SANCTUARY

Newsletter of
The
White Memorial
Conservation Center
Vol. XXXIV No. 4
Fall 2026

Museum Hours:
Tuesday - 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

Eastern Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly
Photo credit: Jim Hudgins
United States Fish & Wildlife Service

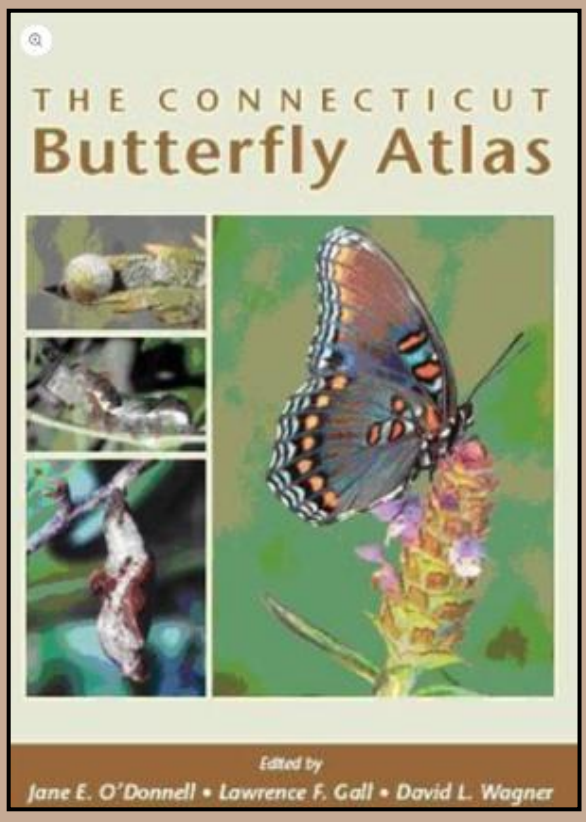
Connecticut Butterfly Atlas Project 2.0 (2027 - 2032)

by Laura Saucier, Wildlife Biologist, Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

Connecticut's first butterfly atlas project was initiated in 1995 and ran through 1999. Editors Jane O'Donnell, Lawrence Gall, and David Wagner organized and oversaw the project, including its eventual publication in 2007. Modeled after the Massachusetts Butterfly Survey and the Atlas of Breeding Birds of Connecticut, the Connecticut Butterfly Atlas Project (CTBAP) was an ambitious undertaking. It was a citizen science-based project that over 350 people contributed thousands of specimens and photos to. In addition to five field seasons of surveys, museum collections and historic literature were reviewed to include historical locations and knowledge.

The goals of the CTBAP were to increase public awareness about butterflies, document species range changes, and to protect our state's biological diversity (because you can't protect what you don't know you have). Over 120 butterfly species historically were documented from Connecticut based on museum specimens and scientific literature; CTBAP documented 117 species between 1995 through 1999.

To ensure adequate coverage of the state, surveys focused on the presence or absence of a butterfly species within each US Geological Survey topographic block (there are 155 blocks that cover CT). A voucher specimen or photograph for each record was required (no observation records were accepted). A field form for each voucher/photo was filled out to provide the information needed to produce distribution maps of each species within the state. Voucher specimens from the project were housed at Yale University.



Version 2.0

Why now? Well, it's been thirty years. Connecticut's landscape looks different than it did thirty years ago…bigger trees, more development, suburban sprawl, and more invasive species. The original CTBAP was a snapshot in time and created to be a baseline for future comparison.

In addition, there are new tools available to us for a project such as this. For version 2.0, we plan to utilize crowd-sourcing for much of the project data. Most people have cell phones which take good quality photos that are geo-referenced, so by utilizing a platform/app like iNaturalist, photos can be quickly uploaded to the web with location coordinates already attached (no field forms required!). Using a platform such as this will lessen some of the work associated with data quality control and increase the speed at which records can be reviewed. Photos will not always be sufficient to document the difficult-to-identify species like duskywings, therefore some voucher specimens will still be needed to be certain of correct identification.

All of this data will be used to update the species distribution maps and inform our understanding of the overall rarity of each species in Connecticut. New information about life histories will be incorporated into species accounts, as well.

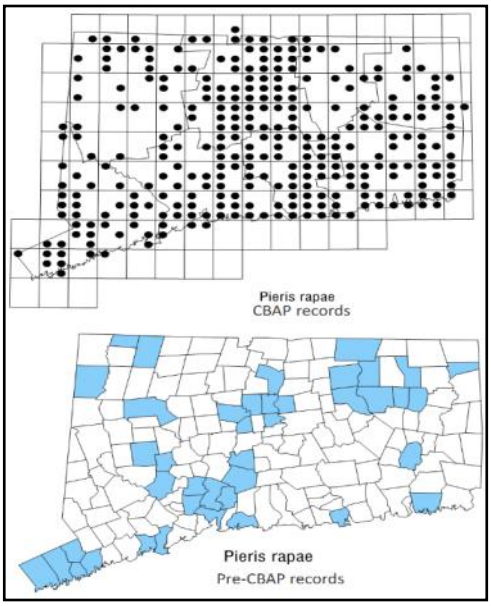
Many details are still being ironed out, but we plan to initiate the project beginning in the spring of 2027 and running through 2032. We anticipate there will be differences, not only in what we have lost, but what we have gained. Global climate change has increased temperatures over the last thirty years and Connecticut has experienced large-scale landscape changes; it will be exciting to have data to compare and contrast those changes.

If you would like to join the Connecticut Butterfly Atlas Project 2.0, please email me and I will include you on communications as we get closer to 2027. Laura.Saucier@ct.gov

(Continued on page 2)

Butterflies, Winslow Homer, 1878
Oil on Canvas on Board
New Britain Museum of American Art

Continued from page one



Use of USGS topographic mapping system greatly enhanced CBAP records.

