



Dear Connie,

If last week's deep freeze got you down, this month's article from Correspondent Alison Robey will help you feel more grateful for winter when winter is due.

Either way, this week feels delightfully more springlike. Has the light changed? If like us, you're feeling more like going outside, see below for some helpful reminders about winter hiking, and profiles on two "KLT Places" where we love to walk.

Been there, done that? Get involved in something truly new by joining KLT's volunteer stewards! March begins our monthly series of workdays happening every third Saturday through November. On the 15th we'll be scouting the first portion of a new trail that will span the Southern Gateway from KLT Farm to town. Register below!

When cold brings you back inside, curl up with hot chocolate and watch [Ann-Christine Duhaime, MD's keynote presentation](#) at the recent RCP Network conference - in which she considers how human neuroscience can help us promote climate-positive behavior.

You'd rather read? In anticipation of the return of migratory birds, we're re-listening to Amy Tan's [Backyard Bird Chronicles](#). That and this recent [talk on Slime Molds](#) has us resolved to pay special attention to the amazing diversity and intricate detail of the natural world.

Speaking of birds, did the [February 22nd launch of Firefly Environmental Arts Program](#) catch your eye? There, KLT director Laurie Doss and her ornithology students from the

February's Features:

In Defense of Winter Weather

RCP Network Keynote Address

KLT's Purple Martin sustainability work

Monthly Trail Highlights

- Iron Mountain Preserve
- Skiff Mountain South Preserve

Upcoming Events

- 3/15 Volunteer Stewardship Workday
- 3/20 PUMA Volunteer Training

Marvelwood School presented [their work](#) to support Connecticut's inland populations of Purple Martins, including several colonies here in Kent. Purple Martins are charismatic, acrobatic, and have evolved to depend on human-provided housing. Can you help? Learn more at our upcoming trainings, details below.

Thank you for the time you take to learn about Kent's environment - to engage in its care and with its gifts. By the time you get our next eNews we'll be seeing Spring's hints of green ... So best enjoy this winter, while you can!

Connie Manes, Executive Director

In Defense of Winter Weather

Alison Robey



Sweater, hat, gloves, scarf, boots, snowgear - even for our pets!?! Going outside this time of year is a complex proposition. But have you stopped to think about winter's complex *function*?

"Winter...if you can forgive its discomforts, [is] quite an amazing ecosystem to witness. " This month Alison digs into the snow and ice to show us how the cold months impact the environment globally, regionally, and locally - from our soon-to-emerge plants and pollinators to the air all around - and also why warming and variable winter weather may lead to consequences we didn't anticipate.

[Read on for Alison's reflections on the necessity, and gifts, of winter](#). They may change your reaction to an icy forecast - or at least take the edge off of scraping the windshield!



Enlisting Our Brains to Promote Positive Climate Actions

On November 14, 2024 Dr. Ann-Christine Duhaime, MD delivered the keynote address at the

annual Regional Conservation Partnership (RCP) Network Gathering at UMass Amherst. Her talk, entitled “Climate Change, Land, and Your Brain: A Hundred-Year Global Story,” explores how we can use the brain’s reward system to tackle the current climate crisis. Dr. Duhaime is a senior pediatric neurosurgeon at the Massachusetts General Hospital and Nicholas T. Zervas Distinguished Professor of Neurosurgery at Harvard Medical School. Her book, *Minding the Climate*, was published in 2022 by Harvard University Press.

[Watch Dr. Duhaime's presentation to learn more about her important work.](#)

February's Highlighted Hikes: Iron Mountain Preserve

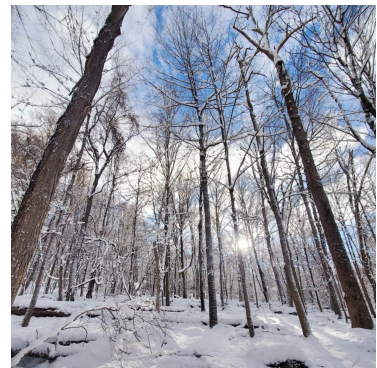
The [Iron Mountain Preserve's](#) quiet wooded landscape is a popular destination for hikers, its “lollipop loop” trail just under 3 miles roundtrip. The Preserve was created in 1974 by the donation of 257 acres by Mrs. Walter E. Irving. Mrs. Irving’s neighbors Brigitta Lieberson, Joseph Gitterman, and Vilma Kurzer followed her lead with gifts of adjoining properties.

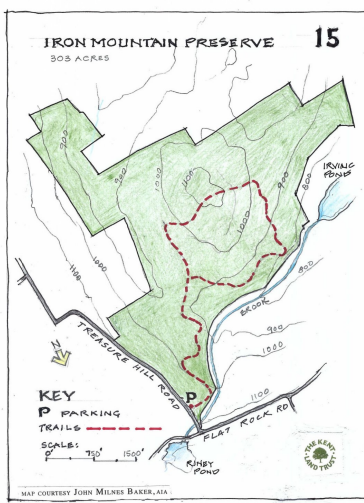
In addition to providing a wonderful recreational resource, it is an important area for wildlife: Part of an 890-acre core forest block interlaced with several stream courses, the Preserve is home to bobcat, bear, coyotes, deer, owls, and many other native species. Visitors with dogs are asked to take special care to keep them on leads and under control.

