

ASSEMBLING TRAIL SYSTEMS WITH EASEMENTS, PERMISSIONS, AND PARTNERSHIPS

A silhouette of a hiker with a large backpack standing on a rocky peak, looking out over a vast landscape under a bright, cloudy sky. The hiker is positioned in the center of the frame, with their back to the camera, looking towards the left. The sky is filled with large, white, fluffy clouds against a blue background. The foreground is a dark, rocky outcrop.

Massachusetts Trail Conference
November 14, 2015

Pete Westover, Conservation Works

A photograph of a dirt trail winding through a grassy field. The trail is made of light-colored soil and is surrounded by tall, green grasses. In the background, there is a dense line of green trees under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is a natural, outdoor setting.

Potential Trails are everywhere...



CONSERVATION WORKS

ENHANCING LAND CONSERVATION AND
ECOLOGICAL RESILIENCY SINCE 2005



Our Partners

Pete Westover | Dick O'Brien | Eric Boudreau
Melissa Adams | Anne Capra | Molly Hale

Each partner brings extensive experience in a broad range of conservation, environmental, agricultural, and trail network projects.

Conservation Works was founded in 2005 by Pete Westover and Terry Blunt to provide high quality, personalized service performed by passionate and committed conservation experts.

Conservation Works provides clients with extensive experience in conservation planning, land protection and land management services

Collectively, Conservation Works has the expertise and experience to work on a wide variety of private and public projects in the Pioneer Valley and New England. Conservation Works welcomes collaboration with firms seeking the capacity of a natural resource firm with our expertise and qualifications.

Our specialties include land conservation, biological assessments, land use and open space planning, trail system design and development, and GIS mapping and photo-documentation.

Conservation Works, LLC
P.O. Box 705, North Hatfield, MA 01066
info@conservationworksllc.com
(413) 695-4627 or (413) 824-1148

ConservationWorksLLC.com

Conservation Stewardship Ecology Farms Trails



Conservation

Protecting land for people and wildlife.

- Conservation Restrictions
- Agricultural Preservation Restrictions
- Open Space and Recreation Plans
- Local Land Protection Zoning
- Community Preservation Act Planning
- Grant Writing & Project Management
- Baseline Document Reports
- Massachusetts Conservation Land Tax Credit Applications



Trails

Providing sustainable access to the outdoors to enhance quality of life.

- Trail Planning & Securing Easements
- Sustainable Trail Designs & Construction Plans
- New Construction & Restoration
- Trail Closures and Re-routes
- Hazard & Liability Assessments
- Training Trail Stewards
- Mapping & Interpretive v.
- Storm Damage & Hazard Tree Removal
- Custom Hikes & Programs
- Grant Writing & Project Management



Farms

Supporting local food systems as a vital part of local economies and cultural landscapes.

- Agricultural & Food Systems Planning
- Farm Business Planning
- Agricultural Preservation Restrictions



Ecology

Understanding our environment to support the co-existence of wildlife and people.

- Habitat Assessments & Land Management
- Biological Inventories & Surveys
- Breeding Bird Surveys & Wildlife Tracking
- Invasive Plant Assessment & Control
- Vernal Pool Certification
- Rare Species Consultation
- Educational Training & Workshops



Stewardship

Managing land to suit the needs of the wildlife and people who inhabit it.

- Monitoring Conservation Restrictions and Agricultural Preservation Restrictions
- Property Boundary Research, Mapping & Marking
- Property & Trail Maintenance
- Customized GIS Mapping
- Photo-documentation of Property Features

Welcome to the
AMHERST COLLEGE
Sanctuary Trail System



Please enjoy the trails on foot only, bicycles and horses are damaging to these environments and are forbidden

Amherst College Sanctuary trails
 Other trails
 Water
 Posted trail map
 N
 100' 300' 600'



New trail route at Flag Rock,
Monument Mountain



Manhan Trail Project for Pascommuck
Conservation Trust

Doyle Center-Universally
Accessible Trail, Leominster





Connecticut River

WHY EASEMENTS?

