

The official newsletter of Avalonia Land Conservancy

# AVALONIA *trails*

FALL  
2020



Photo by Sandra Alexander

## ANNOUNCING AVALONIA'S FIRST ANNUAL GREAT AVALONIA TRAIL TREK!

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 17 THROUGH SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25**

Fall is finally here! What a wonderful time to get out on Avalonia's trails. But this year is exceptional: you can enjoy our preserves and fundraise for Avalonia at the same time. It's easy. If you enjoy hiking or running on Avalonia's trails, or even biking to your favorite preserves you can participate in the Trail Trek.

The funds you raise by hiking on or biking to the lands you love will support Avalonia's acquisition and stewardship efforts and help us reach our fundraising goal for the TriTown Forest Preserve.

**GO TO PAGE 3 TO LEARN HOW TO REGISTER**



Email ..... avalonialc@yahoo.com  
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Office Hours ..... Tues - Thurs, 10 am - 2 pm

## AVALONIA LAND CONSERVANCY, INC. BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A WORD FROM KIMBERLY BARBER BRADLEY

Over the past six months, our communities have faced unprecedented times as the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our daily lives. Avalonia hopes that you and your families have prioritized your health and safety when possible. Our organization has adjusted to public health concerns by hosting committee meetings via Zoom, closing our office, and restricting public events and the size of our stewardship groups. We have maintained public access to our preserves, adhered to social distancing guidelines, and provided your communities with a safe and healthy opportunity to find peace and solace in nature. You, our members, funding organizations, and donors have been there for us, too, underlining the importance of our regional land conservation mission.

Together we have remained focused on our conservation mission, with several notable accomplishments. In June, Avalonia closed on the Atkinson and Dirlam properties in Ledyard, adding 228 acres to the Great Oak Greenway. The great efforts of Julie Dupont-Woody and the Ledyard Town Committee have formalized the property management plan and provided Avalonia's first passive, multiple-use access to the existing trail corridors throughout the preserve.

In May, thanks to the support of the Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, we welcomed our first full-time Director of Development, Terri Eickel. Terri brings exceptional experience and motivating energy to Avalonia. She is working closely with our board, standing committees, and town committee volunteers. We will be launching our "Great Avalonia Trail Trek" fundraiser which will take place October 17-25. Terri and the trek team have worked hard developing a way for the whole family to enjoy our preserve while fundraising to pay off the TriTown Forest Preserve acquisition loan. We are within \$35,000 of completing this goal and know our Trail Trek will help us get there. See you all out on the trails in October!

**Avalonia Trails** is a biannual publication that communicates Avalonia's mission to acquire, protect, and maintain land of high conservation and habitat value; combat climate change for the benefit of people and wildlife; and ensure healthy, livable communities for now and generations to come.

**Editor** ..... Eugenia Villagra  
**Graphic Design and Layout** ..... Sandra Alexander / Dessa Lea Productions  
**Content Contributors** ..... Kimberly Barber Bradley, Jonna Chokas, Terri Eickel, Mark Steele, Beth Sullivan, Chuck Toal, Eugenia Villagra, David Young

**STEP 1: REGISTER ONLINE**

Register for the Great Avalonia Trail Trek at [www.pledgereg.com/great-avalonia-trail-trek](http://www.pledgereg.com/great-avalonia-trail-trek). You can form a team or join a team...or you can be your own team!

**STEP 2: SET A FUNDRAISING GOAL**

Set a fundraising goal that you feel you can reach – you can always raise it later. Don't forget to sponsor yourself!



**STEP 4: HAVE A GREAT TIME AT AVALONIA'S PRESERVES**

From October 17 through October 25, have a great time hiking or running Avalonia's trails or riding your bike to your favorite Avalonia preserves.



**STEP 3: ASK YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO DONATE**

The money you raise will help Avalonia finish paying for the TriTown Forest Preserve and allow us to save more land.



