

The Greenways Connector

Connecting the Wachusett Community with Trails and Greenways

June 2014

Before There Was a Rail Trail...

Steve Fisk's History of the MCRR

On an autumn evening a quarter century ago, two young men set foot on a ramble to explore the abandoned railroad tunnel that used to connect to the former Clinton viaduct. Steve Fisk and Bill Turgeon found the entrance to the tunnel and walked its 3/5-mile length. All they had to light the way was a plastic lighter, which melted just as they began their return trek. Retracing their route in complete darkness was, to Steve, "scary, exhilarating, sublime." He returned the next night with his father, Chuck, equipped with flashlights and canteens. They went through the tunnel, and continued following the roadbed east into the woods, discovering a rusted out semaphore (train signal), and reaching Rt. 62 before they lost the trail. Their imagination piqued, Steve and his father determined to find more of the defunct Central Mass Railroad, which had spanned 104 miles across Massachusetts, whose route the Mass Central Rail Trail traces today.

They began collecting 1970s versions of all the relevant topo maps. When they came across an out-of-print book about the Central Mass train by the B & M Historical Society, it all fell into place. Eventually the maps covered his entire living room wall, and Steve began walking each section with Bill or his father. In the summer of 1987, Steve and Bill spent three days hiking from Waltham to Barre. They had buried supply caches ahead of time along the route, including tents and sleeping bags, to lighten their load for the long excursion. That hike took them on what would become a long section of the Central Mass Rail Trail (MCRT), which includes the 30-mile Wachusett Greenways portion. Since then Steve has hiked "pretty much the entire route," he says.

Continued on page 11



Muschopauge Station in Rutland, circa 1905. (Aka "Sanitarium Station". Note the misspelling.) Eastbound Central Mass train at right.



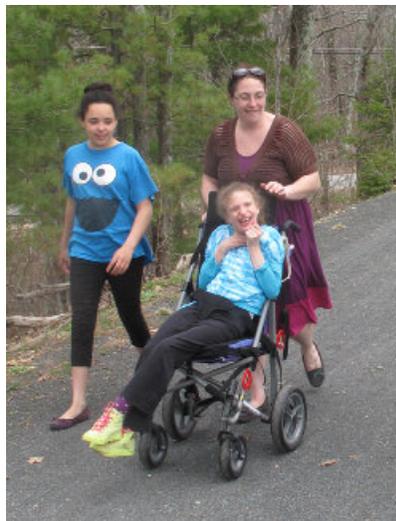
In October of 1991, my father and I hiked from Hadley to Bondsville, and we started off late because we had to buy some rain gear. It was pouring when we started. We arrived at my car in Bondsville, (the depot was still standing), at 3 a.m. The rain had stopped, it was clear out, and it had turned very cold. Wet, cold, late. Bad combination. Started off fun and got crazy at the end.



An abandoned rail, before it became part of the MCRT

Trails for Everyone

People of all ages and abilities who enjoy Wachusett trails are the fuel that recharges Wachusett Greenways. During trail maintenance and hospitality days we meet delighted trail visitors of all ages. Barbara Kimball often rides to work in Sterling center on the MCRT. On a May Saturday she happened upon a Greenways team clearing brush and blowing leaves and pine needles off the trail. "I've had so many wonderful experiences while walking and biking the Sterling rail trail", she said. "Each time a new surprise awaits me. I've seen bald eagles fishing on The Quag, deer feasting on the underbrush, the dew on a spider web and the mist rising in the cool of the morning. As an avid photographer, it's a real treat to have this gem so close at."



Giving to Benefit the Community

Greater Worcester GIVES, a one-day giving celebration sponsored by Greater Worcester Community Foundation, brought new energy to the Greater Worcester community on



Mist rising over West Washacum Pond in Sterling on the Rail Trail.
Photo: Barbara Kimball



May 6. Wachusett Greenways is pleased to share that we ranked 14th in number of donors among a field of more than 170 participating nonprofit organizations. Thank you to the 24 donors who gave on this special day. The \$900 raised will be used for rail trail stewardship, especially to help build the ramp for the Welcome Center. We look forward to rising to the top four next time, with an opportunity to receive an extra gift from Greater Worcester Community Foundation in recognition of YOUR loyal support.



