of DEEP and Milan Bull of the CT Audubon Society, and a posse of citizen scientists, the project monitored osprey nests statewide. Paralleling the history of the GMCT, there were 9 known osprey nests in the state in 1970, thanks to the effects of DDT. This year citizen scientists monitored over 600 nests, including Wethersfield #1 atop the floodlight pole on the "mothballed" Buckeye Terminal dock. This pair had been nesting on top of the abandoned oil terminal pipes north of the Cove channel that were toppled by ice several winters ago. Wethersfield #2 is located in the marsh near the Wethersfield/Rocky Hill border on the Woodhouse parcel, acquired in 1986-7, that not even Land Manager Larry Lunden has visited on foot. Paddling in the spring freshet several years ago, however, several of us spotted the osprey nest perched atop a 40 foot stump. Both nesting pairs of ospreys that winter in South America, produced a pair of chicks.

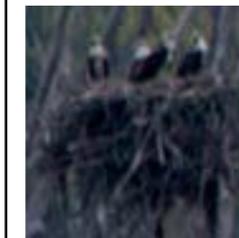


Wethersfield #1 on the Buckeye dock is an easy paddle downstream from the Cove. On a sunny day in late July, Jim Woodworth paddled down to the nest, and a lone adult perched on the



nest and squawked mightily at the undue attention. Suddenly the mate circled in from the sky with a fish in its talons. Up from the nest popped two nearly fullgrown chicks to enjoy their breakfast, oblivious to the clicking shutter documenting two healthy osprey chicks raised in Wetherfield #1.

Monitoring **Wethersfield #2** was an entirely different proposition. Though the nest could be spotted from several vantage points,



Elm Street Extension on the East, the McCann Parcel in the Southwest, and Wethersfield Game Club property on the West, all were pretty distant. At left is a photo that documents two adults and two nearly grown chicks from the WGC vantage point on the edge of the pristine marsh area. Flowering in the marsh were broadleaf arrowhead, aka



duck potato (far left), for the tubers that ducks and muskrats feed on. On the edge was Joe Pie weed bloom visited by a tiger swallowtail.

2017 • The Wood Parcel • 2002 – 2017 • Fifteen Years of Stewardship

Purchased from Sarah Wood in 2002 with DEP Open Spaces and Watershed Land Acquisition Grant

Connecting People and Nature.

The Wood Parcel is GMCT's most visible (corner of Middletown Ave and Maple Street/Route 3) and most visited parcel by the public. In 2017 there were over 35 Winter Walkers, 25 walkers joined the Native American "foraging walk" led by Sherry Pocknet, Chef at Pequot Museum. Over 35 Dads Moms and kids enjoyed the CT Trails Day Little Kids Walk, 150 WHS Wethersfield Studies class students visited in June and September, and those are just the visitors who were counted. Most satisfying feedback: "I saw an owl here last week...looking out of the duck box," said a WHS senior who lives nearby,

2017 Visiting Groups

Native American foraging walk led by Sherry Pocknet, center, flanked by GMCT President Chris Duff, and Jim Woodworth.



Co-sponsored by Wethersfield Historical Society.

CT Trails Day sponsored by the CT Forest and Parks Assoc. brings families with little kids out to walk the forest, pond, marsh and field trails of



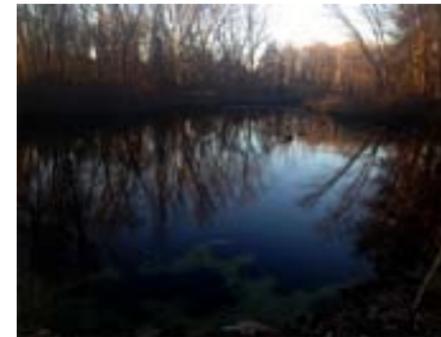
the Wood Parcel the first weekend in June every year.

Cheryl Ryba's WHS Wethersfield Studies classes toured Anderson corn fields via the Wood Parcel where they sampled a planting of sweet corn chopped the day before.



Wood Parcel Stewardship Highlights

- 2006 – Beaver Brook channel improvements, bench, and driveway with DOT Maple Street-Rt3/Middletown Ave. intersection funds.
- 2007 – Loop Trail laid out by Larry Lunden.
- 2009 – Trail work and temporary bridge – Eagle project, Justin Ruty.
- 2011 – Shiny bridge installed by volunteers – Mark and Theo Packard, Bob Ludwig, Jim Woodworth, and Rick from Superior Docks, Ellsworth, Maine.
- 2012 – Kiosk designed and built under Bob Ludwig's leadership.
- 2017 – May – Log trail "portal" installed by volunteers.
 - Sept. – 1952 culvert replaced, thanks to MDC pipe and stone and Wethersfield Const. equipment and expert operators.
 - Nov. – Volunteers remove invasive species, dig flower beds, plant cedar grove, install benches, remove rusty scrap metal.



