



Outdoor Recreational Resources

THE OUTDOOR recreational resources located along the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway are among the region's greatest assets. The Deerfield River and the mountainous terrain of the Berkshire Hills provide the backdrop for a wealth of outdoor activities along the Byway corridor. The large variety of outdoor recreational activities include camping, hiking, mountain biking, whitewater sports, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, golfing, off-road driving, rock climbing, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling and downhill skiing. This chapter of the Corridor Management Plan inventories these facilities by type of activity, identifies issues related to the existing and potential increase in the use of the recreational facilities, and recommends future actions to ensure that the recreational resources remain an asset to the region's economy and quality of life.

While this Corridor Management Plan primarily focuses on resources within a half-mile radius of the Byway (Route 2), the recreational resources section of the report does include attractions that are located outside of this project area boundary, but within the towns along the Byway. Recreational resources that are primarily accessible from the Byway route and within a short drive have been included. The resources located directly along the Byway are noted as such.

There is an outstanding system of state forests, parks and wildlife management areas near the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway in northwestern Franklin and northern Berkshire Counties. The Department of Environmental Management (DEM) owns and manages seven properties that are located either along the Byway or within a few minutes drive off of the Byway. In addition, the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife manages one wildlife area located near the Byway study area. Combined, these areas provide almost 36,000 acres and hundreds of miles of multiple use trails for hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, off-road driving and snowmobiling. Most but not all of the State forests also have facilities for camping, swimming, and picnicking, while fishing, hunting and wildlife

viewing are also enjoyed. In addition, there are a number of open space and conservation areas that are owned by other organizations, such as municipalities or nonprofit conservation organizations, and maintained for public use.

Many of the State forest facilities have overnight accommodations, toilet facilities and showers; however, the schedules and availability varies from park to park. Some of the facilities are only available in the warmer weather. Mohawk Trail State Forest, and Savoy Mountain State Forest offer overnight accommodations year-round. The inexpensive accommodation and facilities provided at the state park campsites and cabins are popular with various groups, and are often sold out on weekends. The policy for renting a camping site without an advance reservation varies from park to park. Reser-



The Byway as it travels through Mohawk Trail State Forest in Charlemont

ervations are strongly encouraged, and are booked through Reserve America by calling 1-877-I-CAMP-MA or 1-877-422-6762 or visiting their website at www.ReserveAmerica.com. Reservations may be made as early as six months prior to the date of arrival or as late as two days before arrival.

State Forests and Wildlife Management Areas

Below is a listing of the parks, state forests, conservation areas and wildlife management areas located either directly on the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway or within the towns along the Byway. DEM maintains the State Forest and Parks system, while the Division of Fisheries and Wildlife maintain the Wildlife Management Areas. The parks, state forests, conservation areas and wildlife management areas that are located directly along Byway are noted with a star icon (★). A brief de-

scription of the facility and a summary of the activities available at each of these sites are also included below.

CHARLEMONT

Mohawk Trail State Forest

★ 6,457 acres

Mohawk Trail State Forest is located on Route 2 four miles west of Charlemont center. The Mohawk Trail State Forest is one of the most scenic woodland areas in Massachusetts. This state forest encompasses much of the last remaining old growth forest in the state. The forest includes over 18 miles of rivers and streams that are excellent for trout fishing; a swimming area in the Cold River; and a day use picnic area. There are 56 campsites and six overnight log cabins. The six units, along with toilet and shower facilities, are open year round, which is rare for most of the state forest facilities in Western Massachusetts. Many of the original Native American trails, including the Mahican-Mohawk Trail, are open for hiking. The activities available in the forest include: handicapped accessible camping, handicapped accessible picnicking, handicapped acces-



Savoy State Forest, one of the many state-owned recreational facilities in the Byway region.

sible restrooms, camping, canoeing, picnic area, camping, swimming, fishing, hunting (with restrictions), interpretive program (seasonal), restroom facilities and showers, scenic viewing area, walking trails, hiking, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing.

SAVOY

Savoy Mountain State Forest

11,118 acres

★ Savoy Mountain State Forest encompasses many miles of wooded trails that are available for recreational use during all of the seasons. The scenic North and South Ponds, with wooded edges and hills rising in the distance, offer tranquil places to fish, picnic and swim. Forty-five campsites are located in an old apple orchard and four log cabins with stone chimneys overlook South Pond. These cabins were built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and are available for rental year-round. The state forest's spectacular natural features include Bog Pond, with its floating bog islands, and Tannery Falls, with multiple cascades through a deep

chasm, finally plunging over a precipice to a clear pool below. The facilities and activities available include: fishing, swimming, hiking, mountain biking, camping, cross-country skiing, hunting, accessible camping, accessible restrooms, accessible picnicking, accessible trails, boating (non-motorized), boat ramp, canoeing, historic site, designated off-road vehicle trails, horseback riding trails, interpretive program, picnicking, restrooms, scenic viewing area, showers and walking trails.

FLORIDA

Florida State Forest

778 Acres

This State Forest can be accessed from an unmarked trailhead at the Western Summit in North Adams. This forest is for passive day use only; there are no formal trails and no facilities on the property.

NORTH ADAMS

Natural Bridge State Park

47 acres

★ The site of a major marble quarry from 1810 until 1947, Natural Bridge State Park offers visitors the opportunity to tour the abandoned quarry and see the only marble dam in North America. The "natural bridge" is a marble arch created over thousands of years of melting glaciers and the fast-flowing Hudson Brook. The bridge spans a rushing brook that tumbles through a steep gorge. The quarry produced course-grained white marble from the early 1800s and was a privately owned tourist attraction from 1950 to 1983. The property became a state park in 1985 and is managed by DEM. During the summer months, park interpreters are on hand to explain the natural forces that created the bridge and its more recent human-related history. The facilities and activities available include: picnicking, fishing, hunting, hiking, cross-country skiing, historic site, in-

terpretive program, restrooms, scenic viewing area, and walking trails.

