



## Protecting Oswegatchie Hills

CFE has joined with local groups Friends of Oswegatchie Hills Nature Preserve (the Friends) and Save the River – Save the Hills (STR) to lead the legal battle against a proposal to build an 840-unit housing development with more than 1,600 parking spaces. This would be located atop a mountain in the last unpreserved stretch of Oswegatchie Hills.

CFE has argued from the start that this is an environmentally destructive proposal that will destroy the Hills and pollute the wetlands and Niantic River Estuary. “We are advocating for the Zoning Commission to fully evaluate all environmental impacts before approving a preliminary site plan,” says CFE Legal Director Roger Reynolds. “The developer has come in with a high-priced legal and engineering team, arguing that approvals should come now and environmental considerations should come later, if at all. They are arguing that the fact that this development includes some affordable housing overrides the town’s interest in preserving the environment.”

In a June 4 hearing, the Zoning Commission heard our legal argument and granted our request to refer the application to the East Lyme Inland Wetlands Agency for a decision on adverse impacts to wetlands before they

make a decision. At a June 18 hearing, the Friends provided evidence that the developer actually mapped the wetlands incorrectly. This completely supports our contention that the developer disregarded the destructive environmental impacts of the proposal. The developer had an opportunity to present his case and failed to seriously rebut any of our contentions about the importance and precedence of wetland impacts to this project.

“We have argued strongly that the Zoning Commission can’t approve this without a thorough and timely environmental review and thus far they have agreed,” says Roger. Our hope is that when Wetlands and Zoning review the environmental devastation that would be wrought by paving 36 acres of this preserve for 1,600 parking spaces and 840 units, they will soundly reject it. We hope the developer will stop fighting and start focusing on the best way to assess the land’s fair market value to support a conservation swap or purchase. If not, though,” Roger adds, “we are in this fight for the long haul.”

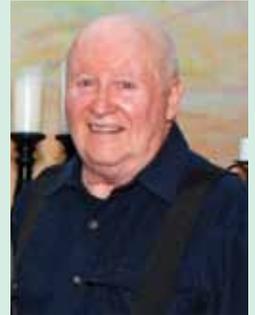
As this newsletter went to press, we were awaiting the final decision from the Zoning Commission. CFE will continue leading the legal charge to achieve permanent protection for this unique property.



*This summer, CFE officially joined the fight to protect Oswegatchie Hills, the pristine 700-acre East Lyme property overlooking the Niantic River, from unbridled development.*

## Meet Fred Grimsey

As a young man, Fred Grimsey experienced water pollution firsthand, when he continually became ill after swimming in the waters of Jamaica Bay, Long Island. Years later, upon moving to Waterford, Connecticut, he observed similar water quality problems in the Niantic River.



“I decided someone needed to do something,” he says. He founded Save the River - Save the Hills, a grassroots environmental organization dedicated to water quality improvements in the Niantic River Estuary in Waterford and East Lyme, Connecticut. The nonprofit runs a pumpout facility to encourage the proper disposal of waste from the many boats on the river, coordinates a water-quality monitoring group, and advocates for preservation of Oswegatchie Hills, sewers for East Lyme waterfront properties, and for the towns of Waterford and East Lyme to make infrastructure changes to bring them into compliance with federal regulations.

“Protecting Oswegatchie Hills from the kind of aggressive overdevelopment currently being proposed is critical to the water quality of the Niantic River,” says Fred. “We’re pleased that CFE is bringing its considerable legal and scientific expertise to bear to work to protect this unique natural area.”

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## Student Volunteer Makes a Difference



*Mamaroneck High School student John Liptack conducted a water quality research project and helped Save the Sound as a water quality monitoring volunteer this summer.*

John Liptack will be a senior at Mamaroneck High School this fall, but he's already set himself on a firm path as a research scientist. John has been participating in a four-year honors elective in which he learned how to conduct his own original research on a topic of his choice.

