

M A S S A C H U S E T T S

# SIERRAN

Volume 11 • Number 3

Fall 2005

Reaching More Than  
26,000 Sierra Club Members  
in Massachusetts

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*Annual dues in the Sierra Club are \$39, of which \$1 is for a subscription to the Massachusetts Sierran.*

## WHEN WIND MEETS WILDERNESS:

### Land Taking Adds to Injury at Wachusett Mountain

Letter from the desk of James McCaffrey, Director

Massachusetts' publicly owned conservation lands are protected by Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution, which requires a two-thirds majority vote of the legislature to change the use of public lands or to take them for another public purpose (such as a water treatment plant). In most cases the Club opposes the taking of conservation land for other than its intended purpose. Do we change our position when a seemingly laudable idea is proposed, such as a renewable energy project, which also requires the taking of valuable public lands?

The parcel in question is found on one of the Commonwealth's most precious properties, Wachusett Mountain State Reservation, also home to some of the oldest trees in the world. The proposed taking would grant to a municipal light department a permanent easement on a popular hiking trail in order to build two new large scale wind power structures on a small parcel of privately-owned land within the Reservation. Construction would require tree clearing, removal of historic stone walls, and re-grading of the mountain on the reservation adjacent to their land.

Even worse, it would set a terrible precedent. The Sierra Club fought for years to scale back ski area development on the north face of Wachusett Mountain. In exchange for allowing a private developer to expand the private ski area by 11 acres, the state adopted a comprehensive management plan which designated the "back" of the mountain as "wilderness" to be "managed in a hands off fashion" in order to "offset the more intensive uses at the ski area."

The proposed expansion of the wind farm appears to violate the spirit and intent of that plan. Hence, any approval of this taking would establish a dangerous precedent in which the legislature allows a private entity to violate a state approved

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On the cover: Paper birches on Mt. Greylock Photograph by Elisa Campbell

MASSACHUSETTS

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*Opinions, unless otherwise stated, are of the author only; positions adopted by the Sierra Club are identified as such.*

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# Wachusett's "New" Old Growth

by Joe Choiniere

There is a quality about mountains, which those who frequent them understand: they are full of hidden things; treasures, revealed slowly, over time, gifts for time spent. Even small mountains have their hidden treasures. Wachusett Mountain, only two thousand feet tall and barely fifty miles from Boston, is no exception; its treasure is Old Growth forest, one of the rarest habitats in North America.

Old growth is forest that has never been cut. Less than one percent of our state's original forests have survived uncut, almost all of it west of the Connecticut River. Wachusett has never been completely denuded of forest by humans — not by the native Americans who named Wajuset, "the Great Hill," not by the European colonists who cleared lands around Wachusett in the late 1700's but left the mountain lots untamed, and at least not completely by the more recent management by the Department of Conservation and Recreation, which balances ski area leases, auto roads, trails, and forestry among many pressures.

## Old Growth found in 1995

In 1995, these treasures revealed themselves to one of the mountain's greatest protectors, Gordon Brownell. Gordon is a sage of the mountain. During a review of a proposal to expand the ski area on the mountain, Gordon reported what he thought were old trees on the mountain. He and his wife, Donna, founders of WEST (Watchdogs for an Environmentally Safe Town), urged biologists to look at these trees. Bob Leverett, our state's most knowledgeable Old Growth guru, looked and was awed. A team led by Massachusetts Audubon's Peter Dunwiddie then verified Old Growth on the mountain in the path of the expansion. The staff at Harvard's forest research site (collectively called "Harvard Forest") eventually documented Old Growth forest around the mountain summit at about 1700 feet elevation, the first certified Old Growth in Massachusetts east of the Connecticut River. Thanks to the combined efforts of WEST, the Massachusetts Chapter of the Sierra Club, and Mass Audubon, this forest was eventually protected.

After the scientific verification of the uniqueness of Wachusett's old forests, one might suppose it a no-brainer that they would be protected. But in some ways, the safety of the Old Growth seemed more difficult to secure than its delineation and the then DEM

Commissioner's protection of the forest on paper; ensuing years brought ski area violations of the Old Growth zone, illegal ski and snowboard trails in Old Growth areas, and the loss of a 20 acre triangle of buffering mature forest despite an extensive legal challenge by the Sierra Club.

The official Old Growth is no ordinary forest. The mountain's elevation, varying slope directions and unusual weather events contribute to an array of interconnected forests of diverse types hard to find elsewhere. The advanced age of trees (over 375 on a yellow birch!), the sheer number of old trees (over one hundred northern red oaks over 300 years of age,) and the varied forest communities have led a number of scientists to visit Wachusett and proclaim it very special, a scientific, dendrological, dendrochronological (Wachusett's tree ring data has already contributed to the study of climate and history), and genetic laboratory, a true national treasure. No one really knows what this ecosystem holds under the trees, down at ground level, in the microhabitats which take decades to develop in forests, in the small stuff like beetles and fungi and lichens and soil animals; but what the trees create in their shade eventually supports the forest itself as a system which is more than the sum of its parts.

*continued on page 4*



Photograph by Elisa Campbell

Northern red oak on the Semuhenna Trail

*Editor's Note: Joe is leading an outing to explore the Old Growth on Mt. Wachusett for the Chapter this fall; see the "Outings" section of the Sierran.*

## NEWS BRIEF

### TRANSPORTATION BILL AUTHORIZES FUNDS FOR NORTH SOUTH RAIL LINK

Congress recently approved a massive transportation package which includes authorization for preliminary engineering to move forward on the North South Rail Link, the only gap in the entire northeast rail corridor. This is a great victory for what Massachusetts planners have called the “greatest absolute time savings” of any commuter rail project in the Commonwealth. The North South Rail Link would prevent the emission of 585 tons of carbon dioxide from our polluted skies every day, and take 55,000 cars off the road daily. Many thanks are due to Senators Kennedy and Kerry of Massachusetts, and Congressman Stephen Lynch for their leadership and vision in steadfastly supporting the North South Rail Link. Thanks are also due to our many members who called their congressmen and asked that the project be authorized. Does this mean the project will be built? Not now, as full funding has not been appropriated, but it does help in preserving the option for the future. ❖

### VOLUNTEER NEEDED TO DESIGN NORTH SOUTH RAIL LINK MAP

We would like to include in the Massachusetts Sierra Club web site a map of the commuter rail system of Eastern Mass showing the possible destinations from each station on the system that will be made available by the North South Rail Link project. We have a color spider map of the system and need someone with the time and ability to design a flash and html interactive system to show the potential of the rail link. Please contact Louise Lewis at 617-266-5890.

