



Great Meadows Conservation Trust, Inc.
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Sandi Kelly and Becky Zaliznock

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Nature's transformative powers—from oil delivery platform to Osprey breeding platform—

long since relinquishing transferring petroleum product from barge to (now removed) tank farm in the Hartford Meadows, but still defying flood and ice flow.



Connecticut Trails Day hikers train their binoculars on a pair of watchful eagles pointed out by GMCT leaders Ken Etheridge and Janet Smith.

GMCT led Connecticut Trails Day hikes in the meadows drew enthusiastic hikers including members, local and area residents, and Goodwin College students. One local resident on the Crow Point hike had spoken up as a student at the public hearing against the infamous Race Track Proposal of 1968. She was pleased to observe the fertile floodplain farmland and verdant wildlife habitat thriving where dike, parking lot, motel, golf course, marina and “floatel” had been proposed.



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Annual Dinner—good food, lively music, dynamic new leadership and a pep talk

by Rick Doran

A group of more than 45 members of the Trust were treated to a delightful evening of delicious food, environmental conversation and music at our Annual Meeting of the Trust, held on March 25th. The site was again the meeting room at Lucky Lou's Tavern in Wethersfield, where members gathered for a social hour, followed by a magnificent buffet of mesclun salad, chicken saltimboca, petite salmon and tilapia piccata, and vegetarian penne pasta Maria. The repast was made complete with a dessert of rice pudding and coffee.

Afterwards, the business meeting of the Trust was conducted with due haste, with the most important item the vote to approve the Nominating Committee slate of Officers and Directors for the upcoming year. New Directors were introduced to the membership and the new President, Mark Packard was introduced. Mark will lead the GMCT with energy and imagination in the year ahead.



President-elect Mark Packard



Ed Chiucarella, Rick Doran, and Peter Maxwell sang river music

included the trio of Ed Chiucarello on banjo, a skilled musician and music teacher by training, Peter Maxwell,

an accomplished bass fiddle musician plucking “Blanche” his beloved bass fiddle, and Rick Doran adding supporting vocals. The trio performed several songs of Ed's creation and then led the entire group with a sing-along of standards, river songs and well-known favorites.



David Morine, author and environmentalist, issued a challenge to the Land Acquisition Committee

The Trust members were then treated to the humor, wisdom and wit of Dave Morine, author of *Two Coots in a Canoe*, a story of friendship and paddling on the Connecticut River from Canada to the Long Island Sound. Along the entire length of the Great River, Dave and his companion Ramsay Peard, spent time with like-minded conservation groups, old friends and new friends promoting preservation efforts in our own backyard. The salient theme of his remarks, however, centered on our responsibility as the leader of land preservation in the Great Meadows, to “get to know our neighbors” in the Meadows and inform them of our interest in buying or preserving their parcels, if-and-when they want to sell or relinquish them. He challenged our Land Acquisition Committee to start to list and contact landowners whom we know have an interest in donating or selling their parcels or holdings. At this time, the Land Acquisition subcommittee has already taken action on Dave's directive and challenge.

The evening's activities were then concluded in good fellowship with members gathering and conversing about our present and future role as preservationists, and discussing our paddling recreational pursuits, in the Great Meadows along the banks of the Connecticut River.

New Members Elected to Board of Directors

Sandi Kelly

by Ed Chuicarella

New board member Sandi Kelly was born in Italy and moved to Rocky Hill in the '70s to live on a dairy farm and train show horses. Her love of animals and the environment plus her service to the community make her a great addition to the GMCT.

Says Sandi, "Over the years, I've watched the town grow. I remember when the land where the Century Hills Complex exits, off 91, was open space. The whole west side of town was farmland.

Now it's the most congested side of town – a drastic change from the rural town I moved to in the '70s."

Sandi lives very close to the Dividend Ponds. In 2002 she was part of a group called Save Open Space (SOS). Along with other like-minded individuals, Sandi helped save 18 acres of land close to Cromwell. "The town wanted to sell it." In 2004 Sandi and SOS worked to get a referendum on the ballot for the town to keep the Dividend Ponds area. The Town was attempting to sell both the Upper and Lower Dividend Ponds within a 68-acre deal. It would have been sold as part of Phase II of the Industrial Park off of Dividend Road.

"The day of the referendum was icy and cold – the worst voting day you could have," Sandi recalls. "Yet, the citizens turned out in force. So many people had a story to tell about the Dividend Ponds. So many people were attached to that area and they wouldn't part with it." The lopsided referendum sent a clear message to the town.

In 2005, Sandi was asked to fill out a term on Rocky Hill's Inland Wetlands/Open Space Commission. She is now serving her 3rd term. "It's one thing to say you want to save open space, but quite another actually doing it." On the commission, Sandi admits, "I have learned a lot about regulations and building requirements. I've even gotten fairly good at deciphering building plans! It's very technical."

Sandi also gives service to the town and the environment by being a member of the Open Space and Farmland Acquisition Committee. This committee put a process in place to acquire open space when it becomes available. "The town needs to be ready to act," says Sandi. She also served on the Rocky Hill Clean Energy task force. During 2007-2008 she helped the town go green by enrolling in the 20% by 2010 Clean Energy program.



Board Members Rich Johnson, Becky Zaliznock, Jim Zagroba, and Sandi Kelly. Zagroba and Johnson will be profiled in a future Meadowview

Becky Zaliznock

by Jim Woodworth

Becky Zaliznock has joined the Board of Directors, bringing an unparalleled level of professional expertise and experience in environmental science to the table. Becky, who said, "I don't mind dedicating time to a worthy cause, has been a valuable member of the Wethersfield Conservation Commission since 1994, and secretary for the last ten or so years.

