



CELEBRATING INTERDEPENDENCE

When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe. (John Muir)

Ghost pipe, currently flowering near beech trees in Steep Rock's forests, are pollinated by small native bees, lack chlorophyll, and cannot photosynthesize (hence the white/pinkish color). Instead, these beautiful yet haunting plants are parasitic, obtaining their energy from mycorrhizal fungi in the soil. Mycorrhizae are critically important to trees, helping in the uptake of nutrients while the trees provide fungi with sugars produced via photosynthesis. Beech trees are in decline because of beech leaf disease (caused by a nematode) and beech bark disease (caused by a fungus transmitted by scale insects). Ghost pipe, whose survival is dependent on the interactions of so many different species, is just one example of complex, interconnected relationships in the natural world. As we celebrate our independence this month, I'm struck with the notion that it's our interdependence—our connectedness with each other and with the natural world—that we should also be celebrating. See you on our trails...

Brian Hagenbuch, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Featured Highlights



Volunteer Spotlight: New Feature

Meet John Aiello, New Preston resident and Steep Rock volunteer for 10 years. He is a carpenter by trade and you may have seen John's work while hiking at Macricostas Preserve where John helped build the wooden bridge over Meeker Swamp, the Viewing Platform, and the Boardwalk at the main Preserve entrance. John loves walking the trails and seeing so many people enjoying his hard work. Thank you so much to John and all our other volunteers! [>Meet John](#)



Summer Study and Notes from the Past

July is a fascinatingly wild time of year. Life histories of organisms spanning all taxonomic kingdoms converge, forming a bustling and bursting environment that beckons for nature study. Learn about biodiversity in the preserves and the interconnections that shape natural communities through our experiential "Notes from the Field" articles posted on the website. [>more](#)



Blazing New Trails

Steep Rock is thrilled to embark on a new trail expansion and remediation project at Macricostas Preserve, and we'd love for you to get involved. This project will repair vulnerable segments on the existing trail system leading up to the Pinnacle that have been damaged by erosion and create a 1.5-mile hiking-only trail that will pass through roughly 100 acres of spectacular, recently acquired land. [>Check it out!](#)



Judea Garden Vegetable Distribution

Judea Garden will begin distribution of fresh produce to those in need beginning Mon., July 11 at the Steep Rock Association office at [116 Christian St.](#) from 12pm -5pm. With the help of many volunteers, Judea Garden annually produces and distributes over 3500 pounds of organically grown food for the Washington community and local food pantries. For more info or to help this wonderful project, please contact us [here](#).

Upcoming Events



Judea Garden Weed & Wine Wednesdays

Wednesdays from July 6 through August 17, 5:30pm - 7:00pm

This summer, enjoy Wednesday evenings with fellow gardeners weeding the vegetables in Judea Garden, then enjoy a glass of wine on us! [>more](#)



"Lake" a Hike

July 9, 9:00am

Join us for "Lake a Hike", a moderately challenging guided hike, approx. 3.5 miles, sponsored by the [Lake Waramaug Association](#) and Steep Rock Association. Learn from an SRA guide about the ecological gem of the Macricostas preserve and Meeker Swamp. Delight in songbirds, butterflies, wildlife, and incredible views! [>more](#)



Summer Saunters: Bronson Field

July 15, 5:00pm

Join Executive Director Brian Hagenbuch for "Summer Saunters with SRA", a series of casual walks through Steep Rock's Preserves. Friday, July 15 we will visit the Bronson Field Pollinator Meadow on Sabbaday Lane at Hidden Valley Preserve. [>more](#)



Monthly Trail Work Party

July 16, 9:30am - 12:00pm

Have you ever wondered what goes into our trail maintenance and construction? Come find out and join us July 16th for our next Trail Work Party! The Monthly Trail Work Party meets at 9:30am, location to be determined. Details and registration info here [>more](#)



Dragonfly & Damselfly Survey Blitz

July 17, 9:00am - 5:00pm

Join our team of "dragon hunters" for an educational and scientific day of sampling odonates. We will overview Odonata ecology, train on capture technique, and then begin the hunt to document the many different species of dragonflies and damselflies throughout SRA preserves. Details and registration info here [>more](#)



Summer Saunters: Steep Rock Tunnel

August 1, 5:00pm

Join Executive Director Brian Hagenbuch on a series of casual walks through Steep Rock's Preserves. Monday, August 1 we will explore the Tunnel at Steep Rock Preserve. The railroad tunnel was constructed from 1871 to 1872 as part of the Shepaug Valley Railroad. [>more](#)

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Steep Rock Association

PO Box 279, Washington Depot, Connecticut 06794

860-868-9131 • info@steeprocksassoc.org



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