

NATIONAL
HERITAGE
CORRIDOR

In Touch

THE
last
green
valley™

with The Last Green Valley

SPRING 2023

MEMBER MAGAZINE

Creatures of the Night

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To our Members, Donors, Partners and Sponsors,

The last few days of 2022 took us on the wildest ride in our history as a National Heritage Corridor.

We had been working with National Heritage Areas (NHAs) around the country for many years to pass comprehensive legislation formalizing the Heritage Area program within the National Park Service and providing stability for our work. Even though Senate and House bills had progressed farther than any previous year, we thought time had run out in the 117th Congress, and we would have to start all over again in 2023.

But sometime after 10 pm on December 20, the Senate passed the National Heritage Area Act by unanimous (bipartisan!) consent. Then, after clearing several procedural hurdles that seemed insurmountable, the House passed its version of the bill on December 22 by an overwhelming, bipartisan vote of 326-95. President Biden signed the law into effect in early January.

This landmark legislation will ensure the long-term stability of The Last Green Valley and 61 other NHAs across the country. The Act guarantees the National Park Service will continue working with NHAs for the next 15 years and authorizes each NHA to continue to receive federal funds. While our designation as a National Heritage Corridor has never been in question, The Last Green Valley's authorization to work with the National Park Service and receive federal funding was set to expire on September 30, 2023.

The Congressional delegations from Massachusetts and Connecticut were instrumental in helping pass the National Heritage Area Act. We are grateful to U.S. Senators Chris Murphy and Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut and Senators Ed Markey and Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts. U.S. Representatives Jim McGovern and Richard Neal of Massachusetts and Joe Courtney of Connecticut also played critical roles in ensuring the legislation was passed.

We are also grateful for the support all of you, our members, donors, partners and sponsors provided by writing letters and calling your Senators and Representatives in favor of this legislation.

Although the manner in which this legislation passed was a nail-biter to the end, the overwhelming bipartisan support it received was not surprising. The Last Green Valley, like every NHA, strengthens communities and embodies the best ideas in public-private partnerships. With minimal federal investment, NHAs collectively protect and promote the people and places that tell America's stories. As Sara Capen, Chair of the Alliance of National

Heritage Areas eloquently explains, "As National Park Service partners, we take the monumental storytelling ethos of our national parks and bring it to communities. 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 NHA. We take pride in making sure that many voices are included around our cultural heritage storytelling tables."

While passage of the National Heritage Area Act authorizes federal funding to NHAs, it does not guarantee funding in any given year. Still, the Act creates new stability for us because we no longer have the stress and time commitment of seeking reauthorization every few years. Instead, we can sharpen our focus to better promote and conserve our natural, historic and cultural resources for future generations to enjoy. We will deepen community connections, increase engagement with diverse audiences, strengthen TLGV as a leading and trusted advocate for the region's future and continue to build financial and organizational sustainability.

The time is right for TLGV to embark on an exciting and transformative project to create a regional touchstone for appreciating the unique natural, cultural and agricultural resources of The Last Green Valley and a portal for residents and visitors seeking to explore and learn. We have begun to envision a TLGV headquarters that will connect residents and visitors to the outdoors, celebrate the area's history and culture and engage current and future residents in the conservation and preservation of this special place. A new headquarters can be a gathering place to begin exploring the ecology, history, culture, agriculture and arts of The Last Green Valley; an access point to outdoor activities through publications, guided trips, classes, gear rentals and more; an education center that offers future scientists and citizen scientists a place to learn about and help monitor the environment; and a place for high-impact, community-focused adult, family and youth programming.

We hope you will join us on this journey and look forward to sharing our progress with you in the next year!



Lois Bruinooge, Executive Director



Creatures of the Night

The Last Green Valley Comes Alive When the Sun Goes Down



Remember that moment as a child when suddenly the night bloomed into hundreds of tiny glowing lights?

Maybe you thought they were faeries. Perhaps you knew they were tiny beetles putting on a show. Whatever you knew about these tiny lights, they were magical.

“Fireflies have a really special connection with people,” said Candace Fallon, a Sr. Endangered Species Conservation Biologist with Xerces Society, an international non-profit organization that protects the natural world through the conservation of invertebrates and their habitats. “People who may not be outdoorsy or think about conservation, or habitat or anything like that know fireflies. I feel like there’s a sense of magic with them.”

Fireflies are just one of the creatures who stir only when we begin to settle into our homes. These animals have evolved for the dark, relying on our absence to hunt, forage, mate and pollinate. We rely on them more than we know to keep our ecosystem healthy and thriving. Yet we know so little about what happens in the woods, waters and fields once the sun sets.

Fireflies are emblematic of our human understanding of the night. For all the wonder fireflies inspire, we know very little about them. We know enough to understand their populations are declining significantly, and they are an important link in the web of biodiversity. Yet, they, and many other creatures that fill the night with activity, are either mysteries or misunderstood and sometimes both.

“We definitely do not have the same understanding of what happens in the natural world at night as we do about many of the species active during the day,” said Devaughn Fraser, a Wildlife Biologist with Connecticut’s Department of Energy and Environmental Protection. “Some of that is because of the challenges of the dark. There’s a reason animals use the night.”

Fraser’s specialty is bats, one of the few truly nocturnal creatures inhabiting The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor. Most of the creatures we think of as roaming the night — raccoons, bobcats, coyotes and opossums for example — are crepuscular, meaning they are active at dawn and dusk.

“Night provides cover for movement,” Fraser said. “For

predators it’s an opportune time for taking down prey.”

Ryan Snide spends a lot of time in the forest at night as the seasonal night ranger at Pachaug State Forest. As President of the Friends of Pachaug Forest, Snide spends many of his days in the forest as well.

“It’s a completely different place at night,” Snide said. “People don’t understand the forest comes alive after dark. I never saw a flying squirrel and now I have. They’re real. When you’re told it’s like a different world in the forest at night it’s hard to believe, but it’s real.”

Snide has seen animals, not just flying squirrels, that he had never seen during the day. And even animals that are common sights around the Heritage Corridor, such as white tailed deer, behave differently when the sun sets, he said.

Pachaug State Forest is one of the areas of The Last Green Valley least affected by light pollution. As the largest forest in the Heritage Corridor, it also has less fragmentation than other areas. In some ways it is an oasis, even in a place like The Last Green Valley, which is still more than 84 percent open space.

“We have these green corridors here in The Last Green Valley,” Fraser said. “But we still have roads and even small roads have an impact on wildlife.”

Human activity is pushing more animals towards the night and making the night less hospitable. And the truth is we don’t really know what that means. Fraser said anecdotally she thinks it’s very possible there is a shift in animal movements away from daytime activities towards the night. But there has not been any significant research.

Nocturnal and crepuscular creatures have evolved over millennium to operate under the cover of darkness. The desire to face less competition for the same food likely was a significant driver in evolution, Fraser said. The fisher, a weasel, is primarily nocturnal and its diet is similar to other weasels active during the day, such as the American marten. Fraser said it’s likely the fisher evolved to take advantage of less competition.

continued on next page

That evolution can take many forms, from larger eyes and heightened senses of smell to the ability to see in UV like owls and the ability to silently flap their wings because of their feathers and wing structure. In the case of the flying squirrel, research has shown these communal animals actually glow bubble gum pink under UV light. This seemingly odd characteristic is called fluorescence, when light is reflected at a different wavelength, changing color. The discovery was purely accidental. In 2019 a forestry professor was in a Wisconsin forest with a UV light searching for fungi and amphibians known to fluoresce when he spotted a glowing pink flying squirrel. Since then, additional research has shown more mammals fluoresce than previously known, such as moles, rabbits and opossums, according to “Investigation of Fluorescence in Selected Mammals of Arkansas,” published in 2021 in the Journal of Arkansas Academy of Science.

Why do these animals glow? Your guess may be as good as the researchers, which is to say everyone is guessing right now. These animals are not closely related and have different diets and habitats. Yet, they all glow to varying degrees. Their commonality is their penchant for moving through darkness.

Fallon, whose job includes conducting research at night, said when it comes to the species active at night there is so much left to learn.

“I truly believe everything has innate value,” Fallon said. “The impacts humans are having on the natural world and its cycle are accelerated. The way everything works together is important and we just don’t know all those connections. But we do know enough that we can take action and stop the damage before we lose more biodiversity.”

Paul Benjunas, a Wildlife Biologist with CT DEEP, said ensuring we do not continue reducing biodiversity is important.

“Since there is still so much to learn when it comes to the many interactions throughout our ecosystems, it is critical for everyone to understand how important biodiversity is to a healthy planet,” he said. “As more species become imperiled, so does the overall health of our ecosystems. Biodiversity is critical to maintaining a natural, healthy environment.”

The issues facing nocturnal and crepuscular animals are similar to those facing creatures active during the day. Humans, fragmentation, pesticides, invasive plants and animals, habitat degradation and loss are all problematic. However, the night also brings with it light pollution, a problem that is pervasive and yet easy to remedy.

