



Monthly Newsletter of Friends of Pachaug Forest



Left to Right: "Mama Betty"-Mentillo (whose husband was in the CCC) age 105; Tom Tyler, Director of DEEP; Tracy Hanson, Voluntown 1st Selectwoman; Michael Caruso, CCC Worker aged 97; State Senator Heather Somers; Sharon Viadella, FoPF member; Harold Oehler, CCC worker aged 101; Congressman Joe Courtney; Todd Babbitt, Griswold 1st Selectman; State Representative Brian Lanoue. .

September 21st Unveiling Ceremony

September 21, 2019 –

As celebration day finally arrived, Friends members gathered at 7am to go over plans one last time and began the tasks of setting up tents, chairs and parking areas for the anticipated crowd coming to see the unveiling of the CCC Worker Statue. A crew of stalwarts had mounted the statue on its resting spot two nights before and tucked it in for a night's rest before the festivities which eventually attracted 600 people.

By 10 am, people were already arriving and enjoying treats and tips from the Sierra Club, the Last Green Valley, the Voluntown Historical Society, Voluntown Economic Development Commission, and Volunteer booth along with the Smart Recovery program. The Art Tent featured works by Dorothy Ford-King,

Kasia Bakhshalizadeh, Lauren Blair Churchill and Peace Potters, the ceramic works of Ellis Tucker and friends. There was an opportunity to see prototypes of 'Friends of the Forest; a naturalist's coloring book', and even some single pages to color. Craven Haven, Roadside Grill and Brick and Basil provided yummy provisions from their food trucks.

Soon it was time for the Boy Scouts to raise the flag and the National Anthem, sung by FoPF member Jack Donahue could be heard over the treetops. On hand were eight speakers, including Congressman Joe Courtney, State Senator Heather Somers, State Representative Brian Lanoue, Voluntown 1st Selectwoman Tracey Hanson, and Griswold 1st Selectman Todd Babbitt all welcomed to the podium by DEEP Director Tom Tyler who was gracious enough to be our MC. Our sincerest thanks go out to

the DEEP workers who did an incredible job getting the park ready. It did not go unnoticed. State Troubadour Tom Callinan was in attendance to galvanize our hearts with songs celebrating the day, and for this we are grateful. FoPF also would like to thank the Voluntown EMTs and Fire Department, as well as ENCON for providing security and the necessary emergency support.

Senator Somers presented citations from the State Assembly to CCC Workers Harold Oehler, Michael Caruso and “Mama Betty” Mentillo whose



husband was also in the CCC. She also presented Sharon Viadella with a citation for the tireless work she has done to make statues #75 and 76 a reality for the State of Connecticut this year. Following Senator Somers, Congressman Courtney presented Sharon with a citation from the Congress of the United States. As speaker Pam Patalano put it, Sharon made her Daddy proud. The joy of seeing this event through was bittersweet for Sharon, however. Her long-time friend and major contributor to the project, Teddy Schulz passed away just two days before the unveiling.



Teddy's wife Gloria was in attendance on Saturday and received a photo of Teddy with the first statue placed in Chatfield Hollow in May.

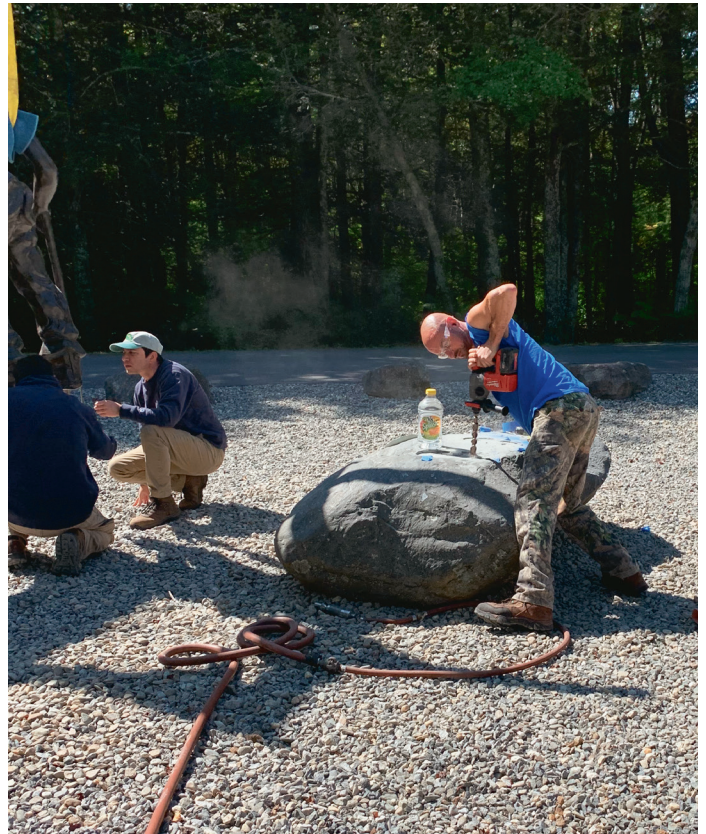
The inspiration behind this outpouring of love is of course the hard work and privations that were experienced by the young men of camp #179 and others across the state and country from 1933 to the beginnings of WW2. Martin Podskoch author 'Connecticut Civilian Conservation Corps Camps', spoke of the men of Camp Lonergan who cut trees to make fire breaks and roads, erected buildings and planted more trees. They did their job so well they were twice named the most outstanding company in New England. Camp #179 was also the longest running of the camps in Connecticut, the last one still operating in 1942 when it finally closed.



