



Mayor's Office | Phone: 860.584.6250 | Fax: 860-584-3835

NEWS RELEASE

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THE CITY OF BRISTOL AND ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTERS OF CONNECTICUT ANNOUNCE THE OPENING OF PIEGON HILL PRESERVE

(BRISTOL, CT) – The City of Bristol and the Environmental Learning Centers of Connecticut (ELCCT) are excited to announce the opening of Pigeon Hill Preserve to the public on Saturday, April 22, 2023 to coincide with Earth Day. ELCCT volunteers will be on hand from 12 to around 2 pm to take community members on tours of the trails and to answer questions. After the park will be formally open and ready for community use from dawn to dusk.

This land, spanning the border of Bristol and Burlington, was purchased through a cooperative effort between ELCCT and the City of Bristol and supported by The CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Open Space and Watershed Acquisition Grant and many generous local donors. The grant program is intended to protect wildlife habitats, offer recreational opportunities, and serve as a buffer and adaptation to climate change. The Pigeon Hill Preserve adds 63.9 acres to the assemblage of The Barnes Nature Center and Seymour Park, making a contiguous recreational hub of over 138 acres for the people of Bristol and Burlington to enjoy. The Pigeon Hill Preserve is protected by a conservation and public recreation easement that will ensure the property is forever protected for public use and enjoyment.

The glacial esker that runs along the western edge of the property was historically called Pigeon Hill, a roost where thousands of the now extinct Passenger Pigeon would feed and rest. Pigeon Hill may have been the tallest esker in North America and the new Pigeon Hill purple trail allows visitors to explore the esker adds over one mile of trail to the existing Barnes Nature Center Trail system. Pigeon Hill Preserve additionally encompasses pine forests, fields, shrublands, and wetlands which are habitat for less common birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. A 304-acre Aquifer Protection Area, owned by the City of New Britain, is located less than 600 feet past the property's southern boundary. Directly west of and adjacent to the property is the Harry C. Barnes Nature Center and Seymour Park.

"The acquisition of this property will allow this land to be used for passive recreation, opportunities to educate the public on the importance of wetlands and native plants and native wildlife for generations to come," stated City of Bristol Mayor Jeffrey Caggiano.

City of Bristol

111 North Main Street
Bristol, CT 06010
www.bristolct.gov

“The Pigeon Hill Preserve provides another high-quality, passive recreation space allowing community members to get outdoors, exercise and enjoy the benefits of being in nature,” stated Dr. Joshua T. Medeiros, Ed.D., CPRE, Superintendent of Parks, Recreation, Youth and Community Services.

“We are truly grateful to all those involved with making this important land acquisition possible and we continue to work hard to make this preserve an important resource for our community and to provide a quality habitat for a wide variety of plants and animals,” said Scott Heth, Executive Director of the Environmental Learning Centers of Connecticut.



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