Laura Saucier will visit White Memorial on Thursday, November 19, 2026 to talk about this exciting project. 6:00 p.m., A. B. Ceder Room. The program is free but please register online: www.whitememorialcc.org

Monarch Caterpillar and Milkweed
Photo credit: CT DEEP

NATURE'S NURSERY SERIES

Thursdays, October 1, November 5, and December 3

Ages 3-6 years

4:00pm

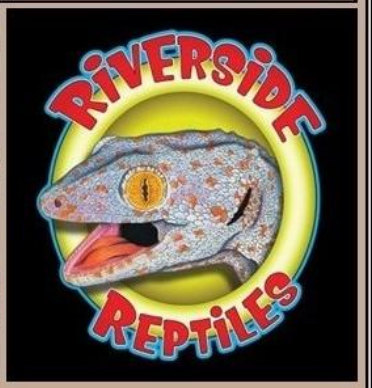
Join us on the *first* Thursday of each month from October–December for an engaging program designed just for your young nature lovers. Every session will last 45 minutes–1 hour and include a story, an encounter with a live animal, and an activity or craft. Some of our activities might be outside, so dress for the weather and wear good walking shoes. *Advanced registration is required. To register, visit whitememorialcc.org or call 860-567-0857. Space is limited. Meet in the A.B. Ceder Room. We require that one parent/caretaker stay for the duration of the program, but our room cannot accommodate more than one adult per child. Please inquire about financial aid as needed.*

Members: $10/child per session or $27/whole series, Non-Members: $15/child per session or $42/whole series

THE WHITE MEMORIAL CONSERVATION CENTER
PRESENTS THE 44TH ANNUAL

FAMILY NATURE DAY

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26TH, 2026
11AM - 5PM + ADMISSION $6.00
CHILDREN UNDER 12 & CENTER MEMBERS FREE



FERNCROFT WILDLIFE RESCUE: OPOSSUMS
RIVERSIDE REPTILES + JURRASIC CLASSROOM
HORIZON WINGS RAPTOR CENTER
MEET OUR ANIMAL AMBASSADORS
MUSIC BY: WRY BRED

BUNNELL FARM WAGON RIDES + TURTLE RACE + GOATS
GUIDED WALKS + DEMONSTRATIONS
PIE SALE + POTION TABLE
BOOTHS & EXHIBITS + FOOD + LOCAL ARTISANS
LIVE ANIMALS + MUSIC + NATURE CRAFTS FOR KIDS

WIN A TRIP FOR TWO
TO GREENLAND IN OUR RAFFLE!

80 WHITEHALL ROAD, LITCHFIELD, CONNECTICUT
LOCATED OFF ROUTE 202
BETWEEN LITCHFIELD AND BANTAM

FOR MORE INFORMATION: 860-567-0857 WWW.WHITEMEMORIALCC.ORG

Meet Stewart McPherson: DARWIN200: A Voyage to Change the World

By Gerri Griswold, Director of Administration and Development, Photo credits: https://darwin200.com/

For three years, Stewart McPherson (above) has generously donated the first prize in our Nature Day Raffle; extraordinary journeys to Scotland, the Galápagos Islands, and Greenland. His passion for nature and dedication to inspiring future conservationists are as remarkable as his generosity.
I hope you enjoy the story of his greatest achievement to date: *DARWIN200*.

The wind filled the sails of the tall ship *Oosterschelde* as it departed Plymouth Harbour. Seagulls circled overhead while the English coastline faded into the mist. Standing on deck, expedition leader Stewart McPherson looked out across the Atlantic. Ahead lay more than 40,000 nautical miles of ocean, dozens of countries, and a mission unlike any other.

This was DARWIN200.

Nearly 200 years earlier, Charles Darwin had sailed from the same shores aboard HMS *Beagle*. His five-year voyage transformed science and changed humanity's understanding of life on Earth. McPherson and his team were retracing that journey, not to study an untouched world, but to explore how the planet has changed and inspire a new generation of conservation leaders.

Darwin Leader projects:
Studying Octopus, Peru, Planting Trees, Brazil

After a decade of planning, DARWIN200 brought together exceptional young environmentalists from around the world, known as Darwin Leaders. Through hands-on conservation projects, research, and exploration, they would gain experience while helping raise awareness about environmental challenges.

Life onboard the *Oosterschelde* required teamwork. Unlike modern vessels, the historic Dutch tall ship relied on cooperation to operate its sails. Participants quickly learned that success at sea depended on trust, communication, and shared responsibility.

One evening, McPherson gathered the Darwin Leaders on deck. "Conservation is not about what we've lost," he told them. "It's about what we still have and what we choose to save."

The expedition's first major stop was the Canary Islands, where Darwin had hoped to land but never did. There, participants worked with local conservationists protecting fragile ecosystems. They explored volcanic landscapes, studied unique species, and learned how invasive organisms can alter habitats.

Study of Sea Turtles, Canary Islands

The voyage then crossed the Atlantic to South America. In Brazil, the Darwin Leaders encountered both extraordinary biodiversity and difficult environmental realities. While much of the landscape Darwin described has been transformed by agriculture and development, they also witnessed successful restoration efforts in the Atlantic Forest. Working alongside researchers and volunteers, they planted trees, monitored wildlife, and studied endangered species.

For many participants, environmental issues they had previously only read about became real and immediate.

Months later, the *Oosterschelde* rounded the southern tip of South America and entered the Pacific Ocean. One of the most anticipated destinations was the Galápagos Islands, where Darwin's observations helped inspire his ideas about evolution. Giant tortoises, marine iguanas, and blue-footed boobies provided remarkable reminders of the islands' unique biodiversity.

