

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

# SIERRAN

Volume 10 • Number 1

Spring 2004

*Reaching More Than  
26,000 Sierra Club Members  
in Massachusetts*

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# Massachusetts Sierra Club

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

## CORRESPONDENCE

### Alewife Reservation Forest

Do not let your local forest threat go untended. The winter issue of the *Sierran* describes the threat to the silver maple stand near the Alewife T Station, including an ancient Mother Tree and her offspring. Preserving this keystone forest would represent a social, environmental, and civic victory that would rank with the preservation of a threatened redwood grove in California or tracts of rainforest in the Amazon.

For 20 years I have worked to preserve forest land in my redwood country home in Northern California, and have traveled to southern Chile to see remnant Alerce cedar groves. In my eyes, the Alewife forest is equal to these forests because of its unique position in the overall social ecology of the Cambridge-Belmont-Arlington region. Generations of children and their children deserve an integrated, functioning example of how humans, trees, towns, commerce, and animals can stand together in common natural respect and harmony. The citizens of your region have a special opportunity to demonstrate to the world how human activity can abide with the earth.

*Andy Barnett  
Humboldt County, California*

### A Mighty Wind

I read the official Sierra Club stance on wind farms with much interest. It seems to me that the chapter is taking far too strident a view toward this new energy source. It is prudent to tread carefully with any new venture, but given the choice between a new energy source that visibly kills 1,100 birds per year, and the numerous old energy sources that invisibly kill plants, animals and humans, the choice seems clear.

It is my belief that the Sierra Club should shower the wind farm movement with support and enthusiasm. I am not a wind farmer, nor do I own stock. I am simply tired of the slow rate of change

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*On the cover: Flowering dogwood Photograph by Paul Mozell*

MASSACHUSETTS

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

*Circulation of the Massachusetts Sierran is over 26,000 outdoor-minded, environmentally aware readers.*

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## Toast the Coast 2004: *Cape Cod Walk for Environmental Justice*

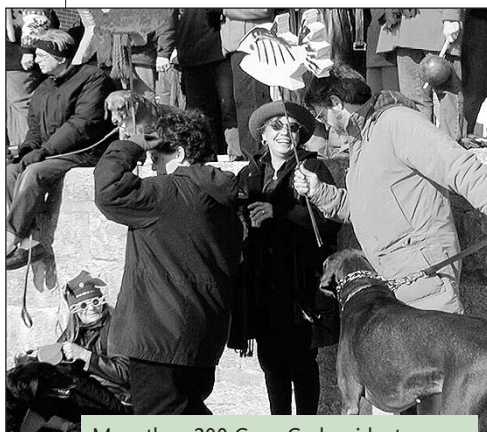
The New Year's Day parade in Woods Hole has become a Cape Cod tradition for environmentalists and other community residents. Prospero, the wizard from Shakespeare's play, *The Tempest*, leads a holiday procession past the laboratories and government offices that are part of the Cape's scientific community. At the ocean's edge, individuals "toast the coast" with non-alcoholic beverages. Stewards promise to protect Cape Cod and its residents during the new year.

The Cape Cod group started the New Year's celebration in Woods Hole in 2001. The event now includes several human rights, environmental, and religious organizations that are active in the area. Musicians play carnival music from Brazil and the West Indies, children and their parents dance, and visitors appear in holiday costumes. Representatives from the Cape Cod group speak, very briefly, about the group's community concerns and current projects.

Cape Cod's natural environment is beautiful and fragile. Residents worry about overdevelopment, the excessive use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers, and continuing threats to beaches, wetlands, and drinking water supplies. Energy costs and housing costs are very high and low-income families are

concerned about their financial future.

Environmental justice on Cape Cod requires careful attention to human needs and to environmental quality. On New Year's Day in Woods Hole, the



More than 200 Cape Cod residents came out for the 2004 New Year's Day parade in Woods Hole.

Cape Cod group brings community people together to celebrate the world that they share. Each year, the same questions are asked at Waterfront Park: "How can we care for each other in this special place? What can we do, in the months ahead, to become wise stewards?"

—Robert Murphy

*Robert Murphy, vice chair of the Cape Cod group and former editor of the New England Sierran, organized this year's Toast the Coast celebration.*

## GROUP NEWS

### Pioneer Valley Group on the Move

Sierra Club members in Western Massachusetts gathered Sunday, February 1, to discuss recent events and future direc-

In our News Briefs in the Winter 2002-03 issue, we neglected to say that the Dirty Dozen Award is given by the Toxics Action Center, a New England environmental group ([www.toxicsaction.org](http://www.toxicsaction.org)). We regret the omission.

tions for the Pioneer Valley group. The general membership meeting was one of the best-attended in recent memory, with a large number of new members coming to their first meeting.

The discussion covered a lot of ground. Members expressed interest in reestablishing an outings program for Western Massachusetts, concern about the development plans for Routes 9 and 66, and a desire to protect the Mt. Holyoke Range and open space in general. Other topics included funding for approved bicycle paths and

*continued on page 8*

## North/South Rail Link

In December, 2003, 121 state senators and representatives signed a letter urging Governor Romney to include building a link between North Station and South Station in the commonwealth's long-range transportation plan. The link would be added as an "illustrative project," meaning that funds do not need to be appropriated for it at this time.

The North/South Rail Link, which would connect North Station and South Station by rail tunnel, has received increasing support from legislators in recent months. According to former governor Michael Dukakis, "continuing to try to run a regional commuter rail system that has to turn its trains around when they arrive at either end of downtown Boston makes absolutely no sense. This is a project that will add a lot of capacity to the existing system, take 60,000 cars off the road every day, and will be more cost-effective and efficient than other projects supported by the governor."

Including the project in the long-term transportation plan would make future funding more likely and, most importantly, prevent other construction that could preclude building a tunnel between the two stations.

## Mass Transportation Report

In spite of the billions of dollars we spend on roads, traffic and pollution are on the rise in Massachusetts. Did you know that: Massachusetts traffic has been ranked as fourth worst in the US?

The average Boston driver spent 42 hours stuck in traffic in 1999?

Massachusetts has the highest asthma rate and among the worst air quality in the country?

To learn how investing in public transportation can turn things around, check out Mass Money, Mass Roads, Mass Transportation, the Sierra Club report on roads and public transportation, now available on the chapter Web site: <http://www.sierraclubmass.org/issues/conservation/sprawl/sprawl.html>.

—Roberta Tovey

# Environmental Injustice and Our City Parks:

*Despite Article 97, cities are losing more and more of their open space*

By Gil Woolley

Article 97 was added to the Massachusetts state constitution in 1972 to provide protection for public open space. It has not succeeded. While wealthier cities and towns fiercely protect their often extensive park systems, less affluent towns, whose lower-income residents need the parks the most, are losing them year after year. This is environmental injustice at its most pernicious. Parks and open space are very important to all and especially to those who have few resources for travel.

