

## The Valley Station Bridge, The Van Ingen Family and Holiday House

By Louise van Tartwijk

*In 2015, Steep Rock Association celebrated the “Year of the Bridges” with the completion of the Thoreau Bridge, a new stairway for the Reich Bridge and the restoration of the Hauser Bridge. Whether made with a sophisticated steel construction or from simple wooden planks, bridges hold an attraction for*

*young and old alike. There is something special about walking over rushing water and an allure to discovering what lies on the other side. Bridges have always had a distinctive place in Steep Rock’s history. One such bridge, built at the end of the 19th century, was constructed specifically for young women, who labored in the factories of New York City, to cross the Shepaug River and experience a dream-like summer holiday. Each Steep Rock bridge has its own unique story, and in this case, even though the bridge no longer exists, the story around the Valley Station Bridge, and the people who used it, still captures our imagination.*

Steep Rock Association is a land trust whose mission is to conserve ecologically and historically significant landscapes in and around Washington, CT and the Shepaug River Valley and to enhance the community’s connection with nature.

*In pursuing its mission, Steep Rock Association will:*

- Use best management practices to maintain and manage the lands and improvements entrusted to it for passive recreation, the protection of native flora and fauna, and to support sustainable agriculture.
- Strive to raise environmental consciousness by enhancing the community’s knowledge and appreciation of nature and its awareness of Steep Rock’s ongoing contributions to the culture and history of the Town of Washington.
- Pursue land-based non-commercial activities that benefit both Steep Rock and the community.

**T**he growth of industrialization at the end of the 19th century resulted in an increase of personal wealth so extraordinary that the era is known as “The Gilded Age.” In 1892, *The New York Times* reported that there were 4,000 millionaires in the United States, many of whom lived in New York City and the borough of Brooklyn-Heights. One of these wealthy individuals was Edward Hook van Ingen, the founder of the wool-importing firm of E.H. van Ingen.

In 1872, the Shepaug Valley Railroad arrived in Washington Depot making Washington an easy train ride from New York City. As a consequence, Edward van Ingen and his wife Mary Mclean became the first of what was to become many wealthy Brooklynites, who decided to make the small rural Connecticut town their weekend and summer retreat. The Van Ingens eventually owned over 1,000 acres around the Washington Green, some purchased from Frederick Gunn.

Other wealthy industrialists, their fortunes made from textiles, shipping, trade and manufacturing, followed the Van Ingens to Washington in the 1880’s & 1890’s. Several purchased land from Van Ingen and built Ehrick Rossiter-designed “summer cottages” near the Washington Green. Many of these men had been students of The Gunnery School of Washington, established in 1850 by Frederick Gunn. Some of the women had attended the Judea Seminary, a school for girls, run in Washington by Mary Brinsmade, Frederick Gunn’s wife’s sister. Others were connected through their businesses, their Brooklyn churches and their exclusive social clubs such as the Hamilton Club, The Century Club, the Holland Society of New York, the Brooklyn Blue Book and the Long Island Society Register. These weekenders who came to Washington were friends who shared a common appreciation for the unique beauty and idyllic surroundings that the small rural town provided and shared a strong commitment to philanthropy and civic duty.

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## From the Executive Director *By Lori Paradis Brant*

What draws you to Steep Rock Association? Is it experiencing the sound of water rushing over the rocks in the Shepaug River? Or the serenity you feel when you walk along the tree-lined pathways? The knowledge that wildlife have a protected home? Is it the opportunity to get some exercise in the out-of-doors?

As the newest member of the Steep Rock Association team, I'm often asked what drew me to the Association. With a background in natural science, I immediately admired how the organization researches, organizes, and ensures mind-

back on the ground. This special "singing ground" is forever protected for the woodcock and with management plans that detail strategies to keep meadows from growing into forest, which would thus remove breeding grounds for the woodcock, generations of this plump little bird will be reared here.

