



News from the

CONNECTICUT STATE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY & CONNECTICUT ARCHAEOLOGY CENTER

 University of Connecticut • Winter 2008



OLD

BONES



The Office of State Archaeology Turns 20!

In the mid-1980s, Connecticut's archaeological heritage was vanishing at an alarming rate. There were no state laws to protect archaeological discoveries and there was concern the damage being done would be irrevocable unless action was taken. The destruction of Connecticut's prehistoric and historic archaeological sites motivated state representatives Teresaless Berinuson of East Windsor and

Richard D. Tulisano of Rocky Hill, working closely with the Coalition of Connecticut Archaeologists, to introduce legislation that would protect the state's archaeological heritage. The legislation passed and in December of 1987 the Connecticut Office of State Archaeology (OSA) became a reality. The OSA had

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News from the State Archaeologist

State Archaeologist, Nick Bellantoni, yesterday and today.

three primary responsibilities set down at that time: “first, the preservation of archaeological sites in the state; second, improving education about archaeology, and third, providing assistance to the general public and to the Native American and archaeological communities.”

Shortly after the creation of the OSA, Nicholas F. Bellantoni became Connecticut’s State Archaeologist—only a few months after receiving his Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Connecticut. His research background focused on the analysis of skeletal remains from eastern North America. “I want to wish you the best in your new office,” said Governor William A. O’Neill on March 18, 1988, welcoming Bellantoni into his new position. “If we don’t know the past, we certainly won’t be prepared for the future.” The OSA would serve as a central source for technical assistance, maintaining comprehensive site files and maps of the state’s archaeological heritage. Town governments would need to be contacted to “salvage threatened property and to promote research and preservation of archaeological materials within their borders.” Connecticut’s citizens would be called into action, asked to contact the State Archaeologist whenever construction threatened to destroy historically significant sites and artifacts. The task at hand for the OSA was monumental, but the future of Connecticut’s archaeological heritage was at stake.

December 2007 is the Office of State Archaeology’s 20th anniversary. Although the scope and reach of the OSA has greatly expanded since its early days, the basic mission has remained constant: to encourage the preservation of Connecticut’s archaeological resources through a combination of research, collections conservation, technical assistance and education. In 2004, the Connecticut Archaeology Center was



For twenty years the message has been consistent:

“We need to teach people that the archaeological resources in Connecticut are part of this state’s heritage. Once a bulldozer plows through a site, that’s it — that history is gone forever.”

State Archaeologist
Nicholas F. Bellantoni
May 1988



Photo by John Spaulding

born out of the 17-year relationship between the OSA and the Museum. This expanded partnership brought the OSA’s expertise in technical assistance together with the Museum’s strengths in collections conservation and educational programming to create a comprehensive source for archaeology resources in Connecticut.

Today, Bellantoni and the OSA provide curatorial oversight of over 600,000 artifacts and maintains over 5,000 site files and map records. In addition, Bellantoni is typically involved in over 20 field excavations, 300 municipal project proposals, and 150 field reviews each year. He also provides over 60 public and academic presentations, and is an Associate Professor of anthropology at UConn’s College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. As Connecticut’s State Archaeologist, Bellantoni has investigated some of the state’s most intriguing historical mysteries. Some of the most notable include investigating New England vampire beliefs, working on the restoration of the tomb of former Connecticut Governor and Continental Congress President Samuel Huntington, collaborating with other researchers on the Venture Smith project, and numerous police investigations that require his archaeological expertise.

“Nick’s work over the past 20 years as Connecticut’s State Archaeologist has helped advance Connecticut’s cultural research and scholarship,” said Ross D. MacKinnon, Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at UConn. “As a respected educator, he has engaged people around the state in learning about our physical and cultural worlds.”

Most recently, Bellantoni has been elected President of the National Association of State Archaeologists. The National Association of State Archaeologists consists of the official State Archaeologist from each U.S. state and

territory. Bellantoni will lead the national association in the development of consensus views concerning the conservation of the Nation’s cultural resources and will provide guidance and direction regarding laws, procedures, current research, educational programs, and ethical standards related to the archaeology field.

So what will the next 20 years bring? No doubt, during the 40th anniversary of the OSA, people will reflect on our 2008 efforts to create the OSA’s first permanent archaeology lab and a professional research library. To preserve Connecticut’s archaeological heritage, the OSA will always be evolving to remain a vital resource for federal, state and town officials, professional and amateur archaeologists, academics, graduate and undergraduate students, K-12 educators, community groups, and the general public. As Bellantoni said in 1988, “We need to teach people that the archaeological resources in Connecticut are part of this state’s heritage. Once a bulldozer plows through a site, that’s it — that history is gone forever.”

