



The Quinnehtukqut Connecticut Chapter

The Monthly Newsletter for Events, Information, and Action

MAY 2017

WELCOME TO THIS 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.

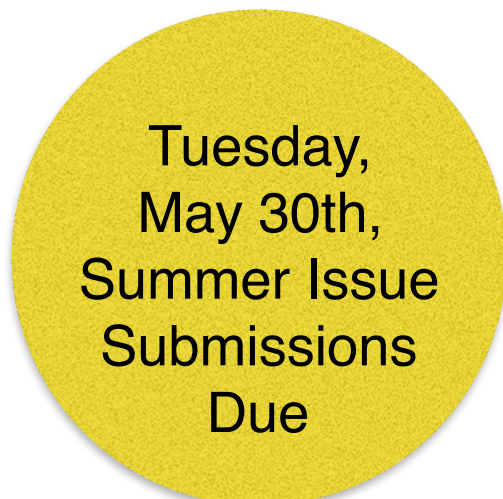
We have developed a newsletter calendar for the next two 2017 submission dates which includes the Summer issue. The purpose of the calendar is to make it easier for you to plan your *Quinnehtukqut* contributions for publication.

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.

MAY/JUNE CALENDAR:



SUMMER CALENDAR:



MAY OUTDOOR EVENTS

Hiking 1

It's spring and hiking is back with a new leader, Geneva Renegar. Here are the details:

Location: Bluff Point, Groton, CT
778 acres of coastal preserve, the largest undeveloped coastline in CT. Wooded trails, photo ops: wildflowers, panoramic views of Fisher Island, Little Gull Island and Orient Point from summit.

Date: Saturday, May 6th

Time: 10:00am

Level of Difficulty: Moderate, steady uphill ascent 190 feet, followed by moderate descent

Length: 3.6 mile Coastal Reserve loop trail

Free event open to club members and the public

Weather: Light rain OK; heavy rain postpones to Sunday, May 7th

GPS Directions: Depot Road, Bluff Point State Park, Groton, CT 06340

Written Directions: http://www.ct.gov/deep/cwp/view.asp?a=2716&q=325178&deepNav_GID=1650#directions

Free Parking

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

[Sierra Club Outings Waiver](#)

Dogs: Well behaved dogs on leash are permitted; bring bags to clean up after your dogs.

Contact: Geneva Renegar, 860.857.2091; genevarenegar@gmail.com

Geneva Renegar, a certified Chapter outings leader, is an avid hiker, walker and organic gardener who enjoys kayaking, hang gliding and observing nature. She believes in the restorative elixir of nature and hopes to inspire others to enjoy all the outdoors has to offer.



View from Coastal Reserve loop trail

Hiking 2

Celebrate the day before Mother's Day with a beautiful hike in the woods. Meet our new leader, Christine Louden.

Location: Penwood State Park, Bloomfield, CT

We will be hiking a loop that includes some of the Metacomet trail. The hike will take us through forested areas, along a ridgeline and to a pond where we may be able to observe some early spring wildlife. The Metacomet Ridge is part of the New England Trail (NET), which was designated in 2009 as a national scenic trail.

Date: Saturday, May 13th

Time: 10:00am

Level of Difficulty: Moderate, some up and down portions on a partially paved trail and a single track rocky trail.

Length: 4-5 miles

Free event open to club members and the public

Weather: Light rain OK, heavy rain postpones to Sunday, May 14th

GPS Directions: 560 Simsbury Road, Bloomfield, CT

Note: The entrance to Penwood is off Route 185 on the right if you are heading toward Simsbury from Bloomfield. There is a large parking lot. We will meet at the trailhead near the parking lot.

Free Parking

Clothing: Please make sure you dress for the weather. Children are welcome who are prepared for the distance and terrain.

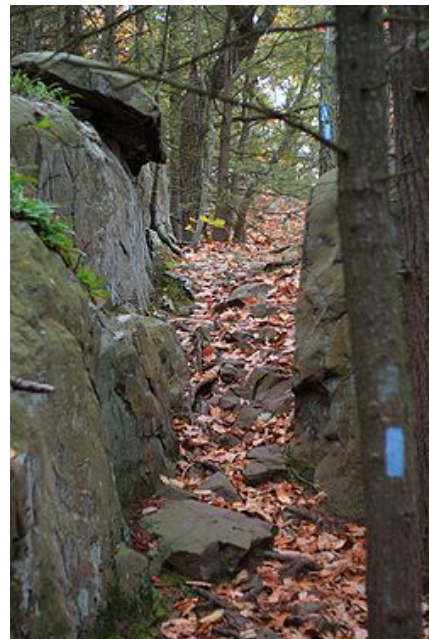
Dogs: Friendly, well behaved leashed dogs are welcome. Bring bags to clean up after your dog.

