

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

SIERRAN

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Reaching More Than
26,000 Sierra Club Members
in Massachusetts

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Massachusetts Sierra Club

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SIERRA CLUB WINS VICTORY FOR WILDLIFE, WETLANDS, AND WATER QUALITY

Letter from the desk of James McCaffrey, Director

Airport Expansion Withdrawal is a Plus for Environment and Economy

After a decade-long effort by the Sierra Club to halt the unnecessary expansion of the New Bedford Regional Airport, airport supporters finally withdrew a controversial economic development project that included filling in more than 20 acres of pristine wetland and wildlife habitat that serves as the headwaters for the Dartmouth drinking water supply.

Withdrawal of the proposal followed a major campaign by the Sierra Club - accompanied by other environmental groups as well as local citizens and politicians - working together to protect the quality of life for all on the South Coast. In a courageous decision, New Bedford Mayor Frederick Kalisz called for the withdrawal of the runway expansion after Secretary Ellen Roy Herzfelder, the state's senior environmental official, issued an opinion in early May stating the project did not "justify consideration of the extensive environmental impacts associated with the proposed activity." Similarly, Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Gollidge cautioned airport supporters that the proposal lacked the "overriding public interest" necessary to exempt it from the state's wetlands protection laws. The Mayor, the Secretary, and the Commissioner are all to be commended for questioning the need for runway expansion at the risk of such great damage to the natural environment.

Withdrawal of the expansion should not be seen as a defeat for the business community, but rather a victory for all. The proposal has dragged on for nearly ten years, wasting both taxpayer dollars and the energy and talents of the environmental and business community. The Sierra Club is hopeful that business community leaders will eventually stand with their Mayor and embrace a new vision for the region. There are many other opportunities in the South Coast area - such as restoring commuter rail service and investing in the historic downtown areas of New Bedford - that do not require the

(continued on page 11)

On the cover: seagull on south cape beach Elisa Campbell

MASSACHUSETTS

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*Opinions, unless otherwise stated, are of
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*Circulation of the Massachusetts Sierran
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environmentally aware readers.*

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The Massachusetts Chapter's Position on the Cape Cod Wind Farm

By Blossom Hoag

Editor's Note:

Work on the April issue of the Sierran was nearing completion as the Chapter finished its comments on environmental impact studies of the proposed wind farm off the coast of Cape Cod. Because of this timing, we were unable to include more than a very short article about the Chapter's comments. While we pointed to our Website for the complete comments, we are concerned that many of our readers do not like to (or cannot) read extensive documents online, so we are including a more complete discussion of our position in this issue. Since the Sierra Club is a volunteer-driven organization with few staff, it is important that

our members take an active role and keep the Chapter Executive Committee informed about issues that concern you.

Cape Wind, a private company, has proposed a 130 windmill project on Horseshoe Shoals, Nantucket Sound between Nantucket Island and Hyannis, Massachusetts, the first of its kind in the United States. It would be five miles off Cape Cod and have a total maximum output of 420 megawatts. It has the potential to supply three quarters of Cape Cod's electricity needs.

This past winter, the Army Corps of Engineers released the project's Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR, federal document) and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS, state document). The Massachusetts Chapter of the Sierra Club commented on the combined document and project with input from the Sierra Club's national energy and marine committees. We also considered comments sent to the office by Club members. Though our actual comments total ten pages, the key points are summarized in this article.

A particular concern of the Chapter and the national marine committee is the lack of any federal regulatory framework for such projects. In our comments, the Chapter requested that federal regulations be developed for these types of offshore projects, but suggested that this be done while the project goes forward. The Chapter further requested that the project not be grandfathered but be held accountable to the regulations as they are developed.

We asked that the project, if approved, be phased in so that impacts could be assessed and addressed during its development.

The Chapter also found significant weaknesses in the reports, including a lack of data in many sections. For example, we requested that the three year study of birds be completed as the project review continues (the study has been going on for two and a half years and can easily be completed while other reviews are done). The DEIR/DEIS also compared pollution levels to generating plants that have a larger generation capacity than Cape Wind, so the comparisons were not useful.

Finally, the Chapter asked for more details and that a Supplemental Report be required to fill in the missing data and to address the other concerns, such as the lack of regulations.

The Sierra Club has continued its position of being "actively neutral" which means we want a thorough environmental review of the project while the process moves ahead. The Sierra Club strongly supports renewable energy. None-the-less, we believe the impacts of any particular project must be carefully examined. The Chapter recognizes that there are members with strong feelings about this project, both in support and opposition. We encourage all members to stay engaged in the public review process and appreciate that many of you shared your comments on the project with us. We ask that you continue to do so.

The Cape Wind URL : www.capewind.org/index.php. You may read the chapter's complete comments at: www.sierraclubmass.org/ . Please contact the Chapter office if you would like a copy of our comments mailed to you.

Blossom Hoag is a member of the Chapter's Executive Committee, Chapter Energy Committee and Greater Boston Group Executive Committee.

Help Protect Our Natural Spaces

By Leslie Doyle

America's first landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmstead, believed that every community should have a park at its heart. After designing New York's Central Park in the 1850s, Olmstead designed an "Emerald Necklace" of parks around Boston - oases of nature in a rapidly-industrializing urban area.

Years later, East Boston residents suffered the loss of their beloved Olmstead-designed Wood Island Park. Residents stood arm in arm to fight bulldozers building additional airport runways. It was a tremendous loss for the community.

Today, we continue to face such devastation. We lose 44 acres of open space in Massachusetts every day. As Sierra Club members, we're fighting to protect these natural areas.

