



MEASURING IMPACT

A recent grant proposal asked to describe how Steep Rock measures its impact. On the surface, it's easy to write about how we conserve open space, protect species, provide outdoor recreation, promote education and awareness, support the local economy, and enhance the area's quality of life. Digging deeper, I can highlight dozens of projects, activities, and events that make a difference—acquiring critical habitats in Hidden Valley Preserve, creating the Boulders Trail for hikers, growing and distributing 3,500 pounds of organic produce for food banks, promoting health and wellness in our 5k run and 3 Peaks Challenge, and protecting native species like dragonflies and turtles. But the bedrock of our impact and success is in the inspiration we get from people like you, the dedication of our supporters, the commitment of hundreds of volunteers, the leadership of our Board and staff, and the connection to our community. Our impact is intimately woven through all these layers. To discover more about our impact, I invite you to peruse our just published [2022 Impact Report](#) and celebrate the accomplishments your support made possible. For a hard copy, contact us. [>more](#).

See you on our trails!

Brian Hagenbuch, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Featured Highlights



Vernal Pools: Prized Hotbeds for Spring Wildlife

Grab your rubber boots and polarized glasses. It's not too late to explore a vernal pool near you. Vernal pools are woodland depressions that hold water in Spring and then typically dry up through the Summer. Several amphibians are dependent on the temporarily inundated environment for breeding and offspring development. Vernal pools provide habitat for a host of other organisms too. [>more](#)



Join the Pollinator Revolution

What are these signs in and around Steep Rock's preserves? We are participating in No Mow May (NMM), an international effort to help pollinators prosper. Participation is simple and easy--Don't mow your lawn in the month of May. Not mowing benefits butterflies, bees, birds, and wildflowers, decreases hours of yard work, reduces emissions from mowers and weed whackers, and increases diversity of native species. SRA is documenting plant and pollinator diversity in both NMM and mowed areas and will share updates on social media. Join the effort--would you rather hike in our preserves or mow grass?



Heartfelt Thank You!

We are thrilled to announce that the 2023 [Give Local](#) event, sponsored by the [Connecticut Community Foundation](#), was a huge success for Steep Rock. Over 180 individuals from six states came together in a remarkable display of generosity and support for our mission to protect the natural resources and beauty of the Litchfield Hills. [>more](#)



Storywalk at Macricostas Preserve

Kid's activity alert! Did you know that Macricostas Preserve has a StoryWalk? This community collaboration between Steep Rock Association, [Gunn Memorial Library](#), and [Washington Supply](#) offers a fun and educational outdoor activity for families. Pages from nature-focused children books are posted on display boards along a short, designated trail. Books are changed seasonally so be sure to visit each new season. [>more](#)

Upcoming Events



Meet Your Greens

May 11, 2023, 5:00pm-7:00pm

On May 11th, Steep Rock is co-hosting "Meet Your Greens" at the [Woodbury Brewing Company](#) from 5-7 PM. This event is free and open to the public, providing an excellent opportunity for individuals to connect with others volunteering or working in the conservation field. This event is an excellent way to connect with others who share your values and to learn more about the work being done in the conservation field.



Judea Garden Spring Planting Day

May 13, 2023, 9:00am-12:00pm

Judea Garden, The Giving Garden, grows and distributes organically grown produce to our neighbors in need. Start the miracle of a season of growing and giving. Help us sow the garden with seeds and plants Info and registration [>more](#)



Summer Saunters: Johnson Farm

May 17, 2023, 5:30pm

Join Executive Director Brian Hagenbuch as we step into the 2023 Summer Saunter Series with a casual walk around Johnson Farm. The 52-acre Johnson Farm Preserve showcases several active agricultural fields, as well as a mix of sunny meadows and shady, open forests, with 1.25 miles of hiking trails crisscrossing the landscape, offering breathtaking hillside views. Bring your binoculars and we'll look for signs of spring. Info and registration [>more](#)



Odonata (Dragonfly & Damselfly)

Survey Training

May 20, 2023, 9:00am-4:00pm

Join our "Ode Corps" - a group dedicated to collecting dragonflies and damselflies inhabiting SRA's preserves as part of a multiyear, comprehensive inventory effort. Join us for a training session, where project protocol, sampling techniques, equipment use, species behavior, and data collection will be covered in the habitats of Macricostas Preserve. Info and registration [>more](#)



Monthly Trail Work Party

May 20, 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](#)



Judea Garden Summer Planting Days

May 27-28, 2023, 9:00am-12:00pm

It's time! Help us grow into our 15th season and get those warmer weather plants in the ground on planting day. Info and registration [>more](#)



2023 Community Block Party

June 2, 2023, 5:30-8:00pm

Join us on Friday, June 2nd @ 5:30pm for a town celebration and family fun in the Depot at the Community Block Party! There will be live music, circus juggling, interactive games for the kids, wine tasting for the adults, outdoor movie and so much more.

This event is sponsored by the Washington Business Association and Washington Parks and Recreation. [>more](#)



CT Trails Day

June 4, 2023, 10:00am

Enjoy a guided moderate to hilly hike exploring the 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, the second largest natural lake in Connecticut. Info and registration [>more](#)



Rossiter Run 5K goes VIRTUAL

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, hikers, and walkers other 5K routes in our preserves in 2023. We are mapping out alternate routes and invite you to explore our other preserves in this friendly health and wellness event. Prizes will be awarded. For information [>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.

Earn Trail Karma by Donating To Steep Rock

[>Donate](#)



May eNewsletter, Steep Rock

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