

The Greenways Connector

Connecting the Wachusett Community with Trails and Greenways

December 2010

Pommogussett Tunnel and Trail Campaign

WACHUSETT GREENWAYS IS TAKING AN important step toward completing the 30-mile Wachusett section of the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) and providing lasting stewardship for the trail. Each of us will be asked to contribute to this unique opportunity to:

- Link two sections of the MCRT with installation of a tunnel under Pommogussett Road (Route 56) during July and August 2011.
- Connect the MCRT along Miles Road.
- Establish a Welcome Center at 21 Miles Road.
- Conserve nearly 15 acres of land, with the potential to connect a new trail to the center of the Rutland.



Trail's end – for now.

The Pommogussett Tunnel will be a major milestone in connecting the trail. The 80-foot reinforced concrete tunnel will be installed in summer 2011 beneath Pommogussett Road (Route 56) just north of Main Street (Route 122A) in Rutland Center.

By purchasing property at Miles Road, Greenways will be able to link the rail trail from the Miles Road parking lot to the trail connection between the Camarra and Veaudry homesteads. The new trail section along Miles Road will complete the connection to Route 56.

This new initiative and long-awaited trail link will benefit the Town of Rutland and the Wachusett communities as a vital part of the

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MCRT Construction for 2010: Westward in Oakham

THE RAIL TRAIL EXPANDED WEST ONE MILE FROM THE ROUTE 122 crossing in Oakham to Coldbrook Station in 2010. During the winter and early spring, volunteers from the "Give a Day, Get a Disney Day" program, Alpha Phi Omega of WPI, and Greenways cleared the rail bed in Oakham in preparation for the trail expansion. The hard-working and enthusiastic crews cleared trees and overhead limbs and moved brush and logs, spreading them out in the woods.

The trail construction went out to bid in February, and East Hill Enterprises of Rutland was contracted to build the abutments for the 110-foot bridge. East Hill's Mark Sadowski constructed a ramp to the original railroad bed from the parking area at Route 122. Mark also prepared the abutments for the new bridge over Parker Brook just west of Route 122. Since the embankments are composed of fairly loose sandy gravel, Bruce Pennino, our dedicated volunteer engineer, recommended a bridge that would make a wide span and sit back from the two ends of the remaining embankment.

As an added precaution to prevent erosion of the end of the west embankment, Bruce designed a "corset" of heavy geofabric and chain-link fencing laced with cables anchored six feet into the ground. The corset will help prevent erosion from a 100-year flood

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15 Years and Counting!



David Simmerer offers his thoughts.

WACHUSETT GREENWAYS is celebrating the completion of fifteen years of working together to connect our communities through trails. This year we are looking back at what we've accomplished and planning ahead. You are invited to participate on February 12, 2011 when we gather to

continue plotting our course and to enjoy a delicious lunch.

On March 20 volunteers first gathered at the Oakdale Methodist Church in West Boylston to review the accomplishments of WG's first 15 years. President Colleen Abrams showed slides of the many volunteers who have shared this 15-year journey of connecting people and trails. John Scannell served as the facilitator. Volunteers began by sharing "my favorite memory of being outdoors" in small groups. Then the groups moved on to identify strengths and opportunities for Wachusett Greenways looking ahead to the next five years and beyond.

The group expressed their enthusiasm about Greenways' strengths and successes, particularly its many volunteers,

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Growing Together — The Directors' Corner

THANK YOU FOR 15 YEARS OF BUILDING TRAIL CONNECTIONS together! Let's rest for a moment to breathe deeply...mission accomplished...jobs well done. We can count miles of trail, and countless smiles of people of all ages working together and enjoying the trail, bridges and tunnels, trail users, members and friends.

And now...ONWARD. We are planning our next 15 years. We have excellent opportunities to build new connections together. Read on to learn how you can help. Many thanks to each of you who is sharing this endeavor. We are grateful!

Your Wachusett Greenways Directors

A New Look for Greenways!

PLEASE WELCOME THE NEW LOOK FOR WACHUSETT GREENWAYS. To help celebrate our 15th anniversary, we've adopted a new logo and newsletter design.

And soon you'll see an all-new Greenways website. We're proud of the good work we are accomplishing together with you, our loyal members and supporters. We hope you'll enjoy staying in touch by reading and sharing the new *Greenways Connector* and visiting us often at www.wachusettgreenways.org.



