



The Quinnehtukqut Connecticut Chapter

The Monthly Newsletter for Events, Information, and Action

WELCOME TO THE JUNE 2017 ISSUE

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REQUEST FOR CONTENT

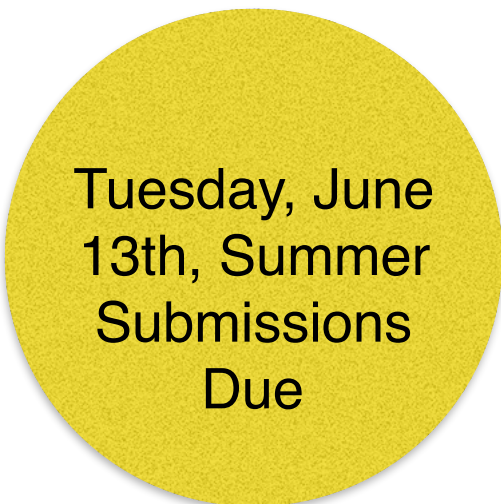
All Connecticut Sierra Club members are invited to contribute to the *Quinnehtukqut*. We accept articles, book reviews, puzzles, events, photos, poems, etc. Articles, limited to 500 words, should be on a subject of local or national interest to the Connecticut Chapter membership. The goal of the newsletter is to inform, educate, motivate and involve our members.

If you post information to the website and want it in the newsletter as well, you must submit those postings separately to the newsletter.

We have developed a newsletter calendar for the next two 2017 submission dates. Please read dates carefully as they vary from the usual calendar to accommodate the Summer issue. The Summer issue will include events for July and August. The calendar is intended to make it easier for you to plan your *Quinnehtukqut* contributions for publication.

The *Quinnehtukqut* is distributed at the beginning of the month. Comments, letters to the editor and all submissions may be sent to ctsierraq3@gmail.com for inclusion in future newsletters.

SUMMER CALENDAR:



SEPTEMBER CALENDAR:



All decisions regarding use are made by the Communications Committee.

JUNE/JULY OUTDOOR EVENTS

Hiking 1

Connecticut hosts the largest National Trails Day® celebration in the nation. The Connecticut Chapter Sierra Club will participate by offering a hike on Sunday, June 4th. For a full listing of trail events this weekend, go to: [CT Woodlands Weekend Events](#)

Location: Buttermilk Falls on the Mattatuck Trail

Description: Hike past mountain laurel groves and cliff caves to Buttermilk Falls, a 59-foot waterfall with numerous cascades where time for exploration will be plentiful.

Date: Sunday, June 4th

Time: 9:30am to noon

Level of Difficulty: Moderate; fast paced with one challenging section along the falls

Length: Out and back five (5) miles round trip

Meet: Parking lot of Cafe 2 North, 2 North Street, Wolcott, CT; shuttle to trailhead

Trail Map and GPS Directions:

[Click Here for Map and Directions](#)

Free event open to Club members and the public

Weather: Steady rain cancels

Dogs: Please, no dogs

Leader: Amanda Kenyon

Contact Information: amanda.kenyon@sierraclub.org; Telephone: 860.416.0081

Pre registration requested, rain plan provided

Footwear: Sneakers or boots required

Healthy Additions: Bring water and snacks

Safety: *All hikers must sign a liability waiver. You may review the waiver by clicking the attachment here.*

Sierra Club Outings [Waiver](#)

Amanda Kenyon is a Certified Chapter Outings Leader and a volunteer with Connecticut Chapter Sierra Club



Buttermilk Falls cascades 59 feet
Photo credit: [Connecticut Explorer](#)

Hiking 2

Location: Selden Creek Preserve, Lyme, CT

Hike is through marked trails that end with a dramatic overlook of Selden Creek. Here we may see wildlife and many species of birds. Selden Creek Preserve sits on 207 acres and is one the most biologically significant sites on the lower Connecticut River and fronts one of the most important tidal wetlands in the river.

Map: [Click for Map](#)

Date: Saturday, July 1st

Time: 10:00am

Level of Difficulty: Moderate

Length: 4 miles out and back, round trip

Trail: Forest trail through the ravine over rocky outcroppings to a vernal pool. Descend to the beaver pond surrounded by huge trees and gnawed tree stumps.