Becky and her husband Michael are owners and principal Environmental Professionals of

Aegis, Inc., a local environmental consulting firm with impressive credentials and a state and national reach.

As Connecticut Licensed Environmental Professionals or LEP's, they direct the services that Aegis, Inc. offers. These services include Phase I, II, and III environmental site assessments, soil and ground water remediation, and environmental risk assessment.

The Zaliznocks attended Edinboro University in Pennsylvania, and began their professional careers in that state, before setting up shop in Wethersfield. As they have downsized their business working toward eventual retirement, the Zaliznocks have relocated into offices constructed over their garage with a view of Heritage Way, a bicycle trail that links Wethersfield's most valuable parks and natural areas. Heritage Way is a long term project of the Conservation Commission that Becky has been involved in from its inception.

Kelly continued

What does she do in her spare time you might ask? She has to have a day job, right? After working with horses, Sandi went on to freelance writing and photography, then worked in real estate, and now is very proud to work at an alternative energy company. "I work in human resources at Proton Energy Systems in Wallingford. We make hydrogen generators, which produce hydrogen for use as an alternative fuel. Our first automobile fueling station will be opening this late summer."

Sandi is never short of ideas or the means to put them into action. In 2008 she thought, "We should have a dog park in Rocky Hill. But be careful what you ask for," she adds. She was soon tapped to be chairman of the Rocky

GMCT monitors Meadow Properties, LLC, dump closure actions

by Members of the Dump Subcommittee

The state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has issued a "Consent Order" to the Meadow Properties, LLC, owners of the old dump in Rocky Hill governing how they should repair the cap and re-close the old landfill that has been closed for the past 27 years.

According to the Consent Order, " (DEP) department staff observed areas where the landfill cap is eroded and areas of landfill leachate outbreaks." Provisions of the consent order require the owners to submit properly documented water quality testing of both surface water and ground water to determine the extent and nature of the pollution leaching from the landfill. As of this writing, the owners have not complied with this requirement.

Thanks to the vigilance of the Riverfront Preservation Society and the GMCT, the presence of residential water supply wells within 500 feet of the dump was brought to the attention of DEP and the Central Connecticut Health District. According to GMCT board member Becky Zaliznock, "DEP has asked MP to conduct a Sensitive Receptor Survey and will most likely require a groundwater quality investigation (including drinking water). The Central Connecticut Health District has sampled two home wells so far, which represents the beginning phase of data collection related to groundwater quality." The results are expect later in July.

Under the provisions of the consent order, DEP and the town of Rocky Hill have allowed the owners to re-establish a road and begin clearing the site of trees and brush. This road will eventually become part of the infrastructure to accept a solid waste product to repair the cap. The owners have cleared vegetation from much of the east slope of the old landfill (in the wetland review area.) This work has destroyed the wildlife habitat that had grown up over the area since the dump was closed in 1982.

The Trust feels that these activities in a regulated area should require permits from the local Inland Wetlands and Zoning authorities. To that end, the Trust Board voted to have the Trust's lawyer review the consent order and contact Marris Borea, expressing the Trust's strong

Kelly continued

Hill Dog Park Committee. The group began raising funds by selling candy bars and tee shirts and holding pasta suppers... \$40,000 worth, to be exact. "The fence is going in now and the grand opening is July 29." You could say her degree in Business Administration, from Albertus Magnus College, was all for the dogs.

Since her work on the dog park effort is winding down, Sandi has graciously accepted a role on the Board of Directors of the GMCT. Lucky for us! "There is a lot

concern and asking for the highest possible level of oversight. According to a communication from Diane Duva, the DEP will be relying on "owner assessment" of how

much material will be needed to close the dump. To the Trust members who have been monitoring MP's actions, that's like having the fox watch the hen house. The Trust would like to see the town of Rocky Hill exercise powers in its ordinances that allow them to require additional studies, by consultants of the town's choosing, answerable to the town, funded by the applicant. Often there are reasonable alternate solutions to an engineering problem, and alternate studies often generate good ideas not included in studies by consultants hired by applicants.

According to Ms. Duva, "the owners must obtain a special type of permit that is used at closed landfills, that spells out their obligations to repair and maintain the landfill, to monitor the property, and to monitor water quality. The closure plan will be approved as part of this permitting process and the public has an opportunity to comment on the proposed permit." The Trust plans to be ready to make knowledgeable input into the process during the public comment process.

The 43 acres of land owned by MP abut our DePaola property along Goff Brook. The dump itself covers about 15 acres and is located at the entrance of the Great Meadows from the Ferry Landing. This land serves as a critical sanctuary for all species of animals that seek higher ground during flood season, and the Trust will be arguing for a stewardship plan that maintains the dump area as wildlife habitat.

We want the town of Rocky Hill and the state DEP to know that preserving wildlife habitat, wetlands and flood storage capacity is a very important mission of the GMCT. We expect to see only justified action taken by the owners based on reliable scientific investigation.

more to the Trust than I imagined. I didn't realize that it was such a business. I am very impressed. This is serious stuff. I'm learning about our national ties and the great work other state land trusts are doing regarding legislative efforts and taxes." What do you see yourself doing on the Trust?" I asked Sandi. "Being present. Being part of the solution." Why? "Because I care." The GMCT extends a huge welcome to Sandi Kelly.

