

Fall / Winter 2015



Voice of the Wapack

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Issue #96

New Wapack Trail protection opportunity in New Ipswich

Opportunity to protect 1 mile of the Wapack Trail while conserving 485 acres around the trail

In our Spring / Summer newsletter we reported that a tract of about 485 acres is for sale in the area of Binney Hill Road in New Ipswich. Known as the Binney Hill property, it includes about 1 mile of the Wapack Trail. We saw this as an opportunity to obtain a trail easement to protect one of the last large sections of the Wapack Trail that is on private land. Also, a conservation easement on this property would connect conserved land around Mt. Watatic in Massachusetts to the south with the Binney Pond Natural Area and the Wapack Wilderness conservation easement to the north. This would result in nearly all of the land being conserved and the trail protected from Mt. Watatic to Barrett Mountain—the southern end of the Wapack Range.

We now have great news that the Northeast Wilderness Trust (NWT), a conservation land trust who's purpose is to protect forever-wild landscapes for nature and people, is looking at purchasing the property. We have been in conversation with Daryl Burtnett, the Executive Director of NWT, to see how our organizations can work together to protect the trail and this property. The NWT has approached the seller to get a purchase option agreement. In order to move that effort forward they are looking for financial pledges of support. The advertised price for the 484.7 acres is \$743,000. So this will require a significant fund raising effort. The Friends of the Wapack are ready to actively participate in and support a fund

raising effort to protect the trail and this property. The Northeast Wilderness Trust presently holds the conservation easement on the Wapack Wilderness property, which includes 1,400 acres in Rindge and New Ipswich, and includes about 1.3 miles of the Wapack Trail on Pratt Mountain and Stoney Top. The Friends partnered with NWT in that successful effort, and we are looking forward to working with them again to protect the trail and this wild landscape along the Wapack Range. Please consider supporting this effort to protect both the trail and the land on one of the last large unprotected properties along the Wapack Range!

For more information and to pledge support for this effort, please contact Daryl Burtnett, the Executive Director of Northeast Wilderness Trust, at 802-224-1000.



View of Binney Pond looking south from Pratt Mt. Much of the land to the east and south of the pond would be protected by this effort.

Friends of the Wapack



The *Voice of the Wapack* is published twice a year by the Friends of the Wapack, Inc. The Friends are nonprofit volun-

teers dedicated to the maintenance and preservation of the Wapack Trail System. Financial support is provided by member donations which are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. The Wapack Trail is a 21-mile skyline footpath from Mt. Watatic in Ashburnham, MA to North Pack in Greenfield, NH. Completed in 1923, it is the oldest interstate hiking trail in the Northeast.

The Friends of the Wapack, Inc. is recognized as a charitable corporation under Section 501(c)(3) of the US IRS code.

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Friends of the Wapack

P.O. Box 115

West Peterborough, NH 03468

Web: www.wapack.org

Email: info@wapack.org

Once it's gone, It's gone forever

Officers:

Rick Blanchette, *President*, (603) 878-1464

Dwight Horan, *V. President*, (603) 878-3779

Lee Baker, *Secretary*, (603) 525-5262

Bruce Myrick, *Treasurer*, (603) 352-8616

Standing Committee Chairs:

Lee Baker, *Trips*, (603) 525-5262

Rick Blanchette, *Trails, Newsletter*, (603) 878-1464

Mitch Call, *Ways & Means*, (603) 924-7544

Mike Przybyla, *Management / Right-of-Way*, (603) 878-3350

Directors:

Tom Brumaghim, (603) 878-6167

Ray Jackson, (978) 597-8813

Ollie Mutch, (978) 386-5318

Bob Saari, (603) 424-7453

Sherisa Sterling, (978) 827-3272

Archivist: Jeannette Baker

Trail Master: Mike Przybyla

Web Master: Rick Blanchette

President's Letter

It's certainly been an eventful year for the Friends of the Wapack! The year started with the publication of our all new, full color, "Guide to the Wapack Trail". The guide has been very well received, with over 323 sold. They are available on line at Wapack.org, at the Toadstool Bookshops, and at EMS.

We've had three successful, well attended trail work days. On our first work day on May 16th we installed several much needed rock waterbars on the Wapack Trail at Windblown XC Ski Area to prevent erosion on this new section of the trail. On NH Trails Day, July 18th, we built several bog bridges in a seasonally wet area on the Beebe Trail. And on September 26, we build a new foot bridge across a stream on the Raymond Trail. The new stronger and wider bridge replaces a deteriorating and narrow log bridge. Thanks to all who helped! See photos below from these work days.

In our Spring newsletter we listed two new challenges. One of those challenges is the opportunity to protect about 1 mile of the Wapack Trail, and 485 acres in the area of Binney Pond in New Ipswich. We are excited that Northeast Wilderness Trust is interested in protecting this land and the Trail. See our lead article in this newsletter for details.

The proposed Kinder-Morgan Northeast Energy Direct Pipeline is a continuing challenge. As you can see from the article in this newsletter, we have been busy making our concerns and position known.

We're looking forward to our Annual Meeting on October 24. Mike Beebe will entertain us with humorous stories and memories about Temple Mt. Ski Area, the early days of the Wapack Trail, and pretty much anything else you want to ask him about. See the flyer included with this newsletter for details. I hope to see many of you there!

For 35 years this volunteer organization has done tremendous work to maintain and protect the Wapack Trail. It could not be done without your help and support. Thank you!