With *Strategic Plan 2020* as our guiding document, the Association continues the work begun over 90 years ago to protect our natural areas and provide recreational, outdoor opportunities. Our five key priorities — Stewardship, Preservation, Outreach,



Boulder in the Shepaug River. *Photo Courtesy: Rory Larson*

ful planning for diverse habitats in its preserves. Steep Rock Association moves beyond typical land preservation by asking important questions: what habitats are found on our preserves? How can we improve our lands so all kinds of native wildlife can find food, water, shelter, and a safe place to raise young?

The dried grasses from last season at Macricostas Preserve provide the American woodcock with a place to attract a mate and raise young. The woodcock, a plump, robin-sized bird with feathers the colors and patterns of fallen leaves, migrate from the southern states in late winter. At Macricostas, the male performs a beautiful courtship at dusk. He puts on an acrobatic dance as he tries tirelessly to dazzle and impress female woodcocks with his spiraling, zig-zagging display in the air, along with his nasal "peenting" call when he is

Citizenship, and Excellence — lead our work, and we're proud to share some highlights.

Now that critical habitats are identified within the preserves as part of our **stewardship** goals, we are identifying which wildlife and rare plants live there. We've worked with various scientists to inventory our sites; this helps us create plans to manage those habitats in order to meet the needs of native plants and animals. At the time of this writing, a herpetologist is surveying our preserves to document the toads, frogs, salamanders, lizards, snakes, and turtles and how we can best manage our properties to ensure the land and water meet their daily living requirements.

One of our **preservation** action items includes the annual monitoring of all our conservation easements. This is no small task. We have 107



Wood frog egg mass. *Photo Courtesy: Rory Larson*

easements we must visit and then document any changes to the land. With landowner's permission, we walk the boundaries of each easement observing any changes (natural or manmade) and record information via photographs, mapping, and text. It's important we continue our monitoring work and stay in touch with the landowner, as together we continue to protect the land and natural resources.

Keep your eyes open for a new look in our kiosks. Our group of **out-reach** members is improving our ways of sharing information with you. One way we'll accomplish this is through the messaging you see in our trailhead kiosks. This spring, we'll be creating new colorful and informative posters for the inside of all those kiosks. You'll find consistent information such as the trail map, ways to volunteer, upcoming events, seasonal observations of nature,

and more. Please let me know if there is a particular type of information you'd like to see in the kiosks.

I am a strong believer in community conservation. In order for us to be successful in enhancing the community's connection with nature, we need to ensure that we stay an integral part of the community. With our **citizen-ship** goals, we are working to grow our relationships with individuals and local and regional community groups. I had a great time connecting with local families at the Shepaug Valley School's Mind in Motion event and we are looking forward to The Gunnery's spring citizen science work at Steep Rock Preserve. We help the Washington Montessori School meet their students' needs of community service while they give their labor in prepping the Judea Garden for the planting season. I'm looking forward to supporting the Housatonic Valley Association on Friday, April 29, as I paddle with other members of local nonprofit groups down the River. I'd love to see



Northern water snake heads to a sunny patch by river's edge. *Photo Courtesy: Rory Larson*

you at the river's bank that day! We shove off at 11:30 a.m. at Boardman Bridge, north of New Milford. Or help us rejoice when we make it to Young's Field, New Milford around 12:30 p.m. I welcome you to join in the afternoon festivities to celebrate the beauty and wonder of the Housatonic River.

We are committed to maintaining a high level of **excellence** as a land trust. With this grand goal, we finalized our accreditation application through the national Land Trust Alliance (LTA) this spring. We are striving toward this recognition so that you and others will know that we meet established standards for organizational quality and permanent land conservation. Through May 31, 2016, the LTA Accreditation Commission appreciates public comment about the Association and how you believe we meet their standards. By visiting the News section on our website, you'll have the link to share your thoughts with them.

Speaking of sharing thoughts, I'd love to hear your thoughts on what draws you to our Association. What is important to you? How do you connect to the lands and the water? Post your photos and tell your stories on our Facebook page and share what is important to you.

Thanks for caring!