Establishment of town trail systems

- Trail links among towns
- Connections with rivers
- Accommodation of many types of users
 - Getting children & adults outdoors
- Attracting people to natural resource-based events and sales locations
- Being creative – every place should have usable trails



Groves Conservation Land Tax Credit project, Pelham



Martin-Held Tax Credit project, Westhampton

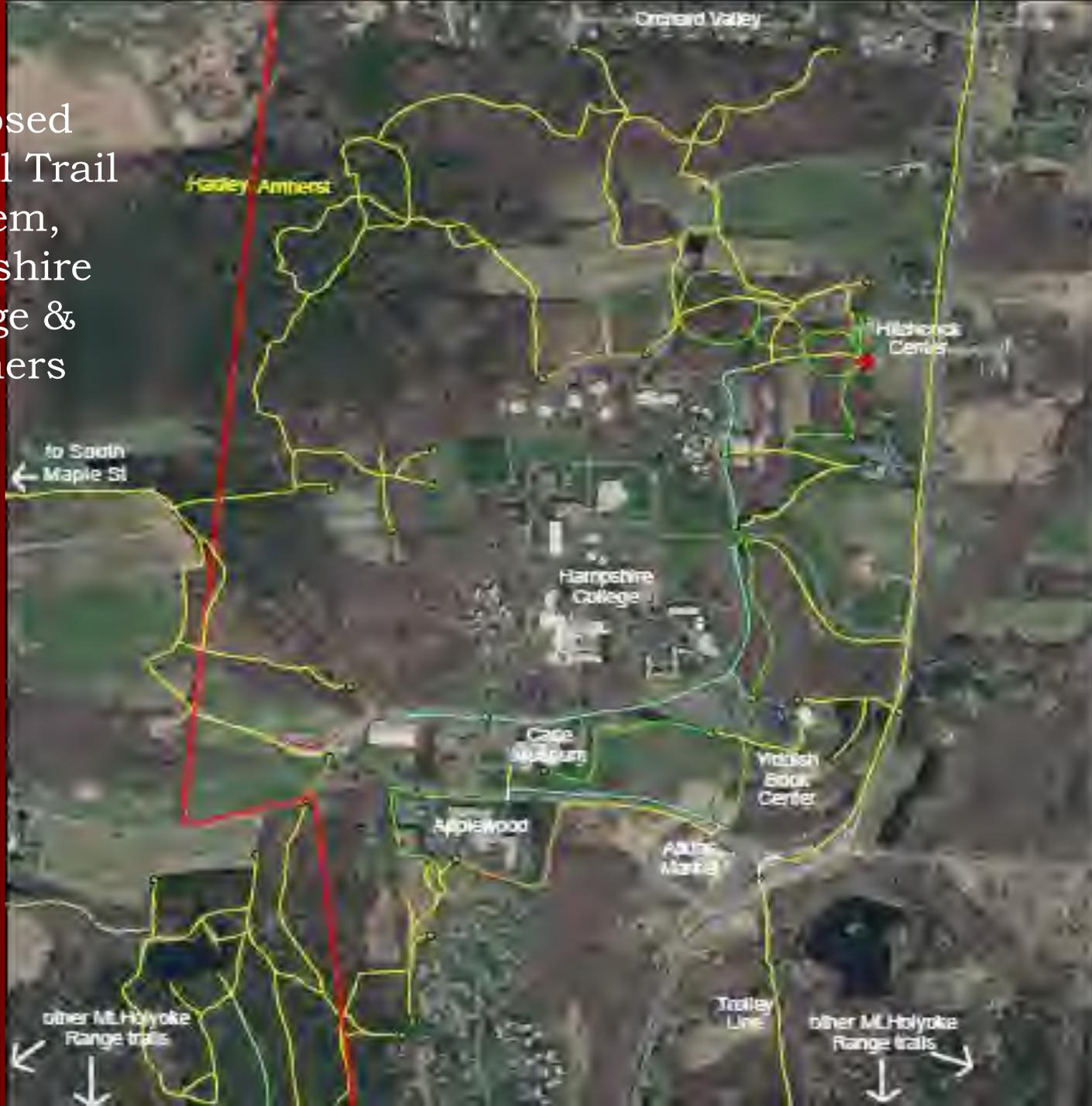


High Valley Agricultural Easement,
Columbia County, New York

LEGAL MECHANISMS FROM INFORMAL TO FORMAL

- Handshake agreement
 - Short-term license
 - Lease
- Short- or long-term easement
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)
- CR or APR with trail easement or right of public use recorded in advance
 - Fee acquisition

