

SANCTUARY

Newsletter of
The White Memorial
Conservation Center

Vol. XLIV No. 2
Spring 2026

Museum Hours:

Tuesday through Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Sunday 12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

For Information

Phone: 860-567-0857
E-Mail: info@whitememorialcc.org
Website: www.whitememorialcc.org



*Hiking Sisterhood ~ Joan Jones (left) and Janet Kozlak at Steep Rock Preserve,
Photo: Ron Jones, Date unknown*

Love, Laughter, Land: The Story of Ron and Joan Jones

By Gerri Griswold, White Memorial Conservation Center Director of Administration and Development

Ron and Joan Jones lived a true love story.

For more than fifty years, they shared a marriage rooted in kindness, curiosity, and devotion—to each other, to their family, and to the world around them. Their home in Watertown Connecticut, was more than a house; it was a place of welcome and warmth, a gathering spot where love was felt as soon as you walked through the door. That spirit endured long after Joan's death in 2008 and continued right up until Ron's passing in 2025.

They first met as college sweethearts at Dickinson College, where both pursued studies that led them to degrees in chemistry. After serving his country in the U.S. Army, Ron worked as a research chemist for Anaconda American Brass and later Jones Environmental Services. Joan's path led her to teaching—first at the Waterbury Hospital School of Nursing, and eventually to Mattatuck Community College (now Naugatuck Valley Community College), where she taught anatomy and physiology for twenty years. She earned her master's degree from Wesleyan University and brought rigor, compassion, and high standards into every classroom she entered.

Together, Joan and Ron raised three children in Watertown: Dennis, Kenneth, and Jennifer. Family celebrations were a hallmark of their lives—joyful, noisy, and full of laughter—and their home remained the heart of those gatherings for decades. The family enjoyed annual vacations at Pappoose Pond in Maine and continued them for years, even with their grandchildren.

Both Joan and Ron shared a deep love

of community. They were active in the Watertown Land Trust, and Ron poured his energy into many local organizations. He coached Little League, served as a



Ron and Joan Jones

Scoutmaster, and was active in the Lions Club. Gardening was his great passion. He transformed their backyard into a kind of Eden, filled with vegetables, flowers, and his much-loved Blueberry House. Ron often said his goals in life were simple: “to make Joan happy and to bring pleasure to others.”

Joan, however, was a force.

She probably never thought of herself that way—she was simply being Joan—

but those who knew her understood. No one knew this better than her beloved sister, Janet, who offers countless stories that could justify Joan's canonization as a Force of Nature.

In 1984, Joan began suffering from serious back pain. After surgery, her doctor prescribed walking—six miles a day. So she did. Most of those miles were walked alongside Janet, and many of them took place at White Memorial. What began as a prescription became a lifelong adventure. For 21 years, the sisters hiked through Litchfield County together. “We were best friends as well as sisters,” Janet recalls. Joan never had back pain again. Joan kept meticulous ledgers of every hike. In 1987, she began carrying bags and recording a tally of “Cans and Bottles Collected,” later abbreviated to “C & B.” Early entries might read “2 cans” or “4 cans,” but as the years passed the numbers climbed—22, 53, 60—quietly reflecting the growing presence of disposable containers in the landscape. Alongside the numbers were Joan's mental notes: “talking sheep,” or “one dead cat and one dead dog.”

But above all, there was laughter.

“What we had were lots and lots of laughs,” Janet says. “We decided we would compliment ourselves on being savvy hikers, and we did keep trying.” They gave each other awards for finding things. Typical journal entries read: “Nevermind finding the trail, first we have to find the parking lot.” “We are going downhill. Shouldn't we be going up to find the fire tower?”

(Continued on page 2)

They would meet at the Stop & Shop parking lot in Litchfield and head off on their adventures, exploring Steep Rock Preserve, Maricostas Preserve, Meeker Swamp, White Memorial, McLean Preserve, People’s State Forest (six times), Pine Knob Loop—pretty much every trail they could find in Litchfield County. There was a brief hiatus once, noted carefully in the ledgers, “due to Joan’s arm, Janet’s back, Joan’s leg, and Janet’s arm.”