Three critical bills

This year, our Legislative Action Committee is focusing on three critical bills that will protect our public lands for future generations. If passed, these bills, known collectively as the Parks Protection Package, will:

- Prevent the closure of neighborhood parks and limit the taking of conservation land for other uses
- Protect old growth forests and establish old growth forest reserves on public lands
- Protect natural and scenic parkways and boulevards across the Commonwealth

Bill details:

Senate Bill 524 to protect old growth forests

Old growth forests harbor exemplary plant communities which have grown essentially unaltered by human activity for generations.



photo courtesy Mena Schmid

Senator Nuciforo (D-Pittsfield) and Representative Kulik (D-Worthington) filed legislation to protect our unique and rare old growth forests, which have irreplaceable ecological, historical, educational, cultural and recreational value.

Senate Bill 539 to prevent the taking of conservation land for other purposes

Protecting existing open space, especially in already densely developed cities, is essential for both present and future inhabitants. Senator Resor (D-Acton) filed this legislation to strengthen Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Article 97 states that the people of the Commonwealth have the right to clean air and water, freedom from excessive noise, and the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources. "Lands and easements taken or acquired for such purposes shall not be used for other purposes or otherwise disposed of except by laws enacted by a two thirds vote."

House Bill 1361 to protect the Commonwealth's historic parkways

Forests and parks across Massachusetts are laced with roadways and boulevards that form an integral part of the character of these irreplaceable public lands. The administration wants to transfer control of the parkways away from the Department of Conservation and Recreation (which currently manages them in a manner compatible with parklands) to the Massachusetts Highway Department. If the transfer permits altering the parkways to meet state and federal highway standards, they will be

unrecognizable.

Representatives Paulsen (D-Belmont) and Donato (D-Medford) and Senator Walsh (D-Boston) filed this bill to require standards to protect the parkways before any management or other changes can take place.

How you can help

We urge you to join the fight. Take a few minutes today and support the Parks Protection Package.

- Call, visit, or write to your state senator and state representative and ask them to vote "yes" on the Parks Protection Package. (Please take a moment to let us know how they responded.)
- Write a letter to the editor in your local newspaper. (We can help!)
- Sign up for our Activist Network to receive updates on the legislation. (To subscribe to this low-traffic email list, send a blank email to scan-request@sierraclubmass.org with the subject line "Subscribe".)
- Download a report about the Parks Protection Package from our website and leave copies at your local library, grocery store, or other high-traffic area.
- Contact Parks Committee Chair Elisa Campbell at ecampbell@sierraclubmass.org to learn how you can be a "Park Guardian" for your local park.
- Talk to your friends, family, and neighbors and ask them to support the legislation.

We welcome other suggestions from those interested in protecting natural spaces here in Massachusetts. Please call (617)423-5775 or email us at legislate@sierraclubmass.org.

Leslie Doyle is Chair of the Chapter's Legislative Committee.

Belmont Uplands Development Far From a Done Deal

By Deborah Holt

Belmont Uplands is a 15.6 acre, privately-owned parcel at the northwest corner of the Alewife Reservation that is home to a rare silver-maple forest and diverse wildlife. The land was once part of the AD Little campus. In 1999, developer Brian O'Neill purchased the property and has since been actively pursuing its development – against great opposition.

Most recently, MassDevelopment approved a Chapter 40B Project Eligibility Application filed by O'Neill in April 2004. MassDevelopment's approval means two things: that the 300-unit residential housing-complex proposed by O'Neill is eligible for funding through MassDevelopment and that O'Neill can proceed with a formal filing of a Comprehensive Permit with the Belmont Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA).

O'Neill originally proposed an office/R&D development on the Uplands. When he changed his mind and submitted the Chapter 40B application, the Town of Belmont issued a Notice of Project Change letter to the Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) and asked that they conduct an environmental review of the project. The town also sent a letter to MassDevelopment stating that the town does "not support housing of any type at the so-called Belmont Uplands site." The letter goes on to say "we strongly believe that the best use of this isolated parcel is for open-space, the next preferred option is for non-residential use, and the least favorable option is for residential use." The town's statement of opposition to development of the Belmont Uplands recognizes the Uplands' "extremely high environmental value" and that it provides wildlife habitat for many species as well as containing almost five acres of wetlands.

Last August, EOEA denied the Town's request for an environmental review and responded that "investigating the feasibility of changing the project and doing appropriate planning and local permitting for such a change would not trigger MEPA review." The town appealed EOEA's decision in October, stating that EOEA's "interpretation of regulations could deprive or delay" various stakeholders of information essential to the local and state permit process. The EOEA has not responded to this appeal as of late April, 2005.

In the meantime, a town-appointed Uplands Advisory Board suggested in 2004 that the proposed development be relocated to a nearby property owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). While discussions with DCR did not reveal any opposition, O'Neill told the board he would not participate in a land swap.

One might reasonably ask if there is any place for hope. Yes! For one, it is not clear whether the proposed development will contribute a net gain or loss to Belmont's tax base. For another, recent studies by a FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) consultant indicate that the 100-year flood plain elevation-level has increased from 8.2 to 10.6 feet since the data was last collected and compiled in 1982. Further study, hearings, and new maps are required before the impacts on the Uplands can be fully assessed. For another, the Uplands are a critical watershed for the towns of Arlington, Belmont and Cambridge. These three towns historically comprised "the great swamp" but most of the swamp was long ago filled in to support development. The Uplands and Alewife Reservation offer a much-needed permeable drainage

surface for the area that reduces flooding and allows for groundwater storage. Finally, DCR, with the support of Arlington, Belmont and Cambridge, could buy the property. While this idea might sound farfetched given tax-base concerns, financing incentive programs exist to encourage just this kind of thing.

Opponents of the project have the support of the local State Representative, Anne Paulsen, (D-Belmont). She says: "It's not smart growth to take an area adjacent to a very sensitive public reservation in a thickly settled area and pack housing onto the edge of the reservation. We should be able to do better."

As a concerned citizen, what can you do? When the Belmont ZBA receives the Comprehensive Permit application, it will be responsible for holding a public hearing, involving the public and interested parties, negotiating with the developer on the planning and design of the project and ultimately acting on the application. Please participate in this process and let your voice be heard. For information about the Comprehensive Permit Application or future hearing dates, see www.town.belmont.ma.us/Home/.

