

**New England National Scenic Trail**  
Trail Stewardship Council  
CT-MA Executive Committee Meeting  
April 13, 2010  
Westfield Athenaeum, Westfield, MA

Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee

Mike Gildesgame provided an update of the April 5<sup>th</sup> discussion and vote of the QWAC, which reaffirmed its December vote to advise the Commissioner of DCR to not approve the relocation of the NET on to Quabbin land. The QWAC believes having the trail on watershed land could endanger water quality and would be inconsistent with the management plan. He noted that DCR staff at the meeting stated their opinion that the trail would pose no threat to the reservoir or watershed.

At today's meeting, Pat Fletcher pointed out that the relocated trail would be no closer than about a mile from the water, would be located on well-established and stable forest roads, and would not involve any trail construction. There are one or two stream crossings that probably will require some level of bridging. All DCR restrictions and requirements would be clearly posted. It was suggested that organizations concerned about trail continuity could write the Commissioner stating their support for the trail relocation to Quabbin.

GIS and Mapping update

Clare Cain reported that Wayne Fogg, one of the CFPA volunteers, has been working very hard on the mapping. There is a GPS trail line for CT and MA and that there is a map of all towns in CT which the trail crosses. She has set up a hidden page on the website with interactive map features, and she is planning to include additional layers as she gets them. We are waiting to resolve the Quabbin issue prior to posting the map on the trail website.

CFPA is using Access for a data base for trail management affectionately known as "Francis" (although "Paul" was also proposed by Paul). Clare has looked at the North Country NST model and the AT for examples of mapping. Chris Curtis and Beth Giannini pointed out that the RPAs have a substantial data base from the feasibility study days, and that much of it has been updated. PVPC is building a trail inventory and map with interns from Westfield State College. Chris will talk with Clare about the attributes included, the structure of the mapping project and other items. There was additional discussion regarding the data collection and mapping issues, including the need for a written guide book (see below) and whether to have one book or two.

It was agreed that there will be a technical GIS meeting in May to look at what CFPA has accomplished so far and decide how to proceed. The meeting will include GIS staff from FRCOG, PVPC, AMC, DCR, CFPA, NPS, and others as appropriate. The meeting will address issues such as how will the end user use the map or data; what attributes should be included, how the trail managers and TSC need to use the map and data, who will be responsible for maintaining and updating the map and data, etc.

Northeast Utilities

Eric Hammerling reported that the CT siting council has recently approved the New England East-West Solution: Greater Springfield Reliability Project which will a) upgrade transmission line carrying capacity from 115kv to 345kv; and b) result in additional clearing within the transmission corridor in CT (although

it is still within the existing right-of-way owned by N.U.). Mitigation discussions included land acquisition or easements on certain areas around Suffield and East Granby as examples.

#### NET book proposal

Ron Strickland, long-distance hiker and author, proposed that we consider creating a “coffee table” book about the trail with good story lines by well-known people and exciting pictures from along the trail and its history. This would serve to spread the word about the trail and especially make people along the trail aware of it. He showed several examples, including one developed by the Green Mountain Club for the Long Trail. This would not be a guide book, but an engaging publicity and education opportunity. As both AMC and CFPA do publications, Mike and Eric will look into the requirements of each organization to publish this kind of book.

The discussion veered slightly off topic to guidebooks and publicity. Bob Curley suggested that our publicity committee should be working with local TV folks, as he has with his trail. He will provide a list of local TV contacts. Local papers always are looking for good stories, and we should use them. We also discussed the need for a free, on-line interactive map that can be downloaded for day hikes. Ron suggested that through hikers would want a book with good information about the route, elevation gains/losses, etc. It was noted that the Conte Wildlife Refuge always is looking for ways to partner with communities and organizations like ours to spread the word about its activities, promote environmental education and watershed education. They also have some funds available for these activities.

#### National Park Service Realty

Charlie Tracy reported on the presentation by members of the NPS Realty division. Federal Land and Water Conservation Funds can be used for land acquisition and protection through easements. The Realty staff can provide technical assistance with the purchase or easement processing, including surveying, appraisals, and other steps.

As a basis for beginning the process to get LWCF funds, it was strongly recommended that the trail develop a land protection process for acquisition and easements which would require some inventorying of the parcels, identifying the procedures—who to contact, when and how, etc.—needed to begin seeking funds.

#### National Trails Day

There are at least 10 NET events in CT and several being developed in MA. The group generally agreed that we should focus on having a bigger celebration in 2011 with significant events and activities. It also was noted that we should begin planning to attend the MA Land Trust Coalition conference, develop the link with Conte, local community leaders and recreation folks. We will plan a recognition for Reps. Murphy and Olver as well if it's not possible this year.

#### Next Meeting

June 15, 2010 at 11:00 in CT.

#### Attendees:

Patrick Fletcher	Eric Hammerling	Kristin Wood
Chris Curtis	Natalie Blais	Laurie Giannotti
Beth Giannini	Paul Jahnige	Ron Strickland
Dan Call	Charlie Tracy	Mike Gildesgame
Joe Hickey	Clare Cain	Robert Curley