They named their hikes. “The Blizzard Walk” took place during an April snowstorm when they had to wade shoeless through two streams. On the Blue Blaze Trail at McLean Preserve, every trail was blue, so they had no idea where they were. The “Footprint Walk” happened one winter day at White Memorial on a small trail behind the Litchfield State Police Barracks. They noticed fresh footprints in the snow and felt the uneasy sense of being followed—until they realized the footprints were their own.

“This was typical,” Janet says. “We liked to say we achieved a high level of incompetence!”

Their bible was *The Connecticut Walk Book*. They carried maps—lots of them. Joan even created a special map bag. Topographic maps and local maps were carefully marked with colored pencils. At Joan’s memorial, Janet recalled some of their famous sayings: “You can’t get lost in an open field.” (They did.) “We’re almost at the top!” (They weren’t.) “This will be a level walk.” (It wasn’t.)

Joan rarely missed a day of walking. She always wore a pedometer and kept impossibly well-organized records of every

journey, right up through 2005, when her health began to decline. There is a deep irony—and unfairness—in the fact that someone so devoted to self-care was eventually stricken with a condition that mimicked ALS, robbing her of the use of her legs.

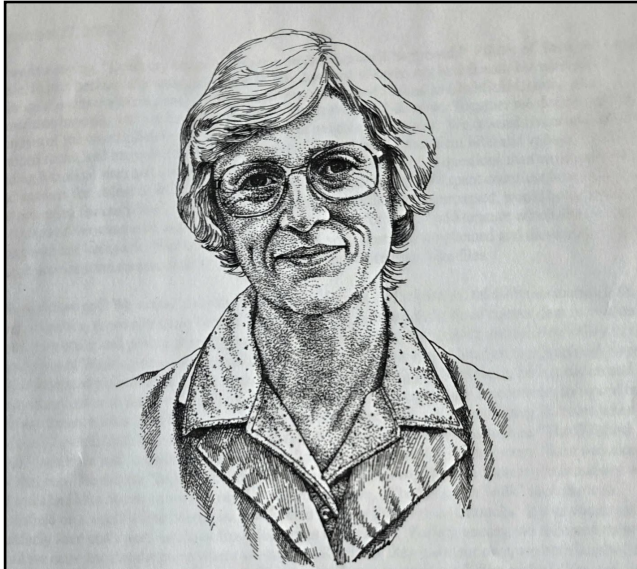
After Joan’s passing, Janet asked Ron if she could have the hiking ledgers. Ron understood immediately.

When Ron passed in early 2025, his wish was to donate the home he and Joan had shared for half a century to the White Memorial Conservation Center. His son Dennis brought some of Joan’s hiking ledgers to White Memorial Executive Director Lukas Hyder. Lukas was amazed. He knew instantly that there was a story here—one that deserved to be told.

The story of the Jones family echoes, in many ways, the story of the Whites: lovers of nature, champions of land preservation, devoted servants to their community, and generous givers. We are deeply grateful to Ron Jones for remembering the Conservation Center as part of his legacy.

In honor of Ron and Joan Jones, White Memorial will be scheduling a series of hikes in 2026. The Ron and Joan Jones Memorial Hikes will begin April 4 with a journey from the Museum to Catlin Woods, Cranberry Pond, and the Cathedrals. By the end of 2026, we will have traversed all 40 miles of trails.

Special thanks go to Janet for sharing a story that celebrates not only an extraordinary family, but—with grace, humor, and love—mile upon mile and acre upon acre of open space, thoughtfully preserved in perpetuity for all living things.



PROFESSOR JOAN H. JONES LECTURE HALL

2011 – Since 1959, when Emerita Professor Joan H. Jones began teaching in the Central Naugatuck Valley region at the Waterbury Hospital School of Nursing, she was a pioneer in both science and nursing education. Until her retirement in the fall of 1995, she taught thousands of science and nursing students in this region when that program was brought to Mattatuck, now Naugatuck Valley Community College. As division director, she provided critically important science leadership during the planning and construction phases of Ekstrom Hall. Professor Jones was elected The Distinguished Professor several times by the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. She was an exceptional professorial role model and science faculty mentor.

The College President and the faculty of the Mathematics-Science Division as well as the Nursing-Allied Health Division honor her memory in naming Ekstrom Hall Room E-440



White Memorial Conservation Center 44th Annual Family Nature Day Raffle September 26, 2026 at 4:00 P.M.