Friends of Pachaug Forest is proud to have helped Connecticut join the many other states that have commemorated the Civilian Conservation Corps in this way through CCC Legacy of Virginia. According to Joan Sharpe, president of CCC Legacy, the statue is the first to be placed in a state forest, and also the first to have the CCC Trademark embossed on it at the bottom of the ax.

Mounting the CCC Worker Statue

On Thursday September 19, a group of Friends joined DEEP workers to mount the statue ahead of the Unveiling Celebration.



Ellis Tucker with the work of Peace Potters

The Annual Members Picnic - Saturday Sept. 14, 2019

Members were treated to a good time on Saturday September 14 when they gathered for our 2nd annual picnic/quarterly meeting. FOPF served up hot dogs and hamburgs with all the trimmings along with corn donated by Betsy's Farm Stand. Members also brought along their own contributions so there was plenty of good food to eat! After filling up, it was time to recreate. Members participated in several activities including an egg toss, egg race, and sack races forward and back! We gave the volleyball net and ourselves, a good workout before rain broke things up. Undaunted, several members continued to break in the new horseshoe pits. The rain continued however so we reluctantly brought the event to a close, cleaning up and leaving nothing for the park personnel to have to deal with. That is the way it is when you have friends!



Some years after the controlled burn to encourage growth of Pitch Pine in Hopeville Pond State Park, the area is beginning to fill in with young trees.





Hopeville Pond Pavillion gets Horseshoe pits!

Friends of Pachaug Forest Directors and Members installed horseshoe pits and a volleyball net near the Pavillion just in time for the Annual Members Picnic. There is more to the creation of this beloved passtime than meets the eye in order to make sure everything is straight for the frame and concrete pads. Soon after it was done, workers tested the equipment to make sure everything worked!





In late August the State closed the Mt Misery Campground and Frog Hollow Horse Campground due to concerns over mosquito borne illnesses. This threat continues until the first freeze, so if you plan to hike in the forest, be sure to use an insect repellent.

Growing Season...

As the days grow shorter, harvest of the fall crops predominate, and it is time to think about preparations for winter if you have not already done so. There is something to be said for good hygiene in a garden when it involves getting rid of invasive species or diseased crops. Some of the species to look for are Oriental Bittersweet, Japanese Barberry, Autumn Olive, and of course Poison Ivy. The latter is the only plant I have been reduced to using a toxin to control, and that very judiciously. Mostly I pull it out because it likes to come up right next to things I have planted. The grape arbor will require a sweeping after I harvest the grapes and pull off the dead leaves and clumps. We have been weed-wacking the herbs that became unruly and we repaired fencing to protect young shrubs from the deer. I have been trying to re-introduce Mountain Laurel and Hazelnut in my yard, both are native to the area. The warm weather has lasted longer, and we have not received a first freeze yet, so the plants that

Clean-ups are ongoing! If you would like to help Keep Pachaug Clean, contact Sharon Viadella at Viadella.I@att.net or 860-303-7320



will have to come in are enjoying a longer time outside. It won't be long before my houseplants will have to move over to make way for the plants that enjoyed being outside all winter, but need the protection of the inside to survive winter. Whatever draws you on on these last relatively warm and sunny days, be sure to enjoy them!



