



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

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*The Clouds opened in the West and the Sunset illuminated the sky over the frozen Cove  
 The Wolf Moon rose in the East shrouded in clouds but emerged to shine and turn blood red*



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

Vol. XXXV no. 1

March 2019

## President’s Annual Report – 2018

**By Chris Duff, President**

In 2018, our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year was highlighted by many fantastic events. The Annual Dinner Meeting in March included remembrances of key events and “steps along the way” of 50 years of protecting and preserving the Great Meadows. Founder Joe Hickey, was followed by past presidents Parker, Schade, Cox, Moyer, Woodworth, and Doran sharing memories.

On Earth Day in April, over 60 people joined Trust members at the Wood Parcel for a work session, including trash pickup, trail maintenance, trail building, invasive plant removal and erosion control. It was a great opportunity to engage the community and inform them of our efforts to preserve land in the Great Meadows.

In May, the Trust sponsored a float participating in the Memorial Day Parade in Rocky Hill, celebrating the town’s 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary banner proudly led the way for our float, which acknowledged our agriculture, bird and wildlife preservation efforts in the Meadows.

CT Trails Day activities on the first weekend in June included a “nature walk for little kids” on our Wood Parcel, a bike ride from Cove to Ferry, and paddles in the Wethersfield Cove and on the CT River, plus a nature hike in Quarry Park and the historic district of Rocky Hill. Summertime events included our participation in farmer’s markets in Wethersfield and Rocky Hill.



Our late summer Harvest Potluck Picnic at Pratt Farms in Glastonbury was great fun. Over 75 guests, including family and friends, enjoyed a delicious cookout meal. Many guests took a scenic wagon ride pulled by Mark Packard driving his tractor through the farmland and past grazing horses down to the shore of the river!

In late September the Trust again co-sponsored the Source to the Sea Cleanup at the Wethersfield Cove; volunteers removed 1.2 tons of trash and 7 tires.



Harvest Potluck Picnic at Pratt Farms featured a fabulous scenic wagon ride through the lush pasture, past grazing horses down to the shore of the CT River! .

October offered us the opportunity to partner with Wethersfield Historical Society and present the second in a series of Native American foraging walks, educating the public about Native American foodways in pre-colonial times in the Meadows. The event was conducted on our Wood parcel and attended by a lively crowd interested in learning about natural and native foods.

Our 50<sup>th</sup> year celebration concluded with a salute to the the Trust for its contributions to

the community over the past 50 years by the Wethersfield Economic Development and Improvement Commission. Founding member Joe Hickey was also honored with the Betty H. Rosania Award for his lifetime commitment to Wethersfield through the GMCT, and for his 50+ years of service on various town commissions.

2018 was a banner year for the Trust and we look forward to 2019 energized and committed to our goals and our mission of protecting and preserving the precious resources of the Great Meadows.

**Join or renew your membership now!** Go to [www.gmct.org/membership](http://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



# Agenda — Annual Meeting, March 27, 2019

1. Minutes of Annual Meeting March 22, 2018.
2. Treasurer's report for fiscal year 2018(see p. 3)
3. President's 2018 Annual Report to the members (see p. 1)
4. Report of the Nominating Committee
5. Election of Directors to serve through 2022. Motion: That Tim Lewis, Penny Rusnak, Peter

Spangenberg, James Zagroba be elected to serve as Directors for their respective terms.

6. Election of Officers by the Directors to serve until the next annual meeting. Motion: That Christopher Duff, Diana Evans, Pete Spangenberg and Richard Doran be elected to serve as President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, respectively of the GMCT for the 2019 – 2020 term.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT – 2019

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** Rick Doran, Ralph Moyer, Chris Duff (ex officio).

