

VISTA

WORKING TOGETHER: THE BIG PICTURE p.3

EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

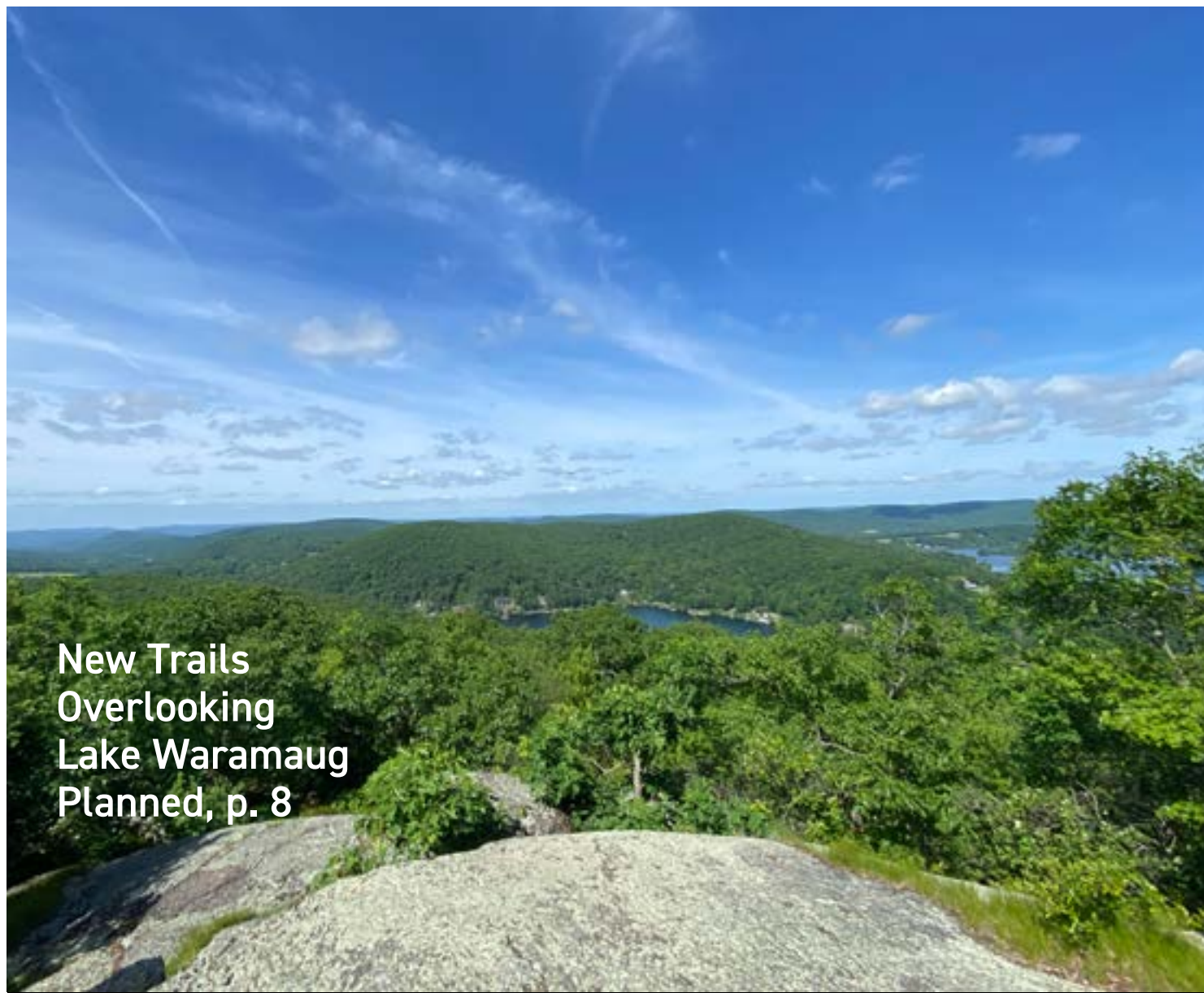
Don't miss out on these events--there's something for everyone to enjoy. p.5

NOTES FROM THE FIELD

Preserving Washington's agricultural heritage while protecting wildlife, water quality, and hiking trails. p. 3

CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

How local land conservation mitigates climate change and promotes community conservation. p. 7



New Trails Overlooking Lake Waramaug Planned, p. 8



TRUSTEES

President

Thomas M. Rickart

Secretary

Peary Stafford

Treasurer

John Santoleri

Howard Barnet Jr.

