



New Hampshire Rail Trails Coalition

September 26, 2011

Commissioner Edward Lambert
Department of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114-2104

Reference: Squannacook River Rail Trail

Dear Commissioner Lambert:

On behalf of the New Hampshire Rail Trails Coalition, I would like to support the efforts by Squannacook Greenways, Inc. to build the Squannacook River Rail Trail. This section of the original Peterborough & Shirley Railroad goes through a scenic stretch between Groton and Townsend. It could be extended to Mason, NH, to connect with the popular Mason-Greenville trail in our state.

We are encouraging New Hampshire-Massachusetts cooperation in extending the rail trails between the two states. For example, the rail trail along the Manchester & Lawrence Railroad grade will go to the state border in Salem, NH, and then will continue in Methuen, MA. Likewise, the Nashua River Rail Trail in Massachusetts has been carried another mile into New Hampshire by a local effort. Extending the scenic Mason-Greenville trail into Massachusetts would add to the available distance and attract more vacationers to this area on both sides of the border.

I understand that you have some concerns about the ability of the Squannacook Greenways group to develop and maintain this trail. Their track record is good in getting public and town support, including obtaining a CPA grant from Groton and getting a vote in support from the Townsend town meeting. A citizens group for rail trails can do wonders, as we have shown, for example, with the Friends of the Northern Rail Trail in New Hampshire. Since 2005, that group has developed over 20 miles of hardpack (like dirt roads) trail and are now proceeding with 2.5 miles of additional construction. Their array of volunteers does wonders picking up trash and resolving problems from water damage and fallen trees.

Sincerely,

President

P.O. Box 98, New London, NH 03257
7387

DrChas@TDS.net

603-526-