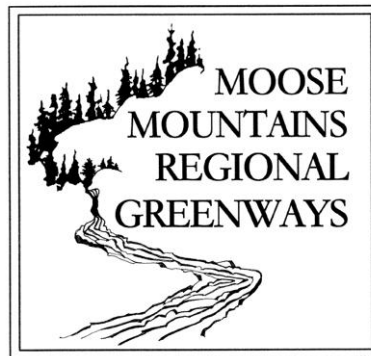


# Moose Mountains Regional Greenways

## 2010 Annual Report

Prepared for Annual Meeting, February 7, 2011



PO Box 191  
Union, NH 03887  
603-817-8260  
info@mmerg.info  
www.mmerg.info

## **Land Conservation**

The year 2010 saw substantial progress in conservation in the Moose Mountains Region by MMRG and our partners. In Milton, Philip Zaeder and Sylvia Thayer donated a conservation easement on 38 acres of their historic homestead off the Hare Road. The easement is held by our partner, the Strafford Rivers Conservancy. In Wakefield, working with our partners at the Natural Resources Conservation Service, we assisted landowners who wished to preserve wetlands and restore wetland functions on 210 acres of their land. An easement purchase agreement has been signed, and the easement is expected to close in February 2011. We also helped three other landowners apply for this program, and our hope is that some of these large potential conservation and restoration projects will come to fruition.

During 2010, we visited or worked collaboratively with many conservation partners in the MMRG service region. Keith Fletcher, MMRG Director of Land Conservation, met with New Hampshire Conservation Commissions in the communities of Brookfield, Milton, Wakefield, Farmington, Wolfeboro, and New Durham. In addition, we worked on projects with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, the Acton-Wakefield Watershed Alliance, Strafford Rivers Conservancy, and the Wolfeboro-Tuftonboro Land Bank. We also renewed our contact with the Acton Conservation Commission in Maine, the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests (SPNHF), and the Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership.

## **Education and Outreach**

As befitting a tenth anniversary year, 2010 was MMRG's most active year yet for outreach events. Eleven workshops, walks, and talks were offered and attended by approximately 200 MMRG members and the interested public. In addition to these, we held our Annual Meeting and Dinner and our 8<sup>th</sup> annual Woods, Water and Wildlife Festival, which attracted another 250 people combined. Our outreach also extended to the local school system with a GIS/GPS training program for Nute High School students.

Some highlights of these events are given below. See the end of this section for the calendar of 2010 educational outreach events.

With a grant from the NH Humanities Council, we were able to host guest speaker Steve Taylor at our 2010 Annual Meeting. Steve informed and entertained the audience with his slide show and talk titled "The Great Sheep Boom and New Hampshire's Agricultural Heritage". Other MMRG educational presentations in 2010 included a talk on forest ecology by licensed forester Dan Stepanauskas at the Branch River Paddle and a talk at the Wolfeboro Public Library by professional landscaper and MMRG Treasurer, Jon Batson, on landscaping for wildlife.

A new and highly successful event for MMRG this year was a Water Quality Cruise on Lake Winnepesaukee. Robert Craycraft of UNH Cooperative Extension demonstrated water quality testing techniques and described how different land uses can impact water quality. The Celtic Odyssey 5-piece band provided live toe-tapping music for the cruise out and back.

A favorite MMRG return event was the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Branch River Paddle hosted by Branch Hill Farm. More than sixty paddlers attended the event and enjoyed the peaceful ride along the Farm's conserved forested banks of the Branch and Salmon Falls Rivers. From Branch Hill Farm's forester, Dan Stepanauskas, they learned about increasing acidity of New Hampshire soils and waters due to acid rain.

Several events took place on MMRG facilitated conservation properties. Darayl Remick held both a winter snowshoe and tracking walk and a summer blueberry picking event on his Wakefield property. Tom and Dulcie Lavender offered their Brookfield land for an Edible and Medicinal Plants walk led by naturalist Sally Cornwell. Dick Maynard demonstrated his maple sugaring operation on his newly conserved farm in Farmington. In Milton, Tom and Janice Long along with Kari Lygren hosted a Holiday Greens pruning and decorating workshop led by Jon Batson and Dawn Evans. And Dave Anderson of SPNHF led folks on a bush whack and hike across the varied terrain of Piper and Moose Mountain, while fascinating participants with lore of vernal pools and bear behavior.

