



# Friends of the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve

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## Newsletter—Fall 2012

FOHNP thanks Dominion for printing this newsletter

### FOHNP wins prestigious award



*Left to Right: FOHNP Board members Marvin Schutt; Greg Decker (VP); Kris Lambert (President); Rich Gallagher; and East Lyme Director of Parks and Recreation, Dave Putnam.*

FOHNP has been chosen by the Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association (CRPA) as their 2012 Organization Award winner. Dave Putnam, Director, East Lyme Parks and Recreation, nominated the Friends for the award for its stewardship of the Preserve. FOHNP President Kris Lambert accepted the award at a special luncheon on Tuesday, November 20th, at the Mohegan Sun Casino & Resort.

News of the award reached Dave's desk in a letter from Alex Palluzzi, CRPA Awards Committee Chair:

“On behalf of the Connecticut Recreation and Parks Association, congratulations on The Friends of the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve being selected as the 2012 Selected Organization Award. This year brought in a record number of

nominations, and yours was selected above all others. This is truly a testament to your hard work and dedication to the field.”

The mission of FOHNP is to:

- serve as a leading grassroots force for preservation of the Hills;
- increase public awareness of the environmental, educational and recreational significance of the Hills;
- raise funds needed by partnering with federal, state and local governments and other organizations and by securing contributions from private sources; and
- coordinate the day-to-day operations and maintain The Preserve through active participation on The Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve Council.

### Check us out on Facebook



FOHNP now has a Facebook page! Check it out at [www.facebook.com/fohnp](http://www.facebook.com/fohnp) for updates on Preserve activities and opportunities. We'd love to hear your feedback as well. Feel free to post your own comments and photos.

Save a tree! If you would prefer to receive an electronic version of this newsletter rather than hard copy, please submit your e-mail address to: [fohnp06357@gmail.com](mailto:fohnp06357@gmail.com)

## Water & Sewer Commission Hearing Ends. Zoning Commission Deliberating on Regulation Changes

The Water & Sewer Commission's public hearing on the Landmark request for a sewer allocation ended on October 23. The Commission now must deliberate and determine whether or not to allocate more than 50% of the town's remaining capacity to this one application. A final decision may be made as early as the Commission's next meeting on December 11.

Landmark's attorney stated that if the town had sewer capacity, they were obligated by law to allocate it to Landmark.

Jason Westcott, attorney for the Friends and STR-STH countered this statement with case law citing numerous cases where courts had upheld the "wide discretion" a town has to prudently allocate capacity and that they are not required to simply give it away on a first come first served basis. The town's attorney appears to have concurred with Mr. Westcott.

For an excellent article on the hearing, follow this link:

<http://thelymes.patch.com/articles/does-east-lyme-have-the-sewer-capacity-for-landmark-s-development?ncid=newsluspatc0000001>

FOHNP is hopeful that the commission decides not to allocate more than 50% of the town's remaining capacity to this one project. This would be excessive, and would deprive other areas of the town, which have been paying sewer allocations for several years, of the opportunity to have sewers installed.

Concurrent with the sewer capacity review, the Zoning Commission is expected to adopt amendments to the Affordable Housing regulations requested by Judge Frazzini. This will set the stage and ground rules for Landmark to come back to the Commission in 2013 with a site plan. At that stage, the Commission will consider and weigh the impact on the environment. The Friends plans to provide testimony, and it will be most helpful if members of the community come out to support preservation of the Hills.

## FOHNP Holds 11/10 Fundraiser: "It Was A Blast!"

*By Marvin Schutt*

There has been lots of excitement around Niantic in recent weeks, including two big storms. The November 10<sup>th</sup> Fund Raiser by the Friends of the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve was a welcome blast with a constructive purpose.

Driving onto York Avenue towards the American Legion Hall, we saw cars parked up and down the street and packed into the parking lot. When we opened the door, the "explosion" of music from the Boathouse Blues Band and the Hoolios was matched only by the enthusiasm of those standing, sitting and dancing, all having an absolute ball! Every area of East Lyme and towns beyond was represented.

The 165+ attendees thoroughly enjoyed it, and the atmosphere was warm and friendly, and one that should be repeated. FOHNP President Kris Lambert echoed that sentiment, saying, "Believe me, this will be a repeat event. Thank you to all who made this such a wonderful evening!"

## Hurricane Sandy Left Her Mark on Connecticut

Hurricane Sandy left her mark on the east coast, including significant damage to Connecticut. But she was no match for the dedicated volunteers who descended on the Hills on Sunday, November 11 with chain saws in hand to clear trees and debris from the trails. The volunteers—John Templeton, Ryan Kain, Evan Bradley, Sean Mcquillen, Jay Clark, Mike Dunn, Paul Whitehouse, Dave Kenney, and Greg Decker cleared most of the trails within two hours.



*Volunteer Jay Clark tackles one of several trees blocking trails following Sandy*

## Riparian Buffer Project Really Taking Shape

If you've visited the Hills recently via the Veterans Field entrance, you've probably noticed that the Riparian Buffer Project continues to make significant progress. On September 8, Phase 2 of the project began with the spreading of six cubic yards of premium topsoil, which had been delivered by the Town.



*Volunteers Kathy Slufik and Ray Heller spread six yards of topsoil as part of Phase 2 of the Riparian Buffer Project*

The remainder of Phase 2—spreading wildflower meadow seed, clearing invasive plants along the shoreline of Clark Pond and planting additional native plant species—will be completed in the Spring of 2013. We will be looking for help in these efforts and if you would like to help please call Greg Decker at (860) 739-9177 or email us at [volunteers@oswhills.org](mailto:volunteers@oswhills.org).



*Erosion control mats were placed over the seed to hold it in place until germination*



*Once the grass seed germinates, it grows through the erosion control matting.*

## Dominion Foundation Gives Check to FOHNP

On November 18, FOHNP received a check of \$2,500 from the Dominion Foundation to support our Land Acquisition and Stewardship Projects. Many thanks to Dominion's Kevin Hennessey, Director, Federal, State & Local Affairs-New England and Nancy Bulkeley, Community Affairs Representative. Their continuing commitment to The Hills is greatly appreciated!

## Seen Around the Preserve



*Josh and Erica Morgan love walking their dog, Pepper, in the Preserve. Josh, a transplant from Texas, was only recently introduced to the Hills, and it is now on his list of favorite hiking places.*

## Seen Around the Preserve (Cont'd)



*This year's original Connecticut Trails Day was cancelled due to bad weather. The rescheduled day in The Hills, September 29, was also affected by inclement weather. Above, Greg Decker, FOHNP Vice President, discusses The Hills' rock formations with intrepid guests, Barbara Wells and Judy Vannell.*



*Rowan and Fiona, the children of FOHNP Board member Susan Gonzalez, enjoy the crisp autumn air of the Hills on a recent hike.*



*The Hills are filled with fascinating rock formations. This one, which almost looks like the open mouth of some kind of rock monster, is the result of a long-ago intrusion of lava into the existing bedrock.*

## New, Improved Trail Map coming to the Preserve

The Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve trail map is undergoing a revision. The new map will reflect the re-routing of a small section of the eastern end of the Blue Trail. This small section is being eliminated because it is wet during a substantial part of the year.

The map will also include additional information, including mileage information between numerous trail junctions. The latest draft is shown below. Our appreciation to Gary Goeschel, Town Planner, for his efforts on this project.

