



Save Deer Lake

Our Wilderness Next Door

In the fall of 2021, the Boy Scouts announced that they planned to sell the Deer Lake Scout Reservation in Killingworth to the highest bidder. That could have meant the private development of this environmentally sensitive 250-acre open space. Pathfinders, Inc., a nonprofit organization, took on the challenge of protecting this land.

In less than a year, Pathfinders succeeded in raising enough money to purchase Deer Lake. Most of that was in contributions from generous donors throughout Connecticut. To meet the Scouts' deadline, however, we had to take out loans for a portion of the sales price. We are now raising money to repay those loans as quickly as possible. As soon as the loans are paid off, we will be able to create an easement that will protect Deer Lake forever.

Deer Lake forms part of a greenway stretching from Middletown to the Long Island Sound. The Nature Conservancy has characterized it as one of the areas "most resilient" to climate change in the Northeast corridor. It is virtually contiguous with Connecticut State Forest land and includes part of the renowned Blue Trail. The southern part of the property contains facilities for a youth camp that has introduced thousands of young people to the natural world. Senator Richard Blumenthal has called the property "a treasure for the whole state" and "part of the ecological lifeblood of the region."

Summer camps have been operated at Deer Lake, under various auspices, for 90 years. The first was started by Ralph Hill, who may have been an inspiration for the character of Dr. Doolittle; Hugh Lofting, author of the Dr. Doolittle books, lived just down the road from Deer Lake. Mr. Hill was known to leave scraps of food outside for the local wildlife to eat and could often be found surrounded by forest animals. For the last 32 years, Mark and Patty Clifton have run the Deer Lake Day Camp and Wilderness School, which has inspired

generations of campers with a lasting appreciation of the natural world. Pathfinders will continue to operate the camp in the inclusive spirit it has had from the beginning.

The public is invited to come walk the Deer Lake trails. Please sign in at the kiosk near the parking area. We will also be developing community-wide programming; look for future notices about concerts, nature workshops, and other events.

We have been gratified by the generosity of donors from 9 years old to 90+, from Killingworth to Killingly, from couples to corporations. Every dollar moves us closer to free and clear title to the land and enables us to steward the property responsibly in the meantime. Please join our community of supporters dedicated to preserving Deer Lake.

Pathfinders, Inc.
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For more information about Pathfinders and the campaign to save Deer Lake:

<https://www.savedeerlake.com/home/about>

<https://www.ctinsider.com/shoreline/article/Pathfinders-inks-deal-to-buy-Killingworth-s-17415488.php>