CLARKSBURG

Clarksburg State Forest

Approximately 3,000 acres

Like Florida State Forest, this property is rustic and has no facilities. There is a minimal trail system, but breathtaking views of both the Berkshire Hills and Green Mountains can be seen from the Appalachian Trail and the Pine Cobble Trail. The activities available include hunting and hiking.

NORTH ADAMS/WILLIAMSTOWN

Mount Greylock State Reservation

12,500 acres

Mount Greylock is the highest peak in Massachusetts (3,491 feet). Mt. Greylock was acquired by the Commonwealth in 1898, and was the first state park. For years, Mt. Greylock has inspired artists and writers, including authors Herman Melville and Henry David Thoreau. The summit, which offers a five-state view, can be reached by foot, bicycle, skis or automobile. Bascom Lodge, built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1937, provides overnight accommodations and meals at the summit during the summer and fall.

The reservation is a naturalist's delight with 45 miles of trails including the Appalachian Trail. To reduce conflict between users, a limited number of trails are designated to allow mountain biking and snowmobiling. The Thunder Bolt Trail, famous for international downhill ski racing in the 1930's and 40's, has maintained a cult following, despite the fact that it has no chair lift or rope tow and is no longer groomed for downhill skiing. DEM provides a year-round schedule of environmental education and outdoor recreation programs. Thirty-five campsites are available, as are picnic sites and a pavilion. The facilities and activities available in-

clude: hiking, camping, wilderness camping, historic site, cross country skiing, hunting (with restrictions), interpretive program, picnicking, restrooms, scenic viewing, visitor center and snowmobiling. The historic Thunderbolt Trail is available for rugged downhill skiing.

WILLIAMSTOWN

Green River Wildlife Management Area

489 acres

This management area is located just south of the Five Corners intersection of Routes 7 and 43. The activities available include hiking, hunting, and fishing.

WILLIAMSTOWN

Taconic Trail State Park

1,774 acres

This park is located along the ridgeline of the Taconic Hills, which border the Massachusetts-New York state line. Majestic views of mountainous New York, Vermont, and Massachusetts can be seen from the Taconic Crest Trail, a well-know north-south hiking trail that traverses the mountain tops of this range. There are no facilities in this park; motorized vehicles are prohibited. The facilities and activities available include: hiking, hunting and fishing.

As can be seen by this long list of recreational facilities, the State of Massachusetts owns several thousands of acres of land open to the public. Maintaining these properties, including numerous campgrounds and thousands of miles of trails, is an enormous task. However, the state Forest and Park system in Western Massachusetts has been under funded for several years. Capital improvement projects are on perpetual hold, many of the park facilities are in need of repair, trail systems are showing signs of erosion, and staff morale is low. It is feared that the state fiscal crisis will increase the level of disrepair that the

MAJOR FINDING



The extensive network of DEM Forests and Parks located along the Byway are deteriorating as a result of heavy use and a lack of sufficient funding for staff and general maintenance.

system is in. Recent budget cuts are forcing state agencies to limit personnel and programs. In fact, agency personnel with several years' worth of service are being encouraged to retire early, and there is little or no intention of hiring replacements. This is extremely unfortunate for the forest and parks themselves, for local economies relying on outdoor recreational tourism, as well as for visitors to look forward to using the parks.

Other Significant Recreation Areas

GREENFIELD

Greenfield Energy Park

The Greenfield Energy Park is located on Main Street (Route 2A) in downtown Greenfield. The park was constructed to offer a pleasant and safe location suitable for picnicking, public concerts or other community gatherings. The park also contains educationally oriented displays that provide information about sustainable energy. The park is 1¼ acres, and was developed with funding from a number of community, state and federal grants, foundation gifts and individual contributions. The Energy Park is owned by the town of Greenfield and was built in partnership with the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association (NESEA).

GREENFIELD

Poet's Seat Tower

The Poets Seat Tower is named for the stone edifice that was erected in 1912 at the sight where Greenfield's poet, Frederick Goddard Tuckerman, was inspired. The tower is located on the top of Rocky Mountain, a 500-foot high volcanic ridge that forms the eastern boundary between Greenfield and the Connecticut River. The climb to the top of the tower is three stories. From the top of the tower there is a spectacular almost 360-degree

view of the Pioneer Valley. The original wooden tower was constructed in 1879, but was later deemed unsafe and torn down, and in 1912 a stronger, sandstone observation tower was erected. Today, a visitor may walk up to the tower, less than a mile from the parking area, or drive up and park at the base of the tower.

In addition to the tower alone, there is a system of trails on Rocky Mountain that stretches between Mountain Road (to the South) and Stone Farm Lane (to the North). Highland Park runs south from Mountain Road to Sachem Head. Many of these trails are suitable for cross-country skiing in the winter. In addition, the Ridge Trail runs down the top of the rocky ridge. This trail is a continuation of the Pocumtuck Ridge Trail, which travels from Sugarloaf in South Deerfield. Parallel trails on both sides of the ridge, provide a woodlands experience.

GREENFIELD

Highland Pond

Highland Pond includes a spring-fed pond, for winter ice skating, 19 miles of hiking and cross country ski trails, clay tennis courts and a playground. It is located on the ridge where Poet's Seat Tower is built. In addition, there is a scenic view of the western hill from Sachem's Head. The Bear's Den is a rock cave formation in Highland Park

GREENFIELD

GTD Griswold Conservation Area

The GTD Griswold Conservation Area is located on Lampback Road in Greenfield. The area consists of 200 acres of conservation land. The activities located at the conservation area include: hiking, mountain biking, bird watching and nature study.

SHELburnE

Mount Massamet Fire Tower

Located near the High Ledges, the fire tower is only accessible by foot.

SHELBURNE

Wilcox Hollow

Wilcox Hollow is a fishing and river access spot located in Shelburne. The access was negotiated as a component of the FERC re-licensing agreement with Northeast Utilities.

