

Region embraces Niantic River and Oswegatchie Hills

This year's For Pete's Sake tribute to Pete Seeger by Friday Night Folk at All Souls drew a full house of fans and supporters of Save the River-Save the Hills and its fight to protect and preserve the Niantic River and Oswegatchie Hills from proposed high-density development. Close to 300 people attended the February 27 folk music celebration at All Souls Unitarian Universalist Congregation in New London.

"This event marked a turning point in the fight to save the Oswegatchie Hills, recognizing the regional significance of this forest and the vision to preserve it," said Mike Dunn, land acquisition director for Friends of the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve. "The proposed over-development of the fragile coastal forest acreage is no longer a fight just for East Lyme."

For more than ten years, STR-STH and the FOHNP, both not-for-profit environmental organizations, have sought to protect the hills from development and to prevent further degradation of the Niantic River estuary that flows into the Long Island Sound. Although the Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve has grown to over 455 acres since 2007, it lacks the adjoining 236 acres currently owned by Landmark Development, LLC. This includes the last mile of undeveloped and unprotected saltwater frontage on the Niantic River.

"This is one of the most spectacular, and most threatened, sites in Connecticut. It's hard to imagine a more inappropriate and destructive proposal," said Roger Reynolds, legal director for Connecticut Fund for the Environment and its bi-state program Save the Sound. "CFE/Save the Sound is joining the tireless residents who have waged this battle for more than a decade and we are looking forward to helping finish the job."

STR-STH founder Fred Grimsey formed the grassroots environmental non-profit organization in 2001 to advocate for cleaning up the Niantic River. When the Town of East Lyme was sued by the developer for denying its proposals to develop the hills on the grounds of inadequate sewer capacity, STR-STH and FOHNP were recognized by the courts as intervenors. STR-STH supports the Town's decision to deny the developer's applications and has been raising awareness and money through fundraisers and grassroots events.

"We've been fighting the good fight for over eleven years," Grimsey told the Friday Night Folk audience. "It's not over yet." For more information and for updates, visit the website at www.savetheriversavethehills.org or see www.facebook.com/pages/Save-the-River-Save-the-Hills-Inc/168138674820



L-R: Mike Dunn,(Friends of Oswegatchie Hills, Land Aquisition) Kris Lambert, (Pres. Friends of Oswegatchie Hills) Roger Reynolds (Connecticut Fund for the Environment), and Fred Grimsey (President and Founder, Save The River-Save the Hills)