

NATIONAL
HERITAGE
CORRIDOR

In Touch



with The Last Green Valley

MEMBER MAGAZINE & 2019 ANNUAL REPORT

A National Heritage Corridor

25 YEARS

**A Look Back at the
First 25 Years of the
National Heritage Corridor
and a Look Ahead to the Next 25**

In Touch

Vol. 5, Issue 1 • Spring 2020

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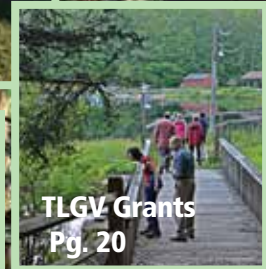
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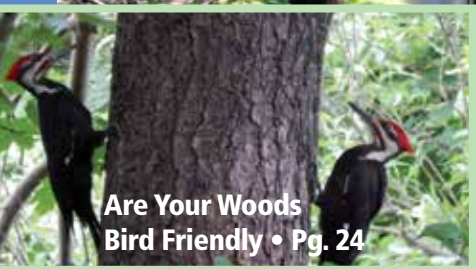
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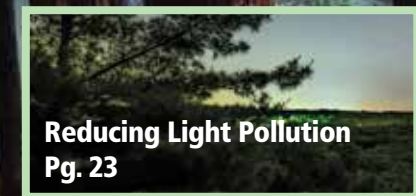
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To our Members, Donors, Partners and Sponsors

I hope you and your families are well. I am writing to let you know that even as TLGV staff operate remotely, we are at your service, working hard to strengthen our communities during these difficult times. As we continue to pivot our programs to meet emerging community needs, your support makes it all possible – thank you for helping us care for and pass on The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor for future generations to enjoy!

Get Connected - The Last Green Valley is blessed with wide open spaces, 500+ miles of trails and dozens of farms close to home. Our job is to connect you to them. If you are looking for places to explore with your kids or grandkids, for quiet places of peace and solace, or for farms selling fresh food in season, please let us help. You can call us at 860-774-3300 (we may not pick up but leave a message and we'll call you back) or email Chief Ranger Bill at Bill@tlgv.org for personalized recommendations. You can also check out our website and social media feeds for great tips and fun facts about the world around us.

Pay-What-You-Can Memberships - We understand the challenges facing our members and the National Heritage Corridor may not be your top financial priority. But we also want you to know that having you as a TLGV member makes a difference. Because your support energizes and shapes our work, we have made it easier to join or renew by launching a pay-what-you-can membership program. You can join or renew at previous levels, pay at a level that feels good to you or sign up for a free membership. Regardless of your choice, you are entitled to all TLGV membership benefits, including our publications mailed to your door, a discount in our online shop, exclusive programs and invitations and more.

Keeping The Last Green Valley Clean - We have modified our popular cleanup program and encourage you and your family to participate. Send us your photos and a completed trash tracker to win prizes!

Innovative Capacity-Building Grants - For our non-profit partners, we have re-envisioned our grant program to better support your efforts. TLGV will provide up to \$1,500 for equipment, services and training to help you improve communication or provide alternative means of engaging the public.

Tastes of the Valley Takes to the Road - For our farm, food and beverage partners, it's more important than ever for us to send customers directly to your place of business. We have compiled a list of retail farm stands, CSAs and farmer's markets on our website so customers can easily find you. We are also planning to change our annual one-day Tastes of the Valley fundraising event into a two-month, Corridor-wide tour to support our farm, food and beverage partners.

The 30th Anniversary of Walktober in 2020 – While this year's celebration will look and feel different, we know with some creative planning we can still showcase The Last Green Valley's natural and cultural resources. Last year more than 95,000 participants enjoyed Walktober and this year's Walktober is an opportunity to help drive economic recovery.

Now more than ever, The Last Green Valley's landscape is critical to our physical, mental and emotional health. While we cannot all gather together, we can come together to ensure this special place is here for future generations to care for, enjoy and pass on! Thank you again for your support.

Lois Bruinooge, Executive Director

25 YEARS Looking Back

by Francesca Kefalas

The story of The Last Green Valley begins with trailblazers, those who see things a little differently and find a way to embrace what others might see as too difficult.

It begins with the settling of the geographic region now known as The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor more than 8,000 years ago. That distant date is actually recent when put alongside the settlement of surrounding areas by Native Americans. Where some Native Americans saw the terrain as harsh and difficult, others saw it as a refuge worth the struggle. Fast forward to 1659 and Norwich is the

only town founded before the end of King Philip's War in 1676. It takes 10 more years before significant settlement of the region begins. It is fueled by rebellion from the puritanical ways of the original colonies.

For the colonists and the Native Americans the issue was the same. The land was dense and foreboding, a "howling wilderness" full of reasons to seek other places to settle. Yet, it became for those very same reasons the backbone of the American Revolution, the place that sent men willing to fight, fed the troops from its farmlands and sheltered leaders as they plotted and planned.

It was home to the only Colonial Governor to side with the revolution. It was home to the man, Samuel Huntington, tagged to lead the new country once the war was over and before the Constitution was ratified. The most famous spy (Nathan Hale), most notorious traitor (Benedict Arnold) and the woman willing to defy everyone to educate young women of color (Prudence Crandall) called it home. It was the heart of the Industrial Revolution and a world power in textile manufacturing.

Fast forward to 1988, however, and the spirit and sense of individuality that drove the region's early days

were difficult to find. This place was rural in the middle of the urban sprawl stretching from Boston to Washington, D.C. The local economy had crumbled. The region had become an afterthought.

A far-fetched idea rekindled the trail blazing spirit when then U.S. Representative Sam Gejdenson thought a huge part of his second congressional district was worthy of becoming one of the first national heritage corridors in the nation. "I had an idea," Gejdenson said. "But it was the people here on the ground who made it possible. From the start this was about the will of the people, about shaping the region's future for themselves. This happened because local people cared."

That idea needed leadership on the local level, Gejdenson said, and he was both lucky and excited to find a trio willing to forge new ground. Roger Hunt was president of the Quinebaug Rivers Association. Already passionate

about the environment and the region's waterways, Hunt saw an opportunity to think bigger and at the 1988 annual meeting of the association formed a subcommittee with himself, Marge Hoskin and John Boland. Together the trio led a committee of about 50 people through two variations and two congressional terms to get the legislation passed that would create a national heritage corridor.

"People were just really understanding what had been done to the natural world," Hoskin said. "A lot of people were asking 'will it ever be the same?'"

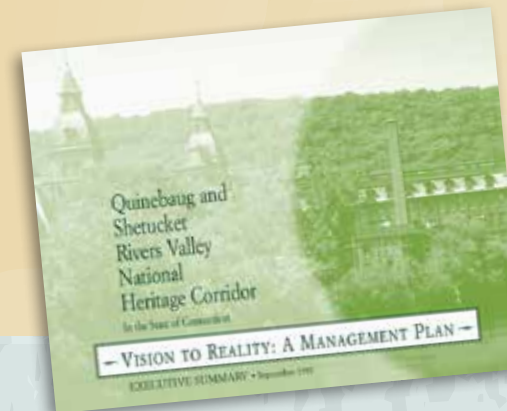
"The level of commitment we had from people over a long period speaks to the passion people have for this area," said Boland, who is now a judicial officer in Connecticut and speaks here only about his personal experiences as a witness to history.

To say the region is unique on a national level is not an understatement. The committee organized river paddles that included National Park Service staff, then U.S. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt and other state and federal leaders to prove it. They also launched a program called Walking Weekend in 1991. Gejdenson urged the subcommittee to develop one regional tour to highlight all of its best qualities. Instead, the committee created a weekend with more than 22 walks, hikes, paddles and more.

"I thought they had really made a major mistake," Gejdenson admits with a laugh. "I was completely wrong. It was a brilliant idea."

"Oh, yes, he thought we were going in the wrong direction," Hoskin said, smiling at the memory. "We were sure it was a good idea, even if he wasn't so convinced."

The first Walking Weekend attracted thousands of participants. It was the first major effort of the committee to create a program highlighting the future corridor, and it was a major success. But it was soon followed by a major blow. Gejdenson's first attempt to get the legislation passed never made it to the senate for a vote.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM 25 YEARS AS A NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR

1988-1990

The Quinebaug Rivers Association explores the idea of a national heritage corridor as a means of raising the region's profile.

1991

The first Walking Weekend is held with 22 walks, hikes, paddles and more showcasing the region.

1992

Grass-roots efforts continue pushing for federal legislation to create a new national heritage corridor.

1993

Larry Lowenthal, National Park Service Historian, makes the case for national heritage corridor designation in a Historical Overview of the Quinebaug-Shetucket Region of Connecticut.

1994

Congress passes legislation to create the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor, encompassing 25 eastern Connecticut communities. It is the 4th heritage corridor in the nation; today there are 55.

1995

The Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor, Inc. (QSHC) is formed as the non-profit to administer the new national heritage corridor.

1996

QSHC uses FY 1996 federal funds to award its first round of mill use and partnership grants to 17 projects. The \$71,250 federal investment is matched significantly by \$1,326,747 in private, state and local funds.

1997

QSHC opens an office and hires its first part-time staff person.

Vision to Reality: A Management Plan is completed with technical assistance from the National Park Service and the State of Connecticut. The Corridor's first mission statement still informs our work today: "Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor will preserve its natural, historic and cultural assets while its residents enjoy a quality of life based on a strong, healthy economy compatible with its character. This will be accomplished through local, regional and state cooperation, and partnerships with businesses, organizations and residents. Town government will play the pivotal role, as land use decisions will remain, as they historically have been, at the local level."

1998

QSHC hires a part-time circuit rider to assist communities with land use planning, open space conservation and historic preservation.



1999

Congress reauthorizes federal funding for 10 years and expands the corridor by adding one Connecticut and nine Massachusetts towns.

The first Walking Guide and Wild Guide are published, and Songs of the Heritage Corridor are recorded.



2000

Vision 2010, A Plan for the Next Ten Years is developed. The phrase, "The Last Green Valley" is used with increasing frequency to describe the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley region. Vision 2010 reaffirms the Corridor's role in catalyzing partnerships, educating and facilitating, and taking on critical projects when there is a community need.

QSHC's first website is unveiled, a directory of agricultural businesses is published as Green & Growing, and Walking Weekend celebrates its 10th year.



2001

A Mills Work conference attracts 200 participants. Historic asset surveys are completed for six towns without them.

The Green Valley Institute (GVI) is launched to provide enhanced land use education and technical assistance to corridor communities. Over the next decade, GVI helps establish 16 conservation commissions, conducts greenways planning with 20 communities, works with 21 towns to improve municipal regulations, assists 27 towns with natural resource inventories and holds more than 800 training sessions attracting almost 9,000 participants.



In 1993 the committee and Gejdenson were facing an uphill battle. The National Park Service assigned Park Ranger and Historian Larry Lowenthal the job of determining whether it was worthy. Lowenthal, who passed away in March, created a 30-page report detailing the intertwining of landscape, history, culture and the economy of the region. He comments that not only is the region worthy, it is unique from the previous three heritage corridors because it has not one distinct characteristic, but rather a multitude of characteristics that in combination creates an exceptional history and culture, an oasis of green in the midst of the east coast megalopolis and a still strong agricultural base.

