



P.O. Box 49  
Old Mystic, CT 06372

# Avalonia Trails

DEDICATED TO PRESERVING  
LAND AND WILDLIFE HABITATS

SPRING 2010

## Avalonia Weathers Floods

by Janice Parker

The record-breaking floods that caused so much devastation in the area at the end of March did not leave Avalonia preserves entirely unscathed, but most properties sustained minimal damage. The stone bridge installed at the Yannatos Preserve in North Stonington in 2007 was undamaged. The bridge at the Knox Family Farm Preserve in Stonington, recently completed by Eagle Scout Tommy Manning, likewise held up well, thanks to good design and solid construction. The boardwalk at the Henne Tract of North Stonington's Shunock River Preserve functioned exactly as it was designed to do, floating with the rising waters, then settling back into its original position aided by only minimal nudging (photo on page 2). The 200-year old earthen dam at Parke Memorial held, despite floodwaters that overtopped it. Many of the fixtures and much debris resulting from the partial collapse of the historic North Stonington building housing the Watermark Café and Miller's Hardware washed into the dam. Avalonia and community volunteers have been working hard to clean up, and where possible restore recovered items to their owners. Volunteers have also cleared the outlet from Dodge Paddock in Stonington, which had become silted up during the heavy rains

Avalonia had been working with The Nature Conservancy to remove a dam from Anguilla Brook in Stonington, one of the areas hardest hit by recent flooding, but we were notified in early March that the grant application would not be funded. We are actively seeking alternative funding sources, and perhaps with the increased awareness of the need to remove unused dams that is a likely consequence of our recent experiences, future applications will be more successful. For more flood photographs, go to our website [www.avalonialandconservancy.org](http://www.avalonialandconservancy.org).



Mac Turner (rear) and Bob Fluery (right) supervise removal of debris from Parke Memorial Preserve. The object in the trailer is a commercial refrigerator from the Watermark Café. Photo by Duncan Schweitzer.



Sluce entrance of the Parke Memorial dam filled with debris immediately after the flood and before clean-up began. Photo by Duncan Schweitzer

### Inside this issue

President's Message	2
Proposed By-law Changes	3
Connecticut Amphibians on the Move	5
Update: Sandy Point Nature Preserve	6
Annual Meeting 2010	6
Poquetanuck Cove Update	7
Summer Solstice Garden Party	7
Change is inevitable...	7
Upcoming events	8

### OFFICERS

President.....Anne Roberts-Pierson  
Treasurer.....Rowland Stebbins III  
Secretary.....Janice Parker

### COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Acquisition..... Harry Tobiassen  
Stewardship.....Rick Newton, David Scott  
Finance.....Bob Chapin  
Development/PR.....Ellen Fossum, Margaret Gibson

### DIRECTORS

**Griswold**  
Scott Dawley

**Groton**  
Joellen Anderson  
Brae Rafferty  
David Scott

**Ledyard**  
Ellen Fossum  
Anne Roberts-Pierson  
Mike Goodwin

**Preston**  
Bob Chapin  
Margaret Gibson

**North Stonington**  
Anne Nalwalk  
Janice Parker  
Mac Turner

**Sprague**  
Gerry Stefon

**Stonington**  
Kate Robinson  
Rowland Stebbins III

**Directors at Large**  
Bruce Anderson  
Anna Coit  
Rusty Morrison  
Rick Newton

**Honorary Directors**  
Carole Clark  
Lois Tefft Van Deusen  
Hugo Wilms

**Avalonia phone: (860) 884-3500**  
**Avalonia e-mail: [avalonialc@yahoo.com](mailto:avalonialc@yahoo.com)**  
**[www.avalonialandconservancy.org](http://www.avalonialandconservancy.org)**

## President's Message

Spring is a time for new beginnings and for change and this spring Avalonia plans to introduce some changes that we hope will enable a rebirth of the organization while conserving all that has made it so successful in the past.

The Strategic Planning Committee has been working hard for the past year to retool our by-laws to make Avalonia a more stream-lined, efficient and sustainable organization. The proposed new by-laws, which you can read in full on pages 3 through 5, will be presented to the membership for a vote at the **42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting** to be held **Wednesday May 19<sup>th</sup>** at Stoneridge in Mystic, instead of at the Denison-Pequotsepos Nature Center as has been the case for a number of years. See page 6 for additional details. As has been customary, the business meeting and election will be followed by an informative conservation-themed program, and refreshments will be served.

