



Photo: John Winchester

100 YEARS STRONG

In the Spring of 1886, just as he was about to break ground on The Rocks, his country house in Washington, Connecticut, the renowned architect Ehrick Rossiter discovered that the wooded hillsides to the southwest that he explored as a student at the Frederick Gunn School were slated for clear cutting. For him, there was only one thing to do...

Using construction money designated to build the house, Rossiter bought the threatened land from the timber company and protected 165 acres

forever, including the cherished summit rock outcropping that now forms the heart of Steep Rock Preserve.

Over the next 39 years, Rossiter built carriage roads and bridges, inviting friends and neighbors to experience the natural beauty of the Shepaug River Valley. In 1925, he took the ultimate step to ensure its future: donating the land to ten esteemed community members, who became the first "Trustees of Steep Rock." Their vision created one of the earliest public land trusts in the nation. Just four years later, they added 100 acres of the Clam Shell (pictured), preserving the summit's breathtaking views.

Now, **in 2025, Steep Rock Association proudly celebrates its Centennial Anniversary!** We owe our gratitude to the vision of our founders, the work of our predecessors, and to you—our supporters—who carry on Rossiter's legacy of protecting the landscapes that define Washington's sense of place and quality of life. Because of you, Steep Rock now protects over 6,000 acres of forested hills, pastoral fields, and scenic rivers that will remain safeguarded for generations to come.

We invite you to join us in honoring 100 years of conservation. Our Centennial Committee has planned a series of fun, engaging, and educational events. **Mark your calendar—you won't want to miss these celebrations!**

See you on our Trails,
Brian Hagenbuch, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Centennial Virtual Speaker Series

- 1/16 - [Rossiter's Riverside Retreat](#) with Carol Santoleri
- 2/20 - [Shepaug Railroad: A Historic Era](#) with Peter Vermilyea
- 3/20 - [100 Years of Conservation](#) with Edwin Matthews
- 4/15 - [Ancient Archaeological History of the Washington Area](#) with Craig Nelson

Thanks to our generous sponsors for making Steep Rock's Centennial events possible. Please support these businesses that share our commitment to protecting nature.



Other Upcoming Events

- 3/19 - [Volunteer Firepit Celebration](#)
- 4/5 - [Isaac Camp House Opening & Centennial Kickoff](#)

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Our Contact Information

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