Before public open space can be converted to any other use, Article 97 requires a two-thirds vote by the state legislature and approval by the governor. While this sounds like a difficult requirement, approximately 150 Article 97 land takings have been approved since 1989, most of them by a unanimous vote. Sixteen of these have been for schools.

The voting record shows that the legislature usually supports proposals pertaining to a local issue if initiated by the city or town government and approved by the local legislators. Most legislators are inclined to vote for any proposal that attracts state funding.

The Massachusetts Sierra Club has assisted citizens in several communities who have tried to save urban parks, but the odds are heavily against preservation. In each of the

cases in which the club intervened, the park was the only significant public open space, primarily serving lower-income residents.

## More clout for Article 97

To strengthen Article 97, State Senator Pam Resor (D-Acton) has introduced legislation in several recent sessions that would require compensatory parkland "of equal value" to replace that lost with "no net loss." The Article 97 bill was recently passed in the state Senate and is awaiting action in the House.

Even if the bill is enacted in the next session, however, it may not protect all urban parks. That depends upon exactly how *equal* is defined and interpreted by the courts. For example, in Everett, the proposed replacement park is larger than the existing Glendale Park, but is more than two miles away. In order for residents to get there they must cross more than 20 intersections. That is too far for a woman pushing a baby carriage, or for parents who now feel comfortable letting their children play in the park across the street. Furthermore, the new site is heavily polluted from a former chemical facility.

Glendale Park Terraces from the left and right sides of the field. Note the large number of mature trees and beautiful hillside. All this would be lost to the new school construction including the tot lot.



Photographs by Agnes Foye



The Glendale Park taking in Everett was temporarily delayed when the National Park Service, which had provided funding to improve the park, required an Environmental Impact Review (EIR). Then, in a move that trumped all hands, a former Everett resident and major fundraiser for the Republican Party approached President Bush for help in getting the taking approved. As a result, jurisdiction was taken from the park service and given to the Interior Department, which is expected to overrule the EIR requirement. Depriving our less fortunate brothers and sisters of a park is evidently so important that the highest office in the land has to be called in to defeat due process! (For the complete story of the fight to save Glendale Park, see the article in the spring 2003 issue of the *Massachusetts Sierran* ([www.sierraclubmass.org/sierran/sierran.html](http://www.sierraclubmass.org/sierran/sierran.html))).

### A false choice

Low-income and minority residents are often told that they have to choose between a park or a school. Since education is critical for their children, they are naturally inclined to support any plans to build a new school—even though it means sacrificing their only park.

But this is a false choice. There is almost always an alternative. For example, it may be possible to enhance the existing school building. If the school site is too small, some eminent domain taking of a small amount of adjacent property or land may be required, but the total cost is usually less than building a new school. More often than not, these old buildings are solidly constructed and have architectural merit.

The Massachusetts Sierra Club is deeply committed to environmental justice, and will  
*continued on page 14*

Pileated woodpecker and trees in Jackson Park, Swampscott.

## Jackson Park

The most recent proposal to take a park as a school site is Jackson Park in Swampscott. After rejecting several other sites, the Swampscott School Committee and Board of Selectmen chose the park as the site of a new high school. The only substantial park in the town, Jackson Park includes an area of mature woodland that is home to several species of wildlife. A town-wide referendum approved the taking by a narrow 52 to 48 percent majority. Residents in the precinct where the park is located, however, voted two to one against the taking.

At the request of several Sierra Club members in Swampscott, the Massachusetts chapter investigated the issue and testified against the taking at a hearing of the Joint Committee on Local Affairs. Despite Sierra Club opposition, both houses of the state legislature approved the Article 97 legislation. A modified version of the original school proposal is currently undergoing MEPA review.

Sierra Club members who live in Swampscott had an opportunity to express their views about the Jackson Park taking at a meeting sponsored by the Massachusetts chapter in the Swampscott Public Library on Saturday, January 10. Opponents of the taking spoke of the loss of town parkland and the rejection of other alternatives, and cited another environmental organization's opposition to the taking. Advocates for the taking said that the town urgently needed



Photographs by Hal Reynolds

a new school and talked about the length of the process that ended in selecting this site. If the present plan is not approved, they fear that Swampscott will lose its chance to get state funding because of the current moratorium on new school projects.

— Gil Woolley

## Now is not the time to give up on stopping sprawl

By Senator Pam Resor



There are disturbing signals coming out of the Romney administration that the state's unprecedented effort to preserve open space is about to grind to a screeching halt. Already well behind the pace set by the previous administration, the Romney administration's budget people are floating trial balloons calling for a complete end to state efforts to preserve open space. This would be a grave mistake Massachusetts can ill afford to make.

Administration officials are operating under the misguided assumption that belies the tangible benefits of investment in environmental infra-

In 2002, more than 200 environmentally-aware organizations championed the \$753 million Environmental Bond package so that Massachusetts could make a calculated, long-term investment in protecting our natural resources before they disappear forever. Massachusetts Audubon estimates that our state loses 44 acres a day to the bulldozer. But between 1999 and 2003, for the first time in recent memory, Massachusetts actually protected more land each day than was being developed. Now is not the time to quit the battle we were finally winning, especially when interest rates are at

historic lows. Unabated development trends, even in this sluggish economy, will gobble up

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*"... between 1999 and 2003, for the first time in recent memory, Massachusetts actually protected more land each day than was being developed."*

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structure, namely that land acquisition and preservation is contrary to economic development and affordable housing goals. Nothing could be further from the truth. Identifying environmentally-sensitive land parcels now, before they are swallowed up in a development free-for-all, accomplishes many long-term goals that will assist planned development, something the administration claims to promote.

State officials and environmental organizations can pinpoint land parcels that meet multiple preservation goals. The land we protect is either biologically significant for protection of plant and animal species, vital to the protection of public water supplies, or recreationally significant, providing people with enhanced opportunities to enjoy the outdoors in our increasingly sedentary times. Oftentimes we can meet all of these goals in the same project, such as with the 14,000-acre Southeastern Massachusetts Bioreserve.

the most environmentally significant land within a decade.

As important as "smart growth" is, open space preservation does more than just prevent land from development: it enhances public health by guarding public water supplies; it promotes agriculture and forestry industries upon which our state economy relies; and it draws in out-of-state dollars by improving our state park system to promote tourism.

And open space bond expenditures are fiscally sound. Between 1999 and 2003, Massachusetts used its borrowing power to protect 150,000 acres of open space. The state accomplished this while spending less money than it had taken to preserve the previous 100,000 acres the state protected between 1991 and 1998, by using creative methods such as buying development rights in the form of conservation restrictions and partnering with organizations such as the Trust for

Public Lands, The Trustees of Reservations, Massachusetts Audubon, regional land trusts, individual communities, and other conservation-minded organizations and individuals. These partners stand ready today to keep us on the right track.