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

[Sierra Club Outings Waiver](#)

Contact: christinelouden@att.net with the number in your party. If your plans change, please let her know so she has a proper head count. Cell: 860.280.6309

Christine Louden, a certified Chapter outings leader, is looking forward to leading hikes in Connecticut to revisit some of her favorite places and discover new trails with other interested people. She is an avid trail runner and has an interest in plant identification and edible and medicinal plants that she hopes to share on hikes.



The Metacomet Trail

Kayaking

Kayak on the Willimantic River and Eagleville Lake

Date: Saturday, May 27th

Time: Noon

Location: Mansfield, CT

Free event open to club members and the public

Description: Let's begin our local paddling season with a quiet water ramble down Willimantic River to Eagleville Lake through lush woodlands and active bird areas with slow currents and good year round water levels.

We can finish the trip by exploring wooded areas upstream past the put until the current gets too strong, then fall back to the launch.



Map of the lakes: [Click Here](#)



Meet: Mansfield River Park. Portage 100 feet from parking to concrete ramp in sheltered bay.

Directions: Route 84 to Route 44, south .3 miles on Stafford Road, Route 32. Turn right onto Plains Road. River Park is .2 miles on right.

GPS: If you enter 50 Plains Road, Mansfield, you'll be close.

RSVP: Yes only by Friday, May 26th to Renee at mchawigirl@yahoo.com. Be sure your cell phone is on Saturday morning in case weather/winds require site change or canceling.

Safety: Safety vests must be worn at all times.

All attendees must sign a liability waiver. You may review the waiver by clicking the attachment here: [Sierra Club Outings Waiver](#)

No cell phone use or smoking on the water.

Optional: Post paddle dining 10 minutes away overlooking Coventry Lake at Lakeview Restaurant, 50 Lake Street, Coventry, Connecticut.

MAY EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

Connecticut's Key Environmental Trends



Karl Wagener, CEQ

What's better, what's worse in the Connecticut environment and why? Hear the executive director of the state Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), Karl Wagener, discuss its recently-published report on Connecticut's key environmental trends. He will also explain how the CEQ helps citizens with environmental problems.

Speaker: Under the direction of Karl Wagener, the CEQ monitors the condition of Connecticut's air, water, land and life and recommends improvements to state laws and policies. Wagener is also involved with investigating and finding solutions to complaints from the public about environmental problems. He oversees publication of the CEQ's annual report to the governor, *Environmental Quality in Connecticut*. Previously

he worked on environmental policy for the Connecticut Audubon Society and was its lobbyist at the State Capitol.

Sponsor: Greater Hartford Sierra Club

Date: Thursday, May 11th

Location: Westmoor Park Lodge, 119 Flagg Road, West Hartford

Time: Activist letter writing: 7:00pm; Program: 7:30pm

Donation: \$4 to defray hall rental fee

Questions: Renee at mchawigirl@yahoo.com

Clean Energy Briefing AND Legislative Call To Action

A legislative briefing on the current energy and climate issues in Connecticut will be presented by representatives of Farmington Indivisible, Connecticut Chapter Sierra Club, Clean Water Action and Connecticut Fund for the Environment. Speakers will review current energy legislation and identify opportunities for clean energy breakthroughs — or defeats.

Learn action tips and strategies to take legislative action on the issues. Use your new skills to write a letter to your legislator or the news media on the spot.