Robby Barnett

Sara Carter

William Coleman

Sally Cornell

Kirsten Feldman

Kathy Guttman

Joseph J. Hanggi Jr.

John Herrmann Jr.

Gregory Heyman

Rachel Jacobellis

Eliot Johnson

Michael Lloyd

Robert Micheletto

Alan G. Mnuchin

Reese Owens

Raymond Reich

Jodi Schwartz

Marie Schwartz

Joanna Seitz

Kasia Smith

Stephen Solley

Leslie Rubler Warner

Lynn Werner

STAFF

Brian Hagenbuch, Ph.D.

Executive Director

Denise Arturi

Judea Garden Head Gardener & Volunteer Coordinator

Mike Giapponi

Trails & Preserves Manager

Rory Larson

Conservation Science Manager

Johanna Maches

Office Manager

Monica Roberto

Development Director

GET IN TOUCH

Steep Rock Association, Inc.

PO Box 279

Washington Depot, CT 06794

T: (860) 868-9131

info@steeprocksassoc.org

www.steeprocksassoc.org

STEEP ROCK PRESERVES



Steep Rock, 2 Tunnel Road, Washington Depot, CT. Spanning nearly 1,000 acres, explore our largest preserve. Enjoy the diverse flora and fauna along the river's edge, adventure through history along the railroad bed and Holiday House remains, or climb through old growth hemlock forests to magnificent summit views.

Macricostas, 124 Christian Street, New Preston, CT. This 500-acre preserve offers an array of landscapes, as meadows and farm fields blend seamlessly with wooded ridges and wetlands. Rare birds and vibrant wildflow-

ers make this an extraordinary destination. Enjoy a leisurely hike around the hayfield or a more challenging trek up to the stunning views of Lake Waramaug from Waramaug's Rock.

Hidden Valley, 198 Bee Brook Road, Washington Depot, CT. Enjoy 700 acres of mixed forest and meadows crisscrossed by nearly 17 miles of trails that offer a variety of destinations along the beautiful Shepaug River. Don't miss the Thoreau Bridge, Quartz Mine, Bronson Fields, Pollinator Meadow, and Hidden Valley Pinnacle.

West Mountain Preserve, Johnson Farm, 37 W. Mountain Road, Washington, CT. Acquired in 2019, the 52-acre Johnson Farm offers stunning views of rolling farmland and incredible vistas. Check back this fall as we expand this trail system along Nettleton Hollow Rd., incorporating panoramic views and stream-side trails.

Steep Rock Campus at Macricostas Preserve, 116 Christian Street, New Preston, CT. Administrative offices and Judea Garden, the Giving Garden where the community comes together to provide fresh produce for neighbors in need.

MISSION

Steep Rock Association is a nationally accredited land trust whose mission is to conserve ecologically and historically significant landscapes and riparian cor-

ridors in and around Washington CT and to enhance the community's connection to nature through outreach, education, and passive recreation.



THE BIG PICTURE

You are part of something big. Your support has been vital to Steep Rock Association protecting over 5,550 acres in Washington and you have been a catalyst for SRA promoting land conservation, protecting critical habitats, and identifying passageways that enhance natural wildlife movement in Washington and the Litchfield Hills.

Along with local and regional land conservation organizations, SRA participates in the Follow the Forest initiative, a collaborative effort to connect core forest habitats (>250 acres) from the lower Hudson Valley to the Canada border to decrease the impacts of the climate crisis, reduce habitat fragmentation, and enable a wide variety of plant and animal species the

capacity to move between areas.

In this issue of VISTA, our Spotlight features SRA's stewardship efforts to abate the ecological threats of the climate crisis.