It is also a fallacy that environmental preservation and affordable housing goals must be in conflict. The basic tenets of smart growth promote the reuse of already developed areas, not the wanton development of virgin land. The answer is to move forward on both fronts, simultaneously protecting environmentally-sensitive land while creating incentives for affordable housing on already developed land. Or put another way, abandoning our worthy land protection goals will do absolutely nothing to relieve pressure on our overheated housing market.

Furthermore, our cash-strapped cities and towns rely on the state to assist them in land purchase. Throughout the commonwealth, cities and towns are trying to compete with developers in purchasing one-time farms and orchards in an attempt to preserve that vital resource. Through various state programs like the Self Help and Urban Self Help, and the Agricultural Preservation Restriction programs, we are helping communities realize their own preservation goals, so that they, too, can make smart-growth planning decisions.

Finally, land preservation, as one expenditure under the State Bond Cap, should be part of a comprehensive bond authorization plan of any administration. The whole idea of bonding open space protection and other long-term investments is to remove these important quality of life goals from the vagaries of year-to-year budgeting. Massachusetts has little time to waste if we want to leave a legacy of rich biodiversity, scenic vistas and clean drinking water for future generations to enjoy. ❖

*State Senator Pam Resor (D-Acton) is chair of the Natural Resources and Agriculture Committee.*

*Reprinted with permission of the Metro West Daily News.*

For several years, Pittsfield, Massachusetts has been planning to improve its municipal airport. The Airport Commission forecasts that airport use will double over the next 20 years, partly due to corporate jet use by local companies like GE Plastics and KB Toys and partly due to high-end tourist traffic destined for Berkshire attractions like Tanglewood and Canyon Ranch Spa.

The improvements will include a longer runway, so that the airport can be used in weather conditions that now require diversion to other, larger airports. Pittsfield's high elevation contributes to winter runway ice, making landing difficult, and low-density air in the summer heat, making full-load takeoffs impossible for some jets. The Airport Commission and business community believe that the renovations will make for a safer, more usable airport, which will help the local economy.

The Airport Commission submitted the Draft Environmental Impact Report in November, 2003 and the extended comment period has closed. Throughout the process, an organization of affected residents and other interested individuals, Citizens for a Sensible Airport Plan (CSAP), fought to reduce the scope and impact of the project—but to no avail.



Photographs by Tom Sakshaug

Area surrounding Mud Pond

## Local Residents Strive for Compromise on Pittsfield Airport Expansion

By Tom Sakshaug

### Plan and counter plan

The Airport Commission's plan calls for the runway to be lengthened and shifted closer to downtown—too close to a densely settled residential area. The proposal also calls for the creation of a large earthen berm, which will fill in over six acres of wetlands. A popular neighborhood through road will be dead-ended at the berm. The renovations will take over nearly half

of Wild Acres, a conservation area abutting the end of the runway.

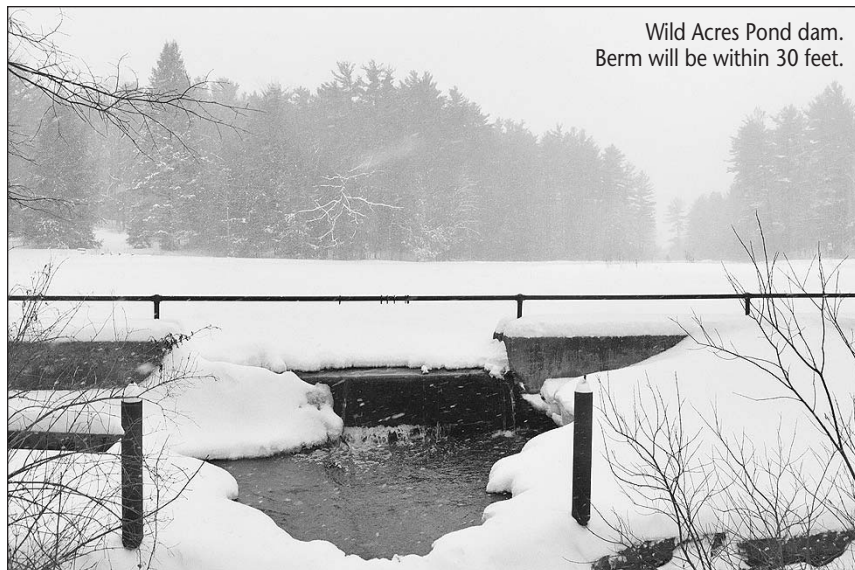
To replace the Wild Acres losses, the plan is to take 80 acres from an adjacent farm, although the owner is absolutely opposed to selling his land. State law discourages taking of farmland, especially for a purpose such as this. A lengthy court battle may ensue, delaying the whole project.

CSAP presented a compromise that would mitigate many of the environmental and social impacts. While it does not solve all problems, it showed local officials and the public that there are real options to the all-or-nothing deal offered by the plan's proponents.

By means of minor adjustments to the plan, the road could remain open and avoid incursion into one wetland. Less fill would be needed for the berm, and more fill would be provided on site, reducing trucking impact and cost.

Although Wild Acres has been gradually surrounded by runways and taxiways over the years, rendering it far from wild, it remains popular for children's fishing derbies, bird-watching and hiking. Its pond, which contains the endangered Chestnut Sedge, must be left alone along with the

*continued on page 8*



Wild Acres Pond dam. Berm will be within 30 feet.

## Pittsfield Airport Expansion

(continued from page 7)

surrounding trees. The CSAP compromise keeps the pond area accessible and adds surplus airport land to it.

The bulk of the park, however, is to be relocated. One possible location, a 100-acre parcel that includes Mud Pond and its associated calcareous fen, is quite close, but has far less noise from aircraft. Another possibility is a 13-acre parcel now slated for the construction of a construction-and-demolition waste transfer station that many strongly oppose. Its location along a pristine branch of the Housatonic River adjacent to a large city park makes it a prime location for a land swap. With Wild Acres relocation, a minimum of farmland would be taken.

### Continuing problems

Even with the compromise, problems remain. Wetland incursion, the visual blight of the berm and the leveled surrounding area, and noise extension into new neighborhoods are difficulties that may never be resolved. The Conservation Commission has also not embraced the idea of relocating Wild Acres.

However, because CSAP, the only organized opponent to the plan, was willing to move from flat-out opposition, the Airport Commission and city officials have been willing to move also. The new mayor and several members of the commission have offered their support for the compromise. With less public opposition, the airport project can progress more rapidly and more in line with the desires of the city. The neighbors and the environment will sacrifice a great deal, but they will receive at least some benefit in exchange.

### What you can do

CSAP is a volunteer, no-budget organization, and hopes to accomplish its goals without the expense of legal counsel. Please send suggestions or comments to the author at [doctom@berkshire.rr.com](mailto:doctom@berkshire.rr.com) or by mail at 50 Vista Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201. ❖

*Tom Sakshaug is a dentist living, working, and becoming politically active in Pittsfield.*

## Pioneer Valley Group on the Move

(continued from page 3)

Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) bus routes and building lines of communication within the group and with the Massachusetts chapter office in Boston. Members also discussed ways to re-energize the group and grow participation from all corners of Pioneer Valley. Special attention was given to ways to include people and concerns from the Springfield area as well as Franklin County.