MMRG held its 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Woods, Water and Wildlife Festival on a sparkling August day at Branch Hill Farm in Milton Mills. More than 20 presenters, almost 50 donors, around 30 volunteers, and close to 200 attendees contributed to the success of this year's fun and family-friendly celebration of our region's natural resources. Returning popular events such as Hayrides to the Salmon Falls River, NH Wildlife viewings, and the Traveling Barnyard were complemented by new demonstrations on fieldstone walls and hand built kayaks and canoes.

#### **2010 Events Calendar:**

1/9 – Snowshoe and tracking with Charlie Ek on Darayl Remick's property in Wakefield; co-sponsored by Strafford Rivers Conservancy and MMRG.

2/8 – Annual Meeting at the Greater Wakefield Resource Center in Union; Steve Taylor spoke on "The Great Sheep Boom and New Hampshire's Agricultural Heritage".

2/27 – Winter Tracking & Tree ID with Charlie Ek at Branch Hill Farm in Milton Mills; co-sponsored by MMRG & BHF.

3/14 – Property walk and Maple Sugaring at Dick Maynard's property in Farmington.

3/31 – Landscaping for Wildlife talk by Jon Batson at the Wolfeboro Public Library.

5/1 – Hike on Piper Mountain & Moose Mountain with Dave Anderson of SPNHF in Brookfield.

5/29 – 6<sup>th</sup> annual Branch River Paddle, with licensed forester Dan Stepanauskas, hosted by Branch Hill Farm in Milton Mills.

8/14 – 8<sup>th</sup> annual Woods, Water, and Wildlife Festival at Branch Hill Farm in Milton Mills, co-sponsored by many area business and individual supporters and underwritten by the Carl Siemon Family Charitable Trust/Branch Hill Farm and the Siemon Company.

9/12 – Edible and Medicinal Plants walk with Sally Cornwell at Tom and Dulcie Lavender's property in Brookfield, co-sponsored by Trager by Kari Lygren and MMRG.

9/25 – Invasive Species walk with Jon Batson and Deb Goard, UNHCE, at the NH Farm Museum in Milton; co-sponsored by UNHCE, the NH Farm Museum, and MMRG.

9/26 – Water Quality Cruise on Lake Winnepesaukee with Bob Craycraft, UNHCE, and Celtic Odyssey on the Winnie Belle Cruise Boat, Wolfeboro.

12/4 – Green for the Holiday Season evergreen pruning and decorating with Jon Batson and Dawn Evans at Tim and Janice Long’s property & Kari Lygren’s house in Milton Mills.

## **Finances: Fundraising, Grants, and Donations**

Each year, MMRG’s biggest challenge is to raise the funds necessary to cover our operating expenses. These expenses are incurred by the day-to-day tasks that allow us to carry out our conservation and education mission, and must be covered by funding that is not restricted to conservation projects. Thus, several of our outreach events each year double as fundraisers. In 2010, our Annual Meeting silent auction brought in slightly more than \$1000. The WWW Festival met its fundraising goal of \$15,000 in sponsorships (donated by local businesses and individuals), which was generously matched by the Siemon Company and Branch Hill Farm/CSFCT. Membership donations of \$8500 in 2010 were also an important part of our unrestricted income.

In 2010, MMRG received \$2162.00 from the Piscataqua Rivers Estuary Partnership (PREP) to cover expenses associated with placing a conservation easement on the Milton property of Sylvia Thayer and Philip Zaeder. The amount resulted in a net zero expenditure by MMRG to accomplish this donated easement. The PREP local grants program is designed to defray transaction costs of completed land conservation projects, and as such was a perfect fit for this particular project.

The Alden N. Young Trust donated \$25,000 to MMRG in 2010 for land conservation projects in Wakefield. These restricted funds follow previous similar donations from the Trust and MMRG is grateful to Trustee Nancy Spencer Smith for her long-term support of our conservation efforts in Wakefield.

