



Hamden Land Conservation Trust
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A publication of The Hamden Land Conservation Trust

President's Message Protecting Hamden Open Space for Half a Century

Fifty years! That's how long your land trust has been protecting open space in the Town of Hamden. From our first parcel to our most recent acquisition of Rocky Top, your all-volunteer land trust board is as dedicated and hard-working as ever. We'll celebrate this milestone at our Annual Meeting/ 50th Anniversary Party on Thursday, June 22 at the Whitney Center Cultural Arts Room beginning at 7pm. I hope you will join us, not just to enjoy the festivities, but to share your thoughts on how you would like to see your land trust's next half century unfold. Maybe you have a property in mind for preservation. Maybe you have ideas on how we can engage more volunteers to help out with events and property maintenance. Perhaps you have a great idea for an event. Let us hear from you!

Our Annual Meeting featured speaker will be Peter LeTourneau, author of *The Trap Rock Landscapes of New England*. His presentation encompasses the history, geology, and biology of traprock ridges, accompanied by the beautiful photography of Robert Pagini. Peter will also have copies of his book available for sale. We are fortunate to have Sleeping Giant and Rocky Top right here in Hamden, and I promise you will appreciate them even more after his talk. If you can, be sure to bring a friend who may not be a member so they can connect with our events and preservation efforts.

habitat for bees and butterflies is more important now than ever. Check our website at www.hlct.org for pollinator plant suggestions and other resources. And please remember, it takes your input to make the Hamden Land Conservation Trust all that it can be. I look forward to meeting and hearing from you.



Rocky Top is a trap rock ridge - a special habitat that characterizes much of the Connecticut landscape.

By the time you read this, spring gardening will be well underway. The ancient Celts held celebrations to mark the start of the agricultural season and the lengthening days. We are all anxious to get back out in our yards and gardens. It's also a great time to get outside for a walk and appreciate that nature brings us hope after the dark solitude of winter. Join us for one of our hikes this year and discover the joy of being out in nature with new friends. And remember to plant a few native perennials for pollinators where you live – whether in a garden or in a few containers on a deck. Creating

Donate Land

Donations of land/property fall into two broad classifications: property that meets the Hamden Land Conservation Trust's criteria for permanent conservation, or property that can be sold or traded to benefit the overall mission of the Trust. We may also be able to help you if you wish to retain title to your land, but have it protected through conservation easement. A conservation easement (also known as a conservation restriction or conservation agreement) is a voluntary,

legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust or government agency that permanently limits uses of the land in order to protect its conservation values. It allows landowners to continue to own and use their land, and they can also sell it or pass it on to heirs. The limits of the conservation easement 'runs with the land,' meaning that even if the land is inherited or sold, the restrictions stay in place.

Join Us as a Volunteer

The Hamden Land Conservation Trust is an all-volunteer organization. The Board of Trustees is a dedicated yet small group, but with assistance from interested members, there is virtually no limit on what we can accomplish. We have standing committees that address various tasks: publicity & programs, and acquisition & stewardship are two of the important ones. Help is

needed with everything from approaching prospective donors to picking up litter and pulling invasive plants. With your help, we can do even more to fulfill our mission of preserving open space and educating the public. If you're interested in joining a work party or helping out in other ways, let us know through the "contact" section of our website at www.hlct.org.



