

The Greenways Connector

Connecting the Wachusett Community with Trails and Greenways

November 2013

Springdale Mill Celebration Scored a Perfect 10

The Journey to the Mill on Saturday, September 28, began with a group of very energetic youngsters at the Oakdale entrance to the Mass Central Rail Trail. First they received water bottles and flashlights from the West Boylston police officer. Wearing their official ride numbers at the starting line, and led by a DCR Ranger and Holden Police Officer on bicycles, the children walked or rode bikes to the Springdale Mill Site. APO members from WPI, along with Greenways volunteers, welcomed the children at the finish line.

Music by the Chas Paddock Band and Dave West created a lively atmosphere, which drew some folks to try their skill with hula hoops.

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“Daisys” Show Flower Power

This summer Mass Central Rail Trail visitors entering at Gates Road in Sterling encountered a strange and novel sight: orange popsicle sticks stuck in the ground along the way. The sticks were “planted” by Sterling’s Daisy Troop 30518, which consists of 13 first grade Girl Scouts led by Nickole Boardman



and Deb Meunier. Each stick designated the location of a lady’s slipper plant, one of our native spring orchids that is protected by a MA state law enacted on April 1, 1935.



The Troop also used the bulletin board at the trailhead to show an image of the flower, with such warnings as, “Don’t pick it” and “Can’t be replanted.” In order to survive and reproduce, Pink Lady’s Slipper interacts with a

fungus in the soil. These plants do not do well if they are transplanted and take years to go from seed to mature flowering plant.

The project was inspired by the Troop’s Girl Scout Journey this year to preserve and protect a national treasure in our region, part of their “Between Earth and Sky” journey.

Wachusett Greenways Newsletter

The Greenways Connector

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For regular news updates, visit our
website at
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Webster First Gift



Lisa Bean presents a giant check from Webster First Federal Credit Union to Greenways Directors, Mike Peckar and Colleen Abrams.

Mass Central Rail Trail...Onward!

Building and maintaining the Mass Central Rail Trail continues to be one of our highest priorities. The stone dust “paving” west from Coldbrook Road, Oakham, was contracted with R. D. Salvadore Excavating of Barre for completion this fall. The trail surfacing is being completed to Barre at the new White Valley Bridge and continuing on to the Route 122 rest stop at the Ware River.

In Rutland, we have developed plans for the important 0.2 mile connector along Miles Road. The route will sweep to make a grade of less than 5%, making it accessible to all. “We’re excited to provide an off-road hop between two popular sections of the trail,” said Colleen Abrams, Greenways president. Plans call for completion of the construction in 2014.

Greenways anticipates a DCR Recreational Trails Grant of \$50,000 to improve three sections of the rail trail beginning in 2014, including the “over-the-hill” section between Manning Street and Route 31 in Holden, the Sterling section from the Cider Mill to Gates Road, and the Charnock “Cut” in Rutland. Greenways matching funds and services will support this work.

Greenways looks forward to partnering with the DCR, the Town of West Boylston and Mass DOT to design a rail trail connection along the Route 140 causeway over the Stillwater River and adjoining land in West Boylston.

The Joys of StoryWalk!



Full Moon Walk at Porcupine Hill

On **Sunday, November 17, 7-8:30 PM** you're invited to join Lori and Larry Altobelli for an unhurried walk at this picturesque park on the Paxton/Holden border. Rustling leaves, distant hoots and moonbeams will accompany us. Contact Lori or Larry to sign up at holden_yahoo@charter.net or 978-407-6066.



Welcome Center is Ready for a Ramp

The Wachusett Greenways Welcome Center at Miles Road in Rutland is moving toward a 2014 opening. **WANTED:** a volunteer to take the lead to build a ramp. Once the Welcome Center is accessible to all it can open for visitors to stop in for information and hospitality.

Through the fall Greenways volunteers and a dedicated group of contractors have been hard at work refurbishing the center. Contractor Thomas Montgomery was hired to replaster the walls in the kitchen, and volunteer Howard Hastings refit the doors on the kitchen cabinets. Warm thanks to the Stidsen family of Sentry Oil who generously donated the Welcome Center's first tank of heating oil this fall and removed all the radiators for painting.



