

The Greenways Connector

Connecting the Wachusett Community with Trails and Greenways

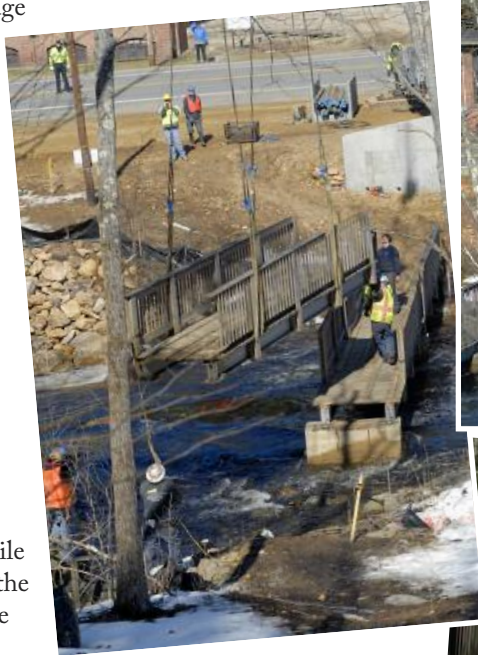
June 2013

White Valley Bridge Spans Ware River

The new White Valley Bridge announces with stunning presence Greenways' western edge on the Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT). Spanning the Ware River along Route 122 at the eastern end of Barre, the 98-foot, heavy duty structure enables convenient access to the MCRT. In snowy months, both MCRT visitors and snowmobiles will share the bridge. After crossing the Ware River, the MCRT continues east along the Ware River while snowmobile riders turn uphill to follow the interstate snowmobile Route 71. In addition, Mass. Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and Mass. Water Resources Authority (MWRA) maintenance vehicles will use the bridge to reach projects across the river.

The new bridge can accommodate up to 15 tons, replacing a narrow wooden footbridge on the site. Plenty of parking is available 0.2 miles west of the new bridge at the Route 122 rest stop.

You can watch video of the bridge work at www.wachusettgreenways.org.



Finding Magic On the Trail

This spring, children on the rail trail in Rutland discovered a new StoryWalk, featuring the Appalachian counting rhyme *Over in the Meadow*, illustrated by Ezra Jack Keats. The colorful book pages posted at intervals along a mile of trail introduced young cyclists and hikers to familiar creatures.

On one occasion, a group of girl scouts on bicycles stopped to read a 'page' and were rewarded two-fold. Their leader, Christy Barnes, tells the story: "First, they saw two turtles on a log; then I encouraged the girls to see what was on the back of one of the 'pages.' Several dragonflies were emerging out of their nymphal shells, with shiny and pressed wings. Within minutes the girls discovered emerging dragonflies all at their feet. With guidance

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Yes, We Can

Here we are in our 19th year! Read on to learn about the lovely and amazing connections that happen in Wachusett Greenways' community. Then take a moment to reflect on your talents. How can you help?

Gratefully,

Your Wachusett Greenways Directors



2013 Directors: Mike Peckar, Steve Chanis, Gordo Elliott, Colleen Abrams, Christy Barnes, Steve Dubrule



West Boylston Boy Scouts celebrated National Trails Day on June 1 to help Greenways clear ditches along the MCRT. Roland Veaudry provided the tractor and trailer for hauling leaves.

"Connectivity Builds Community" Highlights Mass. Trails Conference

On May 4 MARTAB, the *Massachusetts Recreational Trails Advisory Board*, convened the second Annual Massachusetts Trails Conference. Nearly 200 trail enthusiasts filled the new Devens Common Center on a perfect spring day in order to learn how "Connectivity Builds Community".

Keynote speaker Mark Fenton inspired the audience with his rousing presentation. An associate professor at Tufts, Fenton is a former host of PBS series "America's Walking," and a noted public health, planning and transportation consultant. He noted that the best use of trails is to connect things, stating that, "if you have to drive to the trail, you are eliminating the use by the too-young or the too-old who don't drive." Fenton encouraged participants to check the walk score of their communities at www.walkscore.com.