Date: Monday, May 15th

Time: 7:30pm

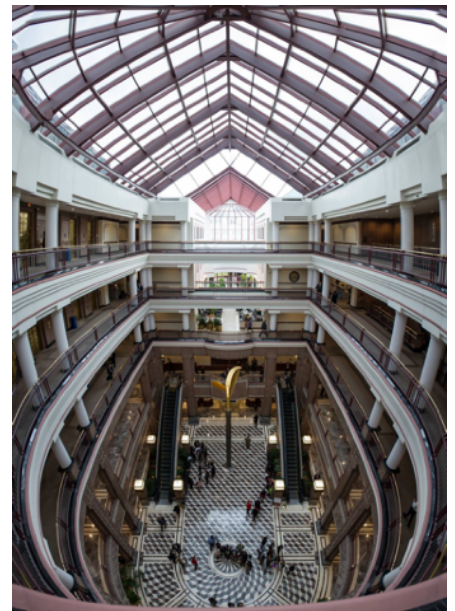
Location: Amistad Hall, First Church Congregational, 75 Main Street, Farmington, Connecticut

Use School Street entry to reach lower level, rooms 101-102.

Parking: Barney Library parking lot off Church Street

Issues

- Legal limits on local renewable energy projects and efforts to remove them
- The continuing threat of natural gas infrastructure expansion
- How Millstone's nuclear power could be competitive with clean renewable energy
- What our statewide environmental organizations are doing
- Action opportunities for you this legislative session
- Tips for effective advocacy



2017 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Activism is the Means to Achieve Good Legislation

by Roberta Paro

Over one hundred concerned Connecticut citizens attended our March 8th Lobby Day at the Legislative Office Building in Hartford. A number of state legislators stopped by to address us, and it was an honor to have so many politicians eager to speak to our group and to share their expectations for this legislative session!

As the 2017 legislative session winds down, we are asking for your help with two bills that could 1) expand the use of solar and wind in Connecticut and 2) create a path toward a transparent review process for public lands proposed to be removed from state ownership.

Expanding Connecticut's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) will help us reach our goal of lowering Connecticut's greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent from our 2001 levels, by 2050 while lowering wholesale energy costs, cleaning our air and creating jobs in Connecticut and New England.

We all realize, if we didn't already, that political engagement is no longer optional. We need to make sure our legislators know where our interests lie.

Two Bills to Support or Oppose Now

In the remaining weeks of the 2017 Connecticut legislative session, two priority bills for the environment are winding through the legislature that need your advocacy. The bills are:

Senate Bill (SB106): Oppose "The Millstone Bill"- This bill must be amended to remove subsidies for nuclear and waste incineration because they are dangerous and dirty, and increase the renewable portfolio standard for wind and solar to use for electricity generation in the state because they lower wholesale energy costs and create jobs in Connecticut and New England. The Sierra Club opposes this bill as it is now written. https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/cgabillstatus/cgabillstatus.asp?selBillType=Bill&which_year=2017&bill_num=106

Senate Joint Resolution (SJ39): Support "Protect Open Space Bill"- to amend the state constitution to protect state lands. A transparent review process is necessary to ensure that any proposal to remove lands from state ownership is in the public interest. The amendment will help Connecticut reach our goal of setting aside 21 percent of our land into protected open space. The amendment is expected to help restore public trust so individuals will be confident bequeathing private land to the state. https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/cgabillstatus/cgabillstatus.asp?selBillType=Bill&which_year=2017&bill_num=SJ39

How Can You Help?

Call your State Representative and State Senator

Find your legislators [Click Here](#). Identify yourself as a constituent and a Sierra Club member and let them know what you want. **Legislators want to hear from their constituents.**

Volunteer. Participate in one or more Wednesday lobbying efforts between now and June 7th at the state capitol in Hartford to protect open space and help achieve the outcomes we need to protect our land, air and climate.

Contact:

Chapter Program Manager, John Calandrelli

860.236.4405

connecticut.chapter@sierraclub.org

Thank you from the CT Chapter Sierra Club Legislative Team!

Roberta Paro, former Chair of Connecticut Chapter Sierra Club is now Co-Chair of the Legislative Committee

EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATION RECAP

Restoring Our Shorelines

by Stephanie Beals

"The poetry of the Earth is never dead." John Keats

'Living Shorelines' are man-made coastal protection structures that attempt to mimic nature-based erosion control. New to Connecticut and the Northeast, these structures may be a way of preserving natural shore elements while protecting our shorelines from erosion.

The Connecticut Institute for Resilience & Climate Adaptation (CIRCA) studies the resilience and sustainability of vulnerable communities in Connecticut to severe storms and the growing impact of climate change. The 'Living Shorelines' technique is new and CIRCA is working to raise public awareness.