Deborah Holt is Chair of the Chapter's outings program and a member of the Greater Boston Group Executive Committee.



photo courtesy Elisa Campbell

Tools for Fighting Development

By Alexandra Dawson

Fighting unwanted development takes political skills, to be sure; but a little legal knowledge helps too.

For enormous projects, especially public works, your best friend is MEPA, the law (Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act) and agency that require environmental impact reports. Remember, though, that MEPA's best values are in getting information, gaining time, spreading the word around the state and requiring "mitigation" (some kind of give-back) if the project goes forward. MEPA cannot veto a project, but intense comments and lots of data often lead to a reduced or approved project, and very occasionally projects are withdrawn.

The Wetlands Protection Act is important too, especially in combination with the presence of endangered species on the property. The regulations for these two laws combine to say that no project can go forward without a habitat-protection plan that prevents both short-term and long-term adverse impacts on species listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA). Local Conservation Commissions have maps showing where the wetlands species are located. The Natural Heritage Endangered Species Program (NHESP), a state agency, has other maps and atlases showing the location of listed non-wetlands species. It is somewhat easier to enforce the wetlands maps because they are part of the process of getting a permit for altering a stream, wetlands or floodplain under the Wetlands Act; but MESA applies to all listed species. The Army Corps gets involved in very large wetlands projects; but Corps jurisdiction over isolated wetlands that do not border surface waters is dwindling.

The state and the developers complain that many appeals under the Wetlands Act are really brought to frustrate development. There is no data on so-called frivolous appeals. My feeling is, the real villain is the New Eng-

land climate: it rains some 43 inches a year in this state. Few large undeveloped parcels remain on which there are no wetlands or streams.

Nevertheless, the state has recently changed the wetlands regulations (much easier than changing the laws) to limit who can appeal Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) wetlands decisions. The right to appeal is now confined to persons involved right from the start. So if you go to a local wetlands hearing, be sure to sign in and sign out.

Smaller projects are not usually subject to MEPA and can frequently work around the wetlands on the parcel. The key issues tend to be zoning and public infrastructure, especially sewers. Citizens should be alert to inappropriate zoning (such as industrial zoning in swamps or commercial zoning on narrow back roads). The time to change the zoning is well before the development lurches up the road. Changing zoning is difficult: it requires a two-thirds vote. In my experience, zoning changes are most likely to succeed if residents of the immediate area (as opposed to do-gooders from the other side of town) petition for the change. Ten signatures suffice to put an article on the warrant for an annual town meeting.

Citizens should also keep an eye on sewer lines. They have a way of creeping all over town. Town meeting vote may not be required if the developer is willing to pay to run the line

from the development back to the sewer main. Alert the Select Board/City Council and the sewer commission, if any, to the need for an overall plan for where sewers should and should not go. These worthies seem to think the only impact of sewer extension is reduction of pollution. They rely on the Wetlands Act to prevent development in areas unsuitable for development. This is really stupid thinking. The effect of sewerage on development of prime farmland is so well known to the state that the Department of Agricultural Resources does not permit sewer lines to be run through land subject to their Agricultural Preservation Restrictions (APRs), for fear of giving people ideas. Many marginally hydric (wetland) soils can host septic systems under the state's new 60-minute percolation rate. Keep the sewers out. Better to subsidize a couple of innovative modern septic systems where old systems have failed.

Finally, there's traffic. Everyone complains about it. Everyone keeps creating it. I have yet to hear of any project, large or small, defeated by enlarged traffic flows. The most you will get is intersection improvement, a mixed blessing.

Alexandra Dawson is an environmental attorney and active member of the Sierra Club who lives in Hadley, Massachusetts. This material first appeared, in slightly different form, in the Daily Hampshire Gazette, Northampton, MA.

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Working for Environmental Justice

By Robert Murphy



Since the late 1990s, environmental activists have been reaching out to the religious community, working together on a variety of projects. It's no longer unusual for rabbis and Roman Catholic nuns to be quoted in environmental publications. Native American spiritual leaders have marched with Sierra Club volunteers in the American Southwest. The National Council of Churches has approached global warming as a moral issue and the Evangelical Environmental Network has been passionate in its support for the Endangered Species Act.

In Woods Hole on Cape Cod, a gathering of environmentalists, religious and community leaders to observe the first day of the year has become a tradition. Sierra Club members were responsible for organizing the first of the New Year's Day celebrations in 2001, and Sierra Club banners are still prominent. However, the inspiration for the event came from the "blessing of the fleet" ceremonies and from the holiday processions that can be witnessed in hundreds of fishing villages from the North Sea to the Indian Ocean.

Such gatherings help us recognize our common concerns for the environment. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

reminded us that "All people are joined together in one inescapable web of mutuality." This recognition has become the movement for "environmental justice" (or "eco-justice" as it's sometimes called). Environmental justice developed as a human rights movement inspired and supported by organized religion. The movement is particularly concerned about the experience of poor and oppressed minorities, because consistently, these are the people who carry the major burdens of pollution. In the Amazon, in Africa, and elsewhere in the world, native peoples are brutalized and displaced by major developers. In the shantytowns and urban slums of the world, the poor are forced into the difficult and dangerous jobs, often with little protection or compensation.

When religious leaders speak about "environmental justice," they speak about the human need for safe sources of drinking water, the human need for safe sources of food and energy, and for the human need to be protected from toxics. Surely, the "right to breathe" must be the most basic of human rights. In the 1980s, the cry for "environmental justice" - often heard in religious gatherings - began as a cry for recognition and help. Work-

ers in sweatshops, refugees moving across borders, and people caught in urban noise and dust began to say, "What about us? Does anybody in the environmental movement care about our experience?"

