

## **Snowy Owl Resort Special Permit Review for New Ashford Planning Board**

BRPC staff and an engineering sub-consultant have been engaged by the New Ashford Planning Board to perform a review of the special permit amendment requested for Snowy Owl Resort, a major time-share development proposed for the former Brodie Mountain Ski area. The Planning Board required that the developer provide funding for the review under its authority to impose a review fee provided by M.G.L. C 44, § 53G. The Planning Board opened its public hearing on the proposed amendment in May and held a site visit and continued hearing in June. It is expected that the hearing will be concluded in July. This is the first time a Planning Board used BRPC as a review consultant under this provision of state law. For further information, contact Planner *Sarah Izatt* or Executive Director *Nat Karns*.

## **July 31<sup>st</sup> Planning Board Training**

BRPC is hosting a free Citizen Planner Training Collaborative class on July 31. The "Roles and Responsibilities of Planning Boards" course will be held at 5:30 pm at the BRPC offices- snacks and dessert will be served. We are happy to welcome Bob Ritchie as the guest instructor. General Counsel for the Department of Agricultural Resources, and former Assistant Attorney General, Bob is able to answer even the toughest questions. The class will provide an introduction to what a planning board member should expect, available tools, and applicable laws. Both new and seasoned planning board members are welcome. Please contact *Sarah Izatt* if you plan on attending, so we can ensure enough food and handouts for everyone.

## **Summer Traffic Counting**

BRPC has begun its annual ritual of collecting traffic count data from around the County. Accurate traffic counts are necessary for many local and regional projects, such as traffic mitigation studies, corridor plans, and construction proposals. Interns Justin Daigle and Matthew Martin will be placing many counters over the coming months. Please be kind both to the traffic counters and the interns - their data and hard work is a vital part of BRPC's transportation planning program.  
BRPC Contact: *Christine Neumann*

## **Energy Planning – Cape Light Compact**

BRPC's Regional Issues Committee, in collaboration with the Berkshire Chamber of Commerce and Center for Ecological Technology, has been meeting with various experts from around the state to determine how the region may best confront energy issues. We were all "energized" by a presentation made by Maggie Downey, head of the Cape Light Compact, which was formed by towns on Cape Cod and Martha's Vineyard after the Electric Deregulation law of 1996. Deregulation allowed the Compact to access all of the energy conservation funds paid by each consumer to their electric utility and has ensured that each member community has derived direct benefit from those funds. Entering into the Compact required town meeting approval.

Energy audits were completed for all local and district (i.e. school) buildings. At least one cost-effective energy efficiency measure was then implemented for each town or district. The program continues to expand to include more efficiency measures. The Compact also purchases electricity at discounted rates on the wholesale supply market on behalf of all participating consumers. (An "opt-out" provision allows customers to decide if they wish to participate.) The Compact is now working on implementing on-site renewable energy projects for its member communities, such as solar panels on municipal buildings. The Cape Light Compact's approach was "enlightening" to all who attended. For more information, contact Senior Planner *Lauren Gaherty* or Executive Director *Nat Karns*.



## **Grant Opportunities**

The Recreational Trails Program provides grants for trail protection, construction, and stewardship projects. Due: October 1.

[www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/greenway/](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/greenway/)

The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program (RTCA) provides assistance to locally-led conservation and recreation projects. RTCA does not provide monies for project implementation, but National Park Service staff time to help projects move forward. Due: August 1.

## **2009 UPWP**

BRPC expects that at the July 16<sup>th</sup> MPO meeting, the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for the 2009 Federal Fiscal Year will be released for public review and comment. The UPWP outlines BRPC's transportation planning work priorities, and is updated each year.

Notable changes from FY2008, and new projects for the coming year include:

- Perform a study to assess the impact of high fuel prices on travel in Berkshire County
- Begin a Central Berkshire Transit study
- Begin a BRTA Needs Assessment and Analysis of Service. This will assess the efficiency of BRTA's fixed route bus service and recommend service improvements to Berkshire communities
- Assess the Transportation Model's ability to reflect changing travel patterns due to fuel cost increases
- Develop recommendations for both Goods Movement and the inclusion of intermodal connectors in Berkshire County (Intermodal connectors are access roads from an airport or rail terminal to shippers' warehouses).
- Begin preliminary preparation for the 2011 Regional Transportation Plan (The 2011 Plan will be a major update, in contrast to the 2007 minor update)
- Learn how to assist communities with the state's new greenhouse gas emissions analysis requirements

BRPC Contact: *Alison Church*

## **Clearinghouse Reviews**

East and Commercial Streets PCB Remediation (Pittsfield)

Camp Eisner Pond Dredging (Great Barrington)

## **New Regional Data**

New data continues to be added to [www.berkshireplanning.org/data](http://www.berkshireplanning.org/data). Data on the site covers a wide range of topics, from commuting times to poverty levels, and is useful for grant applications, reports, or simply general knowledge.