Under the new by-laws, officers will be elected by the membership directly, instead of by the Board of Directors. Much more of the regular business of Avalonia will be conducted by Town Committees representing the member towns, and by Standing Committees representing the various operational functions of the Conservancy, under the overall oversight of a smaller Board. This structure will open up many more opportunities for members who would like to participate in effecting Avalonia's mission, but who cannot commit the amount of time and effort that a position on the Board of Directors formerly required.

As you will have gathered, this will mean many more volunteer positions to be filled. If you would be interested in participating, please let us know. Contact information is provided in the side bar at left. We are particularly eager to recruit individuals with public relations, fund-raising, event planning or grant-writing expertise, or an interest in volunteering in any of those areas, but whatever your skills, we have a place for you!

*Anne Roberts-Pierson*

## A note from the editor

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this issue of "Avalonia Trails". If you would like to contribute an article, notice or photo to our next issue, please send it to [janiceparker@netscape.net](mailto:janiceparker@netscape.net) by **August 1st 2010**. We also welcome "Letters to the Editor". We are limited for space so please keep articles to less than 400 words. Thank you.

## Cost cutting efforts

We regret that in order to reduce our operating costs we may have to discontinue mailing of this newsletter to members not current with their dues. Please check your membership expiration date in the top right hand corner of your mailing label. For your convenience, there is a membership renewal form on page 6.



*The Henne Tract boardwalk rises to the occasion during March flooding.  
Photo by Duncan Schweitzer*

## **Proposed Revisions to the By-Laws of Avalonia Land Conservancy, Inc.**

Article I of the current By-Laws is unchanged. Article II is unchanged except as provided below in Section II 5. Articles III through IX below are intended to replace Articles III through VII of the current By-Laws. Articles VIII through XI of the current By-Laws will be renumbered Articles X through XIII.

Article II 5. - Notice. Not less than ten (10) days prior to all annual and special meetings, the Secretary shall provide reasonable notice thereof to all members entitled to vote at such meeting. The notice shall set forth the time, date, and place of such meeting and the business to be transacted thereat. Where two members have the same mailing address and are living together in marriage or in civil union, only one notice addressed to both need be mailed.

### Article III - Board of Directors

(A) General Powers – The property, affairs and activities of the corporation shall be managed by a Board of Directors consisting of not fewer than ten (10) persons. Directors shall be members of the corporation who are eighteen (18) years of age or over. The Board of Directors shall exercise all of the powers of the corporation except such as are by law, by the Certificate of Incorporation, or by these By-Laws expressly conferred upon or reserved to members. [old Art. III, 1.]

(B) Composition of the Board – At each annual meeting of the members, the following shall be elected (unless then serving an unexpired term) by the members and shall comprise the Board of Directors: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, a Chair (who may be a Co-Chair) of each Standing Committee, a Town Director representing each Town Committee and up to three Directors-at-Large.

### Article IV – Nominations for the Board of Directors

(A) At least one (1) month before the annual meeting of the membership, the Board of Directors shall appoint a Nominating Committee of not less than five (5) members of the Board, which shall nominate persons for President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Chair of each Standing Committee whose Current Chair's term is expiring, and, in their discretion, up to three (3) Directors-at-Large. No two (2) of the positions named in this subsection of this Article may be occupied by the same person. [See old Art. V]

(B) At least one (1) month before the annual meeting of the membership, if the term of a Town Director is expiring, that Town Committee shall nominate one of its members, preferably other than its Chair, to serve as Town Director on the Board of Directors.

(C) Additional nominations for Officers, Committee Chairs and Directors-at-Large may be made from the floor at the annual meeting. Each person nominated shall be a member of the corporation who is eighteen (18) years of age or over and a resident or landowner in a town served by a Town Committee as provided in Article V.

(D) The Nominating Committee shall present to the annual meeting not only the nominees for the Board of Directors chosen by the Nominating Committee, but also those chosen by the Town Committees.

(E) At the annual meeting at which proposed Articles II through IX of these By-Laws are adopted, the Board of Directors serving immediately prior to such annual meeting shall continue to serve as the Board of Directors under the new By-Laws until a new Board of Directors is duly elected under the new By-Laws. At such meeting, sections (a) and (b) of this Article IV requiring actions to be taken at least one (1) month before the annual meeting of the membership shall not apply in the election of a new Board of Directors under the new By-Laws

### Article V – Committees

All members of the committees formed under this Article shall be members of the corporation.