Coming from people of faith, the cry for "environmental justice" is often a cry for justice, equity, peace, and compassion. It's a religious message. Bit by bit, Sierra Club members and others are beginning to listen and understand. Like the civil rights workers of the 1950's and '60s, environmentalists need to reach out to a great variety of people, respecting cultural differences while improving communications and understanding. Religion moves much of the world and, if we want to save the world, we need to appreciate the sources of inspiration that motivate our fellow passengers. On Cape Cod and elsewhere on the planet, "faith matters."

Robert Murphy, who is the vice-chair of the Sierra Club's Cape Cod Group, serves as a Unitarian Universalist parish minister.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

All Massachusetts Sierra Club members are invited to submit their names for nomination to the Massachusetts Chapter Executive Committee (ExCom) and the Executive Committee of their groups (Greater Boston, Cape Cod, Pioneer Valley, Essex and Blackstone Valley). The ExCom of each group serves as its board of directors, establishing group priorities, goals strategies and policies. To submit your name to the nominating committee, please contact the chapter chair, Mary Ann Nelson: chapter-chair@sierraclubmass.org; (617)442-0123 or (617)423-5775 for copies of petition forms.

THE CALENDAR FOR THE 2005 ELECTIONS IS:

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Appoint a Nominating and Election Committee | July 23, 2005 |
| Receipt of names for Nominating Committee consideration and ballot issue petitions | August 22, 2005 |
| Qualification of a ballot issue | August 26, 2005 |
| Nominating Committee report of names of nominees | September 2, 2005 |
| Certification of ballot issue | September 17, 2005 |
| Receipt of candidate petitions | September 23, 2005 |
| Qualification of candidate petitions | September 30, 2005 |
| Produce eligible voter list | November 18, 2005 |
| Print and mail ballots in <i>Massachusetts Sierran</i> | December 1, 2005 |
| Receipt of ballots deadline | January 4, 2006 |
| Count ballots at Sierra Club chapter office | January 4, 2006 |

Climate Change: *Action* is Needed Now

By Elizabeth May

For most of the 3.6 billion-year history of our planet, humanity was not even present. If those 3.6 billion years were placed along a timeline one kilometer long, *homo sapiens* (the self-proclaimed smart species) make our appearance about 2 centimeters from the end. The Industrial Revolution started just 1/8,000th of a centimeter from the current time. Yet in that brief span of time we have disrupted the chemistry of our atmosphere, a chemistry that created a climate that was capable of sustaining life. We have destabilized the climate; have we done so much that the damage is irreversible?

In the past twenty years scientists have learned about global warming and attempted to bring that information to policy makers. The first conference to do so was in Toronto in 1988. "Our Changing Atmosphere: Implications for Global Security" was co-hosted by several U.N. agencies, including the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Program. Following the Toronto conference, the United Nations assembled the largest scientific peer review system in human history to review all published research and provide advice to policy makers.

In 1992, the U.N. Conference on Environment and Development, also called the "Earth Summit," convened in Rio de Janeiro. A key goal was the negotiation of a legally binding treaty on climate change. President G.H.W. Bush refused to sign any convention that included timelines and targets for carbon dioxide reductions. Nevertheless, almost every nation (including the US) signed and ratified a "Framework Convention on Climate Change" (FCCC) that accepted the threat of climate change as real and that we know enough to act to avoid "dangerous levels" of CO₂ concentrations in our atmosphere.

Through the process of "Conferences of the Parties" (or COPs) to the Framework Convention on Climate Change, a more meaningful set of targets was negotiated. In December 1997, at the Third Conference of the Parties under the FCCC in Kyoto, a binding protocol was signed. Canada committed to 6% reductions of greenhouse gases below 1990 levels, and the U.S. to 7% reductions. Unfortunately, in the spring of 2001, President George W. Bush pulled the US out of the Kyoto agreements.

"Humanity is conducting an unintended, uncontrolled, globally pervasive experiment, whose ultimate consequences are second only to global nuclear war."

Consensus statement from "Our Changing Atmosphere: Implications for Global Security" a U.N. sponsored conference in 1988

Where are we now?

The Kyoto protocols are in effect (no thanks to the U.S., which actively tried to persuade other nations not to ratify it). But actual greenhouse gases have not been reduced. Even many countries that ratified Kyoto are not behaving as they should. For example, Canada gives lip service to climate change, while still promoting the most carbon intensive crude (the Athabasca tar sands), even using high quality, low-carbon, natural gas to refine the high carbon crude in Alberta's north – for export to the U.S.



How much is "dangerous"?

The FCCC, as noted, committed the nations of the world to avoid the build up of carbon dioxide to "dangerous" levels. While the term is subjective, most scientists agree that allowing atmospheric concentrations of CO₂ to double from the pre-Industrial Revolution level of 275 parts per million (ppm) to 550 ppm is "dangerous." To avoid a doubling, we need global reductions of 60% below 1990 levels. Kyoto's goal is a very modest first step in that direction.

Instead, we have increased our emissions. We may be following the course of previous civilizations doomed by their own technology, culture, ingenuity and blindness – as experienced by the ancient Maya and Easter Islanders. Recently the scientific debates on climate change have shifted from the 1980s discussions of "has it started yet?" to "is it already too late? Have we reached a point of no return?"


In January 2005, a taskforce of the Institute for Public Policy Research released a report on the risk of abrupt climate change. It claimed a credible case for a "point of no return" in catastrophic interference with the climate system if global average temperature increased by two degrees Celsius. This will occur, according to the study, if carbon dioxide levels

increase from 275 ppm to 400 ppm (far below the “doubling” to 550 ppm). The Institute’s task force is not the first to recognize the possibility of abrupt change. In 2004, a U.S. Department of Defense study considered a climate change-induced shut-down of the Gulf Stream by 2010, a “plausible scenario for abrupt climate change.” The study concluded, as have Hans Blix, U.N. weapons inspector, and Sir David King, science advisor to U.K. Prime Minister Tony Blair, that climate change is a bigger threat to security around the world than terrorism.

