



Great Meadows Conservation Trust, Inc.
P. O. Box 171
Glastonbury, CT 06033
www.gmct.org

Upcoming Events:

Annual Dinner: March 31 – p. 2

CT Trails Weekend: June 4-5, 2016 – P. 5

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

Vol. XXXII no. 1

March 2016

President's Annual Report—2015

by Tom Kehoe, President

Though we have had a mild winter, as spring approaches and our minds turn toward being outside even more, perhaps for some hiking, bike riding, bird watching or canoeing, we are reminded that the Great Meadows provide a wonderful place to do all these wonderful outdoor activities and exercises in over 4500 acres of open space in Glastonbury, Wethersfield and Rocky Hill.

This floodplain contains rich farmland, a varied habitat for wildlife and the largest freshwater marsh in the state. It is an oasis of green in the urban sprawl of Greater Hartford. Cultivated since prehistoric times, the farmland with its plentiful water supply is some of the most valued in the world.

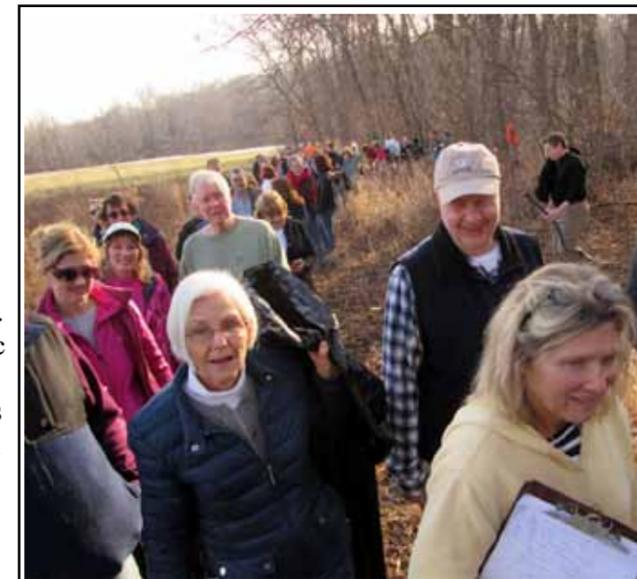
I am pleased to report that the Great Meadows Conservation Trust has remained active in doing its part to preserve this rare and unique land.

This year the Trust hosted six winter walks, led by Trust members who provided insight to the land and an opportunity to see parcels not easily accessible in other seasons.

As stewards of the land, in 2015, we also completed 25 property inspections, thanks to Chairman Larry Lunden and Land Management Committee members, Rick Doran, Jim Woodworth, Ken Etheridge, and Deb Creeden, for inspecting and writing reports for 25 properties. All three of our conservation easements were also inspected, thanks to Betty Schmitt, Rick Doran, and Penny Rusnak, who have developed mutually beneficial communications with all of the land owners. Our leasing program with local farmers continues to

keep 56 acres of farmland in active use. For more detail, see Larry's LMC report on page 3.

Work also continued on the property acquired last January, known as the Frechette parcel, a strategically located 3.37 acre parcel located on Elm Street in Wethersfield. The property came with an access strip between two residential houses, and many overgrown



A sunny Sunday afternoon brought out a record 92 hikers touring the DiPaola and Brooks Parcels in Rocky Hill.

trees and shrubs. Jim Woodworth and a large crew worked hard on the parcel to remove hazardous trees and unsightly brush together with a professional arborist for some of the more difficult work

We also remain on the watch for strategic parcels that the Trust might seek to acquire or accept as a donation.

Also this year, The Connecticut Superior Court ruled that the Town of Rocky Hill Planning & Zoning Commission exceeded its authority by approving a fill permit application to construct a road at the site of the former Rocky Hill landfill. Concurrently, Trust members Betty Schmit and Becky Zalznock, LEP, have

participated in the "Review Team" set up by the DEEP with the Town of Rocky Hill and property owners to work towards the design of an acceptable Landfill Closure Plan to be submitted to DEEP. For more detail on the court case and closure process, see the story by Betty Schmitt on Page 3.

As with all organizations made up of volunteers, the Trust would not exist nor accomplish all that it does without the tireless efforts and dedication of so many members of the board and working committees.

To all who give so much of their time and energy, I give you my heartfelt thanks. Thanks again to Brian Smith and Evan Seeman of the Robinson and Cole law firm for their pro bono support of the Trust.

