

# U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service

Helping People Help The Land

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Connecticut

July/August 2012

## From the State Conservationist ...



Jay T. Mar

### Connecticut Conservation and Proud of It

The recent visit by NRCS Chief Dave White was a milestone for Connecticut's conservation efforts.

The Chief met many conservation partners, dedicated staff, and creative and passionate stewards of the land as he spent two days touring some of the conservation activities we've all been involved in. Healthy soils, wildlife habitat development, healthy forest restoration, fish passage, watershed management, greenhouse energy conservation, integrated water management, aquaculture, agricultural waste management, and composting; and not to forget the *cow pots*, *CT Grown*, and *Know Your Farmer Know Your Food* connection.

Shortly after his visit, the chief commented nationally on his appreciation of the conservation efforts, diversity, and productivity of Connecticut's agricultural operations.

It has become apparent we need to open our doors more often; we have a lot to be proud of. To be national leaders in conservation stewardship and sustainable agriculture we need to continue to prioritize this as a statewide goal. We need to work with our creative producers and conservation partners to continue to improve our progress in implementing conservation on the land and finding new ways and new practices whereby producers can continue to grow food for many while preserving our agricultural heritage for future generations. We need to be proud of our accomplishments while at the same time realizing we have much more we need to do. As many tiny brooks make big rivers, so too is our growing Connecticut Partnership.

Jay

75  
Years

A Legacy of Conservation  
Helping People Help the Land

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### NOTICE TO HISPANIC AND/OR WOMEN FARMERS OR RANCHERS

If you are a woman or Hispanic farmer and believe you were improperly denied farm loan benefits by USDA between 1981 and 2000. You may be eligible for compensation.

To register your name to receive a claims packet, call the Farmer and Rancher Call Center at 1-888-508-4429 or visit: [www.farmerclaims.gov](http://www.farmerclaims.gov)

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Department of  
Agriculture

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# Chief White Tours Connecticut

NRCS Chief Dave White recently paid a 2-day visit to Connecticut, where he toured a good amount of the state. He met with landowners, congressional and state and local representatives, partners, and most of Connecticut's NRCS employees.

The first stop was Valleyside Farm in Woodstock, where the Chief was part of the Healthy Soils Workshop being held for new employees from Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island.

The group then headed to Scotland to visit the McAvoy Land Trust/New England Cottontail Farm, where Rich McAvoy talked to the Chief about how he came to be involved with this declining species and his preservation efforts. Although the bunnies were uncooperative with a large group in tow, they did manage to show up after the entourage moved on to their next stop.

Participants then moved down to Rocky Neck State Park where NRCS's Todd Bobowick and conservation partners talked to the Chief (as well as private citizens who were at the park and came over to listen) about their involvement in the project.



*(left to right) Chief Dave White, Lisa Wahle, CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection, and Connecticut State Conservationist Jay Mar at the McAvoy LandTrust in Scotland.*



*Chief White discusses landscape architecture with Fernando Rincon.*



*The Chief listens to the discussion at the Healthy Soils workshop.*



*Participating in the training!*



*Ray Covino talks about healthy soils.*

# Chief White Tours Connecticut *(continued)*



*Unfortunately, the bunnies at the New England Cottontail Farm weren't comfortable meeting the Chief and didn't come out until the group was gone.*

(photo courtesy of Tom McAvoy)

The next stop was at the confluence of the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound in Old Saybrook where the Chief got a chance to enjoy the beauty of the area.

A smaller contingent from the group proceeded on to Viauso Greenhouse, in Branford. There they met up with District Conservationist Diane Blais and the owner of the greenhouse, who gave the Chief a tour of his operation.

The next morning the Chief, State Conservationist Jay Mar, Assistant State

Conservationist Joyce Purcell, and Resource Conservationist Nancy Ferlow met up with Commissioner of Agriculture Steve Reviczky, State Aquaculture Director David Carey, CACD President Denise Savageau, and Todd Bobowick for a trip into Long Island Sound aboard Norm Bloom & Son's oyster boat. The Chief got a firsthand look at one of the state's largest aquacultural producers in action.



*A picture perfect day for the tour of Bride Brook Fish Passage at Rocky Neck State Park. The group drew attention from the public as they gathered to listen.*

The group then headed to Stamford for a look at a Cultural Resources/GPR Project at the Stamford Congregational Church. There the Chief was introduced to State Archaeologist Nick Bellantoni. Research Soil Scientist from the National Soil Survey Center Jim Doolittle, was also there providing training to the soils staff on the use of GPR.

# Chief White Tours Connecticut *(continued)*



The group then headed north to East Canaan, to the Freund Farm and Laurel Brook Farms. There the Chief had the opportunity to meet several of the state's producers and talk to them about how they do things on a much smaller scale than in other areas of the country.

It was a wonderful opportunity for all of Connecticut's conservation partners, legislators, and NRCS employees to meet our national leader and talk with him one-on-one ... Thanks, Chief White!

*While in Connecticut, the Chief had the opportunity to sample sushi made from several different types of invasive species, including this crab (right)*



*The Chief in the Vaiuso greenhouse with Jim Hyde.*



*The Chief talks with the owner of Vaiuso Farms.*



*The Chief discusses aquaculture with producer Norm Bloom (left).*



*Heading out on a tour of Long Island Sound.*

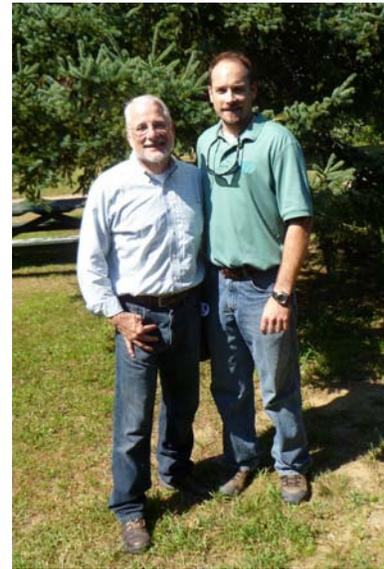
# Photo Ops with the Chief!



