



Great Meadows Conservation Trust, Inc.
 P. O. Box 171
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 www.gmct.org



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

Vol. XXXIX no. 3

August 2018



GMCT 50th Anniversary Celebration!

Who: ✓ GMCT Members' Families, Guests, and Friends of the Meadows Invited

What: ✓ **Harvest Potluck Picnic!**

When: ✓ **September 15 Noon - 4:00pm**

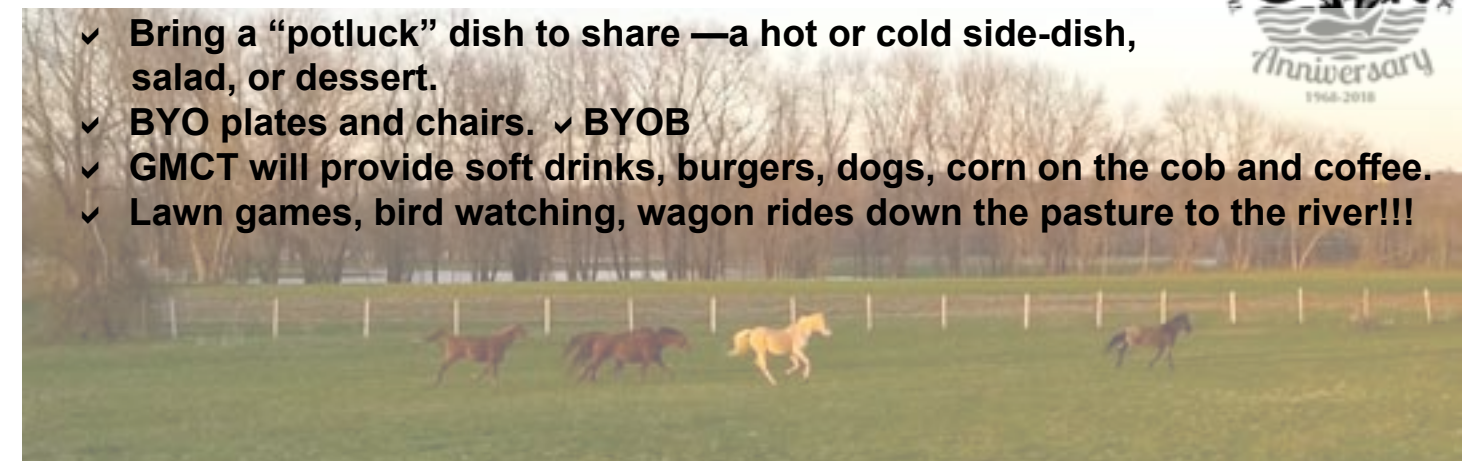
Where: ✓ Packard's Pratt Farm, 156 Tryon Street, South Glastonbury

✓ **RSVP:** Linda (860) 529-7686 or l.w.nielson@gmail.com

Please let us know the number of folks you invited.
Volunteers needed to help set up, etc. Thanks!



- ✓ Bring a "potluck" dish to share —a hot or cold side-dish, salad, or dessert.
- ✓ BYO plates and chairs. ✓ BYOB
- ✓ GMCT will provide soft drinks, burgers, dogs, corn on the cob and coffee.
- ✓ Lawn games, bird watching, wagon rides down the pasture to the river!!!



Inside —

50th Anniversary Events Schedule — Pages 1 - 2

Harvest Potluck Picnic – Saturday, Sept. 15

RSVP! And volunteer to help out!

Rocky Hill Farmer's Market Days – Aug. 22, Sept. 26

Protecting Nature through Land Trusts Sept. 18

Source to the Sea Cleanup – Sept. 29

Foraging Walk @ Wood Parcel with Sherry Pocknett - Oct. 13

New Brochure...and Membership Fees — Pages 4 – 5

Thriving Meadows Habitats —

abundant farm produce, turf and wading birds – Page 6

Scientific Research, Education and Recreation – Page 7

Crow Point Cove at, 60 Years – Page 3

Join or renew your membership now! Go to www.gmct.org/membership or use this form.

\$20 – Individual \$350 – Life Member

Name _____

\$ 30 – Family \$550 – Family Life Membership

Address _____

Send Check payable to Great Meadows Conservation Trust, Inc. to P.O.Box, Glastonbury, CT 06033



Save the dates! 50th Anniversary Events you don't want to miss!



Rocky Hill Farmer's Market Days – Wed., Aug. 22, Sept. 26, 3-7 p.m.

Farmer's Markets @ Ferry Landing GMCT Booth and walks or paddles TBA

Harvest Potluck Picnic! Sat., Sept. 15, 12-4 p. m.

Protecting Nature through Land Trusts

Tuesday, September 18, 6:30 p.m.

Connecticut Audubon Center at Glastonbury, 1361 Main Street 06033

Find out how local Land Trusts are playing a vital role conserving important wildlife habitat in Connecticut and Glastonbury.

Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director, Connecticut Land Conservation Council,

Jim Wright, President of the Kongsicut Land Trust, and **Betty Schmitt**, Director GMCT

Source to the Sea Cleanup — September 29, 8:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

At the Wethersfield Cove with the Connecticut River Conservancy, MDC, Families, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, High School Enviro-Club Kids.

Foraging Walk @ Wood Parcel with Sherry Pocknett — Oct. 13

GMCT and Wethersfield Historical Society join to host an Autumn foraging walk at the Wood Parcel with Native American chef Sherry Pocknett to observe the fall harvest of native and introduced herbs and flowers growing in the woods, pond, streamside and swamp. Stewardship Chair, Jim Woodworth and WHS Education and Exhibitions Coordinator, Kaitlyn Oberndorfer will lead.

GMCT at Fifty — Presentation by Jim Woodworth @ Weth. Nature Center — Tues., Oct. 23

March 2019 — Annual Dinner — The Full Cycle of Celebration



Rocky Hill 175th Parade

VP Diana Evans and Director Linda Nielson led the GMCT with the 50th Anniversary Banner. LM Chair Larry Lunden, dressed as a birder, rode with the eagle in the pickup.



Looking for "Official" GMCT 50th Logo Merchandise?!

Order a shirt, drink cup, or laptop sleeve to show your GMCT pride!

50th Anniversary merchandise is available @ —

<https://www.redbubble.com/people/gmct>

All proceeds above the cost of goods go back to the Trust.

Choose your size and color!



Citizen Scientists tailgate for birds and beauty

Take an evening ride through the meadows and you'll likely find Ken Etheridge and Janet Smith enjoying the quiet evening, absorbing the peace of the lengthening shadows.

Ken's current notebook, begun in 2004 when the first post DDT eagle pair built a nest along Elm Street Extension, documents that first unsuccessful nesting, and every chick fledged since, including this year's single eaglet.

This year and next Ken and Janet's observations will contribute to the Connecticut Bird Atlas project which will document the distribution, abundance, and breeding activities of birds at sites throughout the entire state. The resulting data will be used to document changes since the last comprehensive survey of the state's birds, which happened in the early 1980's. So far they've observed bobolinks, a Connecticut species of special concern, nesting in the hay fields, and Eastern bluebirds, Baltimore orioles, goldfinches, barn, tree, and bank swallows, along with the great blue heron rookery and the osprey nest, sighting 3 osprey chicks. And they heard the call of a bobwhite for the first time in years.



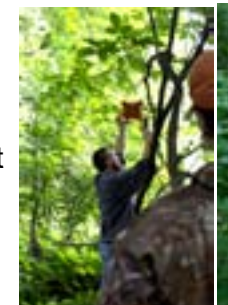
UConn Grad Student Kristin Beatty is studying Bobcat habitat

Kristin Beatty's critter cams are on the lookout for critters in 30 locations around Connecticut, including "RH1" in the Dipaola Parcel, and RH2 and RH3



in Quarry Park. RH1 has a lure, a scented sachet, both in a tree, and on top of a measuring stake that will document the size of a critter, but also the depth of the winter snow cover.

The bobcat at left was caught on camera early one morning in July amongst the lush ferns in the flood plain forest. Roaming bobcats have been observed along the Beaver Brook marsh north of 191 past Maple Street. Kristin's study will extend through the winter, comparing habitats.



Trinity Prof Ben Toscano scouted lab sites for his Ecology 101 class

Newly hired in the Trinity College Biology Department, Ben Toscano took a tour of the meadows looking for old hayfields and golden rod stands for field laboratory sites for his Ecology 101 class to study grasshoppers and golden rod.

The tour included a stop at the Wood Parcel where neighbors Josiah Santiago and Daniel Pohl were chilling on the bench by the cornfield.



E. B. Wolf Outdoor Nature Campers Explore the Wood Parcel trail

Nature Center teacher Pamela Molochko led an enthusiastic group of young day campers, and Moms and Dads, on an outing at the Wood Parcel. After outfitting them each with a pair of binoculars, Pamela warmed them up with song and exercises before setting off, over the bridge, and through the woods to the pond and beyond.





Fair Weather Acres crops thrive in the fertile flood plain

Above, beet greens are high and dry on their raised beds, while their roots reach deep for water during dry spells. Beyond the row of tall Indian corn grow row upon row of squashes, acorn to zucchini,

including, at right blue hubbard squash and orange pumpkins, already ripening in the hot wet growing season.

At left FWA seasonal farm workers weed a field of onions grown on raised beds covered in white plastic sheeting.

Below left, as the sun sets, an FWA trailer pulls away from the processing area under the trees where the day's harvest of produce has been sorted and packed for the FWA Farm Stand, the CSA, Whole Foods and other fine grocery stores in the region. The farm workers, too, will end their long day in the fields.



Keys to the Rocky Hill Meadows Gates

After years of seeking relief from litter, illegal dumping, dust and vandalism, the farmers who raise crops in the meadows were granted their request to have the gates permanently closed to vehicular traffic. (First mentioned in the *Meadow View* in the '80's!). Last fall the Rocky Hill Town Council passed Ordinance 230, limiting driving in the meadows to authorized vehicles. Convenient by-passes are available for walkers and bicyclists at all three gates.