## Notes from the Field

**H**ave you ever been out walking in one of the preserves when you've come across one of the Association's field staff, and wondered, "What are those bearded men up to?" Visit our new *Notes from the Field* section on our updated website, [www.steeprockassoc.org](http://www.steeprockassoc.org) for answers. You'll have a chance to learn about the important work our Land Manager, Clark Gifford, and Land Steward, Rory Larson, accomplish. You may bump into them while they're performing biological surveys, forestry prescriptions, and other methods that help them take care of the preserves and maintain the trails. On this blog, Rory will share observations made while in the field, note what wildlife they've seen or heard in the preserves, discuss the purpose of management activities, and acknowledge the stunning degree of biodiversity Steep Rock Association aims to promote and preserve. ■



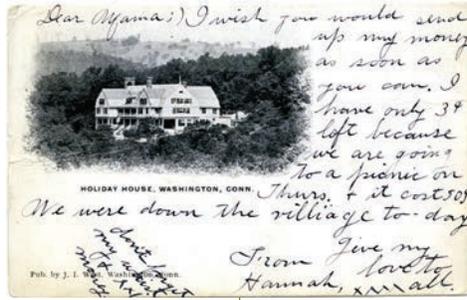
Clark Gifford, (2nd from left) Land Manager, and Rory Larson (3rd from left), Land Steward, take a moment to pause with volunteers after creating wildlife brush-piles. Brush-piles give small animals shelter from inclement weather and predators, as well as places to raise young. *Contributed photo.*

The Holiday House was one such philanthropic under-taking, but it was also an incredible act of private generosity that rose from great private grief. Edward and Mary van Ingen lost their daughter Jeannie at the age of 16 to scarlet fever. The establishment of Holiday House was their way of honoring Jeannie's memory. In 1892, Van Ingen commissioned his friend and neighbor, architect Ehrick Rossiter, to design a country hotel that would serve as a vacation retreat for young working class women affiliated with St. Bartholomew's Church, the Van Ingen's place of worship in New York City. Rossiter worked together with Charles Prindle, a local carpenter, to build an imposing 3-story clapboard and gabled structure that would accommodate 65 young women. Set on a hillside of the Van Ingen's expansive estate, the building, surrounded by sloping manicured lawns, offered dramatic views of the Shepaug River below.

The Holiday House was open during the summer from June 1 until Labor Day. For \$8, the women received a round-trip ticket and two-week stay at the hotel. Arrival at the Holiday House was considered quite an event. The Holiday House had its own private "whistle stop" along the Shepaug Valley Railroad Line, which passed through a part of Van Ingen's property. This stop was known as Valley Station and it was connected to the other side of the Shepaug River by a picturesque bridge, that every girl arriving at the Holiday House had to cross. The bridge was reported to be the smallest suspension bridge ever built by Washington Roebling, a friend of Edward Van Ingen, and the son of John Roebling who introduced suspension-bridge design to the United States and built the Brooklyn Bridge in 1883.

It was said that Mr. Van Ingen would take his carriage from his home on the Washington Green, travel along a tree-line path that ran through his estate down to Valley Station and welcome the girls upon their arrival. Once disembarked, and the river crossed, the girls would walk the short distance up the hill to the Holiday House where they would be greeted by Mrs. Van Ingen and two deaconesses, Miss Ella Taylor and Miss Mabel Hobart. They would be cared for by waitresses and chambermaids who were African American students from the Hampton Institute in Virginia, now called Hampton University.

Their vacation days would begin at 7:00 sharp when the girls joined the deaconesses for morning prayers. Girls of all religions were welcome and they were able to attend the different churches in town on Sundays. To fill their hours of holiday making, the girls were offered a wide variety of activities that included croquet, bowling, archery, and baseball. There were picnics, walks in Steep Rock and carriage rides to Lake Waramaug or to the Clam Shell. Inside the Holiday House there was a ballroom for dancing, two pianos for playing and singing and opportunities for play acting, tableaux or games of charades. Strictly forbidden, however, was interaction with men. If a Holiday House girl was caught with a man she was



immediately sent back to New York.

