

NATIONAL
HERITAGE
CORRIDOR

In Touch

THE
last
green
valley™

with The Last Green Valley

SPRING 2022

MEMBER MAGAZINE

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After Two Years That
Changed the World

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To our Members, Donors, Partners and Sponsors,

Did you know The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor is one of 55 national heritage areas around the country?

Every heritage area is unique and charged with telling nationally important stories that celebrate our nation's diverse cultural and natural heritage. As National Park Service partners, heritage areas such as The Last Green Valley have the ability to extend the benefits of significant natural and cultural resources to all Americans, without the need for federal land ownership or control. Heritage areas leverage small federal investments with community support to engage in preservation, interpretation, heritage tourism, education, grantmaking, conservation, recreation and advocacy, all tailored to the needs and dreams of the communities they serve.

As one of the first heritage areas designated by Congress in 1994, we are proud that our success helped inspire the innovative public-private partnership model adopted by national heritage areas nationwide.

Some of you may not know that every few years, federal funding authorization for The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor must be renewed. This past year, The Last Green Valley and 30 other heritage areas were in danger of losing their authorization when many routine bills stalled in Congress. But thanks to the strong support of our Congressional delegation, and to the tremendous support of our partners, who submitted 50 letters on our behalf, federal funding authorization for The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor was extended until 2023.

Even more important, pending legislation will authorize federal funding for all national heritage areas through 2037, confirming the strength and promise of the heritage area program well into the future.

As we look towards 2037, we are mindful that the future of The Last Green Valley is in our hands. This issue of *In Touch* highlights many of the challenges we will face if the heart and soul of The Last Green Valley are to remain intact. Yet we know that with your support, we can work together to care for and pass on The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor for future generations to enjoy. 🍁


Lois Bruinooge, Executive Director





Looking Ahead

After Two Years
That Changed the World

Two years ago, you held an edition of *In Touch* that looked back at the first 25 years of the National Heritage Corridor.

At the time, The Last Green Valley, Inc. (TLGV) had just completed more than a year of listening tours, asking you, our friends, partners, neighbors, supporters and donors what the next 25 years should be for the organization and the Heritage Corridor.

As that edition of *In Touch* was published, everything began to change in March 2020. The pandemic we all first thought might be a two-week or so break from the rigors of daily life stretched into months and beyond. But the one thing we could all do was go outside. And we did. We realized the wide-open spaces of The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor offered us a peace and solace that millions of people who live less than two hours from us could not enjoy. We were lucky. We had fresh air and miles of trails to explore without fearing we might get caught in a crowd.

The last two years have forced us all to reflect, and the things that concerned so many of us as critical to the future have shifted. Two years ago litter was top of mind for almost everyone during our listening sessions. We still have growing numbers of you asking for cleanup funds, yet litter is not at the top of most minds.

Instead, we are all contemplating how to retain what we have while evolving to meet the realities of a new world.

We have wide open spaces that others covet. How do we protect them and yet reap the economic benefits of visitors? How do we ensure everyone in every community has access to fresh air, clean water and the wonders of nature?

We are steeped in history and yet only a fraction of it has been told. How do we uncover the truths of who truly built this region?

We are surrounded by local farms and yet Connecticut and Massachusetts only have access to a few days'

worth of fresh food. How do we support our local food producers?

Children's lives were severely disrupted these past two years. How do we support them and create new opportunities for them to connect with nature, with each other and to discover their passions?

During the pandemic, the TLGV Board of Directors took on the task of developing a new strategic plan for the organization based on both the sentiments we learned during the listening tour and the new reality we and so many of our partner organizations are dealing with. The Board has fully committed TLGV to collaborating and strengthening partnerships, forging community connections, increasing engagement among diverse audiences and leading the way as an advocate for The Last Green Valley's future.

TLGV must ensure programs we have been doing for years, such as water quality monitoring, not only continue but expand, and newer efforts, such as light pollution reduction, continue to evolve. And, of course, there are iconic programs such as Walktober, entering its 32nd year of shining a light on the National Heritage Corridor, that must remain vibrant and enticing to help stoke the passion for this beautiful region in even more people. But we need to do more to foster community, embrace new friends, and blaze the way towards The Last Green Valley's future.

What follows is a snapshot of where we are and what we face as an organization, but more importantly, as a National Heritage Corridor of 300,000 people living in a region that is both iconic and increasingly rare. Please join us as we enjoy and care for The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor and ensure it is here to pass on for generations to come.





Fostering Connections

Creating Healthy
Communities
through Farming

Yoko Takemura and Alex Carpenter found a farm and a home in the land between two waterways.

They hadn't planned to settle in The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor. They were searching for farmland and a combination of high prices and hard-to-find land in other regions led them to eastern Connecticut. Proximity to the northeast's largest cities convinced them to look here, and it did not take long once they viewed a property in Putnam to convince them they had found the place to build their farm.

"When we came here to take a look, we just really liked what we saw and then a bald eagle flew over our heads and that convinced us," Takemura said. "We felt a connection to this land. It was a big thing."

Nestled between what we know today as the Five Mile River and Mary Brown Brook, Carpenter said the Nipmuc name for the river, Assawaga, became the perfect name for the farm.

Takemura and Carpenter farm about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre of their land, using organic, no till practices. They produce vegetables, many from Takemura's native Japan, such as the greens mizuna and komatsuna. They open their farm stand one day every weekend and go to a farmer's market in Brookline, MA every other weekend.

Takemura and Carpenter represent the future of farming, a couple whose love of the environment is as much a part of their farming practice as their desire to grow food.

CT Department of Agriculture Commissioner Bryan Hurlburt said the pandemic showed everyone in the northeast how important it is to have local farms.

"There are only three days of fresh food east of the Hudson River," Hurlburt said. "We are at the end of the line for so many products, and we have seen that if something happens to the supply chain, we have shortages."

Farming in The Last Green Valley is changing, just as it is all over New England. Hurlburt said the old mainstay, dairy farming, has become more concentrated with the same number of cows living on fewer farms. The future of dairy farming involves innovation and a return to their roots. Before the pandemic there were two milk delivery businesses in Connecticut and today there are six, Hurlburt said.

Jiff Martin, an educator in food systems for the UConn Cooperative Extension in northeastern Connecticut, said the last two years have put a greater emphasis on locally grown food, but they have also been helpful to the farmers.

"We've heard more farmers talk about being able to manage their direct-to-consumer sales better than before," Martin said. "They



are working together and have had to rethink how they do business, and for most of them there have been some positive benefits."

That is a sentiment Takemura and Carpenter echo. "Covid did present us with a new opportunity," Takemura said. "It was a blessing really," Carpenter added. "We put an emphasis on our farm stand, and it has been a great benefit to us."

Martin said the pandemic directly increased the number of home gardens and family homesteads, operations where families are producing their own food. But it has also made more obvious a problem new Connecticut and Massachusetts farmers face — a lack of affordable access to farmland.

According to the 2021 Massachusetts Agriculture Snapshot, both states are among the most expensive per acre of farmland, with Massachusetts prices averaging \$11,300 per acre and Connecticut averaging \$12,000 per acre. The national average is \$3,600 per acre. Connecting farmers to available land is a critical component of creating more food security, Hurlburt said.

There is an additional issue new farmers face throughout New England — finding land and being plugged into the existing community of farmers to know when opportunities arise. Takemura and Carpenter were willing to take open land without any infrastructure. Their land had been a hayfield for decades, but nothing else. They built their barn, erected a high tunnel and even had to drill the well.

Courtney Squire of Unbound Glory Farm and a TLGV board member, said there are many farmers who have been on their land for generations living throughout the National Heritage Corridor. That can be both intimidating and challenging for new farmers to know who to connect with to build community. However, the growing number of new farmers is helping.

Martin's work is, in part, to help bridge the gap. She and the staff at UConn Extension launched an effort to help northeastern Connecticut farmers brand themselves. The work brought both newer farmers and those who have been on their land for generations together in a new way to find their commonalities. Grown ConNECTed is the new brand and one that consumers should see at farmers markets in the Heritage Corridor and beyond.

"That direct-to-consumer effort has grown and is really important," Martin said. "It helps connect the consumers to their food, but also to the land. Agri-tourism is also growing and it's also an important piece of a bigger picture to help make farming viable business."

Martin and Hurlburt both recognize the economic challenges faced by farmers. Being vital does not mean the business side is viable, Hurlburt said. But consumers have recognized the value of paying more for locally grown food that is more nutritious and tastes better. The challenge now, is to continue to build the momentum, and it is a challenge he and the Department of Agriculture takes seriously, he said.


Martin said there is an added benefit to local farming that many

people may not realize. Farmers are stewards of the land, she said. Their livelihood requires the land to be productive. "I think more and more farmers are recognizing their role in stewarding the land on many levels," Martin said.

Squire and her husband, Adam, practice no till, regenerative farming, as do Takemura and Carpenter. One look and one smell of the dirt the couples plant in will make the distinction obvious. The soil is dark and moist regardless of the last rain and filled with life, seen and unseen. It smells rich and connects with us almost viscerally. Adam Squire will tell you smelling soil is his favorite thing to do. And that smell, of healthy earth, has been shown to trigger incredible and positive chemical reactions in the human brain.



Takemura does not stop smiling as she talks about how she ended up a farmer. She had lived and traveled the world but decided in 2012 to leave Japan to study environmental sustainability at a master's degree program in New York City. Living in Brooklyn, NY she found a community garden and a CSA that engaged her with the environment in a new way.

"I distinctly remember leaving Japan telling my family I was going to save the planet," Takemura said. "I can't think of any better way to do it than what we are doing here on the farm." 

Yoko Takemura and Alex Carpenter made a commitment to themselves that Assawaga Farm would be part of the community.

While the pandemic has driven many residents to connect with local farms, Takemura and Carpenter recognize farm fresh foods are not often accessible to all people. Some farmers markets accept EBT and Snap benefits, which allow families who meet low income thresholds to access the offerings at market. But most local farms are unable to take those benefits at their own farm stands.

Takemura said she and Carpenter looked into it, but because one of the two markets offered in their town of Putnam accepts the benefits, they cannot. Instead the couple has created a coupon program. With the upcoming season Assawaga Farm will offer pick-your-own flowers and herbs. The proceeds from those sales will fund coupons that will be offered to lower income families in Putnam.

"We want to bring a more diverse group of people to the farm," Takemura said. "It's a lot of extra work, but we think it's important."

"It will be really cool if it works," Carpenter said. "It will be the community supporting the community. It could have a big impact. I think we've seen how important it is to have support within a community. This is a way for us to keep it going."





Building a Foundation with Healthy Soil

Healthy soil translates to healthier crops and healthier waterways. It means more productive farmlands, less soil erosion and, eventually, savings to farmers who are not purchasing fertilizers and chemicals to support their crops, but who are letting the soil do the work for them.

TLGV, Eastern Connecticut Conservation District and the AGvocate Program of the CT Resource Conservation and Development Council partnered seven years ago on a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, to spread awareness about soil health and improve soil health on local farmlands.