First Prize: A Trip for 2 to Greenland
12 Days / 11 Nights, June 28 - July 9, 2027
Donated by Stewart McPherson, Redfern Tours

Second Prize: A \$2000 AirBnB Gift Card
Third Prize: A \$1000 L.L. Bean Gift Card

Tickets: \$10.00 each! Only 3000 printed!
Purchase in the Museum Store,
by phone: 860-567-0857,
or online: www.whitememorialcc.org



Why Environmental History Matters for Conservation Today

By James Fischer, Research Director, White Memorial Conservation Center

When we look at a place like Litchfield, or any other community in north-west Connecticut, it is easy to see a beautiful landscape and imagine it as a timeless backdrop. Rolling hills, stone walls, wetlands, forests, fields, and village centers can feel as though they have always been here in exactly this form. But the land beneath our feet is not just scenery—it helped shape the history that unfolded here.

Litchfield's story did not simply happen in the landscape; it emerged *from* it. Geology, water, soils, forests, and topography influenced where people settled, how they farmed, where roads were built, where mills operated, and how communities grew. In turn, people altered the landscape through clearing, grazing, damming, draining, building, harvesting, and restoring. Over time, the place we know today became a living record of both natural processes and human choices.

That insight matters for conservation now.

Too often, conservation is framed as if our job is to protect a place by “freezing” it in the condition we happen to love today. We may focus on preserving a scenic view, a familiar shoreline, a favorite trail, or a cherished habitat, exactly as it appears in this moment. But landscapes

are not static. They are dynamic systems shaped by disturbance, adaptation, recovery, and change. If we treat them as still images instead of living systems, we risk making decisions that look protective but fail to sustain ecological function over time.



*Bantam River from Sutton Bridge
Photo credit: Gerri Griswold*

Environmental history helps us see the bigger picture.

At its best, environmental history asks a simple but powerful question: *How did this place become what it is?* The answer

usually includes more than one story. It includes the long geological story—the glaciers, rivers, soils, and landforms that set the stage. It includes the ecological story—forests shifting, wetlands forming, species arriving and disappearing, wind, floods, and fire reshaping habitats. And it includes the human story—Indigenous stewardship, colonial settlement, agriculture, industry, transportation, recreation, and modern conservation.

When we understand those stories together, we become better stewards.

For example, many environmental problems that concern us today—erosion, flooding, degraded water quality, habitat fragmentation, invasive species, and biodiversity loss—did not appear out of nowhere. They often reflect decisions made decades or even centuries ago. A stream may flood differently because wetlands were filled, channels were straightened, or forests were cleared upstream. A lake may struggle with water quality because of cumulative land use across its watershed, not just one visible source. A forest may look “healthy” from the road while quietly lacking the structural diversity needed for long-term resilience.

(continued on page 5)



This program is conducted by the Conservation Center's Education and Activities Committee.

33rd Annual Museum Sleep-In!

For 4-6th Graders

April 24 - 25

5pm Friday - 12pm Saturday

Kids in Grades 4-6, join us for a real-life “Night at the Museum” experience! We'll have a slumber party amongst the exhibits in the Museum. Plus, we'll embark on a night hike, gather around the campfire, make special crafts, explore Ongley Pond, and so much more. You'll also be treated to breakfast and a special program featuring live animals.

Parents, this is a drop-off program, but plenty of adult chaperones from the WMCC Education and Activities Committee will be present. Meet in the Museum.

Advanced registration is required. Registration begins on April 1 and must be received by April 20. Space is limited to 25 kids. Please inquire about financial aid as needed. Event will occur rain or shine.

Members: \$60/child, Non-Members: \$120/child
(covers all materials, snacks, and breakfast)

For more information and to register, please visit www.whitememorialcc.org or call 860-567-0857.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

IN HER CONTINUING SERIES, ZOË GREENWOOD HELPS YOU FIND SMALL WAYS TO HELP THE ENVIRONMENT

Man, this has been a winter like I remember as a kid! Cold weather; frosty noses; lots of cocoa and hot tea and SNOW! We haven't had much chance to "play" in the snow like we did when we were kids, but we've spent a fair amount of time shoveling and snow-blowing and sitting by the woodstove with a good book. We've spent a fair amount of time filling the birdfeeders and suet feeders. We try to live *with* the seasons instead of *against* them. We try to eat foods in season. We try to embrace the rain or the snow. We put on more clothing instead of raising the thermostat.