Among the most exciting new developments to come out of the meeting was the identification of members willing to take on leadership of the outings program. While it is unclear how much can be done before leaders are officially trained, Joyce Harper has agreed to serve as the coordinator. Ideas for outings ranged from hikes along the Holyoke Range and the Rail Trail to a trip to the invasive species exhibit at the US Fish and Wildlife building in Hadley. A number of members are also excited about joining the Sierra Club training for outings leaders in August.

There were also new ideas about solutions to political issues like the money owed to the PVTA from the state and changing regulations for rare and endangered species in Massachusetts. A group has agreed to work on a transportation committee involved in examining issues of development, possibly with help from the Massachusetts chapter transportation chair.

The Pioneer Valley group will schedule another general membership meeting in late spring to discuss developments and additional projects.

For more information, please contact Elisa Campbell ([pvg@sierraclubmass.org](mailto:pvg@sierraclubmass.org) or 413-256-4247) or go to <http://sierraclubmass.org/groups/pvg/pvg.html>.

For more information about the outings leader training in August, please contact Deborah Holt ([outings@sierraclubmass.org](mailto:outings@sierraclubmass.org)).

—Todd Felton

*Todd Felton is a newly-active member of the Pioneer Valley group.*

# Make A Difference

We send out an appeal in March to each of our members, asking for contributions directly to your Chapter. You will not receive any contributions requests from national Sierra Club in this time period, as we want you to concentrate on your local Chapter.

These contributions really do make a difference to us, and are an important part of our Chapter's budget. When you make a donation to the Chapter, you support the Sierra Club's work in your own backyard. You allow us to continue our work to protect wilderness and wildlife, to improve the quality of life in our cities, and to promote the enjoyment of nature.

Please be as generous as you are able—remember, these funds directly affect your way of life in your neighborhood.

**Thank You.**



**Explore, enjoy and protect the planet**



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# Outside Interests Push to Hijack Sierra Club

By Drusha Mayhue

The internal Sierra Club election this spring could prove pivotal and could dramatically alter the direction and mission of our organization. In fact, the Sierra Club we all joined may have a very different look to it next year, depending on the outcome of the 2004 board of directors election. That's because current members of the Sierra Club board of directors have openly recruited candidates with agendas widely different from the club's historic conservation mission.

The Sierra Club's direct elections make us unique—and vulnerable. One of the most important opportunities Sierra Club members have is the chance to select our own board of directors. Every year members select five directors for three-year terms on our fifteen-member board. But as the club has grown, the proportion of our members who vote has declined.

And now the Sierra Club is in trouble—our own democratic process is being used against us to take over our organization and hijack our agenda and assets. Because fewer and fewer members are voting, it has left us vulnerable to take-over efforts by people and parties with narrow, personal, one-issue agendas—like animal rights and anti-immigration. These outside groups can recruit and run petition candidates from outside the club who share their ideology.

And that's exactly what's happening—with help from some current members of the club's board of directors. Director Paul Watson outlined this effort at an animal rights conference earlier this year, just weeks after he was first elected to the club's board. "One of the reasons I'm on the Sierra Club board of directors right now is to try to change it," Watson proclaimed.

"And once we get three more directors elected, the Sierra Club will no longer be pro-hunting and pro-trapping and we can use the resources of

the \$95-million-a-year budget to address some of these issues," said Watson, who calls fishermen "sadistic bastards"—even though about a sixth of the club's membership fishes.

Watson noted his task will be made easier by low voter turnout in club elections: "The heartening thing about it is that, in the last election, of the 750,000 members of the Sierra Club, only 8 percent of them voted. So, you know, a few hundred, or a few thousand people from the animal rights movement joining the Sierra Club—and making it a point to vote—will change the entire agenda of that organization."

Noted outdoors writer Jim Shepherd characterized this statement as an "attempt to hijack the Sierra Club," an effort Watson confirmed at the club's annual September meeting, when he admitted that he's trying to "take over" the Sierra Club and its agenda.

In addition to Watson's efforts to commandeer the Sierra Club, the anti-immigration forces, which have been targeting the Sierra Club for more than a decade, have now joined forces with the animal rights activists. Club Director Ben Zuckerman, another club director with close to zero club experience when he was elected to the board, has recruited candidates to run for the Sierra Club board from an obscure organization called the Diversity Alliance for a Sustainable America (DASA). This organization shares his desire for the club to become involved in closing down immigration into the United States. The DASA has been funded in part by grants totaling

\$125,000 from foundations controlled by the notorious Clinton hater and right-wing patron Richard Mellon Scaife and his family. According to the Washington Post, "Scaife and his family's charitable entities played a central role in the rise of the right, giving at least \$340 million to conservative causes and institutions."

Director Zuckerman's principal focus on the board has been a relentless effort to persuade his fellow directors to overturn the membership vote several years ago to unite the club by remaining neutral on the question of immigration policy. Zuckerman has compared immigration to cancer, defended Colorado Congressman Tom Tancredo—an anti-immigration zealot who earns an average LCV score of 15 percent—as "the person in Congress doing the most for the environment," and called for the club to work on halting immigration as a means of fighting the war against terrorism. A number of anti-immigration Web sites have recently been urging people to join the Sierra Club in order to elect the candidates recruited by Zuckerman.

These unrelenting efforts to undermine the Sierra Club, its conservation agenda, assets, and democratic process prompted the Southern Poverty Law Center, perhaps the nation's leading organization in exposing hate group activities, thus to advise the club's volunteer leadership this fall: "We think that members of the Sierra Club should be fully alert to the methods and motives of some of those who are trying to shift it from its historic mission."

So consider yourself alerted to these take-over efforts, this deliberate attempt to undermine our democracy and hijack the agenda chosen by a majority of Sierra Club members. Consider all that is at stake in this Sierra Club election—our democracy, our direction, our ability to stop the Bush administration's

*continued on page 10*

In March you will receive in the mail your national Sierra Club ballot, which will include information on board of director candidates. The board sets club policy and budgets at the national level and works closely with staff to run the club. The people you elect will determine the future direction of the Sierra Club. **PLEASE VOTE!** For more information about the elections and candidates, visit the Sierra Club election Web site: <http://www.sierraclub.org/bod/2004election>.

## Outside Interests Push to Hijack Sierra Club

(continued from page 9)

assault on our environment and overcome some of the most serious environmental challenges we have ever faced.

Don't sit on the sidelines this election. Vote.

Ballots will be mailed to all club members at the end of February, and must be filled out and received back by the Judges of Elections by April 21. Every Sierra Club member will receive a ballot and an accompanying statement, in which each candidate describes his or her background, qualifications, and goals for the organization. These last are often written in rather general language, but the club and the candidates provide internet mechanisms through which they can be questioned more specifically about their views. Take the opportunity and question them.

