

RATTLESNAKE GUTTER TRUST

200⁵* ANNUAL REPORT

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A very active and successful program of spring activities in 2005 brought new friends and faithful followers to enjoy exploring vernal pools, hike to Sunderland's Pig Pen Ledges, become aware of our Leverett birds, and hike up Brushy Mountain, thanks to programming by Jean Bergstrom and the leadership of Glen Ayres, Mary Alice Wilson, Al Shane, and Brooke Thomas.

On June 2, Benjamin Kilhan's program "Living with Bears" captivated not only school children, but many townspeople as well. RGT joined the Leverett Library to bring this bear specialist for an afternoon school Frances King Memorial program. Ben showed a movie of his life with young bears, followed by an evening slide and talk program.

On the land front, we took a long view of preserving Leverett lands, benefiting from a comprehensive analysis done by Cully Thomas, Brooke's son. A letter to landowners of large tracts of land was well-received, with potential contacts resulting. Two persons have indicated interest in putting a CR on their land. Monitoring our CR's is a yearly responsibility made doable by the complete and competent recording system put in place by Mary Alice Wilson, which makes sure that we keep tabs on these lands. The school trail, a work in progress, was named the "Gordon King Trail." A potential gift spurred more exploratory work on a Leverett Pond trail. In East Leverett, an M&M shelter was constructed on the Mosher land by an Americorps crew.

Much discussion and research on the best way to maintain and protect East Leverett Meadow bird life revolved around when to mow, sheep pasturing and the potential of burning. We are aware and concerned about 4 wheelers on Brushy Mountain and the planned 45 unit development near the Teawaddle Hill Road line and their effects on our Leverett landscape.

Three projects requesting CPC funds are of RGT interest. We voted support for the acquisition of a 9.375 acre parcel near the Leverett-Sunderland line; the restoration of the historic landscape northeast of the Leverett Library; and the Leverett Pond Association's plans for opening a channel and building a dock.

Financially, our bank balance grew from \$45,932 to \$48,751, thanks to an excellent annual fund drive letter that resulted in many generous gifts beyond membership, including gifts honoring two weddings. And our recycle income went from \$37,590 to \$39,422.

Plans to enjoy Leverett Pond at our 2005 Annual Meeting were again rained out by a torrential downpour. At the Town Hall, we recognized five special people who have given outstanding service to the Trust: Evie Schuyler, Gordon King, David Field, Carlyle Field and Gail Alt, presenting each with a framed and numbered Owl print, from Julie Collier's original drawing of a saw-whet owl. During the year, Peggy Sanders and Mary Alice Wilson resigned as trustees, but remain our devoted friends. As compensation, we added Bill Rivers. Joan Godsey and Brooke Thomas continue as co-chairs, as we look forward to another challenging and rewarding year.

Annette Gibavic, *Secretary*