



THE MEADOW VIEW

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

Vol. V No.2

August 1993

GMCT 25 YEARS OLD ANNUAL MEETING HELD

The Great Meadows Conservation Trust celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary May 15 at the Solomon Welles House in Wethersfield. After luncheon, forty persons attended the business meeting and program.

With President John Lepper in the chair, the treasurer, Ingrid Boelhouwer, reported on the satisfactory financial condition of the Trust. The president then presented his Annual Report, the major points of which are given below. Elected to continue serving as directors to 1996 were Clyde Brooks and Ingrid Boelhouwer. Officers elected for the coming year were John Lepper, President; Peter Revill, Vice-president; Ingrid Boelhouwer, Treasurer and Eleanor Revill, Secretary.

The meeting voted to replace the old by-laws with new ones, copies of which had been mailed earlier to members.

Certificates were presented by the president to Eleanor Wolf and Joseph Hickey in recognition of their part in founding the Trust. Certificates of appreciation were also given to donors of land or other property over the years. Two of these were received in person. The services of Attorneys Walter Mayo, James McIntosh and the law firm of Day, Berry and Howard were recognized with appreciation.

INSIDE

History of the Trust	2
Strength and Future of the Trust	3
On the Doorstep of a Last Great Place	4
Floods	4
Students Examine River	5
Organization	6
Volunteers Needed	6

Betsy Katz of the Program Committee introduced the two speakers for the afternoon; Eleanor Wolf who spoke on the beginnings of the Trust and its twenty-five year history, and Attorney Russell Brenneman who looked to the strength and future of the organization.

After the meeting, attendees were invited to canoe in Wetherfield Cove, or walk along its shores.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The main points of President Lepper's report to the Annual Meeting are given below. He included summaries of some of the committee reports.

Membership Secretary Joan Mihm has recorded for the year ending January 31, 1993 a paid membership of 154. We added 10 new members: Janene & Robert Willsey, David Robinson, Barbara Barnes, Jon and Annie Luopa all of Glastonbury; Michael DiCioccio, Stephen, Pauline, and Christine Ucich and John Wolf of Wethersfield; Richard Maden of Newington; and Lester Lunden of West Hartford. A long time member, Duffy Schade, has become a life member. Death claimed two of our members: Wellington MacDonough and Joseph Bardini both of Wethersfield.

The Finance Committee, chaired by Peter Stern, has managed the Trust's investments to ensure the best return at minimal risk. All funds in certificates of deposit have now been withdrawn and invested in mutual funds.

Land Acquisition chair Debbie McIntosh has been looking for acquisition opportunities but they do not seem to be there. We have long standing offers on the table for two parcels in Rocky Hill.

The Land Management Committee chaired by Peter Revill continued to lease the Trust's arable land to local farmers. One renter relinquished his lease on a parcel in Rocky Hill and this remains unused. The US Coast Guard continues to lease a parcel in Glastonbury for one of their navigational aids. During the year the committee made periodic visits to Trust owned parcels. A key was obtained to the gate to the Hockanum Meadow in East Hartford, allowing us easier access to Trust parcels that are in the area. The committee conducted four winter walks for members interested in seeing Trust properties.

The Trust received a request from S.N.E. Woodland Services, Inc. of Smithfield, R.I. to conduct part of a logging operation on one of our parcels in Point Meadows, Glastonbury. The request was made on behalf of their client, Michael Longo, who planned to enlarge a corn field, part of which is on Trust land that he leases. The Trust granted permission to cross Trust property and to remove small trees and brush that had encroached on the corn field. The forester also sought permission to harvest trees of 16-inch or greater diameter located on another portion of the property. Permission was not granted for this. We would not have received any monetary benefit from the harvesting, moreover we could not reach agreement among ourselves on whether or not harvesting was a good idea.

The enthusiasm and energy of the Program Committee continued through 1992 to the present. Both Betsy Katz and Jolly Steffens put forth considerable effort to develop timely and interesting programs such as a walking tour of Hockanum Meadows last fall, the Lady Fenwick Cruise, the Aquifer Forum co-sponsored with the Land Heritage Coalition of Glastonbury, an Evening with Michael Bell, and today's 25th Anniversary Celebration.

Publicity Chair Duffy Schade has promoted Trust activities throughout the year with media releases and displays at events such as the Glastonbury Earth Day Celebration.

Construction is in progress on the I-91/Rt3 Interchange in Wethersfield. As stated in the Stipulation of Agreement reached during the Department of Environmental Protection hearing process on the cuts and fills for the road work, the riverbank under Putnam Bridge has been left at the 16-foot elevation. However a dike across the ravine between state and Trust property has not been built. This dike was requested by the Town of Wethersfield and the

Trust. The Department of Transportation included the dike in their plans for the overall project but DEP has not issued a permit for its construction.