We must recognize the massive security threat represented by climate change, and how urgent it is. Current CO2 levels are 379 ppm. This concentration, unprecedented over the last 20 million years of Earth’s history, is irreversible, at least in human time frames. Increased severe weather events, a melting Arctic, more droughts, forest fires and floods are now inevitable. How are we to avoid even more catastrophic levels of climatic disruption?


We need to take action now. We need the United States to join the effort, rather than blocking it. We should use the COP meeting in Montreal (see the box below) as a chance to push the Bush administration, by profiling those outspoken critics, such as Senators Olympia Snowe and John McCain, who understand the dangers we face.

Elizabeth May is a Canadian environmentalist, writer, activist and lawyer. She is the author of four books, and has been Executive Director of the Sierra Club of Canada since 1989.



Walk Thru History

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LNG is Not a Good Neighbor

By Gil Woolley



photo courtesy Blossom Hoag

Editor's Note: Facilities for importing liquified natural gas (LNG), converting it into gas, and sending it through pipelines to homes and businesses are being proposed for both coasts. In Massachusetts, the Chapter is responding to two proposals: one onshore in Fall River, the other offshore near Gloucester. These articles summarize our concerns.

The LNG (Liquified Natural Gas) terminal proposed for Weaver's Cove in Fall River has the same problems as the existing facility in Everett, Massachusetts: it is located in a highly populated area. The channel the LNG tankers must take to reach the terminal passes close to very densely populated areas and under several heavily-used bridges, and must be heavily dredged. The Weaver's Cove site would not even have been considered if the federal Department of Transportation had created conservative siting regulations for these facilities when instructed to do so by Congress in 1979. The Mayor of Fall River, Edward Lambert, joined by the Attorneys General of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, has petitioned the agency to write such regulations. Mayor Kalisz has also petitioned FERC (the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the federal agency that has responsibility for final approval of the site and for enforcing the DOT regulations) for a "stay" (delay) of consideration of the proposal until regulations have been promulgated.

Weaver's Cove, like several other sites being proposed for LNG terminals, is quite obviously not suitable for an LNG terminal. LNG facilities have had serious accidents involving loss of life and property damage. The risk is not high, but the potential damage from a terrorist attack or an accident is so great that locating an LNG terminal close to populated areas is unacceptable. Life is full of risks, and if such locations were the only ones available, it might be argued that the commercial and environmental advan-

tages of natural gas were sufficient to justify this risk; but this is not the case. An LNG terminal can be built on a platform (similar to an oil drilling platform) sufficiently far from shore that gas from even a massive leak would be so diluted by the time it reached the shore that it would no longer be flammable.

"While in the liquified state, natural gas has a temperature of minus 270 degrees F, and cannot explode or burn. But, in contact with water or with land and structures, liquified natural gas heats up and vaporizes. When natural gas is mixed with air at concentrations from 5% to 15%, it becomes highly flammable. In the worst case, anything within a radius of one mile from a leak could be enveloped in a pool of fire."

So why are terminals built and proposed in locations like Everett and Fall River? Take a guess! Money. It is cheaper to build a terminal in an existing port and close to an existing natural gas line than to build an offshore platform.

The process for siting decisions currently used by FERC includes the following defects:

1. Each site is considered in isolation. Common sense would seem to say that some sites are obviously less suitable and should not even be seriously considered. Yet, obviously unsuitable sites, like Weaver's Cove, are considered and costly environmental reviews are prepared.

2. The "worst case" considered in the review is that one half of a tank is released by an accident. In reality, there are commonly three or more heavy spherical tanks on each ship. But the real worst case is that, after the gas is ignited, the pool of fire burns back to the tanker and the ship is enveloped in flames. It is probable

that the high temperature would result in structural failure of the ship's and it's LNG tanks. This could result in the entire cargo of gas being released.

3. Only fire over water is considered, although the connections at the point where the pipes from the ship are attached to the terminal are a likely source of leakage. If terrorists successfully attacked an LNG tanker while it was close to the shore while passing the center of Fall River (or Boston) there would be very heavy loss of life and destruction of property.

All in all, locating an LNG terminal, and its approach channel close to populated areas is like playing "russian roulette" with the lives of thousands of people. Mayor Kalisz of Fall River is right - there must be rules for siting LNG terminals and these rules must be conservative. It makes no sense to study the impact on the environment of a site which poses such potential danger to human life.

Gil Woolley is an activist and long-time member of the Chapter's Executive Committee, as well as a frequent contributor to these pages.

LNG is Not a Good Neighbor

Part 2

By Blossom Hoag



Another proposed LNG facility is a Deepwater Port Project facility near Gloucester and Marblehead intended to import liquefied natural gas for the New England region. It would be located in Massachusetts Bay and would consist of a submerged buoy system to dock LNG carriers approximately 13 miles offshore in federal waters, 250 to 270 feet in depth. An LNG tanker about the size of a football field would arrive approximately every seven days. The LNG would be converted to gas at sea and sent through a new pipeline constructed, owned and operated by the Algonquin Gas Transmission, L.L.C to the Hub pipeline (which goes from Sable Island in the Nova Scotia oil fields to Long Island Sound).

The Chapter is concerned about safety, the effects of the facility's operations on sea life, including the Right Whale, and details of the construction and operation.

The new pipeline would lie across two marine sanctuaries (Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary, and the South Essex Ocean Sanctuary fishing grounds) and would disrupt the ocean floor along the entire area as the pipeline is laid. In addition, the pipeline is only proposed to be laid at a depth of eighteen inches below the ocean floor. This is not deep enough for ocean fishing trawlers that drag heavy equipment across the floor as

they fish; also, shifting sediment and sands could expose the pipeline to being snagged and ruptured. Fishing would be prohibited around the facility, thus further hindering the fishing industry on the North Shore.

Ships approaching the facility would cross the migration and feeding areas of the endangered Northern Right Whale (as readers of the Sierran know, there are fewer than 300 Right Whales). Ship strikes are a major cause of mortality for them.

