

Ridgefield CONSERVATION COMMISSION

FALL 2021 NEWSLETTER



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Ridgefield's Conservation Commission serves the town by devoting our efforts to the sound development, conservation, supervision and regulation of the town's natural resources.



DID YOU KNOW?

The goal of a pollinator garden is to provide sufficient food (nectar and pollen) to reverse the decline of pollinators, bees in particular, and to provide habitat (milkweed) for monarch butterflies.

MCKEON FARM POLLINATOR GARDEN

The original pollinator garden at McKeon Farm (that was put in a few years ago) is doing well with lots of Purple Bergamot, Coneflowers and Blackeyed Susans. Pollinator gardens truly benefit the ecosystem and this one is simply breathtaking!

What were YOU up to this summer?

It's been a busy one for the Conservation Commission! Have a look what we (and our incredible summer workers) worked on this season! Two fantastic summer workers, Dylan Desmarais and Jonah Pereyra, along with some dedicated Conservation Commissioners, Jim Liptack and Dave Cronin, completed a twenty-two rock staircase on Pine Mountain. It took three and a half days of moving a ton of large rocks and digging almost as much dirt to place them into the hillside. This project helps to provide a more sustainable trail leading up to the very popular viewpoint by the old Ives Cabin site.



Storm Clean Up

Storms will sometimes cause trees to fall in our open spaces. When that happens, the Conservation Commission will send a crew to remove and clear so that all trails will remain passable. In fact, we recently repaired sections of the West Mountain Green Boardwalk after there was some damage by a fallen tree. This boardwalk traverses a particularly wet section of the trail. It is our mission to make sure that all Ridgefield residents are able to enjoy all of our amazing open spaces safely!



A Rare Sighting!



The Alder Flycatcher, a rare bird for Connecticut, was spotted at McKeon this summer. It's a bird that generally does not breed in Connecticut, and only passes through to points in the north. The bird prefers wet thicket edges. A rare sighting for Connecticut bird watchers!

Tenants!

There has been a lot of activity at our “Martin Condos” over at McKeon Farm. These Purple Martin nesting locations were constructed in an attempt to increase this species population. A look inside shows the success of the project!



Amazing Scouts!

Have a look at what our incredible Eagles Scout volunteers completed this year! These amazing young people truly help the Conservation Commission maintain and improve Ridgefield's trails and open spaces. Thank you to all the Eagle Scouts who have worked in our open spaces over the years. Your terrific work is greatly appreciated.

Listed on the following pages are the 2020 projects, with Scouts names, their project, and a photo of their fantastic work:

Caroline Vilinski
McKeon Invasives Removal



Sophie Desmarais
Mar Joy Pond Bridge & Trail location



Katie Bitner
New White Trail at Bear Mountain



Jordan Mooney
Hemlock Hills Bridges



Matthew Olkoski
Schlumberger Jug-Handle Trail & Benches



Joseph Isaac
Educational Trail at Ridgebury Slopes



Quin Mahoney
Schlumberger Trail Bridges



Lucas Kay
Schlumberger Trail Bridge



Gabriella Rogers
Levy Yellow Trail Re-route



Daniel Donovan
Schlumberger Trail Bridge



Joseph Archer
Schlumberger Trail Bridge



Lisa Van Gompel
Barrack Hill Bog Bridge



iNaturalist Training Workshop

Woodcock Nature Center, in collaboration with PACE University, is excited to assist the Ridgefield Conservation Commission in an effort to update the Ridgefield 2012 Natural Resources Inventory. This workshop will take place on October 4 from 5:30-7:30pm and will focus on how to use the iNaturalist app, which is an online social network of people sharing biodiversity information to help each other learn about nature. Participants will learn how to photograph and upload observations to the NRI folders on iNaturalist, along with troubleshooting tips and how to view the identifications generated by iNaturalist, while taking a short walk at the Woodcock Nature Center. All are welcome to join and this program is free (but pre-registration is required).

