

Save Trout Pond Campaign



A year ago, we began our efforts to raise funds to rebuild the spillway and retention dam for Trout Pond, plus add a fish ladder. We faced many uncertainties.

Project costs were only estimates and we had no prior experience with a fund campaign for the McLean Game Refuge. We had no donor base, little knowledge of our users, and only the beginning of ideas of who might volunteer to help.

A year later we can look back on a lot of learning, the gracious help of over 400 people who donated and volunteered time for the cause, and a completed first phase that created a new retention dam and fishway. We have received major grants from the Granby Community Fund and the US Department of Agriculture; we have received almost \$300,000 in external funds, mainly in small donations from members of the Farmington Valley Community. In addition, the McLean Trustees were able to more than match the external funds with 2008 operating funds. This was possible because of the enormous strides made in efficient management of the McLean health services.

Senator George P. McLean was a man of diverse interests and accomplishments. One of the great, perhaps the greatest, love of his life, was the accumulation of land in the Granby/Simsbury area where he hunted and fished alone and with his friends. This land would, upon his death in 1932, become the McLean Game Refuge (MGR). Much has changed in the ensuing 77 years and no where is that more apparent than at Trout Pond. The system he created for diverting a small portion of water from Bissell Brook to fill the Pond, Trout Pond, he had just dug worked well for decades. Unfortunately, no manmade system of this nature functions well forever, and in recent years it became increasingly obvious that if Trout Pond was to persist, major repairs would be necessary.

Engineers were engaged, contractors were consulted and permits were secured. The only thing missing was the money! Starting from scratch, the Save Trout Pond (STP) Committee began its work. In short order, it became obvious that many people cared about and were willing to donate to the STP Campaign.

Today, the new concrete fishway and two associated control dams, collectively known as Trout Pond Phase I, quietly do their jobs in the icy waters of Bissell Brook. Senator McLean, I believe, would be proud of the work and generosity of all the folks who came together around the idea of perpetuating the Pond

In 2009, we hope to complete the reconstruction of the spillway and rebuilding the relief valve system to reduce pressure during major storm events. At that point, we can relax a bit as Trout Pond will no longer be highly vulnerable to floods.

We will also be turning our attention to other needs, like an information kiosk near the Highway 10/US 202 entrance that tell the story of Senator George McLean, the George family, and the history and ecology of the Refuge. The kiosk is the 2009 project collaboration with the Granby 4-H Club.

Repairing the dike as needed, keeping the cabin in good shape, and other tasks on the trails and waterways of McLean Game Refuge will beckon our cadre of volunteers and donors in the future. We also are looking forward to more collaboration with Holcomb Farm on the Conservation Heroes Lecture Series and the Family Day at Salmon Brook Park.

A team of volunteers is planning the second Blue Jean Ball for Saturday evening, March 7, 2009. It will be at the Hop Meadow Country Club and will feature the Colby's dance band. Good food and a fun evening await the attendees. Check the webpage for more information— www.McLeanGameRefuge.org.

Bill Bentley

Chair, Save Trout Pond Campaign

and environs he created long ago.

In the coming months, preparations will continue for Trout Pond Phase II repairs. This will be the work in and around Trout Pond itself which we hope to effect in the dry months of the summer. I extend my personal thanks to all who participated in this worthy effort.

Also eminently worthy of a short note is the recent completion of the McLean Game Refuge's second forest plot resurvey in conjunction with our pilot Habitat Improvement Project (HIP). This project, begun in 2002, was designed to improve conditions for both forest and wildlife, birds in particular, through increased forest health and diversity in two small areas of the MGR. Results to date are very encouraging. The results from all four Forest and Bird Surveys will be compiled and analyzed in 2013.

Steven A. Paine, Director McLean Game Refuge



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SAVE
TROUT POND

