



SLC NEWS

Newsletter for SLC Members

Fall 2019 / Winter 2020

SPOTLIGHT

We continue to make progress in reclaiming the meadows at the South Grand property that we acquired in 2017. It was our hope that we could seed the meadows this fall. This summer Sean Morrison disc harrowed the 14 acres twice and mowed the property once in order to combat a vast amount of invasive weeds, including horse nettle, ragweed, smartweed and many others. We are also trying to get rid of grassy weeds that will compete with the wildflowers that we intend to plant. Our Board member, Todd Mervosh, an invasive plants specialist, recommended we wait until next fall to plant and continue our efforts to prep the property for the best possible conditions. He also worked to control oriental bittersweet, poison ivy, multiflora rose, burning bush, and Japanese barberry along the new trail.

As we mentioned in the past, we will plant a mix of native grasses and wildflowers so this will be habitat for bobolink and other meadow birdlife. This will dovetail with the regional effort to create a pollinator trail through central Connecticut (*For more information on the Pollinator Trail go to www.pollinator-pathway.org*). We hay the Silver Creek meadows annually in mid August to ensure safe nesting for the birds. We will only mow this property every few years. We will maintain a trail that circles the meadow, but will discourage visitors from entering the fields during nesting season. We look forward to 2021 when all this hard work by our volunteers will take seed.

Above: South Grand meadow before mowing. *Below:* After first round of invasive removal



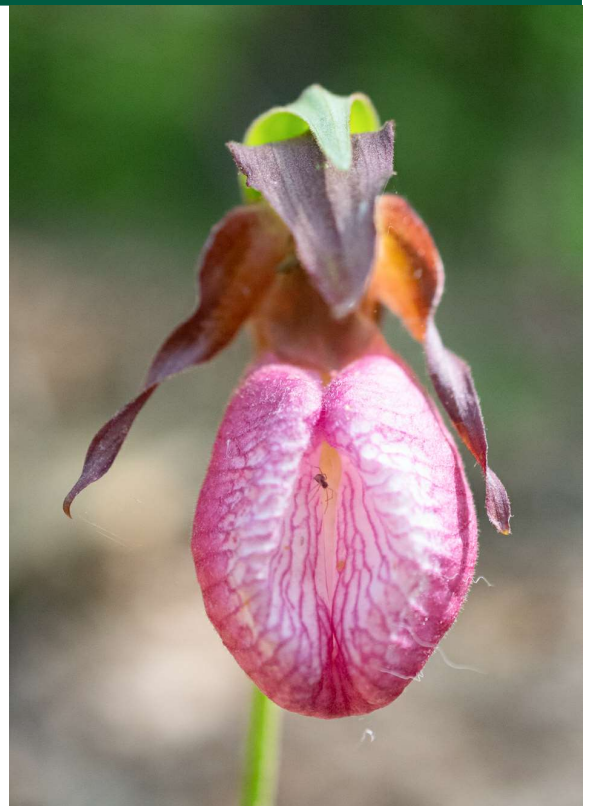
Past Events

We had a busy late spring and early summer with several of our annual programs.

In early May, Joellen Woodworth and Art Sikes lead a large group of all ages on a tour around Sunrise Park looking for wildflower species. While the day was not the sunniest, the flowers provided plenty of brightness. The trillium, trout lily and bloodroot were in their glory, but the abundance of hepatica was the showstopper.

Our spring bird walk this year was at the South Grand property. There was a limited group and the weather was not ideal for spotting birds given the lack of bright sunshine. That being said, it was a great day to be out and we explored several sections of this vast and biologically diverse property. The numerous vernal pools were filled to the brim and the cacophony caused by the frogs and peepers was nearly deafening. The recent rain made for ideal preservation of deer, raccoon, coyote, bobcat, and turkey tracks. The rain water filled tire treads surrounding the fields, creating a habitat for pollywogs. We also observed the handiwork of nature's hard-working engineer, the beaver.

In early June, Ed Ewald led our annual Connecticut Trails Day hike. This year the walk was on the Alcorn property out to the vista at the power lines. The turnout was great with ages from eight to eighty. Not only was it a lovely day, but the lady slippers were in full bloom and in great abundance.



