



# THE MEADOW VIEW

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

Vol. IX No.1

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The Friends of the Wethersfield Nature Center and the Great Meadows Conservation Trust, Inc. are co-sponsoring

## A SYMPOSIUM ON THE FUTURE OF THE GREAT MEADOWS

Wednesday, February 19 AT 7 P.M.  
Pitkin Community Center  
30 Greenfield Street, Wethersfield.

Speakers: John Lepper, Great Meadows Conservation Trust  
Beth Goettel, US Fish and Wildlife and Conte Refuge  
Ozzie Griebel, Riverfront Recapture  
Stuart Popper, Wethersfield Town

Planner

Moderator: Atty. Lee G. Kuckro, Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation

Publications on the river and its environs will be on sale. Refreshments will be served. Donations to cover expenses will be taken at the door.

**Directions:** from Silas Deane Highway go west on Nott Street, turn right on Folly Brook Boulevard. Follow signs to the Pitkin Community Center.

### PRESIDENT'S VIEW

An expanded riverfront park has been proposed by the ad hoc committee studying its development potential along the Connecticut River

in the Greater Hartford area. Plans include a trail and raised planked boardwalk from Windsor into Wethersfield. This has raised questions of its feasibility, especially in the Wethersfield Cove area. Will the park reach into the Glastonbury or Rocky Hill meadows in the future?

In a symposium on the future of the Great Meadows on February 19, sponsored by the Friends of the Wethersfield Nature Center and the Great Meadows Conservation Trust, the riverfront park plan will be addressed.

Earlier proposed uses of the meadows for buildings, race tracks, a boat launch and, most recently, bridge construction will be reviewed by Trust past President John Lepper. For a broader perspective on the future of the river and its environs, we will hear about the Conte Fish and Wildlife Refuge and, more locally, about Riverfront Recapture and the perspective of Wethersfield's town planner who also serves on a task force of the riverfront park ad hoc committee.

Presentations have been made by members of the ad hoc committee before town commissions in Wethersfield and Windsor and also before the East Hartford Citizens' Association.

The future of the Great Meadows is in our hands. This should prove an interesting evening. I look forward to see many of you there.

Jolly Steffens

### ANNUAL MEETING

Save the date!

Thursday April 17th. We will have another of those delicious dinners catered by the United Methodist Church Women of Rocky Hill and a

program on the Connecticut River Assembly. More details will come later.

#### BRISK WINTER WALKS REMINDER

Two walks remain this winter-

Saturday, February 8, 10 A.M. Meet at Point Rd. off Naubuc Avenue for a walk in Glastonbury's Point Meadow

Saturday, February 15, 10 A.M. Meet at Great Meadow Road entrance next to Putnam Bridge for a walk in the Wethersfield Meadows south of the bridge.

#### LAND MANAGEMENT

The Land Management Committee is keeping active in several ways in spite of the cold weather. In addition to sponsoring the Brisk Winter Walks (see above for reminder!), we are studying the design and placement of markers on Trust properties and easements. In December, Eleanor Wolf and Peter Revill toured the dry portions of the Trust's "Nature Conservancy Parcel" with Amy O'Neal of The Nature Conservancy. Amy is Preserve Monitor for TNC which keeps an eye on its former properties. Her report indicates that conditions are satisfactory.

Our committee asks that Trust members help find historical information about the various parcels of land we own or on which we have easements. We hope to compile a file of the lands about former ownership and use, the Trust's acquisition procedures and any other relevant records. Please call Larry Lunden (232-2416) or Neal Cox (563-4143) if you can help.

Peter Revill

#### BIRDS IN THE MEADOWS

To birders looking for wintering native and visiting birds from the north, the meadows offer a wonderful variety of habitats to search in all three towns. The hedgerows are shelter for several species of timid sparrows. The fields invite blackbirds, horned larks, grackles and other field loving birds, and their predators, the hawks. The wooded areas are perfect for winter passerines. The river, when not frozen, is inviting to ducks, cormorants, gulls and Bald Eagles searching for food.

During the annual Audubon bird count, which covers a seven mile radius circle around Hartford, several parties enter into the meadows

and tramp over the fields. Every year is different. A snow cover or lack of one, along with the varying temperature cause various species to be absent or present. One year we will find huge flocks of Red-wing Blackbirds, Grackles and Brown Headed Cow Birds. This year they seem to have settled in Manchester. Another year there will be a wonderful flock of Horned Larks. Last winter there were sixty, but this year there were none to be found.

Often this area is the only one to produce a certain species. Several years ago we found a lone Phoebe, quite rare in winter. Two years ago there was a Pied Billed Grebe by the ferry pilings. A hardy Great Blue Heron is always on the list. Fox Sparrows linger once in a while. Northern Harriers soar over the fields looking for mice and voles. Off Goff Brook Lane we often find a flock of Robins braving the elements. This year seemed to be one of Downy Woodpeckers and White Breasted Nuthatches in large numbers. We also saw several flocks of Tree Sparrows. Usually we see one or two at a time. We also located the only Brown Creeper found during this winter's count for all of Hartford.