“Artificial light pollution definitely has a negative impact on wildlife,” Benjunas said. “Many species of migrating birds often travel at night, relying on the stars and the moon for direction. Unfortunately, many of these birds are attracted to artificial light sources at night and this disrupts their flight patterns, often causing disorientation and potentially fatal collisions with buildings.”

Snide said it doesn’t even have to be constant light pollution. The animals of Pachaug are used to existing without human interference, but sometimes people attempt to use the forest at night, which is not allowed unless you have reserved a camping location.

“People come flying down the roads sometimes, and I see the results,” Snide said. “I’m in the truck, and I drive very slowly, and I’ll see that family of raccoons moving across the road. I stop and wait for them. Someone else comes flying through and the animals get hit. It’s senseless to me. We should have respect for these animals. This is their home. We only get to visit it, and we need to take more care when we’re here. When you see them in their world, behaving like they do when we aren’t around it changes your understanding and your perspective. It’s changed mine. I’ll never look at any of these animals in the same way and as a hunter, I’ve always respected them. It’s just that my appreciation and understanding is that much more. It’s a gift to me to be in this forest at night.”



You Don’t Have to Go Home, But You Do Have to Leave the Forest at Night

Ryan Snide knows Pachaug State Forest better than most people. It’s essentially been his backyard all his life. Now he is the seasonal night ranger for the park.

“This place can be dangerous at night,” Snide said. “I’ve gotten myself turned around during the day, at night it’s much different.”

Snide recalls hunting in the forest and losing his bearings. As the largest forest in the Heritage Corridor, people do not understand how vast it is. And its sheer size is why it and all the state and federal lands in The Last Green Valley are closed at dusk unless you have a registration to camp. And even then, you are expected to stay in the camping area and not wander the park.

Snide said the rules are made to protect people first and foremost. But it’s also about giving the environment a chance to recover without human interaction.

“The forest, and everything in it, needs a break too,” Snide said. 



JIM WHEELER

Moths Lead the Pollination Night Shift

Do you love the juicy snap of a locally grown apple? Or the tart sweetness of a raspberry?

You might have a moth to thank.

Mounting evidence has shown pollination is a more intricate exchange than we think. Honeybees often get most of the accolades followed by native bees and flies. But the insects of the night are proving to be essential in the equation.

“We have a ton more to learn,” said Emily May, a Pollinator Conservationist with Xerces Society, an international nonprofit organization that protects the natural world through the conservation of invertebrates and their habitats. “It turns out we underestimated what is happening at night with pollination. Moths in particular play a really important role in the pollination of apples and berries.”

It's estimated 90 percent of flowering plants, including

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

A study published by PLOS ONE on March 29, 2023, called “Marvelous moths! Pollen deposition rate of bramble is greater at night than day” suggests moths are critical to the production of berries in the bramble family, which includes raspberries and blackberries. The research showed that while moths did not visit the brambles with the frequency of daytime pollinators, they left more pollen when they did visit, and those berries were larger than those that did not have nighttime pollination.

It turns out brambles produce more nectar at night, a factor that aids in the attraction of the moths.

May said what is becoming clear is that there is an overlap between the day and night pollination, and it seems to be a strategy that plants and insects have evolved. These redundancies seem to be critical to the pollination process in a way researchers are just beginning to understand.

In June 2020, Portland Press published “Nocturnal pollination: an overlooked ecosystem service vulnerable to environmental change.” The study said three biological mechanisms play an important role in nighttime pollination: floral scent, night vision and thermogenic sensitivity. The three biological functions, in most cases, work to support one another and the interactions between insect and plant can be quite specific because of these evolutions. Pollution, artificial light and climate change are all disturbing these interactions, the study said.

May said research is also showing insects considered pests because of their destructive behavior on one crop are crucial to the pollination of another crop. The problem extends to the household garden as well, she said. Thrips, a tiny bug that is a significant pollinator of wildflowers, is a garden pest according to an internet search.

“Understanding what you want from your garden is really important,” May said. “That’s true of farms too. There are thresholds that will dictate how we respond to what is happening in our gardens. If your intention is healthy soil and conservation, then how you respond is different than if you just want everything to look beautiful regardless.”

The healthier the soil and the garden, the more life will flock to it and the healthier it will be. Pests are not often huge problems in healthy gardens. But a healthy garden requires healthy soil and the right plants for what the land provides. Those factors will in turn help attract more beneficial insects.

“Diversity is so important for the entire ecosystem,” May said. “A diversity of plants supports a diversity of pollinators and vice versa. But you also have to understand that means you may see things in your garden you don’t expect, like that wasp who is a beneficial predator. Can you appreciate the wasp for the role it plays in the garden or are you going to get the can of Raid?”



Turn the Lights Off

Artificial Light Threatens Birds, Mammals, Insects & Us

Technology and evolution are not on the same timeline.

In the 143 years since Thomas Edison invented the light bulb, humans have used it to transform the night, and it is having an effect on almost every living creature.

The cycles of night and dark control circadian rhythms and almost all life on the planet relies on that cycle of night and day. These intricate internal clocks tell animals when to wake, when to forage, when to mate, when to migrate and everything else they need to do for survival.

“Light pollution is really problematic,” said Candace Fallon, a Sr. Endangered Species Conservation Biologist with Xerces Society, an international non-profit organization that protects the natural world through the conservation of invertebrates and their habitats. “It has this cascading effect on everything from hunting to reproduction.”

Fallon’s attention is primarily on fireflies, one of the species she researches. And the research is showing fireflies are in decline, she said. Light pollution is only one factor, but it is a major factor for a beetle that relies on the night for all of its needs.

Light pollution is both pervasive and probably the easiest pollution to remedy. Research published in 2018 in “Science Advances” of the “New World Atlas of Artificial Night Sky Brightness,” reveals that while 80 percent of Americans cannot see the Milky Way, 99 percent of us live under light polluted skies, meaning we do not know true darkness.

“Light pollution is one of the most pervasive forms of environmental alteration,” the Atlas reports. “It affects even otherwise pristine sites because it is easily observed during the night hundreds of kilometers from its source in landscapes that seem untouched by humans during the day, damaging the nighttime landscapes even in protected areas, such as national parks.”

In 2019, TLGV published an edition of In Touch focused on educating readers about the problems created by light pollution. In an interview for that edition, Patrick Comins, Executive Director of The Connecticut Audubon Society, said artificial lighting is also playing a role in the well-documented decline of birds, particularly impacting migration.

“Bird migration is very complicated,” Comins said. “There are many factors that influence migration. But, intuitively, it makes sense that light pollution is playing a role in the issues we’re seeing with migration.”

While we have created a light pollution problem across the globe, upsetting the internal clocks of the entire animal and

plant kingdoms, we could rectify the problem faster than we created it. We just need to turn off the lights when we don’t need them and point them only where we do need them. While this may be an oversimplification, solutions are readily available to the average homeowner, and they will also save anyone who implements them money on energy costs.



Research is also clear that light pollution has incredible negative impacts on human health, leading to everything from sleep disorders to cancer. You can read the online edition of TLGV’s Light Pollution edition of In Touch to learn more.

Educational efforts to reduce light pollution, such as TLGV’s night sky programing, work with partners on reducing light pollution, and the efforts of Sustainable CT to inspire municipalities to take action, are helping. Connecticut Audubon has taken Comins’ concerns from 2019 seriously and is now part of the Lights Out Connecticut effort to reduce light pollution.

In a 2017 report for the National Park Service, Travis Longcore, an Assistant Professor of Architecture, Spatial Sciences and Biological Sciences at the University of Southern California, detailed his extensive research on how artificial lighting is affecting wildlife on public lands and how best to mitigate the impacts. Longcore examined the impacts of artificial lighting on a variety of habitats, including the kinds found here in The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor – grasslands, wetlands and rivers and deciduous and evergreen forests. In every habitat, artificial light had negative effects on the native wildlife, ranging from the development of amphibians, to foraging and mating.

With the east coast becoming brighter at night every year, dark corridors like The Last Green Valley are becoming more and more important for plants and wildlife. The need for contiguous greenways is becoming more obvious. Comins said Audubon knows through its own field work that The Last Green Valley is an increasingly important flyway for migrating birds.

Emily May, a Pollinator Conservationist with Xerces, said there is increasing evidence that nighttime pollination is an important ecological service for crops we rely on, and the evidence that light pollution disrupts the process is growing.

“We need to rethink what we do with our lightscapes,” May said. “Artificial light is really a threat to nighttime pollinations. The entire ecosystem is involved, and we can develop different strategies for reducing light pollution. There already is a lot of good information for changing our habits.”



Got Light Pollution?

Are you creating light pollution?
Here are some tips to help you figure it out.

Ask these questions about your outdoor lighting:

- Does the area really need to be lit?
- If so, for what purpose?
- How bright does the light need to be?
- Are your lighting fixtures shining light out at 90 degrees or more?
- Is the light falling where you want it to or is it lighting up more than you want?
- Are the lights so bright they cause glare?

If you've realized you can improve your outdoor lighting here are some tips:

- Don't light an area if it's not needed.
- Turn off the lights when not in use.

