



Great Meadows Conservation Trust, Inc.
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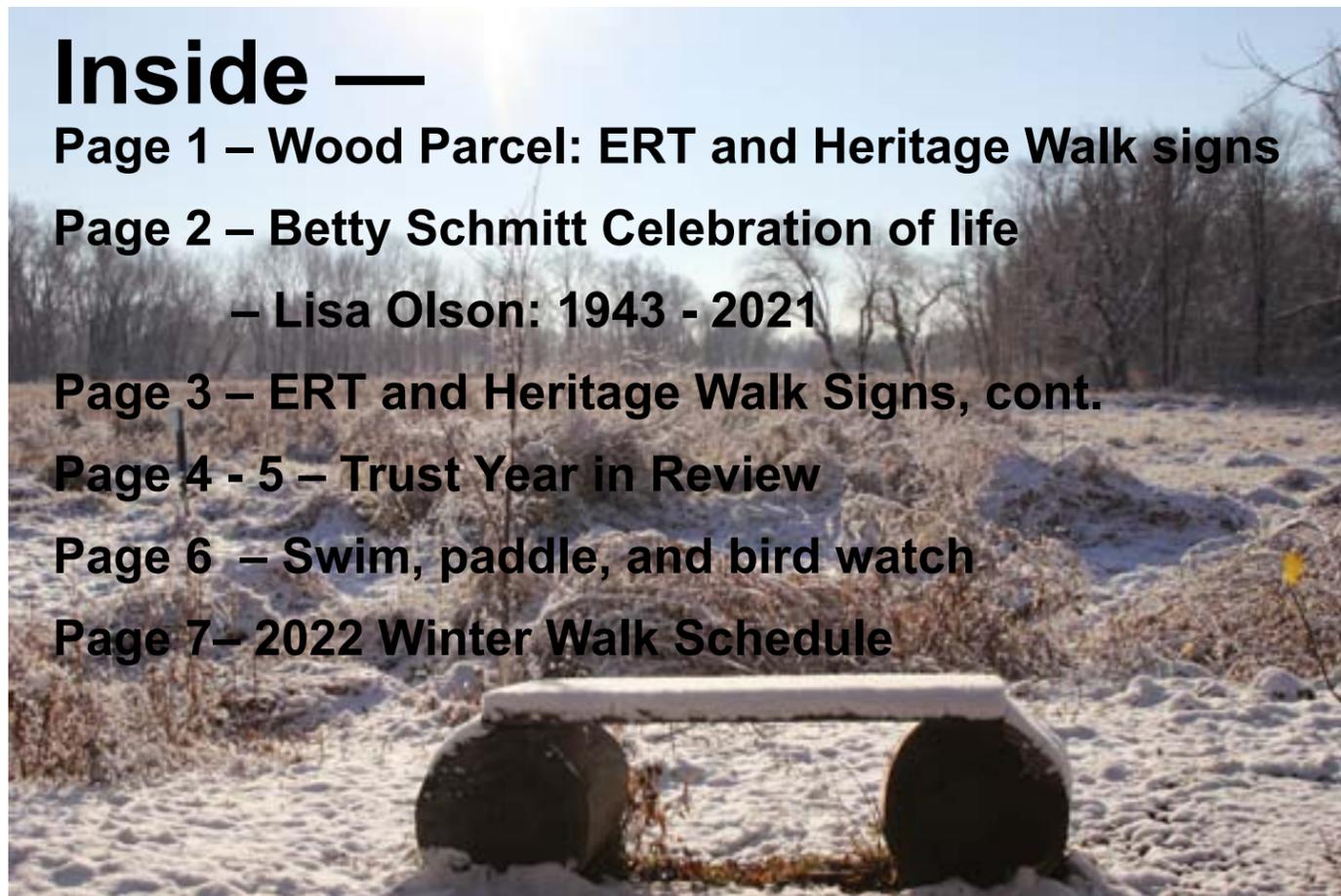
– Lisa Olson: 1943 - 2021

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An early snow storm blanketed the views of the marsh from the rustic bench, sporting a new maple slab seat cut from a tree at Connecticut Landmarks' Buttolph Williams House.



