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In Touch

with The Last Green Valley



SPRING 2021 MEMBER MAGAZINE



Protecting our Pollinators

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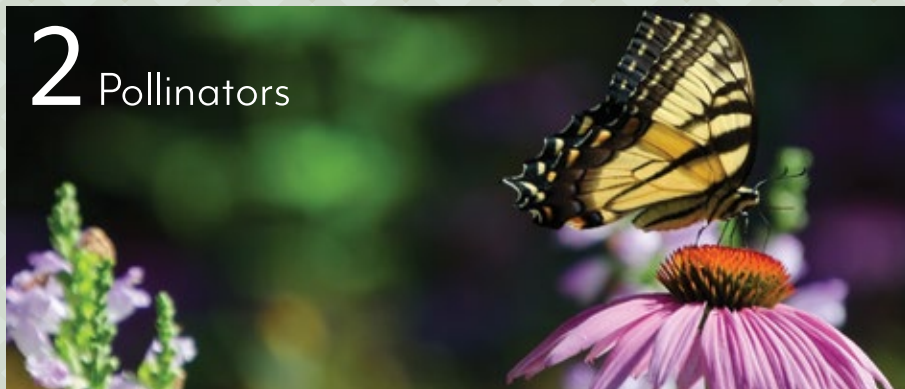
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In Touch

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To our **Members, Donors, Partners and Sponsors,**

Thank you for supporting TLGV during this challenging year. With your assistance we have done our best to adapt quickly, finding new ways to meet the emerging needs of those who live, work and play in our National Heritage Corridor.

From pay-what-you-can memberships and virtual programs, to partnership extensions, socially distanced events and grants for non-profits to work better remotely, TLGV focused on innovative ways to strengthen our communities and our connections to the woods, waters, farms and historic charm of this beautiful place we all love.

But this past year has also reinforced what we knew all along, that The Last Green Valley's wide-open spaces are critical to our physical, mental and emotional health. With 84 percent forest and farm, more than 500 miles of trails, dozens of farms, farmers' markets and a small-town New England feel, The Last Green Valley is an extremely desirable place to live during a pandemic.

As a result, many people have discovered The Last Green Valley for the first time; housing prices have sky-rocketed and housing demand has risen dramatically across the region. A residential construction boom is underway.

So what does our future look like, post-pandemic? How do we care for the mosaic of history, culture, small town atmosphere, agriculture, green forests, dark skies and flowing waters that make this region unique? How do we balance conservation with affordable housing, economic development and equitable and inclusive access to the resources we love? How do we manage change, which is inevitable, so the heart and soul of The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor remains intact?

TLGV is committed to leading the quest for answers and ensuring this special place is here for the long-term, for future generations to care for, enjoy and pass on.

In the short-term, the TLGV Board of Directors has been wrestling with these questions during an intensive strategic planning process. After many thoughtful conversations and hard work, the Board has committed to the following strategic priorities over the next 3-5 years:

- Invigorate deeper and more meaningful personal connection with TLGV — the organization and the sense of place — by strengthening our connection to the community through outreach and collaboration with community leaders.
- Grow representation and engagement with diverse audiences by creating new inclusive programming and evolving current programming to engage new audiences, such as youth, young families and racially and economically diverse communities.
- Position TLGV Inc. as a leading and trusted advocate for the region's sustainability and legacy by understanding and shaping the future of conservation and development in the region.
- Build financial and organizational sustainability to carry out our mission by growing contributions from private sources to increase non-federal revenue.

We hope you will commit to achieving these priorities with us, as we will be stronger and more successful together. Your continued support will make it possible for us care for and pass on The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor for future generations to enjoy!



Lois Bruinooge, *Executive Director*



Our Future Depends on

Pollinators

By Francesca Kefalas



Louise Washer had the loppers in hand, ready to cut back the evening primrose taking over a section of her property.

As she closed in, however, she spotted something extraordinary — a bright pink moth with beautiful yellow edges on its wings. The loppers were forgotten, and the camera came out. With some investigation, Washer learned the moth was a primrose moth that sleeps in the closed buds of evening primrose during the day and emerges as the flowers bloom at night. The plant and the moth have developed a symbiotic relationship.

"I was going to cut back the evening primrose because I had so much of it, and it's not really beautiful to look at during the day," said Washer, who is on the steering committee of Pollinator Pathway and President of the Norwalk River Watershed Association. "When you discover that story between the plant and the moth, it changes everything. I just want to have that beautiful moth here, so I see the evening primrose with different eyes."

Life on planet Earth is an intricate web of connections. Break one link and not only do things it was directly connected to begin to falter, so too do connections further away from that first broken juncture, destabilizing the web.

For us, the top of the food web, the predator of all other things on the planet, it is sometimes easy to miss the lost

connections, to assume we will always be able to repair them, to literally not see crucial parts of the web of life we rely on.

It's actually quite easy to not see one of the most foundational parts of life on earth because it's an interaction occurring daily under our noses between tiny creatures we have often been raised to detest, insects, and their favorite food, plants.

"You grew up and I grew up in a world where if you had an insect on your property the natural response is to kill it," said Douglas Tallamy, author of national best seller "Nature's Best Hope" and a professor and chair of the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware.

"The cultural response to insects, except to the pretty butterfly, is you see it and you kill it. Whether it's a good spider or not doesn't matter. That has been our culture up to now. It's a matter of education. If people understood insects are not optional, they are the little things that run the world, they might not be so quick to kill them.

We need them to pollinate our plants. Ninety percent of the world's flowering plants need insects."

And by 90 percent of flowering plants, Tallamy also means the food we eat. Whether you are a tried-and-true carnivore, a dedicated vegan or somewhere in between, you rely on pollinators for your meals. According to the USDA more than 100 U.S. grown crops rely on pollinators and the revenue from those crops is valued at \$18 billion.



What is Pollination?

Pollination is necessary for flowers to produce seeds, fruits and more plants.

For pollination to occur a pollen grain must be moved from the anther, the male part of a flower, to the stigma, the female part of the flower. Some flowers can self-pollinate, but most need help. Wind and water can assist with pollination, but most pollination happens with the help of animals.

In addition to bees and flies, which do the most pollinating, other pollinators are birds, bats, butterflies, moths, beetles, wasps and small mammals.

Tallamy is perhaps the best-known voice leading the call for us to not only stop killing insects, but instead turn our properties into havens for them.

"Our ecological literacy in this

country is a one out of 10," Tallamy said. "Most people think it's too bad if nature disappears. There is a huge disconnect between how we treat the land and what we get from the land. We can't grasp the magnitude of our footprint, but we depend on a functional ecosystem, which won't function without the species that run them."



Tallamy's focus is on all insects and their relationships with native plants. But he welcomes the growing spotlight that has been put on pollinators. Honey bees and the monarch butterfly are literally the poster insects for pollination and the challenges facing them. Both insects are facing sharp declines. According to pollinator.org, 25 percent of bumble bee species are believed to be in decline and the monarch population has dropped 90 percent.

Dr. Kim Stoner, an agricultural scientist at the CT Ag Experiment Station, and Tracy Zarrillo, an agricultural research technician for the experiment station, are undertaking a checklist of bees in Connecticut. There are about 372 bee species in the state, Zarrillo said, but that number can change as more work is done to identify species.

Stoner said Connecticut seems to have lost several species of native bumble bees, such as the rusty patched bumble bee, *Bombus affinis*, which was last found in Connecticut in 1997.

"There is a lively debate about insect decline," Stoner said. "There are some species of bumble bees that historically were here and now appear to be gone. There are also some species of bumble bees that seem to have increased in number."



Stoner and Tallamy both say the need for more research is great. But a key factor in everyone's concern about the state of pollinators is the idea of biodiversity. The biodiversity of our landscapes has changed dramatically in recent decades, and plants are a key culprit.

Invasives create monocultures, Tallamy said. They outcompete and take over entire swaths of land. Tallamy said research conducted by his students is showing that caterpillars, which grow into pollinators, need native plants. Areas with invasives have fewer caterpillars and the ripple effect is significant.

