



THE MEADOW VIEW

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

Vol. VI No.1

April 1994

ANNUAL MEETING AND DINNER APRIL 29

The 1994 Annual Meeting will take place at the Rocky Hill United Methodist Church on Friday, April 29. It will be preceded by a catered dinner for which reservations and payment must be made by April 20 as noted on the enclosed form. No reservation or payment is required to attend the Annual Meeting beginning at 7.00 P.M. After the completion of business, we will hear about our lively earth from Professor Jelle De Boer, Stearns Professor of Earth Sciences at Wesleyan University. He will talk about **EARTHQUAKES IN THE EASTERN UNITED STATES: New Evidence for their Origin from Moodus, Connecticut.** Professor De Boer's specialty is in the field of active deformation of the Earth. He is also involved in resources development in developing countries through the United Nations.

SPRING COMES TO THE COVE

March, and the north-moving sun has finally melted the ice-strangled Folly Brook on the northwestern corner of Wethersfield Cove. Since December, even the seagulls had abandoned their usual sites. Now the flocks are returning. At dawn they rest camouflaged against the crumbling ice until something startles them into flight. They swirl and tumble like snowflakes in their thousands before settling down again.

Just before sunrise other gulls, singly or in small groups, fly a path from the river toward the northwest. Huge flocks of starlings darken the sky as they rise from the woods and head westward. Crows flap back and forth - cawing to each other in harsh conversation.

On the open channel of the brook, Canada geese glide in single file, their lines of four to fifteen or twenty in soldier-like formation. A flock of mergansers dive for fish, then rise to fling the water off their wings. Mallards feed along the edges, tails tipped up as they reach for the succulent underwater grasses.

Later in the morning a pair of birds, their white heads and tails, and of a size that dwarfs Canada geese, identifying them as bald eagles, come to fish the brook. One scoops up a fish and carries it to the ice. After the eagle finishes its meal, seagulls come to clean up the leavings. Sometimes the scrappy red-wing blackbirds, announcing their recent arrival from the South

with their cheery 'Yes, sireeeeee- dive-bomb the eagles.

The waters are beginning to rise, flooding the marsh and drowning the muskrat houses, favorite perches for the great blue herons. One muskrat, alarmed by the rising flood, swims about, his tail pumping up behind him, leaving a V-shaped wake. Each morning ice skims the brook - ice which melts with the rising sun. But now at last winter is loosening its hold and Spring is putting a welcome end to the coldest, snowiest season on record.

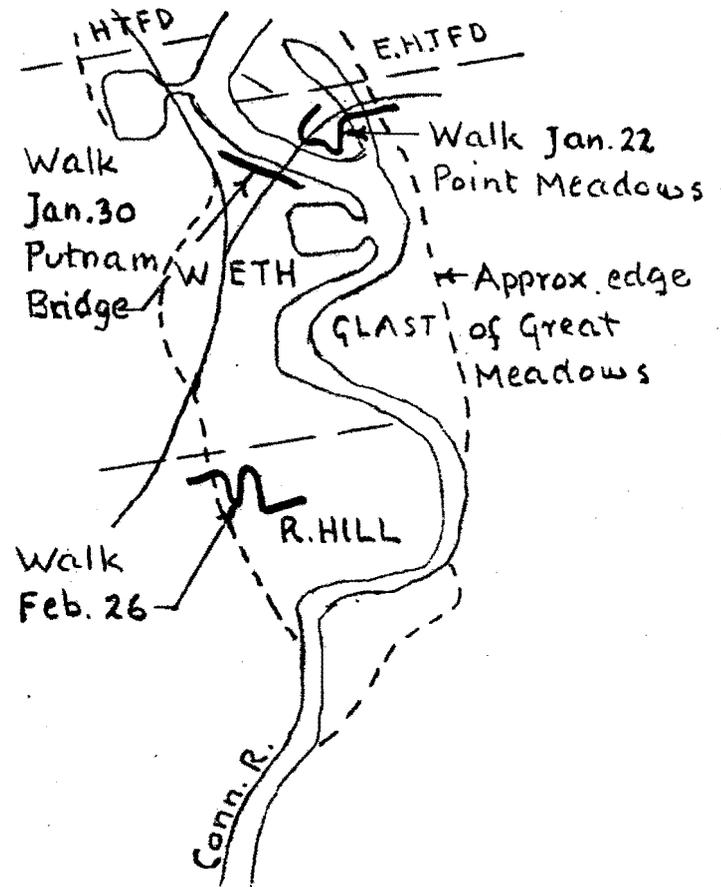
Eleanor B. Wolf

WINTER WALKS WALKED!

Four 1994 "Brisk Winter Walks", to be led by the Land Management Committee, were announced, and three held. Not too bad considering the endless storms during January and February!