"I was drawn initially to the environmental sciences," says John, "and narrowed my topic down to water quality management and water pollution." His science research teacher Mr. Guido Garbarino introduced John to Save the

Sound's water quality monitoring work after he saw an article in the local newspaper. "For my project, I compared rainfall events with beach closures and *Enterococcus* levels to determine whether local beaches are being managed properly," says John.

"John's project was carefully researched and thoughtfully presented in poster format," says Western Sound Programs Director Tracy Brown. "His research confirms the relationship between rainfall and beach closures on the Westchester shoreline. We are very pleased to have John as one of our citizen scientists this summer and that he will continue his analysis of local water quality during his senior year."

### JOIN THE GREEN TEAM

When you become a member of our monthly giving society **The Green Team**, you save paperwork and help us make the most of your membership donation to CFE or Save the Sound. Find out more at [www.ctenvironment.org](http://www.ctenvironment.org) by clicking on the red "Donate" button.

## Noroton Yacht Club Event

Save the Sound is boldly moving to make every beach safe for swimming every day and all the waters of Long Island Sound healthy for fish and wildlife. "Because our sailing friends share our passion for the Sound, we could think of no better way to express our enthusiasm than by hosting an event that explains the problem and how we all can be part of the solution," said CFE/Save the Sound board member Libby Alexander.

Libby engaged her husband Rob, and friends Susan and Hugh Balloch, Tory and Bill Crane, Kim and Flip Huffard, Susan and Scott MacLeod, and Anne and George Walker to co-host a reception for Save the Sound at the Noroton Yacht Club in Darien on May 28. The group's goal was to raise awareness, recruit new Save the Sound members, and help Save the Sound create a party template that can be replicated at yacht and beach clubs all around the Sound.

The evening's weather was gorgeous. The decorations had a nautical theme. Western Sound Program Director Tracy Brown and Save the Sound Executive Director Curt Johnson sparked lively conversation and showcased the organization's work to reduce nitrogen and bacteria in the Western Sound. If you'd like to host an event at your own club, please contact Heidi at [hgreen@ctenvironment.org](mailto:hgreen@ctenvironment.org).



*Above: Members of the Host committee for Save the Sound's event at the Noroton Yacht Club.*

*Left: "Salty people and sailboats! Long Island Sound is where we've enjoyed some of our greatest moments," says board member and host Libby Alexander. "We want a clean and healthy Sound to be our legacy and have made it a philanthropic priority." Pictured (l to r) are: Susan and Kevin Clarke, Libby Alexander, and Jim and Kim West.*



# Let's Change the Conversation, not the Climate

As you may have heard, it isn't just the climate changing these days—finally, the conversation is changing too. Worldwide institutions, countries, and citizens have pushed for change and the recognition that mitigating climate change is a moral obligation. Connecticut is stepping up to do its part.

Governor Dannel Malloy recently established his Governor's Council on Climate Change to recommend policies, regulations, and legislation to meet the state's greenhouse gas reduction goals. I will be joining the panel as one of its three nonprofit representatives and, as I write, our first meeting is set for this week. The appointment says something about the respect that CFE has earned as a leader in climate and energy policy.

CFE has a strong history of working on these issues with stakeholders throughout the legislature, administration, regulatory agencies, and business and clean energy communities. Over the years, we've also provided research and expertise on cutting-edge issues regarding energy efficiency, clean energy finance, renewable energy deployment, and micro-grids. We advocated for and helped to pass the Clean Cars Act in 2004 to bring California's strict vehicle emissions standards to Connecticut and help clean our air. We also subsequently supported a program that now requires new car dealers to display labels with emissions scores so car buyers can choose a model that is both right for them and the environment.