SHELBURNE

High Ledges Wildlife Sanctuary

This 586-acre wildlife sanctuary is owned by the Massachusetts Audubon Society and includes a vast collection of flowers and plants that bloom May through September. The ledges offer a panoramic view of the Deerfield River Valley. The High Ledges has trails that are open to the public. There is an admission fee of \$2.00 for adult non-members of the Audubon Society and \$1.00 for children and senior non-members. Admission for Audubon Society members is free. There are no public facilities.

SHELBURNE FALLS

Salmon Falls/Glacial Potholes

The waterfall has 3 cataracts with more than 50 potholes attesting to thousands of years of erosion. Located at the end of Deerfield Avenue off of Bridge Street in Shelburne Falls. There is an observation area from which the potholes may be viewed. Swimming in the potholes is highly discouraged due to the slippery rock and fluctuating water levels.

CHARLEMONT

Zoar Gap Picnic Area

This picnic area is located on Zoar Road in Charlemont near the Charlemont/Florida border. The picnic area is owned and maintained by PG&E National Energy Group. The picnic area is located along the Deerfield River approximately ½ mile below Zoar Gap, a popular white water location for experienced rafters and paddlers. This is also a popular access point to the Deerfield

River for paddlers. Some improvements are planned to stabilize the riverbank and improve access.

FLORIDA

Dunbar Creek Picnic Area

Located on River Road in the town of Florida, this picnic area is owned and operated by PG & E National Energy Group. It includes picnic tables with fire pits and has a take-out point for whitewater boating on the upper Deerfield River.

NORTH ADAMS

**North Adams
Historic Valley Park**

This 134-acre park is owned and managed by the City of North Adams. The park has campsites and a concrete boat launch on Windsor Lake. In addition, MassWildlife is currently designing a pier on the lake that will provide handicap accessible fishing. The facilities and activities that are available at this location include: camping, hiking, swimming, picnicking.

NORTH ADAMS

The Cascades

Located in North Adams, the Cascades is a 50-foot waterfall in Notch Brook, which flows through a forest of large hemlocks. It is a popular but surprisingly wild area for picnicking and cooling off on hot summer days. The Cascades is about a ½ mile walk from the trailhead at the end of Marion Avenue. The activities available at this location include: hiking and swimming.

WILLIAMSTOWN

Hopkins Memorial Forest

The Hopkins Memorial Forest encompasses 2,500 acres of forest and is owned by Williams College. This area is open to the public, and activities available at this location include: hiking, cross-country skiing, and hunting.

WILLIAMSTOWN

Field Farm

The Field Farm is a 316-acre property owned by the Trustees of Reservations and open to the public. The property has 3-miles of trails that travel through woods, fields, and wetlands. The property also includes a flat-roofed, Bauhaus box style house built in 1948 by Massachusetts architect Edwin Goodell, which is now operated year-round as a bed and breakfast. In addition, the surrounding terraced lawn has sculptures and a guest cottage designed by Ulrich Frazen and built in 1966. Public facilities are available. The facilities and activities available at the Field Farm include: a nature center, picnicking, cross-country skiing/snowshoeing, fishing, hiking, historic houses and scenic vistas.

WILLIAMSTOWN

Mountain Meadows

176 acres

This park of open meadows and woodlands is owned and maintained by The Trustees of Reservations. There are no public facilities. The activities available at this location include: picnicking, hiking, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

Hiking Trails

As noted in the preceding sections of this chapter, there are hundreds of miles of hiking trails located within the State forests, parks, conservation areas and wildlife management areas that are near the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway. In addition, there are a number of inter-regional routes located near and connecting to the Mohawk Trail.

Mahican-Mohawk Trail

The Mahican-Mohawk Trail is a multi-use recreational trail that roughly parallels the Byway corridor. This is a re-creation of one or more Native

American trails that joined the Connecticut and Hudson rivers by following the Deerfield and Hoosic Rivers for a distance of 100 miles. The renaissance of the trail began in 1992, when a group of Williams College students researched the history of the path and assessed its re-establishment and reuse.

From Old Deerfield to Shelburne the trail follows along the Deerfield River for approximately 9 miles where it joins the highway and is not a separate foot trail. The trail recommences again at Mohawk Trail State Forest in Charlemont, where it climbs the ridge to Clark Mountain, emerging from the woods on South County Road, Florida. The trail continues along Stryker Road to Route 2 at the Western Summit. Then the trail descends steeply through the woods past the Western Summit and bypassing the Hairpin Turn, dropping to Route 2 just across from Rock Manor Mobile Home Park in North Adams. The rest of the trail is not marked, but the plan is to follow East Main Street to Main Street to Marshall Street to River Road in North Adams and proceed to a proposed bikeway that will connect North Adams to Williamstown. The trail will eventually continue to Pownal, Vermont, and generally follow the Hoosic River to Schaghticook, New York. Trailheads along the route include one in the area of the State police barracks in Shelburne, one at South County Road in Florida (slightly off the Byway), one at Western Summit in North Adams, and one across from the Rock Manor mobile home park in North Adams.

The Mahican-Mohawk Trail provides hikers with a historic tour through an exquisite landscape of rivers, valleys and communities. Although much of the trail is completed in the Scenic Byway area, there are hopes that the trail can be expanded eastward and westward, eventually creating an east-west link to several north-south trail systems such as the

Hudson River Greenway, Taconic Crest System, Appalachian Trail, Long Trail, Catamount Trail and the Connecticut Valley Trails. The Appalachian Mountain Club, the Deerfield River Watershed Association, the Friends of Mohawk Trail State Forest and the Hoosic River Watershed Association worked cooperatively on this project.