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

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Focus on the Wood Parcel

Environmental Review Team gives direction to stewardship efforts

To guide future stewardship efforts, the Trust engaged the services of an Environmental Review Team, a service of the Connecticut Resource Conservation & Development area, under the direction of Jeanne Davies.

Ms. Davies assembled a team of experts, including Cathy Labadia, Archeologist with the State Preservation Office, Joe Barsky, forester with the CT Ag Experiment Station, Chris Allan, professional soil & wetland scientist, Kip Kolesinskas, Consulting Conservation Scientist from the CT Farmland Trust, Vivian Felton and Fernando Rincon, from the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The team members worked around frigid weather and Covid 19 protocols to survey the habitats of the Wood parcel and produce **See ERT, page 3**



ERT member Fernando Rincon, left, from NRCS, Jim Woodworth, GMCT, Kip Kolesinskas, soils expert, and Jeanne Davies, from the State CRCD, and organizer of the ERT visited the Wood parcel on a spring day in April.

Heritage Walk signs put Wood parcel on the village map

The popular Heritage Walk Trail connecting Old Wethersfield historical sites and information panels has been extended to include the Wood parcel historical and natural site. The Heritage Walk brochure has been revised by artist Phil Lohman to include the location of three additional informative panels located along the trail at the Wood parcel.

Under the direction of Town Planner Peter Gillespie, a committee consisting of Peter and Tina Spangenberg and Jim Woodworth, with help from Diana Evans and Gerry Hayes, worked on brainstorming ideas, gathering photographs, working with graphic artist David Wolfram to lay out and refine the three panels. Funding was provided by a matching grant from the **See Heritage Walk, page 3**

Trust establishes the Betty Schmitt Scholarship Fund

Named for long time Trust member Betty Schmitt, who passed away last spring, the Trust was able to create a scholarship fund and award scholarships to a graduating senior in each of our three towns who are pursuing environmental studies. Encouraging the next generation of environmentalists represents a significant addition to our land preservation, habitat enhancement and education mission.

The Trust established the Betty Schmitt Scholarship Fund with generous donations in Betty's name from her sister Suzie and brothers Ron and Fred, and memorial donations in Betty's name. The Trust has invested the funds in the hope that investment growth and future donations to the Fund will allow the Trust to award annual scholarships to young

See Betty Scmitt Scholarship, p. 2

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Send Check payable to Great Meadows Conservation Trust, Inc. to P.O.Box 171, Glastonbury, CT 06033

\$10,000 gift to GMCT from the Schmitt family A Celebration of Life for Betty Schmitt held at Crystal Ridge Winery

At an exuberant Celebration of Life for Betty Schmitt, sister Susie and brother Ron Schmitt presented a gift of \$10,000 to the GMCT for the purpose of establishing a scholarship for students who pursue environmental studies. Receiving the check at right is GMCT President Tim Lewis. These funds, in addition to memorial donations in Betty's memory, established the Betty Schmitt Memorial Scholarship Fund. A scholarship will be awarded to a graduate of Rocky Hill, Wethersfield and Glastonbury High School.



GMCT President Tim Lewis received the check from Susie Schmitt.



The Schmitt family celebrated Betty's good life.

Betty Scmitt Scholarship, cont.

environmentalists going forward.

Awardees for this inaugural year include 2021 graduates Jasmine Lopez, Glastonbury High School, Caitlyn Kownacki, Rocky Hill High School, and Andrew Gardon, Wethersfield High School.

Ms. Lopez is attending the University of Southern Maine in Portland, Maine, where she is majoring in Environmental Policy. Ms. Kownacki is attending Sacred Heart University in Bridgeport where she is pursuing a degree in Marine Biology. Mr. Gardon is attending Paul Smith's College in Paul Smith, New York, where he is pursuing a degree in Environmental Studies.



Scholarship recipient Caitlyn Kownacki from Rocky Hill poses on the Betty Schmitt Memorial Bench along the scenic trail at Ferry Park in Glastonbury.

