



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

Vol. XXXVIII no. 2

December 2022



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View toward the “Fearful Swamp” Photo by Tim Lewis

Rocky Hill H.S. Terriers “Lend a Paw” for Accessibility

In early October, fifteen Rocky Hill High School freshmen arrived at GMCT’s Wood Parcel for a hard morning’s work. Students and their two advisers helped clean and improve the trails to make the paths more accessible to wheel chair enabled nature lovers.

For two hours, teams of students removed tree roots, loaded and hefted wheel barrow loads of stone dust up and down the trail slopes, and spread them over bigger roots and rocks to smooth the way for wheel chairs and hikers seeking a dose of nature.

After a break for lunch at the Ferry Landing, the group proceeded to the DiPaola Parcel in Rocky Hill.

Although the closed meadow gates are keeping the meadow road cleaner, the students found plenty of accumulated trash

to pick up on the way to the DiPaola parcel and along the Goff Brook Trail.

This work day was all part of the Lend-a-Paw program in which RHHS students engage in community service starting in their freshman year. By senior year, they must meet the requirement for a specific number of volunteer community service hours as part of their Capstone Project.

GMCT is grateful for the opportunity to provide meaningful conservation work to help students achieve their goals and learn about community needs.

See *North Meadow Road* on page 3.



Tim Lewis shares the GMCT mission and the day’s work plan while their adviser hands out gloves to serious minded students eager to get to work.

Developing a Forest Management Plan for the Wood parcel

Tom McGrade, a certified forester with Ferrucci & Walicki, LLC, completed a Forest Management Plan (FMP) based on several visits in July and October. During those visits he learned about the GMCT goals for the forested areas and completed a detailed inventory of the species and density of the forest.

The plan begins with a detailed description of the tree cover and species, the diseases present, the invasive species present, and proceeds to make specific recommendations for treatments that will allow native species to replenish, increase wildlife habitat value, add species to enhance climate change resilience, and allow for more effective carbon sequestration.

In 2021, the Trust was the recipient of the services of an Environmental Review Team that looked at all areas, and the evaluation by Joe Barsky of the CT AG Experiment Station pointed us in the direction of hiring expensive “forest mulching service” to remove the invasive species before replanting using volunteers. Last spring volunteers helped us plant some of the species Joe recommended in areas where the invasives could be controlled by hand.

The FMP was carried out in conjunction with USDA NRCS Forest Technician Erik Dunnack, and will qualify the



Forester Tom McGrade inventories the forest stands on the Wood parcel to develop a forest management plan for removing invasives, allowing the growth of young trees.

GMCT to seek reimbursement from the NRCS for the cost of the Forest Management Plan (c. \$700), and for some of the costs of carrying out the plan.

The largest area of forest (Stand 1b) in the plan is the area where the 18th Century House and barn yard were located before Route 3 cut off the Robbins farm in 1958. The cost of the “forest mulching” to remove bush honeysuckle and multiflora rose from this area is c. \$2500. This would likely take place in winter 2024.

Another area of the forest on the southeast side of the parcel (turn right at the first bench into the woods), is another area with significant invasives, including Amur Cork trees in the “overstory.” The treatment in this area would include cutting down the

“overstory” to create a “forest opening” where saplings, seedlings, and even seeds of native trees can be planted with enough light and space to thrive.

The Trust is looking to an Earth Day work session, next April to build on the efforts of volunteer chain sawyers.

See *FMP* Page 3

New Membership Committee convenes, offers Gift Certificates

By Peter Spangenberg, Membership Chair

This past fall, the board established a membership committee informally. Chaired by Peter Spangenberg, the committee includes GMCT members Kathy Beaty, Diana Evans, Pete Hinman, Rick Doran, and Jim Woodworth. Our mission is to provide a great experience for GMCT members including better outreach and communications, and promotion of the benefits of membership. At our next annual meeting, we will seek to amend the GMCT Bylaws to formally establish the membership committee.

Once again members can see their membership type and the date annual memberships are due for renewal by checking the mailing label.