The **January 22 walk** saw seven souls bravely marching across the Glastonbury Point Meadows, usually on top of the snow covered ice, but occasionally crunching down to the ground. Two walkers sported snowshoes which avoided this problem. Only three of us completed the three mile hike, no - we didn't leave the others in the wilderness - they left early! The route took us down to the Connecticut River, a long trek across last year's corn fields, the stalks sticking up through the snow. The river was clear of ice, and the wide river bank woods were pleasantly free of the chilling northwest wind, wind which we had to brave as we continued back up towards the embankment of Route 3. We crossed under the end of the Putnam Bridge, a structure which is indeed impressive seen from below with its massive girders, high above the shore and the river. A walk along the north side of Route 3 led us to another large corn field. Part of the area still had standing corn, with a harvester sitting as if ready to continue with the cutting. And then the long walk back to the welcome sight of our cars parked along the paved part of Point Road and its bridge over Keeney Cove. Home!

The **January 30 walk** was enjoyed by four of us who approached the west end of the Putnam Bridge in different ways. Two of us parked by the pond opposite the Putnam Park office building. The little fountain was keeping part of the pond clear of ice, and many, many birds were enjoying the water. Our group looked over the Trust's Standish Parcel south of the bridge, crossing the notorious channel which, some of us feel, will enable the Connecticut River to cut into the fields and form an island. The



Standish Parcel shows signs of strong river currents having poured over the high banks, washing the soil way from the roots of some of the trees. Standing under the west end of the Putnam Bridge on the realigned Great Meadow Road, one can now look north and south and sense the continuity of the Meadows as they pass under the bridge. Previously a huge pile of earth had blocked the view. It makes the State's proposed boat launch seem so much more an intrusion into the floodplain than before. Go and take a look!

The February 12 walk was cancelled. The heavy snow of the previous day made walking very difficult, even the ruts on the Rocky Hill Great Meadow Road were uninviting.

The **February 26 walk** attracted five people, two from distant towns. The day was notable for the briskness of the wind as well as that of the walkers. We inspected a parcel in the woods near the MDC sewage plant in Rocky Hill, at one point using a discarded engine block as a landmark in the snowy depths. Even after that snowy but sheltered walk, we felt inadequately exercised and perhaps the need to show the wind that it could not scare us. So the troop marched along North Meadow Road, passed a couple of skiers, and ventured east towards the river,

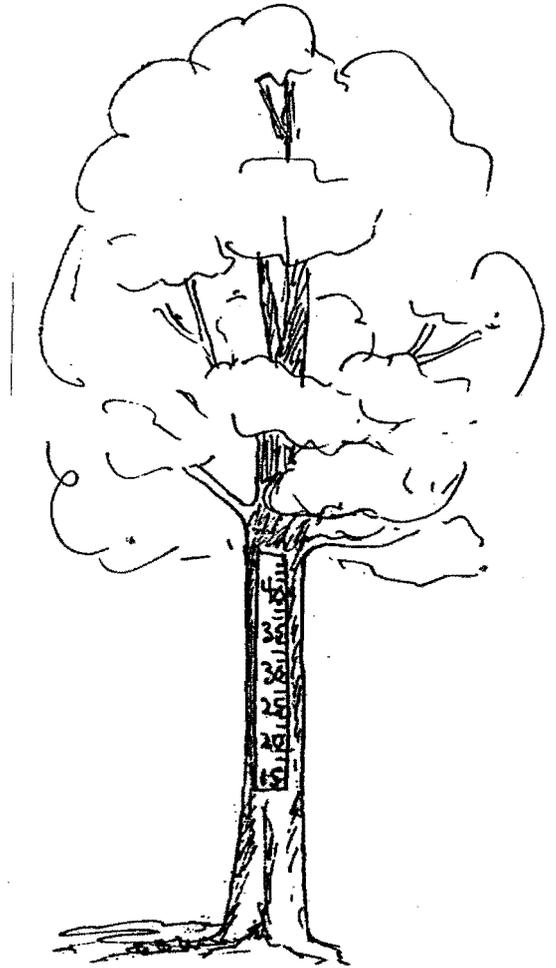
away from the shelter of the trees. The northwest gusts probably swept by at 40 mile per hour, picking up clouds of snow and making the air white. The bleakness of the fields contrasting with the darkness of the distant trees gave us a sense of sheer inhospitability. Life in the Yukon? We soon turned around and enjoyed the welcoming sight of THE Rocky Hill and its forest. So ended the 1994 Brisk Winter Walks.

THE USEPA'S PEYA

The U.S Environmental Protection Agency has asked environmental groups to draw attention to the President's Environmental Youth Award program for 1994. It is a contest open to young people from Kindergarten to 12th Grade. Participants work to protect the environment in various ways such as cleaning up a park or helping to save endangered species.

