



# THE MEADOW VIEW

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

Vol X No. 2

FALL 1999

## SUCCESSFUL ACTION-FILLED YEAR

Hard to believe summer has come and gone. The Great Meadows Conservation Trust has had a very successful year to date with activities in many areas.

We had a wonderful turnout on the Source to Sea clean-up the Connecticut River. Under the capable local leadership of Trust members Ann Kuckro, Chris Sprague, Clyde Brooks, and Jolly Steffens, several hundred volunteers did a spectacular job that has needed to be done for years. Many organizations and volunteers worked the length of the river making our American Heritage River showpiece even better than before!

Action seems to be everywhere in the acquisition of land rights and purchases. Glastonbury residents recently voted in favor of \$3 million in bonding for local action. Other towns are pursuing these interests. Open space acquisition will be topic of our Winter Program.

Our work on Kestral boxes is going to provide material for talk at our Annual Meeting in March . . . details to follow. Anyone with other suggestions for an interesting program is urged to give us a call.

We have had some new members and new life members swelling our ranks. They are most welcome and we look forward to introducing them into some of our active committees. Any special interest in joining a committee would be most appreciated.

Happy Holiday Season!

Neal Cox

## CONNECTICUT RIVER SOURCE TO THE SEA CLEAN-UP A HUGE SUCCESS!

The first Connecticut River Source to the Sea Clean-up, was held Saturday, Oct 2, 1999. The Connecticut River Watershed Council and the Massachusetts Community Water Watch, the coordinating organizations, to thank the many volunteers from Vermont and New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut, wrote:

"It's nice to know we can count on people to go the extra mile. Thank you for volunteering! You made Source to Sea 1999 a huge success!"

"A partial inventory included: 551 full garbage bags, 7 dump truck loads and a 30 yard dumpster, 108 tires and rims, also 5 car seats, 6 appliances...

"Hope to see you next year!"

## ALLIANCE TO SAVE WORKING LANDS

The newly formed WORKING LANDS ALLIANCE (WLA) has come into being through the work of a dedicated group concerned with loss of farmland in the state. A number who had a role in the "Save the Land" conference in June (see Meadow View Summer 1999) were brought together to plan further action. Hosted by State Representative Jefferson Davis at the Legislative Office Building, the group chaired by Mark Winne, Director of Hartford Food Systems, Inc. have met monthly since June. (Continued p. 2 - ALLIANCE)

## IN TRIBUTE TO DOROTHY HICKEY WARING

"With the eye of an artist, the heart of an educator and the thoughtfulness of a friend, Dorothy indeed brought beauty into the world...." from a tribute to Dorothy Waring on her death November 16, 1999.

Among the first to join the Trust after its incorporation in 1968, Dorothy and Dana Waring, of Glastonbury, later became life members. The Trust salutes Dorothy's many and varied contributions to the community in which she made her home and raised her family. Over the years Dorothy with her husband Dana have made an extraordinary commitment to the environment out of which the broader community has benefitted.

Contributions may be made to the Cornell Plantation Dorothy Hickey Waring, Class of 1939, Memorial Fund, One Plantation Road, Ithaca, NY 14850-2799.

(ALLIANCE - Continued)

WLA has set two broad goals 1.) to increase funding for and improve the effectiveness of Connecticut's farmland preservation efforts including the state's purchase of development rights program (PDR) and 2.) to assist in the development of private and municipally supported efforts to preserve farmland.

\$50 million over 5 years for the state's farmland preservation program will be proposed and promoted by WLA in the 2000 legislative session. The proposal will include authorizing a lump sum allocation to the Department of Agriculture to streamline purchases, and also urge release of funding currently authorized for PDR. The plan if approved would protect nearly 20,000 acres of working land (farmland) over the next five years.

## CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

By Larry Lunden

A conservation easement is a method of preserving the natural qualities of a parcel of land without its owner giving up all his rights to the land. It is a form of shared ownership that is quite different from the outright ownership of the land by a trust or other entity. The Great Meadows Conservation Trust (the Trust) holds easements on three parcels and owns 28 parcels.

In an easement, a legal document spells out what rights the landowner agrees to give up and the rights of the Trust as the holder of the easement. The landowner typically gives up the right to build buildings, install advertising (bill boards), excavate soil or minerals. If an easement is donated, there will be a tax-deduction. The property tax may also be reduced by the terms of the easement.

The owner retains the rights to use the land in any way that does not violate the easement agreement. The owner may sell the parcel to another person with the understanding that the easement restrictions transfer to the new owner.

The rights of the Trust are also limited by the terms in the easement. Typically the Trust may inspect the parcel to verify compliance with the terms, and may sue the landowner if the easement is violated.