The program tackled four priority areas to improve soil health and water quality in the Thames River watershed and its sub-watershed regions over five phases. In total, the partners worked with 31 different producers, providing technical assistance to 18 of them and offering more than \$125,000 in financial assistance to six projects covering more than 365 acres that have direct impacts on soil health and water quality. The project encouraged farmers to plant

cover crops, use no till farming methods, and learn from each other's work.

"I think it was a pretty successful program," said Dan Mullins, executive director of the conservation district. "Producers talk to one another all the time. The best salespeople are the farmers themselves."

The program also implemented an edge of field monitoring system with a producer to evaluate the runoff from fields now planted with five cover crops. Mullins said the monitoring has only been ongoing for three years, and it will take four to five years to see the full benefits of cover crops on reducing runoff.

Soil health in the United States has plummeted since the 1950s, Mullins said, largely because of post WWII usage of till farming and chemical and fertilizer usage. Those mid-20th century practices designed to make farms more productive have actually reduced soil health, made the food less nutritious and created an erosion problem affecting waterways. The literal trickle-down effect means the wrong kind of nutrients are impacting waterways all the way to Long Island Sound. And in the case of the National Heritage Corridor, the runoff has had a direct negative impact on the Little River watershed, which provides drinking water for Putnam.

The grant allowed the partners to directly work in the Little River watershed and enact four projects that will improve soil health and reduce negative runoff.

"If we are having a positive impact up in Woodstock," Mullins said, "we will have a positive impact all the way to Long Island Sound."



Tastes of the Valley 2021

TLGV expanded its farm-to-table event series benefitting farms, orchards, vintners, brewers and food providers into a six-venue THIRSTdays Harvest Tour.

Participants enjoyed specially crafted sips and tastes at the following locations:

- Westford Hill Distillers in Ashford with Creamery Brook Bison
- Taylor Brooke Brewery & Winery in Woodstock with Azuluna Foods & Woodstock Sustainable Farms
- Watercure Farm Distillery in Pomfret with Hungry Lion Food Truck
- Preston Ridge Vineyard in Preston with Uncle D's Blazin' BBQ & Comfort Catering
- Brimfield Winery & Cidery in Brimfield with Maddie's Dogs
- Black Pond Brews in Killingly with New York Pizza Co

Thank you to everyone who donated and purchased items from our first online auction. With your generous contributions, ticket sales and sponsorships, we were able to benefit all the participating farms, orchards, vintners, brewers and food providers and launch a new farm adventure program this spring connecting middle schoolers to farmers in The Last Green Valley.

Thank you to our 2021 Sponsors:

PLATINUM - Rebecca M. Harvey, UNFI Helping Hands

GOLD - Byrnes Insurance Agency, Keith and Elaine Knowlton, Laura and Scott Moorehead

SILVER - Centreville Bank, Cornerstone Bank, Heath Drury Boote, Marjorie L. Hoskin

BRONZE - Eastern CT Savings Bank, Gerardi Insurance Services, Inc., Groton Open Space Association, Jewett City Savings Bank, Schott North America Inc., Sturbridge Tourist Association, Village Electric



Special thanks to the Tastes of the Valley Committee: Chairs Laura and Scott Moorehead (pictured), Myra Ambrogio, Ann-Marie Aubrey, Sue Foster, Jimi Gothreau, Mike Nelson, Kwasi Acheampong, Wayde Schmidt and the TLGV staff.

Thank you to our Participating Farms

Baldwin Brook Farm
 Barton Farms
 Betsy's Stand
 Bright Acres Farm Sugar House
 Buddha's Bees Apiary
 Buell's Orchard
 Creamery Brook Bison
 Crooked Creek Farm
 Echo Farm
 Ekonk Hill Turkey Farm
 Fairholm Farm
 Fort Hill Farms & Quintessential Gardens
 Horse Listeners Orchard
 Lapsley Orchard
 New Boston Beef
 P&A Petrucci Farms
 Riegel Farm & Forge
 Unbound Glory Farm
 Westview Farm
 Woodstock Creamery at Valleyside Farm
 Woodstock Sustainable Farms



Watch for 2022 Tastes of the Valley details coming soon!

June 30: Harvest Tour at Preston Ridge Vineyard, Preston, CT

September 18: Farmer at the Table at the Publick House, Sturbridge, MA

November 2: Harvest Tour at Black Pond Brews, Killingly, CT 🍁

Connecting Kids to Farms

Strengthening community requires building connections to the unique aspects of a community that set it apart. Here in The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor, our rolling hills dotted with farms are a critical aspect of what makes the region special.

Despite being in the middle of the most densely populated region of the country, sandwiched between the urban sprawl of Boston and Washington, D.C., with tens of millions of people living just hours from our borders, The Last Green Valley is still 84 percent forest and farmland. Of our wide-open spaces, about seven percent are working farmlands.

To help connect families with their local farms and help middle schoolers recognize opportunities for future careers that farming might offer, TLGV launched its first Farm Adventure Series this spring. The goal was for middle schoolers and their families to get dirty and see the inner workings of local farms in a small group setting. Each experience was designed to show the kids different skills needed to run the diverse array of farms today.



The five experiences to kick off the Farm Adventure Series were:

Unbound Glory Farm in Pomfret

— Digging in the Dirt. There's an entire ecosystem at work in the dirt beneath our feet, and the busier it is, the healthier the soil is. At Unbound Glory the health of the soil is the most important piece of their regenerative farming practices.

Killingly High School —

Hydroponics How To. Middle schoolers joined the Killingly High School's Agricultural Leadership Program, FFA, to see hydroponics at work, how the students grow crops without soil and with less water.

Fairholm Farm in Woodstock —

The 21st Century Cow. At Fairholm Farm the cows milk themselves, whenever they feel like it. Running a modern dairy farm is a high-tech operation and Fairholm Farm is using that technology to farm smarter. Kids learned about the process of getting milk to the table

and about the other products produced on the farm during this behind-the-scenes program.

Morning Beckons Farm in Thompson

— Amazing Alpacas. Alpacas are smart and observant, and their coat makes one of the most versatile fibers on Earth! Families helped one of the largest alpaca farms in New England shear some of their herd and start the process of turning the coat into a sweater. They also learned what it takes to keep the herd happy and healthy.

Woodstock Sustainable Farms in Woodstock —

Eggcellent Farming. Eggs are an important and tasty food for many people, but how do those eggs get from the chicken to your kitchen? Woodstock Sustainable Farms demonstrated how they are collected, graded and prepared for market in a way that makes the whole process more sustainable for the farm and the planet. Kids also learned how technology is helping Woodstock Sustainable Farms produce all of its food in an environmentally conscious way.



Healthy *Environment*, Healthy *People*

The residents of The Last Green Valley are passionate about cleaning up their roadsides, trails and public places.

In 2021 TLGV funded 31 cleanups, which removed more than 61,000 lbs. of trash from the region. In 2022 TLGV has already funded 18 organizations that are organizing 25 cleanups.

The program is funded in part by bankHometown, which has been a supporter of TLGV since 2008 and has sponsored the cleanup program since 2019.

In the last 10 years, 11,498 volunteers have collected 504,003 lbs. of trash from parks, rivers and roadways throughout the National Heritage Corridor thanks to the program. TLGV expanded the program in 2022 to include efforts to plant pollinator gardens or eradicate invasive species harming the region's ecosystem.

Organizations and municipalities working in The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor can request up to \$500 in funding. Those with projects outside the corridor, but still in the Thames River watershed, can request up to \$250 in funding.



A group of people are hiking on a dirt trail through a forest. The ground is covered with fallen leaves and ferns, some of which are turning brown. The trees are tall and thin, with green and yellowing leaves. The people are wearing casual clothing like t-shirts, plaid shirts, and hats. The scene is captured from a rear perspective, showing the group moving away from the camera into the woods.

Embracing New Friends

Past, Present and Future

The future of The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor will be different than its past. It has to be.

As the region and its people adapt to new realities an evolution is critical if this place will retain its history, agriculture, wide open spaces and culture that make it significant on a national scale. But retaining The Last Green Valley for future generations also requires us to see ourselves as a much wider community, with a more complex past and a willingness to embrace it and the future by welcoming an array of people and perspectives into the National Heritage Corridor.

"It's hard to change, and often it's hard to see the change that's needed," said Ashley Stewart, owner of Stewart Environmental and Equity Consulting, who worked with TLGV and the CT Land Conservation Council on a land trust capacity building program. "When we look at ourselves and talk about the successes and failures of what we have done, the good things, although they were good, were limited in addressing all the needs of conservation. Our conservation efforts have been limited in who they have invited to participate and whose needs they addressed. It's not they are bad, but it's important to acknowledge that they are limited, and we can do better."

Stewart's feelings are shared by local historians as well.

Regan Miner, executive director of Norwich Historical Society, said it has been a penchant of historians in the past to shy away from difficult stories. Growing up in Norwich, she heard little about the city's notorious native son, Benedict Arnold. It was only later in life that she first learned he was a complex character, part hero and part villain. Similarly, many people know the story of Prudence Crandall, the state heroine jailed for teaching Black girls at her Canterbury school, but it's only in recent years the Harris sisters, the Black teenagers who convinced Crandall to open her school for Black girls, have had their stories told.

"I think people are realizing our history is deeper and more diverse than they have been taught and there is an appetite for it," Miner said.

Norwich has its own Freedom Trail and several stops on the state Freedom Trail because of the work of local historians.

Dayne Rugh, President of the Society of the Founders of Norwich and Executive Director of Slater Museum, said difficult history is important history.

"The past will always continue to shape the present and the future," Rugh said. "One hundred years from now there will be museums telling the stories of our time. What are they going to talk about? How do you want your descendants to remember you? How do you want the world to remember you, to remember our time?"

Local historian Donna Dufresne believes by uncovering hidden truths, history she calls the under story, we can actually reveal a deeper understanding of American history. Dufresne has been researching for a book she is writing about a section of Pomfret historically known as the Lost Village. Now known as Nightingale Forest, the property is stewarded by the Wyndham Land Trust. By working with a variety of local partners such as Wyndham Land Trust, TLGV and the Pomfret Historical Society, Dufresne is uncovering a rich tapestry of stories that have not been told and extend beyond the forest.



Dufresne's extensive archival research led her to believe there might be unmarked graves of enslaved people in Nightingale Forest.

Working with State Archeologist Sarah Sportman and Debbie Surabian, CT's State Soil Scientist, who is a ground penetrating radar specialist from the Natural Resources Conservation Service, Dufresne and Sportman conducted a study of a small graveyard in the Pomfret forest and found evidence of unmarked graves in the area Dufresne suspects were locations for the graves of captive Africans. Sportman said there are nine marked graves but the GPR suggested there could be 25 total graves, with margins of error for more or less graves. To further prove Dufresne's theory would require excavation.

Sportman said as an archeologist it's critical that she recognize the past was often only seen from a limited perspective and it was those stories, and only those stories, that got told.

"Since I've come into the office of the State Archeologist, we've really made it a focus to pay more attention archeologically to the stories of people of Connecticut who have been left behind before, such as captive Africans and historic period Native People," Sportman said. "Historically, Connecticut has been focused on pre-European Native American sites and grand colonial sites. So just getting the archeological history of regular people who were the backbone of who we are today in Connecticut is really important."