Upcoming Programs for October- November 2019

OCTOBER

***Wood River Paddle Cancelled Due to Low Water Level* New Venue Below:**

- **5 - Kayak Excursion** Pachaug River Paddle: 10 am**, Departing from Hopeville State Park Beach, Rte 201, Griswold, CT. We will paddle south approximately 2 miles to Pachaug Dam. We will follow the pond through woods, farmlands, a small area of homes and cottages; pass under a country road and will soon be peacefully paddling along the Pachaug River. There are coves for exploring with wildlife everywhere, including blue herons, ducks, swans, butterflies, turtles and dragonflies. The maple trees along the water should be blooming with color too! Bring bug repellent, camera and snacks. Free for members. Suggested \$5 donation for non-members. To register, contact Sue at: susan.fopf@outlook.com
**It is mandatory all participants wear an approved Life Vest. Life Vests must be Type I, II, III, V or V- Hybrid. Attach a whistle to your life jacket the sound of a whistle will travel farther than your voice and attract attention. Connecticut and federal laws require a sound producing device onboard at all times.
- **6 - Plein Aire Painting at Heron Marsh: 9 am - 12 Noon**. Join us as we revisit our old watering hole from the Summer and see if we can capture the colors of Autumn! Suggested \$10 donation for Non-Members. RSVP to: lauren.b.churchill@gmail.com and for more information
- **13 - Walktober- Mt. Misery Hike: 10am - 1pm**. Look for Smokey the Bear at the park entrance on Rte. 49, and then follow signs to Chapman Field. Join retired US National Park Service Rangers Bob and Jen Panko and Plant Ecologist Rebecca Panko on a fall hike up Mt. Misery. The leaders will identify a variety of trees, shrubs and other plants along the way as well as discuss habitats and current/future changes due to both natural and human influences. 2.5 miles, moderately difficult.
- **13 - Paint a Pumpkin-Chapman Field: Pachaug State Forest (See above event for directions) 1:00 pm -2:30 pm**. Join FOPF as we paint designs on pumpkins with acrylic paint. Aprons, paint, paint brushes, gloves, pumpkins and fun will be provided! Suggested donation \$5/ per pumpkin. Please register to attend and reserve your spot and pumpkin. To register contact Sue at: susan.fopf@outlook.com

NOVEMBER

- **6 - Ceremonial Stonework: The Enduring Native American Presence on the Land, 6:30 PM** at the Wheeler Library, 101 Main Street, North Stonington. Presentation by Markham Starr. This slideshow takes the audience on an extended walk through the woods to see the ceremonial stonework left behind by the indigenous population that occupied New England for 12,000 years. Native Americans built nearly two dozen distinct types of structures in our area, ranging from cairns to stone serpent effigies, and these spiritual offerings remain standing in now long abandoned woods. While Native American stonework is widely recognized out west and to the south, New England's stonework remains obscure, having blended back into the woods. This slideshow, from the book by the same name, comes from photographs of over 8000 objects and ceremonial sites in North Stonington. This talk will be followed on Sunday the 10th of November, with a guided tour of a local site to give those interested a first-hand experience of the stonework.
- **10 - Native American Ceremonial Stonework Hike, The hike will leave promptly at 9:30 am**, from the paved, public boat launch on Wyassup Lake Road. (From the Fair Grounds head out Wyassup Road and turn left onto Wyassup Lake Road. Go approximately .7 miles to the launch area on the right.) Over 12,000 years ago, the first people to inhabit New England wandered into the area on the heels of the retreating glacier that had covered Connecticut with more than a mile thick sheet of ice. While it is well known by most that these people hunted with spears tipped with beautifully worked points of stone, fewer people are aware that later generations built ceremonial stone structures that still exist by the thousands, just in our town alone. This hike will take you off well-worn trails and into the woods to see some of the two dozen types of stone structures they left behind. As these structures are generally found in the worst terrain North Stonington has to offer, a hiking stick is highly recommended along with appropriate footwear. Length of hike in time depends on group size – it is probably considered a moderately difficult hike in terms of terrain. Although the overall distance is a little less than 2 miles, plan on a total trip time of at least three hours. If you are interested in learning more about this type of ceremonial stonework before the hike, the library has a copy of Ceremonial Stonework: The Enduring Presence of Native Americans on the Land. Hike led by Markham Starr, who has mapped and photographed over 10,000 of these structures in North Stonington and the surrounding towns. A hiking stick, proper footwear, camera, water, snacks and a bag lunch (if staying for the 1:00 pm hike) are suggested.
- **10 -Wyassup Lake, High Ledge Overlook Hike, picnic lunch at 12:30. The hike will leave promptly at 1:00 pm** from public boat launch on Wyassup Lake Road. This is considered a moderately difficult hike in terms of terrain and steep elevations. Overall distance is 1.5 miles, plan on a total trip time about 2 hours. A hiking stick, proper footwear, camera, water, snacks and a bag lunch are suggested. The foliage and views should be stunning.

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