

★ Celebrating 20 Years ★

Shoreline Greenway Trail
Spring 2022 Newsletter



SPRING 2022



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I hope you had a wonderful, safe Winter.

Spring 2022 has a special meaning this year. It is the 20th Anniversary of the Shoreline Greenway Trail. In this issue we will be talking with some early founders and looking back over the past 20 years.

We also intend to look forward. March heralds the beginning of Spring. It starts with small greens poking through the soil, birds returning from the South, trees just starting to leaf out. Best of all, the trail begins to get even busier.

I hope this newsletter keeps you informed and connected. Watch for our upcoming 20th anniversary celebration. See you on the trail.

Aziz Dehkan





CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF PROGRESS

Judy Miller, Chair, Shoreline Greenway Trail

By now, most of you know the origin story: how Joe Marshall saw a greenway trail in another state and came back asking: “Why can’t we have a trail along the shoreline?” He organized a meeting of interested individuals in his living room, and Shoreline Greenway Trail was born, with Chip Angle becoming its founding Chair. The rest is history...long hours putting together by-laws, applying for non-profit status as a 501(C) (3), applying to the Connecticut Greenways Council to become an officially recognized Connecticut Greenway, and building, building, building: membership, town support, and trail. It was a daunting task; they started with nothing, and today the shoreline has several miles of Shoreline Greenway Trail through parks and, soon, along streets.

Our aim is to create safe bicycling and walking from the New Haven line to the west, to the Clinton line in the east, with connections to trails in both of those towns. The Shoreline Greenway Trail is now part of an increasingly elaborate trail system being developed throughout Connecticut. But it is important to note that it is the only multi use trail along the Connecticut shoreline.

Shoreline Greenway Trail seems to breed longevity. Many of the founding group are still active after twenty years: still dedicated to the project they initiated. Some of the original founders are now in their nineties, still going strong. And I would like to take this opportunity to salute our many supporters who have also been with us since the beginning, expressing their faith in what we are doing. As I write this, we are looking at completion of the new trail section in East Haven by the end of the year, and we are actively working on the development of other trail sections. We strive to be worthy of your support in all that we do. So keep your eyes out for a big celebration gathering later this year! We’ll be hoping to see many of you there!

Happy Trails!

Judy Miller



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF PROGRESS

Introducing the Shoreline Greenway Trail Masters Series

To make the most out of your Shoreline Greenway Trail, enjoy our new, recently rolled out Masters Series.

This is a series of 1-2 hour walks along sections of the four town, Shoreline Greenway Trail, and features Masters, experts in various subject areas, sharing their vast knowledge and expertise while an invited partner group joins to enjoy the learning experience and the beauty of the trail. And of course, the general public is always welcome too!

Birds, Trees, Geology, History, Plants, Outdoor Gear, Biking and more are all topics that will be led by selected Masters.

Local civic and municipal organizations included or already participating consist of our Senior Centers, Newcomer's Clubs, school science classes, Rotary, Exchange, Chamber of Commerce, and many others.

Check our Website Calendar for the next one near you. Join our mailing list to keep up to date with events as they become scheduled.

Look for more of these Master Series walks. We have assembled a calendar of walks in East Haven, Branford, Guilford and Madison. Some of the Masters will be extra special, so stay tuned!

If you are interested or know of a Master or local organization that would like to participate, please contact danbuckley@shorelinegreenwaytrail.org

★ Celebrating 20 Years ★

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF PROGRESS

Master Series February 5th

On February 5th, we were joined by Ranger Russ Miller, Director at the Meigs Point Nature Center. Walking with Ranger Russ, we learned about the fascinating environment of the trail and the winter habitats of the trail's permanent residents. We first looked for the things we could see but also talked about the animals and plants that could be there unseen. We looked for tracks and birds, so binoculars were a big plus!



Russ' broad knowledge base and engaging style made for a great walk and talk.

Master Series March 19th

On March 19th, we were joined by Bob Kuchta, past Tree Warden of Madison. After some gloomy forecasts, it turned out to be very enjoyable weather. After some gloomy forecasts, it turned out to be very enjoyable weather. The walk was fun, informative and a nice chance to get out.

As we walked, we learned about all things trees including identification, native and non-native species found along the trail, illuminating facts about tree growth and appearance as well as taking in the beauty of the trail. Bob's wealth of experience and easy-going delivery made this a great event.



A special thank you to the NewComers Club of Madison for joining our walk, and welcome to Madison!



