



BERKSHIRE EXCHANGE

M-M Trail Poised to Become Part of National Scenic Trail

by Maureen Flanagan

The Metacomet-Monadnock Trail is set to become one of the three main segments that will constitute a proposed new 220-mile New England National Scenic Trail. On January 29, 2008, the U.S. House of Representatives approved a bill, proposed by Rep. John Olver (D-Mass.), that creates a new historic scenic trail extending from the Long Island Sound in Guilford, Conn., to Royalston, Mass., at the Massachusetts-New Hampshire border. The Metacomet, Monadnock, and Mattabesset (MMM) trail systems in Mass. and Conn. would make up 190 miles of the new trail, with another 30 miles added to include an extension and trail relocations.

The trail would be the ninth federal Scenic Trail and the first designated since 1983. Its designation is expected to help generate attention, visitors, and resources to ensure the long-term viability of the system, according to a 2006 National Park Service study. About two million people live within ten minutes of the proposed trail system.

In an amendment to the bill, the Park Service is required to honor state and local laws regarding hunting, fishing, and other land uses. The Park Service can also acquire land only from willing sellers, according to the bill's sponsors, but eminent domain language was not passed.

The bill will go to the Senate for a vote before it is enacted into law.

Interested in Turtles? Find Out More!

by Patricia Lukas

turtle, n., **1.** any reptile of the order *Chelonia*, comprising aquatic and terrestrial species having the trunk enclosed in a shell consisting of a dorsal carapace and a ventral plastron. **2.** (not in technical use) an aquatic turtle as distinguished from a terrestrial one.

tortoise, n., **1.** a turtle, esp. a terrestrial turtle. **2.** a very slow person or thing.

The Random House College Dictionary, 1973

When you're out this spring, hiking along a wet meadow or bicycling by a beaver pond, you might be lucky enough to spot a turtle soaking up the sun. Don't just stand there—grab your camera and snap a photo. If you can get close enough, and you happen to have your field guide along, see if you can identify what species you're looking at.

Better yet, before you go out, check in with the turtle biologists at www.turtleatlas.org. Their 11-page Turtle Identification Manual describes characteristics of eight turtles you might see in Massachusetts. Learn about their habitats, the threats they face, and their conservation status. Sign up to be a turtle monitor and help the biologists gather data on local turtle populations.

For more detailed information about the turtles of Massachusetts, visit the website of Mass-Wildlife's Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program at www.nhesp.org. Choose 'Conservation' on the main menu, and follow the 'Reptiles and Amphibians' link to 'turtle conservation tips' where you can click on a turtle's picture to learn all about that species. There are also answers to questions such as, "Why are turtles in trouble?" and "What should I do if I see a turtle on a road?"

There are seven native species you might find in the western part of the state: the Bog Turtle, the Eastern Box Turtle, the Wood Turtle, the Spotted Turtle, the Stinkpot (Musk Turtle), the Snapping Turtle, and the Painted Turtle. There is also an invasive non-native, the Red-Eared Slider.

Good luck out there! I hope you all come across these fascinating creatures and report back to www.turtleatlas.org.

1929-2008
79
BERKSHIRE CHAPTER
YEARS

SATURDAY, MARCH 29
Annual Potluck Dinner
see page 3

An Indoor/Outdoor Classroom at Noble View

by Christine Fogarty

In addition to a beautiful view of the Pioneer Valley, one of the best things about Noble View Camp—and its true gem—is its educational capabilities. The Berkshire Chapter has held Leader Trainings at Noble View for the past few years, hosting groups from 10 to 40 participants. On October 27–28, 2007 we held our most recent Leader Training, with SOLO Wilderness First Aid training conducted on the following weekend. All trainings were held in the newly renovated Double Cottage.

We choose the Double Cottage for the trainings because it offers tremendous flexibility with regard to class size, format, and lodging accommodations. For larger groups, either living room can be transformed into a classroom with seating in rows. Smaller groups can be comfortable sitting around the room on one of the couches. Scenario learning can move outside onto the covered porches if the weather is inclement, and on the back lawn on sunny days.