"In Connecticut, the area was Connecticut's Appalachia, as it was referred to, and that was probably unfair and misleading," Lowenthal said in a 2016 interview. "The fact that it was somewhat isolated and neglected by the rest of the state is now part of its charm, and Massachusetts has the same problem. It doesn't fit well into the other regions of the state, but it's part of a distinct area with the towns in Connecticut."

Gejdenson kept pushing and he had a new staff member, Scott

Kovarovics of Ashford, leading the charge. Kovarovics, now executive director of the The Izaak Walton League, a national conservation organization, said it took the entirety of the '93 and '94 sessions to get the bill passed. Kovarovics said it was only possible because of the dedication of the local team and a willingness from Gejdenson and his staff to trust their ongoing commitment.

"There was such a well-organized grassroots effort from the Massachusetts border down to Norwich that really propelled this concept forward," Kovarovics said. The prevailing issue was governance, and it may be the single most important decision that propelled the heritage corridor forward after the designation. Unlike the preceding three corridors, the Quinebaug-Shetucket legislation did not create a governor's council that would draft a management plan, and it did not require the National Park Service to designate any staff. It left the door open for the grassroots committee to become a non-profit organization that could manage the federal dollars that might follow. And it took until the last minutes of the 1994 session to get it done.

"It went down to the wire," Kovarovics said. "Literally, it was passed in the final hours of the session." The legislation was signed by President Bill Clinton on Nov. 2, 1994.

Boland knew in those years from 1988 to 1994 he was witnessing history. He sees the creation of the corridor as the planting of two seeds, one by Gejdenson and the second by Hunt, who saw an opportunity to think bigger. "Sam prodded us along," Boland said. "But Roger was the whip that kept us moving."

Looking back more than 25 years, however, Boland sees a group of 50 people who worked together to build consensus at every turn, with a passion for the place they called home.

"That was one of the important things," Boland said, "we all loved living here."

Boland presided over the first meeting of the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor. It wasn't until 2014 the nickname that had been with the region from the start of the process, The Last Green Valley, became the official moniker. Hoskin, however, soon became the chairman of the board.

"Marge is a born leader," Boland said. "She has a quiet determination, and she is full of ideas."

For her part, Hoskin sees her role as chairman partly as one that arose because she was retired from the U.S. Navy and not juggling a full-time law practice, as Boland was. Hoskin had served 20 years in the Navy, toured the world, frequently

visiting Hong Kong, San Francisco and Guam just to name a few. When it was time in 1975 to settle in one place, she and her husband wanted to come back to her hometown of Plainfield.

"Before I went into the Navy, I didn't really appreciate it here," Hoskin said. "But you get to know what you had when you're away from it."

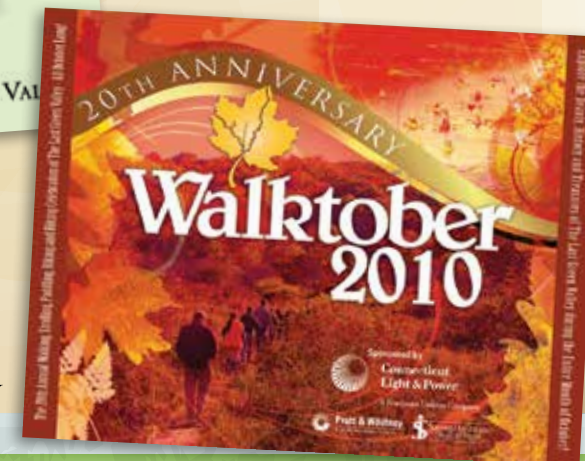
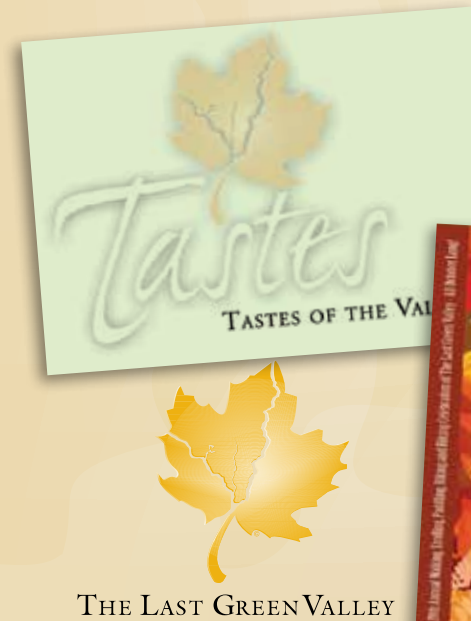
Home, however, was not quite the place it had been when she was a child or the place it would become in the last 25 years. "People were just starting to understand the impact we have on the natural world," Hoskin said. "They were asking 'will it ever be the same?'"

When Hoskin, Boland and Hunt came together in 1988 they were looking at a landscape that was only just starting to rebound from the effects of the Industrial Revolution on its waters and woods. And yet, it was still the

greenest, cleanest place to be found for hundreds of miles.

Gejdenson had noticed the environmental changes beginning and realized his district needed a boost — the potential of federal dollars was certainly a consideration. But the potential to rejuvenate the energy and give people a reason to rally was perhaps even more important.

"Our history and our landscape have always been connected and it's that history and landscape that make this place special," Gejdenson said. "But when I was a kid you never saw a wild turkey, a bobcat or a deer. Our rivers and streams were a mess. Some days they ran red. Some days they were yellow. You had to drive with the windows rolled up in August — and our car didn't have air conditioning — because they smelled so bad. The rivers powered our mills and the mills made the rivers stink.



2002

A Community Compact is signed by all 35 towns in the corridor, pledging to protect and enhance the corridor's resources and to balance conservation and growth.

For the Common Good is published and an Air Line Trail Design Manual is developed.

GVI brings cutting-edge resources to corridor communities by developing courses introducing "Global Positioning System (GPS)" technology.



2003

QSHC awards \$285,000 in partnership and historic preservation grants, the largest round ever offered by the corridor.

GVI develops digitized planning layers for the corridor, from breeding bird density and diversity to water supply aquifers.

2004

Walking Weekend becomes Walking WeekendS.

How to be the Best: Entrepreneurial Agriculture in the 21st Century conference is held to encourage diversification and expansion of agriculture.

2005

Last Green Valley Venture maps and tours are produced.

Information kiosks with "Info" logo signs are installed and stocked with brochures throughout the corridor.

2006

The organization's first sustainability plan is produced and the first major fundraising event, Spirits of the Valley is held at the Hole in the Wall Camp in Ashford.

A coordinator is hired to jumpstart a volunteer water quality monitoring program. Since 2006, about 100 volunteers each year have assessed dozens of lakes, ponds and streams using 9 different state and federally approved methods. Water quality problems have been identified and fixed throughout the corridor.

2007

Spirits of the Valley becomes Tastes of the Valley and continues to connect local farms with local restaurants.

The Last Green Valley begins selling reusable shopping bags and runs a contest encouraging middle school students to recycle single use plastic bags.

The Last Green Valley Visitor's Guide, now known as *Explore!* is published for the first time.

2008

Walking WeekendS becomes Walktober, a month-long celebration of the corridor. From 25,000 attendees in 2008, Walktober has continued to grow, drawing 95,000 participants in 2019.

The organization officially changes its name: Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor, Inc. (QSHC) becomes The Last Green Valley, Inc. (TLGV).

Notables and Notorious is published, a farms-to-purveyors feasibility study is launched, and TLGV participates in the Massachusetts' Heritage Landscape Inventory Program.

2009

The Source to Sea Expedition paddles the Thames River watershed, from the headwaters to the mouth at Long Island Sound. 95 partners host 90 events, including 30 on the water. 700 participants sign pledge cards promising to protect water quality and 70 people sign up to become water quality monitoring volunteers. Five canoe/kayak launches are improved or created and one new segment of riverfront trail is completed.

Federal funding for the corridor is reauthorized until 2015.

The Connecticut legislature establishes a Connecticut Heritage Area Program recognizing the corridor as a state heritage area.

2010

Vision 2020: The Next Ten Years is developed with a stronger emphasis on protecting natural resources and inspiring stewardship.

The Massachusetts legislature establishes a Massachusetts Heritage Area Program recognizing the corridor as a state heritage area.

The Advocate program is launched to create and strengthen farm-friendly communities. Since 2010, 13 new agriculture commissions have been established in the corridor.

TLGV coordinates a mid-winter eagle survey in eastern Connecticut for the first time. In 1994 there were 0 resident bald eagles; in the last decade, 62 bald eagle chicks (estimated) have hatched from 9 nests.



But because of that no one built anything on the rivers. So, when we stopped polluting those same rivers, they became spectacular again. We haven't over-developed the shores of our rivers, and that's been good."

The mills were shuttering, a boon to the environment, but a burden to the economy. Other major employers, such as Electric Boat on the shoreline and Sikorsky and Pratt and Whitney to the west were not employing the numbers they once were. Interstate 395 had done its job and ferried people north and south right through the middle of the region, yet there was little to make travelers want to stop and see what might lie off the exits.

Today, Gejdenson will say he was only helping the people of his district accomplish something they wanted. Kovarovics, however, noticed something different. "This was personally important to Sam," Kovarovics said. "Yes, he wanted to support his constituents, but I think he really saw the long-term benefits for the region and believed this was the kind of thing that could restore some pride and some hope."

In Kovarovics, Gejdenson had a staff member who understood not only why the corridor would benefit the region, but why the region was more than worthy of the designation. "I grew up

playing in the woods," Kovarovics said. "My dad still lives in Ashford. Of all the things that I worked on for Sam this is a thing I look back on and can say is one of great personal pride that I was able to play some small role in this."

While the hard part for Gejdenson's office was over once the designation was achieved, the real work began for the committee. They became a non-profit organization and secured the blessing of then Connecticut Governor John Rowland to manage the corridor and handle any financial resources that might flow from the federal government. They then set about figuring out what to do with any money that might show up.

Hoskin said the single most important decision the board made after incorporating as a non-profit was hiring the first director. Charlene Perkins Cutler, a native of Pomfret and a resident of Woodstock with experience running historic organizations, began part-time in 1997.

"I showed her a room with a desk and a chair that was in the offices of the northeast visitors district and said, 'here you go, figure it out,'" Hoskin said. "I told her she might not have a job

in six months. I was thrilled when we hired her. She was the right person to get us moving."

In six months, Cutler was a full-time employee. In addition to getting the basics, like a phone, Perkins-Cutler's first real job was to build partnerships and spread the word about the corridor. "Even in 1997 not a lot of people understood what this new corridor was about," Cutler said. "Those early days were all about educating people and building partnerships. There was a suspicion that we were going to tell people what to do with their land, but that was never the point."

For Cutler, dissuading people of the notion the heritage corridor was meant to control them and show, instead, the corridor was there to support them and build partnerships is an achievement not to be overlooked. "There were times when we did work

and did not promote our own role in it," Cutler said. "It was more important that the work got done than we got credit for the work."

The early partnership building led directly to the expansion of the corridor just five years after it was designated. Lowenthal had always maintained there were towns in Massachusetts that should be part of the corridor. Politically, however, that hurdle was too high until 1999 when legislation was passed adding nine Massachusetts towns and one more Connecticut town to the original 25. Gejdenson and U.S. Representative Richard Neal from Massachusetts jointly sponsored the legislation and passage was helped by the strong support of both states' senators.