**Secretary –**  
Peter Spangenberg (Wethersfield – 2<sup>nd</sup> – 2022)

**Retiring Directors:**  
Daniel Schnaidt (Glastonbury)

**Treasurer –**  
Richard Doran

**New Directors (Town and Term of Office)\***  
Timothy Lewis (Rocky Hill – 2<sup>nd</sup> – 2022)  
Penny Rusnack (Glastonbury – 1<sup>st</sup> – 2022)  
Peter Spangenberg (Wethersfield – 2<sup>nd</sup> – 2022)  
James Zagroba (Rocky Hill – 1<sup>st</sup> – 2022)

**\* to be elected at the 2019 Annual Meeting.**

**Directors Continuing Terms**  
Christopher Duff (Rocky Hill – 2<sup>nd</sup> – 2020)  
Diana Evans (Wethersfield – 2<sup>nd</sup> – 2021)  
John Ferguson (Glastonbury – 1<sup>st</sup> – 2020)  
Gerry Hayes (Wethersfield – 1<sup>st</sup> – 2021)  
Lilly McKenzie (Rocky Hill - 1<sup>st</sup> - 2021)  
Linda Nielson (Wethersfield – 1<sup>st</sup> – 2020)  
Whit Osgood (Glastonbury – 2<sup>nd</sup> – 2021)  
Elizabeth Schmitt (Glastonbury – 1<sup>st</sup> – 2020)

**Officers:\***  
**President –**  
Christopher Duff (Rocky Hill – 2<sup>nd</sup> – 2020)  
**Vice President –**  
Diana Evans (Wethersfield – 2<sup>nd</sup> – 2021)

### Bobcat pre-dawn prowls on the Wood Parcel and beyond?

A stroll in the Wood Parcel on a sparkling morning with a pristine snow cover, revealed one set of tracks that led over the bridge and along the path.



They continued past the pond, out all the way across the snow covered corn field, into a patch of woods along a farm road leading to Elm Street. Off into a neighboring yard they wandered, back into the tangled patch of woods on Elm Street, leaving a perfect print on a low branch.



Then back across the field and down the Wood Parcel path, meandering into the weeds along the bank of the marsh.



Not a single foot print revealed claws that would indicate a canine paw. Instead, the four round toes and heal pads suggested the sheathed claws of feline paws. A small pile of snow had been clawed into a mound.

Finally the tracks led through a knotweed thicket to the shelter of a large yew where lay a cluster of gray feathers and one blue feather tipped in white: blue jay?

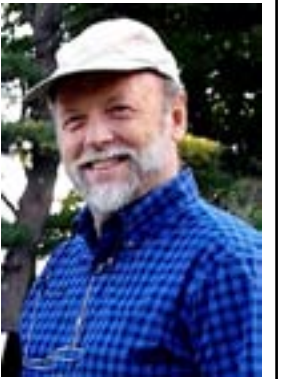
Bobcats are known to range widely in their hunt, males further than females. Could this be the same bobcat caught on the critter cam last summer at the DiPaola Parcel several miles away? Or its mate?

# Annual Meeting—Special Guest Speaker

**Dr. Robert Thorson**

## What Makes the Great Meadows Great?

Did you know that the Great Meadows are less a floodplain than the drained bed of a lake that is recreated every time floods are potent enough to back up the water above Middletown? Combining the general geological history of the region with his own extensive research, Professor Thorson will tell the story of the Great Meadows since their origin about 10,000 years ago. Curiously, the Great Meadows is the only truly meandering reach of the Connecticut River in its namesake state.



## The Gallery

141 New London Turnpike  
Glastonbury

**Wednesday, March 27, 2019**

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

Buffet Dinner Menu

*Shrimp cocktail, cocktail meatballs*

*Tossed Salad and assorted cold salads*

*Carving station with New York sirloin of beef*

*Pasta with Pesto and Marinara sauces*

*Baked cod, breaded with lemon and butter*

*Chicken Francaise*

*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 \$30.00, tax and gratuity included**

—clip here—

## GMCT Annual Dinner Reservations

Please reserve no later than March 18th for the dinner Wednesday, March 27, 2019

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

The cost per person for dinner is \$30.00.

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Dinners @ \$30.00 \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Memberships @ \$20 individual/\$30 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



# Upcoming Events:

## Annual Dinner

Wednesday, March 27 – Glastonbury

3 p.m. – Walk in Wood Parcel led by Dr. Thorson!