"They haven't evolved with these invasive species," Tallamy said.

Fewer caterpillars means fewer birds, a fact his students have proven through research, and those same birds produce fewer nestlings, creating a cycle of decline.

Tallamy's work has directly inspired the Pollinator Pathway project Washer is helping to lead. The idea is to connect pollinator-friendly parcels across a town and then connect towns to one another. The first Pollinator Pathway effort began in the Norwalk area, but there are now more than 60 towns active in the project, including Woodstock and several others in The Last Green Valley.

Jean Pillo, TLGV's Water Quality Monitoring Coordinator, Watershed Conservation Project Manager for Eastern Connecticut Conservation District and a member of the Woodstock Conservation Commission, has seen Tallamy's research play out in her Woodstock yard. Passionate about the ecosystem, Pillo has been an integral part of the effort for Woodstock to join the Pollinator Pathway project. She has also intentionally turned her own yard into a place of experimentation, planting native plant species, ensuring pollinators have nutrition from spring through fall and even watching how a native plant vs a native cultivar performs for her local pollinators.



“Pollinators are keystone species. They affect everything.”

On one bush of native winterberry, Pillo found hundreds of different pollinators over the course of the season.

For Pillo, her passion for pollinators ties directly to her work ensuring healthy watersheds. Pollinators ensure a robust and healthy landscape of diverse plants, which benefits the soil. Good soil filters water before it reaches waterways and that means cleaner water for every living creature relying on rivers, streams and ponds.

“Pollinators are keystone species,” Pillo said. “They affect everything.”

As part of her work, Pillo actively tries to educate homeowners about pesticides. A simple way to help all pollinators is to not use pesticides. Both Connecticut and Massachusetts have banned the use of neonicotinoids by anyone but licensed professionals. Neonicotinoids have been shown to have devastating effects on bees in particular. But other allowed pesticides could also kill pollinators or damage their lifecycle. Many pollinators are also ground nesters, and any chemical applied to a lawn could be deadly.

Washer said anyone who plants pollinator-friendly plants should not use any pesticides. “That creates a deadly pollinator trap,” Washer said.

Getting town public works departments to rethink their methods of pesticide application and mowing habits is a challenge, said Jean de Smet of Windham.

de Smet has played a role in quality-of-life issues in town for decades, from her time as Windham’s highest elected leader to her role in the Garden Club of Windham. She and others in the garden club have had their eye on pollinators longer than most.

In 2011 Windham became only the second community in Connecticut to become a National Wildlife Federation Community Wildlife Habitat. The garden club identified more than 100 homes and

businesses that had native plants and water sources.

“We haven’t really stopped since then,” de Smet said. “We’ve been building a lot of pollinator gardens around town.”

Several years ago the garden club also decided to plant 325 trees in town to honor Windham’s birthday. A charge led by garden club member Faith Kenton has resulted in more than 400 new native plantings. But the work is far from done.

“What we’ve learned is a parcel doesn’t really count if it’s not really connected to other pollinator-friendly parcels,” de Smet said. “Now, we’re thinking of how we connect all these pieces together, and that’s not just Windham.”

In addition to the garden club, de Smet also is a member of the town’s Sustainable CT Committee, and a confluence of circumstances helped create a coalition between Windham, Mansfield and Chaplin to create pollinator-friendly spaces and connections between those spaces. All three towns have also joined the Pollinator Pathway project.

Virginia Walton, Mansfield’s recycling coordinator and the staff member to the Sustainable CT Committee in town, said the first phase of the project is to educate and provide native seeds.

“Our goal is to have regional, connected pathways for pollinators,” Walton said. “Once Mansfield, Windham and Chaplin are well on their way we can invite surrounding towns to create an ever-widening circle.”

Abe Hilding-Salorio, program manager for the community match fund of Sustainable CT, said many communities in the state were applying for grant funds to do pollinator projects. Their interest drove Sustainable CT to add pollinator-friendly actions to its points system this year for municipalities to achieve Sustainable CT certification.





L. SULKAZI

“Focus on your little piece of [the planet], and you can make a difference.”

“I think people are really starting to understand the importance of pollinators and they wanted to take action,” Hilding-Salorio said.

Washer said that kind of intentional planning is exactly what the Pollinator Pathway is trying to promote. But she has also learned that every small plot of dirt counts too. The original pollinator pathway stretches from South Norwalk, which is more than 60 percent hard surface, to a multi-acre farm pasture in Ridgefield.

“It can look different in every town,” Washer said. “But it can still work.”

Pollinator Pathway has grown out of its Western Connecticut roots since it formed in 2017 and now includes 240 towns in Connecticut, Massachusetts and many other northeastern states.

Washer said Tallamy’s inspiration is contagious. “We don’t want to be educated, we want to be inspired,” Washer said.

“[Tallamy] has inspired so many people and he has made it simple to understand a very complex set of problems.”

For Tallamy, he said, it’s critical that we see our own yards differently if the planet is to survive. And yet the solutions can be simple. Tallamy’s own efforts in his yard have him hopeful.

“Earth stewardship is not something a few ecologists can do,” Tallamy said. “It’s a basic responsibility of everybody on the planet. You have to start looking at your own properties as a piece of the local ecosystem. I tell people don’t focus on the whole planet’s problems. That’s just too depressing. Focus on your little piece of it, and you can make a difference.”



M. C. FIELDS



Did You Know?

- It's estimated pollinators are directly responsible for 1 in every 3 bites of food.
- The plants that provide half of the world's oils, fibers and raw materials rely on pollinators.
- More than 1,000 pollinators are vertebrates such as birds, bats and small mammals.
- More than 200,000 species of pollinators are beneficial insects such as flies, beetles, wasps, ants, butterflies, moths and bees.
- In the U.S., pollination produces nearly \$20 billion worth of products annually.
- Honey bees are responsible for between \$1.2 and \$5.4 billion in agricultural productivity in the United States.
- The economic value of pollination services provided by native insects, mostly bees, is estimated at \$3 billion per year in the United States.
- Worldwide, pollinators are responsible for \$235 billion of the global economy.
- Pollinators provide pollination services to more than 180,000 different plant species and more than 1,200 crops worldwide.
- Bumble bees are among the most important pollinators of crops such as blueberries, cranberries and clover and one of the only insect pollinators of tomatoes.
- Monarch butterflies have declined by 90 percent in the last 20 years.
- West coast monarch populations are down 97 percent since 1981.
- Monarchs travel 3,000 miles on their annual migration.
- 19 percent of all butterflies in the U.S. are at risk of extinction.
- 28 percent of bumble bee species are thought to be in serious decline.
- The rusty patched bumble bee was the first bee to be listed as endangered in the U.S. and is already believed to be extirpated from Connecticut.
- 50 percent of leaf cutter bees are at risk.
- 27 percent of mason bees are at risk.
- A 30 percent overwinter colony loss has occurred annually for honey bees during the last 10 years.
- 40 million acres of land in the continental U.S. has some form of lawn on it.
- Homeowners typically use 10 times the amount of pesticides and fertilizers per acre on their lawns than farmers do on crops.
- Nationally, lawns use 9 billion gallons of water per day.
- To support pollinators, the goal is to have 70 percent or more of your property be native plants.

Sources: Pollinator.org, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Pollinator Pathway, Xerces Society, USDA and EPA



B IN PRAISE OF EES

By
Francesca
Kefalas

Adam Fuller remembers visiting a neighbor more than 40 years ago with the hopes of getting a chance to talk to his daughter. Instead, he ended up fascinated with his neighbor's bee hive.

"I forgot about the girl when I discovered the bees," Fuller laughed.

Today, Fuller is president of the Eastern Connecticut Bee Keepers Association and owner of A&Z Apiaries in Hampton. He has more than 300 hives with plans for another 100, but being a professional bee keeper is not easy work. He produces honey, offers pollination services and is known around the area as Papa Bee for selling hives that usually have better survival rates than many.

"When I started you owned the bees and you did a little in the spring with the bees, you kept an eye on them and in the fall you took your crop," Fuller said. "That was it. It was easy. But in the mid-90s that all changed."

