

The Steep Rock VISTA

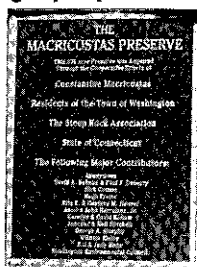
The Newsletter of the Steep Rock Association

Summer 2001

Meeker Swamp Dedicated as Macricostas Preserve

More than 100 people gathered at the 238 acre Meeker Swamp parcel on July 14, to dedicate the land with a new name: the Macricostas Preserve. Dino Macricostas was honored as well as the citizens of Washington and those individuals who so generously contributed to the purchase of the land.

After unveiling a plaque honoring those whose financial contributions made the purchase possible, including the town of Washington, the State of Connecticut and others, was given a graphite drawing of the preserve, created for the occasion by artist Wendell Minor.



contributions purchase possible, the residents of Washington, the Connecticut and Mr. Macricostas an original drawing of the

Echoing the theme of the day, "Forever Wild", and speaking for the Steep Rock Association, John Millington said: "Seven thousand years ago Native Americans inhabited this land. Seven thousand years from now it will be exactly like this."

The Macricostas Preserve is a unique parcel of land, containing within it over 50 acres of prime agricultural cropland and more than 40 acres of pastureland. The property also has within it significant wetlands, the headwaters of Bee Brook (a major tributary of the Shepaug River), and the largest aquifer in Washington.



From the left, Senator Andrew Roraback, Steep Rock Council Member Ginna Risley, Representative Arthur O'Neill (back to camera), Steep Rock Chairman of the Board John Millington, Steep Rock Honorary Trustee Bob deCourcy (back to camera) and Clay White, son of Steep Rock Trustee Ed White at the Macricostas Preserve dedication.

How Much Water In the Shepaug? Check the USGS WebSite

Since July and August have been very dry months and the water level in the Shepaug looks low, many people have been asking whether Waterbury is releasing the amount of water required in its agreement with Washington.

The summer before the trial, Waterbury began releasing more than the requirement of 1.5 million gallons per day (MGD) - sometimes as much as 4 MGD. According to Waterbury Water Company's Ken Skov, the city hasn't changed anything since then. The flow through the pipe and into the river at the dam remains rather steady—between 3.6 and 3.9 MGD.

Shortly after the Shepaug River trial ended, Waterbury had the USGS install a gaging station just below the Shepaug Reservoir. Here's how to access that information after you log on to the internet:

- Type in <http://ct.water.usgs.gov>
- Click on **Water** just under the main heading (it's in green on the right)
- Click on **Real Time** link just under the Water Data heading
- Scroll down to the green box of states, then click on **Connecticut**
- Click on access to **old real time system** just above and to the right of the Real Time Data for Connecticut heading (in blue).
- Scroll down to **Housatonic River Basin** and then to **Shepaug River @ Dam @ Woodville**. The second column, to the right is the current flow, expressed in cubic feet per second (CFS)*
- Click on **Shepaug River @ Dam @ Woodville** to also find the flow (ft³/s - CFS) in the left box under Current Conditions.

*Most of us are more familiar with flow expressed in millions of gallons per day (MGD), rather than CFS. To convert CFS to MGD: 1 cubic foot per second equals 0.6 million gallons per day. Thus a reading of 6.6 CFS (the ft³/s reading on August 7 @ 7:30 a.m.) equals 3.96 MGD.

The USGS site is regularly modified and upgraded. If you have questions or problems finding the data, call the Steep Rock office -860-868-9131- and we'll try to help.

Local Farmers Lease Macricostas Preserve Agricultural Land

The Potter Brothers, Tim and John, well known dairy farmers from Washington, have leased, for one year, the 55 acre corn field on the Meeker Swamp property (now known as the Macricostas Preserve).

Jennifer and Ken Deneault have leased a small portion of the property (around two acres) to use as pasture for their horses.

The Meeker Swamp Advisory Committee decided that, while it is considering proposals for the long term agricultural use of the property, the land should not lie dormant.



John Millington, Steep Rock's Chairman of the Board, congratulates Tim Potter, of Potter Brothers Farm, after both parties signed a one year lease. The Potters will farm the 55 acre field on the Macricostas Preserve.



Jennifer and Ken Deneault with Steep Rock's Executive Director, after signing a one year lease that permits the Deneaults to graze their horses on pastureland on the Macricostas Preserve.

Trail Stewardship Continues

Possible locations for Trails in the Macricostas Preserve were discussed when Peter Jensen of Open Space Management recently visited the site.



Allie Chapin, Peter Jensen, Susan Branson and Mike Jackson assess trail feasibility at the Macricostas Preserve.

Water problems on the first section of the Yellow Trail in Steep Rock were corrected by Peter Jensen's Open Space Management crew this summer.

Three areas of the trail had suffered when water from springs and streams was diverted onto the trails because trees had fallen or culverts had collapsed or filled with debris. The water, with nowhere else to go, was running down the trail, causing erosion problems as well as precarious footing, especially in winter.

The Jensen crew, in their usual conscientious way, repaired the damage to the trail and in the process, restored an old stone culvert. The end result is dry treadway along that section of the yellow trail, and watercourses returned to their original pathways.

