

Old Lyme Open Space Commission Beavers & Birds Program



Earth Day 2021 is on April 22nd. In celebration, the Old Lyme Open Space Commission is kicking off a beavers & birds conservation/education program in the town's Ames Open Space, sponsored by grants from The Rockfall Foundation and the Hartford Audubon Society.

The Commission's slogan is "*Let Nature Be.*" In the case of beavers, allowing their activity results in a host of beneficial impacts. Beavers are one of only a few animals that create their own habitat, which is then shared with an amazing variety of birds, plants, and wildlife. Beaver ponds improve aquifer quality through natural filtration and regulate flow so downstream areas do not run dry in summer months.

The commission, through this program, will give beavers free reign where their activity is confined to town open space. At the same time, we will educationally explain the ecology of beaver ponds which encompass so much more than dams and lodges. Visitors, bird watchers and students will have a wonderful opportunity to observe nature in action with natural amenities at two observation sites.

The Open Space Commission project specifically will:

- Use drones to aerially survey the Ames Open Space boundaries to determine if beaver activity is adversely affecting private property and seek solutions to problems, as needed.
- Protect non-nuisance beaver activity on open space land and deter illegal vandalism.
- Offer a wildlife educational program centered on the unique features of beaver ponds. HD cameras with remote access will capture wildlife activity for web posting with help from LOLHS.
- Create two wildlife observational areas with native-wood benches and interpretive signs on the Ames "blue" trail. QR codes will link to video footage, so visitors can watch beaver and bird activity where it was recorded and perhaps even see similar activity live!

Please visit the commission's web site later this spring and summer at <https://www.oldlyme-ct.gov/open-space-commission> for news of the program's progress.