During the session held this past October, our schedule was flexible enough so that when it rained all day on Saturday we were able to work inside. On Sunday we finished up the last of our class work inside and completed the role play skits hiking on the property's beautiful trails. While most of our attendees were local, we had a few from eastern Massachusetts and were able to provide lodging and kitchen facilities for a nominal cost. Our instructors were current Berkshire Chapter Outings Leaders, so the trainees were taught by experienced leaders. At this training we were fortunate to have Rob Robertson, Noble View Chair; Deb Levine, Berkshire Chapter Vice Chair; Bob Napolitano, Outings Chair; Donna Walters, former Training and Education Chair; and John Tu, a Berkshire Chapter hike leader. We also had the expertise of Steve Ciras, who is the Worcester Chapter Vice Chair. From AMC Staff we had Aaron Gorban, Risk Management Manager, and Jessica Wilson, the new Leadership Training Coordinator.

We've got an exciting 2008 planned at Noble View! Our next Leader Training will be held on April 5–6, with SOLO Wilderness First Aid on April 26–27. June 14–15 will be our second offering of a Map and Compass workshop taught by our Noble View expert, Gary Forish. Please see page 4 for details on these upcoming trainings.

Advanced Wilderness First Aid will also be scheduled this spring. During the summer we will offer refresher courses and workshops for our existing leaders to brush up on their skills. We also plan to schedule another session of Leader Training and of Wilderness First Aid training in the mid to late fall.

I feel Noble View is an ideal spot for science or outdoor education! Schools can benefit by creating a "mountain/outdoor classroom." There are a number of interesting geologic features and examples of local plant life available just a short walk from the Double Cottage. In any season one can observe the life cycles of trees, wildflowers, and verdant ferns and mosses. Girl and Boy Scouts can use the open areas for camping or cookouts.

I value each and every one of you who is an AMC leader, whether you lead one hike or a hundred hikes! Your expertise is important, and we are always looking for experienced leaders to help pass on their knowledge to others. I welcome and encourage any Berkshire Chapter Leader to help out at our Leader Trainings—you will definitely find it fun and may learn a few things you weren't expecting! I am also looking to provide new kinds of trainings or other educational programs. If you have any suggestions for new programs or comments on existing ones, I'd like to hear them! This is your Chapter—let's make it the best chapter! If you are interested in any of the upcoming trainings, please feel free to contact me at 978-372-8448 or learning@amcberkshire.org.

Get the very latest event listings!

<http://trips.outdoors.org>

Just select **BERKSHIRE** in the Chapter field (leave the other fields blank). Then click the **SUBMIT** button.

Don't forget to check in at home!

<http://amcberkshire.org>

**LATE-BREAKING NEWS &
IMPORTANT CHAPTER INFORMATION**

Berkshire Chapter Executive Committee

– 2008 –

CHAPTER OFFICERS

Chair: Jon Hanauer

(chapterchair@amcberkshire.org; 413-568-0990)

Vice Chair: Deborah Levine

(vicechair@amcberkshire.org; 413-584-6065)

Treasurer: Kelly Druzisky (treasurer@amcberkshire.org)

Secretary: Pat Stevenson (secretary@amcberkshire.org)

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Appalachian Trail Committee:

Cosmo Catalano (at@amcberkshire.org; 413-458-5349)

Jim Pelletier (wanderer0131@yahoo.com; 413-454-4773)

Berkshire County Representative: Jim Wells

(berkshirecounty@amcberkshire.org; 413-229-2742)

Berkshire Exchange Publisher: Jon Hanauer

(newsletter@amcberkshire.org; 413-568-0990)

Canoe and Kayak Committee:

Charlie Camp and Connie Peterson

(paddling@amcberkshire.org)

Conservation Committee: Patricia Lukas

(conservation@amcberkshire.org; 413-253-5711)

Family Programs: *vacant*

Membership Committee: Deborah Levine

(membership@amcberkshire.org; 413-584-6065)

Mountaineering Committee:

Bill Fogel (mountaineering@amcberkshire.org; 413-427-1693)

Jim Van Natta (mountaineering@amcberkshire.org)

