



To: NRD Restoration Proposals—Public Comment
Woodlot Alternatives, Inc.
30 Park Drive, Topsham, ME 04086.

16 August 2006

From: Ernest L. Moynihan
755 E. New Lenox Road
Pittsfield, Ma 01201

Subject: Environmental Education and Outreach,
Proposal Number 3

Dear Sir,

I am asking for your help to fund the Mass Audubon's Berkshire Wildlife Sanctuaries program for Middle School children named above.

For the last ten years I have had the privilege of being a volunteer with the groups of young people when they finally go out on the river. Each spring in May and June we take twelve canoes, with two or three 6th grade students in each, from Berkshire county middle schools for a trip on the Housatonic River in Lenox. It is a demonstration or final exam of what they have been studying earlier in the year in school. We travel down stream approximately four miles on a part of the river that has few signs of modern civilization, turn around and paddle back up to the point of entry.

The students bring snacks, drinks, cameras, etc. and are encouraged to experience the river as nearly as possible as it once was. Wildlife is abundant at this time of the year and the plants and trees are at their springtime best. We make no allowance for weather except for heavy rain or thunderstorms, so many classes go back to school with great stories to share. They also have the opportunity to experience what eight miles of travel in a canoe, (four against the current, wind, etc.), and the teamwork required is like. We use a small number of adults such as myself but most of the young people are in canoes in peer groups.

We make two trips each day (weather permitting) each weekday during the two months for as long as there are classes signed up from the schools. Arrangements are made for any child that wishes to participate including any with special needs. This last year we had a request to have a trip for young people with visual difficulties that was quite successful. Each trip can accommodate a maximum of 34 students with 2 adults. Most trips have a few less young people with a couple of teachers from their school.

In the ten years that I have enjoyed being a part of this program I have never encountered a bad trip or a problem with the students. At the end of a trip when the equipment has been replaced and the site cleaned up I always make a point of circulating among the young people to hear their remarks, ask if things could be done differently, and generally find out if they had a good time, learned anything, and, if given a chance, would go again. The answers have always been positive and their feelings of satisfaction of personal accomplishment most satisfying.

In conclusion, I strongly recommend this program and would thank you for any assistance that you might render to allow it to continue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ernest L. Moynihan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Ernest L. Moynihan