



# THE MEADOW VIEW

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

Vol. V No. 1

February 1993

Great Meadows Conservation Trust  
Presents  
**AN EVENING WITH MICHAEL BELL**  
Author of *The Face of Connecticut*

Wednesday, March 3, 7:30 P.M.  
Academy School Cafeteria  
2143 Main Street, Glastonbury

The Trust is proud to have Michael Bell talk about the Connecticut River, its changes from the pre-glacial era to the present day, and what might lie ahead.

This program is one of the commemorative activities in observance of Glastonbury's 300th and Rocky Hill's 150th anniversaries of their separation from Wethersfield, their mother town.

Michael Bell is a Fellow at Yale in the field of environmental sociology. His book, *The Face of Connecticut, People, Geology, and the Land*, published in 1985, was written for the State Geological and Natural History Survey (Bulletin 110). His new book, *The Inner Landscape of a Country Village*, will be published next fall.

**The public is invited**

**Refreshments will be served**

The Academy School and parking adjoins the south side of the Town Hall. The Town Hall is on the west side of Main Street a little over one mile south of Route 3.

**INSIDE**

Ground Water Program	2
Annual Meeting May 15	2
I-91/Rte. 3 Interchange	2
Walks	2
Weather Lore	3
Hartford South Meadow	4

**THIS IS THE TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP AND SUPPORT THE GREAT MEADOWS CONSERVATION TRUST. DUES AND CONTRIBUTIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE. AN ENVELOPE IS ENCLOSED FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE**

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

## **GROUND WATER PROGRAM MARCH 1**

The Land Heritage Coalition of Glastonbury is holding a public forum on the protection of ground water resources March 1 at 7.30 P.M. It will take place at the Buckingham Congregation Church on Hebron Avenue (Conn.Route 94) in Glastonbury. This is about 5 miles east of Glastonbury's Main Street. Driving east it is a short distance on the left after passing the traffic light at Manchester Road (Route 83).

The program will be given by a panel with David Boone, Glastonbury Director of Health as Moderator. Panel members will be Tom Mocko, Glastonbury Environmental Planner; Myron Dornick, Attorney, Land Use and Environmental Practice, Robinson and Cole; and Lori Kulo, Planning Analyst, Water Supply Section, State Health Department.

This discussion is sponsored by the Connecticut Audubon Holland Brook Nature Center; The Nature Conservancy, Glastonbury Sub-Chapter; the League of Women Voters of Glastonbury; the Land Heritage Coalition of Glastonbury, and the Great Meadows Conservation Trust.

Future public water supplies will increasingly depend on ground water. As an example, The Metropolitan District of Hartford is investigating well sites to supplement its present upland river and reservoir system. Thus people who live in Glastonbury, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield have a vital interest in the subject being discussed at the March 1 public forum.

## **A GREAT DAY IN MAY!**

Save Saturday, May 15, and come to the Great Meadows Conservation Trust's 25th Anniversary Celebration and Annual Meeting. It will take place at the Solomon Welles House in Wethersfield and include luncheon and an afternoon program.

Details will be announced later

## **I-91/ROUTE 3 INTERCHANGE**

The long awaited I-91/Rte.3 Interchange project in Wethersfield is now underway - without the originally proposed boat launch. Land clearing is complete and work has started on bridge and overpass construction.

The Town of Wethersfield and the Trust have expressed to the Department of Transportation (DOT) the need to keep both Great Meadow Road and Elm Street open during construction. Assurance has been given that the best efforts will be made to comply.

During the 1991 hearing phase on this project the Town and the Trust negotiated a Stipulation of Fact Agreement, signed by the Trust, Town of Wethersfield, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and DOT, which provided for maintaining the river bank at the 16-foot elevation under the Putnam Bridge. DOT has complied with the agreement.

