

Happy 15th Anniversary!!



In 2007 the 420 acre Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve was formally dedicated. Many have helped through the years, but three board members, Mike Dunn, Paul Whitehouse and Raechel Killeen have provided guidance and inspiration since the beginning. Here is a 15 year lookback:

Recognitions

2012 – Chosen by the CT Recreation and Parks Assoc. (CRPA) as their 2012 Organization Award winner
2019 – Voted by The Days ‘Best of Readers’ Choice Award for Top 3 ‘Places to Take a Hike’

Preserving & Expanding the Hills

2005 – The Friends of the OHNP began acquisition of parcels working with the Town, State and Federal government, and the Trust for Public Land
2014 – The preserve expanded to 457 acres with the purchase of the 37-acre Bayreuther property
2016 – Partnered with Save the River-Save the Hills and Save the Sound (formerly ‘CT Fund for the Environment’) to establish the ‘*Save Oswegatchie Hills Coalition*’

Capital Improvements

2012 – Main entrance kiosk installed, and bollards and chains installed at all secondary entrances
2019 – Location markers and maps installed at all intersections to assist hikers and emergency personnel
2019 – Clark Pond Bridge project completed and dedicated
2022 – The ‘Greg Decker Pitch Pine Park’ officially opened and dedicated

Save Oswegatchie Hills

We continue our work to protect and preserve the remaining 236 acres of undeveloped, unprotected Oswegatchie Hills. Since 2001 **four judges**, (Hartford Superior Court Judge Henry Cohn; CT Superior Court Judge Marshall Berger, as well as New Britain Superior Court Judges Eliot Prescott and Barbara Quinn) have all weighed in on **multiple cases** related to the property. Cases involving East Lyme’s zoning, water and sewer, inland wetlands, affordable housing commission and more. We work tirelessly to prevent inappropriate over-development of the adjoining Oswegatchie Hills owned by Landmark Development.

Research

2007 – The ‘Oswegatchie Hills Natural Resource Inventory’ performed by the Environmental Review Team of the Eastern Connecticut Resource Conservation and Development Area, Inc
2011 – Comprehensive ‘Terrestrial Ecology Survey’ published by board member Rich Gallagher
2015 – Audubon Connecticut ‘Forest Bird Assessment Report of Oswegatchie Hills’ completed
2017 & ongoing —Southern pine beetle traps installed and monitored in the Hills
2018 & ongoing – FrogWatch project observations and documentation
2020 & ongoing – Monitoring stations installed to monitor beech leaf disease
2021 & ongoing – iNaturalist project ‘Diversity in the Oswegatchie Hills’ launched by Al Burchsted

Flora & Fauna Support

2008 – Wood duck nesting boxes donated by Wild Birds Unlimited installed in Clark Pond
2012 – Riparian Buffer Project completed in the sloping area from Clark Pond to the ball fields
2012 & 2020 – Beaver Deceivers installed at Clark Pond
2017 – Bluebird nesting boxes made and installed by the scouts
2018 – Rain Garden installed as an extension of the Riparian Buffer Project
2018 – Purple Martin house installed at the entrance of the preserve

Ongoing Stewardship

- Maintaining and grooming **7 miles** of trail system
- Realigning trails to mitigate trail erosion
- Installing and repairing multiple bridges
- Clearing major tree blow downs
- Maintaining trail blazes and providing trail maps
- Leading hikes and providing education
- Removing invasive plants, replacing with natives
- Working with local schools, Scouts, and organizations