Agenda — Annual Meeting, March 31, 2016

- 1. Minutes of Annual Meeting March 26, 2015.
- 2. Treasurer’s report for fiscal year 2015(see p. 3)
- 3. President’s 2015 annual report to the members (see p. 1)
- 4. Report of the Nominating Committee
- 5. Election of Directors to serve through 2017 Motion: That Timothy Lewis, Daniel

Schnaidt, and Peter Spangberg be elected to serve as Directors for their respective designated terms.

6. Election of Officers to serve until next annual meeting Motion: That Tom Kehoe, Christopher Duff, Dan Schnaidt, and Richard Doran be elected to serve as President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, respectively of the GMCT for the 2016–2017 term.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT – 2016

Date: FEBRUARY 24, 2016

Members: Richard Doran, Christopher Duff, Ralph Moyer.

RE: 2016 Slate of Officers and Directors

Officers:

- President –**
Tom Kehoe (Glastonbury – 2nd – 2017)
- Vice President –**
Christopher Duff (Rocky Hill – 1st 2017)
- Secretary –**
Daniel Schnaidt (Glastonbury – 2nd – 2019)
- Treasurer –**
Richard Doran (Wethersfield – 2nd – 2017)

Directors/New Terms

- Timothy Lewis (Rocky Hill – 1st term 2019)
- Daniel Schnaidt (Glastonbury—2nd – 2019)
- Peter Spangenberg (Wethersfield – 1st 2019)

Directors/Continuing Terms

- Richard Doran (Wethersfield – 2nd – 2017)

- Chris Duff (Rocky Hill) – 1st – 2017)
- Diana Evans (Wethersfield – 1st – 2018)
- Tom Kehoe (Glastonbury – 2nd – 2017)
- Whit Osgood (Glastonbury – 1st -2018)
- Penny Rusnak (Glastonbury-2nd -2017)
- Pamela St. Jean (Wethersfield – 2nd – 2018)
- Sandy Weiss (Rocky Hill – 2nd – 2017)
- James Zagroba (Rocky Hill -2nd -2018)

Directors Stepping Down

- Sandi Kelly (Rocky Hill)
- Rebecca M. Zalznock (Wethersfield)

Two motions necessary at the annual meeting.

- 1. That Timothy Lewis, Daniel Schnaidt, and Peter Spangberg be elected to serve as Directors for their respective designated terms.
- 2. That Tom Kehoe, Christopher Duff, Penny Rusnak* and Richard Doran be elected to serve as President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, respectively of the GMCT for the 2016 – 2017 term.

Annual Meeting—Special Guest Speaker

Catherine M. Rawson

Catherine M. Rawson, J.D., M.E.M, will provide us with an overview of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC), its recent work and future directions in support of our state’s 137 land trusts (www.ctconservation.org). She serves as Vice-Chair of the CLCC Steering Committee.



The Gallery

141 New London Turnpike
Glastonbury

Thursday, March 31, 2016

Social Hour 5:30 • Dinner 6:30
Annual Meeting and speaker to follow

Buffet Dinner Menu

- Cheese and cracker tray, cocktail meatballs*
- Tossed Salad and assorted cold salads*
- Carving station with New York sirloin of beef*

- Pasta with Alfredo and Marinara sauces*
- Baked scrod, breaded with lemon and butter*
- Chicken Marsala*
- Vegetables du jour, red roasted potatoes*
- Dessert du jour*

Regular and decaf coffee and tea

Cash bar for all other beverages and soda

The cost per person for dinner is \$28.00, tax and gratuity included

—clip here—

GMCT Annual Dinner Reservations

Please reserve **no later** than March 24th
for the dinner Thursday, March 31th, 2016

Questions may be directed to Rick Doran at 860- 690- 9983 or info@GMCT.org

The cost per person for dinner is \$28.00.

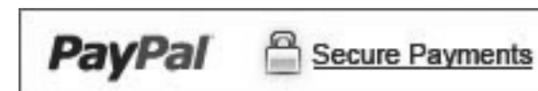
Name(s): _____

Phone Number _____ Address _____

Dinners @ \$28.00 _____ = _____
Memberships @ \$15 individual/\$25 family _____ = _____
Additional Donation _____
Total Enclosed: _____

Please enclose a check payable to “GMCT” and mail to:

www.GMCT.org



GMCT Annual Meeting
Rick Doran
223 Main Street,
Wethersfield, CT 06109

Vice Chair of CLCC and Exec. Dir. of Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust

Not only is Catherine Rawson Vice Chair of CLCC, but she is also Executive Director of the regional Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust, the oldest and largest land trust in Connecticut. The land trust, formed in 1965, works in 17 communities and protects more than 9,000 acres of land including 15 working farms, over 100 wildlife sanctuaries, and 14 nature preserves open to the public with hiking trails.