The Darwin Leaders were not there simply to admire wildlife. They investigated plastic pollution, invasive species, and the effects of climate change on marine ecosystems. Comparing historical records with modern observations, they

Darwin Leaders in Tasmania

examined how much had changed in two centuries.

Some findings were concerning. Habitats had shrunk, species populations had declined, and pollution posed growing threats. Yet there were also signs of hope. Conservation programs had saved species from extinction, protected areas had allowed ecosystems to recover, and local communities had demonstrated that environmental damage is not always permanent.

As the voyage continued across the Pacific, the ship became a floating classroom. Participants conducted citizen-science projects, tracked seabirds, and learned practical maritime skills. Long ocean crossings also created lasting friendships among young conservationists from different countries, united by a shared commitment to protecting nature.

In Australia, they worked with organizations studying threatened wildlife and restoring ecosystems. School groups visited the ship to learn about the expedition, discovering that science can involve exploration, adventure, and conservation in equal measure.

That was exactly the goal.

The World's Most Exciting Classroom

Known as the "World's Most Exciting Classroom," DARWIN200 connected millions of people through presentations, videos, and online events. The project was about more than research, it was about inspiration.

(Continued on page 7)

Beyond the Atlas: Creating Landscapes Where Butterflies Can Persist

By James Fischer, Research Director, The White Memorial Conservation Center

Connecticut is preparing for an important new chapter in butterfly conservation. The upcoming revision of the Connecticut Butterfly Atlas will involve five years of collecting observations from across the state. Volunteers, naturalists, researchers, and members of the public will help document where butterfly species are found and how their distributions may have changed since the previous atlas.

This information will be valuable. It can help identify species that remain widespread, species that appear to be declining, and parts of the state where additional surveys are needed. It can also reveal changes that may be associated with habitat loss, land-use patterns, climate, or other environmental conditions.

But documenting butterflies is only the beginning.

Once we know where butterflies occur, we must also ask what those places provide. Are butterflies simply passing through, or does the landscape contain the resources they need to reproduce and survive? Will the same species be found there five, ten, or twenty years from now?

What an Observation Can Tell Us

A butterfly observation confirms that a particular species was present at a specific place and time. Thousands of observations collected over several years can reveal meaningful patterns. However, a sighting does not necessarily tell us whether a butterfly is breeding at that location, whether its population is stable, or whether suitable habitat will remain available in the future.

A butterfly may visit a flowering garden for nectar even though the surrounding landscape lacks the plants its caterpillars need. Another may be moving between larger habitat areas. Some species may appear only briefly during migration or dispersal.

The atlas will help us understand where butterflies are being observed. The future of those butterflies, however, will also depend on the landscapes we create and maintain.

Butterflies Need More Than Flowers

Most people associate butterflies with colorful flowers, and nectar plants are certainly important. Adult butterflies need reliable sources of energy throughout the growing season. Yet flowers represent only one part of their habitat.

Every butterfly begins life as a caterpillar, and many caterpillars can eat only a limited number of plant species. Monarch caterpillars, for example, depend on milkweeds. Other butterflies rely on native grasses, violets, oaks, willows, cherries, or plants that may receive little attention in a conventional flower garden.

Butterflies also need shelter from wind, heavy rain, extreme heat, and predators. Some overwinter as eggs or caterpillars attached to plants. Others survive in fallen leaves, plant stems, grasses, or protected areas near the soil surface. Landscapes that are cleared too thoroughly in autumn may unintentionally remove the places where the next generation is waiting for spring.

A butterfly-friendly landscape therefore includes more than flowers. It provides host plants, nectar, shelter, overwintering habitat, and protection from unnecessary pesticide exposure.

Native Plantings as Living Infrastructure

Native plantings are often treated as decorative features. They may be installed to improve the appearance of an entrance, walkway, building, or public space. Their value, however, can extend far beyond appearance.

Butterfly conservation begins with observation but depends on action. The Connecticut Butterfly Atlas will document where butterflies occur, while native plantings provide the food, shelter, host plants, and overwintering habitat they need to persist. Illustration: James Fischer/OpenAI.

A thoughtfully designed native planting is a form of living infrastructure. Like a trail, nest box, rain garden, interpretive sign, or wildlife monitoring station, it is created to perform a function. It may provide nectar for adult butterflies, leaves for caterpillars, seeds for birds, shelter for insects, or a small connection between larger natural areas.

One small planting will not determine the future of Connecticut's butterflies. Its direct ecological contribution may be modest. But small habitats become more meaningful when they are repeated across the landscape.

A native garden at a home, school, library, nature center, business, park, or municipal building can become part of a larger network. It can also encourage visitors to create similar habitat elsewhere. In that sense, the educational influence of a planting may be greater than its physical size.

Living Infrastructure Requires Maintenance

Native gardens are sometimes described as low-maintenance landscapes, but low maintenance does not mean no maintenance. Like any living system, a planting changes over time. Some plants spread more quickly than expected. Others decline because conditions are too wet, dry, shady, or exposed. Weeds move in. Shrubs become too large. Taller species may block signs or sightlines. After several years, a garden may no longer appear as orderly or attractive as it did when first planted.

These changes do not mean that the ecological purpose of the landscape must be abandoned. An aging native planting may need to be thinned, pruned, divided, replanted, or redesigned. Shorter species can be selected for prominent locations. Defined borders can be added. Plants can be grouped more clearly, and signs can explain their importance to butterflies and other wildlife.

Renovation is not the same as failure. In fact, periodic renewal should be expected when native plantings are treated as long-term conservation infrastructure rather than temporary landscaping.

Public Landscapes Teach by Example

The grounds maintained by conservation organizations, schools, municipalities, museums, libraries, and other public institutions have an educational role. Visitors learn from what they see, not only from what they read in newsletters or hear during programs.