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF PROGRESS

MADISON

TOWN TEAM CHAIR, VIRGINIA RAFF

The best news is that Dan Buckley has agreed to co-chair the Madison team of the trail, joining long-time chair Virginia Raff. Dan comes with a tremendous amount of energy and enthusiasm along with a fertile creative streak and a determination to “get it done.” He is a great addition to the Madison team!

One of Dan’s first accomplishments was to enlist Ranger Russ Miller, the popular Ranger at the Meig’s Point Nature Center, to join our First Saturday Walk on February 5. Twenty-five stalwart souls and two canine friends braved the cold and wind to be rewarded with Ranger Russ’s extensive understanding of the flora and fauna of the park and his engaging tales about the wildlife that lives there and their winter habitats. Russ brought along the temperature gauge he uses for snakes in the Nature Center so he could tell us that the ground temperature was 24° and the wind chill was 6°.

Russ reminded us that he was around when we started to build the trail and that he welcomed the access it provides to the undeveloped peninsula of the park where the ecosystem is very different from the rest of the park. Also joining the walk was longtime trail supporter Louise Beecher, who was the first to identify the peninsula route for the trail those many years ago.

Dan has also been working with the Connecticut Trail Census to calibrate the counter that records your every visit to the trail. We are still counting you as you cross the walkway and the number of uses is impressive: in the first nine months of 2021, the trail in Hammonasset was used 97,674 times, a daily average of 268.

Another longtime trail supporter and walker, Patty McKeon, has planted more daffodils along the trail to add to those she planted a couple of years ago in memory of a friend she used to walk with.

The Madison trail has suffered a great deal of erosion from the excessively heavy rainfall over the past year. Our trailmeister, Perry Rianhard, spearheaded a project last fall to repair the resulting damage and reconfigure the trail to hopefully ward off further erosion.



Shoreline Greenway Trail 20th Anniversary

Madison Town Chair Ginny Raff Remembers....

In the early years of the trail in Madison, dozens of volunteers put in many hours, days, and weeks, hacking through the roughly one mile of primeval jungle of invasive vines. Eventually, after removing the collapsing fence separating the campground from Route One, we made a crude pathway 12 to 14 feet wide that we could show to Park management and DEP (not then DEEP) officials to get their approval to proceed. Those were the early days of Lyme disease, so we dressed for the occasion with light-colored clothing, long-sleeved shirts and long pants, pantlegs tucked into long white socks, and everything sprayed with insect repellent. When we finished each day, we did thorough tick checks and still missed a few.

On rainy days, or snowy days, or days so hot the mosquitoes ate us for breakfast, we worked inside, writing grants, researching funding sources, applying for permits. At one point we stopped to count and there were 14 permits, inspections, and approvals required for this one mile of trail: two for coastal wetlands, a town sign-off on inland wetlands, three archeological digs, one Native American review, etc. An interesting one was the endangered species certification which raised concern that the northern harrier migrates through the trail area.

The Madison Audubon Shop helped us locate a northern harrier expert who said, "Actually the trail would help the bird because wherever people go, they attract mice and mice are a food of choice for the harrier." By far the most difficult hurdle was the Army Corps of Engineers. They were determined we would not build the walkway across the marsh. After three years, massive amounts of research, and reams of paper, not to mention hundreds of phone calls (back when you paid for every minute on the phone), they finally relented, and we built.



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF PROGRESS

GUILFORD

TOWN TEAM CHAIR, PAM SIMONDS

The Guilford's Safe Streets Task Force led a Zoom public presentation in November attended by over 100 people. The consultants, Schmidt Design Group, are presenting the full plan to the Board of Selectman this winter. Based on this, the Safe Street Task Force is putting together a list of potential improvement projects and will meet with town engineer Janice Plaziak for her input.



Our Guilford Selectmen proposed that the town vote to authorize up to 10M to be spent on future land acquisitions. As land becomes available, we

will want to consider ways to include biking activities and or bicycle paths on potential parcels.

On Saturday, April 2, the Shoreline Greenway Trail "First Saturday" Hike was held at 10AM in Guilford's East River Preserve. As part of our MASTERS Series, Janet Ainsworth, Chair of the Guilford Conservation Commission led the walk. Janet is also a board member of the Guilford Land Conservation Trust and is a lead hiker trainer for the Appalachian Mountain Club. The Conservation Commission oversees the East River Preserve as well as other Guilford properties. Janet gave a short talk in the parking area before we started the 1-1/2 – 2 hour, 3 mile hike. Hike included some hilly, rocky and wet stretches.