The Van Ingens created the Holiday House experience to offer the young ladies first and foremost an escape from the harsh realities of factory life in New York City. At the same time, a sojourn at the Holiday House was seen as an opportunity to experience gracious living. Meals were served on fine china

at tables covered with crisp white linens and decorated with vases of wildflowers. They slept in brass beds, enjoyed hot baths, enjoyed open windows with warm sun and summer smells and breezes. The experience would leave girls with both a wonderful memory and a way of life to aspire to.

The Holiday House only existed for 27 years. Ironically, Charles Prindle, the very man who built it, dismantled the structure in 1920. There has been speculation as to exactly why the Holiday House closed its doors. Originally it was thought that the First World War had negatively impacted on Van Ingens' financial resources and that lack of money had been the reason. Recent research has shown, however, that Van Ingen died a very wealthy man worth approximately \$50,000,000 in today's money. This, combined with the fact that he died in 1920, lends credence to the belief that both Edward and his wife were simply too old to continue to oversee the running of Holiday House. As the vacation retreat had been created as a loving memorial to their daughter, they did not wish to sell it and no local institution desired to take it over. Even in ending the Holiday House project, the Van Ingens remained philanthropic and civic minded. Stones from the building found a new life in other Washington buildings and the silverware and china was given to St. John's Episcopal Church, some still in use. The stone foundations of both the Holiday House and the Valley Station Bridge are all that remain of this charitable venture that brought a great deal of enjoyment to numerous young women. Today, when one looks at the two stone abutments that once supported this fairy-tale-like bridge, it is not hard to imagine the young factory girls, in their white dresses, stepping off the train, giggling with excitement and anticipation as they crossed over the Shepaug River and into another world.

*The Holiday House property remained in private hands for several decades after it had been dismantled. In the 1920's, the Van Ingen estate, was sold to another Washington summer resident, Alfred Severin Bourne of the Singer Sewing Machine fortune. In 1957 the Steep Rock Association acquired the Holiday House ruins as part of a 62-acre parcel purchased for \$17,500 from Alfred's wife Louise Barnes Bourne. That same year, Steep Rock trustees voted to hold a picnic on September 20 on the grounds. "The Holiday House Talk and Hike" is one of Steep Rock's most popular educational programs and will be offered as a part of Northwest Connecticut Land Trust Days in October.*

(Louise van Tartwijk wishes to thank Gunn Historical Museum Curator, Stephen Bartkus, for his help with this piece. The postcard photos included with this article are from the author's collection.)

## In the Spotlight Meet the Team

Next time you are at one of the preserves, at a program, in the office, or visiting the garden, say hello to the staff who would love to get to know you.



**Denise Arturi**, *Judea Garden Coordinator & Head Gardener*

Denise joined the Judea Garden project at its inception and has been happily playing in the dirt growing vegetables with many community groups and individuals.

A graduate of Manhattanville College and the University of Connecticut's Master Gardener Program, and a resident of Washington for over thirty years, Denise has been actively involved in town government, area schools and organizations, lending support where she can. She currently helps run the Soldier Project sending support boxes to our troops in Afghanistan, is a member of the Gunn Historical Museum council, and manages and skates with the Northern Lights Women's Hockey team.



**Lori Paradis Brant**, *Executive Director*

As the new executive director at Steep Rock Association, Lori leads the staff in their efforts to conserve ecologically and historically significant landscapes as they enhance the community's connection with nature.

Lori's collaborative nature supports her focus on community partnerships, environmental education, and volunteerism, as those efforts help increase engagement in and support of local conservation efforts. Prior to her new role, Lori was the Education Director and Project Learning Tree Coordinator for Connecticut Forest & Park Association. Lori currently serves community roles as the chair of the CT Urban Forest Council and chair of her town's Conservation Commission. She is a graduate of Central Connecticut State University with a BA in Natural Resources, Environmental Interpretation.

Lori and her chef husband enjoy camping and hiking with their two awesome, energetic children. The Brants' two cats, one dog, and three Guinea pigs allow them to share their home in peace — as long as the cat allows the dog a seat on the couch.



