Care for it,
enjoy it,
pass it on.

K. DiBonaventura
Message from the Chairman

2014 was an exciting year for The Last Green Valley, Inc. (TLGV). The fiscal year started with a celebratory turn as the Grand Marshal in the region’s Holiday Dazzle Light Parade, in recognition of the National Heritage Corridor’s 20th Anniversary. The year ended with another champagne cork-popping piece of news – our federal legislation was amended to formally change our name to The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor, and our federal funding was reauthorized until 2021. While this legislation doesn’t guarantee any dollar amount in a given year, it reaffirms that The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor is eligible and worthy of continued federal investment.

TLGV is grateful for the support of Senator Richard Blumenthal, who introduced the legislation in the Senate, and Congressman Joseph Courtney, who introduced the legislation in the House. TLGV would also like to thank Senators Elizabeth Warren and Christopher Murphy, and Congressmen Richard Neal and James McGovern, for co-sponsoring this legislation and for their continued support of our National Heritage Corridor.

2014 was also a year of staff transitions. We said goodbye to Charlene Cutler, our Executive Director for 17 years. She accepted a challenging position as the first Executive Director of the Blackstone National Heritage Corridor, and we are excited to continue working with her in her new role. Valerie Imre and Michelle Bourgeois also departed to pursue other opportunities. The Board of Directors appointed our Deputy Director, Lois Bruinooge, as Executive Director, and TLGV hired Marcy Dawley as a Project Administrator. Lois is an environmental attorney by trade and has considerable legal and management experience working for non-profits and state agencies. Marcy has been a volunteer Lead Ranger for TLGV for some time and is a welcome addition to our staff. Walktober was again a huge success, due to the wonderful work of our partner organizations in pulling together more than 160 walks, bikes, paddles, pedals, and special events. More than 60,000 people were able to experience all The Last Green Valley has to offer and we invite you to join us again for the 25th Anniversary of Walktober in 2015.

Tastes of the Valley, our annual feast and fundraiser, also drew a record crowd and raised more than $20,000 to support TLGV’s programs and projects. Again, we could not have hosted such a successful and enjoyable event without the hard work of our volunteers, donors, farms, restaurants, beverage providers, and sponsors.

To all of our members, donors, volunteers and partners, we thank you. We could not provide the depth and breadth of programming that you have come to expect without your support. We work for you in the National Heritage Corridor, and your input is critical to our success. If you have any questions, comments, concerns, or would just like to chat about our work, please feel free to contact Lois or me through the office at 860-774-3300.

We look forward to continuing to provide high quality programs and events in 2015 that celebrate and conserve The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor. Green by day and dark by night, The Last Green Valley is still 77% forest and field. Together, we can care for it, enjoy it, and pass it on.

Bill Jobbagy, Chairman, Board of Directors
Friendly TLGV Rangers and other volunteers participated in 40 events, fairs and festivals, helping to educate thousands of people about The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor.

In November of 2013, TLGV was also named Grand Marshal of the 2013 Holiday Dazzle Light Parade in Putnam, CT, kicking off the 20th Anniversary of National Heritage Corridor. TLGV entered an impressive float and organized the first TLGV Green Flash Mob of marchers wearing green lights. The Holiday Dazzle Light Parade is a spectacular event with more than 120 brightly lit floats viewed by 20,000 spectators lining the streets. As Grand Marshal, TLGV helped to establish the first litter-free parade – TLGV supplied trash bags to volunteers from HighPointe Church and spectators, and encouraged them to clean up after themselves along the parade route. TLGV and the Green Flash mob marched again in 2014 with a recreation-themed float and another successful litter-free campaign.

Did you see us in 2014 at these events? Look for us in 2015:

- YMCA Healthy Kids Day in Danielson
- UCONN Earth Day Spring Fling
- Charlton Earth Day Festival
- Sturbridge Lions All American River Race
- Putnam First Fridays
- Putnam Beautification Day
- Charlton Annual Spring Day
- Willimantic Third Thursdays
- Willimantic River Festival
- Southbridge FEST
- Norwich River Fest
- Paddle for a Cure in Brooklyn
- Dudley Grange Strawberry Fest
- Schott Fiberoptics Employee Fair in Southbridge
- Coventry Regional Farmers’ Market
- Bozrah Farmers Market
- Lebanon Country Fair
- Dudley Farmers’ Market
- Woodstock Fair
- Killingly Cooks & Tomato Festival
- Celebrating Agriculture in Woodstock
- Positively Pomfret Day
- Thompson Community Day
- Fort Hill Farms Balloon Rides in Thompson
- Walktober events throughout the National Heritage Corridor
- Coventry Harvest Day Festival
- Webster/Dudley/Oxford Business & Home Show
- Roseland Cottage Fine Arts and Crafts Festival in Woodstock
- Pumpkin Festival in Putnam