Proposed
Cultural Trail
System,
Hampshire
College &
partners



**ROBERT FROST
TRAIL**

**PUFFERS POND 1.4 Mi
NOTCH VISITORS CENTER
22.3 Mi**

**PRIVATE PROPERTY
PLEASE
STAY ON TRAIL**



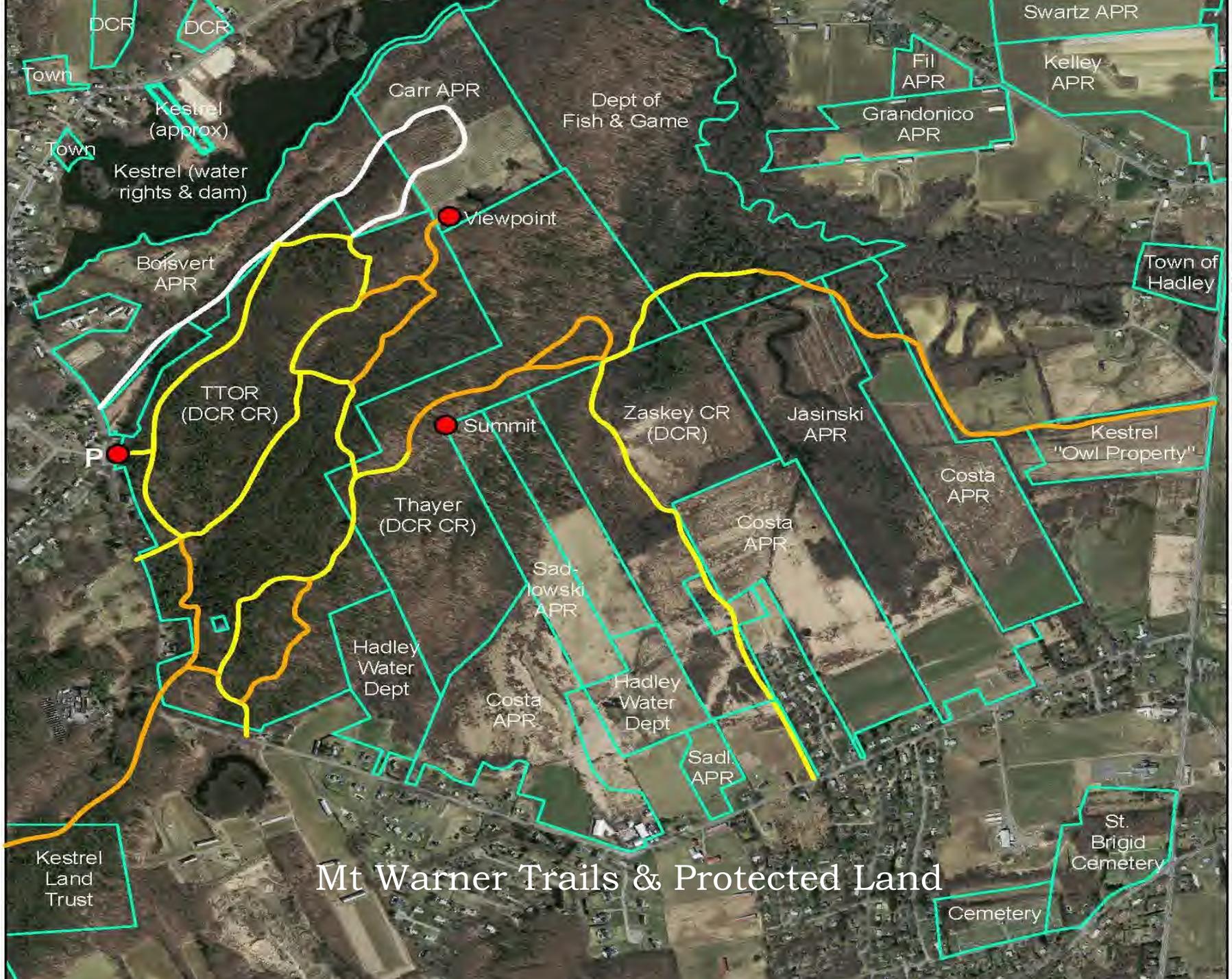


A scenic landscape photograph showing a large, textured tree trunk on the left side. The foreground is filled with a variety of grey and brown rocks of different sizes, some partially covered by green grass and fallen leaves. A dense field of tall, green grasses extends into the middle ground. In the background, a line of trees marks the edge of a forested hill under a bright, overcast sky.

Farm of Walter Banfield - father of the
M&M Trail (now the New England
National Scenic Trail)



Robert Frost Trail starting into
DFG property, Montague
Wildlife Corridor



DCR

DCR

Town

Kestrel (approx)

Town

Kestrel (water rights & dam)

Carr APR

Dept of Fish & Game

Fil APR

Kelley APR

Grandonico APR

Viewpoint

Boisvert APR

Town of Hadley

TTOR (DCR CR)

Summit

Ziskey CR (DCR)

Jasinski APR

Kestrel "Owl Property"

P

Thayer (DCR CR)

Costa APR

Costa APR

Sadlowski APR

Hadley Water Dept

Hadley Water Dept

Costa APR

Sadl. APR

Kestrel Land Trust

Mt Warner Trails & Protected Land

St. Brigid Cemetery

Cemetery

Mt Warner Trail
Dedication, TTOR,
October 2014





John Green and Rick & Mary Thayer



J.
Pipczyński

Harris

Harris

Mt Warner
Road

TTOR
Trail

Williamsville
Bridge

Parkhurst

Griffin

