**Wachusett Greenways 2022 Annual Report**

**Onward Together – 28th Year**

What do you say the Mass Central Rail Trail is? New words came from partners this year: a sanctuary, transformative. And we heard the perennial drumbeat: Keep up the good and important work! Together we continue to build community with this shared use path through Sterling, West Boylston, Holden, Rutland, Oakham and Barre. Our partnership with these towns and Princeton and Paxton, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, local foundations, other nonprofits and businesses along with every individual donor and volunteer is our foundation.

**Incredible Volunteers!**

“I’ll help!” These words came from a trail visitor and new resident here. She immediately signed up to volunteer, and now brings her encouraging spirit to trail clearing days. “The mowers are all set for next spring,” declared a pair of volunteers who cleaned and serviced our small fleet. Many volunteers helped mow, clean ditches, rake leaves, remove dead trees, offer hospitality, mail letters, reach out, stake new trail and more!

**Partner Town Support**

All eight Towns--Barre, Holden, Oakham, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, Sterling and West Boylston--contributed toward Wachusett Greenways’ annual operating expenses. Special thanks to the DPW teams in Sterling, West Boylston and Holden for help with maintenance.

**Filling Gaps on the MCRT**

In 2022, with support from MassTrails, Wachusett Greenways completed two new miles of the Mass Central Rail Trail in Holden between Mill Street and Princeton Street and installed the new bridge in Sterling at West Washacum Lake. WG is also conducting an enhanced maintenance program to upgrade trail surfaces.

In 2023, WG will begin construction of a new accessible MCRT route over the hill in Holden from Wachusett Street (Route 31) at Mill Street toward Manning Street. Filling the gaps and reconstructing MCRT sections for accessible shared use is part of a statewide effort to complete the 104 mile MCRT between Northampton and Boston. MassTrails and DCR guidance and matching grant support is essential for linking the whole MCRT.

**Tunnel Murals**

MCRT Charnock Tunnel Mural grew in 2022. Trail visitors express delight with the beautiful scenes created by artist Margaret McCandless and several volunteers. In 2023 Margaret will engage volunteers with painting a new Pommogussett Tunnel Mural which “weaves human history and natural history into one presentation.” These WG mural projects are produced with support from grants from Rutland, Paxton and Holden Cultural Councils, local agencies, which are supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

**WG Annual Meeting**

The 2022 annual meeting took place on June 16 at Trout Brook Reservation, Holden, with an outdoor picnic, review of progress and shared plans for the future. All are welcome to the 2023 annual meeting in the spring!

**Each Donor Counts**

Thank you to every one of the 936 donors for 2022, including 148 new donors from 117 different towns in17 different states. As a member you help with operating expenses. Please also contribute to the Mass Central Rail Trail Funds: MCRT Construction Fund, Dr. Edward P. Yaglou MCRT Maintenance Fund, and the permanent MCRT Stewardship Endowment Fund. Contribute or volunteer at [www.wachusettgreenways.org](http://www.wachusettgreenways.org) or phone 508-479-2123 or Wachusett Greenways, P.O. Box 121, Holden 01520.

Wachusett Greenways Board of Directors: Colleen Abrams, Chair; Troy Milliken, Treasurer; Mike Peckar, Secretary, Christy Barnes, Stephen Chanis, Christopher Ryan.