Free event open to Club members and the public

Weather: Rain cancels

Dogs: No dogs allowed

Parking: Free



Selden Creek Preserve
Photo credit: [The Day](#)

GPS Directions: Joshuatown Road, Lyme CT. Stay on Joshuatown Road. When you pass Mitchell Hill Road on your right, it is 1.4 miles to a little parking area on the left.

Written Directions: [Click for Directions](#)

Safety: *All hikers must sign a liability waiver. You may review the waiver by clicking the attachment here.*

Sierra Club Outings [Waiver](#)

Please wear sturdy shoes and bring your camera for the many photo opportunities afforded on the Preserve!

RSVP: Geneva Renegar genevarenegar@gmail.com or call [860.857.2091](tel:860.857.2091) to reserve your spot.

Geneva Renegar is a Certified Chapter Outings Leader and a Connecticut Chapter Sierra Club volunteer.

See you on the trail!

Barbecue and Kayaking

Relax, enjoy this pleasant spot and find out about Connecticut Sierra Club activities in your area. Learn how even a small amount of your time can help our environmental efforts.

Sponsor: Greater Hartford Group Sierra Club

Location: Northwest Park, Windsor, CT

Barbecue: The Greater Hartford Sierra Club provides a covered pavilion with many picnic tables and two grills set up to barbecue for our potluck.

Date: Saturday, June 10th

Time: Noon to 4:00pm

Parking: Free

Dogs: Permitted if kept on a leash. Bring bags to clean up after your dog.

Free event open to Sierra Club members and the public

Activities:

- Hiking/biking is available on several park trails
- Luddy-Taylor Connecticut Valley Tobacco Museum is an on site nature center and tobacco museum open 10am to 4pm, Saturdays. <https://www.museumct.org>

GPS Directions: 145 Lang Road, Windsor, CT

Written Directions:

- From I-91 north, take Exit 38. From I-91 south, take Exit 38A
- Turn right at the exit on to Poquonock Avenue (Route 75)
- Go about 1.5 miles and turn left on to Prospect Hill Road
- Turn right at the second traffic circle on to Lang Road
- Continue up the road to the Nature Center



Kayaking

Launch Time: 4:30pm

At 4:00pm, leave Northwest Park and drive a road loop of five miles to the launch.

Location: Nearby Rainbow Reservoir. Map of area and trip route at: [Map and Trip route](#)

Meet: Boat launch is at 118 Merriman Road, Windsor, CT.

Launch: free; **Parking:** free

Course: We'll paddle the 243 acre reservoir that is tree lined with only a few houses set back from the water then head up the Farmington River towards North Bloomfield and even Simsbury before returning to the launch site.

Leader: Renee Taylor, Certified Chapter Outings Leader

Weather: Rain cancels

Safety: *Safety vests must be worn at all times.*

All kayakers must sign a liability waiver.

Sierra Club Outings [Waiver](#)



Restrictions: No cell phone use on the water.

Kayaking Questions or to **RSVP:** Email Renee at mchawigirl@yahoo.com by the day before.

CHAPTER REPORT

In May, 2017, Your Connecticut Chapter Sierra Club accomplished the following:

- Sent six bus loads of Nutmeg residents to the Climate March in Washington, D.C. to protest the administration's disregard of the reality of climate change
- Lobbied successfully to kill the Killingly gas plant helping to move Connecticut past fossil fuels and on to clean and renewable energy
- Helped organize 17 Connecticut towns to ban fracking waste from their communities in tandem with leaders From Food and Water Watch
- Worked to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and cap and reduce CO2 emissions from the power sector by cooperating on the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) with states from Maine to Maryland
- Developed and distributed a fact sheet to save Remington Woods
- Led two hikes and one kayaking trip

To volunteer or renew your Connecticut Chapter membership in Sierra Club, contact John Calandrelli at: connecticut.chapter@sierraclub.org

HELP WANTED

Volunteer Treasurer Position Available

The Hartford group of Sierra Club ICO (Inspiring Connections Outdoors) is seeking a new volunteer treasurer. The position will be available later this summer.

