



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

Vol. XXXI no. 1

Winter 2015

President's Annual Report — 2014

Trust Purchases Two Parcels of Prime Farmland

by Tom Kehoe, President

This has been a busy and exciting year for the Great Meadows Conservation Trust. Among its many accomplishments has been the purchase of two strategic properties in the Great Meadows, discussed below, thus ensuring their preservation in perpetuity.

strategically located 3.37 acre parcel located on Elm Street in Wethersfield. It too will remain in agricultural use but will also be a buffer and impediment against potential development in this sensitive area. Though not contiguous, it is also very close to the Trust's Wood parcel.

This year we hosted seven winter walks, led by Trust members who provided insight to the land and an opportunity to see parcels not easily accessible in other seasons. As stewards of the land, in 2014, we also completed 25 property inspections and posted markers delineating the boundaries of Trust properties.

This year we requested members to consider any additional contribution amount they might be able to make to help us replenish the Trust land acquisition fund.



Winter walks in 2014 featured sunny, snowy landscapes and smiling pink cheeked faces.

The first property recently acquired, in September 2014, is known as the First Church of Christ parcel, and is an ancient and lovely 5.3 acre parcel of active farmland in the Glastonbury Meadows. First Church acquired the parcel in 1896 from its predecessor, the First Ecclesiastical Society. The parcel, about 120 feet in width, stretches 1000 feet across the rolling flood plain. It will remain in agricultural use. The second property, acquired in January, and known as Frechette Field, is a

This year we requested members to consider any additional contribution amount they might be able to make to help us replenish the Trust's E. B. Wolf Fund for land acquisition. Oftentimes the Trust must act quickly to secure a parcel which might otherwise go to development. Our ability to react in such circumstances is dependent on having the funds available to buy the land.

As with all organizations made up of volunteers, the Trust would not exist nor accomplish all that it does without the tireless efforts and dedication of so many members of the board and working committees. To all who give so much of their time and energy, I give you my heartfelt thanks. Thanks also to Brian Smith and Evan Seeman of the Robinson and Cole law firm for their pro bono support of the Trust.

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Upcoming Events:

- P. 7: Annual Dinner — Thursday, March 26
- P. 6: Gardening Event @ Comstock, Ferre — Sun., April 19
- P. 5 CT Trails Weekend Events — June 6, 7

Annual Reports:

- P. 1 President's Report
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Agenda — Annual Meeting, March 26, 2015

- Minutes of Annual Meeting March 27, 2014
- Treasurer's report for fiscal year 2014(see p. 3)
- President's 2014 annual report to the members (see p. 1)
- Report of the Nominating Committee
- Election of Directors to serve through 2016
Motion: That Diana Evans, Whit Osgood, Pamela St. Jean, and James Zagroba be elected to serve as Directors for their respective designated terms.
- Election of Officers to serve until next annual meeting
Motion: That Tom Kehoe, Sandi Kelly, and Richard Doran be elected to serve as President, Vice President and Secretary, and Treasurer, respectively of the GMCT for the 2015–2016 term.

- Ammendment to the By-Laws approved unanimously by the Board on Jan. 22, 2015, thus allowing a wider pool of candidates for treasurer.
Motion that the *By-Laws, Article IV, Officers, Section 1, Elections* be amended as follows: Remove the sentence, "The Officers shall be elected from among the members of the Board of Directors", and replace with "The Officers, except the Treasurer, shall be elected from the membership of the Board of Directors. The Treasurer shall be elected from the membership of either the Board of Directors, the Operations Committee or the membership."
- Any other business which may properly come before the meeting.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT – 2015

Date: FEBRUARY 26, 2015

Members: Christopher Duff, Penny Rusnak, Ralph Moyer.

RE: 2015 Slate of Officers and Directors

Officers:

- President –**
Tom Kehoe (Glastonbury – 2nd – 2017)
- Vice President –**
Sandi Kelly (Rocky Hill – 2nd 2016)
- Secretary –**
Sandi Kelly (Rocky Hill – 2nd 2016)
- Treasurer –**
Richard Doran (Wethersfield – 2nd – 2017)

- Sandi Kelly (Rocky Hill – 2nd - 2016)
- Penny Rusnak (Glastonbury-2nd -2017)
- Daniel Schnaidt (Glastonbury--1st – 2016)
- Sandy Weiss (Rocky Hill – 2nd – 2017)
- Rebecca M. Zaliznock (Wethersfield – 2nd – 2016)

Directors Stepping Down

- Joseph Hickey (Wethersfield)
- Betty Schmitt (Glastonbury)

Two motions necessary at the annual meeting.

