



GROTON OPEN SPACE ASSOCIATION, Inc.

2027 ANNUAL APPEAL

Protecting land, water, and wildlife in Southeastern CT since 1967

Preserving the Places We Love

Dear Friend of GOSA,

Thanks to members, volunteers, community partners, and donors like you, 2026 was a year of meaningful progress for GOSA. Together, we strengthened stewardship, restored critical habitats, expanded community engagement, and protected the natural spaces that make Southeastern Connecticut so special.

Volunteers contributed countless hours maintaining trails, clearing storm damage, improving infrastructure, and expanding accessibility. At Merritt Family Forest, more than 70 volunteers, including teams from Pfizer and the Navy crew of the USS Arizona, moved approximately 4,200 pounds of materials to build new bridges and bog crossings. We also added ADA-accessible parking and picnic areas at Avery Farm South and Sheep Farm, helping more people enjoy these treasured spaces. At the Center Groton Preserve four new trails were designed, built, and marked, bringing us closer to opening this remarkable preserve to the public.

Habitat restoration was also a major focus. At Sheep Farm North, nearly 15 acres overrun by invasive plants were reclaimed as part of a long-term restoration effort. At Avery Farm Nature Preserve, invasive thickets were cleared to prepare for native plantings and forest regeneration. Supported by grants and volunteer labor, these projects are laying the foundation for healthier ecosystems and wildlife habitat.

Our pollinator gardens continued to flourish through partnerships with the Mystic and North Stonington Garden Clubs and Wild Ones. Native plantings at Beebe Cove Vista and Walt's Walls and Woods now provide important food and habitat for pollinators and other wildlife while enhancing the beauty of our preserves.

Connecting people with nature remains one of GOSA's greatest successes. Through partnerships with Groton Public Schools and Groton Parks & Recreation, we provided educational hikes and outdoor experiences for nearly 500 students, as well as summer program participants, seniors, and other community members. These programs build meaningful connections to nature and inspire the next generation of environmental stewards.

GOSA also received international recognition when our video series documenting our history and mission earned a Hermes Creative Award for excellence in storytelling and community engagement. This honor celebrates the volunteers, advocates, and supporters who have protected Groton's open spaces for decades.

None of these accomplishments would be possible without you. Whether you joined a hike, volunteered on a work crew, attended an event, shared one of our videos, or made a donation, you helped make a meaningful difference.

As we look ahead, habitat restoration, trail improvements, educational programs, and land conservation will require continued support. Please consider making a year-end gift to help protect land, restore habitats, educate young people, and preserve the natural beauty of Southeastern Connecticut for future generations.

Together, we are protecting land, water, wildlife, and the connection to nature that enriches all our lives.

With gratitude, *GOSA Board of Directors*

"Your gift turns conservation plans into welcoming trails, healthy habitats, and outdoor experiences for our community."



100+ Volunteers



**2180+ Acres saved
and open to the public**



~500 Students



**2026 Hermes
Creative Film Award**

GROTON OPEN SPACE ASSOCIATION

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The GOSA Board of Directors invites GOSA members and the public to participate in the 2026 Annual Meeting in-person on **Thursday, November 12th** at **Thrive 55+ - Groton Senior Center**.

Proposed revisions to the Bylaws will be presented for membership approval during the business meeting. Printed copies will be available at the meeting and electronic copies are available on GOSAonline.org.

Thursday, November 12th, 2026
Thrive 55+ - Groton Senior Center

AGENDA

Doors open at **6:00 PM**

Business Meeting at **6:30 PM**

Bylaw Review - Officer Reports - Board Elections - Spotted Salamander Awards

Guest Speaker at **7:00 PM**



The Forgotten Rail at Midway Yard

Joe Baril, Local Historian and Preservation Advocate

Join us for an insightful talk with Joseph (Joe) Baril, a lifelong Groton resident, local historian, and community leader with a deep interest in the region's transportation and industrial heritage. Joe has served on the Groton Town Council and has been actively involved in numerous civic and preservation efforts throughout the community.

Joe is particularly knowledgeable about the history of Groton's former Midway Railroad Yard, one of the most significant railroad facilities on

the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad system. Located between New York and Boston, Midway served as a major freight yard, roundhouse, locomotive servicing facility, and transportation hub in the early twentieth century. The site played an important role in the economic development of southeastern Connecticut and remains an important part of the region's industrial and transportation history. Drawing on years of local research and community involvement, Joe has helped bring attention to the historical significance of the Midway site and its connection to Groton's broader story of railroads, industry, and conservation. His presentations combine historical insights, local knowledge, and a passion for preserving the stories that shaped our community.



**Join Joe and GOSA for a tour of the trainyard on
Saturday, Nov. 14th at 10:00 am (rain date Sunday Nov 15).**

Meet at the Town parking lot at the end of Depot Road before the Bluff Point entrance at the RR underpass.

WATCH OUR NEW VIDEO SERIES

Inception • Advocacy & Acquisition
Land Management • Community Engagement

SCAN TO
WATCH THE
VIDEOS



We are always looking for new volunteers and committee members for Board succession planning. Visit us at **GOSAonline.org**.

DONATE / LEARN MORE

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