

# SWRPC

## Commission Highlights

February 2014

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### **Bus Service to Boston Announcement**

Through a public/private partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Greyhound Bus Lines will be providing a new bus route service connecting Brattleboro, VT to Boston, MA on Fridays and Sundays. The service includes a stop in Keene at the Transportation Center on Gilbo Avenue. Prior to this new service the best public bus option from Boston, MA to Keene, NH took over 10 hours, where the new route takes two hours. Improving intercity bus services to connecting Routes in Nashua, Manchester and Concord as well as Boston has been a top priority of the Monadnock Region Transportation Management Association (MRTMA) which receives technical support from SWRPC staff. The MRTMA Intercity Bus Task Force is continuing to advocate for additional service improvements and better transfer times at nearby bus hubs in Springfield, MA and White River Junction, VT. For more information about this new service, the MRTMA and the Intercity Bus Task Force, please contact J. B. Mack of Commission staff.

### **Land Conservation Activities**

The NH Land and Community Heritage Investment Program, known as LCHIP, recently distributed more than \$3 million in grant funds to 39 preservation projects throughout the state. Six projects in our region were awarded funding as follows:

- Brennan Brook Conservation Project in Frankestown
- Shattuck-Dinsmore Conservation Project in Frankestown
- Building #3 and Inspection Room in Harrisville
- Stone Arch Bridge in Keene
- Wyman Tavern in Keene
- Wingate Farm in Winchester and Hinsdale

In a related item, applications are currently being sought for the 2014 Quabbin to Cardigan Trail Grants Program. Applications must be submitted prior to 5:00 p.m. on March 14<sup>th</sup>. Application materials are available at <http://q2partnership.org/grants.aspx>. Questions regarding the grant program and application process should be directed to Chris Wells at the Society for Protection of NH Forests at (603) 224-9945 or [cwells@forestsociety.org](mailto:cwells@forestsociety.org)

### **Stream Crossing Vulnerability Assessment Workshop**

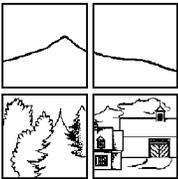
On February 26<sup>th</sup>, SWRPC staff attended the Piscataquog Watershed Stream Crossing Vulnerability Assessment Project Public Informational Workshop in New Boston. Workshop presenters included representatives from Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission, Trout Unlimited, Antioch University, and Streamworks Engineering. Through a grant from NH Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration, project partners completed stream crossing surveys and created assessment tools to evaluate and rate a stream crossing's vulnerability to severe storm events. Field data and modeling tools are currently being developed for use by road agents, public works staff and others to proactively address inadequate crossings, protect water quality, and improve aquatic habitat. For more information, please contact Henry Underwood of Commission staff.

### **Tri-State Bicycle Map Project**

SWRPC staff is in the process of finalizing designated bicycle routes for the western portion of our region for inclusion in the Connecticut River Valley Scenic Bikeway map. SWRPC is a partner with the Windham Regional Commission (VT), Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, (MA) and the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (MA) on a project aimed at developing a regional bicycle map for the tri-state region. Locations for wayfinding signs along portions of the Connecticut River Valley are being discussed, primarily in Chesterfield, Hinsdale, and Walpole. If you have any questions regarding this project, please contact Steve Waleryszak of Commission staff.

## Transportation Planners Collaborative (TPC)

On February 25<sup>th</sup>, staff attended a TPC meeting that provided updates on a new federal funding program called the Transportation Alternatives Program, and the Statewide Asset Data Exchange System (SADES). The Transportation Alternatives Program replaces and combines the former Transportation Enhancement, Recreational Trails and Safe Routes to Schools programs. The new program will set aside \$1.25 million for Recreational Trails projects and an additional \$5 million for other projects annually. NH DOT is currently formulating proposed guidelines for the program that will require a 20% local match. Eligible activities for the Program are to be focused on projects that meet non-motorized needs (e.g. walking and biking). The SADES program is a partnership between the University of New Hampshire, NH DOT and regional planning commissions to begin a geospatial transportation asset inventory of transportation related facilities such as culverts, guardrails, sidewalks, and crosswalks on both state and town roads. For more information on either of these programs, please contact J. B. Mack of Commission staff.



## Farmer Appreciation Night

The Monadnock Farm Community Coalition will be holding Farmer Appreciation Night on Friday, March 14, 2014 from 5:30 to 10:30 p.m. at Heberton Hall, adjacent to the Keene Public Library. This event has free admission for farmers and the public is invited to attend with a suggested \$10 donation. A potluck buffet will be served from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. After dinner, there will be music provided by The Bump Road Band and The Cold River Ranters, followed by a contradance. Awards will be given to the oldest farmer and a newcomer. This is a volunteer-run event to show appreciation for local farmers, and more volunteers are welcome. For additional information or to register, please contact Roe-Ann Tasoulas at: [coordinator@mfccoalition.org](mailto:coordinator@mfccoalition.org).

**Southwest Region Planning Commission**

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