The vision that originally created the OSA was shared by many people. Attending the 1988 ceremony (from left to right) were: David Poirier, Kenneth Feder, Arend-Jan Knuttel, CSMNH Director Carl Rettenmeyer, State Representative Jonathan Peltó, State Representative Richard Tulasano, State Representative Teresalee Bertimuson, Governor William O’Neil, Nick Bellantoni, Cece Kirlorian, CSMNH Associate Director Maryon Attwood, Harold Juli, Ed Sarabia, and John Harman.



FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

The artifacts left behind by past generations—from Native Americans, to colonial settlers, to the industrial working class—are a vital resource for understanding Connecticut’s rich cultural heritage. It is the work of museums to preserve these artifacts for future generations. But vast cultural resources remain in the ground, and each day they are impacted by commercial and residential development and ongoing changes to our public infrastructure. Only with continued vigilance can we ensure that portions of our cultural history are not lost forever.

In recognition of the importance of this task, the state legislature established the Office of State Archaeology in 1987 within the State Museum of Natural History at UConn. In that same year they appointed Nick Bellantoni State Archaeologist to lead the effort. Responsibilities designated for the Office of the State Archaeologist include teaching, care of collections, field work and salvage activities, consultation with town planners, on-site review of development projects, forensic analysis in cooperation with the state medical examiner and police departments, and work with Native American tribes. In the creation of the OSA, no provision was made for funding or additional staff, and over the past two decades the position has surely grown far beyond



what was envisioned for one person. It is truly astonishing that Nick is able to provide the many services mandated by law and accomplish such widespread and effective public education.

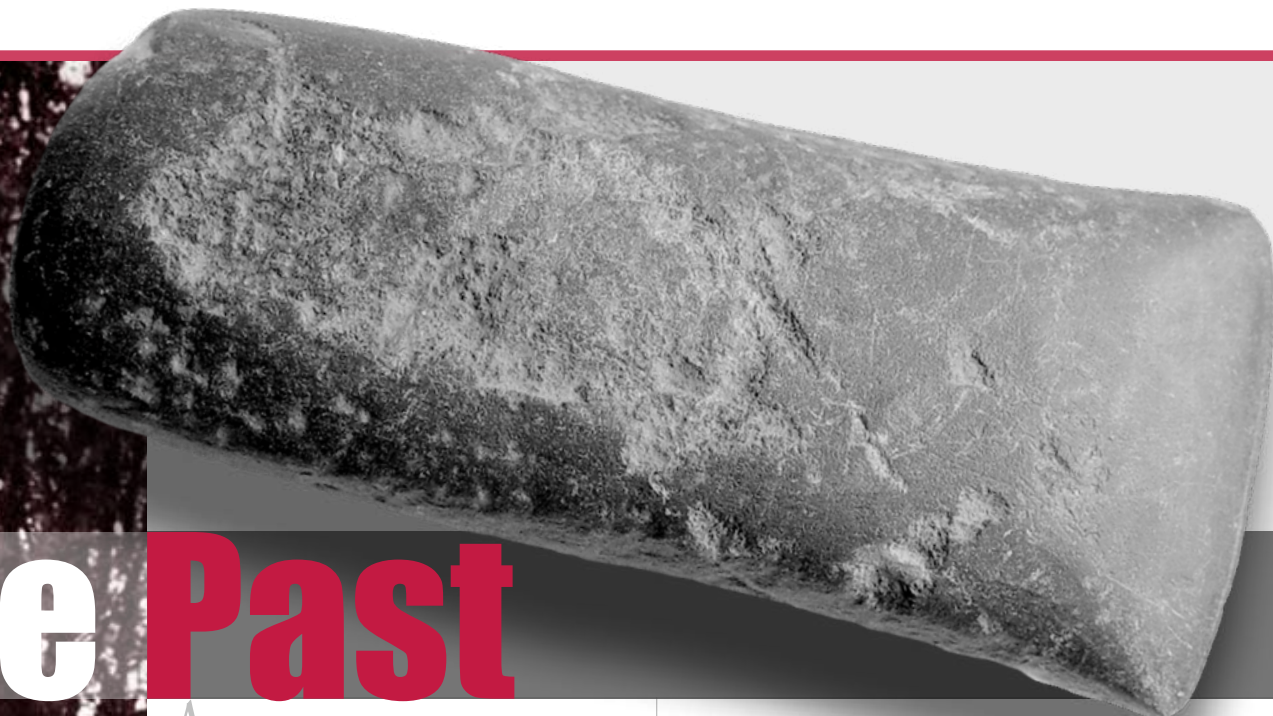
As we celebrate 20 years with Nick Bellantoni and the Office of State Archaeology, we also look