For Dufresne, who is an educator as well as a historian, it's those untold stories of regular people that shape our history and culture even more than the well-known stories littering history books.

"Having a more inclusive local history is a big goal of mine," Dufresne said. "The stories are there but we have to work to find them."

Alex Carpenter and Yoko Takemura own Assawaga Farm in Putnam, but rather than describe themselves as owners of the land, they see themselves as the latest stewards. They have experienced those untold stories on their farm. The name of their farm is intentionally Nipmuc and means the place between. Carpenter said as he has studied the land and done research, it has become obvious the Indigenous People of the region purposefully shaped the land and farmed it.

They have even found two arrowheads, one between 4,000- and 5,000-years-old and the other about 2,500-years-old. "We're just the current occupants of the land," Takemura said.

But those untold stories and forgotten history matter. Takemura, who is Japanese, said being a non-white farmer in New England makes her unique, a role she both embraces and hopes to change. Takemura is actively engaged in organizations supporting BIPOC farmers and has spoken to U.S. Sen. Chris Murphy's office as part of a larger effort to shine a light on the challenges farmers of color face.

"You can farm in less acreage than we've always thought, and you don't need huge pieces of farm equipment," Takemura said. "It's important for people to see people like themselves doing it. It's good to have examples of how it can be."

The Alliance of National Heritage Areas, an organization representing all 55 of the nation's currently authorized heritage areas, has undertaken an effort to support and promote the work of National Heritage Areas to fully tell the stories of their regions. In a position paper called "Racial Equity, Community Empowerment and Social Cohesion," the alliance outlines the ways heritage areas have already been working to empower communities and offers a road map for further work.

"As a National Park Service partner, we take the monumental storytelling ethos of our national parks and bring it to the communities," writes Sara Capen, chairperson of the Alliance and executive director of Niagara Falls National Heritage Area. "We meet people where they are. The average, every day American may not find their story in a national park, but they will more than likely find their story in a national heritage area. We take pride in making sure that many voices are included around our cultural heritage storytelling tables."

Lowell Perry, chairman of the Alliance's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee and executive director of Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area, said by their nature heritage areas are committed to the complete and accurate storytelling of their regions' histories. The work takes leadership and a willingness to stay true to the task of ensuring systems and practices that exclude people from the conversation and work of the heritage areas are not tolerated.

"We are dedicated to ensuring future generations receive an 'honest baton' in the relay of life to make subsequent generations aware of who we really are, and why we are indeed stronger together," Perry writes. "The Alliance is a solutions broker in the national conversation of who the nation aspires to be as a people."

Partnership has always been at the center of the work TLGV undertakes to steward the National Heritage Corridor. Lois Bruinooge, executive director of TLGV, said the organization has been far more intentional in telling an array of stories from the region and providing grants to those who are also doing the work. Recent efforts helped fund the Witness Stones Project, which works with schools to uncover the stories of locally enslaved peoples, and Dufresne's work with Killingly High School and the ACT School of Willimantic, to tell the stories of soldiers of the CT 29th Regiment, the first regiment of Black soldiers from Connecticut to fight in the Civil War.

"We become a richer community when we tell all the stories of our past," Bruinooge said. "Our future is brighter when we welcome all of our neighbors to participate in enjoying and caring for the National Heritage Corridor so we can pass it on to generations yet to come."



“As a National Park Service partner, we take the monumental storytelling ethos of our national parks and bring it to the communities...”



Expanding Trail Camp to Reach More Kids

Last summer, The Last Green Valley, Thompson Recreation Dept. and TEEG had a crazy idea that if we worked together we could figure out how to get middle school kids outside safely. Middle school children especially were facing a second straight pandemic-created, lonely summer of little to no activities for kids their age. We knew getting them on the trails for a week or two could really help provide some happiness and excitement, but also help relieve the stress and pressure on families worried about their middle schoolers.

We launched a pilot program with a hope that we could pull it off. With limited time and resources, the partnership created a program for 18 kids to hike the Air Line Trail State Park Trail all the way from Thompson to Lebanon over two weeks.


The hope of helping these kids have some joy during their summer became a reality.

"I wanted to thank all of you for including my sons in the Airline Trail Camp opportunity," wrote a happy dad. "Thank you very much for this program and to all the folks involved. It was perfect for my boys to get them out hiking and socializing with other kids, after being stuck at home due to Covid for so long. Even after Covid, the Airline Trail was a great program that I hope continues and grows each year."

That first camp was either free or \$75 for each kid.

The partners agreed we had to try this again, but for more kids. In 2022 we will operate from hubs in Thompson and Coventry to give 120 kids that kind of experience. Campers will be empowered with new skills, connecting them to the outdoors and their peers, while giving their families the pleasure of watching them take on new challenges and be excited for the day ahead.

Campers will have the opportunity to hike a variety of trails, their skills developing over the course of the week, be able to understand trail signs, read a map and use a compass when they are done. They'll also be exposed to outdoor STEM-based activities, such as learning about water quality monitoring, the sun and more. They will learn about local history and agriculture and have the opportunity to connect to one another and the adults assisting the camp in a small group environment.

TLGV is working hard to ensure the camp is affordable for all families. Each camper's fee is subsidized and some campers will receive full scholarships. TLGV is undertaking a crowd-funding campaign and has written and received several grants to fund the camp. The maximum cost to campers is \$250 a week for a full day of activities. If the crowd-funding campaign meets its \$7,500 goal and additional grants are received, we hope to reduce the fee for all campers. 



Youth Led Grant Projects


In 2021 TLGV focused its grant funds on projects that supported youth engagement. The array of projects was impressive, including Grow Windham's youth-led efforts to create outdoor learning spaces and expand the growing season of their community garden.

Two projects, Witness Stones and the 29th Regiment Project, looked to engage high school students in uncovering hidden stories.



The Witness Stones Project works with schools to have the student research the history of local enslaved peoples. Killingly High School was the first school in The Last Green Valley to take on the project and the students researched and completed the project in June of 2021. The teens uncovered the stories of several local captive Africans and developed a memorial stone for Cuffee, planting it on the lawn of the Westfield Congregational Church in Danielson. TLGV is supporting the Witness Stones Project again in 2022, and the project has expanded to Norwich Free Academy, where a stone will be planted at Leffingwell House Museum, Woodstock Middle School, E.O. Smith and a second project at Killingly High School.

TLGV has also funded a year-long collaboration between Killingly High School and the ACT School in Willimantic to research and tell the stories of the soldiers of the 29th Regiment, Connecticut's first regiment of Black soldiers to fight in the Civil War. The idea of local historian Donna Dufresne, the students have come together on several occasions to team build and learn about the regiment and research methods using primary sources. The ACT students are using their skills in performing arts to turn the research into artistic presentations, while the Killingly High School students are creating an interactive map of where the soldiers lived.


TLGV is funding youth engagement projects in 2022 as well. The current applications are under review by a team of volunteers. 

Virtual Programs Accessible 24 Hours a Day

In 2020, facing the prospect of vastly reduced programming for Walktober, TLGV staff decided to stop thinking about creating virtual programming and instead just doing it.

Working with local organizations, including the Norwich Historical Society, we began creating virtual versions of some of the best known Walktobers. We also had Chief Ranger Bill hit the trails and soon Lead Night Sky Ranger Geoff McLean began telling you What's Up in The Sky at the start of every month.

While we think nothing can substitute for actually being in the great outdoors, visiting a historic site or gazing at the night sky, we realize it's simply not possible for everyone. Our goals with the virtual programs are two-fold, first to allow everyone to enjoy the historic and natural resources of The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor regardless of circumstances and second, to provide you with ideas for places to visit and hikes to try.

Check out our YouTube page to see any of our more than 70 videos. You can also access many of the videos from our Virtual Program page at TheLastGreenValley.org. 



Look for the TLGV Ranger Van!

The new TLGV Ranger Van hit the road last year, joyfully spreading the word about The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor.

The van, fully wrapped with amazing photos of life in The Last Green Valley, was designed by Laura Tedeschi of T2 Creative and the wrap was installed by Prokop Signs in Norwich.

You'll find the van at TLGV and community events around the National Heritage Corridor and beyond. If you see our van, come say hello. We have stocked it with great information to help you explore the wonders of The Last Green Valley, and we have a scavenger hunt designed for kids!

Conservation through a More Inclusive Lens

In 2021 TLGV completed a three-year effort with the Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) to help land trusts in eastern Connecticut build their capacity. Participants included volunteers from the Eastern CT Forest Landowner's Assoc./Wolf Den Land Trust, Joshua's Trust, New Roxbury Land Trust, Northern CT Land Trust and Wyndham Land Trust.

The program, funded with a \$120,000 grant spread over three years from the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, helped the land trusts improve their communication tools, engage their stakeholders in new ways and examine equity in conservation.

At several points during the program, the land trusts were eligible for small grants to take what they learned from a series of workshops and put those ideas into action.

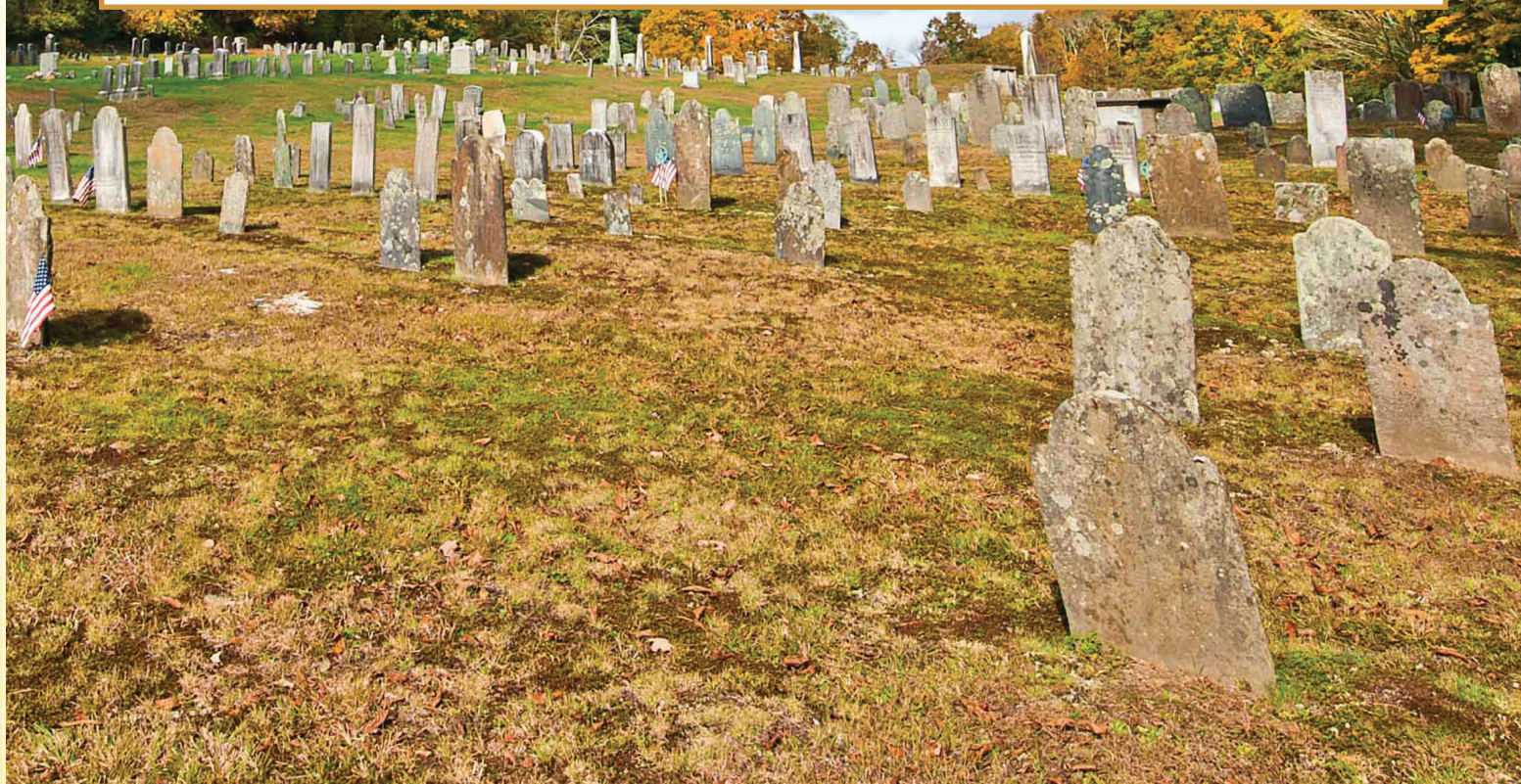
The final phase of the workshops, completed in 2021, urged land trusts to think differently about conservation and to consider how they could make their lands accessible to more diverse audiences.