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**TLGV BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2014-2015**

- Bill Jobbagy, *Chairman*
  - Coventry, CT
- Mike Nelson, *Vice Chairman*
  - Norwich, CT
- Myra Ambrogi, *Secretary*
  - Plainfield, CT
- Thomas E. Dufresne, *Treasurer*
  - Southbridge, MA
- Donna Baron
  - Lebanon, CT
- Elsie Bisset
  - Voluntown, CT
- Janet Blanchette
  - Thompson, CT
- Rick Hermonot
  - Sterling, CT
- Ed Hood
  - Sturbridge, MA
- Jennifer Kaufman
  - Mansfield, CT
- Elaine Knowlton
  - Brooklyn, CT
- Alix McNitt
  - Sturbridge, MA
- Norma O'Leary
  - Thompson, CT
- Wayde Schmidt
  - Pomfret, CT
- Joan St. Ament
  - Woodstock, CT
- Jean Sullivan
  - Brimfield, MA
- Eric Thomas
  - CT Governor’s Designee
  - Coventry, CT
- Christine Armstrong
  - Education Outreach Coordinator
  - Coventry, CT
- Jason Vincent
  - Griswold, CT
- Mark Winne
  - Charlton, MA

**TLGV STAFF**

- Lois Bruinooge
  - Executive Director
- Bill Reid
  - Chief Ranger
- Sharon Wakely
  - Finance Administrator
- LyAnn Graff
  - Office Coordinator
- Marcy Dawley
  - Project Administrator

**Contractors**

- Christine Armstrong

**Education Outreach Coordinator**

- Jean Pillo
  - Water Quality Monitoring and TRBP Coordinator

**Contractors**

- Christine Armstrong

**Education Outreach Coordinator**

- Jean Pillo
Book a TLGV Ranger talk for your organization in 2015. Ranger presentations currently available include:

- **Your Green Oasis**: The Forests of The Last Green Valley
- **On The Wild Side**: Exploring the Flora and Fauna of The Last Green Valley
- **Notable and Notorious**: Curious and Infamous Characters from The Last Green Valley
- **Connecting the Drops**: Source to Sea Through The Last Green Valley
- **Take a Walk in The Last Green Valley**
- **The Last Green Valley: It’s Where You Live**

If you haven’t already seen it, watch for Chief Ranger Bill’s weekly column in the Norwich Bulletin focusing on places to explore in The Last Green Valley. Look for our press releases and “It’s Happening” ads in local publications, and check local cable channels for TLGV appearances. “Like” our Facebook page (greatly enhanced, thanks to Lead Ranger Marcy) to stay connected to The Last Green Valley.

TLGV Rangers LEAD THE WAY

TLGV Rangers and other volunteers provided more than 900 hours of volunteer service educating people about The Last Green Valley’s unique natural and cultural resources – thank you!

Our incredibly helpful and informative Rangers are: Steven Ayer, Christine Armstrong, Tineke Brinks, Janet Blanchette, Steve Broderick, Bill Campbell, Naomi Campbell, Ken Carpenter, Marcy Dawley (Lead Ranger), LyAnn Graff, Lucille Langlois, Kitty Lowenthal, Larry Lowenthal, Mike Mathewson, Cyd Norris, Jean Pillo, Nancy Polydys, Bill Reid (Chief Ranger) and Barbara Vizoyan.

In addition to our Rangers, we’d like to thank several other people who volunteered at the TLGV exhibit booths and member events including: Myra Ambrogi, Tom Brennan, Wendy Brennan, Beverly Butkiewicz, Ken Butkiewicz, Laura Moorehead, Scott Moorehead, Wayde Schmidt and Joan St. Ament.