By tracking tide gauges since the 1800s, and studying satellite records, assessing rising carbon levels and polar ice melt, science has speculated that sea level rise can cause approximately 200 additional flood events in Connecticut by 2050. Six hundred additional events per year could be possible by the end of the century.

CIRCA has been involved with providing grant money and information to build living shorelines across the Connecticut coast, using various materials such as oyster and coral reefs, breakwaters and groins, all to help facilitate beach and dune restoration. These barriers act to slow waves and absorb flooding from storm surges.

Access CIRCA at:

<http://circa.uconn.edu/living-shorelines/>



Reef balls, made of cement, at Stratford Point in Stratford, Connecticut, currently attempting to protect 750 feet of shore, by mimicking a natural oyster reef.

Photo: Jan Ellen Spiegel, *The CT Mirror*

Dr. Rebecca French, professor of Geoscience at CIRCA delivered the presentation on "Living Shorelines: Practices and Projects in Connecticut" at the Greater Hartford Sierra Club meeting,

April 13, 2017. CIRCA offers workshops open to the public. Dr. French may be contacted at Rebecca.french@uconn.edu.

Note: The Sierra Club approves shoreline restoration efforts on a case by case basis.

Stephanie Beals is a freelance writer, editor, environmental advocate and volunteer with the Greater Hartford Group, CT Chapter Sierra Club

ARTICLES

Activism For Connecticut Clean Energy

by James Root

In the face of a difficult national political situation, Connecticut clean energy activism continues apace, with fighting on several fronts.

Lobbying Senators Murphy and Blumenthal, Connecticut Chapter Sierra Club and 350 CT continue to ask our Senators to reconsider their heretofore supportive view of the interstate pipelines. Here's why.

Gas Pipeline Expansion

The Algonquin interstate methane (natural gas) pipeline runs through 320 miles of Connecticut, as well as in Massachusetts, New York and Rhode Island.

Expansion 1 'AIM,' is complete.

Expansion 2 The Algonquin, 'Atlantic Bridge,' was approved by the Federal Energy and Regulatory Commission (FERC) and is soon to be built.

Expansion 3 Owners of 'Access Northeast,' Algonquin, have delayed the FERC approval process, while they seek funding for the unneeded project.



Photo: H John Voorhees III / Hearst Connecticut Media

Activism at Work

When the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) rejected the Enbridge, Eversource and National Grid proposal for Access Northeast last year, due in part to resistance from Connecticut ratepayers to paying for that multi-billion dollar expansion, it contributed to the challenge the owners faced in funding it.

Massachusetts and Connecticut residents continue to attempt to slow down the smaller but significant Kinder Morgan Connecticut Expansion interstate pipeline project on the Connecticut/Massachusetts border.

Activists Work to Slow Activity

Coming down to the critical and more tangible state level, activists, led by the Connecticut Chapter Sierra Club, continue trying to slow the creation of what is becoming the interstate pipeline's biggest customer: methane power plants. The 'NTE' gas power plant proposal in Killingly is the scene of a continuing contest between developers and local residents. Both Sierra Club and Connecticut Fund for the Environment (CFE) legally intervened against this plant. In addition, local and state-wide opposition is engaged in protesting the air pollution and Acid Rain permits approved by DEEP for the Oxford methane power plant (currently under construction).

At the same time, activists are busy lobbying DEEP at hearings and in writing to deny state permits for projects such as the Oxford and Chaplin compressor stations, part of the Atlantic Bridge expansion. Compressor station enlargements are necessary to push greater quantities of gas along the line. Atlantic Bridge is still facing many challenges, including legal interventions concerning conflict of interest, filed by a number of groups including Food and Water Watch.



Strategies on Methane

Food and Water Watch, spearheaded in Connecticut by local organizer Jen Siskind, has approached the methane issue very strategically and successfully, overseeing the passage of fracking waste bans in 13 Connecticut towns and cities. This effort has the potential to 'cut the snake off at its head' as frackers west of us in Pennsylvania need somewhere to put the liquid and solid waste created by their operations.