Fuller said the focus on honey bees is agriculturally and economically critical. Honey bees are the workhorses of pollinators, he said. Without them we simply could not produce enough food to feed the world.

"There is no other pollinator that can do what honey bees do," Fuller said. "We have millions and millions of acres of land that are in food production. Wild pollinators would never be able to handle the volume and intensity of pollination needed."

Fuller's bees are about to be moved all over Connecticut to pollinate apple crops. Honey bees have been facing sharp declines since the mid-1990s when the *Varroa destructor* mites made it to North America. Fuller said in those early years 90 percent of the honey bees in the northern half of the United States were wiped out.

Honey bees are only one of more than 370 bees found the region. Dr. Kim Stoner, an agricultural scientist at the CT Ag Experiment Station, and Tracy Zarrillo, an agricultural research technician for the experiment station, are undertaking a checklist of bees in Connecticut. There are about 372 bee species in the state, Zarrillo said, but that number can change as more work is done to identify species.



The checklist is showing both significant declines and possible extirpation of several bumble bee species. But it is also showing increasing populations of other bumble bee species.

“There’s quite a lively debate about what’s happening with insects,” Stoner said. “We certainly don’t have all the answers.”

The population declines of honey bees, which are not native to the United States, and the decline of native bees are fueled by similar issues. Stoner said a combination of pesticide usage, habitat loss and pathogens are fueling declines, but much more research needs to be done.

Douglas Tallamy, author of national bestseller “Nature’s Best Hope,” and Chairman of the Dept. of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware, said his students are working to understand the complex relationships between insects and plants.

Caterpillars, for example, transfer more energy from plants to other animals than any other animal, Tallamy said. It’s why his latest work is focused on keystone plants that support caterpillars. His newest book, “The Nature of Oaks,” focuses on the ability of oaks to host a variety of essential insects and fuel the food web.

While honey bees are not looking to oaks during their quest for pollen, Fuller said the problems for all insects are similar. A lack of biodiversity in the landscape creates nutritional challenges for the bees, he said, especially in late summer.

“Our landscape is not what it was 30 years ago,” Fuller said. “Especially in the late summer to fall there isn’t the nutrition the bees need in enough abundance.”





H. GLOWACKA

“Honey bee colonies are like one super organism. The whole social aspect of how they work together is mind blowing.”

Stoner said the changes in landscape can come from unexpected places too. Recent changes in how powerline transmission corridors are being managed are having a negative effect on bees. The corridors used to be allowed to grow, but more frequent mowing means less habitat for bees and all kinds of wildlife, she said.

“There’s a lot more research that needs to be done,” Stoner said. “A lot more money and a lot more investment in time and energy needs to go into understanding plants and insects.”

A 2019 study by the University of Maryland revealed five decades of trying to fight the varroa mite was focusing on the wrong effects of the mite. The mites kill honey bees by both spreading viruses through the hive, but also by feasting on the body fat of the bees. The study suggests focusing on the direct effect of the mites could yield better methods of combating them.

For Fuller, the battle is constant, and he tries to use genetic selection to give his hives a better chance of developing behaviors to fight the mites. But the struggle is also worth it, he said.

“Nobody knows everything about honey bees,” Fuller said. “Honey bee colonies are like one super organism. The whole social aspect of how they work together is mind blowing.”

Fuller doesn’t hesitate when asked if he ever thought of giving up his bee-related businesses.

“I’m never going to give up bees,” Fuller said. “They will truck me off to the funeral home and I’ll still be thinking about bees. They’re my life. There is not a moment that I don’t have bees in my thought process. And they’ve given me the life I have, which is a pretty good life.”



Finding Bees

There are approximately 372 species of bees in Connecticut. There are some species, called morphotypes, whose identity is uncertain. Some species can only be distinguished through genetics, which is an ongoing effort.

Sixteen species of bumble bees have been documented in CT, however, several of them are believed to be extirpated.

The rusty patched bumble bee, *Bombus affinis*, has not been seen since 1997. It was federally listed as endangered in 2017.

Bombus ashtoni, a cuckoo bee, is also declining and was last seen in CT in 1992.

The American bumble bee, *Bombus pensylvanicus*, was last seen in CT in 2006.

The yellow banded bumble bee, *Bombus terricola*, is on the state list of endangered and threatened species, but the species has been seen in Litchfield County since 2018.

The northern amber bumble bee, *Bombus borealis*, was only recorded in CT in 1932, but a specimen collected in Suffield in 2010 was discovered in a private collection.

The lemon cuckoo bumble bee, *Bombus citrinus*, was last found in 2010 in CT, but most of the state records come from New London County in 2006 and 2007.

Populations of the common eastern bumble bee, *Bombus impatiens*, are on the rise.

One male specimen of *Eucera hamata*, a spring long-horned bee that is known from the central states and the coastal plain of the mid-Atlantic states north to NJ, was collected in Griswold, which was an unusual find. This was one of two northern records ever collected for this species.

One female specimen of a beautiful blue mason bee called *Osmia simillima* was collected in Waterford in 2006. This species is relatively uncommon in the northeast and is associated with coastal sites.

A specialist mining bee called *Andrena uvulariae* was collected in Pachaug State Forest in Voluntown in 2009 and also found more recently at the CT College arboretum. This bee strictly uses the pollen of *Uvularia*, flowers in the bellwort family.

A sweat bee, *Lasioglossum coreopsis*, was recently documented in CT for the first time in 2014, in Montville.

Another sweat bee called *Lasioglossum georeckworti* was collected in Mansfield near Chapin Pond by an entomologist. This bee species was recently described in 2011 by Dr. Jason Gibbs, and the Mansfield bee specimen was one of the bees used to describe this species. It is called a paratype, which is a very important designation. A paratype is used for the original description of a taxonomic group and specifically stated to be the one on which the original description of the taxon was based. This species is a specialist of dry sandy habitats in coastal states, specifically along the coastal regions of Massachusetts south to Georgia.

Source: Dr. Kimberly Stoner and Tracey Zarrillo, Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station.

You Can Help

ENCOURAGING POLLINATORS IN
YOUR YARD

By Hanna
Holcomb

.....

Across The Last Green Valley, and well beyond, the idea of what makes a
beautiful garden is changing.





E. LINKKILA



J. ROEMER

More than a decade ago the Garden Club of Windham put creating pollinator-friendly spaces at the center of their work to beautify public spaces. With the club's leadership, Willimantic became a certified Community Wildlife Habitat with the National Wildlife Federation in 2011, a feat achieved because the club focused not only on backyards and larger public spaces, but also its smallest spaces.

"We did our zip code right here in the downtown area to try to get across the idea that it's probably almost more important to certify urban areas, so you have pathways and you don't have dead zones for migrators and other kinds of animals," said Pam Wright, the club's president and a Master Gardener and Master Naturalist.

To qualify as a Community Wildlife Habitat, a certain number of properties need to be certified wildlife habitat and provide food, water, shelter and places for wildlife to raise young and be maintained with sustainable practices. There must also be ongoing education and activities for the community.

Though certifying an entire town may sound overwhelming, it was small changes throughout the city that made Willimantic a better place for pollinators. For example, adding flowering window boxes, building a "bee hotel," or refusing to use pesticides, are small but important changes that support the basic needs of pollinators.

Windham is now a part of the Pollinator Pathway and is working with Mansfield and Chaplin on a tri-town

Pollinator-Friendly Native Plants

There are many native plants that are pollinator friendly. This list offers a place to start in choosing plants that bloom spring through fall.

SPRING – Wood anemone, wild blue phlox, wild geranium, wild red columbine, bluets

SUMMER – Common yarrow, sweet pepperbrush, cardinal flower, blue-stemmed goldenrod, trumpet honeysuckle

FALL – White wood aster, New England aster, thin-leaved sunflower

Source: Connecticut Botanical Society



F. J. KEFALAS



K. CARPENTER

pollinator project providing native seeds and education to increase pollinator-friendly parcels across all three towns.

If you're interested in improving your property for pollinators, one of the best places to start is with your lawn.