**TLGV Ranger Talks Connect People to the National Heritage Corridor**

Chief Ranger Bill shared his love of The Last Green Valley in 37 presentations to area non-profits and community organizations with an estimated 840 total people in attendance.

- Lebanon Historical Society
- Canterbury Lions Club
- Rhode Island Canoe and Kayak Club
- Mansfield Lion’s Club
- Sturbridge Historical Society
- Norwich Sunshine Rotary Club
- Lebanon Senior Center
- Dudley Women’s Club
- Thompson Lion’s Club
- Coventry Historical Society
- The Overlook in Charlton
- Corbin Library in Webster
- Dudley Senior Center
- LiR, Quinebaug Valley Community College
- Pomfret Senior Center
- Adventures in Lifelong Learning, Three Rivers Community College
- Thompson Recreation/Library
- Scotland Library
- Danielson Rotary Club
- Sturbridge Senior Center
- Oxford Business Association
- Sturbridge Rotary Club
- Lebanon Senior Center
- Finnish American Society
- Franklin Historical Society
- Bartlett High School PASS Program
- Day Kimball Hospital
- Mansfield Public Library
- Association of University Women at Waterford Library
- Griswold Historical Society
- Southbridge Library
- Eastern CT State University Conservation Class
- Series of Ranger talks at the TLGV office in Danielson

We are always looking for more TLGV Rangers and volunteers. Call Chief Ranger Bill at 860-774-3300 to join the fun!
TLGV Members Have All the Fun

One of the perks of TLGV membership is a monthly member program. This past year, members enjoyed good company and good fun at the following events:

- Stew and Story at The Publick House Historic Inn in Sturbridge, with readings by Kitty and Larry Lowenthal and Barbara Larkin
- Gallery tour of the Benton Museum of Art, UCONN
- A hike along the Nipmuck Trail in Ashford, CT
- Hikes at the Wyndham Land Trust’s Spaulding and Rappaport Preserves in Woodstock, CT
- Paddles on the Willimantic and Quinebaug Rivers
- Ranger Talks held at TLGV’s office
- Lower Natchaug River Cleanup in Windham
- Tastes of the Valley
- Walktober
- Putnam Holiday Dazzle Parade

Members, be sure we have your correct email address so you don’t miss any of our e-newsletters and announcements.

Eagles Love The Last Green Valley Too

The midwinter eagle survey (and our follow-up press release about the survey) has become an interesting way for TLGV to spread the word about the amazing natural resources we have in the National Heritage Corridor. In January of 2014, we placed more than 50 volunteers on rivers, lakes and ponds throughout The Last Green Valley and logged in more than 250 ranger and volunteer hours as we surveyed the skies and waterways for bald eagles. It is no surprise, based on The Last Green Valley’s excellent eagle habitat and the number of volunteers we deployed, that we had a record number of bald eagles sightings that morning, at 21. Based on CT DEEP’s compilation of the data, that translates to 10 or more bald eagles over-wintering in the region. We know from previous experience that at least four breeding pairs of bald eagles live in The Last Green Valley year-round.
Bringing the Watershed to Classrooms and Camps

TLGV expanded its popular Watershed Education program in 2014 with a small grant from the Environmental Professionals Organization of Connecticut. The 30-minute, hands-on program meets state science standards related to the movement of water and pollutants over the landscape. The program is tailored to middle school students but is easily modified for other age groups.

TLGV was able to reach 2,892 students at 29 schools, camps, and events, connecting them to their watershed and learning about ways to keep our water clean.

Students were able to explore TLGV’s table-top watershed model in the following schools, camps, and events:
- Woodstock
- Eastford
- St. Joseph, Thompson
- Mansfield After School Club
- Norwich
- Plainfield
- Webster
- Ashford
- Brooklyn
- Pomfret
- Scotland
- Southbridge
- Canterbury
- YMCA Healthy Kids Day, Danielson
- Canterbury Girl Scouts
- CT Audubon, Pomfret
- 4-H meetings, multiple locations
- Putnam Recreation Day Camps
- Thompson Recreation Day Camps
- Day Camp at Crystal Pond, Eastford/Woodstock
- Camp Woodstock
- Camp Foskett, Charlton
- Plainfield Recreation Day Camps
- Celebrating Agriculture, Woodstock
- Positively Pomfret Day

Did we visit your school or camp this year? If not, contact Christine at 860-774-3300 to schedule a program for your students.
Keeping The Last Green Valley Clean and Green

For the 3rd year in a row, TLGV supported Earth Month and River cleansups throughout the watershed. 1,147 volunteers removed almost 39,000 pounds of trash from our roadways, parks, trails and waterways. Plastic bags and disposable food service items (cups, plates, forks, knives, spoons) were the most counted items, at 6,382 and 6,396 respectively – an avalanche of plastic that we need to stop in 2015!

