

## September Trail Counts

In 2008, with the support of the Berkshire Bike Path Council and the Berkshire Cycle Association, BRPC began a program to count users on the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail. The data gathered will be used to gain a better understanding of what types of activities people most enjoy while using the trail, and help build a foundation for predicting future use. Most importantly, the data collected will be used to advocate for greater trail development. Counts were taken three times throughout the year – in May, July and September – at three locations along the trail: Berkshire Mall Road in Lanesborough, Farnam's Road in Cheshire and Russell Field in Adams. Volunteers identified users by mode of travel; including walkers, joggers, cyclists, and in-line skaters.

It is important to note that volunteers were not required to remember if they had already seen a particular user. Therefore, the total volumes represent the total number of one way trips seen on the trail, rather than the number of individual users.

The last round of 2008 counts was performed on Tuesday, September 9<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, September 13<sup>th</sup>. On Tuesday, data was collected during the AM period only (7:30-9:30AM). 47 one way trips were documented during this time. Of these, 64% were walkers and 30% were cyclists. On Saturday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, data was collected from 7:00AM to 5:00PM. 2,344 one way trips were documented during this time. Of these, 54% were walkers and 45% were cyclists. On Saturday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, the Alzheimer's Association held a four mile Memory Walk on the Ashuwillticook Trail from 9:00am – 1:00pm starting at Farnam's Road. Because of the Memory Walk, the total number of one way trips counted at Farnam's Road may be higher than what is expected on a typical day. For more information on the Ashuwillticook Rail Trail Count Program, please visit [www.berkshireplanning.org/3/bike](http://www.berkshireplanning.org/3/bike).

Thanks to everyone who helped to make the 2008 Trail Count Program a great success! It is anticipated that the first round of 2009 counts will be held during the first weekend in May.

If you have questions about the count program, or would like to volunteer to count trail users in 2009, please contact *Christine Neumann*.

## Priority Development Sites – MGL 43D

Fifty seven municipalities statewide and four Berkshire County municipalities have been approved as “43D – Priority Development Sites (PDS)”. This program offers communities a tool for targeted economic development. Municipalities designate specific qualifying areas where decisions about certain local permits must be made within 180 days. In addition, state marketing and site promotion assistance is provided for those sites. Pittsfield, Dalton, Adams and Lee are the four Berkshire municipalities with approved sites. Lee has two designated



*Lee's Eagle and Laurel Mills are newly designated Expedited Permitting Districts.*

areas: the Eagle Mill (behind Joe's Diner, formerly owned by Schweitzer-Mauduit International, Inc.; and the Laurel Mill on Route 102. A requirement of the Priority Development Site designation is that municipalities must implement permitting practices and procedures to be able to act on permits, including Special Permits and Conservation Commission permits with 180 days. BRPC staff is assisting the town with this task. Timely permit approval is especially important for the Eagle Mill, which was closed as a mill in May and recently purchased for a mixed-use development project.

BRPC contact: *Tom Matuszko* or *Sarah Izatt*.

## Massachusetts Housing Presentation

Tina Brooks, Undersecretary of the Department of Housing and Community Development will visit BRPC on November 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am to discuss the recent study, “The Massachusetts Housing Market: Assessment of Current Conditions and Projection of Trends.” All are invited to participate in the discussion as the state determines its priorities for housing.

BRPC Contact: *Nat Karns*

## FY2009 Executive Committee

At its October meeting, the Executive Committee elected officers and committee chairs for Fiscal Year 2009. These are:

### Chair

John Hickey, Lanesborough

### Vice Chair

### Clearinghouse Review Committee Chair

James Mullen, New Marlborough

### Clerk

Sheila Irvin, Pittsfield

### Treasurer

### Finance Committee Chair

Charles Ogden, Egremont

### Commission Development Committee Chair

Rene Wood, Sheffield

### Regional Issues Committee Chair

Aimee Thayer, Lanesborough

### Transportation Committee Chair

Samuel Haupt, Peru

### At Large

Roger Bolton, Williamstown

James Lovejoy, Mount Washington

## Commission Meeting Recap

New delegates and alternates gathered prior to the September 18<sup>th</sup> Berkshire Regional Planning Commission meeting for a brief introduction to the roles and responsibilities of BRPC. At the meeting, attendees learned about the Department of Conservation and Recreation's Natural Heritage Landscape Inventory program from DCR planner Jessica Rowcroft. The program, which identifies “cultural ecosystems” is planned to be expanded into Berkshire County next fiscal year. BRPC staff provided a primer on drafting special permit decisions and conditions, based on experience with the special permit for redevelopment of Brodie Mountain in New Ashford. The next BRPC meeting will be held November 20<sup>th</sup>. All meetings of the BRPC and its subcommittees are open to the public. Please visit [www.berkshireplanning.org/meetings](http://www.berkshireplanning.org/meetings) for meeting dates and agendas.