#### (A) Town Committees –

(1) The Board of Directors shall determine those towns in southeastern Connecticut for which Town Committees shall be created. A Town Committee may be created to serve one town or a combination of two or more towns that agree to combine their Town Committees. Each Town Committee shall have primary responsibility for the activity of the corporation in the town or towns it serves. A written outline of Town Committee responsibilities shall be prepared by the Board of Directors.

(2) Each Town Committee shall elect a Chair of the Committee, and shall also nominate a Town Director to serve on the Board of Directors pursuant to Article IV (B), both preferably residents of the town and not the same person. The initial members of each Town Committee will be three (3) people who must be residents of the town and chosen by the Board of Directors. Additional members of the Town Committee shall be elected by the Town Committee and approved by the Board of Directors. Each Town Committee should have at least seven

(7) members, including the Chair and Town Director.

(B) Standing Committees –

Each of the committees in this subsection shall have at least five (5) members, including the Chair who is elected by the membership as provided in Article III (B) of these By-Laws. All other members shall be approved by the Board of Directors.

(1) The Acquisition Committee shall have overall responsibility for the evaluation, prioritization and acquisition of all the corporation's interests in real property, and for overseeing the role of the Town Committees in the acquisition process.

(2) The Stewardship Committee shall have overall responsibility for the management and protection of all the corporation's interests in real property and for supervising the delegation of stewardship responsibilities to the Town Committees.

(3) The Development and Public Relations Committee shall have overall responsibility for communicating to our supporters and the public the mission of the corporation and for working with the Town Committees to insure the development of the financial resources needed.

(4) The Finance Committee shall have overall responsibility for the management and protection of the financial assets of the corporation, including compliance with accounting and regulatory requirements, and for the supervision of a budget process designed to allocate resources fairly among the activities of the corporation.

(5) The Personnel Committee shall have overall responsibility for the recruitment and management of volunteers and paid staff, for the nomination of Standing Committee members (other than the Chair) for approval by the Board, and for overseeing the development of volunteer support by the Town Committees.

(C) Other Committees –

(1) An Executive Committee of the Board of Directors may be created and/or terminated by the Board in its discretion, to perform such duties as the Board may assign to it and to be made up of members of the Board chosen by the Board to serve at the pleasure of the Board.

(2) Other committees may be created by the Board, and its members shall be appointed by the President unless otherwise provided by the Board.

(D) Reports by Committees - The Board of Directors may require such reports from time to time by any of the committees as it deems necessary for the effective administration of the affairs of the corporation.

Article VI – Terms of Directors

(A) Officers. The Officers shall be elected for a term of one (1) year or until their successors are elected and may be reelected four (4) times after their first terms, so that each is limited to a total of less than six (6) years of service in the same office. After reaching their limits of service, they may not be elected to the same offices for at least two (2) years.

(B) Standing Committees.

(1) Each Chair of a Standing Committee shall be elected for a term of two (2) years or until his or her successor is elected and may be reelected for a second two (2) year term, so that each is limited to a total of less than five (5) years as Chair of the same committee. After reaching his or her limit of service, he or she may not be elected Chair of the same committee for at least two (2) years.

(2) At the first annual meeting at which this Article of the By-Laws is effective, the three (3) Chairs of the Acquisition, Stewardship and Development and Public Relations Committees shall each serve for an initial term of one (1) year only, but that year shall not be considered a first term in applying Section (B) (1) of this By-Law.

(C) Town Directors

(1) A Town Director shall be elected for a term of two (2) years or until his or her successor is elected and may be reelected two (2) times after his or her first term, so that each is limited to less than seven (7) consecutive years of service as a Town Director. After reaching his or her limit of service, a Town Director may not be reelected as a Town Director for at least two (2) years.

(2) At the first annual meeting at which this Article of the By-Laws is effective, the three (3) Town Directors elected from Ledyard, North Stonington and Stonington shall each serve an initial term of one (1) year only, but that year shall not be considered a first term in applying Section (C)(1) of this By-Law.

(D) Waiver of Term Limits. The Board of Directors, by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Directors in meeting assembled, may waive the application of a term limit provided in this Article to a member of the Board of Directors.