**Clark Gifford**, *Land Manager*

Clark has been stewarding Steep Rock's lands since 2003. Clark takes pride in ensuring people have opportunities to enjoy the natural world around us, leaving little trace that he was there. Clark is responsible

for the condition of your favorite places, as well as the favorite places of so many birds, butterflies, amphibians, small and large mammals, fish, bugs, insects, plants, trees, etc. He has led many projects to improve the quality of habitat for the wildlife of Steep Rock Association's preserve. Projects like invasive plant removal, the Cedar Field Expansion Project, and the current, multi-year, project of creating field/forest ecotone by feathering the transition from field to forest. He has worked hard to maintain trails and build new trails, like the trails and interior bridge

at Macricostas in 2003 and the trails and boardwalk in the Bronson part of the Hidden Valley Preserve acquired in 2010, so that we can leave the hustle and bustle of our lives behind, even if only for a short hike.

On weekends, Clark can often be seen hiking the preserves with his wife Amanda, their three children and two dogs. He can also be found throwing pots, tending his small flock of chickens, and otherwise enjoying his family and home.



**Rory Larson**, *Land Steward*

Rory grew up on the banks of the Shepaug River and spent many childhood days exploring Steep Rock where his interest in its wild inhabitants took hold. He obtained a BS degree in Wildlife Ecology and has since worked on several research projects for a variety of organizations. He has examined sea turtle nesting ecology in Florida, snowshoe hare and Canada lynx population dynamics in Maine, northern goshawk distribution and nesting preferences in the Colorado Rockies, southwestern willow flycatcher distribution on the lower Colorado River, California spotted owl population dynamics in the High Sierras, as well as native and recreational fisheries in Utah, Connecticut, and Vermont.

He returned to the Shepaug River valley to help start an organic farm, joining Steep Rock's team shortly thereafter in 2013. He cherishes the opportunity to tackle an array of projects and contribute to Steep Rock's mission as their Land Steward. Rory assists with land management practices, manages the conservation easement program, maintains trails, and performs biological surveys. After hours, you may find him on the preserves with a camera, on the river with a fly rod, or back at the farm, working over a top bar beehive or kettle of homebrew.



**Louise van Tartwijk**, *Program Coordinator*

Louise joined Steep Rock Association in 2013 as their first Outreach Coordinator with responsibilities for educational programming as well as writing for the "Vista" newsletter and applications for grants. Her work at Steep Rock is one of her many community activities; Louise is also director of the Gunn Historical Museum, a board member of the Institute for American Indian Studies, publicity chairperson for the Washington Garden Club and a member of the Washington Historic District Committee. Louise likes to stay busy, hoping it will keep her out of trouble.

A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, Louise moved to Washington in 2010 after living in the Netherlands for 24 years. Married with 4 daughters, her interests and activities include competitive rowing, historic preservation, wearing hats, writing, reading, following in the mystical footsteps of T.E. Lawrence and embracing everything U2.

# Explorations in Nature Spring 2016

Join us as we explore various facets of nature through a fascinating array of guided hikes and educational programs. Thanks to the support of our members, programs are provided at no cost; however, pre-registration is required. Enrollment is limited and registration is on a first-come, first-served basis. To register, please complete and submit an online form found on [www.steeprocksassoc.org/explorations-in-nature](http://www.steeprocksassoc.org/explorations-in-nature) or call the office. Registration will be confirmed via email. Registered participants will be notified of cancellations or other time changes to programs.

## AN EVENING WOODCOCK WALK WITH WINE & CHEESE

**Saturday, April 23 • 6:00 – 8:30 pm**

**LOCATION:** Macricostas Preserve (*Christian Street*)

**DISTANCE:** 1/2 mile

**AGES:** Adults

Join bird-enthusiast Fran Zygmunt, as he gives a short lecture about the woodcock and then takes us into the Macricostas Preserve to enjoy this unusual mating ritual. Participants are encouraged to dress appropriately for the outdoors, and to bring an outdoor chair and a bottle of a favorite wine. Glassware, cheese and crackers will be provided.