The LNG would be regasified in a "closed loop" that uses ocean water to warm the liquid to turn it back into a gas. Although the water is continuously circulated on the ship, approximately 54 million gallons per week would be used during offloading of the gas. Water would be returned to the ocean at a decreased temperature that could affect marine life (as will the intake). There is also concern that the facility could change to an open loop system where the water is continuously fed from the ocean and discharged back into it, which has much more severe marine impacts.

The Chapter calls for better analysis of safety issues in case of a spill or fire, and for unexpected ocean occurrences, such as a rogue waves. The Chapter also has questions about the air pollutants that would be emitted by the tanker docked at the facility. The environmental analyses so far do not discuss any mitigation. One possible mitigation would be to close the LNG facility in Everett, MA.

The Chapter suggests the possible alternative of delivering the gas at Sable Island. That facility has already disrupted the habitat of the area; delivering the gas there would put the gas into the system at the beginning of the Hub pipeline and eliminate the need for the new Algonquin connection pipeline and the Deep Port.

The Chapter will continue to monitor this project, but would welcome participation from the Essex county area. If you would like to help monitor the project, please contact the Chapter office.

Blossom Hoag is a member of the Chapter's Executive Committee, Chapter Energy Committee and Greater Boston Group Executive Committee.

Letter from the Director

(continued from page 2)

large scale destruction of irreplaceable natural areas.

Still, the battle to protect wetlands, wildlife, and water quality in New Bedford is far from over. Plans to implement other airport improvements are ongoing, including the filling of 14 acres of wetlands and the associated environmental impacts. The Sierra Club looks forward to working with city and airport officials to ensure that all possible measures are taken to avoid those impacts too. Until then, Club members should take pride in the fact that your voices were heard. In the end, the grassroots effort by Club members who commented on the project, attended local public hearings, and organized door to door made a real difference to the quality of life for all in the South Coast region.



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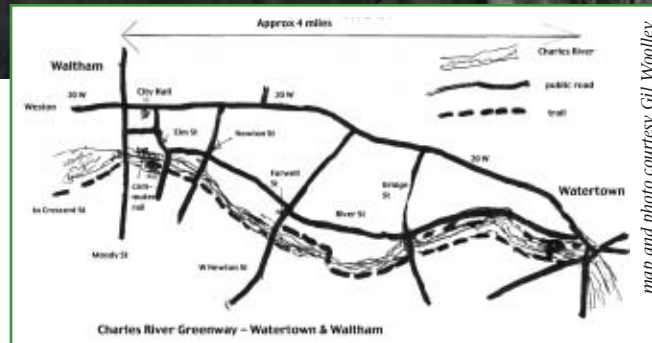
Charles River Greenway:

Missing Link Completed by a Bridge

By Gil Woolley

A wide gap in the Charles River Greenway between Watertown and Waltham has been filled in and an elegant new bridge built. Due to existing development it has not been possible to route the trail along one bank of the river all the way from Watertown to Waltham. From Watertown to Bridge Street, Newton, there is a trail on both sides of the Charles. From the bridge west, there is a newly-opened segment on the south (Newton) side of the river. Now an elegant new bridge is open so that pedestrians and cyclists can cross the river to the trail on the Watertown side and continue to Farwell Street in Waltham (which continues as North Street in Newton).

At Farwell Street, cross the river again and continue to Elm Street Waltham. At Elm Street turn right, then left and you are in City Hall Square where the commuter rail station is located. Stay by the tracks to Moody Street, cross the river again and, just across the bridge, the trail continues to Crescent Street Waltham. This is the end of this part of the designated Greenway but you can reach the Roberts/Brandeis Commuter Rail stop by hiking/cycling through the Mount Peake Cemetery. Exit by the railroad tracks and the Brandeis Uni-



versity campus. Hikers: there is quite a bit of road walking from the cemetery to Roberts.

Commuter trains run from Roberts and Waltham (Fitchburg Line) to Cambridge and Boston. Bicycles are taken on trains at non-rush hour times. See the MBTA web site for the rules for bicycles and for train and bus schedules. MBTA buses run from Waltham to Boston, Cambridge and other locations.

Most entrances to the Greenway

are marked by a four foot high granite pillar engraved with the Greenway Blue Heron logo.

For more information and maps of the Greenway from Boston to Watertown visit web sites "Charles River Greenway" and "Charles River Reservation."

Gil Woolley is an activist and long-time member of the Chapter's Executive Committee, as well as a frequent contributor to these pages.

BREATHE EASIER! CEMENT PLANT GIVES UP

by Elisa Campbell

In late April, St. Lawrence Cement withdrew plans to build a large cement plant and mine on the banks of the Hudson River. The plant would have emitted 20 million pounds of air pollutants every year; many of those pollutants would have crossed the state border into Massachusetts. In particular, nitrogen oxide (NO₂) emissions would have equaled those of the dirtiest power plants in the region, including Massachusetts' Salem Harbor Station (which is considered responsible for 53 premature deaths, 570 emergency room visits, and 14,400 asthma attacks every year).

Congratulations and a great big "thank you" to our neighbors in New York State who fought this plant for over six years.

Middlesex Fells Threatened by Development



By Elisa Campbell

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there was a progressive movement to make cities more livable that seized on the idea of parks and open space nearby to give people fresh air and healthful recreation. What a concept! In the Boston metropolitan area, these ideas led, among other things, to the creation of "reservations" such as the Blue Hills and Middlesex Fells, just beyond the most dense urban development but within reach of urban dwellers.

We seem to live in a time that rejects the idea of civic pride, let alone responsibility. As a result, these reser-

vations have suffered immensely from neglect. Some of them are now threatened by worse impulses.

When Middlesex Fells was created, the land taken by eminent domain, the founders left a 40-acre parcel with a hotel as an "inholding" within the reservation. The hotel evolved into a sanitarium and then a hospital, but for decades those functions and the reservation were good neighbors to each other.