Wethersfield and Rocky Hill birders counted approximately thirty species just in the meadows and river areas alone.

There are several bird counts during the year, and watchers are welcome to participate. The counts are made in the field or by watching your birdfeeder from indoors. If you are interested please call me at 257-7887.

For those hearty members planning to attend winter walks, bring binoculars. You won't be sorry.

Mary Carter

#### TIDELANDS SYMPOSIUM

October 24 saw a day-long "Tidelands of the Connecticut River Symposium" held at Wesleyan University. This meeting was sponsored by The Nature Conservancy and the Connecticut River Watershed Council, with support by Northeast Utilities and Silvio Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge. Several members of the Trust attended and were impressed by the speakers and the wide range of subjects discussed. While many details were only broadly related to our central Connecticut River flood plain, many reminded us of subjects which may need to be given more attention in this area.

These include metal pollution in wetlands, invasive plants, phragmite control, molluscs, fish and birds management and more.

If you are interested in these topics, Peter Revill (529-9254) can give you some guidance in seeking more information.

#### VOLUNTEER INDEXING ANYONE?

We are hoping that an owner of Adams-Stiles "The History of Ancient Wethersfield", 1904, reprinted 1974 by the New Hampshire Publishing Company, would be willing to make an index of portions dealing with the history of the Great Meadows. This would cover any of the three towns, Wethersfield, Glastonbury and Rocky Hill. The book does have the subject in the index, but we need to have some details with each entry. In addition each page in the book should be reviewed in case a reference to the meadows is not listed in the index.

Please call Peter Revill (529-9254) if you are interested. The work could be shared by several volunteers.

#### ODDS AND ENDS DEPARTMENT

We are hoping that our readers will help us maintain the Odds and Ends Department by contributing facts and stories about the Great Meadows and the Connecticut River. Here is an example from the late Thomas Stevens of Deep River contributed to 'The Rangelight', August 1973.

"The Yankee schooner, SALLY ANN, under command of Captain Spooner, was beating up the Connecticut River. The Mate, Mr. Comstock, was at his station forward. According to his notion of things the schooner was getting too near the mud flats which lay on the starboard shore. So aft he goes to the Captain, and with his hat cocked on one side, says, "Captain Spooner, you are getting close to them thar flats; hadn't you better go about?" To which Captain Spooner replied, " Mr. Comstock, you go forward and attend to your part of the ship, I'll attend to mine." Mr. Comstock 'mizzled forward in high dudgeon. "Boys," said he, " see that mud flat is all clear for letting go." "Ay, ay sir; all clear." "Let it go," said he. Down went the anchor, rattled the chain, and like a flash the SALLY ANN came luffing into the wind, and then

brought all up standing. Mr. Comstock walked aft, and touching his hat very cavalierly: "Captain Spooner," said he, "my part of the schooner is at anchor."

The "Rangelight" was the newsletter of the Conference of Connecticut River Historical Societies 1970 - 1987.

Please send contributions to the Editor, Peter Revill, 460 Old Main Street, Rocky Hill, CT 06067



The Great Meadows Conservation Trust was incorporated in 1968 as a non-profit tax exempt land trust to protect and preserve the flood plain lands of the Connecticut River in Glastonbury, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield. The Trust has acquired land, holds conservation easements and leases land for farming. FOR MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION please write to Membership Chair, Great Meadows Conservation Trust, P.O.Box 171, Glastonbury, CT 06033.

#### CREDITS

Material for this issue has been provided by Mary Carter, Eleanor Revill, Julianne Steffens and Editor Peter Revill.



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February 1, 1997

To the Members of Great Meadows Conservation Trust:

Your membership in the Trust indicates your interest and commitment to preserve and protect the Great Meadows that lie in our three communities: Glastonbury, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield. It is now time to renew that membership with your annual dues. If a life member, consider making a contribution as a renewal of your dedication to the work of the Trust. Financial support is needed to meet the ongoing challenges facing us.

In the coming months we hope to see a resolution of the proposal to assemble a bridge span on a barge in the Crow Point Cove in Wethersfield. We are monitoring the motor bike activities in Rocky Hill. On a recent winter walk, we found more illegal dumping on Trust property and on access ways into farm fields. We are, also, looking into the proposed expansion of a regional riverfront park. More on this in the winter edition of "MeadowView" which, to save on mailing costs, is enclosed along with your renewal envelope.

As you know, dues and other contributions are used to cover administrative costs, such as printing and mailing the newsletter, offering programs of interest to the public and, as required, procuring consulting services as we did in the past year.

Your donation at this time, also, serves as a vote of confidence in the efforts of the Trust's Board of Directors and its committees to continue to carry out the responsibilities with which we have been entrusted.

Thank you for your continuing support.

Sincerely



Jolly Steffens, President

enclosures