

RATTLESNAKE GUTTER TRUST

2006 ANNUAL REPORT

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Land preservation was the dominant theme of 2006. The Trust sponsored three CPA proposals, all of which passed at Town Meeting. The purchase of the 9 acre Robert Frost Trailhead property expanded to 35 acres the preserved woodland area at the northwest corner of town. It also provided a liaison with UMass students from the Dept. of Natural Resources, who conducted a timber, wildlife and habitat inventory of the land. It was real-life experience in conservation work for them, and necessary resource documentation for us.

The second proposal was to restore native plants in the wetland area at the Leverett Library. The third was restoration of the inlet channel at the south end of Leverett Pond. Both projects were masterminded by trustee Bill Rivers. The latter led to the purchase of land along the Pond that includes the Friendship Trail.

For our Annual Meeting on June 11, we took advantage of a lovely day to walk the Friendship Trail around the south end of the Pond to our small beachhead off Camp Road for a picnic. Each year we choose RGT "preserved land" for this meeting, which is open to all our Trust membership.

The goal of simplifying the application process of a conservation restriction was furthered by unexpected legislature that benefited landowners, applying only in the year 2007. Three restrictions are under way and we are in conversation with several other landowners who want to take advantage of this benefit.

At the Harvest Festival, we introduced our RGT cap, which we hope to see on many Leverett heads this summer. We also added electric cart rides up Rattlesnake Gutter, a perfect way to enjoy that spectacular area.

Again this year, we had a favorable response to our annual fundraising letter, with several donations in memory of family or friends. Our Recycle Shed at the Transfer Station now has earned us \$41,777. Thanks to Roy Kimmel, who organized shed work, and to all Leverett residents who contribute their empties. We rejoice that Gordon King, whose brainchild this effort was in 1989, is back in action at the Shed.

We are pleased that so many people are taking advantage of our educational programs, hikes, work shops, and nature talks, provided spring and fall and open to the public. Cards announcing these activities are sent to members and available at the Town Hall, Library, etc. We are indebted to Jean Bergstrom in planning these activities.

Annette Gibavic, *Secretary*