



Newsletter – 2nd Quarter 2023

A Message from the President



Two articles that appeared in two different publications caught my attention recently. One, titled “Protecting the Land,” is in the July issue of *Connecticut Magazine*. The other article was in a recent edition of *The Washington Post* and was sent to me by Bruce Dasinger, who along with his son Andrew, is our resident bird expert.

The lead for the news article struck me immediately. It read: “Want to live longer? Living near more green spaces could be part of the answer.” The statement was based on a study published in the journal, *Science Advances*. The study suggests that “if you have long-term exposure to more greenery where you live, on average you may be adding 2.5 years to your life.” I think

Bruce, who is in his 90’s, is a great example of what spending time in green spaces does for the quality of your life as well as longevity. He grew up in the rural panhandle of Florida where he was in the woods all the time. He fished in a creek by his grandparents’ farm in southwest Alabama and got a good feeling being alone in the woods. Small wonder he helps to lead birding hikes in the Hills on Trails Day, most recently in June. Of course other factors can affect how long you live and more research needs to be done, but Bruce is my role model!

The article in *Connecticut Magazine* described the important role land trusts play in the conservation of not only woodlands, as we normally think, but also urban farms and community gardens. Did you know that there are 130 individual and regional land trusts, controlling more than one out of every 20 acres in the state? Or that in 1997, the Connecticut General Assembly set an ambitious goal of conserving 21 percent of the state land base by 2023? In fact, only 18 percent (579,240 acres out of 3.22 million acres) of the land has been conserved so there is work to be done. In addition to the stats about conserved land, the article also explains why conserving land is important. A report in a publication of the American Psychological Association states: “From a stroll through a city park to a day spent hiking in the wilderness, exposure to nature has been linked to a host of benefits, including improved attention, lower stress, better mood ... and even upticks in empathy and cooperation.” Perhaps we should add longevity.

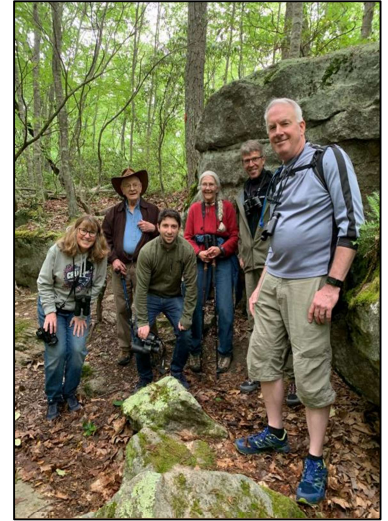
The Friends may not be a land trust, but we certainly are protecting the land in the preserve and working hard to acquire and protect additional acreage. We also are taking good care of the green space where anyone can go to get, in Bruce’s words, “a good feeling.” So get out there and take a hike!

Kris Lambert

CT Trails Day



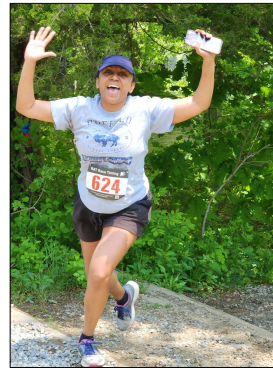
Many fortunate hikers were able to participate in CT Trails Day with guided hikes in the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve on June 3rd. The birding group led by *Bruce and Andy Dasinger* were thrilled to discover a pileated woodpecker's nest which contained an adult and young, they were also provided a special treat when Andrew called in a scarlet tanager! Special thanks go to all the hike leaders including, *Bruce, Andy, Paul Parulis, Ralph Bates and Susan Gonzalez*, for your dedication and passion for the Hills!



Some of the lucky hikers joining in CT Trails Day birding hike with Bruce Dasinger (second from left).
Photo by Andy Dasinger

Run for the Hills - 2023

The Run for the Hills Trail Run and Silent Auction on May 21st was a huge success! A total of 120 runners participated – including two 5 year olds, and six strong runners in the 70+ category! Special thanks to our sponsors, the many volunteers who made this a success, and also to Julie Clements-Reagan, who designed another stunning trail map bandana for our participants!



Trail runners were some of the first to pass the newly posted 'Mike Dunn Blue Loop' trail sign!



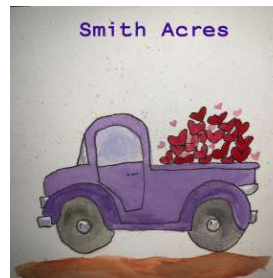
Visit OswHills.org for fun videos, many pictures, the list of the winners as well as links to our sponsors!

Special Thanks to our Sponsors!

Please let them know you appreciate their support!



**Conway, Londregan,
Sheehan & Monaco, P.C.**
ATTORNEYS AT LAW



Annual Meeting 2023

This year's annual meeting was held on May 6th at the East Lyme Library. Mike Sheehan presented the nominations and oversaw the election of Officers and Directors for two year terms. They included:

Officers: Kris Lambert, President; Jane Templeton, Treasurer; Dave Hughes, VP and Raechel Killeen, Sec.

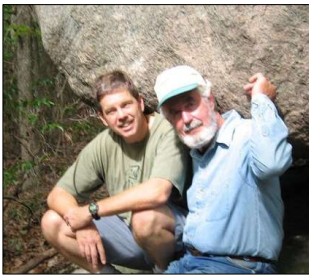
Directors: Greg Decker; Don Danila; and Liz Paganetti



In addition, we are happy to welcome Susan Zimmerman as a newly elected director. Susan is new to the area (since 2021), but not to hiking and service! She is an avid hiker, and enjoys hikes in the Hills. Her recent trips include hiking in the White Mountains and the Delaware Water Gap Appalachian Trail. She has served on the board of Fiddleheads in New London and is an advocate for CT children with mental health concerns and disabilities. We look forward to working with Susan and welcome her to the team!

Finally, we are going to miss Franz Edson who is stepping down. He has served on the board since 2015 and was a major driving force behind the beautiful Clark Pond Bridge. Fortunately, Franz will be staying involved with the Friends, volunteering with the stewardship committee.

Mike Dunn – Director Emeritus!



*Mike Dunn and Marvin Schutt
circa 2001*

After decades of dedication, Mike Dunn, cofounder of the FOHNP with Marvin Schutt in 2001, has decided to step down from the board. His vision, boundless energy and passion over the past twenty-two years has guided us to where we are today!



*(L to R) Martha Marx, Deb Moshier-Dunn,
Mike, Kevin Serry and Holly Cheeseman*

At the annual meeting Mike was presented with the “Mike Dunn Blue Loop Trail” sign, this is the first ‘*named trail*’ in the preserve and will forever memorialize his amazing contributions. East Lyme First selectman, Kevin Serry read a proclamation from the board of selectmen thanking him for his service in preserving and protecting the Hills for future generations and deemed him an ‘Honorary Resident’ of the town of East Lyme! In addition, State Representative, Holly Cheeseman and State Senator, Martha Marx presented him with an official citation from the CT General Assembly, acknowledging his commitment and accomplishments supporting Southeastern CT.

The board voted unanimously to make Mike a Director Emeritus, so thankfully he will still be involved (a Director Emeritus may attend board meetings but is not entitled to vote). Mike's legacy will live on – the entire southeastern Connecticut area has benefitted from his efforts – the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve is safe from development forever. We are very thankful!



(L to R) Tara Borden, Raechel Killeen, Paul Whitehouse, Martha Marx, Deb Moshier-Dunn, Mike Sheehan, Mike Dunn, Kevin Seery, Liz Paganetti, Holly Cheeseman, Kris Lambert, Jane Templeton, David Hughes, Don Danila