

# David K. Leff Tabbed as First National Scenic Trail ‘Poet in Residence’

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MIDDLEFIELD – There are only 11 National Scenic Trails in the U.S. and two of them run through Connecticut – the Appalachian Trail and the nation’s newest national scenic trail, the New England Trail (NET).

Special places like the NET have long offered inspiration for painters and photographers who capture their physical beauty, but never before has a National Scenic Trail recognized a poet to serve as its “artist in residence.” Poet and author David K. Leff of Collinsville will serve as NET Poet in Residence for one year beginning October 15th. Leff was selected due to his extensive experience as a hiker, natural resource conservationist, and nature poet. The previous two artists in residence for the NET were photographers Barbara Bosworth and Xio Xiomaro who displayed their visual art in local galleries along the NET.



The NET – a combination of the blue-blazed Metacomet, Mattabesett, and Menunkatuck Trails in Connecticut – winds 215 miles through 41 communities in Connecticut and Massachusetts encompassing New

England’s iconic large river valleys, long-distance rural and agrarian vistas, as well as colonial historic landmarks, wetlands, vernal pools, and mountain ridgetops. The NET is maintained in Connecticut by the Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA) in a three-way partnership that includes the National Park Service and the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) which maintains the northern section of the NET in Massachusetts.

As Poet in Residence for the NET, Leff will be leading poetry-based hikes, conducting nature poetry writing workshops, and more. Charlie Tracy, Superintendent of the New England National Scenic Trail for the National Park Service, remarked that Leff’s residency “will offer both seasoned hikers and new visitors new paths to experience the trail’s deep beauty and its multi-layered history.” Because of its beauty and diversity, the NET is a perfect setting to probe the idea of “trailness” — the notion that connectivity is critical to human affairs and is also represented physically by a continuous footpath.



To celebrate this occasion, CFPA will be hosting a kick-off event at its headquarters in Middlefield on Nov. 29 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. featuring poetry readings by Leff and CT Poet Laureate Rennie McQuilkin of Simsbury, and a narrated slide show of the New England Trail.

To learn more about the New England Trail: <http://www.newenglandtrail.org>

To learn more about David K. Leff: <http://davidkleff.typepad.com>