"Sierra Club board elections are a fine opportunity for our members to look at our club and determine the

directions they want the organization to go," says Sierra Club President Larry Fahn. "I urge all our members to study the candidates carefully. And I urge all members to vote. It is member participation that has made the Sierra Club the most effective environmental organization in the world. It is member participation that will empower us to stop George Bush, and will allow us to carry on our wonderful tradition of effectiveness into the future." ❖

*Drusha Mayhue is a long time Sierra Club grass-roots leader, and has held many positions including chair of the Houston Group. She currently sits on the Montana Chapter Executive Committee. If you have comments or questions, or would like further information, please contact Drusha at: drusha\_m@yahoo.com or contact Blossom Hoag at: blossomhoag@groundswellsierra.org.*

## AD SALES OPPORTUNITY

The *Massachusetts Sierran* is looking for a self-starter to sell advertising for this high-demographic, 26,000-circulation quarterly. Generous commission structure. Work from home. Send resume to James McCaffrey at [jobs@sierraclubmass.org](mailto:jobs@sierraclubmass.org) or by regular mail at the chapter office. No phone calls please.

**YES!** I want to save America's wild lands and wildlife before our chance to do so disappears forever!

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Contributions or gifts to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible as charitable contributions. Annual dues include subscription to *Sierra* (\$7.50) and chapter publications (\$1), and other member-only benefits.

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# Hiking Close to Home

By Gil Woolley

One of a series of occasional articles on less-known, short hikes in eastern Massachusetts. More than a half of our chapter members live within Route 495; these brief pieces are addressed primarily to them. Members living further north, west and south have a variety of well-known state parks close by. People living within 495 often drive a considerable distance to hike, even though there may be interesting, but little-used, trails on their doorsteps.

## Blue Heron Trail at Charles River

**Total Distance:** Less than 3 miles to Newton and back; Brook Farm about the same. Unless it's been raining, special shoes not necessary.

**Hiking Time:** 1½ hours

Before the recent government reorganization, the plan was to provide a paved trail along the Charles River all the way from Boston to Medfield. This walk is one of the many segments that have not yet been connected. It is marked by triangular metal plates bearing the stylized image of a blue heron.

The most obvious and convenient starting point for this short, but pleasant, trail is the Millennium Park. The park, which sits on the top of the now closed and capped city of Boston landfill, is itself well worth a visit for the extensive views over the middle Charles wetlands and, on a clear day, of the city in the distance. And you don't

even have to walk: there is a parking lot on the summit of the man-made hill.

Access is from the VFW Highway (Route 1) in West Roxbury along Gardner Street north (on the right for westbound traffic) at a traffic light located about a hundred yards beyond the first entrance to the Home Depot parking lot. The Spring Blossom restaurant is on the corner and there is a large blue sign for the Millennium Park. Gardner Street crosses a bridge over the MBTA line to Needham and enters the park. At the first junction bear left. A few yards further is another junction; bear left to the Canoe Launch. The right turn is to the summit parking lot (P2 on the map) and the view.

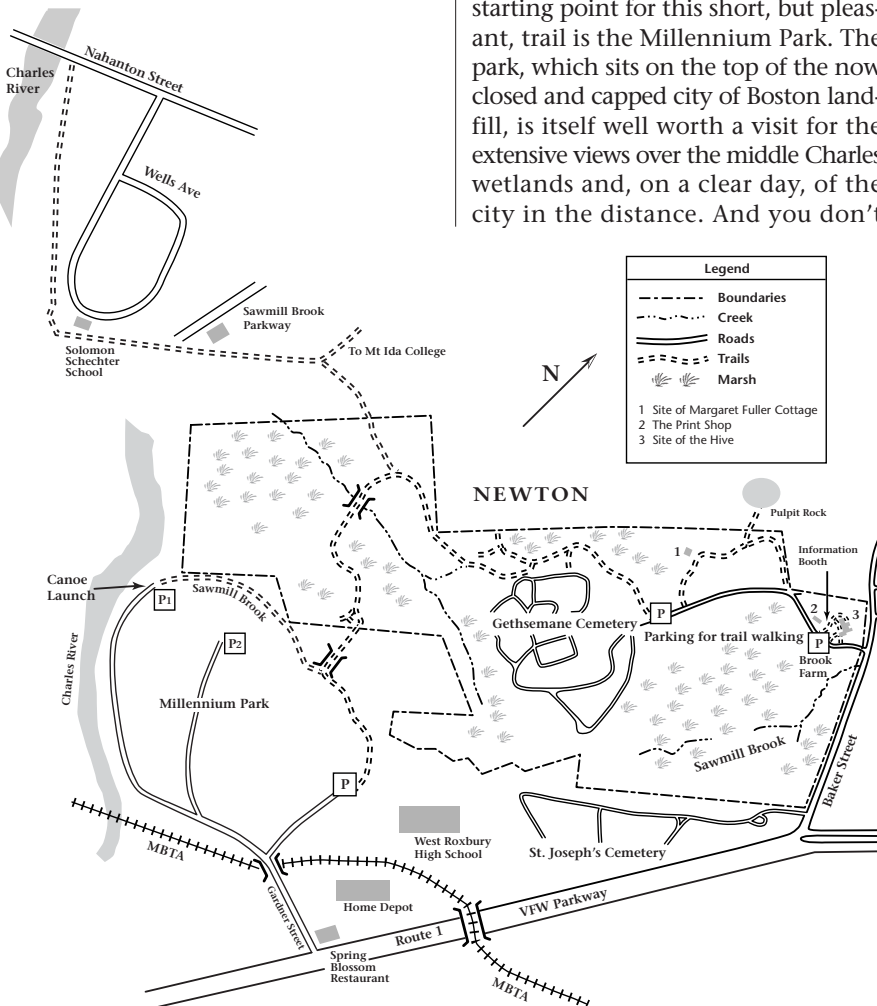
Leave your car at the Canoe Launch parking lot (P1), the most convenient lot for starting the hike. Continue on foot for about half of a mile, keeping to the paved trail alongside the Sawmill Brook, and you will come to a foot-bridge over the brook. Crossing the bridge you will find an easy trail (you could ride most of this trail on a bike).

Less than half a mile in is a fork with a sign post. The trail to the right leads to Brook Farm and the Gethsemane Cemetery (access is from Baker Street, West Roxbury); the left fork leads to Newton. In Newton, the first street access is from the Saw Mill Brook Parkway, but you can continue through the woods to Wells Avenue. Access is through the children's playground of the Solomon Schechter School. A narrow and rough trail continues to Nahanton Street just before the bridge over the Charles River.

The trail to the site of Brook Farm is an interesting side trip. The site, which is a national historic landmark, was home to the most famous Transcendentalist experiment in communal living from 1842 until 1846, when it was abandoned after a disastrous fire. An information office on the site is open until 4:00 PM daily.

Please send any ideas for this series to the *Sierra* editor: [editor@sierraclubmass.org](mailto:editor@sierraclubmass.org), or to Gil Woolley: [gwoolley@sierraclubmass.org](mailto:gwoolley@sierraclubmass.org).