Our new logo was designed and donated by Greenways member Jody Shyllberg, Creative Director of JS Graphics, Inc., of West Boylston, www.jsgraphics.net. It's meant to capture the combination of the great outdoors of the Wachusett region and the sweep of the rail trail and greenways under our stewardship. We're retiring the familiar block Greenways logo, designed by Diane Pedersen, of Sterling, which served us well for 15 years. The new logo will begin appearing on Greenways t-shirts, caps and letterhead as replacement items are ordered.

Adshead Graphics is introducing a new and refreshing design for the *Greenways Connector*. Since 1998 Adshead Graphics has produced beautiful, highly professional newsletters, maps and other publications for Greenways. To celebrate our milestone birthday, they are rolling out the new *Connector*.

And finally, soon we'll be introducing major changes to our website. Besides an all-new visual look and simpler navigation, the site will be more interactive, enabling Greenways members and friends to submit stories and photos of their Greenways experiences. Hank Ouellette, long-time Wachusett Greenways volunteer leader and photographer, has maintained the website for more than 10 years, bringing you news and stunning photographs direct from the field as he chronicles trail construction, our special events and more. We're grateful for Hank's tireless dedication, his eye for that special photo, and his commitment to remain involved in helping tell our story to the world.

Members Sustain Wachusett Greenways

YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS KEY TO WACHUSETT GREENWAYS' ABILITY to help connect our community through trails and greenways. This year 388 members have joined us, and we are grateful for each member.

We need you now! If you haven't sent in your membership for 2010, there's still time. Please check the label on your newsletter or on the letter we'll send you this month. The year of your most recent membership is printed there. If it doesn't say 2010, please send your family membership (\$40), individual membership (\$30) or business membership (\$60) to Wachusett Greenways, Box 121, Holden, MA 01520. You can also or join or renew on-line at www.wachusettgreenways.org.

Our goal for our 15th year milestone is to double our membership this year to more than 1,000 members. There's still time to help reach the goal! More than 2,000 neighbors have either joined or donated to Wachusett Greenways since we first accepted 17 members in 1997. Every single dollar you send will help; and a membership contribution at any level will count you as a member this year. So please, send what you can in the envelope you'll receive this month.

Your annual gift is important, too. Every dollar you give when you check "annual gift to help extend and restore the MCRT" is used directly to construct the rail trail. So please make your year-end gift too. You'll enjoy the results in health and community building. If your employer matches gifts, please consider asking for their support.

Wachusett Greenways Newsletter

The Greenways Connector

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Wachusett Greenways, P.O. Box 121, Holden, MA 01520.

For regular news updates, visit our
website at
www.wachusettgreenways.org.



Working on the Railroad

WORK NEVER ENDS ON THE MASS CENTRAL RAIL TRAIL, AND Wachusett Greenways continues to count on friends both old and new to meet the challenge.

Trail neighbors and longtime supporters Roland Veaudry and Dave Camarra of Rutland turned out on a rainy day this summer to lead volunteers in efforts to clear debris remaining from the December 2008 ice storm. With the help of Roland and his tractor, Dave and others were able to drag away branches that had been choking drainage ditches along the trail.

The Charnock Cut is a special challenge requiring lots of leaves to be raked out from the ditches each fall. This year there was even more work to be done removing large rocks and gravel that had been pulled from the rock walls by falling trees from the big '08 ice storm. A first-rate team of 20 volunteers including Roland Veaudry and Dave Camarra and their tractors, and Bob Spindler and his trailer, volunteers with tarps, chainsaws and other tools came out in November to tackle this big job.

The Quag bridge area in Sterling poses a maintenance challenge where water and foot traffic erode the banks. To improve access to the water and help stabilize the area around the bridge, the hardy Greenways volunteer corps has been shoring up the banks with stone armor. In October, employ-

ees from Cambridge-based Vertex Pharmaceuticals made amazing progress there on their annual service day. In November, Bancroft School students carried on the work in Sterling by cutting brush and invasives.



In Rutland, students from the WPI chapter of Alpha Phi Omega, the national co-ed service fraternity, helped repair a split-rail fence originally installed by Americorps volunteers in the 1990s. They also helped to improve drainage near the MCRT intersection with the Midstate Trail. Longtime Greenways leaders Ed Yaglou and Dick Williams had glowing reviews for the efforts of the WPI students who have joined Greenways for several service days.

Pommogussett Tunnel and Trail Campaign

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full 104-mile trail planned between Northampton and Boston.

The new Welcome Center will be established at 21 Miles Road. At last, Greenways will have a center for providing hospitality to trail users and for providing stewardship for the MCRT and other Wachusett trails for years to come.