## Clearinghouse Reviews

Windsor Reservoir Dam Reconstruction (Windsor/Pittsfield)

Berkshire Medical Center Parking Facilities and Proposed Office Space (Pittsfield)

Ashmere Lake Dam Remedial Repairs (Hinsdale)



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**2009 UPWP Now Available**

The Berkshire County Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for the 2009 Federal Fiscal Year was approved by the Berkshire Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) at its September 9<sup>th</sup> meeting, following a 30 day public review period. The 2009 UPWP is now available on the BRPC website.

The UPWP is a list, budget and description of all federally funded transportation planning work proposed to be performed between October 1, 2008 and September 30, 2009. The work is conducted mostly by BRPC staff and consultants working for BRPC under the auspices of the Berkshire MPO. The UPWP is one of several "certification" documents required under the federal law governing metropolitan transportation planning.

BRPC Contact: *Alison Church*

**2010 Census Preparation**

BRPC will be participating in the 2010 Census Participant Statistical Area Program to review and update block group and tract boundaries for the county. These boundaries can have an impact on community funding from various sources, such as CDBG grants, as these boundaries often determine the areas for which a community is eligible to receive money. BRPC will be working with communities on this over the coming months.

BRPC Contact: *Mark Maloy*

**BRPC Annual Dinner Meeting**

The Annual Dinner Meeting of the Commission will be held Thursday, December 4, 2008, at Berkshire Hills Country Club, starting at 6:30. The dinner speaker will be Secretary of Housing and Economic Development Daniel O'Connell. The cost to attend is \$25, and reservations must be received by November 17

BRPC Contact: *Judy Wagner*

**Welcome to New Community Planners**

Two new members of the BRPC planning team will be joining us on November third. Amy Kacala has worked on master plans throughout the Rocky Mountain states for the past four years, working for Clarion Associates, a consulting firm. Most recently, she has been working on a historic

**Upcoming Grant Opportunity**

The Massachusetts Historical Commission has initiated the Fiscal Year 2009 grant round of funding for local historical commissions and historic district commissions, municipal planning and community development offices, Certified Local Governments non-profit organizations, and other eligible

**Meetings and Events**

November 5	"Creating Successful Meetings" Audio Conference	4:00 p.m.	BRPC
November 6	Executive Committee Meeting	4:00 p.m.	BRPC
November 12	CPTC Class – "Nonconforming Uses"	7:00 p.m.	BRPC
November 13	CPTC Class – "How to Hold a Perfect Public Hearing"	7:00 p.m.	BRPC
November 20	"The Mass Housing Market– Conditions and Trends"	10:00 a.m.	BRPC
November 20	Full Commission Meeting	7:00 p.m.	BRPC
December 3	"Intro to the Zoning Board" Audio Conference	3:00 p.m.	BRPC
December 4	BRPC Annual Dinner Meeting	6:30 p.m.	Berkshire Hills CC
December 12	Smart Growth Conference	All Day	Boston Convention Center

preservation plan for Salt Lake City. She also has experience working for a community development corporation in Buffalo, New York, and has a Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University at Buffalo. Amy is returning home as a native of Pittsfield. She will be focused on community planning and community development projects for BRPC.

Patricia Mullins has several years experience working as a landscape designer for projects in Rhode Island, eastern Massachusetts and Long Island. She received a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture degree from the University of Rhode Island. She also has over ten years experience as a Mined Land Reclamation Inspector for the Commonwealth of Virginia.

applicants. A Survey and Planning grant can provide critical support for projects that help to preserve the character of your community. Eligible activities include completion of cultural resource inventories, nomination of significant properties to the National Register of Historic Places, completion of community-wide preservation plans, and other types of studies, reports, publications and projects that relate to the identification and protection of significant historic properties and sites. Please visit <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhchpp/Surveyandplanning.htm> for more information. Pre-applications are due December 15, 2008.

BRPC Contact: *Lauren Gaherty*