## Wachusett's “New” Old Growth

(continued from page 3)

### “New” Old Growth

But it turns out there is more Old Growth, what I call “new” Old Growth. In 1998, my colleague Frank Shea (a trained Old Growth enthusiast) and I walked the boundary of the official Old Growth area; we found ourselves straying westward into lower elevations and saw Old Growth forests beyond the protected zone. In early 1999, we proposed several new areas with over 100 acres of Old Growth. Verification of these areas by Harvard Forest in a report released in 2004 has initiated an update of the mountains’ resource protection plan to include these new areas in the Old Growth zone, hopefully protecting them forever.

These new areas are of even greater contrast, affected by many natural forces of wind, ice and weather. Absolutely ancient hemlock, mini-ledge barrens of pitch pine, the largest deciduous trees on the mountain, and beech and oak forests affected by multiple natural disturbances are all part of the “new” Old Growth.

Walk south on the Semuhenna Trail from its junction near North Road. You begin uneventfully in younger hemlock forest but soon you will perceive a change: trees are different, more diverse in size, and some very ancient hemlocks stand out in a small grove. At the road crossing near the bog, the forest reduces its size, clinging to bedrock which alternatively supports hemlock in depressions and pitch pine on protruding ledges. Farther along, the trail bursts out from the conifer

shade into hardwood forests with absolutely dense understories as the cone of the mountain rises to your left. As it nears its junction with the Harrington Trail, the Semuhenna parallels a mini-cove, a contour feature which traps both water and nutrients, spawning the largest specimens of trees in Old Growth on the mountain. Frank Shea and I studied this cove in detail and documented advanced ages and sizes of many species including white ash, sugar maple, northern red oak, and yellow birch.

Last autumn, one of the forest giants Frank and I measured was blown over; this three-foot diameter red oak fell westward with its canopy reaching the trail edge. I jumped for joy to see it, explaining my happiness as ecological — this great event was a necessity — this system must cycle and it often does so in “small” events; one tree falls. I looked up at the great hole in the sky where the canopy had been and looked around at the many small trees which would fight for that sunny space in ensuing years.

This is an exciting time to live in. Once thought to be lost, Old Growth forest has been found, at least a fragment of it. Yes, there are a few things which humans have not destroyed completely, and Wachusett is one of them. My sincere thanks to all who have participated in the protection of Wachusett’s forests, an ongoing treasure hunt: and there are still a few things waiting to be found. ❖

*Joe Choiniere is the Director of the Wachusett Meadows Massachusetts Audubon Sanctuary and has been exploring and studying the forests on Mt. Wachusett for decades.*

## The Sierra Club Guide to the Ancient Forests of the Northeast

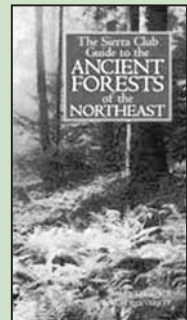
Bruce Kershner and Robert T. Leverett

256 pages

ISBN: 1578050669

Price: \$16.95 Paperback

This book may be purchased through the Sierra Club website: [www.sierraclub.org/books/](http://www.sierraclub.org/books/)



# Look Who's Buying Green Power

by David Beavers

In the Spring 2005 issue of the *Sierra*, Ethan Hoag described how individuals can purchase green power for their homes and offices. Hoag also provided a review of the market mechanics and policies supporting the Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) and green check-off options (for Mass Electric customers) available in Massachusetts. This article follows up by looking at green energy from the perspective of who's "voting with their pocket books" to borrow his phrase.

What many Sierra Club members may not realize is how mainstream the practice of purchasing green power has become. Although this opportunity has only been widely available for a few years, hundreds of thousands of households and thousands of public and private organizations in the U.S. are participating. Federal agencies, states, local governments, and yes, even the Department of Defense are stepping up to the plate and purchasing green energy.

The U.S. EPA has established a Green Power Partnership program to help organizations purchase green power. A look at their "Top 25" purchasers of green power is illuminating:

- The U.S. Air Force, believe it or not, is the single biggest buyer of green power in the program at 321,000 MWh per year. For comparison, an average home will consume around 10 MWh per year of electricity.
- Leading by example, the U.S. EPA is third on the list with a total purchase of 220,898 MWh. This represents 75 percent of EPA's total annual electricity consumption.
- Following its "Whole Foods, Whole People, Whole Planet" theme, Whole Foods Market is purchasing and generating over 20 percent of its total national power load from green power sources. It comes in sixth on the list.
- Harvard University ranks 21st on the list with a purchase and self-

generation of almost 21,000 MWh. Of special note, students at the Kennedy School of Government in 2004 voted to pay an extra \$5 per semester to purchase clean power covering 100 percent of the school's electricity load.

Why are these and other organizations buying green power? Answers for EPA, Whole Foods and Harvard may be easy to find. EPA has an obvious interest in showing leadership in an activity that provides environmental benefits, clean energy certainly fits the environmentally friendly image that Whole Foods promotes, and universities are often early adopters of new environmental initiatives. But what can explain the Air Force? Could it be, in addition to any sense of responsibility for the environment, the national security benefits from energy independence? Let's hope so.