Louise van Tartwijk

Flowering plants in bloom at Macricostas Preserve.

## THE WILDFLOWERS AND INSECTS OF HIDDEN VALLEY

**Saturday, May 14 • 10:00-11:30 am**

**LOCATION:** Hidden Valley (*south side parking lot*)

**DISTANCE:** 2 miles

**AGES:** 12-years of age and older; all children must be accompanied by an adult.

Join botanist Betsy Corrigan, and local naturalists BK and Peary Stafford, for a leisurely stroll along both sides of the Shepaug River in Hidden Valley where they will identify and talk about the various “spring ephemeral” wildflowers that are such a beautiful hallmark of this special preserve. Learn about the insects drawn to these particular wildflowers and, hopefully, there may even be a sighting of the, very-rare-in-Connecticut, West Virginia White butterfly!



Peary D. Stafford

Monarch butterfly - Macricostas Preserve butterfly garden.

## CT TRAILS DAY: HIKE THE STEEP ROCK CLAMSHELL

**Saturday, June 4 • 10:00 am -12:00 pm**

**LOCATION:** Parking lot by the Hauser Footbridge in Steep Rock Preserve. Drive by the Riding Ring and continue down Tunnel Road to the parking lot.

**DISTANCE:** 3 miles

Hike on a challenging loop that examines Steep Rock Preserve, the Shepaug River, and its clamshell-shaped course that passes through the southern extent of the preserve. Cross a footbridge, ascend to a summit, traverse down a lightly traveled trail beside a cascading brook, and wade a river ford. Critical habitats and management activities will be discussed along the way. Bring water, snacks for a break at the summit, and a pair of wading shoes or sandals for crossing the Shepaug River. Any last minute updates/changes will be made to our FaceBook page.

## GLOBAL WELLNESS DAY

**Saturday, June 11 • All day**

**LOCATION:** Various locations.

Check our website for updates

This special day was launched in Turkey in 2012, with the mission to live well. Now celebrated on the 2nd Saturday of June every year, seven continents and 83 countries around the world work together as a day dedicated to living well. Join us as we partner with The Mayflower Grace for contemplative nature walks and more.

## BIRD WATCHING CLASS FOR BEGINNERS

**Saturday, June 25 • 8:00 -10:00 pm**

**LOCATION:** Macricostas

Preserve (*Christian Street*)

**AGES:** 12 and older; all children must be accompanied by an adult.



Contributed Photo

Beginning birders begin their birdwalk.

Join Steep Rock regular Fran Zygmunt for a fun and educational morning walk to learn how to identify the myriad birds that call Macricostas Preserve home. Fran, returns to one of his favorite places to explain the basics of the art of “birding.” This popular program focuses on what beginner “birders” must both look and listen for when it comes to identifying local birds. Participants are highly encouraged to bring binoculars, a field guide, a notebook and a pen. As this program is held out-of-doors, participants are encouraged to dress accordingly.

**TO REGISTER:** Reserve your program space online at <http://www.steeprocksassoc.org/explorations-in-nature/> or call the office Monday – Friday, (860)-868-9131.

## Give Where Your Heart Is!

We hope you will join us for  
*Give Local* 2016!

May 3-4, 2016



Hosted by the Connecticut Community Foundation, *Give Local* Greater Waterbury & Litchfield Hills is a 36-hour online community giving event that encourages donors to lend their support to the nonprofit organizations that work every day to make our community stronger.

Every dollar donated to participating nonprofits from 7 a.m. on May 3rd to 7 p.m. on May 4th will be stretched with bonus funds provided by the Connecticut Community Foundation and our generous Give Local sponsors. Stay tuned to our website and Facebook page for this helpful opportunity.

## Tour the Bridges of Yesterday



Photos courtesy of Gunn Historical Museum.

**E**njoy the bridges that have been a part of Steep Rock Association through this photographic look back in history. Can't you just imagine yourself there?

