



The Steep Rock *VISTA* Spring 2007

Stephen C. Reich Bridge Dedication

On what began as a rainy foggy New Years Day, more than 100 people came to the dedication of the Stephen C. Reich memorial bridge in Steep Rock's Hidden Valley Reservation. The rain stopped just before the ceremony began. In what proved to be a moving and bittersweet ceremony, Sheila Anson, Trustee and Secretary of the Steep Rock Association, was the master of ceremonies. Ray Reich spoke on behalf of the entire Reich family.

The first bridge built on this spot was built with timbers felled in the reservation by John Marsh and Mike Alex and was replaced in 1985 by a wooden truss bridge. In October 2005, that bridge was completely washed away by heavy rains. Record rainfall amounts fell, over two days, close to the levels recorded in the 1955 flood. The bridge was critical to the trail system in Hidden Valley, linking the two major areas of the Reservation.

When the Reich family learned the bridge was lost and Steep Rock would undertake a fund raising effort to replace it, they generously offered some of the funds were contributed to the family in Stephen's name.

The fiberglass bridge, more than 100 feet long was built by O&G Industries and completed in late 2006.



Steep Rock President Mike Jackson, Chairman of the Board and past president John Millington, and Honorary Trustee and past president Bob deCourcy get a lift from Trustee Jim Brinton. The fire department provided the ATV to transport folks to the dedication of the bridge.

Bridge Paid For! Fund Raising Successful

We are enormously thankful to the Reich family and all the individuals who contributed so generously to this worthy cause.



Ray Reich, speaking at the Stephen C. Reich Memorial Bridge dedication on New Year's Day 2007. Steep Rock Trustee Sheila Anson, on the right, was master of ceremonies.



Guests at the dedication of the Stephen C. Reich Memorial Bridge, New Years Day, 2007.

Riders Revive Washington Horse Show

A group of enthusiastic women who regularly ride their horses in Steep Rock and Hidden Valley are planning to hold a Washington Horse Show on September 23, 2007. As in the past, the show will donate its profits over and above the costs of running the show to Steep Rock. The women, led by Margie Starr and Sue Judge, both of Woodbury, see this as an opportunity to thank Steep Rock for the pleasure it brings them.

The last Washington Horse Show was held in 2003, and many people have asked if and when it could be reestablished. The basic format of the show will remain the same, namely to provide area riders, children and adults, the opportunity to compete in a beautiful setting.

There will be a few additions to the show. A program will be available with photographs and articles from past horse shows. Businesses will have an opportunity to purchase advertising space in the program, and individuals may contribute by sponsoring classes in the show. Lunch will be offered for a modest price and served under a tent and there will be a raffle of items donated by area merchants. Steep Rock will have a display on the grounds, with maps and hats for sale.

For more information or to volunteer to help with the show call Susan at 203-266-0266, or Marguerite at 203-263-4714.



Washington Horse Show Co-Chairs Susan Judge, left, on her horse Bella and Marguerite Starr, right, on her horse Angus. They both ride often in Steep Rock and occasionally, as in this photograph, ride along the CT shoreline.

Macricostas Bird Walk

Steep Rock Trustee Peary Stafford will lead a bird walk at the Macricostas Preserve on Sunday April 29, beginning at 9 a.m. Meet at the parking lot behind the house at 124 Christian Street. Space is limited to twelve participants and registration is required. Please call the Steep Rock office to reserve a spot. 860-868-9131



Red Bellied Woodpecker

Steep Rock Association

Telephone 860-868-9131 FAX 860-868-5034

www.steeprockassoc.org

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Mary Hawvermale, Administrative Assistant

Staff Changes at Steep Rock

Amanda Branson Accepts Position at The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum

Administrative Assistant Amanda Branson left Steep Rock recently to begin a new job as Museum Events Coordinator at The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield.

Amanda first worked for Steep Rock as a summer intern in 1997.

When she finished college in 2002 and returned to the area to pursue her career as an artist, she came back to work at Steep Rock part time, becoming our Administrative Assistant. Amanda handled the Annual Appeal, created our archive, organized the office and the files, and was our staff photographer. She will be greatly missed, but we wish her well in her new job.