Quinlan

Keelret
Land Trust

abram

Scott Perry
Washington
Museum

PPH

Scott

Proposed Trail Link to
Mount Warner

Kuusk

Scott

A photograph of a forest trail during autumn. The ground is covered in a thick layer of fallen leaves in shades of brown, orange, and yellow. A stream flows through the lower right portion of the frame. The background is filled with tall, thin trees, some with bare branches and others with green foliage. The lighting suggests a bright day with some shadows.

Trail to Mt Warner on Dyer Parcel,
Kestrel Land Trust

SUGGESTIONS TO TAKE AWAY...

- Be aware of existing uses (e.g. snowmobiles, equestrians)
- Respect farm use and avoid alienating farmers
 - Use established trails
- Bring land trusts and other partners on board
 - Start with short-term permissions
 - Emphasize commercial benefit
- A project with multiple cooperating groups can be a strong candidate for grant funding



Mill River at Ferry
Road, Hadley



Connecticut River

Connecticut River
Fence

Draw part of existing area for the proposed trail on POA maps with approval of M&A, DCR

P

Ferry Road Layout

Heavy Wood Fence

Farm gate

Ferry Road

Boltavent

Boltavent

Boltavent

Signs posted:
Nothing in Tow
No Turnaround

Ferry Boat

Ferry Boat

Boltavent

Proposed Trail Easement

M&A River

Car-top Boat Landing

Proposed car-top boat landing,
Connecticut River Paddlers' Trail



Connecticut River boat ramp (private)

SUGGESTIONS TO TAKE AWAY...