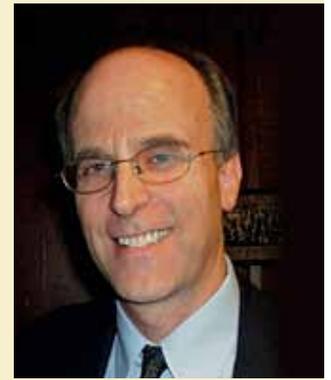
In 2008, we advocated for and helped pass the *Global Warming Solutions Act* to address climate change in Connecticut. The Act requires the state to reduce its total greenhouse gas emissions to at least 10 percent below 1990 levels by 2020, and to at least 80 percent below 2001 levels by 2050, positioning Connecticut as a leader in reducing greenhouse gases.

Last fall, we launched our Stamford 2030 District in partnership with the Business Council of Fairfield County. Its growth has been impressive, as you will read elsewhere in this issue. Through a coalition of building owners and other private- and public-sector partners, we are working to promote energy efficiency and resiliency and to reduce emissions and water consumption. With buildings accounting for nearly half of Connecticut's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, the 2030 project is critical to the climate change effort.

Another 40 percent of Connecticut's greenhouse gas emissions come from the transportation sector. With zero emissions, entirely battery-powered electric vehicles (or EVs) and fuel cell vehicles can help. This spring, we co-hosted an EV ride-and-drive event in Stamford. At the legislature, we advocated for incentives to make EVs more affordable, and we'll continue to do so.

CTfastrak, Connecticut's first rapid transit busway, for which CFE strongly advocated, is off to a great start and is already paving the way for more rapid transit bus systems elsewhere in the state. Riding a bus instead of driving alone for a 20-mile round trip commute can reduce 4,800 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per person per year.

On the clean energy front, we're also working for clean distributed generation, including shared solar. Distributed generation, or on-site generation, is energy produced on a smaller scale than the typical fossil-fuel fired power plant and is usually generated closer to the consumer. Shared solar is one form of distributed generation. Only about 20 percent of Connecticut residents can put solar panels on their houses. What about the other 80 percent? They could "share" solar from a neighboring source. But at this year's legislative session, the utilities won a delaying tactic in the form of a two-year pilot program that will effectively keep most residents from taking advantage of shared solar options until 2017. In the meantime, we're gearing up to educate the public about the benefits of shared solar projects like those already found in half the states around the country, including New York and Massachusetts.



Donald S. Strait, President



This spring, CFE and the Stamford 2030 District celebrated Earth Day with an electric vehicle ride-and-drive event.

Robert Klee, commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, who will chair the Governor's Council on Climate Change, has said we must show strong leadership and boldness in meeting the goals Connecticut enacted with the 2008 Global Warming Solutions Act. By following through on those goals, Connecticut can be an innovative model for other state governments at a time when early decisive action is critical. As a CFE member, you can take pride in knowing you're making a difference by supporting our work to pass laws that mitigate the effects of climate change, reduce harmful emissions, and promote energy efficiency. Our future depends on it.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald S. Strait".



A program of Connecticut Fund for the Environment

# Save the Sound

A program of Connecticut Fund for the Environment

## SoundBites

Summer 2015

### It's All About the Water

It's been a busy summer. Our Western Long Island Sound Program advanced on multiple fronts: data collection, technology, and litigation. "Bacterial pollution from sewage is a major problem in many of our harbors, bays, and coastal streams," said Western Sound Program Director Tracy Brown. "It poses serious public health risks. Pink eye, diarrhea, even kidney failure can result from swimming in fecal contaminated water. Residents deserve to know whether the water in their town is safe for their kids to play in. And if it's not safe, they deserve to know why."

This summer, we launched the Sound Health Explorer, at [www.soundhealthexplorer.org](http://www.soundhealthexplorer.org). The site aggregates reams of water quality information, yet is intuitive enough that anyone can use it to assess water quality problems at their local beach. If you haven't seen it yet, check it out. We expanded our Sound Swim Alerts from Westchester County to include beaches in Greenwich as well as Nassau County communities on the North Shore. We issued our "Nitrogen Diet" online petition so citizens can ask the EPA and governors of New York and Connecticut to



Volunteers like Jeanette Glover help make a difference for Long Island Sound by collecting water samples to document the extent of local water quality problems.

take meaningful steps to address nitrogen pollution this year.