As of December 8th, 2022, the GMCT has a membership roster as follows: 7 Family Life Memberships. 56 Individual Life Memberships. 58 Honorary, Courtesy, or Special Memberships (no annual fees). There are 52 Annual Family Memberships current on dues; 54 Annual Individual Members current on dues. Unfortunately, we still have 94 Annual Individual or Family members we are hoping will renew their memberships to continue their support of our mission. This December the GMCT is offering the idea of gift memberships. Email us at membership@gmct.org to purchase one for yourself or anyone you would like.

Looking for a gift for that person who has everything?

A Great Meadows Conservation Trust Gift Membership might be just the thing!

—And, it's tax deductible!

To get a gift membership for that special person or family in your life or one for yourself, email us at membership@gmct.org. Pete Spangenberg of the Membership Committee can answer any questions and help complete the process.

You can also go to www.gmct.org – select MEMBERSHIP and then select Donate to initiate payment via our secure PayPal page making sure to include vital information within the “message to seller” box on the PayPal page so we will know who the gift membership is for.

An annual membership for an individual is \$20 and it's \$30 for a family. Life individual memberships are \$350 and life family memberships are \$550.



The Friends of the Kycia Farm, Inc., Looking for a few good members!

Friends of the Kycia Farm, Inc., achieved non-profit status last summer under the leadership of President, Jim Woodworth, Vice President, Jaclyn Carpio, Treasurer, Greg Gosslin, Secretary, Kim Sullivan, and a dynamic Board of Directors.

The Friends are currently accepting members at \$25 and Founding Members at \$100. Checks, made out to Friends of the Kycia Farm, can be sent to Greg Gosslin, 154 Straddle Hill, Wethersfield, Or, Venmo: @Jaclyn-Carpio (8355)

Stay tuned to the Town Council proceedings in January for a report of the Historic Preservation Study of the Kycia Barn and the Land Use study being carried out by the Uconn Community Research and Design Collaborative.

The Friends have received a matching grant from Wethersfield Better Together to rebuild the hoop house, pending results of the Land Use study and Council approval.

Judy Hadad: 1936 – 2021

Judy Haddad, Trust member from Wethersfield, passed away in November of 2021. Her life was celebrated at a memorial service. Judy was a long term active member of the GMCT Board. Throughout her life she enjoyed hiking, birding and painting.



Judy Hadad

Judy taught elementary school in Wethersfield and later taught kindergarten at Barnard Brown Elementary School in Hartford. Judy was active in the local Republican Party and was one of the first women to serve on the board of the Metropolitan District Commission, appointed by Gov. Meskill.

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

() \$20 – Individual () \$350 – Life Member Name _____
 () \$30 – Family () \$550 – Family Life Membership Address _____
 Phone : _____ Email Address: _____

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

Wood parcel nature trail accessibility is a work in progress

In the later days of this fall's Indian summer weather, Maureen Mirault answered the call to give the Wood parcel trail a work out. Maureen's electric wheel chair allows her to



Maureen demonstrates the ease of reading the Heritage Walk signs from a chair.

range north to the Farmer's market and south to the Wood parcel. She accepted the challenge to test the accessibility of the Wood parcel trail, both before the RHHS work day, and after.

The result of the test showed that the trail along the brook out to the pond and the "Beaver Brook Overlook" is quite feasible, with some areas calling for further minor improvements. On the other hand, the loop trail that rises to the upper area where the 18th Century house stood requires considerable work.

The GMCT's long term effort to make the nature trail at the Wood parcel accessible to all began more than six years ago with an Earth Day work session involving over 60 volunteers working on various projects, including bringing the trail up toward USDA Forest Service accessibility standards. These standards included a firm surface, a width of at least 36 inches, gentle slopes, and obstructions like rocks or roots no greater than two inches sticking up in the surface of the trail.

Early work included spreading recycled stone donated by Wethersfield Construction to stabilize wet areas of the trail that mired the wheel barrows moving stone. In



An enterprising RHHS student wielded loppers to cut and rip out roots crossing the trail.