DIRECTORS

Melanie Brown	Art Christian	Chris Childs	Muriel Coatti	Brian Dudack	Edward Ewald
Secretary	2018-2021	President	2018 - 2021	2017 - 2020	Vice President
2017-2020	668-7556	2016-2019	668-2414	543-0787	2016 - 2019
789-3819		668-7140			668-6678



Connecting Hope, One Land Parcel at a Time

When the Board Members of Suffield Land Conservancy ponder over land acquisition opportunities and weigh the value that each parcel may bring, a major consideration is the parcel's proximity to other conserved tracts of land, either owned by SLC, or conserved by the town or state. The aim of the Conservancy is to connect habitats together to create what is called a "greenway," or wildlife corridor, that plant and animal species can use for colonization and migration, avoiding the perils of human transportation systems and barriers.

Recent research has been published to support the value of this practice. Damschen, et al. (1) have recently published an article in *Science* to present the results of their 18-year study on plant biodiversity in fragmented habitats. Their hypothesis was that connecting habitat fragments would lead in the long-term to greater biodiversity by species spread into new areas, repopulation of areas where species had gone extinct, and protection of existing populations from extinction. In their experiment at a Savannah River Site in South Carolina, they created several sets of isolated habitat fragment pairs, connecting them with a thin habitat corridor strip. In these fragments, they restored longleaf pine savannas. Unconnected fragments were used as a control and restored identically. The fragments were surrounded by dense pine. After creation, all plant species were counted yearly.

Their results showed an increase in average annual species colonization rate and a decrease in annual species extinction rate in the connected fragments versus unconnected fragments for 239 plant species. Over time, the connected fragments have increased the number of plant species by an average of 24 more species than the isolated fragments. The increase in biodiversity is only expected to grow in the long-term. Their conclusions support SLC's mission of connecting ecologically important habitats within our town to promote the diversity of our unique and fragile ecosystems.

(1) Damschen, et al. Ongoing accumulation of plant diversity through habitat connectivity in an 18-year experiment. *Science* **365**, 1478-1480 (2019)

Upcoming Events

Suffield Land Conservancy Annual Meeting - Back by Popular Demand!

Justin Kaput, selected as one of forty Grosvenor Teacher Fellows by National Geographic and Lindblad Expeditions, will speak about his Antarctica adventure at our Annual Meeting on **November 7 at 7 pm** at the **Suffield Senior Center**, 145 Bridge Street.

Last December, Mr. Kaput embarked on a trip to the Antarctic Peninsula and Weddell Sea. While there he was able to assist scientists in monitoring the rate of glacial melting in several areas and analyze water samples for the presence of microplastics. Now back home, he and his students are analyzing data to see how human impacts like climate change will affect this polar environment. Learn about his experience on the great white continent during his exciting presentation.

Annual Ice Harvest

The Noble & Cooley Center for Historic Preservation, in partnership with SLC and the Suffield Historical Society, will sponsor an annual ice harvest at **Noble & Cooley Mill Pond** on **Feb. 1, 2020 from noon to 3pm** (42 Water St, Granville, MA). If the ice is thick enough, you can try your hand at cutting ice while learning about the commercial ice harvesting industry that blossomed in New England before the widespread use of refrigeration.



DIRECTORS

Marie Gauthier	Joe Grimard	Todd Mervosh	Norm Noble	Art Sikes	Joellen Woodworth
2016-2019	2017-2020	Past President	2017-2020	Treasurer	2018-2021
729-5460	668-1338	2018-2021	668-1721	2016-2019	668-0612
		668-2988		668-0414	

UPCOMING EVENTS

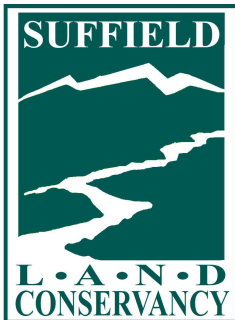
November 7, Thursday	7pm	Annual Meeting <i>@ Suffield Senior Center</i>
February 1, Saturday	Noon-3pm	Annual Ice Harvest <i>@ Noble & Cooley Mill Pond Granville, MA</i>

Be sure to purchase your Suffield Calendar to support the 350th Anniversary Celebration in 2020 and visit the page featuring the Suffield Land Conservancy!

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Please use the enclosed envelope for your annual membership renewal.

Thank you for supporting the Suffield Land Conservancy!



SUFFIELD LAND CONSERVANCY
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