- Find ways to control harmful uses
- Confine use to designated right-of-way
 - Work with abutting landowners
 - Emphasize commercial value
- Be aware of the history of conflicting factions
 - Plan for future stewardship



DCR beach



Red Rocks, Connecticut River



Bashon Beach (DCR)

private

DCR

Red Rocks

Aria Beretta

Dewitt Thompson

APR

Meadow Street

Connecticut River

Hatfield boat launch

small beach

possible campsite

beach

1500 ft

1,000 ft

DCR

DCR

DCR

DCR



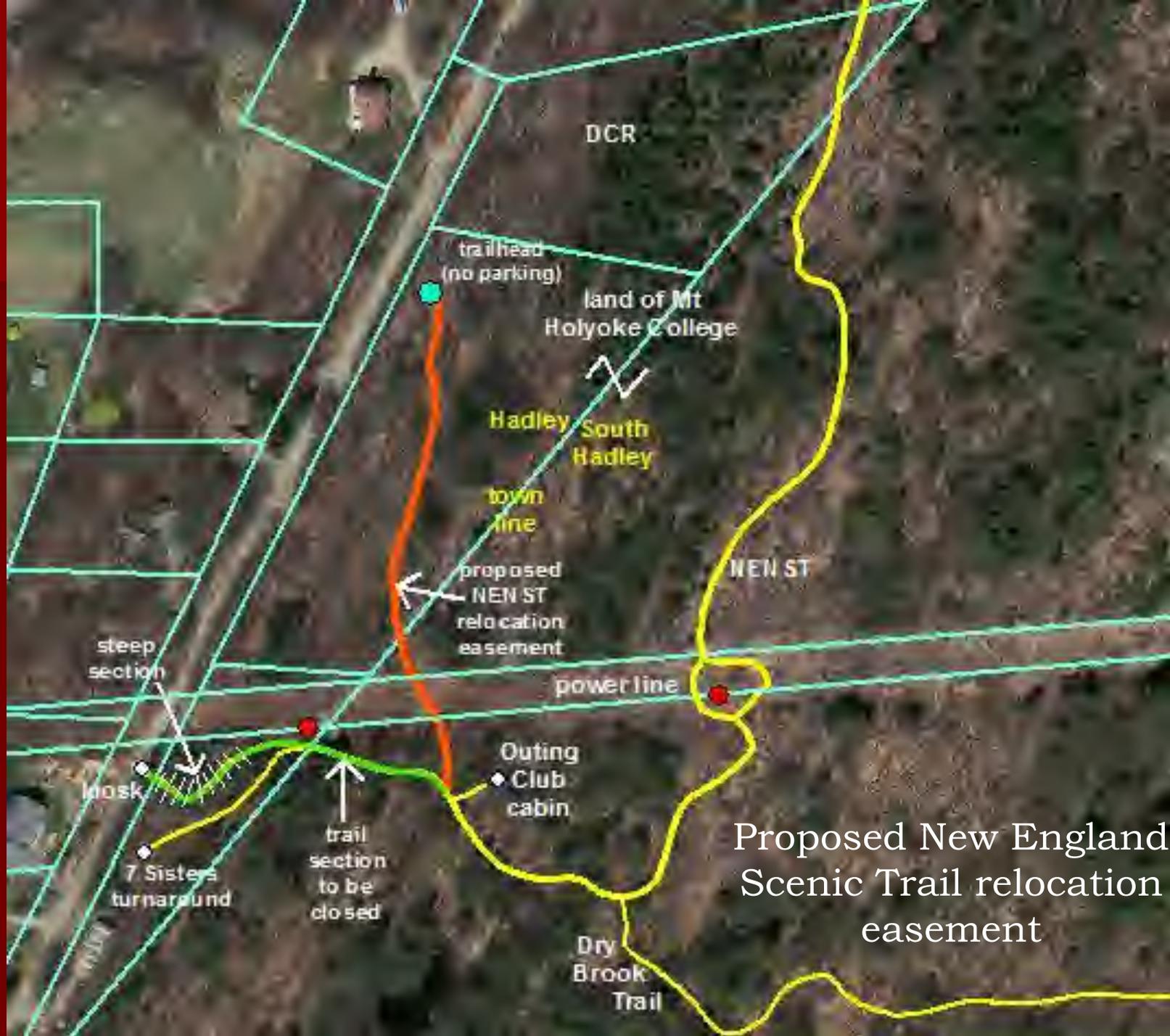
Adjacent APR field

SUGGESTIONS TO TAKE AWAY...