- That Diana Evans, Whit Osgood, Pamela St. Jean, and James Zagroba be elected to serve as Directors for their respective designated terms.
- That Tom Kehoe, Sandi Kelly, and Richard Doran be elected to serve as President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, respectively of the GMCT for the 2015 – 2016 term.

Directors/New Terms

- Diana Evans (Wethersfield – 1st – 2018)
- Whit Osgood (Glastonbury – 1st -2018)
- Pamela St. Jean (Wethersfield – 2nd – 2018)
- James Zagroba (Rocky Hill -2nd -2018)

Directors/Continuing Terms

- Richard Doran (Wethersfield – 2nd – 2017)
- Chris Duff (Rocky Hill) – 1st - 2017
- Tom Kehoe (Glastonbury – 2nd – 2017)

Annual Dinner—Special Guest Speakers

Two local farmers talk about life on the farm

Bethanne Couture

— Riverview Farms, Glastonbury



Bethanne Couture grew up on the Dufford Family Farm on Tryon street in Glastonbury, traveled the world with her airforce husband and returned in 2009 to work with her father. See page 6 for more.

Lisa Gilbert

— Gilbert Farm, Rocky Hill



Lisa Gilbert worked side by side with her father on the Gilbert Farm, as the farm transitioned from dairy to vegetables. With a degree in Horticulture from UConn she added bedding plants. See page 6 for more.

The Gallery

141 New London Turnpike
Glastonbury

Thursday, March 26, 2015

Social Hour 5:30 • Dinner 6:30
Annual Meeting and speaker to follow

Buffet Dinner Menu

- Cheese and cracker tray, cocktail meatballs
- Tossed Salad and assorted cold salads
- Carving station with New York sirloin of beef
- clip here—

- Pasta with Alfredo and Marinara sauces
- Baked scrod, breaded with lemon and butter
- Chicken Marsala
- Vegetables du jour; red roasted potatoes
- Dessert du jour

Regular and decaf coffee and tea

Cash bar for all other beverages and soda

The cost per person for dinner is \$28.00, tax and gratuity included

GMCT Annual Dinner Reservations

Please reserve **no later** than March 20st
for the dinner Thursday, March 26th, 2015

Questions may be directed to Rick Doran at 860- 690- 9983 or info@GMCT.org

The cost per person for dinner is \$28.00.

Name(s): _____

Phone Number _____ Address _____

Dinners @ \$28.00 _____ = _____
 Memberships @ \$15 individual/\$25 family _____ = _____
 Additional Donation _____
 Total Enclosed: _____

Please enclose a check payable to "GMCT" and mail to:



GMCT Annual Meeting
Rick Doran
223 Main Street,
Wethersfield, CT 06109

Annual Dinner Speakers — Lisa Gilbert — “A Life on the Farm”



Lisa Gilbert was born and raised on one of the oldest continuously operated farms in Rocky Hill, Connecticut. As a young girl, she worked side by side with her father with daily chores, planting and harvesting of crops, and was actively involved with Wynding Brook 4-H Club. In 1977 her father sold his herd of cows and started raising vegetables. Lisa helped with the raising and

Now, 20 years later, she has 10,000 square feet of greenhouse production and raises 40 acres of fresh vegetables.

marketing of these crops. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Horticulture from the University of Connecticut in 1993. She returned to the family farm upon graduation and began raising bedding plants along with vegetables. Now, 20 years later, she has 10,000 square feet of greenhouse production and raises 40 acres of fresh vegetables. In addition to acreage at the farm on Gilbert Avenue, in the Rocky Hill meadows, for the last two years, Lisa has tilled a fertile 6 acre parcel on the “Great Plain” on Elm Street in Wethersfield adjacent to GMCT’s Frechette Field. She will share her 40+ years of experience living and working on a farm.

Spring Gardening Event at Comstock, Ferre in Wethersfield

2:00 pm, Sunday, April 19. Suggested Donation \$5. Co-sponsored by GMCT and C.F.&Co.

Joseph Simcox — “Cave Men, Kings, and Cannibals”

Why we eat the plants we eat and have left behind so many good ones.



Joseph Simcox, the Botanical Explorer, will pull out his photo archives documenting amazing edible plants around the world. He will also introduce and suggest an amazing number of rare and beautiful edibles for the Connecticut Gardener. Joseph has traveled to over 100 countries documenting the

world’s useful plants. He is bringing new perspectives about the future of food and the future of mankind’s interaction with nature.

