



## WELCOME TO THE WINTER 2018 ISSUE

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## REQUEST FOR CONTENT

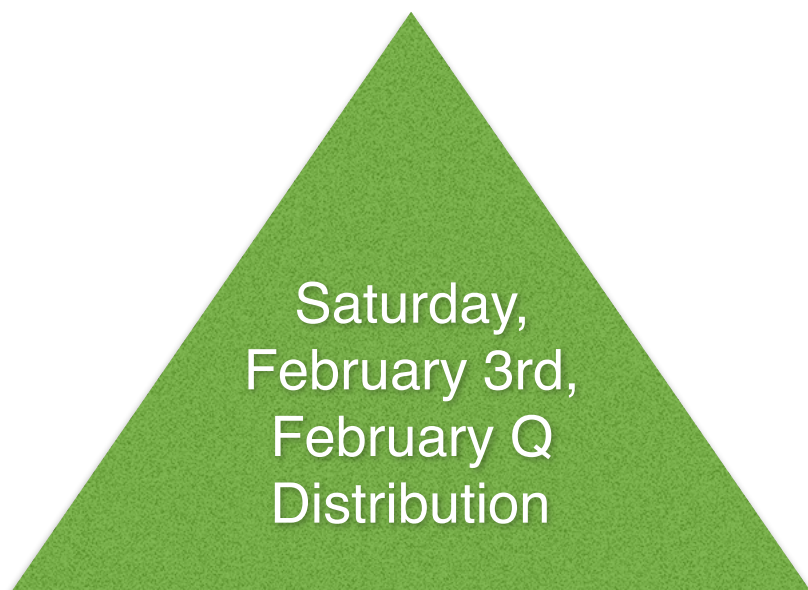
All Connecticut Sierra Club members are invited to contribute to the *Quinnehtukqut*. We accept articles, book reviews, puzzles, events, photos, poems, etc. Articles, limited to 500 words, should be on a subject of local or national interest to the Connecticut Chapter membership. The goal of the newsletter is to inform, educate, motivate and involve our members.

To submit newsletter articles, letters to the editor, etc. for the *Quinnehtukqut*, send to [ctsierraq3@gmail.com](mailto:ctsierraq3@gmail.com). To post information to the website or social media, send content to <https://ctsierraclub.wixsite.com/sierraclub-ct>.

We have developed a newsletter calendar for the next two 2018 submission dates. Please read dates carefully. The calendar is intended to make it easier for you to plan your *Quinnehtukqut* contributions for publication.

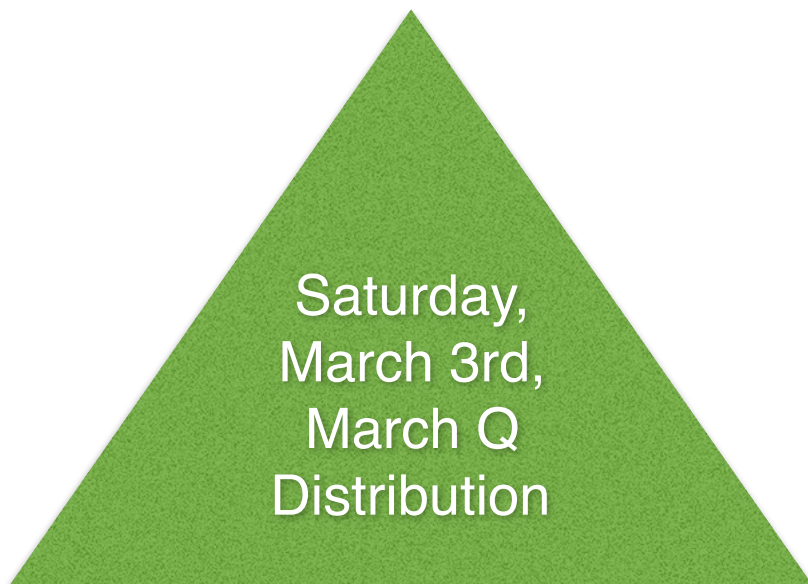
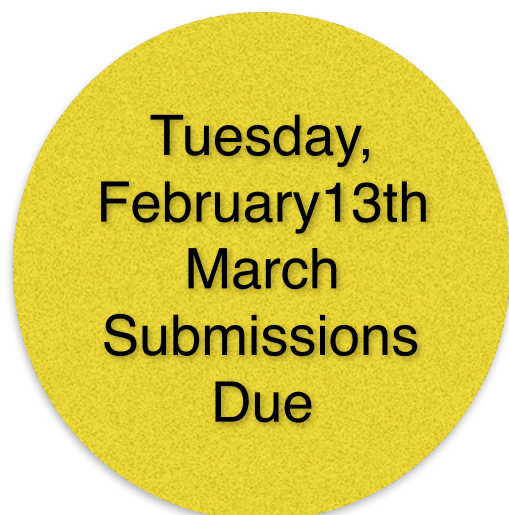
The *Quinnehtukqut* is distributed at the beginning of the month.

### FEBRUARY CALENDAR:



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### MARCH CALENDAR:



*All decisions regarding use are made by the Communications Committee.*

# CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

## Transitions

The Connecticut Chapter Sierra Club is undergoing a transition. Recently, our only staff, John Calandrelli, resigned after a 14 year tenure. We bid John a fond farewell on December 6th at our end of year gathering. In addition, we lost the lease on our office in Hartford and couldn't find new space in the capitol at a reasonable cost. So, for the time being, we are without staff and without an office. But don't get nervous! We are not going away. In fact, we hope to take advantage of different circumstances and get stronger. We plan to fundraise and build the chapter so we can have the presence and influence in Hartford needed to achieve environmental successes. Challenging times call for strong responses and we are upping our game!