- To save energy, don't use excessive lights that are brighter than you need.
- Use timers, dimmers and motions sensors whenever possible.
- Use only "full cut-off" or "fully shielded" lighting fixtures. That means no light above the 90-degree angle. Fully shielded lighting can be purchased or retrofitted.
- Use energy-efficient lighting sources and fixtures.
- Only use lighting sources with correlated color temperature (CCT) no higher than 3000K. For example, the warmer, the redder it is and the lower the CCT. Blue light is cooler and causes the most problems. Most lighting products provide CCT information on their package labeling.

Source: International Dark-Sky Association



Would You Like to Become a Dark Sky Community?

The International Dark Sky Association (IDA; darksky.org) provides a wealth of resources for understanding light pollution and for mitigating its impacts.

IDA also recognizes and promotes excellent stewardship of the night sky by encouraging communities, parks and protected areas around the world to preserve and protect dark sites through responsible lighting policies and public education.

IDA recognizes cities and towns that adopt quality outdoor lighting ordinances and undertake efforts to educate residents about the importance of dark skies with a special International Dark Sky Community designation.



Puppies with Wings

Bats Need Our Help & We Need Bats



Bats — they are the stuff of nightmares. Rats with wings. The nuisance that finds its way into your attic. But are they?

“I think they’re more like puppies with wings,” said Devaughn Fraser, a wildlife biologist with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection who has studied bats.

Bats are many things, but the misinformation and myths about them have made the public perception largely inaccurate. Bats are the second most diverse mammal on the planet with 1,400 species and the number keeps climbing. They’re pollinators, pest management and much more.

They are not rodents. We are more closely related to rodents genetically than bats are. They are mammals but rarely carry rabies. They find their prey and navigate with echolocation, but they are not blind. And they have excellent hearing. In The Last Green Valley bats range in size from 8 to 16 inches.

“They fill a role comparable to birds,” Fraser said.

Bats are integral in pest management. They love mosquitoes but also eat other insects that have been known to damage crops. Mass Audubon estimates an individual bat can eat 600-1,200 insects an hour. That correlates to an estimated \$3 billion value to the U.S. agriculture and forest industries.

“There’s a significant public health value with bats as well, not just in their role in reducing pests but that reduction also allows us to use fewer pesticides,” said Fraser.

Like birds, bats are facing significant challenges. While bird populations are plummeting, few species have experienced the kind of mortality rate of bats in recent years.

Massachusetts and Connecticut are home to nine species of bats. All of them are threatened with most of them considered endangered. In recent years white-nose syndrome (WNS) has attacked bats, especially cave bats that roost in colonies. The little brown bat population has dropped by about 95 percent in Connecticut since WNS was first found in the state in 2008, Fraser said.

Mass Audubon suspects that 2 million little brown bats have died in the state leaving the population at about 1 percent of its numbers before the arrival of WNS.

Even big brown bats, the largest bat population in the region, have suffered about a 30 percent drop in population because of WNS.

WNS is caused by a fungus that enjoys humid, cool, cave environments. It can be spread from bat to bat, from soil to the bat and humans can carry it into proximity of bats. The fungus disrupts the normal hibernation cycle, waking the bats often, which uses fat reserves. The bats starve before spring when insects are available.

Fraser organizes all of Connecticut’s research and education efforts about native bats. A bat cam on a big brown bat colony roost will go live in June to help people overcome the stigma of bats. Fraser also has a crew of volunteers, including TLGV’s Chief Ranger Bill Reid, who assist in monitoring bat populations in

multiple ways. Some drive predetermined routes with sensitive microphones to listen for bat calls. Others use microphones and visual counts at known roosting sites.

“There seems to be some evidence the little browns might be stabilizing,” Fraser said. “That would be some good news. But WNS is not the only challenge facing our bats.”

Many of the challenges facing bats are human generated.

Bats, like all other creatures of the night, are impacted by light pollution. Pesticides, pollution and wind energy have all had negative effects on bat populations. To put all the blame on WNS for the strain on bats would be irresponsible. Fraser said the northern long-eared bat was once a state-wide species but now it’s so rare it’s been difficult to track a population. It is on the federal threatened species list as well as the endangered list in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

“We are constantly trying to play catch up to our own destructive behaviors,” Fraser said. “Bats are actually not unique. They’re indicative of what is happening throughout the environment.”



Meet a Marvelous Marsupial The Incredible Opossum

You wouldn't be alone if you thought opossums were giant rodents.

They are, however, the only marsupial in the United States and Canada. They have incredible biological systems and bring numerous benefits to the ecosystem. Yet, they are not only misunderstood, but reviled by some and considered a nuisance.

"They are amazing animals, the only ones of their kind that we have," said Pam Lefferts of Ferncroft Animal Rescue in Woodstock. "We should be protecting them."

Lefferts and her husband, Bill, dedicate themselves to rescuing injured and orphaned opossums. It's more work than they had planned for their retirement, but it feels more like a blessing to them.

"We feel like we're doing something good," Lefferts said. "We're not changing the world, but maybe we're changing our small corner of it."

Opossums are creatures of contradiction. That wiry fur you think they have is soft like a long-haired cat. The long tail will hold your finger, not unlike the way a baby holds onto its parent's fingers. They hiss but are not aggressive unless severely threatened. They are more likely to have a catatonic response and keel over than attack, Lefferts said. It's the reason they have a reputation for playing dead.

"They are amazing animals, the only ones of their kind that we have."

They have a reputation as chicken killers, but they are not. They are the creature willing to clean up the mess. They do not dig holes, but will use the abandoned holes of other animals, and while they may be living under your deck, they are not the ones chewing on your house.

Paul Benjunas, a wildlife biologist with the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, said opossums and raccoons are serving important functions for humans.

"Raccoons and opossums, for instance, feed on carrion and insects, helping eliminate decomposing animal matter and potential pest species," he said.

Because of a lower body temperature, opossums also rarely get rabies. They are not nocturnal, but they are crepuscular, using an incredible sense of smell to hunt and forage at night. Seeing one during the day, however, is possible.

The Lefferts do their best to educate the public about opossums and have three rescued animals that were unable to be released. Those opossums are ambassadors, traveling with the Lefferts to schools, senior centers and any other organization interested in learning about the only marsupials we have.

Opossums are not native to The Last Green Valley

National Heritage Corridor. The Indigenous Peoples of the region would not have encountered an opossum. Neither would the colonists. Only at the turn of the 20th century would the opossum begin appearing in the region.

Today it's commonplace through most of New England because of rising temperatures. They do not hibernate but will hunker down during severe winter weather. Here, frostbite can also impact their tails and ears.

Opossums have two reproductive systems. The female has two wombs and can give birth to as many as 20 opossums, but 9 to 13 is most common. From

the start it's a battle to survive. The babies must crawl their way from the birth canal to the pouch and latch on. If there are more babies than places to nurse, the babies left out will not survive. They are not like cats or dogs that nurse and leave. Lefferts said a newborn opossum is essentially an embryo. The ones who do nurse will stay there for about 60 days. Lefferts said this is when the female opossum is the most vulnerable and more likely to be hit by a car.

After they leave the pouch, the babies are often found hitching a ride on mom's back.

"I'm not going to pretend the mothers are as attentive as we are," Lefferts said. "I'm not trying to humanize them. They are wild animals, but those mothers do so much for their babies."



Who's Out at Night?

The variety of creatures roaming The Last Green Valley at night is too great to catalogue. Here are just a few.



Southern Flying Squirrel (*Glaucomys volans*)

SIZE & APPEARANCE

Southern flying squirrels weigh just 1.8 to 2.5 ounces and are 8-10 inches long. They have large, dark eyes for night vision and soft, gray-brown fur on their backs and sides with white bellies and a flattened tail. There are loose folds of skin from their legs to their bodies which allow them to glide through the air.

HABITAT & DIET

Mature deciduous or mixed deciduous/coniferous forests with an abundance of various nut-producing trees, which is a preferred food. They also eat seeds, acorns, berries, beetles and even small birds and their eggs.

LIFE STORY

Flying squirrels nest in tree cavities and will also use bird houses. They mate in late winter and have three to four babies about 40 days later. They can breed again in summer. Babies are born blind and helpless but are foraging on their own in six weeks. Flying squirrels are sociable, often feeding and denning with each other. They are active year round and their group nesting becomes more common in harsh weather. Flying squirrels have been known to den with other animals, such as screech owls and bats.

DID YOU KNOW?

New research has shown flying squirrels glow bright pink. It is called fluorescence and they are not the only nocturnal animals to do so, but the accidental discovery has triggered research into more mammals.

Although they are not actually flying, flying squirrels display tremendous ability to control their glides. They can glide more than 150 feet if they start at more than 60 feet high. They can tense and turn their legs and use their tails to control direction, turning as far as 90 degrees. Their tails also act as a kind of brake, slowing the glide down when the squirrel is ready to land.

Bobcat (*Lynx rufus*)

SIZE & APPEARANCE

Bobcats are two to three times bigger than the average house cat. Known for a "bobbed" tail of about 6 inches long, males can weigh up to 35 lbs. and females about 30 lbs. They have tufts of black hair on their pointed ears and prominent cheek ruffs. Their coats tend to be grayer in winter and tan in summer. Dens are usually in windfall, caves, rock crevices, ledges, hollow logs, and trees and may be used for several years. Like house cats, bobcats have retractable claws.