Maureen Mirault cruises down the improved trail.

addition to the aluminum bridge over Beaver Brook that is wide enough for wheel chair access, a small wooden bridge was constructed to carry the trail over a drainage area. This stone was also used to enlarge the parking area, which in the mud season, cars sunk in and even got stuck.

The Heritage Walk signs, funded by the Hartford Foundation were required to be handicap accessible, Trust volunteers engineered approaches to the three signs with a deep recycled stone base and stone dust finish.

The Forest Service guidelines of two inch obstructions proved to make wheel chair access arduous to say the least. Efforts by RHHS students removed and smoothed over many of these obstructions. Volunteers will have the

opportunity to continue the work on our Earth Day work day in April 2023.



The accessible trail leads to the Beaver Brook Overlook and a view of the "fearful swamp."

North Meadow Road, continued from page 1

RHHS Lend a Paw Terriers also tackled trash on North Meadow Road

The RHHS students worked the road and the trail on the DiPaola parcel, rooting out trash half buried from past years or from the annual spring freshets that flood the road most years. Goff Brook backs up from the River, overflows its banks, leaving behind flotsam and jetsom swept down from Mill Woods park and off roads south Wethersfield and north Rocky Hill.



FMP, continued from page 1

The Earth Day volunteers would have the opportunity move brush from the tree cutting to create a deer barrier, remove or cut smaller invasive bush honeysuckle, whisteria, bittersweet and other invasives. The soil in the area would be "scarified" so that tree seeds could be planted, along with seedlings and saplings,

The forest Management Plan, signed by the forester, Tom McGrade, Trust president Chris Duff, and NRCS Forest Technician Erick Dunnack will provide the basis for NRCS involvement. The details were worked out during a joint visit including McGrade, Dunnack, NRCS Landscape Architect Fernando Rincon, and NRCS archaeologist Krista Dotzel, hosted by GMCT Stewardship Chair, Jim Woodworth.

During this visit, Ms. Dotzel, was able to meet Wethersfield Archeologist Frank Winiarski, view a selection of the artifacts Frank has collected, and observe the areas of the site with potential archaeological significance, both colonial and Native American on the cornfield. Her position with NRCS reflects a renewed interest and sensitivity on the part of the Federal Government in preserving sites of archaeological significance, especially Native American sites.

GMCT outreach in summer of 2022 — Bringing people together in nature to make the world a better place

May: Bicycles on Main



May: Linda Nielson festooned a bike for Bicycles on Main with meadow grasses, flowers, and critters.

June: CT Trails Day Weekend — four events hosted by GMCT leaders

The Forest and Parks Association coordinates over 200 events statewide.

Novice Paddle: (right) Launching in the Wethersfield Cove with canoes from the Park and Rec Department, families of novice paddlers, led by Paul Woodworth, Pete Spangenberg, and canoe instructor Dan Pelletier explored the scenic Wethersfield Cove, gaining confidence with practice, they ventured out of the Cove onto the big River.



Intermediate paddle: (Right)

Launching from the Glastonbury Boat House, led by Tim Lewis and CRC's Brent Morrison, the intermediate paddle explored Crow Point and Keeney Coves.



Bicycle ride: (Right) Beginning near the Weth. Cove, the ride, led by Jim Woodworth and Rob O'Connor, of Bike Walk Weth., wound through the village and the meadows, across the Ferry to Killam Bassett Farm and back.



Little Kid's Nature Hike: The hike led by Jim Woodworth and Kathy Beaty along the Trail at the Wood parcel, featured a scavenger hunt created by Kathy Beaty.

August: The Hartford Compass Youth Paddle

WETHERSFIELD COVE—Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC) and Compass Youth Collaborative worked together for a second year to bring Hartford youth to Wethersfield Cove for paddle outings in August. Paddle instruction was provided by AMC's Barry Gorfain, and water guidance by GMCT's Tim Lewis. Among others assisting were CRC's Rodrigo Pinto and the new CRC CT River Steward, Rhea Drozdenko. Compass Youth Collaborative connects with high risk youth in Hartford to provide support and provide opportunities to help them succeed in education, employment and life.