The legislation also reauthorized the corridor for 10 years and provided an opportunity to create a community compact, which was signed by all 35 towns. Cutler said, "We were able to have every town show their support for the corridor."

Tom Chamberland was a ranger with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Massachusetts when the corridor was expanded and said it was an opportunity for both the Corps and the corridor.

"The Army Corps had recently started rethinking our roles and

as rangers we were being asked to do interpretive work and lead programs," Chamberland said. "The Army Corps really embraced the corridor and the corridor was able to introduce itself to Massachusetts through the Corps."

For Lowenthal it was also a chance to finally call the corridor home. The Brimfield resident said the creation of the corridor was important to him and the expansion finally added the towns that should always have been included. "It was personal for me," Lowenthal said in 2018. "I grew up in northern New Jersey and I saw what can happen. It was like The Last Green Valley is now when I was a boy and it became a place of concrete and highways. I chose to live here because I wanted to live in a place like I grew up in, but there are not many of those left on the east coast."

Twenty-five years later, Gejdenson said the signs of how successful the heritage corridor is are everywhere. Whenever he is at his family farm in Bozrah, just outside the corridor, he sees all kinds of wildlife, including bald eagles. "I think it's amazing I can see these things literally in my own backyard," Gejdenson said. "That speaks to the kinds of work and partnerships the heritage corridor has accomplished and inspired."

Gejdenson said it took creative, innovative people to create the corridor and make it a success.

"Probably now, maybe more than at the start, that drive has to continue for the success to continue," he said. "The challenges are different now."

Hoskin looks back on the years that led to the creation of the corridor and the accomplishments of its 25 years and smiles a little. "I suppose you could say it's a success," Hoskin said. "The organization has certainly done a lot of things. Even as successful as that first Walking Weekend was, I would never have imagined it would become what Walktober is now. That's one example. I only worry a little that the success might diminish the things that make this place special as we attract more and more people here."

The birds outside her living room window catch Hoskin's eye. The variety that visit her feeder almost seems to grow as the years go by. "But then I think I might not need to worry," Hoskin said. "I still wake up every morning, and I think how nice it is to live here."



2011

The first rural sustainability plan, *Green & Growing, A Call to Action* is produced.

TLGV begins to fund a coordinator for the Thames River Basin Partnership, ensuring the coalition remains strong.

The first TLGV Volunteer Rangers are trained to provide information to the public about the corridor. Rangers now attend about 50 community events annually.



2012

TLGV begins to fund and track community cleanups. Since then, 11,274 volunteers have picked up 407,603 pounds of trash.

The Willimantic River National Recreation Water Trail is designated and the Quinebaug River National Recreation Water Trail is expanded. Paddle guides are created and 17 informational kiosks are constructed and installed.



2013

A watershed education program is developed for middle school students. Since 2013, 12,068 kids have learned what they can do to protect clean water.

Woodland Ambassadors teach landowners how to care for their forest lands in a collaborative pilot project for the Southern New England Heritage Forest.

2014

Congress officially changes the name of the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor to The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor. The same legislation reauthorizes federal funding until 2021.

TLGV is the Grand Marshal of the Holiday Dazzle Light Parade in Putnam to celebrate 20 years as a national heritage corridor.



2015

The National Park Service conducts a comprehensive evaluation of the corridor and finds TLGV has used its federal dollars to fulfill legislative requirements for historic preservation, natural resource protection and economic development.

A 5-year project to improve soil health and water quality from agricultural fields is funded by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

The first *In Touch* member magazine is published.

2016

Spring Outdoors is launched to celebrate and promote the corridor between the vernal equinox to the summer solstice.

The Shetucket River National Recreation Water Trail is designated, increasing the number of nationally designated water trails in the corridor to almost 90 miles. A new paddle guide is produced and ten additional kiosks are created and installed.

TLGV establishes a Legacy Society and creates two endowment funds.

2017

An economic impact study is completed, concluding that corridor partners generate \$303 million annually, supporting 3,630 jobs and generating \$25.8 million in tax revenue.

TLGV and its partners are awarded \$6.1 million by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to conserve and protect critical woodlands in the Southern New England Heritage Forest. Nineteen partners are bringing an additional \$6.1 million in matching contributions to the project.

The High Efficiency Trails Assessment Process (HETAP) Team begins to assess the Air Line State Park Trail for people with mobility challenges. The team has now completed assessments on about 24 miles of trails.

2018

A Night Skies initiative is launched to combat light pollution in the corridor.

TLGV begins a Community Engagement Process to solicit input about the corridor's future. In 2 years, TLGV has conducted 22 listening sessions with 256 participants representing 67 organizations.

For 25 years we have inspired, planned, organized, created, promoted, celebrated, conserved, protected, engaged, educated, catalyzed, connected and advocated for the people and significant resources of The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor.

We look forward to 25 more years of leading the way towards a better future for our residents, our visitors and our communities.

2019

25 Years as a National Heritage Corridor Since 1996, TLGV has awarded \$3,896,509 in grants to community partners, matched by \$15,920,459 in state, local, private and non-profit contributions.

During that time, TLGV has received \$15,670,942 in funds through the National Park Service that have been matched and leveraged with \$335,144,780 in private, state, local and non-profit contributions, for \$349,483,722 in total impact benefitting The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor.

25 YEARS Looking Ahead

By Francesca Kefalas

Trailblazing sparked creation of The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor, but its future is far from written in stone. Twenty-five years after designation of the national heritage corridor, it will take more trailblazing to ensure the region's unique character and landscape are not eroded slowly over time.

"The work is harder now," said Sam Gejdenson, who launched the effort to have the region designated as a National Heritage Corridor during his 20-year tenure as U.S. Representative from the 2nd-Congressional District. "You used to be able to smell and see

the pollution and now it's invisible to the average person. It's harder to get people to pay attention when they can't see the problem."

From late summer 2018 through autumn 2019, staff and Board members of The Last Green Valley, Inc. (TLGV) undertook a listening tour, meeting with dozens of groups and hundreds of individuals to ensure stewardship of the national heritage corridor remains a grassroots effort. The information gathered and the voices heard will help create the next vision plan for The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor, to be released later in 2020.

Listening tour participants expressed a variety of concerns, from a lack of youth engagement to the challenge of providing access for all to corridor resources. Many attendees were particularly distressed by ever-increasing mounds of roadside trash, perhaps a reflection of our throw-away society or a lack of community pride.

But throughout the listening sessions, participants overwhelmingly valued the mosaic of history, culture, agriculture, green forests and flowing waters that make the region unique. They also realize change is inevitable and the importance of working to shape that change.

"We have more cars, more people," said Marge Hoskin, one of the leaders of the grassroots effort to create the corridor. "It is something we have to consider. How do we keep what we have and support the local economy at the same time?"

That balance of open spaces and economic development, history and the future, clean water and vibrant downtowns, has been at the crux of the heritage corridor since before it was founded. It was a major driver for the creation of the heritage corridor concept in the first place.

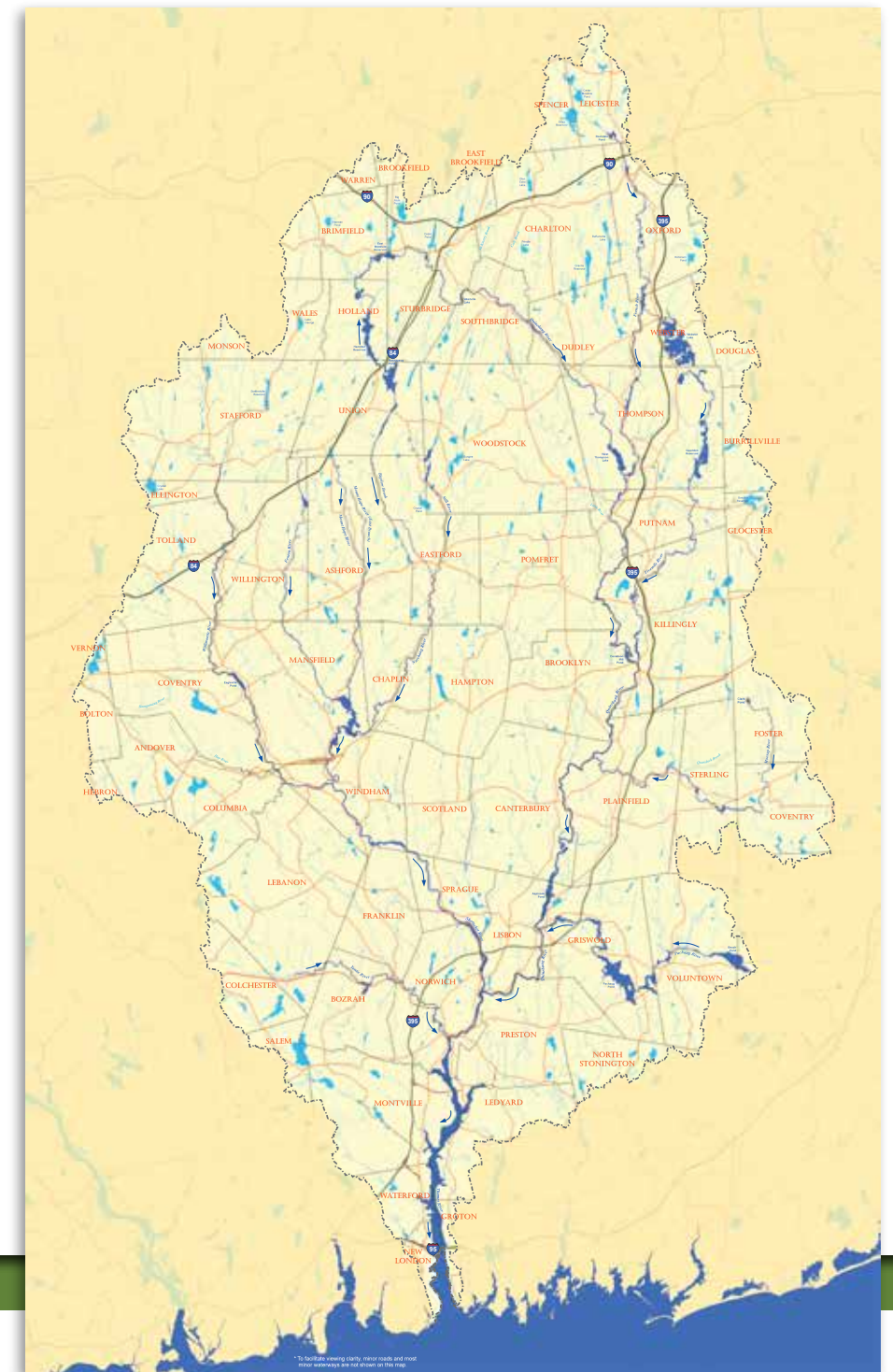
How we manage that balance over the next 25 years will determine whether the heart and soul of The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor remains intact. None of us will be able to do this alone. Partnerships and collaboration will remain essential. In addition, we will need to be creative and innovative, drawing inspiration from those who have already proven they can embrace diversity and change while successfully preserving what matters most.