PEYA participants with significant projects will be encouraged to compete in the national awards program. The winner from New England will receive a trip to Washington for the awards ceremony and a tour of the Capitol. There will also be grants for some contestants to continue their environmental work. All participants will receive a certificate signed by the President.

If you know of any young people who might be interested in this PEYA program, more information can be obtained from Evelyn Sullivan, PEYA Coordinator, EPA, JFK Federal Building, Boston, MA 02203 or by calling (617) 565-3187. The deadline for the competition is July 31, 1994.



RIVER LEVEL GAUGE BOARD

Drawing by Eleanor Wolf of a gauge board on a tree close to the edge of the Wethersfield Cove earlier this century. It was clearly visible from dry land and was a source of excitement as the Connecticut River rose. Eleanor says we should put up a new one!

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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 _____

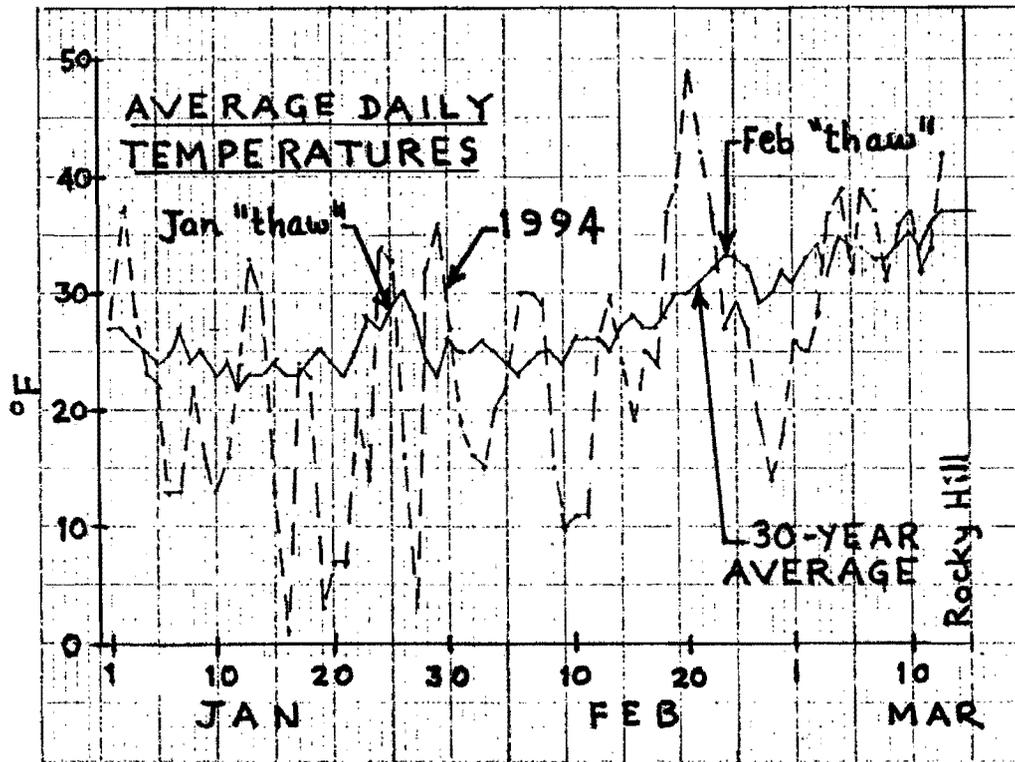
(Name, address, telephone no.)

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

THE WEATHER



CREDITS
 Material for this issue has been provided by
 Joyce Bauer, Eleanor Wolf, the US EPA and Editor
 Peter Revill

In last February's issue of this newsletter, we showed a small graph indicating that the 30-year average average (no-not a typo!) temperature for each day of the month showed the existence of what might be called the "January Thaw". Your editor, who has a maximum-minimum thermometer, has taken daily readings for many years. For each day the average temperature has been calculated by adding the max and min and dividing by two. If the max is 46 and the min is 32, the average is $46 + 32 = 78$ divided by two = 39. Taking 30 years of all the March 10's, for instance, the average of the thirty averages is 34.

Did we have a January thaw in 1994? The new graph shows two lines - the January to mid-March figures and the long-term average. The crazy looking dotted line confirms the wild ups and downs of the thermometer in January, and seems to show that we had four warmish periods, two close to the "bump" in the solid line around the 25th. We also had a noticeable warm period around February 21, and the long term curve indicates that there is usually a short warming spell towards the end of February, only to be followed by a cold snap. So there are milestones in the weather pattern that often show up year after year, and the warm ones in winter are particularly welcome!



P.O. Box 171, Glastonbury, CT 06033

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 **Annual Meeting Reservation Form Enclosed**

