



THE MEADOW VIEW

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

Vol.I No.2

MAY 1989

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE GREAT MEADOWS CONSERVATION TRUST, INC.

Date: Thursday, June 1, 1989

Time: 7.30 P.M.

Place: Holland Brook Connecticut Audubon Center, 1361 Main Street,
Glastonbury

Agenda: Call to order by President Frank Child

1. Annual reports to the members
2. Election of three Directors to serve until the 1992

Annual Meeting.

3. Any other business which may come before the meeting.

Program: THE NATURAL HISTORY OF A GREAT MEADOWS TOWN,
a slide presentation by Ruth Bergengren whose fine
photography has won awards in the amateur field.

Plus: The Renowned Great Meadows Punch and cookies

THE PUBLIC IS INVITED TO ATTEND

RIVER WATCH NOW IN ACTION

River Watch, designed to protect the Connecticut River and environs locally, has been officially launched. Meetings were held in Glastonbury, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield on April 10, 11 and 12 at which the purpose and operation of River Watch were discussed by residents, state and local authorities and the initiators of the project. Astrid Hanzalek, president of the Connecticut River Watershed Council and Frank Child, president of the Great Meadows Conservation Trust explained that River Watch was similar to neighborhood watches in trying to prevent damage by rubbish dumping, vehicular trespass, tree cutting, etc. Anyone who observes reportable items or activities can now contact the "Hot Line", 241-0500, and the message will be relayed to police or concerned agencies. Police and representatives of the Department of Environmental Protection gave details of their areas of jurisdiction and support to the program. A total of about 60 people attended the meetings at which much interest was shown. Several volunteers were recruited to monitor the "Hot Line", but more are needed. (Call Jolly Steffens at 633-9379 for details.)

A "River Watch Map" has been prepared by the Trust showing the great meadows area from Hartford to the south end of Glastonbury. It consists of letter sized sheets with a reference grid so that a "watcher" can identify the location of a suspicious activity to the River Watch Hot Line. The map is available for \$1.50 at the coming meeting, or write to our P.O. Box 171, Glastonbury, CT 06033 for other pick up or mailing details.

ELEANOR WOLF GIVEN ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD

It is still fresh in our minds that Eleanor Wolf received an Environmental Merit Award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) last year. Mrs. Wolf was a founder of the Great Meadows Conservation Trust, is a past president and an active member of the Operations Committee. On July 12, 1988, Mrs. Wolf was presented with a plaque for "significant contribution to the betterment of the environment" at the awards ceremony held in Cambridge, MA for Region One of EPA. She was nominated for this award by the Great Meadows

Conservation Trust in light of her long time and vigorous activities in protecting the flood plain land of the Connecticut River and establishing the Folly Brook Conservation Area. Mrs. Wolf was a major player in halting the infamous tree cutting in that conservation area. The Steffens' and Revills of the Trust joined the large audience at the event at which nineteen persons or groups were recognized for their notable work in the environmental field.

FOLLY BROOK AREA NEWS

A major step in the protection of the Folly Brook Natural Area in Hartford and Wethersfield was taken on March 20 when the City of Hartford, owners of the land, granted The Nature Conservancy a 50-year conservation easement for the land. Our Trust played a part in the negotiations leading to this happy event.

"Stump City", that part of the Folly Brook Nature Preserve cleared last year by the Department of Transportation (DOT) as "tree topping" for Brainard Airfield, is now being treated so as to encourage regrowth of the trees from the remaining stumps. All shoots but two are being cut back at each stump with the hope that the two will become massive trunks and limbs in the future. DOT is doing this work by arrangement with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) under an agreement which has to be yet to be signed.

GROUND WATER AND THE GREAT MEADOWS

The Town Planning and Zoning Board of Rocky Hill is considering adopting regulations to protect the Glastonbury - Rocky Hill Aquifer which underlies a goodly part of the southeastern part of town. This area includes the Rocky Hill meadows. The moving force behind the action is the Department of Environmental Protection which has issued reports on groundwater potential and protection in the state.

The estimated but unused yield of the aquifer is 19.8 MGD (million gallons per day), the second largest in Connecticut. (For purposes of comparison, the Metropolitan District (MDC) supplies 60 MGD of upland reservoir water to Hartford and adjacent towns.) With the prospect of limitations on the further development of surface water supplies (e.g. reservoirs), it

appears that groundwater, or well water, will have to be tapped to quench our increasing regional thirst. In fact the MDC is planning to explore the Rocky Hill- Glastonbury Aquifer and might draw 4 to 8 MGD from that source in the future.

Where does the well water come from? Some may be indirectly drawn from the Connecticut River, but filtered through the ground. Some will be from precipitation in the vicinity of the well, and some will be from fairly distant sources that might be called underground rivers. The flow is very slow! Water might take as long as ten to fifteen years to travel a mile.