Native plantings can demonstrate that wildlife habitat can be attractive, intentional, and appropriate for highly visible places. It can introduce visitors to plants they might use at home. It can show that supporting butterflies does not require converting an entire property into a meadow.

Public landscapes also provide an opportunity to connect ideas with action. An organization may encourage people to plant native species, reduce pesticide use, leave some fallen leaves, or provide host plants for caterpillars. When those same practices are visible on its grounds, the message becomes more tangible and persuasive.

The goal is not to preserve every planting forever or to suggest that ecological value must always outweigh safety, access, visibility, or maintenance needs. The goal is to consider whether a landscape can be improved while retaining its educational and ecological purpose.

From Observation to Action

The Connecticut Butterfly Atlas will ask people to look carefully at the butterflies around them. That act of observation is important. It helps us understand what species are present and where conservation attention may be needed.

The next step is to look just as carefully at the landscapes those butterflies depend upon.

(continued on page 6)

2027 ANIMAL CARE FUND APPEAL

The Conservation Center reaches out to you
for help in defraying the monumental cost of
caring for our animal ambassadors throughout the year.

The annual expense of taking care of our birds,
reptiles, and amphibians is approximately $8000!

Your donation, no matter how small,
would be greatly appreciated!

Donate Online: www.whitememorialcc.org
Mail a check to: WMCC / Animal Care Fund, PO Box 368, Litchfield, CT 06759

Beyond the Atlas

Continued from page 5

Homeowners can add native host and nectar plants. Schools and businesses can incorporate small habitat gardens into visible areas. Municipalities and public institutions can maintain demonstration plantings that are both welcoming and ecologically useful. Everyone can reduce unnecessary pesticide use and allow at least some leaves and plant stems to remain through winter.

The Butterfly Atlas will help show us where Connecticut's butterflies are found. The choices we make in our yards, campuses, parks, and public landscapes will help determine where they can continue to live.

Recording a butterfly is an important act of conservation. Creating a landscape that welcomes its return and sustenance is the next step.

Jerrod Cattey Trio Presents: A Charlie Brown Christmas

Experience the magic of the season as the trio brings to life the timeless music from the 1965 holiday classic ***A Charlie Brown Christmas***.
You'll be transported straight into the heartwarming world of Peanuts, offering the perfect mix of nostalgia and jazz in a performance suitable for listeners of all ages.

Saturday, December 5, 2026

2:00 p.m., Carriage House, Admission: New Gloves, Hats, Socks, Mittens, Scarves to be donated to F. I. S. H. of Northwestern Connecticut
Please pre-register: www.whitememorialcc.org
THIS CONCERT IS MADE POSSIBLE BY A KIND SPONSOR

SCHOOL VACATION PROGRAMS

BACK TO NATURE BASICS For Grades 5-8

Tuesday, November 3 (Election Day) 1:30—4:30pm

Middle schoolers, let's UNPLUG and connect with the natural world. Back to Nature Basics is an immersive program designed to teach topics such as map-reading, navigation, wildlife/plant awareness and identification, and other practical skills that come in handy when spending time in nature WITHOUT the aid of internet and cell phone service. Wear good hiking shoes, appropriate layers, and bring a snack and water bottle. *Meet in the A.B. Ceder Room. Pre-registration and pre-payment are required. To register, visit whitememorialcc.org or call 860-567-0857. Space is limited!*
Please inquire about financial aid as needed. **Members: $20/child, Non-Members: $30/child**

GRADES 1-6: ONE-DAY FUN DAY!

Grades 1-3: Tues., Dec. 29, Grades 4-6: Weds., Dec. 30
9:30am-3:30pm

Grab your coat, boots, and hat, and let's spend one of your vacation days learning about the natural world around you. Get outside, play games, make crafts, and meet live animals! A morning snack will be served between adventures. Please bring a lunch and water bottle, and wear appropriate clothing for the weather.
Parents/Guardians are welcome to stay, but it is not necessary. Meet in the A. B. Ceder Room. Pre-registration and payment are required. To register, visit whitememorialcc.org or call 860-567-0857. Space is limited!
Please inquire about financial aid as needed. **Members: $40/child, Non-members: $70/child**

AFTER-SCHOOL ADVENTURES

Grades 1-3: Tuesdays in October
Grades 4-6: Wednesdays in October
4:15-5:30pm

Every session brings a new adventure—exploring a "hidden" part of White Memorial property, meeting a live animal, taking part in an outdoor activity!
Children should be dressed for the weather with appropriate footwear.
Adults are welcome to stay, but it is not necessary.
Meet in the A.B. Ceder Room. Pre-registration and pre-payment are required.
Space is limited. Please inquire about financial aid as needed.
Members: $10/child per session or $35/whole series
Non-Members: $15/child per session or $55/whole series

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK:
The White Memorial Conservation Center
And INSTAGRAM: **@whitememorialcc**

Torrington Savings Foundation Awards Grant for Updates to Children's Corner

The Children's Corner in the Nature Museum will be getting some updates thanks to a generous grant from the Torrington Savings Foundation. We were recently awarded $8,750 from TSF in order to 1) replace one of the favorite exhibits in the Museum, the "Micro-eye" scope, 2) purchase a dozen new kid-size chairs, and 3) add some new books and toys in the Children's Corner. We are very grateful to TSF for their generous donation!

Torrington Savings FOUNDATION

DARWIN200

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After nearly two years at sea, the journey home began. The Darwin Leaders returned with practical skills, scientific experience, and a global network of environmental advocates. More importantly, they had witnessed both the challenges facing the planet and the solutions being developed to address them.

DARWIN200 crossed four oceans and visited five continents, connecting scientists, students, conservationists, and communities around the world. As the *Oosterschelde* finally entered harbor, cheers echoed across the water.

The voyage was ending, but its purpose was only beginning.