R.S.V.P. by April 17 to info@gmct.org or 860-808-9968. Donations accepted at door.

Bethanne Couture — “A Bit of Earth”



Bethanne Couture grew up in Glastonbury within a 3-mile radius of Ferry Lane and Tryon Street. Their Ferry Lane home overlooked the Horton Farm; the family was surrounded by the cycles of

farm life. In 1972, the family traded houses with Ruth Dufford, her grandmother, and moved to the tobacco farm on Tryon Street. The kids grew up with chickens, sheep, horses, and pigs, plus cats, dogs and various wildlife. In the summer, Bethanne and her sister Linda helped set tobacco and worked the harvest. A graduate of the University of Maine-Orono with a Bachelor of Science Degree, she majored in Pre-Veterinary studies. She worked for Dufford Construction Company when she met her husband, an Air Force Pilot, and spent 20 years living in England, Germany, Alaska, New Mexico and Mississippi. After returning to Glastonbury, joined her father on the farm in 2008. Riverview Farms raises CT broad leaf tobacco, hay, straw, pumpkins and apples. Bethanne manages the Old Cider Mill Fall Festival and initiated a partnership with Robb’s Farm and Ice Cream Shop on Wassuc Road, expanding the Festival to include a corn Maze, birthday parties and long hayrides.

During Joseph’s talk, munch on Podunk Popcorn. Grown locally in South Windsor by the Dzen family.



Land Management Annual Report — 2014

by Larry Lunden, Land Management Chair

This year the committee has completed inspections on 25 parcels. This brings all our inspections up to date. With the posting of our boundary signs and more members of the committee participating, knowledge of our parcel locations is now more widely shared. I thank Rick Doran, Jim Woodworth, Sandi Kelly, and Deb Creeden for their help in writing the reports.

All three of our conservation easements have been inspected. We have developed mutually beneficial communications with all of the land owners. I thank Betty Schmitt, Rick Doran, and Penny Rusnak for their thorough work.

Jim Woodworth led trail development and maintenance on the Wolf and DiPaola parcels. We now have short trails that our visitors can use to see the properties.

Our leasing program with local farmers continues to keep 54 acres of farmland in active use.

The Trust has acquired a new property this year. It is our First Church of Christ, Glastonbury, parcel in the Glastonbury Meadows. This is our first property in the middle of this large, unprotected area that

gives us a footprint there. The parcel is 5.3 acres, with a 5.1 acre farming field and 0.2 acres of woods. The present farmer using the field, Botticello Farms of Manchester, will continue to use the field. We welcome them to our family of farmers.

We had a Purple Martin nesting box installed on the Finnegan-Fox parcel in Wethersfield. Paul Cianfaglione of Hartford Audubon installed it and is hoping they will take up residence in a couple of years. Purple Martins are common along the coast, but now they are beginning to nest inland along major waterways. Paul thinks the meadows are an attractive location for them.

We installed a bat house on the DiPaola parcel in Rocky Hill. Deb Creeden donated it and Bob Ludwig installed it on a pole that has not been used for several years. We will keep an eye on it to see if any bats take up residence.

We held six winter walks for the public, co-sponsored with the Connecticut Audubon Society at Glastonbury and the Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center. We had an attendance of 149 people total. Meetup.com continues to be a good form of publicity.

Treasurer’s Annual Report – 2014

by Rick Doran, Treasurer

Invested assets grew by 6.2% in 2014, compared with year end 2013. This growth was impacted by a \$4,000 transfer from invested assets to the general operations account to help pay for land acquisition in Glastonbury. Without the transfer, invested assets would have grown by 7.3%.

A review of the Trust risk and investment strategy was conducted in a telephone interview with a financial advisor at Vanguard. The investment objectives of the Trust remain to promote liquidity, provide current income and long term capital appreciation for long term growth. The strategy to achieve the objectives is to combine a diversified portfolio while maintaining a moderate level of risk. The asset mix is comprised of 50% stocks, 44% bonds and 6% money market funds. The financial advisor stated the Trust has a

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balanced diversity of assets, which tend to balance and reduce our investment risk. On a scale of 1-to-5, the financial advisor stated the Trust risk level was at a ranking of three, noting moderate investment risk. According to the financial advisor, our asset mix, balance and risk is similar to other not-for-profit land trusts of comparable size to ours.