At Allen Hill Farm in Brooklyn, CT, land preservation, agriculture and enhancing the local economy come together. Charles Langevin and brother-in-law Roland Gibeault lead a whole-family effort that dates back to 1891 to run a farm on some of the most picturesque land in the national heritage corridor. The farm sits on both sides of Allen Hill Road and sweeps down to the Quinebaug River, where it is easy to forget civilization is nearby. The property is not just historic

from a colonial perspective, fish weirs created by Native Americans can still be seen in the river. "Sometimes when I walk along the river, I feel like I've stepped back in time," Gibeault said.

"This was probably a farm since the 1600s," Langevin said. Bricks

dating from 1772 found on the property make up a portion of the chimney in Langevin's home. When Langevin, an English teacher by trade, and Gibeault, a contractor, first planted Christmas trees in 1980 on the property, they were looking for a way to make the family farm, which had been a dairy farm,



productive again. Langevin's uncle, George, was the owner and happy to have someone to pass the land to. "He loved this place, so he was happy to have us experiment," Langevin said.

Today, Allen Hill is an iconic Christmas tree farm. It's also a wedding and event venue and an orchard that will serve as the ingredients for hard cider that is the next phase of agri-business on the land, which, for the most part, will never be anything but a working farm.

Langevin, Gibeault and the rest of their generation preserved 330 acres of the 350-acre farm in 2010.

"As long as there is a state of Connecticut this land is protected," Langevin said. "It feels pretty good to say that. The generations that came before us endured all kinds of hardships to keep this land working. It seemed like a way to honor them and ensure there was something for the next generations to enjoy the way we did."

"We often have customers tell us how beautiful it is here," Gibeault said. "They ask us if they can buy a little piece to put a house on, but if we did that it wouldn't be this beautiful."

Langevin and Gibeault know first-hand how hard farming in southern New England is. Obtaining grants, having the expertise to maintain and build anything they need on the farm and having a small army of family to diversify has helped Allen Hill Farm become a model of what can work. Langevin is hopeful the future of farming in the region is one of diverse farmers that keep the land working.

"It can't be a hobby," Langevin said. "But you almost need to have some other income too. I'm not sure we could have made it, especially in the early days, if this was our only income."

For Susan Mitchell, owner of Cloverleigh Farm, producing organic vegetables in Mansfield, the struggle to farm is compounded by the struggle to find land. Mitchell needs less than 10 acres, but she can only find farms of 100 acres or more. Leasing has meant she can't establish the roots she needs to maximize her land. In six years, Cloverleigh has been on three different properties.

"I know I will have to move eventually, and that is really unfortunate," Mitchell said. "I know there is land out there that is fallow, but there's a disconnect between some of the newer farmers and the landowners. If we want to continue being an agricultural region, we have to make the connections, we have to support local food more than we do."

Mitchell runs a CSA and frequents farmers markets. She drops off her produce as far as Manchester. It's not for lack of effort that she does not have more customers. But the modern farmer must not just be an expert in their product, they must be part entrepreneur, part marketer. When the growing season is over, Mitchell can't sit back and plan. She must work another job to build up savings to purchase land.

"We have to start thinking about farms as businesses," Mitchell said. "We're trying to support ourselves and our families just like any other businessperson. We're also trying to feed people. I don't know a farmer who is not concerned about the quality of our food system."

Mitchell said too much farmland is being used for other thing. "Once the land is out of production it's much harder to get it back to food production."

Newlyweds Regan Miner and Dayne Rugh can relate to the concerns of lost farmland. As historians they have witnessed the loss of the region's history due to decay and neglect.

"You realize that you can't save and preserve everything," said Miner, who is executive director of the Norwich Historical Society. "It's unfortunate, but decisions have to be made."

Miner and Rugh, who is director of education at Slater Memorial Museum and president of the Society of the Founders of Norwich, which oversees Leffingwell House Museum, met while students at UConn Avery Point. Miner's infectious love of hometown Norwich and its history was easy for Rugh to understand. "Overnight I felt like oh my goodness what a unique history with so much potential," Rugh said.

Together, Miner and Rugh are bringing a fresh perspective to historic and cultural preservation, and it's easy to see why. As millennials they are often decades younger than the other historians in the room and that has its benefits in a variety of ways. "People like history," Rugh said. "But the people I know, they never liked history class in school."

"People like to have experiences," Miner said. "You can give them that experience and teach them a lot about history while you are doing it." Miner points to the Norwich Historical Society's hugely popular Ghost Tours of Norwichtown Cemetery as an example of seeing an issue just a little differently. "The ghosts are the hook, but the truth is the tours are all about colonial Norwichtown and the people who lived here."

It's a lesson Benedict Arnold taught the region. Born in Norwich, Arnold is a traitor second only to Judas in world history. Yet generations of Norwich residents never knew he was born in their town.

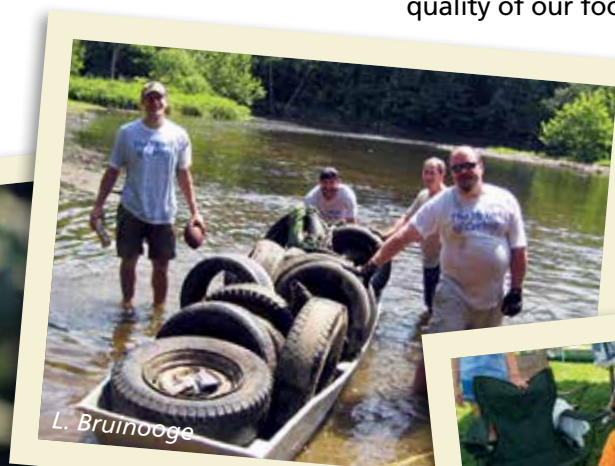
"If Salem can tell the story of the witch trials, why can't Norwich tell the story of Benedict Arnold?" Miner said. "It's not about celebrating him. It's about being honest. He was a complicated man. He was a hero before he was a traitor. Let's tell his whole story."

"I think historians are more willing to explore difficult history," Rugh added. "By its very nature it's uncomfortable, but it's important. The past will always continue to shape our present and future. How do we learn from it if we're not honest about it?"

Norwich has been working for several years to unify its effort around its own history. Miner and others have been leading the charge to turn that into visitation. "History and heritage are economic development," Miner said.

Spreading the word and getting people to think differently about history is essential if the history that makes the region special is to be preserved for future generations, she and Rugh agree.

Lois Bruinooge, executive director of TLGV, said the concerns and thoughts expressed during the organization's listening tour



L. Bruinooge



L. Moorehead



J. Pillo



reinforced the need for innovative ideas – some of which are already being applied to ongoing projects. The \$6.1 million federal grant funding the Southern New England Heritage Forest initiative is one example.

The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor is the heart of a 1.49 million-acre unfragmented forest corridor stretching along the Connecticut and Rhode Island border to the Quabbin Reservoir in Massachusetts. With 77 percent forest, the national heritage corridor is a green oasis in the middle of the urban megalopolis of the east coast. The Southern New England Heritage Forest extends that oasis, creating a vital north-south corridor of open land for birds and other wildlife. Most of that open land, however, is in private hands.

“The region relies on private landowners to protect many of its forests,” Bruinooge said. “Recognizing that, we have led the Southern New England Heritage Forest initiative to educate landowners and bring the idea of conservation to the front of their minds. To do so we have brought

together a coalition 19 non-profit, academic, government and business partners, all working together to achieve the same goals.”

The \$6.1 million Southern New England Heritage Forest initiative is now in phase two where landowners are applying to create forest management plans with a special emphasis on bird habitat assessments. Phase one saw 30 landowners apply to permanently protect more than 2,500 acres of land. The highest scoring properties are currently being evaluated.

Even with a \$6.1 million federal grant and another \$6.1 million being infused into the initiative through the work of partners, the effort will protect or create management plans for only a

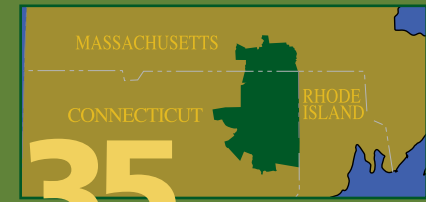
fraction of the Southern New England Heritage Forest.

“So we are asking,” Bruinooge said, “how can we extend this project? How do we further help landowners protect the woods they love? It’s just one example of how we are asking, not only with land conservation but with farmland and historic and cultural efforts, how do we help people see problems in new ways? How do we partner to make the efforts that much more effective and longer lasting? How do we inspire new stewards, engage more youth and become even more effective advocates for the corridor? We know every answer involves collaboration and partnerships, and the kinds of grassroots, roll-up-your-sleeves mentality to think differently that created the corridor in the first place.”



J. Wheeler

The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor BY THE NUMBERS



35 communities
9 in Massachusetts and
26 in Connecticut

706,815 acres
or 1,104 square miles

300,000+ PEOPLE

275 sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places
FIVE National Historic Landmarks

\$303 million generated annually by National Heritage Corridor tourism partners

62 bald eagle chicks (estimated) hatched from 9 nests over the last decade



531 miles of trails



11 SITES on the CT Freedom Trail

100+ historic sites and museums open to the public



43 historic town commons and greens



84% forest and farm



ONE National Natural Landmark, Pachaug-Great Meadow Swamp

9 SITES on the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route, a National Historic Trail

1000's of businesses & non-profit partners working together towards stronger, healthier and more vibrant communities



32 MILES of a National Scenic Byway, Route 169



57 MILES of state-designated scenic roads

ONE Wild & Scenic River, the Wood-Pawcatuck headwaters



NINE rail trails

FIVE National Recreation Trails

56 miles of the East Coast Greenway, a Maine to Florida bikeway



6 US Army Corps of Engineers Recreation/ Flood Management Areas

Most of the **1,407 square-mile** Thames River watershed, the 3rd largest draining into Long Island Sound

Heart of the **1.49 MILLION-ACRE** Southern New England Heritage Forest, a priority woodlands landscape



Scenes from TLGV's 25th Anniversary Celebration



After wagon rides down to the river, State Archaeologist Emeritus Nick Bellantoni shared his extensive knowledge of early settlements in the region, pointing out the locations of Native American fish weirs in the Quinebaug River.

TLGV capped off a successful Walktober with a special 25th anniversary celebration on November 2, 2019, exactly 25 years to the day the national heritage corridor was created.



State Senator Mae Flexer, State Representative Pat Boyd, State Representative Anne Dauphinais and State Representative Rick Hayes present a citation from the Connecticut Legislature to honor the national heritage corridor's 25th anniversary.

U.S. Representative Joe Courtney and former Congressman Sam Gejdenson were on hand to celebrate with TLGV.



TLGV Executive Director Lois Bruinooge thanked all of the Walktober leaders in attendance for their knowledge, passion and desire to pass on what they love.



Attendees were treated to a hearty lunch complete with an anniversary cake!



The event was held at iconic Allen Hill Farm, with perfect weather and wagon tours arranged by Charlie Langevin and his crew.

Chief Ranger Bill Reid spoke about the mill history of the Quinebaug River, the central artery of the corridor.



Special thanks to the Brooklyn Agriculture Commission and Town of Brooklyn for helping organize this event.



NONPROFIT PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

QVCC Foundation

“Unique race, unique place” – Tackle the Trail is a fundraiser that could only exist in The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor.