NORTH ADAMS

Appalachian National Scenic Trail (AT)

The AT, one of America's most celebrated and respected hiking trails, crosses the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway in North Adams approximately two miles west of the center of town at Phelps Road. The AT runs north and south through Massachusetts for a distance of about 88 miles. Travelers who hike the AT near its intersection with the Byway will experience the highest and lowest points on the AT in Massachusetts. Traveling south from the AT's junction with Route 2, the AT climbs for approximately five miles to the summit of Mount Greylock at 3,491 feet, the highest point on the AT in Massachusetts. Traveling north from the Mohawk Trail the AT crosses the Hoosic River, which at 640 feet is the lowest point on the AT in the state. The AT then climbs through Clarksburg State Forest and after approximately four miles it crosses into Vermont and joins the southern terminus of the Long Trail at about 2,300 feet. The AT intersects with the Mahican-Mohawk Trail just north of Route 2. Seasonal overnight accommodations are available at the Mount Greylock State Reservation.

WILLIAMSTOWN

Pine Cobble Trail

The Pine Cobble Trail, located northeast of Williamstown, offers one of the finest panoramic views of the Hoosic River valley and Mount Greylock. The

trail is accessible from Pine Cobble Road and travels into Clarksburg State Forest, where it intersects with the Appalachian Trail just beyond the summit of East Mountain.

Camping

In addition to the State parks and forests there is one municipal and several privately owned campgrounds.

Mohawk Park

Route 2, Charlemont

Country Aire Campground

Route 2, Charlemont

Shady Pines Campground

547 Loop Road, Savoy

Chilson's Pond Campground

Mohawk Trail, North of Whitcomb Summit

Historic Valley Campground

Windsor Lake Road, North Adams (operated by the City of North Adams)

Whitewater Rafting, Canoeing, Kayaking

Deerfield River

The Deerfield River has become a popular destination for whitewater enthusiasts of all abilities. In 1994, an agreement was executed between the New England Power Company and twelve separate organizations, representing environmental, recreational and government agencies to enhance the recreation, fisheries and conservation along the Deerfield River. The agreement was negotiated during the power company's quest for a 40-year license renewal from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) for the use of the Deerfield River. The Deerfield River Settlement Agreement was unparalleled in magni-



Experienced paddlers on the upper Deerfield River.

tude representing only the second such agreement in the country. The terms of the agreement ensured that the power companies (11 of the 12 dams are now owned and operated by PG&E National Energy Group and 1 is operated by Con. Ed.) would assure whitewater releases at agreed upon times for kayaking, canoeing and other paddling activities; provide free public access to all non-developed river resources and non-developed project lands; install fish passage at various sites along the river; implement a program of wildlife enhancements within project boundaries; provide minimum flows and reservoir management to aquatic habitat; establish a Deerfield River Basin Environmental Enhancement Trust Fund to finance future conservation and educational projects; and grant conservation easements to land management organizations on more than 18,000 acres of land that PG&E National Energy Group owns.

The determination of water release dates and times has established the Deerfield River as a whitewater resource for boaters of varying skill lev-

els. The release of water on the upper Deerfield (located in Monroe outside of the area of focus for this study) has elevated the level of whitewater, and established those upper sections of the river as more difficult, requiring a higher level of skill. This also allows the upper portion of the river to be used for events such as races, training and rafting from April until October. It also provides a sometimes, scarce resource for experienced boaters.

The whitewater release schedule for the Fife Brook Dam section of the river includes 106 days of releases annually. This portion of the Deerfield is classified as a Class III (moderately difficult). From Fife Brook Dam in Florida, Massachusetts to the Number 4 dam in Buckland, the Deerfield River flows unimpeded for 17 miles. This is the longest stretch of the river without a dam and is among the most heavily used by whitewater paddlers. For paddlers, the most prominent feature along this section of the river is Zoar Gap, a class III-III+ (moderately difficult) rapid located five miles downstream from the Fife Brook Dam.

The Fife Brook section of the river has interesting scenery that is closely linked to the development of the railroad and hydropower. Additionally, this section is important from an environmental perspective because it is the habitat for the variety of bird species including red tail hawks, ospreys, bald eagles, and blue herons, it has active beavers, and it has potential as a trout fishery.

A put-in is located below the Fife Brook Dam in Florida off of Old River Road and approximately 1 mile upstream of the Hoosac Tunnel. Approximately a mile and a half down river, there are the remains of stone-walls, columns and lintels that were part of a mill building which were a part of the hydroelectric power generation system used to construct the Hoosac Tunnel. Further downstream from the mill building is a railroad

bridge, which leads to the eastern entrance of the Hoosac Tunnel.

Below Zoar Gap, it is possible to continue down the Deerfield River for another 12 miles. A number of put-in/take-outs areas are located along the route, and provide opportunities for the moderately experienced rafters and paddlers. Along this next section of the river there are several more class II (moderate) rapids and some swimming holes. A popular put-in/take-out located approximately ½ mile below Zoar Gap at the Zoar Gap Picnic Area owned and maintained by PG&E National Energy Group. PG&E has some plans to complete bank stabilization to improve river access in this location. There are some take-out points along the way, although much of the frontage is on private property.

Paddlers looking for a milder whitewater run can enter the Deerfield River in Charlemont at the Shunpike rest area just east of the Indian Bridge or the picnic area at River Road. There are several miles of Class I (easy)—Class II (moderate) water along this section of the river, including a couple of Class I-II (easy to moderate) rapids before the underpass of the Route 8A Bridge in the center of Charlemont. Two more Class I-II rapids are located between the Route 8A Bridge and the take-out, about six miles downstream, but for the most part, the river is fast flowing and unobstructed.

There is a take-out at the small boat launch next to Route 2 on the left as the river enters the dead water above the Number 4 dam. This section ends at the Number 4 dam, next to a bridge on Route 2 just upstream of Shelburne Falls.

River access is also available at Wilcox Hollow in Shelburne near the Gardner Falls Dam. Con. Ed. owns this dam. There is currently a gravel parking that provides access for the river. It is possible to enter the river at this location and paddle around between the Garner Falls Dam and the

#2 Dam located further downstream. Con. Ed. has plans to implement erosion control in this area. They are also planning improvements in the future to improve handicapped accessibility to the river in the quiet waters located above the Gardner Falls Dam.

