



The Landmark



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SKYLINE SCENIC AREA AND NATURE PRESERVE DEDICATION

As announced in the spring Landmark and advertised in a subsequent flyer, we held a dedication ceremony and nature hike on June 10th at our land in Somers, which we have decided to name the Skyline Scenic Area and Nature Preserve. The event couldn't have turned out better, and in fact was far more successful than any of us expected.

The weather surprised us. It was pouring the night before and still cloudy for the ceremony, but shortly after we started hiking the sun came out and the longer we stayed the better the weather got until it was one of the most beautiful spring days ever. The weather wasn't the only spectacular thing that day - the turnout was too. I was hoping we would have at least ten people and expected every one of them to be a land trust member. Over twenty showed up, including several town officials and other nonmembers. A few came only for the dedication and didn't join us on the trail, but there were about twenty who took the nature hike.

There isn't much to say about the ceremony. It was short and simple. We gathered everybody together and I said a few words, then introduced Mrs. Bovarnick and presented her with a plaque thanking her for her donation. Then she cut the ribbon across the entrance to the trail. I announced plans for the hike and introduced our guide, Jerry Stage, and we set out after a few words from him.

The hike was quite interesting and informative, and everybody seemed to enjoy it. We were fortunate to have a very knowledgeable and articulate guide in Jerry, and there were several people along with expertise in areas with which Jerry was unfamiliar. All told, we had people with substantial knowledge about wildflowers, insects, birds, trees, and geology. The preserve has a wealth of wildlife on it, and with people along to point it out and talk about it, we learned a lot. Besides the learning, there was a nice view from the lookout and a very interesting boulder beside the trail, the mountain laurel thicket through which the trail passes was in full bloom, and the weather was gorgeous.

NEXT HIKE PLANNED

Our first hike was so well received that we have decided to hold another at the Preserve, this one a fall foliage hike. It is scheduled for October 8th at 11 AM, with essentially the same program as before: several of us will be pointing out signs of nature along the way and giving brief explanations of what we are seeing, and we will stop at the scenic overlook for lunch and return during the afternoon. The land trust will be providing drinks and cookies; everybody should bring their own lunch. The rain date is set for October 15th. The trail head is on the north side of Stafford Road about 0.8 miles east of Hampden Road and 0.2 miles west of Root Road, and probably be marked by our sign by then. For further information or to see if the hike is on in case of questionable weather, call 627-8062. Hope to see you there!

MASS MAILINGS

We have come to the conclusion that general publicity hasn't been very effective at attracting new members. When we first realized it, we considered direct mailings to all residents of the four towns. A quick calculation, though, showed us that a mailing to every household in the area at the nonprofit bulk rate would cost about \$3000 in postage. We decided to shelve that idea for the time being. We then realized that targeting our audience would reduce our mailing costs and increase the percentage return, so we decided to make two mailings aimed at two likely groups of people.

The first group is those who have been members of other conservation oriented groups such as the Somers Land Trust, the Scantic River Watershed Council and town conservation commissions. The other group is landowners. We have written a letter to owners of undeveloped (or underdeveloped) land in the four towns thanking them for keeping their land open, telling them about our aims, and inviting them to join the land trust and/or contact us with any questions or concerns. We have compiled a list of landowners, and are currently working on putting the whole package together for mailing. This is an area in which we could use some help. Typing the mailing list into the computer is very simple work but also very time consuming. If anybody would like to lend a hand, please call Elizabeth Grant at 623-3472 and offer to help.

We don't know yet what the results of these mailings will be, but rest assured that I will report any sudden surge in membership.

ANNUAL POT LUCK SUPPER/MEETING

Sunday, September 24th is the date that has been set for our annual pot luck supper and meeting of the membership, so mark that date on your calendar. An official notice of the meeting will be sent later, but I can tell you what I know so far.

We will start at 5 P.M. and finish before most children have to go to bed. The meal will be first, followed by a film of the dedication of the Preserve, a slide show, and the meeting. I will have just returned from a three day weekend at Great Mountain Forest learning about wildlife and forestry, so I may talk about that some.

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All comments contained herein are those of the editor and are not necessarily those of the Land Trust.



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