We can always be reached at the same email address: [Connecticut.chapter@sierraclub.org](mailto:Connecticut.chapter@sierraclub.org).

The new telephone number is: 860.542.5225.

The new website is <https://ctsierraclub.wixsite.com/sierraclub-ct>.

Our Facebook page is Connecticut Chapter Sierra Club.

Our snail mail address is P.O. Box 270595, West Hartford, CT 06127.

We appreciate your understanding as we navigate how to develop the CT Chapter to support Sierra Club's conservation, clean energy and climate justice goals. Volunteers are welcome who can offer their time and administrative, fundraising or IT/social media skills. You can contact us by phone or email.

For the future,  
Martha

## Update: CT Attorney General Investigates Eversource/Avangrid by Martha Klein

We learned in October that Connecticut's two utilities, Eversource and Avangrid, the two companies that control the entire electrical supply in the state, were found to have cost ratepayers in Massachusetts and Connecticut an additional \$3.6 billion over three years as a result of the practice known as "artificial constraint of gas pipeline."

The utilities claimed that the gas pipelines were full when they were not, which drove up the price of both fuel and electricity. They insisted then and continue now in saying that this practice is for the benefit of the customer. As a result of this consumer rip-off, the Connecticut Office of Consumer Counsel and Public Utilities Regulatory Authority initiated an investigation of Eversource and Avangrid.

Now the office of the Connecticut Attorney General George Jepsen has also started an investigation. CT Chapter Sierra Club is pleased that the AG will be looking into the practice that smells a lot like corporate greed, and not for the good of the customer. Interestingly, the utilities have insisted for years that they need larger fracked gas pipelines, although numerous studies have found that claim to be unfounded. Perhaps the pretense of gas scarcity supports what CT Chapter has said all along: they have more than ample fracked gas, but inadequate customers, and enlarged pipelines allow them to get the methane to the coast for export, which has been their intent from the early days of fracking.

*Martha Klein is Chair, CT Chapter Sierra Club.*



## 2017 End of Year Gathering and Fundraiser

There was no need for introductions. Everyone at the December 6th CT Chapter Sierra Club end of year party and fundraiser knew that anyone they approached would have strong feelings about the environment, water, pollution, methane gas, national parks and the CT budget. Conversation flowed strongly. Generations merged. Food was eaten, drinks were consumed and money was donated. A successful party at the Connecticut Forest and Park Association in Rockfall.



New members joined, a few people offered to volunteer and everyone showed their commitment to our world. Thank you to Rick Haeseler who is the party photographer.

# CHAPTER LOBBYING

## The Importance of Grassroots Lobbying

by Roberta Paro

The desire to learn how to become an effective legislative advocate was stronger than the season's first snowstorm on Saturday, December 9th. Fourteen people braved the elements and traveled to Hartford to hear Jen Hensley, (pictured below) the Sierra Club's State Lobbying & Advocacy Director, lead us through a legislative training.

Jen emphasized building personal relationships with our elected State Senators and State Representatives as the most effective way to bring about long-term change. Jen explained that when constituents (those who live in the district of a senator or representative) follow events at the State Capitol they create accountability for how legislators vote.



Referring to one strategy used, Jen described how opposition focus on one or two issues each legislative session is the way to succeed. If CT Chapter Sierra Club is going to be effective, she believes we must use the same playbook.

### Focus on Two Legislative Issues

Although the Connecticut Chapter may take positions on many different legislative proposals, our volunteer in-district lobbyists will stay focused on the Chapter's two key issues: ensuring that Connecticut reaches the greenhouse gas reduction goals set in the 2008 Global Warming Solutions act and protecting public lands.

The mechanics of setting up a meeting was next on the agenda. Most important is preparation which includes assigning a specific role for each team member. Next in importance is the post-meeting work that must be done including thank you notes and obtaining answers or procedures to questions raised. The Connecticut Chapter's web site will soon house materials that are needed for these in-district meetings, including the most up to date fact sheets on our key issues.

### How Bills Become Law

Lobbyist Laurie Julian (pictured right) talked about how a bill becomes law. The 2018 legislative session is scheduled to begin February 7th and end May 9th. February 9th is the last day for proposed bills. Therefore, all bills will be under consideration and possibly written throughout January.



Bills in short sessions (even numbered years) start with committee leadership rather than from individual legislators. Leadership of each of these committees determines which bills will have a public hearing. Ensuring that each bill has enough testimony submitted may help the bill get voted out of committee and onto the floor for a vote. When a bill is on a public hearing agenda, the public can either come to the hearing to testify in person, or submit an email message with a personal statement. Both are effective.

### **State Owned Land Strategy**

A key strategy for protecting Connecticut's state owned public lands is a proposed constitutional amendment that would require appropriate public input before the General Assembly sells, swaps, or gives away state lands, according to Connecticut Forest and Parks Executive Director, Eric Hammerling. Hammerling explained that Massachusetts and New York have these protections embedded in their constitutions, but Connecticut does not. The Connecticut system of legislators swapping public lands through a conveyance bill that minimizes the public process puts our public lands in jeopardy. We've seen this happen many times. The legislature must first pass a bill with the language of the amendment which then goes on the ballot in the next general election where the voters must accept it for it to be enacted.



Eric Hammerling addressing In-District Lobby Team

After a delicious lunch prepared by the folks at The Kitchen at Billings Forge, we went over Connecticut's Renewable Portfolio Standard and the need to expand and extend it to 50 percent clean energy by 2030. I was encouraged by the attendance and interest in the training. I feel personal gratification in organizing the day. I look forward to forming in-district lobby teams in every district in Connecticut. If you are interested in participating in an in-district lobby team, please contact me at [roberta.paro@sierraclub.org](mailto:roberta.paro@sierraclub.org) or at 860.857.0976.