Longtime Trust member Lisa Olson dies

The GMCT lost another long time member when Elizabeth (Lisa) Ann Olson passed away last April.

Although Lisa had been less active in the Trust in recent years, she played a number of roles in the GMCT. These ranged from Program Chair to Vice President over several decades. Lisa planned and catered a number of memorable Annual Dinners among the screeches and chirps at the late great Audubon Glastonbury Center.

Generous memorial donations made in Lisa's name may be added to the Scholarship fund.

Lisa is survived by a sister and a brother-in law. Aunt Lisa was devoted



Lisa Olson 1943 - 2021

to her nieces and nephews and was equally devoted to their children.

Lisa graduated from Connecticut College in 1965 with a mathematics degree. After a brief stint at John Hancock Boston, she found her true calling as a teacher and taught math for 25 years at Middletown Junior High School.

Her dedication and hard work went well beyond the classroom, including serving on the board of the Connecticut Education Association.

In retirement she worked a number of jobs, but could be found playing tennis, working in her gardens, or sipping coffee and reading the paper at Riverfront Park.

ERT, cont. from page 1

a report that will inform the Trust stewardship initiatives going forward.

At right, Kip Kolesinskas examines the soil on the Wood parcel's six acre corn field. The soils are identified as Occum fine sandy loam, and Winooski silt loam, both excellent alluvial soils. However, he did observe that the soils were somewhat depleted and lacking in structure.



The recommendations for remediation included planting of a cover crop. No cover crop was planted last season because of the drought.

This September the cover crop planting was held up by rain storms. At right, farmer Chris Anderson, broadcast the seed, and nephew Jared Christensen harrowed in the seed. At right the blend of oats, peas, radishes and winter rye will both enrich the soil and slow erosion.



Joe Barsky, CAES

forester, at right, inspected the wooded areas of the Wood parcel on a frigid January day. Observing the dead elms and ash and the pervasive invasive bush honeysuckle and multiflora rose, he prescribed a course of mechanical control, followed by planting of native tree species such as tupelo, tulip poplar, and hackberry which provide wildlife benefits and resilience. He recommended hiring the services of a contractor with machinery that would grind up the woody invasive shrubs. Herbicide control would be necessary to prevent regrowth. With the installation of deer exclusion fencing, bare-root planting of native species could be carried out by community volunteers, providing educational benefits. The Trust is seeking grant funding for the mechanical invasive removal, fencing material, and planting materials.



Heritage Walk, cont. from page 1

Connecticut Humanities with matching funds from the Town and the Trust, as well as many volunteer hours. Town crews installed the three signs at the conclusion of the fall leaf collection, just in time for the New Years winter walk.

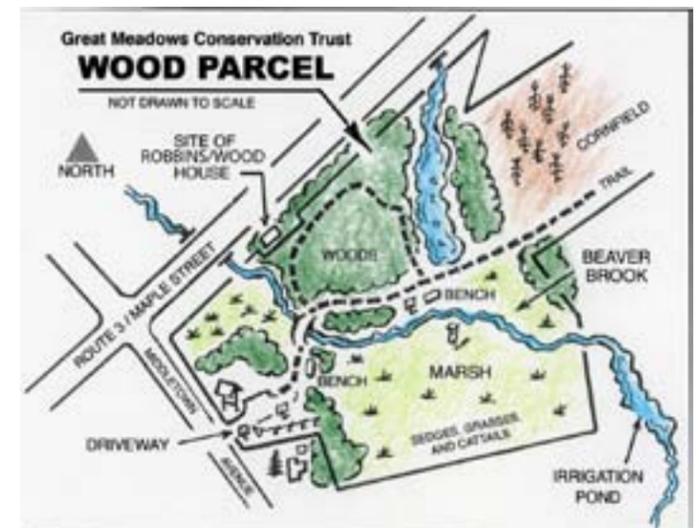
The first panel, entitled "Preservation in Perpetuity" is located at the driveway entrance and tells the story of the geological forces that shaped the area, settlement by Native Americans, settlement by the Robbins family, purchase by the Wood family, intrusion by Route 3 construction, and finally, the purchase by the GMCT with the help of an Open Spaces and Watershed Area grant from DEEP in 2001.

