

At the end of the 2015/16 school year, Jaan Aarismaa conducted a tour of the Hillcrest Environmental Center, for 8 Norwich school faculty from the Middle School and High School and 2 academic science teachers from BOCES. He reported in an e-mail (aarisma@dcmoboces.com) of July 8: The Norwich School faculty are very excited to begin utilizing the trails and pavilion in science classes, phys. ed classes and possibly art classes, as well as hosting an "Envirathon" at the site. They were very receptive to the concept that it is time for the Norwich School District, their faculty and their buildings and grounds to take ownership of the property and utilize and maintain it. Additionally, one of the BOCES science teachers, Erin Engle-Thomas, has strong connections with Rogers and may have an interest in developing curriculum concepts around the property. I will be making plans to hand off the chest of old curriculum and photos that Mr. Constable and you gave me, to the Middle School Science Department headed by Mike Messere. They were the most enthusiastic group to tour the site and were very excited to locate the "chest" and expressed an interest in resurrecting the collection of historic curriculum. (Harry explains: Three of the photos were placed on the website August, 2015; I am attempting to archive them and put up three more) The beaver dam has been removed, and the road is passable by jeep. The pavilion is in excellent shape; the clearing is in need of mowing. I regret to inform you that this may be my last interaction with the Hillcrest site, as I am moving from Conservation to head up our growing Welding Technology program at BOCES. This will be a full-time job. I expect my commitments to our local manufacturing industry and specialized training to adult education outside of my regular class to take up most of my available free time. It has been a pleasure to meet with you and work with you in the capacity of Conservation Instructor, and I expect Norwich Schools to begin taking advantage of the unique learning space that they have available at Hillcrest. All the best for your summer. Jaan. As the Hillcrest website (www.hillcrestenv.org) shows, Jaan met with NHS 55 class members both in the summer of 2014 and 2015. This was, of course, an indication of all the work he has done as the main point person in recovering Hillcrest, after it went into decline in the late 1990's. Hopefully others will take his place as he indicated.

But Welding's gain is Conservation's loss. Let us not forget the others who have helped recover Hillcrest: Superintendent Gerard Sullivan, former school board members Sally Chirlin and Perry Owen, current member Howie Sullivan, Don Windsor, Cara Sefchick, Earl Callahan, Lane Anderson, Chris Snow, Jeff Constable, and from our class especially Pat Scott, Harris Manwarren, Stan White, Mary Lou McAvoy, Kate Stewart, Mary Jean Mody, Barb Bean, Jim Dunne, and Patsy Smith. It seems that Hillcrest has been restored as our country becomes more appreciative of its natural beauty. Maybe even Pokémon will incorporate Hillcrest. Harry Winter, Aug. 3, 2016.