Under Catherine's leadership, management plans, habit restoration, and trail maintenance on the many protected properties have been brought up to Land Trust Alliance standards. Since assuming the position in 2011, Catherine has led the land trust through the accreditation process with the LTA, joining a growing number of accredited land trusts in Connecticut.

Among her passions is "having people enjoy and connect to the natural area we protect. It's wonderful to connect with the land—it's good for the spirit," she said in a 2011 interview.

A graduate of Bates College and Vermont Law School, where she studied environmental law, Catherine also has a Master's Degree in Environmental Management from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Prior to joining Weantinoge, she served as an Assistant Attorney General for the State of Connecticut.

Catherine's professional experience in the environmental field spans more than 15 years. She has lived in Connecticut most of her life, cherishes the state's rural and wild spaces, and is thrilled to be able to work to protect them.



"It's wonderful to connect with the land—it's good for the spirit,"

Treasurers Annual Report – 2014

by Rick Doran, Treasurer

Invested assets grew by 6.2% in 2014, compared with year end 2013. This growth was impacted by a \$4,000 transfer from invested assets to the general operations account to help pay for land acquisition in Glastonbury. Without the transfer, invested assets would have grown by 7.3%.

A review of the Trust risk and investment strategy was conducted in a telephone interview with a financial advisor at Vanguard. The investment objectives of the Trust remain to promote liquidity, provide current income and long term capital appreciation for long term growth. The strategy to achieve the objectives is to combine a diversified portfolio while maintaining a moderate level of risk. The asset mix is comprised of 50% stocks, 44% bonds and 6% money market funds. The financial advisor stated the Trust has a balanced diversity of assets, which tend to balance and reduce our investment risk. On a scale of 1-to-5, the financial advisor stated the Trust risk level was at a ranking of three, noting moderate investment risk. According to the financial advisor, our asset mix, balance and risk is similar to other not-for-profit land trusts of comparable size to ours.

The general operations account is balanced and secured in a checking account at TD Bank.

An audit of the Treasurer was conducted and it was noted that all accounts are properly balanced and expenditures have been properly accounted.

The budget for 2015 was presented and approved by the Board

at its February 26, 2015 meeting. The annual budget for 2015 is \$14,740 compared with \$12,500 for 2014. This represents an increase of 18% due to expected increases in our land acquisition and stewardship expenditures in the coming year.

Landfill, Cont.

including criteria for initiating corrective action" and a "long term water quality monitoring program...for post closure surface and ground water monitoring."

- that any work performed on the site, with prior approval by DEEP, be done with minimum impact on adjacent properties, wetlands, surface and groundwater, Goff Brook, and the Connecticut River, in a manner appropriate for the existing geological conditions,
- for the owner to repair the site—when DEEP completes its step by step review, the public comment period has been concluded, and the owner has received all local and DEEP approvals and permits required to start work, and
- that when approved by DEEP, an ongoing monitoring program of the maintenance of the repaired landfill cap and water quality be implemented and reports be available to the public—to ensure environmental and public health and safety.

Land Management Committee Report 2015

by Larry Lunden, Land Management Chair

This year the committee has completed inspections on 25 parcels. This brings all our inspections up to date. With the posting of our boundary signs and more members of the committee participating, knowledge of our parcel locations is now more widely shared. I thank Rick Doran, Jim Woodworth, Ken Etheridge, and Deb Creeden for their help in writing the reports.

All three of our conservation easements have been inspected. We have developed mutually beneficial communications with all of the land owners. I thank Betty Schmitt, Rick Doran, and Penny Rusnak for their thorough work.

Our leasing program with local farmers continues to keep 56 acres of farmland in active use. We added a new farmer to our family. Ms. Clark of Botticello Farms is using two of our properties for their corn crop. Our leasing program is now being run by Rick Doran and Deb Creeden. They graciously took on the responsibility to free up my time for other duties.

Court Supports Trust's Appeal

Trust continues to seek environmentally sound closing, capping and monitoring of former RH landfill

by Betty Schmitt,

The mission of the Trust is to preserve and conserve the Great Meadows floodplain. Protection of Trust land often involves the use of advocacy for environmental and public health and safety, and when merited—legal action.