The Iron Mountain Preserve's trail covers mostly moderate terrain with a few steep climbs along the way providing glimpses of the Geer Mountain Panorama. From the parking area near the junction of Flat Rock and Treasure Hill Roads in South Kent, the trail leads downhill to the west for some length, flanking a small stream before traversing level rocky areas crisscrossed by stone walls, long-abandoned pasture and orchard, and remnants of Kent's iron industry including well-preserved charcoal mounds.

Two footbridges span intermittently flowing streamcourses, but some areas can become wet so we recommend appropriate footwear and ask that walkers stay on the trail rather than circumventing muddy patches.

Winter can be a great time to get outdoors (no bugs!). Taking steps to ensure your safety is a smart idea no matter the season. We appreciate [these resources](#) from our friends at the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, covering what to wear, what to pack, and how to look out for common winter problems before they become emergencies.





Skiff Mountain South Preserve

The [Skiff Mountain South Preserve's](#) 320 acres feature tranquil woods, a pond and stream, a hidden meadow, and abundant wildlife. The mostly level terrain, diversity of habitats, and connected trails enabling a choose-your-own-adventure make it attractive to individual and group visitors including student researchers from the adjacent Marvelwood School.

With tremendous support from Skiff Mountain neighbors, members of the Kent and Sharon communities, and partnering conservation organizations including the Trust for Public Land and Sharon Land Trust, KLT purchased the property in 2003 as an early recipient of the State of Connecticut's Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Program (OSWA). An additional 70 acres was donated in 2021, and new trails throughout this parcel make the most of stunning views across the Housatonic River.

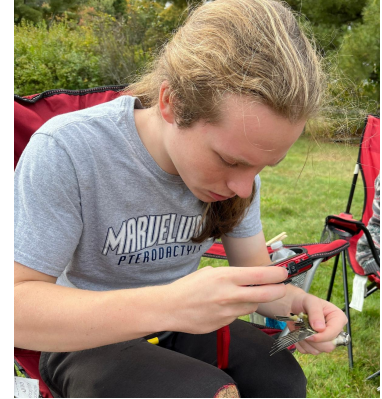
The OSWA program has made a monumental difference to land conservation in Connecticut by enabling land trusts like KLT to purchase very large properties that would otherwise be out of reach - usually in combination with several funding sources like at Skiff - showing the leveraging, catalytic power of such a program. [Learn more](#) about OSWA here, from the Connecticut Land Conservation Council.



The Skiff Mountain South Preserve sits amidst 7,000+ acres of conservation land. This regionally important area, known as the Macedonia Forest Block, encompasses private parcels along with the Pond Mountain Nature Preserve, Macedonia Brook State Park, and the Appalachian Trail corridor, plus land owned by Northwest Connecticut Land Conservancy, Northeast Utilities, Sharon Audubon, and the Sharon Land Trust. In 2016, the Macedonia Forest Block gained recognition as a State Important Bird Area, thanks in part to the avian research conducted by Marvelwood School.

We love to see your photos out and about while enjoying Kent Land Trust properties! Please tag or share with us on social ([Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)) or email us at info@kentlandtrust.org.

Finally, please also let us know if you see anything that needs to be addressed. We are grateful to our trail visitors who help alert us when needed!



Upcoming Opportunities to Get Involved



VOLUNTEER WORKDAY TRAIL SCOUT & DESIGN*

Join us at the Kent Land Trust office where we will meet and walk across the road to begin designing a new trail traversing the Southern Gateway.

Saturday, March 15th
9:00 AM - 11AM

Free and open to the public.
Registration is required to communicate weather-related changes.

<https://bit.ly/KLTAactivities>
info@kentlandtrust.org or 860-488-9185

*This activity is for ages 10 and up.



Please wear sturdy, waterproof footwear, weather appropriate clothes, and bring a water bottle and your curiosity.

Click image to register or just [click here!](#)



It Takes a Village...

Banding Together for Purple Martins!



Learn how you can get involved

Zoom Webinar presented by Laurie Doss
Science Department Chair, Marvelwood School
Director, Kent Land Trust

Thursday, March 20th 6-7:30 PM

bit.ly/KLTactivities

info@kentlandtrust.org or 860.488.9185

Registration is required to receive the Zoom link.

Funding generously provided by:



Participants will learn to conduct nest checks and collect data important to the management of Purple Martin colonies. This volunteer activity is a critical component to this species' survival here in Northwest CT.

A follow-up field session at an active colony will be offered in May.

Click image to register or just [click here!](#)

Are you a member?

The Kent Land Trust safeguards an ecosystem which in turn supports us all, at the most basic level: integrity of the air we breathe and water we drink. We envision a community where treasured landscapes are protected for today and the future. Where diverse living things continue in healthy coexistence, supported through the challenges of a changing environment. And where iconic outdoor spaces inspire people to connect. Our role is daunting, but compelling. We promise assiduous focus on Kent's distinct needs even as we join colleagues doing the same throughout our region and beyond. Your membership each year directly advances this vision.

Thank you sincerely for your generous support!



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