

Minutes
Meeting of the Mass Central Rail Trail Coalition
February 10, 2007

Moderator: Craig Della Penna

Future meetings (details on the MCRT web site):

May in Northampton

October in Waltham

News:

Berlin, Clinton, Belchertown have begun negotiations with a Limited-Liability Corporation LLC to buy as a package the rail beds in those communities owned by Guilford. The communities have committed to buying out the LLC.

The Chuck Fisk chronicle of his mid-1980s hike along the MCRT is now on the MCRT web site. [Click here](#). If anyone knows where he is, have him contact Craig Della Penna at Craig@CraigDP.com

Ideas offered for increased publicity for the MCRT:

- A coalition-led effort to obtain more press publicity and thereby better educate the public. Possible drafting of news releases by the coalition. Contact with key reporters to educate them and stimulate MCRT articles.
- Organizing a “trail summit” on Beacon Hill modeled after the annual “bicycle summit” in Washington.
- Urge folks to vote for Wachusett Greenways in the Brigham/Chronicle contest to win a \$5k prize.
- Follow the lead of the Cochituate Rail Trail group that has worked with John Harvard Brew House to have “Rail Trail Ale”.
- Use community TV local access channels to publicize the trail. Put together a show for distribution to the community TV folks.⁴
- Craig is continuing his trail trek with a Globe and NY Times reporter.
- Generate a uniform set of maps and a global map of the MCRT.
- Design and implement a uniform set of mile markers. The design might a college team contribution.
- Create a wildflower guide for the trail modeled after the brochure that is being done for the Upper Charles Trail.
- Get more coverage or rail trails, including the MCRT, in the Commonwealth of Mass. tourist book.

Attendees involved with other rail trails:

- Grand Trunk Trail in Brimfield and the Quinnebaug Trail on the other side of the river.
- Doug Mink: Charles River and many other Boston trails. Notes that the East Coast Greenway will intersect the MCRT in Boston.
- Dick Williamson, Bruce Freeman, Assabet River and Cochituate trails.

Updates from communities along the MCRT:

- Somerville. The trail from Boston into Somerville will hopefully be incorporated in the design and construction of the Green Line extension. A letter has been sent urging a joint design of rail and trail.
- Somerville to Belmont. There is a debate about the trail surface. A porous surface is being considered because of nearby wetlands.
- Belmont. Use of CPA funds is being considered. Discussions have begun with the owner of a critical section of the trail. News about Belmont from the Belmont Citizens Forum newsletter is on the MCRT web site.
- Waltham. The trail is close to construction. A big development of the Polaroid property alongside the trail is planned.
- Wayland and Sudbury. The much-discussed plan for the development of a new Wayland Town Common abutting the MCRT has died once again. The developer had promised some rail trail funding.
- Hudson. No news. Current focus is on the Assabet River Rail Trail that intersects the MCRT.
- Berlin. The MBTA-owned rail bed ends in the middle of town. The Town has purchased a short section to the west. The Town will buy out the LLC that probably will be purchasing another section.
- Clinton. A LLC is pursuing the acquisition of the tunnel and rail bed.
- West Boylston, Sterling, Holden and Rutland. Wachusett Greenways section. New segments are being built. A tunnel has been constructed at Charnock Hill Road in Rutland. The long-term goal is connecting the segments.
- Ware. Discussions have begun with a utility that owns 80% of the rail bed.
- Palmer. There is a new Town Manger who will place an emphasis on the MCRT,
- Belchertown. Six of the nine miles in the Town have been acquired for a trail. One more mile is to be acquired.
- Belchertown to Northampton. Norwottuck Rail Trail. The extension from Damon Rd. in Northampton (approx. one mile) has been held up while wetlands issues and a property dispute are dealt with. An active railroad has given permission for a rail trail tunnel under the railroad. There is late summer target for completion of the extension. The tunnel will be a few years later.

Miscellaneous items:

- Wachusett Greenways has created a cookbook that is attracting sales.
- Folks are encouraged to see if their company provides matching donations for monies donated to rail trail efforts.