



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Woodcock Nature Center Celebrates 50th Anniversary

Golden anniversary year to include tributes to the past, plans for the future and celebrations for the entire community starting with a spring Frothy Forage.

(Wilton/Ridgefield, CT) — Founded in 1972 by former Ridgefield First Selectman J. Mortimer Woodcock, Woodcock Nature Center is beloved to both Ridgefield and Wilton for its nearly 150-acre preserve, educational programming, unforgettable events, and outreach into the community through deep connections to nature. Over the last 50 years Woodcock has evolved but never wavered in its mission to creatively connect the community with nature and to one another.

In celebration of its numerous achievements, Woodcock will host a series of exciting events throughout 2022 which will provide opportunities for the community to celebrate together as well as help build for the future. Woodcock leadership has also begun work to revitalize the Centers long-term strategy and visual identity through strategic re-envisioning of its identity, website, on-site signage and more which will be unveiled throughout the year and is aimed at matching the centers current vitality with its goals for the future.

“Taking a deep look back on 50 years of outdoor education, we are reminded of the many people who have contributed to our organizations incredible success. The current board, staff and I are humbled to be among this group of dedicated individuals. I am especially privileged to shepherd Woodcock Nature Center during this milestone year and to be guiding our strategy for the future,” commented Executive Director Lenore Herbst.

“I know our community will continue to embrace our programs and events, especially during this landmark year. And I am especially looking forward to sharing the evolution of our strategic goals and brand identity throughout the year, as well celebrating Woodcock’s ongoing success with everyone at our many special events.”

The board of directors of Woodcock Nature Center is spearheading a campaign to collect historical information about the nature center. From past board members and executive directors to education staff and key volunteers, the board of directors is

assembling a historical timeline of notable events with plans to honor individuals who have made substantial impacts to the organizations half-century of success.

“It is truly incredible to see how former Ridgefield First Selectman J. Mortimer Woodcock’s simple vision to get kids outside has grown into the organization we have today,” notes Board President Jana Hogan. “We are excited to learn more about those who helped to shape Woodcock Nature Center; to honor their contributions and to discover ways in which we can continue to nurture this wonderful community treasure.”

Golden Special Events

As Woodcock kicks off its 50th year, the community is invited to celebrate together at several exciting upcoming fundraising events:

- The celebrations kick-off **April 30** with Woodcock’s annual [Frothy Forage](#), a one-of-a-kind hiking and tasting experience for the whole family. Along the trails guests enjoy tastings of craft brews from Nod Hill Brewery plus new partner Owl’s Brew Boozy Tea as well as soda tastings with Izze Sparkling Soda and Hosmer Mountain Soda. Also included are animal encounters, live music, and food. Tickets go on sale March 30 and are expected to sell quickly.
- A [50th Birthday Bash](#) on **July 9** welcomes all ages to learn about Woodcock history, meet the animals, enjoy the playground, set out on a scavenger hunt plus music, food and of course... a birthday treat.
- Beer lovers will delight in the launch of a new brew at Ridgefield’s Nod Hill Brewery in honor Woodcock’s 50th. The **First Pour Kick-Off Party** on **August 7** includes first sips of the new brew, a Nod Hill meadow tour and reserved seating at the brewery’s new biergarten.
- The year would not be complete without Woodcock’s annual [Under the Harvest Moon](#) on **September 16**. Details for the picturesque evening under the candlelit pavilion are forthcoming but includes food, wine, beer, music and a live and silent auction.
- [Where the Wild Things Run 5K & Kids Fun Run](#) on **October 16** honors the Woodcock preserve with runners and walkers of all ages participating in this trail race and celebration, which is nearly as old as Woodcock itself.

Woodcock welcomes new event sponsors in honor of its 50th anniversary. Please contact Executive Director Lenore Herbst at lenore@woodcocknaturecenter.org for more information.

More ways to get involved.

Woodcock leadership is looking for stories to document and share about how Woodcock is shaping our community. Do you or someone you know have fond memories at Woodcock Nature Center when they were young? Did attending programs or working as a camp counselor inspire you to pursue a career in the environmental

sector? Do you consider yourself a “Woodcock Kid”? If so, please get in touch by [completing this form](#).

Additional photos and stories about the early years of Woodcock’s history are also encouraged to be shared by emailing wncboard@woodcocknaturecenter.org.

Woodcock Nature Center receives no government funding and relies on generous donations as well as program and event income for its continued success. **Donations in honor of Woodcock’s 50th anniversary** are welcome and can be made by visiting woodcocknaturecenter.org/donate

About Woodcock Nature Center

Woodcock Nature Center was founded by a former Ridgefield First Selectman: J. Mortimer Woodcock. Since 1972 Woodcock has grown to provide educational programming for over 4,000 learners of all ages each year including school field trips, our popular summer camp and enrichment programs, which support our educational efforts by immersing the community in direct experiences with nature. We partner with local organizations to present lectures, workshops, and films, and our guided hikes, child and caregiver classes and on-site animal encounters provide a means for the public to engage with and learn from our natural world.

Woodcock’s nearly 150 acres of preserve, originally inhabited by the Siwanog tribe and today owned by the state of Connecticut straddles both Wilton and Ridgefield. The preserve includes historic stone walls and stands of old maple, beech, oak and hickory trees, a pond, wetlands, vernal pools and nearly 4 miles of hiking trails which remain a resource for thousands of hikers, birders and outdoor enthusiasts. Woodcock’s trails, natural playground, nature center, and outdoor aviaries (where we care for ambassador animals including 2 non-releasable birds of prey and nearly 20 reptiles and amphibians) are publicly accessible year-round with no admission fee.

Woodcock Nature Center does not receive any funds from local towns or the state of Connecticut and fundraises privately for every dollar necessary to sustain its programs and facilities — in fact, 50% of our revenues are from these donations along with special events income. We depend on the generosity of private foundations, corporations and individuals to remain a resource to our community.

Learn more about Woodcock’s history and the history of our land at woodcocknaturecenter.org/our-history

For a complete schedule of activities please visit
woodcocknaturecenter.org/upcomingevents