September: Source to the Sea Cleanup 2022

The 21st Annual Source to the Sea Cleanup, co sponsored by the CT River Conservancy, and at the Wethersfield Cove by the GMCT drew a mighty crew of volunteers, who gathered the usual dumpster filling mound of trash. (Top right) The crew with its haul of bulging bags. (Near right) Leader Dennis Walter takes on the WHS Environmental Club crew in his pontoon boat to ferry trash pickers to the north side of the Cove along I91 and bags of trash back to the dumpster. Middle right: Tom and Sam work the River bank for fresh trash from fishermen and floating down the River. (Far right) imagine the total tonnage of plastic bottles, bags, and larger debris removed from the River and the Cove over the last twenty years? Mount Trashmore? .



December: Holidays on Main



Indian Summer! (Above) In the RH meadows, the Fair Weather Growers' bountiful harvest was thriving. After the last Thanksgiving CSA shares, FWG generously donates the remainder to the Great Meadows Conservancy Trust. Linda Nielson, Paul Bourdan and Jim Woodworth gleaned perfect red, savoy, and dutch cabbages, cauliflower, broccoli, kale and more. The GMCT Holidays on Main table, offering fresh picked produce FREE with donation to the GMCT raised \$250 for Trust goals!

Writing the Land project moves forward with poet Margaret Gibson



Poet Margaret Gibson, recent Connecticut Poet Laureate, captures the Wood parcel in verse.

In the summer of 2021, the GMCT signed up for the Writing the Land project with editor Lis McLoughlin, connecting Land Trusts with poets. David Leff, environmentalist, poet and essayist of Collinsville, began visiting the Wood, Wolf and DiPaola parcels to gather material for poems embodying each parcel. Sadly, Leff passed away unexpectedly in May. This summer, poet Margaret Gibson agreed to step in for her fellow nature poet and write a poem capturing the essence of the Wood parcel. In one visit in late summer, with the aid of the Heritage walk signs, Gibson produced an amazing poem. Tim Lewis and I are so impressed and moved, and can hardly wait until spring when the poem will be published in an anthology that will be available for sale. In addition to the poem, our “chapter” in the anthology will have information about the Trust, the Wood parcel, the poet, as well as Phil Lohman’s maps and sketches, and photos by Tim, Jim, and Jack Jensen, all in stunning black and white.



A green heron makes an indelible impression in the poem.

Fair Weather Growers’ vegetable crops maximize the fertility and high water table of the flood plain soils in the meadows



Two Guatemalan farm workers prepare a field for winter, removing plastic row cover, before harrowing, seeding with winter rye cover crop.

Thanks to the generosity of Fair Weather Growers (AKA Fair Weather Acres) GMCT gleaners picked pickup truck loads of fresh late season vegetables for Holidays on Main and food pantries in Wethersfield and Hartford. But what does it mean to be one of the 10 largest farm operations in Connecticut?

For Billy Collins, third generation of the Collins family, with sons Andrew and Shawn, 4th generation coming along, it means hiring 45 seasonal workers from South Africa and Guatemala, managing over 200 varieties of seeds and plants with different growing habits and seasons, all at the mercy of the weather.

It means managing the equipment and vehicles to plant, grow, harvest, process and deliver to market about 200 products, with two loaded semi trailers departing the processing area in the meadows...every day! In addition to supplying the FWG farm stand on Cromwell Avenue, and their 500 CSA share members, FWG supplies CSA’s at Lyman Orchards and Bishop Orchards— that’s 1400 shares of product a week. And there’s enough left over to send product to super markets like Whole Foods and restaurants via SYSCO “Restaurant

Solutions,” with its CT headquarters just down the street in Rocky Hill. Pretty amazing!



Jim Woodworth and Friend of the Kycia Farm Cindy Greenblatt ride in Paul Bourdon’s truck toward the fennel and leek beds.