Noble View Committee: Rob Robertson

(cerobertson@comcast.net; 413-549-4963)

Nominating Committee: Rob Robertson

(cerobertson@comcast.net; 413-549-4963)

Outings Committee:

Bob Napolitano (nappyofma@comcast.net; 413-534-8955)

Past Chair: Rob Robertson

(cerobertson@comcast.net; 413-549-4963)

Public Relations Committee: Bess Dillman

(publicity@amcberkshire.org; 413-667-5178)

Trails Committee: Patrick Fletcher

(hiker6@comcast.net; 413-562-9863)

Training and Education Committee:

Christine Fogarty

(training@amcberkshire.org; 978-372-8448)

Website Committee:

Bob Bergstrom (webmaster@amcberkshire.org)

Young Members Committee: *vacant*

Other Helpful Contacts

Membership in a Bottle: Chris Ryan

(bottles@amcberkshire.org; 413-549-4124)

Regional Director: Dale Geslien

(dalegeslien@sbcglobal.net; 203-778-3651)

Tuesday Hiking: Gloria LaFlamme (413-664-9648)

Tuesday Hiking Email Postmaster:

Dave Conley (dccmlc7@comcast.net; 413-786-6005)

Website Editor-in-Chief: Nancy Gonter-Weld

(nancy@gonter.com; 413-256-8728)

BERKSHIRE EXCHANGE

– March 2008 –

Editor: Maureen Flanagan

(berksexeditor@amcberkshire.org)

Assistant Editor: Gail Blackhall

(proofreader@amcberkshire.org)

Submissions (to the Publisher): Jon Hanauer

newsletter@amcberkshire.org; 413-568-0990

Berkshire Exchange, 29 Atwater St., Westfield, MA 01085-1541

Address Changes:

AMC, 5 Joy St., Boston, MA 02108; 800-372-1758

Title image:

Mount Greylock view from Ragged Mountain,

Mount Greylock State Reservation

Need a phone number?

If the person you want to contact by phone has no number listed, please call the Chapter Secretary, Pat Stevenson, at 413-625-2709.

Save the Date! All Are Welcome!

AMC BERKSHIRE CHAPTER ANNUAL POTLUCK DINNER

Saturday, March 29, 5:30 PM to 9 PM

American Legion Hall, 162 Russell St. (Rte. 9), Hadley, MA

Help us welcome new, returning, and prospective members! Enjoy a delicious potluck dinner and an exciting program. Meet new and old friends, network with Committee Chairs, and learn how you can join in and get involved. Bring along any friends who might like to know more about the AMC.

Our guest speaker, Naturalist Laurie Sanders of WFCR's Field Notes, will present "Special Natural Places in Western Massachusetts."

Please bring a dish to share with 6–8 people. Last name A–C, bring an appetizer; D–M, casserole; N–S, dessert; T–Z, salad.

It's a great event for all!

Plenty of free parking!

For questions, please call
Deborah Levine at 413-584-6065.

Laurie Sanders: Biography

Field Notes Host and Producer Laurie Sanders first discovered her interest in the natural world as a child growing up next to several hundred acres of wild land in Connecticut. As a teenager, she spent most afternoons exploring the traprock ridge and talus slopes, visiting streams, and crisscrossing the woods near her parents' house. Of all these habitats, most important was what her family called "the swamp." Consisting of a red maple swamp and an open tussock marsh, Laurie spent hundreds of hours there, poling down through the marsh on a homemade raft (two truck tire inner tubes and a piece of plywood), watching wildlife and identifying plants. "What surprised me was that basically I was the only one who ever went there, and here was a place that was full of interesting plants and animals. I think that Field Notes is an outgrowth of that experience. It's a way for me to share my appreciation for the richness and diversity of the natural world."