There are several established and licensed outdoor recreation retailers along the Byway that provide water safety instructions and rent watercraft such as canoes, kayaks and rafts. The businesses that rent watercraft to the public are required by the state to provide instructions on the proper and safe use of the equipment. The renting of equipment and receipt of safety instructions in their use is an invaluable introduction to whitewater recreation for the inexperienced. Water level information for this section can be obtained on the Deerfield River information phone 888-356-3663. Guided whitewater trips and instruction on the Deerfield River are available from:

Crabapple Whitewater, Charlemont

Offers five river trips in Western Massachusetts that range from easy to advanced. They offer both rafting and kayaking.

1-800-553-7238

North American Whitewater, Charlemont

Offers rafting and kayaking, tour/flat-water kayaking, canoeing. Located in the Berkshire East ski patrol building.

1-800-727-4379

Wilderness Plus Rafting Company, Charlemont

Offers whitewater rafting, inflatable kayaking and canoe trips.

1-800-866-6943

Zoar Outdoor, Charlemont

Offers whitewater rafting, canoe and kayak instruction, rock-climbing and sea kayak trips.

1-800-532-7483

MAJOR FINDING



Water safety in the Deerfield River and Glacial Potholes are a concern.

MAJOR FINDING



Most of the Byway communities view a modest increase in recreational tourism as positive for the regional economy, but there are concerns about the impacts to the environment and the strain on local rescue squads.

In addition to the established outdoor businesses there are small, unlicensed outfitters offering inflated tubes and other whitewater equipment for purchase. Unlike the established retail/renting companies that are required to provide safety instructions, these smaller businesses are not registered with the state and often do not provide safety instructions to the individuals purchasing the equipment. There is the concern that accidents and conflicts caused by inexperienced whitewater recreationists, and a few thoughtless intoxicated rowdy individuals threaten the wild and scenic experience of the Deerfield River. There is also the concern that as the number of these inexperienced recreationists increase, there will also be an increased demand on local volunteer rescue squads to respond to accidents that could be prevented by safety instruction or educational information.

Hoosic River

The Hoosic River also offers recreationists the opportunity to canoe, kayak or raft. Although movement is interrupted by concrete chutes in North Adams, and roll a dam in and Williamstown, sections of the west of the city are rural and enjoyable in times of high water.

Public Boat Access Sites

In addition to the boat access sites in the state Forests and Parks system, there are several other public boat access sites along the Byway or within a few minutes drive. Listed in this report and shown on the accompanying Recreational Resources Map are the official public access sites maintained by state or local authorities. In addition to these, there are several informal sites that afford access to the rivers and lakes within the Byway region.

Public Boat Access Sites in Franklin County

As detailed above, there are several locations along the Deerfield River in Franklin County with access for canoes and kayaks to the river. These locations are noted on the Recreational Resources Map for Franklin County. Wilcox Hollow is a fishing and river access located in Shelburne near the Gardner Falls Dam. This area is owned and maintained by Con. Ed. There is a parking area at this site and Con. Ed. has been completing improvements to prevent bank erosion and provide handicapped accessible access to the river. Many of the access points and improvement that are planned were negotiated as a part of the FERC re-licensing agreement with the utility companies that operate the dams along the river. In Charlemont, approximately one mile from the Buckland/Charlemont border there is an access point where boats could be put in the river from a trailer. This location is down a dirt road and it is not well signed. There is also an area along the river further west that is owned and maintained by PG&E, which is near the river and has picnic tables. The MassHighway Department owns the Shunpike pull-off/picnic area, which is located on the west side of Charlemont and also has access to the river. MassHighway completes the mowing at this location. Trash removal has been adopted and taken care of by an organization called Degree of Pocohontus. The informational kiosk at this location is being maintained by the Deerfield River Watershed Association. In the past, a Sani-can restroom facilities had been placed at this location; however, the funding was not included in the recent budget. There is also an access point at the Zoar Gap Picnic Area on Zoar Road in Charlemont.

Public Boat Access Sites in Berkshire County

In Berkshire County, there is an access point for the Deerfield River in the town of Florida. The put in is popular for the experienced white water paddlers and it is located just below the Fife Brook Dam.

The boat ramp at Windsor Lake in North Adams, off Bradley Street, allows small boats, canoes, and kayaks. The smaller access sites in along the Hoosic River in North Adams, Ashton Avenue, and in Williamstown, off Simonds Avenue, are designed only for canoes and kayaks.

Local residents and the Deerfield Watershed Association have voiced concerns about canoeists and kayakers trespassing on private property to access the Deerfield River. Canoeists/kayakers have created paths to the water, disrupted property owners and left trash behind. A potential solution may be to create additional public access sites to reduce the demand for informal/illegal put-ins. Also, additional signs directing river users to legal and established put-in/take-out areas would help to educate the public as to where the most appropriate placed to access the river are. In addition, improvement to river access points to make entering and exiting the river with canoes, kayaks or other boats at designated locations may also serve to channel the river users to these legal and permissible locations. It has been noted that some of the locations where there is legal access to the riverfront for boaters and paddlers, there are no established steps or bank structures to make access easy. As a result, bank erosion has occurred.

Cross-Country Skiing

As noted earlier in this chapter, cross-country skiing is allowed in many of the recreational and conservation areas detailed in this section of the report. It is an excellent way to experience the

beauty of the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway region. The trails within the State parks, conservation areas, and wildlife management area provide facilities for those who have equipment and are not seeking groomed trails. Among the State forests where cross-country skiing is allowed are Mohawk Trail State Forest, Savoy Mountain State Forest, Natural Bridge State Park and Mount Greylock State Reservation. In addition to these trails, cross-country skiing is available at several cross-country ski centers that maintain groomed trails and provide opportunities to rent equipment located a short distance from the Byway. Stump Sprouts Lodge and X-Country Ski Touring Center is located on West Hill Road in Hawley, and Hopkins Memorial Forest is located in Williamstown.