“Who knew picking up trash could be so much fun? 197 volunteers picked up 12,960 pounds of garbage in Norwich over 7 months. We have gone above and beyond achieving our goal of finding a project that would help us get to know some of the spiritual groups in our community. We have established relationships, rolled up our sleeves and worked together in the community where we live and serve.”

Suzee Costa, Reliance House, Inc. of Norwich

TLGV supported cleanups by the following organizations and communities:

- Bozrah
- Brooklyn
- Canterbury Lions
- Coventry
- Eastern CT Conservation District
- First Congregational Church in Woodstock
- Groton Open Space Association
- Killingly
- Natchaug River Young Marines
- Putnam
- Reliance House, Inc.
- Sprague
- Thompson Recreation/Middle School
- Thompson Together
- Thread City Development
- Thames Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited
- Webster Dudley Business Alliance
- Windham Chamber of Commerce
- Windham Textile Museum
Engaging Volunteers to Monitor and Protect Water Quality

Now in its 9th year, TLGV’s water quality monitoring program is in the top 25% of programs nationwide, as all of our methodologies are fully-approved by state and federal agencies, and the data can be used in formal state water quality assessments.

Fifty more volunteers were trained this year, for a total of 110 active volunteers willing to get their feet wet and become stewards of The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor.

This year, TLGV volunteers and partners:
- Assisted with tracking down sources of bacterial contamination in Ekonk Brook in Plainfield, CT
- Conducted bacteria monitoring in the French River in Oxford, Webster and Dudley, MA and Little River in Putnam, CT
- Monitored conditions in Webster Lake and South Charlton Reservoir in MA, and Amos Lake and Avery Pond in CT
- Placed temperature data loggers in nine stream locations in northeastern CT in cooperation with CT DEEP.
- Focused river bioassessment monitoring efforts on the smallest streams to help CT DEEP document healthy water habitat in the upper watershed areas.

Water Quality Monitoring Partners include:
- Eastern CT Conservation District
- CT Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection
- MA Dept. of Environmental Protection
- Environmental Protection Agency
- CT Audubon Society at Pomfret
- CT Dept. of Public Health
- Northeast District Dept. of Health
- Avery Pond
- Amos Lake Association
- French River Connection
- South Charlton Reservoir Association
- Webster Lake Association
- Webster Dudley Wastewater Treatment Facility

Special kudos go to French River Connection volunteers for completing their 10th year of temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, conductivity and turbidity data collection in the Massachusetts part of the French River.

Water quality monitoring volunteers were treated to TLGV’s annual appreciation event and luncheon, featuring workshops by conservation professionals. This year, Laura Saucier of CT DEEP taught us about fresh water mussels and how volunteers can report mussels they find when collecting other water quality data. Fresh water mussels are living water filters but they are very vulnerable to pollution, and many are endangered or threatened in the northeast.

“I really enjoy participating in TLGV’s Water Quality Monitoring program. The training program is very comprehensive, challenging, fun, and user-friendly… We feel that we are doing something that matters….One of Fall 2014’s highlights was sighting an American mink as it silently swam across a narrow stream just a few yards ahead of us without realizing that we were there!…THAT is the type of encounter that brings us back year after year!”

Anne, a long-time water quality monitoring volunteer
Walktober Celebrates its 24th Year

Our amazing partners collectively offered more than 160 guided walks, bike rides, paddles and events during October and stretching into November. More than 60,000 people participated, an increase over last year’s record-breaking numbers. There is no better way to learn about The Last Green Valley’s unique resources than through a Walktober adventure.