Yes, Members Matter!

This year our goal is 900 members. Thank you to each of you...already 500... who have joined or renewed for 2014. Your support sustains services as basic as portable toilets and trail tools and as missional as outdoor events and communications. Wachusett Greenways is a 100% volunteer organization and your membership support invigorates each

volunteer. If you aren't sure whether your membership is current for 2014, send us an e-mail or make a call (colleen.abrams@verizon.net or 508-829-3954).

Thank you!

Wachusett Greenways Newsletter

The Greenways Connector

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2014 Annual Meeting

On April 30, Wachusett Greenways' held its Annual Meeting to celebrate 19 years of connecting the Wachusett communities with trails and greenways. More than 50 attendees enjoyed a potluck supper and presentations by Board President Colleen Abrams and several others. Jon O'Brien described his Eagle Scout project, which included rerouting a hard-to-traverse section of the White Oak Trail in Holden to make it more accessible. Jeff Keay introduced a two- to three-year project to create a community garden at the future welcome center at 21 Miles Road in Rutland.



Elected to the Board for the coming year were Colleen Abrams, Christy Barnes, Steve Chanis, Gordo Elliott, Jeff Keay and Mike Peckar. Steve was re-elected Treasurer, Mike was re-elected Clerk, and Colleen was re-elected President of the Board.



Greenways recognized several key partners with Golden Spike Awards. Craig Della Penna, of Northampton, received a Golden Spike for his many years of work as a rails-to-trails advocate and his efforts to create a continuous rail trail from Northampton to Boston, of which Greenways oversees the middle 30-mile section. John Scannell, Regional Director for the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), also received an award for his longtime Greenways support, including planning for a connector along Route 140 in West Boylston. Steve Fisk accepted an award on behalf of his father, Chuck, and himself, who together explored the whole Mass Central Rail line and



documented their work in Those Tracks Don't Go Anywhere Anymore (see story on page 1). And Greenways veteran Ed Yaglou was recognized for his work to expand the Sterling-to-Barre section of the trail, with steadfast support from Dick Williams and Bruce Pennino.

St. John's Students and West Boylston Troop 151 Continue a Service Tradition

On May 10, St. John's High School students and West Boylston Troop 151 Scouts donned work clothes and gloves to join Wachusett Greenways for spring cleaning at the rail trail. St. John's 13th annual Service Day was their second



venture with Wachusett Greenways. Altogether 20 volunteers worked tirelessly in two teams sprucing up the West Boylston trailhead and plantings and clearing brush, logs and drainage



at the Holden entrance to the MCRT. Thank you, St. John's and Troop 151!

Lyme Disease Awareness Is Worcester Couple's Mission

Wachusett Greenways volunteers Michele and Ken Miller, of Worcester, are determined to keep Lyme disease top-of-mind in Central Massachusetts. The Millers' organization, Central Mass Lyme Foundation, works to "raise awareness, educate, teach prevention and provide support about Lyme disease and other tick-borne illnesses."

In May, during Lyme Disease Awareness Month, Michele and Ken joined Wachusett Greenways volunteers at the MCRT to help spread Lyme awareness. Michele also made frequent visits to senior centers, garden clubs, golf courses, nurseries, schools—"anywhere there are people," she says—to talk to them about the dangers of Lyme disease. She points out that symptoms—including fatigue, headache, fever, or muscle and joint aches—can often be mistaken for other conditions, leading to misdiagnosis or delayed diagnosis.

