

The Greenways Connector

Connecting the Wachusett Community with Trails and Greenways

October 2011

Key Connections in Rutland and Oakham

With the completion of the Pommogussett Tunnel and the rebuilding of the slab bridge to the west, you can now hop on your bike at Glenwood Road in Rutland and ride the Mass Central Rail Trail all the way to Coldbrook Road in Oakham – a distance of eight miles.

You'll pedal alongside brooks and through hardwood and evergreen forests; see historical markers at the sites of a train crash, the Rutland Water Tower and Train Depot, and Coldbrook Springs; feel the noticeably cooler air between rocks walls near Charnock

Road; and pass the still waters of Thayer Pond and Muddy Pond with their water lilies and bird boxes. This year the completion of the trail connection next to Miles Road and stone dust paving from Muddy Pond to Coldbrook will make that scenic trip even easier.

"It's great to be able to enjoy a continuous eight mile ribbon of rail trail" said Ed Yaglou, Wachusett Greenways board member and chair of MCRT Task Force, as pieces of the trail continue to fall into place. Yes, the whole is beginning to exceed the sum of its parts.

Tunnel Project on Time

The Pommogussett Tunnel, which runs under Route 56 (called Pommogussett Road locally) just north of Rutland center, is Wachusett Greenways' most ambitious project to date. Costing about \$300,000, it involved closing the heavily used road and making sure the work was completed on time.

Wachusett Greenways, the MA Department of Conservation and the Town of Rutland worked together closely to develop a clear and achievable plan. The



goal was to complete the tunnel between the 4th of July parade and the August 18 'Chowda Challenge'. Neighboring businesses and residents were patient during the five weeks of road closure. Two neighbors, the Mann and Johanson families provided easements for the tunnel connection, and others stopped by to cheer on the work.

The project began with soil testing by Yankee Engineering. Then Northern Construction Services went to work to place erosion controls, remove trees

Continued on page 4

21 Miles Road: A Welcome Center is On the Way



The new Greenways Welcome Center at 21 Miles Road, Rutland, was a beehive of activity last spring and throughout the summer. The property creates Greenways' first official "bricks-and-mortar" headquarters. It will provide a location for a safe, convenient link between two completed sections of the rail trail. And the property's nearly 15 acres of beautiful woodland will be preserved for public access.

Continued on page 2



Pitch In for the Pommogussett Tunnel and Trail Campaign

Last winter, Wachusett Greenways set a fundraising goal of \$600,000 for the Pommogussett Tunnel and Trail Campaign. The campaign included installing the Pommogussett Tunnel and purchasing the property at 21 Miles Road in Rutland center to establish a Welcome Center and connect the Mass Central Rail Trail. With the generous help of our members, foundations, DCR Partnership Grants, and corporations, we are within \$140,000 of meeting that goal. Support from our members and friends is vital to the success of this campaign. Greenways is very thankful to each donor for their gift. Our friends' and members' support encourages us to keep moving forward. If you have not yet contributed, we hope you'll choose to give now.

Pommogussett campaign chair, Lydia Barter is a regular at the future Welcome Center where she is helping to prepare the Center with other volunteers. "I was at the Welcome Center one morning this summer for a meeting," she said, "and I was amazed by the amount of traffic going by the living room window – runners, cyclists, walkers, and baby strollers. It was wonderful to see so many people on the Mass Central Rail Trail." And according to Lydia, it's not only the summer weather that brings people out on to the trail. "On any Saturday during this past winter, a sense of community and friendship warmed the inside of the house as volunteers worked to prepare the welcome center."

If you haven't yet, we encourage you to contact Lydia 508-867-8941 to arrange a visit. Enjoy a walk or ride on the trail and come see what neighbors can accomplish when we all pitch in. With your help, we'll soon complete the welcome center and this MCRT connection for the community to enjoy together.

Members Make the Difference

June Fagerquist honors the memory of her husband, Andy, with her membership and generous gifts to help build and care for the rail trail. Andy walked trails, admired butterflies and spent countless hours filming community events for Holden cable television. He especially enjoyed filming outdoor events and the chance to shine the spotlight on nature and those who enjoyed it. June, now a nonagenarian, took a tour of the new Welcome Center and Pommogussett Tunnel with volunteers Rachel Bradley and Viv Ouellette. "Splendid!" exclaimed June as she enjoyed the new trail connection and reminisced about hikes with Holden Senior Walkers.