TLGV could not have coordinated Walktober without the tremendous support of our 100+ partners and major sponsors: Millenium Power, Savings Institute Bank & Trust, Southbridge Savings Bank, Ivanhoe Tool & Die Company, CME, Eastern Savings Bank, Savers Bank, UNFI, Newell & Betty Hale Foundation, ARS Products, Citizens National Bank, Farm Credit East, LeBoeuf Rubbish Removal, Putnam Plastics, and the Towns of Bozrah, Chaplin, Coventry, Franklin, Hampton, Killingly, Pomfret, Putnam and Sprague. Thank you!

“I am writing to thank leaders Sue and Tom from the Mansfield Parks Advisory Committee, their helper Griffen and TLGV for today’s hike at Dunhamtown Forest in Mansfield. We found out about this hike through Walktober from TLGV. I went on the 10 am hike (1.5 hours and 1 mile) with my 6 year old, my 2 year old and 6 month old children. The games were engaging and suitable for my 6 year old as well as my 2 year old. The terrain, duration and distance were just right for our wide-ranging levels….I would love to see this activity on next year’s calendar of events…Thanks again for a wonderful day!” – Melissa, a grateful Walktober participant

Meet Mr. Walktober 2014 – Nick Bellantoni

Dr. Nicholas Bellantoni recently retired as the state archaeologist with the CT State Museum of Natural History and Archaeology Center in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences at the University of Connecticut. Over the years, Nick has brought history to life for hundreds of Walktober participants. He is a great story teller, able to share vast amounts of information, and is incredibly entertaining. Anyone who has been on his walks knows that Nick Bellantoni is a rock star in the Walktober world.
Marketing The Last Green Valley’s Strongest Assets

TLGV continued to promote The Last Green Valley as a destination by marketing in Yankee Magazine, the CT Visitors Guide, the Central Mass. Convention and Visitors Bureau, and other regional publications. Advertising materials continued to focus on our strongest assets - nature-based recreation, agriculture, and small town New England experiences.

Promoting Local Products and Talents through the 2014 Guide

TLGV’s 2014 Guide featured 177 local businesses and attractions in The Last Green Valley. The Guide is distributed in more than 65 regional locations, state visitor centers, and mailed to thousands who see TLGV’s ads and request information each year. The Guide is also incorporated into the TLGV web-based destination map, offering more visibility for business partners.

As the primary fulfillment piece for inquiries about the National Heritage Corridor, the Guide also features editorial content highlighting major seasonal events, each of our towns, agricultural products, hikes, pedals, water trails, flora and fauna, historic sites, museums, characters, and itineraries for great days in The Last Green Valley.

Green Lights for The Last Green Valley

Residents, businesses, municipalities and non-profits took part in TLGV’s slightly off-kilter festival from mid-February through mid-March. We love to promote local businesses during this traditionally slow time of year, and herald the arrival of a green spring.

- Best Collaborative Display - to Willimantic, for the Green Lights Screen Project. Original artwork was projected onto the windows of the Kerri Art Studio and Gallery in a stunning display. Thread City Development, Inc., Willimantic Screen Project, Kerri Art Studio and Gallery, and Willimantic Brewing Company collaborated with Professor June Bisantz and art students from Eastern Connecticut State University who provided the images.
- Best Community Display - Green Lights in Davis Park, Danielson. Killingly Parks and Recreation incorporated green lights into their holiday display.
- Best Public Event - The Green Valley Festival Premier and Art Exhibition, Silver Circle Gallery, Putnam. The evening was the premier of the Green Valley Festival film from Bond Brothers Entertainment and also featured G. Leslie Sweetnam’s aerial photography of The Last Green Valley.
- Best Business Promotion - Celebrations Gallery, Pomfret. Celebrations used Green Lights as a marketing tool, offering a special TLGV Tea, as well as a unique outdoor display.
- Best Residential Display - Lenore Felpel and Jim Hamel of East Killingly.

Updated and Expanded Interpretive Publications

TLGV updated and expanded three of its most popular publications; all three are available from the TLGV website at www.thelastgreenvalley.org/tlgv/publications.

- Notable and Notorious – Historically Interesting People from The Last Green Valley;
- For the Common Good – A Guide to the Historic and Scenic Town Commons and Greens of The Last Green Valley; and
- Wild Guide to The Last Green Valley.

And be sure to visit www.thelastgreenvalley.org. TLGV finished a major overhaul of the website this year, with a completely new design and operating system. The new website features an expanded destination map and events calendar, a blog, and interactive options such as Monthly Quizzes and Weekly Photo Contests.