The ICO group works with Hartford public schools to lead outings that introduce students to many of Connecticut's great state parks. The goals are to build a love of nature and outdoor activities, and foster environmental appreciation in children.

The primary responsibilities of the Hartford ICO Treasurer position include:

1. Maintain our local ICO bank account:
 - Reconcile the account
 - Pay ICO expenses
 - Request periodic reimbursements from the national ICO
2. Complete an annual report on the group's financial activity to provide to the national ICO
3. Participate in monthly/bi-monthly ICO meetings during the school year

The role typically takes a few hours per month. Fundraising is not anticipated to be a requirement of the role.

Contact Dennis Desmarais at: dennis.desmarais@gmail.com or 508.282.0305 to volunteer or to discuss the position.

ARTICLES

Natural Gas in Connecticut: A Victory in Killingly

by Martha Klein

The methane, or natural gas expansion in Connecticut continues at a rapid pace, and two interstate pipelines just received permission from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to start construction: Enbridge's Atlantic Bridge and Kinder Morgan's CT Expansion. One new gas powered electricity generating plant is under construction in Oxford and two more are proposed. The state continues to subsidize the conversion of thousands of homes and businesses to methane, despite rising electricity prices which signal the clear economic failure of the program.

Victory Rise

But, in the midst of bad news, there was a significant victory. In May, the Connecticut Siting Council (CSC) denied NTE Energy's bid to build a 550MW gas fired plant in Killingly. The reason given by CSC was a lack of need. The electricity grid operator, Independent Systems Operator of New England (ISO-NE) recently held an auction to procure the power needed for the years 2020-2021. Interestingly, ISO-NE procured only new energy coming from demand response (DR) and energy efficiencies.

Demand response is a very simple way of shifting energy use from high use times to low use times because "demand response seeks to adjust the demand or power instead of adjusting the supply."

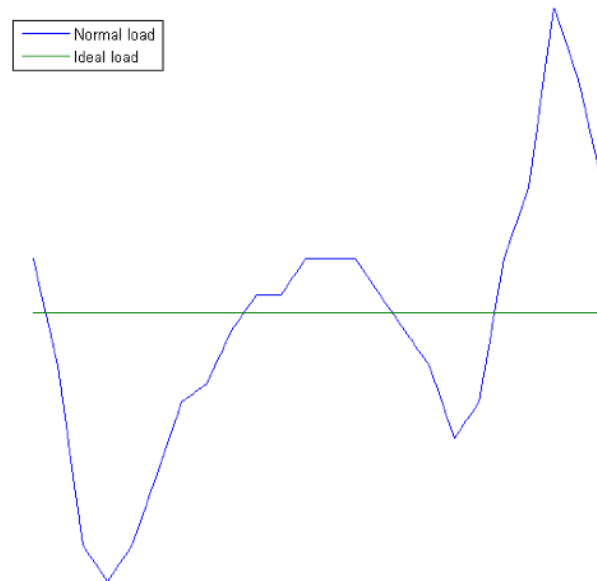


Chart: Wikipedia: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demand_response

The actions of ISO-NE support the idea that there is no need for massive new power plants. Thus, the lack of need undercuts the rationale provided by the state and the energy companies for increased methane use and transport.

Public Awareness Rises

The NTE plant was defeated for a number of reasons, including organizing by local residents who hired lawyers, legal intervention by the Sierra Club and Connecticut Fund for the Environment and grassroots activism. We raised public awareness of the issue, turned out people at hearings, submitted testimony, and never gave up.

Today we have one less fracked gas project to fight and correspondingly, more energy to block the other methane expansion projects. United, we shall not be defeated. Our goal is 100 percent by 2050. It's no longer a dream, but a reality.

Martha Klein is Chair, Connecticut Chapter Sierra Club

2017 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Will Connecticut Finally Ban Fracking Waste?

by Jennifer Siskind

A vote to ban waste from hydraulic fracturing gas was passed May 9th by the House of the Connecticut General Assembly. The bill (HB 6329) carried by a strong vote of 141-6 and is now in the Senate.

Towns Pass Local Ordinances

The movement to ban drilling waste, town by town, is having an effect. Throughout the debate, legislators referred to fracking waste bans that have been passed across the state. Already 17 towns in Connecticut have enacted local ordinances banning all oil and gas drilling and extraction wastes.