Land owners, including the Great Meadows Conservation Trust, could request keys for a service charge of \$15. Seven GMCT members volunteered to be custodians of keys. They are Christopher Duff, President, Sandi Kelly, Steve Kotchko, Larry Lunden, Ken Etheridge, Jim Woodworth and Jim Zagroba. Trust members and others who wish vehicular access to the meadows should contact one of the key holders directly to arrange a mutually convenient time to share a visit to the meadows or borrow a key for the day. An email inquiry sent to "info@gmct.org" will be forwarded to key holders.

Borrowers should be careful to follow rules, including locking the gates after passing through, and being sure not to block the passage of farm equipment. Substantial penalties can accrue for a lost key, up to replacing all the locks and keys, and "Penalties for Offenses" outlined in RH Ordinance 203-6, including fines up to \$250.

Crow Point Cove at 60 Years – A testimony to the resilience of Nature and the efforts of the Great Meadows Conservation Trust



A short paddle across the river from the new Glastonbury boat house and launch lies the man made Crow Point Cove, excavated to a depth of more than 40 feet 60 years ago for the earth to raise Route 3 and I91 high above the flood waters.

Note at right the photo of the Elm Street underpass as the fill mined in Crow Point is formed into an elevated roadbed several miles long.

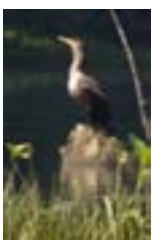


At left the aerial photo from 1934 shows Hales Creek, a remnant river channel that once flowed past Wright's Island, the pastures and sandy beach of Crow Point, and, circled in yellow, productive Comstock, Ferre, & Co. fields.

At right is the proposed dike, horse race track and facilities, and marina in Crow Point abandoned due to fierce opposition from Wethersfield residents and the timely acquisition in 1972 by the GMCT of the Standish Parcel circled in yellow.



At left the 2016 aerial photo shows Crow Point Cove gradually filling in with rich river silt. A midsummer paddle in the clear water along the shallows revealed fingerlings and a two foot fish



drawing the interest of the cormorant drying on the log, and the osprey high on a snag. As the afternoon wore on three osprey began to soar in the sunlight.

At right the invasive water chestnut is still controllable by pulling, but its growth, like evil aquatic strawberry plants with spiky fruit, poses a real threat to the teeming fresh water habitat.



On the rich farmland saved from development, Anderson Farms raises sweet corn and Fair Weather Acres raises green beans. Whole bean plants are scooped up by the harvester at left, stems and leaves blown out to the left, while ripe pods flow up into the bin. The harvester transports the beans to Rocky Hill for processing.

New GMCT brochure features color and a new fee schedule



Clip here —
Photograph by Jim Woodworth

HEED THE WARNING SIGNS

The Great Meadows are already seriously impacted by sand and gravel excavations, a former landfill, and highway construction. Certain areas continue to experience vandalism and dumping problems. Pressures to develop in the Meadows and along the river continue. Without action to protect it, this oasis will experience further degradation.



LOOKING AHEAD

The Trust will continue to encourage agriculture and compatible recreational use in the meadows, support archaeological and ecological research and monitor development proposals that might impact the Meadows. The Trust will work with others in long-range planning for the Connecticut River and its environs, believing that wise use of these resources is vital both today as well as for generations to come.



Map by Phil Lohman

Yes, I want to help preserve and protect the Great Meadows for generations to come. To support the Trust, I enclose my tax deductible membership gift:

- Individual Member \$20
- Family (Parents & Children under 16)..... \$30
- Life Member..... \$350
- Family Life Membership (two people)..... \$550
- Associate Member (Lives out-of-town) \$20
- In addition to dues, I am making an additional tax deductible contribution of..... _____
- And my employer matches my gift..... _____

Total contribution..... _____

Name _____

Address _____

Town/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Please make checks payable to
Great Meadows Conservation Trust, Inc.
and mail to P.O. Box 171
Glastonbury, CT 06033



Printed on Recycled Paper

New Membership Fee Schedule

The new fee schedule reflects only the second increase in 50 years.

The Board of Directors voted to increase the fees effective with the first new brochure printing since 2013.

The new brochure features colorful photographs, and a new map, but also continues to communicate to prospective members the mission and now 50 year legacy of the Great Meadows Conservation Trust, Inc.



Important Bird Area indeed!

The bird's eye view of the meadows in the aerial photograph in the brochure illustrates the attraction of the Great Meadows to migrating birds as they follow the river north in the spring to breeding areas and south in the fall for the winter.

The shallow pond above, reflecting the evening sky after a summer rain, provides a refueling spot for wading shore birds on their long, often intercontinental, journeys.



Killdeer, summer residents of the fields, feast before their fall migration.,

“Where are the meadows?” The aerial photo and map allow prospective members to visualize the expanse of the Great Meadows.