

# RATTLESNAKE GUTTER TRUST

# NEWSLETTER

## 1996 ANNUAL REPORT

This year RGT created the membership status of Trustee Emeritus to honor those who have devoted exceptional time, energy and skill to promoting the Trust's goals. Two Trustees, Gordon King and David Field, were unanimously voted this honor. Both Gordon and Dave have been Trustees since RGT's beginning in 1988. Both have given invaluable service to our organization.

This 1996 Annual Meeting centers around recognition and appreciation of these two Trustees Emeritus as we crown them "Kings of the Dump." A look around makes it evident that the term "dump" is affectionate. The Transfer Station, as it is now officially designated, is meticulously clean and neat. Through the efforts and guidance of Gordon and Dave, RGT's returnables bin has earned over \$15,000.

Our celebration of Gordon and Dave is long overdue and tremendously well-deserved. With help from Carlyle Field and Charlie Good, Gordon and Dave have kept up with the sorting and transportation of the returnables you so generously donate to the work of the Trust.

During the past year, the Trust has had sub-committees working on preservation of Rattlesnake Gutter, management of the Long Hill Natural Area, expedition of conservation restrictions, mapping and preservation of hiking trails, and integration of educational programs for Leverett children with the goals of the Trust.

Our management responsibilities in the Long Hill Natural Area led us to clear the view from the top of the hill, which an estimated twenty to twenty-five people enjoy hiking each week. RGT has also filled the well on the Long Hill trail to lessen

the danger to animals and children.

Following the annual monitoring of the Laurel Hill development, the Trust met with Sid Poritz, Laurel Hill's developer, to discuss boundary adjustments on two lots which abut common land.

RGT continues contact with landowners along Rattlesnake Gutter with the goal of preserving and protecting the unique character of the Gutter.

RGT has been involved with several landowners interested in donating conservation restrictions. The Trust has established criteria for its acceptance of CR's, first and foremost that clear public benefit must result from donation and acceptance of any CR.

A substantial memorial gift was anonymously given to the Trust in honor of RUBY HEMENWAY and MAURICE GLAZIER. This gift also honored the "22nd" birthday of LOYCE DUNBAR.

We invite all Leverett residents to join RGT as a Friend, to offer suggestions, to give assistance. Let us know if you would like to serve on a committee or as a Trustee.

Annette N. Gibavic, Secretary



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Trustees are elected at the annual meeting of the membership of RGT. Trustees serve for three years. A slate of candidates is presented by the Trust's nominating committee at the annual meeting. Other nominations may be made from the floor.

Current trustees and the year of their term's expiration:

Priscilla Greeley	1996
Matthew Kelty	1996 (on leave)
Gordon King	Emeritus
Annette Gibavic	1996
Kathryn Addelson	1996 (on leave)
Albert Shane	1996
David Field	Emeritus
Stephen Weiss	1997
Roberta Bannister	1998
Evelyn Schuyler	1998
Stephen Schmidt	1998
Brooke Thomas	1998

### A MEETING WITH OTHER VALLEY LAND TRUSTS

Conservationists in the Valley may not be able to agree on the best way to protect open land, but they certainly can eat pizza! On January 17, 1996 I represented RGT at a gathering of local land trusts sponsored by the Valley Land Fund and hosted by the Hitchcock Center for the Environment in Amherst. The meeting announcement mentioned refreshments and a time span from 6:00 to 9:00 PM. Knowing that meetings rarely start on time, and not wanting to spend three and a half hours there, I showed up about 6:10 to find a room filled with almost 40 people and a stack of empty pizza boxes. Fortunately, the good folks from Valley Land Fund sprung for another order of pizzas, but, unfortunately, there was no more pesto topping!

Overall, the meeting was most useful, if only to realize that "we are not alone." There was a wide range of organizations represented ranging from the biggies in the area such as Mount Grace and Kestrel Trusts, the Massachusetts Audubon Society, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to some small groups just starting up and several local

conservation commissions. The questions batted around sounded like an echo of an RGT meeting. Strong opinions were voiced in the debate over the relative merits of purchasing land outright as opposed to acquiring conservation easements. Laments voiced over baseline surveys not taken sounded very familiar. Other topics covered included annual surveys, land management, liability, and the perennial favorite, fundraising.

After two hours people began to slip out so it was decided to adjourn for the night. But the feeling of the gathering was so positive that an agreement was made to get together again in late spring.

Stephen Schmidt

### FRIENDSHIP TRAIL

For several years, the Trust and the Conservation Commission have been working on creating a trail around Leverett Pond. Thanks to the efforts of Dave Field and Brooke Thomas, there is now a walking trail from the southwest end of the Pond to Long Hill. Work continues to clear and mark this delightful stroll, and we are pleased to announce that landowners have granted permission for the public to access this new trail. Take a hike from the Depot Road end of the Pond along Cider Mill Lane to the base of Long Hill. Scale Long Hill to enjoy the newly-cleared views!

**JOIN RGT NOW!**

**SIGN UP AND KEEP UP!!**

Members receive periodic updates through our newsletter. Our strength is your support!