## Article VII - Vacancies

- (A) In the case of any vacancy in the Board of Directors by death, resignation, disqualification, or other cause, then:
- (1) if an Officer leaves a vacancy, the remaining Directors may elect a successor for the balance of the term until the next annual meeting of the members.
  - (2) if the Chair of a Standing Committee leaves a vacancy, that Standing Committee shall elect a successor, to serve as Chair and as a member of the Board of Directors until the next annual meeting of the members.
  - (3) if a Town Director leaves a vacancy, the Town Committee for that town shall elect a successor (preferably other than the Chair) to serve until the next annual meeting of the members.
- (B) A person who fills a vacancy until the next annual meeting of members shall not be considered as having served a term in applying the term limits under Article VI.

## Article VIII - Powers and Duties of Officers

The various Officers shall have such powers and duties as customarily appertain or are incident to their respective offices and, in addition, such powers and duties as the Board of Directors confers and designates. [old By-Laws, Art. IV 2.]

## Article IX – Meetings of the Board of Directors and Committees

(A) The Board of Directors shall meet at least four (4) times each year at times and places designated by the Board or by the President. The Secretary shall give each director reasonable notice of the time and place of each meeting. If the Board establishes in advance a regular time and place for meetings, no other notice will be required. The Board of Directors shall also meet upon call of the President, or upon written (including electronic messaging) request filed with the Secretary by any two (2) or more Directors.

(1) A quorum shall consist of a majority of the number of directors authorized by these By-Laws at the time of the meeting.

(2) The action of a majority of the Board of Directors present at a meeting at which there is a quorum shall be the action of the Board of Directors, except that all decisions relating to the acquisition by the corporation of any interest in land shall require a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Directors in meeting assembled, and except as may be specifically provided by statute.

(B) Standing Committees and Town Committees shall meet on a regular basis at least quarterly at the times and places set by the Chair of each committee, and reasonable notice of all meetings shall be given.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Connecticut Amphibians on the Move

*by Joellen Anderson*

March has come and gone and now it is April. With a little rain and warm weather, Connecticut's amphibians woke up about mid March after their winter 'sleepovers', found the nearest vernal pool and laid their eggs in preparation for the emerging next generation. Over 84 children and adults attended our Avalonia-sponsored March and April INSIDE/OUTSIDE amphibian programs presented by Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center, hosted by both the Groton Public Library and Bill Memorial Library, and outside on Avalonia's Avery Preserve in Ledyard, CT. and at the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center.

Budding environmentalists of all ages learned how our CT amphibians survive the winter months. Then we explored a natural vernal pond on the Avery Preserve, locating both wood frog and salamander eggs. We found and examined a few salamanders, handled them carefully and then returned them to their log homes. We even found salamanders in their metamorphosis stage (with gills) at DPNC.

Spring is on its way and wildlife in addition to amphibians make their home on all of Avalonia's properties. Do enjoy spending time outdoors with your children, grandchildren, and friends on all our Avalonia properties, exploring our local natural environments, taking pictures, bird watching, and hiking our trails; but please leave only footprints.



*From one generation to another.*

*Photo by Joellen Anderson.*

**42nd ANNUAL MEETING  
Wednesday, May 19, 2010 at 7 p.m.**

at

**STONERIDGE\***

186 Jerry Browne Road, Mystic

(note location change--not DPNC as in recent years)

Refreshments will be served. The public is invited.

Important business meeting to elect Directors and vote on by-law changes, followed by a program:

**PROTECTING HABITAT AT  
SANDY POINT ISLAND**

Our guest speaker will be Richard Potvin, manager of the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge. Avalonia's Sandy Point will now be part of the Refuge, to protect the nesting American oyster-catchers, piping plovers and least terns. Mr. Potvin will explain the objective of striking a balance between public use and wildlife.

\*Please park only in visitor spaces just inside entrance and to the rear of the building. Our meeting is in the auditorium accessed through the main entrance.

**Update: Sandy Point Nature Preserve**

*by Anne Roberts-Pierson*

As our streams and rivers recede after recent historically high rainfall and as we anticipate blissful summer days ahead, I would like to update our readers on Avalonia's partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding Sandy Point Nature Preserve.