The Millers' efforts are a labor of love: Michele's mother passed away from Lyme disease in February 2013 after a long struggle to find the correct diagnosis. Michele recalls reading journals her mother kept during this time and being struck by the sense of isolation her mother described. "No one believed she could be this sick from Lyme disease," Michele says. Now, support groups are part of Central Mass Lyme Foundation's mission.

The bacterium that causes Lyme disease is spread through the bite of an infected tick. Ticks are small and can attach in hard-to-see areas like the groin, armpits and scalp, so awareness is critical. If you are bitten, there is a major benefit to noticing and removing the tick promptly.

Michele and Ken hope that their outreach will give people in Central Massachusetts the tools and information they need to stay vigilant against tick bites and to recognize the threat

It's Lyme Time!

Protect Yourself Against Lyme Disease*

1 Walk in the middle of trails: avoid sitting on logs and leaning on trees.

2 Wear a hat, tuck in hair, if possible.

3 Wear a long-sleeved shirt.

4 Wear shoes, no bare feet or sandals.

5 Wear long pants tucked into high socks.

6 Consider Deet for skin and permethrin for clothes.

7 Wear white or light-colored clothing to make it easier to see ticks.

8 Continue doing tick checks 2 to 3 days after outdoor activities in tick-nested areas.

9 If you find a tick, remove it properly and save it**.

10 Ask your veterinarian about protection for your furry friends.

* Unlike Dengue, the most common vector-borne disease in the U.S., and other the plan, Lyme disease is not spread by mosquitoes. Lyme disease is transmitted to a host in the bite of a TICKET.

** To save the tick for testing for the presence of Lyme, place the tick in a sealed container in Ziploc® bags with a moist paper towel. Check with a tick-testing laboratory for costs and instructions.

CALED4
www.lymedisease.org

LDA
www.lymediseaseassociation.org

ILADS
www.ilads.org

posed by Lyme disease. Read more about their work at www.centralmasslyme.org, or phone toll free 888-511-LYME (5963).

Healthy Land – Healthy Communities: MLCT Conference

Can we have healthy communities without healthy land? In his keynote speech, Dr. Eric Chivian argued that if we don't conserve the earth's biodiversity, we will surely lose potential benefits to the well-being of the entire planet. Some striking stories included the polar bear and the cone snail.

Why do we care about the polar bear, expected to be extinct in the wild by 2100? The polar bear is immune to osteoarthritis, a painful and debilitating condition for many older people. Researchers are trying to discover the secret of polar bears' immunity to that condition in the hope that we humans can benefit.

The cone snail is a venomous creature that lives among coral reefs, within a narrow range of sea temperatures. Neuroscientists have synthesized this deadly beauty's venom into at least two FDA-approved, non-addictive drugs to treat severe chronic pain. The cone snail population, however, is declining because of over-collecting by shell-seekers and destruction of its coral reef habitat, home to 25% of marine life and a natural storm barrier to coastal communities.

Healthy land is that which supports biodiversity, sustainable food production, clean water, healthy forests, coastal and riparian wetlands, and a stable climate. Are we willing to nourish biodiversity and invest in the infrastructure to support it for a healthy community? Dr. Chivian left us with a quote from Edward Everett Hale: "I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something."

Three Workshops

There was good news from the Parks and Community Health Workshop. Its three presenters showed the connection between health and open space. Parks reduce crime, revitalize local economies and promote public health. Attendees learned about Fitness Zones – free, easy-to-use, accessible outdoor gyms being built in some communities to promote fitness in a

supportive social context. Boston's Public Health department is assessing physical activity in selected parks for ways to combat obesity, especially in minority youth. The Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC) is working with physicians at Mass General Hospital for Children, who give out prescriptions to patients to pursue free outdoor programs offered by the AMC.

The workshop on Communicating Effectively to Build Support for Conservation provided practical tips, with an emphasis on connecting to the community involved, inviting participation of local citizens, offering hope and articulating a vision. The presenters also warned against tactics employed by a national organization that trains people in local communities to become members of various town boards to undermine conservation efforts.