In the early 1980s, Laurie arrived in the Pioneer Valley as a Smith College student. Already keenly interested in New England flora, her interests have expanded over the years to include many other taxonomic groups and other aspects of landscape ecology. In the 1990s, she produced more than thirty segments for public television on the natural history of our area, and in 1999, began producing Field Notes on WFCR.

additional information: http://wfcra.org/field_notes

TUESDAY EVENING POTLUCK SERIES

Tuesday, April 8

Potluck Social and New Member Orientation

Unitarian Society, 220 Main St., Northampton, MA. Celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Connecticut River as an American Heritage River, with Andrea Donlon, Connecticut River Steward. Dinner is 6–7 PM. Bring a dish to share. Program begins at 7 PM with a new member orientation to follow. All are welcome! Leader Deborah Levine (413-584-6065). Sponsored by the Berkshire Chapter Conservation Committee.

Tuesday, May 13

Potluck Social and New Member Orientation

Unitarian Society, 220 Main St., Northampton, MA. Join us as Bernadette Giblin, owner of Safeground Organic Landcare, informs us about people-, pet-, and planet-friendly lawn care. Dinner is 6–7 PM. Bring dish to share. Program begins at 7 PM with a new member orientation to follow. All are welcome! Please bring your own reusable plate and utensils. Leader Deborah Levine (413-584-6065); Co-Leader Pat Lukas (413-253-5711). Sponsored by the Berkshire Chapter Conservation Committee.

Educational Workshops at Noble View

Berkshire Chapter Leadership Training Sat. & Sun., April 5–6, 2008

Whether you'd like to become a Chapter leader or just want to improve your outdoor skills, you're invited to attend. Training emphasizes group dynamics, leaders' responsibilities, trip planning/management, weather emergencies, incident/accident scene management, leader awareness, and decision-making. The \$25 fee covers day training and materials. Fee is refundable to Berkshire Chapter leaders once you've completed your three co-leads and have led your first event for the Berkshire Chapter. Overnight lodging available for \$15. Advance payment requested. Please contact Christine Fogarty at 978-372-8448 (before 9 p.m.) or learning@amcberkshire.org.

SOLO Wilderness First Aid, Sat. & Sun., April 26–27, 2008
WFA addresses the medical and logistical issues that arise where there is no ambulance, no roof or walls for shelter from the elements, supplies are few, and the length of the wait for help is unknown. Lectures and discussions are supplemented by hands-on scenarios. An emphasis on long-term care and evacuation complications in the backcountry makes this course unique. Fee of \$130 with optional lodging available. An \$80 subsidy is available for currently active Berkshire Chapter leaders. For info or to register, contact Gary Forish at 413-519-3251 or forgary@comcast.net.

Map and Compass Workshop, Sat. & Sun., June 14–15, 2008
With a simple compass, an accurate map, and the skills to use them, the woods are open for you to wander. Whether you're an outdoor leader or enthusiast, this active, participation-oriented field workshop is for you! You'll learn map symbols, scales, contour line identification, latitude/longitude, declination, and map and field bearings. You'll learn to follow bearings through the woods, and pace to control points. Fee of \$125 includes maps, compasses, etc. Lodging is available for additional \$15/night. For info or to register, contact Gary Forish at 413-519-3251 or forgary@comcast.net.

Do you have a skill or passion you'd like to share?

Nature study, writing, photography, map & compass, yoga, outdoor cooking, almost anything at all.
We'd like to help you bring it to our members.
Contact Chris Fogarty, Training & Education Chair, at 978-372-8448 or learning@amcberkshire.org.

Upcoming Events at Noble View

Earth Day Celebration and Conservation Work Day – and Free Lunch!

Sat., April 12, 2008 (Rain dates: April 19 or 26)

Celebrate upcoming Earth Day. Help remove invasive plants to restore Noble View's natural ecosystem. Planted in the 1940s and 1950s as ornamentals, these plants' rapid spread has overwhelmed native species. We need a strong turnout of volunteers to remove the plants, roots and all, for burning. Work starts at 9 a.m. Bring gloves, snack, coffee, hot chocolate, water. Tasty beef stew and vegetarian stew will be provided. RSVP for lunch to Leader Gary Forish (413-519-3251; forgary@comcast.net). Co-leader Patricia Lukas (conservation@amcberkshire.org).