Paul Jahnige, DCR Trails and Greenways Director, and Colleen Abrams offered a session updating the map on recent MCRT progress from Northampton to Boston. In addition to WG's steady progress toward completing the central 30 miles, Paul offered exciting news of DCR's successful procurement of 22 miles of the Wayside section of the MCRT, opening the way for more trail connections east of WG.

Leaders in land trusts, conservation commissions, town planners and the full gamut of trail stewards learned about art on trails, funding, collaborating and trail construction. You can find excellent conference presentations at DCR's website <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/greenway/conference.htm>. Greenways volunteers Ken McDonnell, Dave Simmerer, Ed Yaglou and Colleen Abrams attended, and all expressed gratitude to Amanda Lewis, DCR Recreational Trails Program Director, Dick O'Brien, MARTAB Chairman and the MARTAB team for the high-energy, beautifully organized day.

Greenways Members Matter!

Membership reached an all-time high in 2012, signifying the community's growing support of the Greenways mission. If you've renewed for 2013, many thanks. For those of you who haven't yet renewed, consider this a gentle nudge. Your membership provides much-needed funding for trail stewardship and operating expenses. In addition, your vote of confidence provides a wonderful encouragement for Greenways volunteers, inspiring them to keep working. Truly every member matters. And if you're thinking of joining for the first time, please do. You'll be in good company!



Wachusett Greenways Newsletter

The Greenways Connector

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

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Trail Etiquette

You can't help but marvel at how expansive the Mass Central Rail Trail has become since Wachusett Greenways was formed nearly two decades ago. But while the trail segments have gotten longer and longer, they haven't gotten any wider, and on busy days, sometimes our 10-foot wide path can feel a bit crowded. With that in mind, we offer this refresher for kind and thoughtful sharing of the trail.



Keep to the right. Being able to walk side-by-side with a companion is one of the greatest attributes of the MCRT, but, as is often the case, three can be a crowd. Be sure your group isn't impeding the progress of faster travelers looking to pass you.

Announce your pass. Pedestrians or other cyclists may not hear you approaching from behind, so call out "On your left!" before moving to pass another trail user. (Feel free to add a friendly "Hi!" as well.) Of course, make sure there is no oncoming traffic that will need to stop for you to complete the pass.

Wheels and Hoops Usher In Spring

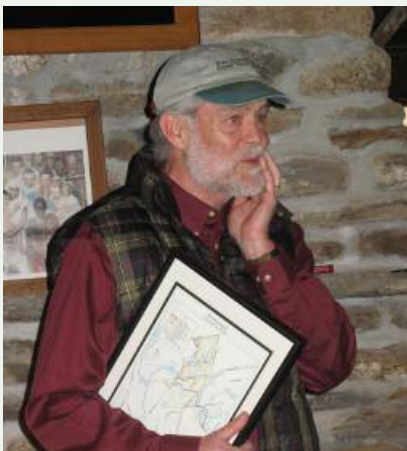
On Mother's Day cyclists were inspired to join WG's Bay State Bike Ride. Starting at Glenwood Road in Rutland, the group of more than 20 including five children, biked nine miles to the White Valley Bridge in Barre, and then back. A long ride! According to leaders Steve Dubrule and Christy Barnes, they encountered many bikers and walkers as well as budding wildflowers.



A less traditional WG event occurred in late April when a cheerful group arrived at the rail trail for a hula hoop play date. Under the leadership of Dotty Kormeluk, the women brushed up on old skills and learned some new tricks to teach their grandkids. Using adult-sized hoops they spun the hoops overhead and behind, accompanied by a lot of laughs.



George Dresser Loop



George Dresser was honored by White Oak Land Conservation Society and Greater Worcester Community Foundation this spring as dozens of grateful conservationists gathered to thank him for his devotion to conserving open spaces. The George Dresser Loop at Kinneywood in Worcester was fittingly named for this patient, generous leader who has given thousands of hours to help link land and nature enthusiasts. George has also been instrumental in helping Wachusett Greenways to build out the MCRT.



