

New England National Scenic Trail
Trail Stewardship Council
Executive Committee Meeting

January 7, 2010

The MA-CT Executive Committees met jointly at Northeast Utilities in Berlin, CT. The original reason for meeting at NU was to discuss with their staff issues related to the Greater Springfield Reliability Project (<http://www.transmission-nu.com/residential/projects/springfield/default.asp>) as it may affect the NENST. Unfortunately, NU staff were not available to meet, so the group had a brief discussion of the issues. There was general consensus that at this point there is no pressing issue with the proposed project and we will await further information from NU. The main concern raised has been the potential visual impact of raising the height of the transmission towers in the existing right of way.

Funding

This year's funding for the NENST has been approved by the National Park Service Regional Office, and the FY2011 budget picture also seems positive. Currently, the two states will split \$90,000 this year and possibly \$120,000 next year. In addition, there are funds available from the matching challenge cost-share program. The two Stewardship Councils will recommend priorities and projects for the AMC and the CFPA which will be considered in the scope of work agreement to be signed with the NPS.

GIS, Mapping and Data Base issues

There was a wide-ranging discussion of the information needed for the trail data base, where it would reside and who would manage it. It has been generally agreed that having a single data base for the whole trail is a priority. DCR has a trail inventory for DCR properties and a trail protocol with characteristics that will be helpful. The Franklin Regional Council of Governments and the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission also have data from the Feasibility Study and have expressed interest in being involved in the process. CT DEP has trail data as well, which they will transfer to CFPA. It was also noted that local colleges and universities have GIS expertise and students who might be interested and able to assist.

The first step is to clarify what data is available and the format it is in; then identify a list of tasks that need to be done and a scope of work including what data needs updating, what new data is required, what level of interactivity is needed, some legal issues like who owns the data, etc. At the same time, we will decide on where to best house the data base, who will update the information on a regular basis and what the costs are. The Trail use and Management Committee will be involved in this discussion, and other committees will provide suggestions for trail projects and land protection needs.

We may be able to get interns from the Student Conservation Association to carry out some or all of the GPS work along the trail. We discussed the potential of having a presence on Facebook and Twitter as well as other outreach efforts to Chambers of Commerce, Kiwanis, Rotary, and other groups.

It was noted that the email newsletter has 650 subscribers—a very good showing at this point.

Mission Statement

The group discussed a mission statement for the trail, and agreed on the following:

The vision of the Stewardship Council is to protect, preserve and promote the New England National Scenic Trail as a premier long-distance trail, nationally significant for its ecological, recreational, cultural, scenic, and historic values.

Suggestions are welcomed.

Trail Staff

Part of the MA portion of the budget will go towards hiring a part-time staff person to be located in central MA and report to AMC. This individual will be directly involved in the GIS/data base management, will work on public outreach and education, and will coordinate activities within the TSC. AMC hopes to hire this individual in February or March. The job description is being finalized and will be widely circulated.

Trail Extension/Relocation

The extension of the trail to Guilford, CT is proceeding and it is expected that flagging and additional steps will be completed this spring. Discussions have been started with colleagues in New Hampshire about trail protection on the 15 miles of MM trail in that state, but no specific activities have taken place.

AMC has received approval for the relocation of the trail to cross UMass Cadwell Forest in Pelham from Mt. Lincoln to Route 202. The MOU with DCR is in process, and we hope to finalize that in the next month or so.

Next Executive Committee Joint Meeting: **April 13, 1 pm** (in MA, location to be announced)

Attendees:

Janet Ainsworth, Town of Guilford
Michael Stanley, Town of Suffield
Pat Fletcher, AMC Berkshire chapter
Laurie Gianotti, CT DEP
Dan Call, Southwick MA
Beth Giannini, FRCOG
Charlie Tracy, NPS
Mike Gildesgame, AMC
Eric Hammerling, CFPA
Clare Cain, CPFA
Natalie Blais, Congressman Olver's office
Vincent Messina, CT DEP
Laurie Giannotti, CT DEP
Tommy Talbot, CT DEP
Kristin Wood, Congressman Olver's office
Paul Jahnige, MA DCR