Continuation of the river bank at the 16-foot level by means of a dike between DOT and Trust properties would close the gap created by an existing drainage channel. Plans for the dike were prepared by the Wethersfield Engineering Department and included by DOT in the interchange plans. The dike would be built by DOT.

The DEP permitting process for the dike has included a request for justification for its construction. This has been given. In addition, DEP has recently asked the town to submit a Dredging and Structures Permit for the dike. This matter is still under consideration.

## **A BRISK WINTER WALK**

Seven bundled up hikers met at the Rocky Hill Ferry landing on a bright, partly cloudy late January Saturday morning for the first of the Land Management Committee's series of four Meadow walks to inspect land parcels owned or held in easement by the Trust.

As we neared our "Methodist Church" parcel, John Lepper and Peter Revill got out tape and compass and counted about 160 paces to where the northerly boundary should be.

Exact boundaries are hard to come by in those wide open spaces. Markers get disturbed by plow and flood. We then walked across a carpet of turf toward the river. The last hundred feet are wooded.

Yes, it is windy in the meadows.

Two of the hikers went home after that portion of the walk. The remaining five tramped up into Quarry Park for a look at the land the Trust helped Rocky Hill and the State to acquire.

We didn't see much wild life on that chilly day. There were six white swans in the river at the ferry landing, and the hikers found a dead raccoon in the quarry, which they reported to the Rocky Hill Police. Not native to this hemisphere, mute swans were brought here from Europe. When they move into an area they become dominant and tend to drive out other aquatic birds.

The last in this winter series of LMC walks is scheduled for Sat. February 27th at 2 P.M. in Wethersfield, the Nature Conservancy Parcel. We'll meet in front of the home of Eleanor and Dick Wolf at 400 Hartford Avenue. Dress warmly. Park on the street. For further information call 529-2290 or 529-9254.

Eleanor Revill

### A BRISKER WALK

The second of the "Brisk Winter Walks" took place on February 6 which was a notably wintery day - thermometer about 10, overcast and breezy. We two walkers, John Lepper and Peter Revill, started out by looking for the west end of the Bacon Parcel - an area of dense reeds in the swamp between I-91 and the Connecticut River in Wethersfield. The approach was through woods out of the wind. As so often happens, the exact boundaries could not be found, especially as the ice was interrupted by open water making it likely that the walk would become a wade.

A bumpy drive along the Connecticut River brought us opposite the east end of the Bacon Parcel, and this we approached on foot crossing a windy open field. The edge of the parcel was not reached, but the mass of reeds assured us that it was still there and nothing

untoward had happened to the Trust's property.

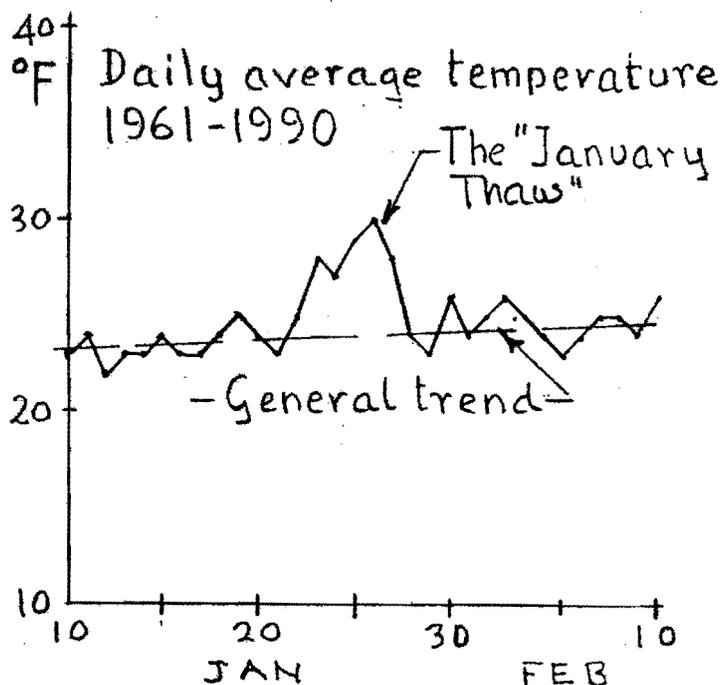
The warmth of the car was most welcome after this "hike"!