HLCT President Gail Cameron

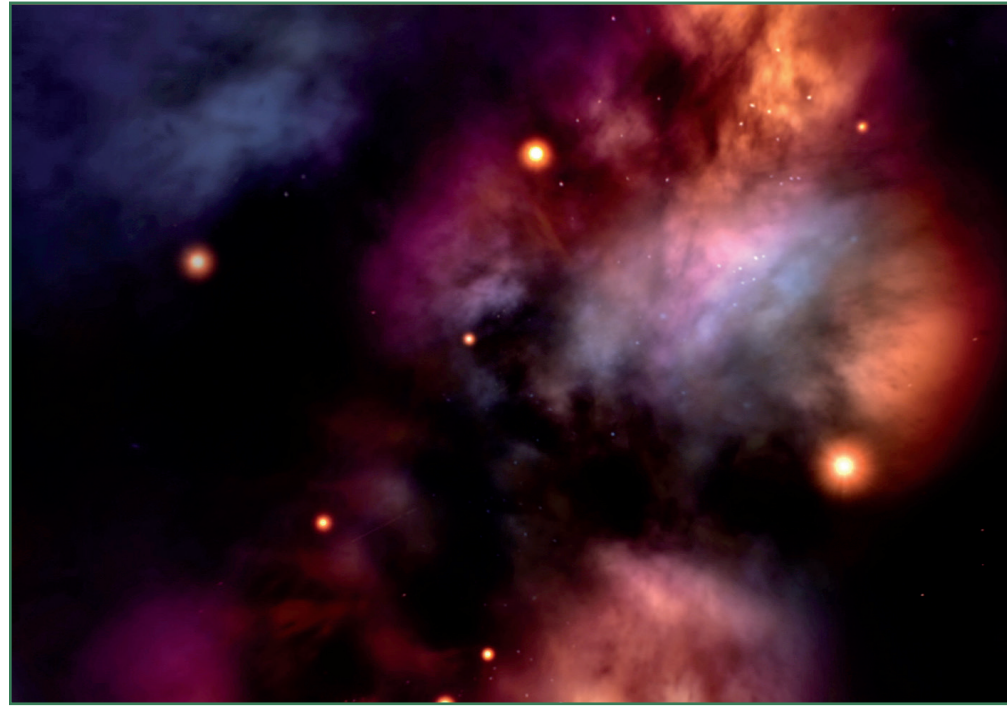
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Journey of the Universe - and Beyond

On Tuesday, April 2, the Hamden Land Conservation Trust hosted a showing of the film *Journey of the Universe* at Best Video Film and Cultural Center. The evening featured a memorable foreword and follow up question-and-answer period with Yale University Lecturer Dr. Mary Evelyn Tucker, who conceived and produced the film with her husband Dr. John Grim, also a Yale professor. This remarkable presentation draws together scientific discoveries in astronomy, geology, and biology with humanistic insights concerning the nature of the universe. As Dr. Tucker observed, "If we light up our sense of wonder and beauty and awe, we may have the strength we need to do the environmental work that needs to be done."

The evening proved to be very inspiring for many attendees. For that reason, we'd like to share that there is a host of materials related to the film for those who want to dig deeper. If you missed our showing or want to view the film again, you can borrow it through interlibrary loan. You may



"Journey of the Universe" brings together scientific discoveries in astronomy, geology, and biology with humanistic insights concerning the nature of our world and the cosmos.

also enjoy the book by the same name based on the film and available through Amazon and other sources.

There are even classes you can take related to the film and book. For details, visit www.journeyoftheuniverse.org.

You Saved Rocky Top - But We're Not Done Yet

- By Tim Mack

So you probably thought we were done when Rocky Top was transferred to the Hamden Land Conservation Trust. Not so fast. There's still some preservation work to be done. On January 23, 2019, Senator Martin Looney, 11th Dist., referred Senate Bill 237 to the Joint Committee on Environment. If passed by the state legislature, SB 237 - An Act Designating York Hill as a Protected Traprock Ridge will serve to protect York Hill (a.k.a. Rocky Top) as traprock ridges for purposes of preservation. The bill would allow the municipality of Hamden to regulate development near crests and steep slopes of certain traprock ridgelines as allowed by Public Act 95-237. The bill was co-sponsored by Rep. Michael D'Agostino 91st Dist., Rep. Josh Elliott 88th Dist., Rep. Mary Mushinsky 85th

Dist., and Rep. David Michel 146th Dist.

The bill was voted on and drafted by the Joint Committee on Environment and a public hearing was held at the State Capital Building in Hartford on February 4, 2019. I testified that day before the Environment Committee, stating that although a portion of this ridge is protected by the Hamden Land Trust, the passing of this bill would add another layer of protection to the York Hill/ Rocky Top traprock ridge and maintain this important animal corridor, protect unique habitats and a historically significant portion of the Quinnipiac Blue Blazed Trail.