The passage in 2014 of a temporary moratorium on taking hydraulic fracturing waste (fracking waste) into the state, is due to expire this year and could be replaced with regulations by DEEP permitting the taking of fracking waste.

The possibility is one of the reasons the grassroots movement to pass town bans is active.



There's a second indication that the grassroots movement is on the right track: an amendment that would have replaced the bill with a one year extension of the current moratorium was voted down by almost two-thirds of the House, a vote of 96-50. Because Connecticut is one of the smallest and most densely populated states in the country, we cannot risk bringing toxic, radioactive fracking waste here. With the overwhelming vote, the House acted to keep tanker trucks filled with hydraulic fracturing waste from gas wells off our highways, out of waste treatment facilities and de-icing products off roads.

Constituents Voice Their Concerns

As stated, legislators repeatedly referred to fracking waste bans that have passed with overwhelming support across the state. Constituents in 42 more towns are interested, actively organizing or have local leaders championing new laws. And all but one of the local ordinances are more protective than the current bill moving through the legislature. Whatever happens with statewide legislation, it is clear that local efforts will continue.

HB 6329 has shortcomings. It removes some key protections that currently exist in state law and as currently written, it removes the requirement of disclosure to all constituents of fracking waste, including multiple chemical combinations and radioactivity. And, it doesn't exempt all drilling and extraction wastes, storage wastes or any oil wastes.

A permanent solution is the right move to legislators. It's up to them to take action.

Jennifer Siskind is a Food & Water Watch Local Coordinator in Connecticut and a CT Chapter Sierra Club member.

BOOK REVIEW

Nature vs Wilderness

by James Root

One of Connecticut-based writer Michael Pollan's early books is *Second Nature*. Like many of Pollan's books such as *Botany of Desire* and *A Place of My Own*, *Second Nature* uses small, examples, i.e. gardening attempts at his Cornwall home, to explore the critical story of the development of the Euro-American concept of nature and wilderness.

In his battle with weeds (a concept itself that is debated in the book), Pollan, as a problem solving gardener, reaches the conclusion that the garden/wilderness dichotomy or mental split is not always apt and is sometimes counterproductive -- in both small and large scale conservation efforts.

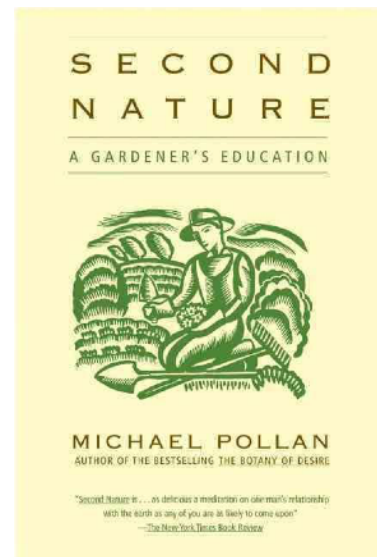
In his garden, he defies "Puritan" thinking found in such intellectual giants as Thoreau, and removes plants other than those he planted -- on the basis that these uninvited species have evolved (short term) to thrive in human gardens or, alternatively, were brought to the indigenous North American plantscape.

In a more macro example, he describes a celebrated patch of virgin forest near his home that had a great deal of deadfall (fallen trees) after a big storm. Conservationists lobbied, in a town debate, to leave the deadfall untouched in the name of "pure wilderness untouched by man." Pollan, while defending the more justified uses of the pure wilderness concept, is dubious in Cornwall's case, as his research shows that the forest in question is actually man made, the land itself having been cleared by Europeans at one time, long ago.

In general, he advises augmenting laudable nature worship with acceptance that we have altered the wilderness, deliberately or not, and own it in some sense. (Global warming guru Bill Mckibben, in several of his books, makes the same assertion within different, darker arguments.) In Pollan's opinion, Americans, in our relatively short history, have developed an almost schizoid mentality towards nature, either worshipfully roping it off in our innovative national parks (we did that first), or treating it antagonistically and abusively -- as demonstrated by our national lawn fetish. He hopes for a reconciliation of these paradoxical attitudes that will aid in meeting our dire environmental challenges.