HABITAT & DIET

Bobcats like brushy lowlands and swamps, as well as brushy and rocky woodlands broken by fields, old roads and farmland. They tend not to inhabit mature forest but do flourish in areas with a thick understory. They hunt small mammals such as rabbits, squirrels, chipmunks and mice. They have been known to hunt small, injured or old white-tailed deer. They will prey on domestic animals such as poultry, small pigs, sheep and goats.

LIFE STORY

Bobcats have multiple mates and don't form lasting bonds. They breed in February and March, with one to four kittens being born in April. Kittens are born blind and nurse for about 60 days. In about four weeks they begin to leave the den. They may remain with their mother for a full year.

DID YOU KNOW?

Bobcats are patient hunters, using dusk and dawn to help mask their movements and crouching, watching and listening under cover. Bobcats often cache, or cover, their kills with leaves, grass, snow and even hair from the carcass. They will revisit a carcass until most of it is consumed. Other feline species are known to cache their kills for future consumption.



Coyote (*Canis latrans*)

SIZE & APPEARANCE

Eastern coyotes are larger than their western brethren. They can weigh up to 50 pounds and have wide, pointed ears, a long, tapered muzzle, yellow eyes, slender legs, small feet and a straight, bushy tail which is carried low to the ground. Fur color varies from grizzled-gray color with a cream-colored or white underside, to blonde, reddish and charcoal coat colors. Most coyotes have dark hairs over the back and a black-tipped tail, which has a black spot near its base covering a distinctive scent gland. However, not all coyotes have the black markings.

HABITAT & DIET

Coyotes can be found all over The Last Green Valley. Opportunistic and adaptable, they can use man-made environments to their advantage. They eat mammals as small as mice and as large as deer, but will also eat fruit, scavenge and take advantage of human garbage.

LIFE STORY

Coyotes are monogamous and remain bonded for several years. They breed from January to March with as many as 12 pups born in April or May. Both adults care for the young, which begin hunting with the adults between 8-13 weeks old. The pups disperse in the fall or early winter searching for new territory.

DID YOU KNOW?

Coyotes did not arrive in southern New England until about 100 years ago. Recent genetic research has shown the eastern coyote's larger size comes from interbreeding with Canadian gray wolves. Coyotes can also reproduce with dogs but the coyotes' short fertile season make successful breeding more difficult. Male domestic dogs also abandon the female coyotes, making survival of the coydog pups improbable. Pups who do survive are usually infertile.



SHORVELLES

Owls

There are eight species of owls that live in or visit The Last Green Valley. They are the barn owl, the barred owl, the eastern screech owl, the great-horned owl, the long-eared owl, northern saw-whet owl, the short-eared owl and the snowy owl.

These raptors of the night are very important to the nocturnal environment, and they will likely get their own edition of In Touch in the future!

Fireflies

Also known as “lightning bugs,” fireflies are actually beetles. There are an estimated 150 species of fireflies in the United States and about six of them are in the eastern part of the country. How many, exactly, live in southern New England is unclear. There is still a lot of research to do on fireflies. Fireflies fall into three primary groups: Photinus, which is Greek for shining, Photuris, which means luminous tail and Pyralis, which means fire.

Fireflies are bioluminescent, which means they produce their own light. They use that flashing for communication and to find a mate. You may see the flashing begin in June, but most fireflies are active in July and August.

Fireflies have a complex lifecycle of about two years and go through a complete metamorphosis from egg to larva to pupa and finally, becoming an adult. Females lay about 100 eggs under stones or beneath vegetation. They are eggs for about three weeks before transforming to larva, which is how they spend most of their lives as they feed and grow for one to two years. The larva are predators, eating insects, snails and slugs. Fireflies then become pupa for about three weeks before becoming an adult for the final two to four weeks of their lives.



Timber Rattlesnake

(*Crotalus horridus*)

A CT & MA ENDANGERED SPECIES

SIZE & APPEARANCE

These snakes average 40 inches but can grow as long as 54. They have the distinctive segmented rattle at the tip of their tail. They usually have black or brown crossbands on a yellow, brown, or gray background. The crossbands, which may be V-shaped, break up toward the head to form a row of dark spots down the back and on each side. Sometimes the snakes are darker, with a heavy speckling of black or very dark brown that hides much of the lighter pigment. The head is flattened, unmarked, triangular and about twice the size of the neck.

HABITAT & DIET

Timber rattlesnakes inhabit deciduous forests in rugged terrain with steep ledges, rockslides and a nearby water supply. Dens are usually located in rocky ledges. The timber rattlesnake feeds primarily on small mammals and occasionally birds.

LIFE STORY

They are active mid-April through October. During the colder seasons, they retreat to communal dens that may include other snake species. Mating occurs in spring or fall, although the females only breed every 3-4 years and do not breed until they are 7-10 years old. On average, 9 eggs remain in the female's body and hatch internally. The young can fend for themselves at birth.

DID YOU KNOW?

Rattlesnakes are ambush predators with sensory pit organs that allow them to sense warmer prey. These pit organs help them hunt at night. Their venom is hemolytic, which means it causes the breakdown of red blood cells in the bitten animal. A defensive strike has less and sometimes no venom compared to a prey strike.

Red Fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)

SIZE & APPEARANCE

The average fox is 10 – 11 lbs. but they can be up to 15 lbs. They are 39 to 43 inches long with pointed ears. Red foxes have red coats, black legs and ears and long bushy tails tipped in white. They have long muzzles, pointed ears and white bellies.

HABITAT & DIET

Red foxes prefer a mixture of woods and fields. They're omnivores, eating small rodents, squirrels, woodchucks, rabbits, birds and eggs, amphibians and reptiles, as well as vegetation, fruits, nuts, insects, carrion and garbage.

LIFE STORY

Red foxes are the more common of our two foxes. They are crepuscular, known to hunt at dusk, dawn and the night, but also can be spotted during the day. They breed from January through March with the female giving birth to an average of four or five pups. They will dig their own den but often improve on woodchuck dens. Most foxes have more than one den and will readily move their young if disturbed. Both adults care for the pups.

DID YOU KNOW?

Foxes are very vocal, making a variety of barks, howls and whines, including sounds that are like screeches. Red foxes are known for a raspy, single syllable scream or bark they will repeat every 3-10 seconds. 🌿



SHORVELLES

Sources: CT DEEP, Mass Wildlife, Mass Audubon, Meigs Point and Candace Fallon from the Xerces Society



22 MIDDLE SCHOOLERS
participated in
TLGV's Adventure Camp

2022

BY THE

Numbers

23 PARTNERS

were part of TLGV's capacity building efforts to increase our collective capabilities to protect the natural, historic and cultural resources of The Last Green Valley

★ **3 NEW MEMBERS**
joined the TLGV
Board of Directors



528 PEOPLE
attended TLGV's monthly programs

4

MIDDLE SCHOOLS & HIGH SCHOOLS

in the National Heritage Corridor participated in The Witness Stones Project with support from TLGV funding



1.7 MILLION PEOPLE VISITED
THE NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR
IN 2022

164 PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS
worked closely with TLGV on Heritage Corridor projects

1,106



ACRES OF PRIVATE LAND
were included in a TLGV Forest Legacy application to permanently protect lands in Union, Ashford, Eastford, Mansfield, Sprague & Stafford

1,135 VOLUNTEERS

PARTICIPATED IN

42 CLEANUPS

COLLECTING

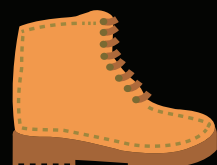
60,351 LBS.
OF TRASH



7 LOCATIONS

totaling

3.6 MILES



of trail were assessed by the Trail Assessment Team

18 BALD EAGLE CHICKS BORN



\$476,199

WORTH OF VOLUNTEER TIME WAS GIVEN TO
HERITAGE AREA PROJECTS BY **2,478 VOLUNTEERS**



885 HOURS

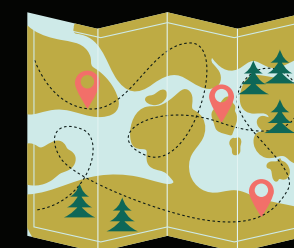
were given to Water Quality Monitoring efforts throughout the Heritage Corridor by

74 VOLUNTEERS



6

GRANTS
TOTALING
MORE THAN
\$20,000
were
awarded
or disbursed
by TLGV for
youth
engagement
projects



64,348 PEOPLE
participated in
216 UNIQUE
Walktober adventures



Volunteer Spotlight

Laura & Scott Moorehead

If you're wondering where to go for a great meal in the National Heritage Corridor, Laura and Scott Moorehead are good people to ask.

The Mooreheads have known food all their lives. Laura grew up on a farm in upstate New York, and Scott comes from a long line of farmers in Rhode Island. That connection to the land and what it can

produce has translated into a love of The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor and a major commitment of time and energy to leading Tastes of the Valley, TLGV's largest annual fundraiser.