As you may recall, in our Fall 2009 *Avalonia Trails*, I recounted the experiment that took place on Sandy Point in Summer 2009 with the assistance of USFWS and so many volunteers. Due to the beneficial results of that experiment which included a better informed public and a rise in the reproduction rate of federally endangered shorebirds (piping plovers most particularly), the partnership between Avalonia and USFWS will continue this year in a more formal fashion. With the goal of meeting the wishes of the donors of this island, and achieving a balance between public access and the needs of wildlife, shorebirds in particular, the USFWS offered to place Sandy Point under the umbrella of the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge this year. This was an opportunity that does not come along every day and Avalonia took the bold step to accept this offer. Avalonia has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the USFWS to that end. We are also participating in a Challenge Cost Share program with the USFWS this summer to make this happen.

Two public meetings were required to inform the public of this plan and to obtain their comments about it. The first such meeting took place in early February at the Stonington Community Center and 200 individuals attended. The second meeting took place on April 8 at the same location to make clear to all the specifics of how this new partnership will affect summer activities on Sandy Point.

So as shorebirds and boaters return to Sandy Point this season, the birds for the rich habitat where they can multiply, and people for the pure pleasure of sun, sand, and sea, we strive for the very best balance we can. When human know-how and the resilience of nature are combined with the energy and resourcefulness of dedicated individuals, great recoveries can take place. We are very optimistic that this summer will see increased populations of piping plovers and American oystercatchers, and that maybe the terns will come back and stay as well. We hope you feel as we do that Sandy Point Nature Preserve is a treasure, for people and for the wildlife that seek to call it their home.



***Avalonia welcomes new  
and renewing members!***

Mail completed form and check to:

**P.O.Box49  
Old Mystic CT 06372**

Name(s).....

Address .....

Town.....State ..... Zip .....

Phone .....

E-mail .....

Choose membership level:

Individual \$15 Family \$30 Supporting \$50 Patron \$100 Life \$500

I am enclosing \$.....as a contribution in addition to my membership dues.

I want to help:  outdoor work  fundraising/PR  solicit new members   
other work (please specify)

.....

*Note: Dues, gifts of land, securities and other contributions are tax-deductible within the limits of the law.*

## ***Summer Solstice Garden Party***

Sunday, June 20 from 4-7 p.m. at Stone Acres, 385 North Main Street, Stonington

CHICKEN & RIBS BARBEQUE,  
BEER & WINE,  
LIVE MUSIC,  
OUTSTANDING SILENT AUCTION!

Bring Dad for Father's Day and explore the estate.

**See the enclosed color flyer to purchase tickets.**

### WE ARE SEEKING:

- SPONSORS (tent rental, printing, portajohns)
- SILENT AUCTION ITEMS (products, services, art, weekend getaways, dining out, etc.)
- VOLUNTEERS to organize, set up & take down, and work the event.

**Like the saying goes, “Change is inevitable... except from a vending machine”**

*by Bob Chapin*

And as you've seen in these pages, change is happening big-time in your land conservancy as we move to strengthen our organization, more creatively tap the power of our volunteers and members, and become an even stronger force for land conservation in southeastern Connecticut. The big bull in **our** china shop right now is the pressing need for more funds. Two of the biggest issues facing the organization are as follows. Firstly, the size and scope of our organization has necessitated employing part-time paid staff. This initiative is moving our office functions into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and providing a critical mass for office continuity and organizational memory. Having dedicated paid staff is a huge step forward for our organization, and one that comes with financial obligations that are well worth it, but they are obligations nonetheless, and we must meet them. Secondly, the Finance Committee and the Board recognizes the value of having an endowment that will help pay for all the stewardship activities that come with caring for and maintaining all our properties. It's imperative that we secure a stable source that will fund these critical maintenance operations. Without this, we risk breaking the trust that our donors had placed in us when they deeded us these wonderful properties. We need to build up the long-term means of doing what we must critically do for our properties.

To meet our obligations and help secure the future of Avalonia, we will likely take the unprecedented step of holding a second appeal this summer. Many of you gave, and gave generously, to our regular Annual Appeal at the end of 2009, for which we thank you. Rest assured that if so, you will not be asked a second time. Nor if you give to our summer appeal will you be solicited again in the fall. However, we recognize that year-end is not an ideal time for many people to give, so we are offering a second opportunity. Please know that when you see that envelope in your mailbox, our need for funds is real and pressing. We take seriously the trust placed in us by our previous land donors, and our obligation to preserve their donations in perpetuity.

In the next newsletter we'll cover some more of the challenges facing the organization. Meanwhile, we wish you the most pleasant of Springs, full of woods-walks and wildflowers!