Finally, in a less reactive and more forward looking fashion, energy activists are:

- Engaged in pushing Connecticut state legislators to pass clean energy legislation in the current legislative session with only little over a month to go
- Fighting the attempt to provide the already profitable Millstone nuclear power plant in Waterford with more subsidies
- Pushing the state to require that energy distributors Eversource and UI buy increasing amounts of renewable energy

Statewide Bills on the Environment

A host of other bills, including a statewide effort on fracking waste, have occupied the attention of many state activist groups, including the legislatively focused Connecticut League of Conservation Voters and Connecticut Fund for the Environment. The Connecticut Climate and Jobs Roundtable, led by John Humphries, continues its broad array efforts including a prominent lobbying position on the state's long term climate planning group, the Governor's Council on Climate Change or 'GC3.'

Despite the national political scene or how disappointing and discouraging to renewable energy activists last November's election results appear, they do at least force Connecticut residents to look harder for opportunities to shape our energy future on the state level. This approach may provide the most political leverage and be the most feasible.

James Root is a Sierra Club Member and Danbury Resident

We're Going Solar with the Sierra Club: The Decision

by Eileen Monaghan

Here's the house--with a new roof, right! It's a classic 1977 ranch of 1600 square feet. That long full length section of the house facing you, also faces south, the best direction! Yeah! No trees, right! Let's cut our heating bill and diminish our propane use. Better for the environment, better for us!

Step One: Select the Solar Company

As proud members of CT Chapter Sierra Club, we called Sungevity and the competition. Guess what? Sungevity had the better price plus they donated \$750 to the Sierra Club when we signed the contract. We decided on a 20-year lease of the solar panels rather than a purchase plan.

Step Two: The Evaluation

Painlessly, by computer with a live person guiding the effort, we filled out all the paperwork. Next, an estimator came to the house to check roof stability and attic support strength. He also measured the roof and evaluated the electrical system in the house.

Based on the estimator's data collection, Sungevity engineers determined the number and placement of the solar panels and all the attended electrical apparatus. The results: the number of solar panels required is 33 panels, all the same size, configured for the south side of the house.

We learned that the number of solar panels is determined by the average monthly electrical demand based on the most recent year's electrical use. Sungevity cannot install a system that generates more electricity in a month than we are expected to use. If, however, we do generate more electricity than we use, the utility will purchase the extra energy at the wholesale rate.

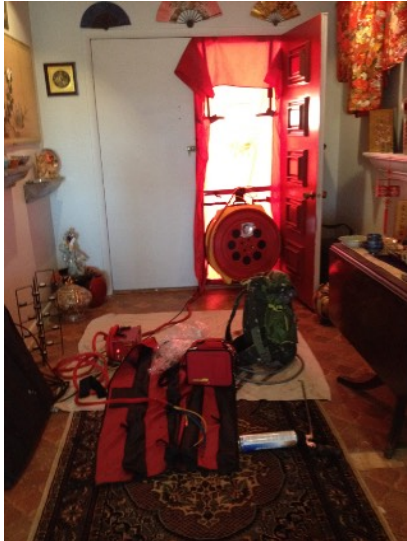
Step Three: Home Energy Audit

Ten days later three men arrived to evaluate the interior of the house and make any interior changes that could help insulate the house. The cost: \$124 outlay, reimbursed to us by Sungevity. Here's what they did:

- Tested how well the house is sealed using a special seal testing fan and gauge
- Changed all light bulbs to LEDs throughout the house; 25 LEDs and eight specialty LEDs
- Installed new fixtures tight to the ceiling
- Pulled back attic floor insulation and sprayed in foam sealant
- Sealed every opening in our cement foundation and in the house



Long south sided roof, perfect for solar panels



Seal testing fan and gauge in home's front hallway

- Offered a \$75 rebate on a Nest thermostat, if we choose to replace the current thermostat
- Added an insulated zipper blanket over the attic stairs to seal that location. The additional cost of \$210 was our choice

Step Four: Permitting

Now our local town hall has to issue a building permit for the solar panels to be installed. It usually takes five weeks to receive the permit.

Step Five: Installation will be an article in a future issue, probably the Summer *Quinnehtukqut*.

Eileen Monaghan is a CT Chapter Sierra Club member, founder and president of The Wedding Council and co-president of the Merryall Center for the Arts.

