

Season's Greetings

A New Beginning For HMCA

With families beginning to prepare for a new year, the Hogback Mountain Conservation Association (HMCA) is happy to be doing so as well. In fact it's a metamorphosis - HMCA is leaving behind its formative identity as a fund-raising organization to buy and conserve Hogback Mountain. We are very excited about a new role to provide volunteer support for existing programs and new initiatives as Hogback Mountain moves into the future under Town management. (More on that later in this article)

On November 17th, HMCA held a meeting to begin to address these changes and build a foundation for its new role. After assisting HMCA to fulfill its goals, several HMCA directors understandably said they needed to direct their time to other challenges after four long years but we are very pleased that all have agreed to stay on as HMCA members and are willing to assist in the future if needed. The other original directors volunteered to continue as directors and several new folks



Check out some of the new trails at Hogback this winter

immediately stepped forward with an offer to fill the vacancies and assist HMCA in moving toward its new direction.

HMCA would very much like to thank Lucy Gratwick, Jim Tober, Sara (Anderson) Kermenski and Bruce and Barbara Cole for the hard work in the various roles they fulfilled over the four years that HMCA spent to buy and conserve Hogback Mountain.

No organization could ask for a better group of individuals to help with the difficult task of fundraising over these recent years. Without exception

their efforts were carried out with diligent dedication and great good cheer. A heartfelt thanks goes to each of them from HMCA.

HMCA also welcomes some new faces to the board of directors including Carol Berner, Staley McDermott, Ed Metcalfe, Mike Purcell, and Jeff Burt.

A Brief Recap

To better understand the changing roles for HMCA, it's probably useful to start with a review of

of events since last March when HMCA successfully completed fundraising with the help of the Vermont Land Trust (VLT), a partner with HMCA in this effort since its inception.

In March 2010, the fundraising was completed, the conservation buyers were repaid and the property was formally preserved with conservation easements that will be held jointly and monitored by the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) and VLT. Both a conservation plan and a management plan for the property were drawn up also with help from VLT. In March the title to the property was officially transferred to the Town of Marlboro clear of all financial obligations and that also included lease income and an endowment fund to defray future expenses. A well-attended Celebration to mark the culmination of all the dedicated efforts by many donors, area legislators, the Vermont Land Trust, HMCA, the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board and many others, was held at the Mountain in May this year.

Over the summer HMCA co-sponsored several events organized by Mike Clough and the Southern Vermont Natural History Museum (adjacent to the Gift Shop) at Hogback Mountain. This series of events concluded with the extremely successful Southern Vermont Wildlife festival featuring a live wolf among other activities. Several members of HMCA helped with the activities. Planning at the moment is for the festival to be an annual event.

This brings us back to HMCA's role in the future. At the moment this role is envisaged to include trail development, support for education and research, a website, public awareness of Hogback and its resources and support of Hogback as a recreational resource.

HPC and HMCA; What's the Difference?

Hogback Preservation Commission (HPC)

With ownership of the 600 acres of Hogback Mountain property, the Marlboro Select Board set up the 7-member Hogback Preservation Commission (**HPC**) as the official town agency to formulate and direct policy with regard to Hogback Mountain and to manage Hogback's endowment fund. HPC is the official management board for Hogback Mountain and as such represents the Marlboro Select Board. HPC itself is a management body and has no membership or support group to carry out activities at Hogback.

Regular HPC meetings will be held bi-monthly: January, March, May, July, September and November on the second Monday of the month at 7:00 PM at the Marlboro Town Office. The public is always welcome and encouraged to attend and provide input.

Hogback Mountain Conservation Commission (HMCA)

HMCA, separately, will remain a private volunteer organization that plans to assist in carrying out the goals and needs at Hogback Mountain in the coming months and years, *in support of and at the pleasure of the HP*

HMCA plans to do this through its membership. HMCA members are people who simply have an interest in Hogback Mountain and what happens there. From the existing membership there are already a number who chose to volunteer with some of the activities at the mountain. As new initiatives are developed, other members may find some aspect that motivates them to help out in

some way. But there are no requirements for any member except to provide contact information (preferably email) so that each member can stay informed. The Newsletter itself will be the primary means of letting people know about what's going on at the mountain. Regular distribution of the Newsletter will be limited to the membership of the HMCA. Complimentary copies will be available to other organizations or individuals by request.

Hogback Mountain is an incredibly important and unusual natural resource - and now it will continue to be a permanent part of the area. Hogback's importance starts with being a beautiful and vital part of southeastern Vermont's natural environment simply by being what it is, where it is. It can also play an important role in what we can learn there and can share with others in the coming years. HMCA hopes to be a part of that process in the stewardship of this great place.

HMCA - Moving Forward

HMCA would like to consider each of you, as a current reader of the Newsletter, to be a member of HMCA. Really, the only requirement is an email address so that we can forward issues of the Newsletter or bulletins about upcoming activities. And we have that already. At the same time, we invite any who are interested to join one of HMCA's committees. You may want to participate in just one of the committee's activities, or be involved in everything it does. It would be up to you. Just let us know. The committees are listed later on.

So we would like to leave it like this: Each current subscriber will be considered a member of HMCA and continue to receive the Newsletter. If you would rather NOT be considered a member of HMCA, simply let us know by return email to this address. (hogback1@sover.net)

The four committees are as follows:

1. *Grants/Fundraising* (including preparing HMCA's 501(c)(3) application for federal non-profit status, and assisting the trail committee and education/science committee in preparing project grants);
2. *Education/Science* (planning MES and adult lifelong learning events at the Conservation area, coordinating a Natural Resources Inventory of the Conservation Area in collaboration with Marlboro College faculty and students, organizing a 24-hour bioblitz event at the Conservation Area, and assisting a professional forester in supervising any timber harvest in the Conservation Area);
3. *Trails* (constructing and maintaining the trail network in the Conservation Area, constructing and maintaining kiosks and trail signage);
4. *Public Information/Membership* (preparing HMCA's Newsletter, maintaining the hogback.org web site, preparing and updating trail maps and Conservation Area brochures).

As always, we value your ideas and suggestions. Feel free to write in with your comments.

B.A.