The general operations account is balanced and secured in a checking account at TD Bank.

An audit of the Treasurer was conducted and it was noted that all accounts are properly balanced and expenditures have been properly accounted.

The budget for 2015 was presented and approved by the Board at its February 26, 2015 meeting. The annual budget for 2015 is \$14,740 compared with \$12,500 for 2014. This represents an increase of 18% due to expected increases in our land acquisition and stewardship expenditures in the coming year.

Oh what a winter!

2015 Brisk Winter Walks started at the Wood Parcel. Sunshine, not too cold, and just enough snow to make



a winter wonderland of trees, brook, turtle pond, marsh, and field.



By the end of the month, the snow was up, and the thermometer was down — but that didn't stop this hardy group from



crunching or snowshoeing down Goff Brook Lane and around the trail through the DiPaolo Parcel along the brook to the elm tree plantation and bat house and back into the teeth of the north wind.



Another hardy group gathered at CAS and snow shod or hiked the trail up and down the bluffs of Earle Park into the meadows to the Matava Parcel at navigation signal 122. Glimpses of an eagle flying down the river and common mergansers diving in the patches of open water were tempered by the discovery of a frozen Great Blue Heron by the side of the Holland Brook by the bridge.



Winter fishing is a popular sport in the Coves and in the River Northern Pike is a popular sport fish for people and birds

Wethersfield Cove

Keeney Cove



On a sunny Saturday morning Nick Vincenzo had Keeney Cove in East

CT Fisherman.com has the motto "Beyond addicted. Just plain sick." So for the members it doesn't get much better than gathering as the snow falls for an annual day of fishing on the Wethersfield Cove. Fish weren't biting, but Bob Kowalski shared this photo of a Northern Pike he'd pulled out of the Cove last winter.



Hartford to himself, but he, too, had a northern pike photo to share from earlier in the winter before the snow fell.

2022! That's the year when the MDC projects completion of the South Storage Tunnel (now being designed), ending forever centuries long combined sanitary and storm sewer overflow into the Wethersfield Cove!



A northern pike was pulled from the river and swallowed whole by a great cormorant this winter — caught on camera by Bruce Morell

Three Great Walks and a Bike Ride on CT Trails Weekend — June 6 and 7

1. Hike into Meadows from Rocky Hill Ferry Landing.

Saturday, June 6. 9:00 AM to 12:15 PM. Rocky Hill Meadows. Ken Etheridge will be leading a 2.5-mile walk through the Rocky Hill floodplain, talking about the history of the RHM, trees, agricultural business, and the wildlife that is in and on the Connecticut River. Bald eagles, great horned owls, and a red tail hawk chick were spotted on past hikes (no guarantees though). Meet at Ferry Park.

2. Educational Walk for Little Kids!

Saturday, June 6. 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM. Wood Parcel. Bring your young naturalists (ages 4-6) for a short 1-mile hike and nature activity on this Great Meadows Conservation Trust property. We will cross the shiny bridge over the brook, follow the trail through the woods, pass the turtle pond, and follow the trail along the marsh. The route will skirt the edge of corn field, site of the original "Pyquag" Native American summer camp, to the irrigation pond and back. Along the way, members of the Wethersfield High School Ecology club and Winding Brook 4H Club will have tables set up with stickers and nature activities. Meet leader Jim Woodworth at the entrance to the Wood Parcel

3. Nature Walk in East Hartford Saturday, June 6. 10:00 AM to 12:00 AM. Connecticut River Floodplain. Walk along the mighty Connecticut River with Goodwin College environmental studies students. We will observe birds and wildlife, flood plain forest reclaiming farm fields, and invasive species control experiments. The 3-mile walk will include a visit to the "Wethersfield triangle" and Glastonbury's Keeney Cove, which was left behind by the meandering river. Meet leaders Bruce Morton and Deb Creedan at Hockanum Park (324 High Street)

4. Bike Ride Wethersfield, Rocky Hill and Glastonbury Sunday, June 7. 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM. Wethersfield's Heritage Way Bike Path. Follow this unique bike route from the Wethersfield Cove toward the Rocky Hill Ferry Landing. We will travel 15 miles and encounter flat terrain, some village and unpaved agricultural roads. Scenic highlights will include a historic seed company, farms, fertile fields, flood plain forest, and marsh habit along the Connecticut River. Ride across the nation's oldest ferry (\$4 round trip, if it is running!) to the Killam-Bassett Farm in South Glastonbury (Meet leader Jim Woodworth at Cove Park.