Actually, we've been spending a lot of time at home—no company; few trips out; nearly no dining out. Our gasoline bills and credit card bills have liked that.

We've spent a lot of time on the telephone keeping in touch with family and friends. Our plan does not cost more for time spent on the phone, which is good. We've played a fair bit of music; read a fair number of books; watched a fair bunch of birds at the feeders; made a fair bunch of soup and a few batches of cookies. I must say that we have enjoyed the "down" time. It's been quiet and restful. It has been a time of readjusting our needs and wants and focus. Gone are the hectic, frantic days spent in the garden or at the stove, canning. Gone are the multitude of visitors and visits. It's been a time of reset and rest. All too soon we will be returning to "real life" and its various demands.

All of this has got me thinking about what to do when the weather breaks. Yes, it will be fine to see flowers blooming and open the windows and shut down the



woodstove. It will be fine to once again hang clothes out to dry in the sunshine. But, I am not all that anxious to return to life as we have known it. I want to maintain the quiet, the rest, the peace. I don't want to have a dozen things to do in a given week. I don't want to go to a

dozen different places. We have got to do a better job of saying "no".

Now, I know that I am very lucky. I am retired. I no longer must engage in the day-to-day rat race of working for pay. The work that I am doing now is work for me and for hubby, in our home, in our community. Those things fill my well; help me be better prepared to help others. But, really, most, if not all, of us can readjust our wants and needs; our wishes and hopes. We can FORCE ourselves to take a minute; take a break and look around and spend time just living in the moment.

Put your errands all together so that you no longer need to do something every day. Take a couple of hours a week, after work, to stop at the store and get supplies. Use up what is already in your pantry and your freezer and on your shelves instead of buying more and more each week. Do your banking on the way to the basketball game for your kids or grandkids. Just *stop* and *readjust* and *refocus*. Remember the difference between want and need. Just stop and take the time in *your life* so that you can be fully present and prepared. If you don't take the time to recharge yourself, how on earth are you going to be able to help others, or do the myriad tasks set before you?

Take the time to *make a difference* for you and yours and how you live in this very complex world.



Join Us in 36 Hours of Giving for Good



Greater Waterbury & Litchfield Hills

April 21 & 22, 2026



HOSTED BY: 

PRESENTING SPONSOR: 

Go to GiveLocalCCF.org

The Connecticut Community Foundation's Give Local Greater Waterbury & Litchfield Hills

Thirty-six Hours of Giving!

Every dollar donated to the Conservation Center from 7 a.m. on April 21st to 7 p.m. on April 22nd will help defray the cost of our exciting new aviary!

This spectacular new home for Zelda, Irie, and a NEW resident will break ground in 2026!

Your donations will be stretched with bonus funds provided by the *Connecticut Community Foundation* and generous *Give Local* sponsors.

We are also eligible to win amazing cash prizes during the event!

Watch our website www.whitememorialcc.org, read your *Habitattler* for more details on how you can donate, or visit our personal *Give Local* page:

<https://www.givelocalccf.org/organizations/white-memorial-conservation-center>

Why Environmental History Matters for Conservation Today *continued from page 3*

Without a historical perspective, we may misread what we are seeing.

Environmental history also helps us avoid another common mistake: assuming that the landscape we remember from our own childhood—or from old postcards, photographs, or family stories—is the “right” condition to preserve forever. Memory is important, but memory is not the same thing as ecological understanding. Every generation inherits a landscape that has already been shaped by previous generations. What feels “natural” to us may actually be the result of past disturbance and recovery. In some places, that history includes farming, logging, grazing, industrial use, or active management. In others, it includes abandonment and re-growth. In nearly all places, it includes change.

This does not mean conservation is hopeless, or that “everything changes anyway” so nothing matters. It means the opposite!