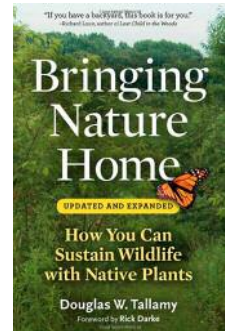
Volunteers tackled the radiator painting. Meanwhile B & R Floors of Leicester was contracted to refinish the floors in October. Hagman Landscaping continues to donate mowing and leaf removal keeping the grounds green and inviting. New windows and partial siding and fresh paint are the next priority for improvements.

Reading to Bring Nature Home

Have you a favorite book about Nature? Wachusett Greenways would like to feature members' favorite nature readings on its website and in its newsletter. Did the reading inspire you to plant a butterfly garden, or put on some hiking shoes or bicycle helmet, pack up a picnic or tent, and head for the hills, the mountains or the sea? Let us know in a paragraph or so about a book you'd like to share with WG members. Why did you like it, what did you learn? Here's WG Board member Christy Barnes' contribution:

"I have browsed a book recently that I would love to share. It is titled: *Bringing Nature Home*, by Douglas W. Tallamy. He discusses the fact that, as a society, we have groomed our landscapes with mainly plants that are from Europe and Asia, to mimic the homeland or to increase color in our gardens or to "tame" the wild. And, sadly, grass is the most common form of landscape across the country. But our native insects do not recognize most of these plants as something to eat, let alone lay their eggs on.

"This is of concern, particularly for those of us who value bird-watching as our favorite pastime. Birds need to feed their babies with insects. If we do not provide the landscape for our native insects, then we are not providing a basic part of the habitat for our loved birds. Tallamy argues that we should be providing refuge for our native insects by planting native plants. A chapter of the book discusses many possibilities for such planting, and a chapter devoted to all of the neat insects and arthropods that birds favor that we could be nurturing in our gardens. He discusses many of the invasive plants and what they are doing to our forests and fields. This is a book that everyone who loves to garden and who loves their birds must read!"





ALL ABOARD!

Did you know?
Wachusett Greenways members hail from
55 towns in 11 states.

Join them today!
And please remember to
renew your membership annually.

Individual \$30 / Family \$40
Business or Group \$60

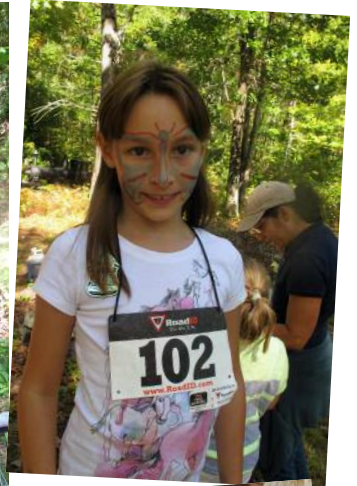
Click here to join!

Springdale Mill Celebration Scored a Perfect 10

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WPI students engaged children in face painting, beading and a treasure hunt. Boarding the MCRT model train proved to be another big hit. A new StoryWalk installed by DCR's Jim Lafley drew children up the hill to the mill housing. Maggie Spaulding, enthralled by the story along her walk, copied all the script from StoryWalk and is in the process of drawing her own pictures. Maggie, #101, was the first entrant in the inaugural Journey to the Mill and the first to cross the finish line.

Participants of all ages enjoyed delicious food. Donors for the event included Clearview Orchards, Leroux's, Walmart, Rocky's Ace Hardware of West Boylston, and the Oakdale Nursing Home. Ruth Spaulding, chair of the Springdale Mill Committee, thanked all who attended and each volunteer (including her very supportive family). "We all look to next September's celebration and hope for another beautiful day!"



Stewards on the MCRT



Ticks FAQ

Massachusetts' ticks have never had it better. A damp fall last year and a not particularly cold winter made for a bountiful summer for these pesky and disease-spreading insects. Protect yourself by knowing the facts.

How common is Lyme disease in Massachusetts?

Massachusetts is among the states with the highest incidence of Lyme disease. Infections spike in June and July. Be aware, ticks are present every month of the year.

What is Lyme disease?

