Wachusett Greenways 2019 Annual Report

**25 Years of Partnerships to Connect our Communities**

Wachusett Greenways (WG) thanks the partners who have brought us to 25 years of connecting our communities with trails and greenways. Thank you to every WG member, donor and volunteer, eight central Massachusetts Towns, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the MA Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), the United States Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Mass Office of Travel and Tourism, Worcester County Sheriff’s Department Community Service Program, each legislator, many local foundations, several regional schools and colleges, several non-profit organizations, and businesses.

**Each of Eight Towns Participate**

All eight partner towns--Barre, Holden, Oakham, Paxton, Princeton, Rutland, Sterling and West Boylston--contributed toward Wachusett Greenways operating expenses and care of the Mass Central Rail Trail in FY 20. Wachusett Greenways is deeply grateful to the citizens, select board members, town administrators and manager each town for their encouragement and for their enthusiasm for the Mass Central Rail Trail.

**Reached the Goal of 1000 Wachusett Greenways Donors**

A record number of 1004 donors contributed to WG in 2019 including 160 new members. Donors came from 126 different towns and 24 different states. 513 of the WG donors made gifts to Wachusett Greenways’ MCRT Construction Fund. Nearly 200 volunteers of all ages served in 2019.

**Stretching Across the Commonwealth**

Twenty miles of the treasured Mass Central Rail Trail (MCRT) are open and being cared for by WG and our partners. Now we are working to complete the remaining ten miles of the central 30 mile section of this prized multi-use trail for recreation, transportation and health. Year round neighbors and visitors benefit from the MCRT between Sterling and Barre. To the east and to the west of our region, the Commonwealth and others are constructing new sections of the MCRT along the 104-mile corridor between Northampton and Boston.

**MCRT Construction and Restoration Progress**

Mass Central Rail Trail construction projects advanced in 2019 through the DCR Recreational Trails Program and the new MassTrails Program grants with Wachusett Greenways match included are:

1. Phase II to restore the section in West Boylston at Thomas Street to I-190.
2. Phase II of new construction of the 0.8 mile section in West Boylston along old Pleasant Street between Route 140/Beaman Street and Prescott Street.
3. Phase I of reconstruction adding an accessible-grade bypass for the connector section in Holden between River St. and Manning Street.
4. Phase I--temporary deck repair of the bridge in Sterling at the Quag/West Washacum in preparation for renovation or replacement of the bridge.
5. Phase I planning for reconstruction of the trail for accessibility at Whitehall Road in Rutland.
6. Phase I of design for new construction of the 1.9 mile section in Holden from Mill Street to Princeton Street.

The DCR solicited design and engineering for the new bridge connection at the Route 140/ Beaman Street causeway in West Boylston in 2019. Progress was interrupted when anticipated design cost exceeded the funds allocated. The Commonwealth and Wachusett Greenways will continue to seek an effective plan for completing this key MCRT connection.

Projects which WG is working to advance in 2020 include a MassTrails grant proposal to reconstruct the MCRT in Holden between Manning Street and Route 31 at Mill Street with accessible grades and the MCRT connection in Rutland at Miles Road.

**Gratitude for MCRT Stewards**

Wachusett town Departments of Public Works and WG volunteers mowed trail shoulders to maintain the MCRT. WG trail patrollers removed parking lot litter, checked portable toilets, and removed downed branches. WG trail volunteers removed dead trees and cleaned drainage ditches. WG also hired snowplowing for the River Street, Holden, parking lot.

**Reaching Out**

WG volunteers participated in the Moving Together Mass DOT conference in Boston, the biannual MassTrails conference in Leominster, and the annual Mass Land Trust Conference in Worcester. WG also participated in UMass Med School’s Earthday Celebration, Sterling Celebrates!, and Holden Days. Greenways directors continued to collaborate with other Commonwealth groups working on rail trails. Greenways held hospitality days at the MCRT, welcoming new members and volunteers.

**21 Miles Road Rutland**

Greenways kept tools here for trail maintenance and tended the vegetable garden shared by volunteers and visitors. Doug Hagman Landscaping generously donated mowing and leaf removal. Sentry Oil contributed heating oil.

**Outdoor Events**

WG provided outdoor events each month. Volunteers led walks, bicycling, canoeing and other outdoor adventures.

**Saying Goodbye**

Two amazing Greenways friends passed away in 2019. On February 19, Ruth Spaulding passed away. Ruth was the Springdale Mill Committee Chairman who led the annual September celebration at the mill site, and rallied her whole family to help. She offered warmth and hospitality to all, and she is greatly missed. On December 12, Ed Yaglou passed away. Ed led the way to connecting our community with trails for more than two decades. He envisioned the Mass Central Rail Trail, led the MCRT Task Force and created the MCRT logo now being used across the state. Ed encouraged others to serve and to lead. The Edward P. Yaglou MCRT Stewardship Fund is now established in honor of his special way of helping to sustain a community.

**Every Member and Volunteer Counts**!

You are invited to contribute at [www.wachusettgreenways.org](http://www.wachusettgreenways.org/) or by mail at Wachusett Greenways, P.O. Box 121, Holden 01520. A gift in *any* amount counts you as a member, and you will receive the *Wachusett Greenways* guide, which includes a map for the regions’ trails and greenways. Volunteers welcome.

Wachusett Greenways Board of Directors:

Colleen Abrams, Chair Troy Milliken, Treasurer

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Richard Barry Christopher Ryan

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