

# August/ September 2005

## NewsLetter

### Connecticut State Parks Are Hurting



Friends of Connecticut State Parks

The Friends of Connecticut State Parks keeps pretty close tabs on our state parks, and the pluses and minuses of our park system. Earlier this year the FCSP put out a summary of an independent study (The Clough Harbour report) vs. other states and problems inherent in our own parks system.

- CT ranks an alarming 47<sup>th</sup> in the nation in state parks' share of state budget.
- Parks Division receives less than half of the annual operating budget they need.
- Parks Division has less than half the full-time staff it needs.
- Parks Division has virtually no funding for vehicles and equipment.

Not a pretty forecast for our state park system .....



'Old Put' Statue



Park Visitor Center / 1893 Pavilion

### Putnam State Park

- Putnam suffers from all the ills listed above; operating budget, staffing, and funding for vehicles and equipment.
- Putnam is fortunate to have an expert/professional park staff. They keep the park looking good with a small maintenance team. They also work well with the Friends of Putnam Park, as a team.
- Putnam received \$2million special funding for the retrofitting of the 1893 Pavilion into a beautiful visitor center, new parking lots, a new park entrance way and a realigned intersection which results in a safer entrance way and more pleasing view of the park.
- This special funding, although affording the park a new interpretive facility and improved appearance, gives the false impression that the park has plenty of funds for the overall park. Wrong, it still suffers from lack of funds like other state park locations.



A non-park ranger

*The Friends of Putnam Park thank the state for our new entrance complex ...*

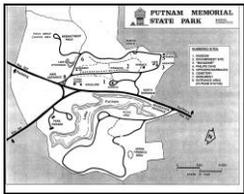
## September FAN's Meeting

The September meeting of the Friends group was held on Tuesday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, at the Redding Town Hall.



### Discussions held included:

1. Jeanine Herman reviewed the Treasurer's report.
2. Nancy Cowles recapped this year's Summer Craftsmen Program. The turnout was fair. Most of the spectators came from either the Redding area, or people who has seen the event signs in front of the gate.
3. Harry Gibson recapped the status of the Visitor Center/Pavilion. Except for a few odds and ends the construction phase is completed. Kronenberger has vacated the project; returning only to finish up some minor tasks. The landscaping contractor is almost finished. The lawn area is seeded. Plantings are in. We badly need some gentle soaking rain to help the plantings. The rubble near the curb areas will be cleaned up as soon as the power company completes the cable burial along the entire new project frontage. It is a shame they can't hurry up their long overdue installation so the landscaping can be totally completed.
4. We voted to use the current park map for Friends brochures etc. It is much easier to read than the new DEP format for their maps.



## *The Remarkable Huntingtons*

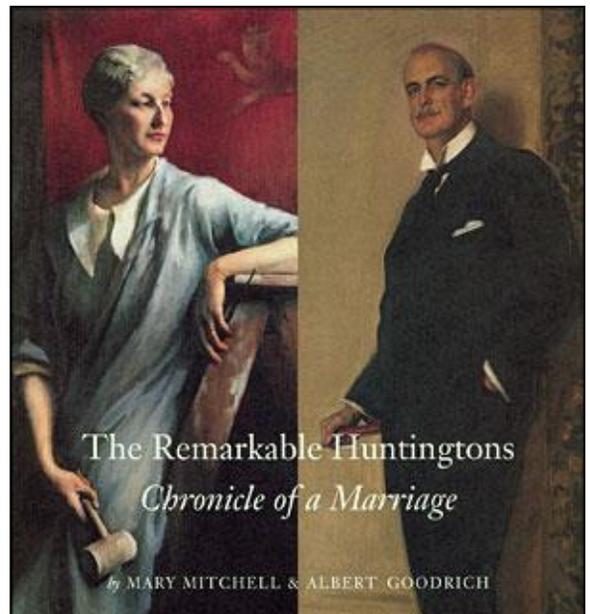
We had a wonderful letter from Mary Mitchell, historian and author from Newtown. She enclosed a copy of her new book, which she co-authored with her very good friend Al Goodrich, who recently passed away.

The duo spent years in researching the lives of Anna and Archer Huntington. Their Redding estate is now Huntington State Park on Sunset Hill Road.

Anna was the famous sculptor who created the *Putnam's Escape At Horseneck*, which is our 'Old Put' statue now in front of the new visitor center.

For more information and how to purchase the book, go to [www.buddrivepress.com](http://www.buddrivepress.com) or call **203-426-6824**

## Huntington State Park, sister park to Putnam



## Carolina Countertops By The Ton



▲ Carry the slabs and place on 2x4's on the ground.

◀ Kronenberger and park crews unload the slabs from truck.

Tom Kronenberger tells stone cutters to get down to park ASAP! They have to install the countertops. ▶

The truck arrived from the Carolinas one hot morning in August. The truck contained a load of granite slabs for the countertops of the Information Desks in the new visitor center. Six or seven huge slabs at about 3-400 lbs. each. The brand new composite gravel walks had just been completed from the parking lot to the visitor center. No trucks allowed! And the driver wanted to get back on road. How do you get a couple of tons of granite slabs into the visitor center?

Fortunately, the top management was on hand. Tom Kronenberger Jr. from the restoration firm, and Nathan Hale, the Park Supervisor had their crews moving slabs to the front door. That tractor sure made the task easier.



The park tractor just fit on the sidewalk. With forks on the tractor, Nate lifted each slab and delivered it to the front door. From there to the counters inside would be up to the stone cutters.



◀ The counters, in August, were sans tops. The stone cutters had to mount the slabs and then fasten them to the base. Then fill the seams and polish them to look like a single piece.

The counters are all installed at the Information Desk; front and rear counters. It's hard to tell where the seams are. ▶



## New Visitor Center/Pavilion Awaits Official Opening



The new Putnam Park Visitor Center / 1893 Pavilion is completed. The new lawn and plantings are growing. The facility is awaiting the grand opening event to be addressed by Governor Jodi Rell and DEP Commissioner Gina McCarthy. The newly refurbished Old Put statue will be unveiled, and the brand new flag will be unfurled. The public is invited to attend the opening on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2005.



**CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

### **The Official Opening of the new Putnam Park Visitor Center:**

**DATE: Wednesday, October 5<sup>th</sup>      TIME: 3:30 pm**

**PLACE: New park visitor center, inters. Rts. 58/107**

**- Open to the general public -**

### **Next Meeting**



The next FAN's Meeting will be on **Tuesday Evening October 11<sup>th</sup>** at the Redding Town Hall. The meeting will start at **7:00pm**. The monthly meetings will now be on the **2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday** of each month.