

## Exhibit A

### Forster Pond State Park 1928-2013

In 2013 as we celebrate the Connecticut State Parks Centennial and the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Civilian Conservation Corps we should also be celebrating the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Forster Pond State Park.

One of the least known Connecticut State Parks sits on the south side of Route 80 in Killingworth, directly across from one of the state's most used recreation facilities, Chatfield Hollow State Park. The story of Forster Pond State Park starts in 1927 when renowned New York City architect Frank. J. Forster (1886-1948) began purchasing large tracts of woodland in the pristine Chatfield Hollow Valley section of Killingworth.

Forster's vision was to create a summer retreat that offered his family and friends relief from the hectic summer social scene that characterized the Long Island suburbs in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The small rustic houses Forster designed and built in Killingworth were worlds apart from the large Medieval European stone and brick homes he designed for his wealthy clients. Each house had a central gathering room with high ceilings and hand-hewn beams build around a large hearth. The homes had a concern of human scale and cozy spaces that were also present in his larger works. Forster's respect for the environment is clearly evident by rambling designs that were beautifully sited making the house appear as if it were grown from the site rather than built there. In his first house built (northwest house) Forster left behind a notable architectural epitaph above the north rooms fireplace, in red and black Gothic lettering are painted these words: *"If Thee Would Reflect Thy Surroundings, Thee Could Do No Better"*.

Considered by some to be one of Connecticut's first green architects, Forster's designs made extensive use of reclaimed beams, wide boards, barn siding and stone, rescued from Connecticut historic buildings that were slated for demolition. Forster also had a rather interesting passion and understanding of water that he put to work in Killingworth when he build a dam at the south end of the property to create a 32-acre pond. In 1930 Forster did it again when he tapped into natures energy by raising the dam of a 19<sup>th</sup> century water-powered sawmill and installed a hydroelectric generating plant to power his first home. It makes one wonder what the folks around town thought about the first electric light the pristine valley had ever seen in its over 10,000-year history.

To further the green thought process, Forster reclaimed the 19<sup>th</sup> century Historic Chatfield Farmhouse that he moved in one piece (with the central fireplace in tact) to a secluded pond front location. A short distance from the house, guests would stay in what could be described as "Connecticut Rustic Guest Cottage" reminiscent of those built in the "Adirondack Style" in New York state at about the same time period. Forster's guests had to have been charmed by the rustic tones of repurposed weathered barn siding, hand hewn beams, multi light window sash and the 19<sup>th</sup> century stone & brick fireplace that would take the chill off an early spring or fall morning.

Forster's philosophy toward architecture was unmistakable, in a 1931 interview he said; "*They are a natural outgrowth of the soil on which they stand and of the lives of the people who built them*". When Forster retired to his Connecticut retreat the completed work looked like a well laid out environmental community that easily could have qualified as a National Park, yes it was that well done.

The Chatfield house with its breathtaking views of the pond became the final act in Forster's life. It was in the Chatfield house where his wife Mary brought Frank breakfast in bed one morning to find he died peacefully in his sleep in a place that he loved so much. At the time he died in 1948 Forster had amassed hundreds of acres not only in Chatfield Hollow but elsewhere in Killingworth.

In 1963 Forster's widow Mary agreed to sell the estate "*for use as a state park and for the inviolate protection of wildlife*" that would be named after her late husband.

On the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Forster Pond State Park has not been open to the public and it remains "*restricted for public use*". In an effort to understand the restriction we contacted the park supervisor in November 2011 who arranged a tour for a group of concerned citizens. What we witnessed was horrible; All but one of the state registered historic buildings in the park had fallen into complete state of disrepair due to lack of maintenance. The only building in good condition is where a state employee has been allowed to live on a prime 32-acre pond front location ideal for boating, fishing and summer picnics. Even Forster's Large Abby house that is run by the state as some sort of educational center has been allowed to fall into a state of disrepair. If not maintained it too would be on a list for demolition in the very near future.

We discussed the problem with our state representative and state senator who told us the only way to get the attention the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection was to send a formal proposal to commissioner Daniel Esty. In March of 2012 as proposal was being readied for delivery, we were handed some very bad news: Two historic Forster homes and a guesthouse that we agreed to restore had been *demolished!* Tom Tyler, head of our state parks told us the federal government was somehow involved with the demolitions. How could that be when so many in Hartford were aware of our pending proposal? We will probably never know the real truth in the matter.

Demolition is an expensive, dangerous, unsustainable practice. There is a tremendous amount of "embodied energy" in the structure that is; the energy to manufacture, transport and assemble the original building; combined with the potential disassembly and transport to be lost in a land fill. In addition, the National Trust for Historic Preservation's sustainability initiative may be the best source on the web for green preservation.

*Demolition by Neglect* is defined as the destruction of a building through abandonment or lack of maintenance. In Connecticut the Environmental Protection Act has provided preservationists with a powerful tool to assist in the struggle to preserve historic buildings.

