



Friends of the
OSWEGATCHIE HILLS
NATURE PRESERVE

Newsletter – 3rd Quarter 2024

A Message from the President

An important matter is on my mind...

You are probably aware of the activity taking place on the north end of the Hills. You may have even seen the equipment and heard the noise. So, what is happening?

The answer is: Glenn Russo, owner of the property, is clearing the land for a farm. An application was filed in 2017 “for a determination of a non-regulated activity for a tree farm... to be known as River Valley Farm.” Because of wetlands on the property, the Inland Wetlands Agency (IWA) had to review the application. After much discussion, a motion was passed that approved the application because “the activities in the proposed application are directly related to the farming operation ... and are permitted by right.” The motion also included three requirements:

- 1) 15-20 days prior to starting site work, the owner/applicant must review the plan changes with the Inland Wetlands Agent to confirm the extent of the repair work to be undertaken;
- 2) Notify the Inland Wetlands Agent two days prior to the start of the site work at each [wetland] crossing;
- 3) Notify the Inland Wetlands Agent upon completion of all regulated activities for final inspection.

Greg Decker, chair of the Stewardship Committee, and I have discussed the matter with Gary Goeschel, of the Inland Wetlands Agency (IWA) for East Lyme. I have also sent an email and followed up with phone calls. Mr. Goeschel assured us that when he walked the site, he found no violations. At the October 1st meeting of the IWA, I spoke during the Public Delegations time. On behalf of the Friends, I wanted to go on record with our concerns. As a result of my speaking, the IWA asked Mr. Goeschel to inspect the site again and report back at the next meeting in November. But at the end of the day, there is, unfortunately, not much else we can do. Mr. Russo has a right to clear the land for a farm. Even if violations are found, all he would have to do is remediate the impacted area and continue farming.

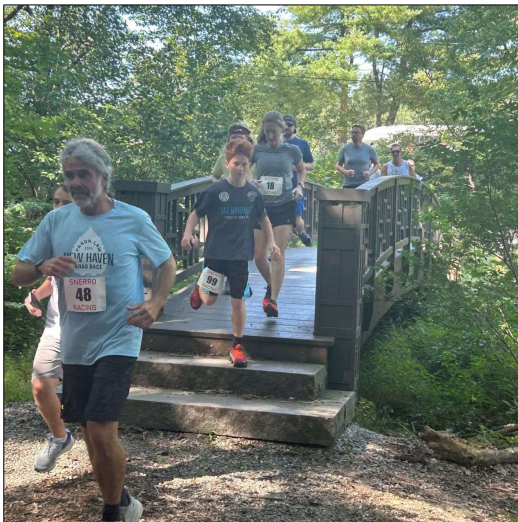


Brown area shows clearcutting of trees. Since this photo was taken in June 2024 there has been additional clearing.

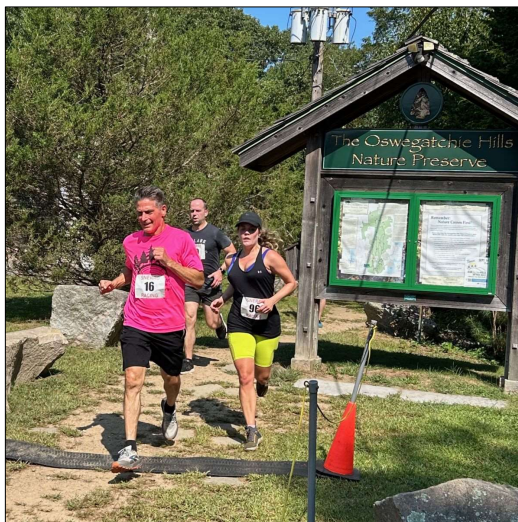
Kris Lambert

Run for the Hills - 2024

The 3rd annual 'Run for the Hills' trail run on September 14th was a huge success with 120 runners participating!



**Congratulations
to the 5K
winners and
special thanks
to our sponsors
and the many
volunteers who
made this fun
event a success!**



**Please visit
OSWhills.org for
fun videos,
photos of all the
runners and a
list of the
winners.**



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Clark Pond (from the red trail). Photo courtesy of Kathy Czepiel from Save the Sound

iNaturalist



Check out these photos....

To find out more information about these and thousands of other observations, visit the 'Diversity in the Oswegatchie Hills' project on the iNaturalist app. It's a great reference for learning about and sharing the wonders of the Hills!



Near the Kiosk...



Spotted Lanternfly Reminder

Keep your eyes open for Spotted Lanternfly egg masses, you may find them from now through June.

Egg masses are typically found on trees near the base but can also be found on other smooth surfaces. To help eradicate this invasive species, scrape them off using a plastic card or putty knife. Scrape them into a bag or container filled with rubbing alcohol or hand sanitizer and keep them in this solution permanently.

Every little bit helps.



Join Our Board!

Make a Difference!

If you love the Hills, we are seeking dedicated individuals who would like to become a member of our board and help fulfill our mission.

Board members are responsible for ongoing programs and initiatives of the Friends and collaborate with passionate team members to ensure this special land is available for generations to enjoy.

If you are interested, email us so that your name can be passed along to our nominating committee for consideration.

Email:
volunteers@oswhills.org