Grants Awarded

DCR's Recreational Trails Grant program is the steady engine that helps Wachusett Greenways expand the MCRT. At a May 31 ceremony, DCR Commissioner, Edward M. Lambert, Jr., and Recreational Trails Program leaders Amanda Lewis and Paul Jahnige announced the Grant awards for 2012. Ed Yaglou attended the ceremony to accept Wachusett Greenways' 13th award. This \$50,000 grant along with Greenways matching support will help complete the MCRT stone dust paving between Coldbrook Road, Oakham and Route 122 Barre along with contributing to the White Valley Bridge.



Greenways is awaiting 2013 grant announcements expected in the fall. The award and Greenways donor matching funds would enable Wachusett Greenways to upgrade three challenging MCRT sections in Sterling and Rutland.

In May the DCR Partnership Matching Grant program invited Wachusett Greenways to make a full proposal for engineering and design for the Route 140 causeway connection for the Mass Central Rail Trail. Greenways is looking forward to beginning this key project for connecting the statewide MCRT.

MCRT Connections Moving Forward

Anticipated trail development in 2013 includes:

- Complete a direct connection between rail trail gates on Miles Road, Rutland, near the Greenways Welcome Center now under development.
- Complete stone dust "paving," signage, bollards and some trail amenities from Coldbrook Road, Oakham, to the new White Valley Bridge and the Route 122 rest stop in Barre.
- Begin design and planning for the MCRT connection along the Route 140 causeway in West Boylston.
- Prepare for 2014 trail improvements on the trail in Sterling and on trail sections in Rutland at the State Park entrance road and at the Charnock cut.

Patrolling – Par Excellence!

You may wonder why the Mass Central Rail Trail is so tidy and free of trash. It's thanks to Wachusett Greenways Trail Patrollers who are constantly on the (volunteer) job! Year after year WG members agree to regularly walk specific portions of the trail. They pick up refuse, rake leaves and sticks from the trail and culverts, and alert WG of fallen trees. The parking lots also get the once-over.



One six-person team has taken on a new responsibility – that of updating the bulletin board at the Miles Road, Rutland entrance. Patroller Team, Rachel and Jere Bradley, Carol Moore, Karen Glidden, and Viv and Hank Ouellette add trail info and upcoming events. Everett Reynolds often coordinates with them and puts his pickup truck to use at the trail. Be sure to check for news at the display board.

Finding Magic On the Trail

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each girl picked up her own dragonfly, marveling at its beauty, giving it a name and watching the insect flutter its wings and fly away. Loud 'goodbyes' accompanied each departure. It was truly a magical time for these girls." None of them, or their leaders had been on the rail trail before, but they are sure to return.

Wachusett Greenways volunteers Frank and Ann Puffer, and Grace Blydenburgh set up the walk, inspired by The StoryWalk® Project, created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, VT, and developed in collaboration with the Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition and the Kellogg Hubbard Library. Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, Wachusett Coordinated Family and Community Engagement Grant also assisted Wachusett Greenways in preparing this StoryWalk.



Joe Choiniere: Teacher of the Natural World

Joe Choiniere led his first guided hike in the early 1970s as a volunteer with Mass Audubon's Laughing Brook Sanctuary in Hampden, Mass., though he got his start as a naturalist much earlier. Growing up in Springfield, Joe spent much of his childhood exploring the white cedar swamp on a conserved plot of land near his family's home. He developed a reputation among the neighborhood kids, who would bring him whatever odd bug and plant specimen they found, knowing that most likely Joe would be able to identify them.

Exploring the swamp one day, Joe ran into a group led by Dr. John Brainerd, a professor of botany at Springfield College. Recalled by other students for reciting his own poetry along with the names of plants encountered during field trips, Dr. Brainerd made a lasting impression on Joe. "He connected the natural world to all aspects of life. He'd find bulrushes and mention their appearance in the Bible, stuff like that."