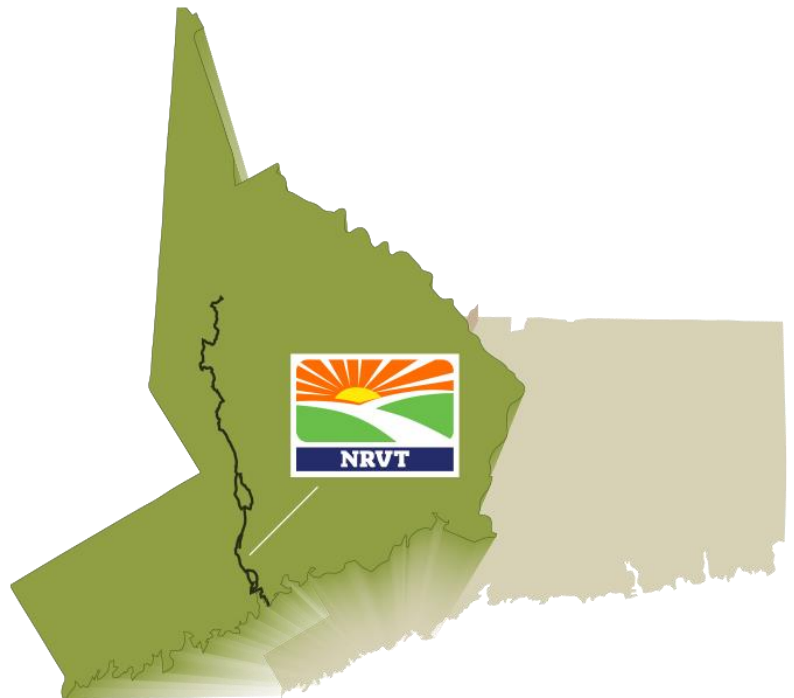
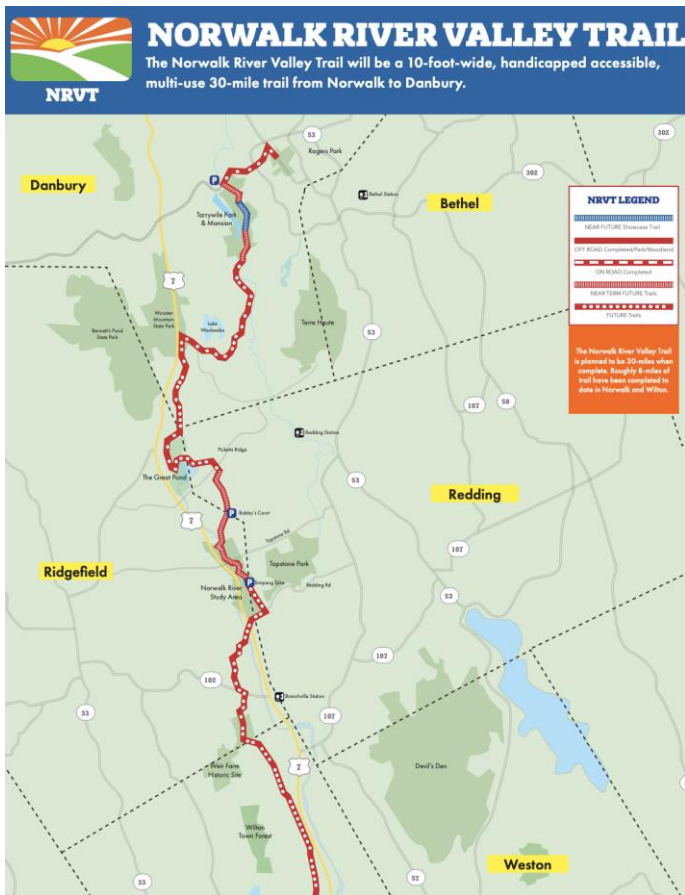
More information can be found at
www.woodcocknaturecenter.org/upcomingevents



Norwalk River Valley Trail:

The NRVT is a thirty-mile trail that, upon completion, will connect Norwalk to Danbury, running through Wilton, Ridgefield, and Redding along the way. In Wilton and Norwalk, the trail is wildly popular, and residents enjoy terrific support. The project is headed up by a group of dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers representing all five towns. NRVT is seeking donations to fund the engineering and permitting processes of the “Ridgefield Ramble” portion of the Norwalk River Valley Trail. Check out the NRVT website:

www.nrvt-trail.com



Become A Ranger !

Our terrific Ridgefield Rangers act as the “eyes” for the Conservation Commission by reporting any fallen trees or damage to the town’s open spaces and trails. Because of our Ranger reports, we are able to quickly and efficiently keep all trails safe and clear for the public to enjoy. Interested in becoming a Ranger? Email Ridgefieldrangers@gmail.com and we will send you information!



What is a Ranger?

A Ranger is a volunteer who enjoys the town’s trails and open spaces, and helps the RCC take care and maintain them. Rangers may have a particular trail (open space) that they often visit. Rangers may volunteer for one or several trails/open spaces. *Time commitment is minimal. Literally, just “a walk in the park!”*

Who can be a Ranger?

- » Any individual who is willing to volunteer
- » A family (or family members) who enjoy Ridgefield’s numerous trails and open spaces
- » A youth group or organization that wishes to volunteer and help keep Ridgefield beautiful
- » A school group or class who is interested in Ridgefield’s natural resources
- » Any hiking, walking, or biking group or individual

Become a Ranger Family

Support our community while enjoying the beauty of our local natural environment. Volunteer today! 203-431-2713 RidgefieldRangers@gmail.com

Love the Outdoors?

If you love the outdoors and value Ridgefield’s incredible open spaces, being a Ranger might be for you!

With minimal time commitment, just walk your favorite trail, observe, and communicate to the RCC.

The Job of a Ranger

- » Walk a trail (or trails) at least 4 times per year.
- » Keep trails free of any debris
- » Be on the lookout for any damage, impassible areas, or evidence of any violation.
- » Communicate to the Town of Ridgefield Conservation Commission with your observations and comments.
- » Encourage friends and neighbors to appreciate Ridgefield’s valuable open spaces and trails!