Land conservation is among the most effective, meaningful, and hopeful tools to mitigate the local and regional impacts of a rapidly changing climate.

SRA's proactive efforts emphasize acquiring critically important lands, monitoring water quality, reducing invasive species threats, and measuring impacts on indicator wildlife species.

It's more than just land we protect; it's our community too. Thank you for being part of something big. For interactive maps and to learn more about Follow the Forest, visit: followtheforest.org.

Forests Against Climate Change



HILLSIDE: ON THE HORIZON



Steep Rock Association is thrilled to announce the newest addition to its preservation portfolio – Hillside Farm. The 86-acre property located on Nettleton Hollow Road at the junction of Washington and Woodbury is a mosaic of productive farmland and picturesque habitats including streams, wetlands, meadows, and forests.

This exciting acquisition ensures the viability of the farm's agricultural future and provides enormous benefit to wildlife and water quality. Once trails are completed, Hillside Farm will provide the public with the opportunity to experience our state's agricultural heritage and enjoy the integrity of intact, functioning ecosystems.

The significance of this project is accentuated by the recent acquisition of the nearby Johnson Farm and Steep Rock's vision to connect

several protected properties in the Pomperaug River watershed, forming an expansive trail system and a safe corridor for wildlife travel through interconnected lands.

Hillside Farm's purchase was made possible through a public/private partnership. Our sincere thanks go to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection for awarding funds through their Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program and the United States Department of Agriculture for acceptance into their Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. We would also like to recognize the incredible support from our municipal and private partners, who were instrumental in making Hillside Farm a conservation success story.

NATURE: UP CLOSE & PERSONAL

"What a gorgeous place - well cared for and lots of variety. The kids loved the tunnel & bridges and had no issue getting to the lookout. The terrain is relatively easy and we ate lunch at the biggest picnic table I've ever seen. Lots of dogs and horses to see along the way. Win!" Anna

Railroad Tunnel, Steep Rock Preserve

EVENTS

JULY

JUDEA GARDEN: A VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY. MONDAY-FRIDAY, 8:00AM - 12:00PM THROUGH SEPTEMBER, MACRICOSTAS PRESERVE

Judea Garden, The Giving Garden, grows and distributes organically grown produce to our neighbors in need. Now in our 14th season, we have helped fill plates and bellies with over 43,000 pounds of fresh vegetables. Ages: 16+

SUMMER SAUNTERS WITH SRA JULY 15, 5PM - BRONSON FIELD POLLINATOR MEADOW AT HIDDEN VALLEY PRESERVE

Join Executive Director Brian Hagenbuch on a series of casual walks through Steep Rock's Preserves. Ages: All

For More Information or Sign Up for Events:
[SteeppRockAssoc.org/events-programs](https://www.steepprockassoc.org/events-programs)

WEED AND WINE WEDNESDAYS JULY 6, 13, 20, 27 5:30PM - 7:00PM JUDEA GARDEN AT MACRICOSTAS PRESERVE.

Spend an evening with fellow gardeners weeding the vegetables in Judea Garden, then enjoy a glass of wine on us! Ages: 21+

MONTHLY TRAIL WORK PARTY A VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY JULY 17, 9:30AM - 12:30PM

Put your hands (and not just your boots) on the trails this hiking season by joining SRA's monthly trail work party. Ages: 16+

MACRICOSTAS IN MOONLIGHT AN EXPLORATION IN NATURE MACRICOSTAS PRESERVE JULY 13, 8:00PM - 10:00PM

Explore your nocturnal side with SRA this summer as we hike through Macricostas Preserve under a full moon. We will be

graced by the Buck Moon. If skies are clear, we'll hike through an illuminated landscape, a special time as the trails are typically closed. We'll meet at the main Macricostas Preserve parking lot before proceeding over boardwalk, around hayfield, and into forest with the Lookout as a destination. This rocky outcropping will provide the perfect platform for viewing the moonrise and letting out a howl or hoot into the night. Ages: 12+