*Gil Woolley is a member of the Massachusetts Chapter Executive Committee and chair of the Conservation Committee.*



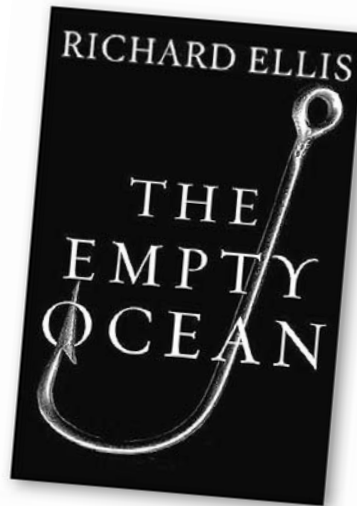
**BOOK REVIEW:**

## A Tragedy of the Commons

Reviewed by Diana Muir

### The Empty Ocean: Plundering the World's Marine Life

By Richard Ellis  
*Island Press, A Shearwater Book*  
355 pages, \$26.00



On a September day in 1871 the British warship HMS Thetis intercepted an Arab slave ship in the Indian Ocean with 271 enslaved black Africans on board. Britain had recently signed an agreement with the powerful sultan of Zanzibar to end the flourishing East African slave trade. By capturing that ship, Britain signaled its determination to end the Indian Ocean slave trade even though the sultan had no intention of abiding by the treaty that he had signed.

Richard Ellis's powerful book brings this obscure bit of history forcefully to mind. Because fish are so valuable and human greed so great, unless some force as powerful as the British Navy intervenes, the ocean will very soon be empty despite the several international treaties designed to protect fish stocks.

#### Of tuna and seals

Skip the opening pages—a pedantic rehash of fisheries depletion—and start reading on page 28 with the “Great and Wonderful Tuna.” Ellis is at his best when his writing gets into the water with the fish, and he is marvelous when he explains the ironic complexity of fishing. Harp seals, for example, have long been hunted as aggressively as possible by men with absolutely no compunction about killing every last seal. Yet, unlike virtually every other marine mammal, their population has never been reduced to the point of endangerment. This is because seals do not haul out

to breed on islands. Harp seals pup on ice floes, and despite truly heroic efforts, sealers could never locate every last chunk of ice drifting in the Arctic Ocean.

Sadly, Ellis explains that global warming is reducing the volume of drift ice so rapidly that harp seals may soon be extinct—not from overfishing, but from loss of habitat.

Bluefin tuna, by contrast, are endangered because sushi is one of the finest things in life. Unfortunately, I share my taste for raw tuna with 126 million Japanese, and they can afford to indulge it. A top-quality bluefin goes for as much as \$391 at the Tsukiji Fish Market in Tokyo. That's \$391 *per pound*. \$173,600 per fish. And you can confidently expect that price to rise as the number of bluefins declines.

#### The road to extinction

Toothfish, a.k.a. Chilean sea bass, only made it to the big time in 1982 when the first, shimmering, white forkful was served in a Los Angeles restaurant. Two decades from the discovery of a creature's desirability to endangered status is fast, but it is hardly a world record.

It took just 27 years from the moment a European first met a Stellar's sea cow to the day a Russian hunter killed the last one. Sea cows were cousins to manatees, but the sea cow was 30 feet long and had a layer of subcutaneous fat nine inches thick to keep it warm in the icy waters between Kamchatka and Alaska. The fat was

“yellow like May butter... Its odor and flavor are so agreeable that it can not easily be compared with the fat of any other sea beast.” We must accept Georg Wilhelm Stellar's description, since the last sea cow was eaten in 1768.

#### Who's in charge here?

The decimation of our fisheries is a tragedy of the commons: since everyone has access to the oceans, no nation has the kind of proprietary interest that might lead it to decide to preserve a fishery for tomorrow instead of catching all the fish today. Not that national stocks are necessarily well-managed. In the United States we extended our territorial claims 200 miles out to sea and appointed a group of fishermen to set sustainable quotas. In no time at all, the New England fleet caught virtually every cod, haddock, and yellowtail flounder on George's Bank. Now the fishermen are unemployed.

It didn't have to happen that way. If a responsible authority had set sustainable catch limits and enforced them, George's Bank could have produced a bountiful catch forever. Iceland manages its cod fisheries in a sustainable manner.

The larger problem is that fish do not respect 200-mile territorial limits. Bluefin tuna tagged in the Bahamas have been recaptured in Newfoundland, Norway, and Uruguay. There is always a fisherman greedy enough to catch endangered fish, and a nation-state corrupt enough to register rogue boats.

Ellis is fascinating when writing about fish, but he is savage when revealing the inability of international organizations to protect declining marine populations. Which is why I kept thinking about the British Navy as I read about boats that are on the high seas stealing our children's future. Britain did not wait until the international community agreed to end slavery. If we were as serious about preserving ocean resources as nineteenth-century England was about ending the horrors of slavery, we would be talking about sending the navy, too. ❖

*Diana Muir is working on a new book on the role of overpopulation in history.*

# Department of Defense Wages War on Endangered Species

By Megan Amundson

For years the Department of Defense (DoD) has attempted to create exemptions for itself within the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA). In 2003, it succeeded. In a rider attached to the Defense Authorization bill passed by Congress and signed by the president last November, the DoD won its exemption and much more.

The rider was included in what was largely considered "must pass" legislation given the current political climate, the focus on the war on terrorism, and the war in Iraq. In the past, the DoD was limited to a specific number of species it could take (injure or kill) in a particular area. Under the new law, the DoD is no longer limited to the number of marine mammals it can take, nor is it limited to a specific range.

The rider also creates a tremendous loophole in the MMPA by loosening the definition of *harassment*. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) defines *harassment* rather broadly. According to NMFS, it includes any activities that have the potential to affect endangered species' behavior, including feeding, mating, and migrating. The new definition now puts the burden of proof on the NMFS to prove harm before the MMPA can be exercised.

The ramifications of these sweeping exemptions are great. The DoD manages 25 million acres of land. Among other things, the DoD develops environmentally-detrimental technology like low-frequency sonar. The courts prohibited the use of low-frequency sonar last fall, but their ruling and agreement with environmental groups now may be bypassed entirely.