It means conservation becomes more meaningful when we focus on what truly sustains life in a place: ecological function, resilience, and biodiversity. Instead of trying to preserve a single snapshot in time, we can ask better questions. Are wetlands able to store and slowly release water? Are stream corridors connected and shaded? Are native plant communities regenerating? Is habitat available for a range of species across seasons? Can the system recover from storms, drought, pests, or other disturbances without collapsing?

Those are the questions that help us conserve a living landscape, not just a picturesque one.

For communities like ours, this way of thinking also strengthens local stewardship. People are more likely to care for a place when they know its story. A stone wall becomes more than a boundary; it becomes evidence of past land clearing and farming. A wet meadow becomes more than “open space”; it becomes part of a hydrologic system with ecological and historical significance. A pond, river, or outlet becomes more than scenery; it becomes a place where geology, land use, and community decisions continue to interact.

In that sense, environmental history is not just about the past. It is a practical tool for the future.

It can help land trusts set better priorities. It can help lake associations understand watershed-scale causes of local problems. It can help municipalities make smarter planning decisions. It can help educators and volunteers connect science to place. And it can help all of us move beyond a narrow idea of conservation as simply “keeping things the same” toward a deeper commitment: keeping places alive, functioning, and resilient through change.

That is one reason Robert Thorson’s upcoming presentation for White Memorial on May 14, 2026 is so exciting and so timely.

Dr. Thorson has a rare ability to make geology, history, and human experience

speak to one another in ways that are both intellectually rich and accessible to a broad audience. His work invites us to look again at familiar places and ask not only what happened there, but why it happened there. Litchfield treasures its landscapes and is committed to conserving them; this is exactly the kind of conversation we need.

This program will be a chance to explore how the ground beneath us has shaped the communities, institutions, and environmental conditions we inherit today. It will also be an opportunity to think more clearly about what conservation should mean in the twenty-first century: not preserving a myth of untouched nature, but understanding real places in all their complexity—and caring for them wisely.

If you care about Litchfield’s land, water, wildlife, and future, I hope you will join us. Whether you come as a naturalist, historian, conservation volunteer, educator, policymaker, or simply someone who loves this place, you will leave with a deeper appreciation for how environmental history can sharpen our stewardship. The better we understand how a landscape came to be, the better prepared we are to help it endure.

And that, perhaps, is the heart of conservation: learning to see a treasured place not as a frozen scene but as a living story we are now responsible for carrying forward.

Please turn to page 7 for more information on Dr. Robert Thorson’s May 14 luncheon & talk.

Spring Break Camp

Tuesday–Friday, April 14–17

Grades 1-3: 9:30 am-12:30 pm

Grades 4-6: 1:30-4:30 pm

Members: \$25/child per session

or \$90/child for the whole week

Non-Members: \$40/child per session

or \$150/child for the whole week



Spend your vacation exploring the wild! Meet live animals up close, make some awesome crafts, tromp around the woods, and play fun games, all while learning about the amazing natural world around you. Bring a water bottle and dress for the weather. Parents/Guardians are welcome to stay, but it is not necessary. Meet in the A.B. Ceder Room. Advanced registration is required. Space is limited! You can sign up by day or for the whole week. Please inquire about financial aid as needed.

To register, please visit whitememorialcc.org or call 860-567-0857.

Summer Nature Camp

Wonder Camp

NEW FORMAT! This camp for children ages 4-5 meets twice a week during the first three full weeks of July. Each class is 1.5 hours and features stories, songs, crafts, and outdoor adventures.

Sign up by week. Wednesdays and Fridays, July 8-24

Discovery Camp

Week-long sessions featuring outdoor discovery, games, books, songs, and crafts that help kids learn about the natural world. For children entering grades 1-2. Sign up for one week only.

July 6-10, 13-17, or 20-24

Exploration Camp

Week-long sessions for children entering grades 3-9. Outdoor adventures await, both on White Memorial property and in many other natural places throughout northwest Connecticut. Sign up for one week only. July 6-10 or 13-17 for 3rd/4th grade, July 20-24 or July 27-31 for 5th/6th grade, Aug. 3-7 for 7th-9th grade


More details on whitememorialcc.org. Registration begins April 1 for members and April 15 for non-members.