The hospital went bankrupt in 1999, and about five years ago the land was sold to a developer. The first development proposal was for an office park. The Massachusetts Chapter, along with many other groups including the Friends of the Fells, opposed it. The Secretary of Environmental Affairs ruled the developer would have to submit reduced-scale alternatives in future plans due to excessive traffic and environmental impacts.

Instead, the newest proposal is bigger, not smaller. It is a Chapter 40B development of 550 housing units

plus 250,000 square feet of office space on the former hospital land. The development would add 7,000 vehicle trips to the parkway that goes through the Middlesex Fells reservation.

If the Stoneham Zoning Board of Appeals issues a comprehensive permit for the project, there will be a review under state environmental laws. Everyone anticipates a long fight. Unfortunately, due to our publication schedule, the Sierran can't keep up with it; for the most up-to-date information, please go to the Friends of the Middlesex Fells Web site (see box).

Elisa Campbell is Chair of the Chapter's Public Lands & Open Spaces Committee

MA Chapter Web Outings Site:
www.sierraclubmass.org (click on events)

Friends of the Middlesex Fells:
www.fells.org/

Middlesex Fells Reservation Official Site:
www.mass.gov/mdc/FELLS.HTM

John Holdren on the Environmental Challenge and the Human Condition

By David Dow

The Cape Cod Group of the Sierra Club honored John Muir's birthday with a speaker, Dr. John Holdren, co-chair of the National Commission on Energy Policy, Professor of Environmental Science and Policy at Harvard University, President-elect of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and Director-designate for the Woods Hole Research Center. His talk was entitled "Environmental Challenge and the Human Condition".

Holdren's major theme was that society has three pillars: economic, sociopolitical and environmental components which are equally important for a sustainable society. Unfortunately, since Earth Day, the trend in the U.S. is for the economic and sociopolitical components to receive more attention than the environmental aspect. This trend has been accelerated during the Bush administration. Holdren briefly described the direct and indirect impacts of poor environmental quality on the citizens and the poor in the developing and developed world and the importance of mitigating this if one wishes to have the necessary economic and sociopolitical aspects required to support a sustainable society in the world as a whole. He used the analogy that we are all in the same boat and if one end sinks, we will all go down together.

He spent about half of his talk discussing our fossil fuel

energy supply and its economic and environmental consequences. Since 80% of our current energy supply comes from fossil fuels and it is the key to our economy, while at the same time being the major source of environmental degradation (in different ways in the poor, developing and developed world), finding a way forward to using energy in a greener fashion, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions, is a major challenge. It takes 30 to 50 years to change energy systems, so it is critical to get started now. According to Holdren, we must increase energy efficiency (going from 1% increase per year to 2% would make a big difference); reduce the rate of population growth (stabilizing population size at 8 billion might be an achievable goal); develop low carbon fossil fuel energy options; and make greater use of renewable energy sources.

Holdren ended by discussing what people can do locally to make a difference. Since none of the energy generation technologies are without some environmental downsides, he favors developing the Cape Wind project in Nantucket Sound (this has been a controversial environmental issue on Cape Cod). He also advocated people auditing their own energy usage and finding ways to reduce their personal greenhouse gas emissions (and encourage their neighbors to do the same). Increasing energy efficiency is an area where local initiatives can make a difference. The Cape Light Compact gives local citizens an option to obtain "green" electricity, rather than utilizing the standard option.

David Dow is acting chair of the Cape Cod Group of the Sierra Club.

Help Create Forest Reserves for Massachusetts



By Elisa Campbell

For those of us who live west of Worcester, Massachusetts is a forested state. We love our trees. But those forests are threatened – especially by sprawling development and fragmentation. Now we have a chance to preserve some of them.

The state Executive Office of Environmental Affairs (EOEA) is proposing to create a system of Forest Reserves in Massachusetts in which no commercial timbering would be done. The concept is to have large reserves of about 15,000 acres apiece, that represent as many of the forest ecotypes in Massachusetts as possible. In addition, there would be smaller reserves in areas deserving protection but not suitable for designation as large reserves (for example, because they are fragmented by roads).

Working with The Nature Conservancy, staff from EOEA, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife (DFW) have designated eight areas to be the candidates for large reserves. The decision process involved finding large, relatively unfragmented forested areas, then comparing them using eleven different scientific criteria. Among those criteria are numbers of rare species, the acreage of old growth, acreage of unfragmented interior forest, and acreage of bottom-land along streams or rivers. They also looked at ownership; some places already have almost 15,000 contiguous acres owned by state land agencies, but most don't.

ATTEND THE EOEA MEETINGS

**Wednesday, June 22, 7-9 pm -
The Berkshire Ecoregional Assessment**
A meeting to review the Berkshire Ecoregional Assessment. Some information on this process can be found at www.mass.gov/envir/forest/berkshire_assessment.htm

The meeting covers all six large reserves proposed for the Berkshires as well as the proposed small reserves.

The meeting is at:
DCR Bureau of Forestry Region 5
Headquarters
740 South Street (Rte 7) in Pittsfield, MA.
(413)671-0948

**Tuesday, June 28, 6:30 pm -
Mt. Greylock**
A meeting to discuss the proposed Mt. Greylock ecological reserve.
This meeting will take place at:
The Western Gateway Heritage State Park
Visitor Center
115 State Street, Building 4 in
North Adams, MA
(413)663-6312



photo courtesy Mena Schmidt



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EOEA hopes to purchase some land, and also work with land trusts and other non-governmental protectors of land to achieve the desired number of acres in other places.

The staff came up with eight candidate areas: Mt. Greylock, Chalet (south east of Greylock), Middlefield/Peru, Otis, Mt. Washington, Westhampton, Plymouth (primarily Myles Standish State Forest), and the Ware River Watershed. As you can see, most of these sites are in the Berkshires because that's where most of the unfragmented forests are.

The Forest Reserves are part of a larger effort by EOEA to have the state's forest management certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). The state received conditional certification in May 2004 for 500,000 acres. Fewer than a dozen states have passed this evaluation and no other has received such an expansive and comprehensive designation.