"You might want to minimize your lawn," said Faith Kenton, a founding member of the Garden Club of Windham and co-chair of the club's Public Spaces Committee. "They take a lot of work and they take a lot of pesticides and water."

A 2005 study of NASA satellite images showed there are about 40 million acres of lawn (about the size of New England) in the continental United States. Unfortunately, our preference for perfectly manicured turf is at odds with the needs of pollinators. Pollinators need a variety of flowering native plants, and good places to lay eggs and build nests. Most lawns provide neither.

Replacing part of your lawn with native shrubs, trees or a garden will support more pollinators. Alternatively, you can make your lawn more pollinator-

friendly by raising your mower's blade to the highest setting and reducing mowing frequency. This allows grasses to grow tall enough to form flower heads and seeds and allows flowering lawn weeds, like clover, to grow, providing nectar and pollen in an otherwise foodless area.

The Connecticut Department of Transportation has reduced mowing at 80 designated pollinator corridor sites along highways. At these sites, only the highway shoulder and the site perimeter are mowed to maintain visibility and to remove encroaching woody vegetation. The remaining interior area is mowed in the late fall or in the following late winter or early spring.

"Reduced mowing practices have greatly benefited the germination and propagation of wildflowers and warm season grasses in the designated areas," said Adam Boone, Transportation Landscape Designer for CT DOT.

CT DOT also seeds construction areas with a wildflower and conservation mix to support pollinators and does some planting and transplanting of wildflowers.

"We are currently looking into expanding our transplanting work, utilizing existing hardy wildflowers within our right of way to increase wildflower density in other designated areas," said Boone. "Improving density will further improve propagation within the areas, crowding out unwanted and invasive plants."

According to Martha Gach, Education Manager & Conservation Coordinator at Mass Audubon, invasive plants harm pollinators by outcompeting other plants and decreasing the amount of biodiversity. Gach cited Japanese knotweed, an invasive in The Last Green Valley, as an example.

"Instead of having a variety of flower structures and flower colors and blooming times that support all sorts of pollinators throughout the entire season, you have these single plants that only bloom for two weeks at the end of August," she said. "It's starving all those bees that come out early in the season."

Gach designed the gardens at Worcester's Broad Meadow Brook, the largest urban wildlife sanctuary in New

“Imagine if every homeowner was dedicated to planting native species to support native pollinators. What a huge difference that could make.”





M. C. FIELDS



M. C. FIELDS

England, and prioritized the use of native species. Studies have shown that native pollinators prefer to forage on native plants over introduced species. Because native plants and native pollinators have evolved together, native plants provide the right balance of nutrients for the pollinators, and the pollinators have the right “gear” to access nectar and pollen.

“Flowers have different shapes and different structures,” said Gach, “For example, some of them may have a very long neck. Think of honey suckle, that’s adapted for hummingbirds.”

When designing the gardens, Gach was also sure to select plants that bloom at various times, providing pollinators with nutrients for the entire

season. “We’ve chosen plants so that we have things in bloom from early April all the way through October,” she said. “From an early blooming aster to the last goldenrod and everything in between.”

Garden maintenance can also have a big impact on pollinators.

“We definitely avoid pesticides,” said Kenton. Used to kill pests, disease and weeds, pesticides can negatively affect a pollinator’s reproduction, navigation and memory.

Further, leaving behind leaf litter, stems and other organic matter provides habitat for pollinators to nest or overwinter and can attract birds searching for seeds and insects.

“Don’t be sterile in your urge to keep the garden neat and tidy,” said Gach. “Tolerate mess.”

Over the last decade, scientists have become increasingly concerned about pollinator decline. Due to habitat loss and fragmentation, pesticide use and disease, pollinator populations have dwindled or even vanished. But by making small changes to the plants in your backyard, you can support pollinators in The Last Green Valley.

“Every little bit helps,” said Gach. “Imagine if every homeowner was dedicated to planting native species to support native pollinators. What a huge difference that could make.”



To learn more about pollinators visit these resources for creating pollinator-friendly landscapes:

grownativemass.org
homegrownnationalpark.org
plantnative.org

pollinator.org
pollinator-pathway.org
xerces.org

Non-Profit Partner Spotlight

Quiet Corner Garden Club

Members of the Quiet Corner Garden Club do a lot more than talk about flowers. “We’re very civic minded,” said Linda Kaplan, President of the club. “Our main emphasis is civic projects, educating ourselves and the public regarding gardening and wildlife, and being able to give out horticulture scholarships.”

The Quiet Corner Garden Club is a non-profit organization and a member of the Federated Garden Clubs of Connecticut and National Garden Clubs. Founded in 1978 by Woodstock resident Mary Larson, the club was a way for people to gather and learn more about home gardening. Club members used their gardening know-how for projects in Woodstock, including gardening at Roseland Cottage. As membership grew, it provided more funding and people-power to increase volunteering and civic projects.

The club funds most of its projects through an annual plant sale, which takes place in the Woodstock Fairground Ag Building the Saturday before Mother’s Day. The sale had to be canceled in 2020 due to the pandemic, but in 2019, club members donated more than 750 perennial plants they had grown and local nurseries donated vegetables, herbs and annuals to be sold.

Some of the raised funds go towards scholarships, including a scholarship for a high school senior planning to study horticulture, one for a current college student studying horticulture and a scholarship for a garden club member who wants to attend a Master Gardener certificate program. The money raised also funds speakers who educate club members and the public about using native plant varieties, preserving garden veggies and other topics related to gardening and the environment.

The club now has about 90 active members and they work on projects throughout The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor. Members can be found working in public gardens at parks, buildings and arboretums. They donate flower baskets to fire departments and create holiday wreaths for municipal buildings.

“We love the Quiet Corner and want to protect it,” said Linda. “We want to enhance its beauty, support one another and support local businesses.”

For more information about the Quiet Corner Garden Club, visit quietcornergardenclub.org.

— BY HANNA HOLCOMB

Business Partner Spotlight

Select Seeds



Select Seeds, a mail-order seed and plant business based in Union, Connecticut, started in 1987 as a small, “kitchen table” organization focused on antique perennials. Founder Marilyn Barlow grew up in the home her great-grandparents built in the 1850s and was surrounded by the fragrant flower varieties they had planted. But as an adult, she couldn’t find these heirlooms.

“I couldn’t go to my garden center and buy that type of stuff so that’s what really sparked my interest – why couldn’t I buy it and where is it?” said Barlow.

Through extensive research she was able to track down these plant varieties and began to sell them. Now, this second-generation family company offer seeds and plants of annual and perennial varieties and has recently started offering garden vegetables. They even have a research greenhouse in Maine where they test seeds and organic gardening techniques.

Select Seeds also works to make their business sustainable. They collect rainwater in tanks to irrigate plants in the greenhouse. They’ve installed a solar

Volunteer Spotlight JP Babineau

Super volunteer JP Babineau just might be the biggest fan of bald eagles. A Last Green Valley Ranger since 2015, Babineau discovered her love for these majestic birds after moving to Eastern Connecticut and finding an eagle's nest in her backyard. After reporting the nest to the CT Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), she monitored it for several years, walking into the woods with her notebook and camera to observe and diligently document the birds' activities.

In 2015 she participated in DEEP's annual Mid-Winter Eagle Survey, which TLGV helps organize for the region, and met Chief Ranger Bill Reid at the post-survey breakfast. He later asked if she'd like to be a ranger for The Last Green Valley. "I was a tad reluctant because of my age," she said. "But The Last Green Valley was a perfect fit for me. You feel like you belong." Since becoming a ranger, JP has become a familiar face at The Last Green Valley. She attends hikes and paddles, educational events,

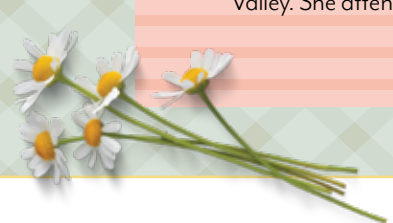
staffs The Last Green Valley's information table at fairs and festivals, and more. When asked if she has a favorite memory of volunteering as a ranger, she couldn't choose. "I love it all," she said. "I can't pick one thing because I love to kayak, I love to hike, I love to be outdoors."