TLGV and CLCC staff hosted the workshops and brought in Ashley Stewart of Stewart Environmental and Equity Consulting to help lead the workshops.

A final round of grants was offered to the land trusts to undertake projects that would address equity in conservation issues.

Wyndham Land Trust is working on an exemplary project to acknowledge the complex history of one of its newest parcels, Nightingale Forest in Pomfret. With small grants from the TLGV and CLCC program and Connecticut Humanities, the land trust has positioned a stone at the entrance to a small graveyard that will be engraved "Sacred to the memory of the enslaved Africans who may be buried here. May we someday know their names."

Based on the research of local historian Donna Dufresne, local stories and a recent ground-penetrating radar study of the graveyard, there appear to be a number of unmarked graves that would corroborate the verbal history that enslaved peoples were buried there. "The story of the people who long ago lived and worked on the land that we cherish and value today as places of nature and outdoor walks, can provide a host of learning experiences we may not expect," said Janet Booth, a member of the Wyndham Land Trust Board of Directors and a participant in the land trust program. "This project has allowed us to pause and reflect that slavery was not just a practice of the southern United States. There are documented enslavers in New England. The northern states were deeply entwined in and benefitted from an economy that was driven by the work of enslaved people. But because the enslaved were regarded as property, not as people, it is difficult to find records of their lives."





Leading the Way

Honoring the
Value of Our Woodlands

As the West Coast seems to be trapped in an endless drought and wildfires engulf thousands of acres,

here in Southern New England we wonder when the rain will stop and if the winds will ever return to their normal patterns.

It's enough to convince people climate change is real, and it has. According to a Yale Climate Opinion Study conducted in 2021, a majority of people living in The Last Green Valley believe climate change is happening and will have harmful effects on future generations and the ecosystem. The concern, however, drops significantly when asked if climate change will impact them personally. Most experts agree climate change is generally too big of a topic for the average person to tackle on an individual scale. And even when thinking about it globally, most people don't know what to do about it.

Lisa Hayden, outreach manager for the New England Forestry Foundation and TLGV's board secretary, has been working with landowners throughout eastern Connecticut and south-central Massachusetts since 2014 to help them better understand the potential their properties have to be part of larger conservation efforts.

"In those visits with landowners we're talking about what the property means to them and they realize they are already doing many of the things that are important on a larger conservation scale," Hayden said. "You're getting into the topic without getting into climate change and breaking it down into more simple steps."

Jen Shakun, a climate forest specialist with NEFF, said as demands on the ecosystem increase, awareness grows about climate change and it can almost be overwhelming.

"There is a limit to how green you can be in the system we have," Shakun said. "NEFF is trying to look at the system and see not just an ecosystem, but an economic system as well."

In New England, our forests have value that is not always recognized.

Bryan Garcia, CEO and president of Connecticut Green Bank, said New England will likely see more and more rainfall. As we do, our forests (The Last Green Valley is still 77 percent forest), will provide a green infrastructure that will not cost municipalities money but will save them plenty in having to cope with stormwater.

"How do you value that?" Garcia said. "But not only value it, but invest in it?" Garcia and his staff are working on that very question now. Like NEFF they are looking at ways to help communities derive economic benefit from the ecosystem.

Ashley Stewart, owner of Stewart Environmental and Equity Consulting, was brought in by Garcia to help the Connecticut Green Bank meet its new regulatory mission to address climate impact through investment in environmental infrastructure supporting the most vulnerable residents in the state. The Green Bank's focus is driven by an expansion of its mission to now include environmental infrastructure.

"We have to admit that we have failed in some ways," Stewart said of the modern conservation effort. "We need new methods. What does conservation need to do to reach a broader audience and how do we impact more communities that have traditionally not been served by conservation?"

Tom Lautzenheiser, a senior conservation ecologist for Mass Audubon, said not all people working on conservation issues agree on all things. Solar panel development, for example, is a hot button issue as more and more arrays are installed. Massachusetts has lost open land to development, according to Mass Audubon's report *Losing Ground*. "Ironically, if not for the development of solar arrays, the state



In New England, our forests have value that is not always recognized.





Climate Change Opinions

A Yale University 2021 study asked Americans a series of questions about global warming to determine their level of concern.

Americans who are alarmed

33% vs 18%
2021 2017

Americans who are concerned

25% vs 32%
2021 2017

Americans who are cautious

17% vs 22%
2021 2017

Americans who are disengaged

5% vs 5%
2021 2017

Americans who are doubtful

10% vs 12%
2021 2017

Americans who are dismissive

9% vs 11%
2021 2017

Source: Yale University Program on Climate Change
Communication, Global Warnings Six Americas

likely would have had some minor gains in conserved lands,” Lautzenheiser said.

“If all we cared about was carbon then the growing numbers of solar arrays might be a win,” Lautzenheiser said. “But forests have a far greater value than carbon sequestration. Personally, I view the removal of forest to put in solar a conservation loss.”

Communities value their forests in so many ways, Lautzenheiser said. They provide a sense of place and character for communities, but even in places where the rural landscape is valued, the incremental changes often go unnoticed.

“It’s sort of a death by 1,000 cuts,” he said. “You’re not noticing the damage until it’s significant.”

Stewart said there is no question the work to protect large tracts of land is both important and has had value, but it leaves large segments of people without both the emotional and mental benefits of open space, while also increasing the financial pressures climate change will create on more urban centers.

“Broadening our view of environmentalism and talking about things like jobs and all the things that impact people’s ability to survive is something we need to start doing,” Stewart said. “Conservationists are often at odds with communities. It happens because

they aren’t having the conversations with the community.”

Stewart points to a project she is working on with the Connecticut Land Conservation Council, connecting land trusts in southeastern Connecticut with community groups. Those conversations have been eye opening for all parties, Stewart said, and they are critical.

The work of the Connecticut Green Bank is energizing because it will help reshape conversations around the environment, she said. “There’s this idea that if you are poor, you can’t be a conservationist,” Stewart said. “The Green Bank has this broadened scope to invest in green infrastructure in a way that can benefit all communities. They hired me to help them shape what that means for conservation and urban spaces. How can we shape what is valuable and who needs it and create jobs around environmentalism? What industries can come out of working lands?”

It’s a similar question being asked by NEFF. Hayden said NEFF is looking to do more work with urban communities to show how even smaller scale conservation can have a positive impact on the larger environment and the local community. At the same time, they are turning to the larger forest tracts to promote the creation of working lands that create jobs and benefit local economies.

N. VELLES

Percentage of residents that believe global warming is happening:

72%
of Americans

75%
of Connecticut
residents

65%
of Windham County
residents

73%
of Tolland County
residents

69%
of New London County
residents

77%
of Massachusetts residents

73%
of Worcester County residents

74%
of Hampden County residents

Source: 2021 Yale Program on Climate Change Communication, Climate Opinion Maps

Shakun has been working since 2019 to resurrect the idea that building with wood can be a benefit to the environment. Called “mass timber construction,” building with wood engineered into panels through a glue lamination process can be used to create large scale buildings as tall as 12 stories, Shakun said.

It may seem counter intuitive, but by using trees that have slowed their carbon sequestration, mass timber construction creates fewer carbon emissions than steel and concrete construction. The costs of construction are also lower, Shakun said. And timber buildings can be built larger in areas where the soil is poor. The factors combined offer not just the potential for significant job creation, but also for more affordable housing that is actually both beautiful and has proven mental health benefits.

“There are studies that show people are more productive and happier in spaces that have natural wood surfaces,” Shakun said. “These buildings are beautiful. There’s a lot of potential.”

There are no mass timber buildings in The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor, but Mystic Seaport’s Thompson Exhibition Center is mass timber as is the University of Massachusetts Amherst John W. Olver Building. Providence and New Haven also have mass timber buildings.

Organizations like NEFF and the Connecticut Green Bank recognize as they develop initiatives around green infrastructure and a green economy, they must also educate government leaders and the average person. The connection between abstract environmental ideals and how they actually work in communities is critical.

Dan Mullins, executive director of the Eastern Connecticut Conservation District, said anyone working on conservation in communities faces a disconnect between how people feel about the environment and conservation and the pressures of the local tax rate and turnover in local government.

ECCD’s work is all about protecting waterways. But for every mitigation effort ECCD is successful in implementing, waterways face even greater impacts from increased development. While many organizations, such as Sustainable CT and UConn’s Center for Land Use Education & Research, are working to educate municipalities about how they can mitigate negative environmental impacts, the pressure to lower or hold the tax rate is constant and the turnover on local boards and commissions is significant.

“To get good citizens who want to make a difference in their communities and who have the time to make the commitment is not easy,” Mullins said. “And a lot of people come into these situations without the education they need to be effective.” Resources, both human and financial, are constantly being challenged, he said.

Lynn Stoddard, executive director of Sustainable CT, said the program has grown in the last two years, with more communities trying to get certified or raise their level of certification. More actions are being added to help municipalities understand sustainability in a variety of ways. Sustainable CT has also added a category of Climate Leader to help municipalities understand that climate change is a local issue. But the recommended activities are often actions that the communities can already be doing, she said.

“I think the last two years have given people a greater appreciation of what they have and what can be done in their own communities,” Stoddard said.

But what Stoddard has seen over the years is a divide between communities that do not have enough staff or volunteers to undertake the actions required to achieve Sustainable CT certifications, and communities where there is more ability to think beyond the demands of day-to-day tasks.

Lois Bruinooge, executive director of TLGV, said TLGV has repeatedly heard concerns about capacity from local government leaders and organizations. The questions facing TLGV include: How can we boost the work of municipal and non-profit organizations? How do we harness new ways of thinking about climate change, ecosystem services and economic benefits to assist decision-makers in retaining the characteristics that make The Last Green Valley worthy of National Heritage Corridor designation? And how do we ensure a much more diverse array of people, both within and outside the corridor, are actively engaged in this work?

