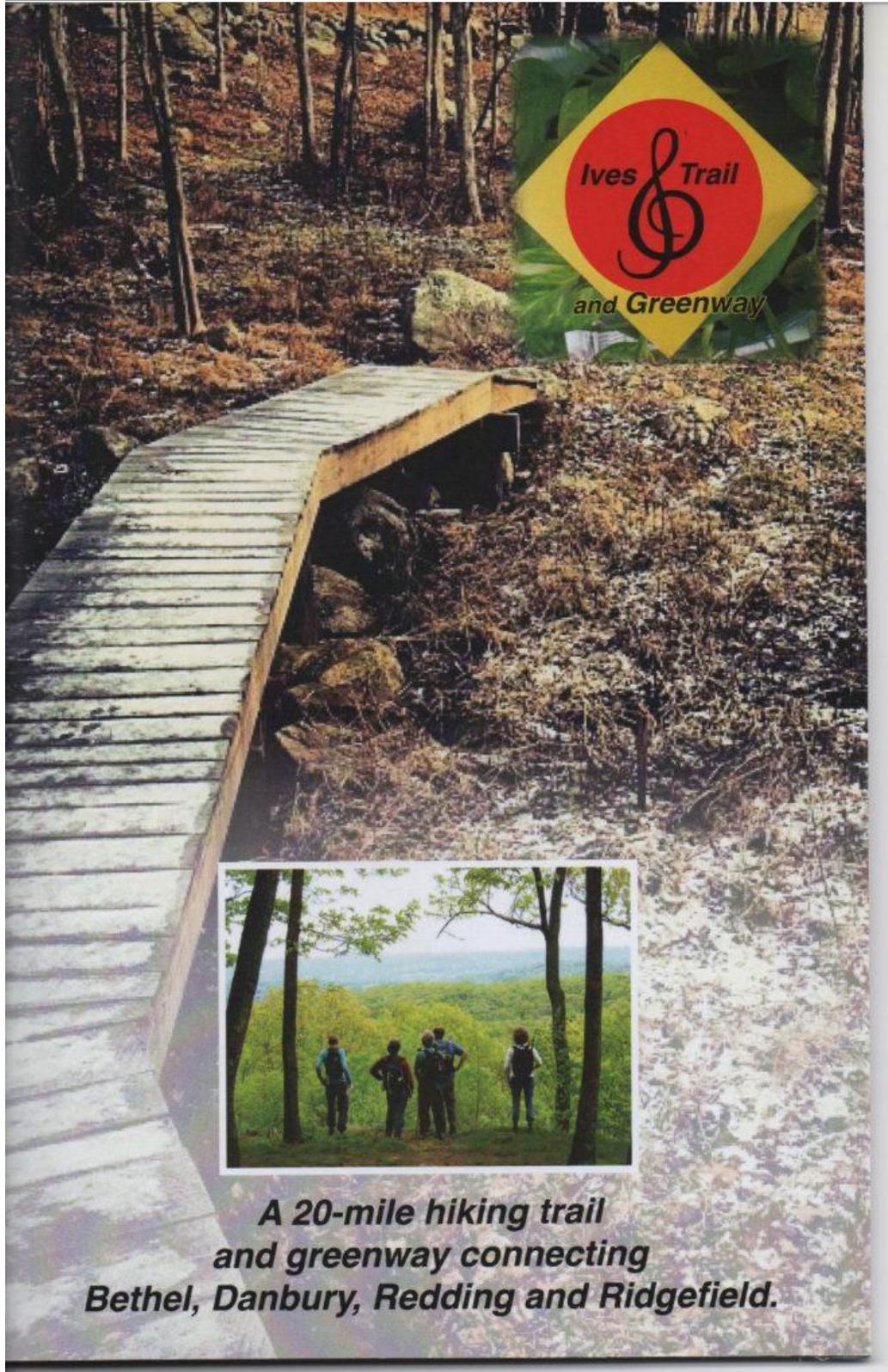


Group to publish Ives Trail guide book

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***A 20-mile hiking trail
and greenway connecting
Bethel, Danbury, Redding and Ridgefield.***

The cover of the Ives Trail guide book, which is scheduled to be published in April. Where the Ives Trail begins to climb out of Bennett's Pond and up toward Pine and Wooster mountains in Ridgefield, it goes to a lookout where the late composer Charles Ives owned a building where he used to go for inspiration.

That's one of piece of trivia included in the Ives Trail Guide Book, which will be published in April by the Ives Trail Task Force Committee.

The book is all about the Ives Trail, an 18-mile continuous stretch of protected space that connects Redding, Danbury, Bethel, and Ridgefield.

The 40-page book contains four maps of four different areas of the trail, provides detailed descriptions of parts of the trail, and gives the history of different areas the trail goes through.

One piece of history discussed in the book is the Indian Trading Post, which was a fixture on Route 7 from 1952 until 2013, according to Richard DeWitt of Bethel, a member of the Ives Trail Task Force.

The book also talks about the various wildlife on the trail. A passage reads, "There are low areas that fill with water in late winter and spring but dry out later in the summer. These provide breeding areas for salamanders. The fact that the pool is dry for a good part of the year prevents any permanent aquatic species, such as fish, from populating the pool, which is crucial for salamander. Permanent aquatic life such as fish would prey on such species." "Originally, there was a 12-foot-high tepee and several small cabins, as well as the log cabin which housed the store. It was burned down as an exercise for firemen and was rebuilt as the Elks Club Lodge," DeWitt said.

The book will be available for purchase at the main office at Tarrywile Park in Danbury, as well as at several locations that have yet to be determined.

Proceeds from the book will help support the trail.



From left, Steven Bayne and Rick DeWitt , two members of the Ives Trail Task Force, who meet regularly to clean up the trail.

Ives Trail Task Force

The Ives Trail Task Force was appointed by Danbury Mayor Mark Boughton in 2003. Members of the group live mainly in four towns: Redding, Danbury, Bethel, and Ridgefield. Meetings rotate among the towns.

Work began on the trail in 2003. The task force has been meeting monthly since that time. It secured the final easements and permissions needed to complete the trail in 2012, with construction of the final trail segments completed by 2014.

The Ives Trail Task Force is supported by donations. Membership dues are \$20 a year. About five years ago, the task force formed a nonprofit group called the Ives Trail and Greenway Regional Association Inc. (ITGRA).

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) has officially designated the Ives Trail as one of the state's greenways.

"We are dedicated to maintaining the Ives Trail," task force Committee Chairman Mike Cunningham said.

“There should never be any building on it,” DeWitt said. “It’s all protected land.”

According to DeWitt, the Ives Trail is a great asset to the towns it goes through.

“People just really enjoy getting outside and hiking,” he said.

“Lower Fairfield County has gotten to be so densely populated,” DeWitt added. “We want to try to preserve this so 100 years from now this doesn’t turn into another condo complex.”

Volunteering opportunities

While construction of the Ives Trail has been completed, there are still areas where it can be improved, according to DeWitt.

“Occasionally, we will put together a work party,” he said. “We normally go out for four to five hours.”

Work involves clearing downed trees and branches from storms, digging up rocks to make hills smoother for walking, and making general improvements to the trail.

The group also needs volunteers to nail plastic markers on trees and walk the trail to take note of any problems.

No experience is necessary to be part of the work party. All tools are provided.

There will be an Ives Trail work day on Saturday, May 19, at 10 a.m. Those interested in volunteering may email DeWitt at wrdewitt@snet.net.

To find out more about the Ives Trail and Greenway or to make a donation, visit its Facebook page.

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