The reader of *Second Nature* might stumble across a few useful gardening tips appropriate for this planting season. But, for most serious environmentalists, *Second Nature* offers a healthy provocative perspective on American postures towards nature that should be useful in assessing thorny ecology issues -- especially on the state and local level.

James Root is a Connecticut Chapter Sierra Club volunteer and a Danbury resident.



OUR NATURAL WORLD

Aquatic Invasive Plant Management: Candlewood Lake

by Larry Marsicano



Myriophyllum spicatum L.

Candlewood Lake is a 5,100 acre pumped-storage reservoir created for hydropower production in the late 1920s. The lake is located in western Connecticut and is the largest lake in the State. Since the late 1970s it has been plagued by the aquatic invasive plant Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) which adversely impacts recreational use and can also create environmental problems, e.g. loss of plant diversity.

In the early 1980s stakeholders including the hydropower company (Connecticut Light & Power at the time), the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP), the Candlewood Lake Authority (CLA), and Western Connecticut State University agreed on a strategy to keep the milfoil managed. Every other year the lake level would be lowered by approximately ten feet in December and left there through January in an effort to kill the roots of the milfoil. During the alternate year, the winter drawdown was four to six feet. While not the perfect solution because of other potential adverse impacts, the strategy was successful and had minimal impacts on the lake's water quality and nationally recognized fisheries.

Around the year 2000, Connecticut deregulated its energy market making it more competitive, which impacted the timing of the drawdowns and made them less effective. By 2013 an alternative strategy was sought by the CLA, the local agency that serves the five municipalities surrounding the lake, in conjunction with the CT DEEP and the current hydropower company, FirstLight Power Resources. The CLA closely examined options available, including aquatic herbicides. They elected to pursue a nontoxic, biological control... stocking the lake with herbivorous triploido grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*). [Click Here to Read More](#)

The triploid grass carp (TGC), used to manage aquatic plants, are non-native but bred sterile and have been shown to be quite useful in managing aquatic invasive weeds in many other waterbodies from small farm ponds to the combined 160,000 acres of Lakes Marion and Moultrie that are part of the Santee-Cooper public utility in South Carolina. These fish are certified sterile by US FWS and stocked to graze on many invasive aquatic plants including Eurasian watermilfoil.

In late 2014 the CLA applied and received a grant from the CT DEEP to begin a TGC program and in early 2015 received a permit from the State to import and release



Tripoli Grass Carp
photo courtesy of US Fish & Wildlife

approximately 3,800 fish. A second stocking of 4,450 fish is planned for June of 2017 and that should bring the concentration of fish to the State's target goal of 15 fish per vegetated acre. The reasoning behind not exceeding the target concentration is to prevent overgrazing by the fish, which could have adverse impacts on the lake including its fisheries, but still keep weeds managed to an acceptable level.

The community around Candlewood Lake has been very supportive. For example, in 2016 fifty additional fish were surgically equipped with radio transmitters, stocked in the lake and tracked throughout the summer. As part of a fundraising effort, members of the community "adopted" and named many of the radio-tagged fish, including local favorite "*Carp-edium*."

Larry Marsicano is executive director of Candlewood Lake Authority (CLA).

The Sierra Club does not take a position on the use of genetically modified fish to control invasive plants.

Baby Birds in Nest



Peggy Ann Adler, Clinton, CT

Rethink Lawns for Homeowners and Wildlife

by Michele MacKinnon

Property owners may be reluctant to downsize lawns now the drought in Connecticut has downgraded from 'severe' to 'moderate.' The health of ecosystems and measures of plant wildlife values, however, may persuade skeptics to change their ways.

Resources Depleting Rapidly

As of 2005, the Earth's ecosystem services had dropped to 40 percent. Dr. Douglas Tallamy shared this and other sobering facts during his recent presentation, "How Native Plants Sustain Wildlife in Our Gardens and Surrounding Landscapes," in Lakeville, CT. My curiosity after Tallamy's talk led me to discover [Earth Overshoot Day](#). It's the point in the calendar year when global ecological resource demands exceed our planet's ability to replenish them. More sobering still is the fact the day leapfrogged from December 24, 1971 to August 8, 2016.