“We know we can’t stand still and let change happen to us,” Bruinooge said. “We are facing increased development pressures, and we have to start thinking differently or we will lose the essence of The Last Green Valley. As a region we need to find the passion and commitment to create the change we want, and to be innovative and inclusive. We became a National Heritage Corridor because of community effort and partnership, and we know that is what will move all of us forward together.”





Healthy Environment **Draws Bald Eagles** to The Last Green Valley



The health of the ecosystem in The Last Green Valley

may have no better, or emblematic, barometer than the bald eagle. In the 12 years since TLGV has been helping the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection monitor bald eagle nests in the Heritage Corridor, the barometer has been on the rise.

Every January, Connecticut counts bald eagles in the state as part of the national mid-winter eagle survey. (Massachusetts does not participate in the mid-winter eagle survey). TLGV coordinates volunteers in the Connecticut portion of The Last Green Valley and on Jan. 8, 2022, 28 volunteers monitored 38 locations and counted 32 eagles; 21 were adults and 11 were juveniles. One week later during one of TLGV's eagle programs for the public, the group spotted six bald eagles, including juveniles, a sub-adult and adults fishing at a pond. There are now 14 known bald eagle nests in The Last Green Valley.

In 2021, the last full year of data, Connecticut counted a total of 80 active eagle territories, 64 nests that had chicks and 105 chicks statewide. Those are the numbers the state can be sure of.

"There are certainly places that have nests we don't know about," said Brian

Hess, a wildlife biologist for CT DEEP who oversees bald eagle initiatives in the state.

In 2010 when TLGV first started assisting CT DEEP with the survey there were 108 bald eagle sightings in the entire state. "It seems that every year we break a record," Hess said.



Eagles are a barometer of the ecosystem because they are at the top of the food chain. They love fish, and require a steady diet of fish, birds, small mammals and food they can scavenge. The return of the bald eagle in significant numbers means the food chain is cleaner than it has been in decades. DDT is gone and other chemicals are being removed from the waterways.

Eagles are resilient and adaptable, Hess said. More so than scientists realized as work was first being done to reintroduce them to New England. For the first time there are three eagles' nests on cell towers,

including one in Lebanon.

But for all their adaptability, humans are still having a detrimental effect on eagles. While many environmental contaminants have been removed, there are still others that have significant impact.

"Eagle populations would have grown faster if not for lead," Hess said. "They are growing quickly, but if there had not been lead in the environment they would have rebounded faster."

Hess believes eagles are both an important conservation success story and a call to continue to work towards better conservation efforts.

"They are a sentinel species," he said. "If they were to start declining again, we would investigate. We, as a society, would want to know why and that would reveal what is happening on a larger scale."

And they lead people to think about the environment differently.

"They are almost an umbrella species in a public awareness and outreach kind of way – they are kind of a gateway into caring for other wildlife issues," Hess added. "People care about eagles in a very special way. There is a chance we might not even have an Endangered Species Act in the nation if not for the plight of the eagle." 🍂

There are now 14 known bald eagle nests in The Last Green Valley.



Clean Water Starts with Us

With hundreds of lakes and ponds, and miles of rivers, streams and brooks, water is the lifeblood of The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor. For centuries it has fueled the economy and provided endless hours of peace, tranquility and recreation.

Its importance is so great that TLGV has led regional efforts for 17 years to monitor and assess our waterways. Working with federal and state agencies, countless associations and organizations and other conservationists, TLGV spearheads the collection of information that can help us all work towards improving water quality.

"A lot of people don't realize we do this and certainly do not know how long we've had a water quality monitoring program," said Lois Bruinooge, TLGV's executive director. "I believe it's some of the most important work we do because it leads to so many other important efforts and helps so many other conservationists do their work."

Throughout the course of the year, Jean Pillo, TLGV's Water Quality Monitoring Coordinator, will train and guide volunteers in a variety of data collection methods. Data collected by TLGV water quality volunteers provides the information needed for others to determine which waterways need mitigation or support and to create plans for those efforts.

In the last fiscal year, despite the challenges of training and volunteer recruitment, 65 volunteers participated in the water quality monitoring program. These citizen scientists helped expand the program, as well.

Riffle Bioassessment for Volunteers, or RBV, is critical to determining the health of the watershed. The volunteers get into streams looking for bugs, sorting what they collect and sending them off to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection for analysis. The bugs provide critical information about the health of the waterway.

TLGV volunteers also routinely monitor for cold water streams, a necessity for local fisheries. That effort proved to be an even greater challenge in 2021 as three flash flooding events swept away four of the 10 monitoring devices. Unfortunately, early review of data from the

remaining devices shows none of the streams monitored qualify as cold-water. The heavy rains and runoff into the streams likely played a significant role in the elevated stream temperatures.


Volunteers have also participated in lake monitoring at Webster Lake, South Charlton Reservoir and Amos Lake for many years. Lake monitoring includes testing for temperature, clarity and nutrients in the water. This year TLGV launched a pilot program with CT DEEP and the Crystal Pond Association in Eastford and Woodstock to monitor the stability of the thermal layers in the pond. The volunteers also collected data on oxygen levels, nutrients and clarity.

TLGV worked with CT DEEP on the CT Lake Watch program, recruiting and assisting volunteers to monitor Mansfield Hollow Lake and Ashford Lake. In addition, Pillo joined the team to review a watershed plan for Hamilton Reservoir in Holland, MA.

TLGV also expanded its work with the federal Environmental Protection Agency and the Cyanobacteria Monitoring Collaborative, collecting samples from 11 locations in the Thames River watershed, including two in Massachusetts. Cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae, are a sign of an unhealthy body of water and can be deadly if ingested.

Volunteers also conducted a targeted effort to monitor E. coli in the Bungay Brook watershed. E. coli levels are used to indicate the presence of fecal contamination in waterways. The study helped narrow the source of the E. coli that is contaminating the Natchaug River and determined that the point source was not from household septic leakage.

"The data our volunteers collect helps improve the entire Thames River watershed," Bruinooge said. "As caretakers of the third largest watershed flowing into Long Island Sound, the health of our waterways, from source to sea, depends on us."

For more information about becoming a TLGV water quality monitoring volunteer, contact Jean Pillo, Jean.pillo@comcast.net. 

Trail Access *for All*

Ensuring everyone can enjoy the beautiful trails of The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor keeps a team of volunteers busy year-round.

TLGV's Trail Assessment Team is driven to ensure people have the information they need to determine whether a trail is right for them. Funded at first by two grants, the team has assessed more than 49 miles of trail and numerous boat launches. The team was the first east of the Mississippi River to use new, advanced technology to assess trails. The technology allows the team to create more accurate guides to each trail segment, a project the team tackles in the winter months.

The Air Line Trail State Park now has all of the team's guides posted along the starting and ending segments of the trail. Additional trails in Southbridge, Sturbridge, Norwich, Putnam, Thompson, Killingly, Lebanon and Mansfield have also been assessed and guides are in development.

In 2021 the team assessed 13.5 miles of trail and has already been out in 2022. "There are many more miles of trail to assess," said Lois Bruinooge, executive director of TLGV. "The work the team has done is incredible and we're committed to keeping it going so people of all ages and abilities know what their options are to enjoy the outdoors in our National Heritage Corridor."

For more information about the trail assessment process, contact LyAnn Graff, LyAnn@tlgv.org.



Reducing **Light Pollution**

Starting in 2020, TLGV began a partnership with Sustainable CT to reduce light pollution statewide. Working with TLGV staff and our Lead Night Sky Rangers, Sustainable CT created a series of actions that municipalities could take to earn points toward becoming certified sustainable communities.

The actions include addressing light pollution in zoning regulations and developing educational materials and programs for light pollution reduction. The actions took effect in 2021 and TLGV staff became part of Sustainable CT's review team, awarding points to municipalities that have completed night sky friendly actions.

This work adds to the efforts of TLGV's Lead Night Sky Rangers, Geoff and Kim McLean, to host night sky programs and assist community groups with their own light pollution reduction efforts. In 2021 the McLeans worked with the Windham Garden Club to develop a night sky friendly and safe lighting plan for the Garden on the Bridge.

To learn more about the Sustainable CT program visit sustainablect.org. If you are interested in assistance on light pollution reduction efforts, contact Fran Kefalas at Fran@tlgv.org to discuss how TLGV can be of assistance. 🍂




J. WHEELER

J. WHEELER

Conservation Mapping for *Community Needs*

The TLGV website contains a new conservation mapping tool we invite you to explore. The “Conservation Mega Mapper” contains the most comprehensive protected open space data layer for The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor and surrounding communities in eastern Connecticut and south-central Massachusetts. It also contains data layers for important natural resource attributes, such as watersheds and biodiversity, plus socioeconomic indicators including distressed municipalities and environmental justice screening tools. By examining these data layers and overlaying them in different combinations, this mapper can be used for conservation planning from large-scale landscape projects to smaller-scale neighborhood projects.


We invite you to explore the mapper at thelastgreenvalley.org/learn-protect/conservationmapviewer. Please note that disclaimers apply - this mapper is only as up-to-date and accurate as each of its constituent data layers and should not be relied upon for property-level determinations. Conditions on the ground may be different from conditions shown on the map, and not all protected open space parcels allow public access. More information about each data layer and its source can be found in the mapper. If you find errors or omissions, please email Lois@tlgv.org with your recommended changes.

The mapper was produced as part of a collaborative project funded by the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut and hosted by the CT Land Conservation Council and The Last Green Valley. Land trusts throughout the region contributed to the map development. Special thanks to Hunter Brawley of Brawley Consulting Group and Brian Hall for creating the mapper and web viewer. 

Conserving the “Green” in The Last Green Valley

The Last Green Valley is the heart of a green oasis surrounded by the most densely populated areas of the United States. With 1.49 million acres of forest stretching along the Connecticut and Rhode Island border to the Quabbin Reservoir in Massachusetts, the Southern New England Heritage Forest is an astonishing 76 percent forest. Bounded by more heavily urbanized areas, with more than one million nearby residents, the SNEHF is one of the last undeveloped regions in the coastal sprawl from Boston to Washington, D.C. and offers one of the last viable wildlife corridors from southern to northern New England.

Because the SNEHF is so significant, a conservation partnership was formed to bring additional funding to the region through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. TLGV, the MassConn Sustainable Forest Partnership/Opacum Land Trust and the Northern Rhode Island Conservation District joined together to lead the program and received a \$6.1 million grant that offered funding opportunities for woodland landowners.

Funds have been made available to landowners to create forest management plans for critical bird habitat (8,000+ acres to date), to implement sound forest management practices and to permanently protect approximately 1,000 woodland acres. Because of the massive partnership effort with significant partner contributions, the program will infuse \$12.2 million of total funding into regional conservation. 

