

# RESOURCES REPORT



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## ***Berle launches memorial wildlife area with major gift***

Lila W. Berle's November 2009 gift of a 308-acre conservation restriction in Great Barrington conserved the confluence of Muddy and Stony brooks, along with farm fields, wetlands and upland forest.

Lila made her gift in honor of her late husband Peter, who loved to work the fields and match wits with the beavers along Muddy Brook. Peter was a champion of land conservation and served for years as president of the Stockbridge Land Trust. He was also a former president of the National Audubon Society.

The land is the first conserved block in the proposed Peter Berle Wildlife Conservation Area, a 3,000-acre mix of wetlands, working farms, and forested hillsides in Monument Valley. Chris Nye, of the Orion Society and Myrin Institute, had the idea to establish the conservation area, and Lila Berle needed no convincing.

"Lila's enthusiasm for her surroundings is exciting," said Narain Schroeder, BNRC's director of land conservation. "On one visit she insisted I come see the fringed gentians growing near the wetland's edge. Soon, we had her beat-up farm truck stuck deep in the mud and we were off walking, without a care, to see the wildflowers."

The Peter Berle Wildlife Conservation Area encompasses the state's Agawam Wildlife Management Area and the marshes surrounding Konkapot, Muddy and Stony brooks. It is designated as an Important Bird Area by the National Audubon Society. Massachusetts has identified the area as a high priority for conservation. Portions of the project area have also been categorized by the

Commonwealth as Priority Habitat of Rare Species, and Estimated Habitat of Rare Wildlife, pursuant to the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act and the Wetland Protection Act.

"From the birds migrating along the Housatonic, to the many rare and

*continued on page 2*

Baxter, Dolf, Peter, Lila and Mary Berle at the farm with Otto.



Berle hayfields, with Beartown Mountain in the distance.

## On Hoosac Range, a path to unite people, culture, land

This summer, BNRC will start building its most exciting hiking trail yet, on the skyscraping ridge-line of the Hoosac Range in North Adams.

Excitement comes from the fabulous natural features on the mountain – the bird’s-eye views, the high-elevation wetlands, the dramatic cliff faces and ledges crowned with grassy openings.

Beyond all that, we’re excited because for the first time we’re conceiving a new trail not just as an enchanting route through the woods, but as an interactive community resource.

The Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, the Northern Berkshire Community Coalition, the Department of Conservation & Recreation, Mass MoCA, and Christodora’s Manice Education Center – we are either forming or discussing partnerships with these groups and others in hopes of forging new and creative alliances with diverse community interests.



When scouting trail routes, Jensen looks for the weird and wonderful ‘features’ that animate a woodland walk.



Emily Johnson will be part of the Student Conservation Association crew building the trail.

So while master builder Peter Jensen scouts and plans a sustainable hiking and snowshoeing path over and around cliff and bog, we are trying to build new connections and pathways to the lives of our friends and neighbors in Northern Berkshire.

These plans are ambitious, and not without cost. We are fundraising strategically, and hope that you will donate. To learn more, call Tad Ames at 499-0596.

Elena Traister of MCLA, Christodora’s Matt Scholl, Dan Shustack (MCLA) and Kenny Damon of Christodora, atop Hoosac Range’s Spruce Hill.



## Berle conserves water and wildlife in GB

*Continued from page 1*

common plants and animals, this is a remarkable area. We hope that Lila’s beautiful conservation restriction inspires other land owners to conserve Monument Valley so that future generations see the valley as we do today,” Schroeder said.

Stony Brook descends to the valley; Monument Mountain rises above it.



# Acres count, experience matters

From 2000-2009, BNRC conserved 9,619 acres, or 56 percent of the 17,044 acres we have protected since our founding in 1967. And those are just the lands we acquired and held: We financed or bridged the preservation of another 1,223 acres during the decade.

We're proud of that record. We're even prouder that so many surpassingly generous families trusted us with the emotionally charged task of carrying their conservation hopes into perpetuity. Working with landowners, the conservationist realizes soon enough that he or she is helping preserve not only ecological function, but collective memory and shared experience.

In the coming decade, we aim to match or exceed the acreage total of the last 10 years. That's ambitious and entirely worthwhile, but it's not enough. To fully deliver on our mission, we must create more opportunities for people to tap into the shared experience we call "the Berkshires."

