

# Ridgefield Conservation Commission



## SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER

The Ridgefield Conservation Commission (RCC) serves the Town by devoting its efforts to the sound development, conservation, supervision, and regulation of the Town's natural resources.



### RCC Awards Woodcock Nature Center

At its annual meeting in May, the RCC presented the Edith Meffley Award to the Woodcock Nature Center. The award is given to persons or organizations that have demonstrated unwavering values and contributions to nature and conservation. The award is named after a former Commissioner, Edith Meffley, who served for decades starting in 1965. Over three dozen people attended the award ceremony, which was preceded by a lecture by Ryan MacLean from the **Greenwich Audubon Center** on raptor behavior and identification.



### Conservation Tip!

Black bear sightings have become increasingly common in Ridgefield. To minimize chances of contact, all food sources around your dwelling should be eliminated. This includes bird seed, pet food, open garbage can and compost piles.

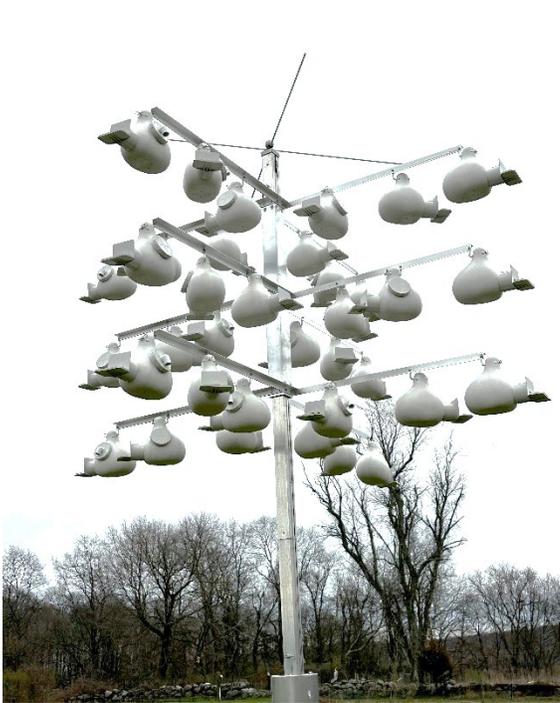
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### RCC Donates \$5,000 To Replace Main Street Trees

It's no secret that a number of the stately trees on Main Street need replacement. The RCC has donated \$5,000 as part of an effort to plant replacement native trees along the highway. It has also reviewed and commented on the planting plans. The first trees should go in the ground later this year.

## Go Martins!

The RCC doubled the number of nesting gourds this Spring for the purple-martin population residing at McKeon Farm. The result has been an explosion of birds and eggs. By mid-June there were 19 gourds with nests, 4 newborns and 84 eggs. If you visit the fields, you can't miss these expert aviators zipping over the fields catching countless insects. And don't forget to watch for the many bluebirds living in one of the 16 nesting boxes on the farm.



## Lady Slippers at Hemlock Hills



This lovely native orchid reveals itself at Hemlock Hills. If you are fortunate enough to see one, take only pictures, as many are endangered. This Pink Lady's Slipper is the most common of its type.

## Carroll Brewster Recognized

Long-term commissioner Carroll Brewster was recognized by the Town for his many years of service including his tenure on the RCC. In addition, a bench in his name was dedicated and installed at his family farm on Lounsbury Road. Over 108 acres of the Brewster Farm has conservation easements that prevent its development in perpetuity.



## A Summer (Not Motley) Crew

The RCC is fortunate this year to find a quartet of exceptional summer help that will maintain its properties and over 50 miles of trails. Ryan, Dave, Paul, and PJ bring a vast wealth of experience, enthusiasm and skills to our open spaces. If you see them, wish them well on their hard and important work.



## Kitsey Snow Resigns RCC, Joins Tree Committee

The RCC regrettably accepted the resignation of Kitsey Snow, who has been a member since 2006. Kitsey's contributions to the conservation and enhancement of Ridgefield's open spaces include contributing to two Natural Resources Inventories and Plans of Conservation Development as well as adoption of Ridgefield's Native Plant Policy.

The Commission is delighted that she has accepted a position on Ridgefield's Tree Committee. Other related affiliations include the Norwalk River Watershed Association, the Ridgefield Garden Club, the Norwalk River Valley Trail and the Pollinator Pathway.



## Open Space Sightings

At McKeon Farm and Sarah Bishop Park a variety of views and creatures can be found. If you just stay in a single spot and wait, it is remarkable what can come your way.



## Busy As Scouts

Local Scout groups were pitching a variety of open-space projects this Spring. The RCC approved a quartet of them consisting of a dock and benches around Shadow Lake, the reconstruction of a bridge around the Barrack Hill Refuge, and the repair of a bridge over the dam at Shadow Lake. The RCC appreciates the effort put forth by these enterprising teenagers.



## The Goats Are Back!

The RCC has brought back a herd of goats to McKeon Farm to attack and consume invasive plants. They came hungry and ready to go, obliterating large swaths of plants in sensitive, hard-to-reach areas. The RCC plans to use humans with weed whackers as a follow up to keep these areas in check and eventually replant with native species.



## Ridgefield Thrift Shop Grant

The RCC is thrilled to announce it received a \$10,000 grant from the Ridgefield Thrift Shop to fund the purchase of additional purple martin houses, the planting of native fruit trees, and the removal of invasive plants at McKeon Farm. Some of the funds are also slated to be used as a contribution toward the purchase of open-space property.

## Looking For Native Plants?

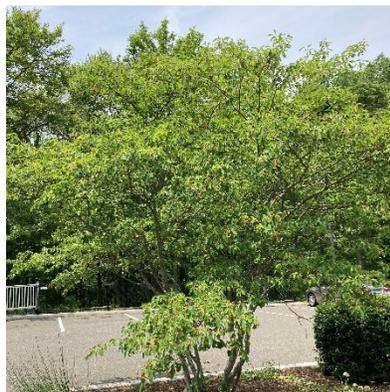
Connecticut DEEP has recently published a list of places where native plants can be purchased. If you want to help the local birds, bees and other creatures get a nourishing meal, check it out. The list can be found at:

[https://ipm.cahnr.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3216/2023/05/CT-Native-Plant-Availability-List\\_UConn\\_CTDEEP\\_May2023.pdf](https://ipm.cahnr.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3216/2023/05/CT-Native-Plant-Availability-List_UConn_CTDEEP_May2023.pdf)

Black Cohash



Shadbush Serviceberry



Coneflower