*Roberta Paro, former Chair, CT Chapter Sierra Club now heads the Legislative Committee for the Connecticut Chapter. Thanks to Martin Mador, Co-Chair for his insightful edits.*

# CONNECTICUT'S ECONOMIC HEALTH

## The Economic Wildfire of Connecticut

by Vanessa Woy

Once viewed by the city's highest earners as a quaint and quiet reprieve from the bustle of New York, Connecticut's economy is now positioned to be a catalyst for residents to move away from our state toward metropolitan areas.

With Connecticut's state income taxes ranking among the ten highest in the country, plus the cost of property taxes ranking within the top three highest states, Connecticut has made the cost of living an unavoidable factor in dissuading those looking to relocate in the northeast.

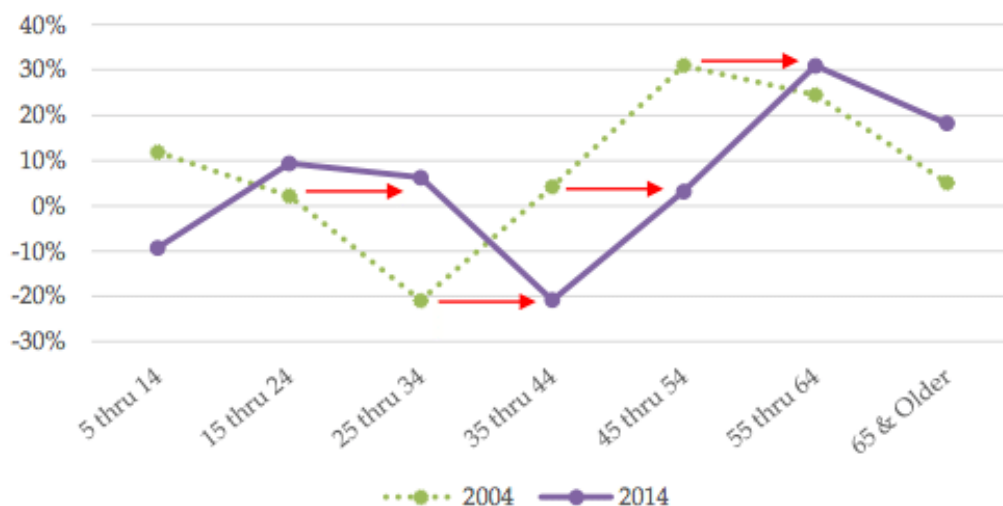
### Connecticut Needs a Facelift

In an article featured in *The Atlantic*, "What On Earth Is Wrong With Connecticut?" writer Derek Thompson discusses the need for a statewide revitalization; one that begins and ends with an infrastructure facelift. Thompson writes:

*In the biggest picture, Connecticut is a victim of two huge trends—first, the revitalization of America's great rich cities and second, the long-term rise of hot, cheap suburbs. But Connecticut's cities are not rich or great; its weather is not hot year-round; and its cost-of-living is not low. The state once benefited from the migration of corporations and their employees from grim and dangerous nearby metros, but now that wave is receding. To get rich, Connecticut offered a leafy haven where America's titans of finance could move. To stay rich, it will have to build cities where middle-class Americans actually want to stay.*

What's fascinating-or rather troubling-about this observation, is that it speaks only to the rebuilding and reimagining of our cities, as opposed to the climate ramifications of making those "improvements."

### Connecticut's Prime-Age Valley: Bye-bye, 30-somethings



Connecticut Tax Study



With Connecticut's post-grad to early 40s population decreasing yearly, it seems the only plan in place to retain its citizens is rooted in making our small cities more aesthetically appealing.

Further, recent data displaying trends in migration, show that those looking to move aren't even taking Connecticut into consideration.

*Finally, writes Thompson, the hottest trend in American migration today is south, west and cheap—that is, far away from Connecticut, both geographically and economically. Texas is growing rapidly, and seven of the ten fastest-growing large metropolitan areas in 2016 were in the Carolinas and Florida. Of the 20 fastest-growing metros, none are in the northeast. So, Connecticut's prime-age population is in decline, as the state loses families to both nearby cold cities and faraway hot suburbs.*

Based on these statistics alone, the question arises: Why are we still catering to those who wish to either work or live near metropolitan areas when, historically, it hasn't always been sustainable? If each state was to reassess its budget and allocate the majority of its spending into its city's infrastructures, what would be left over to preserve the ground on which it's built?

### **How to Attract Residents**

To build a prosperous, self-evolutionary community, our budget needs to be evenly dispersed across open space preservation, educational infrastructure and the integration of clean, renewable energy across the state—more specifically, in our public transportation services. This path not only lessens running and maintenance costs, but lessens the emissions of Greenhouse gas which currently make up nearly 40% of CT's total emissions ([Greenhouse Gas Emissions from the Transportation Sector](#)).

### **Urban Expansion Faults**

If the state's resources went into the rebuilding of Hartford and Bridgeport, where would that leave the remaining communities of Connecticut? Further, if we only invest in reinforcing the resources of neighborhoods and cities that are already frequented and enjoyed by the privileged, what kind of population are we working toward? Improving money-saturated sanctuaries such as the insurance neighborhood of Hartford is only whitewashing our demographics with dollar signs and the privilege of skin color. It should come as no surprise that clean energy, accessible and affordable transportation and neighborhood improvement is landing on the doorsteps of those who can already afford it and therefore aren't in need of these superfluous expansions.