Its greatest lesson was simple: the future of the natural world depends on the choices people make today. Having seen both Earth's wonders and its vulnerabilities, the Darwin Leaders now carried the responsibility and the opportunity to help protect it.

The Oosterschelde concludes a most remarkable journey.
The River Thames, London, UK, July 25, 2025

TEACHERS, PARENTS, AND GROUP LEADERS, CHECK OUT WHAT WE CAN OFFER YOUR CHILDREN!

PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOLS/GROUPS

can be presented at White Memorial, at your facility, or even virtually!

The Possibilities are Endless...
Amazing Adaptations
The Wildlife Outside Our Windows
Animal Tricksters
Do the Locomotion
Rare and Remarkable
...Plus So Many More!

To view all program descriptions and for more information,
visit whitememomorialcc.org,
call 860-567-0857, or email
carrie@whitememorialcc.org.

Back to Nature Basics
For Grades 5-8
Tuesday, November 3 (see page 6)

One-Day Fun Day
Grades1-3: Tuesday, December 29
Grades 4-6: Wednesday, December 30
(see page 6)

Nature's Nursery (see page 2)
First Thursday of Every Month

After-School Adventures (see page 7)
Tuesdays and Wednesdays in October

SCOUT PROGRAMS
Custom-designed programs for cub scouts and girl scouts to help fulfill badge requirements!
We also offer free camping to all youth non-profits.

Make a Difference

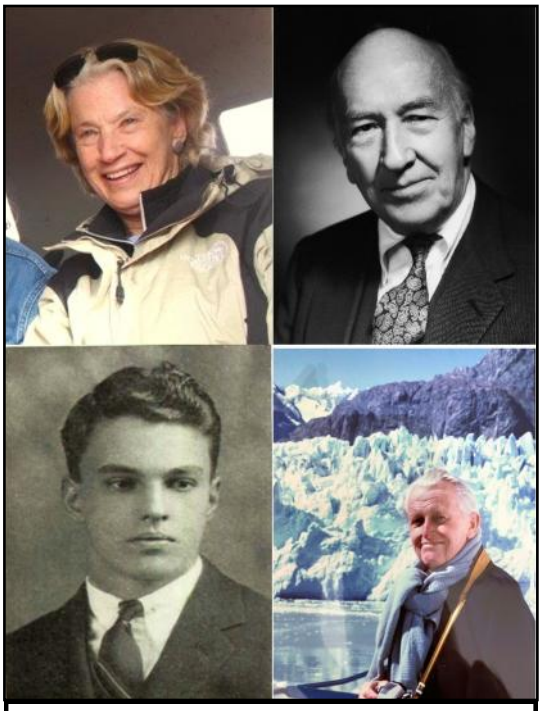
In her continuing series, Zoë Greenwood helps you find small ways to help the environment.

History matters. We need to remember our past as we focus on our today. As we drift toward the end of the 250th year celebration for the Untied States of America, my thoughts turn to those individuals who by their words and their actions have made the United States of America and our unique Democracy what it is today. The nameless and faceless individuals across the tiny hamlets, villages and towns who declared themselves independent and then fought for the freedom that we so lovingly cherish today. They are who made and continue to make the America that we know and love.

We all know the names of John and Samuel Adams; Benjamin Franklin; John Hancock; Benjamim Harrison; Thomas Jefferson; Roger Sherman and Oliver Wolcott. What about the other forty-eight? Their names are Josiah Bartlett; Carter Braxton; Charles Carroll; Samuel Chase; Abraham Clark; George Clymer; William Ellery; William Floyd; Elbridge Gerry; Button Gwinnett; Lyman Hall; John Hart; Joseph Hewes; Thomas Heyward, Jr.; Willian Hooper; Stephen Hopkins; Francis Hopkinson; Samual Huntington; Francis Lightfoot and Richard Henry Lee; Francis Lewis; Philip Livingston; Thomas Lynch, Jr.; Thomas McKean; Arthur Middleton; Lewis and Robert Morris; John Morton; Thomas Nelson, Jr.; William Paca; Robert Treat Paine; John Penn; George Read; Caesar Rodney; George Ross; Benjamin Rush; Edward Rutledge; James Smith; Richard Stockton; Thomas Stone; George Taylor; Matthew Thornton; George Walton; William Whipple; William Williams; James Wilson; John Witherspoon and George Wythe. They were lawyers and merchants and physicians and plantation owners and surveyors and land speculators and scientists and ministers and landowners and farmers and military officers. A lot like some of your neighbors, perhaps. Maybe a lot like you and me. People who put their own ambitions aside for the good of the new, baby country. For those of you who live near White Memorial, one of those names, Oliver Wolcott, should stand out. Yes, it is the same Oliver Wolcott for whom the public library was named.

Thomas Jefferson and John Adams were two visionaries... two men who had an amazing idea to create a new nation. Alain and May White were visionaries, too. They were a brother and sister who had an unprecedented vision to create an oasis and haven for us to enjoy. In both cases, the legacy continues.
Which got me to thinking about White Memorial and the dozens of individuals who have made the place we all know and love what it is today. Alain and May White are the first to come to mind, much like Thomas Jefferson and John Adams. The four of them were forward thinkers- two to develop a new country and two to develop a place where Conversation, Research, Recreation and Education are, and continue to be, valued. In my research about Alain White, it seems probable that his philosophy was: hire good people, give them the support and tools they need to do a good job and then let them go and do it.