A Trust parcel abuts the 43-acre privately owned Former Rocky Hill Landfill. In January 2010 the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) ordered the owners to design a plan—to repair, close, "cap" and monitor the site—for up to 30 years—for pollution issues. The Town of Rocky Hill has responsibility to issue all locally required permits for the site, construction of a "cap" and monitoring system.

In Oct 2010, GMCT appealed the issuance of a "filling" permit approved by the Town's Planning and Zoning Commission for construction of a temporary access road using recycled asphalt millings as "fill." GMCT argued this approval was in violation of town regulations.

In November 2015, the Superior Court decided in favor of GMCT. The Court found that the Commission had exceeded its authority, violated its own regulations

The Trust acquired a new property this year. It is our Frechette Field parcel on Elm Street in Wethersfield, a 3.37 acre parcel with a farming field and marsh area. We had the property surveyed and the boundaries marked. The property came with an access strip between two residential houses, and many overgrown trees and shrubs. Jim Woodworth and a large crew have been working hard on the parcel to remove hazardous trees and unsightly brush. We had to use a professional arborist for the work that was too difficult for volunteers. The present farmer using the field, Anderson Farms of Wethersfield, will continue to use the field.

We now have 189 acres under ownership or easement, in 49 parcels.

We held seven winter walks for the public, co-sponsored with the Connecticut Audubon Society at Glastonbury and the Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center. We had an attendance of 133 people total. Meetup.com continues to be a good form of publicity.

and thereby voided the permit. The five-year long appeal process was carried forward ably by GMCT's legal counsel Brian Smith and Evan Seaman of Robinson & Cole, LLC.

The DEEP has approved a process—to design, review and approve construction of the "capping" and closure of the former Rocky Hill landfill. The Trust stands ready to continue to work with the Town of Rocky Hill and the property owners, as a member of "the Review Team," in the "Public Participation Process" for the design of the Landfill Closure Plan.

The GMCT continues to seek these outcomes:

- to reduce the present or future potential environmental impacts of pollutants from the site,
- to leave the site in as natural condition as possible,
- to halt activity on the site until each of the action steps required by the owner is approved by the DEEP,
- that baseline and on going water sampling and sample analysis (as required to be provided by the owner) meet DEEP required standards necessary to "...evaluate leachate quality, as well as initiating and continuing leachate monitoring on a quarterly basis,

See Landfill, p. 6

Winter Walks 2016—surprises in a warm and open season From the last day of the longest Indian summer

Wood Parcel—January 3



A sunny Sunday afternoon walk across the fertile fields along the marsh revealed a magnificent beaver lodge to over 60 walkers, and, on the way back, yielded a bountiful late season harvest of spinach, beets, even an overgrown radish or two from David Anderson's field.



Lee and Carol West pose with their harvest.

The spinach planted for the spring spread out green and strong while the strawberries, nestled under straw, were prepared for a winter's nap. The very next morning the beets were frozen solid in the ground!

Wolf Parcel—January 7



A Saturday morning walk began with more than 40 walkers exploring the flood plain forest. Looking up they spotted a pair of eagles in the trees. Walking along the Goff Brook bank, they saw where an enterprising family of beavers had gnawed trees and burrowed a lodge into the bank.



Many also walked out the Harford dike to the river.



Dipaolo, Brooks, Ryan, McCann Parcels—January 31

A record 92 hikers gathered for a sunny warm winter walk where Goff and Beaver Brooks meet and meander among the fallow fields and flood plain forest. Fallen trees made bridges and the beaver altered landscape offered a dam, right, a sturdy bench (below), and a lodge excavated into the bank. No snow cover meant trash strewn among the trees by flood waters could be gathered and carried out. Below left, Phil Wilsey, Judy and Lew Parker and friend brandish shock absorbers that had been dumped in the woods, now destined for the transfer station.



Crow Point—February 20

Hikers headed out the old earth mover road, explored the hulking cement silos, reminders of a time when dairy cows and corn and hay were raised in the fertile soil that was later excavated for Routes 3 and 91. The man made cove, now owned by Goodwin College, forms a natural bowl where trash, floated in on the spring freshet is caught, just like the back of the Wethersfield Cove. These intrepid hikers filled bags with plastic bottles, lumps of styrofoam, a huge cooler, a plastic monster(?!), and lugged and rolled heavy tires on steel rims a good half mile back to the gate where Goodwin College workers can remove it.