The second panel is located at the end of the parking lot in front of one of the newly planted elm trees and is dedicated to the story of the Elm Restoration Project. Photos of the Great Elm, and of volunteers planting the 25 disease resistant elm trees are featured.

The third panel is located at the "marsh view overlook," a quarter mile down the trail, and is dedicated to the many native species of "field, marsh, brook, pond and floodplain forest" that have thrived in the Wood parcel since native American times and continue to thrive under Trust stewardship.

The initiative begun several years ago to improve the trail to USDA Forest Service accessibility standards has been continued to insure that the panels are hand-capped accessible, as required by the grant.

The Trust has reached out to the town social services department for help from wheel chair enabled citizens to evaluate the trail and spread the word about the accessibility of the healing powers of nature at the Wood parcel.



This updated Phil Lohman map is on Panel No. 1 and will be on future publications about the Wood parcel.

Trust events from June to December — 2021

CT Trails Day — Hike — bike ride — paddles



Little kids' hike at the Wood parcel...along the trail by the fields.



Bike ride – village, meadows, ferry, Killam Basset Farm and back...with photo op at the Putnam bridge.



The novice paddle introduced young people to paddling on the calm waters of Wethersfield Cove.



The intermediate paddle from the Glastonbury boat launch explored Crow Point and Keeney Coves and the scenic stretch of the meadow meandering River.

Source to the Sea Cleanup 2021– a two day affair



The Cleanup began Friday afternoon when a crack crew attacked the bath tub ring on the south shore, while another group boarded Dennis Walter's pontoon boat and hit the 191 bank, covering the bottom of the dumpster with it's first layer. Filling many bags with bottles, bottle caps, nips and plastic chip bags galore.



Among the treasures...a shoe!



The Saturday group poses in front of the dumpster before dispersing to the far reaches of the Cove to fill their bags and bring them back,



From the darkside of the Cove



The young women of the WHS Eco-Club on a leaning tree trunk



One family gets a head start on cleaning the most scenic stretch of the river.

Rescuing an injured Osprey in Crow Point Cove

An osprey was returned to “freedom” after three weeks of rehab at A Place Called Hope. She was spotted by Jim Woodworth, perched on a log in the water just off the shore of Crow Point Cove. Even when approached, the young female could only fly two feet before plunging into the water.

Alerted, Tim Lewis contacted the rescue center and they sent out rescuer Alex Brune. Tim ferried Alex out to Crow Point in his canoe. At right, Alex, in the bow of Tim's canoe, armed with gloves, grabbed the osprey by the talons. He determined that she had no broken bones, but had an injured left wing. She was admitted to APCH on August 27th and took some weeks to heal. “She was a wonderful patient at APCH,” they said. On the GMCT facebook page and on the APCH website you can see the awesome video of her taking to the skies and “flying and flying and flying,” eventually swinging back around and landing in some trees nearby where she had been injured.

APCH thanked “Alex and the Great Meadows Conservation folk who helped to get this osprey rescued and returned.” A special thanks went to Linda Nielson for “playing gatekeeper at Crow point.” With luck and instinct, this osprey will make the incredible migratory journey to winter in the Amazon and return to nest on the Connecticut River to breed as she matures.



GMCT Fall Picnic



Enjoying the September sunshine and good company are Bob Mittica, Rick Doran, and Jim and Diane Milne at what may become an annual GMCT fall picnic at the Packards' horse farm on the East side of the River.

Goodwin College Cruise



Goodwin college's “Navigator” research boat gave GMCT members a scenic tour of the River up to Hartford and downstream to the Glastonbury Boat Launch.