toward the future. Transformation of the Museum at UConn continues. Our new Connecticut Archaeology Center was launched in 2004. We opened our new permanent exhibits and classroom space in the spring of 2007, and we are already working to reach the next goal in making this a truly vibrant and comprehensive museum facility by adding a dedicated collections facility, more staff assistance, and an on-site library and archaeology lab.

Over the years, Nick Bellantoni has devoted himself to identifying, preserving and protecting Connecticut’s material culture. Beyond the establishment of the Archaeology Center, the creation of a new, professional lab and collections facility will be a fitting legacy—leaving the OSA better prepared and equipped to continue the work Nick started in 1987.

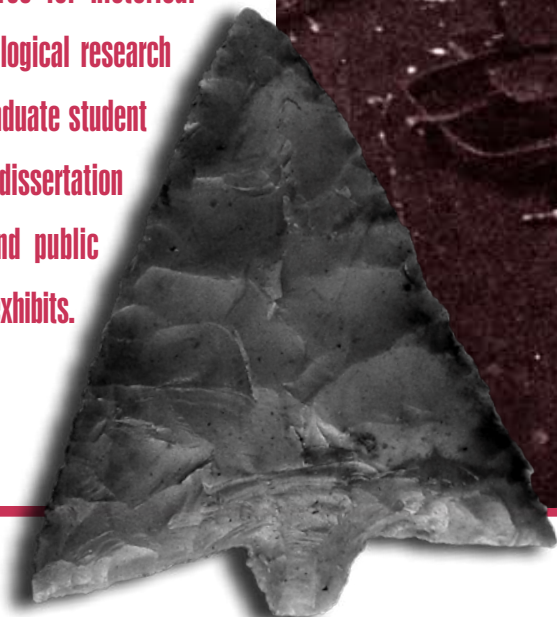
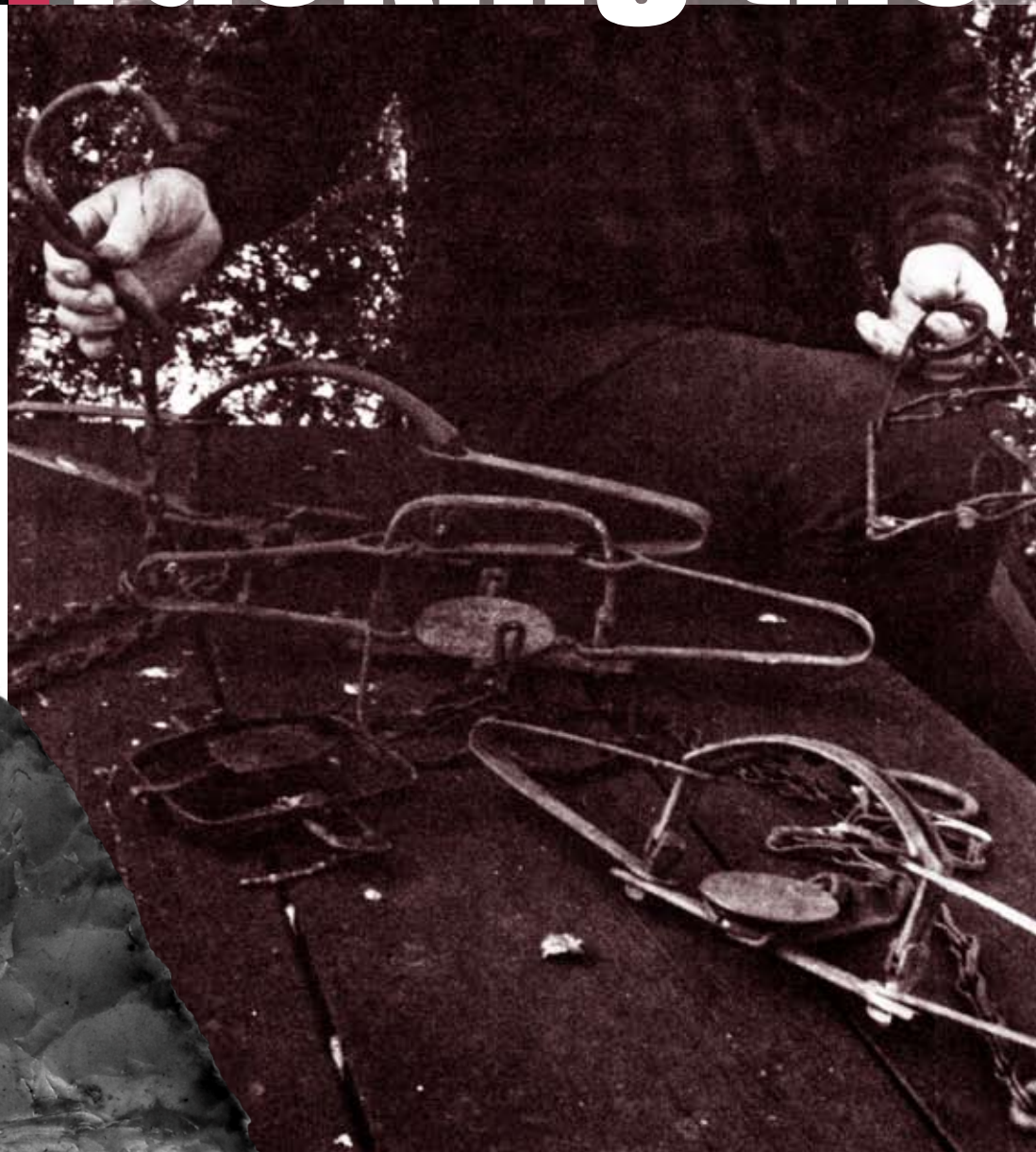
Thanks, as always, for your continued support.

