



Friends of the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve

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Newsletter—Summer 2017

FOHNP thanks Dominion for printing this newsletter

A Message from the President

Ten years ago on November 4, 2007, two visionaries, Marvin Schutt and Mike Dunn, achieved a major milestone when the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve was dedicated and opened to the public. This event culminated years of hard work and dedication to protect and preserve 420 of the 700 acres of the beloved Oswegatchie Hills. Their greater vision was to acquire, protect and hold in perpetuity the entire 700 acres of the Hills. We are celebrating this 10th anniversary to honor and appreciate not only their foresight but also that of many others who helped to make the preserve possible.

This anniversary is also a time to show our appreciation for this land. In the current political climate, we need, now more than ever, to embrace, protect and share with others what we know is a regional gem. This land provides not only opportunities for active recreation or quiet solitude but is also a place where biodiversity and unique ecosystems exist. The preserve is a guardian

and protector of the Niantic River, filtering rainwater while providing essential dissolved minerals to the river. The diverse flora and fauna contained in this unique coastal forest are testimony to why it is essential the entire 700 acres be protected.

So please join us on Saturday, October 14 at 9 am at Vet's Field/OHNP main entrance to celebrate this land and to say thanks to the two visionaries, Marvin and Mike, who had the foresight and determination to protect it. This land could have been squandered or lost to development but for the simple stroke of a pen. Luckily for all of us it was saved. So come celebrate and share in the wonder of the Hills.



Visit our website at:

www.oswhills.org

And our Facebook page at

www.facebook.com/fohnp

Bridge Approved for Clark Pond

On August 14, the East Lyme Inland Wetlands Agency approved the construction of a bridge across the Clark Pond dam, near the entrance to the nature preserve.

Greg Decker and Franz Edson, a board member, are spearheading the drive to replace the existing walkway with a safer, more permanent structure, which will also serve as a welcoming symbol of the permanence of the Preserve itself.

“We’re adding curb appeal as well as additional safety to the main entrance of the Preserve. We want it to say ‘welcome, come and explore!’ ” said Greg.



Current walkway

The existing walkway, the third such structure since the preserve was created, presents some issues:

- Heavy rain events sometimes dislodge the walkway planks
- It is narrow and sometimes unstable after heavy rain



The new bridge will be far more stable and eliminate additional tripping hazards that exist on the hill going down to the dam.



The bridge above is representative of the bridge proposed for Clark Pond Dam

This bridge will be anchored by the low impact Diamond Pier Foundation System which has been used successfully and repeatedly over the last two decades by Federal, State and Municipal clients across the country.



Diamond Pier Foundation System

It will provide significant stability under the soil conditions found in the area of Clark Pond dam.

Outdoor Lifestyles’ Drew Kenny drafted the site plans for the project pro bono, which led to the success of obtaining the permit. We extend our thanks for his continued support.

Look for future updates on progress on the bridge.

Celebrate Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve at its Tenth Anniversary

On Saturday, October 14, we will hold an official celebration of the preserve's Tenth Anniversary. The Celebration will take place at Veterans Memorial Field—the entrance of the preserve— beginning at 9:00 AM, followed at 10:00 by guided hikes around the Hills. Join us as we celebrate those whose vision, energy and determination made the preserve possible.



Our booth at the OL Midsummer festival, staffed by Kris Lambert (above) and Heidi Green and Melissa Schlaig, resulted in 40 new members.

Save Oswegatchie Hills Coalition Update

The Coalition continues to spread the word about our gem in Niantic. Since its founding in 2016, the Coalition has represented the Hills at more than 30 events. The Coalition now comprises a total of more than 400 members and 20 organizations.



Stewardship Committee member Ralph Bates (above, right), provided support for the "Water Wednesday" event at the Children's Museum of SE CT Museum.

Check out Friends and CFE Facebook pages for upcoming Coalition events.

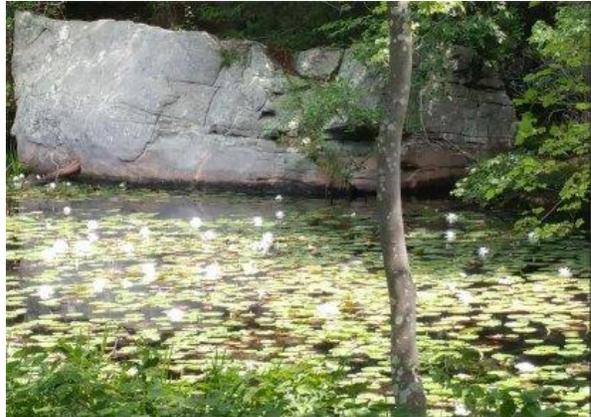
Marvin Schutt Made First Director Emeritus

At its annual meeting in May, the Friends elected Marvin Schutt the first director emeritus of the organization as a way to honor him for more than 15 years he devoted to saving Oswegatchie Hills. Because he was unable to attend the meeting in May, friends and colleagues gathered at Masonicare in Mystic, where Marvin now resides, to officially bestow the title. At the June 7 party, past president Kris Lambert, below, presented Marvin with a special plaque and a shirt bearing the title "Director Emeritus."



Seen Around the Preserve

Beauty in OHNP comes in all shapes and life forms



The pond lilies are in full bloom on Clark Pond



The preserve's nesting boxes have produced bluebirds every year since installation almost a decade ago.



This is one of many border markers between the original parcels that now make up the preserve. Some of these markers can be seen along the trails.