



## Annual Report for 2005

Prepared for Annual Meeting, February 6, 2006

*Moose Mountains Regional Greenways' mission is to identify and protect important natural resource areas, including water resources, farm and forest lands, wildlife habit, recreational areas, cultural and scenic areas; to educate others about these efforts; and to join protected lands to form greenways.*

Moose Mountains Regional Greenways sixth year, 2005, will be a memorable one, for this is the year we were successful in helping our partner, the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, purchase 2,189 acres on Moose Mountains. We also continued with our efforts to increase public awareness of Moose Mountains Regional Greenways and the importance of conserving our region's natural resources. Our efforts paid off with an increase in our member base and financial support. Highlights from the year are documented in the attached report.

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## **2,189 Acres in the Moose Mountain Range Purchased by Our Partner the Forest Society**

We are thrilled to announce that Moose Mountains Regional Greenways, in partnership with the Forest Society, has nearly completed the permanent preservation of the spectacular 2,189 acres in the Moose Mountain Range.

The conservation of this regional treasure fulfills every stated objective of MMRG's mission. These 2,189 acres represent one of the last large blocks of forestland in southeastern NH and contain the most pristine upper reaches of the Salmon Falls and Great Bay Watershed. This parcel links two other conservation lands to form a 4,000 acre greenway corridor for wildlife and multiple recreation opportunities.

The project was initiated 4 years ago with MMRG's successful application for a \$1million grant from the Forest Legacy Program. In 2005, our partner, SPNHF, was able to secure an additional million from the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program. Fortunately, SPNHF was able to purchase the property before the grant funding came in, thanks to a bridge loan from the Open Space Conservancy. This left \$400,000 for the partners to raise through private donations.

This past week, our Forest Society partners let us know that, due to the generosity of our many members and friends, the \$400,000 goal has been reached. However, because of the delay in receiving grant funding, the Forest Society is facing \$15,000 in financing costs. So, we are keeping the fundraising effort going to help cover these additional costs.

Through numerous public outreach initiatives throughout the year, MMRG presented the Moose Mt. Project to each of the six MMRG communities. MMRG spent many hours presenting the benefits of the Moose Mountain project at Town Meetings and to Planning Boards, Select Boards, Conservation Commissions, and conservation groups throughout our 6 town region in order to secure statements of support for the CELCP grant.

We want to offer our sincere thanks to Senator Judd Gregg, and the other members of the NH Congressional delegation, for prioritizing and supporting this project through the federal grant process.

## **Awarded \$30,000 from Carl Siemon Family Charitable Trust**

Moose Mountains Regional Greenways received a \$30,000 grant from the Carl Siemon Family Charitable Trust to support the Salmon Falls Headwaters project. MMRG is once again partnering with the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests to raise funds to acquire a conservation easement on a 341 acre tract in Milton Mills and to purchase a 146 acre tract in Middleton

## **Awarded \$30,000 from the Adelard and Valeda Lea Roy Foundation**

The Adelard and Valeda Lea Roy Foundation awarded Moose Mountains Regional Greenways \$30,000. The Foundation generously offered MMRG the latitude to determine how to best use these funds to support the organization's mission. At our last board meeting it was determined that \$15,000 of this award will be restricted to land conservation efforts, and \$15,000 will be allocated to staff funding.

## **Held Community Conservation Round Table**

Moose Mountains Regional Greenways partnered with the Green Mountain Conservation Group to host a Community Conservation Round Table in January 2005. The meeting, held at the Wakefield Town Hall, was attended by more than 25 community leaders and individuals interested in local land conservation issues. The goal of the event was to educate local leaders about the latest strategies and issues in land conservation. Wetlands scientist Mark West presented the recently updated wetlands mitigation rules developed by the state Department of Environmental Services. UNH Forest Resources Extension Educator Phil Auger talked about options for municipal fundraising for land conservation; issues and solutions surrounding cluster ordinances; and the challenges of long term easement monitoring. This event was made possible by support from NH Estuaries Project.

## **Co-sponsored Land Protection Workshops**

More than 25 people attended a Land Conservation workshop in Wakefield which MMRG co-hosted with the town and the Natural Resources Outreach Coalition. MMRG also joined NROC and the town of New Durham to co-host an Estate Planning and Land Conservation workshop, which was attended by 28 people from as far away as Dover, Wolfeboro and Alton Bay. These workshops are designed to help landowners and others who are interested in learning about estate planning and alternatives for permanently protecting open space.

## **Hosted 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Branch River Canoe and Kayak Trip**

In June, Moose Mountains Regional Greenways joined the Cocheco River Watershed Coalition, the NH Department of Environmental Services, Branch Hill Farm, and UNH Cooperative Extension to hold its second annual Branch River Canoe and Kayak Trip. Nearly 100 paddlers from all over the state attended the event. The emphasis of this event is to increase awareness and appreciation about the critical connections between land and water. The day's event concluded with a picnic lunch at Branch Hill Farm

## **Raised Over \$20,000 at Third Annual Trail Days Event**

In August over 100 families and nature lovers joined us at Branch Hill Farm for a day in the sun at Moose Mountains Regional Greenways' third annual Trail Days Party. This event offers family fun activities that enhance participant's understanding and appreciation for our region's natural resources. The feature activity this year was a hike up Moose Mountain led by Mike Speltz and David Anderson of the Forest Society, our partners in the Moose Mountain conservation project. Once again we owe the day's success to the generous support of Moose Mountain's members and businesses throughout the region who donated time, talent, goods, services and funding. This local contribution was matched by \$5,000 from the Carl Siemon Family Charitable Trust and \$5,000 from the Siemon Company resulting in over \$20,000 to support our mission.

## **Successfully Met \$10,000 Challenge Grant**

In June 2005 The New Hampshire Charitable Foundation generously agreed to a \$10,000 challenge match grant—in order to receive it Moose Mountains Regional Greenways had to raise at least \$10,000 in new membership revenue before the end of March, 2006. Not only did we meet that challenge, we met it by the end of November. There is no doubt that the ability to incorporate a message in our campaign letter explaining that the donation dollars would be matched up to \$10,000 was a tremendous incentive to prospective members and donors. MMRG wants to thank the Annette and George William Cottrell, Jr. Fund, and the Barbara K. & Cyrus B. Sweet III Fund, both charitable giving partnerships of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, for supporting this challenge match.

## **Added 90 New Member Households**

Our member's ongoing financial and volunteer support are critical to ensure that MMRG can realize its conservation goals. The larger our membership base, the more local support and awareness for our work. Therefore, it is important that we continually reach out to the citizens of the towns in our region to attract new members. During 2005 MMRG's efforts to further develop our member base paid off – we added 90 new member households. Welcome.

## **Hired New Executive Director**

In September Cynthia Belowski joined Moose Mountains Regional Greenways as the new part-time Executive Director. Cynthia brings an extensive background in operations and marketing management, as well as experience working for several NH conservation organizations. She currently serves on the Durham Conservation Commission and the Lamprey River Advisory Committee. Cynthia follows Joyce ElKouarti who, during her 2-year tenure, was instrumental in raising regional awareness of MMRG, and land conservation in general as a result of her efforts. We are fortunate that Joyce has agreed to remain active on MMRG's board of directors.