"I was at the very first Tastes of the Valley as an attendee," Laura said. "The whole idea of eating food from a local farm and prepared by a talented chef was interesting. Before it was a thing, Tastes of the Valley was bringing that to the community."

"Areas like ours are where farm to table should be," Scott added.

19 years ago, when the first Tastes of the Valley happened, Laura was already working with TLGV as the designer of all the organizational publications. After several Tastes of the Valley, she began volunteering for the event committee and has since become the co-chair of the event with Scott. Laura also sits on TLGV's Finance, Planning and Development committee. Laura is also a founding member of the Women's and Girls Fund and is being awarded the Northeast Connecticut Chamber of Commerce Humanitarian award. Scott is also a board member for TEEG in Thompson.

The Mooreheads are both retired, which has allowed them to travel and put their time into ensuring the community they love retains the values and attributes

they have fallen in love with, Scott said.

Scott's hometown of East Greenwich, RI is an example of what they do not want to see happen in The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor, he said. They are doing their part by working with TLGV and its partners to develop a bird habitat management plan on their 88 acres of land.



"What's nice about The Last Green Valley is it's rural, but you're not far from pockets of civilization," Scott said. "There are downtowns and restaurants and theaters."

"Local places to shop," Laura added.

Local chefs are also important to the Mooreheads. Both enjoy

meeting the chefs and learning about the food they create. For that reason, Scott said local restaurants can be just as exciting, if not more so, than those they find on their travels.

"Give me a place where I can get to know the chef," Scott said. "The chef who wants to know the people who dine at their restaurant is a chef who cares."

The emphasis on spending their dollars locally was also a reason to give so much of their time to Tastes of the Valley. Over the years the event has connected local farmers to local chefs and markets. Laura said her multiple hats with TLGV has also been enlightening. She has worked closely with staff, the board and other volunteers in her multiple roles. "I've seen how careful The Last Green Valley is with every dollar it gets," Moorehead said. "It is such a struggle to get the word out and have the resources. We need donors and we can be helpful. It's important to us to know that when we give our time or a donation that the organization can turn it into something more." 🍁

Non-profit Partner Spotlight

Lebanon Historical Society



Lebanon is in the middle of nowhere and yet in the middle of so much. A community that was never at the center of transportation modes in any era was somehow at the crossroads of significant history. It's a quirky twist that seems to be tied to the people who have been attracted to Lebanon.

"The people who came to Lebanon wanted to be part of a community," said Donna Baron, executive director of the Lebanon Historical Society. "It's a relatively isolated town but it really isn't that far from anything."

That sense of community was the impetus for creation of the Lebanon Historical Society in 1965 and has allowed it to grow into a museum sitting on almost seven acres with ten historic buildings and a 2,400 sq.-foot addition under construction. Lebanon Historical Society also has three staff members and occasional part-time help based on need, along with a healthy crew of volunteers and members. The addition will be an archive of textiles and other important materials, Baron said. It will not be part of the museum, which is open four days a week, but it will be available for research by appointment.

Rick Kane, president of the historical society's board of directors, said the organization has been lucky enough to have had a major benefactor in Hugh Trumbull Adams, a cousin of the Lebanon Trumbulls. The Trumbull lineage includes Gov. Jonathan Trumbull, the only Revolutionary War era governor to support the colonists, his son, Jonathan Jr., an aide-de-camp for Gen. George Washington and another governor of the state, and John Trumbull, the renowned artist who has four paintings hanging in the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol. Hugh's mother, Mary, was among the Trumbulls contacted after the hurricane of 1938 devastated much of Connecticut in hopes the Trumbulls would support rebuilding efforts in Lebanon. Mary fell in love with Lebanon, visiting often. Because of that love, Hugh made large donations to a variety of Lebanon organizations after his mother's death.

The Trumbull funds alone, however, could not support the organization as it is now.

"There is a lot of passion in the community for its history," Kane said. "We are a farming community and that has always instilled this idea of mutual survival. You have to support one another both economically and socially and many of the families still here are old families."

It's that farming history, not the Revolutionary War history, which is significant, that is the most fascinating part of Lebanon's past, Kane and Baron agree.

"Lebanon has been one of the prime examples of 'great man' history in the past, there is no question," Baron said. "The roles of Native Americans, women, enslaved and freed peoples and many more have not been a large part of Connecticut published history."

But, Baron, the staff and volunteers of the historical society are doing their part to share those untold and under-told parts of history. "It's the stories of the people that are compelling," Baron said.

The Lebanon Historical Society only collects artifacts from the town and only tells stories that happened in Lebanon, Baron said. While working hard to tell the story of one town, Baron said the staff and board believe it's critical to partner with other organizations, share knowledge and work to place Lebanon history in the context of the larger regional and state history. Part of that effort has been to partner with TLGV for more than 20 years.

The historical society has participated in Walktober and Spring Outdoors to offer the history of Lebanon in new ways. But that is only a small part of the partnership. Baron was a TLGV board member for 9 years before term limits required her to step away. She is now an integral member of TLGV's America 250 Steering Committee.

"There is mutual benefit in partnership," Kane said. "We welcome more of it. We're part of a bigger community and so is our history." 🍁

TLGV Launches America 250 Efforts

As the Nation begins considering its 250th birthday in 2026, TLGV has begun working with partners throughout the National Heritage Corridor to envision what America's 250th anniversary means to the region.

TLGV has now developed a framework to guide our work moving forward and galvanize the region in a commitment to ensuring Americans of all backgrounds see themselves in our shared history. "Through our research, education and programming we commit to deeply engaging with the entirety of our past, one that both challenges and inspires us to become a more inclusive and vibrant democracy," the guiding document reads.

Lois Bruinooge, executive director of TLGV, said America 250 provides an opportunity to celebrate the revolutionary people that have called the region home from well before colonization to the modern day.

"This is not just about the American Revolution," Bruinooge said. "There is so much history to share and uncover about the people who have shaped our region for thousands of years."

The framework states, "The Last Green Valley is a place defined by its landscape. Our geography and abundant natural resources have shaped the lives of all who resided or traveled through this place, from Indigenous Peoples dating back more than 8,000 years to today."

TLGV plans to convene a broad array of partners in 2023 and 2024 to share its vision for America 250 and develop collaborative projects with regional impact. To learn more about TLGV's America 250 efforts call TLGV's Financial Officer Nick Velles at 860-774-3300 or email Nick@tlgv.org.



This initiative is funded in part by a CT Cultural Fund Operating Support Grant from CT Humanities, with funding from the CT Dept. of Economic and Community Development/CT Office of the Arts from the CT State Legislature.



CThumanities

Water Quality Monitoring Program

Expands Year-Round

TLGV's team of Water Quality Monitoring volunteers spent more than 800 hours collecting data about the health of the waters in The Last Green Valley.

The team of 74 volunteers monitored streams, lakes and ponds in a variety of ways and expanded their efforts into a new program to detect the effects of salt-based road treatments on waterways. With the new salt watch program, volunteers are able to monitor waterways year-round.

Riffle bio assessments are conducted in the fall in Connecticut. The assessments require teams of volunteers to collect sensitive underwater bugs, such as caddisflies and mayflies. These bugs are biological indicators of water quality. The samples are reviewed by CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection and the data is used as part of the state's federal Integrated Water Quality Report.

Pathogen monitoring was conducted in the summer at 11 sites along the Quinebaug River in conjunction with CT DEEP, the Department of Public Health and the Northeast District Department of Health.

The volunteers continued assessing stream temperature to understand the challenges of maintaining cold water environments, a necessity for native underwater life.

Lake monitoring in both Massachusetts and Connecticut continued with the Webster Lake Association having completed its 17th year of assessments. Temperatures, clarity and nutrients are all monitored by these teams of volunteers.

The volunteer efforts to monitor cyanobacteria blooms have expanded. Three locations were monitored and blooms detected. The samples are being reviewed by the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

Jean Pillo, TLGV's Coordinator for the Water Quality Monitoring Program, said the value of the water quality monitoring program goes beyond collecting critical data. The volunteers are important ambassadors and advocates in their communities.

"They communicate their findings to their lake associations, use the data to apply for grant funds for projects that will improve the water and habitat quality of their waterbodies and promote stewardship," Pillo said in her end of year report.

Pillo is also grateful for the volunteers' willingness to assist each other. She noted, "Many of the team leaders participate in quarterly TLGV Water Advisory Committee meetings, where they share experiences and ideas with other teams."





Tastes of the Valley 2022



Tastes of the Valley 2022 returned to the Publick House in Sturbridge, MA for an outstanding evening of food, fun and fundraising.