When Monique Wolanin, director of institutional advancement at QVCC, dreamed up Tackle the Trail in 2014 she saw the opportunity to bring together her love for her community and the landscape and her passion for trail running. The race – open to both teams and individuals – is a major fundraiser for the QVCC Foundation, which supports students and programs at Quinebaug Valley Community College.

“We’re taking advantage of our location,” Wolanin said. “We’ve got this amazing natural resource. Let’s share it. Let’s share our love of it and have other people appreciate it and support the community that surrounds it.”

Tackle The Trail grows up in 2020 from a 20-mile trail run to a full marathon through The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor, along the Air Line State Park Trail from Windham to Putnam, with some extra loops in the middle. The race is Oct. 17 in 2020 and is always the third Saturday in October. A marathon was always part of the plan for Tackle the Trail. As a 20-mile race, it had already attracted runners from near and far. As a marathon it will capture the attention of even more racers, which, Wolanin said, means more funding for students at QVCC.

The 2019 edition of Tackle The Trail raised \$52,000 for the foundation. It is second only to the much longer tenured golf tournament. But Tackle the Trail grows every year and has the potential to become the foundation’s largest fundraiser. Fundraising allows the QVCC Foundation to infuse more than \$240,000 into programs and direct student aid. Because of the community’s support for the foundation, every QVCC graduate in the last nine years has left the college with no federal debt.

Peter Deary, president of the QVCC Foundation, said when he hears the stories of how the college and the foundation have impacted lives, he knows all the volunteer work is worth it.

“Not to sound corny, but what we do is life changing,” Deary said. “We’re helping people who could not afford an education get one. They can go on to get jobs, not minimum wage jobs, but good paying jobs that may help them go on to further their education and then get even better jobs. When you hear those stories, you know what we do is important.”

The benefits of the foundation’s work ripple out beyond the individuals who might receive aid, Deary said. Those good jobs help fuel the economy and support the community in many ways. Tackle



RUN THE RACE
Tackle The Trail
is Oct. 17

For more information and to register for Tackle the Trail and the upcoming training session, visit www.tacklethetrail.org.

Follow Tackle the Trail on Facebook and Instagram.

the Trail is similar. It takes the efforts of dozens of volunteers and the cooperation of the state and the towns the race runs through. But the race brings together the community and also attracts runners from far and wide, Deary said.

“The race has a local flavor because of where it is and the community members who support it,” Deary said. “Why not show off how beautiful it is here to runners and make them aware of what we have? What better way to spread the word about this area?”



Deary credits Wolanin’s commitment to the region and the college with fueling the success of Tackle the Trail. “We knew if Monique wanted to do this race it was going to be a success.”

Wolanin said while the race will be a marathon, there will also be half-marathon and the traditional relay team format for Tackle The Trail. Because of the length of the race, two legs will be loops off the

Air Line Trail and include more technical running. “It’s important for runners to train appropriately,” she said.

To help get runners started on their training, the foundation has teamed up the Hale Youth and Family YMCA for a stretching and mobility class followed by a trail run. There will also be a post-run gathering for “brews and bites” at Jessica Tuesday’s.

The 2019 Tackle the Trail raised more than \$50,000 for the QVCC Foundation.

All photos by P. Carito

The heart of Tackle the Trail, every program that spins off it and all the other programs the foundation runs, such as Visions in Leadership, is the community and supporting students.

“The Foundation’s mission has never changed,” Wolanin said. “Our community realized from the start that it would need to fundraise to ensure local students had the means to enroll at QVCC. Since 1971, thanks to events like Tackle the Trail, the QVCC Foundation has provided a ‘hand up’ to thousands of local students, helping them to transform their lives and in return, improving our community.”

“Why not show off how beautiful it is here to runners and make them aware of what we have? What better way to spread the word about this area?”

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Ernie Benoit

Ernie Benoit just might be The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor's version of Aquaman. At the very least you would have a difficult time finding anyone with as much knowledge about what is happening above and below the waters of Webster Lake.

Benoit has spent his life on the lake and exploring the shores of the French River. His love of all things watery – from water skiing barefoot to racing sail boats – turned into a passion to ensure those water resources he has enjoyed all his life would be there for his daughter, grand-daughter and generations after.



"I'd like the lake to be as good for them as it's been for me," Benoit said. "I've lived here essentially all my life. I love it here." Here, is Point Breeze, on the end of the peninsula with rare undeveloped land surrounding him. He has a great view of Webster Lake's resident eagles – George and Martha (or perhaps other eagles who have taken their place) - and history with the land and water.

The one water-based activity Benoit prefers to leave to others is fishing. He remembers trying it as a child, bringing a fish to his mother who refused to make it into a meal. The experience convinced Benoit fishing wasn't for him, but he also realizes his mother had a good reason not to eat that fish. The water quality

was not exactly pristine. In truth, parts of the area were literally dumping grounds.

"About 40 years ago a group of us decided to start cleaning up the point," Benoit said. "Back when I was growing up people would dump things in the swamp or up over the hill. There were some places that were really bad, so we decided to do something about it."

Benoit's love of the water led him to become a citizen scientist in the early 2000s as he joined both the French River Connection and Webster Lake Association to support their efforts to steward the waterways. Benoit has been an active member of the Webster Lake Water Quality Monitoring

Team, a team which is a critical cog in The Last Green Valley's Water Quality Monitoring Program. "With all the testing we've done we know the lake is in pretty good shape and we're not seeing any pollution coming into it from the streams," Benoit said.

For Benoit, all the volunteering hours add up to the opportunity to continue enjoying the lake and making sure future generations will too. "My favorite time is when the crowds leave in the autumn and we can get out on the boat to watch the sunset," Benoit said. "The foliage is beautiful."

"I'd like the lake to be as good for them as it's been for me. I've lived here essentially all my life. I love it here."

BUSINESS PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Putnam Bank

For more than three decades Tom Borner has been in a leadership role at Putnam Bank. In that time the bank has donated millions of dollars to non-profits and community organizations. Ask Borner what fuels the philanthropic drive and he bristles a little.

"It's not charity, it's about community," said Borner, President and Chief Executive Officer of Putnam Bank. "We never give handouts. We give a hand up."

Putnam Bank is one of the oldest community banks in the nation. Founded in 1862 in Putnam, it now has eight branch locations and a loan center. Both the bank and its charitable arm, The Putnam Bank Foundation, have been generous to The Last Green Valley and other organizations in the national heritage corridor. The bank and foundation have donated \$41,675 to support TLGV's Acorn Adventures, Walktober and Tastes of the Valley since 2001.

"We were one of the first financial supporters of Walktober back when it was just Walking Weekend," Borner said. "The national heritage corridor is about the community and celebrating what we have here. It made sense for us to support that."

"It's not charity, it's about community. We never give handouts. We give a hand up."



Left to right: Bill Reid, TLGV Chief Ranger; Lois Bruinooge, TLGV Executive Director; Thomas A. Borner, Putnam Bank President & CEO; and Lynn K. Bourque, Putnam Bank SVP & Branch Administrator.

Putnam Bank is merging with Centreville Bank of Rhode Island and will be known as Putnam Bank, a division of Centreville Bank in the coming months. Borner said The Putnam Bank Foundation will continue to support community endeavors.

Knowing the bank was merging with a like-minded community-oriented bank was critical for Borner. While he attended primary and high school in western Connecticut, his family's roots are in the Pomfret area, where his mother, grandmother and great-grandparents were born. Every summer, he, his parents and his seven siblings would live in a family home in Brooklyn and later he would stay in Pomfret to work on the family farm. The family stayed summers through the Brooklyn Fair,

at the end of August, and then went back home to prepare for school. On his 18th birthday, the day after high school graduation, Borner moved in with his great-aunt in Pomfret full-time and worked on the farm to put himself through college and law school.

Lynn Bourque, a senior vice president and branch administrator at Putnam Bank, said Borner is not afraid to roll up his sleeves and get dirty, literally, to support his community. It's that spirit, mentality and work ethic that drives all the funding decisions made by the bank, she said.

"We're a close-knit community and we have a lot of good things happening here," Bourque said. "We support the organizations that are working together to make a difference."

TLGV GRANTS

Enriching Our Communities

The Last Green Valley awarded \$75,000 in grants in 2019 as part of its largest funding program in more than a decade. TLGV offered the grants to celebrate the 25th anniversary of its national heritage corridor designation.

The Community Food Collaborative in Sturbridge, MA received \$6,000 for enhancements to make the community garden more efficient and productive. The garden ensures a food pantry in Southbridge can offer fresh produce to Sturbridge and Southbridge residents in need.

Killingly Historical and Genealogical Society in Killingly, CT was awarded \$1,000 for its "Preserving the Past" project. The project will catalog and preserve historic photographs, postcards, maps and other items and make them more accessible to the public.

Killingly Intermediate School in Killingly, CT received \$3,424.48 for the creation of three nature trails

on the school property. The trails will be part of a larger curriculum-based initiative on ecosystems and forest health.

Town of Mansfield, CT received \$7,500 for trail work, including signage, improvements and a trail guide, on its new Simpson-Wood Preserve. The town will be working with Boy Scout Troop 56 and students from EO Smith High School on improvements to the property. The preserve also connects to the town's 35-acre Mt. Hope Park.

Norwich Historical Society in Norwich, CT was awarded \$4,000 for its project called "Restoration of the circa 1759 David Greenleaf House." The house is a historic property on the grounds of the Leffingwell House Museum and the funds will go directly toward restoration of the rear lower level of the home to create an accessible space to accommodate more visitors for events and programming. Renovation of the space will allow both the Leffingwell House Museum and the Norwich Historical Society to expand programming and events.

Town of Oxford, MA was awarded a \$3,000 grant to assist in the purchase of a 1.23-acre parcel adjacent to an existing town recreation area. Oxford has made significant investments in

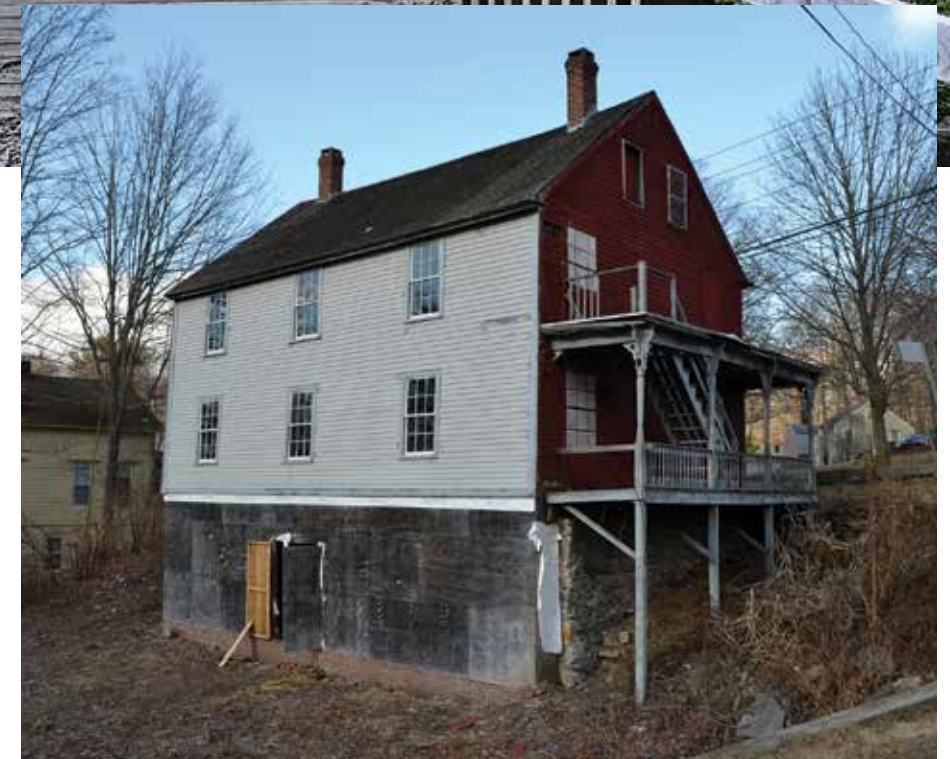
the last two years to its recreation area on Caruncle Pond. The property being purchased allows the town to protect more of the pond's shoreline while expanding opportunities for fishing, swimming and kayaking or canoeing.