In much of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC) is making it easier for individuals and organizations to achieve their own green power goals through its Clean Energy Choice<sup>SM</sup> program. MTC manages the Renewable Energy Trust, dedicated to developing renewable energy; most Massachusetts electric ratepayers contribute to it through a small surcharge on their electric bills. The power produced by MTC's recommended vendors is rigorously certified. As an added bonus, for every dollar a consumer spends on clean power through the program,

*For every dollar a consumer spends on clean power through the program, MTC will match it with contributions toward renewable energy projects in the buyer's hometown.*

MTC will match it with contributions toward renewable energy projects in the buyer's hometown and at low-income residences.

The City of Newton is one of the first organizations to have taken advantage of MTC's offer. The City is purchasing \$20,000 of RECs from the Massachusetts Energy Consumers Alliance and will receive a dollar-for-dollar matching grant from the MTC for renewable energy projects. According to Martha Broad, MTC Manager for Renewable Energy Markets, 3,400 people in Massachusetts Electric's territory have thus far signed up in their Greenup program, accounting for 14,000 MWh of electricity. This summer MTC awarded the first round of matching contributions to Massachusetts communities. A total of \$150,000 was awarded for clean energy projects, and another \$150,000 for projects targeting low-income residences. Northampton is expected receive about \$30,000 — enough to install a good sized solar photovoltaic system.

In other parts of Massachusetts, things are a bit more complicated. For example, customers of Massachusetts Electric can pay for green power directly through their utility bill, but customers of Western Mass Electric so far do not have this option. New England

*continued on page 13*

## For More Information

Green Power Marketing in the United States: A Status Report, Seventh Edition, Lori Bird and Blair Swezey, National Renewable Energy Laboratory, gives more complete information on this subject. It is on the Web at [www.eere.energy.gov/greenpower/pdfs/36823.pdf](http://www.eere.energy.gov/greenpower/pdfs/36823.pdf).

U.S. EPA Green Power Partnership program	<a href="http://www.epa.gov/greenpower">www.epa.gov/greenpower</a>
Clean Energy Choice program	<a href="http://www.cleanenergychoice.org">www.cleanenergychoice.org</a>
Massachusetts Energy Consumers Alliance	<a href="http://www.massenergy.com">www.massenergy.com</a>
Center for Ecological Technology	<a href="http://www.cetonline.org/Greenstart/Options.html">www.cetonline.org/Greenstart/Options.html</a>

# Saving Local Farms While Cutting Sprawl and Pollution

by Dan Proctor



Photograph by Elisa Campbell

Jim Pitts of Delta Organic Farm sells squash at the Amherst Farmers' Market

“Chemical” agriculture is far and away the number one water polluter in the U.S.

That startling fact greets us on the home page of Sierra Club’s True Cost of Food campaign.

The webpage for the combined-state Public Interest Research Groups (PIRGs) gives us

another no-less-startling fact about a little-known method of disposing of toxic wastes: *fertilizer factories.*

“The recycling of hazardous industrial wastes into fertilizers introduces several dozen toxic metals and chemicals into the nation’s farm, lawn and garden soils... Between 1990 and 1995, 600 companies from 44 different states sent 270 million pounds of toxic waste to farms and fertilizer companies across the country.”

We can change all this by purchasing locally-grown organic food and supporting local agriculture. This is an issue that we can all work on: individually, with other Sierrans, and with other organizations.

## Acting Individually

We can begin by taking a close look at our current food-buying routine. Establish the household’s present “baseline score”: what percent of food items are organic and/or local? Resolve to increase that percentage. Do the stores where we shop have local/organic versions of items we normally purchase? Do they stock items we

haven’t tried? Where appropriate, let’s ask store managers to stock more items that are local and organic. Where possible, purchase from farm-stands and farmers’ markets.

Another baseline score is the average distance traveled by items, including organic, that we normally buy. Can fruit that is organic when picked in California still be considered organic after being hauled 3,000 miles? Children might enjoy calculating these scores and helping to improve them. As an example, in the accompanying “scorecard,” the family has evidently been purchasing locally-grown tomatoes, but not potatoes or apples grown in New England, both of which are readily available (although organic apples and potatoes are rare, regardless of the region).

## Acting Collectively

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has been promoting local products for over a decade with their “Massachusetts Grown ... and Fresher!” campaign. The Department’s webpage has links to information about the advantages of local produce as well as to several organizations that work to promote local agriculture and help family farmers survive in various parts of the state.

Farmers need the help: from 1997-2002, Massachusetts lost 17% of its farms (the highest rate in the region). A major bonus in saving farms is that less sprawl occurs than if the farms were sold to developers. And food is not hauled 3,000 miles before reaching our tables.

Red Tomato, started nine years ago, is a non-profit marketing organization based in Canton. “We look for growers who use ecological growing practices, both certified organic and Integrated Pest Management (IPM), a method that greatly reduces pesticide use,” says Lynn Colanigione, of the Red Tomato management team. She adds: “We manage all the steps necessary to get produce from family farmers into mainstream supermarkets.” As you read this article, Eco Apples from an IPM program that Red Tomato leads will be reaching stores across the state. Look for the “Born and Raised Here” tote bags. You can visit their website for details about this important organization.

In the Connecticut River Valley and neighboring hill towns, the main organization pro-

EXAMPLE BASELINE SCORECARD (1=YES, 0=NO)

Item	Organic	Local	Distance
Potato	0	0	1500
Tomato	1	1	5
Fish	0	1	100
Bananas	0	0	4000
Apples	0	0	6000
Averages	20 %	40 %	2,321

moting regional agriculture is Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture (CISA). Since 1999, their “Local Hero” campaign has encouraged people to purchase both food and other agricultural products directly from farms and cooperating retailers. Look for the Local Hero signs along the road, and announcements in newspapers about CISA promotional events, as well as their webpage.