Our growing trail network accomplishes some of this: Olivia's Overlook, with its access to the Burbank, Walsh and Charcoal Trails, Steadman Pond, Bob's Way, Stevens Glen, Basin Pond – each tells a story. Visit these wonderful places, and look for more to come.

Look too for more events on our lands like the recent snowshoe race at Constitution Hill, or the upcoming Garlic Mustard Grapple on May 15 at Stevens Glen. If you take time to visit BNRC's lands—whether you're chaperoned or not—you may be introduced to a plant you've never met before, or discover muscles you never knew you had.

Who knows, you may even take away a lifelong memory, one that binds you closer to your loved ones and deepens your affection for the Berkshires. At the very least, we're pretty sure you'll have fun.

Land does many things for us. It gives us clean air and water. It gives us fresh food. The streams and forests shelter the fox, the thrush and crayfish, the owl and the bear and—we believe—the mountain lion.

It also shelters the imagination. The world may be mapped, but for most of us the nearby fields and forests make up a frontier ripe for exploration. What is on the other side of that hill? The journey to find out—along with a good airing—never hurt anyone.

Get out!

—Tad Ames



Sue Garrity and Joan Salatino

## RESOURCES REPORT

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Berkshire Natural Resources Council  
20 Bank Row  
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(413) 499 0596  
info@bnrc.net

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# Sunshine, snow and goodie bags make inaugural Constitution

There were many reasons to enter the inaugural BNRC snowshoe race at Constitution Hill on March 6. It was a beautiful day; the race was close by;

the snow was plentiful; there were great goodie bags; with so many snowshoe race regulars at the Nationals there was a chance for

a good result; and since the race was only 5.5 kilometers it would be an easy jaunt. Only the last reason proved to be untrue.

BNRC's crew had the race perfectly organized, which is quite an achievement for the first time out. The T-shirts were high quality and we got all three of Pat Dunlavey's fantastic Berkshire maps in our goodie bags, in addition to a book about outdoor places in the Berkshires.

We set off with a loop of two fields which offered wonderful views towards Greylock as we traversed the lower field but then we had to climb out of there and the fun aspect began to slacken. Upon reaching the top of the field we heard the cheers of the race officials as we headed into the woods. I was feeling quite strong, giving me a false sense of security about how easy this race would be.

As we began a lovely gradual descent through a hardwood forest on a snowmobile packed trail, I was passed by a guy in a red short-sleeve party shirt who said it was almost a full kilometer downhill. I later found out this was Doug Bruce, the BNRC staffer who had set the course. I tried



Bruce Shenker enters the woods with false sense of security.

## 2010 Constitution Hill Snowshoe Race Results • 5.5 KM Race



Ken Clark



Cynthia Gardner

Place	Time	Name
1	32:23	Ken Clark
2	34:35	Rich Teal
3	36:55	Edward Alibozek
4	39:47	Doug Bruce
5	41:43	Bruce Shenker
6	43:56	Vince Kirby
7	44:10	Tim McKenna
8	44:20	Ed Alibozek, Jr.
9	46:35	Cynthia Gardner
10	47:55	Bob Toth
11	48:42	Daryl Ryan
12	51:06	Darlene McCarthy
13	55:14	John Tsamis
14	55:15	Jay Hale
15	57:42	Meghan Foley
16	57:48	Konrad Karolczuk
17	74:15	Laura Fulton
18	89:42	Joan Salatino
19	89:42	Sue Garrity



Fun Run finish

### Fun Run

- Silas Davison
- Tommy Flynn
- Mia Flynn
- Dan Davison
- Susan Lockwood
- Caroline Maloney
- Cooper Maloney
- Jessica Maloney
- Robert Maloney



Edward Alibozek



Ed Alibozek, Jr.

# Hill race a smash success

fairly successfully to stick with him until we made a right turn onto a single track that had not been touched by a snowmobile and my perspective began to change.

This was a real steep climb. The bright red shirt sleeves moved quickly away, and I began to appreciate the value of the snowshoe cleat as it dug into the firm snow on the hill. Dripping with sweat, we reached the steepest section of all, and this seemed to top the ridge, but there was a still a sting in the tail as flats mixed with a few more climbs until we reached the summit. Then it was a fun dash across the ridge and a nice descent back to the field for the finish.

