



Photo by Alan Barry

## LAND CONSERVATION IS COMMUNITY CONSERVATION

The green forested hills and meandering rivers of Washington are more than just a scenic backdrop in our daily lives. Our ecology is intimately woven into our history and culture and truly defines our sense of place. This bucolic setting shapes our community's quality of life, rural character, and who we are, drawing visitors seeking wildness, keeping generations of families close to the hearth, and supporting our local economy. Steep Rock's efforts have tremendous long-term benefits. Acquiring property with high conservation value ensures the benefits of these lands are protected forever. The trails we build will be hiked for generations. We are vigilant in addressing threats to our preserves, from invasive species to a changing climate. Judea Garden provides fresh organic vegetables to those without access. And we are preparing for our next 100 years with the creation of the Steep Rock Campus at Macricostas Preserve. Our work is critical for both land conservation and community conservation now and into the future. As we wrap up our fiscal year this month, your financial support for conservation is vital. Thank you for all you do supporting our lands and community. See you on our trails...

Brian Hagenbuch, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

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# Featured Highlights



## Volunteer Spotlight

Meet JT Schemm! JT is one of many amazing volunteers that helps maintain our trails and keep our nature preserves in pristine condition. We are so grateful for JT's generous support over the years and hope that his words may inspire you to participate in our volunteer programs. [>meet JT](#)



## Hillside Farm Update

Acquired in 2021 with a combination of federal and state grants and private donations, the 86-acre Hillside Farm on Nettleton Hollow Road, the newest addition to Steep Rock's West Mountain Preserve, features a rich mosaic of farm fields blending seamlessly with surrounding meadows, wetlands, and forested hillsides. A parking area and picnic site are currently available for visitors to bask in the magnificent ridgeline views. Trails will be completed later this fall. [>more](#)



## Steep Rock Earns Reaccreditation!

We are thrilled to announce that the [Land Trust Accreditation Commission](#), the national accrediting body for land trusts, has renewed our accredited status! After a rigorous 14-month process, they have verified that our efforts meet the highest possible conservation standards, we have sound finances, practice ethical conduct and responsible governance, and can ensure lasting stewardship of the lands we love. The Commission noted that “Steep Rock Association has made an extraordinary commitment to excellence, trust, and permanence

in land conservation.” We are one of only 450 land trusts accredited in the United States. [>more](#)



Photo by Bill Coleman

## Bill Coleman: A Legacy of Conservation

It is with heavy hearts that we report that Trustee Bill Coleman passed away. He was a long-time member of the Steep Rock Board and a generous philanthropist, including funding the Rose Garden bordering Judea Garden (photo). He was a key contributor to all aspects of Steep Rock. He was our historian, our mentor, and our inspiration for so much that is good about our organization. The impact Bill had on conservation activities through his life and service was immense. We will all miss his love of nature, keen intelligence, kind spirit, and deep generosity. His passing will leave a long shadow. We leave you with these thoughts from his family: *“Today, as you walk through the streets or the woods and see a special tree or bird or historic street sign, please keep him in your thoughts. May his memory be a blessing.”*



## Judea Garden Vegetable Distribution

Judea Garden distribution of fresh produce takes place every Monday 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 email us at [info@steeprocksoc.org](mailto:info@steeprocksoc.org).



## Baby Turtle Watch in Effect

After months of incubation, turtle eggs are beginning to hatch. Nests are often laid in upland areas, resulting in a dangerous, lengthy trek for hatchlings as they head for water. Please keep an eye out for these inconspicuous youngsters while driving, hiking, biking, and dog walking. This is their most vulnerable time. That hatchling that you move across the road or distance your dog from can live up to 50 years as an integral member of a functioning population. Thank you!

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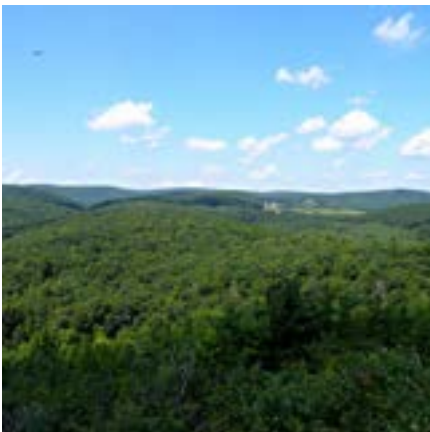
## Upcoming Events



### Annual Community Picnic

Sept. 10, 12:00pm - 2:00pm

You're invited! Join us on Saturday, Sept. 10, from 12:00PM – 2:00PM at Steep Rock Preserve's Riding Ring for Steep Rock Association's Annual Community Picnic. All community members are welcome to join us for food, fun, and games! RSVP appreciated. [>more](#)



### Fall Saunters: Hidden Valley Preserve

Sept. 14, 5:00pm

Our Summer Saunter Series has been extended into the fall season. Join SRA's Executive Director for a walk to the Hidden Valley Lookout and Pinnacle and enjoy the spectacular views. We will meet at the blue trail entrance on Sabbaday Lane, second parking area north of Rt. 109. For information and registration [>more](#)



## Monthly Trail Work Party

**Sept. 17, 9:30am-12:30pm**

Put your hands on the trails this hiking season by joining Steep Rock Association's (SRA) Monthly Trail Work Party. The Monthly Trail Work Party meets at 9:30 a.m. the third Saturday of every month from April through November. Participants in SRA's monthly trail work party learn by doing, tackling new and exciting projects every month [>more](#)



## Autumnal Equinox @ the Firepit

**Sept. 22, 5:00pm**

Mark the Equinox with fire! Join us at the firepit and celebrate as the season moves from summer to fall. Hike at 5:00pm and light refreshments at 6:00pm. All ages welcome. For information and registration [>more](#)



## Tunnel Road Connector Hike

**Oct. 1, 11:00am - 1:30pm**

Join SRA and [Roxbury Land Trust](#) (RLT) on a 4-mile hike along Tunnel Road. Rory Larson (SRA's Conservation Science Manager) and Jamie Curren (RLT's Land and Property Manager), will lead the walk. This partially closed town road connecting protected lands owned by the two organizations offers unparalleled views of the Shepaug River [>more](#)



## 3 Peaks in 3 Weeks Challenge

Oct. 3 - Oct. 24

Strap on your trail shoes, leash up your dog, enjoy the fresh air, and take in the beauty of fall foliage while boosting your health and wellness. Hike to the three highest peaks in Steep Rock's preserves and absorb the sights of our scenic viewsheds in autumn grandeur: the Summit at Steep Rock, the Pinnacle at Hidden Valley, and Waramaug's Rock at Macricostas. For information and registration [>more](#)

*Honor or remember someone special by making a gift in their name.*

[>TRIBUTE GIFTS](#)



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