### **Poquetanuck Cove Update**

*by Anne Roberts-Pierson*

All is going very well with this multi-year *Phragmites australis* eradication project. As planned, the CT DEP did come to the Cove last fall and Year 2 of the spraying and mulching of this invasive plant pest was undertaken. I am pleased to report that the funding for Years 2 and 3 did get straightened out. We have the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the Connecticut Corporate Wetlands Restoration Partnership to thank for partnering with us to finance these continued efforts to restore this tidal estuary by ridding it of *Phragmites*. Our goal to allow native wetland plants to return, thrive and thus provide improved habitat to the many, many birds and creatures calling this special place home are being realized thanks to the efforts of so many. If you have not yet gotten out to Poquetanuck Cove to see for yourself, please consider paddling with us on CT Trails Day. See details on page 8 of this newsletter.



AVALONIA LAND CONSERVANCY, INC.

P.O. Box 49, Old Mystic, CT 06372

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Organization

U.S. POSTAGE PAID

Old Mystic, CT

Permit No. 18

## Upcoming Events

➡➡ **Annual Meeting. Wednesday May 19, 7 p.m.** at Stoneridge. See page 6 for details. ☺☺

**Avalonia offers the following two events as part of CFPA CT Trails Days, which are June 5 and 6, 2010.**

**Sandy Point Nature Preserve Paddle. Saturday June 5, 7:30 a.m.** Enjoy a Saturday morning paddle in Little Narragansett Bay and meet with US Fish & Wildlife environmental interpreter on island. Meet at 7:30 a.m. at CT State boat launch area of Barn Island WMA, Palmer Neck Rd., Stonington. Bring your own kayak, personal flotation device, and beverage/snack as appropriate. Heavy rain cancels. *Limited to 10 to 12 paddlers so please pre-register with Anne Roberts-Pierson (860) 464-8101.*

**Poquetanuck Cove Paddle. Saturday, June 5, 3 to 6 p.m.** An easy flat water paddle at high tide through narrow, two-mile tidal embayment of the Thames River. Discover a significant coastal habitat and designated state bird sanctuary. Learn about ongoing efforts to control the invasive plant phragmites, now threatening this special place. Bring your own canoe or kayak, personal flotation device, beverage and snack. Meet at 3 p.m. at the public access car-top boat launch at end of Royal Oak Drive (off Arrowhead Drive), Ledyard. Heavy rain cancels. *Please pre-register with Leader Anne Roberts-Pierson, 860-464-8101.*

➡➡ **Summer Solstice Garden Party. Sunday, June 20, 4-7 p.m.** at Stone Acres. See page 7 for details ☺☺

**Sandy Point Nature Preserve Paddle. Friday, July 9, 4 p.m.** Enjoy a late afternoon paddle in Little Narragansett Bay and meet a US Fish & Wildlife environmental interpreter on the island. Meet at CT State boat launch area of Barn Island WMA, Palmer Neck Rd., Stonington. Bring your own kayak, personal flotation device, and beverage/snack as appropriate. Heavy rain cancels. *Limited to 10 to 12 paddlers so please pre-register with Anne Roberts-Pierson (860) 464-8101.*

**Sandy Point Nature Preserve Paddle. Thursday, August 5, 4 p.m.** Enjoy a late afternoon paddle in Little Narragansett Bay and meet a US Fish & Wildlife environmental interpreter on the island. Meet at CT State boat launch area of Barn Island WMA, Palmer Neck Rd., Stonington. Bring your own kayak, personal flotation device, and beverage/snack as appropriate. Heavy rain cancels. *Limited to 10 to 12 paddlers so please pre-register with Anne Roberts-Pierson, (860) 464-8101.*

**Giant Native Rhododendron Blossom Tour. Saturday, July 10, 2010, 7:30 a.m.** Meet at historic Nathan Lester House parking lot, corner of Long Cove Rd. and Vinegar Hill, Gales Ferry, CT. Come discover these beautiful elusive blooms on the Harry Leiser Tract of Pine Swamp Wildlife Corridor. A leisurely, early morning hike following the loop trail of this woodland tract that abuts the Swamp. If interest, will proceed to 2 other Avalonia Gales Ferry locations where one can also see these beauties in full bloom. Pre-registration appreciated but not essential. Leader: Anne Roberts-Pierson (860) 464-8101.