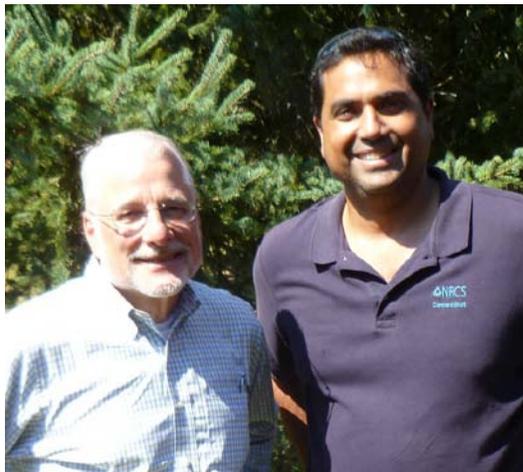
*The Chief with Randy Snow*



*Chief White with King's Mark RC&D President Jim Sipperly.*



*Chief White with Todd Bobowick.*



*The Chief with Javier Cruz.*



*(left to right) Chief Dave White, Connecticut's Commissioner of Agriculture Steve Reviczky, and Sandy Breslin from Connecticut Audubon.*



*(left to right) Connecticut Farm Bureau Executive Director Henry Talmage, Chief White, and State Conservationist Jay Mar.*



*(left to right) Ben Freund, Cricket Jacquier, Chief White, and Bob Jacquier.*

# News You Can Use

## Bulletin Board

### HEALTHFUL FOODS MAKE GREAT PLATES

*My Food. My Plate. My Transformation.*

**How do you rate your diet? Overall, are your meals mostly nutrient-dense or calorie-dense?** Many of the empty calories Americans eat come from foods and beverages that provide calories but few nutrients, such as desserts, salty snacks, and soda. These tips can help you limit empty-calorie choices so you get the most from your Plate.

- *Focus on nutrient-dense foods* including vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat dairy foods. Also included are protein foods like eggs, beans and peas, nuts and seeds, seafood, and lean meat and poultry that do not have significant amounts of solid fats and added sugars, and are low in sodium.
- *Sip smarter:* Soda and other sweet drinks contain a lot of sugar and are high in calories. Drink water, 100% juice, or fat-free milk when thirsty.
- *Satisfy your sweet tooth in a healthy way:* Indulge in a naturally sweet dessert like fruit. Try serving a fresh fruit cocktail or a fruit parfait made with yogurt. For a hot dessert, bake apples and top with cinnamon.
- *Make treats "treats," not every day foods:* Limit sweet treats to special occasions.
- *Make foods look festive:* For children, decorate foods with nuts or seeds or even use new shapes for vegetables. Add a few eye-catching fruits to a favorite dish, serve up a new recipe, or add a sprinkle of almonds or green onions to add just an extra something.

For more information, visit  
<https://connections.usda.gov>

### Connecticut's Civil Rights Committee Members

A reminder for some, and good information for newer employees ... here is the list of Connecticut's Special Emphasis Program Managers:

- Abbie Cadman – 860.871.4017  
Disability Special Emphasis Program Manager
- Vivian Felten – 860.626.8258, Ext. 202  
Gay/Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Special Emphasis Program Manager
- Seth Lerman – 203.287.8038, Ext. 104  
Asian American/Pacific Islander Emphasis Program Manager
- Charlotte Pyle – 860.871.4066  
American Indian/Alaska Native Emphasis Program Manager
- Fernando Rincon – 860.688.7725, Ext. 139  
Hispanic Emphasis Program Manager
- Randy Snow – 860.774.0224, Ext. 105  
Veteran's Special Emphasis Program Manager
- Deborah Surabian – 860.871.4042  
Federal Women's Program Manager
- Marissa Theve – 860.871.4018  
Black Emphasis Program Manager

### Feds Feed Families Update

Contact Abbie Cadman 860.871.4017

Donations for June 2012. Thanks everyone!

<b>Tolland</b>	<b>159 pounds</b>
<b>Windsor</b>	<b>26 pounds</b>
<b>Danielson</b>	<b>24.5 pounds</b>
<b>Torrington</b>	<b>23 pounds</b>
<b>Hamden</b>	<b>0 pounds</b>
<b>Norwich</b>	<b>26.5 pounds</b>

# Newbie News!

*Connecticut has several new employees, some of whom have been kind enough to share something about themselves with us. Read on ...*

## **Bobolinks and the Bear: Highlights of my first month working for NRCS**

*Bob Purcell, Soil Conservation Technician, Torrington Field Office 860.626.8288, Ext. 206*

What an exciting first month I've experienced! I began working in the Torrington Service Center on June 4<sup>th</sup> and have loved every minute of it. My first week consisted of many site visits with the staff. Until now, I've never had the opportunity to see how we as an agency are truly helping conserve resources until I stepped foot on the Freund and Laurelbrook Farms.

The highlight of my second week was going out to a site in Winchester where an EQIP applicant was looking to do some non-native invasive species removal and a cool season planting to help create better ground-nesting bird habitat. While walking, I ran into some Bobolinks and clearly saw how NRCS assistance can help protect wildlife.



*The Bobolinks I was lucky enough to see.*

In my third week, I experienced something completely unexpected ... I found myself face to face with a black bear! I was walking on a site in Barkhamsted. I heard rustling coming from the woods behind me. I stopped a few times but saw nothing. I hit an old logging trail and as I continued to walk I heard the noise again. I turned to see a black bear about 100 feet from me ... and still approaching. I had no clue how to react so I stood still (in complete fear). The bear came within 20 feet of me. He walked into the woods (to go around me), then came back onto the trail and continued on his journey. Somehow I managed to snap a photo of him as he passed in the woods.



After an amazing first month like this, I can't wait to see what will come my way during the coming years. One thing I do know is that these experiences will be while I do my part in protecting Connecticut's natural resources.



*The bear I was lucky enough to avoid.*

# Newbie News! *(continued)*

## Student Intern Andrew Brown

My name is Andrew Brown. I'm a 19 year old junior at the University of Connecticut majoring in Environmental Science with a concentration in Soil Science. I grew up in Durham, Connecticut.

From a very young age I was interested in gardening, hiking and generally being outdoors. In high school, I worked on a small market farm and nursery in North Branford. It was during that time that I realized my interest in sustainable agricultural production and, also, the pivotal role which soils play in our agricultural endeavors and our natural landscape. I continued on to UConn, where I joined the EcoHouse Living and Learning Community on campus. EcoHouse is essentially a common-interest housing opportunity for students with an interest in the environment and associated issues. Through EcoHouse, I took part in the UConn student farm program right as it was getting off the ground. I have been living and working at the student farm, which is located on the Spring Manor Farm property in Mansfield, since spring 2011.