Downhill Skiing

The only operating downhill skiing area directly off the Byway is the Berkshire East Ski Area, located on South River Road in Charlemont. Other nearby ski areas are Brodie Mountain Ski Resort in New Ashford, Massachusetts, and Jiminy Peak Ski Resort in Hancock, Massachusetts. There were four others along the Byway during the 1960s. All of them are now closed

Golfing

There are a number of golf facilities located on or close to the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway. These facilities vary in size and type of course. Below is a list of the facilities and a brief description of each. Those located directly on the Scenic Byway are noted with a star icon (★).

The Country Club of Greenfield

Country Club Road, Greenfield
413-773-7530

MAJOR FINDING



There is a need for additional access points and parking for the Deerfield River and the Mahican-Mohawk Trail.

Semi-private, 18 holes

The Meadows

Deerfield Street, Greenfield
413-773-9047
Public, 9 holes.

Long View Tower Miniature Golf



Route 2, Greenfield
Miniature golf

Goodnow's Chip and Putt



Mohawk Trail, Shelburne
413-625-6107
Public, 18 holes.

North Adams Country Club

River Road, Clarksburg
Public, 18 holes.

Taconic Golf Club

Meacham Road, Williamstown
Semi-private, 18 holes.

Waubeeka Golf Links

New Ashford Road, Williamstown
Public, 18 holes.

sion of Fisheries and Wildlife stocks several waterways in the region. The following is a list of such waterways:

Greenfield: Allen Brook, Green River and Mill Brook

Shelburne: Deerfield River and Dragon Brook,

Buckland: Clesson Brook, Deerfield River, and Cooley Brook

Charlemont: Avery Brook, Chickley River, Maxwell Brook, Pelham Brook, Deerfield River, Cold River

Clarksburg: Hoosic River (North Branch) and Hudson Brook

Florida: Deerfield River, North Pond and Cold River

North Adams: Natural Bridge Pond and Windsor Lake

Savoy: Chickley River, Cold River, and Westfield R. (East Branch)

Williamstown: Broad Brook, Hemlock Brook, Green River (West Branch), Green River, Roaring Brook

Hunting and Fishing

Hunting is permitted in all of the Massachusetts State Forest areas and Wildlife Management Areas along the Byway in accordance with the state's regulations and permitting requirements. There are 12 different hunting seasons. Detailed information regarding these individual seasons and licensing is available from the MassWildlife District Office in Pittsfield at 413- 447-9789 or online at www.state.ma.us/dfwele/.

Fishing is a year-round recreational activity in Massachusetts. The Cold River in Florida and Savoy and the North Branch Hoosic River in Clarksburg, support populations of bass, pickerel, and trout. Self-sustaining wild trout populations, although rare in Massachusetts, are found in several areas along the Hoosic River. In addition, to increase the possibility of catching the elusive trout, the Massachusetts Divi-

Farms with Pick-Your-Own Fruits and Vegetables

There are a number of farms that offer opportunities to pick fruits during various seasons in the Franklin County section of the byway. Berry and fruit picking are popular family outdoor activities.

SHELburnE

Dole Farm

Located one mile north of Route 2 on Peckville Road in Shelburne. Pick your own apples weekends September 15th through October.

SHELburnE

Apex

Also located on to the north of Route 2 on Peckville Road. Apex provides pick your own apples and pumpkins.

SHELBURNE

Mohawk Orchards

Located on Route 2 at the intersection of Colrain-Shelburne Road. Pick your own apples Labor Day through Columbus Day.

CHARLEMONT

Blue Heron Farm

Located on Warner Hill Road. High-bush blueberries and maple syrup according to the season.

Bicycling

Bicycling on Roads

Road bicycling safety is an issue of much concern in the rural areas of the Scenic Byway. While some portions of the Mohawk Trail have wide shoulders that will accommodate road cycling, much of the Byway is narrow and winding, posing potential dangers to bicyclists. The road is particularly dangerous for less experienced or young bicycle riders. However, in the more developed areas of the Byway, such as in North Adams and Williamstown, bicycling for recreation or as an alternate mode of transportation is appropriate. Such bicycle use is discussed in more detail in the Transportation Section of this Corridor Management Plan.

While Route 2 itself is not appropriate for family bicycling, there may be more suitable routes for road cycle touring that intersect the Scenic Byway and provide opportunities to explore the region by bicycle. Specific routes off of the Mohawk Trail have not been fully evaluated; however, the suggestion of developing a network of bicycling loops has been made at numerous times during the *Corridor Management Plan* planning process. A few specific suggested routes have been mentioned such as East Hawley Road. Bicycle route signs have

been installed at two locations on Route 112 in Buckland near the intersection of Route 2. This road has adequate shoulder to serve as a part of a longer bicycle touring route off of the Byway.

In addition, DEM, working in cooperation with the Massachusetts Highway Department and the Federal Highway Administration, has developed a Berkshire Bike Touring Map. This map was developed based on the results of a bicycle route survey conducted in 1993 by bicycle facilities development expert John S. Allen and details on-road touring routes which allow the rider to take in many of the scenic and cultural features of the area. The routes highlighted on this map are targeted towards intermediate to experienced level bicyclists. The intention was to help access the beauty of Berkshire County, especially the DEM forest and park system. The network of routes was designed to highlight short core routes suitable for the casual rider that are located within the cultural centers of Berkshire County. Branching off of those core routes are extensions, which are more challenging and offer access to additional cultural and recreational attractions.

The northern portion of the routes highlighted on the Berkshire Bike Touring Map is located within the project area for the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway. These routes create a link from the Byway to Southern Berkshire County via designated bicycle routes. The route for northern Berkshire County is a series of circular routes, generally taking bicyclists off the main routes with the heaviest vehicle traffic when given the opportunity. However, the Mohawk Trail, from the intersection with Route 8 in North Adams to the intersection with Route 7 in Williamstown, is promoted as a prime bicycling route. Circular routes off of the Mohawk Trail, lead bicyclists to Clarksburg State Forest to the north and to Mt. Greylock State Reservation to the south. For



There is not one comprehensive resource with information on recreational resources. The information is scattered among the many state, local and private organizations that manage these recreational assets.

more detail, see the Berkshire Bike Touring Map in Appendix 4A.