One of our most enjoyable projects in late summer each year is to host a photo contest for the upcoming year’s calendar. Our 2014 contest (for the 2015 calendar) drew close to 100 entries. The 2015 - A Beautiful Year in The Last Green Valley calendar is filled with exquisite pictures and interesting tidbits about the natural and cultural history of the National Heritage Corridor. This year’s coveted cover shot of an “Old Farm Truck” reposing peacefully in the shade beside an old stone wall, was taken by Sandee Harraden of Woodstock, CT.
Working Collaboratively on Regional Issues – the Thames River Basin Partnership

The Thames River Basin Partnership (TRBP) is a diverse coalition of government and non-profit organizations, educational institutions, industries and municipalities with a shared vision of natural resource conservation in the greater Thames River watershed.

The Last Green Valley forms the heart of the Thames River watershed, and TLGV funds a part-time coordinator for the TRBP. Four times each year, TRBP partners meet to share information, network, and collaborate on projects that are compatible with the TRBP Plan of Work.

TRBP’s flagship event is the annual Floating Workshop, which features a different part of the watershed each year. This year focused on the Pachaug River – its history, current economic development challenges shared by Griswold and Voluntown, and the pros and cons of lake drawdowns as a means of controlling aquatic weeds. After the workshop, a tasty networking session was hosted by Buttonwoods Farm.

Pontoon boats hooked together make a floating classroom on Pachaug Pond as part of TRBP Floating Workshop XIV

TLGV continued its work as a partner in a New-England wide project funded by a US Forest Service Grant through the North East State Foresters Association. All of our Last Green Valley communities are included within the Southern New England Heritage Forest. Our region was one of four priority landscapes in New England selected for a pilot project.

Our goal is to strengthen forest stewardship and conserve the many values of the region’s forest landscape for future generations. The pilot project was designed to engage landowners who have never been involved in forest management or conservation in the past.

We trained Woodland Ambassadors – people passionate about their woods - to conduct informal woods walks and events. Twenty two events, drawing 305 people, were held during the pilot project throughout the Southern New England Heritage Forest.

The majority of attendees had never spoken with a consulting forester, 75% had never spoken with a land trust or government agency to learn about conservation options, and 90% had never consulted an estate planning professional to discuss long-term options for their land. After the workshops, about half the participants said they were now interested in speaking with a forester, 40% said they are likely to contact a land trust or agency to learn about conservation options, and 30% are likely to consult with an estate planning professional. All of the data collected through this project will be used to target the next steps landowners can take towards forest management and conservation.

Project partners included:
• MassConn Sustainable Forest Partnership
• Northern Rhode Island Conservation District
• Opacum Land Trust
• Providence Water
• RI Resource Conservation & Development Area Council
• State Forestry Agencies (CT DEEP, RI DEM, MA DCR)
• The Nature Conservancy
• University of CT Cooperative Extension
• University of Rhode Island
• USDA – NRCS
• Highstead Foundation
• Yale University
• North East State Foresters Association

Protecting Forest Resources - Southern New England Heritage Forest Partnership

J. Stahr
Striving Towards Sustainable Communities

More than 60 people attended a free workshop on new strategies for Brownfields development. TLGV, in cooperation with EPA, CT DEEP, and private sector consultants and attorneys, hosted the workshop covering new funding resources, streamlined cleanup regulations, and legislative changes including liability relief.

Immediately following the workshop, attendees toured the Willimantic Whitewater Partnership’s property on Bridge Street, to learn about cost-effective strategies for dealing with site contamination, and see firsthand the potential of this property as a nexus of community revitalization.

TLGV continued to build capacity at the municipal and regional levels by providing assistance over the phone, drafting support letters, and attending regional meetings of interest. TLGV supported:

- Coventry’s application to the Main Street Investment Fund program to continue its efforts to revitalize Historic South Coventry Village
- Sprague’s grant application for funds to purchase the 111-acre Robinson Property
- An environmental consultant’s efforts to increase connectivity in the Barbers Hollow Brook system and to restore an Eastern Brook Trout fishery in Oxford
- Preston’s grant applications to the Environmental Protection Agency for cleanup of the former Norwich State Hospital property

Lois Bruinooge continues to represent The Last Green Valley on the Eastern CT Resource Conservation and Development Council, and as a member of the CT Greenways Council.