The issue of development in Quarry Park is still unresolved. As may be recalled, Richard Johnson of Rocky Hill laid claim to a portion of the park for an access road to proposed houses on his adjacent land. Grading was begun but stopped by state and local officials. As cooperators in the purchase of the Quarry for a state park, the Trust joined with the Rocky Hill Neighborhood Association to study the matter. Since then several meetings have been held by interested parties to try to find a solution, but as yet nothing has been resolved, and there has not been any further work on the site.

We took action to support the Wethersfield Conservation Commission initiative for the conversion of the Valley Line Railroad right of way to a biking/hiking trail.

With fewer outside challenges to respond to this year, your officers and directors were able to attend to organizational matters, and changes to the bylaws proposed. (These were approved at the meeting). They are the first major changes since the organization was founded.

In conclusion Mr. Lepper said he was pleased to report that the Great Meadows Conservation Trust is healthy and well, and with your continued support is positioned for another 25 years of protecting and preserving the Great Meadows.

THE HISTORY OF THE TRUST BY ELEANOR WOLF

Twenty five years ago Henry Beers, Russell Brenneman and Betty Brown of Glastonbury; Charles Crosier, Felix Montano, Nancy Sears and Marion Flaharty of Rocky Hill; and Ken Geyer, Joe Hickey and I of Wethersfield met because the 4000-acre flood plain meadows of the Connecticut River in the three towns were being eroded by development. Our concern was that the State Water Resources Commission allowed up to ten percent of land within the channel encroachment line to be built up. After that had happened they would "review their policy". Action had to be taken!

The Great Meadows Committee was organized in February 1968. Its first act was to sponsor a survey of the meadows, the outcome being a booklet by Professor Fabos of the University of Massachusetts Department of Landscape Architecture and four of his graduate

students. Preservation was strongly urged. During the study phase the Great Meadows Conservation Trust was incorporated on March 29, 1968.

Our first challenge was a proposal to use part of the Folly Brook Natural Area for an ash dump for the Metropolitan District's South Meadows Pollution Control Plant. This was defeated.

In the following twenty-five years we have appeared before commissions many times to challenge uses detrimental to the flood plain; acquired acreage in all three towns through gifts, easements or purchases; worked cooperatively with farmers and game clubs; achieved the first step in the designation of five miles of the Connecticut River as a "wild and scenic river"; and acted as "river watchers" in reporting cases of pollution, littering and erosion.

The largest threat to the Great Meadows was a proposal by a New York developer to build a horse race track in Wethersfield. The Great Meadows Conservation Trust organized CART (Citizens Against the Race Track). Over seven hundred Wethersfield people devoted seven long evenings to attend a hearing before the Town Planning and Zoning Commission, the longest ever held in Connecticut. Thanks to the generosity of Attorneys James McIntosh and Walter Mayo, we were brilliantly represented and the Commission denied the application. Moreover, the Trust's acquisition of its Standish Parcel on land planned for the entrance road to the track added to the difficulties of the developer.

Presently we are involved in trying to prevent the Department of Environmental Protection from cutting down the river bank for a boat launch ramp at the Putnam Bridge, an action likely to cause a change in the course of the river and form a large island similar to Wright's Island of the seventeenth century.

After 25 years the Great Meadows Conservation Trust continues in good health with the readiness to meet the challenges to one of the most important flood plains on the Connecticut River.

NEEDED - Copies of "The Great Meadows of the Connecticut River, Glastonbury, Rocky Hill & Wethersfield, State of Connecticut, An Inventory and Analysis of Resources and Recommendations for Conservation and Development", published by the University of Massachusetts, Summer 1969. This 32-page 8 1/2" x 11" booklet is the founding document of the Trust. Phone Ellie Revill 529-9254.

BRENNEMAN ON STRENGTH AND FUTURE OF THE TRUST

Russell Brenneman, a founder of the Trust, looked to the power of the smaller volunteer groups in the world, and gave encouragement to the Trust to continue its work. His opening words were:

"Although the topic may surprise you, I want to talk about how I discovered a hill in Africa that set my spirit free. The Great Meadow of the Connecticut River is not as far away from that hill, metaphorically and actually, as you might think. That hill carries for me the "vision of the future" that I would like to talk about with you. Let me explain."