Pam Simonds, Brad Kronstat
Co-chairs, Guilford Team, Shoreline Greenway Trail





Shoreline Greenway Trail 20th Anniversary

Guilford Town Chair Pam Simonds Remembers....part 1

Because I loved biking, right after I retired in the summer 2001, a friend asked me to go to a meeting at Joe Marshall's house in Guilford because a few folks were talking about building a bike trail in the shoreline, *That was my dream!!* From that day, I was hooked with the fantastic dream and the major challenges to build a bike trail. And the Guilford Preservation Alliance gave us a boost with a start-up check!

We quickly found several folks equally enthusiastic, and formed a group to start deciding: what did we want to do? How? And where? Would the community support us? We argued over the breadth of our dream....just bikes? walkers too? horses? Guilford resident Chip Angle who was on the Board of National Rails to Trails, agreed to be chair of our new group, and pointed out that there were federal funds for multi-use trails. Bingo! And we also realized that a multi-use trail would serve more people, which we embraced.

We argued over trail surfaces... and the beauty of the local Stony Creek pink granite won out, crushed and mixed to be a firm surface good for bikes, but not for roller blades, a gentle color to enhance the surroundings, a product with local history and regional fame.

So many decisions!! Myriad details to tackle. We wrote our mission: the impossible dream: a 25-mile off-road multi-use bike from Madison to Lighthouse Point Park in New Haven. We chose the name.... Shoreline Greenway Trail. We agonized over logo designs. We limited our geographic range to the four towns along the shoreline, which felt more manageable. We limited the trails to walkers and bikers, not horse riders, not roller bladers. We decided to remain a grass-roots all-volunteer group.



Shoreline Greenway Trail 20th Anniversary

Guilford Town Chair Pam Simonds Remembers....part 2

Then, we were ready to go public! I remember that rainy April 2002 when we held our very first public meeting at the Guilford Community Center to present our exciting ideas, to measure if there was enough local interest and support in our four towns. Over 100 people showed up, and the energy in the room was palpable. Everyone was so excited and willing to work. At the end of the meeting, we asked everyone interested to go to the corner where their new Town Team leader was, to help form their own Town Teams. All four corners of the room were crowded with folks volunteering to help! We were on our way!!



Pam Simonds, Chet Blomquist, Ginny Raff, Jack Wood, Judy Miller, Barbara Brow, Chip Angle
June 2021



EAST HAVEN

TOWN TEAM CHAIR, BARBARA BROW

On a pleasant December 4 day, East Haven town team hosted a First Saturday Shoreline Greenway Trail walk of 2021. Participants came from various towns, many with cameras including a photographer from East Haven Courier. View trail photos on Zip06.

We anticipate construction to extend Shoreline Greenway Trail to Cosey Beach Avenue to begin in the Summer.

East Haven Rotary Club selected East Haven Shoreline Greenway Trail for their community service project. On April 9, members will accomplish various trail maintenance tasks. In addition, an interpretive trail brochure will be produced and distributed for elementary school field trips.

In June, East Haven School District Wellness Committee will hold a walk and talk meeting on Shoreline Greenway Trail.



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East Haven Chair Barbara Brow Remembers....

My early fond memories of Shoreline Greenway Trail began in the Spring of 2002 with a telephone call and subsequent meeting with Guilford resident, Sallie Sperling. Sallie wanted an East Haven resident to participate in a newly organized effort to establish a multi-use trail from Lighthouse Point in New Haven to Hammonasset Park in Madison.

A trail along shoreline towns was an exciting concept and I readily committed to organize the East Haven town team. Enthusiastic town team members quickly explored trail route options, became visible in the community, garnered the support of town/state government officials and began a wonderful partnership with Boy Scout Troop 401.

On October 4, 2003 a ground breaking event was held on town property off Elliot Street....the home of East Haven Shoreline Greenway Trail's first multi-use trail. And the first multi-use trail in East Haven!





CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF PROGRESS

BRANFORD

TOWN TEAM CHAIR, JUDITH MILLER

At this time of year, we look forward to plans for the spring. We're excited about improving the pollinator garden at Tabor, planting native seeds for a garden full of color and attractive to bees, birds, and butterflies. We've been preparing for the tree planting and bench in honor of volunteer Josh Wood, hoping to have a dedication in April. Other plans for Tabor include working with the town to repair the fence that was broken by a fallen tree during a storm last fall and building a trail to connect the Shoreline Greenway Trail to Ecology Park.

