

# Policy Potlucks

## Moving from Engagement to Action!

**Robert LaFrance, Audubon CT Director of Policy**

**Rochelle Thomas, Greenwich Center Director**

A close-up photograph of a hummingbird hovering over a pink flower. The bird is in sharp focus, with its wings blurred from motion. The background is dark and out of focus. A semi-transparent dark grey box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing white and orange text.

# Greenwich: Pollinator Potluck

**THE ORIGINAL IDEA**



## What is a Pollinator Potluck?

- A free community event started in 2016 through partnership with a local Garden Club of America chapter
- Pre-COVID, rotated among locations; Post-COVID, dormant until 2024
- Originally focused heavily on topics related to native plants and gardening; more formal
- No cost to the Center beyond staffing and in-house materials; fee wine tasting; often results in small contributions
- Attendance generally between 80-100<sub>3</sub>

# Shifting Toward Policy

2024

- Biodiversity Crisis and Audubon's Natural Climate Solutions
- Cleansing Currents and Protecting our Waters
- Coastal Resilience in a Changing Climate

2025

- Green Energy: A Win for the Birds!
- Neonicotinoids: The New DDT
- Growing Together: Ecological Gardens, Food Security and Local Resilience



# Embracing Variety

## *Embedding Policy Within Programs*

2026

- Let's Talk Turkey with Ginny Apple (in partnership with the Greenwich Land Trust)
- From the Cloud Forest to CT: Protecting Birds Across the Hemisphere with Jim Muchmore
- Investing in Biodiversity with Kevin Webb of Superorganism

 Superorganism

We can do more  
than co-exist.



## Taking Direct Action

- Recent postcard collection initiative to support the Local Communities and Bird Habitat Stewardship Act; Coordinated by Felice Stadler, Audubon's Vice President of Government Affairs
- Direct Action Alert signups via computer or iPad at Potlucks
- Postcard collection and Action Alert Signups help engage volunteers in advocacy and direct action and give them defined roles as Audubon ambassadors.





Audubon  
Greenwich  
Audubon Center

I Bird, I Vote!  
Audubon

Northwest  
Youth  
Volunteer  
Opportunities

Join Us!  
LIGHTS OUT  
CONNECTICUT



Greenwich Audubon Center

BIRDFEST

Police Politics:  
Holding Urban Birds & People Thrive



## Audubon in Connecticut Policy Priorities

### ✓ Coasts

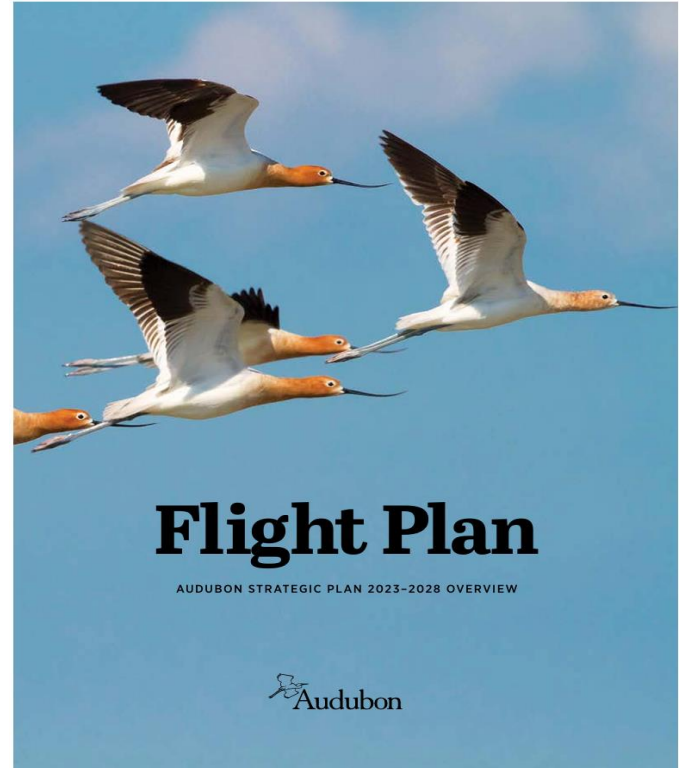
- Connecticut's coastlines are being squeezed by rising sea levels and human development.

