



**For immediate release  
April 8, 2009**

**Contact: Wendy Fox  
617-626-1453**

## **DCR APPLAUDS FEDERAL DESIGNATION OF THE NEW ENGLAND NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL**

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) praised Congressional leaders for passing the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009, which includes designation of the New England National Scenic Trail.

It is the first National Scenic Trail designated in any state in 26 years. The trail will be 89 miles long in Massachusetts, largely following the route of the existing Metacomb-Monadnock Trail. It is the second National Scenic Trail in New England, the first being the Appalachian Trail.

This National Scenic Trail designation, signed into law by President Obama on March 30, enables technical and financial assistance to ensure the trail's long-term protection and maintenance.

"I have hiked every mile of the trail through Massachusetts, and while some segments are very well protected, other sections have suffered serious encroachment," said Massachusetts Congressman John Olver, who championed the legislation. "Not only will designation provide an opportunity for maintenance assistance, but it will also help ensure that we don't lose the trails to residential subdivision growth. Today marks the culmination of an effort that has been nearly a decade in the making. I feel honored to have been able to join the President at the White House as he signed this bill into law."

DCR owns about 26 miles of the trail and is the largest single landowner of the trail in Massachusetts. DCR also has conservation restrictions on another 3 miles, which ensures the land cannot be developed. The remainder of the trail is owned by a number of public and private entities.

"This is one of our signature long-distance trails in Massachusetts," said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. "These long-distance trails form the spine of our greenway and trail network, connecting our state parks and forests with neighboring communities and the region. We're delighted to have earned the National Scenic Trail designation."

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS · EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Department of Conservation and Recreation  
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600  
Boston MA 02114-2119  
617-626-1250 617-626-1351 Fax  
[www.mass.gov/dcr](http://www.mass.gov/dcr)



Deval L. Patrick  
Governor

Timothy P. Murray  
Lt. Governor

Ian A. Bowles, Secretary, Executive  
Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., Commissioner  
Department of Conservation & Recreation

In Massachusetts, the New England National Scenic Trail travels between the Rhode Island border and New Hampshire. Along the way, it passes through and connects several DCR state parks and forests, including Robinson State Park, Mt. Tom State Reservation, Mt. Holyoke Range State Park, Wendell State Forest and Mt. Grace State Forest.

DCR is also working with partners such as the Appalachian Mountain Club to route a section of the trail from the Holyoke Range to the Quabbin Reservation and back to Wendell State Forest to bypass some private property.

Designation of the New England National Scenic trail was championed by Congressmen Olver and Congressman Chris Murphy of Connecticut, and also benefitted from the leadership of Massachusetts Senators John Kerry and Edward Kennedy and Congressional delegations in Massachusetts and Connecticut.

Volunteers from the Appalachian Mountain Club originally built the 89-mile Metacomet-Monadnock Trail starting in the late 1950s. Today, volunteers continue to maintain and manage the trail in partnership with agencies like DCR. In its entirety, the New England National Scenic trail covers about 220 miles, between Long Island Sound and New Hampshire.

DCR and the Appalachian Mountain Club will collaborate with other state and local partners and communities to manage the trail and coordinate use of any federal funds as part of a newly formed Trail Stewardship Council. The National Park Service will provide support and assistance for a local approach to trail management and protection. No land will be acquired to protect the trail without the consent of the landowner.

"The Appalachian Mountain Club is extremely pleased with today's designation of the New England National Scenic Trail," said Heather Clish, AMC's deputy director of conservation. "DCR has been a helpful partner in managing the existing Metacomet-Monadnock Trail system, which is now a big part of the newly designated Trail's proposed route. We look forward to continuing our work with local and state partners in determining the final route of the National Scenic Trail and implementing trail management priorities."

For more information on the New England National Scenic Trail and a map of the route, visit: [www.outdoors.org/about/newsroom/press/index.cfm](http://www.outdoors.org/about/newsroom/press/index.cfm).

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*The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, and dams, in addition to 278 bridges and miles of roadways. Led by Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr., the agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit [www.mass.gov/dcr](http://www.mass.gov/dcr). Contact us at [mass.parks@state.ma.us](mailto:mass.parks@state.ma.us).*