Greenways members do make a difference! If you haven't joined yet for 2011, please join us now by mailing your gift to Wachusett Greenways, Box 121, Holden 01520 or renew on-line at wachusettgreenways.org. If you aren't sure whether you are a current member check the date on your newsletter mailing label or, please ask karlxbarry@charter.net.



June Fagerquist seated with Viv Ouellette left, and Rachel Bradley.

21 Miles Road: A Welcome Center for Wachusett Greenways Members

Continued from page 1

Greenways volunteers Christy Barnes and Lydia Barter are spearheading the effort to develop the property. "The 21 Miles Road project is truly a milestone for Greenways. The House Committee is developing a plan which will provide accessibility," said Christy. In the future, 21 Miles Road will serve as a hospitality center for trail users, and a central location for directing Greenways' stewardship of the rail trail and other Wachusett trails.



Chuck Belanger and Roland Veaudry made lots of progress together at Miles Road this summer.

Since last spring, legions of helpers have done everything from painting, cleaning and light maintenance to outdoor upkeep and beautification. Noteworthy here are the volunteer efforts of many neighbors and friends of Wachusett Greenways. Special thanks to Chuck Belanger, John and Linda Rives, Roland Veaudry and Dave Camarra for many hours of planning, house and yard work, and plowing. Chuck, for example, coordinated the plan for making the center wheelchair accessible and helped create an organizational structure for the facility. Architect, Dan Ferguson, of Princeton, contributed his services to develop an accessible design. And Doug Hagman has volunteered landscaping services.

Like every other Greenways undertaking, making 21 Miles Road shipshape is a labor of love. To learn how you can help, please contact Christy at christybarnes@verizon.net or Lydia at lydiabarbar@charter.net.

Wachusett Greenways Newsletter

The Greenways Connector

Editors: Grace Blydenburgh, Peder C. Pedersen, Ken McDonnell

Newsletter Team:

Vivianne Ouellette, Manager		
Colleen Abrams	Tim Enman	Dave Greenslit
Ken McDonnell	Hank Ouellette	

Photographer:

Hank Ouellette

Board of Directors:

Colleen Abrams	Steve Dubrule	Ed Tarquinio
Christy Barnes	Gordon Elliott	Ed Yaglou
Lydia Barter	Dave Lambert	

Graphic Design: Adshead Graphics

To submit articles or letters to the editor, please send to Vivianne at: vivoue30@charter.net or mail to

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

For regular news updates, visit our website at

www.wachusettgreenways.org.



Printed on recycled paper with soy inks.

**Wachusett
Greenways**

Nativity Summer Service

For three weeks in July, 5th through 8th grade boys from the Nativity School piled into vans and left Worcester. When they reached the WG headquarters on 21 Miles Road, the boys converged on *nature*. These good natured, hard-working young volunteers spent hours clearing dead branches under the old evergreen trees and making piles of brush for Roland Veaudry to cart off to Dave Camarra's pasture.

The young workers were intrigued by their lush, green surroundings. They were amazed at a tree frog whose sticky feet climbed up a tree, and at the power of tangled vines to enclose them. One lad proclaimed, "I'm all covered up with nature! But I like it." Adult volunteer Laura Beckwith praised the "amount of brush they cleared for their size," and was impressed by "how hard they worked." Volunteer Christy Barnes was "encouraged to see that the kids who were at first nervous in the woods began to explore and find fascinating creatures, such as salamanders, which they shared with their friends. It was a good bonding experience for them." Nativity teachers and Greenways volunteers worked side by side with the students, and everyone enjoyed a welcome break with cookies and juice.

As the boys prepared for the drive home one day, Colleen Abrams shared the sign for 'YES!' with them...as in "Yes, it was wonderful to have you here. You did a great job and you are very polite students." The next day several students tapped on the window as they were departing, "Yes!" they signed with big smiles. At the end of this summer's service program, Nativity's closing ceremony celebrated the programs and participants shared tales of their service. We hope the boys will return in the fall for bike rides and hikes, along with more service opportunities.



Nativity School of Worcester is an accredited, independent, Jesuit middle school that provides a quality, all-scholarship education to underserved boys of all faiths. (See <http://www.nativityworcester.org/>)



National Honor Society Students are signing on to volunteer with Greenways this year.