In addition, nearly 15 acres of beautiful woodland will be preserved for public access. This land will offer a potential trail connection to Rutland's Main Street. The protected land is near Thayer Pond and MA Fish and Wildlife land, which increases the wildlife benefits of this parcel.



21 Miles Road, Rutland.

Wachusett Greenways will seek the support of all our friends and members and the people of central Massachusetts in addition to government and foundation support. This project is an expensive endeavor, costing nearly \$500,000. The Pommogussett Tunnel and Trail Campaign goal is to raise \$150,000 from individual donors. You can help ensure that we will be able to enjoy this regional jewel of recreation now and for generations to come. Please answer the call with a generous gift when we ask for your Pommogussett Tunnel and Trail contribution.

MCRT Construction for 2010: Westward in Oakham

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or the failure of beaver dam(s) upstream. Mark Sinkewich, of Wachusett Landscape, Rutland, was contracted to install that bank stabilization.

On May 5 the new bridge arrived. Astro Crane of Stow, MA, connected the two 55-foot sections and then expertly lowered the bridge into place. The bridge crosses the V-shaped gap in the original railroad embankment, which washed out in the 1938 hurricane floods. CONTECH, formerly Continental Bridge of Alexandria, MN, built the bridge (and also provided the two MCRT Kaplan bridges in Holden).

Greenways contracted with R.D. Salvadore Excavation of Barre, MA, to build the trail for the nearly mile-long trail section, once the bridge was installed. Ron Rich of Barre was contracted to remove several large nearly dead pines. Bob Salvadore completed the excavation of stumps and grading; then he placed the gravel and rolled and compacted the trail, finishing in November.

At Coldbrook Road, at the former location of the Coldbrook RR station, freight house and elevated water tank, the Oakham Historical Association set out an interpretive marker at the site. On the south side of the trail, opposite the station foundation is located a cemetery with



but one burial, believed to be a person who died on the train more than a hundred years ago. Another cemetery, a quarter-mile to the south of the station, boasts the first known burial in Oakham, in 1761. These are features of the Lost Villages Scenic Byway (Route 122 from Paxton through Petersham, MA). Parking is available where the rail trail intersects Coldbrook Road and at Route 122.

Mass Central Rail Trail Preservation Endowments: The Perpetual “Labor of Love”

GREENWAYS IS DEEPLY GRATEFUL FOR THE LEADERSHIP donations by generous contributors to endow funds for maintenance of the trail in perpetuity. The Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) Preservation Fund is a permanent endowment that provides money for maintenance of the MCRT in central Massachusetts. The permanent endowment fund was established by the Kaplan family in 2002, and several Greenways donors have added to the fund in memory or in honor of loved ones. A major gift from the Kirby Family Foundation in 2008 helped this fund grow significantly. The Springdale Mill River Walk Preservation Fund, established by the Kaplan family, will also help maintain the section of the rail trail from River Street, Holden, to I-190. This section of the rail trail is named for the mill it passes.

If you'd like your gift to grow forever, Greenways welcomes donations to the permanent MCRT

Preservation Fund. Interest from your gift will help maintain the trail in perpetuity. To learn more, please contact Greenways President Colleen Abrams at 508-829-3954 or colleen.abrams@verizon.net. Donors are also welcome to check the box requesting their contributions be used for the MCRT Preservation Endowment Fund when sending contributions by mail to Wachusett Greenways, Box 121, Holden, MA 01520 or making on-line contributions through the Wachusett Greenways website.



Mass Central Rail Trail

An Anniversary Annual Meeting

WACHUSETT GREENWAYS' 2010 Annual Meeting was held on April 16 at West Boylston Middle/High School. The meeting took on an air of festivity as friends gathered to celebrate our 15th anniversary. Thanks to the efforts of Nancy Lucier and her team of creative volunteers, the event clearly indicated that a birthday party was in progress that evening.

After opening remarks by Greenways President Colleen Abrams, guests enjoyed a delicious potluck dinner. The evening's program kicked off with awards for Eagle Scout projects completed in the past year by Philip Blake, Cameron Horton, Mike Kent and Zachary Kent.

Colleen thanked outgoing Board of Directors members Margaret Lock and Ken McDonnell for their service to Wachusett Greenways over the years. Following that, incoming members Karl Barry, Gordon Elliott and John Rives were officially elected and welcomed.

The theme for the evening, "We are 15! Wachusett Greenways: Looking Back and Forging Ahead," provided the backdrop for a diversified and interesting slide show of events and milestones that have occurred over our first 15 years, including vivid photos of on-going trail construction by our own Hank Ouellette.