The Mitchell Hole Trail itself suffered surprisingly little damage after a severe thunderstorm passed through the area in the spring. However, several large hemlocks fell across one section of the trail. The picture below shows trail work still to be done after two large trees had already been removed!



Downed Hemlock trees on the Mitchell Hole Trail.

Four New Trustees Elected to Steep Rock Board

The Steep Rock Trustees elected and welcomed four new Trustees at their annual meeting in May.

Robby Barnett knows every trail in Steep Rock and Hidden Valley. He hikes and cross country skis regularly in both reservations. Robby has been a volunteer on Steep Rock's Stewardship and Trails Committees and has been an energetic helper on workdays.

Robby is Artistic Director of the world famous Pilobolus Dance Theater Company whose home base is here in Washington.

William A. (Waddy) Davidson, a relative newcomer to the Washington area (he's been here only four years!), has been an interested and faithful volunteer on the Steep Rock Stewardship Committee. His professional background is in the banking and investment field.

Wendell Minor is well known for his paintings in children's books and for his jacket illustrations for many best selling books. He painted the beautiful cover for the Open Space ad hoc Commission's Report to the Town of Washington, and created the "Forever Wild" drawing of Meeker Swamp, the original of which was presented to Mr. and Mrs. Macricostas at the dedication of the Macricostas Preserve.

Alison Picton, as a child, spent weekends and part of summers in Washington. Her grandfather was a Steep Rock Trustee (he was in charge of the onion soup at the picnic!).

Alison was Curatorial Assistant at the Gunn Museum for four years and during that time wrote a small book about Ehrick Rossiter, architect and founder of Steep Rock. More recently, she was a tremendous help with the book published in honor of Steep Rock's 75th anniversary "75 Years of Steep Rock".

Trustees, continued...

In addition, Mike Alex, Allie Chapin, Rita Hauser and Ed Matthews were re-elected to serve an additional year term on the Board of Trustees.

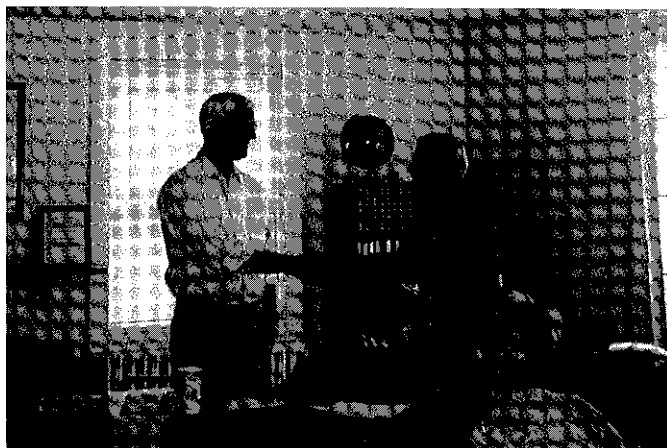
Wendy Federer and Bill Fairbairn retired from the Board of Trustees, each having served two three year terms. Wendy and Bill become Council Members, and will hopefully stay active in the organization.

Michael C. Jackson New Steep Rock President

At May's annual meeting of the Steep Rock Board of Trustees, Mike Jackson was elected President. He is the 7th President of the organization.

Mike has been a Trustee since 1994 and is a member of Steep Rock's Finance and Investment Committee as well as the Nominating Committee.

John Millington, who served as President for five years, was elected Chairman of the Board.



Mike Jackson, the new President of Steep Rock, is congratulated by John A. Millington, outgoing President and newly elected Chairman of the Board.

Become a Member of Steep Rock. We Need Your Support!

A contribution of any size entitles you to membership for one year.
The funds raised help us to maintain the reservations. Please use this form to send in your donation.

Name _____
PO Box /Street _____
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State, Zip _____

Send To:
Steep Rock Association
PO Box 279, Washington Depot, CT 06794

Steep Rock Picnic Saturday, September 8

We can't promise you the extravaganza we had last year during our 75th Anniversary but we'll still have wonderful home made onion soup, and the requisite hamburgers and hot dogs.

Holding the picnic at the riding ring was such a success last year, we're going to continue with that location- parking spaces are plentiful, and access is easy. So mark your calendars!

Saturday, September 8, 2001,
Noon -2 p.m.

Steep Rock Association

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Ehrick K. Rossiter

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Dog Problems...Again

A most unfortunate incident involving unleashed dogs occurred in Hidden Valley this summer. A small terrier was attacked and killed by another larger dog. Neither dog was leashed. In fact, the owners of the attacking dog had no leash with them.

Steep Rock's Stewardship and Trails Committees met recently to discuss the many problems dogs create in the Reservations. One year we had complaints of unleashed dogs jumping on and frightening other hikers— they were friendly dogs for the most part, but unleashed and not under their owners control. This year the incidents are more serious.

For several years we've posted the entrances of the Reservations with signs that remind dog owners the CT State Statutes regarding dogs, "dogs must be under the owners control at all times".

The Stewardship and Trails Committees are reluctant to impose a strict leash rule in Steep Rock and Hidden Valley, but increasing incidents of such a serious nature may necessitate just such a ruling.



Third graders from Shepaug School listen to Steep Rock Council Member Linda Potter before walking the trails near the riding ring. The field day was part of a series introducing the elementary school students to Steep Rock and Hidden Valley.

Steep Rock Association
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