Leaders Rosalind and Jocelyn stopped by to make plans.

Mapmaker Jill Phelps Kern: On the Trails

Whenever Jill Phelps Kern needed to relax from her demanding job of building high tech teams, she took a hike. In the beginning, the available maps of the trails near her home in Stow just didn't seem adequate, so Jill took along her GPS (Global Positioning System) receiver and mapped the trails for herself. As she continued documenting more trails and sharing the maps she created, local conservation groups urged her to publish her trail data.

After mapping over 1,000 miles of trails, Jill wrote "Hiking the SuAsCo Watershed: Exploring the Woods and Waters of the Sudbury, Assabet and Concord Rivers," published in 2004. Inspired by some informal training in cartography provided by the Sudbury Valley Trustees, Jill enrolled in an online Masters Degree program at Penn State in GIS (Geographic Information Systems). Three years later, her professional degree in



Jill Kern right, with her son Josh

hand and high stress job in the past, Jill continues mapping trails and many other things for a living, working for the Towns of Weston and Concord.

Wachusett Greenways has gained from Jill's expertise as well. She is putting the finishing touches on a series of eight detailed section maps of the Mass Central Rail Trail, currently GPS'ing and mapping side trails. Besides the enjoyment from her restorative time in the woods and the satisfaction of helping hikers enjoy the trails, Jill hopes that her maps will be included on web sites so more people can be coaxed off the couch and into the woods.

Jill's map of the trail from Glenwood Road Rutland, west to the Ware River Crossing, Barre, our longest section of the trail, is shown on pages 4 and 5.

Key Connections in Rutland and Oakham

Continued from page 1

and build drainage structures for the road. Next they excavated the roadway before lowering parts of the 80-foot-long concrete tunnel into place with a crane. Then they put rubber gaskets between sections, waterproofed the joints, backfilled, built wing walls, installed a new waterline and completed drainage work. Northern installed the tunnel and then rebuilt, graded and paved the road before reopening on August 11 – beating the ‘Chowda Challenge’ deadline by a week.

The Pommogussett Tunnel is the second tunnel along the rail trail. Built by Hanson Pipe and Precast, the 80’ foot long tunnel arrived right on time as eleven custom-made pieces to make a 10-foot wide by 8-1/2-foot tall passageway under Route 56 in Rutland center. The first tunnel, under Charnock Hill Road to the west in Rutland, was completed in 2006.

Box Culvert Makes Oakham Connection

In March 2010, heavy rain undermined the slab bridge near the Route 122 rest area in Rutland, which had already undergone reconstruction after earlier flooding. This spring, trees were removed to make room for heavy equipment, and during the summer Bob Salvatore of R.D. Salvatore Excavating of Barre installed a 7 x 8 foot diameter box culvert, reconnecting the



severed trail. Bob also reused the large slabs which had spanned the crossing, transforming them into wing walls to provide projection from the busy brook, which makes a hard turn just before the culvert.

Miles Road Section Planned in Rutland

A new section of trail will run from the Welcome Center parallel to Miles Road to make the connection near Thayer Pond. That section, intended to get people off the road, may be completed this fall.

The Veaudry and Camarra families, who live across from the Welcome Center and have given easements for the trail to pass through their land on that side of Miles Road, are assisting with the new trail connections. “The Miles Road neighborhood support has been heartening,” Yaglou said.