2021 BY THE

Number 



488 PEOPLE

enjoyed 13 Acorn Adventures
and 11 Member Programs

65,185
WALKTOBER
PARTICIPANTS 



355 PARTICIPANTS
enjoyed the THIRSTdays
Harvest Tour at
6 different venues

7,000 WOOD
are getting new forest
plans with bird habitat

70 VIDEOS

available on TLGV's
YouTube channel
youtube.com/TheLastGreenValley



2,323 VOLUNTEERS

CONTRIBUTED 9,201 HOURS FOR A TOTAL DOLLAR

VALUE OF \$334,565



\$43,070

GRANT FUNDS DISBURSED TO

7 ORGANIZATIONS

251 STUDENTS

learned about water pollution
using TLGV's hands-on
watershed model

rs

327 PARTNERS ENGAGED
in National Heritage Corridor activities

13,094 SPRING OUTDOORS PARTICIPANTS



\$6,615,062
INVESTED BY
PARTNERS

in work that
advances the
National Heritage
Corridor
management plan



1,000 ACRES
of forest management
habitat assessments



3,396,124
social media impressions,
UP 179% from 2020



100 VOLUNTEERS
PICKED UP **61,864 LBS.**
31 CLEANUPS

1,036
PEOPLE
participated
in TLGV
educational
programs



13.5
MILES
of trail
assessed for
people with
mobility
challenges



65 VOLUNTEERS MONITORED
stream, lake and pond
sites for water quality

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Volunteer Spotlight

Angela Kneeland

Angela Kneeland has always been curious.

It has served her well throughout her life and career and has made her a committed volunteer Ranger for TLGV.

Kneeland, a Putnam resident since 1990, watched with interest as community residents worked diligently to convince Congress the region was worthy of

designation as the fourth National Heritage Corridor. At the time her own career in R&D at Rogers Corp. — where she “went into the lab to see if she could make” the products the design team had dreamed up — kept her busy. But when Kneeland had her daughter, working in a wet chemistry lab did not seem like a great idea, so she earned a Master’s Degree in Library Sciences and went to work at Clark University.

“I’ve always known about the Heritage Corridor, and I believed in the mission,” Kneeland said.

Kneeland and her husband, Tom, have always been avid hikers and walkers. When Kneeland retired young, it gave her a chance to refocus on her interest in the outdoors. In 2017, Kneeland found an opportunity with the newly formed TLGV Trail Assessment Team to put her energy into something she believes is important.

“I was retired, and I wanted to give back,” Kneeland said. “The trail assessment seemed really interesting and a way I could be helpful.”



Since then, Kneeland has also become a volunteer TLGV Ranger, assisting with programs and representing TLGV at community events. The role keeps Kneeland’s curiosity stoked. It has given her a reason to begin training as a Master Naturalist.

“I would go on hikes and look at the woods and wonder ‘why is it the way it is?’” Kneeland said.

“What are the forces shaping it and the creatures interacting with it?”

And it excites her that through just a little effort she might be able to kindle a love for the outdoors in the people she meets as a Ranger.

“When you’re a Ranger you meet a lot of people who have questions about the outdoors,” Kneeland said.

“They’re so curious about what they see and it tickles me that there are people who love the outdoors as much as I do.”

Kneeland, who has hiked all over New England, said she has come to appreciate the beauty of local trails.

“The peaks may not be as high here, but the excitement of the trail is still there,” Kneeland said of the trails in the Heritage Corridor. “After all these years I can still discover new trails and places and learn new things about the trails. There are these aha moments and that’s pretty special.” 🍁

Non-profit Partner Spotlight

TEEG

To say 2021 was a year of ongoing challenges for TEEG would be an understatement. Like many non-profits in the Heritage Corridor, it was a year that solidified and deepened the changes and needs created by the start of the pandemic in 2020. But when so much of your work demands personal connections, like all of TEEG's youth and senior services, jumping on a video chat simply won't cut it.

"We found ways to be able to engage with our families," said Anne Miller, TEEG's executive director since 2016. "We gave our clients choices in how to connect. We had to think about what we do in new ways, just like so many other organizations."

TEEG serves the residents of Thompson, Putnam, Woodstock and Pomfret, with services such as community markets and food pantries, a diaper bank, new family mentoring, energy assistance, after school programming and an array of senior services. In 2019 it became the official youth services bureau for the community and runs the Northeastern Juvenile Review Board in addition to other youth services. Juvenile Review Boards are designed to keep youths out of the juvenile justice system whenever possible and allow first time offenders an opportunity to change the behaviors that led to their referral to the board. They have been busier in the last year, Miller said.

While the needs grew, community support also grew, and some positive changes have emerged from the pandemic. Virtual trainings have led TEEG to change their food pantries into markets where fresh fruits and vegetables are featured. In 2021 TEEG gave out more than \$100,000 in food in Woodstock alone, Miller said.

"Our clients have loved the changes," Miller said. "They were wanting these changes, but we might not have realized it if we hadn't been forced to step back."

Community support in the form of both donations and volunteers for services such as the food markets, has also grown.

"Because we are a rural community the need is not always obvious," Miller said. "But it's there and it might change but it doesn't go away."

Despite the demands of their own work, TEEG has always been a willing partner with numerous other local non-profits and community organizations. They have been long-time partners of TLGV's work as well.

"We've always known being in nature is good for our individual well-being, but the last two years have really shown us how important it is to have what we do here in The Last Green Valley," Miller said. "Our organizations are both working to support the well-being of the community." 🍁



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TEEG



Business Partner Spotlight

Dexter-Russell

The former woolen mill along the Quinebaug River hums with the business of making sharp things. It's been that way at this very location on River Street since 1934. But Southbridge has been where this company's roots have held firm since 1818. Dexter-Russell is the epitome of American made, of a company that has stuck with its community through centuries of change for both.

"We do believe in this community," said Alan Peppel, president and chief executive officer of Dexter-Russell. "We value our employees and the craftsmanship they bring. There are a lot of factors that determine our ability to stay here." Peppel has continued the trend of Dexter-Russell CEOs who invest in the community in a variety of ways. Under his leadership Dexter-Russell has been a long-time supporter of The Last Green Valley. Peppel, who is an avid outdoorsman, said he believes the National Heritage Corridor provides an important quality of life component for employees.

Employing about 250 people in Southbridge and a second campus in Sturbridge, Dexter-Russell uses small batch manufacturing, a combination of automation and hand-made skills, to make everything from the knife in your kitchen drawer to the knives in high-end commercial kitchens. They also make knives and other tools used by butchers, meat processors, medical grade knives and more. The company also has an outlet store, open Thursday night and Saturday morning, at its Southbridge facility.

"We make knives that will be in the hands of the user all day," Peppel said.

Understanding the use and constantly reviewing products with an eye toward improving quality and usability are a hallmark of the Dexter-Russell product line and drive innovation toward new products, such as the Dextreme line of knives designed for the fisherman.

Every knife begins from a sheet of steel, but there are an array of processes and steps, depending on the product, that determine how it will take its final form. Every step of the process happens locally, from the formation of the blade, to grinding its sharp edge and the creation and shaping of the handle. The products are all packaged and prepared for shipping on site as well. And there are many checks and balances that go into each product, Peppel said. The finest quality steel can be rendered inadequate at a variety of steps in the manufacturing process if it improperly handled, he said.

The company also takes its environmental role seriously, ensuring materials are recycled and using recycled plastics or sustainable woods in its handles, for example.

Peppel, who has been CEO for 21 years, said the company often has to create its own manufacturing innovations to get the job done. But even as manufacturing changes, the heart of the company's values remain with the roots planted by founders, Henry Harrington and John Russell, to create the best knives in America. 🍀



2021 TLGV

Annual Meeting Recap



▲ Prior to the meeting, TLGV members were able to take a guided tour of the camp, explore the outdoor science lab, learn how to letterbox or try their hand at archery.

The 2021 Annual Meeting of The Last Green Valley, Inc. was held on June 3

at Camp Laurel in Lebanon, CT where sprawling fields, meandering trails and quintessential camp buildings offered the perfect setting. Thank you to the Girl Scouts of Connecticut and Camp Laurel for welcoming us so warmly.



▲ Joshua's Trust was recognized as Team Walktober for 2021. Officially known as Joshua's Tract Conservation and Historic Trust, Joshua's Trust has been leading walks every single year since the first Walking Weekend in 1991. Today, Joshua's Trust protects more than 4,500 acres in northeastern Connecticut and ensures those lands remain open space and protected forever from development.



During the annual business meeting, the following TLGV members were re-elected to the Board of Directors:

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.

LISA HAYDEN from Sturbridge, MA is a forestry landowner outreach specialist and has been on the TLGV Board since 2017.

MARTY NIESKI from Woodstock, CT is a retired successful business owner and has been on the TLGV Board since 2015, serving as Treasurer for the last 2 years.

Two new Board members were elected to three-year terms:

MARTIN FEY from Putnam, CT lives along the Quinebaug River and has

owned and operated several businesses. He is a strong advocate for The Last Green Valley's natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities.

BILL JOBBAGY from Coventry, CT has been a long-time advocate for TLGV, serving many years on the Board and as Chair. He is a retired engineering and business development manager from Pratt & Whitney and has volunteered on numerous town boards in Coventry.

The following Officers were also elected for two-year terms:

CHAIR - MYRA AMBROGI
from Sterling, CT

VICE-CHAIR - MARTY NIESKI
from Woodstock, CT

SECRETARY - LISA HAYDEN
from Sturbridge, MA

TREASURER - KENT BOUDREAU
from Union, CT



▲ TLGV bestowed its Business Partner of the Year honor upon long-time friends and Walktober participants, John and Patti Wolchesky from Lapsley Orchard in Pomfret. John and Patti have worked incredibly hard to turn their 270-year-old farm from an apple orchard with a few pear trees into a diverse agricultural business that has become a must-visit destination with community events and festivals. They tirelessly promote locally grown foods throughout The Last Green Valley and generously donate their time and food products to help support our work.



◀ Outgoing Board Chairman Mike Nelson (center) and TLGV Executive Director Lois Bruinooge (right) recognized Dale Plummer, Norwich City Historian (left), for his role as Mr. Walktober 2020. Dale was part of the first Walking Weekend in 1991 and has been leading walks ever since, sharing Norwich's rich and complex history. He was part of the committee that helped establish the National Heritage Corridor and we were honored to have named him Mr. Walktober for 2020.

TLGV named Quinebaug Valley Community College as our Non-profit Partner of the Year and thanked QVCC staff for all the support they have provided over the last two years. From hosting TLGV staff for nearly three months while our office was undergoing mold and asbestos remediation, to providing hand sanitizer for Walktober leaders, QVCC understands what it means to build and nurture community.

Building TLGV's

Financial Future

Twenty-seven years ago,

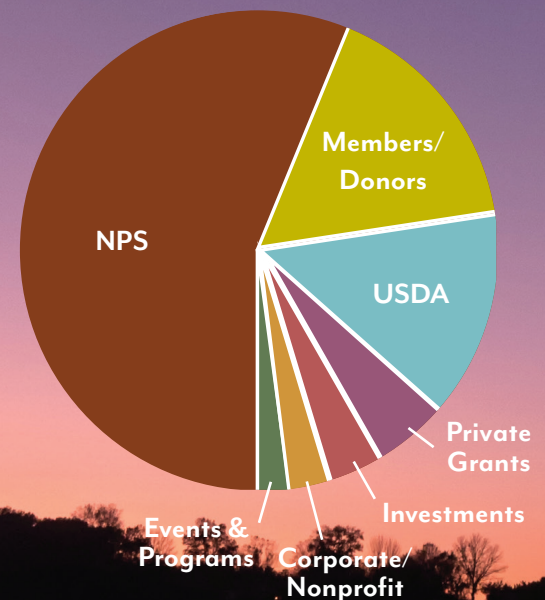
The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor was born from a grassroots effort to celebrate our region. That same community-driven spirit remains strong today as The Last Green Valley, Inc. continues to build its financial security. TLGV's strong financial position is entirely the result of the tremendous donors and partners throughout our region who share a common love for our unique mix of open spaces, working farms, history, and culture.