(top right) Margaret Lock receives a Golden Spike.

Eagle scouts (lower left) Cameron Horton and (center) Philip Blake accept our thanks.

(lower right) Laura Beckwith and Natalie Maynard welcome guests.



15 Years and Counting!

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community involvement, family orientation, programs for all ages free to the public, and emphasis on education. In summary, one member offered, "Wachusett Greenways has something for everyone!"

Despite its many accolades, the group was asked to identify areas in need of improvement. These included signage to guide trail users; increasing donations of equipment for member use, such as bikes, skis, canoes and snowshoes; trail maintenance; expanding programs to include more evening and weekend activities; and increasing financial support through memberships, donations, grants and foundations. Suggestions for expanding the Greenways events calendar included a Boston-to-Northampton bike event, a 5K trail running race, overnight camping, and more live music on site.

The group enjoyed a delicious meal following the session, donated by the Bagel Inn and Blue Plate Restaurant, both of Holden, and including scrumptious soups by Ruth Spaulding and Chris Nichols. Many thanks to all! Afterwards several of the trail enthusiasts enjoyed a good walk on the rail trail nearby.

Wachusett Greenways is planning a winter meeting on February 12, 2011 to pursue many of the great ideas gathered in the spring, to check our progress, and to continue plotting our course for the next 15 years. You are invited! Will you join us? Please contact Colleen at 508-829-3954 or by e-mail colleen.abrams@verizon.net.



Wachusett Greenways 2010 Board of Directors:
 Standing: Ed Yaglou, Steve Dubrule, Gordo Elliott, John Rives, Ida Nystrom, Karl Barry
 Kneeling: Stan Miller, Chris Nichols, Colleen Abrams.
 Learn more about the Greenways directors at www.wachusettgreenways.org

A Glorious Springdale Mill Celebration

SEPTEMBER 25 DAWNED WARM AND SUNNY IN 2010 ON THE RAIL trail, a perfect backdrop to the annual celebration at the Springdale Mill Historic Site in Holden. Throughout the day, hundreds walked, bicycled and ran along the trail and made a stop at the Mill site to take in the many enjoyable activities, partake of delicious foodstuffs and enjoy stirring music.



Just before noon, the inaugural Family Trail Trek kicked off, in memory of Dylan Seymour and cosponsored by Wachusett Fitness, Holden. All donations collected during the day were dedicated to young Dylan's memory, in an effort to place a memorial bench along the trail.



At the old mill site, volunteers hosted a variety of engaging activities. Kids of all ages went treasure hunting, some had their faces painted, and everyone enjoyed free hot dogs, pizza, cookies, fruit and refreshing drinks. Local musical duo Chas Paddock and Deborah Mc-



Donnell added to the festivities with their entertaining selection of folk, bluegrass and even railroad-themed tunes.

Special thanks to Wachusett Fitness, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity of Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Holden and West Boylston Police De-

partments, Oakdale Methodist Church, the Spaulding Family, countless Wachusett Greenways volunteers, as well as Sam's Club, Oakdale Nursing Home and Rehabilitation Center, Clearview Orchards, S & S Farms, Pepsi, and Big Y.



Trail Extension West into Barre and Continued Restoration

WACHUSETT GREENWAYS CONTINUES TO WORK ON RESTORING and extending the Mass Central Rail Trail with three projects being planned now for 2010/2011. The trail will be finished with stone dust 'paving' from the Muddy Pond outlet in Rutland west one mile to the Route 122 crossing in Oakham in spring 2011. Prior to the stone dust paving of the Muddy Pond outlet to Route 122 section, the slab there must be restored. The slab bridge was repaired in 2009 and then undermined in the heavy rains of spring 2010. A heavy-duty full box culvert will be installed in December 2010. If the weather becomes too inclement the restoration of the bridge will be held over to 2011.

The next new trail construction will take place west 1.2 miles from Coldbrook Station in Oakham to the Ware River crossing in Barre. Wachusett Greenways has applied for a \$50,000 DCR Recreational Trails Program grant to help carry out this project, which will exceed \$100,000 in construction and materials costs. Additional funds will be provided through contributions by donors and members of Wachusett Greenways.

Give a Day, Get a Disney Day

THIS PAST WINTER AND EARLY SPRING MORE THAN 90 NEW volunteers from across Central Massachusetts came out to help spruce up the rail trail and rally 'round other important Greenways work. It was all part of the HandsOn Network's "Give a Day, Get a Disney Day" program, celebrating and inspiring volunteerism and connecting helping hands to community need across the nation.