Brenneman said that after ten years of teaching environmental policy at Trinity College, he was discouraged. All over the world the environment was being assaulted by such injuries as overfishing and the cutting of the rain forest. Political and financial forces offered little hope for improvement. Then Brenneman continued:-

"You see, this hill is in some place like Zaire, I think, that had once been covered by a forest canopy that was home to the most diverse family of life of any sort to be found anywhere on earth. The forest had been cut down. Without consulting the people who lived in it, somebody had bought the land and the trees--bought the "family of life" with it." Brenneman noted that we indirectly used that forest in our quest for the good life. He then brought a ray of hope-

"There is a group of women in the village. They have no money. No modern tools. No funding from the World Bank (although the World Bank financed the project that resulted in the destruction of the forest). No support from a distant government. But they do have their hands. Ingenuity. An entrepreneurial spirit. Determination. Imagination. Grief. Belief in reborn life. And time. You see, they look at time differently than the tree cutters. To the tree-cutters time is money. To the women it is life. There are some crops now. And the hill knows that it is cared for."

This tale set Brenneman on a search for more such stories, and he discovered thousands of them. He sensed that, whereas the programs of government and economics have failed, the "small" programs of local people working at the grass roots can change the world. He continued praising the effectiveness of small and non-government (NGO below) groups that are, like the women on the hill, restoring a *sustainable* use of the land.

The term *sustainable development* first gained prominence in the Rio de Janeiro World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987.

He noted that "The Great Meadows Conservation Trust is an NGO that stands honorably beside its sisters on the hill in Africa".

For the future of our Trust, Brenneman offered the following goals:-

- *Participation in the necklace of protected areas, both publicly and privately owned, in four states collectively to be known as the Silvio Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

- *Inclusion of appropriate areas of Trust lands, where appropriate, as components of a Connecticut Greenways program, the basic building blocks of which will be laid out by the 110 local land trusts in the state.

- *Greater recognition and support (at last) by the federal and state governments of local non-governmental land saving efforts, with an emphasis on local support for processes rather than projects or programs proposed by "outsiders".

- *An understanding of ability of non-government organizations in achieving a sustainable world economy.

In closing Brenneman praised Eleanor Wolf for her part in organizing the Trust and its continued effectiveness over the years.

ON THE DOORSTEP-

- Of A Last Great Place

Earlier this year, The Nature Conservancy announced in its publication *From the Land*, that it had named the lower part of the Connecticut River as "A Last Great Place". The designation now applies to some 40 sites in the world, sites with remarkable ecological systems.

The Connecticut River project, known as "Tidelands of the Connecticut River - A Last Great Place", extends from Long Island Sound up to the Rocky Hill-Cromwell line, a reach of 37 miles. The core of the program is saving the tidal marshes, the northernmost one being the Wangunk Meadows in Portland. TNC plans to work with government agencies, universities and other local organizations to achieve its objective. TNC's Connecticut Chapter has set a fund raising goal of \$17 million for the project.

The Great Meadows Conservation Trust area finds itself on the doorstep of the magnificent TNC program. According to TNC's Connecticut

office the reason for its being outside is: "The northern limit of the Tidelands project area is the freshwater tidal marsh system, with flood plain forests further to the north" However the connection with the Great Meadows area is noted- "We do recognize the importance of all areas within the Connecticut River watershed to the north of the Tidelands area as they are part of an interrelated system. At the very least, the Great Meadows area and the system of salt, brackish and fresh tidal marsh are interconnected through water quality and river processes such as spring flooding".

It might be hoped that TNC's concentrated interest in the lower Connecticut River will extend further north than its Tidelands limit and continue above Hartford up to the point where the tidal effect is lost.

FLOODS

The recent summer floods in the mid-section of the country remind us that the Connecticut River is visited by substantial freshets almost every year and in any month, so the subject easily comes to mind.

The National Weather Service River Forecast Center, recently made a search of its records. It found that the Connecticut River has risen to 25 feet or higher at Hartford 27 times. This data includes 1683 and 1692. Since 1800 cresting of the river at ten or more feet above the flood stage has occurred 21 times, flood stage being 16 feet. In condensed form the data shows-

Stage 26 - 28	14 Times
28.1-30	3
30.1-35	2
Over 35	2

All those over 30 feet have occurred since 1930:-

March 1936	37.6
September 1938	35.4
August 1955	30.6
June 1984	31.3

From other sources of data the flow in 1936 at Hartford was gauged at 282,000 cubic feet per second. What does this look like?

A football field flooding to a depth of about 300 feet in one minute! Filling the Great Meadows to a depth of 10 feet over flood stage in about two hours!

STUDENTS EXAMINE CONNECTICUT RIVER

As part of Rocky Hill's sesquicentennial observance, a team of eighth graders at the Albert D. Griswold Junior High School investigated the quality of the Connecticut River water and obtained people's reaction to the state of the river. Under the guidance of Jean Robertson many physical, chemical and bacteriological tests were made and questions asked. The results of this admirable survey follow.