The pond at the Wood Parcel in November – man made – nature embellished!

The Wood Parcel – 20 acres of varied habitat

Roughly divided in thirds – 6+ acres of woods, 6+ acres of brook, marsh or swamp, 6+ acres of farmland. The Wood Parcel has something for everyone: trees and pond for wood ducks, tree tops for red tail hawks to nest, thickets for rabbits, and deer, Beaver Brook and marsh for...beaver...and muskrat; coexist comfortably. The Beaver Brook cattail marsh extending a half mile to Rt 91. Cattails provide food and building materials for muskrats. Hiding among the cattails are various secretive bird species, including king and Virginia rails and sora, each with their distinctive voices. *Let us know if you hear them!* And, of course, for us humans, us humns there are the 6+ acres of farmland leased to David Anderson for several plantings of early sweet corn, enjoyed at the stand on Broad Street, The lease income from David and other farmers funds our Stewardship activities.



The Wood Parcel Pond, created by the 1952 sewer line causeway, drained by the newly replaced culvert, not only cleanses highway runoff from Route 3 since 1956, but also provides wonderful habitat for painted and snapping turtles, seen sunning themselves by the dozen on logs in the Spring, great blue heron, green heron, and families of secretive wood ducks, nesting in the plentiful Game Club duck boxes, and sheltering their young under the fringe of native buttonbush and red osier dog wood shrubs circling the pond. Note the white eye ring of the female wood duck in the foreground at left. Below left, note the fringe of buttonbush in flower and the close up of the pincushion-like flower, and the shiny green leaves.



Buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) is a deciduous shrub that typically grows 6-12' tall. It is common throughout North America, most frequently occurring in wet areas, such as *stream/pond margins*. Ovate to elliptic glossy bright green leaves (to 6" long) are in pairs or whorls. In early to mid-summer, tiny, tubular, 5-lobed, fragrant white flowers appear in dense, spherical, long-stalked flower heads (to 1.5" diameter). Long, projecting styles give the flower heads a distinctively pincushion-like appearance. *Flower heads are very attractive to bees, moths, butterflies., and hummingbirds* Flower heads mature into hard spherical ball-like fruits consisting of multiple tiny two-seeded nutlets, providing food for ducks and other birds, and persist throughout the winter.

Calling all GMCT photographers!

The Diana Atwood Johnson OSWA Photo Contest

Let's try to represent the GMCT and The Wood Parcel in this contest...if not this year...next year! We have much to share. The contest is intended to provide a venue for amateur photographers to celebrate the OSWA program, display their work, and provide CLCC and DEEP with new materials for their publications and communications. Those of us who attend the CLCC Annual Conference can view the winners of the contest next Spring .

Contestants are invited to submit up to three digital high resolution photos featuring OSWA properties for consideration. Details: <http://www.ctconservation.org/2018-photo-contest>. Other OSWA properties include the Wilkus Farm in Wethersfield, the Outer France Street property in Rocky Hill and 7 properties in Glastonbury.

Major Stewardship Initiative Achieved Thanks to Donated Services in 2017

A seven year effort culminated in repairing the broken MDC culvert draining the pond. MDC donated two lengths of plastic pipe to replace the 50 year old ceramic tiles, and a heap of crushed stone to make a bed for the pipe. Installation was accomplished in an astonishing 2.5 hours of skilled work and equipment donated by David Ambrose of Wethersfield Construction, located just up Beaver Brook on Wells Road. Operator Craig Butterworth (left) played the Yanmar Mini-Excavator like a fiddle, and



Manny Arujo (center), guided the removal of the old tiles, the preparation of the bed of stone, backfilling, tamping and covering with the remaining stone. Bob Ludwig, Linda Nielson, and Whit Osgood also helped the effort.

November Work Session

On a gray Saturday morning in November volunteers dug flower beds and planted a grove of donated arborvitae and Atlantic white cedar that will shelter and provide food for birds and small animals. A fence will keep the deer away. From left Maryann Lienau, Mike Munroe, and Kelly De La Cruz, stand behind one of two rustic benches they and Eva Lienau, seated, had just finished installing.



Gerry Hayes, Rick Doran helped move scrap metal to the curb, and master gardener Linda Nielson supervised the planting.