## Earth Day Work Session:

Saturday, April 27 – Wood Parcel

## CT Trails Day Weekend

Saturday, June 1

Little Kids Walk, Wood Parcel

## Sunday, June 2

Canoe/Kayak Paddle Wethersfield Cove

Cove-to-Ferry Bike Ride

TBA – Work Sessions at DiPaola, Frechette Field, Wolf Parcels as needed.

## We've got keys...to the Rocky Hill gates!

The Trust supports the farmers' need to keep the gates shut to keep out vandals and litterers, and the town ordinance to keep the gate locked. As land owners in the meadows, the Trust has been issued keys to the gates. The peace and beauty of the farmland, forest and wildlife of the Rocky Hill Meadows are open to walkers and bike riders.

For those who want to drive into the meadows, both Jim Zagroba and Jim Woodworth are "designated key holders" who will loan their keys for a day or open a gate. To make arrangements, contact Jim Z (jameszagroba@att.net; 860-529-2474) or Jim W. (info@gmct.org; 860-808-9968).

## Focus on the DiPaola Parcel in the Rocky Hill Meadows—

### IBA Small Matching grant received for erosion, access, and parking

The efforts of Jim Zagroba in applying for an Important Bird Area Small Matching Grant paid off with an



Erosion at the entrance to the DiPaola Parcel.

award of a \$1000 matching grant. The funds will be used to stabilize the area between

North Meadow

Road and the farm

road entrance to the DiPaola Parcel that erodes as water runs down

toward Goff Brook. The stabilized surface will enhance pedestrian access

(no more mud), provide parking area for cars, and improve water quality in Goff Brook.

The enhanced access provided by the improvements funded by this grant will fulfill the grant goal of "In-



Winter Walkers checking out the medals on the trees in the TNC transect.

## The Boatman

### Henry David Thoreau's River Years

Robert M. Thorson



"The Boatman gives readers a Thoreau for the Anthropocene epoch. As a backyard naturalist and river enthusiast, Thoreau was keenly aware of the way humans had altered the waterways and meadows of his beloved Concord River Valley. And he recognized that he himself—a land surveyor by trade—was as complicit in these transformations as the bankers, lawyers,

builders, landowners, and elected officials who were his clients. Robert Thorson tells a compelling story of intellectual growth, as Thoreau moved from anger, to lament, to acceptance of the way humans had changed the river he cherished more than Walden Pond."

The Harvard University Press

<http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674545090>

Also on the HUP website, follow the link to: "WBUR's

Here & Now, listen to Robert Thorson describe Thoreau's deep relationship to the Concord River. The excellent Here & Now interview is also linked from [www.gmct.org](http://www.gmct.org).

Ed Chiucarello is also working on enhancing the self-guided visitor experience in the DiPaola Parcel. Ed has been developing a map of the

parcel, including the trail, the TNC flood plain forest

research transect, and the disease Resistant Elm Tree Plantation.

In addition to projected trail marking and maintenance work, Ed is working on an informational sign that would include the map and information on the IBA

program, birds and other wildlife like the deer, beaver and bobcats found in the flood plain forest, in Goff Brook, and in the adjacent farm field habitats.



# Land Management Report 2018

by Larry Lunden, Land Management Chair

This year the committee has completed inspections on 26 parcels. I thank Rick Doran, Sandi Kelly, Ken Etheridge, Diana Evans, and Deb Creeden for their help in writing the reports. All three of our conservation easements have been inspected. I thank Betty Schmitt and Rick Doran for their thorough work. Our leasing program with local farmers continues to keep 56 acres of farmland in active use. Our leasing program is being run by Rick Doran and Deb Creeden. I thank them for their efforts.

We didn't acquire any new properties this year. We

continue to have 189 acres under ownership or easement, in 49 parcels.