BRPC Contact: *Sarah Izatt*



1 Fenn Street, Suite 201  
Pittsfield, MA 01201

Presorted  
Standard  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 121  
Pittsfield, MA

**2009 Commonwealth Capital Program**

**May Full Commission Meeting**

**Ashuwillticook Trail Count Program**

The Commonwealth Capital program was begun in 2005 as a way for cities and towns to receive points for “smart” planning practices, such as an existing master plan, zoning for mixed-use, and open space protection, or commitments to undertake activities. The Commonwealth Capital score is tied to a variety of grant programs. Several changes are proposed for the Fiscal Year 2009 program, including the types of grant programs available, and the activities for which points are awarded. If your community is planning on applying for any grants this fiscal year, a Commonwealth Capital application should also be filled out. Please visit [www.mass.gov/commcap](http://www.mass.gov/commcap) for more information.

BRPC Contact: *Sarah Izatt*

**New Marlborough Comprehensive Plan**

BRPC will assist the Town of New Marlborough to prepare a Comprehensive (Master) Plan. Under the direction of the Planning Board, BRPC staff will: engage in a meaningful public participation process; coordinate activities of a Steering Committee; provide technical planning services such as preparing and analyzing socioeconomic trends; and preparing draft and final Comprehensive Plan documents.

New Marlborough has already conducted a public opinion survey with an almost 40% response rate. This is an extremely high response for this type of survey. Important items for consideration in this planning effort are the many small villages in the town. These villages greatly shape the Town’s community character. Planning efforts will explore how the villages can continue to thrive and possibly expand. BRPC contact: *Tom Matuszko*

At the May meeting of the full Planning Commission, delegates and alternates were provided with an example of a reference handbook for planning board members. Geared towards newly elected board

members, the guidebook is designed to be used as a reference at board meetings. Attendees also were presented with comments on GE’s proposal for the “Rest-of-River” cleanup for the Housatonic River downstream of Pittsfield, and were briefed on the role of the Commission Development Committee. Meetings of the BRPC and its subcommittees are open to the public—please visit [www.berkshireplanning.org/meetings](http://www.berkshireplanning.org/meetings) for dates and agendas.

**May 5th Thursday Dinner**

Despite the beautiful weather, more than fifty guests from around Berkshire County and beyond attended the May 29 “5th Thursday Dinner.” Co-sponsored by the Center for Ecological Technology, the dinner was held at Mazzeo’s in Pittsfield. Guest speaker Chris Vreeland, PE, provided a primer on small wind energy systems, including where they are viable, where they are not, what should be included in small wind bylaws, and some common misconceptions about wind energy. The 5th Thursday Dinners are on hiatus for the summer, but will resume in October.

BRPC Contact: *Sarah Izatt*

BRPC has begun 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 trail activities people most enjoy on the trail, and

will help build a foundation for predicting future use. The data collected will also be used to advocate for greater trail development. Counts will be taken three times a year – in May, July and September.

In May, with the support of members from the Berkshire Bike Path Council and the Berkshire Cycle Association, counts were performed at three locations: Berkshire Mall Road in Lanesborough, Farnam’s Road in Cheshire and Russell Field in Adams.

During a 12 hour period on Sunday, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1,180 trips were counted. Of these, 44% were walkers and 43% were cyclists. Between 7:30-9:30AM and 4:30-6:30PM on Tuesday May 6, 510 trips were counted: 43% walkers and 42% bicyclists. The Berkshire Mall entrance was the most frequently used location on both days. For more information on the May trail counts, please visit

[www.berkshireplanning.org/3/bike](http://www.berkshireplanning.org/3/bike)

July counts are planned for the 12th and 15th. In September, counts will take place on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. Please contact *Christine Neumann* for more information or to volunteer to help with future counts.

<b>Meetings and Events</b>			
July 10	Transportation Advisory Committee	5:00 p.m.	BRPC
July 16	Berkshire MPO Meeting	4:00 p.m.	BRPC
July 31	“Roles and Responsibilities of Planning Boards”	5:30 p.m.	BRPC
August 6	Executive Committee Meeting	3:45 p.m.	BRPC