In many cases, entire families signed on. In exchange for helping out for a single day, each volunteer received a one-day pass to Disney World or other Disney theme park. The program saved families real money on a Disney trip and provided the opportunity to get involved in a good cause. Kids as young as seven joined right in with their parents.

Greenways volunteers John Rives and Linda Waldron introduced the program and participated in a Disney Day themselves. Comments from our Disney volunteers included:

"We actually live right next door to the rail trail entrance and enjoy many activities out on the trail with our children. We look forward to helping to maintain this beautiful area. Thanks for this opportunity."

"I can't speak highly enough about my two days helping your organization. My son and I enjoyed the first day so much, we volunteered a second day and brought my wife and daughter as well. The trails were beautiful!"

"A great experience for our family. We were impressed with the map handouts, quality tools, gloves, snacks, etc. We just returned from a super trip to Disney!"

"Become a Member" Gift Idea

Wondering what to give the young people in your life for birthdays, holidays, graduation or "just because"?

How about a membership to Wachusett Greenways?

To learn more, please visit the Become a Member section of our website,

www.wachusettgreenways.org.

They'll thank you for it!

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 8, 2011 – 1 PM. – Moore State Park

Family-Friendly Cross-country ski or hike at Moore State Park. Hot chocolate will warm you at the finish. Call Steve Dubrule for details and to register. 508 829-1769

January 15, 2011 – 1-4 PM. – Wachusett Meadows

Cross-country ski at Mass Audubon's Wachusett Meadows in Princeton. We'll ski the former Goodnow Road to the Four Corners Conservation Area on Gates Road. Warm up with hot cocoa at the Visitor Center. Call Chris Nichols to register. 978 464-2328.

January 22, 2011 – 6 PM. – Princeton Land Trust

Snowshoe or hike through the wooded Peabody property of the Princeton Land Trust under a full moon. Enjoy a pot-luck dinner after the hike at the home of Dave and Chris Nichols. This is a joint event with the PLT. Call Chris for more information and to register. 978 464-2328

February 18, 2011 – 10 AM. – Mt. Watatic

Hike or snowshoe an intermediate trail on Mt. Watatic then enjoy lunch at Ashburnham Country Café. Call Margaret for information and directions. 978 422-9720



Rutland reflections on the rail trail, photo by Rob Smith.

Thank you to those who have volunteered and thanks to Deb Cary at Mass Audubon.



MARTAB, Massachusetts Recreational Trails Advisory Committee visits the MCRT in Rutland. Amanda Lewis, DCR Recreational Trails Program director is on the right.

Patroller On Duty

FOR HOLDEN'S EVAN SCHAKENBACH, 23, AND JIM, HIS DAD, helping out on the rail trail and White Oak Trail has been a family affair for years. "Dad and I go out together on trail maintenance crews, keeping drainage clear, removing downed



limbs and doing other upkeep," Evan says. A couple years back, Evan stepped up to serve as a volunteer Trail Patroller, taking responsibility keeping the trail between Manning Street and the I-190 overpass in safe,

tip-top shape all year long. He regularly walks or cycles "his" heavily used section of the trail, performs light maintenance and reports more serious needs to Paul Hennessey, who oversees the Trail Patroller program. "While I'm out patrolling, it's a common thing for trail users to stop and thank me for helping this way and to comment on what a great resource the rail trail is." Kudos and thanks to Evan and his fellow Trail Patrollers for jobs very well done!

Robert Price and Stanton Whitman Memorial

THIS YEAR, WACHUSETT GREENWAYS SADLY marked the passing of two of our original supporters, Robert "Bob" Price and Stanton Whitman, two men deeply committed to the outdoors and to their communities.

Bob Price was born to walk. Together with his wife Ruth or his Tuesday walking group, he covered thousands of miles and helped blaze new trails, including the White Oak Trail. An attorney, Bob oversaw the incorporation of Wachusett Greenways as a nonprofit, and he and Ruth were among the first donors to our fledgling organization.

When Stanton Whitman learned about Wachusett Greenways and its work with the Mass Central Rail Trail, it was a natural fit. A longtime leader of the Green Mountain Club, Stan was also involved with developing the Midstate Trail along with Bob Elms, Rolf Larson and others. He was a strong supporter of Greenways' work from the beginning and encouraged building the second bridge across the Quinapoxet. We'll miss them both.



Robert Price



Stanton Whitman

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