That got me to thinking about all the other people, like the forty-eight lesser-known Declaration signers whose names are not remembered. White Memorial Conservation Center has its own set of lesser-known individuals who helped create what you see today; those who throughout the years have dreamed and worked. Wm. Mitchell Van Winkle, was a contemporary and friend of Alain White and who was the second White Memorial President. While in a boat on Bantam Lake, it is he to whom Alain White first expressed his idea of the need to preserve Bantam Lake and the surrounding land. Celestine Mott, who worked in the main office was also a Trustee and for whom, along with Wm. Mitchell Van Winkle, Jr., the Mott- Van Winkle Center is named. Late Trustee Hans Seherr-Thoss, who saw the need for and developed the information kiosk. S. Dillon Ripley, Secretary General of the Smithsonian Institution, was a Trustee as was Governor Wilbur Cross. Howard Keppleman, Bob Cooley, Gib Guion, Bill Risley, Susan Fischer Spencer, Wm. Mitchell Van Winkle, Jr., were Trustees who always supported the museum staff. Alice Rogers, who was a Trustee and wrote a booklet about Alain White. Gene Marra who was the first Executive Director. Keith Cudworth, who was the second Executive Director and who wrote the book, *White Memorial Foundation- The First One Hundred Years: The Legacy of Alain and May White.*



Foundation Trustees:
Susan Fischer Spencer, top left, S. Dillon Ripley, top right, William Mitchell Van Winkle, Jr, bottom left, Hans Seherr-Thoss, bottom right

People like Clifford Ongley who worked with Alain White and for whom the pond is named. He was one of four early Superintendents who constructed the roads and trails. People like Arthur Ceder, an early Superintendent, who had a hand in furthering forest management at White Memorial and for whom the meeting room in the museum is named. Folks like Gretel and Randy Bowlles who saw the need for and developed the former nature lending library on the second floor of the museum. Jay Bacca, who got the weekend programs going. Helen Sebastian who gave presentation after presentation on various topics for the Saturday programs. Rosa and Karl Porges who oversaw the herbarium. People like Ray Belding, Paul Gros and Bill Madden who were always available to do a program or lead a walk. Dino Testone who developed the first fluorescent rock display in the trailside museum. Norm Wickstrand who led walks, donated rocks and minerals and gave programs. Gordon Loery and William Mitchell Van Winkle, Jr. who conceived and developed the first trail side museum, incorporated in 1964, in the Whites' former summer home. Gordon then set about working with local schools to go into classrooms and have classes come to WMCC for teaching and a Conservation Field Day. Jeff Greenwood, who built upon Gordon's vision and developed even more programs and adventures, night walks, and museum overnights. Paul Woodward, "Woody", was a sawyer and member of the woods crew who often brought quirky forest finds to the museum to use in talks or for displays.

And let's not forget the long-standing Trustees who value the mission of the museum- Arthur Diedrick, Jr.; Susan V. W. Pollock (daughter of William Mitchell Van Winkle, Jr.); Philip Sampanaro, Charles Roraback, and John Morosani. Together, they have volunteered for two hundred twenty -nine years and are still going strong. Their wisdom and history alone are worth celebrating!

The Center staff is a highly qualified, innovative, skilled group of individuals who are also totally in tune and in sync with the goals and values of Alain and May White. Gerri Griswold; Jamie Fisher; Carrie Szwed; Kelly Orr; and Colleen Harrak all continue the hard work that those before them established. They value the history of the Foundation and revere Alain and May. They continue to strive for the excellence that Alain and May instilled in the very soil of White Memorial.

Each of these individuals has made a difference at White Memorial, some in small ways, some in much larger ways. I know that there are many, many more people who have worked tirelessly to provide countless hours of volunteer and paid time to make the center what it is. More than likely, I am forgetting more than I am naming. I apologize; the omissions are mine alone.

Two hundred and fifty years ago a fledgling nation was born. One hundred thirteen years ago a fledgling foundation was created. Both the nation and the foundation were created by folks who decided to make a difference. Be sure that you follow their example and ***make a difference*** too.

Beginner Family Camp-out at White Memorial!

Join our staff for an overnight to remember!
Stars, S'mores, and so much more!

October 17th-18th 2026

Register at whitememorialcc.org
$30/member family
$60/non member family
Limited to 10 families

New to the world of camping? Don't let the "gear-fear" or tent poles keep you at home! Join us for a stress-free, guided overnight experience designed specifically for families who are ready to learn how to camp with kids!

Whether you've never pitched a tent or just need a refresher on outdoor basics, our experienced leaders will be with you every step of the way. From setting up your "home away from home" to mastering the art of the perfect marshmallow, we provide the expertise so you can focus on making memories.

Families will be provided with a place to camp, hot dogs, smores, breakfast and activities, including nature walks and star gazing. Bring your own camping gear and dinner. No electrical hook-ups! No alcohol!

Learn more on page 11.
To register visit: www.whitememorialcc.org

RACE ON OVER TO THE GIFT SHOP FOR HOLIDAY TREASURES MADE BY LOCAL ARTISTS

Wooden Bowls, Axes Pottery, Nature Prints Toys, Original Watercolors Greeting Cards, Honey Maple Syrup, Jewelry Walking Sticks, & more!

Fall 2026 Calendar of Events

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

SEPTEMBER

SEPTEMBER 26th
44th ANNUAL
FAMILY
NATURE DAY
See page 3 for details.

28-Oct. 4 Children's Free Week in Museum*
Courtesy of Joan and Jack Benham
honoring Wesley D. Parcell

OCTOBER

After-School Adventures
Tuesdays and Wednesdays in October
For grades 1 - 6
See page 7 for details.

Nature's Nursery Series
October 1, November 5, December 3
See page 2 for details.

3 ***Anthropomorphized Mouse Taxidermy with Gotham Taxidermy***
See page 11 for details.

3 ***The Fungus Among Us! with Dave Paton***
See page 11 for details.

4 ***Sunset Moth Taxidermy with Gotham Taxidermy***
See page 11 for details

4 ***Longhorn Beetle Preservation with Gotham Taxidermy***
See page 11 for details

October 6, November 3, December 1
Fresh Start Hiking Club
7:45 a.m., Meet in the A. B. Ceder Room

October 8, November 12, December 10
Happy Hour Hiking Club
4:00 p.m., Meet in the Museum.