Leanne Harty
Leanne Harty



Tracking the Past

More than 3,000 indigenous Connecticut artifacts, collected by Louis M. Bayer from 1937 to 1970, have been donated to the Connecticut State Museum of Natural History and Connecticut Archaeology Center. The collection has become part of the University of Connecticut's substantial anthropological collections and will be used as a resource for historical and archaeological research projects, graduate student theses and dissertation research, and public educational exhibits.



As a game warden for 33 years in what would eventually become the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, Louis Bayer was responsible for protection of Connecticut's wildlife from the Connecticut River to the Rhode Island border and as far north as Mansfield. Often referred to as "The Old Fox" for his ability to track down illegal deer hunters, he was an early conservationist, working to ensure that hunters and fishermen observed state laws and regulations to conserve and preserve the state's wildlife. Intimidated by his large stature and tenacity in tracking down lawbreakers, illegal hunters and poachers were fearful of Bayer; yet he is more often remembered by friends and family as a man who was very kind, had a great sense of humor, and loved the outdoors.

Bayer spent most of his time in the woods, fields, and farms of southeastern Connecticut where he often came across what appeared to be ancient artifacts. These objects included flaked tools like projectile points, knives and scrapers, and ground stone tools such as axes and pestles. Believing they could be culturally significant, he began a collection of the artifacts as a hobby, recording the location of each individual item he found. Conservation and collecting artifacts became Bayer's passion, which continued well beyond his retirement

from the Connecticut State Board of Fisheries and Game in 1970.

In 1989, Kathy Hoy, an anthropology graduate student at the University of Connecticut, learned about Bayer's collection of artifacts. She contacted him to ask if she could see the collection and perhaps study them as part of her research. At first Bayer was unsure, but after a few meetings they became fast friends. "He knew every dirt road in southeastern Connecticut and just about everybody knew him," Hoy said, recalling how she and the 80-something retiree trekked all over southeastern Connecticut to document where the artifacts had been found. "He felt really connected to nature and was passionate about the artifacts he discovered." State Archaeologist Nicholas Bellantoni also fondly recalls spending time with Bayer and learning about the artifacts he collected. "The objects Louie collected are in remarkable condition and will enable us to advance our knowledge regarding the region's cultural heritage. We are pleased to accept the artifacts under the stewardship of the University of Connecticut and entire state," said Bellantoni.

Mr. Bayer died in 1997 at the age of 90. His final wish for the collection was that the artifacts stay together, preserved for future generations, and be used for educational purposes. His son, Jon Bayer, held onto his father's collection for ten

years and eventually contacted Kathy Hoy to discuss ideas about how to fulfill his father's wishes. Both agreed that the Connecticut State Museum of Natural History and Connecticut Archaeology Center at UConn would be the ideal location for the collection. "I'm looking forward to the collection being in the hands of the Museum and Archaeology Center," said Jon Bayer. "I know that this is what would make my dad happy."