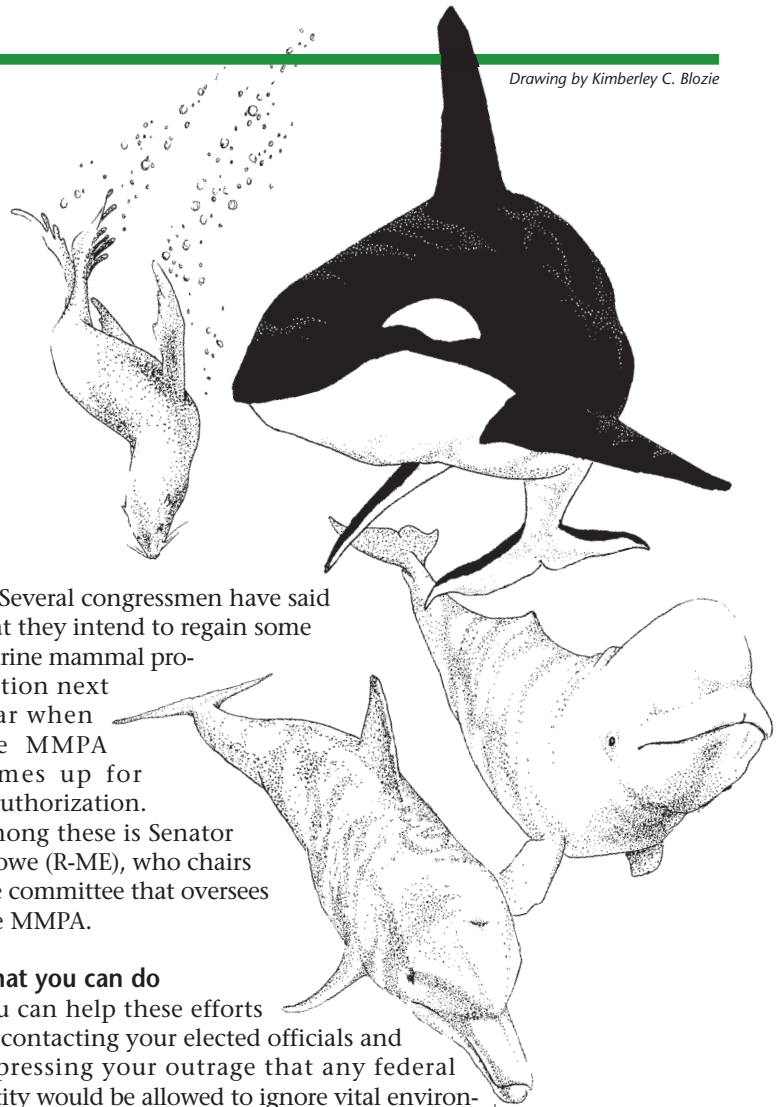
Unfortunately, Congress was dealing with the energy bill and the healthy forests bill when this bill was passed. So little focus was placed on this egregious example of the Bush administration's attempts to dismantle decades of environmental progress and dilute the country's most favored environmental legislation. Considering that there already was a mechanism for exemptions for military readiness under the ESA, the new DoD exemption suggests that the administration wants to bypass key environmental legislation entirely.

Several congressmen have said that they intend to regain some marine mammal protection next year when the MMPA comes up for reauthorization. Among these is Senator Snowe (R-ME), who chairs the committee that oversees the MMPA.

### What you can do

You can help these efforts by contacting your elected officials and expressing your outrage that any federal entity would be allowed to ignore vital environmental laws.

*Megan Amundson is a member of the Greater Boston Group Executive Committee, the Marine and Coastal Habitat Committee, and the Legislative Committee.*



## SIERRA CLUB GROUP AND CHAPTER ELECTION RESULTS

### MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Elisa Campbell  
Alexandra Dawson  
John Kyper  
Gil Woolley

### ESSEX GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Marilyn Graves  
Deb Longman-Marien  
Joan Longwell  
Margaret Reny

### GREATER BOSTON GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Megan Amundson . . . two years  
R.P. Dowds . . . . . one year  
Chris Hallgren . . . . . two years  
Deb Holt . . . . . two years  
Lisa LaBrecque . . . . . one year  
Michelle Salisbury . . . two years

## Environmental Justice and Our City Parks

(continued from page 5)

continue to help citizens defend precious open spaces. The chapter is ready to work with legislators to make takings more difficult. "Development pressure is mounting to convert parkland to other than its intended use," says Chapter Director James McCaffrey. "We lose 44 acres of open space in Massachusetts every day, making it all the more necessary to preserve what we have. There are almost always other alternatives to taking a park, but current funding mechanisms at the state and local level actually encourage the taking of parks."

Sierra Club chapters and groups across the nation are fighting to protect open space from politicians and government bodies who see parkland as a sort of landbank—a convenient and free site for schools, incinerators, water-treatment facilities and other municipal services. In reality, the true monetary value of a park or open space is the cost of replacing it on the open market.

Takings may also deter potential donors of open space. Land for many parks is donated by generous individuals who want it to be dedicated to

parkland in perpetuity. If they are aware of the lack of legal protection, they may have second thoughts about donating land to a city or town as a park.

### What you can do

Please contact your local representatives and urge them to support passage of Senator Resor's Article 97 bill. ❖

*Gil Woolley, a frequent contributor to these pages, is a member of the Massachusetts Chapter Executive Committee and chair of the Conservation Committee.*

Tall trees at Jackson Park, Swampscott



Photograph by Hal Reynolds

## Lease Extension at the Massachusetts Military Reservation

By David Dow

The September 25, 2003 issue of the *Cape Cod Times* featured a picture of Governor Romney and Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army, Ray Fatz, complete with jet and assembled troops in the background. The two were signing a lease that will extend military use of the Massachusetts Military Reservation (MMR) until 2051. Governor Romney has argued that we need the 25-year extension because the MMR is important to the economy of Cape Cod, and because the Department of Defense is considering locating a Northeastern Homeland Security Center there.

The Sierra Club, along with several environmental groups on Cape Cod, opposed the lease extension, citing many unresolved issues including public water supply and the slow pace of the cleanup of contaminated groundwater and soil from past military training actions. The public voiced strong opposition to the lease extension at a June 30 meeting, run by Chief of Commonwealth Development Douglas Foy and Director of Public Safety Edward Flynn. As a result, the two-week comment period was extended to a month.

One of the environmental groups, the Alliance for Base Cleanup (ABC), filed a "fail safe" petition with Ellen Roy Herzfelder, Secretary of the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) under provisions of the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) to allow residents more time to consider this issue. But the MEPA petition was denied. The Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) then filed comments, stating that under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) a major federal action like the MMR lease extension requires an environmental impact statement.

However, Governor Romney's version of the lease (released on September 25) contained no changes from the one presented at the June public meeting. The cleanup and water supply issues are discussed only in sidebar letters which do not appear to be legally enforceable, since they only make general promises about the Pentagon's good intentions.

On November 20, ABC and PEER announced a lawsuit against the Pentagon for not complying with NEPA.

Unlike the Swift administration, Romney does not seem interested in developing public consensus on issues related to the MMR. Backroom negotiations between the Commonwealth and military, along with the governor's unilateral decision-making process, have only worked to reinforce public distrust. ❖

### What you can do

If you'd like to get involved with MMR issues, contact David Dow 508-540-7142; e-mail: [ddow@cape.com](mailto:ddow@cape.com).

*David Dow is a member of the Executive Committee and treasurer of the Cape Cod group.*

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## Correspondence

(continued from page 2)

towards alternative energies. When I finally see hope on the horizon, I do not expect the Sierra Club to quibble about relatively small consequences—not when the enormous consequences sweeping over the past century could finally be turned back.

