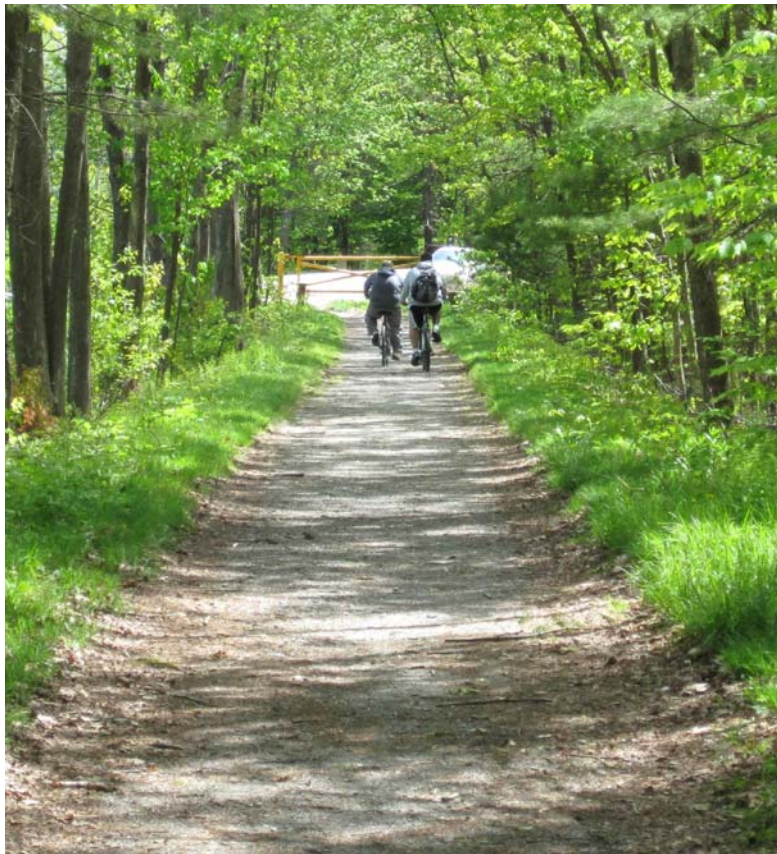


TRAIL INVENTORY UPDATE



Prepared for all MRPC Communities

Prepared in cooperation with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Transportation. The views and opinions of the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation or the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Contract # 69656

September 2013

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MassDOT Highway Division Administrator	Frank DePaola
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Arthur Frost, Project Development Engineer for Administrator Frank DePaola
Glenn Eaton, Executive Director, MRPC, for Chairman Koivumaki
Mohammed H. Khan, Administrator, MART, for Chairman Mayor Wong

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Mary Beth Mello, Region I Administrator	Federal Transit Administration

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Tammy Haney, Regional Planner
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Jason Stanton, GIS/IT Director
*Renee Marion, GIS Analyst
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*Participated in the development of this report

MONTACHUSETT JOINT TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

<u>COMMUNITY</u>	<u>APPOINTED BY SELECTMEN/MAYOR</u>	<u>APPOINTED BY PLANNING BOARD</u>
Ashburnham	Greg Fagan	
Ashby	Mary Krapf	Alan Pease
Athol	Doug Walsh	
Ayer	Pauline Hamel	Peter Johnston
Clinton		
Fitchburg		Paula Caron
Gardner		
Groton	Anna Eliot	David Manugian
Harvard	Lucy Wallace	
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Lunenburg		Robert Saiia
Petersham		
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Royalston	John Morse	
Shirley		Robert Thurston
Sterling		Charles Hadju
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Townsend		
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EXOFFICIO MEMBERS

Heather Hannon	Office of Transportation Planning (OTP) and Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)
Pamela Stephenson	Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Administrator
Mary Beth Mello	Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Region I Administrator
	Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
Laurie Scarbrough	MassDOT Highway Division - District 2
Arthur Frost	MassDOT Highway Division - District 3
	Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)
Mohammed Khan	Montachusett Regional Transit Authority (MART)

ORGANIZATION MEMBERS

Al Futterman	Nashua River Watershed Association (NRWA)
Tony Salerno	Amalgamated Transit Union #690 (ATU 690)
Kit Walker	Fitchburg Airport Commission
	North Central MA Chamber of Commerce
	Fitchburg Council on Aging
	Mass Development
Peter Lowitt	Devens Enterprise Commission (DEC)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this Trail Inventory update is to modernize our past trail inventory data that was collected from 2005-2010. The past trail data was examined and reviewed by MRPC staff and local officials and interested parties to verify the accuracy of the data as well as include any data that may have been missing. The updated trail data was then included in community maps which were made available on the MRPC website and distributed to each community as well as other local agencies.

INTRODUCTION

This project was driven by the newly established Montachusett Regional Trail Coalition (MRTC). This group was formed in March 2012 and is made up of state and local officials and other interested parties who are passionate about trails in the region. These individuals made a request to MRPC for assistance with developing a regional trail map that can be used to boost trail interest, awareness and tourism for the region. The MRTC is focused on trail connectivity by establishing new trails as well as maintaining the existing trail network.

This report will outline the trail inventory update process and will include a final map for each community. These maps will then be merged together to create a large regional trail map which will be made available online as well as at other public gathering spots (ie. libraries, town halls, visitor centers, etc.).

