



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION**



Governor Charles D. Baker
Lt. Governor Karyn E. Polito
EEA Secretary Matthew A. Beaton
DCR Commissioner Carol I. Sanchez

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For Immediate Release

EEA, DCR Celebrate Mt. Holyoke Range Landscape Partnership Program *Approximately 1,000 Acres of Land Conserved through Partnership*

Hadley- Tuesday, July 14, 2015- Today, energy and environmental officials joined with Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Commissioner Carol Sanchez, members of the Kestrel Land Trust and other stakeholders to celebrate land protection through the Mt. Holyoke Range Landscape Partnership Program, which resulted in the conservation of approximately 1,000 acres of land. DCR and the Kestrel Land Trust received \$3 million in funds from grants and public and private investments, and worked with four municipalities and seven private landowners to conserve the newly acquired acreage situated within the Mt. Holyoke Range.

“The conservation of the Commonwealth’s natural resources remains an important priority for the Baker-Polito Administration, the Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, and to the Department of Conservation and Recreation,” **said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Matthew Beaton.** “To have such a large and dedicated group of partners working cooperatively and cohesively is remarkable, and I am happy to be able to provide my support of the Mt. Holyoke Range Landscape Partnership.”

Utilizing the EEA Landscape Partnership Grant Program, DCR’s Acquisition Program, private donations and grants awarded to the Kestrel Land Trust, as well as the Agricultural Preservation Restriction Program offered by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) using federal Scenic Byways funding administered through Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), the Mt. Holyoke Range Landscape Partnership ensures the conservation of vital forests and farmlands that lie between the Range and the Connecticut River. The newly protected land will become immediately available to visitors as part of the Mt. Holyoke Range and DCR’s Skinner State Park, and will ensure the habitats of a variety of animals and plants, including 27 species that are listed under the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act, will remain intact.

“Only through the dedication of so many partners, and their tireless work, did the Mt. Holyoke Range Landscape Partnership and Land Acquisition project come to fruition,” **said DCR Commissioner Carol Sanchez.** “Generations of people will be able to access this very unique and important habitat for years to come.”

Some of the partners who worked with EEA, DCR, and the Kestrel Land Trust include the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR), the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), the Towns of Amherst, Granby, Hadley, and South Hadley, and several private land owners.

“This Mount Holyoke Range Landscape Partnership is an example of the deep and abiding long-term commitment our communities have for conserving the lands and waters that sustain us all in the Connecticut River Valley,” **said Kristin DeBoer, Executive Director of the Kestrel Land Trust.** “Through proactive conservation with willing landowners, we can preserve the iconic landscapes that define our Valley for this and future generations.”

“This newly-protected land represents our ongoing commitment to conservation in Western Massachusetts, particularly of the iconic Mt. Holyoke Range,” **said Senate President Stan Rosenberg (D-Amherst).** “This

partnership between local, state, and federal stakeholders serves as a model to ensure that our natural resources remain protected for generations to come.”

Due to the partners of the project, 943 acres along the Holyoke Range have become protected open space. The breakdown of the new conservation land, includes:

- 401 acres to be owned and maintained by DCR;
- 123 acres of Barstow’s Farm protected under MDAR’s APR program;
- 73 acres within the Town of South Hadley to be managed by the town’s conservation commission;
- 20 acres within the Town of Amherst to join the municipality’s conservation holdings; and
- 326 acres to the Kestrel Land Trust to co-hold three new conservation restrictions (46 acres of Hampshire College property in the Town of Hadley, 94 acres with the DFG, and 186 acres with the Town of Granby).

“Mt Holyoke Range is one of the classic, premiere landscapes in both the Pioneer Valley and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. I am very excited to see this project moving forward,” **said Representative John W. Scibak (D-South Hadley).**

The Mt. Holyoke Landscape Partnership will provide a high level of quality outdoor, recreational opportunities for all to enjoy. Additionally, visitors are encouraged to utilize the trail system already in place throughout the Holyoke Range, which is a part of the larger New England Scenic Trail.

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, dams, and parkways. Led by Commissioner Carol Sanchez, the agency’s mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.

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