As always, thank you for reporting on these issues.

*Moriah Tumbleson-Shaw  
Medford, Massachusetts*

We were pleased to read the *Massachusetts Sierran's* recent story "Bird Meets Wind Turbine" (Winter 2003–2004) about wind power and the relative effects of turbines on avian populations. The Massachusetts Renewable Energy Trust is the Commonwealth's lead agency in efforts to promote renewable energy development. The trust has set a goal of 750–1000 megawatts (Mw) of new renewable generation by 2009 to mitigate the risk of future climate change. Much of this new generation will likely be wind-powered. Like the Sierra Club, the trust wants to be sure that future wind projects do not adversely affect wildlife populations.

To that end, we are funding research by the Massachusetts Audubon Society on bird populations in the area proposed for the Cape Wind Project in Nantucket Sound described in your article. The trust will also support post-construction monitoring of bird and bat population impacts of the proposed 30 Mw Hoosac Wind Project in Florida and Monroe, Massachusetts. This is being done as part of the ongoing environmental review of the project by the state's Executive Office of Environmental Affairs.

Thank you for giving attention to this important topic in your publication.

*Robert L. Pratt  
Director, Massachusetts  
Renewable Energy Trust  
Westborough, Massachusetts*

*The Sierran welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be limited to 200 words and may be shortened to fit allotted space. Send letters to editor@sierraclubmass.org or to Editor, Massachusetts Sierran, 100 Boylston Street, Suite 760, Boston, MA 02116.*

## Events and General Membership Meetings

### THE FUTURE OF FISHING IN NEW ENGLAND

**March 14**

Time: 3:00 PM – 5:00 PM

Place: The Parish Hall of the Unitarian  
Universalist Church,  
26 Pleasant Street,  
Newburyport

David Lincoln is an environmental consultant to the Gloucester Fishermen's Wives Association and advisor to the Habitat Committee of the New England Fishery Management Council. The commercial fishing industry in New England recently took its first major steps towards ensuring a sustainable fishery. Although ground fish species have begun a remarkable comeback, not all of the stocks are increasing at the same rate. Fishermen have recently proposed a plan to quickly end overfishing on most stocks including cod in the Gulf of Maine and to phase-in an end to overfishing over the next several years on other fish. This talk will look back at fishing practices of the last century and forward to the emerging trends in cooperative research for habitat protection and selective fishing methods. Upcoming topics in the Essex group speaker series: wind power (April); mercury poisoning and other chemical pollutants (May). Call the chapter office for more information: 617-423-5775.

### OUTINGS . . . . .

#### TRACKING CAPE COD'S WILDLIFE

**March 13**

Time: 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Place: Sandy Neck Beach,  
West Barnstable. Meet at  
beach parking lot by the  
beach (not by the gate house).

Join wetland biologist and wildlife tracker, C. Diane Boretos, from Call of the Wild Consulting and Environmental Services at Sandy Neck Beach, West Barnstable. This outing will focus on tracks and signs of indigenous prey and predators at one the Cape's last remaining wild places. Limit 20 participants. Bring warm clothes, sturdy boots, and lunch. Register by March 10 with Pam Polloni at 508-563-2312 or by email at Pam394@aol.com.

### WINDFARM HIKE/SNOWSHOE AT MT. WACHUSETT

**March 14**

Time: 9:30 AM – 4:00 PM

Place: Visitor's Center, Mt. Wachusett  
Hike or snowshoe at Mt. Wachusett, depending on terrain conditions. Moderate hike of 1.5–2 hours to summit, lunch at the top, and return. View of wind farm along the way. Trail maps and facilities available at Visitors' Center by the trail head. Mt. Wachusett is in Princeton, Massachusetts, about an hour west of Boston on Rte. 2. Carpooling encouraged. To sign up and get directions, please contact Kristina Cairns at kristinaca@earthlink.net. Dogs welcome, if on a leash. Leader: Deborah Holt.

### GLOUCESTER DOG TOWN HIKE

**April 25**

Time: 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM

For more information and to register, contact Deborah Holt, leader, at HoltDJ@verizon.net.

### BLUE HILLS SKYLINE TRAIL HIKE

**May 23**

Time: 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM

For more information and to register, contact Emily Caner, leader, at E.Caner@comcast.net.

### PEDDOCK'S ISLAND SERVICE OUTING

**TBD Saturday in May**

Join the Sierra Club and the Friends of Boston Harbor Islands for a day on Peddock's Island clearing invasive plants. There will be time for a walk to see the remains of Fort Andrews, built by the US Government in 1900 in the wake of concern stirred by the Spanish-American War for the harbor's defense system. Transportation from Long Wharf will be provided. Bring a lunch and water and dress appropriately for weather and work. For additional information and to register, contact Deborah Holt at holtDJ@verizon.net.

### PROVINCE LANDS TRAIL BY BIKE

**June 27**

Time: 9:00 AM – 5:30 PM

For more information and to register, contact Deborah Holt, leader, at HoltDJ@verizon.net.

## Conservation and Issue Committee Meetings

### NEW COASTAL AND MARINE HABITAT AND WILDLIFE COMMITTEE

**April 3**

Time: 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Place: Sierra Club office

This committee will work on fisheries management; Northern Right Whale conservation, federal legislation to lease or license the ocean's bottom; Stellwagen Bank Marine Sanctuary Management Plan; coastal armoring; and the work of the US Commission on Ocean Policy. For more information, please contact Mary Ann Nelson, chapter chair: [chapter-chair@sierraclubmass.org](mailto:chapter-chair@sierraclubmass.org); phone: 617-442-0123.

### NORTH/SOUTH RAIL LINK COMMITTEE

**March 16, May 18**

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: Sierra Club office

This committee meets on the third Tuesday of every other month to discuss and strategize progress on the North/South Rail Link. The rail link will extend the northeast corridor national passenger rail service from South Station to North Station, New Hampshire, Maine and beyond, as well as connect the commuter rail system from Rhode Island to New Hampshire. All members are welcome to attend, to learn, and to participate. Please contact Louise Lewis, committee chair, at 617-266-5890 for more information.

*The Sierra Club office is located at 100 Boylston Street, Suite 760, Boston.*

*All meeting times may change without notice.*

*Please consult Web site for updates ([www.sierraclubmass.org](http://www.sierraclubmass.org)).*

## Massachusetts Chapter and Group Executive Committee Meetings

### ESSEX GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**March 8, April 5**

Time: 7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

Place: Unitarian Church,  
26 Pleasant Street,  
Newburyport.  
Use downstairs side doors.

For more information, call the chapter office (617-423-5775); leave a message for Michael Dorsey.

### GREATER BOSTON GROUP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**March 9, April 13, and May 11**

Time: 7:00 PM

Place: Sierra Club office

### MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**March 28, May 1, June 12**

Time: 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Place: TBA

### Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

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