Restore Lost Habitat Resources

Water is an overused resource, largely due to lawn irrigation. Unfortunately, we can expect overuse to continue as another 500 square miles of lawn are added annually through commercial and residential development. Development increases demands on water resources and displaces entire ecosystems. Professor Tallamy suggests homeowners play a key role in restoring displaced habitat. By opting for smaller lawns and landscapes that incorporate native plants, we can start repaying our mounting debt to Mother Earth.



Wildflowers merge with lawn
Photo credit: Helen Applebaum

While lawns cover soil and hold it in place, growing large amounts of a single plant (grass) eliminates the diversity needed for a healthy ecosystem. Native plants and wildlife have co-evolved over thousands of years. So, maintaining wildlife populations depends on maintaining plants and other resources wildlife need to live. Native plants have adapted to Connecticut soils and climate, making them tough, drought and disease resistant choices for property owners.

Oak Trees Support Wildlife

If space allows, plant a red, white or pin oak for its high wildlife value. Connecticut's oaks support 352 caterpillar species. Oak trees add value to black-cap chickadees which feed their young an exclusive diet of juicy, protein-rich caterpillars. Parents deliver them every three minutes, totaling 390 to 570 caterpillars daily, or as many as 10,260 caterpillars during the 16 to 18-day period required to fledge a single clutch of chickadees. Keep in mind these are the dietary needs of a *single* chickadee family in a *single* season. The importance of plants with high wildlife value cannot be overstated.

The following table lists more plant choices with high wildlife value worthy of consideration.

Native Plant Choices <i>(refer to botanical name on tags when buying new plants)</i>		
Trees and Shrubs		Number moth and butterfly species hosted
Maples (<i>Acer</i> species) - sugar and red maples are familiar landscaping choices for summer shade and fall color; sugar maple is an important agricultural crop in New England		226
River birch (<i>Betula nigra</i>) - a smaller tree for home landscapes and less prone to pests than other birches		297
Crabapple, apple (<i>Malus</i>) - decorative and fragrant landscape tree and edible fruit source for birds and people		206
Highbush blueberry (<i>Vaccinium corymbosum</i>) or Lowbush blueberry (<i>Vaccinium angustifolium</i>); popular edible landscaping option; numerous smaller varieties available today; good choice for hedges		224
Flowering Perennials		
New England and New York Aster (<i>Aster novae-angliae</i> , <i>A. novi-belgii</i>) - lovely fall flowers, important source of pollen for late season foraging		79
Goldenrod (<i>Solidago</i>) - doesn't cause allergies; important source of pollen for late season insect foragers		67
New York Ironweed (<i>Vernonia noveboracensis</i>) - important late summer bloomer and pollen and nectar source for butterflies and numerous insect species		14
Milkweed, butterfly weed (<i>Asclepias</i>); don't worry about the name "weed"; exclusive host plant of Monarch butterfly whose population is in critical decline and highly dependent on homeowners to restore plants lost to farming and development activity; 2017 Perennial Plant Association "Plant of the Year"		11

For numerous native plant choices available, visit the "Plant Finder" tab of [Missouri Botanical Garden's](#) website for detailed information and pictures of plants mentioned above. Find inspiration and landscape designs featuring native plants at [American Beauties Native Plants](#). Look for *American Beauties* labels at local garden centers. To check if a plant supports wildlife, visit the [Native Plant Finder](#) site and search by zip code to find the best local choices. Although non-native ornamental plants add beauty, they provide little, if any, wildlife benefits so consider using native plants when the opportunity arises.

Rethink the need for large lawns this year. You'll be doing yourself, local wildlife and our resource-depleted ecosystem a big favor. How about it? Are you ready to change your ways?