### **Market Connecticut**

With a budget deficit predicted to surpass \$2 billion and no plans to lessen the taxes on its citizens, it's no wonder that the underserved communities of Connecticut are being pushed to the outer limits of its cities. Though the state is the richest in the country by per-capita income, the city of Hartford has been moving exceedingly closer to the [edge on bankruptcy](#). To make a state more "marketable" to the masses, changes must be *holistic* in their approach. If we're going to build more high-rise apartments in downtown Hartford, then we should also improve public spaces and parks by preserving open land and making them accessible to its residents—more specifically, to the children who reside in urban areas.

With organizations such as Sierra Club's [ICO: Inspiring Connections Outdoors](#), environmental nonprofits continue to work toward bringing people who rarely experience it to nature, by providing both resources and opportunities to the future generations that will inherit the Earth.



## Revitalize Connecticut

If we're working to build a better future, shouldn't we be building upon the needs of today? This includes, but certainly is not limited to, education on climate change to our youth, access to potable drinking water in impoverished communities throughout the state, reliable transportation, affordable living costs and a livable wage available for all—regardless of education level. To revitalize our state from the ground up, we need to listen to the needs of our 99%, instead of the elusive 0.02% that seem to still control much of the direction of economic investments and societal changes. If the divisive political turmoil of 2017 has taught us anything, it is that our underserved communities and the marginalized cities of Connecticut and America alike deserve more than what they've been given.

*Vanessa Woy is a volunteer with CT Sierra Club and a member of the Communications Team.*

## ENVIRONMENTAL HEAT

### John Muir Inspires Today's Power of Hope

by Ann Gadwah

*Keep close to Nature's heart... and break clear away, once in a while, and climb a mountain or spend a week in the woods. Wash your spirit clean.* John Muir

What a splendid quote with which we all can relate. John Muir truly had the power to touch and inspire those who felt and thought as he did. His words and his actions inspired the creation of national parks, a president to create numerous national monuments and a people to care about the natural world and its preservation. And of course, he inspired the creation of our beloved Sierra Club, which stands 125 years later as a testament to his devotion and passion.



President Theodore (Teddy) Roosevelt left; John Muir right.

Muir wrote diligently and beautifully about his adventures within the natural world of our beautiful country. He not only talked the talk, he walked the walk. His adventures began with a journey on foot from Indiana to Florida. His wanderlust brought him to California, to Alaska, to Arizona. He walked among the mountains, the forests, the tundra and the deserts. He met with people along his path and shared his love and knowledge. His devotion to the lands he sought to protect was evident to all who encountered him. His writings brought these places into American homes, galvanizing a want to protect and an urge to travel to these great sites. He gave hope that these wondrous sites would be around for future generations to enjoy for centuries to come, free from exploitation and damage. His influence continues to this day.

**What of hope and inspiration now?** What purpose does it serve, when many of our truths and beliefs are shattered to their core every day? I declare that in this vacuum of environmental leadership at the federal level, we must be our own John Muirs. We must inspire ourselves to continue the fight for environmental justice around this country and around the world. We must share our passion with our fellow citizens through language and the arts; through music, film

and poetry. Go on walks with people and show them why you love the outdoors and nature. Show your environmental leadership through example and actions. Proudly claim yourself as an environmental warrior. Let your light shine brightly. People will respond and will be inspired to action. And if this government is truly of the people, by the people and for the people, they will (eventually) respond in kind.

I leave you with my poetic contribution to this hope and inspiration.

*When they have called you of the mountains  
Of the sea, of the land  
Take to heart the changing of others  
For they shall see as you do  
That all is sacred.*

*Ann Gadwah is a CT Chapter Sierra Club member.*

## CONNECTICUT'S ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

### Victory! CT Announces Offshore Wind Procurement

by John Humphries

When CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) released the draft Comprehensive Energy Strategy in July, the [CT Roundtable on Climate and Jobs](#) voiced concern about the absence of offshore wind as a component of the state's vision. Since RI made history in 2016 with the first offshore wind farm in the U.S., other states in the region have been aggressively pursuing offshore wind development in leased areas in federal waters. Massachusetts for example, has mandated that their utilities must purchase 1600 MW of offshore wind resources by 2027, and the state plans to sign contracts for the first 400 MW next spring.

In September, the Roundtable organized a [forum on offshore wind](#), hosted by IBEW Local 90, and gathered [130+ endorsements on a statement](#) urging that offshore wind be integrated into CT's climate and energy strategies.

Earlier this month, [DEEP announced plans to procure offshore wind in 2018](#), marking a significant victory for clean energy advocates! The next step is to [ensure that the projects will provide local jobs and economic development for CT's workers and communities](#). CT workers can help build the turbines in federal waters south of MA and RI; New London's port can be the onshore hub; and CT manufacturers can provide components. This is a very exciting advance toward the clean energy future we need!

*John Humphries is the Organizer for CT Roundtable on Climate and Jobs and a CT Sierra Club member.*

# ACTIVISM THROUGH SPORT AND ART

## Climate Ride Now Contributes to Our Chapter

by Dennis Desmarais

Since its founding in 2008, thousands of bicycle riders have powered the [Climate Ride](#) on their quest to protect our planet and improve lives through sustainability and active transportation. During this decade, participants have raised millions of dollars to donate to environmentally oriented organizations. And now as of December 10, 2017 Connecticut Chapter Sierra Club has been officially designated as a Climate Ride beneficiary.

### Pedaling for Connecticut

The Climate Ride has nine multi-day cycling (and some hiking) charitable events planned for 2018, ranging from tours of the soaring peaks of Colorado to an exploration of the exotic monasteries in Bhutan. Riders of all abilities join the events with little to worry about as they are fully supported by a top-notch support crew and trip leaders. And nearly every ride ends with riders planning to sign-up for another event next year. The reason: after spending days surrounded by people committed to making a positive difference for the environment, participants leave energized and eager to take action.