Tastes of the Valley starts with our farms, and we are grateful for their participation in 2022: Apis

Verde Farm, Assawaga Farm, Baldwin Brook Farm, Betsy's Stand, Blackmer Farm, BOTL Farm, Bright Acres Farm Sugar House, Buddha's Bees Apiary, Buell's Orchard, Cook's Farm Orchard, Creamery Brook Bison, Crooked Creek Farm, Crossman's Country Farm, Dovehill Farm, Echo Farm, Ekonk Hill Turkey Farm, Elm Farm, Fairholm Farm, Fort Hill Farms, Himmelstein Homestead Farm, Horse Listeners Orchard, Lapsley Orchard, New Boston Beef, Organic Roots Farm, Pakulis Farm, P&A Petruzzi Farm,



Our featured chefs and their assistants received a standing ovation. Thank you to Chef Jess Sabine - Rose Room Cafe, Chef Jay Livernois - Metro Bistrot, Chef Luke Jajliardo - Black Pond Brews and Chef Ken O'Keefe - Publick House for proving yet again that farm to table dinners from The Last Green Valley are unequalled.

Pinecroft Farms, Steve T's Honey Bees, Unbound Glory Farm, Winterplace Farm & Creamery, Westview Farm, Woodstock Creamery, and Woodstock Orchards.

Thank you to our tastes and sips providers for creating delectable dishes and beverages: Altruist Brewing Company, Chubby Dog Coffee Co., Creamery Brook Bison, Grill 37, The Inn at Woodstock Hill, Saw Dust Coffee House & Dessert Bar, Sütő and The Ice Box, Taylor Brooke Brewery & Winery, Vanilla Bean Café, Watercure Farm Distillery and Willimantic Brewing Company.

Guests enjoyed conversing with farmers, brewers, vintners and distillers at their tables. Thank you all for sharing the joys and challenges of farming in The Last Green Valley:

Yoko Takemura and Alex Carpenter, Assawaga Farm

Ryleigh Mullins, Azuluna Foods

Judy Wilson and Richard Schenk, Bright Acres Farm Sugar House

Erica and Jonathan Hermonot, Fairholm Farm

Patti and John Wolchesky, Lapsley Orchard

Sarah and Jonathan Eddy, New Boston Beef

Linda Auger, Taylor Brooke Farm

Megan Hebert, Westview Farm

David Wollner, Willimantic Brewing Company



This event was made possible by the generous support of our sponsors, and we are grateful for their commitment to local agriculture.

HOST: The Publick House

PLATINUM: Rebecca M. Harvey, Laura & Scott Moorehead and UNFI, Helping Hands

GOLD: Byrnes Agency Insurance, Fiberoptics Technology and Keith & Elaine Knowlton

SILVER: Centreville Bank, Heath Drury Boote and Marjorie L. Hoskin

BRONZE: Azuluna Foods, Christopher Heights of Webster, Cornerstone Bank, Dexter-Russell, Inc., Friends of The Last Green Valley, Gerardi Insurance Services, Groton Open Space Association, Jewett City Savings Bank and ServiceMaster by Mason

A special thanks to the Tastes of the Valley Committee for creating another outstanding event: Laura Moorehead, Scott Moorehead, Ann-Marie Aubrey, Karyn DiBonaventura, Lou Dzialo, Jimi Gothreau, Wayde Schmidt, LyAnn Graff, Kyle Gregoire, Fran Kefalas, Nick Velles and Lois Bruinooge. 🍁

Get ready for Tastes of the Valley 2023!

We'll be returning to the Publick House in Sturbridge, MA on Aug. 20, 2023 for a unique farm- to-table experience you won't find anywhere else. Save the date.

2022 Youth Engagement Highlights



TLGV hosted ten Acorn Adventures to help families explore the National Heritage Corridor. Pictured here is TLGV Ranger Christie Hazen leading an amphibian and reptile Acorn Adventure in Chaplin. Acorn Adventures are always free thanks to a generous sponsorship from Centreville Bank.



TLGV developed a hands-on farm series for middle school students to explore agricultural businesses in the National Heritage Corridor. Thirty-one participants learned about regenerative agriculture, healthy soils, dairy operations (pictured here with Erica Hermonot at Fairholm Farm in Woodstock), hydroponics, alpacas, poultry and eggs.



TLGV continued working with the Witness Stones Project to bring the program to four middle and high schools in the Heritage Corridor. The Witness Stones Project seeks to restore the history and honor the humanity of the enslaved individuals who helped build our communities. Here, students from Killingly High School install a Witness Stone memorializing the life of Demas Cape next to a stone installed the previous year in memory of Cuffee.



TLGV and its partners created an adventure camp for middle schoolers to connect them to the rich natural and cultural resources of the Heritage Corridor. Campers visited different locations each day and engaged in a variety of activities including hiking (with increasing challenges as the camp progressed), disc golf, visits to historical sites, creating crafts using natural materials, hands-on science, letterboxing, farm visits and other activities that offered a different adventure for campers each day. Through structured activities, such as building a pontoon bridge, playing nature bingo and learning from experts about eagles, sunspots, water quality, aquatic bugs and forest ecology, campers were able to participate in shared experiences and expand their knowledge of the world.

In addition to offering middle schoolers a variety of fun and unique outdoor activities and opportunities for physical activity, the biggest success of this trail camp was the interpersonal connections and relationships it fostered among students and staff from different towns.

Twenty municipal, nonprofit and business partners assisted with the camp. TLGV was awarded grants to subsidize camp registrations from Centreville Bank, Putnam Area Foundation, the Chamber of Commerce of Eastern CT Foundation, the CT Society for Women Environmental Professionals and received generous corporate and individual donations.



TLGV led campers from Our Bright Future's summer day camp up to the top of Bull Hill on the Woodstock and Thompson line. Wyndham Land Trust has acquired many parcels in this area because of their ecological significance.



TLGV spent a week leading Marianapolis High School students on outdoor adventures throughout The National Heritage Corridor. Here, they are hiking on the Natchaug Trail and learning about significant natural, historic and cultural resources associated with the trail.

2022 TLGV Annual Meeting Recap

The 2022 Annual Meeting of The Last Green Valley, Inc. (TLGV) highlighted the many ways trails benefit our communities.

The evening kicked off with a walk on the new Air Line State Park Trail bridge over Rt. 169 in Pomfret. Along the way our partners showcased the trail enhancement and economic development projects they are completing on and near the trail.

Pomfret First Selectwoman Maureen Nicholson highlighted the town's significant efforts to refurbish the trail's surface, construct safer road crossings and create connections to other Pomfret attractions.

Jeanne Davies of CT Resource Conservation & Development Council, described the 12-town master planning process currently underway for the entire Air Line State Park Trail.

TLGV's LyAnn Graff demonstrated the equipment she and a team of volunteers use to assess trails for people with mobility challenges.

Sarah Heminway of CT Audubon Society in Pomfret, described the synergy between trail access and their sanctuary. They have offered bike camps for kids utilizing the Air Line Trail.

Monique Wolanin of the Quinebaug Valley Community College Foundation, talked about the importance of Tackle the Trail – a unique race in an amazing place, which is a fundraiser to support QVCC students. Most of the race takes place on the Air Line Trail, and participation is growing steadily, becoming an economic driver for the region.

Jeff Doyle and Serena Dupuis, Quiet Corner NEMBA, spoke about mountain biking and trail development as a unique recreational resource and opportunity for economic development.

Dan Mullins of the Willimantic Whitewater Partnership, described the Partnership's efforts to develop their Bridge Street property as a park and trail at the junction of the Air Line Trail, Hop River Trail, Willimantic River National Recreation Water Trail and East Coast Greenway.

Monique Salvas of TLGV, highlighted summer adventure camp, a joint project between TLGV, TEEG, and Thompson and Coventry recreation departments to introduce middle school kids to the trails and other outdoor adventures.

Later in the evening, Tom Chase, Thompson Historical Society, gave an illustrated presentation about the Great East Thompson Train Wreck and talked about plans to create a Train Wreck Park on the Air Line Trail in Thompson.

After the Air Line Trail walk, attendees enjoyed a delicious dinner at Grill 37 in Pomfret followed by the Annual Meeting with elections and awards. TLGV members also voted unanimously to endorse a resolution creating a Southern New England Pollinator Partnership with Rotary Districts and National Heritage Areas in CT, MA and RI. The resolution recognizes the critical importance of pollinators and seeks to increase and improve pollinator habitat, develop strategic partnerships, encourage action, provide education and promote citizen science.

The following TLGV Board members were re-elected for three-year terms:

RICK CANAVAN from Pomfret, CT, an environmental scientist with 25 years of experience and a passion for natural resource protection.

REV. DR. SUE FOSTER from Woodstock, CT, a long time TLGV member and pastor of the East Woodstock Congregational Church who brings a deep appreciation for our resources and an environmental ethic to the Board.

JIMI GOTHREAU from Putnam, CT, a retired real estate appraiser for Farm Credit East, with a love of the outdoors and tremendous experience in agriculture and conservation easement appraisals.

Three TLGV members were newly elected to the Board of Directors for three-year terms:

HEATHER BRUNELLE from Lebanon, CT, a TLGV Ranger with a degree in environmental management and is the former owner of Bee Present Lavender Farm.

AARON MARCAVITCH from Suffield, CT, the Exec. Director of CT Landmarks, the non-profit owner of Nathan Hale Homestead in Coventry. He comes to CT from Maryland, where he was executive director of a state heritage area and he understands the power of partnerships.

REGAN MINER from Norwich, CT, the Exec. Director of the Norwich Historical Society and has extensive experience in researching, interpreting and creatively promoting the region's history.