Stop by the office during the work day to view a larger collection of historical photographs of bridges. We've partnered with the Gunn Historical Museum to display copies of some of their great photos. The exhibit will be on display through the spring.

*"Sometimes, if you stand on the bottom rail of a bridge and lean over to watch the river slipping slowly away beneath you, you will suddenly know everything there is to be known."*

– A. A. Milne, Pooh's Little Instruction Book

## IN THE GARDEN

### For Students: Paid Summer Internship at Judea Garden

**D**o you know a college or high school student looking for summer work that is invigorating and outdoors? Judea Garden, a Steep Rock Association community project, is offering two paid summer internships working from July 5 through August 26, 2016. Applicants must be either high school students (16 years old by end of summer) or college students (through class of 2016) and be available to work 20 - 25 hours/week in garden located in Macricostas Preserve.

Now in its eighth season, Judea Garden has grown, harvested and distributed over 25,000 lbs. of fresh produce to members of our community with limited financial resources through local food banks, senior centers and social service agencies.

The Garden Internship will provide lessons on sustainable agriculture and current food issues while growing vegetables for local food banks. Interns will: identify and control insects and diseases; identify weeds and their properties; use succession harvesting through planting for fall crops; harvest and distribute foods, and participate in all garden tasks.

The application is available online at: [www.steeprockassoc.org](http://www.steeprockassoc.org) or by emailing [denise.arturi@steeprockassoc.org](mailto:denise.arturi@steeprockassoc.org). For more information, call the office at (860) 868-9131.

The internships are made possible in part by a grant from the Connecticut Community Foundation.

### Volunteers needed to Weed and Wine

**Wanted:** Folks who enjoy being outside and have a sturdy back and good weed-pulling arms!

Help weed Judea Garden, then toast your efforts with a glass of wine. Volunteers like you have helped Judea Garden donate more than 25,000 pounds to local food banks.

**Meet us at Macricostas Preserve**  
124 Christian Street

WEDNESDAYS this Summer  
June 15th to August 17th • 5:30 - 7:00 pm

**For more information visit**  
[www.steeprockassoc.org](http://www.steeprockassoc.org)

Staff Photo



## Under the Stars and By the Campfire

Imagine yourself sitting around a crackling fire under the brightly lit night sky listening to the Shepaug River meandering downstream. At the campsites in Steep Rock Preserve, campers are surrounded by nature. Steep Rock offers tent camping at three different sites located right along the River. We invite you to come experience Steep Rock in a new way!

For more information at [www.steeprockassoc.org/explore/camping](http://www.steeprockassoc.org/explore/camping)

- Good to Know:**
- Camping Season: April 15 – November 15
  - Fee: \$35/night
  - Firewood: supplied for you
  - Tents only

*"...camping there is absolutely beautiful and peaceful and just what we need. Really looking forward to it."*

~ Sharon

*"It's my favorite place in the world. I've been going there since I was 17 years old and now I bring my kids there."*

~ David

## Notice of Steep Rock Association's Application for Land Trust Accreditation

The land trust accreditation program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. Steep Rock Association, Inc. is pleased to announce it is applying for accreditation. A public comment period is now open.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, conducts an extensive review of each applicant's policies and programs. Steep Rock's Executive Director Lori Paradis Brant said "Through the priorities of our

Strategic Plan 2020, we are working toward achieving excellence as a land trust. LTA accreditation is one of the main goals in our Plan. It is an important component as we enhance our role as a leader in our community, collaborate with key partners, and continue to protect the significant landscapes around the Town of Washington and the Shepaug River Valley."

The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how Steep Rock Association complies with national quality standards. These standards

address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. For the full list of standards see <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/help-and-resources/indicator-practices>

To learn more about the accreditation program and to submit a comment, visit [www.landtrustaccreditation.org](http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org), or email your comment to [info@landtrustaccreditation.org](mailto:info@landtrustaccreditation.org). Comments may also be faxed or mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments: (fax) 518-587-3183; (mail) 112 Spring Street, Suite 204, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. Comments will be most useful by May 31, 2016.

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