



BWLT NEWS

Protecting The Land You Love

October, 2024

5K Course Is Complete *A New Recreational Opportunity*

The BWLT has completed a new 5K Course which starts and ends at the Bridgewater Town Park. Runners, hikers, and walkers are welcome to enjoy the course from dawn until dusk every day.

The 3.1 mile trek, which extends across Hemlock Road, traverses a number of wooded trails with gentle slopes. The course includes two loops and features pine, maple and oak forests, hair pin turns, numerous bridge and stream crossings with views of stone walls and boulder fields. The elevation gain is 318 feet.

The land owners who partnered with us to make this course possible include Eversource Energy, The Nature Conservancy of CT and the Witkin Family. Jamie Curren, a local independent contractor, along with BWLT Executive Director Julie Stuart, were the architects of the course. Once the course was defined, several volunteers assisted them in connecting existing preserve trails and building new trails. Signage and markers were added and include 5K directional arrows and mile markers every 0.5 miles.

BWLT President Christian Feuer stated, "This is the first permanent 5K off-road course in Bridgewater and its surrounding towns. We are thrilled to be able to offer this experience to the entire community. We foresee walkers, trail runners, and hikers taking advantage of this scenic, forested course and reaping the many health and wellness benefits."

A course map is on the BWLT website at www.bridgewaterlandtrust.org



A glimpse of the 5K Walk & Celebration

Front row (left to right): Kyle Bennett, Grace Kellogg, Samantha Bisignano, Mairead Rosa, Bridget McCarthy, Christian Guinta, Tanner Guinta, Emily Cable, Haley Gugel, John Guinta

Back Row (left to right): Ryan McLaughlin, Kelly Sullivan, Chris Alfson, Matt Gugel

Community Fun!

Recent Events Of Note

September ushered in a number of impressive community events. The BWLT participated in the Bridgewater Annual Tractor Parade on Labor Day weekend. Our float was inspired by and in memory of Kit Sagendorf, a volunteer with the Trust and creator of the BWLT logo. We were awarded the Best Ladies Float in her honor.

We also held a Walk and Celebration to mark the opening of our new 5K Course. Over 100 community members came out to walk some or all of the course and then relaxed at the Town Park with food, games, contests, raffles and a bonfire. See the photo contest and raffle winners below.



Tappen Brook Walk & Celebration Winners

Photo Contest Winners

**Category 1:
Trucker Hat Party
Charlene Sullivan**



**Category 2: Spirit of The 5K
Wendy Rothman, Hannah Kaplon**

**Category 3:
Jump For Joy
Helaina Buzzeo**



Yeti Raffle Winners



1. Mairead Rosa
2. Haley Gugel
3. Tom Sperry
4. Mae Orkisz
5. Scott Greenhut

5K Race Held On New Course

Twenty-five runners turned out for our first 5K race on the new course at Tappen Brook Trails held on September 29th. Most of the athletes who ran the course are part of the 169 Club, a group of Connecticut runners whose goal is to run a race in all 169 CT towns. Bridgewater is considered "hard to get".

The top male finisher was 25 year old Dillon Bell of New Milford, CT with a time of 25:04. Kristin Vaughan (age 40) of East Hartford, CT was the top female finisher with a time of 31:09. Henry Gsell, age 18, was the top Bridgewater runner coming in 4th place overall with a time of 28:24.

The BWLT is very grateful to volunteer Scott Benjamin who timed the event and Bridgewater EMT's Diana Haskell, Jim Donaghy and Jeannette Purdy who were on hand in case of emergency.



Top male finisher Dillon Bell



BWLT President Christian Feuer gives a prize to the top female finisher Kristin Vaughan

Helping Neighbors In Need

Donation Made To Southbury Land Trust

The town of Southbury faced severe devastation to roads, homes, farms, and businesses after the flood event on Sunday, August 18th. We learned that there was unprecedented and costly damage to the Phillips-Lovdal Farm Preserve, one of the Southbury Land Trust's largest and most popular Preserves. In response, the Board of Directors voted to donate \$500 to help with the expense of new culverts, ditches, loads of gravel and a new parking lot. While it is unusual for a non-profit to donate to another, we hope our members agree that under the circumstances, it was an appropriate and neighborly gesture.