To maintain credibility as an effective land trust, the Trust has an obligation to manage its easements and must establish a good working relationship with the landowner.

The Trust's Land Management Committee (LMC) is seeking a person(s) to monitor its easements. To volunteer or for further information contact LMC Chair Larry Lunden at 860-232-2416.



## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

As I was raking leaves the other day, I could not help thinking about the environment. This led to creatures such as beavers, those natural dam builders now returning to Connecticut. Dams! Then I remembered President Neal Cox's piece in the last issue of "Meadow View" welcoming the removal of the Edwards Dam in Maine.

Yours truly has spent much of his professional life on the building and maintenance of dams, so my engineering feathers were a little ruffled at the idea of removing those structures which have made it possible to settle and survive in this part of the world. While some disused barrages could be removed for the good of the environment, most could remain in service to homo sapiens.

What concerns me is the rapid change in environmental outlook in just a few decades. Not long ago, we were retrofitting old dams with turbines and generators at great expense because fossil fuel was in short supply. Now we are starting to demolish hydro-electric dams at great expense. When the next fuel crunch comes, will we be restoring water-power structures again? I hope that a logical long range plan can be worked out to avoid wasteful policy changes.

We would be lucky if any of man's activities did not disturb the environment. Dams obviously flood valleys, disrupt natural flows, upset fish migrations. Dams also provide water supply, industrial power, irrigation, flood control and, in many cases, stream-flow enhancement in dry weather. Finding a balance isn't easy!

We in our Great Meadows parcels do not have to worry about dams yet. However we'd better keep an eye on those beavers and their dams!

Peter Revill

(Editors note: "FISH RETURN AFTER REMOVAL OF MAINE DAM" - AP article in Hartford Courant - 11/8/99)

## RETURN OF THE BEAVERS

By Eleanor Revill Wolf

One of the exciting things about preserving the Great Meadows is the return of birds and animals once declared extinct in this area. American Bald Eagles and Osprey now appear frequently over Crow Point, soaring and fishing. Water birds ducks, geese, herons, and cormorants have returned in large numbers. Deer, fox, coyotes and wild turkeys frequent these woodlands and fertile farms.

Now beaver have returned.

John Oldham in 1633 was commissioned by Governors Bradford and Winthrop to "trade with the Indians for beaver and hemp."

"Beaver Meadow" and "Beaver Brook", names applied by the first English settlers, remain names on today's maps of the Wethersfield Meadows even though beaver became extinct in the early 1900's.

It is on Beaver Brook that the beavers have recently build a dam and a lodge. Beaver have been observed as far inland as Mill Woods and are appearing in other areas of the meadows.

How rewarding it is to witness the return of these birds and animals! And how important to preserve these wonderful flood plains in Rocky Hill, Glastonbury and Wethersfield!





P.O. Box 171, Glastonbury, CT 06033

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**WINTER WALKS**

- Saturday, January 15 - 10:00 a.m.  
Meet at Connecticut Audubon Center,  
1361 Main Street, Glastonbury
- Sunday, January 23 - 2:00 p.m.  
Meet on Goff Brook Lane, Rocky Hill
- Saturday, February 5 - 10:00 a.m.  
Meet on Elm Street underpass of Rt I-91, Wethersfield
- Sunday, February 13 - 2:00 p.m.  
Meet on Point Road off Naubuc Avenue,  
south of Rt. 3 overpass, Glastonbury

**WINTER PROGRAM**

**"ACQUIRING OPEN SPACE"**

**SPEAKER: DAVID LEFF,**  
Deputy Commissioner, Dept. Environmental Protection

**WILLIAM J. PITKIN COMMUNITY CENTER**  
30 Greenfield Street, Wethersfield  
**MONDAY, JANUARY 31 - 7:00 p.m.**

Sponsored by Wethersfield Nature Center and  
Great Meadows Conservancy Trust, Inc.

**Officers & Committee Chairs :**

- |                              |                  |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| President: Neal Cox          | 860-563-4143     |
| Vice-Pres: Joe Hickey        | 860-529-4363     |
| Secretary: Mary Carter       | 860-257-7887     |
| Treasurer: Gary Gagnon       | (h) 860-633-6021 |
|                              | (o) 860-520-1262 |
| Land Mgm't: Larry Lunden     | 860-232-2416     |
| Land Acquisitn: Pam St. Jean | 860-563-2931     |
| Program: Jolly Steffens      | 860-633-9379     |

**WATCH FOR NOTICE OF  
ANNUAL MEETING IN MARCH**



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WITH THE PLACES WE LOVE" -**

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