JP has continued to monitor eagle nests throughout The Last Green Valley and has started observing ospreys as well. After spotting a nest in Willimantic, she became a steward to monitor nests through Osprey Nation. JP was very excited that in 2020, both of the nests she monitored produced three successful fledglings. The knowledge JP has gained over the years of monitoring nests has become an important part of TLGV's efforts to educate people about bald eagles.

When JP ventures to the outdoors, she's ready to observe and learn. "Every time I'm outside somewhere it seems like I learn something new," she said. "It's a plethora of information."

She is grateful for all of the information that other TLGV volunteers and participants have shared with her and the community that she's become a part of. "The people that I have met through TLGV have been wonderful," she said. "I have not met one person who has not been willing to pass down some information that I find important."

— BY HANNA HOLCOMB



panel to help reduce their carbon footprint. They grow their plants with organic methods, using natural pest predator insects rather than insecticides. And they ship their plants in 100% recycled or reclaimed plastics that the recipient can recycle as well.

Select Seeds is also happy to support horticultural learning experiences. "We love to give free seeds to children's groups," said Barlow.

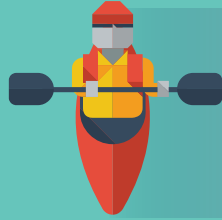
During the pandemic, many people have turned to gardening, a trend that Barlow hopes will continue. Planting diverse



and native plants helps to support local pollinators, and Select Seeds has a wide variety of plants and seeds to choose from, including a whole selection of native

pollinator favorites. For more information about Select Seeds' offerings, visit selectseeds.com.

— BY HANNA HOLCOMB



41

VOLUNTEERS MONITORED **59**
stream, lake and pond sites for
water quality

2020
BY THE NUMBER

18,760 WALKTOBER
PARTICIPANTS



15

NEW VIRTUAL WALKTOBER
experiences drew **3,522** views

26

ORGANIZATIONS
involved in capacity building projects with TLGV



12

MILES OF
TRAIL
assessed
for people
with
mobility
challenges

4 SO
TASTES
farm-to
serve



1,221,012 TOTAL IMPRESSIONS
on TLGV's social media sites



56

\$22,717 GRANT AWARDS
TO **19 ORGANIZATIONS**



38 VOLUNTEERS SIGHTED **34** BALD EAGLES
during the annual mid-winter eagle survey

88

ATTENDEES
at Thames
River Basin
partnership
educational
programs

8

LOCATIONS
on the
new TLGV
Letterboxing
Trail



3,500
WOODLAND
ACRES
are under
contract for forest
management plans
with bird
habitat
assessments

SOLD-OUT
OF THE VALLEY
potable dinners
and **400** people

“Walktober Redux” launched
with **8 EVENTS**

30

ACORN  ADVENTURE
and member program
attendees



232 VOLUNTEERS
from 8 organizations picked up
34,962 pounds of trash

\$25,000 GRANT AWARDED TO TLGV FOR A “WIDE OPEN” CAMPAIGN



"My family loves exploring The Last Green Valley, especially enjoying the hidden pockets of tranquility, such as Diana's Pool in Chaplin." TLGV Board Member Wayde Schmidt, pictured above with his wife and daughter, at Diana's Pool in Chaplin, CT

"I love the wide variety of recreational activities, in all seasons, and the opportunity to explore the history and culture of this diverse region." TLGV Board Member Sandra Gibson-Quigley, pictured above right, sledding at East Brimfield Dam in Sturbridge, MA



TLGV 2020 Annual Meeting Recap

Members and friends of The Last Green Valley, Inc. (TLGV) gathered in July 2020 for a physically and socially distanced Annual Meeting in Creaser Park, Coventry, CT. It was a "BYOE – Bring Your Own Everything" meeting. Attendees were asked to bring lawn chairs, drinks and snacks and to wear masks.

Prior to the meeting, TLGV Board member **Eric Thomas** led a tour of the 57-acre park, which was originally a dairy farm. Today the park has a large pavilion and picnic area, four trails for passive recreation, such as hiking, fishing, bird watching and biking, ponds for fishing and a new nine-hole disc golf course.

Board Chair **Mike Nelson** welcomed everyone to the business meeting, thanking attendees for their support during a challenging year. Given state restrictions on indoor, in-person gatherings, the first order of business was to amend TLGV's bylaws to allow for remote meetings.

Elections followed, with a full slate of nominees. Current board member **Karyn DiBonaventura** of Pomfret, CT, was re-elected to the board. She is the owner of Longmeadow Automotive and a passionate nature photographer whose images are often featured in TLGV publications.

Wayde Schmidt of Pomfret, CT also returned to the board after a short hiatus. He has a Ph.D. in physical and analytical chemistry and an M.B.A. in Management Technology and is a TLGV Volunteer Ranger.

The following first-time board members were also elected:

Kwasi Acheampong from Brimfield, MA, is the founder of Our Bright Future, Inc., a non-profit dedicated to empowering youth and developing bright leaders through robotics, sports and academic guidance.

Ann-Marie Aubrey of Killingly, CT, is the town's Director of Planning and Development. Aubrey brings to the board years of land use planning and legal experience.

Kent Boudreau of Union, CT, is a retired pilot who says The Last Green Valley really is that dark spot in the middle of the east coast's urban sprawl and an important navigation marker for pilots. Boudreau is an avid hiker.

Rick Canavan of Pomfret, CT, is an environmental scientist with 25 years of experience, specializing in wetlands and water quality.

Sandra Gibson-Quigley of Sturbridge, MA, is a retired teacher with expertise in cultural history and extensive experience on municipal boards and committees.

Christopher Hadis of Oxford, MA, has a public health and safety background and is an animal health inspector with the Massachusetts Department of Agriculture.

Courtney Squire of Pomfret, CT, is the owner of Unbound Glory Farm with extensive experience in the retail food market.

Three Officer vacancies were also filled:

Myra Ambrogi from Sterling, CT, was elected Vice-Chair. Myra works for the Town of Plainfield and has been a member of the TLGV Executive Committee as our Secretary since 2013.

Lisa Hayden from Sturbridge, MA, was elected Secretary. Lisa is a forestry landowner outreach specialist and has been on the TLGV Board since 2017.

Marty Nieski from Woodstock, CT, was elected Treasurer. Marty is a retired successful business owner and has been on the TLGV Board since 2015.

The final order of business was to recognize and thank retiring board members **Steve Ayer, Elsie Bisset, Tom Dufresne, Lou Dzialo, Cody Elvin, Jennifer Kaufman** and **Joan St. Ament** for a combined total of 47 years of experience on the Board.



TLGV Staff Changes in 2020

Nick Velles Joins TLGV Staff as Sharon Wakely Retires

We welcomed Nick Velles in June 2020 as TLGV's new financial officer. Nick is a lifelong resident of The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor and a graduate of UConn. He is a Certified Public Accountant and has worked for accounting and real estate firms. Nick currently lives in Sprague and grew up in Franklin. He serves on the Sprague Planning and Zoning Commission and has been a girls youth basketball coach. His civic-mindedness led him to seek this position with TLGV and we are thrilled to have him!