Results of the Tests

Color - None, water is clear and colorless

Odor - None

Hardness - Slightly hard - soap lathers fairly well

pH - Average 5.6, water slightly acidic

Microscopic examination, organisms found

Leeches (2 cm)

Daphnia (water fleas)

Microscopic worms (in mud)

Algae

Sediment - Sandy sediment settles out (slight). No film left on after evaporation

Bacteria - some white colonies, some distinct, some diffuse

Density - 0.984 (*Temperature not given*)

Chemicals - Chlorine, Iron, Copper - None

Carbon dioxide - Slight amount.

Replies to questionnaires

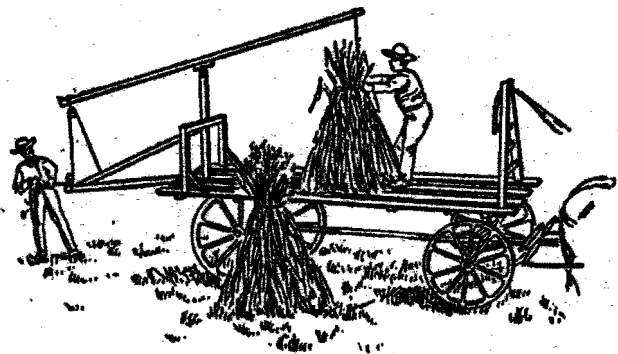
Many people, including residents and people who worked in town or used the river for recreation, were asked what they thought of the condition of the river and what changes they would like to see. Most people felt that the condition of the water was good and had improved

over the years, however some saw the need for further cleanup. Most people used the river for recreation or enjoyed hiking near it.

In reply to what they would like to see in the future, responses favored increased recreational facilities. Ideas ranged from keeping the area natural to improved picnic grounds, and from better docks to hotels and floating casinos at the riverside.

A copy of the full report, can be seen at the Academy Hall Museum of the Rocky Hill Historical Society, 785 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill. Hours are Sat. 2-4, Sun. 3-5, Mon. 2-4, Tues. 10 - Noon.

IN DAYS GONE BY



Was corn handled in this way in the Meadows early this century? This "handy loading device" could be made on the farm according to Rolfe Cobleigh's "Handy Farm Devices and How to Make Them", New York 1912.

5

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

This application is for those who wish to join the Great Meadows Conservation Trust and help 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 enroll _____

(Name, address, telephone no.)

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

Date _____

Membership categories: Individual Member (resident in Glastonbury, Rocky Hill or Wethersfield) \$10
 Associate Member (Non-resident) \$10
 Family (parents and children under 16) \$15
 Life Member \$200

OUR ORGANIZATION

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John C. Lepper (W)	President
Peter J. Revill (R)	Vice-Pres
Eleanor D. Revill (R)	Secretary
Ingrid Boelhouwer (W)	Treasurer
Clyde Brooks (G)	
Frank M. Child (W)	
Deborah McIntosh (G)	
Peter M. Stern (G)	
Donald G. Watson (R)	

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

John Lepper
Peter Revill
Eleanor Revill
Ingrid Boelhouwer
Peter Stern

THE OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

John Lepper	President
Peter Revill	Vice-Pres
Ingrid Boelhouwer	Treasurer
Frank Child	Secretary

All other members of the Board and-

Joyce Bauer (W)
Carl Bergengren (G)
Nancy Berges (W)
Thayer Chase (W)
June Cox (R)
Joseph Hickey (W)
Lucinda Hughes (W)
Betsy Katz (G)
Henry Kinne (G)
Joan Mihm (G)
William Robbins (R)
Edith (Duffy) Schade (G)
Christine Sprague (R)
Julianne (Jolly) Steffen (G)
Eleanor B. Wolf (W)

G, Glastonbury, R, Rocky Hill, W, Wethersfield.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Membership	Joan Mihm
Publicity	Duffy Schade
Finance	June Cox
Land Acquisition	Deborah McIntosh
Land Management	Peter Revill
Program	Betsy Katz

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

John Lepper	529-2290
Ellie & Peter Revill	529-9254
Frank Child	529-2087
Ingrid Boelhouwer	529-1185
Duffy Schade	633-4885
Joan Mihm	633-1806
Deborah McIntosh	633-2179
Betsy Katz	633-4157

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We need volunteers to type occasional letters.
Please call John Lepper at 529-2290

CREDITS

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



P.O. Box 171, Glastonbury, CT 06033



Printed on recycled paper.