Low Impact Development (LID) and Drought, Part Two

by Nora Hulton

As the state of Connecticut becomes more developed the amount of impervious surface in the form of pavement, cement or asphalt roof shingles increases. When rain hits these surfaces it runs off at a rapid rate and usually re-enters a water body, via storm drains, carrying with it any pollutants it has picked up along the way. This is a “lose lose” situation, as local water bodies become contaminated and precious rain water doesn’t get the chance to infiltrate the soil and recharge our groundwater supplies.

Storm Water Pollution

“Stormwater pollution is ranked as the number one cause of degradation of our rivers, lakes and streams.....current practices of stormwater management for land development have many adverse impacts on the natural environment such as water quality impairment and degradation of our streams and groundwater depletion,” explained Sean Hayden, soil scientist and executive director of The Northwest Conservation District, based in Torrington. He reports that "current codes often mandate extensive land clearing that destroys existing on-site vegetation and hydrology.” He also stresses the urgent need to increase our permeable surface with these sobering statistics, “On an undisturbed vegetated site ninety percent of a one inch rainfall will infiltrate into the soils with only ten percent becoming runoff. When a site is developed in the traditional manner, this relationship reverses to only ten percent infiltrating and ninety percent becoming runoff (Hayden).”

With the increase of impermeable surface annually in our state, it’s becoming apparent that preventive and adaptive strategies have to be implemented to conserve our invaluable liquid resource. There are many effective Low Impact Development (LID) practices, and they can range from fairly easy, do-it-yourself methods to intricately engineered projects. Two of the less daunting, yet very efficient and attainable approaches are rain barrels and rain gardens. These

techniques are easy to implement, and the average homeowner can make a significant contribution to improving the quality of local waterways and drinking water.

Rain Barrels

Today's rain barrels are not made of wooden staves and cinched with metal bands like the water casks of yore. Presently, attractive, streamlined plastic vessels with bottom spouts that can be connected to garden hoses are the storage tank of choice. Using them, however, is still as simple as it was in your grandmother's day. Place it directly under your downspout and stand back and watch as the magic happens. The CT DEEP reports that 50 gallons of rainwater can be collected after just a ¼ inch of rainfall; multiply that by three barrels per household in a neighborhood of 100 houses, and you've saved over 15,000 gallons of storm water. That's enough water to keep the average water sprinkler pumping for over 62 hours (*A Resident's Guide to Rain Barrels*).

Rain Gardens

Rain gardens are another easy way to take a bite out of storm water runoff. This method works by diverting rainwater from downspouts and impervious surfaces such as: driveways, sidewalks, and patios into a vegetated depression. Deep-rooted native plants that can tolerate temporary "wet feet" are planted in the shallow basin. The vegetation, coupled with a well-draining soil, work to purify the captured storm water as it trickles down from the soil surface through the subterranean layers. The impurities from fertilizers, pesticides and other household wastes are filtered out before the reclaimed resource is introduced into local surface or groundwater supplies. Rain gardens are aesthetically pleasing, and the native flora also provides the additional advantage of attracting beneficial birds and insects to your yard (*A Resident's Guide to Rain Gardens*).



A Newly Planted Connecticut Rain Garden
Photo credit: UConn Tolland County Extension Center, Vernon, CT.

Sufficient rainfall cannot be the only solution to the water shortage caused by extended drought; the capture and conversion of storm water back to a clean, usable resource is of equal importance. It's imperative that Low Impact Development strategies are mainstreamed and widely implemented before the issue of clean water availability takes a critical turn. To learn more about how productive LID measures can be enacted on a state, municipal, and even a private level go to [Learn More](#)

Works Cited

Hayden, Sean. "LID and Drought," e-mail interview, 10 February, 2017
Rainfall as a Resource: A Resident's Guide to Rain Barrels in Connecticut and A Resident's Guide to Rain Gardens in Connecticut, Hartford, CT Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, 2009. Print.

Nora Hulton is a Connecticut Certified Wildlife Conservationist and a member of the CT Chapter Sierra Club.

Remington Woods: Nature or Office Complex

by Peter McKnight

Remington Woods, a 422 acre parcel of land with 344 acres in Bridgeport and 78 acres in Stratford, is under threat. In a region that has little natural space, this privately owned land is the last remaining undeveloped site in Fairfield County and one of the largest unprotected urban open spaces in the northeast.



23 acre Lake Success in Remington Woods

With its 25 acre Lake Success at the center of the property, the remaining open space is home to swans, snakes, other wildlife and many inland wetlands. See a list of wildlife in the Woods at: [Wildlife](#). The site has been called a hidden natural paradise teeming with life and nearly untouched by man for decades.