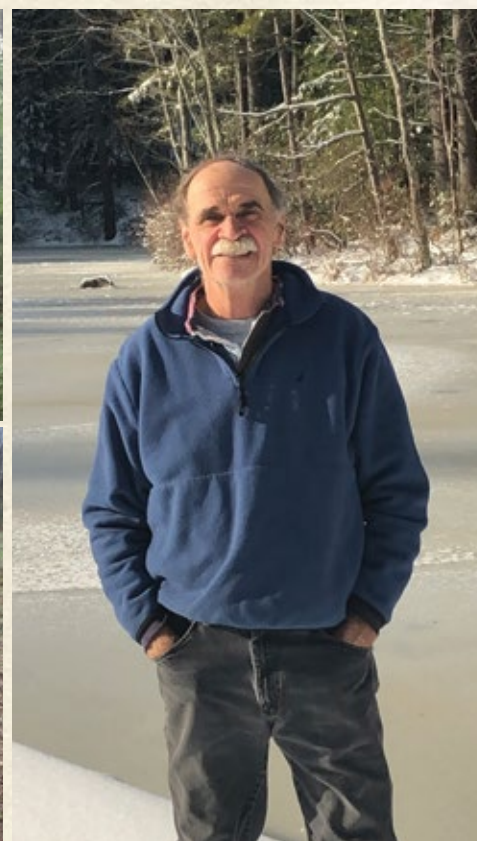
As happy as we are to have Nick on the TLGV team, we were sad to see Sharon Wakely retire after more than 12 years as TLGV's financial officer. We valued her integrity, pragmatic good judgment, optimism, warm personality, sense of humor, dedication and work ethic. Her sound fiscal management left TLGV in a much more stable and secure financial position than when she started. A native New Yorker, Sharon and her husband Paul raised their children here in The Last Green Valley, and her love for the place showed in her work every day.

**Thank you, Sharon, for all you've done
for The Last Green Valley!**

"I love living in The Last Green Valley because of its commitment to preserving open space, protecting our natural resources and promoting our agricultural heritage. It is the best place to live, the perfect setting for our farm and offers vast opportunities for outdoor play and recreation!" TLGV Board Member Courtney Squire, pictured above right with her dog.

"After living in several areas around the world, my wife, Marie and I came back to our roots of New England. The Last Green Valley is a special place where we can feel at home in the outdoors and enjoy the beauty and tranquility of every season." TLGV Board Member Kent Boudreau, pictured far right in Union, CT

"I love the Last Green Valley for its trails, hills and valleys. I love the different natural spaces, small town centers and historic hill tops." TLGV Board Member Rick Canavan, pictured below right with his children and dog in Pomfret, CT



TLGV Capacity Building *Grants*



As COVID-19 restrictions tightened in 2020, we realized we could not conduct business as usual and had to adapt quickly to a virtual world. To support our non-profit partners who were also struggling with these challenges, we pivoted our grant program to award more than \$22,000 to help them build capacity during challenging times. TLGV provided up to \$1,500 for equipment, services and training to help organizations improve communication or provide alternative means of engaging the public. All grants were matched by at least 1:1 cash or in-kind contributions and applications were accepted on a rolling basis. Non-profit 501(c) organizations with missions aligned with the vision and strategies of the management plan for The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor were eligible.

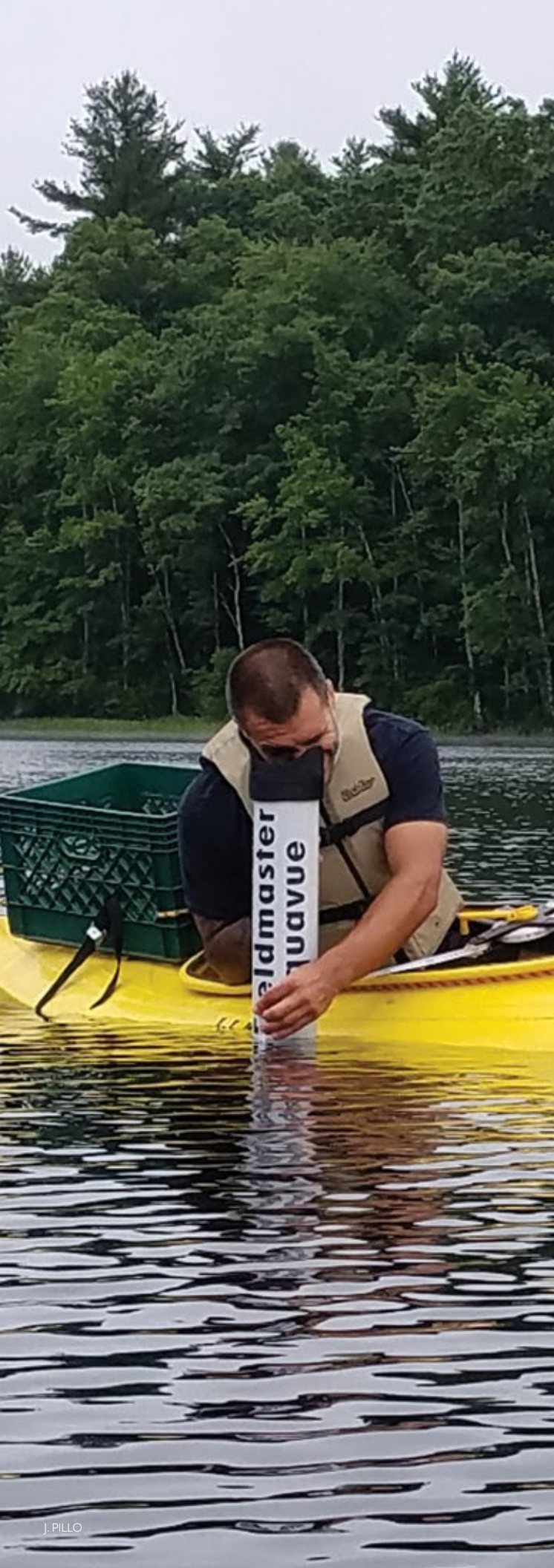
TLGV grants were awarded to the following organizations:

- ✿ Avalonia Land Conservancy in Mystic, CT: \$1,500 to purchase social media software and computer equipment to provide Zoom meetings.
- ✿ Chamberlin Mill in Woodstock, CT: \$962 to purchase software and training to produce a digital newsletter for the Chamberlin Mill, Inc.
- ✿ CliCk in Windham, CT: \$1,064 for creation of an outdoor “open air” learning space in Willimantic.
- ✿ Connecticut Daughters of the American Revolution in Lebanon, CT: \$853 to hire a videographer/marketing company to produce a video to promote the history of the Wadsworth Stable.
- ✿ Eastern Connecticut Conservation District in Norwich, CT: \$1,500 to purchase and train staff on a social media platform to enhance and coordinate their social media capabilities.
- ✿ Franklin Historical Society/Ashbel Woodward Museum in Franklin, CT: \$1,000 to upgrade a computer, purchase domain name for website, purchase archival storage, a photo light box and associated equipment and install countertop area for digitizing photos.



- Girl Scouts of Connecticut in Lebanon, CT: \$1,500 for equipment to enhance virtual learning at the environmental lab at Camp Laurel.
- Hitchcock Free Academy in Brimfield, MA: \$1,500 to purchase computers and video equipment and to improve internet capabilities to better serve their public by offering online training and computer classes.
- Joshua's Tract Conservation and Historic Trust in Mansfield, CT: \$500 for the purchase of equipment and software to increase their ability to film and promote their properties throughout the region.
- Lebanon Historical Society in Lebanon, CT: \$800 to install interpretive signage at various Lebanon historical buildings.
- Mansfield Historical Society in Mansfield, CT: \$750 to purchase a digital camera and equipment to expand their website and social media presence.
- The Mill Museum in Willimantic, CT: \$1,490 to develop and implement online educational programs to promote the region's history.
- Norwich Historical Society in Norwich, CT: \$1,500 for the production of three videos to improve public awareness of Norwich history and increase NHS and Leffingwell House Museum's storytelling capabilities.
- Opacum Land Trust in Sturbridge, MA: \$1,500 to improve and expand remote communications through their website and other digital platforms to better promote their properties.
- Our Bright Future in Charlton, MA: \$1,048 to purchase a printer/scanner and video camera to reduce costs, improve their remote abilities and expand awareness of the organization.
- Pomfret Historical Society in Pomfret, CT: \$750 for equipment to digitize images and documents for use on their website.
- Windham ARTS in Windham, CT: \$1,500 to upgrade their website and purchase video equipment, software and provide training to produce videos to promote local artists.
- Windham County 4-H Foundation, Pomfret, CT: \$1,500 for the purchase of equipment to offer virtual learning experiences.
- Windham Regional Chamber of Commerce, Inc. in Windham, CT: \$1,500 to upgrade their website and purchase video equipment, software and provide training to produce videos for local businesses.