Undoubtedly there are more organizations doing this work. To join in the collaborative effort, see suggestions at the Sierra Club’s True Cost of Foods website. You may also send ideas, questions or comments to [dproctor@post.harvard.edu](mailto:dproctor@post.harvard.edu).

And thanks for supporting local, healthy agriculture! ❖

*Dan Proctor, vice-chair of the Chapter’s political committee, grew up on a farm and vividly remembers what a real tomato tastes like.*

**Sierra Club’s True Cost of Food campaign**

[www.truecostoffood.org](http://www.truecostoffood.org)

**PIRG Toxics Reports**

[www.pirg.org/toxics/reports/wastelands/](http://www.pirg.org/toxics/reports/wastelands/)

**Red Tomato website**

[www.redtomato.org](http://www.redtomato.org)

**Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture**

[www.buylocalfood.com/about.html](http://www.buylocalfood.com/about.html)

**Massachusetts Department of Agriculture**

[www.mass.gov/agr/massgrown/](http://www.mass.gov/agr/massgrown/)



## You Care, They Care

When you purchase Equal Exchange fairly traded organic coffee, chocolate or tea, you help ensure a livable wage for small-scale farmers while providing farmers with the means to care for the environment.

Equal Exchange fairly traded organic coffee, chocolate and tea is available in your local co-op, natural foods store or supermarket. Also online at [www.equalexchange.com](http://www.equalexchange.com)



# EXPLORING TIDE POOL MYSTERIES

by Chris Polloni

Tide pools are fascinating places, as a group of hardy explorers discovered on a Sierra Club Interpretive Trip to Sandwich Beach in June. I call them hardy because they started at 8 am and spent over an hour standing shin-deep in the frigid waters of Cape Cod Bay. We all thought it was worth it.

First, we learned about the horizontal diversity in the shallow tide pool, turning over rocks and having our finds identified by Dr. David Dow, biological oceanographer in Woods Hole and co-founder of the Cape Cod Group. According to David, the Sandwich tide pool can be considered a local treasure due to its rarity on Cape Cod. However, the tide pool may be threatened by a new invasive animal from Asia, a colonial sea squirt. Earlier invaders from Europe — the periwinkle and dog whelk — are now so established they are considered part of our native fauna. The future of the sea squirt is, of course, unknown at this time.

After an hour in the shallows, the group walked over to inspect the jetty, which provides vertical diversity and therefore a different collection of organisms: anemones, sponges, and corals. As we walked, we noticed an unusual bird — a red phalarope. We were able to get a picture, which was forwarded to Chris Leahy of Massachusetts Audubon for verification. The Audubon staff later informed us that a group of these pelagic birds had been driven into the region by a storm in May.

For future outings on the Cape, keep your eyes on both the Sierran and the Chapter’s website. ❖

*Chris Polloni is Outings Leader of the Cape Cod Group.*



David Dow identifies creatures during an exploration of tidal pools on the Cape

Photograph by Chris Polloni



# Update the Bottle Bill

by Phillip Sego

The subject of the proposed Updated Bottle Bill

The Massachusetts Bottle Bill is a huge success. In its 22 years, we have recycled over 30 billion bottles and cans. The Bottle Bill has kept an estimated two million tons of glass, aluminum, and plastic containers out of landfills and incinerators, and has saved the energy equivalent of about 10 million barrels of crude oil. It has also minimized litter on roads, beaches, and other public places across the Commonwealth. The Bottle Bill recycles over 70% of the covered containers sold in Massachusetts. In contrast, states without deposits recycle an average of 22%.

But tastes change, and the Bottle Bill has not kept up. Non-carbonated beverages like bottled water, iced tea, sports drinks, and juice drinks — especially those in single-serve containers — were not available then, but now make up about 25% of the entire beverage market.

The Sierra Club believes that we need to update the Bottle Bill. "It's an environmental no-brainer," says James McCaffrey, Chapter Director. "About 70% of containers covered by the Bottle Bill are redeemed — and about another 10% are blue-binned (placed in curbside recycling bins). But only 20-30% of non-covered containers like Poland Springs water are recycled."

Bottlers, beverage distributors, and grocers don't like the Bottle Bill, and they've been ramping up for an all-out legislative battle for the fall. They are supporting the "Litter Tax" introduced by Senator Robert O'Leary (D-Barnstable), and abolishing the Bottle Bill entirely.

O'Leary's proposal is essentially a copy of New Jersey's Litter Tax. An analysis of New Jersey's system shows that while a producer responsibility fee may make sense in helping clean up litter, *it does nothing to prevent litter from being created*. An incentive system — such as the Bottle Bill — is needed to complement this type of program.

While the Bottle Bill provides \$35 million in badly needed state funding (\$49 million under the update), the proposed Litter Tax would collect less

than \$15 million. That amounts to a mere \$42,000 per city or town, not nearly enough to make up for the huge increase in litter collection and recycling pick-up fees.

## Myths and Facts

In working on an update, the Sierra Club and other environmental advocates have identified several myths about bottle bills and recycling.

**CLAIM:** *We don't need a Bottle Bill now that communities have curbside recycling programs.*

**Fact:** States without Bottle Bills have only a 20-30% recycling rate, while states with a Bottle Bill typically have a 70+% rate. A Bottle Bill complements curbside recycling. When these two programs are combined, the result is far greater than either program alone. The Updated Bottle Bill works in areas where curbside recycling is less effective. And it is the best solution for the millions of beverages consumed "on the go."

**CLAIM:** *The Bottle Bill is a tax on consumers.*

**Fact:** The Bottle Bill is not a tax since deposits are 100% refundable. Choosing not to redeem your containers doesn't make it a tax.

