



Trumbull Nature Commission Wrap-up Report

Mission

The charge of the Nature Commission is to develop an Environment and Arts Education Center that promotes sound environmental stewardship and enhances community life through participation in collaborative Environment science and Art educational experiences. Our goal is to inspire and encourage students to explore the natural sciences, and communication through the arts.

During the process of development, it was decided by the commission and administration that the organization should ultimately be operated by a non profit 501c3, which was later established by the commission. This would allow for more successful fundraising and development.

Building and Property Development

The Nature Commission began with an agreement with the town council for use of the Wagner building and property for the purpose of starting an Environment and Art education center, now known as the Trumbull Nature & Arts Center. The building and property had gone unused for many years, and needed much work.

Early on, the commission requested the help of United Way to hold their 'Days of Caring' at TNAC, enlisting many major businesses to participate, such as Sikorsky, RBS, Target, and many others. The results were so effective and well received that the commission then continued to partner with dozens of corporations and local businesses over the years to improve the building and property through corporate volunteer days and donations.

Sun Products was a major contributor over the years, including donating a recycled playground and engaging the elementary schools in a recycling program. Unilever has also been a major contributor, donating thousands of dollars over the years, and partnering with the commission to make improvements to the Trumbull Community Gardens at Abrahams Park. A number of local organizations such as Trumbull Community Women, Long Hill Garden Club, and Rotary also made significant contributions through the years.

In 2009, The Mallet Foundations made a significant donation which allowed the commission to replace rotted siding and windows on the building. We partnered with Bullard Havens School, giving their students valuable hands-on experience while greatly cutting project costs.

A number of other town departments and community groups have also utilized the TNAC building and property over the years for activities, meetings and training, including Trumbull Community Women, The Young Womens Club, Garden Clubs, Scouts, Police Dept., Fire Dept, Trumbull Energy Task Force committee, schools, and others.

Commissioners that have served over the years:*

Meg Barnes
 Paul Buttress
 Joan Coughlin
 Pam Georgas
 Ann Germano
 John Girard
 Frank Grazynski
 Ray Jaroszewski
 Mary Keane
 Christine Kennedy
 Karin King
 Bonnie Lindsay
 Kevin Malone
 Paula Meachen
 Ruth Mohr
 Mike Paoletto
 Tatiana Rampino
 Helen Sweet
 Lori Vellaradito
 Lorraine Yakush

**We apologize if any names have been inadvertently left out of this list.*

Programs

Corporate Community Impact Volunteer Days

Employees from dozens of local businesses have donated their time and effort to beautifying the building and grounds of the Trumbull Nature and Arts Center. Volunteers have built butterfly and vegetable gardens, planted trees, removed invasive plants and brush, and planted hundreds of shrubs, flowers and plants. Volunteers have painted and helped beautify the interior of center, as well. Many local businesses have donated cash and goods to complete these projects.

School Field Trips

TNAC offers field trips to elementary schools that support the curricula in their science classes. Field trips that we have offered include:

- Pre-K: Introduction to Plants
- Kindergarten: Hike with Insects
- 1st Grade: Maple Trees / Sugaring
- 2nd Grade: Soil Investigations
- 3rd Grade: Habitat Exploration
- 4th Grade: Plant Cycles / Erosion

Seasonal & Scout Programs

TNAC offers a wide variety of programs for both children and adults. Some of these programs have included:

- ArtSmart nature-based art classes for children
- Merit badge programs for Boy Scouts
- Badge programs for Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts
- Archery
- Gardening, grow your own food
- Animal Tracking
- Blue Bird house Construction
- Grow Your Own Frog
- Holiday Crafting
- Build a Bird Feeder
- Photography and sun printing
- Beekeeping
- Nature walks for children
- Educational hikes for adults and children
- Maple sugaring demonstrations

Relocation and New Building Planning

In 2010, the Commission began an extensive analysis of potential sites of a new building after the Town's administration suggested moving to another existing town site in the Parks. Commission members walked and visited all town sites and measured and gauged the effectiveness of all properties in regard to the ability to serve as both a center location and "classroom." The areas were looked at with particular attention to supporting a modest building with classroom and meeting room space with no catering or museum display features. One important criteria of the location would be ready access to the outdoors (nature's classroom) with an emphasis on proximity to our Pequonnock Trail System.

The ranking report was presented to various town departments and commissions as well as the public attending Commission meetings. The report ranked Old Mine Park as the best location for a new Nature Center. To date final approvals have not been received.