What bearing does all this have on the Great Meadows? It means that the land will have to be treated with much greater care in the future to avoid contamination of the underlying aquifer. If the flow is as slow as a foot per day, any contamination is going to take a very long time to disperse. Hence the importance of controlling pollution for the sake of future generations.

At this time the practical effect of regulations to limit ground contamination is not clear, but it seems logical to assume that there will be increasingly stringent controls on the use of fertilizers, pesticides and the dumping of hazardous chemicals in the meadows. The Trust intends to keep abreast of developments in this field.

BIRDS IN THE MEADOWS

The Meadows come alive with birds in the Spring! Some are shore birds migrating north which stop off at large puddles: Lesser Yellowlegs, (sandpipers), and two "peeps"- Semipalmated and Least Sandpipers.

Singing and calling from the tree tops (the buggier the better) are twelve kinds of brightly colored agile warblers and three kinds of duller vireos. In the morning sun the red Cardinal and the orange and black Northern Oriole gleam like jewels. Along roads with weedy edges and fence rows you can see little brown birds run from your slowly moving car. They have short notched tails and yellow eye stripes - Savannah Sparrows.

The male Red-Winged Blackbirds sing from the cattails and show off their red epaulets to the streaked females. Flickers, Downey and Hairy Woodpeckers hammer on dead tree limbs. Steady even hammering means "This territory is MINE!". Red-tailed Hawks perch in the morning sun in tall trees on field edges and a Marsh Hawk (Northern Harrier) shows off its white rump as it flies from the lone bush in the middle of the field.

If we are fortunate, in the unmown coarse grass field we can hear bubbly song and see birds rising and falling - a flock of Bobolinks. The male is black below and is white and yellow on top. He sings while he hovers over the grass and old rusty Dock stems. When Rocky Hill had hay fields and cow pastures we had lots of Bobolinks. Now the field in the Meadows is the only place you can find them.

- Joan Marie Schaefer

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

This application is for those who wish to join the Great Meadows Conservation Trust and help us in our efforts to keep the flood plain of the Connecticut River as open space for agriculture and natural enjoyment.

Membership Chair
Great Meadows Conservation Trust, Inc.
P.O.Box 171, Glastonbury, CT 06033

Please enrol (Please print) _____

address, telephone no. _____

as _____ Member(s). Enclosed is \$ _____ annual membership

dues. Date _____

Membership categories: Individual Member \$10. Family Member (parents and children under 16) \$15, Life Member \$200.

MAKING A CASE FOR INTELLIGENT RIVER MANAGEMENT

The following, by Margaret Ruff, is a reprint from the December 1988 issue of THE LEADER, journal of National Wildlife Federation.

What is America's fastest disappearing habitat - forests, wetlands, prairies? Actually, riparian habitat has the dubious honor of being the most abused ecosystem in the United States. This often neglected resource is explored in a new book by former National Wildlife Federation staff member Constance Hunt, *Down By The River: The Impact of Federal Water Projects and Policies on Biological Diversity*.

Riparian Habitat, consisting of the plants, animals and soils along river and stream banks, is considered to be one of the most productive and valuable systems in the world. These habitats are very beneficial - they purify water, control flood waters and recharge groundwater areas.

As *Down By The River* illustrates, riparian habitats in the United States are being erased by dams and reservoirs, housing projects, unsupervised livestock grazing and channelization for barges. The U.S. once had 121 million acres of riparian habitat (land within the 100-year floodplain of a river), but today only 23 million acres remain in a natural or semi-natural condition.

By looking at case studies of seven different rivers, Hunt illuminates the effects of development projects on the biological diversity in riparian habitats. She makes a strong case for intelligent river management, restoration of some riparian habitats examined and alternatives for the future of riparian habitats.

Down By The River, published by Island Press in cooperation with NWF, may be obtained from NWF, 1400 16th Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036-2266. Please refer to item # 69223.

BE A MEADOW VIEWER!

Become a Meadow Viewer! Meadow Viewers will help the Land Management Committee keep an eye on the Trust's properties and easements, and report any changes or disturbance to the land.

We have thirty-three parcels of land covering almost a hundred acres, and can offer a choice of grassland, cultivated areas, swamps, woodland and riverfronts for you to visit. You might want to become the Meadow Viewer for one particular piece of land, or prefer to roam around and see several parcels. For more information, telephone or write to Peter Revill, Chair, Land Management Committee at 460 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill, CT 06067, tel. 529-9254.

CREDITS

Material for this issue has been supplied by Frank Child, John Lepper, Duffy Schade, Jolly Steffens, Eleanor Wolf, Joan Marie Schaefer and Editor Peter Revill



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