

Railroad
Days
COMPASS



And the
band played
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New dairy owner
in Cornwall
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THURSDAY, JULY 19, 2018 \$1.25

LAKEVILLE ~ SALISBURY ~ SHARON ~ NORTH CANAAN ~ FALLS VILLAGE ~ CORNWALL ~ KENT ~ BARKHAMSTEAD ~ COLERBROOK ~ NORFOLK ~ WINSTED

A 420-acre forest protected, celebrated

By Cynthia Hochswender

A large white tent popped up in the Kent Land Trust field on Route 7 late Friday afternoon, July 13, for a celebration of land conservation efforts not just in the Northwest Corner but all along the East Coast.

Senator Chris Murphy was the guest of honor and was joined by Rob Klee, commissioner of the state Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.

On hand for the celebration were selectmen from area towns, including First Selectman Bruce Adams from Kent and First Selectman Curtis Rand of Salisbury; state Rep. Brian Ohler (R-64) and state Sen. Craig Miner (R-20); Lynn Werner, who is executive director of the Housatonic Valley Association; and representatives of several Northwest Corner Land Trusts. Murphy and Klee were in-



PHOTO BY CYNTHIA HOCHSWENDER
Sen. Chris Murphy, left, HVA Executive Director Lynn Werner and DEEP Commissioner Rob Klee came to Kent July 13 to talk about the Highlands Conservation Act.

GRANT

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roduced by Tim Abbott of the Housatonic Valley Association, where he is the Regional Land Conservation and Greenprint director and where he has worked over the years to try and link together and conserve open space, farmland and forest in Connecticut.

His efforts are part of the larger effort to protect the massive forestland that runs through Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York and Connecticut and that is known as the Highlands region.

Thanks in part to efforts by Murphy, the Highlands Conservation Act was created in 2004 and has, since then, provided more than \$8 million to land conservation and protection efforts. More than 1,630 acres have been protected so far thanks to that federal support; about 1,000 acres are set to be conserved this summer.

The act was reauthorized by Congress in 2017 and now is in place through 2021.

One notable property that was discussed at Friday's event is the 420-acre Vagliano forest in Nor-

folk, which will be purchased by the DEEP with Highlands funds.

The announcement that the Vagliano purchase has almost been completed was one reason for the celebration.

Another was a donation of \$250,000 that HVA secured from an anonymous donor through its Greenprint Partners Pledge Fund to help with that purchase.

Werner explained that "the pledge fund is set up to link private philanthropists with conservation deals that need funds, leveraging other private and public funds. The conservation deals are within our 40,000-acre conservation vision for the Litchfield Hills (which in turn is part of our 75,000 acre vision across the Housatonic Watershed) and needed by any of our partners in the Litchfield Hills Greenprint Collaborative.

"In this case, the state tapped Highlands and other public funds and still needed this last piece to conserve Vagliano — a vitally important property in the heart of our mapped conservation vision."