



HVA  
PROTECTING YOUR BACKYARD

10/11/06

Housatonic River Natural Resource Trustees  
c/o Woodlot Associates  
30 Park Drive  
Topsham, ME., 04086-1737

RE: Review Panel comments regarding the HVA Old Mill Trail Proposal

To Whom It May Concern:

I would like to include this explanation to the questions that were received from the state review panel. I feel that the review committee did a thorough job with these proposals, and that their questions were well thought out.

- “Budget struck reviewers as somewhat high; especially proportion devoted to salaries, benefits, and overhead. A more detailed budget justification may be warranted.”

This project is a multi-year project for a non-profit organization overseeing the construction of a trail by professional trail crew, including the expense of a licensed engineering study, and a 50 foot lightweight pedestrian bridge that will be installed by a paid professional overseer and a team of volunteers. During the construction season, there will be a need of quality time to be spent on the project. The entire project is overseen by the HVA office which is a non-profit organization operating on competitive non-profit wages and expenses. If a private firm or governmental agency was overseeing the project, we anticipate that the cost may be much higher.

Regarding benefits and overhead; the Fringe is 17% and entails 11% or that is for social security, medicare and various required taxes; 6% is for pension, medical, life and short term disability insurance, and vacation. The overhead @ 5% is the partial cost of maintaining an office and helps to pay the cost of rent, utilities, and necessary equipment and supplies.

- “Budget amount for permitting stuck some Team members as low”.

We are anticipating a \$75 fee for the continued work on the trail itself, and another \$75 for the pedestrian bridge.



- “Means of establishing the fair market value of easement was not explained. Criterion C.3., requires the applicant to have an independent appraisal of the property.”

The fair market value, \$84,000, was what Ma. Fish and Wildlife recently paid for the easement on the 110 acres of land where the trail is located. I believe that the recent actual selling price is a more accurate determination of value than an appraisal. Plus we are not buying any land for this project, I’m assuming that the section C.3. requirement is if the applicant is proposing to purchase any land.

The amount paid is \$764 dollars per acre. According to “Losing Ground: At What Costs,” 2003 publication by Mass Audubon, the average Ecosystem Service Value Per Acre by Watershed in 2001 dollars for the Housatonic region is between \$3,811 - \$6,253. So this price for the easement is a very conservative cost.

- “Recommends assurance from both towns that they would be responsible for maintaining the trails and bridges.”

The principle of future trail maintenance of this low impact, pedestrian trail is following the management principles of the Appalachian Trail, which is that maintenance will be a combination of volunteer labor and town assistance whenever needed. We have already submitted support letters from both towns. While we are constructing the trail in Hinsdale, the municipal Highway Department has been very helpful in supplying needed sand and gravel and any other trail supplies that we need. We expect this partnership to continue and to have the assistance of the Dalton Highway Department.

We are submitting a trail maintenance support letters with this reply, from the regional Boy Scout Council, whose office will be located along the proposed trail route in Dalton. We’ve had great support for this trail from the regional scout council. This past summer, we also had a weekly crew of ‘Councilors in Training’ (CIT) from Camp Taconic, which is a summer camp located on a lake in Hinsdale, conduct maintenance work on the trail. The CIT’s are campers that plan to be councilors the following year. This crew came to do work every Wednesday throughout the summer and we plan to make it an annual practice.

- “Concern expressed safe crossing of Route 8, team recommends asking the applicant to seek input from the appropriate local and state highway officials.”

We have been in contact with the regional state highway office since the beginning of this project on crossing the state road. They were helpful in providing maps and information on the historic roadway in the area of the trail, and verified that the trailhead on Old Dalton Road is town property and not state lands. They recommended that when we get close to finishing construction near the Route 8 crossing, we reconnect with them and they will assist us in determining Best Management Practices for the crossing Route 8.

I have since been in phone conversation with their office last week regarding this issue with Mr. Lawrence Salvatore the Acting District Director, and upon his

recommendations followed that call up with a written request for a letter regarding our partnership on this project. At the time that I mailed this reply to your office, I have not received anything in writing, but hope to fax it to you by tomorrow.

Thank you for the opportunity for this reply to the initial review of the proposals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dennis Regan". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

Dennis Regan  
Berkshire Director

Enclosures:

- Trail maintenance support letter from the Appalachian Trail District Boy Scout Office.



**APPALACHIAN TRAIL DISTRICT  
GREAT TRAILS COUNCIL  
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA**



October 11, 2006

Dennis Regan, Berkshire Director  
Housatonic Valley Association  
PO Box 251  
South Lee, MA 01260

Dear Dennis,

I find the long range plan of completing the Old Mill Trail from Hinsdale to Old Windsor Road in Dalton to be very exciting! The whole concept fits very well with the Boy Scouts of America's outdoor program and its Historic Trail program. I envision local scout troops playing an important role in the development and maintenance of the Old Mill Trail. The trail offers the opportunity for scouts to conduct and participate in projects not only to help bring the trail to completion, but also long into the future as they help maintain the Old Mill Trail.

One of my dreams is to see a completed trail designated as a Historic Trail with Scouts coming not only from Berkshire County, but from all over the northeast to visit our community and to learn about the early industries of western Massachusetts. One of the requirements for designation as a BSA Historic Trail is that written documentation of the trail's history be provided to the participants. What an opportunity to explain the importance of the upper Housatonic to the youth of our community and region! It is my opinion that having the trail designated an official Boy Scout Historic Trail will be relatively easy once the trail is completed.

Thank you informing me about this project and giving me the opportunity to have a part in its development. I'm looking forward to helping coordinate the Boy Scouts of the Great Trails Council with the Housatonic Valley Association in completing the trail and then making it an integral part of the community.

Sincerely,

Robert C. Gunnells  
Senior District Executive  
Appalachian Trail District  
Great Trails Council

88 Old Windsor Rd, Dalton, MA 01266  
(413) 684-3542 - (413) 684-2565 fax  
[www.greattrailsbsa.org](http://www.greattrailsbsa.org)