For more information about registration or sponsorship, please contact Terri Eickel at [terri@avalonialc.org](mailto:terri@avalonialc.org)

# Avalonia

## CLOSES ON 12+ ACRE GIFT IN NORTH STONINGTON

It took over six years for Anna Coit's wishes to be honored. Anna passed away on October 16th, 2014, at the age of 106 after leading a remarkably rich life as an editor, author, environmentalist, poet, historian, and teacher. A Vassar graduate, she became the first woman to write for Time Magazine in the early 1940s. She and her late husband, Harlan J. "Pete" Coit, purchased their farm in North Stonington in 1952 and after careful research, she and Pete decided to leave her 12+ acres, a former Christmas tree farm on Dennison Road, to the Mashantucket Land Trust (whose name changed to Avalonia Land Conservancy in 1995.) Anna was an active member for many years and an environmentalist long before the word was coined.

Before Avalonia could accept the gift, there were a number of obstacles, both in probate and in the field. The Coits had protected their land in a now defunct state program for fifty years, but a few years before her death, the land rolled over into an additional 50 years, exposing the transfer to a potential \$40 – \$50,000 tax bill. Thanks to the efforts of Coit's estate attorney, Frank N. Eppinger, a solution with the state was found when it was suggested that the land be transferred into Connecticut's Public Act 490 program, which allows 25 or more forested acres to be eligible for the program. Unfortunately, a state forester

Anna Coit's property is maturing into a new growth forest of gently rolling hills. Most significantly, the northwest border of the preserve protects more than 400 feet of the Green Fall River corridor, a federally protected "wild and scenic" watershed in North Stonington.

determined the land did not have the proper density of tree plantings in addition to being too small to qualify.

Undaunted, the community and Avalonia came to the rescue. The North Stonington Garden Club, local scout groups, and Avalonia volunteers planted several thousand seedlings over a spring 2019 weekend. Then Avalonia combined another 15 acres it owned with the 12 Coit acres to meet the PA 490 acreage minimum (state law does not require that the land be contiguous.) In May 2020, Connecticut's forester approved the land for PA 490 protection as most of the seedlings survived for more than 12 months and the acreage was over the 25-acre minimum. The protected land is expected to grow into a healthy forest with a loop trail system.

The closing took place on September 25, 2020. Avalonia is currently developing a management plan to steward the property so the existing trail system will soon be open to the public in honor of Anna Coit's final wishes. For more information, visit [www.avalonia.org/news](http://www.avalonia.org/news)

## RECOMMENDED READING

**Losing Earth: A Recent History** by Nathaniel Rich. This must-read 2019 book chronicles how, by 1979, scientists knew mostly everything we understand today about climate change—including how to stop it. It also tells the sad story of how climate change denialism and the fossil fuel industry’s systematic effort to thwart climate policy through a misinformation campaign and political influence brought those efforts to a grinding halt.

**Losing Earth**  
**A Recent History**  
**Nathaniel Rich**



## TIMING IS EVERYTHING

BY DAVID YOUNG

As I pointed out in the last newsletter, carbon dioxide levels are already at levels (412 ppm and growing at 2 ppm per year) that would result ultimately in substantially higher temperatures than the currently discussed targets. Meeting those targets would require tremendous amounts of carbon re-capture from the atmosphere and one of the largest international economic collaborations in history. Given the continued growth in power generation, the worldwide dependence on coal (27%), and the failure so far for countries to join hands in pursuit of meaningful solutions, I suspect that we should anticipate the ultimate temperature rise to be in the direction of 4° to 5° Centigrade.

There is no known period in the

history of the earth when greenhouse gasses (GHG) accumulated at the rate they are now. The runner up was the end of the Permian epoch 252 million years ago when massive volcanic activity and releases of frozen methane got GHG rapidly to these levels, but it took at least 2800 years. The recent accretion has taken about 200 years with most of it occurring in the last 50 years.

