

## Labbadia, Bonnine

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**From:** Thomas Ebersold <bikehikekayak123@sbcglobal.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, September 29, 2013 9:12 AM  
**To:** Gray, Eric; Beisel, Brian; Program Review and Investigation  
**Subject:** State park funding study

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to provide my input regarding the continued inadequate funding of the Connecticut state park and forest system.

Look across the borders to New York and Massachusetts to see the differences in park condition and staffing, as compared to Connecticut where years of underfunding and understaffing have led to obvious neglect.

Since 2007, I have volunteered more than 500 hours of my personal time, plus gotten others to help out for 200 additional volunteer hours at West Rock Ridge State Park in Hamden. I have maintained trails, including blazing about 23 miles of trails, pruning back overgrowth, removing invasive plant species, building boardwalks and bridges, and adding rock water bars to deal with erosion. Regrettably, my work schedule has gotten busier, so I have not be able to do much at West Rock in the past year.

West Rock has a variety of infrastructure needs, including rebuilding the stone walls at the South Overlook and Judges Cave, repaving the road to the South Overlook, and patching parts of Baldwin Drive, which is popular with cyclists and hikers. There is also a need to rebuild the crumbling steps on the Red Trail between Common Ground High School and the South Overlook.

There is a need for extensive removal of invasive plant species, particularly Asiatic bittersweet, multi-flora rose and autumn olive.

My blog details park highlights, my accomplishments, and ongoing needs:  
<http://westrocktrails.blogspot.com/>

Even if I had the time to volunteer on a regular basis, I simply cannot replace the ongoing efforts of a paid employee.

Connecticut needs to properly fund its state parks. They benefit everyone and also provide tourism dollars that benefits the state economy.

Sincerely,  
Thomas Ebersold  
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Milford, CT 06461