TLGV thanked retiring Board members Donna Baron, Mike Nelson and Mark Winne for their distinguished service and leadership on the Board of Directors. TLGV also congratulated Laurie Giannotti upon her retirement after 15 years as the CT Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection's Trails and Greenways Coordinator. Laurie was a strong advocate for trails and served on TLGV's Board as the Governor's designee from 2007-2010.

TLGV also announced Mr. Walktober for 2022, Andy Rzekniwicz. Andy is the "go to guy" to learn about birds, wildlife habitat and land protection. He is the land manager at CT Audubon's Center in Pomfret and has been employed by Audubon since 1994. Andy has also been a volunteer with the Wyndham Land Trust for 30 years, currently serving on the Wyndham Land Trust Board of Directors and actively involved in protecting hundreds of acres of critical wildlife habitat in The Last Green Valley. He was named Mr. Walktober because he has been ably leading walks for both organizations as far back as he can remember, since the Walking Weekend days. 🍁



TLGV's Financial Update

The Last Green Valley, Inc. (TLGV) continues to operate from a strong financial footing. When it comes to the organization's finances, two things are clear: we must be good stewards of the gracious contributions from our members, partners and donors; and every dollar we spend must further our mission to sustain the National Heritage Corridor's legacy for future generations. We are pleased to offer this financial recap of the fiscal year ending Sept. 30, 2022.

HIGHLIGHTS:

- A six-month operating reserve remains fully funded. We are currently finalizing an official policy regarding the use and investment of this "savings" fund, seeking to balance liquidity with prudent investment opportunities.
- To invest our reserves, we continue to take advantage of rising interest rates by opening certificates of deposit with our local banking partners, as well as purchasing I-bonds. As of Sept. 30, 2022, we held \$61,318 in such investments, and as of this writing we have allocated nearly \$300,000 more, with some funds now earning more than 4 percent APR while remaining nearly risk-free.
- Tastes of the Valley returned to the Publick House in Sturbridge and raised \$32,279, netting more than \$25,000, our second highest tally since the event's inception 18 years ago.

- Corporate donations and sponsorships were especially strong, increasing 25 percent from the prior fiscal year. This generous support allowed us to continue programs such as the TLGV Adventure Camp for Kids, Cleanups/Greenups, Acorn Adventures for Families, Tastes of the Valley, the Ranger program, the Explore! Guide and of course, Walktober!

NOTES OF REFLECTION:

- The endowment funds were not spared from market volatility. We experienced unrealized losses of \$61,110 during the fiscal year. As the market moves forward, we have since recovered \$30,577 of those losses and we continue to contribute into the funds with an eye toward long-term sustainability.
- Membership revenue decreased 7 percent from the prior fiscal year. We will continue to evolve our outreach efforts to retain and attract members and provide value including new Heritage Circle experiences and benefits.
- Not surprisingly, the cost of nearly everything has increased and TLGV's financial strategy has kept this top-of-mind. Printing costs are a large part of our budget and those costs alone increased nearly 30 percent from the prior fiscal year. We operate with flexibility to ensure we adhere to our approved budgets while still delivering high quality publications and programs that support our local non-profit, farm and business partners.

The Last Green Valley, Inc.

Financial Summary for the Fiscal Year Ended Sept. 30, 2022
From Audited Financial Statements – Copies Available Upon Request

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS

CURRENT ASSETS	
Cash	\$ 92,559
Operating Reserve	430,419
Grants Receivable	138,004
Prepaid Expenses	11,755
Inventory	5,202
Certificates of Deposit	51,318
Bonds	10,000
Endowment	261,833
Total Current Assets	1,001,090

PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT

Motor Vehicle	25,488
Furniture and Equipment	7,043
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(22,790)
Net Property and Equipment	9,741

TOTAL ASSETS **\$ 1,010,831**

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	\$ 1,860
Accrued Expenses	62,485
Advances from Grantors	51,850
Total Current Liabilities	116,195
TOTAL LIABILITIES	116,195

NET ASSETS

Without Donor Restrictions	856,013
With Donor Restrictions	38,623
TOTAL NET ASSETS	894,636

TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS **\$ 1,010,831**

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

REVENUES (FY 2022)

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
National Park Service	\$ 614,220	-	\$ 614,220
Grants	154,819	-	154,819
Contributions	114,850	3,790	118,640
Fundraising Events	49,164	-	49,164
Memberships	17,450	-	17,450
Advertising Revenue	8,965	-	8,965
Merchandise Sales	3,251	-	3,251
Interest Income	881	-	881
TOTAL REVENUE	963,600	3,790	967,390

EXPENSES & LOSSES (FY 2022)

Program Services	849,242	-	849,242
Management & General	64,862	-	64,862
Fundraising	48,032	-	48,032
Investment Losses (unrealized)	61,110	-	61,110

TOTAL EXPENSES & LOSSES **1,023,246** **-** **1,023,246**

CHANGE IN

NET ASSETS **\$ (59,646)** **\$ 3,790** **\$ (55,856)**

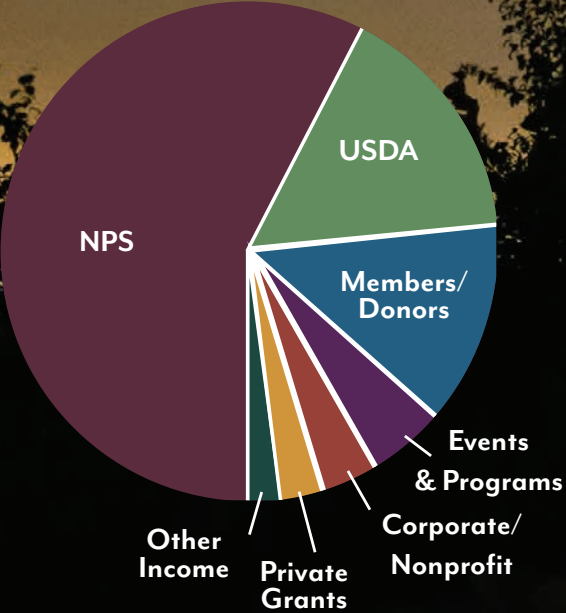
NET ASSETS –

Beginning of Year **\$ 915,659** **\$ 34,833** **\$ 950,492**

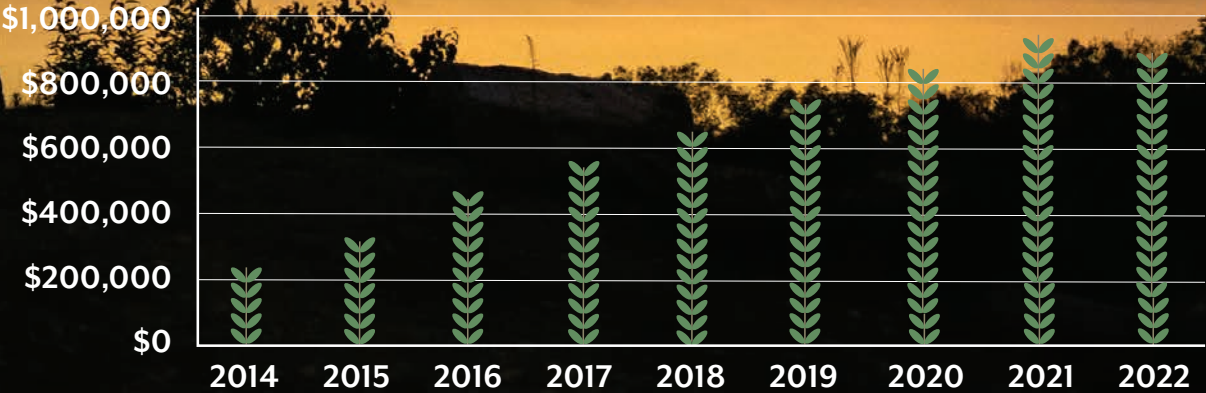
NET ASSETS –

End of Year **\$ 856,013** **\$ 38,623** **\$ 894,636**

Revenue Sources



Net Assets



Thank You

to All of The Last Green Valley's Corporate Non-profit and Government Sponsors and Partners from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2022



FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDING

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

MUNICIPAL FUNDING

Town of Ashford
Town of Brooklyn
Town of Chaplin
Town of Coventry
Town of Eastford
Town of Griswold
Town of Hampton
Town of Killingly
Town of Lisbon
Town of Pomfret
Town of Scotland
Town of Sprague
Town of Sterling
Town of Thompson
Town of Union



DONATIONS & SUPPORT \$5,000+

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Millennium Power Partners
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Putnam Area Foundation, Inc.