Lyme disease is caused by bacteria that are spread to humans through the bite of tiny, infected ticks. Lyme disease can cause serious joint, heart or central nervous system problems if it is not recognized early in the disease process and treated appropriately.

How is Lyme disease spread?

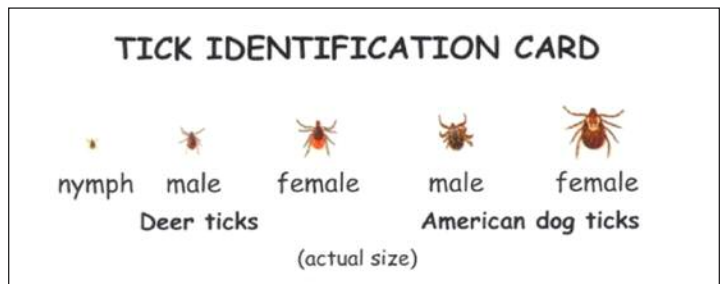
White-footed mice, coyotes, deer and bear may all carry Lyme disease, as do robins, blue jays, thrushes, wrens and about 70 other species of birds. These critters may also carry ticks, which feed on the blood of their carriers and in turn become infected with the Lyme bacteria. If a tick then bites humans for another blood meal, these people can become infected. Black-legged ticks, aka deer ticks, are the insects most responsible for spreading the bacteria that causes Lyme disease.

If bitten, how likely am I to be infected?

Tick bites often go unnoticed because of the small size of the tick and tick secretions that prevent the host from feeling any itch or pain from the bite. Transmission of the bacteria, however, is rare. Only about 1% of recognized tick bites result in Lyme disease. This may be due to the fact that an infected tick must be attached for at least a day for transmission to occur.

What should I do if I find a tick on me?

The longer a tick remains attached to the skin, the greater the chance it will be able to spread disease. Remove an attached tick as soon as possible using a fine-point tweezers.



Avoid squeezing or twisting it; rather grasp it close to the skin and pull straight out with steady pressure.

After I've removed an attached tick, what symptoms should I look for?

Whenever someone removes an attached tick from their body, they should watch for the appearance of any type of rash, fever or flu-like symptoms. Immediately seek the advice of a health care provider should any symptoms occur, especially if the tick was attached for more than 24 hours.

How can I prevent diseases spread by ticks?

Ticks generally cling to plants near the ground in brushy, wooded, or grassy places. The edges of woodlands and leaf litter are high-risk areas. Wear long pants tucked into your socks. The ticks, which cannot jump or fly, climb onto animals and people who brush against the plants. Check your entire body for ticks after returning indoors and remove any attached tick as soon as possible. Pay particular attention to areas between the toes, back of the knees, groin, armpits, neck, along the hairline, and behind the ears.

Use of repellents that contain DEET (N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide) or permethrin before you go outside can reduce the risk of tick bites. Repellents should not be used on children less than two months of age.

Valiant Vertex Volunteers

This September, for the fourth year in a row, employees from Cambridge-based Vertex Pharmaceuticals volunteered to spend a day working on the MCRT. Alongside Wachusett Greenways volunteers, eight Vertex employees led by Research Scientist Brian Boucher cut and hauled brush on the trail edge near Miles Road, and fortified the embankment along Thayer Pond with crushed gravel and stone. The volunteers enjoyed good company as well as a lunch of pizza and delicious homemade apple crisp.



The Vertex employees participated as part of Vertex's 5th Annual Day of Service, which engages over 2,000 Vertex employees worldwide to assist their local communities. We are incredibly grateful to Vertex and the hardworking individuals who pitched in!

Community Connections



This summer and autumn found us spreading the word about Wachusett Greenways and the many great trails throughout the region. From Rutland's famous 4th of July parade, to Holden Days, the Sterling Fair, West Boylston Arts Fest or Hey Day in Princeton at Wachusett Meadow, and at trail counts on the MCRT, our Greenways volunteers enjoyed meeting new people and handing out maps and more.



Mexicali Fun



Mexicali Fresh Mex Grille gave a big welcome to Wachusett Greenways friends and members in October when they donated a portion their food sales for two days. Greenways supporters gathered in their favorite WG t-shirts for a festive and delicious time together.