Helping Everyone Enjoy the Land: Access for People of All Abilities was a particularly popular workshop. The presenters guided folks through the MA Universal Access Program. Adaptive equipment at MA Parks and other non-profit conservation lands offer everyone an opportunity to bicycle, hike or paddle as they celebrate their independence or welcome a helping hand to enjoy nature.

Springtime Trail Count

Volunteers spent time on one Rutland section of the MCRT in early May, counting the number of people enjoying the trail, answering questions about Wachusett Greenways, and selling t-shirts, cookbooks and other items. On May 3, they counted more than 50 walkers, runners and bikers. And on May 10, the count and hospitality planned for the West Boylston-Holden section was postponed due to expected rain. The next day, Mothers Day Sunday, the trail was packed with visitors of all ages including scores of families with strollers and bicycles with tiny cyclists. An experienced tally volunteer estimated 600 visitors. This summer – or any season – come join your friends and neighbors on the rail trail!

MLTC Conference: Healthy Land – Healthy Communities

About the MLT Coalition

The 24th Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition (MLTC), Conference held March 22, brought four Greenways volunteers together with a record 548 participants to learn about "Healthy Land—Healthy Communities" from more than 80 presenters in 30 workshops. Keynote Speaker Dr. Eric Chivian is Nobel Laureate and Founder of Harvard Medical School's Center for Health and the Global Environment. The Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition coordinates its over 130-member land trusts and conservation organizations to achieve maximum impact in networking, training and advocacy for conservation legislation.



Alpha Phi Omega Back on The Trail

The WPI chapter of Alpha Phi Omega, an international service fraternity of men and women, has been a longtime friend to Wachusett Greenways, carrying out maintenance on the MCRT several times each year. The group's latest service day took place on May 3. Eight APO members cleared ditches and worked on rock steps on the Rutland section of the trail.

Autumn Paro, a master's degree student at WPI and a Service Vice President for APO at WPI, says that she chooses to work with Wachusett Greenways because "They're very flexible, easy to work with, and they always have work for us." She adds, "It's nice to work with somebody in this area." Wachusett Greenways is grateful for APO's staunch ongoing support, and looks forward to meeting new members in the next academic year!



WG Joins DCR Park Serve Day

On a rainy April 26, about a dozen WG volunteers joined in to assist the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) team in rebuilding the fence at the Manning Street entrance to the rail trail connector. This partnership also cleared several bags of parking area litter and cleaned up the drainage on the connector slope. An annual event, this DCR Park Serve Day attracted hundreds of volunteers across the state, including WG volunteers. DCR Director John Scannell, left, and WG volunteer Bob Pezzini, with others mending fences.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS: Please call to register and join us!

June 23 – Monday – 10:00 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Explore Rocky Hill Wildlife Sanctuary

Located on the Groton-Ayer town line, Rocky Hill Wildlife Sanctuary is a land of impressive ledges, large boulders, beaver ponds, vernal pools, extensive uninterrupted woodlands. The sanctuary lies within a state designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern and supports moose, beavers and porcupines, as well as nearly 100 species of birds and more than 240 plant species. Join Mass Audubon's Laurie Nehring with Christy Barnes to explore one of MAS's newer sanctuaries. Contact Christy to sign up and to car pool; bring a lunch. 508-755-6321 or bertinbarnes@verizon.net.