The Rocky Hill meadow gates are now permanently locked. It has been very successful in eliminating the

vandalism the farmers experienced before. Walkers and bicyclists are welcome on the roads. We can make arrangements for those who need vehicle access.

We renewed the hunting license agreement with the Wethersfield Game Club for the coming two years. We will try to get agreements with the other hunting clubs.

Goodwin College held a grand opening celebration for the walking trail through Hockanum Meadows, and across two of our parcels there. It is open to the public and will allow access to our isolated parcels. It runs from East Hartford to the Putnam Bridge.

I held a training session for property inspectors. I went over the process and forms needed. It was well received by those attending.

We held eight winter walks for the public, co-sponsored with the Connecticut Audubon Society at Glastonbury and the Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center. We had attendance of 455 people total. Meetup.com continues to be good publicity.



Goodwin College hosted a Greenway Conference in October on multi-use trails and then held a dedication ceremony for the trails they are constructing in phases with DEEP grants that will eventually connect the East Hartford Riverfront and the Goodwin Campus south through Hockanum Meadow to the Putnam Bridge. Some completed sections accessible from S. Meadow Rd. are paved and have information kiosks featuring historical river maps by Phil Lohman.

## Treasurer's Annual Report

by Rick Doran, Treasurer

Our investment account with Vanguard suffered a loss of 3.4% in calendar year 2018, compared with the yearend asset value on December 31, 2017. This can be attributed to the declining stock market, which resulted in a loss of 5.6% in the fourth quarter 2018 compared with third quarter 2018. Many expected what they called a "market correction" and our assets declined along with the rest of the investment world. Also, one of our funds is being closed due to its performance and lack of activity and minimal growth. The assets, which are in the Convertible Securities Fund, will be transferred to several of our better performing funds.

The operations account remains in a positive position secured in a checking account at TD Bank.

The balance in the checking account can cover our expected expenses in the first six months of 2019.

An audit of the Treasurer's log books and registers was performed to review all transactions, debits, credits, and checking account balances. Auditors Dan Schnaidt and Pete Hinman, found written evidence to explain and justify all of the fiscal activity during calendar year 2018.

The budget for 2019, as developed by Finance and Development Committee members Ralph Moyer and Jim Zagroba, was presented to the Board at the February 28 meeting. Our budget for 2018 was \$16,200 and closed above breakeven, with \$16,400 of income and \$13,500 of expense. For 2019, we anticipate and target a total of \$18,200 of income and expense, which is presented as a balanced budget.



# Brisk Winter Walks — 2019!

## 100+ started off their New Year

with a mild and muddy stroll through the Wood Parcel, the Anderson Farm fields, Frechette Field and beyond. At right, the warm sunshine, the fluffy clouds and the bright green of the spinach, promising fresh, crunchy salads come May.



Right: A second mild and muddy walk led 40+ walkers through the Wolf Parcel and out astride the dike and into the partially flooded forest, returning with eagles nest high in a tree to the left, water treatment plant to the right, MDC storage/conveyance tunnel stack ahead. Hot chocolate, snacks and a warm welcome greeted the walkers at the Wethersfield Academy for the Arts after the walk.



Right, President Chris Duff pulls a tire from Goff Brook, while 30+ walkers (see p. 6) filled bags with trash stranded in the forested DiPaola Parcel by the high water this fall. Thanks to the good folks at Goodyear Auto Service on the Silas Deane Highway for taking the two tires that had been floating around the Meadows for awhile and recycled them. Years ago they were paid for recycled tires; these days they have to pay \$4.50 a tire – go figure!



Right, the New England winter offered up another mild sunny walk into the Glastonbury meadows for 50+ walkers, joining with the Land Heritage Coalition. The Trust Preissner and First Church Parcels were visited.



Good ole New England lingering freezing drizzle shrouded the super moon and canceled the walk to Wethersfield Cove (see cover photo!) and high water canceled the walk from the Audubon Society down into the meadows.

Below, the sunny afternoon crowd of 77 walkers gathered at the gate to enter Crow Point and circle past the silos to the point and back, with bags of trash and a tire. At right, the Weth. Game Club wood duck box cleaning day in the morning woke a sleepy screech owl and introduced a troop of Boy Scouts to wildlife stewardship.