B. Zoldak



Restoration has begun at the David Greenleaf House in Norwich. Above: the front of the 1759 structure. Right: the back of the home where the restoration work will take place.



Pierce Care in Brooklyn, CT received \$10,000 for a light pollution reduction program at its Creamery Brook Retirement Village. The grant will help fund replacement of fixtures which create significant sky glow on the 12-acre campus. See "TLGV Grants at Work" for more details about this project.

Thompson Together in Thompson, CT was awarded \$4,000 for its project called "Thompson Cemetery Restoration II." The grant will fund cleanup and repair work at six of the town's 24 cemeteries. The grant will help fund an ongoing effort of the committee to preserve and conserve the cemeteries, which had been neglected for many years. All the cemeteries play an important role in Thompson's history.

Town of Thompson, CT was awarded \$2,500 for its Garden by The River Project at 65 Main St. The garden is phase one of a long-term vision to reclaim the property and rehabilitate a historic building there. The garden will include installation of a rain garden and a community garden.

Town of Thompson, through its Trails Committee, was awarded \$3,000 for its project called "Traveling Through Thompson: Directional and Interpretive Signage to Protect & Promote Thompson's Historic and Cultural



From left to right seated: Ted Decyk of Paquette Electric, John Bartok Jr., a resident of Creamery Brook, and Linda Silvia, executive director of Creamery Brook, meet with TLGV's Lead Night Sky Rangers, Kim and Geoff McLean to discuss new night-sky-friendly lighting fixtures.

Resources." The Town will develop a consistent signage plan to promote and protect Thompson's resources and provide valuable information to visitors to enhance their experience. Many of the town's historic locations will receive signage.

Union School in Union, CT was awarded \$9,747 for its Union United effort on the school grounds. Effort have been underway for several years to make Union School both the educational and community center of Connecticut's smallest town by population. The grant will fund enhancements to outdoor classroom space, an outdoor gathering space and the creation of a community garden.



Windham County 4-H Foundation in Pomfret, CT was awarded \$10,000 for dam repairs. The dam is essential to the maintenance of the 4-H Camp pond on its 265-acre property. The pond is the center of activity during summer camps and is integral in the programming of the Ragged Hill Environmental Science programs.

The Windham Region Community Council in Willimantic, CT received \$10,000 for its Thread City Family Garden Outdoor Classroom. While the council and its GROW Windham effort are the applicants, it is truly the Windham Youth Core, a high school leadership group, that is leading the effort to build outdoor classroom and gathering space at their existing half-acre Thread City Family Garden.



TLGV GRANTS AT WORK

Reducing Light Pollution

John Bartok Jr. loves to stargaze. But the Big Dipper, Pleiades, Cassiopeia, the Milky Way and other night sky features many residents of The Last Green Valley can see regularly have disappeared for Bartok.

"I can't see the stars here," said Bartok, a resident of PierceCare's Creamery Brook Retirement Village in Brooklyn, CT. "I've had conversations with other residents about it, and they would like a chance to look at the night sky too."

Armed with TLGV's Night Sky issue of In Touch, published in 2019, and a news clipping about the 2019 Community Enhancement Grant program, Bartok suggested to the leadership at Creamery Brook the installation of night-sky-friendly lighting to dramatically reduce the light pollution created by 26 lighting fixtures surrounding the grounds.

"John really inspired us to look at this, and we realized the project could have a lot of positive benefits for our residents and the region," said Linda Silvia, executive director of Creamery Brook. Creamery Brook applied for and received the full \$10,000 possible to help fund the \$31,000 project.

Bartok said in addition to enhancing the night sky views, the new fixtures will also prevent light shine into residents' apartments. "There are some areas where it's a real problem, and it disturbs the sleep of people living here," he said.

Light pollution has well documented negative effects on human health, wildlife and plant life, in addition to obliterating views of the stars. The Creamery Brook project will also help TLGV further its efforts to educate about and reduce light pollution in the national heritage corridor. TLGV now has 16 volunteer Night Sky Rangers monitoring light pollution in 21 towns of the corridor. As Night Sky Rangers collect measurements, the data is being compiled to create a baseline of light pollution and prioritize areas where light pollution reduction efforts can be most effective.

Ted Decyk, a senior program administrator at Paquette Electric in Pomfret, is working with Silvia and Bartok to install night-sky-friendly fixtures. Decyk said the Creamery Brook project is an example of how lighting fixtures can provide illumination where it's needed, yet not contribute to light pollution. "They need lights here on their walkways," Decyk said. "They can't turn off the lights, but they can really reduce the sky glow their lights create."

Once Creamery Brook developed a plan for the new lighting with Decyk, Silvia invited TLGV's Lead Night Sky Rangers Geoff and Kim McLean to review the plans. "What they're doing makes sense for their needs, and it should really help," Geoff McLean said. The McLeans have taken pre-project light pollution measurements around the property and will return to take new measurements once the project is complete.

"We're excited to see how much a difference this could make," Silvia said. "I love to look at the night sky. It's one of the really special things about living in the area, so to be able to ensure our residents can enjoy it too is important."

"They can't turn off the lights, but they can really reduce the sky glow their lights create."



T. Miller

Are Your Woods Bird Friendly?

The Last Green Valley launched the second phase of the \$6.1 million Southern New England Heritage Forest Program with two grant rounds for landowners to obtain forest management plans with bird habitat assessments. To date, more than 40 landowners with approximately 3,000 woodland acres have applied.

Additional funds will be available in 2021 for landowners who would like to improve woodland habitat for important bird species and manage their woods for wildlife and people.

A professional forester will walk your property and coordinate with the Audubon society in your state to produce a high-quality forest management plan with a bird habitat assessment of your woods. The plan will recommend measures you can take to improve the health of your woods. The plan will meet federal and state requirements and may be used to apply for property tax reductions at the local level (where applicable).

Grant funds are available to pay for most of the forester's costs and to completely fund the bird habitat assessments. Landowners will be responsible for choosing a forester from an approved list and paying for a percentage of the total cost of the forest management plan. This program is ideally suited for landowners who have never had a forest management plan and own more than 10 acres of woodlands.

Program requirements vary by state. To get started, contact the lead partner for your state. The partners can assist with the application process. The application deadline for Connecticut and Rhode Island is December 31, 2020, but we recommend you begin the process early to ensure the application is complete before the deadline. Massachusetts is accepting applications on a rolling basis so you may apply at any time.

Visit www.thelastgreenvalley.org for links to the application materials, including a list of communities in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island that are included in this program.

CONTACTS

For Connecticut Projects – Bill Reid, 860-774-3300; bill@tlgv.org

For Massachusetts Projects – Christopher Riely, 401-225-6135; christopher@sweetbirchconsulting.com

For Rhode Island Projects – Kate Sayles, 401-934-0840; ksayles.nricd@gmail.com

Supporting partners for this project include: MA Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Providence Water, Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies, CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, Hull Forest Products, Thames River Basin Partnership, New England Forestry Foundation, Eastern CT Conservation District, Norcross Wildlife Foundation, RI Division of Forest Management, RI Woodland Partnership, Harvard Forest, Yale Sustaining Family Forests Institute, Audubon Connecticut, Mass Audubon and Audubon Rhode Island.

The Southern New England Heritage Forest is a 1.49 million-acre unfragmented forest corridor stretching along the Connecticut and Rhode Island border to the Quabbin Reservoir in Massachusetts. Bounded by more heavily urbanized areas, with more than one million nearby residents, the SNEHF has an astonishing 76 percent forest cover and offers one of the last viable wildlife corridors from southern to northern New England.

The program is part of the \$6.1 million Southern New England Heritage Forest conservation effort, an unprecedented three-state collaboration made possible through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The NRCS funding is being matched by project partners, bringing the economic infusion into the region to \$12.2 million.

A TRIBUTE TO Larry Lowenthal

Larry Lowenthal, one of the people integral to the creation of The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor, passed away in March.

It was Lowenthal who the National Park Service sent to investigate whether the claims of the grassroots committee and then-Congressman Sam Gejdenson, that the area was worthy of national designation, were accurate. As a National Park Service Ranger and Historian, Lowenthal's report not only convinced the park service the locals were right, it's a primer on what makes The Last Green Valley special.

"Larry was an extraordinary person to The Last Green Valley for so many reasons," said Lois Bruinooge, executive director of TLGV. "Most important was his love for the region, its history and its landscape. Larry's insight into how the land shaped the history of the region set the tone for everything the corridor has done these last 25 years. His enthusiasm and reverence for the region inspired many people."

Larry's professional involvement only signified the start of his relationship with The Last Green Valley. He had been a dedicated volunteer ever since. "I lived in it," Larry said in a 2018 interview. "It gave me a connection I didn't have with too many other places that I had worked on. This was personal."

Lowenthal led Walktober adventures, all the way back to when the event was known as Walking Weekend. In 2018 Lowenthal was named Mr. Walktober and led several walks.



Lowenthal is survived by his wife, Kitty. He and Kitty have volunteered for many years as TLGV Rangers, giving talks about various aspects of The Last Green Valley and assisting the organization in other, behind-the-scenes ways, such as reviewing grant applications.

Thank you, Larry, for caring so deeply about The Last Green Valley. We are grateful for your passion, expertise and vision, a legacy that will continue as we strive to pass on the national heritage corridor for future generations to enjoy.



By the Numbers

22

listening sessions conducted by TLGV with **256 participants** representing **67 organizations** to plan for the next 10 years

16

new Night Sky Rangers trained

\$75,000

in grants awarded to **13 projects** in The Last Green Valley

2.5 months

spent at Quinebaug Valley Community College while mold and asbestos were removed from our office – we are grateful to QVCC for taking us in!

