



Planning & Resource Protection

# Norwottuck Rail Trail Rehabilitation Design

## Northampton – Hadley – Amherst - Belchertown

**Status:** Design complete 2010  
**Duration:** Design approx. 24 months  
**Cost:** \$699,999  
**DCR Team:**  
 Office of Recreation Facilities  
 Planning  
 Central District Operations

**Consultant:**  
 Stantec Consulting Services, Inc.  
**Sub Consultants:**  
 Bryant Associates, *Land Surveyors*  
 Urban Forestry Solutions, *Arborist*

### History

- In 1881 the railroad corridor was part of the Massachusetts Central Railroad, later becoming the Wheelwright Branch of the Boston & Maine Railroad.
- In 1985 DCR acquired the corridor for a shared-use path.
- In 1993 the first 8.5-mile section of rail trail from Damon Rd, Northampton to Amherst was built by MassHighway.
- Today, the rail trail runs 10.6 miles from Woodmont Rd. in Northampton to Warren Wright Rd. in Belchertown.

### Points of Interest

- Built in 1887, the NWRT Bridge is an 8-span steel lattice truss bridge over the Connecticut River.
- Beavers have built dams along the rail trail where it passes through town conservation land in Amherst.
- DCR's Universal Access Program offers adaptive cycling on the NWRT serving 500-600 people each June- September.



The Holyoke Range is one of the unique views from the NWRT.

The Norwottuck Rail Trail (NWRT) Rehabilitation Design project upgrades and enhances the existing 10.6 mile shared-use path located in the Pioneer Valley. Constructed in 1993, the rail trail has become popular as a regional recreation facility and as a transportation route for local bike commuters. The design is funded through a state and federal partnership between DCR, MassHighway and the Federal Highway Administration.

The scope of work includes:

Assessment of existing conditions & natural resources. Replacement of existing trail surfaces. Documentation of existing plant communities. Development of a Vegetation Management Plan to address invasive plants & hazardous trees, prevent tree root damage to pavement, and protect valuable wildlife habitats. Evaluation of beaver impacts to the trail and a plan to manage the effects. Public safety & Universal Access improvements. Identification and resolution of drainage and erosion problems. Upgrades to trail signage and Improvements to bridge decks, tunnels & parking lots.



The Norwottuck Rail Trail Bridge



Beaver Dam in conservation land



DCR's Accessible Cycling in Hadley



The Norwottuck Rail Trail in Connecticut River Greenway State Park, Hampshire County, MA.