



The "Steep Rockers" trained in advance trail construction and stonework.

THE SPIRIT OF VOLUNTEERISM

"Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can." – Arthur Ashe

What's the secret to Steep Rock's success? The answer is easy—Volunteers! We are truly indebted and thankful for the spirit of volunteerism within the Steep Rock community. In 2022, we had **217** volunteers log **3,311** hours toward our efforts. Two super-Vols logged over **200** hours each—truly impressive! Over **70** people weathered hot temperatures and drought and contributed **1,615** hours to growing and distributing **3,400** pounds of vegetables for Judea Garden; **110** stewardship volunteers helped monitor preserves, build and keep trails clear, and remove invasive species; and **59** community scientists assisted in monitoring nest boxes, counting eagles, documenting pollinators, and catching dragonflies and damselflies. Volunteers spent **150** hours tabling at events and helping in the office. We are so grateful for your inspiration, perspiration, and dedication—You make a difference. Interested in joining our team? No experience necessary, just "do what you can." We are hosting a volunteer information, recognition, and kickoff event on Monday, March 20th (see below). Come join us. See you on our trails...

Brian Hagenbuch, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Featured Highlights



Ecology of a Snowless Winter

With little snow this winter, it's been another discouraging season. Winter weather is complex and can have year-round ecological effects. Warmer temps and lack of snow have major effects on plants and animals that call CT home. Many invasive species are moving northward because they survive milder winters. Temperatures of -5F to -10F are needed to reduce hemlock woolly adelgid, which is devastating our stately hemlock trees. Expect higher mosquito and tick populations as temps above freezing allow these pests to be active year-round. Lack of snow also has major implications for water quality and quantity, especially after last summer's drought. Winter seasonal temps have risen dramatically over the past few decades. A few degrees make a big difference in whether it snows or rains, with long-term consequences for human health and the environment. That's why Steep Rock monitors changes in local ecology and works to create climate resilient habitats.



Spend the Summer with Steep Rock

Interested in joining our team? **We are hiring!**

Seasonal Landscape Assistant responsible for mowing and landscaping around trails, preserves, and Steep Rock Campus.

Summer Internships are also available! Make a difference for the environment this summer working on conservation studies, raising organic vegetables in Judea Garden, or assisting our marketing, outreach, and fundraising efforts.



Give From Your Donor Advised Fund

Increasingly, supporters of all ages donate to our land trust using their Donor Advised Funds (DAFs). Now, thanks to a partnership with [Chariot](#), you can donate to Steep Rock with your DAF in just three clicks. The service is free to use. [>more](#)

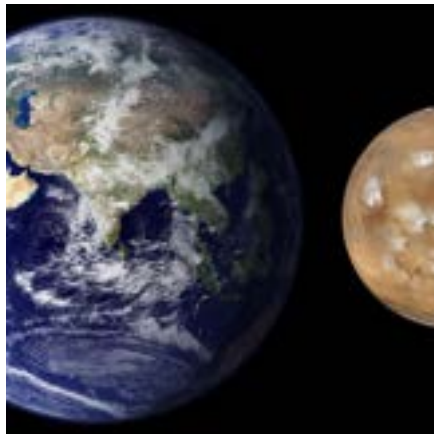
Steep Rock Staff



Meet Our New Trails & Preserve Manager

Welcome Merlin Ennis! A native to Simsbury, CT he has had a connection with the outdoors ever since he can remember. Merlin earned a BA in Environmental Science and German Language and Culture from Franklin and Marshall College. During his time at F&M, Merlin conducted a full year independent study on the effects of erosion on tree growth on dam fill terraces and completed a semester long internship with the state forestry department in Baden-Württemberg Germany. Merlin also brings experience in property stewardship and invasive management to SRA. When not at Steep Rock, Merlin can be found exploring trails around Connecticut, working in his backyard garden, drumming, or playing hockey.

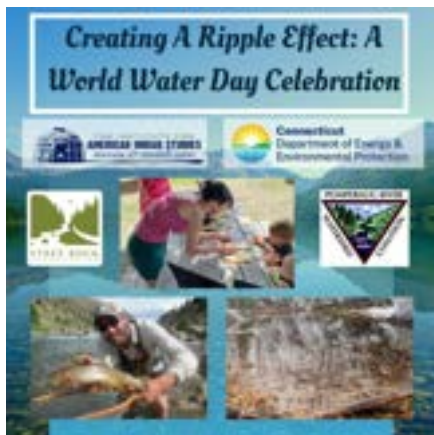
Upcoming Events



Is Going to Mars the Answer?

March 9, 2023, 6:30pm

Join us for a Zoom talk, “Is Going to Mars the Answer? Reflections from Physics and Astronomy” on **Thurs., March 9 @ 6:30PM**. Ray Reich, a retired Physics & Astronomy teacher with 45 years of teaching experience, including 16 years at The Frederick Gunn School, will discuss current plans for manned missions to Mars and the ability to serve as a possible destination for the survival of humankind. Info & registration [>more](#)



World Water Day Celebration

March 18, 2023, 10:00am

Steep Rock Association is proud to partner with [The Institute for American Indian Studies Museum and Research Center](#), [CT DEEP](#), and [Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition](#) to celebrate World Water Day. Join us for a fun and education event for learners of all ages. The day includes a guided hike, vernal pool presentation, Storytime and crafts, and more. Info and registration [>more](#)



Volunteer Opportunities Event

March 20, 2023, 5:00pm

Calling all community members! We invite you to come learn about the variety of ways you can volunteer with Steep Rock, contribute to our efforts, and support the land trust you love. Please join us March 20th 5-5:30PM at our headquarters at [116 Christian St.](#) (next to Macricostas Preserve) to learn of volunteer opportunities. Stay after the session for our firepit volunteer celebration! Info and registration [>more](#)



Trail Manager Training

April 1, 2023, 9:00am

Love Steep Rock Association's trails? Help us keep them in tip-top shape by becoming a Trail Manager. Everyone within this special group of volunteers helps steward a designated trail over a one-year period, regularly scouting the trail for environmental concerns and safety hazards as well as performing light trail maintenance duties. This training will be hybrid - with the option of in-person training at Steep Rock House or via Zoom. Info and registration [>more](#)



Judea Garden Spring Cleaning

April 8, 2023, 1:00pm

Judea Garden, The Giving Garden, grows and distributes organically grown produce to our neighbors in need. Help us launch our **15th season** by getting the Garden ready for the upcoming season and maybe even getting some seeds in the ground. [>more](#)



Steep Rock Preserve: Tunnel Road Bridge Closure in 2023

The Town of Washington is replacing the Tunnel Road Bridge over the Shepaug River. The bridge will be closed from April -- November. There will be **no parking or access to Steep Rock preserve on the west side of the bridge coming from River Road or Lower Church Hill Road**. The only access to Steep Rock will be Spring Hill Road off Route 199/Roxbury Road. **All horse trailer access and SR1 and SR2 campsites will be closed for the 2023 season**. We apologize for the inconvenience and welcome you to [visit our other preserves](#) open to the public. Please [contact](#) SRA if you have questions.

>GIVE FROM YOUR DONOR ADVISED FUND



Steep Rock Association

PO Box 279, Washington Depot, Connecticut 06794

860-868-9131 • info@steeprocksoc.org



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