Increasing Recreational Access to our Waterways

TLGV, its partners and volunteers worked hard to maintain and improve more than 60 miles of National Recreation Trail on the Quinebaug and Willimantic Rivers. The water trails project is funded by a CT DEEP Recreation Trails grant, and receives technical assistance from the National Park Service Rivers and Trails Program.

New kiosks were constructed and installed at public launches on the Willimantic River at six locations by students from Ellis Technical High School. New kiosk information signs were developed in close coordination with the Willimantic River Alliance. A ceremony was held at River Park in Mansfield to dedicate the new Willimantic River kiosks. TLGV also worked with an Eagle Scout to construct a new kiosk at the CT DEEP Fish Hatchery in Plainfield.

TLGV and its partners led numerous paddles, and continued to publicize all water trail paddles and development efforts through Currents from Source to Sea, its periodic e-newsletter.

TLGV volunteers were also trained in the Universal Trails Accessibility Process, and will be working to assess all of the public boat launches in the next year. The training was provided by the US Army Corps of Engineer trails expert, Tom Chamberland.

Project partners include:

- Willimantic River Alliance
- NPS Rivers and Trails Program
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- CT Dept. of Energy & Environmental Protection
- CT Light and Power
- Ellis Technical High School
- Towns of Dudley, MA, and Brooklyn, Canterbury, Killingly, Mansfield, Pomfret, Putnam, Stafford, Tolland, and Willington, CT

“When I moved to this beautiful place over 15 years ago, and learned that there were threats that would make this area just like the place I left behind, I heard myself say, ‘Somebody needs to do something to stop that from happening.’ Then it dawned on me: I am somebody.”

Jean Pillo, TLGV Ranger, Volunteer Water Quality Monitoring Program Coordinator, and Thames River Basin Partnership Coordinator
Connecting Local Farms to Local Restaurants - Tastes of the Valley

TLGV held its 9th Annual Tastes of the Valley feast and fundraiser in September. The event celebrated locally-grown foods, matched local farms to local chefs, and raised funds for the National Heritage Corridor. Each year, local restaurants prepare tasting portions of delicious menu items using food and beverages grown and produced in The Last Green Valley.

More than 150 participants enjoyed the creative cuisine and glorious fall weather.

- Bella’s Bistro in Putnam, CT, was voted as the “Best Cuisine of the 2014 Tastes of the Valley,” for its braised pork bellies over acorn and butternut squash chutney topped with apple slaw and a reduction of Hosmer Mountain root beer, Taylor Brooke wine and tomatoes using products from 18th-Century Purity Farm, Buell’s Orchard, Ekonk Hill Turkey Farm, Hart’s Greenhouse, Lapsley Orchard, Hosmer Mountain, Taylor Brooke Winery, and Wayne’s Organic Garden.

- Honorable Mention was awarded to The Inn at Woodstock Hill in Woodstock, CT, for its chilled peach & black currant soup and roasted vegetable salad with herb roasted chicken & goat cheese, using products from 18th-Century Purity Farm, Buell’s Orchard, Chase Road Growers, Ekonk Hill Turkey Farm, Hart’s Greenhouse, Meadowstone Farm, Lapsley Orchard, Maple Lane Farms, and Wayne’s Organic Garden.
- Honorable Mention was also awarded to The Publick House in Sturbridge, MA, for its pan seared turkey with roasted blue hubbard squash, sautéed lacinato kale, organic garlic and shallots, with a Taylor Brooke Autumn Raspberry wine reduction; their dish was created using products from Ekonk Hill Turkey Farm, Lapsley Orchard, Palazzi Orchard, and Taylor Brooke Winery.

- The “Best Beverage” competition resulted in a four-way tie between Black Pond Brews, Sharpe Hill Vineyard, Taylor Brooke Winery, and Westford Hill Distillers.

- Many other restaurants, beverage providers, and farms made generous contributions to this event, including: Blackmer Farm, Devon Point Farm, The Farmer’s Cow, New Boston Beef, We-Li-Kit Farm, 85 Main, Cafémantic, Grill 37, Heirloom Food Company, The Mansion at Bald Hill, Marty’s of Dudley, Mrs. Bridges’ Pantry, Pioneer Brewery, Oliver Wight Tavern, The Purple Carrot, Soleil & Suns, Willimantic Brewing Company, The Vanilla Bean Café, and Vienna Restaurant.