ODONATA SURVEY BLITZ A COMMUNITY SCIENCE PROJECT. JULY 17, 9:00AM - 5:00PM

What odonates (dragonflies and damselflies) inhabit Washington, and what does their presence or absence mean for local and regional conservation? Join our team of "dragon hunters" for an educational and scientific day

of sampling odonates in SRA preserves. Location is TBD and inclement weather will advance the survey to July 16. Ages: 16+

events cont. on next page



Summer Solstice Hike in Macricostas Preserve, June 2022

YOUR IMPACT

Thank you for protecting the natural areas, plants and wildlife we all cherish. To get more involved with Steep Rock, here are a few ways to start:

Volunteer: Join us working in the preserves, Judea Garden, or other areas in our organization, as we keep our lands a treasure for generations to come.

Donate: Steep Rock is a non-profit organization supported by your donations, including: cash gifts, goods and services, equipment, land, and legacy gifts. Please use the enclosed reply envelope to make a gift, donate online at [steepprockassoc.org/donate](https://www.steepprockassoc.org/donate) or contact us at gifts@steepprockassoc.org



EVENTS

cont. from previous page

AUGUST

JUDEA GARDEN: A VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY. MONDAY-FRIDAY, 8:00AM - 12:00PM THROUGH SEPT., MACRICOSTAS PRESERVE.

Ages: 16+

SUMMER SAUNTERS WITH SRA AUG. 1, 5:00PM - STEEP ROCK TUNNEL

AUG. 15, 5:00PM - HIDDEN VALLEY PRESERVE BRIDGE LOOP

Join Executive Director Brian Hagenbuch on a series of causal walks through Steep Rock's Preserves. Ages: all

MONTHLY TRAIL WORK PARTY A VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY AUG. 20, 9:30AM - 12:30PM

Put your hands (and not just your boots) on the trails this hiking season by joining SRA's monthly trail work party. Ages: 16+

WEED AND WINE WEDNESDAYS AUG. 3, 10, 17

5:30PM - 7:00PM

JUDEA GARDEN AT MACRICOSTAS PRESERVE

Spend an evening with fellow gardeners weeding the vegetables, then enjoy a glass of wine on us! Ages: 21+

PLANTING A POLLINATOR MEADOW, AN EXPLORATION IN NATURE: MANAGEMENT SERIES. HIDDEN VALLEY PRESERVE. AUG. 6, 12:00PM - 1:30PM

Pollinators are all the buzz these days and for good reason! Populations are declining due to a variety of factors, with one significant cause being the loss of habitat. Join us on a 1.5-mile round trip hike in Hidden Valley Preserve for the second offering in our new Management Series as we visit our recently established Bronson Fields Pollinator Meadow - our largest habitat creation project specifically targeting pollinating insect conservation. Ages: all

JUDEA GARDEN OPEN GARDEN A VOLUNTEER CELEBRATION AUG. 20, 3:00PM - 5:00PM

Join Steep Rock Association's Judea Garden for its annual Open Garden at Macricostas Preserve. Visitors, volunteers, and friends are welcome to explore the beautiful garden, enjoy refreshments and learn from our interns. Come by and visit us any time during the event! Ages: all

SEPTEMBER

JUDEA GARDEN: VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY. MONDAY-FRIDAY, 8:00AM - 12:00PM THROUGH SEPT., MACRICOSTAS PRESERVE. Ages: 16+

MONTHLY TRAIL WORK PARTY A VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY SEPT. 17, 9:30AM - 12:30PM

Put your hands on the trails this hiking season by joining Steep Rock Association's monthly trail work party. Ages: 16+

AUTUMNAL EQUINOX, SEPT. 22-STEEP ROCK HOUSE

Mark the Equinox with fire around our firepit and celebrate the change of the season. Hike at 6:00pm and light refreshments at 6:30 pm. Ages: all.