Ken Clark of Somers, Connecticut pretty much ran away from the field for an easy win. Cynthia Gardner of Pittsfield, who had not been on

snowshoes in years, used her running fitness for a solid win in the women’s division. Top finishers got terrific prizes, including \$25 gift certificates for the Old Forge (that’s a few nice beers). There was also a raffle—young Caroline Maloney won BNRC’s mounted and laminated map of Berkshire County—so a very high percentage of the runners walked away with a prize. A great morning, and a fun, challenging race that would be an excellent addition to the Dion Snowshoe Series.

—Bruce Shenker



Tommy Flynn



Mia Flynn



John Tsamis nips Jay Hale at the finish.

I just wanted to say thank you very much for putting today’s race together. My family and I had a wonderful time. Caroline thinks the giant map of the Berkshires is great, we are looking for a good place to display it in our house so the kids can keep track of all the places we go. I hope you all had as much fun as we did, and we are looking forward to next year’s race.

—Rob, Jessica, Caroline, and Cooper Maloney



The Maloney Family

## Thanks to our supporters:

Berkshire County League of Sportsmen, Berkshire Environmental Action Team, Blue O, Dion Snowshoe Company, Mass Wildlife, The Old Forge Restaurant, Western Mass Athletic Club, Williams College Dining Services

## Chauncey Loomis’s Berkshire legacy



Word arrived recently that the late Chauncey C. Loomis, Jr., of Stockbridge, had left a \$2 million bequest to the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation to endow a fund whose proceeds will provide perpetual benefits to 21 specific education, health, social services, art and environmental organizations, including BNRC.

“Chauncey Loomis was a world-class fly fisherman,” said BNRC President Tad Ames, “so he was well-aware of the vast and invisible commitment of time, money, skill and patience—let’s call them ‘operations’—that lead up to any splashy success.”

“During his lifetime, Mr. Loomis provided steady and generous support year after year, giving BNRC both footing and staying power. His legacy will continue and expand his kind underwriting of our efforts, both hidden and visible, to knit together the human and natural worlds of the Berkshires.”

# Mahanna Cobble purchase marks gains for scenery, wildlife

On December 4, 2009, bolstered by more than 200 contributions from the community, Berkshire Natural Resources Council closed on the purchase of 80 mountain-top acres from the Bousquet Ski Area that have been at the center of ongoing litigation for nearly two years.

“The purchase of Mahanna Cobble is an important gain for Berkshire conservation, and a historic milestone in the ongoing effort to protect Yokun Ridge for public benefit and enjoyment,” said Tad Ames, BNRC president.

BNRC originally signed a purchase and sale contract for Mahanna Cobble with George Jervas, owner of the Bousquet Ski Area, in March 2007. Later that year, a New York City development group, along with local businessman Patrick Muraca, initiated inquiries into buying the entire ski area, including the land under contract to BNRC, which straddles the crest of the ridgeline immediately south of the ski area.

The ski area and its would-be buyers have differing



Mahanna Cobble summit

## Contributors to the Campaign for Mahanna Cobble

*BNRC's purchase of Mahanna Cobble was made possible by these donors:*

Anonymous (33)  
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## and hikers on Yokun Ridge

interpretations of what happened next. The potential buyers delivered a \$100,000 check to the ski area, which was deposited, and then filed suit against the ski area a couple months later when it became evident that Jervas intended to honor his contract with BNRC.

BNRC intervened in the suit as a co-defendant with the ski area in order to protect its interests. Late in 2009, the Berkshire Superior Court found that BNRC's contract remained valid and enforceable, clearing the way for the purchase.

The development group has said it will appeal the judge's ruling.

"The story is not completely over," Ames said, "but the rulings have been in our favor. We are in a strong position. Thanks to many generous supporters, BNRC now owns the land, and we will take all necessary steps to ensure it remains conserved and open to the public."