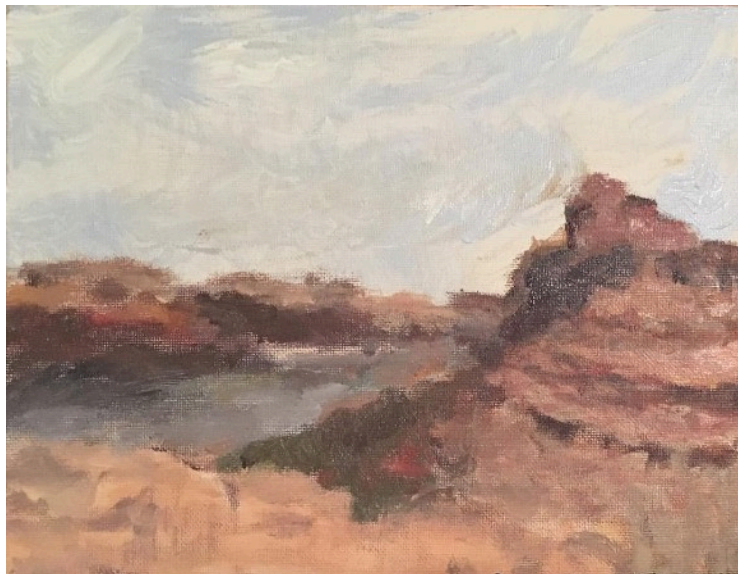
Michele MacKinnon, is a UCONN Certified Advanced Master Gardener, garden educator and speaker.

To contact MacKinnon for speaking engagements, or to ask gardening questions, email beehappygardener@gmail.com. We'll publish answers in the next edition of the newsletter.

Arches National Park Inspires Artist

by Lucy Shaiken

Connecticut and its lush, green rolling landscapes covered with trees and grasses has been my home my entire life. The juxtaposition of the hot, red, barren landscape of the American Southwest is alien to me. For that reason, I find images of this region especially alluring. The sandstone formations in Arches National Park, Utah are more like the landscape views we see from space of the planet, Mars.



Arches National Park, acrylic paint on board by Lucy Shaiken

The natural sculptures in Arches National Park are unique and I love the way they pierce the otherwise even skyline. The reddish color and strange shapes of these more than 2,000 natural sandstone arch formations are opposite to everything I know and love in New England. I love depicting images of nature in my art, and such unfamiliar landscapes provide a stimulating challenge for me. Thus, the purpose of this painting is to highlight the beauty of this protected land with hope that my work will inspire further support and stewardship. It is my belief that our National Parks and protected forests are the United States' greatest asset.

Right now, this park faces several threats. The crust of the land is home to many life-forms. Footprints and vehicle tracks compress and disturb this crust, harming these delicate ecosystems. According to the National Park Service, Arches National Park alone is home to over 1000 species although invasive non-native species threaten to overrun native plant life.

Arches is also one of the best places to observe the night sky. The park's flat landscape and often cloudless nights make it ideal for stargazing. In today's world it's difficult to find areas where views of the night sky are unadulterated by civilization. Unfortunately, light pollution from nearby towns is visible from many points in the park, disrupting the views of the stars at night,

In *Desert Solitaire*, an autobiographical work about author Edward Abbey's time as a park ranger at Arches National Park, Abbey writes, "Wilderness is not a luxury but a necessity of the human spirit, and as vital to our lives as water and good bread. A civilization which destroys

what little remains of the wild, the spare, the original, is cutting itself off from its origins and betraying the principle of civilization itself." *Desert Solitaire* was published in 1968 and in the fifty years since, we have made great strides in conservation with legislation such as the Clean Air Act. As climate change progresses, however, our National Parks and other wild spaces are threatened. It is crucial to our health as a nation, and as a planet, to protect what wild spaces we have left.

Read More: <https://www.nps.gov/arch/index.htm>

Lucy Shaiken is an artist and defender of our national parks and a Sierra Club member.

Fiona, My Girl Golden Goes After Geese

by Renee M. Taylor

Talk about a wild goose chase! I should have called my girl golden retriever Diana, after the Greek goddess of the hunt, instead of Fiona, fair beauty in Gaelic.

On a lovely spring day, I took my two golden retrievers to Stroh Park's tennis court that isn't (fence, no net) so they could chase balls I tossed with a 'chuck it toy' for fifteen minutes or so before returning to work.

I secured the back and front gates and began tossing balls. When I turned my back to pick up a ball the boy Shiloh had dropped, Fiona my girl golden was no longer in the pen! I checked the rear gate and found the latch had swung open, with Fiona's, aka Houdini prodding I'm sure!