INVENTORY UPDATE PROCESS

1. Meetings

In the spring of 2013, MRPC held a series of meetings throughout the region (see meeting notice in Appendix A). Communities were grouped together into sub-regions, there were five in total, and each meeting focused on a particular sub-region. The attendees were asked to view maps of their sub-region. These maps showed the existing trails that the MRPC had on file. They were then asked to verify the existing trails, and sketch out any other additional existing trails not currently included on the map. Parking locations and points of interest were also documented to be placed on the official trail maps. Informal and potential trails were omitted for this project due to the sensitivity of private property. Thus all maps to be distributed include only those trail that are open and available to the general public.

Additional information was also gathered at the regularly scheduled Montachusett Regional Trail coalition (MRTC) meetings. MRTC members assisted with sub-region meetings and provided their local knowledge of trails and points of interested in the study area.

2. Map Review

The next step was to take the information gathered at the sub-region and MRTC meetings and create draft maps. These maps were then emailed out to all member communities. Departments such as Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Trail groups, and other interested parties. were included in the distribution list. A 30 day review comment period was

established to give communities ample time to submit comments and changes.

3. Final Paper Map

Once the trail maps were finalized, each community received an official 8.5"x11" sized trail map by email. These trail maps were sent electronically so that each community could forward the map to other interested parties, put it on their website for residents and visitors and/or print out copies of the maps for distribution. These maps were also made available on the MRPC website as well as the Johnny Apleseed Visitor Center, located on Route 2 westbound in Lancaster near the Leominster City Line. All community maps can be found in Appendix B.

4. Interactive Trail Map

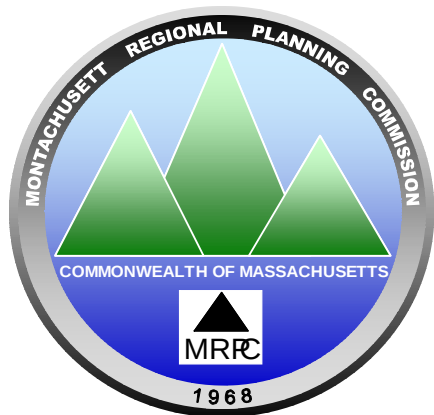
The updated trail data was also added to a Google Maps site. This site is linked to the MRPC website (www.mrpc.org). This page allows individuals to view the trail data through Google Maps while being able to view other key layers such as attractions, lodging, restaurants, etc. Viewers can then print any trail range they wish.

The updated trail data was also added to the MRPC's MrMapper web application. This application is meant to provide more detailed information for each trail system as well as being able to add other related GIS layers to the map. Detailed data includes trail status, property owner, surface type, trail use and trail data source. MrMapper can be accessed through the MRPC website or directly at <https://mrmapper.mrpc.org/>.

RESULTS

This trail inventory project has resulted in accurate, up to date, trail data that has been made available to paper and electronic interactive maps for member communities. These maps will allow communities to publish their trail data on their individual websites or print them to distribute as they wish. In addition, this inventory update will enable the MRPC to work towards the goal of creating a single region wide trail guide for distribution throughout the area/state. This will hopefully promote additional tourism to the Montachusett Region.

APPENDIX A – Sub region trail meeting notice



MONTACHUSETT

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

1427R Water Street Fitchburg, Massachusetts 01420
(978) 345-7376 FAX (978) 348-2490 Email: mrpc@mrpc.org

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Sheri Bean, Transportation Planner

RE: Trail Inventory Project and Visitor Guide for the Montachusett Region

DATE: February 5, 2013

The Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) is currently working on a trail inventory update & trail guide mapping project as part of our ongoing transportation planning activities. This year's project involves working with member communities to review and update the current trail inventory for the entire Montachusett Region. This data will be used to create an electronic and hard copy trail and visitor guide.

To help with our data gathering the following sub-regional meetings have been established. At these meetings, communities can provide input and updates regarding existing trail data that will be shown on a map. There will also be representation from the Montachusett Regional Trails Coalition (MRTC) who will be seeking input regarding a regional trail vision.

- ***Athol, Petersham, Phillipston & Royalston***
March 6th 5:00-7:00pm– Athol Town Hall (downstairs meeting room), 584 Main Street, Athol.
- ***Ashby, Fitchburg, Lunenburg & Townsend***
March 7th 5:30-7:30pm – Fitchburg Public Library (Garden Room) , 610 Main Street, Fitchburg
- ***Ayer, Groton, Harvard & Shirley***
March 13th 6:00-8:00pm - Ayer Town Hall (2nd Floor Great Room), 1 Main Street, Ayer
- ***Clinton, Lancaster, Leominster & Sterling***
March 14th 6:00-8:00pm - Lancaster Town Hall (Auditorium), 695 Main Street, Lancaster
- ***Ashburnham, Gardner, Hubbardston, Templeton, Westminster & Winchendon***
March 27th 4:30-6:30pm -Levi Heywood Memorial Library (Greenwood Meeting Room),
55 West Lynde Street, Gardner

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact Sheri Bean at 978-345-7376 ext.315 or sbean@mrpc.org.

Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC)

TRAIL INVENTORY & VISITOR GUIDE

MEETING AGENDA

1. Introductions
2. Review of Existing Trail Information – shown on a map
3. Trail Updates
 - a. What public trails are we missing?
 - b. Are there any that need updating?
4. Parking facility locations
5. Trail/Visitor Guide information
6. Regional Trail Coalition introduction
 - a. Does your community have a trail vision?
 - b. Would your community be interested in joining this trail coalition?

C: City & Town Clerks: Please post this notice pursuant to MA General Laws, Chapter 30A, Section 11 ½.

Questions: Please contact the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) (978) 345-7376.

APPENDIX B - Community Trail Maps

The trail map files are too large to include in this document. To view the trail maps please visit the MRPC website (www.mrpc.org).