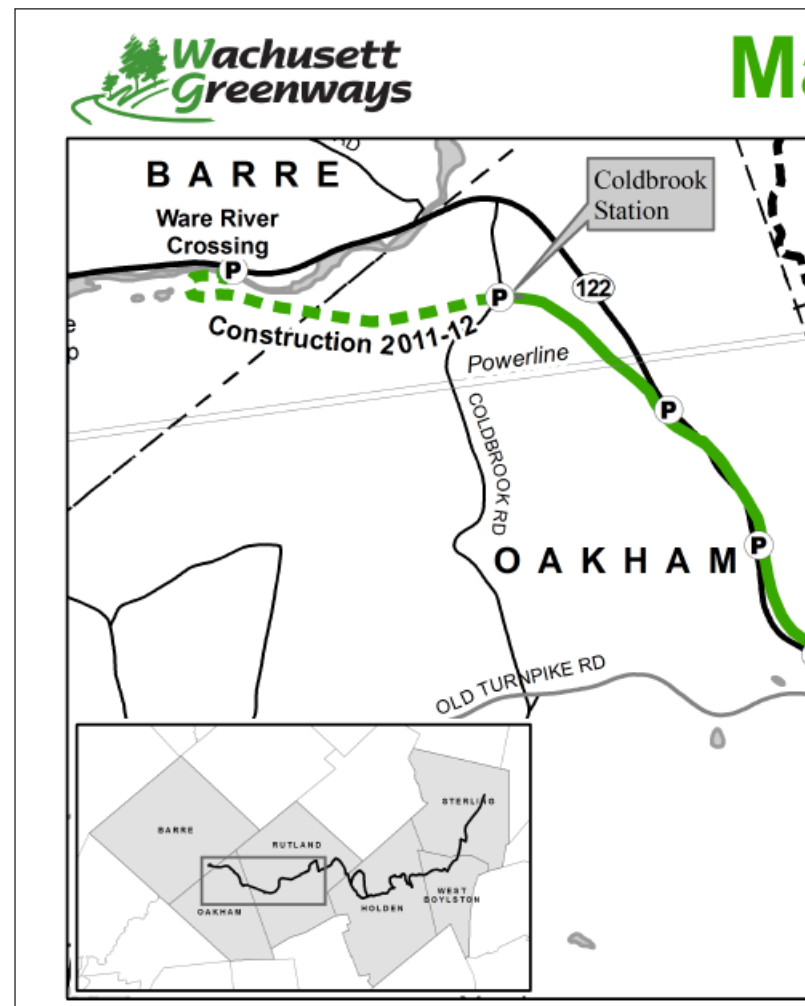
Progress to the West

R. D Salvatore will complete stone dust 'paving' in Oakham from Muddy Pond to Coldbrook Road by November 2011. Work

continues west of Coldbrook Road where the trail is being cleared 1.3 miles to the Ware River crossing. A 2011 DCR Recreational Trails grant will provide a match to help build the trail section.



While the trail will use the snowmobile bridge over the Ware River, Wachusett Greenways will have to span Niger Brook with a new bridge. The Niger Brook crossing was one of many washed out in the 1938 hurricane. Greenways is seeking a 2012 Recreational Trails Grant to assist with funding the bridge.



[Click here to download one piece map.](#)