9 Tiny Trekking on the Water!
10:00 a.m., Meet at the boat launch off of Whites Woods Road! Bring your own boat!

10 An Autumn Hike through Slab Meadow
10:00 a.m., Meet in the Museum.

12 - 18 Children's Free Week in Museum*
In Memory of Tish Samponaro from her husband Philip G. Samponaro

12 COLUMBUS DAY/ INDIGENOUS PEOPLES DAY
Offices Closed

17 ***All About Owls & Owl Pellet Dissection for Kids***
See page 11 for details.

* Free Museum admission for children ages 12 and under when accompanied by an adult.

17 ***Star Party!***
The Litchfield Hills Amateur Astronomy Club Celebrates 70 Years Under the Stars
4:00 p.m., A. B. Ceder Room / Activity Shed
FREE! See page 9. Please pre-register: www.whitememorialcc.org

17 ***Family Campout at Point Folly***
See pages 8 &11 for details.

22 ***Ashes of Industry: 19th Century Charcoal Production in Connecticut***
See page 11 for details.

24 ***Historic Trees of Litchfield Van Tour***
See page 11 for details

24 Moonlight Hike with Kelly & Gerri
6:00 p.m. A. B. Ceder Room.
Pre-register: www.whitememorialcc.org

26-Nov.1 Children's Free Week in Museum*
In Memory of Ron Hummel
from His Family and Friends

31 Shade Swamp Sanctuary Hike
10:00 a. m., Meet in the parking area
175 Scott Swamp Road, Farmington.
Please pre-register: www.whitememorialcc.org

NOVEMBER

3 ***Back to Nature Basics For Grades 5 - 8***
See page 6 for details.

7 ***Artistry in Nature: In the Footsteps of Violetta White Delafield with Colleen Harrak***
For Grades 6 - 12
10:00 a.m., Meet in the A. B. Ceder Room
Pre-register: www.whitememorialcc.org

7 Tiny Trekking with Kelly Orr
3:00 p.m., Meet in the Museum.

9 - 15 Children's Free Week in Museum*
In honor of Louise W. Willson

14 Owl Prowl with Fran Zygmont
4:00 a.m., A. B. Ceder Room. Pre-register:
www.whitememorialcc.org

14 ***Everything Irie! with Colleen Harrak***
See page 11 for details.

19 ***Connecticut Butterfly Atlas Project Version 2.0 with Laura Saucier***
6:00 p.m., A. B. Ceder Room
Pre-register: www.whitememorialcc.org

20 Star Party
Astronomy program.
Star gazing will follow, weather permitting
7:00 p.m., A. B. Ceder Room

21 The Pandemic Pantry: Rhubarb Ruckus!
12:00 p.m. Microsoft Teams & Facebook Live!
Pre-register: www.whitememorialcc.org

23 - 29 Children's Free Week in Museum*
Courtesy of the Swift Family
In Memory of Betsy & Henry Swift

26/27 THANKSGIVING
Museum & Offices Closed

28 16th Annual
Walking the Cranberry Pond Trail
2:00 p.m., Meet at the Cranberry Pond trailhead on Webster Road.
Pre-register www.whitememorialcc.org

DECEMBER

4 **AFTER HOURS SIP & SHOP!**
See page 12 for details.

5 ***The Jerrod Cattey Trio***
A CHARLIE BROWN CHRISTMAS
See page 6 for details.

7 - 13 Children's Free Week in Museum*
In Loving Memory of Jesse Kula
from His Family.

12 Tiny Trekking
10:00 a.m., Meet in the Museum
Pre-register: www.whitememorialcc.org

12 ***Globe Trotting with Gerri Griswold***
See page 11 for details.

19 A Holiday Stroll Up Apple Hill
10:00 a.m., Meet at the Apple Hill Trailhead
144 East Shore Rd. Pre-register:
www.whitememorialcc.org

20 Litchfield Hills Audubon Christmas Bird Count
To volunteer, email Dave Tripp
dtrippjr@gmail.com

21-27 Children's Free Week in Museum*
Courtesy of Tara and Arthur Diedrick
In honor of Adele and Joseph d'Assern

25 CHRISTMAS
Museum & Offices Closed

26 A Boxing Day Visit to Catlin Woods
A winter walk, coffee, and a surprise!
7:30 a.m., Meet in the Museum.
Pre-register: www.whitememorialcc.org

One-Day Fun Day at White Memorial!
December 29, Grades 1 - 3
December 30, Grades 4 – 6
See page 6 for details.

31 New Year's Eve Hike to Little Pond
9:00 a.m., Meet in the Museum.
Festive attire is optional!

New Years Day
January 1, 2027
Museum & Offices Closed

Adult Nature Study Workshops & Saturday Programs: Fall 2026

Anthropomorphized Mouse Taxidermy
October 3, 2026 9:00 a.m., A. B. Ceder Room
All Tickets: $350.00

Create your own storybook-style mouse! In this hands-on workshop led by renowned artist Divya Anantharaman of Gotham Taxidermy, you'll learn how to craft an anthropomorphized mouse in a whimsical pose of your choosing. This class will guide you through professional techniques to sculpt and mount your taxidermy creation. All supplies provided—just bring your imagination.

The Fungus Among Us with Dave Paton
October 3, 2026, 10:00 a.m.
Meet in the Mott-Van Winkle Classroom
Members: $15.00 Non-Members: $30.00
Foraging is not allowed on Foundation property!

Spend a couple of hours in the forest with Dave learning do's and don'ts, basic identification, and stories behind the fungus among us! The program begins with a brief introduction in the Mott-Van-Winkle Classroom to view some specimens. Dress for the weather!