Spring Cleaning Day – and Free Lunch! Sat., May 17, 2008

Breaking the ice is easy! New members especially welcome. Help us clean the Farmhouse and Double Cottage and grounds. All hands on deck for an epic spring cleaning! Inside work cleaning buildings, washing windows, etc. Rain or shine. Bring work gloves and clothing appropriate for the weather. Tools, water, burgers, and dogs will be provided. Meet 9 a.m. at the Farmhouse; gate open at 8 a.m. For info or to register, contact Gary Forish (413-519-3251; forgary@comcast.net).

Give Back to Trails – and Free Lunch! Sat., June 7, 2008 (Rain date: June 8)

Celebrate National Trails Day by giving back at Noble View. We'll clear water bars and ditches of leaves and debris, and we may build new water bars and ditches. Bring work gloves and clothing appropriate for the weather. Tools, water, burgers, and dogs will be provided. Meet 9 a.m. at the Farmhouse; gate open at 8 a.m. For info or to register, contact Gary Forish (413-519-3251; forgary@comcast.net).

Highlights of Upcoming Chapter Activities

More activities are listed on pages 3 and 4.

For complete listings of all Berkshire Chapter events, please see *AMC Outdoors* or visit <http://trips.outdoors.org>.

HIKING

April Coordinator: Dave Koerber

Abbreviations: L= Leader; CL=Co-Leader.

Hike Rating: First character indicates distance: AA=over 13 mi.; A=9-3 mi.; B=5-8 mi.; C=under 5 mi. Second indicates Leader's pace (avg. terrain): 1=very fast (2.5 mph or faster); 2=fast (2-2.5 mph); 3=moderate (1.5-2 mph); 4=leisurely (less than 1.5 mph). Third indicates terrain: A=very strenuous; B=strenuous; C=average; D=easy. Two letters at the end indicate terrain between the two values.

Activities range from challenging to leisurely. Ask trip Leader which activities are appropriate for you and what equipment is required. Hikers unsure of their ability should try only one level higher than previously attempted. Be sure to bring lunch and liquids, bug repellent and sunscreen, clothing and footwear appropriate for weather and conditions. When carpooling, please offer contribution to driver for gasoline.

Tue., Apr. 1. Tuesday Hiking.

Check trips.outdoors.org several days before each event for details, or call Dave Conley at 413-786-6005.

Sun., Apr. 6. Snowshoe/Hike Monroe State Forest.

Some strenuous parts, moderate pace, 5-8 miles. Conditions could be muddy. Meet 8:30 AM at Staples/Big Y parking lot, Rte. 2 W, Greenfield, located just off I-91 exit 26. Call leader to register. L Tom Eaton (413-665-3187).

Tue., Apr. 8. Tuesday Hiking.

Check trips.outdoors.org several days before each event for details, or call Dave Conley at 413-786-6005.

Tue., Apr. 8. 10th Anniversary of Connecticut River as an American River, Northampton.

Please see page 3.

Sat., Apr. 12. Hike Daniel's Mtn. and Mt. Wantastiquet (B2B), NH.

Hike includes a visit to the ruins of "Madam Sherrie's" in Chesterfield, NH. This will be about a 7-mile hike with some steep sections. Meet at 8:45 AM behind WalMart in Hinsdale, NH, just over the bridge from

Brattleboro on Route 119. We'll spot cars. Dress appropriately and bring plenty of water and lunch. Rain cancels. Call leader to register and for info. L Lisa Kirkland (802-857-5137 before 8 PM).

Sat.-Sun., Apr. 12-13. Backpack in Western MA or Southern VT.

Conditions and interest will determine the location and length of the trip. Participants should be self-sufficient; shared equipment based on group size and experience. Participants new to backpacking or a little rusty are encouraged to come along. Call leaders for details. L Bob Napolitano (413-534-8955 before 8 PM, nappyofma@comcast.net), CL Dave Koerber (413-568-4650 before 9 PM, dkoerber@earthlink.com).

Sun., Apr. 13. Leader's Choice (B3BC).

Join us on a refreshing, approx. 7-mile hike in the Westfield area. Terrain can be strenuous at times, moderate pace. Will car-spot to make this a one way trip. New Members always welcome! Rain or other inclement weather cancels. Reg. with Leader. L Christine Fogarty (978-372-8448 before 9 PM); CL Jon Hanauer (413-568-0990).