July 8 – Tuesday – 9:30 a.m. - Noon
Westborough Butterfly Walk

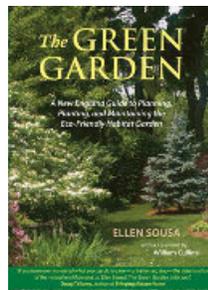
Please join Elise Barry, Wendy Miller and Dolores Price for a morning butterfly walk at the Westborough Wildlife Management Area off Lyman Street. The three women are long time and talented Massachusetts Butterfly Club members who will be looking for a variety of butterfly species in this area. Some specialty butterflies which they hope to see include Northern Pearly-eye, Appalachian Brown, and Mulberry Wing. It is suggested that you bring binoculars if you have them, sunscreen, water, a hat, insect repellent, and snacks if you like. Contact Wendy at (508) 340-7701 or Elise at (508) 795-1147.



see include Northern Pearly-eye, Appalachian Brown, and Mulberry Wing. It is suggested that you bring binoculars if you have them, sunscreen, water, a hat, insect repellent, and snacks if you like. Contact Wendy at (508) 340-7701 or Elise at (508) 795-1147.

July 12 – Saturday – 1 - 4 p.m.
Wildflowers at Sibley Farm

Join naturalist/author Ellen Sousa for a walk around the recently preserved Sibley Farm in Spencer to look for birds, native plants and the complex wildlife they support. Bring home ideas for native plants to include in your own backyard habitat. Ellen is the owner of Turkey Hill Brook Farm Garden Design and Coaching and author of *The Green Garden*, a guide to eco-friendly gardening. Contact Christy Barnes to sign up, 508-755-6321 or bertinbarnes@verizon.net.



July 19 – Saturday – 10 a.m - 1 p.m.
Paddling on Comet Pond

Bring a picnic lunch. Paddle the perimeter of this beautiful, spring-fed pond. Bring your own canoe or kayak, PFD and sun screen. Bring a swimsuit if you'd like to swim afterwards. Contact Christy Barnes at 508-755-6321 or bertinbarnes@verizon.net to sign up.



August 21 – Thursday – 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
Bicycling on the Mass Central Rail Trail

Relaxing 12 mile ride on level terrain in Rutland and Oakham. Bring your picnic lunch. Sign up with Colleen Abrams 508-479-2123 or colleen.abrams@verizon.net

August 31 – Sunday – 1 - 4 p.m.
Mushrooms at Wachusett Meadow with Joe

Fungi are one of the most important parts of forest ecosystems. Late summer and fall is the prime time for observing fungi "fruiting" bodies, commonly called mushrooms. Mushrooms are diverse in form, color, and texture. Wachusett Meadow has documented over 500 species and we are still adding new fungi every year to the list. The Hemlock Seep Trail's older forests have some of the highest diversity of fungi on the sanctuary. We'll explore on and off trail for brittle-gills, milk caps, amanita, and other mushrooms. Note: This is not an edible oriented walk! Contact Christy Barnes to sign up, 508-755-6321 or bertinbarnes@verizon.net.

September 27, Saturday, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Springdale Mill Celebration

Springdale Mill Celebration for all. Second Annual Journey to the Mill for children starts at 11 a.m from the West Boylston entrance to the Mass Central Rail Trail. Register at colleen.abrams@verizon.net or www.wachusettgreenways.org

Golden Spike IV

MCRT enthusiasts celebrated at the 4th Golden Spike Conference on April 12 in Clinton. Among the highlights on the 104-mile cross-Commonwealth route are several long awaited successes:

- The Norwottuck section is under reconstruction during 2014. The bridge over the Connecticut River will reopen this spring.
- East Quabbin Land Trust will finish bridge repair, making 3.5 miles in Hardwick and New Braintree walkable in 2014 as it awaits surfacing. A fitness trail will be built in 2014 along 0.5 miles in Gilbertville.
- On the central 30-mile section, the connection along the Route 140 causeway at the Stillwater River is in planning by Wachusett Greenways and the DCR. The 19th mile in Oakham/Barre will be complete this spring.
- In Clinton/Berlin, Clinton Greenways Conservation Trust is negotiating purchase of a section from Pan Am Railroad.
- The Wayside section is now secured by a long-term DCR lease for development of 25 miles now under planning by the DCR and connecting towns.
- For Belmont, the Alewife to Belmont section opened in 2013.
- In Boston-Cambridge-Somerville, 3.9 miles of the six-mile section will be complete in 2014.