As part of our agreement with the National Park Service, TLGV is required to match federal dollars 1:1 and your contributions allow us to do just that. Additionally, your support has allowed TLGV to position itself on strong and stable footing, as evidenced by some key achievements on these pages.

Looking to the future, one of TLGV's strategic priorities is to build financial and organizational sustainability. Much progress has been made to this point and TLGV will continue leveraging your donations to achieve this goal. We are pleased to present to you a detailed financial summary of our most recent fiscal year ending September 30, 2021. It is our goal to be open and transparent with all we do—we hope you are proud of TLGV's financial position, and it is because of your continued support that we are here today.

In the pages that follow the financial summary, we offer our sincere thank you to all those who are part of this collaborative effort to care for, enjoy, and pass on all the incredible aspects of our National Heritage Corridor!

Revenue



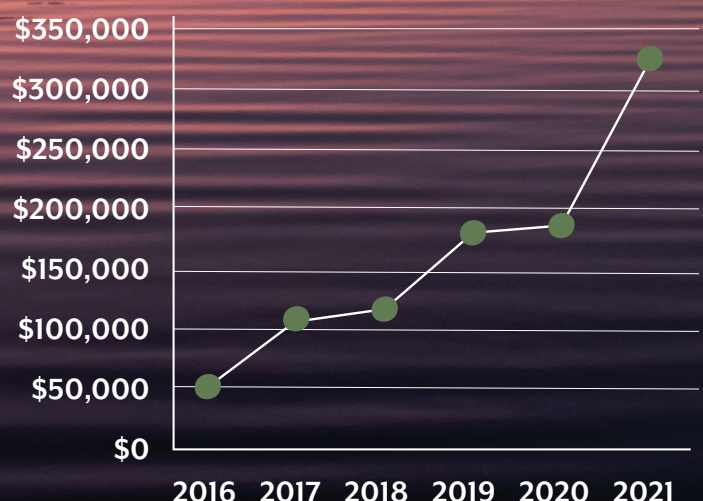
TLGV has worked to diversify revenue sources as it works toward sustainability from NPS funding.

Membership



Membership continues to grow, with 126 new members and partners being welcomed in the past year.

Endowment



The Last Green Valley, Inc.

Statement of Financial Position as of September 30, 2021

From Audited Financial Statements – Copies Available Upon Request

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS

Cash	\$123,653
Operating Reserve	488,296
Grants Receivable	56,897
Prepaid Expenses	16,258
Inventory	1,831
Endowment	322,943
Total Current Assets	1,009,878

PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

Motor Vehicle	25,488
Furniture and Equipment	5,323
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(16,948)
Net Property and Equipment	13,863

TOTAL ASSETS \$1,023,741

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	\$7,670
Accrued Expenses	58,928
Advances from Grantors	6,651
Total Current Liabilities	73,249

TOTAL LIABILITIES 73,249

NET ASSETS

Without Donor Restrictions	915,659
With Donor Restrictions	34,833
TOTAL NET ASSETS	950,492

TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS \$1,023,741

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

REVENUES AND GAINS (FY 2021)

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
National Park Service	\$592,683	\$-	\$592,683
Grants	204,591	-	204,591
Contributions	172,963	3,680	176,643
Fundraising Events	19,860	-	19,860
Memberships	18,806	-	18,806
Merchandise Sales	2,467	-	2,467
Advertising Revenue	1,875	-	1,875
Investment Gain	34,504	-	34,504
Interest Income	2,102	-	2,102
TOTAL REVENUE	1,049,851	3,680	1,053,531

EXPENSES (FY 2021)

Program Services	849,577	-	849,577
Management & General	69,701	-	69,701
Fundraising	36,057	-	36,057
TOTAL EXPENSES	955,335	-	955,335

INCREASE NET ASSETS \$94,516 \$3,680 \$98,196

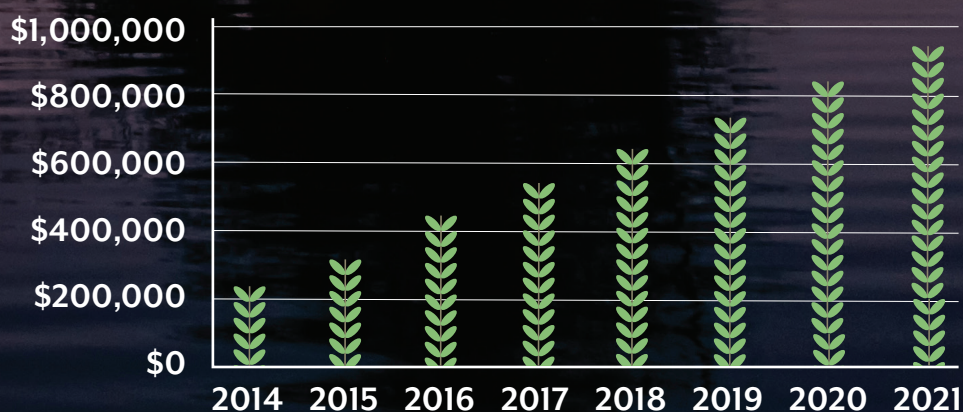
NET ASSETS –

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

NET ASSETS –

End of Year \$915,659 \$34,833 \$950,492

TLGV's endowment fund has grown significantly since its creation in 2016. It is currently valued at \$322,943.



TLGV's net asset balance continues to trend upward.
TLGV has now built a six-month operating reserve.

Thank You to All of The Last Green Valley's Corporate, Non-profit and Government Sponsors and Partners From 01/01/2021 – 12/31/2021

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

\$2,500+

Berkshire Bank Foundation, Inc.
Centreville Bank
Chamber of Commerce of Eastern
Connecticut Foundation
Cornerstone Bank
Millennium Power Partners
Putnam Area Foundation, Inc.

\$1,000+

Byrnes Insurance Agency
Impact Capital Strategies
Ivanhoe Tool & Die Co., Inc.
Jewett City Savings Bank
Savers Bank
UNFI – Helping Hands

\$500+

Charter Oak Federal Credit Union
Cigna Foundation
First Congregational Church of
Woodstock
Just Let Me Bead, LLC
Pfizer Foundation
Town of Chaplin

\$250+

Archambault Insurance Associates
Eastern CT Savings Bank
Gerardi Insurance Services, Inc.
Keurig Dr. Pepper
Schott North America Inc.
Town of Coventry
Village Electric

\$100+

AbbVie
Dudley-Charlton Regional School
District
Eileen Brown Charitable Trust
Groton Open Space Association
Hansen Family Tree Farm, LLC
Quiet Corner NEMBA
Sutton Historical Society
Town of Ashford
Town of Killingly
Town of Lisbon
Town of Pomfret
Town of Sprague
Town of Thompson
Town of Woodstock
United Health Group Foundation



\$50+

Apple
Daughters of the Holy Spirit
Pratt & Whitney, A Raytheon
Technologies Company
Stop & Shop Community Bag Program

\$25+

Big Y
Liberty Mutual
Voya Financial

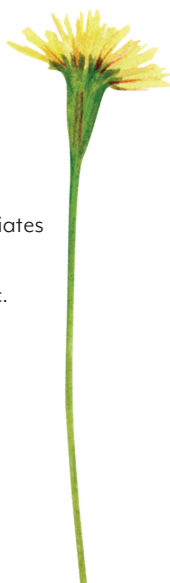
STEWARDSHIP PARTNERS

bankHometown
Berkshire Bank
Byrnes Insurance Agency
Centreville Bank
Cornerstone Bank
Farm Credit East
Fiberoptics Technology Inc.^
Fort Hill Farms & Gardens, LLC
Heritage Information Radio, AM 1700
Impact Capital Strategies
Ivanhoe Tool & Die Co., Inc.
Jewett City Savings Bank
Joshua's Tract Conservation & Historic
Trust^
Lebanon Historical Society Museum
Little Dipper Farm^

Millennium Power Partners
Rampco Construction Co., Inc.
Savers Bank

SUSTAINING PARTNERS

Allen Hill Farm, LLC
The Arc Eastern CT
Ashford Business Association^
Atlantic Broadband
Avalonia Land Conservancy^
Azuluna Foods
Bed & Breakfasts of Mystic Coast &
Country
Blackmer Farm
Bogey Lanes
Boy Scouts of America - CT Rivers
Council
Bright Acres Farm Sugar House^
Brooklyn Historical Society
Capen Hill Nature Sanctuary
Cedar Ledge Tree Farm
Chamber of Central Mass South
Chamber of Commerce of Eastern CT
Cherry Ledge Farm
Columbia Canoe Club
Connecticut Water Company^
Cook's Farm Orchard
Country Bank
Coventry Historical Society^
Daughters of the Holy Spirit
Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center
Dovehill Farm, LLC
EASTCONN
East Woodstock
Congregational Church^
ECFLA/Wolf Den Land Trust
Eileen D. Brown Charitable Trust
Ekonk Hill Turkey Farm^
Enchanted Jewelry CT LLC^
Finnish-American Heritage Society^
Florence Griswold Museum
Fresh Please
Friends of Pachaug Forest Inc.^
Garden Club of Windham
Girl Scouts of Connecticut^
The Governor Samuel Huntington
Trust/Huntington Homestead



Greater Norwich Chamber of Commerce
 Groton Open Space Association
 Halagan Design Group
 Hansen Family Tree Farm, LLC^
 Hart's Greenhouse & Florist^
 Hay Burr Inn
 Henrietta House B&B
 Hidden Springs Farm
 Highland Festival Association of Scotland, CT
 Hitchcock Free Academy
 Homelight, Inc.
 Horizon Wings
 Hull Forest Products
 KeyBank
 Ladd's Garden Center
 Lakeview Marine - Paddlesport Rentals
 Lapsley Orchard
 Light Source Center
 Long Subaru^
 Mansfield Downtown Partnership
 Marty's of Dudley
 McLean Research Associates
 Morning Beckons Farm^
 Northeast Connecticut Farmer's Market
 Northeastern CT Chamber of Commerce
 Old Sturbridge Village
 Opacum Land Trust, Inc.
 Optical Heritage Museum, Inc.^
 Palmer Arboretum^
 PierceCare^
 Pine Hill Alpaca Farm
 Plainfield Business Association
 Pomfret Proprietors
 Pourings & Passages
 Preston Historical Society
 Preston Ridge Vineyard
 Project Imo
 Publick House Historic Inn
 Putnam Business Association
 Putnam Elms^
 Quiet Corner Cottage
 Quiet Corner Garden Club
 Quiet Corner Inn
 Quiet Corner NEMBA^
 Quinebaug Valley Community College Foundation
 Samuel Slater Experience^
 Select Seeds
 Semaki & Bird