Many people participate in charitable bicycle rides, and here in Connecticut we have at least a handful to choose from. So if you're looking for a new challenge, particularly one that will support the mission of the Sierra Club, consider Climate Ride. If that sounds appealing to you, head over [here](#) to sign up for one of the 2018 events. When you do sign-up, be sure to select the CT Chapter Sierra Club as beneficiary for which your efforts will be raising money.



Dennis Desmarais and his bicycle on a Climate Ride in 2017 at Glacier National Park

### 2018 Climate Rides and Hikes

[Death Valley](#) Ride | February 24 - March 1, 2018

[California North Coast](#) Ride | May 20-24, 2018

**NEW!** [Bhutan](#) Ride | April 18-24, 2018

[Glacier National Park](#) Ride | July 17-22, 2018

[Glacier National Park](#) Hike | July 29-August 2, 2018

[Iceland](#) Ride | August 12-17, 2018

**NEW!** [Colorado](#) Ride | August 25-30, 2018

**NEW!** [Northern Michigan](#) Ride | Dates TBA

**NEW!** [Nova Scotia](#) Ride | September 29-October 3, 2018

## Couch Support

If spending a couple of days on a bike or out in the woods isn't your thing, you still have another option to support our Chapter through the Climate Ride. I've signed up for my seventh Climate Ride. In June 2018, I'll be doing what is called an Independent Challenge (rather than one of the organized events). I'll be covering 1,000 miles over five days as I ride from Detroit to Cape Cod. Every pedal stroke for this ride will support our CT Chapter Sierra Club. In fact, all of my fundraising efforts support the chapter. Please pedal with me in tandem or in spirit and support my ride as I work fiercely to help support our chapter. Please consider making a tax deductible donation [here](#). Or to donate specifically for Dennis' efforts: <https://support.climateride.org/index.cfm?>

*Dennis Desmarais is Vice Chair, CT Chapter Sierra Club.*

## *Song of Spring*, an Environmental Film

by Linda Beers



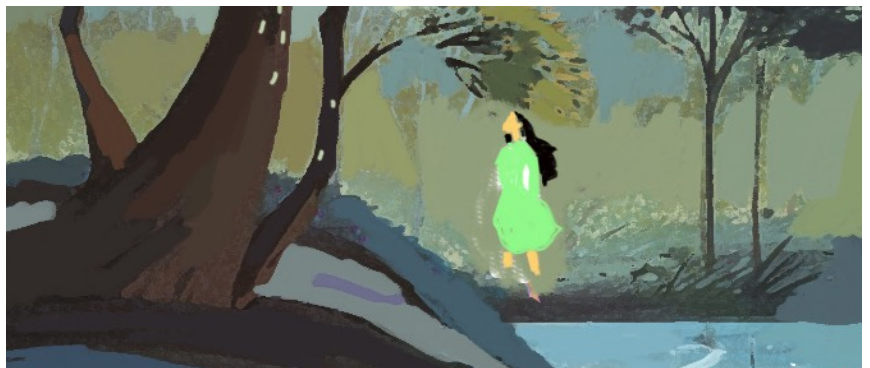
If there is something you feel strongly about, don't wait to act upon it or your opportunity may be lost forever. Allow your imagination to soar.

My story started when I performed a folk song for a Chinese New Year celebration. It was my initial inspiration to create *Song of Spring*, an environmentally focused, metaphorical animated short film about saving species from extinction. The experience enabled me to see how music can transport us to a completely different place and time.

Other experiences brought more awareness and helped the creative process. Viewing the documentary *Racing Extinction* on the Discovery channel, I was deeply moved by the site of shark fins as far as the eye could see and the haunting image of a shark with severed fins tragically struggling to survive. Also in this documentary, I learned about the Kauai O'o bird, essentially loved to extinction. Both added to my growing concern about environmental tragedy. The O'o bird went extinct in 1987 after being hunted for its beautiful feathers. Both the male and female O'o birds were song birds. The final male bird sang for a female bird who would never reply.

The experience of captured animals put to death, frequently in gruesome ways, exploded through me as the physical experience of being carried away in a dreamlike state to finally turn to dust. Although my film does not portray the slaughter, I hope its beauty helps to send its message.

The violin solo "Song of Spring" was written in the spring of 2016 for an Earth Day program I performed with Joan Kantor who read nature inspired poetry from her collection, *The Magic of Moments*. The script and scene descriptions were next, followed by collaboration with animator, Susan Lee.



*Hualing, the beautiful Chinese girl who is carried away in a dream.*



Around the time I first contacted Susan, Tyrus Wong, the animator for Disney's *Bambi* had just passed away. Wong's water color-like animation was innovative and I thought this style would be a good fit for *Song of Spring*. It was Susan's idea to have an O'o bird turn into the character Chaoxiang at the beginning of the video. In mid-February, actor Cecilia Lee recorded the voiceover narration. The quotes by Allen M. Solomon and Robert Swan were used to clarify the message of this film.

View *Song of Spring* here: [Song of Spring](#)

*Linda Beers is writer, director, producer and composer of "Song of Spring," an official selection in the New York Short Film Festival 2017 and the Zero Film Festival New York 2017.*

[LindaBeers.com/Song-Of-Spring](#) is a member of CT Chapter Sierra Club.