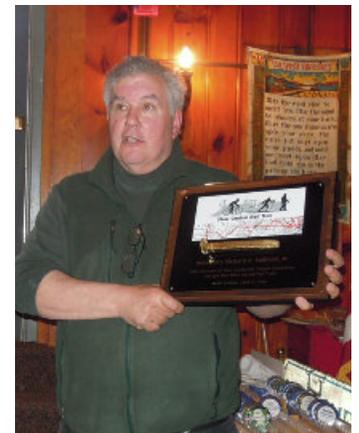
Craig Della Penna, who convened the 4th Golden Spike, and Colleen Abrams, Wachusett Greenways President, presented five Golden Spike Awards on behalf of the MCRT Coalition to: Secretary Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., "With Gratitude for Your Leadership Toward Completing the 104 mile Mass Central Rail Trail!" Secretary Sullivan is the first person in Massachusetts state government who moved from being the DCR Commissioner to become Secretary of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA). DCR Commissioner Jack Murray accepted the award on behalf of Secretary Sullivan, who was on an international assignment.



Ed Yaglou thanks Craig Della Penna for his enduring vision.



Bruce Pennino accepts his award from Colleen Abrams.



Craig Della Penna presented many of the awards

DCR's Gary Briere, a bicycling enthusiast, and 'Bike Berkshires to Boston' ride supporter, was also present to encourage MCRT progress.

Dr. Edward P. Yaglou, "In Honor of your Vision and Enduring Work to Connect the Mass Central Rail Trail." Ed was one of the original founders of Wachusett Greenways and helped shepherd the MCRT through six Wachusett Towns. He carried the vision and designed the MCRT logo now being used across the state.

Bruce J. Pennino, P.E. "With Deep Appreciation for Your Gift of Engineering to Bridge the Mass Central Rail Trail." Bruce donated his professional engineering services to engineer 10 bridges on the Wachusett Greenways section of the MCRT. He continues to assist other groups with low-cost service in developing bridges on the MCRT and other trails.

The Family of Danny O'Brien, "In Recognition and Appreciation of His Tireless Work and Advocacy to Get

Continues

Greenways Events Round-up

Since fall 2013 Wachusett Greenways has been busy hosting a variety of events and excursions. On October 24, participants enjoyed a walk and picnic in Cooks Canyon Sanctuary, Barre. On November 9, a group hiked a Princeton section of the 95-mile Midstate Trail. And on November 17, 10 intrepid folks braved wet weather for a full-moon walk at Porcupine Hill, on the Paxton/Holden border.

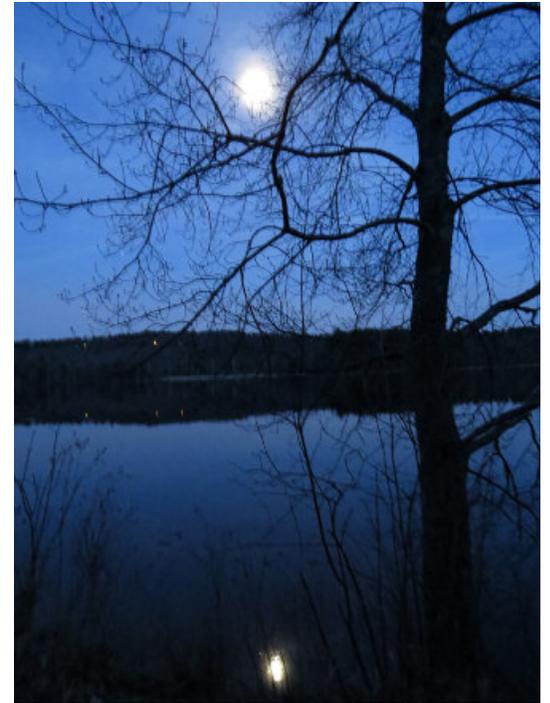
The outdoor fun continued in 2014, despite brutal winter weather. On January 1, about 30 hearty souls participated in the second annual New Year's Day hike on East Quabbin Land Trust's section of the MCRT.