Spring 2026 Calendar of In-Person, Virtual, and Hybrid Events

For more information on any of our programs, please call us at 860-567-0857. Register online: www.whitememorialcc.org

APRIL

Nature's Nursery
April 2, May 7, June 4
Please pre-register:
www.whitememorialcc.org



3 **Good Friday**
Museum and Offices Closed

4 **The Ron & Joan Jones Memorial Hikes:**
Catlin Woods, Cranberry Pond
& the Cathedrals
10:00 a.m., Please pre-register
www.whitememorialcc.org

5 **Easter Sunday**
Museum Closed




6 - 12 Children's Free Week in the Museum*

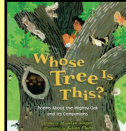
Fresh Start Hiking Club!
April 7, May 5, June 2
7:45 a.m., Meet at the A. B. Ceder Room.
Pre-register: www.whitememorialcc.org

Happy Hour Hiking Club!
April 9, May 14, June 11
4:00 p.m. Meet in the Museum.
Pre-registration required:
www.whitememorialcc.org


Artistry in Nature
with Colleen Harrak
April 11, May 2, June 13
See page 7 for details.




11 **The Mighty Oak**
and Its Companions
with Marilyn Singer
& Jonathan Chesler
See page 7 for details.




April 14 - 17
Spring Break Camp!
See page 5 for details!



17 **Star Party!**
Astronomy program
with star-gazing to follow.
8:00 p.m., A. B. Ceder Room



18 **Bat Hike!**
See page 7 for details.




18 **BATS COUNT!**
Evening Bat Count at the Green Barn
7:00 p.m., Meet at the A. B. Ceder Room.

20 - 26 Children's Free Week in the Museum *

21 / 22 **GIVE LOCAL!**
A Day of Giving!
See page 4 for details!



24 / 25 **33rd Annual**
Museum Sleep-In
For Grades 4 - 6
See page 3 for details.



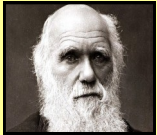
25 **Early Spring Migrants Bird Walk**
with Fran Zygmunt
7:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
Meet in the Museum parking lot.

25 **Tiny Trekking Birding Edition**
with Kelly Orr & Fran Zygmunt
10:00 a.m.
Meet in the Museum.

27 - May 3 **Children's Free Week**
in the Museum *

MAY

2 **Charles Darwin:**
History's Most Famous
Biologist
with Stewart McPherson
See page 7 for details.




4 - 10 Children's Free Week in the Museum*

9 **Bobbing for Bobolinks**
at Apple Hill and Topsmead State Forest
8:00 a.m., Meet at the Apple Hill Trail Head
116 East Shore Road. Limited to 15.
Please pre-register: www.whitememorialcc.org

11 - 17 Children's Free Week in the Museum*


12 **Birding & Botany Amble**
with Ann Orsillo & Eileen Cooper
8:30 a.m., Meet in the Museum parking lot.

14 **Why Litchfield?**
Grounding Town History
to the Land Itself
with Dr. Robert Thorson
See page 7 for details.




15 **Tiny Trekking with Kelly Orr: Pine Island**
Meet at the Pine Island Parking lot,
122 Whites Woods Road.


15 **Star Party!**
Astronomy program
with star-gazing to follow
8:00 p.m., A. B. Ceder Room



16 **Nature Tag Sale**
Activity Shed, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.




16 **Connecticut**
Classical Guitar
Ensemble
See page 7 for details.



23 **The Ron & Joan Jones Memorial Hikes**
Mattatuck Trail through White Memorial
Hike six miles of this beautiful 35 mile trail
through White Memorial.
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.,
For more details and to register online:
www.whitememorialcc.org

25 - 31 **Children's Free Week in the Museum ***

25 **Memorial Day**
Offices Closed




30 **Greenland:**
Wildlife Wonders at the End of the World
with Stewart McPherson
3:00 p.m., A. B. Ceder Room
Please pre-register:
www.whitememorialcc.org




JUNE

5 **Spot the Glitch: Nature or AI Edition**
with Matthew Harrak
6:00 p.m., A. B. Ceder Room


6 **Connecticut Trails Day**
The Ron & Joan Jones Memorial
Hikes: Circumnavigating Five Ponds
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.,
Meet at the Five Ponds Trail Head,
300 Straits Turnpike
(Routes 63/61)
Please pre-register:
www.whitememorialcc.org




13 **Iceland through My Heart**
with Gerri Griswold
See page 7 for details.