Water Quality Monitoring Volunteers

Persist Despite the Pandemic

TLGV's water quality monitoring volunteers are a resourceful and passionate crew. Even with special safety protocols including smaller team sizes, prohibitions on ride sharing, mandatory mask wearing, social distancing, use of gloves and hand sanitizer and restrictions on equipment sharing, many of our volunteers succeeded in collecting data from rivers, streams and lakes throughout The Last Green Valley.

Five volunteers contributed 47 hours to monitor the temperature of 10 streams, looking to document the dwindling number of cold-water streams in our region. Cold water streams provide important habitat for native species, such as brook trout.

Six volunteers collected 90 samples from seven locations in the Natchaug River watershed as part of a weekly effort to document E. coli levels. E. coli is a common bacteria found in the gut of all warm blooded animals, but its presence in water indicates contamination by fecal material. Unfortunately, the team found high E. coli levels in Bungee Brook (Eastford and Woodstock), which requires further investigation into the source.

Volunteers from the French River Connection also monitored for E. coli at 10 locations in the French River watershed in Massachusetts. Elevated E. coli levels followed rain events, implicating stormwater runoff and non-point source pollution as the source of the bacteria.

Lake monitoring was limited in 2020 as volunteer team members could not work in close proximity to each other from a boat. However, five volunteers working on their own contributed 65 hours collecting surface water grab samples and secchi disk readings from Webster Lake, as well as continuing their long-standing monitoring of Webster Lake's tributary streams.

A secchi disk is a black and white disk that is lowered into a lake or pond and is used to determine water clarity. In addition to the monitoring in Webster Lake, four volunteers collected secchi disk data

G. Hoehne taking secchi disk readings from his kayak in Black Pond, Woodstock.



K. Boushee, L. Golas, S. Whiston and P. Shaffer monitoring for *E. coli* in the Natchaug River watershed.

from six lakes in the Natchaug watershed as well as Amos Lake and Gardner Lake.

A Charlton volunteer was able to conduct shoreline monitoring in South Charlton Reservoir, as well as two other lakes in Charlton, MA. The data was shared at Charlton Lake and Pond Association meetings, representing 27 hours of effort.

TLGV also participated in a modified cyanobacteria monitoring project by collecting grab samples from lake and pond shorelines. Cyanobacteria, also referred to as blue-green algae, are microscopic organisms that can live in fresh water. They multiply and “bloom” when the water is warm, stagnant and rich in nutrients from sources such as fertilizer runoff or septic tank overflows. Some of the blooms can produce cyanotoxins that are harmful to people, wildlife (and pets) and the environment.

Seven volunteers collected samples and photo-documented bloom events in four lakes during the summer of 2020. The samples were submitted to EPA for processing and identification, and the results will be used to better understand the threats from potentially harmful algal blooms across the northeast. Jean Pillo, TLGV Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program Coordinator, was invited to represent TLGV at the annual Northeast Aquatic Biologist

conference in Newport, RI, where she gave a presentation entitled, “Monitoring for Harmful Algae Blooms Using Citizen Scientists.”

Finally, six volunteers monitored five locations for specific bugs that live along stream bottoms and are indicators of stream

health. The volunteers collect, sort and identify the bugs and submit samples to CT DEEP for verification. Over the years, TLGV volunteers have made important contributions to this monitoring program, called “Riffle Bioassessment for Volunteers,” documenting many stream segments with excellent water quality.

The TLGV water quality monitoring program is truly a collaborative effort that could not succeed without its dedicated volunteers and partner organizations including the French River Connection, Webster Lake Association, Charlton Lake and Pond Association, Amos Lake Association, Gardner Lake Authority, Roseland Park, Lebanon Inland Wetlands Commission, CT Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection, Eastern Highlands Health District, CT Dept. of Public Health, MA Dept. of Environmental Protection, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Eastern CT Conservation District.



L. Miller sampling for cyanobacteria in Roseland Lake, Woodstock.



Tastes of the Valley

HARVEST TOUR

In 2020 TLGV turned its largest fundraiser into four farm-to-table events benefiting farms, orchards, vintners, brewers and restaurants in The Last Green Valley.





The Tastes of the Valley Harvest Tour served more than 400 meals, selling out each stop of the tour. The stops on the tour were:

September 17 at Grill 37 in Pomfret, CT. The menu featured corn chowder with corn fritters, maple bourbon pork on a corn cake and corn ice cream on a sugar waffle with salted caramel and candied bacon.

September 24 at the Inn at Woodstock Hill in Woodstock, CT. The menu featured chilled peaches and cream soup, strip steak with vegetable fritter, topped with fresh pico de gallo and apple berry crisp.

October 1 at Willimantic Brewing Company in Willimantic, CT. The menu featured artisan local burger served on a brewers' spent grain fire grilled bun, pickled vegetables and micro-greens with a cucumber gazpacho shooter, smoked pulled chicken presented over winter squash finished with a sweet and spicy green onion butter sauce and kale and zucchini bread served with lavender ice cream.

October 8 at The Publick House in Sturbridge, MA. The menu featured roasted wedge of sugar pumpkin with maple vinaigrette and toasted pepitas, somewhat traditional turkey dinner with sautee of turnip and fall squashes, potato puree and pan dripped gravy and caramelized pear and yogurt panna cotta.

Thank you to our 2020 Sponsors:

PLATINUM - Fiberoptics Technology, Inc., Rebecca M. Harvey and UNFI Helping Hands Committee;

GOLD - Keith & Elaine Knowlton and Putnam Bank, a division of Centreville Bank;

SILVER - Cornerstone Bank, Titan Energy and Village Electric;

BRONZE - Gerardi Insurance Services, Inc., Groton Open Space Association, Marjorie L. Hoskin and Jewett City Savings Bank.

Thank you to our Participating Farms:

Apis Verdi Farm, Baldwin Brook Farm, Barton Farms, Blackmer Farm, Bright Acres Farm Sugar House, Buddha's Bees Apiary, Buell's Orchard, Cloverleigh Farm, Crooked Creek Farm, Echo Farm, Ekonk Hill Turkey Farm, Fairholm Farm, Fort Hill Farms, Himmelstein Homestead Farm, Horse Listeners Orchard, Lapsley Orchard, Maple Lane Farms, New Boston Beef, Organic World Farms, Taylor Brooke Winery, Tiny Acre Farm, Unbound Glory Homestead Farm and Woodstock Creamery.



Are Your Woods *Bird Friendly?*



The Last Green Valley sits within the Southern New England Heritage Forest, a 1.49 million-acre unfragmented forest corridor stretching along the Connecticut and Rhode Island border to the Quabbin Reservoir in Massachusetts. Bounded by more heavily urbanized areas, with more than one million nearby residents, the SNEHF has an astonishing 76 percent forest cover and offers one of the last viable wildlife corridors from southern to northern New England.

Additional funds will be available in 2022 for landowners who would like to improve woodland habitat for important bird species and manage their woods for wildlife and people. To date, more than 70 landowners with approximately 4,000 woodland acres have applied.

A professional forester will walk your property and coordinate with the Audubon society in your state to produce a high-quality forest management plan with a bird habitat assessment of your woods. The plan will recommend measures you can take to improve the health of your woods. The plan will meet federal and state requirements and may be used to apply for property tax reductions at the local level (where applicable).

Grant funds are available to pay for most of the forester's costs and to completely fund the bird habitat assessments. Landowners will be responsible for choosing a forester from an approved list and paying for a percentage of the total cost of the forest management plan. This program is ideally suited for landowners who have never had a forest management plan and own more than 10 acres of woodlands.

Program requirements vary by state. To get started, contact the lead partner for your state. The partners can assist with the application process. The application deadline for Connecticut and Rhode Island is December 31, 2021, but we recommend you begin the process early to ensure the application is complete before the deadline. Massachusetts is accepting applications on a rolling basis so you may apply at any time.

Visit thelastgreenvally.org for links to the application materials, including a list of communities in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island that are included in this program.