Remington Woods' history is not so natural. Remington Arms Corporation used it as a testing ground for their weapons in the 1920s and 1930s. As a result, the forest was off limits for most of the twentieth century as it housed potentially explosive material.

The Site Today

Though much of the site is not polluted, Remington Woods is designated a "brownfield" which DuPont, the current owner, is remediating to meet "industrial standards."

The site is difficult to approach. There is no access for the public except for the occasional bus tour provided by DuPont, or the limited vistas into the site from the other side of the fence. Some propose federal funds be used to build a major road to provide access from the Bridgeport side if the property is developed as an office complex. Although there are scattered city sites where economic development is also feasible, there is no large open space that can provide a major natural tourist attraction with hiking trails, an undisturbed ecosystem from colonial times, wildlife and vernal pools and camping. The possibilities are endless for this rare natural space within the city of Bridgeport.

See videos of the site at: [Video of Site](#) or [Friends of Remington Woods](#)

Activism: The 2017 Way to Fight

Is it really a wise investment to immediately destroy a natural space, or should efforts be made to find ways to allow that natural space to add value to the local community? Friends of Remington Woods propose to protect the land as open space or as a green



Aerial view of Remington Woods and Success Lake

development to attract tourism. We have to get the message out.

On April 6th, students at Housatonic Community College were amazed to learn from members of the Eastern Fairfield County Sierra Group about the hidden 422 acre natural parcel they did not know existed in their city. Great interest was generated as students signed a petition to save Remington Woods and promised to attend the City Council meeting on April 17th in support of saving this hidden gem. The Woods are hidden from most residents behind buildings and other structures. The aerial picture of the property is a surprise to many.

What You Can Do

1. **Sign the petition!** Add your name to the growing list of people who do not want to see Remington Woods destroyed.

2. **Attend all Bridgeport/Stratford City Council meetings where Remington Woods is discussed.** Check future event info at the link below:
<https://www.facebook.com/Friends-of-Remington-Woods-A-Project-of-the-E-Fairfield-Co-Sierra-Group-152076305887/>

3. **Contact the people involved** and tell them you do not support industrial development. Say you want to see this community asset used to preserve the natural space. Ask them to support preservation of Remington Woods and to resist calls for development.

Note: Telephone messages have the most impact, but you can telephone and/or email.

Contacts

Bridgeport Mayor Joseph Ganim

Phone: 203.576.7201

Email: mayer@bridgeportct.gov

Stratford Mayor John Harkins

Mayor John Harkins (Official Page)

Phone: 203.385.4001

Email: mayer@townofstratford.com

Bridgeport City Council President, Thomas C. McCarthy (D)

Cell: 203.449.6066

Email: Tom.McCarthy@bridgeport.gov

State Senators and Representatives for Bridgeport and Stratford

Go to the following website to find your state representative and state senator:

<https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/cgafindleg.asp>

U.S. Representatives

Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro

Phone: 203.562.3718

Email: delauo.house.gov



Bridgeport City Council

Congressman James Himes

Phone: 203.333.6600

Email: himes.house.gov**U.S. Senator Richard Blumenthal**

Phone: 203.330.0598

Email: senator@blumenthal.senate.gov**U.S. Senator Chris Murphy**

Phone: 860.549.8463

Email: senator_murphy.senate.gov

For more information about Remington Woods, go to:

<http://www.sierraclub.org/connecticut/remington-woods-project>

Peter McKnight is Chairman, Eastern Fairfield County Group and Secretary, CT Chapter Sierra Club

Noisy Lawn Care Practices

by Michele MacKinnon

I'm a bit cranky each spring. As a gardener, the sight of swelling buds and the reappearance of favorite plants delight me. So why be cranky? The answer: loud lawns.

Noisy lawn care—a century old complaint

Lawns are silent when left alone. In fact, they dampen noise levels. However, the incessant hum of mowers and other lawn-care equipment irritates like a cloud of mosquitoes buzzing around one's head. Similar noise complaints arose over a century ago in England when lawn bowling became popular. The game's requisite smooth playing surface precipitated a spree of grass and hay-cutting using scythes. Silence proved elusive during frequent work breaks, when the air resonated with the sound of scythes being sharpened.