## OUR NATURAL WORLD

### Reptile and Amphibian Winter Survival Guide

by Nora Hulton

Several years ago, my upper elementary class and I were having a discussion about how mammals survive the winter. One of my students asked, "Where do turtles, snakes and frogs go when it's cold?" I have to say I was a bit flummoxed, as I had never really given a thought about where our reptilian and amphibious friends spend their winter months. I seized the moment, and the kids and I embarked on a Montessori-style fact finding hunt to satisfy our curiosity. They ran, and I followed.

#### Frogs Bury Themselves

One of the first things we discovered was that not all genera behave the same. For instance, Bullfrogs, Green frogs, and Pickerel frogs bury themselves in the muddy beds of ponds, lakes, and streams over the winter months. Their breathing slows, body temperatures drop to the ambient temperature, and they take in what little oxygen they need through their porous skin. On the other hand, the Gray Treefrog, Spring Peeper, and Wood Frog dig shallow divots (two to three inches in depth) under logs or beneath tree litter. As the temperatures get colder, the water in their circulatory system freezes, which draws water out of their cells via osmosis. This, in turn, triggers their livers to produce large amounts of glucose which is pumped to their cells to keep them succulent and viable. When spring comes, the frogs "thaw" and fill the air with their vernal tidings. [Crazy Monster Frogs](#)

#### Snakes Hide

Rattlesnakes, Garter Snakes, Copperheads and Water Snakes all have similar approaches to winter survival. They rely on rocky crevices and abandoned dens and tunnels to hole up in for the duration. Although their method of hibernation isn't all that extraordinary they, too, have their own little curiosity. Apparently, our slithery slumberers aren't at all picky about whom they bunk with, as it is quite common for several different species to share one den.



A ball of common garter snakes in winter  
Maine Lakes Resource Center Center

Painted turtles and Snapping turtles are similar to the Bullfrog in their manner of hibernation. They, too, bury themselves in the muddy bottoms of lakes and ponds and slow down their breathing and heartbeat. Unlike frogs, however, they are sensitive to changes in light and heat and will move around under the ice if the conditions permit it.



A painted turtle beneath the ice.  
Photo credit: Maine Lakes Resource Center, Cliff Fairweather

### **Newts Transform**

The Eastern Newt is a whole other complicated, but interesting, story. It originates as a larva in a pond or a lake. After several months, it goes through a metamorphosis, develops lungs, and becomes terrestrial. At this juvenile stage it is known as a red eft; a diminutive creature that sports orange-colored skin speckled with bright red spots. The red eft stage lasts between one to three years, and when the snow flies it hibernates under logs, leaf litter, and abandoned burrows. When it reaches adulthood, it turns olive colored, evolves back into an aquatic organism and returns to its watery origins. Here, it remains active all winter, and can often be seen swimming beneath the ice hunting for invertebrates. The Eastern Newt is truly one of the most remarkable of our cold-blooded over-winterers.

When my class and I set out on our fact-finding mission, we knew that mammals had three modes of winter survival: hibernation, migration or plain, old “toughing it out.” When we started our research, however, what we had conjured up could in no way compare to the actual phenomenon of amphibian and reptile over-wintering strategies. I can still hear the “oohs” and “ahs” that were elicited as each new, astonishing detail was uncovered. That was more than a decade ago, but I still find myself marveling over the adaptability and fortitude of these fascinating creatures.

*Nora Hulton is a Connecticut Certified Master Conservationist and a member, CT Chapter Sierra Club.*

# How to Help Animals in Winter

by Annie Hornish

Winter in Connecticut is a season of bitter cold, but there are simple steps you can take to help both companion animals and wildlife.



## Help Your Companion Animals

In extremely cold weather, dogs should always be brought inside. If your dogs are outdoors for a length of time in cold weather, they should be protected by a dry, draft-free shelter that is large enough to allow them to move comfortably but small enough to keep in body heat. The floor should be raised a few inches from the ground and covered with straw. The doorway should be covered with waterproof burlap or heavy plastic. Pets should have access to unfrozen water and more food because keeping warm requires more energy. Use plastic food and water bowls; when the temperature is low, your pet's tongue can stick and freeze to metal.

All pet cats should be kept indoors in the winter, and remember that community (feral) cats in your area also need protection from the elements. You can make your own cat shelter quickly and easily with a plastic storage bin (cut openings for entrances), rigid foam insulation and straw. Don't use blankets or towels, since they absorb body heat and chill cats who are lying on them.

Horses should have access to a barn or three-sided run-in, access to unfrozen water (heated buckets), and should be fed more forage—unlimited amounts, if possible—during extreme cold to help create heat and regulate body temperature.

## Avoid Hazards

Antifreeze is a deadly poison, but it has a sweet taste that may attract animals, so keep it out of reach. Coolants and antifreeze made with propylene glycol are less toxic to pets and wildlife.

Rock salt and other chemicals used to melt snow and ice can be poisonous. Wipe all paws with a damp towel before your pet licks them.

Warm engines in parked cars attract cats and small wildlife, who may crawl up under the hood for warmth and shelter. To avoid injuring any hiding animals, bang on your car's hood to scare them away before starting your engine.

## Prevent Abuse

If you encounter a pet left in the cold, politely let the owner know you're concerned. Some people genuinely don't know the risk that cold weather poses to their pets or livestock, and will be quick to correct any problems. But if they respond poorly or continue to neglect their animals, contact law enforcement: per Connecticut's animal cruelty statutes (CGS 53-247(a)), all animals under our custody must be provided "protection from the weather."



Birdbath photo credit: Mike McFarlan

## Help Our Wildlife

You can help wildlife by creating shelters, like brush piles and even your firewood pile--pile your logs crisscross fashion in order to create internal spaces that offer small animals a little relief from the cold. Providing a heated bird bath can provide essential water for drinking and bathing--a year-round necessity to keep feathers in top flying and insulating shape. When water freezes, birds expend valuable energy and risk dangerous exposure searching for other sources—which might mean the difference between life and death.