- Rick Blanchette, President



Friends of the Wapack Upcoming Events

All are welcome to attend the following meetings & events
Check our website for updates and additions www.wapack.org

Board Meetings

First Thursday of alternate months unless otherwise noted. (November 5, January 7, March 3). Shieling Forest Barn in Peterborough, NH, or Ashby Public Library, Ashby MA.. 7:00 PM. Check with a board member to confirm date and location.

Trail Work Days

Saturday October 17, 2015— New Ipswich to Sharon section

The final workday for 2015 will be on October 17th and will concentrate on the section of the Wapack trail between Turnpike Road in New Ipswich and Nashua Road in Sharon. We haven't visited this section on a workday in quite a few years and will be doing general trail maintenance including drainage work, brush trimming, and blazing. Meet at the NewWest Mall on Turnpike Road in New Ipswich at 8:30 AM. We'll car pool from there to the trailhead where there is limited parking.

Contact Mike Przybyla for more information or questions 603-878-3350. Please check our website for updates www.wapack.org.

Annual Meeting

Saturday, October 24 - 1:00 PM - Town Meeting House, Sharon, NH

Join us for a fun and informative presentation by Mike Beebe. Mike will share his personal memories and stories about growing up at Temple Mountain Ski Area and the early days of skiing and hiking along the Wapack Trail. Temple Mt. Ski Area was established in 1937 by Mike's parents, Charlie and Lucie Beebe. This is a must for fans of the former ski area and for anyone interested in the history of skiing in New England. Everyone is welcome!

See the annual meeting flyer included with this newsletter for details or check our web site www.wapack.org

Hikes

Saturday, October 24 - 9:00 AM — Temple Mt. State Reservation Beebe Trail

Join us on a morning loop hike through the former Temple Mt. Ski Area on the Wapack Trail and the new Beebe Trail! Meet at the Temple Mt. State Reservation parking lot on Route 101 in Peterborough, NH at 9:00AM. For details contact Lee Baker (603) 525-5262 or email info@wapack.org . Updates at www.wapack.org.

Notices

Winter use of the Wapack Trail through Windblown Cross-Country Ski Area

1. With snow on the ground everyone using the Wapack Trail through Windblown property needs to pay for a trail ticket.
2. Everyone must use skis or snowshoes, no hiking.
3. In winter with a trail ticket you can use the Windblown parking lot during the day, not overnight.
4. Dogs are not permitted.
5. Check the Windblown website to see if they are open or stop into the ski shop between 9 and 5. If not open no trail fee.
6. Snowshoers need to stay out of the ski tracks.
7. People coming from south to north and not leaving a car in the lot can pay on their way out. Thank you!

Help Wanted—Webmaster

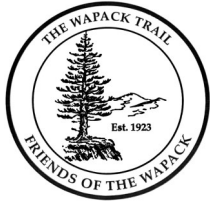
The Friends of the Wapack are looking for a volunteer (we're all volunteers!) to take over the design and maintenance of our website, Wapack.org. Experience with web design software or on-line web site building tools required.

Please contact Rick Blanchette at rick@wapack.org, or 603-878-1464

Voice of the Wapack newsletter on line

If you would rather read this newsletter on line, please sign up for our email Newsletter at Wapack.org. Rather than receiving the paper newsletter you will receive our e-Newsletter via email with a link to the full version.

If your email address has changed please send us a note from your new address to info@wapack.org



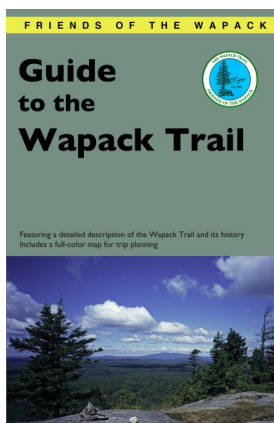
Friends of the Wapack, Inc.
P.O. Box 115
West Peterborough, NH 03468
Info@wapack.org
www.wapack.org



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NED Pipeline Update

In keeping with our organization's charter to protect and maintain the trails, the Friends of the Wapack have many concerns regarding the possible impact to the Wapack Trail by the proposed NED gas pipeline.

The gas pipeline would intersect the Wapack Trail at two locations in New Ipswich. The first is at the Windblown Cross Country Ski Area, where the pipeline would impact 800 feet of the Wapack Trail. Double that distance for ongoing visual impacts resulting from the additional clearing along the transmission line. The second location is to the east of Turnpike Road where the pipeline will directly impact 112 feet of the trail. The NED pipeline will also impact 350 feet of the Kidder Mountain Trail.

Pipeline construction will result in trail surface changes which may include new erosion issues and wet areas, exposed rocks and boulders, debris left from the clearing and pipeline construction, as well as the visual impact of a much wider power line clearing and staging area clearings.

Another major concern are the visual and sound impacts of the 41,000 hp compressor station which is planned to be built in New Ipswich. The compressor station may be visible and will likely be heard from Kidder Mountain, which is only two miles from the proposed compressor station. It may also be seen and heard from the Wapack Trail along some locations of the Temple Mountain ridge.

We oppose any impacts from this project that would restrict access to or degrade the trail. We have met with Kinder Morgan officials, submitted comments within the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission process, and have provided a statement to the Southwest Regional Planning Commission to make our position and concerns known. - FoW Board of Directors