Sunset Moth Taxidermy with Gotham Taxidermy
October 4, 2026, 9:00 a.m., A. B. Ceder Room
All Tickets: $250.00

Longhorn Beetle Preservation
October 4, 2026, 1:30 p.m., A. B. Ceder Room
All Tickets: $250.00

In these beginner-friendly classes, students will learn the fundamentals of butterfly, insect, and arachnid preparation. Topics include harvesting, drying, rehydrating, handling, spreading, mounting, posing, display, and long-term care. Students will build their own spreading boards, learn to assemble and maintain a rehydration chamber, and explore archival-quality materials for preserving specimens. Each student will work with the same specimen during class and choose specimens to take home for independent practice. *Simple shadow boxes are included for finished pieces.*

All specimens are legally and sustainably sourced.

All About Owls, Including Owl Pellet Dissection
October 17, 2026, 10:00 a.m., A. B. Ceder Room
Members: $10.00, Non-Members: $20.00
Grades 4 - 6

WHOOO… wants to learn about owls? Hailey Horan from Flanders Nature Center will amaze you with fun facts about these nocturnal birds of prey. You'll get the chance to dissect a real owl pellet! We'll discuss the 8 owl species that call Connecticut home and meet our barred owl, Zelda! *This is a drop off program for grades 4 - 6.*

Beginner Family Camp Out at White Memorial
October 17 / 18, 2026, 3:30 p.m. - 9:00 a.m.
Members: $30.00 / per family
Non-Members: $60.00 / per family

An overnight experience designed for families who want to learn how to camp with kids! From setting up camp to enjoying classic outdoor activities. Included: a campsite, hot dogs, s'mores, breakfast, and activities. Bring dinner in addition to the hot dogs. A packing list will be provided. No electrical hookups are available. Pit toilets and drinking water are provided. Alcohol is not permitted.

Ashes of Industry: 19th Century Charcoal Production in Northwestern Connecticut with Peter and Barbara Rzasa
October 22, 2026 1:00 p.m., Carriage House
All Tickets: $25.00, LUNCHEON INCLUDED!

While hiking in Northwest Connecticut, you may encounter large circular mounds hidden in the woods. These are charcoal hearths, where nineteenth-century colliers produced charcoal that fueled Connecticut's iron, steel, and brass industries. Thousands of these archaeological sites remain throughout Litchfield County, preserving an important but often overlooked part of the region's industrial history. Join local historians Peter and Barbara Rzasa for an illustrated presentation on the history of charcoal production in Northwest Connecticut, including White Memorial. Discover how charcoal was made, who the colliers were, how to identify charcoal hearths today, and view samples of 150-year-old charcoal.

The Historic Trees of Litchfield Van Tour
October 24, 2026, 10:00 a.m.,
Board the van in White Memorial's parking lot, 80 Whitehall Road. Litchfield
Members of WMCC / Litchfield Historical Society: $10.00 Non-Members: $20.00
Limited to 12 guests!

Let the oldest and largest trees of Litchfield tell the tales of our town's rich history. This van tour will take you to notable trees, such as Wolcott's Sycamore, the Colvocoresses Oak, the rare Franklin Tree, and "The Biggest Tree" in Litchfield. Education Directors Kate Zullo from the Litchfield Historical Society and Carrie Szwed from White Memorial will be your hosts. At each location, gather around the trees to marvel at them while learning about their amazing cultural and natural history.

Everything Irie with Colleen Harrak
November 14, 2026, 10:00 a.m., A. B. Ceder Room
Members: $5.00, Non-Members: $10.00
For ages 8 and up!

Come meet Irie, our resident Red-tailed Hawk ambassador, up close! Ever wondered how a hawk spots a field mouse from hundreds of feet in the air, or how they deal with kleptoparasites? Join us to explore the secret adaptations of North America's most recognizable raptor—from built-in "telescopic" vision to clever hunting defenses—and what you can do to help protect them and their habitats.

Globe-trotting with Gerri Griswold
December 12, 2026, 2:00 p.m.
A. B. Ceder Room
Members: $5.00, Non-Members: $10.00

Take a photographic tour with Gerri! Sleep in a Dutch windmill. Wander through Paris. Visit the American Cemetery in Normandy, and neolithic Carnac in Brittany. Stand at the top of a dormant volcano on Easter Island and beside a live volcano in Iceland! Meet the beautiful people of Jaisalmer, India! Witness the amazing Surva Masquerade Festival in Bulgaria, the Paine Massif in Chilean Patagonia, and marvel over Scotland's wild islands! No need for a passport! Just pack your passion for travel!

Become a member of
The White Memorial Conservation Center
and take advantage of the member discount, along with free admission to the Nature Museum, a discount in the Gift Shop, and receipt of the quarterly newsletter.
Your tax-deductible fee will help sponsor a rich array of programs for children and adults.
A family membership is $60.00 per year. An individual membership is $40.00 per year.
https://whitememorialcc.org/join-renew/

WHITE MEMORIAL CONSERVATION CENTER'S
4th Annual
Holiday Sip and Shop
FRIDAY
DECEMBER 4TH
5-8PM
Music, Drinks, Snacks and Shopping!

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WHITE MEMORIAL THANKS...

Stewart McPherson: Redfern Adventures
Thomaston Savings Bank + Two Anonymous Donors
Pete & Sue Carpenter + Litchfield Paddle + ACE Hardware of Litchfield
Gerri Griswold + Ferncroft Wildlife Rescue
LSC Cards + Litchfield Ford + Auto Trim Design
Monica Richman & Steven Lerangis + Litchfield Lions Club
Dr Flo McPherson: Naturopathic Specialties

...for making the 44th Annual Family Nature Day possible.

The White Memorial Conservation Center
P.O. Box 368
Litchfield, CT 06759

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