In addition to my work at the student farm last summer, I worked in the UConn Plant Science/Cooperative Extension Department where I took part in research related to biological control of invasive plant species, deep-zone tillage, and agronomic best management practices.

This summer, I was hired as a student trainee for NRCS at the Tolland office, where I am lucky enough to be able to work with really great people. I am really enjoying working for the agency. I learn so many new things each day. I feel like I am a part of something big that is practical and helpful to both people and our environment. I am particularly happy to be here since I feel it is important that we protect our fragile land resources so that they can retain their function in the landscape in perpetuity.

In my short time here at NRCS I have been afforded dozens of educational opportunities that I would not have found at UConn. This temporary employment position has helped inform me about the way in which NRCS functions and puts conservation measures into practice. Through hands-on experience and my direct interactions with exceptional soil scientists my interest in a soil science career has been re-affirmed.

## Student Interns Assist Soil Survey Staff

Student Interns Andrew Brown and Adam Aldridge have been doing a great job assisting the soil survey 12-6 staff on a soil survey project by collecting soil descriptions and noting differences in surface stoniness. The information was collected using a GPS, spade, Dutch auger, and sharpshooter (a shovel made of heavy-duty steel that opens a deep, narrow hole – even in hard, rocky soil. It has a long black rubber-coated handle that reduces recoil when striking rocks or dense glacial till). They learned how to distinguish the different horizons in a soil profile, use the Munsell color chart to color soils, determine rock fragment content in the soil and on the surface, test for pH using the Cornell pH kits, use a clinometer, and use GPS to plot points of interest.

After completing the field portion, they learned how to use the Keys to Soil Taxonomy and classify the soil to the series level.



*(left to right) Soil Scientist Donald Parizek with student interns Adam Aldridge and Andrew Brown describing a soil profile in George Washington State Forest, in Rhode Island.*

# Rincon Talks Careers at Baseball Game

Looks like everyone in Connecticut wants to show their appreciation for the state's local farmers and agriculture ... This year even the Rock Cats Baseball Team got into the spirit by making July 15 **Agriculture Day** at their New Britain stadium.

The purpose of the event was to showcase various agricultural related businesses, groups, and educational programs to teach the public about agriculture in Connecticut.

NRCS was represented by none other than baseball fan Fernando Rincon, who staffed a display about Careers in NRCS. Rincon reported the turnout was great and he had plenty of people ... especially young people ... stop by his booth to learn about what we do – and hopefully a seed was planted for future conservationists, engineers, and soil scientists. A number of the visitors were interested in volunteering; one older student was interested in GIS; and some farmers/land managers and other adults were interested in NRCS programs.



*Crowds of people attended Agriculture Day at the New Britain Rock Cats baseball game July 15.*



*The 4H Booth.*

**Public networks are designed for convenience, not security.**

You cannot control who joins the public network.

Anyone sharing the network with you can potentially connect to your computer.

Anyone sharing the network with you can see information you send and receive on unsecured internet sites.

Public networks are popular targets for hackers and identity thieves.



**The Operations Security Branch reminds you ...**

**Not all public Wi-Fi is free! You may pay for access to a public wireless connection and still be exposed to security threats.**

# Soils Staff Participates in UConn's First Natural Resource Conservation Academy

Contact Marissa Theve 860.871.4018, or Ben Smith 860.871.4027

Connecticut soil scientists Debbie Surabian, Lisa Krall, and Marissa Theve, along with Student Interns Andrew Brown, Adam Aldridge, and Jennifer Blanchette, along with Research Soil Scientist from the National Soil survey Center Jim Doolittle recently assisted the University of Connecticut with their first Natural Resource Conservation Academy (NRCA). The group helped out by preparing pits and demos, and assisting in the coordination of the weeklong event's soils competition.

Students from high schools across the state had an opportunity to participate in the first ever NRCA Program at the UConn Storrs campus. Directed by Cooperative Extension Educator Charlotte Rand, the program had both educational and entertaining appeal. Each day included not only valuable lessons in the basics of natural resources, but also some form of recreational team-building activities such as a rope courses, geo-caching, camping, and barbecues. Studies included remote sensing and GPS; watersheds, lakes, and rivers; forests and soils; and fish and wildlife. During the soils portion, students experienced a demonstration on the use of Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR), participated in comprehensive soil morphology and soil quality practicums, and competed in a mock

soil judging contest between each of the teams.

Though the hands-on training and team building is over, students will continue what they began with a 7-month project in their own schools and communities.



Soil Scientist Marissa Theve (left) shows students how to sieve rock fragments from the soil

Projects will culminate with poster presentations at the Connecticut Conference on Natural Resources next March.

NRCA had a rather interesting beginning ... funding came from an anonymous donor who approached Dr. John Volin, Head of the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment who asked the question, "If you had \$20,000 to \$50,000 for the Natural Resources Department for up to 10 years, what would you do with it?" Dr. Volin worked with his department, extension staff, and others to develop a plan for NRCA, proposed the idea, and made it happen.

The NRCS group currently plans to assist in next year's program with the hope of encouraging more of Connecticut's students to gain an interest in agriculture and soil science as they consider their careers.

For more information on NRCA, visit <http://nrca.uconn.edu/index.htm>. Or read the UConn-based blog at [http://today.uconn.edu/blog/2012/07/conservation-academy-creates-connections-with-the-environment/?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+uconn-today+%28UConn+Today%29](http://today.uconn.edu/blog/2012/07/conservation-academy-creates-connections-with-the-environment/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+uconn-today+%28UConn+Today%29)



Lisa Krall (kneeling) instructs students in pH measurement.

# Soil Survey Staff Attends Regional Conference

Contact Marissa Theve 860.871.4018

The Regional National Cooperative Soil Survey Conference is held bi-annually for the purpose of proposing and exchanging ideas throughout the region with soil survey staff and cooperators. A national conference is held during alternate years where ideas from the regional conferences are shared across the country. This year, the conference was hosted by Maine NRCS, the Maine Association of Professional Soil Scientists, and the University of Maine in Orono June 18-21. Representing Connecticut was acting State Soil Scientist Lisa Krall, and Soil Scientists Donald Parizek, and Marissa Theve.



(l to r) Donald Parizek, Marissa Theve, Lisa Krall

Parizek made a presentation to the Hydric Committee about hydric indicators in problematic red soil materials. Theve gave a talk about the Soil Survey Office 12-6 project concerning soil salinity to both the Hydric and Subaqueous, and the Taxonomy, Standards, Interpretations, and Procedures Committees. The group also fit in a whole field day exploring some of Maine's most well-developed spodosols in both wet and dry environments.