Save the dates! Saturday mornings, April 2 and 9

Planting of a pollinator garden of native wildflowers, shrubs and a tree offer Spring volunteer opportunities

Take a break from your gardening and yardwork—join Trust members at the Frechette parcel on Elm Street in Wethersfield. We'll need to prepare the soil, design the wild flower garden, dig the planting holes, and plant the wild flower plants, shrubs, and the large American basswood or linden tree. We'll be looking to purchase the wildflowers from Earth Tones in Woodbury, North Central Conservation District Plant sale (Tolland), and some of the shrubs and the American Linden Tree (aka "bee tree" for its sweet blossoms) from Millane Nursery in Cromwell. Our "habitat improvements" in the Frechette parcel, including removing overgrown trees and invasive vines, add to our invasive species control efforts in the Wood and Wolf Parcels, as well as, native warm season grass plantings in the Wolf Parcel.

Join us on Saturday, April 2 and/or April 9 anytime between 8:30am and noon.

Trust receives grant from the Wethersfield Green Summit Committee

Trust members Gerald Hayes, Dorene Ciarcia, and Matt Forest were members of the Wethersfield Green Summit Committee, formed in 2006 as an umbrella organization to bring together community groups whose shared mission focused on environmental and energy issues. As the sun set on the committee last year, their remaining funds were dispersed to like-minded organizations, including a \$1000 grant to the GMCT. Among their activities, the GSC held a conservation challenge, where residents were encouraged to conserve natural resources and be mindful of their use. The Trust plans to invest some of those funds in planting a pollinator garden of native wildflowers, shrubs, and an American Basswood Tree on our Frechette Parcel to encourage sustainability of the native bee and butterfly population. The sustainability of our food system depends on pollinators.



Jewel weed and Joe Pye weed flourish on the bank of Beaver Brook, gracing the Wood Parcel bridge

CT Trails Day Weekend Events—June 4 and 5 Two Great Walks...and New this Year—Two Paddles! Celebrate Free Launch from the Wethersfield Cove!

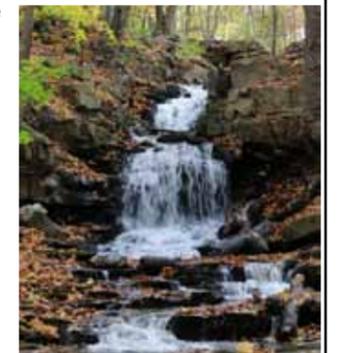
Educational Walk for Little Kids! Saturday, June 4. 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM. Wood Parcel. Bring your



young naturalists (ages 4-6) for a short 1-mile hike and nature activity on this Great Meadows Conservation Trust property. We will cross the shiny bridge over the brook, follow the trail through the woods, pass the turtle pond, and follow the trail along the marsh. The route will skirt the edge of the cornfield, site of the original "Pyquag" Native American summer camp, to the irrigation pond and back. Members of the Wethersfield High School Ecology Club will have a table set up with stickers and nature activities. Meet leader Jim Woodworth at the entrance to the Wood Parcel.

Dividend Pond Trails and Archaeological District Hike.

Sat. June 4, 9:00AM to 10:30AM. Meet GMCT's Sandi Kelly at the park entrance on Old Forge Road. This gentle hike winds through 68 acres of natural beauty. Enjoy the woods, ponds, a waterfall and archaeological sites while spotting birds, waterfowl and perhaps a beaver at work in one of the ponds. The town has made major improvements to this area, including natural stone steps, bridges, benches and new kiosk with detailed trail map. Sponsored by Rocky Hill Parks and Recreation (860) 258-2772.



Kayak and Canoe Paddle. Sunday, June 5, 9:00AM to 11AM. Experienced Paddlers. Limit 20 boats.

Join the Connecticut River Watershed Council Lower River Steward Alicea Charamut and GMCT's Tim Lewis. Launch in scenic Wethersfield Cove, paddle upriver to Hartford and back. Explore the beauty of the river—view eagles, ospreys, learn about clean water efforts. For more information and pre-registration (required!) call or email Jim Woodworth 860-808-9968, info@gmct.org. Life vests are required. Heavy rain or high water cancels. Insurance Fee: \$5.



Kayak and Canoe Paddle. Sunday June 5, 10AM. Novice Paddlers. Limit 20 boats.

Join Boy Scout leader Denis Walter and GMCT's Paul Woodworth in a paddle around the Cove. Explore the north side of the Cove and Folly Brook. View birdlife and learn about clean water efforts. For more information and pre-registration(required!) call or email Jim Woodworth 860-808-9968, info@gmct.org. Life vests are required. Heavy rain or high water cancels. Insurance Fee: \$5.