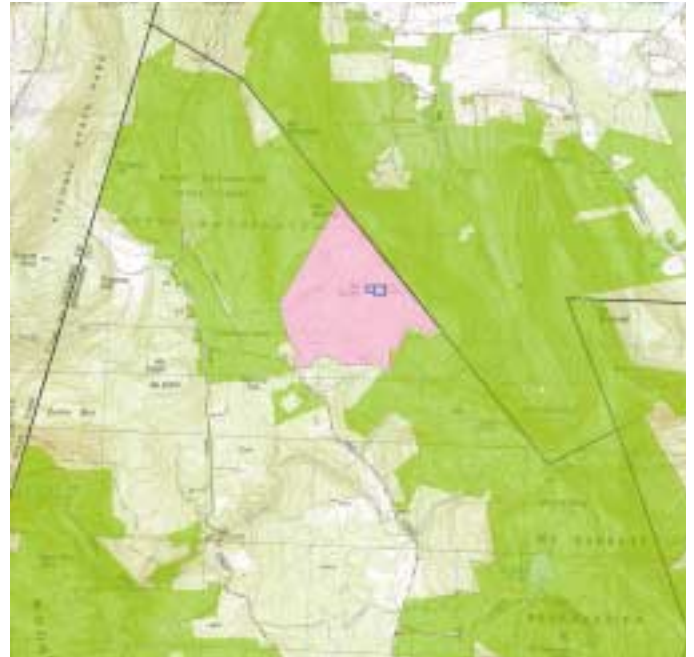
A Superior Court trial on unresolved issues in the case, including BNRC's claim for recovery of attorneys' fees, is tentatively scheduled for June.

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All donations underwriting one-quarter acre or more of the Mahanna Cobble acquisition have been acknowledged by Affidavit recorded with gratitude in Book 4452, Page 265 at the Berkshire Middle District Registry of Deeds. Please contact us if you would like a time-stamped copy of the Affidavit, or visit the Registry online at [www.masslandrecords.com](http://www.masslandrecords.com).

## A key piece in Mt. Washington



Berkshire Natural Resources Council and The Nature Conservancy have launched a partnership to conserve 326 acres on Mount Darby in Mount Washington.

Once conserved, the property will be open to the public for hiking, skiing, bird watching, and other non-motorized recreational pursuits.

We must raise \$105,000 before our scheduled closing on May 14, 2010.

The Mount Darby property is on the Mount Everett massif of the Taconic Range, the defining geographic feature along Berkshire County's western border with New York.

The cool mountain climate of the Taconics supports a mixed northern hardwood forest and rare plants and animals including the Mountain Cranberry (*Vaccinium vitis-ideas ssp. minus*), the Blackpoll Warbler and the Early Hairstreak Butterfly (*Erora laeta*).

With Mount Everett and Mount Race on the east and Alander and Brace Mountain on the west, the Range forms a double ridge encompassing a summit plain. Mount Darby rises 400 feet above the plain's northeastern edge to an elevation of 2,031 feet and then drops over 1,000 feet to Fenton Brook and the entrance to the state's Jug End Reservation.

Total expenses for the project are \$665,000. We have applied for over \$560,000 in grants and the sale of a conservation restriction to Mass Wildlife.

To make a donation or learn more, contact BNRC's Narain Schroeder at 413.499.0596.

## ***Garlic Mustard Grapple will stem Stevens Glen invader***

On Saturday, May 15, BNRC will host the Garlic Mustard Grapple, a free event at Stevens Glen in West Stockbridge held in conjunction with the Student Conservation Association and Massachusetts AmeriCorps.

The Grapple will include two work sessions, a guided walk to the historic Glen, and lots of freebies, including delicious garlic mustard snacks, goodie bags loaded with trail maps, and the opportunity to win raffle prizes

Volunteers will help eradicate the invasive garlic mustard plant. Garlic mustard is a non-native species that competes against our naturally occurring wildflowers and trees. Garlic mustard spreads its seeds rapidly across forest floors and grows more quickly than native plants, monopolizing sunlight

and soil nutrients. Weeding this plant is easy and satisfying, can be done by people of all ages, and requires no strenuous activity.

For more information about volunteering a few hours of your time at the Garlic Mustard Grapple, visit our website at [www.bnrc.net](http://www.bnrc.net) or contact Emily Johnson at 413.499.0596 or [ricefellows@bnrc.net](mailto:ricefellows@bnrc.net).



Garlic Mustard Monoculture



In its ongoing efforts to conserve and celebrate lands formed eons ago while remaining au courant with 21st century modes, BNRC has created a Facebook page.

Check us out, become a fan, and while you're at it keep an eye out in coming weeks for new features at our website, [www.bnrc.net](http://www.bnrc.net).

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