Many of the talks involved the upcoming Soil Data Join Recorrelation (a.k.a. Harmonization) Project, the use of LiDaR imagery to refine soil maps, the concept of mapping using raster spatial data, and soil carbon data, especially from the Rapid Carbon Analysis Project.

MLRA Soil Party Leader Debbie Surabian and Marissa Theve contributed posters titled, "Soil Survey Investigations of Freshwater Subaqueous Soils," and "Salinity in Coastal Soils," respectively. The Connecticut soils staff would like to thank everyone who helped put the conference together, especially Tony Jenkins of NRCS in Maine, and those who allowed us to attend such an enriching event.

For more information or to view selected presentations visit: <http://soils.usda.gov/partnerships/ncss/conferences/2012/northeast/index.html>

## Update on Wounded Veteran

Contact Ray Covino 860.779.0557

District Conservationist Ray Covino has shared periodic updates about his friend Liam, a wounded veteran who lost part of his leg due to an incident with an IUD in Afghanistan. Ray said his fellow NRCSers have been asking how he is doing, so here is an update ....

*Last year the racing club we belong to set up a live feed so that Liam could watch from his hospital bed. In June of this year, he not only went to the track, he raced! And, Liam turned in the 3<sup>rd</sup> fastest time of the day, on street tires, while shifting a manual transmission with a prosthetic left leg! Channel 30 News was onsite. Following is the link: <http://www.nbccconnecticut.com/video/#!/on-air/seen-on/Wounded-Vet>Returns-to-Race-Track/160028005>*

*Thanks for keeping him in your thoughts.*

*Ray*

# *Human Interest/Cultural Resources*

## **White Bison Born to Connecticut Farmer**

*Aimee Fusco 860.626.8258, Ext. 111*

*To Native Americans, the Bison (or American Buffalo) is a symbol of sacred life and abundance. A well-known legend tells of the white buffalo as being the "most sacred living thing you could ever encounter." According to the story, one summer many years ago, the seven sacred council fires of the Lakota Sioux came together and camped. The people were starving because there was no game to hunt. Two young men went out to hunt in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Along the way, a beautiful young woman dressed in white appeared to the warriors and said, "Return to your people and tell them I am coming." This holy woman presented the Lakota people with a sacred pipe which showed how all things were connected. She taught them the mysteries of the Earth, and how to pray and follow the proper path while on Earth. As the woman left the tribe, she rolled upon the Earth four times, changing color each time, finally turning into a white buffalo calf. Then she disappeared. At almost the same time, great herds of buffalo could be seen surrounding the camps. It is said after that day, the Lakota honored their pipe and buffalo were plentiful.*

*This story of the White Buffalo Calf Woman has immense importance to the Lakota and many other tribes. Native Americans see the birth of a white buffalo calf as the most significant of prophetic signs, equivalent to the weeping statues, bleeding icons, and crosses of light prevalent in Christian churches. Where the Christian faithful who visit these signs see them as a renewal of God's ongoing relationship with humanity, so do the Native Americans see the white buffalo calf as the sign to begin life's sacred hoop. The birth of a sacred white buffalo provides those within the Native American community with a sense of hope and an indication that good times are to come.*

Peter Fay raises bison in Litchfield County. In mid-June, Fay was watching a female preparing to give birth and realized a second one was about to deliver, as well. When he saw the second calf hit the ground, he noticed it was white. He waited for the calf's mother to dry him off and thought the calf looked like a ghost.

Native American friends of Fay's told him about the importance of the white bison. Astonished, he carefully researched the bloodlines of the calf's parents. He is confident it is pure bison, but has sent DNA in to be tested to be sure.

According to experts, one in 10 million bison are white, but a few other white bison births in recent years suggest the rate is somewhat higher.

Less than a month before this bison was born, the National Bison Legacy Act was introduced in the Senate. The act would designate the American bison as the "National Mammal of the United States." (There has never been a national mammal.) It has 15 co-sponsors, including the two senators from Connecticut, and an upbeat Web site, [votebison.org](http://votebison.org), though its prospects for passage are unclear.

# Looking for Pollinators?

## Look Here ...

Alan Page 860.626.8258, Ext. 203

Westmoor Park is a popular environmental, agricultural, and horticultural education center in the Town of West Hartford, with approximately 100,000 visitors annually.

Back in 2000, through the help of NRCS and its Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, approximately 13 acres of the park's old fields were converted to warm season grasses and 50 different species of wildflowers. The conversion was done for two reasons – one to enhance wildlife habitat in the park, and the other because wildflower/grasslands were disappearing in Connecticut.

Following this conversion, the park is brilliant with colors throughout the year and during peak flowering around mid July. And not only are the colors spectacular – the pollinators (insects, bees, and butterflies) are everywhere!

I recently attended a training course on pollinators and learned they are on the decline around the world, primarily from a loss of pollinating habitat and the use of pesticides! Why are pollinators important? Without them, our food would be less abundant and more expensive to buy. The U.S. alone grows more than 100 crops that either need or benefit from pollinators. In 2000, the economic value of insect-pollinated crops in the U.S. was estimated

to be \$20 billion – of that, \$3 billion of them were pollinated by native insects.

Although the WHIP project has long since been completed, I decided to revisit the park to find out if pollinator's there are also on the decline, and to evaluate the success of the project. In early July, I joined Doug Jackson (Westmoor Park Naturalist) and Jim Hyde (NRCS District Conservationist) for a tour of the wildflowers. One of the more spectacular flowers in bloom was the *Queen of the Prairie* and the dominant pollinators included bumblebees and monarch butterflies! Also spotted were several types of colorful song birds, and many native beehives which have been around for a while. Although Jackson doesn't scientific data on pollinators, over the years he has observed an increase – especially since the wildflower conversion. Whatever the reason, he considers the WHIP project a huge success and a feature attraction for park visitors. If you're looking for a peaceful and beautiful place for a break, visit Westmoor Park, a pollinator paradise!



Wildflowers  
at Westmoor  
Park.



Queen of the Prairie flower, with pollinator, at  
Westmoor Park

# News From Partners ...



## **Nutmegger Cheese & Wine Festival Scheduled**

Contact Leah Mayor 203.988.3270

Calling all cheese lovers! The Working Lands Alliance will host the inaugural Nutmegger Cheese and Wine Festival (a fundraiser to protect Connecticut's farmland and support quality childhood nutrition) on Sunday, September 23, 12-4 PM at the Jones Family Farms, 120 Beardsley Road, Shelton.