On February 22, about 10 hikers, skiers and snow-shoers explored the North Sterling Woods and Poutwater Pond. And on March 15, a small group enjoyed a late-winter walk in Holden's Eagle Lake Wildlife Sanctuary.

Eighteen people took part in a moonlit walk on the MCRT in Rutland on April 12. The next day, a group walked the



Joe Choiniere and Wendy Miller lead many events.



Birch Trail and the Brown Hill Loop Trail on Wachusett Meadow. April 30 brought the Wachusett Greenways Annual Meeting, held at the Holden Senior Center and attended by more than 50 supporters.

More events are planned for the spring and summer. To get involved, contact Christy Barnes at bertinbarnes@verizon.net.

Golden Spike *Continued*



Rail Trails Built All Across the State.” The rail-to-trail network in Massachusetts is a direct legacy of the work of Danny O’Brien. The Cape Cod Rail Trail, the Norwottuck Rail Trail (the western segment of the MCRT), and many others are on the ground—largely because of Danny’s work at DEM and later DCR. Danny’s family accepted the award posthumously, and expressed their gratitude.

The Fisk family, “In Recognition of Your Visionary Trek Across the State Which Led to: *These Tracks Don’t Go Anywhere Anymore: a Hikers’ Guide to the Abandoned Central Mass Railroad*, which in Turn Led to the Idea of the 104 Mile Trail Across the State.” Steve Fisk was unable to attend, but later accepted his award and shared his story at Wachusett Greenways annual gathering (see “Before there was a Rail Trail” on page 1.)

The event closed with a tour of the Clinton tunnel on the Mass Central Rail line and visits to Rauscher Farm hosted by Clinton Greenways Conservation Trust.

Volunteer Spotlight

Behind-the-Scenes Specialists Karl Barry, Carol Morin and Jane Arntz

Karl Barry and his wife, Elise, had enjoyed the rail trails of West Virginia, so when they moved to Central Massachusetts in 1999, they joined Wachusett Greenways and started walking and cycling the trails. In short order, Karl took on the responsibility of maintaining the Greenways membership database, preparing thank you letters, and creating reports.



A private pilot, Karl enjoys flying with Elise to airports across New England to cycle and, he admits, enjoy the local ice cream. He is also a volunteer for Wachusett Earthday and the Massachusetts Butterfly Club. When asked what he liked best about Wachusett Greenways, Karl quickly replied, “We really enjoy the many beautiful walking and biking trails, which offer stunning views and solitude. And our Greenways friends have so much enthusiasm and dedication.”

Volunteer opportunities come in many different flavors, some more visible than others. Karl’s steadfast and continuous efforts go a long way to keeping Greenways records on track.

Outdoor enthusiast **Carol Morin** joined Wachusett Greenways over 10 years ago. Since then, she has contributed many behind-the-scenes volunteer hours covering a range of



tasks. Today she helps process donations to Greenways by serving as assistant treasurer. Carol records donor information, and forwards information to Treasurer Steve Chanis and Membership Manager, Karl Barry. Carol also processes all incoming Greenways invoices and issues payments. Clearly, she has become a vital link in the smooth-running Greenways financial operation.

Carol has many hobbies, two in particular that provide creative activities during winter: weaving baskets and chair caning. With her love of nature, Carol is drawn outdoors early in the spring for yard work and gardening.

She credits much of Greenways’ ongoing success to outstanding leadership and a dedicated volunteer corps.



Jane Arntz wears many hats when it comes to volunteering for WG, but she is best known for her efforts in assembling a mailing team to get the word out. Volunteers meet at First Baptist Church in Holden, usually on a weekday morning, where they process Greenways mailings. It’s no small task to fold, insert and label a typical 2,000-piece mailing.