*Annie Hornish is the Connecticut Senior State Director for The Humane Society of the United States and a supporting member of CT Chapter Sierra Club. Learn more at [humanesociety.org](http://humanesociety.org) and [blog.humanesociety.org](http://blog.humanesociety.org)*

## Trend Spotting for Connecticut Gardeners

by Michele MacKinnon

Think gardens are an unlikely subject for the avalanche of reports on trends that appear each January? Think again. Gardens are trendsetting hotbeds.

### The Garden as a Sanctuary

The Pew Research Center says 10,000 Baby Boomers will turn 65 daily until 2029, and these aging gardeners are undergoing attitude changes. After long, sometimes stressful careers, Boomers view gardens as peaceful retreats. Lighting, including solar lighting, will offer safety and lengthen hours of relaxation in outdoor spaces. Also, Boomers desire technology-free zones because electronic gadgets disrupt zen-like environments. On the other hand, Millennials have grown up connected to digital devices but largely disconnected from nature and are using technology to fill knowledge gaps as they attempt their first gardens. They rely on smartphone applications such as [LeafSnap](#), [GrowIt!](#), [myGardenAnswers](#) and [SmartPlant](#) for answers to their questions.

### Living Space Expansion in Gardens

Homeowners have dined and reclined in their outdoor spaces for generations. However, fully equipped outdoor kitchens, natural gas and wood fire pits and yoga and meditation spaces were all major trends in recent years that will continue into 2018 and beyond.

### Rightsizing the Garden

After pursuing the American Dream, retired Boomers favor leisure activities over doing their own landscape maintenance. Likewise, Millennials, 2015's largest group of new gardeners according to the National Gardening Survey and a generation noted for their high value on work/life balance, seek easy-care solutions. Lawns are shrinking and turf grass is being replaced by low-growing ground covers, including sedums, liriopse, switch grass, and big root geraniums. Native plants are increasingly popular because they need less pampering, can withstand temperamental weather conditions and most importantly, provide food and habitat for our native wildlife. Kerry Mendez, author of *The Right-Size Flower Garden*, advocates using more trees and shrubs as another long-term, low-care



Christmas cactus (left), Cuban oregano (right)



alternative to fussy perennials or annuals. Placing large deciduous trees or those that drop fruit at property edges further reduces seasonal cleanup chores.

### **The Green Industry Responds**

Expect garden centers to carry diminutive versions of popular shrubs. New introductions will perform well in containers or in smaller garden spaces. Look for these hydrangea varieties having mature sizes of three feet or less and touted as reliable bloomers: “Invincibelle Spirit II,” “Bobo,” and the Oakleaf Hydrangea variety named “Ruby Slippers.” Butterfly Bush Lo and Behold “Blue Chip,” Ninebark “Tiny Wine” and Blue Mist Shrub “Petit Blue” are more choices. [Bushel and Berry](#) will offer lilliputian blueberry shrubs that supply tasty fruit all season long and dazzle with blazing red foliage in fall.

### **Greening Indoors**

The 83 million Millennials in the US have spurred a houseplant craze. With their purchasing power even small percentages of sales may signal a lifestyle trend. Continued demand for homegrown food is being met with hydroponic and various aeroponic systems.

**Note:** *CT Chapter Sierra Club does not endorse products. Research products and check online reviews before making a purchase.*

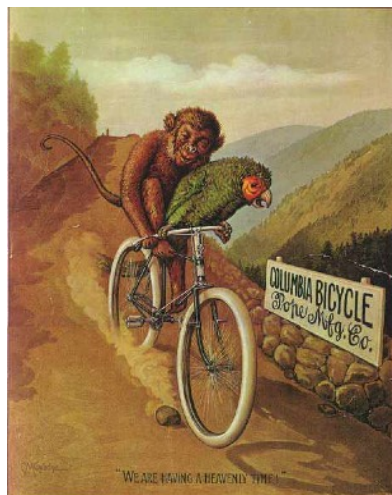
*Michele MacKinnon, is a UCONN Certified Advanced Master Gardener, garden educator and speaker. She is a CT Chapter Sierra Club member.*

*To contact MacKinnon to ask gardening questions, email [beehappygardener@gmail.com](mailto:beehappygardener@gmail.com). We'll publish answers in the next edition of the newsletter.*

## **BOOK REVIEW**

### **“Drive” The Evolution of Cars in Connecticut**

by James Root



“Drive” by Lawrence Goldstone, offers general insight into the pivotal early evolution of automobiles and the associated industries, and is of particular interest to the environmentally minded Connecticut resident because a significant amount of that evolution occurred here in the Nutmeg state.

Most of this local activity, as discussed in “Drive,” involved the Pope Company out of Hartford. Using CT gun barrel metallurgy technology in bike frame development, Colonel Albert Pope and his bicycle company help engender the original golden age of bicycles (approximately 1880-95) with the development and marketing of the ‘safety bicycle’ (or what we would simply call the ‘bicycle’). Basically, this new model obviated the iconic, crazy tall rear wheeled bicycles that preceded the safety bikes. Those earlier two-wheelers resulted in many injurious and fatal ‘headers’ (the apparent origin of this still popular term).

Additionally, Pope (admittedly in the interest of his bike business) created the first successful national push for better surfaced roads-called, yes, the “Good Roads Movement.” That the first modern roads were actually built for bicycles, and not automobiles, is bitterly ironic for the constantly car-harried modern bicycle commuter.