The event will feature samples of the state's best cheeses and wines, vineyard tours, hayrides, cheese maker talks, book signings, and will include special guests who will talk about cheese.

"Connecticut offers an incredible and diverse food culture that represents the bounty of our farms, farmland, and artisanal traditions," said WLA Project Director Leah Mayor. "Over the last 25 years, we've seen an increased interest in local foods, and the Northeast is quickly becoming a leader in producing delicious artisanal and farmstead cheeses."

Tickets purchased prior to the event are \$50/adults, \$10/6-12 (\$55/adult, \$10/6-12 at the event). Proceeds will support WLA, as well as the Valley Initiative to Advance Health & Learning in Schools (VITAHS) Program, collaboration between Griffin Hospital and the Valley School Districts of Shelton, Ansonia, Derby, Oxford, and Seymour to develop, implement, evaluate, and sustain a valleywide program to reduce prevalence of obesity in students in grades pre-K-12.

To purchase advance tickets or for more information, visit - [www.workinglandsalliance.org](http://www.workinglandsalliance.org)

## **Live Webcast from Bracken Bat Cave Scheduled**

A live electronic field trip will be held September 18, 2012, from the Bracken Bat Cave near San Antonio, Texas – summer home of the world's largest bat colony. As millions of bats emerge from the cave, watch the live program from 7-8:30 PM Eastern time.

With millions of Mexican free-tailed bats living in the cave from March through October, Bracken holds one of the largest concentrations of mammals on earth. The emergence of these millions of bats, as they spiral out of the cave at dusk for their nightly insect hunt, is an unforgettable sight. Learn about the Mexican free-tailed bats of Bracken Cave and other bat species, predators that wait for their nightly emergence, threats to bats including White-nose Syndrome, how you can help these beneficial creatures, how bats navigate using echolocation, cave ecology and more. For more information, visit <http://batslive.pwnet.org/webcast/index.php>

## Naugatuck River Website Launched

Members of the Naugatuck River Steering Committee (including representatives from river organizations, state and local government, and foundations) recently launched [www.naugatuckriver.net](http://www.naugatuckriver.net) a website that proclaims the revival and resurgence of the Naugatuck River as a recreational asset for the Naugatuck River valley.

“For two centuries until the mid 1900s, the Naugatuck River played a major role in the economic development of the river valley with many industries relying on its water power and water resources,” said Dan Esty, Connecticut Commissioner for the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. “Now that the river is being restored to its natural beauty and health, it can become a focus for recreation, tourism and overall quality of life for the Naugatuck Valley.”

From being one of the most polluted rivers in the U.S., the river has been transformed into a

natural resource that attracts wildlife, anglers and hikers. The new Website provides area residents and visitors in-depth information on fishing, paddling, and walking activities on and along the river. It also has a calendar of events, news stories, the river’s history, and information on current and future projects.

The website is being launched in conjunction with the inclusion of the Naugatuck River Greenway as one of 100 America’s Great Outdoor Initiatives by the Department of the Interior. This designation recognizes the potential for the Naugatuck River Greenway and the river as major recreational sites. Derby and Ansonia already have significant portions of the greenway completed. Other portions are open in Beacon Falls and Naugatuck with plans underway for construction to begin in Waterbury. To highlight the designation, a bike ride along the Naugatuck River Valley from Torrington to Derby will be held September 23.

## Southwest District Co-Sponsors Workshop

Contact Ellie Tessmer 203.287.8038, Ext. 111

The Southwest Conservation District (SWCD) recently co-sponsored an Equine Waste Management Workshop at the Fairfield Country Hunt Club. The event was open to horse owners in New Haven and Fairfield Counties. Speakers for the event included:

- Dr. Jenifer Nadeau, Equine Extension Specialist, who discussed ways of dealing with equine waste using best management practices at various levels – from simple to complex.
- NRCS District Conservationist Diane Blais discussed eligibility for funding through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program.
- SWCD District Executive Director Roman Mrozinski spoke to the group about options available to owners of smaller horse operations.
- The event concluded with a talk by Stuart Sachs, Landscape Architect, who suggested ways to deal with storm water runoff issues. Sachs also led a site walk on the grounds to demonstrate best management practices used at the facility.



(l to r) Landscape Architect Stuart Sachs, Hunt Club Manager Carla Nelson, NRCS District Conservationist Diane Blais, and NRCS Soil Conservation Technician Gala Herdman. Photo by Ellie Tessmer, SWCD

## **Reviczky Announces Eligible Farm-Related Entities May Apply for SBA Disaster Loans:** *Small agricultural cooperatives and small aquacultural businesses in Fairfield and Litchfield counties among those eligible*

Contact Linda Piotrowicz 860.713.2558

State Agriculture Commissioner Steven Reviczky recently announced the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is offering federal economic injury disaster loans to small businesses, agricultural cooperatives, aquacultural businesses, and most private non-profit organizations in Fairfield and Litchfield counties as a result of frosts and freezes beginning March 1, 2012.

"I am pleased that the SBA has offered this assistance and hope that those who are eligible and in need will apply," said Reviczky. "Agriculture is an industry affected by forces beyond human control, including those of Mother Nature. While those engaged in the industry are, by nature, a resilient bunch, a little extra help to recover from severe weather disasters can go a long way."

The SBA issued its own disaster declaration following that from the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. The SBA's declaration works to assist eligible entities affected by the same disaster. Connecticut's Fairfield and Litchfield counties are eligible because they are contiguous to primary disaster counties in New York.

The program is available to eligible farm-related and nonfarm-related entities that suffered financial losses as a direct result of this disaster. While aquacultural enterprises, small agricultural cooperatives, and most private nonprofit organizations are included, other agricultural producers, farmers, and ranchers are not eligible.

Loans can be as much as \$2 million with interest rates of 3-4% and terms up to 30 years, and may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable, and other bills that could have been paid had the disaster not occurred. Loans are not intended to replace lost sales or profits.

For more information contact the SBA's Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955 (800-877-8339 hearing impaired) or visit [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov).

Completed applications must be returned no later than February 5, 2013.