ServiceMASTER by Mason
 Sharpe Hill Vineyard
 South East CT Community Center of the Blind
 Sturbridge Lions Club
 Sturbridge Tourist Association
 Taylor Brooke Brewery
 Taylor Brooke Winery
 TNECT at The Bradley Playhouse
 Town Line Tree Farm
 Town of Killingly, Economic Development Office
 Town of Voluntown, Economic Development Commission
 Watercure Farm Distillery^
 Webster Fish and Game Club
 Westford Hill Distillers^
 Wheelabrator, Lisbon
 Willimantic Brewing Co., LLC, Restaurant & Pub Brewery
 Willimantic Food Co-op^
 Windham County 4-H Foundation
 WINY Radio/Osbrey Broadcasting Company
 Woodstock Academy
 Woodstock Agricultural Society, Inc.
 Woodstock Building Assoc., LLC
 Woodstock Business Association
 Woodstock Sustainable Farms & Manton Green B & B
 Wyndham Land Trust, Inc.^

SUPPORTING PARTNERS

101 Business Solutions
 85 Main
 The Adventure Park at Storrs
 Alternatives for Health
 Archambault Insurance Associates^
 ARTicles Gallery
 Arts in the Garden
 Ashford Historical Society
 Aspinock Historical Society
 Ballard Institute & Museum of Puppetry
 The Barn at Gray Mare Hill Guest House
 The Black Tavern Historical Society
 Blue Slope Farm and Country Museum
 Booklovers' Gourmet
 Brialee Family Campground
 Business Systems & Incentives, Inc.
 Chamber of Commerce, Windham Region

Chamberlin Mill, Inc.
 Charlie Brown Campground
 Chase Graphics^
 Chelsea Groton Bank
 The Clara Barton Birthplace Museum & Barton Center for Diabetes Education
 Clarus Multimedia Group
 Cloverleigh Farm
 Columbia Historical Society
 Connecticut Audubon Society at Pomfret^
 Connecticut Eastern Railroad Museum
 Covanta SECONN^
 Coventry Arts and Antiques
 Creamery Brook Bison
 Dexter-Russell, Inc. ^
 Dudley Conservation Land Trust
 Eastern CT Conservation District, Inc.^
 Eastford Historical Society^
 Echo Farm^
 Fairholm Farm, Inc.^
 Federated Church of Brooklyn
 Friendly Spirits LLC
 Friends of Ashbel Woodward Museum^
 Friends of Mansfield Hollow, Inc.
 Friends of the Prudence Crandall Museum
 Frog Rock Rest Stop, LLC
 Garden Gate Florist
 George's Galley
 Gerardi Insurance Services
 Goudreau's at Nash's Garden Center
 The Governor Jonathan Trumbull House Museum
 Griswold Historical Society
 Guns of Norwich Historical Society, Inc.
 Hale YMCA Youth & Family Center^
 Hampton Antiquarian & Historical Society, Inc.
 Highland Campground
 Inn at Woodstock Hill^
 J&D Civil Engineers, LLC
 Jeff Helgersen Excavating, Inc.^
 K & E Farms
 Killingly Business Association
 Killingly Grange #112
 Killingly Historical & Genealogical Society
 Lake Shore Legal Solutions
 Landon's Tire, Inc.
 Lebanon Life Publications, LLC



^Has committed to a multi-year partnership.

*Has contributed to one of The Last Green Valley's endowment funds with either the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut or the Greater Worcester Community Foundation.



Lisbon Historical Society[^]
 Little House in the Big Woods
 Longmeadow Automotive[^]
 Lord Thompson Manor
 Mansfield Historical Society
 Nathan Hale Homestead
 New England Forestry
 Foundation[^]
 The New Roxbury Land Trust,
 Inc.
 North Oxford Mills
 Northeastern Connecticut Art
 Guild [^]
 Norwich Arts Center[^]
 Norwich City Historian
 Norwich Community
 Development Corporation[^]
 Norwich Heritage & Regional
 Visitors' Center
 Norwich Historical Society
 OFS Fitel, LLC
 Our Companions Animal Rescue
 Oxford Firefighters Association[^]
 Oxford Historical Commission
 Pakulis Farm, LLC[^]
 Pinecroft Farm
 Plainfield Historical Society
 Pomfret Historical Society
 Pomfret Horse & Trail
 Association, Inc.
 Rawson Materials
 Reliance Health, Inc.
 Roseland Cottage
 Roseland Park
 Sawmill Pottery[^]

Schott North America Inc.
 Scotland Historical Society/
 Edward Waldo House
 The Shoe Smith
 Slater Memorial Museum
 Society of the Founders of
 Norwich/Leffingwell House
 Museum
 South Charlton Reservoir
 Association
 Sprague Historical Society
 Sullivan & Company Real
 Estate, LLC
 TEEG[^]
 Thompson Historical Society[^]
 The Three C's (Community
 Cultural Committee)
 Town of Ashford, Farmers
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 Trinity Episcopal Church
 Tyrone Farm[^]
 UCONN CAHNR Office of
 Communications
 Unbound Glory Farm[^]
 Vanilla Bean Cafe
 Village Electric[^]
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 Webco Chemical Corporation[^]
 The Webster Dudley Business
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 Westfield Congregational
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 Westview Farm

William Benton Museum of Art[^]
 Willimantic Renaissance, Inc.
 Willimantic Victorian
 Neighborhood Association
 Willimantic Whitewater
 Partnership[^]
 Windham ARTS[^]
 Windham Textile & History
 Museum
 Woodstock Orchards, LLC
 The Yoga Farm

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

85 Main Restaurant
 AAA Northeast
 The Adventure Park at Storrs
 Allen Hill Farm, LLC
 Booklovers' Gourmet
 Boston Red Sox Baseball
 Brialee Family Campground
 Byrnes Insurance Agency
 Captain Grant's 1754
 The Chronicle
 Church Street Storage
 The Clara Barton Birthplace
 Museum & Barton Center for
 Diabetes Education
 The Courthouse Bar and Grille
 The Day
 Dexter-Russell, Inc.
 Eastern Regional Tourism Office
 Enchanted Jewelry CT LLC
 Friends of Pachaug Forest Inc.
 Garde Arts Center

GateHouse Media
 The Governor Jonathan Trumbull
 House Museum
 Green Valley Hospitality
 Hall Communications, Inc.
 Healthquest
 Henrietta House B&B
 Heritage Information Radio, AM
 1700
 Hosmer Mountain Soda
 Jeff Helgerson Excavating, Inc.
 Jorgensen Center for the
 Performing Arts
 Key Bank
 Landon's Tire, Inc.
 Lapsley Orchard
 Lebanon Green Vineyards
 Mohegan Sun
 New York Giants Football
 New York Pizza Company
 Norwich Bulletin
 Old Sturbridge Village
 Publick House Historic Inn
 Putnam Town Crier/Northeast
 Ledger
 Rawson Materials
 Renee's Bistro & Catering
 Service
 Roseland Park
 Samuel Slater Experience
 ServiceMaster by Mason
 The Tree House at Underhill
 Hollow
 Tree House Brewing Company
 Villager Newspapers
 The Webster-Dudley Business
 Alliance
 Wheelabrator Technologies, Inc.
 WILI Radio/The Nutmeg
 Broadcasting Company
 Willimantic Food Co-op
 Windham County 4-H
 Foundation
 WINY Radio/Osbrey
 Broadcasting Company
 Woodstock Agricultural Society,
 Inc.
 Worcester Railers HC
 Foundation
 The Yankee Xpress



[^]Has committed to a multi-year partnership.

^{*}Has contributed to one of The Last Green Valley's endowment funds with either the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut or the Greater Worcester Community Foundation.

Thank You

to All of The Last Green Valley's Individual and Family Members, Donors and Supporters from 01/01/2021 – 12/31/2021



DONORS \$10,000+

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Keith & Elaine Knowlton

\$1,000+

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Ellen Lehtimaki
Koren Lowenthal
Joe & Ashley McKenna
Janet Robertson
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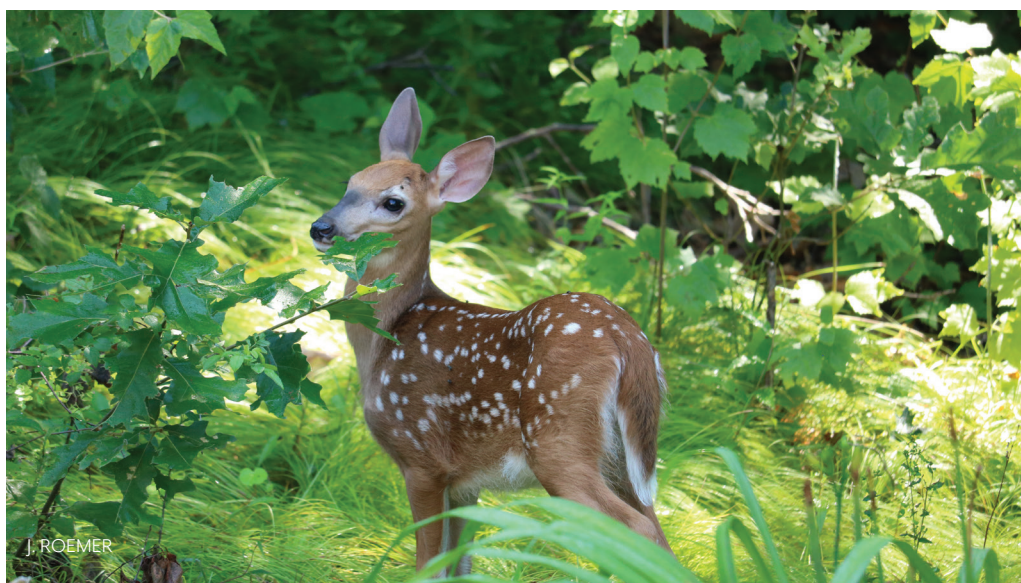
Ron & Gwyneth Tillen
Susan Waldron

\$100+

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Mashikian
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Lillian Rhodes
Barry & Jane Rider
Joyce M. Rivers

Lucy Wong
Richard & Cynde Woodward
Loretta Wrobel
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Mike & Mary Ellen Ellsworth
Diane Ethier
Amanda & Eric Johnson
Lee Felpel & Jim Hamel
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David & Susan Fowler
Peter & Judy Georg
Barry Gorfain & Debbie Tedford
LyAnn Graff & Ken Carpenter*
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Paul Grenier
David & Susan Griffiths
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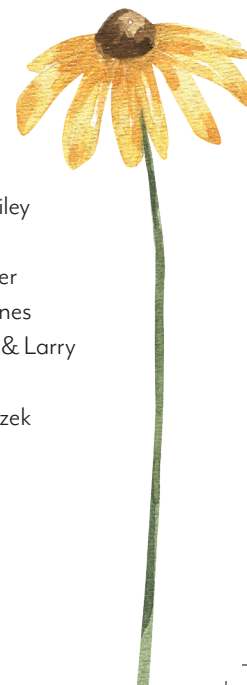
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