# E.B. Wolf Parcel and DeMille Easement A WHIP Grant Retrospective – 2005 to 2018



**2005:** All Habitat Resources brushhogged the entire area with their Argo amphibious ATV. They also treated trees along the edge of the forest producing snags. Note the line of saplings screening the Cove.

**2013:** Amazing how fertile the alluvial soil is and how quickly the “early successional” woody growth regrows. This time Marshall Lussen of B&B Landscaping subcontracted a “forestry grade” brushhog that scuffed up the soil so that warm season grass seed could be planted on the higher areas...once an acre of wood chips was raked into rows by volunteers. The seed mixture (big blue stem, little blue stem, Indiangrass, deertongue, switchgrass, and partridge pea mixed by Hart Seed) was broadcast on the bare soil.



A long day of brushhogging finished up in the moonlight, On the same contract, three B&B workers extracted the overgrown paddock fencing from the vines and saplings.

Below right, a B&B payloader lifts a stone to form a rustic bench with a view of the Cove,



### Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program

In the early 2000's, the historic Buck family hay field now the E.B. Wolf Parcel and the DeMille Easement on the northwest shore of the Wethersfield Cove was reverting to flood plain forest. In 2005, at the suggestion of Paul Woodworth, then Trust President Jim Woodworth applied for a Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program grant from the USDA NRCS. Over \$20,000 in matching grants spread over 12 years were awarded to the Trust to remove invasive species (Japanese knotweed), control “early successional growth,” and establish “warm season native grasses.” The grant was managed by Fernando Rincon of the NRCS. Over the years of the grant many contractors and volunteer workers, who matched the grant funds with hours of hard work, cut down trees, mowed brush, cut back and herbicided sumac, and planted a mix of native warm season grass seed. The result is meadow habitat of native grasses and wildflowers that preserves the historic hay meadow.



The meadow skinned down to the dirt in preparation for planting native warm season grasses that needed a winter season to germinate.



Young women of the Wethersfield High School Environmental Club raked the chips and sticks into windrows exposing the rich soil, then posed by the rustic stone bench that may have served as the threshold of a Buck Barn.



**2019 and beyond:** The Trust will depend on volunteers to continue to “maintain the meadow” habitat with the assistance of the tractor and towed brush mower owned and operated by neighbors, and the planned purchase by the Trust of a walk behind brush mower, to be stored on the premises. The walk behind mower will be available to mow edges and steep areas, and for stewardship work on other parcels.

**2018:** One more brushmowing by Advanced Resources, followed by spot treatment of sumac sprouts or stems with Brushtox herbicide by volunteers Linda Nielson and Gerry Hayes, will prevent sumac from overwhelming desirable plants.

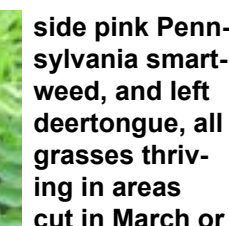
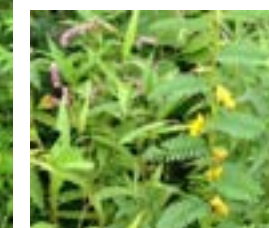
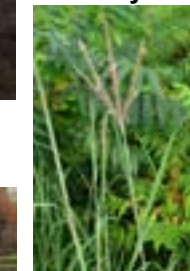


**The Goal:** a rich meadow of native wild flowers and grasses. Left



is blue verbena, a native herb with blossoms for pollinators, seeds for birds. Joe Pye weed, ironweed, and swamp milkweed also thrive.

Clockwise from left, big blue stem or turkey's foot in bloom, yellow partridge pea along-



side pink Pennsylvania smartweed, and left deertongue, all grasses thriving in areas cut in March or April before they begin to grow.

Below: Hartford Ave. neighbor Mark Demattia driving the tractor and



brush mower owned by the LeClercs, mowing the Wolf Parcel.