We also expanded our water quality monitoring program to include the entire coastline of Westchester County and Greenwich, Connecticut, and increased the options for volunteers, including stream walks. Save the Sound member Ray Tartaglione donated a beautiful 17-foot Boston Whaler with Save the Sound's name prominently displayed on the side, which is useful in water quality sampling and helps build our name recognition. The cost of a boat slip was also underwritten by a generous donor. We processed the samples our staff and volunteers collected at our own new lab in Mamaroneck, made possible by an EPA equipment loan.

But that's not all. This summer, we took strong legal action to ensure that environmental laws governing pollution in the western Sound will be enforced. For more than a decade, state, county, and municipal officials have failed to effectively address sewage overflows and leaking sewer pipes in Westchester County. Save the Sound took a decisive step to speed up needed infrastructure repairs and stop the flow of sewage into the Sound when our legal team, after months of meetings with municipalities and the County, issued a Notice of Intent to Sue (NOIS) to Westchester County.

We are calling on Westchester County to work with us, the towns, EPA, and New York State DEC to fix leaking pipes that run from private homes and businesses into the public sewer system; fix leaking town and county pipes; establish enforceable timelines for repairs; and establish a sufficient funding source to complete the necessary work in the required timeline.

We are committed to stopping the flow of raw bacterial and nitrogen-filled sewage into the Sound.



### Meet Peter Linderoth

Water Quality Program Manager Peter Linderoth joined the Save the Sound staff earlier this year, working from our Western Long Island Sound Program office in Mamaroneck. As a child, he recalls being told on occasion that the Sound was too dirty to play or swim in.

"It was not until many years later that I discovered the truth behind the closed beaches of my childhood," he explains, "namely, nitrogen and bacterial pollution that result in dead zones and beach closures." Deeply reducing nitrogen and eliminating fecal contamination of our waterways are top priorities for Save the Sound. Peter oversees our sampling program designed to measure those pollutants and track down their sources, working with a dedicated corps of citizen scientists and clean water advocates.

"Protecting Long Island Sound does not rest on any one organization's or individual's shoulders," he says. "This is a group effort that requires collaboration and steady determination."

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## Meeting the Challenge

At CFE, we know that serious environmental issues require decisive action. This year, we filed a Notice of Intent to Sue the federal Department of Homeland Security and the General Services Administration to protect Plum Island. We petitioned the Environmental Protection Agency to create a better standard for nitrogen pollution. We filed a Notice of Intent to Sue Westchester County to keep its sewage out of Long Island Sound. Now, we are pulling out all the stops to go against an ill-advised development project and protect the pristine Oswegatchie Hills in East Lyme.

CFE doesn't shy away from challenges. One of our generous supporters has faith that you won't either. Our lawyers, legal fellows, and law school interns are tough and smart. Their work is largely supported by the contributions of individual donors. An anonymous donor who respects this work has made sustaining it a philanthropic priority, and has a challenge for you!

"I've always respected the law. The profession attracts bright, well-trained, well-educated, motivated people who are eager to solve problems and thus, are creating the rules by which citizens can play. That's powerful stuff, especially when it is done for a good cause that will benefit many. Enter Connecticut Fund for the Environment and its bi-state Save the Sound program. When I heard about some of the requests that were pouring onto Roger's desk (Roger Reynolds is the legal director), I was inspired to share some of the minor wealth that I was lucky enough to come into in a rising stock market with CFE/Save the Sound to enhance the organization's legal capacity," said the anonymous donor.

This donor made a generous multi-year commitment and has sweetened the pot. Because the donor wishes to inspire you to give in ways that provide the organization the highest degree of

flexibility (gifts that are often the most difficult dollars to secure), this individual decided to make challenge gifts, multi-year pledges, and endowment contributions especially attractive.

The challenger will match each dollar of multi-year pledges at 2:1; each dollar of endowment gifts at 2:1; and each dollar of gifts to widen the challenge pool at 2:1 to a total of \$120,000 each year.