## **NFWF and Wells Fargo Announce Environmental Grants Program:** *Partnership Establishes \$15 Million Program*

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and Wells Fargo & Company recently announced the launch of a new environmental grant program aimed at awarding \$100 million to nonprofit organizations and universities by 2020. The five-year program will combine the nonprofits' scientific expertise with Wells Fargo's philanthropic and volunteer resources to promote environmental stewardship in communities across the country. Grants will fund proposals focused in the following areas:

- sustainable agriculture and forestry
- conservation of land and water resources
- restoration of urban ecosystems
- clean energy infrastructure

Visit [www.wellsfargo.com/about/csr/ea/environmental-giving](http://www.wellsfargo.com/about/csr/ea/environmental-giving)

# The Naturalist's Niche

*"Es mi casa!" It's my house!*

Contact Charlotte Pyle 860.871.4066

As a guest in a Peruvian village that bordered Inca and pre-Inca ruins, I asked what one would call the collection of buildings that fronted on a small courtyard. One building had two separate entrances. The leftmost revealed a room where potatoes and grains were stored in sacks, large pots and covered buckets. The other opened into a kitchen, one wall lined with small, wooden benches softened with alpaca hides. On the dirt floor was an Inca stove constructed of clay next to an old shovel blade propped in the corner. The woman at the stove pantomimed putting the shovel blade onto the coals; and with a big smile on her face, she spoke of how succulent guinea pig was when cooked that way.

Across the courtyard was the small structure with a bed and a two-burner campstove where her recently deceased mother had lived. Her sister's child had been born there. Smiling in remembrance, the child's father described the birth overseen by his mother-in-law as he had helped, cradling his wife in his widespread lap, strong hands pushing on her belly.

In a two-story building, the bottom room had a large table where we ate a big meal with the extended family after helping to shuck corn that had been drying in shocks out in the nearby field. The meal began with finger foods – large kernels of boiled yellow corn and small potatoes for which there was a garlic sauce. Next came a soup, richly flavored with vegetables and meat, then the main plate of beef, potatoes, and rice. Over in the corner was a highly-decorated, waist-high ceramic pot made by the household's patriarch.

That talented man, now 90 years old, also had worked as a blacksmith. His forge was located in a three-sided structure on the opposite side of the courtyard, its open side reached by following a path along the chest-high rock wall of a small burro pen. Various wooden implements in need of ironwork lined the walls of the forge.

Between the forge and the kitchen was an enclosure where colored corn had been shucked and lay drying on hard, bare earth that had been swept clean of all sticks and weeds. This enclosure

formerly housed the *toro*, a bull used, in partnership with another, as a draft animal.

We stood in the gap between the ancient, stacked rock wall of the *toro* pen and a "newer" (though now very weathered) adobe brick wall to take a quick look at the back of a small building described as a *tienda* (store) used when people came to the village for fiestas.

From the road, the entrance to the courtyard was through a doorway within a garage door-sized, store-bought metal wall that connected the two-story building to another one-story building, used currently, I think, for storage. Beyond this building was a walled-in privy area.

Upon first entering the courtyard, I had wondered which building was the house (in Spanish, the *casa*). Later, waving my hand to encompass the wholeness of what I had just been shown, I asked what was the word to describe this place. With a puzzled look, the woman said, "*Es mi casa!*"

It's my house! It's my dwelling place! At home, it follows easily that my own dwelling place includes my house proper and the web of connections to the sugarhouse, the barn, the vegetable garden, the orchard, the meadow and the woods for which we are current owners and take stewardship.

*Es mi casa!* Expanding still further, my dwelling place is a neighborhood with people of all ages who gather together on the Fourth of July. My dwelling place is The Quiet Corner of Connecticut where people value living among forests, farms, fields, wetlands and remnants of the industrial past even as they hope to forge a vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Did you know that the *eco* in the word ecology comes from the Greek word *oikos*? Ecology is the study of living organisms and their interrelations with their environment. And can you guess what *oikos* means? House!

Where does the web of interrelationships end? Who is ready to say of the Earth, "*Es mi casa!*"

## NRCS 2012 Program Update

**Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA)** –AMA provides payments to agricultural producers to voluntarily address issues such as water management, water quality, and erosion control by incorporating conservation practices into their farming operations. Producers may construct or improve water management structures or irrigation structures, and mitigate risk through production diversification or resource conservation practices.

**Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)** - CRP reduces soil erosion and sedimentation in streams and lakes, improves water quality, establishes wildlife habitat, and enhances forest and wetland resources. It encourages farmers to convert highly erodible cropland or other environmentally sensitive acreage to vegetative cover such as tame or native grasses, wildlife plantings, trees, filterstrips, or riparian buffers. Farmers receive an annual rental payment for the term of the multi-year contract. Cost sharing is provided to establish the vegetative cover practices. *CRP is administered by the Farm Service Agency, with NRCS providing technical land eligibility determinations, conservation planning, and practice implementation.*

**Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)** –A voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to promote the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life, and other conservation purposes on Tribal and private working lands.

**Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)** –EQIP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers who face threats to soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. Through EQIP, NRCS provides financial incentives to producers to promote agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible goals, optimize environmental benefits, and help farmers and ranchers meet federal, state, Tribal, and local environmental regulations.

**Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP)** –A voluntary program that helps farmers and ranchers keep their land in agriculture. The program provides matching funds to state, tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations with existing farm and ranch land protection programs to purchase conservation easements.

**Grassland Reserve Program (GRP)** - A voluntary program for landowners and operators to protect, restore, and enhance grassland. The program emphasizes support for working grazing operations; enhancement of plant and animal biodiversity; and protection of grassland and land containing shrubs and forbs under threat of conversion.

**Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)** –A voluntary program that provides technical and financial assistance to private landowners to restore, protect, and enhance wetlands in exchange for retiring eligible land from agriculture. Includes 30-year and permanent easement options and funding for restoration.

**Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)** –WHIP is a voluntary program for private landowners to develop and improve high quality habitat that supports wildlife populations of national, state, Tribal, and local significance.