14 **Litchfield Hills Road Race**
Museum Closed



19 **Star Party!**
Astronomy program
with star-gazing to follow.
8:00 p.m., A. B. Ceder Room




20 **Make a Solstice**
Head Piece
with Susan Spanger
See page 7 for details.




23 **Tiny Trekking with Kelly Orr**
Newborn to 5 years, 10:00 a.m.,
Meet in the Museum.

27 **Camping with Kids**
with Kelly Orr & John Markelon
See page 7 for details.



27 **Moonlight Paddle with Kelly Orr**
See page 7 for details.



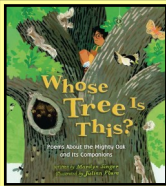

* Free admission to children under the age of twelve
when accompanied by an adult

SPRING 2026 VIRTUAL, HYBRID, & IN-PERSON WORKSHOPS
CALL 860-567-0857 OR REGISTER ONLINE: WWW.WHITEMEMORIALCC.ORG



April 11, May 2, June 13
Artistry in Nature with Colleen Harrak
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., A. B. Ceder Room
Members: \$20.00 / Session, \$50.00 / Series
Non-Members: \$30.00 / Session, \$80.00 / Series
For Ages 10 and up. Materials included!

Not all who wander are lost—some are artists! Join us as we wander the trails with sketchbooks in hand. Along the way, we'll pause to draw whatever catches our eye: crooked trees, tiny flowers, interesting textures, animal tracks, or moments of quiet beauty. You don't need to "know how to draw"—just bring curiosity. This program is about slowing down, noticing the small things, and letting nature be your guide.



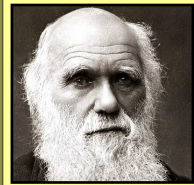
April 11 The Mighty Oak & Its Companions
Talk, Reading, Book Signing, & Walk
2:00 p.m., A. B. Ceder Room, Ages 4 - 10 years
Members: \$5.00, Non-Members: \$10.00

Did you know that some species are so important that without them entire ecosystems would fall apart? They're called "keystone species." Some of them, such as starfish, wolves, sea otters, and beavers, are animals. But, believe it or not, others are plants! One keystone plant found all around the world and right here in Connecticut is the oak. Join author Marilyn Singer and horticulturist, Jonathan Chesler, for a reading and discussion about what makes an oak an oak.



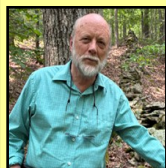
April 18 Bat Hike! with Gerri Griswold
4:00 p.m., A. B. Ceder Room
Members: \$5.00, Non-Members: \$10.00

Enjoy a late afternoon stroll through bat habitats to bat houses near Litchfield Town Beach! Almost 300 precious Little Brown Bats inhabit these structures installed in 2018 by Research Director, James Fischer.



May 2 Charles Darwin: History's Most Famous Biologist with Stewart McPherson
Museum Reception: 6:00 pm, Talk: 7:00 p.m.
Members: \$5.00, Non-Members: \$10.00

Charles Robert Darwin (1809-1882) transformed the way we understand the natural world with ideas that, in his day, were nothing short of revolutionary. He and his fellow pioneers in the field of biology gave us insight into the fantastic diversity of life on Earth and its origins, including our own as a species. Darwin Scholar Stewart McPherson does a deep dive into the life and times of this astonishing man.



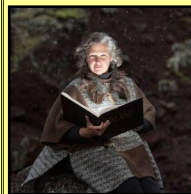
May 14 Why Litchfield? Grounding Town History to the Land Itself with Dr. Robert Thorson
1:00 p.m., Carriage House, Lunch Included
All Tickets: \$30.00

This will be a mixed-media presentation with slides, readings, demonstrations, discussion, and Q&A. Of interest will be Litchfield's varied terrain, rock ledges, erratic boulders, streamlined hills, hardscrabble pastures, wetland pastures, stone walls, streams, mill seats, aquifers, Bantam Lake, and other ponds. One specific point of special interest will be a beautiful slab of Litchfield rock that records eight events in deep time.