TLGV raised more than $20,000 to support its programs, in large part due to its generous sponsors:

- Platinum Level - Fiberoptics Technology Incorporated, Rebecca Harvey, and The Mansion at Bald Hill;
- Gold Level – Putnam Bank, Keith & Elaine Knowlton, and Savings Institute Bank & Trust;

In addition, dozens of local businesses contributed raffle and auction items – thank you all!
Helping Farmers Succeed - Mastering the Business of Agriculture (MBAg)

The MBAg Program was designed to provide business planning assistance to farmers to increase small-midsize farm viability, through an in-depth educational program culminating in the production of individualized business plans. It was supported by a grant from USDA and faculty support from UConn.

In 2014, sixteen farms participated in the 10-week course, and one new farm audited the course. Most farms had multiple attendees which brought the attendance to 31 individuals. A total of 2,256 acres and 51 full-time-equivalent jobs were affected by the program.

Attendees had a wide range of products including livestock, fruit, produce, value added, and forestry. The number of years the farms had been in existence ranged from 1 year to 142 years. Several were exploring alternative markets or products to expand their sales.

Based on participant evaluations, the course significantly increased participant’s knowledge of farm business management, the value of planning, marketing, budgeting, goal setting, and writing a business plan. 100% of the participants would recommend the class to others.

Strengthening Farm Friendly Communities - AGvocate Program

The AGvocate Program, begun as a pilot in The Last Green Valley, received a grant from the CT Department of Agriculture to expand the concept statewide in 2014. The AGvocate works with municipalities to strengthen the farm-friendliness of local regulations and to improve the long-term viability of agricultural businesses within each community.

TLGV is a member of the AGvocate Steering Committee and provides time, expertise, and other in-kind services to the project. The fourteen original AGvocate towns have continued to host promotional events and educational forums, to meet quarterly in a regional network, and to continually improve municipal planning, zoning, and tax requirements to benefit agricultural businesses.

The AGvocate Program, begun as a pilot in The Last Green Valley, received a grant from the CT Department of Agriculture to expand the concept statewide in 2014. The AGvocate works with municipalities to strengthen the farm-friendliness of local regulations and to improve the long-term viability of agricultural businesses within each community.

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“Good push to our farm to plan instead of ‘do’ and ‘react.’”

“Extremely eye-opening class. I think it should be a requirement for farmers.”

“This course will help my farm become more profitable.”

“Helping Farmers Succeed - Mastering the Business of Agriculture (MBAg)
Balance Sheet for The Last Green Valley, Inc. as of September 30, 2014
Audited Financial Statement

Assets
CURRENT ASSETS:
   Cash  $ 203,168
   Grant Receivable  39,131
   Inventory  2,100
   Prepaid Expenses  3,891
Total Current Assets  248,290

Property and Equipment:
   Machinery and Equipment  25,842
   Less Accumulated Depreciation  (25,421)
Net Property and Equipment  421

TOTAL ASSETS  $ 248,711

Liabilities and Net Assets
CURRENT LIABILITIES:
   Accrued Expenses  13,813
Total Current Liabilities  13,813

TOTAL LIABILITIES  $ 13,813

NET ASSETS:
   Unrestricted  234,898
Total Net Assets  234,898

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS  $ 248,711

FY 2014 INCOME SOURCES
National Park Service  $ 677,089
Sales – Merchandise  1,168
Grants  50,269
Contributions  3,021
Memberships/fees  94,161
Interest Income  484
Advertising Income  15,380
Fundraising Event  25,060
Members’ Activities  870
TOTAL REVENUE  $ 867,502

FY 2014 EXPENSE ALLOCATIONS
Programming  637,970
Management (Admin/Overhead)  113,632
Fundraising  48,691
TOTAL EXPENSES  $ 800,293

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   Soleil & Sons Bakery
   G. Leslie Sweetnam
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   Town of Coventry
   Town of Hampton
   Town of Pomfret
   Town of Putnam
   Town of Sprague
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   Willimantic Brewing Co.
   Willimantic Food Co-op

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   Adept Bodywork
   The Adventure Park at Storrs
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