**CLAIM:** *A Bottle Bill Update will hurt our economy.*

**Fact:** Updating the Bottle Bill will be good for the Massachusetts economy. The unclaimed deposits on the updated items will generate \$15 million without new taxes. The update will save municipalities collection fees.

**CLAIM:** *The updated Bottle Bill will increase the price of bottled beverages.*

**Fact:** The 5¢ added to the cost of a bottle or can when you buy the beverage is fully refunded when you return it! Even the bottling industry agrees. Donald Dowd, Vice



Photographs by Phillip Sego

President of Coca Cola of New England, stated, "our prices pre-Bottle Bill and post-Bottle Bill are virtually the same."

**CLAIM:** *Updating the Bottle Bill will create problems for shopkeepers.*

**Fact:** Massachusetts retailers and redemption centers already have well-established systems to handle deposit containers. Reverse Vending Machine (RVM) technology has already greatly reduced the amount of space needed to store returned containers. This technology is adaptable: RVMs read bar codes on the container and can be re-programmed to deal with new containers.

**CLAIM:** *Updating the Bottle Bill will harm municipal curbside recycling programs by removing valuable aluminum.*

**Fact:** The vast majority of the items included in the update are plastic and glass: cumbersome, low-value materials. Removing them from municipal recycling programs will save far more than any loss of revenue from sales of scrap aluminum.

## What You Can Do

Our Chapter's Legislative Action Committee is gearing up for an all-out battle to save the Bottle Bill and update it to include newer beverages.

Contact the committee to help us with our campaign. We need volunteer help in a variety of areas, from tabling and canvassing to dropping off leaflets at your local redemption center. Email phil@sierraclubmass.org or contact the Chapter office. ❖

*Phillip Sego is a member of the Chapter's Legislative Action Committee.*



# A Forest Grows in Lowell: the Lowell Dracut Tyngsboro State Forest

by Sandy Green

Call me silly, but at 38 I still get excited every time I see a live deer. You see, I live in Lowell, and there haven't been many (read 'any') deer in downtown Lowell for quite some time. However, tucked away on the northwest side of the city, in the Pawtucketville section, lies a corner of the Lowell Dracut Tyngsboro State Forest (LDT). It is in here that I have seen deer and other critters that you don't typically see in the city. This 1,100 acre wooded area is a haven to many wildlife and plant species whose combined habitats in Massachusetts and elsewhere are quickly dwindling due to suburban sprawl. Within the forest are 16 miles of hiking, biking, and horseback riding trails that go up and down hills and past swamps, vernal pools, and many other natural geological features. It is priceless to have some place so close to home where one can escape the noise of the city and instead listen to the sounds of birds chirping, watch a beaver build its lodge, and catch a glimpse of a grazing deer.

Unfortunately, this natural treasure is starting to suffer from the illegal use of All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs). Despite the efforts of the Friends of the Forest, a local volunteer group which promotes responsible conservation of the Forest, and many other volunteers to maintain the forest trails, the ATVs are causing heavy erosion and disrupting wildlife. Due to budget cuts, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) removed the only ranger from the LDT Forest a few years ago. Further, the police from the surrounding towns do little to enforce the "no motorized vehicles allowed" policy since they are short-staffed as well. With no enforcement, the ATVs come and go freely at all times of the day and at all speeds. One can see the damage that these vehicles have caused in just a few years. There are several spots where they have made such large ruts that water pools in them for days after a rain storm, causing hikers and bikers to have to go around the pool, thus widening the trail. In many spots, trails have had to be diverted many feet from the original trail because the ruts never dry up. Sadly, you can also see small animals that have been run over by these vehicles. Further, the



Photographs by Sandy Green

ATV riders illegally in the LDT State Forest



Lowell Dracut Tyngsboro State Forest

noise from these machines disturbs and frightens the wildlife and people trying to enjoy the serenity of the Forest.

ATV sales have increased dramatically and as they do the situation is only going to get worse. The problem is not isolated to the Lowell Dracut Tyngsboro State Forest. ATV riders are tearing up land in other state forests and private land in Massachusetts as well as in the rest of the states. It is important that the groups promoting conservation of these habitats band together and re-convince our elected officials that ATV use on these lands is bad and that the "no motorized vehicles allowed" policy needs to be enforced.

To introduce more people to the delights of the Lowell Dracut Tyngsboro State Forest, the Chapter is sponsoring a hike or snowshoe (weather determines which!) in the LDT. See the "Outings" page of the Sierran for information. ❖

*Sandy Green is a member of both the Massachusetts Chapter and the Lowell Dracut Tyngsboro Friends of the Forest.*

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*[We need to] re-convince our elected officials ... that the "no motorized vehicles allowed" policy needs to be enforced.*

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BOOK REVIEW:

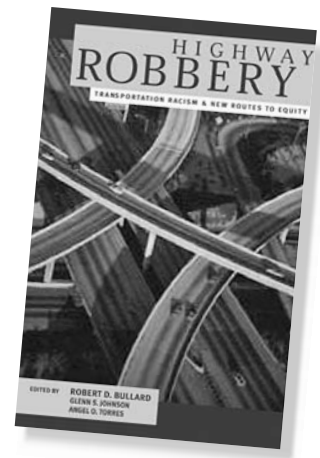
## Highway Robbery: Transportation Racism & New Routes to Equity

Edited by Robert D. Bullard, Glenn S. Johnson and Angel O. Torres

South End Press

\$40.00 (cloth), \$18.00 (paper)

Reviewed by John Kyper



When I first moved to Roxbury's Fort Hill thirty years ago, there was an empty valley just below me where a series of urban neighborhoods had been cleared a decade earlier for an expressway that was never built. Half a mile away, where Ruggles station on the Orange Line now stands, was to be a 4-level interchange with another expressway, sandwiched between two large housing projects. During the long fight against the highway, there were angry accusations that it had been designed as a "Chinese Wall" blocking the westward expansion of Boston's black community.