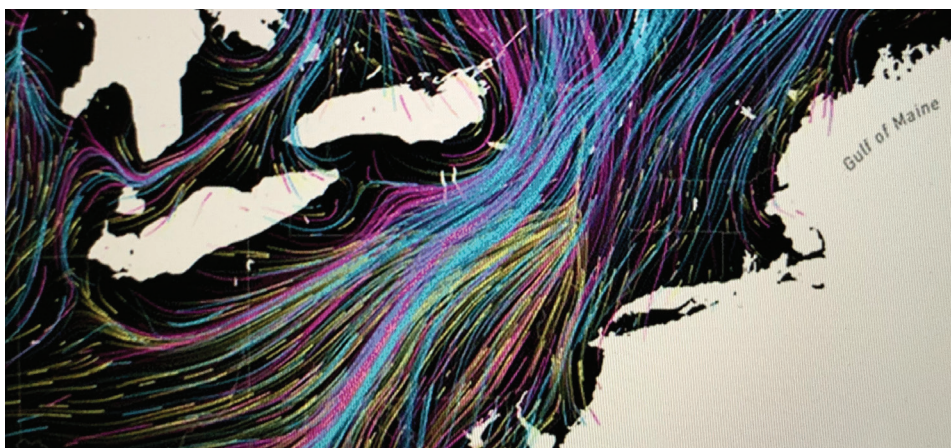
These gases provide additional insulation to the earth and trap more solar radiation each year, slowly warming the land and the seas. It may take decades for the global temperature to reach its peak, even if we arrest the growth of GHG in the near future. However, many decades are just a blink of the eye of nature. As the

temperature rises and weather patterns change, plants and animals are beginning to migrate. It is estimated that half of all species are already on the move. In earlier eons these climactic changes took millions of years allowing a plant, for instance, whose seeds could only travel a few feet to successfully make the move over time.

Animals are more mobile than plants, but their food sources are often not. One big problem is that as animals and birds migrate, they may have to adjust to new diets or suffer the consequences. Under consideration is a concept of “assisted migration” where humans would intervene to accelerate plant migration and try to mitigate the damage to wildlife. We can, however, surmise that the faster these changes occur, the more extinctions will take place.

The timing of our responses to these threats individually, nationally and globally will determine how much of the current ecosphere survives.

The probable routes of hundreds of species of mammals (pink), birds (blue) and amphibians (yellow) in the Northeast as they move north and to higher altitudes. The greatest concentration of movement is along the Appalachians for altitude. Source: Nature Conservancy.

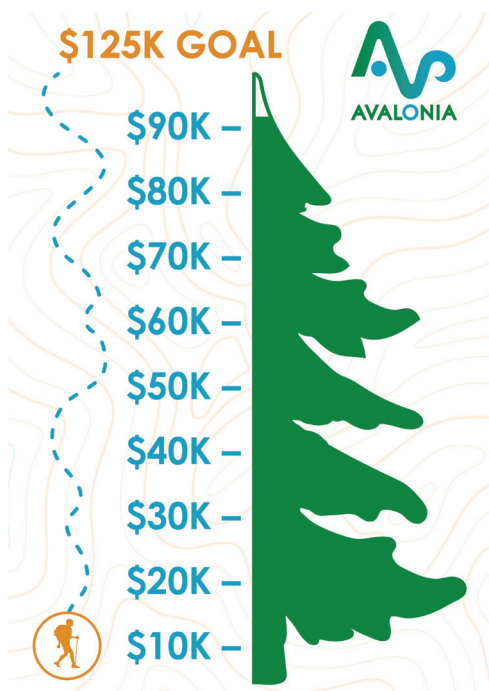




### Katharine H. Robinson 1935 - 2020

Kate Robinson spent every summer of her youth in Stonington, Ct., with her grandfather, who had acquired land there in the 1920s. Her love of that land engendered a strong interest in the environment from an early age, and her mother’s love of gardens and trees fostered that interest as well. Read Kate’s full story at [www.Avalonia.org](http://www.Avalonia.org)

### HELP US “RIP UP” THE REMAINING MORTGAGE ON THE TRITOWN FOREST PRESERVE



**DONATE TODAY!**  
[www.Avalonia.org/tritown-forest](http://www.Avalonia.org/tritown-forest)

## A NEW PRESERVE

BY BETH SULLIVAN from the  
AVALONIA eTRAILS Blog

While everyone has been out looking for new places to hike, Avalonia has added several new preserves. But the one that has caused the most excitement is the TriTown Forest Preserve, open to the public for two years now. Many people have hiked it and reported that it is amazing. Checkout the “Our Preserves” page at [Avalonia.org](http://Avalonia.org) to read more about it and go for a visit! There are many loops, varied habitats, lots of wildlife, and some challenges for those who prefer that kind of hiking.