Tue., Apr. 15. Tuesday Hiking.

Check trips.outdoors.org several days before each event for details, or call Dave Conley at 413-786-6005.

Sat., Apr. 19. Northwest area of Quabbin Reservoir.

Hike approximately 6 miles, returning to starting point. The hike will be over some of the access roads and a side trail to ledges overlooking the reservoir. Bring binoculars and field guides. Registration required (to keep group size around 10 for wildlife viewing). Contact leader for meeting place and time. L Michael Zlogar (413-253-7522, mzlogar@comcast.net).

Sun., Apr. 20. Hike on Unkamt's Path (B3B).

Rte. 20 in Russell to abandoned trolley line in Huntington. Call leader for details one week prior to hike. L Alex

Trzasko (413-562-5782 before 9 PM, atrzasko@verizon.net)

Sun., Apr. 20. Chesterfield Gorge and East Branch Trail (B3C), Chesterfield.

Chesterfield hike of approximately 8 mostly flat miles from the Chesterfield Gorge along the East Branch of the Westfield River. We'll check out the spring flowers. May do a one-way hike or double back depending on the amount of water being retained by the Knightville Dam. Meet at 10 AM. Bring lunch and liquids. Heavy rain cancels. Contact leader for meeting place. L Bess Dillman (413-667-5178, bess123@ecoisp.com).

Tue., Apr. 22. Tuesday Hiking.

Check trips.outdoors.org several days before each event for details, or call Dave Conley at 413-786-6005.

Sat., Apr. 26. Mt. Grace (C3C), Warwick.

Mid-morning hike, approx. 3 hours. Hemlock and pine forest stroll to start, glacial pebbles along the way. Fire tower at the summit with 360 degree views W. to Mt. Greylock, S.E. to Wachusett Mtn., and N. to Mt. Monadnock. Bad weather cancels. Reg. with Co-Leader before 4/23. L Donna Walters (413-367-3025, dwalters@admin.umass.edu); CL Harold Petzold (862-377-9814).

Tue., Apr. 29. Tuesday Hiking.

Check trips.outdoors.org several days before each event for details, or call Dave Conley at 413-786-6005.

Sat., May 3. Bike Ride Norwottuck Rail Trail, Northampton.

Enjoy spring on an 11-mile ride along asphalt rail trail. Pace will be moderate. All riders welcome. Must wear helmets. L Dave Koerber (413-568-4650 before 9 PM, dkoerber@earthlink.com).

Sat.-Sun., May 3-4. Sages Ravine to Race Brook Falls (A3B).

Backpack Under Mountain Trail to Sages Ravine to Race Brook Falls. Meet at Noble View lower parking

lot at 8 AM on 5/3 to carpool to the trail head. Beginners welcome. A great hike to start off the season, so be ready for a cool night and a great hike. As always LNT taught and practiced. L Alan Doty (413-369-4464, aelydoty@msn.com).

Sun., May 4. Hike Mt. Haystack (C2B), Wilmington, VT.

This is about a 4-plus mile hike with some steep sections. Meet to carpool at 9:45 AM in the parking lot of Shaws on Routes 9 and 100 just east of the village of Wilmington, VT. Dress appropriately, bring lunch and water. Rain cancels. Call leader to register and for more info. L Lisa Kirkland (802-257-5137 before 8:00 p.m.); CL Jane Michaud (802-254-1343 before 8:00 p.m.).

MOUNTAINEERING

Abbreviations: L= Leader; CL=Co-Leader.

Wed., Apr. 2, 9, 16, 23. Indoor climbing.

Gym Climbing at Northampton Athletic Club, every Wednesday after 5:30. Gym fee – 10% discount on passes for AMC Members. Call gym to confirm hours of operation. Ongoing throughout the winter and early spring months. Informal. L Anita Greiter (201-819-3673, anita_lynn@comcast.net).

Sat.–Sun., Apr. 5–6. Rock Climbing, Multi-pitch.

“First Grasp,” New Paltz, NY. Multi-pitch rock climbing at the “Gunks.” Climbing experience required. L Jim Van Natta (413-498-2698).