OCTOBER

TUNNEL ROAD CONNECTOR - AN INTERTOWN RAMBLE OCT. 1, 11:00AM - 1:30PM STEEP ROCK PRESERVE

Join Steep Rock Association and Roxbury Land Trust for a 4-mile intertown hike on Tunnel Road, traversing nature preserves protected by both organizations. Experience the fall foliage, marvel at the Shepaug River, and learn about land stewardship along the way. Ages: all, but please note the hike length.

JUDEA GARDEN CLEAN UP OCT. 22, 9:00 AM- 12:00 PM OCT. 23, 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Clean away plant debris, prep beds and plant seeds to greet us early next spring. All ages.

OCTOBER - 3 PEAKS IN 3 WEEKS CHALLENGE.

OCT. 3 - OCT. 23

Challenge family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers to take the 3 Peaks in 3 Weeks Challenge! Enjoy the fresh air and take in the sights leading to the scenic viewsheds bursting with the vibrant colors of fall as you do a self-guided run, hike or walk to Steep Rock's three highest peaks in our preserves: the Summit at Steep Rock, the Pinnacle at Hidden Valley and Waramaug's Rock at Macricostas. Ages: all

MONTHLY TRAIL WORK PARTY A VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY OCT. 15, NOV. 19

9:30AM - 12:30PM

Put your hands (and not just your boots) on the trails this hiking season by joining Steep Rock Association's monthly trail work party. Ages: 16+

WASHINGTON'S ANNUAL HARVEST FESTIVAL, OCT. 9 CARVE FOR CONSERVATION

Bring your kids and join Steep Rock Association as well as the rest of the town of Washington for some fall themed fun at the Harvest Festival from 12-5pm on Sunday. We invite you to visit our booth and carve the animals that call Steep Rock home. The Festival will be at the Pavilion behind the Primary School.



LOVE OUR TRAILS?

- LEAVE A REVIEW ON GOOGLE OR FACEBOOK

- FOLLOW/TAG US ON SOCIAL MEDIA:





Steep Rock Honey

Made from our hives at Macricostas Preserve, 100% of proceeds go to Steep Rock Association to help care for and maintain the trails you love!

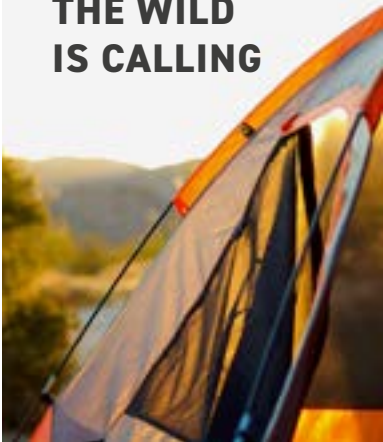
\$25 per jar
(limited supply)

Great for Gifts!

Available at:

Steep Rock's Office
Hickory Stick Bookshop
The Po Cafe

THE WILD IS CALLING



Did you know that you can camp at Steep Rock Preserve? Just imagine yourself sitting around a crackling fire under the brightly lit night sky listening to the Shepaug River meandering downstream. We offer tent camping at three different sites located right along the Shepaug River. Amenities: all sites have a grill, picnic tables, access to an outhouse, and a firewood rack. Weekend camping is a 2-night minimum. All campsites must be reserved online. Visit: steeprocksassoc.org/activity/camping/

SPOTLIGHT

CONSERVATION, CLIMATE & COMMUNITY

Land conservation is also community conservation. The climate crisis is a clear and evident danger not only in SRA Preserves, but Washington and the greater Litchfield Hills. We witness the effects daily—from the insidious impacts of invasive species to weather extremes altering growing seasons to flooding and blowdowns from increasingly volatile storms. The result is damaged trails, loss of habitat, power outages, business disruption, and threats to life and property.

SRA is driven to be part of the solution. Our preserves contain over 2,400 acres of mixed forests, providing refuge to a wealth of biological diversity and sequestering thousands of tons of carbon within trees and soil organic matter, reducing erosion, filtering pollutants, and protecting vital watersheds. SRA's land acquisitions prioritize protecting key forest and working lands with high conservation, agricultural, recreational, and carbon storage value, in perpetuity.