### Office Locations

**Danielson Field Office**  
71 Westcott Road  
Danielson, CT 06238  
860.779.0557  
Raymond Covino  
District Conservationist

**Norwich Field Office**  
Yantic River Plaza  
238 West Town St.  
Norwich, CT 06360  
860.887.3604  
Javier Cruz  
District Conservationist

**Torrington Field Office**  
1185 New Litchfield St.  
Torrington, CT 06790  
860.626.8258  
Kathleen Johnson  
District Conservationist

**Hamden Field Office**  
51 Mill Pond Road  
Hamden, CT 06514-1703  
(203) 287-8038  
Diane Blais  
District Conservationist

**Windsor Field Office**  
100 Northfield Dr. 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Windsor, CT 06095  
860.688.7725  
James Hyde  
District Conservationist

**Tolland State Office**  
344 Merrow Road, Suite A  
Tolland, CT 06084  
860.871.4011  
Jay T. Mar  
State Conservationist

# Calendar of Events

## August

- 1 **PLANT SCIENCE DAY** – Agricultural Experiment Station, Lockwood Farm, Hamden – 10 AM – 4 PM – Admission Free. Barn displays, exhibits, technical demonstrations, plant diagnosis, insect ID. More. Visit <http://www.ct.gov/CAES>
- 2 **FRIENDS OF SHERWOOD ISLAND SUNSET LECTURE SERIES** – Sherwood Island Nature Center, East Beach, Westport – 6-7:30 PM - Features David Park, author of *Kayaking In and Around the Norwalk Islands*. Hear details and ask questions on kayaking between Long Neck Point in Darien to Sherwood Point in Westport including local rivers, coast and islands off-shore. Information on kayak safety and island nesting birds will also be discussed. Free event and parking.
- 4 **PASTURED POULTRY WORKSHOP** – Terra Firma Farm, Stonington – 2-5 PM –Brienne Casadei will talk about poultry farming and show her 1,000 pasture-raised layer hens (in movable coops). After the workshop, there will be a beginning farmer lunch and gathering. Co-sponsored by CT NOFA, UConn & RMA. \$25/members and beginning farmers; \$35/non-members. Contact 203.888.5146
- 4 **YEAR OF THE LIZARD – LIVE ANIMAL PROGRAM** – Stratton Brook State Park, Simsbury – 1-3 PM – Special live animal program provided by Beardsley Zoo, focuses on lizards and their special adaptations. Learn about the local, five-lined skink and others from around the world. Contact Susan Quincy 203.734.2513 [susan.quincy@ct.gov](mailto:susan.quincy@ct.gov)
- 4 **SUMMER FOOD FESTIVAL** – St. John’s Episcopal Church, Washington, CT – 10 AM – 4 PM – Booths will offer locally-grown and produced foods – from savory to sweet, fresh to prepared, as well as plants, herbs, cooking utensils, and entertaining accessories. Vendors include The Pantry, New Preston Kitchen Goods, Waldingfield Farms, Sweets, Starberry Farm, NYCH20, and more. Shoppers can fill their baskets with vegetables, fruit, breads, pastries, cheeses, desserts, herbs, plants, and more. Visit [www.stjohnswashington.org](http://www.stjohnswashington.org) 860.868.2527
- 4-5 **EXPERIENCE THE BOUNTY OF THE COUNTY Goshen Open Farm Tour** – 10 AM – 4 PM – Launch Point is The Gazebo at the 4H Fair, Goshen Fairgrounds – Free tour. Presented by the Goshen Ag Council. Visit [www.goshenagcouncil.org](http://www.goshenagcouncil.org)
- 6 **BUTTERFLIES!** - Simpaug Turnpike, Redding – 10 AM – 12 Noon -Lepidopterist Victor DeMasi will introduce area butterflies and moths, discuss their food and habitats, and show his remarkable collection. Rain date August 7<sup>th</sup>. Contact Vic DeMasi 203.938.9016; [victormonarch@yahoo.com](mailto:victormonarch@yahoo.com)
- 9 **A NEW FRUIT FOR THE NORTHEAST** – Storrs – 2-5 PM – Learn how to grow and market Aronia Berry, a crop with nutraceutical and value-added product potential. Free field day open to the public. Preregistration required. Contact [lois.stack@maine.edu](mailto:lois.stack@maine.edu)
- 10-12 **NOFA SUMMER CONFERENCE** – University of Massachusetts, Amherst – Keynote speakers include Representative Chellie Pingree and Jeffrey Smith. Visit [www.nofasummerconference.org](http://www.nofasummerconference.org)
- 11 **FISH FIELD SAMPLING** - - Mansfield Hollow Reservoir – 3 PM – Fee/\$20 - advanced registration required, Spend the afternoon seeking out fish with Dr. Eric Schultz from UConn’s Dept. of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. Bring appropriate footwear. Presented by the CT State Museum of Natural History. Contact 860.486.4460
- 13 **STATE VEGETATION MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE LISTENING SESSION** – DEEP Headquarters, Hartford – 4-6 PM + 7-9 PM – After the two storms of last year, the Task Force seeks public input regarding its recommendations for future roadside forest management. Contact Chris Donnelly 860.424-3178 [chris.donnelly@ct.gov](mailto:chris.donnelly@ct.gov)
- 14 **REMEDIATION ROUNDTABLE** – DEEP Headquarters, Hartford – 1:30-3:30 PM - An open forum for the exchange of ideas and information on the various site cleanup programs in Connecticut and to solicit opinions, advice and information from those outside sources on a routine and established basis. Contact Camille Fontanella 860.424.3705
- 16 **RANGER PROGRAM: ON THE WILD SIDE** – Jacob Edward Library, Southbridge, MA – Explore the Flora and Fauna of the Last Green Valley, which is almost 80% undeveloped land with a multitude of opportunities for exploring the outdoors. Contact [mmorriss@cwmars.org](mailto:mmorriss@cwmars.org)
- 18 **DINOSAUR STATE PARK DAY** – Rocky Hill – 10 AM – 3 PM - The annual celebration of the discovery of the dinosaur tracks. All outside activities are free (except food vendors/mining activity). Fees to enter Center: \$6/13+, \$2/6-12, free/5 and under. Contact Meg Enkler 860.529.5816
- 18 **KAYAK TOUR** – Longshore Sailing School, Westport – 1-3:30 PM – 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Westport Historical Society kayak tour to Cockenoe Island (1 mile off of Westport). Rentals available. Contact 203.226.4646
- 18 **HISTORIC CEDAR HILL CEMETERY WALK** – Hartford – 10-11:30 AM – \$15/advanced registration. Learn about Cedar Hill’s remarkable history and landscape, as well as its notable trees and residents. Sponsored by the Connecticut State Museum of Natural History and Connecticut Archaeology Center. Contact [www.mnh.uconn.edu](http://www.mnh.uconn.edu)