The road leading to the Phillips-Lovdal Farm Preserve during the flood.

Bridgewater Added To Highlands Region

Open Space Funding Extended

The Bridgewater Land Trust & HVA (Housatonic Valley Association) are pleased to share the news, on behalf of CT DEEP & US Fish and Wildlife Service, that Bridgewater's request to be added to the Highlands Region in Connecticut has been approved.

The Highlands Conservation Act (HCA) is a law that was passed in 2004 to protect the Highlands region, which covers parts of Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania (see map below). The HCA's goals include protecting endangered species, ensuring clean drinking water and sustaining working farms and forests.

The HCA authorizes the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to provide financial assistance to the states in the Highlands region to help conserve land. With this news, conservation

projects in Bridgewater may be eligible for Highlands funding through this Act.



FIELD NOTES

Float Preparations

Thank you the volunteers who helped engineer and create our float for the Bridgewater Tractor Parade. Thank you: Lisa Antel, Leslie Granger, Russell Marcus, Curtis Read and Bill Stuart Sr. for your hands on help!



Walk & Celebration Volunteers

Thank you to Bridgewater Recreation Commission members Lynn Kubisek, Allison Gsell (pictured right) and Dawn MacNutt for staffing the stations at our Tappen Brook 5K Walk & Celebration.



Hay Production

Four of our preserves are actively used for hay production. Late summer is often the 2nd or 3rd cutting of a field and the hay more nutritious and suitable for both cattle and horses. The field shown here is along Northrup Street and is part of the Lamont Preserve.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Meet Your Greens

Thursday, October 24th 5-7 PM

Woodbury Brewing Company

BWLT is Co-Hosting

Meet Your Greens is Northwest Connecticut's happy hour network, providing opportunities to make conservation and land-use connections. These informal gatherings offer time for people to exchange news and plant seeds for collaboration. All are welcome and no RSVP is necessary.



Trunk Or Treat

Meet The Mad Hatters

The Bridgewater Land Trust has partnered with the Bridgewater Historical Society to "treat" families to some fun on Halloween. Bring your kids over to the Peck House near the Burnham Library and meet the "Mad Hatters of Hat Shop Hill"!

For those who may not know the history, there were a number of large hat factories in Bridgewater in the 1800's located on Hat Shop Hill Road. The phrase "mad as a hatter" comes from mercury poisoning, also known as Mad Hatter disease, which was common among hatters in the 19th century. Mercury was used to stiffen felt for hats. Over time, the hatters inhaled mercury vapors and it caused illness which included unpredictable and crazy behavior. These crazy "mad hatters" are back!



Annual Meeting & Celebration

Local Farms & Food

We are looking forward to celebrating with our members on Wednesday evening, November 13th. The event will be held at the Hilltop Center on Hut Hill Road in Bridgewater. In addition to providing an overview of our activities, finances and accomplishments in 2024, we will have a special presentation on local farms and food. The meal will be a farm-to-table experience catered by the Bridgewater Bistro.



Please Join Us

Annual Meeting and Celebration of
Local Farms & Food



Wednesday,
November 13th
5:30 PM
Hilltop Center
132 Hut Hill Road
Bridgewater

Featuring
Farm-To-Table
Food Stations
catered by
**The Bridgewater
Bistro**

Tickets: \$50
Includes program
and dinner
Seats are limited

RSVP - Julie Stuart at julie@bridgewaterlandtrust.org

Support Us

The Bridgewater Land Trust is a federally recognized
501(c) (3) charitable organization, and all your
contributions are tax deductible.

Stay Social

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