A more appropriate bicycling route other than Route 2 between North Adams and Williamstown should be developed to avoid having cyclists travel on a major commercial artery, which carries between 14,000 and 16,000 cars per day. Given the population density, the relatively high number of low and moderate-income families in the area, and the high number of college students, the development of bicycle paths is justifiable in the North Adams and Williamstown sections of the Scenic Byway.

Off-Road Bicycling

Mountain biking is permitted on many of the roads and trails within Mohawk Trail State Forest and Savoy Mountain State Forest, and also on designated trails in Mount Greylock State Reservation. The rugged terrain of the State Parks and Forests offers challenging mountain bicycling routes that require from moderate to extremely difficult skill and conditioning levels. At this time, there are no established bicycle trails or off-road bicycle paths with gentler terrain for the novice or family recreational bicyclist within the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway Study Area.

Both the FRCOG and the BRPC have been working actively to implement off road and shared roadway bicycle facilities within their respective regions. Providing safe and efficient bicycle facilities that serve as both a viable mode of transportation and a recreational facility is a priority to regional transportation planning activities. Below, is a summary of the work and the potential future connections to the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway within Franklin and Berkshire Counties.

The FRCOG has been working to implement a regional bikeway system, which includes both shared roadway and bicycle path facilities. This bikeway system is called the Franklin

County Bikeway and at this time only includes routes as far west as Greenfield. As the phases of the project that have been in the planning stages move into construction during the next few years, the FRCOG will be exploring further expansion of the regional bicycle facilities. Future expansion plans will examine possible off-road connections within the Byway Study Area.

There is a great deal of interest in North Berkshire County in extending the Ashwillticook Rail Trail from Adams through North Adams to Williamstown. The recently-opened Ashwillticook Rail Trail, a pedestrian/bike trail that has become immensely popular, runs north from Lanesborough through Cheshire and ending in Adams, only a few miles south of the Scenic Byway. It is hoped that the trail will be extended north past its current terminus to the Western Gateway Heritage Park in North Adams and then on to downtown Williamstown. If the extensions were fully realized, this would offer Scenic Byway bicycle enthusiasts over 20 miles of dedicated trail, much of which would run along the Hoosic River.

The Berkshire Bike Path Council and its partners are currently investigating potential routes for the bike path that would connect Williamstown to North Adams and south to Adams. This section of trail is a priority for the group, which has been so instrumental to the creation of the Ashwillticook. Several local interests have begun work on the proposed route of the bike trail. The Hoosic River Watershed Association and the Williamstown Rural Lands Foundation partnered in 1999 to complete a greenway study in an effort to continue the Mahican-Mohawk Trail westward. Much of this greenway is also being considered for the bike trail. Most recently, Williams College students from an environmental planning class proposed three alternative routes

from North Adams into Williamstown. Analyzing the options, the class proposed a segment on an interceptor sewer line easement owned jointly by North Adams and Williamstown, a segment in a greenway along the Hoosic River, and a segment that would share a right-of-way with the Guilford Transportation Company. This initiative is supported by the Hoosic River Watershed Association and the Hudson River Watershed Team as it compliments their efforts to reintroduce local people to the beauty and bounty of the river

Although the preferred and alternate routes have not yet been thoroughly investigated, preliminary studies conducted in cooperation with the Bike Path Council suggest that some of the route could be located along an abandoned rail line and some of the route could be located in a greenway along the Hoosic River. Much of the route would be within the Byway Study Area and provide additional recreational opportunities for visitors to the Byway.

Rock Climbing

Rock climbing instruction and excursions are available through Zoar Outdoor in Charlemont (800-532-7483).

Off-Road Vehicles

Off-road vehicles (ORVs) are allowed in a limited number of the state forests and parks in Western Massachusetts. The only state forest in the vicinity of the Byway that allows ORVs on certain designated trails only is Savoy Mountain.

Snowmobiling

Savoy Mountain State Forest and Mount Greylock State Reservation al-

low snowmobiles, and many of these trails are voluntarily groomed by local snowmobiling clubs. A major snowmobiling corridor, Trail Number 91 on the Massachusetts Snowmobile Corridor Trail Map 2002 crosses the Byway in the town of Florida and connects Savoy Mountain State Forest and Monroe State Forest. This trail also connects an extensive system of trails in northern Berkshire County and Franklin County. The map, prepared by the Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts, is found in Appendix 4B. It should be noted that the snowmobile trails on this map are seasonal snowmobile trails, and for the most part they do not serve as ORV trails in warmer weather. The Charlemont Inn, in Charlemont center, welcomes snowmobilers, offering lodging and trailside parking. Also, according to state park officials, a large number of snowmobilers stay at Mohawk Trail State Forest, which is open year-round, to visit the Kenneth Dubuque State Forest, which has over 50 miles of groomed trails.

More information on local trails and conditions can be obtained from the following organizations:

Buckland Riders Snowmobile Club

Post Office Box 176
Buckland, MA 01338

Indian Head Snowmobile Club, Inc.

Post Office Box 222
Charlemont, MA 01339

Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts

Post Office Box 55
Heath, MA 01346
413-3337-8305

Adams Sno Drifters

Post Office Box 25
Adams, MA 01220

It should be noted that residents have voiced a concern with inappropriate ORV and snowmobile riding on

private property in the vicinity of the Scenic Byway. This includes unauthorized motorized recreation vehicles trespassing on property that is posted as private property or traveling on state forest roads not specially designated for ORV use, creating noise late into the evening hours, and causing environmental damage. Residents agree that these nuisances are caused by a small minority of recreational drivers, but such rude behavior taints the public's perception of all motorized recreationists.