A mural on a wall near Memorial Drive commemorates Cambridgeport's victory in stopping the Inner Belt, but Roxbury and Jamaica Plain were not so fortunate. A decade and a half after the massive demolitions, the Southwest Corridor project tried to reknit the urban fabric where it had been rent asunder, but with mixed success.

The Boston neighborhoods' fight against demolition by expressways is but one of many such battles. Ever since San Francisco's original "Freeway Revolt" in the 1950s, countless communities have fought back against the proposed bulldozing of their neighborhoods. *Highway Robbery* is a collection of nine essays that explore how our transportation policies have short-changed many people of color and the poor — substandard urban bus service, massive highway projects, exclusive suburban train systems that bypass the inner city — and describe how community organizations in several cities around the country have mobilized to demand equitable treatment in transportation planning.

In his *Foreword*, US Congressman and former civil rights activist John Lewis summarizes the problem and its consequences:

"From New York to Los Angeles, segregated housing, discriminatory land use planning, and unjust transportation policies keep poor people and minorities separate and apart. Suburban road construction programs expand while urban transit systems are underfunded and fall into disrepair. Service jobs go unfilled in suburban malls and retail centers because public transportation too often does not link urban job-seekers with suburban jobs."

Robert D. Bullard, Professor of Sociology at Clark Atlanta University and director of its Environmental Justice Resource Center, then provides a brief overview of the transportation planning process. Federal aid to the states is funneled through the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) structure. Each MPO is legally mandated to draw up regular plans for proposed transportation projects in its designated area, and it is required to solicit public input into these decisions. It's a flawed process, but it does provide one vital forum, the legal starting place for activists desiring to engage in any campaign for change.

Eric Mann describes the fight of Los Angeles' Bus Riders' Union (BRU) for improved bus service. In the early 1990s, riders began accusing the Metropolitan Transit Authority of slighting existing bus service by redirecting money for badly needed improvements into the expansion of new rail lines. After several years of litigation and community organizing, the

Authority finally entered into a consent decree to add hundred of buses to its fleet. Unfortunately, by implicitly equating all rail projects, he does not distinguish between suburban commuter rail lines and urban light rail. The Blue Line in Los Angeles traverses minority communities like Watts and Compton between downtown and Long Beach. Even allowing that bus service is likely to remain the primary means of public transportation in a city as sprawling as Los Angeles, a stark dichotomy of good buses versus bad rail seems simplistic.

"Transit Activism in Steeltown, USA," reminds us of Boston's "Silver Line" bus. Pittsburgh's once-comprehensive streetcar system now has only a handful of lines south of downtown, a predominately white community. These lines are currently being upgraded to modern light rail standards. The African American communities in eastern Pittsburgh ended up with a busway built on a former railbed that does not go into the downtown subway. Promises that this corridor would also be upgraded have been broken.

The book's other chapters recount efforts for equity in transit planning in Atlanta, Baltimore and the San Francisco Bay Area, and organizing in the South Bronx and Brooklyn to demolish two of Robert Moses' worst expressways and return the land he had blighted to their neighborhoods.

Much of the inequity in transit planning lies in the tendency of transit agencies to cater to "choice" suburban commuters (where the votes are), seeking to lure them out of their cars by extending service that is more expensive and less cost-effective than

what the inner city populations — their “captive audience,” so to speak — desperately need. And underlying everything is the lock of the petroleum and automotive interests on our transportation policy, leaving transit advocates to fight for crumbs. One essay recognizes the dangers in this situation:

“While the “highways vs. transit” debate is a natural for environmental and social justice coalition building, the “transit vs. transit” debate has the potential to destroy a coalition’s solidarity.”

It’s a lesson we ignore at our peril. ❖

*John Kyper is chair of the Chapter’s Transportation Committee, and a long-time member of the Washington Street Corridor, which advocates for light rail service; he is also a regular user of the MBTA.*

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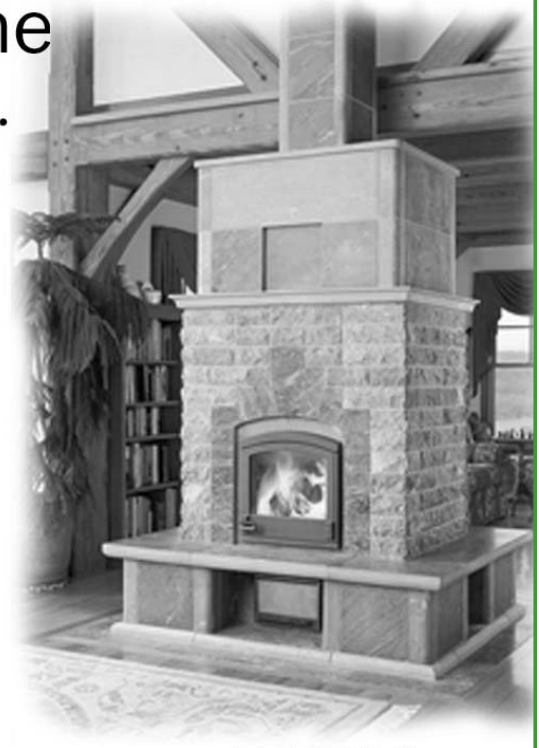
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## From the Director

(continued from page 2)

management plan for a public reservation. That is not good public lands policy.