A Place for Your Dog

Along the Mass Central Rail Trail, land owners determine whether or not dogs are allowed. Some rail trail sections are open for dogs, provided that owners keep their pets leashed and remove any waste.



On the Holden-West Boylston section of the MCRT, dogs are allowed on the land owned by the Town of West Boylston, which extends from the trailhead off Thomas Street west to the I-190 overpass. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation owns the land west of the I-190 overpass and manages the property for the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority. Dogs are not

allowed on this section of the trail due to concerns about contamination of water from diseases found in pet waste.

Each DCR watershed has its own access policy, however. From Glenwood Road, Rutland west into Barre, the MCRT lies in the Ware River Watershed, and the DCR is less concerned about the threat of pet waste in this area, where it is more distant from the reservoir. In the Ware watershed dogs are permitted on DCR lands including the MCRT. On the rail trail dogs must always be leashed and pet waste removed.

Other nearby outdoor spaces that allow dogs include Trout Brook Reservation and the White Oak Trail in Holden. Many State Parks, including Rutland State Park and Leominster State Park also allow dogs, and lands under the stewardship of the Trustees of Reservations (ttor.org) in the central region are also dog- friendly. The Towns of Rutland, Holden and other area towns do require that dogs are leashed for the protection of all.

Summer Service

In the spring, WG received this message from Matt Todd: "I'm an undergraduate at the University of Maine studying forestry and wildlife ecology. I came across Wachusett Greenways and was wondering if there were any volunteer opportunities available in June." Our answer was a resounding, "Yes, please." Matt was an enthusiastic volunteer who helped with trail work and mowing at 21 Miles. He also joined wildlife biologists through MA Fish and Wildlife and the DCR to assist in projects.



Faces along the Trail: Kathy Vignaly, West Boylston

"I greatly appreciate all of the hard work that Wachusett Greenways has done over the years to make the rail trail such a beautiful place to walk, run and bike. With all the running I have to do to train, I love that I don't have to run on the road with the traffic or worry about neighborhood dogs.

"I also love that I can run in the shade and I have a soft surface with no holes to worry about twisting an ankle. I love taking some time to just listen to the sound of the [Quinapoxet] river after a rainstorm. It is definitely a favorite place of mine and such a peaceful place to be."



One sparkling autumn afternoon recently, we caught up with Kathy half way through an 11-mile training run. A dedicated marathoner, she has completed this year's Goofy's Challenge and is now training for the 2014 Goofy's Challenge, consisting of nothing more than a half-marathon on day one, followed by a full marathon the next day through Disney World in Florida, 39 miles in all. Yikes!

Kathy also is involved with Team in Training, a volunteer organization that has trained over a half million runners, walkers, triathletes, cyclists and hikers, and raised more than \$1.3 billion to fund lifesaving leukemia, lymphoma and other cancer research. "Running takes on a whole new meaning when I do it with real purpose," says Kathy.

"Since my family has been using the trail for so many years – from my running to the kids playing along the trail – I know how much work goes into building such a wonderful resource. I am always impressed with the constant maintenance to keep it in perfect shape. So thanks again for all the hard work by the volunteers of Wachusett Greenways. I know many other people appreciate them as well."

Pioneers Pitch-In at Springdale Mill

Wednesday August 14th found a determined detachment of rising seniors from St. John's High School hard at work along the West Boylston – Holden section of the MCRT. As part of a leadership and bonding program run by St. John's, the students, along with alumni and faculty mentors, cleared ditches and trimmed brush around the Springdale Mill historic site over the course of an all day shift. It was the first formal volunteer collaboration between Wachusett Greenways and St. John's, and the day's impressive results have longtime Greenways volunteers looking forward to the next time.

Holden resident and Greenways volunteer Laura Beckwith said the St. John's group took direction well, were able to visualize the job, and stayed at it until completion.

Greenways President Colleen Abrams complimented the group on their strength, stamina, good attitude and solidarity. "They completed a tremendous amount of very good work, and they looked like they were having fun," added Laura Beckwith. "I know I was having fun. I hope they did too."



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