Contacts:

For Connecticut Projects – Bill Reid, 860-774-3300; bill@tlgv.org

For Massachusetts Projects – Christopher Riely, 401-225-6135; christopher@sweetbitchconsulting.com

For Rhode Island Projects – Kate Sayles, 401-934-0840; ksayles.nricd@gmail.com

Supporting partners for this project include: MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Providence Water, Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Hull Forest Products, Thames River Basin Partnership, New England Forestry Foundation, Eastern CT Conservation District, Norcross Wildlife Foundation, RI Division of Forest Management, RI Woodland Partnership, Harvard Forest, Yale Sustaining Family Forests Institute, Audubon Connecticut, Mass Audubon and Audubon Rhode Island.

The program is part of the \$6.1 million Southern New England Heritage Forest conservation effort, an unprecedented three-state collaboration made possible through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The NRCS funding is being matched by project partners, bringing the economic infusion into the region to \$12.2 million.

You Matter Most

That was the phrase that guided everything we did at TLGV as the uncertainty of Covid-19 settled over the National Heritage Corridor and the country. Recognizing that without our members and our partners we would never be able to do the work of caring for, enjoying and passing on The Last Green Valley, we launched the pay-what-you-can membership and extended all of our business and non-profit partnerships for one year. We did not want finances to stand in the way of anyone's ability to support the National Heritage Corridor.

Many of you chose to continue paying the traditional membership prices. Some of you decided to augment your membership with additional donations, and there were others who took full advantage of the opportunity to pay what was most comfortable for them. No matter the level, we are grateful for your support as it energizes and shapes our work.

While traditional programs, such as Walktober, were smaller than in past years, membership increased in 2020. We know

more people were able to enjoy The Last Green Valley, and we plan to continue our pay-what-you-can membership program into the future.

As much as wanting to ensure our individuals and families were cared for, our partner businesses and non-profits were just as important. Most of them could not carry on their work and some are still operating in a limited fashion.

"On behalf of the Lisbon Historical Society, and myself, thank you for the additional year of membership with The Last Green Valley," said Ken Mahler, treasurer and chairperson of buildings and grounds for the Lisbon Historical Society. "This indirect gift is greatly appreciated! This past year has indeed been a very stressful one for non-profits."

Thank you, Ken, and thank you to all our business and non-profit partners for the work you do to care for and pass on The Last Green Valley for future generations to enjoy. 

Thank You to All of The Last Green Valley's Corporate, Non-profit and Government Sponsors and Partners From 01/01/2020 – 12/31/2020

FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDING

National Park Service, National
Heritage Areas Program
State of Connecticut, Eastern
Regional Tourism Office
UConn Extension, Tolland County
Extension Center
US Dept. of Agriculture, Natural
Resources Conservation
Service, Regional Conservation
Partnership Program

CASH CONTRIBUTIONS

\$10,000+

Community Foundation
of Eastern Connecticut

\$2,500+

Putnam Area Foundation, Inc.
Putnam Bank,
a division of Centreville Bank

\$1,000+

Anonymous
bankHometown
Cornerstone Bank
Ivanhoe Tool & Die Co., Inc.
Jewett City Savings Bank
UNFI, Helping Hands Committee

\$500+

Pfizer Foundation Matching
Gifts Program
Rampco Construction Co., Inc.
Titan Energy
Town of Sterling
Village Electric

\$250+

Gerardi Insurance Services, Inc.
Groton Open Space Association
Norwich Historical Society
Town of Hampton
Town of Pomfret

\$100+

AbbVie
Charter Oak Federal Credit Union
Dudley Women's Club
Lawrence Real Estate
Associates, Inc.*
Quiet Corner Camera Club
Town of Ashford
Town of Lisbon
United Health Group/ Benevity
Community Impact Fund

\$50+

Plainfield Woman's Club
Sturbridge Lions Club

\$25+

Chase Graphics
Raytheon Technologies/Benevity
Community Impact

ENHANCED PARTNERS

Allen Hill Farm, LLC
Anonymous^
Atlantic Broadband
Azuluna Foods
bankHometown
Bed & Breakfasts of
Mystic Coast & Country
Berkshire Bank
Blackmer Farm
Bogey Lanes
Boy Scouts of America
- CT Rivers Council
Bright Acres Farm Sugar House
Brooklyn Historical Society
Byrnes Insurance Agency
Capen Hill Nature Sanctuary
Cedar Ledge Tree Farm
Chamber of Central Mass South
Chamber of Commerce
of Eastern CT, Inc.
Cherry Ledge Farm
Columbia Canoe Club
Cook's Farm Orchard

Cornerstone Bank
Country Bank
Coventry Historical Society^
Daughters of the Holy Spirit
Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center
ECFLA/Wolf Den Land Trust
Eileen D. Brown Charitable Trust
Ekonk Hill Turkey Farm^
Enchanted Jewelry CT LLC
Farm Credit East
Finnish-American Heritage Society^
Florence Griswold Museum
Fort Hill Farms & Gardens, LLC
French River Connection
Fresh Please
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Hay Burr Inn
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 AM 1700
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 Northeastern CT Chamber
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 Optical Heritage Museum, Inc.^
 Palmer Arboretum^
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 Pine Hill Alpaca Farm
 Pomfret Proprietors

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 Windham Textile & History Museum
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The Chronicle
The Day
Hartford Courant
 HealthQuest
 Heritage Information Radio, AM1700
 Horse Listeners Orchard
 Key Bank
 Lapsley Orchard
Norwich Bulletin
Norwich Magazine
Putnam Town Crier/Northeast Ledger
Putnam Traveler
 Town of Coventry
 US Census Bureau
Villager Newspapers
 WILI Radio/The Nutmeg Broadcasting
 Company
 WINY-AM Radio Station
 Woodstock Creamery at Valleyside Farm
The Yankee Xpress



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The Last Green Valley, Inc.

Statement of Financial Position as of September 30, 2020

From Audited Financial Statements – Copies Available Upon Request

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash	\$ 309,636
Certificates of Deposit	325,858
Grants Receivable	130,553
Investments	188,439
Inventory	729
Prepaid Expenses	4,941
Total Current Assets	960,156

PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

Motor Vehicle	25,488
Machinery and Equipment	6,739
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(10,454)
Net Property and Equipment	21,773

TOTAL ASSETS \$ 981,929

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	\$ 3,575
Accrued Expenses	48,793
Advances from Grantors	15,423
Grants Awarded	61,842
Total Current Liabilities	129,633

TOTAL LIABILITIES 129,633

NET ASSETS

Without Donor Restrictions	821,143
With Donor Restrictions	31,153
TOTAL NET ASSETS	852,296

TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS \$ 981,929

CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

REVENUES AND GAINS

(FY 2020 INCOME SOURCES)

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
National Park Service	\$ 637,339	\$ -	\$ 637,339
Sales – Merchandise	1,184	-	1,184
Grants	149,760	-	149,760
Contributions	114,951	4,220	119,171
Memberships/Fees	17,875	-	17,875
Interest Income	9,660	-	9,660
Investment Gain	11,824	-	11,824
Advertising Income	8,625	-	8,625
Fundraising Event	20,980	-	20,980
TOTAL REVENUE	972,198	4,220	976,418

EXPENSES (FY 2020 EXPENSE ALLOCATIONS)

Program Services	764,279	-	764,279
Management & General	86,911	-	86,911
Fundraising	30,211	-	30,211
TOTAL EXPENSES	881,401	-	881,401

INCREASE NET ASSETS \$ 90,797 \$ 4,220 \$ 95,017

NET ASSETS –

Beginning of Year \$ 730,346 \$ 26,933 \$ 757,279

NET ASSETS –

End of Year \$ 821,143 \$ 31,153 \$ 852,296

Thank You to All of The Last Green Valley's Individual and Family Members and Donors From 01/01/2020 – 12/31/2020

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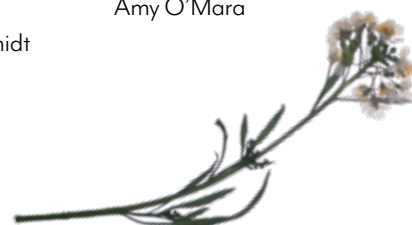
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