\$2,500 – \$4,999

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Centreville Bank
Chamber of Commerce of
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Foundation
Cornerstone Bank

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Society of Women
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UNFI – Helping Hands

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Cigna Foundation
Pfizer Foundation

\$250 – \$499

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Dexter-Russell, Inc.
Gerardi Insurance Services, Inc.
Groton Open Space Association
Keurig Dr. Pepper
ServiceMaster by Mason
Sturbridge Tourist Association

\$100 – \$249

AbbVie
Google
Plainfield Historical Society
United Health Group Foundation

UNDER \$100

Amazon Smile
Chace Building Supply of CT, Inc.
Eileen D. Brown Charitable Trust
Microsoft
Otis Library of Norwich
Salem Free Public Library

Stop & Shop Community
Bag Program

TLGV PARTNERS STEWARDSHIP PARTNERS \$295+

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Cornerstone Bank
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Fort Hill Farms & Gardens, LLC
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AM 1700

Impact Capital Strategies
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Jewett City Savings Bank
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& Historic Trust^
Lebanon Historical Society
Museum^
Little Dipper Farm^
McLean Research Associates
Millennium Power Partners
The Rose Room Cafe
and Tonic Bar
Savers Bank
Sturbridge Tourist Association^
Webster Fish and Game Club

SUSTAINING PARTNERS \$100 – \$250

85 Main
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Ashford Business Association^
Avalonia Land Conservancy^
Azuluna Foods
Blackmer Farm
Blue Slope Country Museum
The Bradley Playhouse, TNECT
Bright Acres Farm
Sugar House^
Brooklyn Historical Society
Capen Hill Nature Association

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
East Woodstock
Congregational Church^
EASTCONN
ECFLA/Wolf Den Land Trust
Eileen D. Brown Charitable Trust
Ekono Hill Turkey Farm^
Enchanted Jewelry CT LLC^
Farmers' Market at Hale
Homestead
Finnish-American Heritage
Society^
First Congregational Church
of Woodstock
Florence Griswold Museum
Friends of Pachaug Forest Inc.^
Garden Club of Windham
Girl Scouts of Connecticut^
The Governor Samuel
Huntington Trust/
Huntington Homestead
Greater Norwich Area Chamber
of Commerce
Groton Open Space Association
Hall Communications
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
Lakeview Marine
- Paddlesport Rentals
Lapsley Orchard
The Light Source Center^
Long Subaru^
Loos Center for the Arts at
Woodstock Academy
Mansfield Downtown
Partnership
Marty's of Dudley
Morning Beckons Farm^
Northeastern CT Chamber
of Commerce
Norwich Heritage & Regional
Visitors' Center
Norwich Historical Society
Old Sturbridge Village
Opacum Land Trust, Inc.
Optical Heritage Museum, Inc.^
Organic Roots Farm
at Popover Hill
Palmer Arboretum^
PierceCare^
Plainfield Business Association
Pourings & Passages Bookstore
Preston Historical Society, Inc.
Preston Ridge Vineyard
Project Imo
Putnam Business Association
Quiet Corner Cottage
Quiet Corner NEMBA^
Quinebaug Valley Community
College Foundation
Samuel Slater Experience^

Select Seeds
Semaki & Bird
Sharpe Hill Vineyard
South East CT Community
Center of the Blind
Sturbridge Lions Club
Swift Waters Artisans'
Cooperative
Taylor Brooke Farm, LLC
Town Line Tree Farm
Town of Killingly Economic
Development Office
Town of Voluntown Economic
Development Commission
The Vanilla Bean Cafe
Watercure Farm Distillery^
Westford Hill Distillers^
Willimantic Brewing Co., LLC^
Willimantic Food Co-op^
WIN Waste Wheelabrator
Lisbon^
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Foundation
WINY Radio/Osbrey
Broadcasting Company
The Woodstock Academy
Woodstock Agricultural Society
Woodstock Building Assoc., LLC
Woodstock Business Association
Woodstock Orchards, LLC
Wyndham Land Trust, Inc.^

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Archambault Insurance
Associates^
Art and Garden Tour of NECT
Aspinock Historical Society
Ballard Institute & Museum
of Puppetry
Bed & Breakfasts of Mystic
Coast & Country
Black Pond Brews^
The Black Tavern
Historical Society
Booklovers' Gourmet
Boy Scouts of America - CT
Rivers Council
Brialee Family Campground
Business Systems & Incentives
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
Columbia Historical Society
Connecticut Audubon
Society at Pomfret^
Connecticut Eastern
Railroad Museum
Covanta SECONN^
Coventry Arts and Antiques
Creamery Brook Bison
CT State Museum
of Natural History
Dexter-Russell, Inc.^
Dudley Conservation Land Trust
DWP Events
Eastern CT Conservation
District, Inc.^
Eastford Historical Society^
Echo Farm^
Fairholm Farm, Inc.^
Federated Church of Christ
First Congregational Church
of Lebanon
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Friends of Ashbel Woodward
Museum^
Friends of Mansfield Hollow, Inc.
Frog Rock Summer Shack
Garden Gate Florist
George's Galley

Gerardi Insurance Services, Inc.
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^
Inn at Woodstock Hill^
J&D Civil Engineers, LLC^
Jeff Helgeson Excavating, Inc.^
Killingly Business Association
Killingly Historical &
Genealogical Society^
Landon's Tire, Inc.
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
Northeastern Connecticut
Art Guild^
Norwich Arts Center^
Norwich City Historian
Norwich Community
Development Corporation^
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Oxford Conservation
Commission
Oxford Firefighters Association^
Oxford Historical Commission
Pakulis Farm LLC^
Pinecroft Farm
Plainfield Historical Society
Pomfret Horse and Trail
Association, Inc.
Publick House Historic Inn
Putnam Elms^
Quiet Corner Garden Club^
Rawson Materials
Reliance Health, Inc.
Renée Healion Appraisals
Roseland Cottage
Roseland Park
Sawmill Pottery^

^Has committed to a multi-year partnership.

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Scotland Historical Society/
Edward Waldo House
ServiceMaster by Mason
Slater Memorial Museum
Society of the Founders
of Norwich
Sprague Historical Society
TEEG^
Temple Bnai Israel^
Thompson Historical Society^
The Three C's (Community
Cultural Committee)
Town of Ashford Farmer's
Market
Tyrone Farm^
Unbound Glory Farm^
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Webco Chemical Corporation^
The Webster Dudley Business
Alliance
Webster Lake Gifts
Westfield Congregational
Church, UCC
Westview Farm^
William Benton Museum of Art^
Willimantic Renaissance, Inc.^
Willimantic Whitewater
Partnership^
Willow Tree Pottery
Windham ARTS^
Windham Textile
& History Museum
Zion Hill Farm

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The Adventure Park at Storrs
Allen Hill Farm, LLC
Altruist Brewing Co.
Azuluna Foods
Bayside Resort
Big Y
Black Pond Brews
Blick Art Materials
Blue Slope Country Museum
Body and Soul Acupuncture
and Massage Therapy
Booklovers' Gourmet
Boston Red Sox Baseball
Bright Acres Farm Sugar House

Captain Grant's 1754
The Chronicle
Chubby Dog Coffee Co.
Columbia Canoe Club
Creamery Brook Bison
The Day
Denison Pequotsepos
Nature Center
Eastern Regional Tourism Office
Ekonk Hill Turkey Farm
Elm City Tickets
Florence Griswold Museum
Foxwoods Resort Casino
GateHouse Media
Grill 37
Hartford Yard Goats
Hart's Greenhouse & Florist
Healthquest
Heritage Information Radio,
AM 1700
Highland Festival Association
of Scotland, CT
Hosmer Mountain Soda
The Ice Box & Suto World Foods
Inn at Woodstock Hill
Jorgensen Center for the
Performing Arts
Key Bank
Lakeview Marine
- Paddlesport Rentals
Landon's Tire, Inc.

Lapsley Orchard
Lebanon Historical Society
Museum
M. Provost Trucking &
Landscaping Products
The Metro Bistrot
Mohegan Sun Golf Club
Mystic Aquarium
/Sea Research Foundation
Mystic Seaport Museum
Nathan Hale Homestead
New England Patriots
Foundation
New York Football Giants
New York Jets
Norwich Beverage Co.
Norwich Bulletin
O&E Customs
Old Sturbridge Village
Publick House Historic Inn
Putnam Elms
Putnam Town Crier
/Northeast Ledger
Quiet Corner Garden Club
Rampco Construction Co., Inc.
Rapsallion Brewery
Rawson Materials
The Rose Room Cafe
Roseland Cottage
Saw Dust Coffee House
Sawmill Pottery

Select Seeds
Sky Dive Danielson
Sparrow Soaps
Sprucedale Gardens Nursery
Taylor Brooke Farm, LLC
Terra Corps
UConn Athletics Ticket Office
Unbound Glory Farm
The Vanilla Bean Café
Villager Newspapers
Wadsworth Atheneum Museum
of Art
Watercure Farm Distillery
Weiss, Hale & Zahansky
Strategic Wealth Advisors
WILI Radio/The Nutmeg
Broadcasting Company
Willimantic Brewing Co., LLC
Willimantic Food Co-op
Willow Tree Pottery
WIN Waste Innovations
Windham County 4-H
Foundation
WINY Radio/Osbrey
Broadcasting Company
Woodstock Agricultural Society
WooSox Foundation
The Yankee Xpress



MIRANDA BAUBLITZ

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to All of The Last Green Valley's
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and Supporters *from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2022*

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^Has committed to a multi-year partnership.

*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

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In celebration of my life here in
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