Covid permitting, the Branford team will hope to continue its past practice of welcoming Walsh middle school students for a walk on the trail. And we'll hope to have our booth at the Branford festival in June. We'll be bringing the door we decorated as a model of the Tabor property to the booth, challenging children to find the animals that are hidden throughout the model. The Festival is always great fun and an opportunity to share our enthusiasm for the Shoreline Greenway Trail.

In terms of trail development, Shoreline Greenway Trail is working with the towns of Branford, East Haven, and New Haven to apply for funding to complete the Shoreline Greenway Trail between Branford and the New Haven trail system. This would make the Branford trail section almost complete. We especially look forward to proposed improvements to Route 142 in Short Beach. This project will require a lot of work and financial support. But it's worth doing, because it will connect the Shoreline Greenway Trail to New Haven's trail system and the Farmington Canal Trail, making it an integral part of Connecticut's growing trail system. The Branford Festival will be held again this year, and the Branford team hopes to have our usual booth.



Shoreline Greenway Trail Pollinator Gardens

When is a greenway trail a pollinator pathway? When groups plant native pollinator gardens along the trail. That's the idea behind two pollinator gardens being developed along the Shoreline Greenway Trail In Branford. These pollinator gardens are becoming an important aid in supporting bee and butterfly populations throughout the Northeast.

The first garden is at the edge of the parking lot off of Tabor Drive. The slope facing southeast seemed a natural. It has been heavily mulched for years by Branford's Department of Public Works, but had become infested with bindweed. Branford's Shoreline Greenway Trail has been busy ripping out the bindweed and planting native pollinator plants in the expectation that they will eventually spread via seeds and root systems.



The second native pollinator area is on the Shoreline Greenway Trail between Pine Orchard Road and Birch Road, in an area known as Nature's Garden. Branford's Conservation Commission is using a process known as solarization to kill noxious weeds such as the rampant mugwort before spreading the area with seeds of native pollinator plants. In a nearby field, Director of Public Works Gary Zielinski has marked off a section where dozens of common milkweed plants are thriving. Common Milkweed is prized as a host for the eggs of the monarch butterfly, whose larvae feast on the milkweed leaves.

While both gardens are intended for the use of bees and butterflies, they will also provide beauty and interest to pedestrians and bicyclists enjoying the Shoreline Greenway Trail. We invite you to take a trip out to follow these projects as they develop.



Shoreline Greenway Trail 20th Anniversary

Branford Town Chair Judy Miller Remembers....

The project to build the Shoreline Greenway Trail had begun in Branford well before I joined. Chet Blomquist, Jack Wood, Pete Peterson, Art Johnson, Valerie Murray, and Bimmie Herget were at the heart of the team. They worked with other volunteers to scout out possible places for a multi-use greenway and spent hundreds of hours at Tabor, bushwhacking through the shrubs, mostly autumn olives, along the pond that would be officially named Chet's Pond in 2010.

Art would often work alone, and he was the one who hacked out the lovely curve overlooking the pond that is such a beautiful spot with a bench and a tree today. Valerie had communicated with the Young's Pond Park Association to get permission to designate one of the existing trails in the park as part of the Shoreline Greenway Trail, and the town agreed to consider the Stony Creek Trolley Trail as Shoreline Greenway Trail as well. Branford was fortunate in having farsighted early leaders who maintained large amounts of town-owned open space with the potential for a multi-use trail.





CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF PROGRESS

Meet our newest Board member Matt Lieber

Matt grew up in New Haven and attended college in Minnesota. A political scientist with Ph.D. from Brown University, he has experience working in the federal government and teaching college students in Mexico City and in Wisconsin, where he started his own family and was an active member of his neighborhood association in Madison WI. After a move back to the New Haven area, Matt and his family resettled in their own home in East Haven in 2020. He is presently employed by the Yale SOM and the US Census.

Matt learned about the Shoreline Greenway Trail while visiting family in Madison CT. He got involved with the East Haven team in 2020. Matt is passionate about the SGT for the health, livability, and connectedness benefits it brings to our local communities. With a focus on Complete Streets and outreach to local residents and leaders, Matt is enthusiastic to contribute to SGT's next chapter.

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BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR THE ANNOUNCEMENT
OF OUR ANNUAL MEETING
IN OCTOBER WHICH WILL BE HELD
IN GUILFORD THIS YEAR





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