In order to maintain the certification, the FSC requires the creation of forest reserves — without, however, specifying their size or number. It is EOEA's inspiration to create so many and to make many of them large.

The Forest Reserves proposal is an exciting opportunity. EOEA will be holding hearings in the towns where the reserves are proposed, and we encourage all Sierra Club members who live in or near those towns to attend the meetings and speak up for reserves. You can believe that opponents will be there, so we must be there too. Now is our chance!

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.

THE GREEN MOUNTAINS NEED OUR HELP!

FROM THE VERMONT CHAPTER OF THE SIERRA CLUB

The Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF) covers over 400,000 acres of beautiful forest and wildlands in Vermont. The US Forest Service is now revising their management plan which will guide activities on the Green Mountain National Forest for the next ten to fifteen years. Their proposal falls short on protecting wilderness, increases damaging motorized recreation and promotes clearcutting.

If you know the Green Mountains, they need your help! Send your comments to the Green Mountain National Forest by July 1, 2005. The Green Mountain National Forest plan is online at:
www.fs.fed.us/r9/gmfl/nepa_planning/plan_revision

Join the Forest and Park Guardians!

In the April *Sierran*, the Massachusetts Chapter launched an initiative to protect our state forests and parks. We asked members to contact us about a state forest or park that you live near or care about. One person's response led to our article in this *Sierran* about Middlesex Fells.

We also asked for photos for our web site of your favorite park or forest, with a note about the threats to it. Check out our web site to see the results so far at www.sierraclubmass.org/guardians.html

So... how about it? Where's your photo? Or concern?

Let us know! See our web site for more information about what you can do and how.

And... if you want to know about a new initiative to create forest reserves, join us for one or both of the forest reserve hikes scheduled for August (see the Outings section of this *Sierran*).

Events and Outings

NOTE: Outings marked with an "E" are educational in addition to recreational!

Please contact leaders for more information and to sign up for the following outings:

WARE RIVER SUNSET PADDLE, BARRE

Thursday June 16, 2005 - 6 pm
Contact leader Matt Hopkinson at 978-928-5964 or at hopkinson34@charter.net

WENDELL STATE FOREST HIKE, WENDELL – PIONEER VALLEY GROUP

Saturday June 18, 10:30 am
Contact leader Elisa Campbell by June 15 at 413-256-4247 or at campbell@oit.umass.edu

GREAT MEADOWS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE HIKE, CONCORD – GREATER BOSTON GROUP - E

Sunday June 19, 8 am
Contact leader Jay Pendexter at 617-924-1176 or at ecotourjay2002@yahoo.com

INTERPRETIVE TIDAL POOL FIELD TRIP, SANDWICH - CAPE COD GROUP

Saturday June 25, 8 am
Contact leader Chris Polloni at 508-563-2312 or at cpolloni@aol.com

MT. TOBY SUMMIT HIKE – PIONEER VALLEY GROUP - E

Saturday June 25, 9 am
Contact leader Elisa Campbell at 413-256-4247 or at campbell@oit.umass.edu

KEYSTONE ARCHES TRAIL HIKE – PIONEER VALLEY GROUP

Sunday June 26, 10 am
Contact leader Elisa Campbell at 413-256-4247 or at campbell@oit.umass.edu

MORaine TRAIL HIKE, FALMOUTH – CAPE COD GROUP - E

Saturday July 9, 10 am
Contact leader Chris Polloni at 508-563-2312 or at cpolloni@aol.com

THOMPSON ISLAND SERVICE – GREATER BOSTON GROUP

Saturday July 30, 8:30 am
Contact leader Deborah Holt at holtdj@verizon.net

FOREST RESERVE HIKE, BERKSHIRE COUNTY - MA CHAPTER - E

Saturday August 6, 9 am
Contact leader Elisa Campbell at 413-256-4247 or at campbell@oit.umass.edu

BUTTERFLY HIKE, CRANE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA, HATCHVILLE – CAPE COD GROUP - E

Saturday August 13, 10 am
Contact leader Chris Polloni at 508-563-2312 or at cpolloni@aol.com

GRAPE ISLAND SERVICE TRIP, BOSTON HARBOR – GREATER BOSTON GROUP

Tuesday August 16, 9:30 am (rain date Aug 17)
Contact leader Karin Tate at 617-876-9507 or at karintate@aol.com

FOREST RESERVE HIKE, BERKSHIRE COUNTY - MA CHAPTER - E

Saturday August 20, 9 am
Contact leader Elisa Campbell at 413-256-4247 or at campbell@oit.umass.edu

To receive a monthly update about MA Chapter outings, subscribe to our outings list!

To subscribe: send a blank email to outingslist-request@sierraclubmass.org with the subject SUBSCRIBE.

If you would like to lead an outing or get involved with the outings in some other way, contact the Outings Chair Deborah Holt at holtdj@verizon.net.

GREATER BOSTON GROUP "HOW TO" SERIES

Sunday, June 26, 2005, 2-4 PM

(this is a different time than previously announced)

Meet with a person from the Environment Department,
City of Boston

Location: Fort Hill, Roxbury

RSVP for address to: Matthew Kepnes, 617-388-0411

HOLD THE DATE!

The next session in the "How To" series will be held on
Sunday, September 25.

Watch the next Massachusetts Sierran or our Website at
sierraclubmass.org for the speaker, location and updates.

SIERRA CLUB & BEER!

Friends, nobles, environmentalists... give me your beer!

Wednesday June 29, 7 pm

Boston Beer Works, 112 Canal Street-upstairs (Look for the
Sierra Club signs). No cover charge, no dress code, just a
good time with a bunch of like-minded environmentalists.
Come meet and mingle with Sierra Club members from
around the region and play a few trivia games. Why?
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Questions? Call the Sierra Club office at (617) 423-5775.



photo courtesy Elisa Campbell

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