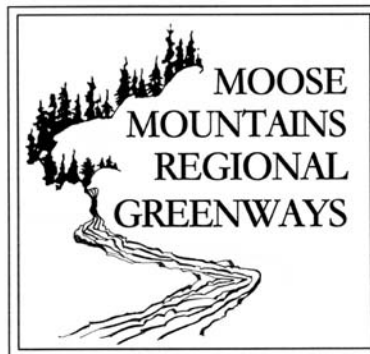


# Moose Mountains Regional Greenways

## Annual Report for 2007

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# 2007 Annual Report

## **Conserved Two Waterfront Properties Totaling 53 Acres**

Abutting a previously conserved 120-acre parcel along Union Meadows in Wakefield, these two properties have approximately 5,910 feet of pristine shoreline. The property's wetlands, evaluated in an earlier MMRG study, are part of a high quality palustrine wetland complex and overlay a stratified drift aquifer. Both the Coastal Land Conservation Plan and the NH Department of Fish and Game Wildlife Action Plan identified these properties as possessing features with some of the highest ecological significance in the state. The National Heritage Inventory has also identified this area as an exemplary natural community because of its unique ecological features. The property provides habitat for painted turtle, yellow perch, red-winged blackbirds and various other birds, frogs and fish. The property includes a well-maintained snowmobile trail that will remain open to the public for hiking as well as snowmobiling. A five acre outlot will be reserved for use as a picnic/parking area.

## **Conserved 120 Scenic Acres in Wakefield**

Located along the well-travelled Witchtrot Road, this wooded property features 120 acres of native plant and wildlife species, including beaver ponds, that will be permanently conserved. The property also features important agricultural soils, and its conservation will ensure the property's capacity to produce marketable agricultural and forestry products long-term. Approximately 1,800 feet of scenic frontage along Witchtrot Road will remain open for the scenic enjoyment of the public. The public is also invited to hike, cross-country ski, fish, and observe wildlife as well as the historic stonewalls and old barway.

## **Conserved 106 Acres in Brookfield and Wakefield to Protect Drinking Water Resources**

MMRG partnered with the Town of Wakefield, the NH Department of Environmental Services, and three private landowners to conserve the old Albee Gravel Pit that straddles the towns of Brookfield and Wakefield along Route 109. This creative collaboration will result in the conservation of the 106 acres overlaying a stratified drift aquifer and two existing wellheads that serve more than 1,500 Wakefield residents. The land is also home to a variety of wildlife, including coyote, deer, bear, moose, painted turtle, crayfish, birds, frogs and other fish. In addition, the public will continue to enjoy access to the property's existing snowmobile trails.

## **Conserved 26 Acres of High Quality Farm Land in Wakefield**

Located next to the Gage Hill Conservation Area already under easement, this additional 26 acres will further expand the local conservation mosaic. The land features an orchard with excellent farming soils. Former MMRG Board member Nancy Spencer-Smith chose to donate this conservation easement to ensure that suitable land for farming will be available for future residents of Wakefield and neighboring communities. The property also overlies a stratified drift aquifer that may serve as a future public water supply for the Town of Wakefield.

## **Completed Mapping for \$4,875 Moose Plate Grant**

MMRG received a “Moose Plate” grant from the State Conservation Grant Program to work with our member towns, Strafford Regional Planning Commission and The Nature Conservancy to promote the conservation and protection of high value natural resources throughout the Moose Mountain region.

Most of the tools needed to help our member communities identify and prioritize their critical natural resources were readily available. However, the recently completed Land Conservation Plan for NH Coastal Watershed (LCP), which provides a comprehensive science-based resource regarding unfragmented forest blocks, high quality fresh water systems, and critical plant and wildlife habitat, only goes to the NH coastal watershed boundary. A significant portion of both New Durham and Wakefield are outside of this boundary. Therefore, the picture of these natural resource features in these communities was incomplete.

MMRG specifically asked the State Conservation Grant Program to fund the completion of the analysis and mapping of these natural resource features identified in the LCP to the borders of both New Durham and Wakefield. This mapping and accompanying conservation focus area descriptions were completed in October 2007 and are being used by these two communities for conservation planning.

## **Presented Woods, Water and Wildlife Festival**

Moose Mountains Regional Greenways partnered with UNH Cooperative Extension to present the Woods, Water and Wildlife Festival at Branch Hill Farm in Milton Mills, NH. Visitors young and old enjoyed guided walks and talks with nature experts, workshops and demonstrations on tree farming, a live bluegrass concert, and hands-on craft projects and demonstrations – all designed to provide greater insight into the natural world. Thanks to the generous support of our members, event underwriters and sponsors, we were also able to raise more than \$20,000 to support our continuing mission.

## **Worked on \$8,500 NHEP Grant**

The New Hampshire Estuaries Project awarded MMRG an \$8,500 grant to undertake a public outreach and education initiative titled, “Thanks for all the maps and reports. Now what do we do with them?” MMRG previously provided each of its member communities with local maps and data detailing 10 high priority wetland areas within each town, as well as wildlife habitat maps produced by NH Fish & Game.

In 2007, MMRG staff worked closely with the conservation commissions of Farmington, Middleton and Milton to identify local conservation priorities using the maps, reports, and other resources available to them. The Town of Middleton incorporated this summary in their local Master Plan. Our work on this grant project continues through the first half of 2008.

The mission of the New Hampshire Estuaries Project is to protect, enhance and monitor the environmental quality of the state’s estuaries.

## **Organized 2 Nature Walks**

More than 30 people explored the vernal pools of Gage Hill Farm at a nature walk in Wakefield, NH. MMRG invited Sara Callaghan of the Forest Society to describe the important role that vernal pools play in the life cycles of spotted salamanders, wood frogs, fairy shrimp, and other vernal pool critters.

Moose Mountains Regional Greenways and Strafford Rivers Conservancy partnered to present a Hawk and Nature Watch and Walk field workshop. Naturalist Mark Suomala and property owner Steve Panish led 48 participants on a gentle climb up Teneriffe Mountain, a 102-acre property owned by Moose Mountains Regional Greenway’s Chairman of the Board Steve Panish that was recently conserved by Strafford Rivers Conservancy.

Both walks were funded through the New Hampshire Estuaries Project as part of Moose Mountains Regional Greenways’ public outreach and education initiative.