Our stewardship efforts moni-



Tropical Storm Ida Flooding, Steep Rock Preserve, August 2021

tor key wildlife species and rare plants. From wood turtles to salamanders and dragonflies to kestrels, our data helps identify and mitigate threats to their populations. By monitoring water quality in tributaries of the Shepaug and Pomperaug Rivers, we are measuring changes in water temperature and the climate's impact on our beautiful trout streams. And

we have created a detailed plan to identify, prioritize, monitor, and control invasive species, which are a direct result of the climate crisis.

At Steep Rock, we're passionate about conservation and our community. When faced with threats such as the climate crisis, we know that the success of both depends upon each other.

CONSERVATION LEGACY



If you cherish Washington's natural spaces, plants and wildlife, consider a gift to Steep Rock through your estate plans to protect our land and natural resources for generations to come. Find out how you can become a Legacy Society member with a gift through your will, trust, retirement plan or life insurance policy.



To learn more:
scan the QR code or
steeprocksassoc.org/legacy-giving/



PO Box 279
Washington Depot, CT 06794

BLAZING NEW TRAILS

Steep Rock is expanding the trail system at Macricostas Preserve by 30 percent! The 1.5 miles of new trails meanders through pristine mixed hardwood forest, featuring glacial erratics, incredible ridgeline views, and even a small waterfall. As part of this project, major maintenance will also be conducted along portions of Meeker Trail, restoring eroded sections of the trail and safeguarding this treasure for future generations.

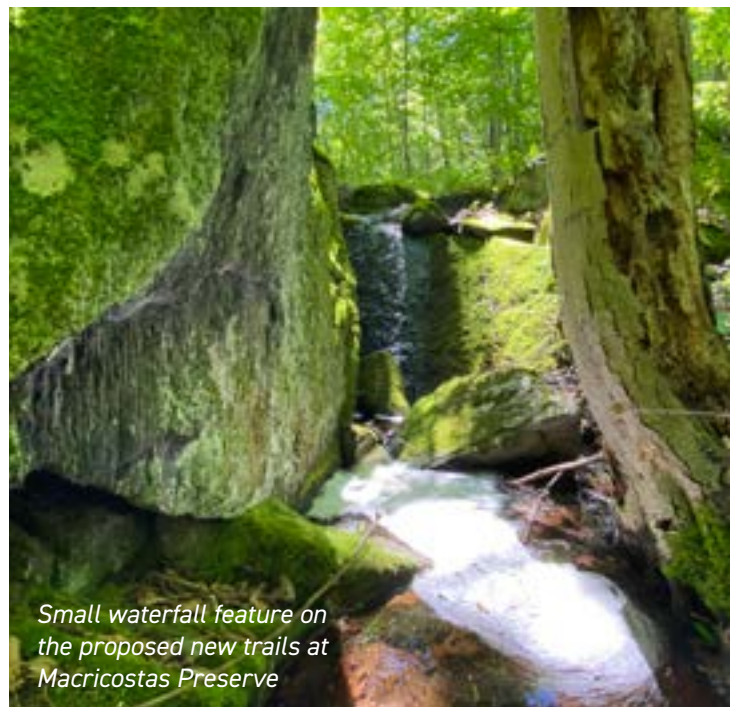
Steep Rock has pledged of \$24,500 toward our \$45,000 goal to cover trail costs. The work is scheduled to be completed in 2022, subject to funding.

Milestones: Since the Macricostas Expansion project was launched in 2018, we have closed on four acquisitions totaling al-

most 100 acres, a 25% increase in owned land at the Macricostas Preserve.

These parcels include large areas of wetlands and streams which feed Lake Waramaug and Meeker Swamp, as well as a significant portion of highly visible ridgeline which dominates easterly views from both the Warren and Washington sides of the Lake.

THANK YOU to the generous donors who funded this first expansion phase. The Preserve now extends to the Warren town line. We are in discussions regarding additional acquisitions and donations of land or conservation easements in order to permanently protect Pinnacle Valley. For more information, contact info@steeprockassoc.org.



Small waterfall feature on the proposed new trails at Macricostas Preserve