There are less damaging alternatives for the siting of the wind towers in Princeton which do not require the taking of public lands. The lack of statewide planning and permitting requirements for the siting of wind projects, either on land or offshore, requires that the legislature be vigilant when matters relating to such facilities come before them. Granting a private developer the right to forever access and alter areas in the "wilderness zone" of the reservation only increases the injury already caused by the ski area developers on the north face of Wachusett Mountain. ❖

## Population and the Lives of Women

by Elisa Campbell

The Population Committee held its annual spring lecture in early April at Smith College in Northampton, MA. The speaker was Robert Engelman, Vice President of Population Action International. He pointed out that population has always been a difficult subject to talk about, because of its connection to sexuality, pleasure, gender relationships, and conflicts between the common good and personal desires. He recommends that people working on the issue focus on achieving real gender equality and enabling all adults to parent "intentionally." From his research, he reported that most people in the world now want three children; he believes that if women had full equality with men the population problem would be solved by the choices women would make. He believes women are more cooperative than men, perhaps because of helping each other with childbirth.

The Population Committee sponsors speakers and provides information to people about population and consumption issues, primarily by tabling at the campuses in the Connecticut River Valley and writing letters to the editor and to elected officials. People interested in becoming involved should contact Anita King, at 413-268-5616. ❖

*Elisa Campbell is editor of the Sierran.*



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# The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative

by Blossom Hoag and Marc Breslow

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, (dubbed RGGI or "ReGGie"), would slice carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from electric power plants in the northeast (Maine to Delaware) by creating a "cap and trade" system. A "cap" would be set on emissions from the region, presumably well below current levels, and decreasing over time. Power plant owners would have to hold permits for every ton of CO<sub>2</sub> they emit, and would be allowed to buy and sell these permits. The theory is that such trading of permits means the CO<sub>2</sub> reductions would come about at the least possible cost.

A coalition of environmental groups is participating in discussions about the details: what level of CO<sub>2</sub> reduction will be required; what "offsets" will be allowed; and who will pay for the cost of emission permits.

Sierra Club energy policy currently does not permit Chapters to condone "cap and trade" programs. The Club can be, and has been asked to be, a participant in the discussions. If you have expertise in this area or would be interested in it, please contact the Chapter Energy Committee, energy@sierraclubmass.org, or David Heimann, committee chair, to help form a Chapter RGGI sub-committee. We need volunteers to attend the stakeholders meetings, help the Chapter develop a position to support the most stringent emission reductions possible, and help the Chapter develop a plan to work with the other northeastern chapters on this issue.

Please see the Chapter's website for more information about RGGI and the Chapter's involvement. ❖

*Marc Breslow is the Director of the Massachusetts Climate Action Network; he and Blossom Hoag are both on the Chapter's Energy Committee.*

## Green Power


(continued from page 5)

Wind, a green power product, is an alternative available to customers of utilities that do not offer a green power option.


The campaign in western Mass is coordinated by the Center for Ecological Technology, which is based in Northampton, and it has been very successful. Northampton actually had more customers sign up (440 by May) than any other municipality in the state. Northampton lost out in the competition for percentages, however, to two small towns in western Mass: Wendell and Shutesbury.

Those in Massachusetts deciding to cast a "vote with their pocket book" for green power can be assured of two things: first, their vote will be counted, and second, they'll be joining a large and growing contingent of green power buyers. Step into a voting booth at either the Clean Energy Choice or Green Start webpage. ❖

*David Beavers is a Mechanical Engineer and a Certified Energy Manager (CEM) based in Watertown and a Sierra Club member since 2001.*



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## Forest Reserves Proposal Advances

by Elisa Campbell

The state Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) will hold several meetings this fall for public input on its proposal to create a system of Forest Reserves in Massachusetts. As of the Sierran's deadline the places for the meetings have not all been set, but the subjects, dates and times have been.

- Wednesday, September 14, 6:30 pm: Mt. Washington and Otis Reserves
- Tuesday, September 20, 6:30 pm: Plymouth (Myles Standish Reserve)
- Wednesday, September 28, 6:30 pm: Ware River Reserve
- Thursday, September 29, 6:30 pm: at DCR Pittsfield Headquarters for the Central Berkshire Management Plan including Middlefield and Westhampton Reserves, plus the Chalet Reserve (Department of Fish and Wildlife land)

Please go to the meeting nearest you! The Sierra Club supports the Forest Reserve initiative, and encourages our members to attend these meetings and speak up in favor (four of us attended the meeting about Mt. Greylock in June). We will post the locations of the meetings on the Sierra Club website as soon as we know them; or you can email me at [ecampbell@sierraclubmass.org](mailto:ecampbell@sierraclubmass.org) ❖

*Elisa Campbell is the Chair of the Chapter's Public Lands and Open Spaces Committee and has written frequently for the Sierran about the parks.*



Photograph by Elisa Campbell

Trees in the Mt. Greylock Forest Reserve

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September 17th & 18th

Orange, MA [www.garlicandarts.org](http://www.garlicandarts.org) (978)544-9023



## Massachusetts Chapter Outings

Please contact leaders for more information and to sign up for the following outings.  
Outings marked with an E are educational in addition to being recreational!

### **WARE RIVER SUNSET PADDLE**

Wednesday, September 14,  
5:00 pm  
Barre

Contact leader Matt Hopkinson at  
978-928-5964 or at  
hopkinson34@charter.net

### **MT. MISERY HIKE FOR PARENTS, SMALL CHILDREN AND PACKABLE INFANTS**

Saturday, September 17, 9:00 am  
Lincoln

Contact leader Corey Mathews  
at 617-417-7212 or at  
coreymathews@yahoo.com

### **COASTAL CLEANUP ON WASHBURN ISLAND**

Saturday, September 17,  
8:30 am – 12:00 pm

Waquoit Bay Yacht Club,  
Seapit Road, Waquoit

Contact leader Chris Polloni at  
cpolloni@aol.com to sign-up; contact  
Bob Murphy at 508-563-5948  
for information

### **MAUDSLAY STATE PARK HIKE (E)**

Saturday, September 24, 10:00 am  
Contact leader Laurel Miller by email  
at Ontime2006@earthlink.net or at  
978-469-8345