\$1,169,865

in match contributed by TLGV partners

13

support letters written by TLGV for projects that advance the Vision 2020 management plan

738

attendees at TLGV Acorn Adventures and Member Programs

73

volunteers monitored **67 sites** (stream, lake and pond) for water quality, collecting more than **3,330 pieces** of valuable data

34 volunteers surveyed

31 locations and sighted

22

bald eagles during the annual mid-winter eagle survey

22

landowners applied for forest management plans with bird habitat assessments covering **1,300 acres**

39

organizations involved in capacity building projects with TLGV

EIGHT

bald eagle chicks hatched from **5 NESTS** monitored by TLGV volunteers

1,870 volunteers from **29 organizations** participated in

69 cleanups, picking up

95,376

pounds of trash

22,349

people enjoyed Spring Outdoors

95,983

Walktober participants

12 miles

of trail assessed for people with mobility challenges by TLGV's team

1,975,473

people visited National Heritage Corridor attractions and events

48

community events attended by TLGV Rangers

EIGHTEEN

farmers at the table enjoyed speaking with guests at Tastes of the Valley

3,167 volunteers devoted more than

10,000 hours

to National Heritage Corridor projects, worth

\$317,992



2019
tastes
of the
valley

FARMER at the TABLE

A sold-out crowd enjoyed the 14th Annual Tastes of the Valley – A Farmer at the Table held at the Publick House Historic Inn in Sturbridge, MA, in August.



Tastes of the Valley is farm-to-table dining at its best, with products donated by Apis Verdi Farm, Blackmer Farm, Bright Acres Farm Sugar House, Buddha's Bees Apiary, Buell's Orchard, Colgon Farm, Creamery Brook Bison, Echo Farm, Ekonk Hill Turkey Farm & Brown Cow Café, Elm Farm, Fairholm Farm, The Farmer's Cow, Himmelstein Homestead Farm, Lapsley Orchard, Maple Lane Farms, Taylor Brooke Winery and Woodstock Sustainable Farms.



Guests enjoyed locally-grown foods prepared by the region's best chefs during a sit-down, multi-course dinner in the company of a farmer, brewer, vintner or forester at each table, including: Linda Auger, Taylor Brooke Winery; Mike Bartlett, Hull Forest Products; Steve Broderick, Town Line Tree Farm; Robert Chang, Echo Farm; Margaret Chatey & Summer Webster, Westford Hill Distillers; Katie & Rick Hermonot, Ekonk Hill Turkey Farm; Erica & Jonathan Hermonot, Fairholm Farm; Bethany Knowlton, Killingly Ag-Ed & Knowlton Farms; Diane & Paul Miller, Fairvue Farms & The Farmer's Cow; Kies Orr, Fort Hill Farms & The Farmer's Cow; Chrissy & Matt Peckham, Elm Farm; and David Wollner, Willimantic Brewing Company.



Dick Woodward placed the winning bid to become "Honorary Mayor of The Last Green Valley" for the upcoming year.



Chefs from Grill 37, Inn at Woodstock Hill and Willimantic Brewing Company shared our host Publick House Historic Inn's kitchen to create one-of-a-kind dishes using fresh local ingredients. Additional tastes and sips were provided by Ben's Beans, The Courthouse Bar & Grill, The Farmer's Cow, G Seven Catering Company, Hosmer Mountain Soda, Maple Lane Farms, Metro Bistrot, Renee's Working Girl Catering, Taylor Brooke Winery, These Guys Brewing Company, The Vanilla Bean Café and Westford Hill Distillers.



Gene Michael Deary entertained guests while helping raise almost \$9,000 during the live auction, for an event total of more than \$35,000 in support of TLGV's programs. Thank you to all who donated auction and raffle items.



Thank you to our sponsors for supporting Tastes of the Valley: Host - Publick House Historic Inn; Platinum - Rebecca Harvey, Nancy Polydys and Simonds; Gold - Fiberoptics Technology, Keith & Elaine Knowlton, Putnam Bank and UNFI Helping Hands; Silver - Groton Open Space Association, Marjorie Hoskin, Savings Institute Bank & Trust (now BerkshireBank) and Titan Energy; Bronze - Cornerstone Bank, Dexter, Gerardi Insurance Services, Jewett City Savings Bank, Sturbridge Tourist Association and Village Electric.

Once again, we could not have held a successful event without the hard-working Tastes of the Valley Committee, led by Laura and Scott Moorehead. Thank you!



Scenes from the The Last Green Valley, Inc.'s 2019 Annual Meeting



The Last Green Valley's 2019 Annual Meeting was held May 30 at the UConn Alumni Center in Storrs, CT. We celebrated 25 years as a National Heritage Corridor with a reception in the Alumni Center's Husky Heritage Sports Museum, dinner in the Great Hall, and cake and ice cream from the UConn Dairy Bar!

Prior to the meeting, attendees were able to enjoy three optional activities: a guided tour inside the Ballard Institute of Museum and Puppetry; a campus art walk led by staff from the William Benton Museum of Art; or a tour of Horsebarn Hill with staff from the UConn College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources.



During the business meeting, TLGV members re-elected the following Board members for 3-year terms: Myra Ambrogi from Sterling, Donna Baron from Lebanon, James Gothreau from Putnam, Mike Nelson from Norwich and Mark Winne from Charlton. Marty Nieski from Dudley was re-elected to fill a 2-year vacancy.



We also welcomed two new Board members for 3-year terms: 1) The Reverend Doctor Susan Foster from Woodstock, who is a long-time TLGV member and pastor of the East Woodstock Congregational Church. She enjoys kayaking, biking and hiking in The Last Green Valley and will bring a deep appreciation and environmental ethic to the Board; and 2) Cody Elvin from Griswold, a new TLGV member with a passion for this region. He is a manager for the UConn branch of Key Bank, allowing us to develop stronger connections with UConn students, faculty and staff.

TLGV members also elected the following Officers for 2-year terms: Chairman – Mike Nelson; Vice Chair – Elsie Bisset; Secretary – Myra Ambrogi; and Treasurer – Joan St. Ament.



Retiring Board members Debra Burns, Janet Blanchette and Bill Jobbagy were recognized for their service and Bill Jobbagy was surprised with a special Boland Hoskin Volunteer Award. This award is named for two of our founding members, John Boland and Marge Hoskin, and has only been given a few times to recognize exceptional volunteer service to The Last Green Valley. Bill was recognized for his support and steady leadership over the last 14 years. He has presided over some interesting challenges with grace and humor, and has been unfailingly thoughtful, respectful and kind in his approach to our work. We have leaned on his business expertise as well his passion for all parts of our mission. He has encouraged discussion, debate and engagement by our Board and is leaving the Board in a much stronger position than when he began.



The US Army Corps of Engineers was named Team Walktober 2019. The Corps' staff have always worked hard to promote, care for and celebrate their recreational resources, despite very limited budgets and duties that pull them in other directions. They've been part of Walktober since 1992, when it was Walking Weekend, and they offered a tour of West Thompson Dam. Since then, they have consistently offered walks, talks, tours and paddles not only during Walktober but year-round.



The Public House in Sturbridge, MA was presented with TLGV's Business Partner of the Year award in recognition of their staff's outstanding commitment and participation in Tastes of the Valley. They have been with us since the first Tastes of the Valley but have gone above and beyond our wildest expectations for the last three years as our host restaurant.

The Last Green Valley, Inc.

Statement of Financial Position as of September 30, 2019
From Audited Financial Statement - Copies Available Upon Request.

Assets	
CURRENT ASSETS:	
Cash	\$263,120
Certificate of Deposit	303,265
Grants Receivable	156,506
Investments	175,845
Inventory	494
Prepaid Expenses	4,339
Total Current Assets	\$903,569
PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT:	
Machinery and Equipment	6,739
Less Accumulated Depreciation	(4,896)
Net Property and Equipment	1,843
Total Assets	\$905,412
Liabilities and Net Assets	
CURRENT LIABILITIES:	
Accounts Payable	\$ 5,575
Accrued Expenses	37,675
Advances from Grantors	16,212
Grants Awarded	88,671
Total Current Liabilities	148,133
Total Liabilities	\$148,133
Net Assets:	
Without Donor Restrictions	\$730,346
With Donor Restrictions	26,933
Total Net Assets	\$757,279
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$905,412

Changes in Net Assets

Revenues and Gains (FY 2019 Income Sources):

	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	Total
National Park Service	\$717,482		\$717,482
Sales – Merchandise	1,000		1,000
Grants	39,580		39,580
Contributions	127,529	6,159	133,724
Memberships/Fees	17,555		17,555
Interest Income	3,938		3,938
Unrealized Investment Gain	6,876		6,876
Advertising Income	14,405		14,405
Fundraising Event	36,023		36,023
Total Revenue	978,800	6,159	984,995

Expenses (FY 2019 Expense Allocations):

Program Services	750,716	750,716
Management & General	80,249	80,249
Fundraising	41,209	41,209
Total Expenses	872,174	872,174

Increase in Net Assets	106,626	6,159	112,821
Net Assets – Beginning of Year	623,720	20,738	644,458
Net Assets – End of Year	730,346	26,933	757,279

Thank You to All of The Last Green Valley's Corporate, Non-Profit and Government Sponsors and Partners

From 10/01/2018 – 12/31/2019

FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDING \$100+

National Park Service, National Heritage Areas Program
US Dept. of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Regional Conservation Partnership Program

CASH CONTRIBUTIONS \$10,000+

Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut

\$5,000+

Millennium Power Partners, L.P.
Putnam Bank
Rivers Alliance of CT

\$2,500+

Berkshire Bank

\$1,000+

Anonymous bankHometown
Cornerstone Bank
Farm Credit East
French River Connection
Ivanhoe Tool & Die Co., Inc.
Jewett City Savings Bank
Savers Bank
Simonds, Inc.
Town of Brooklyn
UNFI, Helping Hands Committee

\$500+

Cigna Foundation
Groton Open Space Association
Jewett City Savings Bank
KeyBank
Titan Energy
Town of Coventry

\$250+

The Denali Foundation, Inc.
Dexter-Russell, Inc.
Gerardi Insurance Services, Inc.
Sturbridge Tourist Association
Town of Chaplin
Capen Hill Nature Sanctuary
Village Electric

\$100+

Big Y Community Bag Program
The Black Tavern Historical Society
Charter Oak Federal Credit Union
Chelsea Groton Foundation
Fitzgerald & Halliday, Inc
Hansen Family Tree Farm, LLC
Pfizer Foundation Matching Gifts Program

Plainfield Historical Society
Plainfield Lions Club, Inc.
Sturbridge Lions Club
Town of Ashford
Town of Lisbon
Town of Pomfret
Town of Sprague
Town of Union
United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers & Allied Workers - Local 12

\$50+

Friends of Mansfield Hollow, Inc.
Network for Good
Stop & Shop Community Bag Program
Tuesday Bridge Club
Tuesday Club of Webster

\$25+

Bright Acres Farm Sugar House
DonateWell General Fund
New England Fiero Association
United Health Group/Benevity Community Impact Fund

ENHANCED PARTNERS

Allen Hill Farm, LLC
Anonymous^
Atlantic Broadband
bankHometown
Bed & Breakfasts of Mystic Coast & Country
Berkshire Bank
Blackmer Farm
Bogey Lanes
Bright Acres Farm Sugar House
Brooklyn Historical Society
Buell's Orchard
Byrnes Insurance Agency
Capen Hill Nature Sanctuary
Chamber of Central Mass South

Columbia Canoe Club
Cook's Farm Orchard
Cornerstone Bank
Coventry Historical Society^
Daughters of the Holy Spirit
ECFLA/Wolf Den Land Trust
Eileen D. Brown Charitable Trust
Enchanted Jewelry CT LLC
Farm Credit East
Finnish-American Heritage Society
Florence Griswold Museum
Fort Hill Farms & Gardens, LLC
French River Connection
Friends of Pachaug Forest Inc.
Girl Scouts of Connecticut
The Governor Samuel Huntington Trust/Huntington Homestead
Greater Norwich Chamber of Commerce
Groton Open Space Association
Halagan Design Group
Hale YMCA Youth & Family Center
Hansen Family Tree Farm, LLC^
Hart's Greenhouse & Florist
Hay Burr Inn
Highland Festival Association of Scotland, CT
Horizon Wings
Hull Forest Products
Ivanhoe Tool & Die Co., Inc.
Jewett City Savings Bank
Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts
Joshua's Tract Conservation & Historic Trust^
KeyBank
Ladd's Garden Center
Lakeview Marine - Paddlesport Rentals
Lapsley Orchard
Lebanon Historical Society Museum
Millennium Power Partners, L.P.
Morning Beckons Farm
Northeast Connecticut Farmers' Market
Northeastern CT Chamber of Commerce
Opacum Land Trust, Inc.
Optical Heritage Museum, Inc.