No stranger to trail work, Jane can be seen pulling invasive weeds, trimming branches, raking leaves, and helping with any other job that needs doing. Years ago, following a Greenways foraging session led by Russ Cohen, Jane became fascinated with identifying wild edibles, such as milkweed, pokeweed, daylily buds and lamb’s quarters.

In addition to her love of nature, Jane plays French horn in the Wachusett Community Band. In the late 90s, while practicing at Holden’s Rice School, Jane met Colleen Abrams, who was working at the old Recycling Center. Through this chance encounter, Jane became interested in volunteering at the Center and for Wachusett Greenways. If you would like to join Jane’s mailing team, please contact her at 508-829-7396 or sjaj12@hotmail.com.

Spring Clean-Up Time for Patrollers

Although patrollers can be seen on the trails in every season, springtime brings special challenges. Winter and spring winds brought down countless small branches that need to be removed to clear the way for safe passage, particularly for cyclists. Entrances to trails need to have unsightly debris removed.



By checking the Mass Central Rail Trail and White Oak Trail throughout the year, patrollers keep up with trail care. When trail repair is needed or a tree has fallen on the trail, the patrollers contact Paul Hennessey, our Patrollers Captain.

Presently 29 dedicated patrollers, plus Sterling Cub Pack #34, regularly monitor their assigned segments of the trail. We need new patrollers for the rail trail from Wachusett Street to the Holden line, which runs parallel with Rt. 68 in Rutland. If you would like to help, please contact Paul at 508-886-6317 or peh01543@charter.net.



MCRT 2014 Construction

Construction on the MCRT soon will be underway to finish stone dust paving between the rest stop on Rt. 122 in Barre, along the Ware River, and up to Coldbrook Road, Oakham. Local contractor Bob Salvadore will complete this work.

Next up is improvement of trail sections in Sterling, Holden and Rutland. Greenways will seek contractors this summer to begin enhancements to three sections of the rail trail, including the “over-the-hill” section between Manning Street and Rt. 31 in Holden, the Sterling section from the Cider Mill to Gates Road, and the Charnock “Cut” in Rutland. These projects will be supported by a DCR Recreational Trails Grant with matching contributions by Wachusett Greenways donors.

A major design and engineering project is now underway for an 850-foot connector along the Rt. 140 causeway at the Stillwater River and Thomas Basin in West Boylston. The first phase of the planning is funded by a Partnership Matching Grant totaling \$75,000, with DCR and Wachusett Greenways each providing half of the matching funds.

Greenways will seek further DCR Matching Funds Grants and DCR Recreational Trails Grants, which also require a Greenways match to complete the engineering and design.

In Rutland, WG has developed plans for the important MCRT connector along Miles Road. This quarter-mile route will require a trail sweep to maintain a 5% grade, making it accessible to all.

Before There Was a Rail Trail...

Continued from page 1

Eventually the maps on the living room wall came down and were photocopied, notes and comments added, and the whole became a self-published book. Still a railroad history enthusiast, Steve spends time away from his job as a website designer by collecting antique bottles and documenting “before and after” scenes, comparing vintage photographs with how the same places look today. What he likes best about hiking on abandoned railroads is “slipping out of time-bound awareness, when you can suddenly become conscious of how the past connects to the present and they seem to blend together—something akin to time-travel.”

For his long love of and commitment to chronicling the MCRT, Steve received a Golden Spike Award awarded to the Fisk family by the Mass Central Rail Trail Coalition, and presented by Craig Della Penna at this year’s Wachusett Greenways Annual Meeting.



Spring has Arrived

A rail trail photo essay by Simon H Gregory



Hooded Merganser-male



Wood Frog



Northern Red-bellied Cooters

All photos by Simon H Gregory



Marsh Marigolds

Selaginella viewed through a hole in the ice



Ice formation



Beaver banquet

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