### ✓ Biodiversity and Nature-based Solutions

- Intact natural systems are Nature's solution to mitigating the biodiversity and climate crises.

### ✓ Working Lands

- We are working to protect our forests and agricultural lands through the Bird-Friendly Maple Project, Forester Endorsement Program, and restrict the use of neonicotinoid pesticides.



## Our Connecticut Centers



Bent of the River



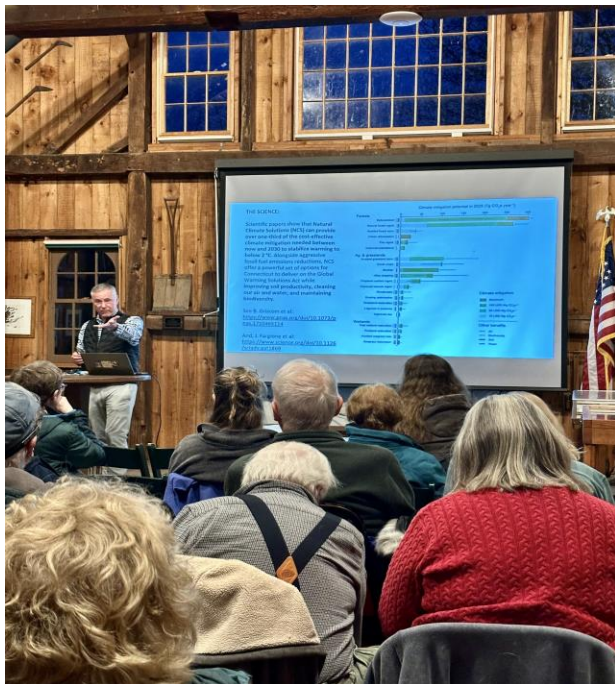
Greenwich



Sharon

# Birds, Beverages, and Small Bites at Bent of the River

## *A Policy Potluck on Nature-Based Solutions*



web browser.

The logo for Sharon Audubon Center, featuring the Audubon bird logo and the text "Audubon | Sharon Audubon Center" on a dark background.

Audubon | Sharon  
Audubon Center



**Policy Potluck | Light Pollution and its  
Effect on Birds, Wildlife, and Human  
Health: How You Can Help**



## Birds, Beverages, and Small Bites: A Policy Potluck

Eastern Bluebird, female. Photo: Chris Lizama/Audubon Photography Awards

Our Policy Potluck is back! Join us at Bent of the River for an informational evening with light refreshments. Our topic is pesticides and the bill raised in the Environment Committee - AN ACT CONCERNING PESTICIDE REPORTING MODERNIZATION. We will be joined by Audubon Connecticut Director of Policy, Robert LaFrance and Louise Washer co-founder and board member of the National Pollinator Pathway and serves as an organizer of Connecticut Pesticide Reform (CPR).

This event will take place in our historic barn. Feel free to bring an appetizer of your own. We have limited handicapped parking by the barn, so we ask those who are able to please park in our visitor lot and walk up to the barn. This program is free but registration is required for capacity.

**Register Here**



**Bent of the River Audubon Center**  
185 East Flat Hill Road  
Southbury, CT 06488

Thursday  
**March 12**  
5:30 PM - 7:30 PM



Louise Washer

## Sharon Policy Potluck

### *Neonicotinoids: The New DDT*

Local Press Reports:  
"Policy Potluck emphasizes need  
to protect pollinators"  
By Ruth Epstein



Bird Story: Sharon's "Bob"  
the American Kestrel