### **MT. TOBY HIKE**

Sunday, September 25, 9:30 am  
Sunderland

Contact leader Elisa Campbell at  
413-256-4247 or at  
campbell@oit.umass.edu

### **DOGTOWN COMMONS HIKE**

Sunday, October 2, 10:00 am  
Gloucester

Contact leader Heidi Roberts at  
978-927-4157 or at  
heidiroberts@comcast.net

### **MIDDLESEX FELS HIKES (E)**

Sundays, October 2 and 30,  
1 – 4 pm

Contact leader Deborah Holt by  
email at holdtdj@verizon.com or at  
617-797-1683

### **CHARLES RIVER VOLUNTEER DAY**

Saturday, October 8, 9:00 am  
Contact leader Corey Mathews at  
617-417-7212 or at  
coreymathews@yahoo.com

### **WACHUSETT OLD GROWTH PROGRAM WITH JOE CHOINIÈRE (E)**

Saturday, October 15,  
10:00 am – 3:00 pm  
Princeton

Contact leader Deborah Holt at  
holdtdj@verizon.net

### **NOANET WOODLANDS FALL FOLIAGE HIKE (E)**

Sunday, October 16  
(rain date Oct 23), 10:00 am  
Dover

Contact leader Jackie Slivko at 617-  
407-8796 or at jslivko@yahoo.com

### **OLD TREES WALK (E)**

Saturday, October 29, 10:00 am  
Amherst

Contact leader Elisa Campbell at  
413-256-4247 or at  
campbell@oit.umass.edu

### **QUABBIN RESERVATION FORESTRY HIKE (E)**

Saturday, November 5, 9:30 am  
New Salem

Contact leader Elisa Campbell at  
413-256-4247 or at  
campbell@oit.umass.edu

### **MIDDLESEX FELS BIRTHDAY HIKE/SNOWSHOE/X-C SKI (E)**

Saturday, December 17, 10:00 am  
Contact leader Jackie Slivko at 617-  
407-8796 or at jslivko@yahoo.com

### **LOWELL/DRACUT/TYNGSBORO STATE FOREST HIKE OR SNOWSHOE (E)**

Saturday, January 7  
(rain date Jan 8), 11:00 am

Contact leader Elisa Campbell at  
413-256-4247 or at  
campbell@oit.umass.edu

## Help Your Sierra Club Chapter

by Kristine Zeigler

Help the Massachusetts Chapter Sierra Club raise awareness, funds and produce winning results for our environment! Check out the following opportunities:

- **Give the gift of Membership.** Gift memberships are a terrific way to celebrate a birthday, anniversary or wedding. Receive a handsome expedition pack when you buy your unique gift online at: <https://www2.sierraclub.org/membership/gift/>.
- **Volunteer as a Special Event Representative** and staff a booth at a local fair or other outdoor event. Duties include set-up of booth with Club-provided literature, selling Sierra Club-branded merchandise (including tasty organic shade-grown coffees and teas, beautiful notecards and stunning landscape calendars), answering general questions and signing up new members. Contact Fundraising and Membership Committee member Kristine Zeigler at 781-395-3310 or at kzeiglermass@yahoo.com
- **Host a Wine & Cheese House Party.** Donate the use of your home and/or yard for Sierra Club members in your area to learn more about ways they can impact local and regional environmental issues. Enjoy Sierra Club wines from California. Contact Fundraising and Membership Committee member Freda Reblsky at 617-527-9093.
- **Participate in the Fundraising Committee** with your ideas, time and energies in crafting strategies to engage current donors, recruit new members and increase revenues for the Massachusetts Chapter. The Committee meets on the second Sunday of each month at 10:30 a.m. at the MIT Stata Center. Contact Fundraising and Membership Committee Chair Ann Chase Ballantine at [aballantine@tools-for-business.com](mailto:aballantine@tools-for-business.com) ❖

*Kristine Zeigler is a member of the Chapter's Fundraising Committee.*

## GROUP & CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

*Unless otherwise noted, meetings are in the Sierra Club Office at 100 Boylston Street, Suite 760, Boston.*

### GREATER BOSTON GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

September 13  
7:00 pm

### MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

September 17, October 29, and December 4  
11:00 am to 3:30 pm

## ISSUE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

### NORTH/SOUTH RAIL LINK COMMITTEE

September 20, November 15  
7:00 PM

Help strategize for the Rail Link to extend the Northeast Corridor national passenger rail service from South Station to North Station, New Hampshire, Maine and beyond, and connect the commuter rail system from Rhode Island to New Hampshire. Contact Louise Lewis, Chair, 617-266-5890 for more information.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### SIERRA CLUB VICTORY! MBTA Cancels Silverline Phase III

As the Sierran went to press, the MBTA decided to postpone the controversial phase III of the Silver Line Bus project in Boston, citing heavy community opposition. The MBTA pledged to work to build community support for other options for the project. For a complete update, visit the chapter website at [sierraclubmass.org](http://sierraclubmass.org)

### ALTWHEELS ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION FESTIVAL

September 17-18, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm  
Larz Anderson Museum of Transportation, Brookline  
Visit the Sierra Club booth at the AltWheels Alternative Transportation Festival

### “THE REPUBLICAN WAR ON SCIENCE”

#### AUTHOR CHRIS MOONEY

Tuesday, November 15, 6:00 pm  
Pioneer Valley Group is co-sponsoring a talk by Chris Mooney at Food for Thought Books in Amherst, MA

### PIONEER VALLEY GROUP ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

Sunday, December 11, 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm  
Home of Alexandra Dawson,  
2 West Street, Hadley MA

Potluck supper: bring some food to share and, if you want, some wine or beer to drink. Meet other Sierrans, share a great meal, and see some interesting slides of a trip. For more information, contact PVG Chair, Elisa Campbell at [campbell@oit.umass.edu](mailto:campbell@oit.umass.edu) or the hostess, Alexandra Dawson, 413-586-5586



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