Weir Farm National Historic Site

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

The Sketchbook

I hope many of you had a chance to watch Ken Burn's newest documentary series *The National Parks: America's Best Idea* and noticed the unique role that art and artists had in the establishment of our national parks. Rocky Mountain National Park had the brush strokes of Albert Bierstadt; paintings of Yosemite created a national cult for the valley, and the paintings and photographs of Thomas Moran, George Catlin, William Henry Jackson, and Ansel Adams helped bring people to the parks and convince Congress to set aside these lands for the public. The series pointed out that the love of natural places makes people more engaged citizens and saving and sharing small and large national park areas positively impacts our lives in countless ways. Nothing could be truer at Weir Farm National Historic Site. The park draws so many visitors and artists of all ages regardless of the season and the major on-site restoration projects. Check out some of their art online at www.nps.gov/wefa/planyourvisit/tpia.htm. The children's art is especially beautiful. So what is the update on the restoration you ask? We have completed the utility and fire suppression upgrades at the Weir House and studios and the exterior of the new Artist in Residence Studio. In 2010, we are focusing on the interiors and historic furnishings in the Weir House and studios. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding will go to much needed repairs to the exteriors of the two historic studios. Amazingly, and because of our great staff and volunteers we remain open to the public (weather permitting) as we continue on with these exciting preservation projects. Check out the tour schedule and plan a day to walk through the trees, hike to the pond, explore the trails and gardens, and just simply enjoy the great outdoors.

See you soon,
Linda Cook, Superintendent

A member of the Groundwork Bridgeport Green Team painting the very landscape he helped restore.

Next Generation of Park Stewards

Weir Farm National Historic Site and Groundwork Bridgeport experienced another successful summer working together to create the next generation of park stewards. The summer began with a stone wall workshop at the Kellogg Environmental Center and continued with several work projects at Weir Farm National Historic Site. The students had roles in managing the park's invasive species and maintaining the historic gardens and trails. Students were also exposed to the range of careers available in the National Park Service through a series of talks presented by the park's superintendent, facility manager, museum specialist, horticulturist, and interpretive park rangers. They also were given time for art, aided by the instruction of professional artist Marc Chabot. As one Groundwork Bridgeport member, Brandon Holland, reflected: "When we finally got the chance to make art at Weir Farm, I was able to observe my surroundings and while I did that, everything seemed different. Everything seemed so calm and refreshing." Participant Carol Trinh commented: "Even though my art was hideous, I had an awesome day."

Things To Do:

Reading Ranger* NEW!

Join a park ranger for a read-aloud story in our cozy historic barn, followed by an activity exploring the farm's fascinating landscape.

10:00-12:00 on the following Saturdays:

- 11/14 Mr. Weir, Inspired!
- 12/12 Preserving a Special Place
- 1/9 What's to be Found on the Farm?
- 2/20 Stone Wall Wonders
- 3/13 Nature All Around
- 4/10 Discover Your National Parks

Take Part in Art

Nov.-Apr., Thurs.-Sun., 10:00-4:00

Discover your inner artist while sketching ***en plein air*** with art supplies provided by the National Park Service free of charge.

Junior Ranger

Nov.-Apr., Thurs.-Sun., 10:00-4:00

Earn your Junior Ranger badge and patch by completing 1 of the 3 Junior Ranger activities.

Group Visits

Nov.-Apr., Thurs.-Sun., 10:00-4:00

Visit the farm every season of the year! To schedule a group visit, call (203)834-1896 x12. School groups and scout groups should ask for information on the Art Alive! curriculum-based program and the Scout Ranger program.

*** Registration is required. To register, please call (203)834-1896 x12.**

Conservation Corner

The beloved stag horn chandelier that presided over the Weir House dining room for decades is finally getting some much-needed cleaning. The chandelier has been at the Northeast Museum Services Center, where dense soot is being removed to reveal the carved woman's facial features and accurate paint colors. Conservators' research shows it to be related to a number of Bavarian chandeliers featuring carved figures with antlers, called *lusterweibchen* which range in date from the Middle Ages to the 1900s.

Stag horn chandelier after soot removal.

Two Days in September Currently on Exhibit

Weir Farm was described by artist Albert P. Ryder in 1897 as a place where "the landscape and the air are full of promise." This attitude was one shared by many Impressionist artists of the time, and it kept them coming back to this rural farm, owned by their colleague, J. Alden Weir, to paint the rolling fields, stone walls, gardens, and meadows. In the spirit of this artistic tradition, Weir Farm National Historic Site held an Impressionist Painting Workshop for local artists over the weekend of September 19th and 20th. Led by fine artist Dmitri Wright, the workshop explored the techniques and methods of the Impressionist painters. "The information, unique environment and profound depth of knowledge and understanding were truly inspiring," commented one workshop participant. Paintings from the workshop will be the subject of a new exhibit entitled *Two Days in September*. This exhibit will be on display in the Burlingham House Visitor Center November to March, Thursday through Sunday, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Bobbi Eike Mullen
Dmitri's Day
Acrylic on Canvas

"Two sunny days of wonderful instruction, convivial folks, and a place of inspiration."

Comments from artist and Impressionist Painting Workshop participant, Christine Glidden

Meet Weir Farm's Artist-In-Residence of the month at the Wilton Library for a lively reception that includes a lecture by the artist and an opporunity to view their work. Bring a friend and see how the current Artist-In-Residence was inspired by Weir Farm National Historic Site! Check out the Wilton Library website at www.wiltonlibrary.org for the next date. The Artist-In-Residence program is managed by the Weir Farm Art Center.

Volunteer and Become a VIP

Volunteer Bonnie Tremante admiring a young artist's painting while helping with an on-site event.

Volunteers-In-Parks (VIPs) are very important people at Weir Farm National Historic Site! Each year we benefit from the efforts of over 100 VIPs who assist us with a variety of projects and tasks; including garden and trail maintenance, visitor services and interpretation, historic buildings maintenance and preservation, and archival letter transcription. For more information on how you can become a VIP and the current volunteer opportunities available, please visit www.nps.gov/wefa/supportyourpark/vounteer.htm.

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Weir Farm National Historic Site
Linda Cook, Superintendent

Contributors
Emily Bryant
Pat Clark
Linda Cook
Dolores Tirri
Christa Weinbaum
Cassie Werne

Editor
Cassie Werne

Mailing Address
Weir Farm NHS
735 Nod Hill Road
Wilton, CT 06897

Site Information
(203)834-1896
www.nps.gov/wefa

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Visitor Center Hours of Operation

November through April

The Visitor Center is open Thursday through Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Tour Schedule

November through April

Tour of Weir Farm NHS:
Thursday through Sunday at 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Friday, and Sunday at 1:00 p.m.

Stone Wall Program:
Thursday and Saturday at 1:00 p.m.

Teacher Tour:
10:00 a.m. on the following Saturdays: 11/28, 12/19, 1/16, 2/13, 3/20, 4/17

The grounds are open daily from dawn to dusk. Admission and tours are offered to the public free of charge.

Weir Farm to Be Featured on Connecticut Quarter

Weir Farm National Historic Site will be featured on Connecticut's quarter in 2020 as part of the recently announced America the Beautiful Quarters Program. "Weir Farm is an outstanding example of Connecticut's natural beauty and historic past and it is an ideal spot to be honored in the Mint's new series of quarters," Governor Rell said.

Weir Farm National Historic Site dedicates this issue of The Sketchbook to Christopher Gezon. Good luck in your new position at Zion National Park. We will miss you!