Pope’s involvement in transportation/environmental history continued with a central manufacturing role in an ambitious consortium that aimed to make the very promising electric car the vehicle of choice for Americans. (Pope, like many bike manufacturers, segued right into technically closely related automobile manufacture.)

This electric car effort was highly successful in the cities, especially with cabs and buses, and was on the verge of an historic marketing breakthrough in the 1890s, before it was derailed by overly aggressive expansion (over leveraging with 19th century finance) and the impetus of the emerging gasoline powered automobiles, which were easier to market in the still un-electrified countryside.



1907 Pope Toledo

Aside from the Connecticut portions of the book, Goldstone’s narrative follows the gas powered auto patent battle that shaped the early industry. Ford won his risky legal battle to ignore the gas powered patent as he forged ahead, while many of those who paid for the use of the patent became General Motors. One comes away from this story with a less deterministic view of transportation history (i.e. it didn’t have to be this way and easily could have gone in a better direction). Let’s hope Connecticut’s still potent technological innovation abilities can help reverse the carbon spewing history of automobiles, pick up where we left off circa 1890, and get us back to a sustainable transportation system.

*James Root is a Danbury resident and a member CT Chapter Sierra Club.*

# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Power Project Surrender

What I see happening with these power projects is the obvious surrender of former Federal guidelines that were backed by active state bureaus. They're mostly gone because of funding.

The regional approach to power, which is now practiced nationwide with the Federal government having abdicated their oversight position, has been replaced by a free for all for the electric power investors to operate unopposed. With Governor Cuomo in New York (who approved funding for the building of the Tappan Zee Bridge replacement without a light rail commuter connection) it's obvious there is nobody speaking for the commuter/resident when issuing permits for these huge projects.

Everything here is connected to everything else...Railroad and highway collapse, industrial sector fleeing the Northeast, Republican blocking all infrastructure funding with obsession to lower taxes.

The systems have stopped working as we knew them, this is all new.

Steve Crouse  
Ridgefield, CT

# EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

## How We'll Manage Our Water in 2018+

**Speaker:** Virginia de Lima, Water Resources specialist

**Date:** Thursday, January 11th

**Time:** 7:00pm: *activist letter writing* - 7:30pm: *program*

**Sponsor:** Greater Hartford Group Connecticut Sierra Club

**Location:** Westmoor Park, [119 Flagg Rd, W. Hartford, CT](#)

**Refreshments:** Provided

**Donation:** \$4 requested to defray hall rental

**Questions:** Email Renee [HERE](#).

*Free and open to the public*

### Overview

#### CONNECTICUT DRAFT STATE WATER PLAN

A draft CT State Water Plan has been developed to help regulators and lawmakers make decisions about managing Connecticut's water consistently across the state, per PA 14-163. Its final version will be presented to the Governor and legislation in early 2018. The Connecticut Water Planning Council (WPC) offers public outreach, information on how to comment and a copy of the Plan with pertinent resources. See: [www.ct.gov/water](http://www.ct.gov/water).



The draft plan recommends a framework to manage Connecticut's water as we balance our human and environmental needs with emerging climate trends and new needs. It addresses the quality and quantity of water for drinking, ecology, recreation, business, industry, agriculture, energy and wastewater assimilation.

### **Biography**

Virginia de Lima has had a 30 year career with the U.S. Geological Survey in Water Resources. For the first 10 years she was a groundwater modeler. She modeled the site featured in the book and then the movie "A Civil Action." Next as a manager, she headed the USGS offices in Rhode Island and then in Connecticut. Today, she chairs the Science and Technical Committee for the recently completed State Water Plan and serves on the Advisory Group for the Connecticut Water Planning Council. You may contact Virginia at: [virginiadelima1@gmail.com](mailto:virginiadelima1@gmail.com)

## **JANUARY/FEBRUARY EVENTS**

### **Water Awareness and Climate Change Documentary**

**Date:** Saturday, January 27th

**Time:** 10:00 am to 12:45 pm

**Location:** Bristol Public Library, 5 High Street, Bristol, CT

**Program:** The Pequabuck River Watershed Association is holding its 2nd Annual Water Awareness Event.

Leonardo DiCaprio's 90 minute environmental movie, *Before the Flood* will be shown. The film looks at how global heating affects our environment and what society can do to prevent climate disruption. Cast includes Leonardo DiCaprio, Barack Obama, Elon Musk, Bill Clinton, John Kerry and Pope Francis. A discussion follows in which Martha Klein, Chair of the CT Chapter Sierra Club will participate.



Sponsored by Pequabuck River Watershed Association (PRWA). The Association has been advocating on behalf of a healthier watershed for more than 25 years. Find them on Facebook: [www.fb.me/pequabuckriver](https://www.facebook.com/pequabuckriver)



## Climate Justice Teach-In

**Date:** Saturday, February 24

**Time:** 11:00am to 5:00pm

**Location:** Elmwood Community Center  
1106 New Britain Avenue, West Hartford, CT

**Program:** "Climate Justice Now: For a Livable World." This day long educational event will feature speakers from the front lines of the environmental justice movement and seek to educate about the particular social justice issues exacerbated by climate change. Both national and local challenges will be highlighted.

**Speakers** include:

Jacqui Patterson, Climate Justice Director, NAACP

Anne L. Hendrickson, Director, Population and Development Programs and Faculty in Critical Social Inquiry, Hampshire College

Sean Sweeney, International Director, Trade Unionists for Energy Democracy

Alexis Rodriguez, CT Puerto Rican Agenda

Martha Klein, Chair, CT Chapter Sierra Club

Cynthia Jennings, Hartford City Council

The event is co-sponsored by Sierra Club Connecticut Chapter, 350 CT and CTCORE-Organize Now



**Help Us Keep Our Programs Running!**

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