### **Finance Committee Report, 2010**

Before 2010, MMRG kept its assets either in bank accounts or CDs. Interest from the CDs was used to pay part of our operating expenses. However, the very low interest rates accrued by CDs in recent years has greatly reduced the income generated this way. A financial committee was formed in 2010 to explore alternatives, consisting of Steve Panish, Darayl Remick, Art Slocum and Cynthia Wyatt. After considerable investigation and deliberation, the committee wrote up an Investment Policy document, and presented it to the Board, which approved it. The committee recommended that the board move funds that are considered long-term endowment holdings into a brokerage account and invest in two conservative “balanced” mutual funds. The brokerage account was opened with Charles Schwab, a discount brokerage, and the funds decided upon are the Janus Balanced Fund and the Vanguard Wellington Fund. Balanced funds are highly diversified to reduce volatility and are intended to be used as a solely-held investment that is not actively managed by the investor. In late fall we began transferring funds into the Schwab account and are gradually investing. As of 1/25/2011 we have moved \$114,611 into the account and invested \$65,600 equally into the two funds. The current value is \$116,460. This represents a gain in value of \$1849, although this figure will move up and down. We will continue to slowly invest the remaining \$49,512, which is in a money market fund.

For the details of MMRG’s 2010 income and expenses, please see the final page of this report.

## **Staff**

In June 2010, MMRG Executive Director (ED) Charlie Ek resigned for personal reasons. The Board acted quickly to fill the position of Interim ED and hired Virginia Long of Milton in early July. Virginia stepped in to organize the Woods, Water, and Wildlife Festival, which came off very successfully, and to catch up on administrative tasks that needed attention. In August and September, MMRG advertised and conducted a search for the permanent ED position. In order to avoid any conflict of interest in this process, Steve Panish, Virginia's partner, resigned as Chair of the Board and stepped down from the Hiring Committee. After reviewing several applications and interviewing candidates, the Board hired Virginia as permanent Executive Director in October. This hire was publicized by a legal notice in Foster's Daily Democrat in accord with New Hampshire law for non-profit organizations.

At the close of 2010, MMRG began the transition to being an employer of employees rather than of independent contractors, categories legally defined by the State of New Hampshire. In October 2010, MMRG submitted for the first time a New Hires report to the NH Department of Employment Security (NHES), after learning that such reports are legally required any time new staff are hired. This report occasioned an audit of MMRG staffing since its inception in 2000; the audit found that MMRG had mistakenly misclassified several of its previous and current staff as independent contractors. Although MMRG was allowed to choose the reimbursable option for its obligatory unemployment insurance, it was liable for a \$700 penalty for lack of payment in previous years. As part of the transition to hiring employees, the Board set up an Employee Policies Committee consisting of Cyndi Paulin, Jon Batson, Steve Panish, and Art Slocum. The committee drafted an Employee Handbook and submitted it to the Board for approval. In early 2011, the Board approved hiring Checkmate Payroll Services to do the MMRG payroll. Workers Compensation Insurance was also purchased to cover the employees.

## **Board of Directors and Executive Officers**

In addition to the turnover in staff, MMRG also saw significant changes in its Board of Directors and Executive Officers in 2010. Directors Robert Craycraft, from New Durham, and Kasandra Stockman, from Wakefield, both resigned for personal reasons. The Board continues to search for persons who believe in MMRG's mission and are willing to serve the organization as Directors.

More importantly, the aforementioned resignations required election of two new Executive Officers of the Board (These appointments must be confirmed by the newly elected Board of Directors at the 2011 Annual Meeting.) Dawn Evans, Director-At-Large, was elected Secretary to replace Bob Craycraft, who had served in that capacity for three years. Dawn had previously served as MMRG's Executive Director for 1 year, was elected to the Board in 2010, and had already performed co-Secretary duties for several months.

Most notably, Art Slocum of Wolfeboro was elected Chair of the Board in September, after Steve Panish submitted his resignation from that position. Art joined the Board of Directors in 2009 after MMRG expanded its service area to include Wolfeboro as its seventh community. Art is a retired Manufacturer's Representative and Sales Manager for La-Z-Boy, Inc. and brings much needed sales expertise to the Board. He devotes a lot of his time to several area outdoors and conservation-minded organizations and has energetically stepped into the role of Chair at MMRG.