- Talk to all owners before giving up on a potential route
- Be ready to regroup and try something different
 - Be aware of historical difficulties
 - Treat all owners with respect
 - Time can change the picture
- Build public access/trail rights into an APR or CR before it's recorded

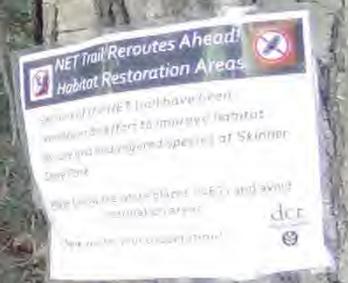


Mt Holyoke Range & Connecticut River



Proposed New England Scenic Trail relocation easement

New England National
Scenic Trail – present
trailhead Old Mountain
Road



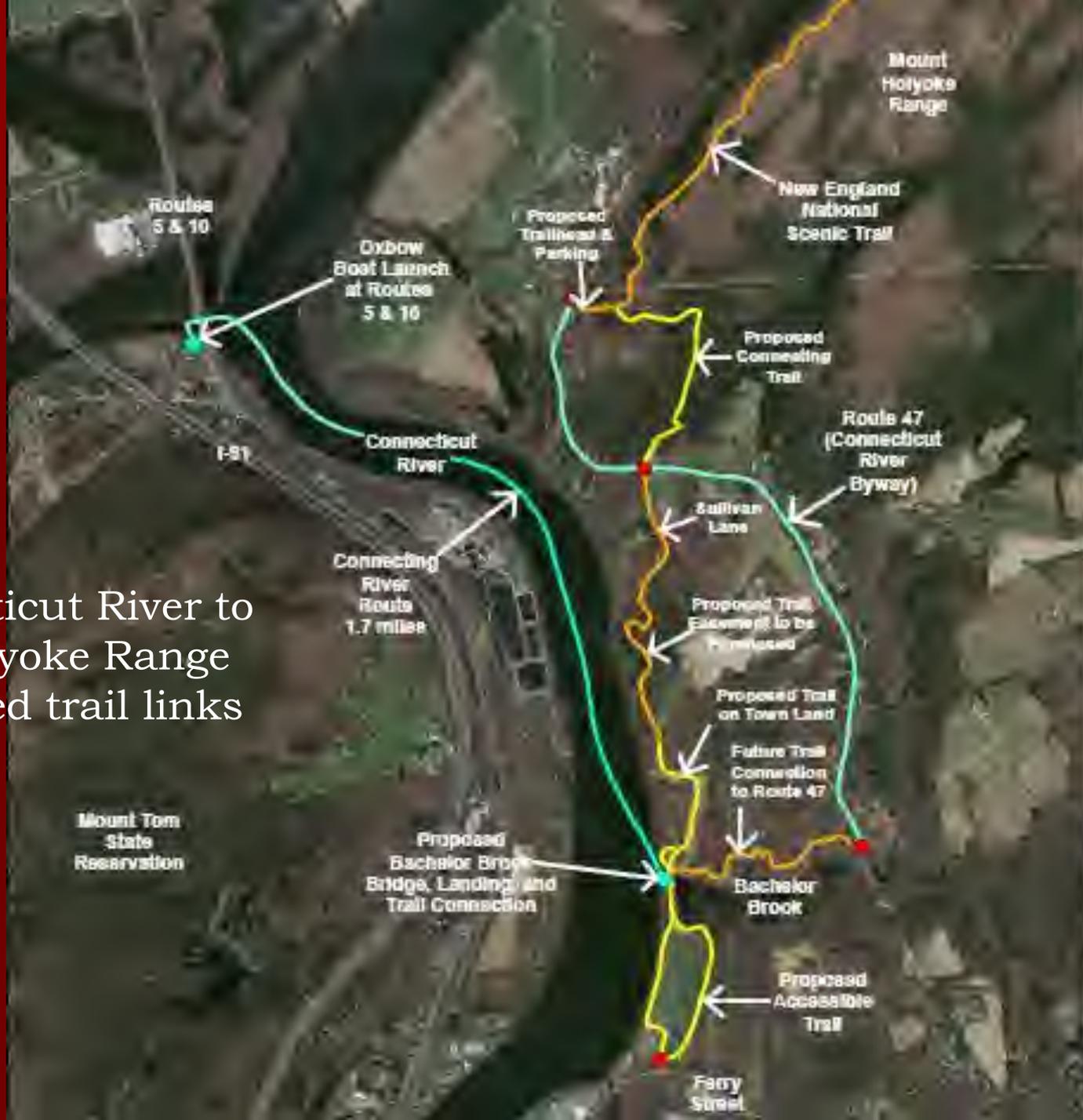


Relocation Route, New England Scenic Trail

SUGGESTIONS TO TAKE AWAY...

- Listen to neighbors and keep them informed
- Be alert to possible new ideas or trail routes
- Connect with overall land protection mission
 - Work with the landowner throughout the process of discussion and planning
- Plan for alternatives in case the landowner does not agree to an easement or trail permission
 - Make sure maintenance is provided for.

Connecticut River to
Mt Holyoke Range
proposed trail links



SUGGESTIONS TO TAKE AWAY...

- Scope out all potential permits that may be required
- Learn from previous permit experience
 - Work closely with town officials
 - Incorporate Universal Accessibility where possible
 - Respect the renting farmer

AND a few cheerful examples of cooperative
and generous landowners...

Adams Brook crossing,
Shutesbury



EASTMAN BROOK
CONSERVATION AREA
ENTRANCE
RIGHT-OF-WAY ONLY

TRAIL HEAD
PARKING

PLEASE
STAY
ON
THE
TRAIL

PLEASE
STAY
ON
THE
TRAIL



