

# The Greenways Connector

Connecting the Wachusett Community with Trails and Greenways

Fall 2016

## Teaming up for the MCRT in 2016

### *One, two, three ways to help*

**Join!** Commit to make a difference. If 286 friends join or renew during December we'll reach our goal of 1000 members for 2016. THANK YOU to each of the 714 members who already joined in 2016.

**Give!** Your year-end gift for the MCRT Construction Fund will help us complete our commitments. Four new construction projects are planned for 2017 along the MCRT in four Wachusett towns. WG must match the grant funding for these projects.



**Serve!** Stewardship is the key to our 2016 progress. Even one volunteer hour is a gift. Here are some jobs well done this year by our outstanding volunteers: repair split rail fence, paint a picnic table, mow miles of trail shoulders, write notes to our members, let

visitors know about the rail trail with maps and membership info, remove dead wood from the trail, remove graffiti in the Charnock Tunnel, offer a fun walk or bike ride – all free.

2016 Progress! Our volunteer trail team cut several hundred dead trees to increase safety. The team is still mowing trail shoulders and cleaning ditches. WG placed new benches on the MCRT, added portable toilets in Barre and Sterling and increased service to twice weekly at the West Boylston entrance for the busy months. The accessible ramp at 21 Miles Road in Rutland is under construction this fall. WG volunteers produced a fine harvest from the first Learning Garden at 21 Miles. Our partners paved the parking lot at River Street, Holden, and above the Charnock Tunnel in Rutland. How can you help? Please contact Colleen at [colleen.abrams@verizon.net](mailto:colleen.abrams@verizon.net).

### Let's Keep In Touch!

If you like our newsletters, you'll love our e-mails! Send your current e-mail address to Steve Chanis at [schanis42gmail.com](mailto:schanis42gmail.com), and we'll keep you informed about special events, MCRT progress and volunteer opportunities.

## Honoring a Loved One for All Time

Rest for the weary traveler, a quiet spot to reflect amid life's hectic pace, a perch from which to view the wonders of nature – their uses are many. These simple, engraved granite benches will honor loved ones. Generous donors make each bench possible through leadership gifts for the Mass Central Rail Trail. To learn how you can have a bench placed, contact Colleen at [colleen.abrams@verizon.net](mailto:colleen.abrams@verizon.net) or 508-479-2123.



*This year Greenways installed six new benches on the rail trail between the Ware River crossing in Barre and West Boylston. Four more are coming this fall. Come sit a spell!*

## StoryWalk Celebrates the Seasons on the MCRT

*Winter is Coming*, a story by award-winning children's book author Tony Johnston, depicts the slow fade from autumn's brilliance to the austere beauty of winter. What could be better than enjoying a book outdoors on the Mass Central Rail Trail in autumn?

That was the vision behind StoryWalk, presented by Sterling's Conant Public Library and welcomed by Wachusett Greenways and the DCR. Between October 6 and November 14, each page of *Winter is Coming* was posted along the Sterling section of the MCRT, so young visitors could read the story as they made their way along the trail.





## Our Sharing Garden is Growing!

Throughout the growing season, a hard-working group of volunteers labored to establish our new Sharing Garden at 21 Miles. Spring preparation involved constructing four 4x8 ft. raised garden beds, adding a soil/compost/alpaca manure mixture and sowing seeds. During the summer the crew kept the beds watered, weeded, and watched-over with an eye to protecting them from critters.

The season yielded a bountiful harvest of veggies. We shared fresh produce with the Rutland Food Pantry, and volunteers enjoyed the variety (the sweet yellow tomatoes were especially yummy!)



Volunteers of all ages are invited to contact Jeff Keay at [jkeay23@gmail.com](mailto:jkeay23@gmail.com) or 508-353-1174 to join in a hands-on gardening experience. The garden's first year was a plentiful success, and the future looks green!



*The annual Springdale Mill Celebration on September 24 brought laughter and sunshine. Join us the last Saturday of each September for trailside fellowship for all ages.*

## Events for December & January

### Eagle Lake Walk

Thursday, December 15, 10 a.m.

Enjoy a casual walk on Mass Audubon land over stone walls, across ancient eskers, viewing the lake and possible winter wildlife. Bring water and snack. Sign up with Colleen at 508-479-2123 or [colleen.abrams@verizon.net](mailto:colleen.abrams@verizon.net).

### 5th Annual New Year's Day Hike

Sunday, January 1, 2017, noon

We'll walk (or bring skis/snowshoes) the East Quabbin Land Trust's section of the MCRT. Meet at the former New Braintree Railroad Station Site, across the Ware River from Clover Farm Store on Rt. 32 in Hardwick. Sign up with Ed at [egyaglou@verizon.net](mailto:egyaglou@verizon.net) or 978-355-2539.

### Hike Mount Wachusett

Saturday, January 28, 10 a.m.

We'll start at the Echo Lake gate on Mountain Rd. and hike to the summit. Sign up with Christy at 508-755-6321 or [christybarnes0706@gmail.com](mailto:christybarnes0706@gmail.com).

Check [wachusettgreenways.org](http://wachusettgreenways.org) for new event listings.

## Ramping Up!

The accessible ramp at 21 Miles Road is nearly finished! Wachusett Greenways is grateful to our amazing volunteer for removing the concrete porch and installing the ramp. Watch for the opening of our Welcome Center for you this winter.



## NEW Legacy Circle

You can make a lasting impact for trails and greenways by making a bequest to Wachusett Greenways. The Legacy Circle is an exciting new way to join friends who want to make a difference. When you name Wachusett Greenways in your will or estate plan your gift will secure the care of the MCRT and treasured trails for years to come. Contact Colleen Abrams at [colleen.abrams@verizon.net](mailto:colleen.abrams@verizon.net) or 508-479-2123 or add a note in the envelope with your year-end donation or membership to let us know.

Help us name the Legacy Circle. Ideas are flying and imaginations are soaring. How shall we be known? Let us know your naming ideas before January 1.