Sat.–Sun., Apr. 19–20. Rock Climbing Instruction for Beginners.

Introduction to Top Rope Rock Climbing. Basic Instruction in Climbing, belaying, and general safety. Come and have fun on the rocks! Fee: \$50 for AMC members; \$60 for non-AMC members. Prior experience not required. Gear is available. Call leader 2 weeks in advance if interested. L Ed Daniels (413-527-4384).

Sat., May. 3. Work Party & Rock Climbing, Ashfield.

Work Party at Chapel Ledges in Ashfield. Come and improve the trails around one of the popular climbing crags. After the work is done we can hop on the rocks for the rest of the day. L Ed Daniels (413-527-4384).



Last year, Ian Beatty (former Website Committee Chair) spent some time in Africa. During a Caprivi safari, this bull elephant made it clear that he was getting more attention than he wanted. *photo by Ian Beatty*

Moving On at Noble View: Conserving Land and Building New Traditions

One Step Closer to Success – Russell Approves Funding of Conservation Restriction

With great satisfaction, I watched the Town of Russell approve the funding of the purchase of a conservation restriction on Noble View's 358.5 acres in a special Town Meeting on January 31, 2008. The move will result in the permanent protection and conservation of Noble View's open space. (See article in the *Berkshire Exchange*, Winter 2007/08.)

Russell's share of the \$675,000 purchase price for the conservation restriction will be subsidized by the \$472,500 Self-Help Grant awarded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, and the balance will be funded by the Springfield Water Commission. The process should be finalized this spring, shortly after the Town of Russell, the Springfield Water Commission, and the AMC reach agreement on the exact language of the conservation restriction.

We're really looking forward to the successful conclusion of this process, which has been supported by the Russell Select Board, Russell Planning Commission, Russell Conservation Commission, Winding River Land Conservancy, Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, and AMC staff and volunteers.

Traditions in Transition – Facing Facts

Over the last few years, we've experienced the decline of some traditions at Noble View. Many of our predecessors who loyally supported Noble View traditions have aged or moved away or have, perhaps, become disconnected from Noble View for one reason or another.

Some of these traditional events aren't really relevant any more. Now that we have a two-lane hardened road, Road Maintenance Day (first Saturday in May) isn't really necessary. Spring Opening Day (third Saturday in May) and Fall Closing Day (third Saturday in October) were essential to open and close the buildings when Noble View was seasonal, but we're open year-round now. The buildings still need a good top-to-bottom cleaning on a semi-annual basis, so I guess we'll have Spring Cleaning Day and Fall Cleaning Day now!

The Noble View community supports some of our traditions with reasonably good attendance. The most recent Woodcutting Day (now Woodcutting Weekend, third weekend in November) was enormously productive—a large group split and stacked about fourteen cords of wood.

Unfortunately, some traditions no longer enjoy the support they once had. We had a great time hiking, eating, drinking, and enjoying each oth-

ers' company at the George Washington Valley Forge Winter Picnic (President's Day Weekend), but the low attendance, again, was disappointing. Elvery Veal, who coordinates this event, asks folks to help get the word out, and for help with planning and execution for next year's festivities. You may reach Elvery at 413-387-9892.

Participation in Laurel Day (third Saturday in June) has diminished to the point where we have decided to abandon the event. This venerable tradition commemorates the retirement of the mortgage by Noble View's founding members with a hike to enjoy the blooming mountain laurel followed by—what a surprise!—a feast. It's sad to see it die out but, if there's no interest, we should face up to it.

The Fireworks Chicken Barbeque (just before July 4th) wasn't well attended last year. If we sponsor any Fireworks celebration at all this year, it'll be significantly scaled back.

We'd like nothing more than to see Noble View continue to serve a growing community of folks who enjoy each others' company at social gatherings, family days, and work days (or half-days). However, it's not reasonable to continue to expend volunteers' energy and resources on events that aren't of interest. If continuing any of these traditional events is important to you, please let us know, and support them by attending, and even by volunteering to help make them better. If these traditional events aren't supported by good participation—and they haven't been over the last few years—we can only conclude that they are no longer of value, and must pass away. Perhaps new traditions will spring up to replace them.