Dr. Brainerd's approach has influenced Joe's own 40-year career as a teacher naturalist. If you've attended one of the guided hikes Joe regularly leads for Mass Audubon or Wachusett Greenways, you'll recognize his talent for meeting a group of students where they are and guiding them to a deeper



understanding of the environment through whatever subject they might be studying, be it birdsong, tracking or the winter botany class he recently taught for Fitchburg State's adult learning program. You come away from a walk with Joe learning more than you expected, without ever having felt over your head.

"I like to introduce people to the shape or smell of a plant, instead of just its name," says Joe. "If you learn the name first, you tend to think 'OK, I *know* that plant,' and you stop paying attention to the details of what makes it what it is." Joe also looks forward to learning from his students. "I like meeting people with different experiences on walks, retirees with other names for plants that they learned from growing up in a different time or place."

Joe's service as a guide has helped draw together citizens concerned about conservation for a number of local groups, including Wachusett Greenways. He credits Deb Cary, Mass Audubon's director of Sanctuaries in Central Massachusetts, for leading much of Audubon's outreach to other conservation groups in the area. Joe will lead a Greenways walk on September 10. Check the events list and join him!

Polishing Up the Bridge

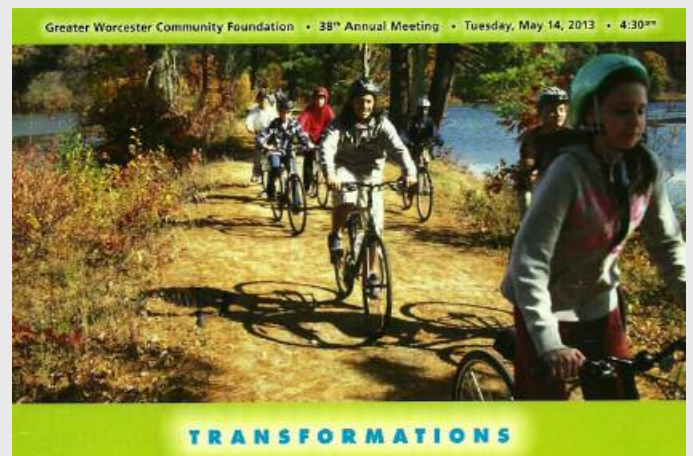
This spring members of the MCRT Task Force inspected and cleaned the Charlotte Kaplan and Jeremiah Kaplan bridges over the Quinapoxet River in Holden. They removed debris between the wooden deck planks and cleared growth and debris at the abutments. Work will continue to examine the remaining MCRT bridges this summer.



John Rives, Engineer Bruce Pennino and Chairman Ed Yaglou at work on the JK bridge.

'Let's Go' on the Mass Central Rail Trail

The Greater Worcester Community Foundation annual report featured this cover photo of the Worcester East Middle School students in the 'Let's Go' program as they enjoyed riding the Mass Central Rail Trail in Rutland. Wachusett Greenways provides a place for the program's bicycles at our future Welcome Center so that students have a ready access to the rail trail. Howie Fain directs the Let's Go program.



Greenways Guide Full of Information

Curious about the status of Mass Central Rail Trail? Want to know how the MCRT connects to other trails? Looking for a new trail to try? Answers to such questions are now at your fingertips with the new Wachusett Greenways Guide, containing a detailed map on one side and text about trails, parks and open space on the other side.