Peter Revill

### WEATHER LORE

A walk in the Great Meadows is always a weather experience. In the wide open spaces the sun beats down in summer and the icy winds greet one in winter. The weather and the Meadows are inseparable, so we feel that a few words on the subject truly belong in *The Meadow View*.

Is there a January thaw? Yes! Your editor has been keeping temperature records at home in Rocky Hill for many years. Recently he calculated the average of the average daily temperatures for the years 1961 - 1990. The average daily temperature is the maximum plus the minimum for the day divided by two. The 30-year average is the sum of these daily averages divided by 30. The results for January are charted below.



The "bump" in late January is most pronounced. One might expect a long-time average to show a relatively smooth line such as sketched on the chart, but the strength of the warm spell is obvious.

According to George H.T. Kimble in his "Our American Weather", McGraw-Hill, NY, 1955, the idea of the January Thaw began in Europe where the weather is markedly different from that of New England.

As of the time of this writing there has been very little snow this winter. Snow is a necessity for a good harvest according to some quotes from a book we have on weather lore.

From France and Spain - "A year of snow, a year of plenty."

From Sweden - "Much snow, much hay."

But a great amount of snow is not all that wonderful according to a French saying - "An eight-day mantle of snow is like a mother to the earth, but if it lasts longer it is like a mother-in-law."

#### CREDITS

Material for this issue has been provided by John Lepper, Eleanor Revill, Edith Schade, Julianne Steffens and Editor Peter Revill.

## HARTFORD SOUTH MEADOW PLAQUE

Up to about a century ago the Connecticut River meadows were used for pasturing cattle in the fall. To regulate the use of the land, various associations of the proprietors of the meadows were formed soon after the towns were settled. North of the Great Meadows was the Hartford South Meadow. This area, now diked and developed, was entered through the land in the Folly Brook Preserve and a bridge over Folly Brook. A sketch by Eleanor Wolf of the bridge was in the February 1992 *The Meadow View*.

A marker, mounted on a boulder, stands on the old entrance to the Hartford South Meadow. It is on the east side of Hartford Avenue, Wethersfield, immediately south of the Wilbur Cross Highway overpass. The wording sums up a bit of the past when the land was used for feeding animals.

NEAR THIS SPOT STOOD THE OLD SOUTH GATE, THROUGH WHICH OUR FOREFATHERS REACHED THEIR COMMON FIELD KNOWN AS THE HARTFORD SOUTH MEADOW.

HERE EACH LANDOWNER HAD THE RIGHT, ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF ACRES HE OWNED, TO TURN IN CATTLE IN THE FALL OF THE YEAR TO TAKE OFF WHAT FEED REMAINED AFTER THE CROPS WERE HARVESTED.

THE PROPRIETORS OF THE HARTFORD SOUTH MEADOW, ORGANIZED AT LEAST AS EARLY AS 1659, WHOSE RECORDS ARE IN THE CONNECTICUT STATE LIBRARY, MADE THEIR OWN RULES, SETTLED ALL DIFFERENCES, AND TOOK CARE OF THE ROADS, COMMON FENCES AND BRIDGES WITH MONEY RAISED BY A YEARLY ACREAGE TAX.

THE HARTFORD SOUTH MEADOW PROPRIETORS ASSOCIATION WAS TERMINATED IN 1979 AFTER NEARLY THREE CENTURIES OF ACTIVITY. IT WAS THEN DECIDED TO USE THE MONEY LEFT IN THE TREASURY TO ERECT A MARKER ON THIS HISTORIC SPOT.

JOHN S. BUCK, WILLIAM D. SHEW, JARED B. STANDISH,  
TRUSTEES