Universal Access (Handicapped Accessibility to Recreational Areas)

DEM's Universal Access Program is dedicated to providing outdoor recreation opportunities in Massachusetts State Parks for visitors of all abilities. Accessibility to the State Parks and Forests is achieved through site improvements, specialized adaptive recreation equipment, and accessible recreation programs. Universal access has been made available to beaches, swimming, fishing, boating, camping, cycling, hiking, picnicking and vistas throughout the Commonwealth.

ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Issues

In general, the input received during the process of developing the Corridor Management Plan indicates that recreational tourism is positive for the Byway. However, concerns have been raised relative to large increases in the number of recreationists using the area's resources. Concerns were expressed that increased use could threaten the long term well-being of the recreational facilities and also strain the resources of the local communities' where they are located. Below are concerns that were discussed during the Corridor Management Plan development process:

- Many visitors to the Byway area are unaware of the bounty of natural resources upon which recreational tourism is based.
- The Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway has many outdoor recreational opportunities. However, information pertaining to recreational assets are scattered among the many state, local, and private organizations that manage them. There is not one comprehensive resource for recreational information.
- Concerns were expressed related to the high levels of use at State Parks and Forests and the lack of sufficient funding for staff and maintenance. An increase in recreational use could further exacerbate these problems.
- Improper disposal of trash and public drinking are concerns at many public recreational areas along the Byway.
- The Deerfield River has heavy use by kayakers and white-water rafters, and further increase in use could adversely impact water quality and wildlife habitats.
- Some of the more rural communities have noticed a dramatic increase in the number of outdoor emergency rescues that occur each year. These rescues generally involve inexperienced or over-confident recreationists who get lost hiking or get hurt white-water rafting or tubing. Concerns were specifically expressed relative to the rental or selling of unlicensed watercraft, particularly inflatable tubes. Local fire and ambulance companies have limited resources and often rely on volunteers. These companies are already strained by the number of rescues that they conduct, and they are concerned that an increase in recreational use could further endanger the safety of their members.
- Concerns have also been expressed about informal canoe/kayak puts, which access the river from private property. There is a need to establish additional public put-in areas in order to relieve the pressure on these private sites. There is a need to investigate publicly owned properties to identify potential river access sites. A combination of creating new put-in locations and additional signage to direct canoeists/kayaks to the public sites and away from private land could improve this problem.
- Existing canoe put-in and take-out areas along the Deerfield River can become congested during peak use times.
- State camping areas are often filled to capacity on weekends during the summer, particularly Mohawk Trail State Forest and Savoy Mountain State Forest, which are located the closest to the Deerfield River whitewater rafting tour companies. There are also lag times, like off-season or midweek, when the parks are lightly used. This is an issue for park

There are a number of facilities located in the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway region that provide universal access to certain recreational activities.

Camping

Camping has been made more accessible to wheelchair users with designated hard-packed level sites featuring pedestal grills and accessible picnic tables at the Mohawk Trail State Forest and the Savoy Mountain State Forest.

Fishing

MassWildlife is currently in the design phase of building a pier in Windsor Pond in North Adams that would provide handicap access fishing.

Hiking

The Savoy Mountain State Forest has a quarter mile long stabilized stone-dust trail traveling through woods and skirts the lake. The trail has benches and views of the lake.

Picnicking

Picnic sites featuring wheelchair accessible tables and pedestal grills are located at Mohawk Trail State Forest and Savoy Mountain State Forest

Scenic Vistas

Mount Greylock State Reservation has specially designed handicapped accessible scenic viewing areas.

supervisors, who are encouraged to increase annual revenues.

- All lodging is often filled to capacity with no alternative on the weekends. Mid week provides a critical option.
- There are no off-road bicycling/pedestrian trails within the downtown areas of North Adams and Williamstown.
- The only existing off-road bicycling trails, all of which are located in the state forest and parks system, are in rugged terrain and beyond the capacity of many bicyclists and families.
- Some sections of the Byway are a safety hazard to road biking. Sections are littered with trash and shoulders are rough and breaking up from lack of maintenance.
- There are limited parking areas for the Mahican-Mohawk Trail, which is one of the few east-west trails in the northeast. There is also a gap in the trail between Shelburne and Charlemont and west of North Adams.
- Concerns about use of ORVs in state forest on trails and roads that are not designated for such use. There needs to be more information made available to the public on ORV use restrictions and where it is permitted.
- There is a law prohibiting alcohol consumption on the Upper Deerfield River and also law that limits the

number of commercial rafts at one time on the river, but due to limited enforcement (not enough environmental police and insignificant fines) they are not always well heeded.

- Concern over the unpredictable water level fluctuations on the Deerfield River due to the water releases from the dams for hydroelectric power production. These releases can occur at any time water level may rise quickly, and create dangerous conditions for swimmers, fishing or playing near the river. River users should be better informed about the possible changes in water level and associated dangers via brochures, kiosks, and announcements.

Recommendations

- Compile, publish and distribute a comprehensive guide to recreational opportunities along and adjacent to the Mohawk Trail Scenic Byway. Include safety information, particularly related to water, in this guide.
- Expand the ways in which visitors can become more aware of the natural resources that are the basis for the abundance of outdoor recreational facilities along the Byway.
 - Develop an educational campaign on the bountiful natural resources

located along the Byway. This campaign should include ways to minimize the potential negative impacts of visiting the great outdoors, by respecting the land and “treading softly.” This is important if the Byway becomes a way to introduce nature to those who are not normally “the outdoor type” and may never have hiked, biked, or snowmobiled in forested areas before.

- To minimize conflicts between humans and wildlife, remind visitors to control food waste and not to purposely feed the animals. Animals that become accustomed to people food can become pests and may need to be relocated or destroyed.
- Establish educational signs reminding visitors to stay on marked trails.
- Incorporate this campaign into recreational tourism brochures and materials for the Mohawk Trail by suggesting ways to minimize visitor impacts to the environment.
- Local conservation and recreational groups should coordinate