May 16 Connecticut Classical Guitar Ensemble
Conducted by Michael Stubblefield
3:00 p.m., Activity Shed
All Tickets: \$10.00

Bring your charcuterie board and some wine to a beautiful concert performed by this wonderful guitar ensemble that will perform a variety of genres. Michael Stubblefield is an American composer, guitarist, and music educator based in Hartford, CT. He is a graduate of The Hartt School at the University of Hartford with a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Music Composition.



June 13 Iceland Through My Heart
with Gerri Griswold
2:00 p.m., A. B. Ceder Room
Members: \$5.00, Non-Members: \$10.00

Join Griswold as she shares stories and beautiful photos illustrating her deep love for this spectacular country and its people. This dynamic presentation leads you through glacial landscapes and molten lava fields, meet-ups with farmers and their four-footed friends, exposes you to stunning seascapes, and so much more.



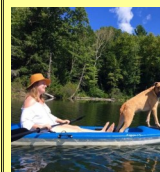
June 20 Make a Solstice Headpiece
with Susan Spanger
2:00 p.m., A. B. Ceder Room, For all ages!
Members: \$55.00, Non-Members: \$75.00
All materials provided!

This spectacular and fun workshop is facilitated by our favorite floral designer, Susan Spanger. With 1:1 attention, Susan will help you create a beautiful floral headpiece using many flower types and textures. Wear your creation to the market, on a hike, or at your very own solstice gathering! You'll learn what flowers are best to use for color and longevity so that you can take your new skill home and make crowns for every occasion!



June 27 Camping with Kids: Kelly Orr & John Markelon
2:00 p.m., Meet in the Horse Trailer parking lot.
Members: \$5.00 / Family
Non-Members: \$10.00 / Family

Join White Memorial's Kelly Orr and avid camper and outdoorsman John Markelon for an immersive fireside chat all about how to camp with kids! Kelly and John will go over the basics of camping gear, packing, entertainment, eating, and camp safety for you and your family. We will talk about fire, set up a tent, and give the kids a chance to get to know what camp can look like. This is a great program for anyone looking to get into camping or needs help rethinking it when adding kids to the fun! You will have a chance to roast a hot dog over the fire and make s'mores.



June 27 Moonlight Paddle with Kelly Orr
7:00 p.m., Meet at the Whites Woods Road Boat Launch
Limited to 15 boats. Provide your own boat.
Members: \$5.00, Non-Members: \$10.00

What better way to end a day than by launching your boat on the Bantam River and communing with Nature, like-minded friends, and the moon! Be on the lookout for herons, beavers, snapping turtles, and more!



Become a Member of The White Memorial Conservation Center
Family Membership: \$60.00
Individual Membership: \$40.00

Take advantage of free admission to the Nature Museum, program and Gift Shop discounts, and receipt of the quarterly newsletter with calendar of events. Your tax-deductible fee will help sponsor programs like these.





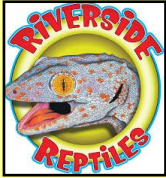
MARK YOUR CALENDAR !
THE 44TH ANNUAL
FAMILY NATURE DAY

SEPTEMBER 26TH, 2026

RIVERSIDE REPTILES
JURASSIC CLASSROOM
FERNCROFT WILDLIFE RESCUE ~ OPOSSUMS!
HORIZON WINGS RAPTOR EDUCATION
WHITE MEMORIAL'S ANIMAL AMBASSADORS
BUNNELL FARM WAGON RIDES + POTION TABLE
PIE SALE + FOOD + ARTISAN'S MARKET

MUSIC BY ~ WRY BRED

WIN A TRIP FOR TWO
TO GREENLAND IN OUR RAFFLE!



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THE MUSEUM
GIFT SHOP

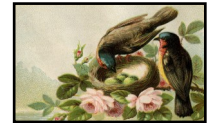
SHOP IN STORE
OR ONLINE

FIND THE
PERFECT GIFT
FOR
MOM, DAD,
AND GRAD!

EARTH DAY
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April 24th - 26th, 2026
 @ the Goshen Fairgrounds

NORTHWEST CONSERVATION DISTRICT
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www.whitememorialcc.org

“In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.”
 ~ Margaret Atwood



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