Following the sound of honking geese, I drove to the pond at the far end of the park and saw her swimming in circles around the pond's island, chasing a dozen geese and five small babies. They tried pulling her away from the babies by splitting up, so she alternately chased the geese with goslings then the big geese that pulled out in side circles.

I got a big dog cookie that Fiona normally would stand on her head to get and started wandering around the pond, trying to get her attention. I was at any low spot she could crawl out as she swung around the island in yet another circle. But she was mesmerized by the geese.



Fiona swimming
Photo credit: Renee M. Taylor



Fiona swimming with the geese
Photo credit: Renee M. Taylor

For over an hour as park passersby watched, admiring her stamina and flat top line swimming, I finally noticed she was swimming slower. She's ten and a half years old with an arthritic hip and living on one third of a kidney, so I was afraid she'd seize up in the hip or drown from exhaustion soon. I called 911.

An officer arrived smiling, “She’s cute, I have a golden too,” she said. “Maybe she’ll go after my floating dog toy.” She tried that but Fiona wasn’t the least bit interested, after all it didn’t keep honking and rising from the water fluttering large wings.

Then the officer thought Fiona would like her French fries, so she threw them in the water also hoping it would draw the geese closer to shore with Fiona following. Neither geese, worried about Fiona nor Fiona, the Obsessed, cared about the usually highly desirable junk food.

Next the officer called the dog warden. When he arrived, also smiling, he said, “She’s cute. Had another dog doing this recently.” I asked, “What happened?” He said, “That dog listened and came out.” Meanwhile, Fiona kept circling the island switching course every time the geese tried to fake her out.



Geese protecting their goslings
Photo credit: Renee M. Taylor

I asked the warden if the Fire Department had a raft or inflatable they could launch on the pond and he said no but he had an idea. He called a pal and asked if he could leave work early and bring his small rowboat to chase Fiona down. Nope, his pal couldn’t leave work.

“So I guess it’s Plan B,” the dog warden said. He went back to his van and came out with a big net on a 30 foot telescoping handle. “I don’t think you’ll catch her with that” I said, “she’s a strong 80 pound dog and very maneuverable as you can see.”

But when the warden extended the long handle across the water, the sight of the huge handle splashing high and repeatedly in the water broke Fiona’s hypnotic spell. At that moment, I leaned out from shore with the big cookie and kept coaxing her towards me. Hunger and fatigue finally took its toll and she weakened.

As Fiona ate her cookie on shore the warden said, “You don’t deserve that cookie!” And to me, “She’ll be out cold for two days now.”

He doesn’t know my Fiona. Leaving, she bounded up into my SUV and later after drying out in the kennel, dragged me down the street for her evening walkies.

Thanks to a veterinarian prescribed regimen of daily IVs, treatments and a special diet, Fiona is strong and healthy despite serious health issues. Thanks to the vet’s care, I’ve probably got another couple of years trying to keep up with my monster princess!

Oh and I finished my night having to bathe her to get the pond scum smell out. It took two sudsings to do the job!

Do you have any good pet tales to share?

Renee Taylor is a CT Chapter Sierra Club member and volunteer.

POETRY

Nature to a Hiking Child

Nature to a hiking child
Comes alive, and makes them wild
Crazy things they think and ask
'Bout clouds and bugs and mud and grass
Falling down, skin a knee
Go behind a tree to pee
Tracking boldly through the muck
Now in the brambles, getting stuck
Walking stick and pocket knife
Morning glory, exploring life
Tossing pebbles in the pond
Examine leaf and fern and frond
Boasting of the farthest leap
Confidence that touches deep
Poke and prod with twig and toe
Now hurry, onward we must go
Snap a stick and stomp a nut
Stumble giggling through a rut
Hesitate at mouth of cave
Summon courage, be bold and brave
Attack the pack for snack and drink
Granola bars, then pause to think
Imagine bears and snakes and more
Creeping, stalking forest floor
No selfish thought or petty strife
A hiking child, amazed by life

Vince Jennetta, Burlington, CT



Collage, Seasons at Sessions Woods
Photo Credit: Vince Jennetta



Poet writing this poem
Photo Credit: Jennetta nephew

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