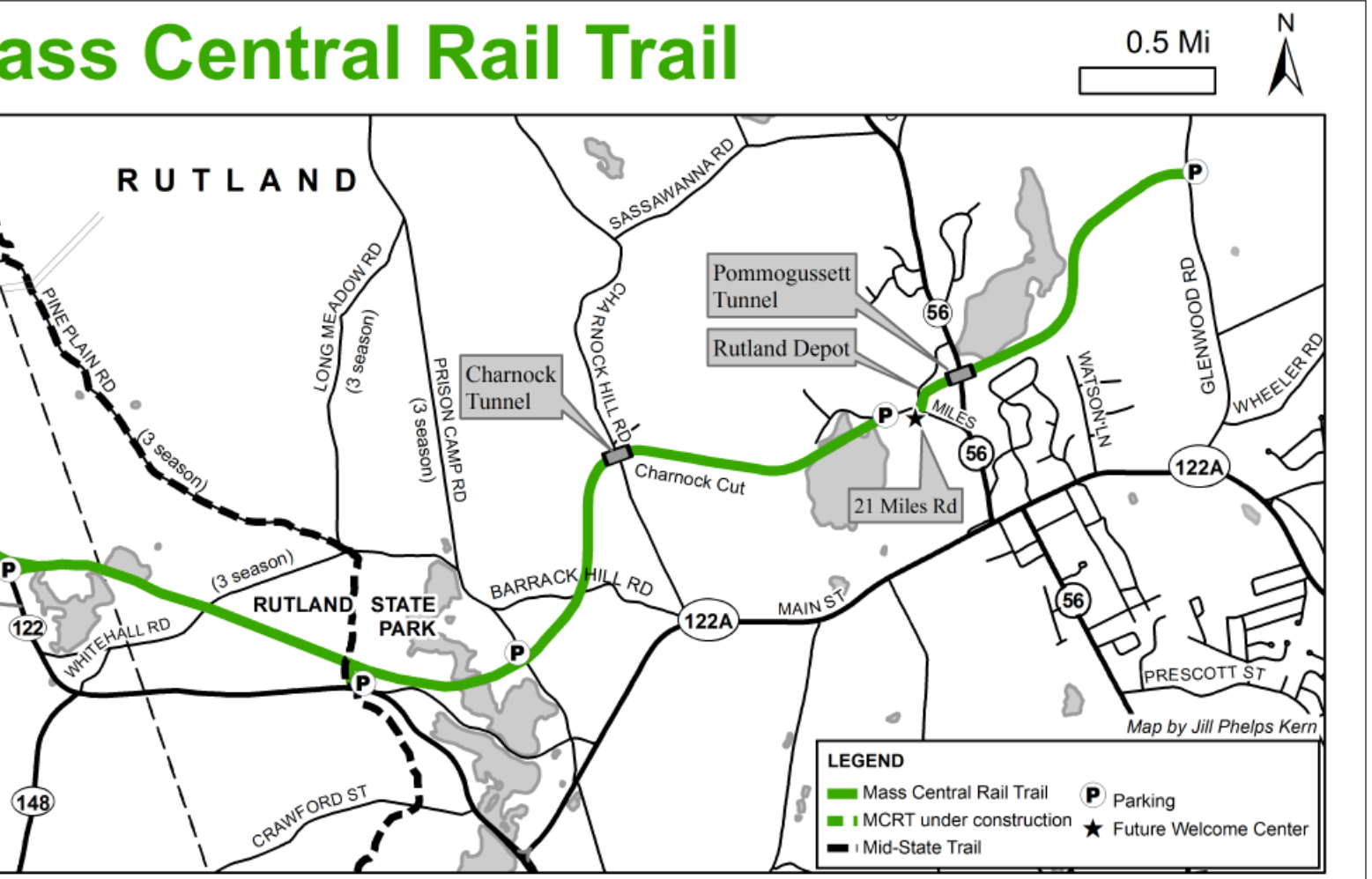
Maintenance Matters

To volunteer for trail work or maintenance, please contact:
 Gordo Elliott (508-753-0420; boltstwo@charter.net)
 or Colleen Abrams (508-479-2123; colleen.abrams@verizon.net).



Maintenance of the trails is as important as building them. Wachusett Greenways has a tremendous trail maintenance crew keeping the trails in great shape. If you see them on your journey, stop and say thank you, we wouldn't have our beautiful trails without them.

Mass Central Rail Trail



Pancakes and Pedaling

Intrepid cyclists took to the rail trail in May as they pedaled from Sterling Center to Rutland. Ed Yaglou and Steve Dubrule and their volunteer team planned a great ride — uphill. More than a dozen riders met the challenge.

Meanwhile Greenways volunteers including several new neighbors from Miles Road put on a beautiful pancake breakfast with all the trimmings at the Rutland Congregational Church. Fresh maple syrup was donated by the Milt and Robin Severance of Northfield, and Clealand Blair from his Vermont sugar bush.

The cyclists and other visitors enjoyed a great breakfast to kick off the spring outdoor season.



Eagle Scouts On the March

Brian Walsh was looking for a challenging topic for his Eagle Scout project. Brian was acquainted with Hank Ouellette, Greenways volunteer photographer and webmaster, and asked if Hank could be his mentor.

Fast forward to August 21, 2011, when Brian Walsh was inducted into the Eagle Court of Honor. His qualifying project will benefit rail trail users interested in town and rail history. Brian designed, built and erected a sign depicting the Rutland depot and water tower off Miles Road. Under Brian's direction, scouts from Holden's Troop 175 covered the tower well hole with wooden decking. Brian appreciated the help he received from other Scouts, and WG and was pleased that he could do a project with an historical focus.



Adam Mayer and his family have enjoyed walking Wachusett area trails for years. Adam explained, "I just wanted to give something back in a way that I was passionate about." Adam, a Troop 306 Rutland scout, improved the White Oak Trail from the parking entrance at Sterling Road in Holden to the raised bridge. His project included restoring the entry sign, removing dead trees and improving the parking lot, adding routed directional signs and trail junctions and repairing the raised bridge. Adam described the bridge repair and placing routed signs as the most beneficial and noticeable element of his project.

Wachusett Greenways is very grateful that Brian and Adam chose us for their Eagle projects. They join the legacy of more than a dozen Boy Scouts who completed meaningful Eagle projects.