## August (continued)

- 20 **ON-FARM WORKSHOP – COMPOST, SOIL TESTING & ORGANIC FERTILITY** – Community Farm of Simsbury – 4-7 PM – Join NOFA and UConn's Tom Morris to understand the importance of and process for soil tests and learn how to respond to them in a way that are organic and avoid excess nutrients. CT-NOFA Members and Beginning Farmers/\$30, Non-Members/\$40. Contact Kristiane 203.888.5146
- 25 **SATURDAY MORNING BIRDWALK** – Kellogg Environmental Center, Derby – 8-10 AM – Observe birds in the world, sharpen your bird ID skills, or enjoy a morning hike through the grounds. Contact Donna Kingston 203.734.2513 [donna.kingston@ct.gov](mailto:donna.kingston@ct.gov)
- 25 **WALKCT FAMILY RAMBLE: Flat Stanley's CT Outdoor Adventure** – Wilcox Woods Conservation Area, Middletown – 10 AM – 12 Noon – Help find Flat Stanley. Embark on a scavenger hunt in search of clues to locate the hidden CT Flat Stanley letterbox. Sponsored by the CT Forest & Park Association. Raindate August 26. Contact 860.346.2372
- 25 **WALKCT FAMILY RAMBLE: Cheney Railroad History Walk** – Cheney Railroad Trail, Manchester – 1-3 PM – Walk along this former railroad (built in 1869) to connect the Cheney silk mills to the main rail line in the North End. Hike along the 1-mile portion owned by the Manchester Land Conservation Trust. Hear about the history of the railroad and see maps and old pictures. Sponsored by CT Forest & Park Association. Contact Susan Barlow 860.643.9776
- 26 **SEED SAVING WORKSHOP** – Comstock, Ferre & Co., Wethersfield – 1-4 PM – Learn the basics of seed saving – hybrid vs. open pollinated; heirlooms; annual vs. biennial; self fertile vs. needing to cross pollinate; different ways of pollination; easy seeds to save; techniques for crops that need isolation; and growing seed commercially. Members + beginning farmers/\$30; Non-members/\$40. Contact Kristiane 203.888.5146

## September

- 1 **NATIONAL VULTURE AWARENESS DAY** – Kellogg Environmental Center, Derby – 10:30-12 PM – Celebrate this special day with a beginners walk and talk. Contact Diane Joy 203.734.2513
- 3 **HOLIDAY – LABOR DAY**
- 10 **CHEESE MAKING WORKSHOP** – Beltane Farm, Lebanon – 4-7 PM - Join dairy farmer and cheese making professional Paul Trubey for a hands-on workshop that will teach you how to produce your own fresh seasonal goats-milk cheeses. This workshop is a great opportunity for farmers and food lovers to learn the technical details of cheese making from a well established and knowledgeable instructor. Registration limited to 20 people. After the workshop there will be a beginning farmer dinner and gathering. \$45/members and beginning farmers; \$55/non-members. Contact 203.888.5146
- 15 **SATURDAY MORNING BIRDWALK** – Kellogg Environmental Center, Derby – 8-10 AM – Observe birds in the world, sharpen your bird ID skills, or enjoy a morning hike through the grounds. Contact Donna Kingston 203.734.2513 [donna.kingston@ct.gov](mailto:donna.kingston@ct.gov)
- 15 **BLOCK PARTY ON THE FARM** – Urban Oaks Organic Farm, New Britain - Connecticut NOFA is turning 30 – come celebrate the next 30 years of food, fun, and community. Meet local farmers, organic land care professionals with a farm tour, wine tasting, live music, and talk with NOFA Exec. Dir. Bill Duesing. Contact NOFA 203.888.5146
- 18 **LIVE WEBCAST FROM BRACKEN BAT CAVE** – 7-8:30 PM eastern time. A live, electronic field trip broadcast from San Antonio, Texas. Bracken Cave is the summer home of the world's largest bat colony. Visit <http://batslive.pwnet.org/webcast/index.php>
- 22 **CONNECTICUT HUNTING/FISHING APPRECIATION DAY** – Sessions Woods, Burlington – 10 AM – 4 PM - Family-oriented atmosphere for individuals to learn about the state's natural resources and outdoor recreational opportunities. Visit [www.ct.gov/deep/HuntFishDay](http://www.ct.gov/deep/HuntFishDay). Contact Peter Good 860.675.8130
- 25 **CT FOREST & PARK RUN AND WALK FOR THE WOODS** – Sessions Woods, Burlington – 8:30 AM – 12 Noon – To support CFPA's efforts to protect forests and walking trails and educate residents about the environment. Event includes 5K race, several different walks, and family friendly activities including a carve a walking stick session. Race entry \$25 (waived for those raising contributions of \$50 or more. Contact 860.346.2372
- 28-30 **THE LAST GREEN FESTIVAL** – Brooklyn Fairgrounds – 3 day event in support of The Last Green Valley. Festival promotes greener living, sustainability, and preservation of The Last Green Valley by providing educational exhibits, demonstrations, and public speakers combined with music, art, film, and food. [www.thelastgreenfestival.com](http://www.thelastgreenfestival.com) Contact 860.779.7970 [mdawson@thelastgreenfestival.com](mailto:mdawson@thelastgreenfestival.com)

# October

- 8           **HOLIDAY – COLUMBUS DAY**
- 20           **SATURDAY MORNING BIRDWALK** – Kellogg Environmental Center, Derby – 8-10 AM – Observe birds in the world, sharpen your bird ID skills, or enjoy a morning hike through the grounds. Contact Donna Kingston 203.734.2513 [donna.kingston@ct.gov](mailto:donna.kingston@ct.gov)

# November

- 12           **HOLIDAY – VETERAN'S DAY**
- 13           **REMEDICATION ROUNDTABLE** – DEEP Headquarters, Hartford – 1:30-3:30 PM - An open forum for the exchange of ideas and information on the various site cleanup programs in Connecticut and to solicit opinions, advice and information from those outside sources on a routine and established basis. Contact Camille Fontanella 860.424.3705
- 16           **CONNECTICUT FARM BUREAU ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING LUNCHEON/BANQUET** – Courtyard Marriott, Waterbury – 8 AM. Contact
- 17           **SATURDAY MORNING BIRDWALK** – Kellogg Environmental Center, Derby – 8-10 AM – Observe birds in the world, sharpen your bird ID skills, or enjoy a morning hike through the grounds. Contact Donna Kingston 203.734.2513 [donna.kingston@ct.gov](mailto:donna.kingston@ct.gov)
- 22           **HOLIDAY – THANKSGIVING DAY**