# Annual Action Plan for 2011

## Protect Important Natural Resource Lands

- Work directly with landowners to conserve high priority lands: close on project in Wakefield; work to facilitate progress on projects in the pipeline, help landowners enroll in Wetlands Reserve Program.
- Do field work to assess appropriate new Wetlands Reserve Program projects.
- Present a Land Conservation Easement workshop in Wolfeboro.
- Visit Conservation Commissions of MMRG seven communities.
- Continue to assist our conservation partners to conserve high priority lands and local land use Boards to identify town-specific conservation priorities.
- Create new informational materials about the conservation easement process and distribute.

## Public Outreach and Education

- Hold approximately one Outreach Event per month, including annual events, conserved property walks, educational talks, workshops on natural resources and conservation workshops.
- Organize 7<sup>th</sup> annual Branch River Paddle in May.
- Organize 9<sup>th</sup> annual Woods, Water and Wildlife Festival in August\
- Organize 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Water Quality Cruise in August
- Organize Land Conservation Easement workshop for interested landowners

## Communications and Media Outreach

- Publish at least two newsletters, with target months of January and June.
- Re-organize, maintain and update MMRG web site: add archives of Board Meeting Minutes, Newsletters, Annual Reports, and Map and List of MMRG-facilitated conservation lands, add links to contact MMRG staff, to subscribe to electronic mailings, and to volunteer.
- Draft and distribute press releases, calendar postings, and fliers as appropriate for all MMRG activities and accomplishments.
- Make use of electronic mail service to streamline electronic notifications.

## Fundraising

- Involve staff and Board members in soliciting sponsorships for WWW Festival, using enhanced prospective sponsor list.
- Identify prospective major donors; establish and implement protocol for contacting; create written materials for this process.

## Membership Development

- Involve staff , Board members, and existing MMRG members in reaching out to new potential members to increase our membership.

## Planning

- Plan for and hold Board strategic planning sessions to guide MMRG's next 5 years.

# Moose Mountains Regional Greenways

## Profit and Loss for Fiscal Year 2010

### Income

CONTRIBUTED SUPPORT	
Contributions/Donations	66,304.25
Membership/Donations	8,525.00
Total CONTRIBUTED SUPPORT	<u>74,829.25</u>
EARNED REVENUES	
Fundraising	513.00
Interest Income	4,902.06
Program service fees	3,750.00
EARNED REVENUES - Other	3,498.00
Total EARNED REVENUES	<u>12,663.06</u>
Reimbursed Expenses	<u>3,212.00</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>90,704.31</b>

### Expense

Reconciliation Discrepancies	(339.27)
BUSINESS EXPENSES	
Legal Notifications	96.60
Reimbursement of expenses	1,000.00
Bank fees -checks	20.50
Advertising expenses	25.00
Computer supplies/software	53.48
Dues/Fees	220.00
Fundraising Costs	849.50
Insurance - business	1,838.00
Internet/Website Expense	145.00
Land Acquisition Costs	17,025.50
Office Supplies	240.81
Organizational (corp) expenses	102.00
Postage/Shipping/Handling	1,110.12
Printing & copying	4,972.27
Recording Fees	135.00
Telephone/telecommunications	720.19
Total BUSINESS EXPENSES	<u>28,553.97</u>
PROFESSIONAL/CONSULTANT FEES	
Education Coordinator	870.00
Director of Land Conservation	3,400.00
Executive Director Contract Exp	33,211.60
Professional Fees	700.00
Subcontractors/Other	4,373.75
Total PROFESSIONAL/CONSULTANT FEES	<u>42,555.35</u>
TRAVEL/MEETING EXPENSES	
Meal expense	1,316.50
Conference,workshop,meeting exp	322.34
Hall Rental	795.00
Meeting Materials	25.27
Speakers Fees & Expenses	302.00
Total TRAVEL/MEETING EXPENSES	<u>2,761.11</u>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>73,531.16</b>
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b><u>17,173.15</u></b>