Wachusett Greenways Guide

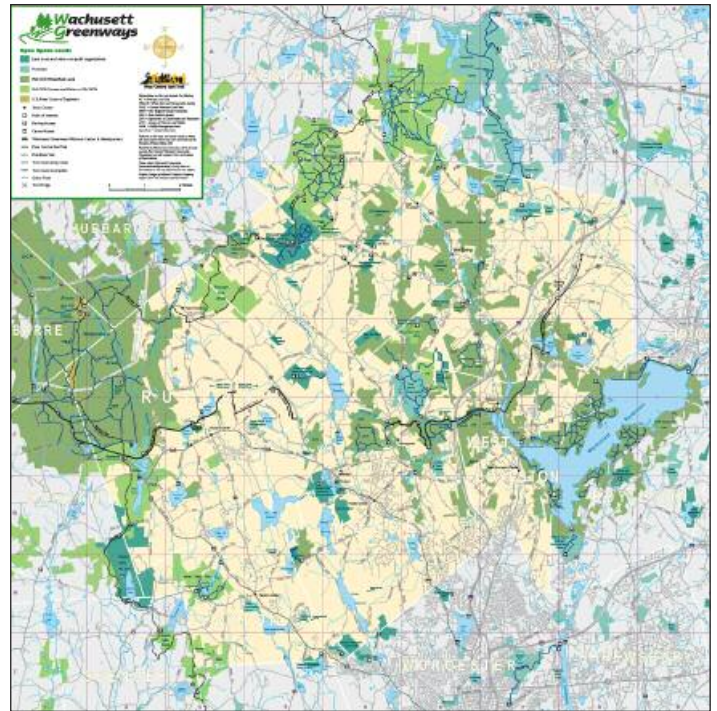


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evening working with us on the revisions. His keen eye for perfection greatly contributes to the map's precision and authenticity."

Greenways Director Steve Dubrule oversaw the production, while the lay-out was produced by Damian Adshead of Adshead Graphics. Vin Antil at the Trustees of Reservations was a key contributor for the map data from the Mass GIS Mapping database.

Greenways incorporated information from the 1998 guide, other nonprofit groups, the DCR, and the personal knowledge of Wachusett Greenways members. Then began the revisions. Damian remarked, "These are done to ensure the highest level of accuracy. We want the reader to feel confident when they visit an area," and "Adshead Graphics would like to thank Wachusett Greenways for their unwavering dedication to this project, and their trust in having us produce the guide. Steve spent many an



Greenways members Grace Blydenburgh, Margaret Lock and Chris Nichols contributed to the team. Jill Phelps Kern generously provided the GPS mapping of the Mass Central Rail Trail. Steve Dubrule is enthusiastic about the results. "Whether it's mountain biking, hiking, paddling, or cross country skiing," he says, "I hope this guide will help the next generation of outdoor wanderers discover the abundant remaining wild spaces throughout the Wachusett region."

Greenways Celebrates 18th Year with Annual Gathering



Carol Morin, Roland Veaudry and Ed Yaglou (front left to right) receive golden spikes in appreciation of their stellar contributions.

Andrea Stone, Natalie Maynard and Jon O'Brien welcome participants.



Halley Kamosky speaks of Bancroft School students' pride and pleasure in serving with WG.



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

July 18 – Thursday – 6-8 p.m. Foraging for Wild Edibles at Sibley Farm

Worcester County is home to over 100 species of edible wild plants, many of which are more nutritious and/or flavorful than their cultivated counterparts. Join expert forager Russ Cohen, author of the book *Wild Plants I Have Known...and Eaten*, on a two-hour ramble to learn about at least 18 species of edible wild plants. Identification tips and guidelines for safe and environmentally responsible foraging included. Wear clothing for ticks. Contact Christy Barnes to sign up, 508-755-6321, bertinbarnes@verizon.net

July 19 – Friday – 9:45 a.m.-noon. Butterfly Walk in Westborough

Join Elise Barry and Wendy Miller for a butterfly walk at the Westborough Wildlife Management Area. Elise and Wendy will be looking for a variety of butterfly species including Northern Pearly-eye, Appalachian Brown, and Mulberry Wing. To bone up on these species, visit the Mass. Butterfly Club Website at: <http://www.naba.org/chapters/nabambc/index.asp>. Meet at the Tatnuck Bookstore parking lot in Westborough. Bring binoculars if you have them, sunscreen, water, a hat, insect repellent and snacks. Contact Wendy at 508-340-7701 or Elise at 508-795-1147 or Christy Barnes, 508-755-6321.