As a Committee, we need to offer interesting and relevant events, trainings, hikes, and social occasions. As AMC members and potential or actual members of the Noble View community, we enthusiastically invite you to invest the time and energy to support and enjoy this community with us.

So, consider coming out for a walk at Noble View. Come to a scheduled event. Help out by volunteering. Bring your sweetie, the family, or friends, or your pet on a leash. Let's build some traditions together.

Respectfully submitted,
Rob Robertson
Noble View Chair
cerobertson@comcast.net
413-549-4963

Register for Mountain Leadership School

The 2008 Mountain Leadership School (MLS) schedule is now available online at www.outdoors.org/education, or by calling 603-466-2727. Now in its 50th year, MLS is a five-day wilderness leadership training program designed to help you lead groups with minimal impact in the backcountry. It's perfect for new or experienced trip leaders looking to improve their skills. Participants will discover and develop their own leadership style and learn new techniques such as trip planning, map and compass, time management, group dynamics, Leave No Trace, and accident scene management. The fee for MLS is \$343 (\$381 for non-members). The fee for MLS with Wilderness First Aid is \$559 (\$634 for non-members). Call 603-466-2727 to sign up.

There are two \$150 scholarships available for Berkshire Chapter leaders (with preference given to the most active leaders). For a scholarship application, contact Jon Hanauer at chapterchair@amcberkshire.org or 413-568-0990.

Berkshire Chapter Member Receives AMC Stewardship Society Award

Dona Burdick, longtime Berkshire Chapter member, received the 2007 Warren Hart Award at the AMC Annual Meeting in January. She has contributed over 425 volunteer hours in the Berkshires and White Mountains to foster the mission of education, recreation, and protection of the mountains and trails of the Northeast.

In 2005 and 2006, Dona received the Marian Pychowska Award, named after an early woman explorer who, in the late 1880s, made first ascents in the White Mountains and developed trails used today.

Save the Date for the 2008 AMC Spring Gathering on Cape Cod

Hosted by the Southeastern Mass. Chapter, April 18–20. What could be better than springtime on Cape Cod? Dune walks, sea kayaking, and bike trails await you. Details at www.amcsem.org and in *AMC Outdoors*, or contact chair@amcsem.org. See you there!



SNOW IN FLORIDA
 The east portal of the
 Hoosac Tunnel, Florida, MA.



MEMBERSHIP IN A BOTTLE

For the cost of your annual membership, you will receive:

- A Nalgene® water bottle
- A \$10 gift certificate good for AMC books, lodging, and workshops
- An AMC window decal
- A subscription to *AMC Outdoors*
- Our quarterly newsletter, the *Berkshire Exchange*
- A new member packet with a welcome letter, information brochure, and member ID card.

– AMC Berkshire Membership Form –

I wish to purchase:

- _____ Individual "Membership in a Bottle" kits (\$50 each).
- _____ Family "Membership in a Bottle" kits (\$75 each).
- _____ Senior "Membership in a Bottle" kits (\$25 each, age 69 and over). Age: _____.
- _____ Young Member "Membership in a Bottle" kits (\$25 each, up to age 30). Age: _____.

I have enclosed a check for the total amount of \$_____ made payable to **Berkshire Chapter AMC**.

Please mail the kits to:

Name: _____
 Street: _____
 City, State, Zip: _____
 Phone: _____
 E-mail: _____

Is this a gift membership? Yes No
 (Bottles will be sent to the address above, and the membership recorded in that name, unless you indicate otherwise.)

Note: This offer is for new members only. Not for renewals, please. Thanks.

Please mail completed form with check to:

Chris Ryan, PO Box 9369, North Amherst, MA 01059

Questions? Contact Chris Ryan at 413-549-4124 or bottles@amcberkshire.org

BERKSHIRE EXCHANGE
 Spring 2008



Berkshire Chapter
Appalachian Mountain Club
 5 Joy Street
 Boston, MA 02108

NON PROFIT ORG
 US POSTAGE
PAID
 PERMIT 1035
 SPFLD MA 011