Mary Hawvermale Assumes Administrative Assistant Job

In mid February, Mary Hawvermale began as Steep Rock's new Administrative Assistant.

Mary has lived in Bethlehem since 1981, on the farm her Grandparents bought in 1929. She has a Masters Degree in Biology. Her thesis topic was identification of Finback Whales in the Gulf of Maine.

Mary has had a varied career, working for a local Veterinarian, as a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, running her own businesses, and teaching and working at the Washington Montessori School.

Mary is Vice President of the Bethlehem Land Trust. She is a strong believer in protecting the rural character of our area. Mary writes, "I have spent many hours hiking and horse back riding through the Steep Rock Reservations and I'm very happy to be working for such a great organization."



Monarch butterfly larva at the Macricostas Preserve.

Butterfly Garden

By Peary Stafford, Steep Rock Trustee

It's not very well known that the wet meadows and fields at the Macricostas Preserve are prime habitat for a wonderfully diverse group of butterflies. Not just the familiar Monarchs that dote on the milkweed and depend on it for their livelihood; there are also Swallow-tails, Tortoiseshells, Ladies, Hairstreaks, Checkerspots, Anglewings and Skippers, to name just a few. But getting a look at some of these beautiful insects is quite another story, and it can take a lot of patience walking the paths before you come across them. When you do, it can be pretty darn frustrating when they take off just as you get your eyes on them.

So don't be surprised this spring when you see a new blast of color as you drive into the parking lot. We're building a butterfly garden just to the right of the driveway where by June there should be Butterfly Bush, Butterfly Weed, Spirea, Pepperbush, Verbena and lots of other flowers, all designed to pull different species into a more concentrated area that is accessible for all to see. With any luck, butterflies nectaring at these plants will be sufficiently diverted by the available food that they'll stick around for a while.

Eventually, we hope to have a sign with photos of some of the more common species to help in identification. But that's down the road a bit. We have to take the pictures first!



Peary Stafford, Natalie Dyer, Clark Gifford, and of course, Natalie's dog Buffum, take a rest from tilling the soil at the new butterfly garden at the Macricostas Preserve.

Steep Rock Wins Award at CLCC Conference

Steep Rock won the award for Land Acquisitions of Substantial Size at Connecticut Land Conservation Council's 24th Annual Conference, held this year on March 31.

In the last two years, we have protected more than 761 acres of land by means of gifts in fee and conservation easements. In 2005, 444 acres were protected, including an easement of 150 acres adjacent to our 368 acre Macricostas Preserve. In 2006, 317 acres were protected, including easements on 24 acres bordering Mt. Tom State Park, and 165 acres adjacent to the Steep Reservation.

Land now protected by Steep Rock totals 2426 acres owned in fee and 2129 acres preserved with conservation easements for a total of 4555 acres.

**Please Become a Member of Steep
Rock.
We're Halfway Through our Annual
Membership Appeal and We Need Your
Support!**

Send Your Contribution To:

Steep Rock Association
PO Box 279
Washington Depot, CT 06794

Conservation Tax Incentives End in 2007

Legislation, passed in 2006 as part of the Pension Bill, included enhanced tax incentives to protect land.

The incentives:

- increased the charitable deduction limit from 30% to 50% of adjusted gross income (AGI) for donations or bargain sales of qualified conservation contributions;
- increased the charitable deduction limit to 100% of AGI for eligible farmers and ranchers (i.e., those who receive more than 50% of their income from farming or ranching), so long as the contribution does not prevent future agricultural use; and
- allows the taxpayer to carry forward the deduction for 15 years (rather than five years).

As always, every conservation easement must clearly identify the purposes of the easement and the resources to be protected. Any reserved rights must be consistent with the protection of the conservation values of the property. The land trust accepting the easement, the Steep Rock Association for example, must have the commitment and the resources to enforce the terms of the restriction.

Landowners interested in preserving their land are reminded that these provisions expire at the end of

www.steeprockassoc.org

Visit us there. There are photos, information about Steep Rock, and links to other environmental organizations.



Steep Rock Association
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