July 22 – Monday – 7-9 p.m. Full Moon Hike Up Mount Wachusett

Meet at the park visitor center off Mountain Road for a hike from the Bicentennial Trail up to the top of the mountain by the light of the full moon. Maybe owls will be calling but certainly crickets and katydids or, perhaps, just the wind. Contact Christy Barnes, 508-755-6321, bertinbarnes@verizon.net to sign up.

August 14– Wednesday– 1-3:30 p.m. Boating on Moulton Pond

Bring your kayak or your canoe for a tour of Moulton Pond in Rutland. We'll look for late summer flowers and explore the shoreline. Bring a snack, water and bug spray or sunscreen. Contact Christy, 508-755-6321, bertinbarnes@verizon.net to sign up.

September 10 – Tuesday – 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Early Fall Mushrooms with Joe Choiniere

A diverse array of mushrooms is crucial to our forest ecology. Over 1,000 kinds of fungi - mushrooms, puffballs, coral and bracket fungi - exist in our area. Joe will lead out walk in Mass. Audubon's Wachusett Meadow Hemlock Seep, a groundwater-fed moist cool mature forest. There may be mosquitoes and ticks. Bring a lunch to eat afterward as we review our notes. NOTE: This is NOT a class in edibility of mushrooms! Contact Christy, 508-755-6321, bertinbarnes@verizon.net to sign up.



September 28 – Saturday – 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Springdale Mill Celebration

Music...Food...Exploration for all ages at the Springdale Mill Interpretive Site on the MCRT 1.4 miles from the West Boylston or River Street, Holden trail entrances.

October 6 – Saturday – 12:30-3:30 p.m. Bike Ride to White Valley Bridge

Ride the MCRT from Miles Rd. to the White Valley Bridge and back, 16 miles round trip. Fall colors, migrating birds, the beautiful Ware River. What a magnificent rail trail! Contact Christy Barnes to sign up: 508-755-6321, bertinbarnes@verizon.net

October 24 – Thursday – 10 a.m.-noon. Explore Cooks Canyon

Enjoy a leisurely walk through this lovely Barre sanctuary with a picnic overlooking the "canyon." Contact Colleen Abrams, 508-479-2123, colleen.abrams@verizon.net to sign up.

Welcoming West Boylston's new Director of Public Works

Anthony Sylvia hit the ground running in his new position as West Boylston's Director of Public Works in February of this year. At the start of his new job, he was greeted with a blizzard, with more snowstorms to come.

With so much on his plate, perhaps it's no wonder that he hadn't yet discovered the joys of the West Boylston section of MCRT. In May, however, West Boylston Town Administrator Leon Gaumond introduced Mr. Sylvia to the rail trail and to Wachusett Greenways. Mr. Sylvia immediately made this surprise resource in his new town his domain. The very next day his team removed a large pile of invasive brush collected by Wachusett Greenways. Welcome Mr. Sylvia!

Check wachusettgreenways.org for new listings.

Fitting Right in as a Greenways Volunteer

At the very core of Wachusett Greenways is the energetic, dedicated corps of volunteers who have been making it happen since 1995! The Greenways "labor of love" continues thanks to volunteers – like trail construction director Ed Yaglou and maintenance director Gordo Elliott; master photographer Hank and wife Viv Ouellette, who oversees our newsletter production; events coordinator Christy Barnes, mailings coordinator S. Jane Arntz, Springdale Mill leader Ruth Spaulding, and many others out on the trails and behind the scenes.

Keeping Greenways chugging steadily down the track requires many helping hands.

As a Greenways volunteer, you'll work with other trail enthusiasts, make new friends and benefit from outdoor exercise. And you'll be doing your part to showcase our bountiful Central Mass. for the thousands of friends who visit our trails and greenways every year.

Volunteer opportunities include trail clearing and maintenance, Welcome Center hosts, Springdale Mill Historic Site Committee, Family Fun Day, trailhead plantings, trail stewards, grant writing, newsletter team, event leaders, group and scout project leaders, carpenters and more. What's your skill and your joy? Contact Colleen to sign up colleen.abrams@verizon.net or check out our website for more volunteer opportunities.



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