The Museum of Natural History and Connecticut Archaeology Center are home to the University of Connecticut's Anthropological Collections, representing the single largest repository of Connecticut Native American, colonial and industrial artifacts in existence. The materials housed at the Museum and Archaeology Center document over 11,000 years of Connecticut's past. Many of the artifacts are one-of-a-kind, representing a last link to our early cultural heritage. The Office of State Archaeology is charged with both the conservation of these collections, to ensure their continued physical preservation, and their curation, to make sure the information they contain is systematically organized and readily usable. The collections are not only a vital resource within the University community; their reach is felt throughout New England and beyond.

FACULTY PROFILE DR. ISAAC "MORTY" ORTEGA

Our mission here at the Museum is to explore cultural and natural history both locally and around the world. Our newest Museum board member, Dr. Isaac M. "Morty" Ortega, Associate Professor of wildlife ecology in the Department of Natural Resources Management and Engineering, personifies that mission. Dr. Ortega, originally from Chile, earned his Ph.D. at Texas Tech University in 1991, and came to UConn in 1997.

Dr. Ortega has maintained studies of wildlife ecology on three continents during the last thirty years. He has been conducting research at Torres del Paine National Park in Chilean Patagonia since 1977 on native herbivore and carnivore relationships. He has also brought UConn students to Torres del Paine for research projects since 1999 via the UConn Patagonia Project. In 2002, the UConn-African National Congress Partnership, the Departments of Natural Resources Management and Engineering (NRME) and Ecology and Evolutionary Biology (EEB) in collaboration with the University of Fort Hare in South Africa, offered a three-week African Ecology course. Taught by Dr. Ortega and Dr. John Silander (EEB), this course has been offered four times, bringing close to 50 UConn students to South Africa. In 2008, Dr. Ortega plans to begin research on leopards in South Africa. His research continues on yet a third continent, studying the ecology, behavior, and the human dimension of coyotes in Connecticut.

This fall, Dr. Ortega assumed another international role as Director of Global House, the new worldwide living/learning community at UConn, located in McMahon Dormitory. This residential unit brings together up to 80 U.S. and international students interested in learning about global society.

Morty is an active and enthusiastic board member. As a member of the Collections Committee, he has shown a special interest in our natural history collections and their potential for use in education, both here at UConn and in the community at large. We look forward to working with Dr. Ortega to develop new classroom collaborations on campus and at other educational institutions through the use of the Museum's collection materials.



ADVENTURES IN LETTERBOXING

How can you combine a hike in the forest with the thrill of following clues that test your observational skills, learn about Connecticut's history and wildlife, and earn a Connecticut State Forests Centennial Patch? You can do all of these by letterboxing in Connecticut's state forests. Letterboxing involves following a set of clues to find a hidden container in a state forest; once the container is located, the hiker records the visit in a notebook with his or her own 'stamp'. After visiting five of the 32 letterbox hikes, the hiker can earn the patch! You can learn more about letterboxing and get the clues for each hike by visiting www.ct.gov/dep, under Outdoor Recreation.



STATE ARCHAEOLOGIST

It astounds me to think that the Office of Connecticut State Archaeology (OSA) was created over twenty years ago, and that I have served as the state archaeologist since that time. Looking back, I remember the small room I initially occupied in Beach Hall, which was between the offices of Ken Metzler and Les Mehrhoff,

who gave me a daily education in natural resources. The room was so small that with only three people in it, it looked like the stateroom scene in a Marx Brothers' movie! From Beach Hall, the office moved to Jorgenson Auditorium, then Wilber Cross, then Horsebarn Hill Road, and (finally) to the Museum of Natural History Building. In twenty years, we never unpacked our bags—until now.

Memories include ups and downs of course, but I was always optimistic that our museum and office would grow with the public demands and the need for archaeological preservation. Today we are written into seven separate sections of the state's statutes with ever increasing roles and responsibilities.

