

RGT Stewardship Plan

Site: Mosher Conservation Area

Plan for year: 2013

1. Description: size, location, access, brief description

This 16-acre property of upland forest on the south side of Brushy Mountain lies just north of Rat Hollow Road. On the east and part of the south side, it abuts the David M. Smith property (Conservation Restriction held by RGT). On the west and north it abuts the Paul C. Jones Working Forest (Conservation Restriction held by MA DFW).

While there is access to the property along Rat Hollow Road from either end, the western end is a discontinued road from the Gordon King property east and so there is no legal permission to use the road. The eastern end does have access through the David Smith CR, but that access is discouraged in deference to the home abutting the Smith property that wins all the parked cars. There is walking access from Shutesbury Road north on the M-M Trail (trail name may be changed).

or same as last year

2. Site Significance:

The property was given to RGT so that the M-M trail could be relocated to this property. The Appalachian Mountain Club built and maintains the trail. With the help of an AmeriCorps crew, they also built and maintain an AMC shelter on the property.

or same as last year

3. Deed Restrictions/Responsibilities:

In 2004, Harold and Eleanor Mosher gave their 16-acre woodlot to the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust with the understanding that the Appalachian Mountain Club could put the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail through the property.

The deed does not include any restrictions.

RGT has a memo of agreement with the Appalachian Mountain Club regarding the maintenance of the trail and the construction and maintenance of the shelter.

or same as last year

4. Site Restrictions/Limitations:

This property is unique among RGT-owned properties: it is bordered on 3 sides by Conservation Restrictions (The east side (358 feet) borders private property and on the south side there is about 300 feet bordering the discontinued Rat Hollow Road).

Access is limited to walking: the M-M trail or from Mountain Road.

Although there is an AMC shelter on the property, the nearest stream, Mountain Brook, is to the west on the Paul C. Jones Working Forest.

or same as last year

5. Plant Communities, Wildlife Communities, Natural Features:

Given the size of the contiguous Conservation Restrictions, the property has surely hosted almost the complete range of expected wildlife from the shrew to the moose. We do not have anyone monitoring the mammals.

Nesting forest birds include Barred Owls, Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers, Hermit Thrush, and Scarlet Tanagers. Volunteers collecting data for the second Massachusetts Breeding Bird Atlas found 17 breeding species in one morning. More volunteer time recording birds, butterflies, and other wildlife would be very useful.

With the stone walls on the north and the stone walls and Virginia rail fences on the south, it is easy to imagine sheep grazing here (and on lands nearby) in the mid 1800's. Today's forest is relatively young (possibly from a clearcut sometime before Hal Mosher purchased the property in 1952). It is primarily a hardwood forest with a tangled understory of mountain laurel mostly in the eastern part.

or same as last year

6. Historic Land Use and Cultural Resources:

Some of the property lines are marked with stone walls. At least one is marked by the zigzag pattern of stones that supported a Virginia rail fence (a fence made of rails resting on each other at an angle).

In addition to the stone walls and the zigzag pattern of stones used to support a Virginia rail fence, there is an old foundation next to Rat Hollow Road. This is probably the place where a local resident raised guinea pigs for the local college laboratories. The story goes that the neighbors were not too impressed – hence the name Rat Hollow Road.

or same as last year

7. Trails Present and Potential (also complete/revise Trail Assessment on last pages):

The Metacomet–Monadnock (M-M) Trail goes through the property. It is maintained by the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC). Because the trail is the responsibility of AMC, RGT has not done a Trail Assessment.

or same as last year

8. Potential Threats: (boundaries/access, unauthorized use, hydrology/wetlands, soil erosion/sedimentation, invasive species, sensitive resources)

AMC is responsible for maintaining both the trail and the shelter. The trail north of the property was discontinued by the owner (Cowls) – hikers are welcome on the property but the trail

markers have been painted out. As a result, AMC in re-routing this section of the long-distance north-south trail through the Pelham/Quabbin area. The fate of this trail (and shelter) are uncertain.

or same as last year

9. Management Goals Last Year and Accomplishments:

Monitor the property annually (including checking on the maintenance of the shelter.)

10. Comparison last year's budget (year 2012) with actual costs:

a. Estimated every-year costs:

none

b. Estimated single-year costs:

none

c. Unanticipated costs:

none

11. Management Goals This Year:

Monitor the property annually (including checking on the maintenance of the shelter.)

Work with Appalachian Mountain Club and the Leverett Trails Committee to determine future of the M-M Trail and the shelter.

12. Schedule of Planned Activities (including monitoring) to Meet Goals:

fall: monitor property

13. Budget: Description	Estimated cost	Estimated Total
a. Costs every year		
none		
b. Costs just this year		

none		
(Total for this year)	none	
<i>c. Anticipate additional costs next year</i>		<i>(do not add to total)</i>
none		
<p>Plan completed by: GlenAyers, Mary Alice Wilson</p> <p>Date: February 19, 2013</p> <p>Presented to the Board: in Archives and on the web:</p>		

Special thanks to the East Quabbin Land Trust for their help with the format of this document.