

CT Greenways Council

2019 Awards to be presented on May 31

- 1. John Hampton, State Representative** - recipient of the CT Greenways Council's *Legislative Award*. John Kennedy Hampton represents the 16th Assembly District, Simsbury. He was elected to the General Assembly in November 2012 and is Asst Majority Leader. He serves on the Aging, Banking, and Planning and Development Committees, and is Vice Chair on the Committee on Children. Prior to his election to the state legislature, Rep Hampton served on the Simsbury Board of Selectmen from 2003-2012, including five years as Deputy First Selectman. During his tenure, Rep Hampton was a strong advocate for local trails and the environment. As a Simsbury Townie, he has held very nearly all the positions you can in Town. New trails are coming to Town, and he is active in the Tariffville Village Association, the Farmington River Watershed Association and the Simsbury Main Street Partnership. When he is not tirelessly working for Simsbury, he is a non-profit strategist, providing marketing, fundraising, and advocacy services to charitable organizations.
- 2. Jeff LaMalva** Manchester's town engineer – recipient of the CT Greenways Council's *Municipal Award* for years has been and continues to be a greenway planner, designer, and advocate. He has hosted “bike to work” events and is currently designing the gap in the tri-town 20-mile loop connecting the Cheney Rail trail to Charter Oak Greenway (East Coast Greenway). His latest achievement is the completion of the Manchester gap in the Charter Oak Trail.
- 3. Dr. Robert Rodner** - recipient of the CT Greenways Council's *Health Care Integration Award*. He was co-chairman for a 10-year period running the Manchester Memorial Hospital Trail/Road event. Currently he is a facilitator of the October 13, 2019 event celebrating the tri-town (Manchester-Vernon-Bolton) 20-mile loop with a 5-mile leg into East Hartford. This event will start and finish in Charter Oak Park. The route includes the Charter Oak Greenway (part of the East Coast Greenway), the Hop River State Park Trail, Valley Falls Park Trail, and the Cheney Rail Trail.
- 4. Jerry Silber** recipient of the CT Greenways Council's *Unsung Hero Award*. He has been the president of the Merritt Parkway Trail Alliance for many years and has been a tireless voice for its important connection to New York. He continuously advocates for the trail with local and regional trail opponents and the Merritt Parkway Conservancy. He is a frequent sight at events across the state, and along with his cohorts, is responsible for energizing the City of Stamford to successfully apply for a DEEP grant for the preliminary design of the first mile of the Merritt Parkway Trail, thus honoring the Bureau of Highways Landscape Architect, Thayer Chase's 1938 vision.
- 5. Melissa Evarts**, recipient of a CT Greenways Council's *Volunteer Award*. Melissa is the linchpin of the Lower Connecticut River Valley Horsemen's Club (LCRVHC) and their 501(c)3 the Bridle Path Conservancy (BPC). Melissa has been a member of LCRVHC since the late 1980s, serving as secretary for several years, and as president for close to 15 years now. Over the years LCRVHC and the BPC have donated thousands of

hours in trail maintenance; conceived of, completed and now maintain the regional Quinimay Trail; and spent countless hours advocating for multi-use trails in the state. Melissa has also been an active member of the Connecticut Horse Council Volunteer Horse Patrol for over nine years. She understands the importance of having all trail users collaborate, and has formed partnerships with groups including the Connecticut Forest and Park Association and the New England Mountain Bike Association. She builds these partnerships through a shared love of trails and educates equestrians on the importance of giving back.

6. **Debbie Livingston**, recipient of a CT Greenways Council's *Volunteer Award*. She is an avid trail user in all seasons. Debbie serves on the board of directors of the Bolton Land Trust. She is very supportive of Bike Walk Bolton and has volunteered at their CT Trails Day Events. She also has organized Trails for Young Families events at Bolton Notch State Park to help expose them to the trails and being outdoors. She also has many other commitments including ultra-marathon running and is an active member of the Shenipsit Striders and supports their events. She is an environmentalist who takes care to minimize her footprint, for example, she used the Hop River Trail to commute to work from Bolton to Vernon long before most in CT and often gets around town by bike with her two children in tow.
7. **Jon Regan**, recipient of a CT Greenways Council's *Volunteer Award*. In 2013 Jon founded and is currently president of the Northwest CT chapter of the New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA). This chapter has worked to legitimize 40 miles of trails in Burlington, 15 miles at Cowles Park in East Granby, and 10 miles in Harwinton. About half of that mileage are new trails. The Session Woods/Nassahegan area had many unsanctioned trails and issues with parking and user conflicts. Jon and the Chapter have worked tirelessly to resolve these issues with DEEP and the mountain biking community. The legacy of Jon's leadership includes the development of a solid working relationship with: Session Woods (DEEP Wildlife and Fisheries); DEEP foresters and park managers; City of New Britain and The New Britain Water Commission, the town of Granby, and town of Harwinton. This Chapter sets an example for the rest of the state, and Jon, who is not one to beat his own drum, is being recognized as a leader in the true sense of the word.
8. **Patricia Sesto** – recipient of a CT Greenways Council's *Volunteer Award*. Pat was recently appointed Director of Environmental Affairs for the Town of Greenwich. After her position was officially announced, First Selectman Peter Tesei said: "Patricia Sesto is an experienced environmental scientist and brings a wealth of knowledge to this newly established position. Her professional career spans 30 years as she held the same role in the town of Wilton." Pat served in a similar position in Wilton for 23 years. Pat was a founding member of the Friends of the Norwalk River Valley Trail (NRVT) and currently serves as President of their Board of Directors. The vision of the non-profit NRVT is to build, beautify and maintain a thirty mile, ten-foot wide, multi-use trail from Calf Pasture Beach in Norwalk, passing through Wilton, Ridgefield and Redding, and terminating at Rogers Park in Danbury.

- 9. Lower Connecticut River Valley Horsemen's Club and Bridle Path Conservancy**—recipient of a CT Greenways Council's *Non-Profit Organization Award*. LCRVHC is a social/riding club that was established in the early 1960s. The Bridle Path Conservancy (BPC) is a non-profit trail committee dedicated to the preservation, enhancement and acquisition of multi-purpose, passive-use, recreational trails on public and private land in Connecticut and southern New England. Club members have donated thousands of hours to the trails in our state. They were the driving force behind the Quinimay Trail, and invested their time, effort, and funds to make it happen. LCRVHC focuses on trail maintenance and restoration.
- 10. The Simsbury Land Trust** - recipient of a CT Greenways Council's *Non-Profit Organization Award*. Founded in 1976, the Simsbury Land Trust is a federally-recognized, 501(c)3. Governed by a volunteer board of trustees elected by the membership, the SLT currently has over 700 member families. In those years the SLT has acquired 34 permanently protected parcels of land, representing over 1000 acres. The SLT built a bog walk in West Simsbury, allowing a close-up view of 40 acres of unique wetlands without damaging the fragile surface vegetation. They have installed informational signs on several recreation trails that provide educational and historical facts. They publish an annual newsletter as well as *The Simsbury Walkbook: A Guide to Local Hiking*, available to members free of charge. The Dirty Boots Kids Club gives children an opportunity to learn about nature and the environment in a comfortable kid-friendly pace at locations in Town. Finally, *Green Scenes*, their documentary film and discussion series, provides an opportunity for interested individuals to watch a documentary film and discuss with a panel of experts six times a year.