Eric Hammerling, Executive Director, Connecticut Forest & Park Association, also testified in favor of SB 237, which would enable Hamden to pass local ordinances to regulate

developmental activities within the 150-foot ridgeline setback area defined in the statute. Mike Miller, President of the Sleeping Giant Park Association also submitted testimony, saying that the traprock ridge areas of York Hill and Rocky Top should be afforded the same consideration as other traprock ridges in Connecticut, such as Sleeping Giant. In addition, Julie Hulten, of North Haven, testified stating the importance of including additional unique spaces of habitat and wildlife protection from future development. Additional letters of support were submitted by the Connecticut Audubon Society, Connecticut Land Conservation Council, Christina Crowder and Roberta Mack, both from Hamden. Salvatore Filardi, Vice President, Facilities and Capital Planning for

Trash Talk

- By Willow Ann Sirch

For more than two decades, many developed countries, including the United States, have been sending massive amounts of plastic and other material to China for recycling instead of recycling it in their own country. In general, the recyclable material sent to China was not high quality and China's cheap labor was used to pick through and clean up the material. But in 2017, China decided to restrict and ultimately ban the import of plastic and other recyclables, stating that the materials were too contaminated and caused unacceptable environmental damage. This caused a disruption in markets for the recyclables collected in the United States. Many domestic markets closed when recyclables started going to China; remaining domestic markets did not want the low-quality materials being generated in the U.S. The recycling industry is in transition," says Judy Belaval, former staff member in the Recycling Unit at the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. "Domestic markets need to be revitalized and we all (consumers, trash haulers, recycling facilities, etc.) need to do a better job of recycling."

What does that mean for towns like Hamden? First of all, residents need to place only clean, acceptable materials in recycling bins. Sidewalk recycling collection used to be a revenue stream for the town. Now it's a cost center. All across Connecticut, towns are or will soon begin paying to have their plastic and other recyclables hauled away and processed for recycling.

Does that mean you should throw your recyclables out with the trash? No, clean material can still be recycled and new domestic recycling processing and markets are being developed. It is still cheaper for the town to recycle glass, paper, aluminum and other materials accepted in single-stream bins than it is to put those items into the regular trash stream for disposal. Besides, the recycling of specific material is the law in Connecticut.

The key is to think reuse first. If someone else can use it, don't recycle or trash it. Then, make sure that what you recycle really is recyclable. Check



Shanghai recycling bicycle

out this page <http://www.recyclect.com/resources.html> on the RecycleCT website. Download the "What's In, What's Out" brochure and post it on your refrigerator. Follow the directions and clean all recyclables before placing them in the bin. Non-recyclable items or "contaminants" often lead to substantial loads of otherwise recyclable materials getting discarded. Very small items, like bottle caps, fall through a screen and end up not being recycled at all. And, SURPRISE, many items you probably thought could be put in your recycling bin cannot—like shredded paper (which can be recycled through other programs—but not through curbside recycling.) If it's not on the list and you don't know if it's recyclable—something like a leaky, old, plastic garden hose, for instance—trash it. Don't think it's better to let SOMEONE ELSE decide at the recycling center. If it's not on the list, it goes in the trash. Whatever you do, NEVER put plastic bags in your recycling bin. They wreak havoc at recycling facilities by clogging up the machinery, actually hindering the recycling process.

While you're at it, get ready for two new initiatives in Hamden. Earlier this

spring, pink bags were delivered to your home. They are for used clothes, blankets, drapes, sleeping bags, and other textiles that otherwise would go into the regular trash. You leave the filled pink bags curbside on trash pick up day. A company called Simple Recycling under contract with the town will leave a new bag behind and cart the textiles away. The plan is for the top quality materials to be resold to local thrift outlets, mid-grade materials to be exported to international markets and "unusable" items processed for raw materials.

In the fall, Hamden's single use plastic bag ban will go into effect and you can help by bringing your own cloth bags to the grocery store right now. We hope you won't think of it as an inconvenience. Think of it more as saving a life—a sea turtle's, whale's or heron's—or, since we now know there are often tiny bits of plastic in the fish and shellfish we eat—maybe even your own!