Forster Pond State Park is a disgrace and a prime example of "*Demolition by Neglect*" In 50 years the folks who manage Forster Pond State Park have not installed a shingle or developed a

program to save the historic buildings in this park. At the core it's a rather simple problem, the state continues order (and pay for) costly studies rather than installing a new roof on a building. The cost of a new roof is far less expensive than any report and in fact will add ten to twenty five years or more to the life of a historic structure.

Unfortunately our government is too big and has grown into an over regulated nightmare of red tape, prevailing union wage rates and a host of other road blocks that no longer allow for any sort of common sense measures such as installing a new roof.

What our parks managers in Hartford don't seem to understand or have forgotten is that historic buildings in state parks belong to the citizens of Connecticut and the current level of stewardship is not acceptable. There are real solutions to save our historic treasures and the issue needs to be addressed head on before any more historic properties in our state parks are neglected or demolished.

Jeffrey L Bradley  
Connecticut Architectural Historian and founder of  
The Friends of Forster Pond & Chatfield Hollow State Parks  
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**Ehibit B-1**

**The Division of State Parks and Public Outreach has a mission to**

“ Provide an understanding of, access to and enjoyment of the state’s historic, cultural and natural resources.”

A Resident Curator is a private individual, a private not-for-profit organization or a for profit company who is interested in historic preservation, who wishes to live in or, reuse a historic structure on state park or forest land. A Resident Curator has the skills, knowledge, interest and financial means to restore a historic building and be willing to share it with the public.

The goal of the Resident Curator Program is to rehabilitate and maintain historic state park and forest properties at no expense to Connecticut taxpayers in exchange for a long-term lease and the opportunity to live in a state park or forest and to play a key role in the preservation of state and local history. The Resident Curator program creates a partnership between the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) and a Resident Curator through a long-term lease. In exchange for the long-term lease, the Resident Curator is responsible for the restoration, rehabilitation and ongoing maintenance of the house and property within guidelines set forth under this program. The partnership benefits the public, the state, and the Resident Curator.

DEEP is interested in a hearing from a wide range of proposes. Reuses of the property may involve either for-profit or non-profit undertakings or a combination of both. The reuse proposal must be compatible with the Deep’s mission of environmental conservation and public recreation.

Resident Curator Program  
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## ***Exhibit B-2***

### ***The Resident Curator Program by Jeffrey L Bradley, 2012***

The History of the resident curator program is explained in a 2007 book by Donna Ann Harris - "New Solutions for House Museums" - "Ensuring the Long Term Preservation of Americas Historic Homes "

Threatened Historic buildings in state parks are not limited to Connecticut but are a nation wide problem that must be addressed head on. A number of states including Maryland, Massachusetts, and Delaware have successfully engaged the program resulting in the restoration of a long list of wonderful historic buildings.

The stories of citizens willing to in some cases spent years restoring their dream were published in the New York Times and other national media outlets highlighting their success stories.

The Department of Natural Resources in the state of Maryland pioneered this program in 1982 and provides a model for initiating similar programs in other states. Maryland currently has about 43 curator ships in operation. To date, curators have contributed over \$8 million worth of improvements to these publicly owned historic structures at no cost to the taxpayers.

The state of Massachusetts also has a resident curator program for historic buildings. A new and creative move on their behalf is unfolding, proof thinking outside the box does work! The state is currently is looking for response to restore and maintain the 1894 Schooner Ernestina. Viewing is scheduled at the state pier in New Bedford, Saturday June 16<sup>th</sup> 2012 and I will be there.

### ***The Resident Curator Program comes to Connecticut,***

In 2010 Governor M. Jodi Rell and the Connecticut DEEP announced the Resident Curator Program, one that would address the problem of neglected buildings in our state parks. Connecticut's challenge involves over a hundred threatened historic buildings in parks that have been left to decay to the point no return and now put on a list waiting for funding to be demolished.

Four Historic buildings around the state were up for assessment as the start of the Resident Curator Program. Since, no homes are or have been placed in the program.

One such property, The Historic Chatfield house is located at Forster Pond State Park in the town of Killingworth, directly across from Chatfield Hollow State Park.

**Our goal is to restore the Chatfield house and will be run as a pilot program for other citizens to become Resident Curators.** In the process we will educate residents and send them off qualified to restore other historic Connecticut buildings on state land before it's too late.

We are a group of highly qualified citizens who are more than capable of meeting and in many areas exceeding the environmental and preservation standards set forth by the Department of the Interior in Washington and those of the State of Connecticut.

We invite Governor Daniel Malloy and DEEP Commissioner Daniel Esty to personally view one of the most pristine places in the entire Connecticut park system and discuss why the state should support our plan.

This opportunity should not be missed and trust it will be given the full consideration it deserves.

Sincerely

Jeffrey L. Bradley

Director of Resident Curator Training