Hayes Farm raises grass fed beef with corn and hay from the Meadows

The Hayes Farm on Hayes Road in Rocky Hill has upland pastures for summer feeding, but the bulk of the nutrition for their grassfed beef cows comes from the fertile fields in the meadows. At right, Kathy Beaty stands in a clearing in the Hayes cornfield adjacent to the DiPaola parcel, made by beavers who came up from Goff Brook to share the “cow corn,” growing high as an elephant’s eye.

In addition to deep roots reaching down to the high water table, the corn benefits from a heavy dose of chicken manure from the egg operation in Lebanon, CT, trucked in by the semi trailer load (right).

Lower right, the lush late summer hay harvest belies the near drought conditions in central Connecticut, summer of 2022.



The American Kestrel, the smallest falcon, shares the open meadow with farm crops.

Art Gingert, bird expert, builds specially designed kestrel nesting boxes, installs and monitors them throughout the state, including in the Great Meadows.

Art climbs a ladder, opens each box he has cleaned and filled with wood chips early in the season, to see if a kestrel family has moved in. At right, Art discovered three tiny chicks surviving the hot weather in one of his boxes on the Fair Weather Growers’ gatepoles in the meadows.

A few weeks later he returned with bird enthusiasts Rhonda Nedelle (left), and Janet Smith (right) and friends to band the

chicks before

they were ready to “fledge” or fly out of the box. Soon after banding, FWG set up its “corn canons” to protect the ripe corn nearby. Ken Etheridge and Janet later observed the feisty little kestrels feeding from tree branches nearby—they survived!



Brisk Winter Walks – 2023

Join the GMCT Brisk Winter Walks for 2023! Walks are co-sponsored by the Land Heritage Coalition of Glastonbury, the Eleanor Buck Wolf Nature Center in Wethersfield, and Goodwin College.

Sunday, 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 8, 1:00 pm, Rocky Hill. About 2 hours. Meet at the meadows gate at 78 Goff Brook Lane, off of Old Main St. Join Tim Lewis 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.

Saturday, January 14, 11:00 am, Glastonbury. About 2 hours. Meet Whit Osgood at Earle Park (former Glastonbury Audubon Society Parking area) at 1361 Main St. We will take a short, moderately difficult hike up the trail over the bluff, across Holland and Hubbard Brooks, and north along the River to our Austin and Matava parcels in Glastonbury Meadows.

Sunday, January 15, 1:00 pm, Wethersfield. About 2 hours. Meet Larry Lunden at 258 Elm St, at the underpass under I-91. A long hike down to the River and along the farm road, now designated a Greenway, to our Wolcott and Crilly parcels in the Wethersfield Meadows. From I-91 south take exit 25 S to route 3 south, or from Glastonbury take route 3 south over the Putnam Bridge. Go past the first traffic light, make a U turn and come back to this traffic light. Turn right onto Elm St and park at the highway underpass.

Sunday, January 22, 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 on the Cove and Folly Brook**. 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.



The View across Crow Point Cove

Saturday, January 28, 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 29, 1:00 pm, Glastonbury. About 2 hours. Meet Paula Tamburro and John Ferguson at 57 Point Rd, off of Naubuc Ave south of route 3 overpass. A long hike to our Dickau, Beers, Baril and Bidwell parcels in Point Meadows. Check out the progress on the Putnam Bridge bike trail! From I-91 take exit 25 N, route 3 north. Take the first exit to Main St Glastonbury. At the end of the ramp turn right and follow to end. Turn left and then right onto Point Rd, a small and difficult to see road. From Route 2, take exit 5 D to route 3 south. Take the first exit to Main St Glastonbury. At the end of the ramp turn left and follow to end. Turn left; go under the highway, and then right onto Point Rd.

Saturday, February 4, 9:00 am, East Hartford. Meet GMCT's 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 inspect the tree "obstruction removal" carried out by CAA on the approach to the Brainard field runway. 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.

Sunday, February 5, 4:30 pm, Wethersfield. As the winter twilight fades in the western sky, meet GMCT's Mike Munroe 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 Snow Moon will rise above the trees on the eastern shore, giving a luster to the river below, as the sunset fades in the west!



The Moon over the River

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.