



5-acre wetlands in Pinnacle Cliffs parcel

THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND

Woody Guthrie's homage to the iconic American landscape offers a fitting theme song to report our successes in May. On May 19th, Steep Rock acquired 184 acres of critically important conservation land between Hidden Valley Preserve and Mt. Tom State Park. Identified as one of SRA's highest conservation priorities nearly 17 years ago, the Cook, Mt. Tom, and Bantam parcels represent the patience and perseverance necessary to protect land for critical habitats, rare species, exceptional views, and public recreation. Together with another parcel, SRA added 206 acres in the Bantam and Shepaug River watersheds to Hidden Valley Preserve in 2023. The State of Connecticut also approved a \$406,250 Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition grant to SRA to pursue protection of the 30.6-acre Pinnacle Cliffs parcel to be included in our Macricostas Preserve (see photo above). From our scenic peaks to hemlock forests to trout-filled rivers, Steep Rock continues to protect and steward the land you love...for you and me, and generations to come. Many thanks to everyone who supported our Hidden Valley Expansion Project and land acquisition and stewardship efforts.

See you on our trails!

Brian Hagenbuch, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Featured Highlights



Judea Garden 15th Season Kicks Off June-August

The Giving Garden, a Steep Rock Association Community Project, is thrilled to announce the commencement of its 15th growing season and the celebration of the Garden, the People, and their Stories. This remarkable milestone highlights a decade and a half of hard work, dedication, and community involvement that has allowed the garden to flourish and provide fresh produce for the less fortunate in the region. [>more](#)

Judea Garden 15th Season Celebration Calendar

Wed., June 7-Aug. 23, 5:30pm Weed & Wine Wednesdays at Judea Garden, (excl. June 21)

Sat., June 24, 9:00am – Garden to Exercise, Exercise to Garden

Thurs., July 20, 6:00pm – Round Table/Potluck: Does Food Insecurity Really Exist in Litchfield County?

Sat., July 29, 9:00am – Kids in Judea Garden

Sat., Aug.19, 4:00pm-7:00pm – 15th Season Celebration and Open Garden

Every Tuesday June-Sept., Plein Air Judea Garden

June 1 to Aug.11 - Painting, Photography, and Mixed Media Contest



Watch Out for Turtles

Please be on the lookout for turtles when driving and mowing this month. Females are on the move in search of a place to lay their eggs. Often, that means traveling long distances, crossing roads, and frequenting yards. If you come across a turtle that can be safely escorted out of harm's way, move them the shortest distance possible and always in the direction they are heading.



No Mow May a Blooming Success!

Steep Rock participated in No Mow May in select locations this year, documenting differences in mowed and un-mowed areas. After 30 days, we noticed a significant difference in plants and pollinators. We randomly sampled a 1m² plot in both areas and found 11 plant species in un-mowed plots compared to only 4 in mowed plots—a 175% increase in diversity! Furthermore, flower availability increased by 2000% and non-grass cover increased by 100%! We hope you will help feed the hungry bees and butterflies by participating in No Mow May with us next year!



Calling all interested volunteers!

SRA is currently seeking volunteers like you! Join our team and make a difference by helping us maintain our kiosks with updated maps and fliers (a Kiosk Keeper!), support upcoming activities (Event Assistant), and capture our programs and the beauty of our preserves (Photographer/Videographer). Together, we can promote and preserve the splendor of the Litchfield Hills while creating memorable experiences for all.

To join our volunteer team click here: [>more](#)

Upcoming Events



Rossiter Run Virtual 5K Run/Walk

June 1-20, 2023

The main entrance to Steep Rock Preserve may be closed and group events restricted, but the annual Rossiter Run 5K lives on! We are embracing this unique opportunity to offer runners, trail runners, hikers, and walkers other 5K routes to explore in our preserves in 2023. We have mapped out alternate routes at each of our 4 preserves, and invite you to join us in this friendly health and wellness event. Info and registration [>more](#)



CT Trails Day: Boulders Trail

June 4, 2023, 10:00am

Enjoy a guided moderate to hilly hike and explore Steep Rock Association's Boulders Trail in Macricostas Preserve. This trail meanders through woodlands, glacial erratics, waterfalls, and vernal pools, and will include a short side-loop to Waramaug Rock, with its breathtaking views of Lake Waramaug. This hosted hike is part of the [Connecticut Forests & Parks Association's](#) Annual CT Trails Day. Info and registration [>more](#)



Weed & Wine Wednesdays

June 7 - Aug. 23, 5:30pm

Weed & Wine Wednesdays are back at Judea Garden! Stop by Wednesdays, June 7 through August 23 (excluding June 21) 5:30-7:00 PM and weed the vegetable beds at Judea Garden alongside fellow gardeners, then enjoy a glass of wine on us! Please bring your own glass. No registration required. Info [>more](#)



Summer Saunters: Hidden Valley Preserve

June 15, 2023, 5:30pm-7:00pm

Join Executive Director Brian Hagenbuch on a series of casual walks through Steep Rock's Preserves. Thursday, June 15 we will walk the Hidden Valley Preserve Bridge loop, which will include the Henry David Thoreau Bridge and the Reich Memorial Bridge. Info and registration [>more](#)



Mindfulness Hike at Boulders Trail

June 17, 2023, 8:30am

Science has proven that children and adults of all ages experience positive results from mindfulness and nature while hiking; especially the beautiful trails of the Steep Rock Preserve. Being in nature is sensory immersive and a wonderful landscape for exploring nature and mindfulness. Join special hosts Roxanne Kraft and Alan Arellano on a 4-mile mindfulness hike at the Boulders Trail on Macricostas Preserve. Info and registration [>more](#)



Monthly Trail Work Party

June 17, 2023, 10:00am-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. The work party meets at 10:00 a.m. the third Saturday of every month from April through November. Info and registration [>more](#)



Summer Solstice Celebration

June 21, 2023 5:00pm

Join us on the longest day of light for the year as we welcome summer. Each seasonal firepit event celebrates something special; this solstice event, we will recognize our Rossiter Run Virtual 5K Walk/Run finishers, and announce the prize winners. Join us at 5:00PM for a victory lap group run or walk around the Macricostas Hayfield (approx. 1.5 miles). At 5:30PM, we will gather with refreshments and friends around the fire! Info and registration [>more](#)



Exercise to Garden, Garden to Exercise

June 24, 2023, 9:00am

Did you hear? Gardening is the new exercise! Gardening is a great way to stay fit and reduce stress. Like any exercise or sport, conditioning will help you perform better and reduce the risk of injury. Gain valuable insights from fitness trainer Dani Gelfand on the appropriate techniques that will make your gardening experience both fun and safe. Info and registration [>more](#)



Steep Rock Preserve: Tunnel Road Bridge Closed in 2023

The Town of Washington is replacing Tunnel Road Bridge over the Shepaug River. The bridge will be closed until November. There is **no parking or access to Steep Rock Preserve coming from River Road or Lower Church Hill Road**. The only vehicle access is Spring Hill Road off Route 199/Roxbury Road. **Horse trailers are prohibited and SR1 and SR2 campsites are closed for the 2023 season**. Large group gatherings are discouraged. We apologize for the inconvenience and welcome you to [visit our other preserves](#). Please [contact](#) SRA if you have questions.

>Donate



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