Holidays on Main



After the fall harvest, Fair Weather Growers and Anderson Farms allow the GMCT to glean vegetables. At left, Kathy Beaty, Linda Nielson and Tim Lewis glean cabbage, cauliflower, carrots, and kale from the FWG fields in Rocky Hill. Both golden and red beets from Anderson farms added roots and greens. At the GMCT booth at the Heirloom Market, fresh picked vegetables were “free” to the Holidays on Main crowd with donations to the Trust totaling over \$150. Many pounds of fresh vegetables were donated to the Wethersfield food bank.



On the same Saturday morning the Wethersfield Education Foundation sponsored a Fall Farm Festival for elementary kids at the Kycia Farm. Featured were antique farm equipment (l.) and a GMCT booth (r.) set up by Kathy Beaty with scavenger hunt for kids.



Tim Lewis, GMCT President, is most at home on the water

Tim’s red Toyota pickup is hard to miss with a canoe or a kayak or two on the rack, and “OC1” plates, signalling Tim’s “Solo Open Canoe” racing class. Tim is a long-time member of NECKRA (New England Canoe and Kayak Racing Association), and when he’s not racing himself, he serves as sweeper, rescuing capsized racers.



Tim, a veteran of paddling/camping adventures, is on the Executive Committee of CRPT (CT River Paddlers Trail), a group working to provide camping areas for paddlers along the River. Tim works closely with the CRC (Connecticut River Conservancy), assisting CRC Lower River Steward Kelsey Wentling, pictured with Tim above, including efforts to control aquatic invasive water chestnut on local waters. Though water chestnut control was difficult this season due to the frequent high water, the Wethersfield Game Club organized a water chestnut pull in Hale’s Creek and Tim joined them. Above, Tim’s truck is loaded with water chestnut ready for composting at the Wood parcel.

Kari Kostango swims the Long Tidal River to raise awareness

Kari Kostango is swimming the entire length of the Connecticut River to raise awareness for the river and to raise funds for the Connecticut River Conservancy. At right Kari swims past the UTC dock at Middletown. Tim Lewis assisted her with the Connecticut portion, and with two sections in NH below Ryegate and Comerford Dams. At right, Kari swims past the Goodspeed Opera House, and far right she flexes the muscles that are propelling her 400+ miles from the source in northern New Hampshire to the sea in Long Island Sound. She’ll swim the last 3 miles to the Sound next spring.



Compass Youth Paddle on the Wethersfield Cove

In collaboration with the Connecticut River Conservancy and Compass Youth Collaborative, Tim Lewis assisted with a program to get young people into kayaks and onto the water at Wethersfield Cove. The program was spear-headed by CRC’s Kelsey Wentling, assisted by AMC member Barry Gorfain. Kayaks were provided by Metacomet Tours of Windsor, CT. Smiles provided by the Hartford youths!



Black Bellied Whistling Ducks spotted in Rocky Hill meadows



The photo at left, taken by Hartford Audubon Society birder Joan Hefernon shows a pair of black bellied whistling ducks enjoying a muddy pond in the turf field in the Rocky Hill meadows. When an unusual bird is spotted, word travels fast among birders. At right, Tim’s photo shows birders checking out the visitors from the south. BBWD’s are residents of Central and South America and very southern U.S. states. The noisy ducks are expanding their territory northward, adapting to the extreme warming in their home territory and our moderating climate to the north.



Brisk Winter Walks – 2022

Post Covid-19! —Join the GMCT Brisk Winter Walks for 2021. If you’re not vaccinated, wear a mask. Walks are co-sponsored by the Land Heritage Coalition of Glastonbury, the Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center in Wethersfield, and Goodwin College.

Saturday, January 1, 1:00 pm, Wethersfield. About 1½ hours. Meet Jim Woodworth at 160 Middletown Ave, south of Maple St, on GMCT’s **Wood Parcel**. Enjoy the new Heritage Walk panels and accessible trail enhancements! Cross the shiny bridge and follow the trail along the marsh and around the loop past the 18th century house site. Hike will continue across the culvert by the Pond, and out along the edge of the farm fields that once hosted the original “Pyquag” Native American summer camp and along the marsh, across the **Frechette Field Parcel**, and the newly acquired **Dowd Parcel**.