Photo caption: Noisy leaf blowers add to summer noise

Photo credit: [Boston Herald](#)**Land use for lawns exceeds corn crops**

Unfortunately, silence will remain elusive for many U.S. homeowners. Research by Cristina Milesi, a Ph.D. student at the University of Montana revealed “there are three times more acres of lawns in the U.S. than irrigated corn” and that’s a conservative estimate. Milesi and her team concluded “lawns—including residential and commercial lawns, golf courses, etc.—could be considered the single largest irrigated crop in America in terms of surface area, covering about [49,500 square miles] in all.” Imagine the states of Maine, Massachusetts and Connecticut as a green blanket to grasp the land mass involved. No wonder lawn mowers, leaf blowers and string trimmers are a daily unwelcome sound suburbanites endure for six months or more.

Irrigation irritation

Irrigation adds a tick-tick-tick-whoosh of above-ground sprinklers. Why spend limited water resources on an endeavor that satisfies society's norms, not our appetites, as food crops do? At some point, practical needs must outweigh aesthetic values.

Noisy advertisements

Shrill advertisements add to spring's cacophony. They would have homeowners believe a multi-step regimen of weed and feed applications is mandatory. Consistent *soil* temperatures (not *air* temperatures) of 40 - 42°F prompt grass roots to start growing and only then will roots absorb fertilizers. Otherwise, such products run off into streams and lakes where they damage fish and aquatic plant species and spur algae blooms. Note that crabgrass preventer works differently. Applied before grass starts growing, it coats soil surfaces and crabgrass seeds which prevents sprouting. Never use in areas where over-seeding or a new lawn is planned.

Simple no-cost alternatives

Extra nitrogen is seldom needed if grass clippings are left in place. Even better, this simple mowing practice offers several benefits. It's free, harmless to watersheds and, based on further study by Milesi, would cut synthetic fertilizer use in half. Conduct a low-cost [UConn soil test](#) to determine a lawn's actual needs. The resulting report details soil nutrient levels and which, if any, fertilizer products are recommended, along with appropriate application rates. Additional products may be unnecessary.

Next time I'll discuss ways to replace grass with attractive but tough, drought-tolerant alternatives. Until then, homeowners interested in organic landscaping options will find information at www.organiclandcare.net. Visit www.quietcommunities.org for stories of communities that turned down the decibel level on landscaping noise.

Michele MacKinnon, is a CT Chapter Sierra Club member, a UCONN Certified Advanced Master Gardener, garden educator and speaker.

For a list of MacKinnon's 2017 programs, or to ask gardening questions, email beehappygardener@gmail.com. We'll publish answers in the next edition of the newsletter.

Information referenced in article:

<https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Features/Lawn/lawn3.php>

US Drought Monitor - [Drought Monitor](#)

POETRY

"Where have you gone," Rachel Carson...

The Nazis developed organophosphorus gas,
Used it only at Holocaust Centers, says Spicer...

"Hello. darkness, my old friend..."

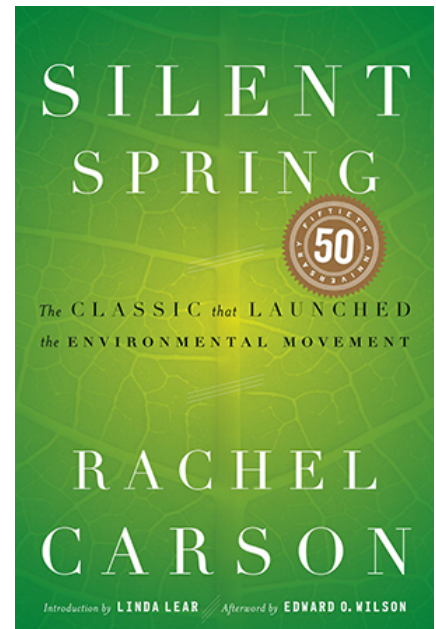
No such niceties were observed by al-Assad
In Idlib. So Trump bombed him as ChemMad...

"...thousand people maybe more..."

Now Dow wants Trump to extend chlorpyrifos,
Affects only 1800 protected species, much nicer...

*Copyright: Paul Simon and Art Garfunkel

JRG. J. Roger Guilfoyle is a writer, poet and professor



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