The challenger said, "As we watch the legal department of CFE/Save the Sound ramp up, keep a watchful eye out for the opportunity to join this challenge. Be part of helping CFE/Save the Sound be prepared to handle the cases that will improve our environment for the future. You can even come on board right now. So, go, Roger, go!"

To find out how you can trigger a matching gift, please contact Heidi Green, Director of Advocates and Special Gifts, at [hgreen@ctenvironment.org](mailto:hgreen@ctenvironment.org).



*CFE's legal team put its expertise to work for more than a decade in the long term effort to protect Old Saybrook's Preserve. Now an anonymous donor has made a challenge gift to spur support for CFE's litigation work.*

## Good News on Climate Change

In just six months since its official launch, our Stamford 2030 District has grown its membership by 40 percent, held six events for members, and benchmarked more than half its buildings (that



*Stamford 2030 District Member representatives Andrea Pinabell, Vice President, Sustainability, Global Citizenship, Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. (far left) and Reyno A. Giallongo, Chairman & CEO, First County Bank (far right) join Stamford 2030 Executive Director Megan Saunders and CFE President Donald S. Strait.*

is, assessed the District's buildings' performance relative to the 2030 goals of building energy use).

This past spring, the District was awarded \$75,000 in support from Partners for

Places, a project of the Funders' Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities, with a matching grant from the Emily Hall Tremain Foundation. "We're excited for this opportunity," says Stamford 2030 District Director Megan Saunders, "which will allow us to expand the Stamford 2030 District even further by providing assistance to help us increase membership, benchmarking activities, and visibility through events and marketing."

With nearly half of all energy produced nationwide being consumed by the building sector (according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration), our Stamford 2030 District has tremendous potential. "We can make a big difference in helping our state meet the CO<sub>2</sub> emission reductions it signed into law with its Global Warming Solutions Act," observes Megan. CFE helped write and get passed Connecticut's Global Warming Solutions Act with its goal of 10 percent greenhouse gas emission reduction below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80 percent reduction below 2001 levels by 2050.

# Roadside Trees

In communities all around the state, the roadside trees that make Connecticut so special are in danger from overly-aggressive cutting and pruning. Our state’s utility companies are needlessly removing healthy trees in an attempt to secure power lines. While having a safe and reliable power grid is essential, the loss of thousands or even hundreds of thousands of trees is not the answer.

“It’s possible to reduce risk to electricity infrastructure and still preserve healthy roadside trees,” said CFE Attorney Zachary Bestor. “What’s more, residents have many ways to defend their trees. The utility companies are required to post notices on healthy trees they want to remove, so we’re asking residents to be on the look-out for those notices, object to them in writing, and let us know.” CFE offers a range of resources for residents seeking to protect their trees on its website [www.ctenvironment.org](http://www.ctenvironment.org). (See “Utility Tree Removal” under the “Lands and Communities” tab.)

“CFE has been a great resource for us,” said Anthony Bosco, Stamford resident and business owner. “They’ve brought together knowledgeable professionals, shared a wealth of expertise on the subject and provided personal attention to many of us seeking to protect trees in our own communities. They are making an incredible impact. I, for one, am grateful for CFE’s continued guidance and support to protect town trees.”

## VICTORY FOR THE PRESERVE

*As of May 1 of this year, the 1,000-acre parcel known as The Preserve was permanently protected, instead of being developed with 200+ houses and a golf course, thanks to more than ten years of*

*legal interventions by CFE and the efforts of the Trust for Public Land and other allies. The land is now owned by the State of Connecticut, the town of Old Saybrook, and the Essex Land Trust.*



John Maxwell

## Leave an Environmental Legacy

A planned gift from your estate to CFE and its bi-state program Save the Sound can help protect public health and the endangered places you care about far into the future. Please consider a lasting gift to the environmental heritage of Connecticut and Long Island Sound. For more information, contact Michelle LeMere at 203-787-0646, ext. 104.

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