Grant Partners Move the Rail Trail

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation has provided pivotal grants for the rail trail construction. Two DCR Partnership Grants helped build the Pommogussett Tunnel. Two DCR Recreational Trails Program grants along with Greenways match helped complete the other rail trail connections this year in Oakham.

Local foundations are also pivotal to the continued expansion of the rail trail and particularly the Pommogussett Tunnel and Trail Project. Greenways is grateful to each of the Trustees of these foundations for their generous gifts in 2010/2011 which have allowed us to accomplish this major project: George I. Alden Trust, Fred Harris Daniels Foundation, Fletcher Foundation, Hoche-Scofield Trust, Kirby Foundation, Stoddard Charitable Trust, Wyman Gordon Foundation.



MCRT: Where Does it Go?

If you've ever walked a section of the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) near your home, come to the end, and wondered "where does it go from here?" — you are not alone.

Wachusett Greenways is but one group among many working to realize the vision of a continuous trail from Northampton to Boston. The MCRT will eventually connect 24 cities and towns, with several groups working toward that goal. With that in mind, let's visit the eastern and western "frontiers" of trail development along the proposed route.

In busy Somerville, the old Central Massachusetts Railroad track, now called the Somerville Community Path, is a respite from busy streets for cyclists and pedestrians. The existing path stretches 0.8 mile from the vicinity of Davis Square to Alewife station. Friends of the Community Path, a citizens group, is working to extend the existing trail 2.5 miles towards Boston to connect with other paths along the Charles River, as part of the Green Line Extension, an initiative of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)



and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA). Both state departments encourage civic engagement, so let them know how much you look forward to the prospect of an alternative transportation route into downtown Boston.

The western terminus of the MCRT has already been realized in the form of the Norwottuck Rail Trail, which stretches 11 miles from Belchertown to Northampton. To the east of the well-established Norwottuck, a Belchertown land trust has begun securing access to properties along the old right of way. As Wachusett Greenways director, Ed Yaglou puts it "Everywhere along the way, people are collecting macaronis and putting them together, so eventually we'll have a nice, long spaghetti,"

Between its eastern and western bookends, the vision of MCRT has inspired citizens across the state to work with local partners and overcome difficult financial and engineering obstacles. To learn about end-to-end progress check out wachusettgreenways.org or masscentralrailtrail.org.

A Time to Welcome and Thank



2012 Incoming directors: Ed Yaglou, Gordo Elliott, Ed Tarquinio, Lydia Barter, Dave Lambert and Steve Dubrule. (Not shown in photo: Christy Barnes, Colleen Abrams)



Greenways thanked four outstanding outgoing board members for their service: Stan Miller, Ida Nystrom, Karl Barry and Chris Nichols. All four provided immeasurable service to Wachusett Greenways.



Dave Camarra and Roland Veaudry on the right accept their honorary Greenways mugs and a BIG thank you for their service to Greenways from Ed Yaglou and Colleen Abrams.



Bruce Pennino (right) accepts his honorary Greenways mug and a BIG thank you for his service to Greenways from Ed Yaglou. Karl Barry and Steve Dubrule look on.

Spotlight on New Patrollers

Recently, Barre residents Fred and Becki Hamel joined our dedicated group of trail patrollers to lend a hand in maintaining the Oakham stretch of trail from Muddy Pond to the Route 122 crossing. With their busy schedules, Fred as a Burncoat High School history teacher, and Becki as an operating room nurse at St. Vincent's Hospital, it seems reasonable that they would seek relaxation and enjoyment in the outdoors. Some time ago, Becki took a bike ride on the Rutland trail with Ed Yaglou, another Barre resident and WG director. Becki was not only impressed with the beauty of the trail, but she realized that it was practically in her back yard.

When asked what she liked most about the Rutland trail, Becki mentioned the likelihood of meeting a diversity of people along the way, including walkers, bikers, families with children, and elderly folks out for a stroll. She loves to see the old railways turned into trails for everyone's enjoyment. Becki offered kudos to all Wachusett Greenways volunteers.

We ended the interview with Becki's quote from Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

New patrollers are needed. Contact Paul Hennessey at peb01543@charter.net.



Rutland Celebrates



Everyone loves the 'Chowda Challenge' and the 4th of July Parade.

Return Service Requested

P.O. BOX 121
HOLDEN ~ MA ~ 01520

**Wachusett
Greenways**

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Holden, MA 01520
Permit #15