Fortunately, the Museum's recent development, including the establishment of the CT Archaeology Center,



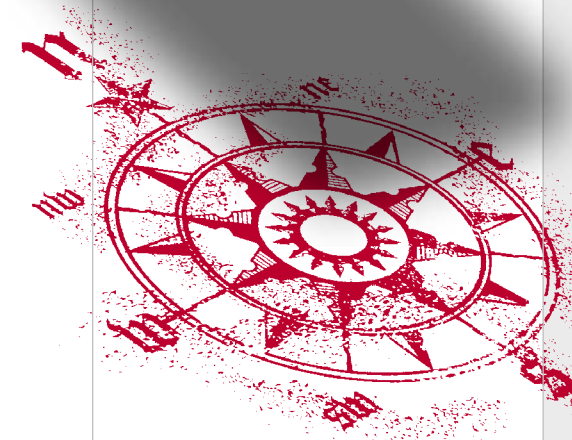
has given OSA new visibility and a permanent home. It has been extremely gratifying to witness the positive changes within the last couple of years as well as the increased support from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the UConn Foundation and, most importantly, our members. Yet, no matter how hard we work, none of this could have happened

without all of your support.

We have gained a great deal of momentum over the last few years, but we are not yet finished. The next phase of museum development includes a new collections facility to house our extensive anthropological and natural history specimens—consisting of well over a million archaeological artifacts. A collections space will help us provide new educational opportunities for the university as well.

We continue to need your support more than ever, because our work is not completed. Our goal is to provide the university, you and your children, and all the people of the State of Connecticut the finest museum and research facility we are capable of. Let's keep the momentum going into the next twenty years!

Nick Bellantoni, State Archaeologist



LETTERBOXING

Salmon River State Forest includes parts of the towns of Hebron, Colchester, East Hampton, and Marlborough in its 6,000 acres. The letterbox trail is in Colchester following the banks of the Blackledge River and takes the hiker alongside a deep pool habitat restoration project. The Salmon River State Forest, the first parcel of which was purchased in 1934 with the intent of providing stream improvement for trout, has some noteworthy features. While not included in the letterbox hike itself, these include the only remaining covered bridge in eastern Connecticut, the Lyman viaduct which was an elevated bridge built for trains, mill ruins, and a handicap-accessible fly-fishing area. DEP is continuing habitat restoration with the goal of conserving freshwater fish populations in this area.

LETTERBOXING

Pachaug State Forest spans six towns in southeastern Connecticut and is the largest of the state's 32 forests with over 27,000 acres along the state's border with Rhode Island. The letterbox hike for this forest is accessed in North Stonington. The clues take the hiker over boulders and ledges unique to this area, through beech and hemlock forests, past rock ledges adjacent to streams, and to a high point with a view to Westerly, Rhode Island and Long Island Sound. Human use of the forest is evident in many places, from managed forestry practices such as logging to recent illegal campfire remnants to old stone walls pre-dating this area's purchase in the 1930s for use by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

LETTERBOXING

Mohegan State Forest covers 700 acres in Scotland and Sprague. This forest was donated to the State of Connecticut in 1960 for the purpose of educating the public about forest management practices. This letterbox hike is accessed in Scotland and takes the individual through living history as the forest species composition and tree ages change as a result of these forest management techniques. Many of these forestry indications are bordered by old stone walls that tell the story of farming and livestock management during the 18th and 19th centuries.

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VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are a vital part of the Museum's effort to provide innovative programming and enrich the museum experience. We wish to thank the following individuals for joining the new volunteer program:

Mary Brescia, Carolyne Burgess, Al Ciccarelli, Jeffrey Egan, Frank Pearson, Michael Pontacoloni, Cynthia Redman, Rita Rehn, and Paul Scannell.



WELCOME
 TO OUR NEWEST
 MEMBER!

We send out a heartfelt congratulations to Emily-Rose Lanz, our Membership Coordinator, and her husband Tom Lanz, on the birth of their daughter Sylvia Rose Lanz. Our species just got a little richer.

MEMBERSHIP

Standard membership benefits:

- Free admission to special events
- Reduced rates for workshops
- 15% discount at the UConn Co-op
- Early notification of programs
- Museum Newsletter

Regular Memberships	1 Year	2 Year
___ Family.....	\$45	\$80
___ Couple.....	\$40	\$70
___ Senior Couple.....	\$35	\$60
___ Individual	\$35	\$60
___ Student Individual	\$25	\$45
___ Senior Individual	\$25	\$45

Consider upgrading to an Owl Membership. These memberships provide special support for Museum programs. In addition to standard membership benefits, Owl Members receive guest passes, gifts, and more.

Owl Memberships	
___ Saw-whet Owl	\$75
___ Snowy Owl.....	\$150
___ Screech Owl.....	\$300
___ Barn Owl.....	\$600

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The Connecticut State Museum of Natural History and Connecticut Archaeology Center are part of the **College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.**

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 2019 Hillside Rd., Unit 1023
 Storrs, CT 06269-1023



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