Sunday, January 2, 1:00 pm, Glastonbury. About 2 hours. Meet Penny Rusnak at the Glastonbury ferry landing on Ferry Lane for a short turn around the Ferry Park trail, to try out the new bench in memory of GMCT’s Betty Scmitt, and then cross Ferry Lane and walk upstream along the River through fields and pastures to the **Walker Easement** on the **Coal Wharf**. Nearby are archeological digs dating to the earliest settlement in Glastonbury, and a planting of DED tolerant elm trees positioned to spread their seeds on the spring freshet to the flood plain forests down-stream **information, 860-808-9968**.

Sunday, January 9, 1:00 pm, Rocky Hill. About 2 hours. Meet at the meadows gate at 78 Goff Brook Lane, off of Old Main St. Join Jim Woodworth on a hike to several of our parcels in the Rocky Hill Meadows. We’ll walk the farm roads, take a turn around the new **Goff Brook Trail** in the **DiPaola** parcel, and walk out into the meadows, noting the Nature Conservancy flood plain forest study transect and the planting of DED tolerant Elm Trees.

Sunday, January 16, 1:00 pm, Wethersfield. About 1 hour. Meet Jim Woodworth at 412 Hartford Ave, corner of Jordan Lane, for a short walk through the gate to our **Wolf Parcel and DeMille Easement**. See habitat improvements made with the help of a WHIP grant and volunteer work. Stay for a longer walk, another two and a half hours, up Hartford Ave. and out along the Hartford dike that divides the Folly Brook Nature area from the South Meadows Industrial Park. We’ll walk through the area slated for “tree removal” for the Brainard Airport approach and learn about advantages of “shrub/scrub” and early successional habitats.



Monday, January 17, 4:00 pm, Wethersfield. As the winter twilight fades in the western sky, meet GMCT’s Mike Monroe and Bike Walk Wethersfield’s Kevin Sullivan, at the Keeney Center parking lot, 200 Main Street, Old Wethersfield. Walkers will stroll down Main Street to Wethersfield Cove Park (about 1 mile), walk through the parking lot to the Cove channel, under the I91 overpass and out to the River’s edge. The Wolf Moon will rise above the trees on the eastern shore, giving a luster to the river below, as the sunset fades in the west!

Saturday, January 22, 9:00 am, Wethersfield. Meet Jim Woodworth and Goodwin College’s Bruce Morton, Program Director of Environmental Studies, at the Putnam Park parking lot, 100 Great Meadow Road, just north of the Putnam Bridge. We’ll peel away the centuries to imagine the river bank before the bridge, and explore the 300+ acre **Crow Point** property owned by Goodwin College. We’ll observe the process of nature reclaiming the land and waterways excavated for fill to build the highway across the ancient farmland and wetlands of the Great Meadows.

Sunday, January 30, 1:00 pm, Glastonbury. About 2 hours. Meet Penny Rusnak at the Glastonbury Boat House, 252 Welles St. View the beautiful River from the boat house veranda and Riverfront Park. Follow the trail through the park, past the DED tolerant elm trees, and down along the riverbank to the **Preissner parcel** and the **First Church of Christ parcel** in the Glastonbury meadows. Return along the trail or loop up to Main Street. Longer distance walkers can continue along the river toward the **Matava** and **Austin parcels**.

Saturday, February 5, 9:00 am, East Hartford. Meet GMCT’s Penny Rusnak and Rick Doran, Goodwin College’s Bruce Morton, Program Director of Environmental Studies, and Charley Smith of Land Heritage Coalition of Glastonbury at Hockanum Park, 324 High St. Explore our **Wilson-Carvalho** and **Hockanum Meadows** parcels in the “Wethersfield Triangle” of land marooned on the east side as the river meandered. We’ll explore the trails that Goodwin College has constructed with the help of DEEP trail grants, and will soon pave from S. Meadow Rd. along the River to the Putnam Bridge.



Dress for the Weather and ground conditions, including mud or snow. Weather and water conditions may revise or cancel. These areas are used for hunting, so wear an orange vest if you have one. Call Jim Woodworth for the latest information, 860-808-9968.