A photograph of a dirt path in a wooded area. The path is covered with fallen brown leaves and some green grass. The path leads into a dense forest of evergreen trees. The lighting is bright, suggesting a sunny day. The text "Gellman property, Leverett" is overlaid on the image in white font.

Gellman property,
Leverett



W.D. COWLS, INC.
LAND COMPANY

Sustainably managing Pioneer Valley forests since 1741

TREE FARM

Respectful
Visits
Welcome



forestry@cowls.com 413-549-1403 x333 www.cowls.com

SUGGESTIONS TO TAKE AWAY

- Don't be afraid to talk to landowners
 - Listen to concerns
 - Be flexible
 - If necessary, start with a handshake agreement or short-term license or easement
- Arrange for proper trail inspection and maintenance
 - Engage partners

Maidenhair Fern, Hatfield Trail





Wild Ginger, New England Scenic Trail route

ISSUES AND QUESTIONS

- Will land value be diminished (or enhanced)?
 - Are there neighbors who will object?
- Will an existing APR or CR prevent a trail easement?
 - Is the physical route suitable?
- Are there permitting issues (archaeological-historical, wetlands, NHESP, town regs, ...)
 - Liability (re Chap 21 sec 17C)
- Has there been a history of trespass or misuse?
- Will there be objections to bike or vehicle use?
 - Will farmers be bothered by public trail use?
 - Are there wildlife or rare species concerns?
 - Can parking be accommodated?

A dirt trail winds through a lush forest. The path is surrounded by dense green vegetation, including ferns and various trees. The scene is captured from a slightly elevated perspective, looking down the trail.

Thanks to:

Amanda Lewis & Dick O'Brien

DCR Greenways & Trails Program

MARTAB Board

Double Tree Hotel & Conference Center

Generous cooperating landowners

Many others....