The TriTown Forest Preserve, a gorgeous 531.55-acre property straddling North Stonington, Griswold, and Preston, was acquired by Avalonia through a generous loan of \$877,000 from the Conservation Fund. We currently owe approximately \$100,000 on the Conservation Fund loan, due on March 20, 2021. Raising big amounts of money has always been a challenge. Our business is nature and most of us hate fundraising. But we now have a wonderful resource in Terri Eickel, our new Director of Development, and she knows how to put the FUN in fundraising.



At the TriTown Preserve, a vertical challenge. Photo by Carl Tjerandsen.

## A GUIDE TO AVALONIA'S TRAILS

### Most Accessible

FLAT, WELL-MARKED TRAILS, LOW OBSTACLES

**Knox Preserve, Stonington** A 16-acre oceanside preserve with benches for beautiful views. Short 0.5-mile trail.

**Marcia Woolworth Porter Preserve, Stonington** Short trail with boardwalk for a spectacular view of a 40-acre wetland. To view a drone video, search "Woolworth" on Avalonia.org.

**Simmons Preserve, Stonington** Take the family for a [Hike & Seek](#) treasure hunt on this half acre with a view of Quana Duck Cove.

**Dodge Paddock/ Beal Preserve, Stonington** Open meadow with sea wall and 0.1-mile walking trail on Little Narragansett Bay.

**Preston Nature Preserve, Preston** Well-established 0.5-mile trail system with bridges and some low hills.

Find a full list of our trails at [www.Avalonia.org](http://www.Avalonia.org) or download the Avalonia map on the Explorer app

### Easy

GENTLE TERRAIN WITH A FEW OBSTACLES

**Woodlot Sanctuary, Stonington** A series of short, looped trails. Level ground and well-blazed trails.

**Benedict Benson Preserve, North Stonington** A 1.5-mile, lightly-used loop with unique wildflowers, trees, stone walls, and wildlife.

**Pike Marshall Preserve and Nature Trail, Ledyard** 0.8-mile trail, owned by the Nature Conservancy but managed by Avalonia, is a forest setting in the heart of the community.

### Moderate

DIVERSE, UNEVEN TERRAIN WITH OBSTACLES

**Paffard Woods, Stonington** A 1.4-mile trail ranging from a heavily wooded glacial valley to a salt marsh on a tidal cove.

**TriTown Forest Preserve, North Stonington** Avalonia's largest system with 10 miles of trails and amazing natural and historical features.

**Moore Woodlands, Groton** Part of a "crosstown" trail system connecting state and conservation woodlands.

## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO!

Avalonia's has about fifty trailed preserves we encourage everyone to visit, but if you've never been before, how will you know if the trails match your abilities? Too rugged? Too easy? Will it take too long? Some trails are short and flat; others long that go on for miles over hills and rocky terrain. Follow these suggestions for the trail that suits you!



An important part of hiking safely is being able to regulate your temperature. This is a little more difficult in the fall when the temperature at the beginning of the hike can vary dramatically from the middle and end of the hike.

## HOW TO REGULATE TEMPERATURE WHILE HIKING

BY MARK STEELE

The best way to maintain body temperature is to wear many layers. As the temperature outside goes up and your body temperature rises, you can always remove a layer. Make sure to check the forecast and have the ability to be comfortable in multiple temperatures.

Next, you should do your best to wear clothing made out of performance materials. As you sweat, performance materials move moisture away from your body and help you stay dry during unexpected weather. Cotton has the opposite effect, retaining moisture and lowering body temperature.

Last, you should invest in high-quality hiking shoes. Notice any water-proofing and water-resistance the shoes offer, which help keep your feet warm and dry throughout your adventure. Follow these tips to ensure a safe and comfortable hike this fall and winter!



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# AVALONIA *trails*

View our full calendar of events  
at [www.AVALONIA.org](http://www.AVALONIA.org)



**Avalonia's Hike & Seek** Program encourages people of all ages to explore our preserves with an educational scavenger hunt. GET READY... by locating a Hike & Seek preserve near you; GET SET... by downloading a trail map, fun clues and targets onto your smartphone/tablet; then GO!

[AVALONIA.ORG/Hike-and-Seek](http://AVALONIA.ORG/Hike-and-Seek)

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**THANK YOU FOR BEING A VALUABLE MEMBER OF AVALONIA!**

Over 52 years of preserving natural habitats in southeastern Connecticut by acquiring and protecting lands and by communicating the value of these irreplaceable resources.