Pakulis Farm LLC
Palmer Arboretum
PierceCare^
Pine Hill Alpaca Farm
Pourings & Passages
Preston Ridge Vineyard
Putnam Bank
Putnam Business Association
Putnam Elms
Quiet Corner Inn
Quiet Corner NEMBA
Roseland Park
Samuel Smit, William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty
Savers Bank
Select Seeds
Semaki & Bird
Sharpe Hill Vineyard
Sturbridge Tourist Association
Taylor Brooke Winery
TNECT at The Bradley Playhouse
Town Line Tree Farm
Town of Killingly
Town of Voluntown
Voluntown Peace Trust
Wheelabrator, Lisbon
Willimantic Brewing Co., LLC, Rest. & Pub Brewery
Willimantic Food Co-op^
Willimantic Whitewater Partnership
Windham County 4-H Foundation
Woodstock Building Associates, LLC
Woodstock Business Association
Woodstock Sustainable Farms & Manton Green B & B
Wyndham Land Trust, Inc.

PARTNERS

101 Business Solutions
85 Main
The Adventure Park at Storrs
The Arc Eastern CT
Arc Emporium & ARC Redemption Center
Archambault Insurance Associates^
ARTicles Gallery
Arts in the Garden
Ashford Business Association

Continued on next page



^Has committed to a multi-year partnership.

Aspinock Historical Society
 Avalonia Land Conservancy^
 Ballard Institute & Museum
 of Puppetry
 The Barn at Gray Mare Hill
 Guest House
 The Black Tavern Historical Society
 Blue Slope Farm and Country Museum
 Booklovers' Gourmet
 Boy Scouts of America -
 CT Rivers Council
 Business Systems & Incentives, Inc.
 Canterbury Historical Society
 Chamber of Commerce,
 Windham Region
 Chamberlin Mill, Inc.
 Charlie Brown Campground
 Chase Graphics
 Chelsea Groton Bank
 Cherry Ledge Farm
 The Clara Barton Birthplace
 Museum & Barton Center for
 Diabetes Education
 Clarus Studios, Inc.
 Cloverleigh Farm
 Columbia Historical Society
 Connecticut Audubon Society
 at Pomfret
 Connecticut Eastern Railroad Museum
 Covanta SECONN
 Coventry Arts and Antiques
 Creamery Brook Bison
 Dexter-Russell, Inc. ^
 Dog Lane Cafe
 Dudley Conservation Land Trust
 Eastern CT Conservation District, Inc.
 Ekonk Hill Turkey Farm
 Federated Church of Brooklyn
 Friendly Spirits LLC
 Friends of Ashbel Woodward Museum
 Friends of the Prudence Crandall
 Museum
 Frog Rock Rest Stop, LLC
 Garden Gate Florist
 George's Galley
 Goudreau's at Nash's Garden Center
 Guns of Norwich Historical
 Society, Inc.
 Hampton Antiquarian & Historical
 Society, Inc.
 Henrietta House B&B and
 Red House Farm
 Highland Campground
 Hitchcock Free Academy
 Horse Listeners Orchard

Inn at Woodstock Hill
 J&D Civil Engineers, LLC
 Jeff Helgerson Excavating, Inc.
 Jonathan Trumbull Jr. House Museum
 JOYasanAH, LLC
 Killingly Business Association
 Killingly Grange #112
 Killingly Historical & Genealogical
 Society
 Landon's Tire, Inc.
 Lebanon Life Publications, LLC
 Lisbon Historical Society
 Longmeadow Automotive
 Mansfield Connections Magazine
 Mansfield Downtown Partnership
 Mansfield Historical Society
 Nathan Hale Homestead
 New England Forestry Foundation
 The New Roxbury Land Trust, Inc.
 North Oxford Mills
 Northeastern Connecticut Art Guild
 Norwich Arts Center
 Norwich Community Development
 Corporation
 Norwich Heritage & Regional
 Visitors' Center
 Norwich Historical Society
 OFS Fitel, LLC
 Old Sturbridge Village
 Old Sturbridge Village Inn & Reeder
 Family Lodges
 Oliver Wight Tavern at Old
 Sturbridge Village
 Our Companions Animal Rescue
 Oxford Firefighters Association
 Oxford Historical Commission
 Parker Memorials & Stone Co.
 Peppertree Camping
 Pomfret Horse and Trail Association,
 Inc.
 Preston Historical Society, Inc.
 Publick House Historic Inn
 Quiet Corner Garden Club
 Quinebaug Valley Community
 College Foundation
 Rawson Materials
 Reliance Health, Inc.
 Roseland Cottage
 Sawmill Pottery
 Schott North America Inc.
 Scotland Historical Society/Edward
 Waldo House
 The Shoe Smith
 Slater Memorial Museum
 Society of the Founders of Norwich

South Charlton Reservoir
 Association
 St. Joseph Living Center
 Sullivan & Company Real Estate, LLC
 SunNerds Solar Brokers
 TEEG
 Thompson Historical Society
 Trinity Episcopal Church
 Trink-et Shoppe
 Tyrone Farm
 UCONN CAHNR Office of
 Communications
 Vanilla Bean Cafe
 Victorian Neighborhood Association
 Village Electric
 Walter P. and Carolyn E. McGinn, DMD
 Webco Chemical Corporation^
 The Webster Dudley Business Alliance
 Weiss, Hale & Zahansky Strategic
 Wealth Advisors
 Westfield Congregational Church,
 UCC
 William Benton Museum of Art^
 Willimantic Renaissance, Inc.
 Willimantic Victorian Neighborhood
 Association
 Windham ARTS
 Windham Textile & History Museum
 WINY Radio/Osbrey Broadcasting
 Company
 Woodstock Agricultural Society, Inc.
 Woodstock Orchards, LLC

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

308 Lakeside
 85 Main
 Aces Defense
 The Adventure Park at Storrs
 Anya
 Apis Verde Farm
 Ben's Beans
 Blackmer Farm
 Boston Red Sox Baseball
 Bright Acres Farm Sugar House
 Buddha's Bees Apiary
 Buell's Orchard
 Church Street Putnam, LLC
 Captain Grant's 1754
 Colgon Farm
 Connecticut Audubon Society
 at Pomfret
 The Courthouse Bar and Grille
 Creamery Brook Bison
 Echo Farm
 Ekonk Hill Turkey Farm
 Elm Farm
 Fairholm Farm
 The Farmer's Cow
 Friendly Spirits LLC
 G-Seven Catering
 Garden Gate Florist
 Grill 37
 Hale YMCA Youth & Family Center
 Hank's Dairy Bar
 Highland Festival Association of
 Scotland, CT
 Himmelstein Homestead Farm
 Hosmer Mountain Soda
 Inn at Woodstock Hill
 Jorgensen Center for the
 Performing Arts
 KeyBank
 Killingly Historical &
 Genealogical Society
 Landon's Tire, Inc.
 Lapsley Orchards
 Maple Lane Farms
 Marty's of Dudley
 The Metro Bistrot
 Mohegan Sun
 Norwich Community Development
 Corporation
 Old Sturbridge Village
 Preston Ridge Vineyard
 Prudence Crandall Museum
 Publick House Historic Inn
 Rapsallion Brewery
 Rawson Materials
 Renee's Working Girl Catering Service
 Roger Williams Park Zoo
 Roseland Park
 Seasons Magazine
 Selbuort Valley Maple, LLC
 ServiceMASTER by Mason
 Sturbridge Coffee Roasters
 Taylor Brooke Winery
 These Guys Brewing Company
 Vanilla Bean Cafe
 Webster Lake Gifts
 Westford Hill Distillers
 Wheelabrator Technologies, Inc.
 Willimantic Brewing Co., LLC, Rest.
 & Pub Brewery
 Willimantic Food Co-op
 The Windham Club
 Windham County 4-H Foundation
 WINY Radio/Osbrey Broadcasting
 Company
 Woodstock Agricultural Society, Inc.
 Woodstock Sustainable Farms

^Has committed to a multi-year partnership.

Thank You to All of The Last Green Valley's Individual and Family Members and Donors

From 10/01/2018 – 12/31/2019

CASH CONTRIBUTIONS

\$10,000+

Bill & Silvia Jobbagy

\$5,000+

Keith & Elaine Knowlton*

\$2,500+

Rebecca M. Harvey

Nancy Polydys

\$1,000+

Anonymous

Anonymous*

Heath Drury Boote*

Jeff Conrad

Charlene Perkins Cutler

The Fish & Loaves Charitable

Gift Fund

John & Joan Gray

Betty Hale

Marjorie L. Hoskin

Mills Family Charitable Trust

Wayde & Mary Beth Schmidt

Glenn Warner & Marguerite

Davis

\$500+

Denise Archambault

John & Susan Preston Boland

Arthur Brodeur*

Elaine Crooke*

Lois Davies

Joe & Jean Drake

Michael & Carlee Drummer

Mark C. English

Peggy & Christopher

McKleroy

Mark & Michele Winne

\$250+

Anonymous*

Pamela Aey Adams*

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David & Nancy Bull

Margaret Campanelli*

Warren & Marguerite Church

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 Liz & Gregory Stillman
 William J. Zenko

\$100+

Anonymous (8)

Anonymous* (3)

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Marc & Mary Archambault

Dan & Mary Atwood

A. David &

Margaret Babbitt*

Richard Bailey

Donna Baron

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John & Janice Benda

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Jeff Blinderman

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 Ben Williams*
 Lucy Wong
 Loretta Wrobel

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Dean & Suzanne Albro

Susan Allen & Donald Konow

Julia Altdorf

Peter & Judy Andersen

Kelly & William Bailey

Merilyn G. Bambauer

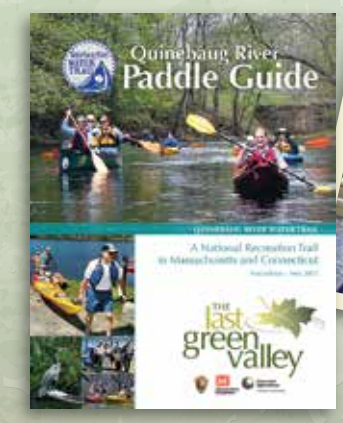
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