

U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Natural Resources,  
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands

**Testimony of Adam R. Moore**  
**Executive Director**  
**Connecticut Forest & Park Association**

On HR 1528, the New England National Scenic Trail  
Designation Act

May 15, 2007

Connecticut Forest & Park Association  
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## **H.R. 1528: New England National Scenic Trail Designation Act**

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### **Introduction and Summary**

Chairman Grijalva, Representative Bishop, and Members of the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forest and Public Lands, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony on HR 1528, the New England National Scenic Trail Designation Act. I am the Executive Director of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association. I am pleased to offer our strong support for this bill. If designated, the New England National Scenic Trail would be only the ninth National Scenic Trail in the nation and the first trail designated since 1983.

Founded in 1895, the Connecticut Forest & Park Association is a private, non-profit conservation organization and is the oldest conservation organization in Connecticut. The Association's mission is to conserve the land, trails and natural resources of Connecticut. In 1931, the Association created the Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails, two of the footpaths that would be designated part of the New England National Scenic Trail by HR 1528. We have maintained these trails for 76 years through the good will of civic-minded landowners and the hard work of generations of Association volunteers.

We strongly support the designation of the Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails in Connecticut, and the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail in Massachusetts (with a section rerouted in the Belchertown-Leverett area), as the New England National Scenic Trail. National Scenic Trail designation will enhance the long-term viability of these trails as a continuous, open-to-the-public resource. Designation will result in improved mapping and maintenance, better coordination and communication between landowners, towns and trail maintaining organizations, and a more enjoyable experience for walkers. Designation will greatly improve the potential for willing-seller land conservation. In this rapidly developing area of Connecticut, designation will help to keep these trails intact far into the future.

The Association strongly opposes the use of takings for trail purposes and strongly opposes using trails to restrict private property rights. We are most pleased that this legislation bars federal takings and allows land acquisition from willing sellers only. We are equally pleased that respect for private property rights has been a guiding principle of the trail study and will remain so if National Scenic Trail designation occurs.

National Scenic Trail designation will leave intact the fundamental nature of this trail system. That is, a trail that is primarily a footpath, existing through the good will of landowners, and maintained by volunteers. If a landowner asks us to close a trail, we honor that request, and will continue to do so if designation occurs. Though it is essential that this fundamental nature will remain so, it is also clear that with National Scenic Trail designation, every type of positive trail-related activity will

increase and improve – maintenance, mapping, signage, wholesome use, land conservation, tourism, educational opportunities, economic development and more.

With its miles of sheer, striking trap-rock cliffs, a New England National Scenic Trail most certainly is scenic. From some vantage points along the trail, one can see clear across Connecticut: the distant profile of Mt. Tom over one shoulder, and the shimmering blue waters of Long Island Sound over the other. Yet a New England National Scenic Trail offers something more. In its Statement of Policy, the National Trails System Act states that “trails should be established... primarily, near the urban areas of the Nation.” The feasibility study revealed that some two million people live within ten miles of the proposed New England National Scenic Trail. Two million people within ten miles. A New England National Scenic Trail clearly meets this primary policy goal behind the National Trails System Act.

I urge you to join with me in support of HR 1528, the New England National Scenic Trail Designation Act, and I thank you for the opportunity to testify.

In the written testimony to follow, I will present information on the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, a detailed description of the Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails and their operation, information about the National Park Service feasibility study, and the reasoning behind our support of HR 1528.

### **The Connecticut Forest & Park Association**

The Connecticut Forest & Park Association is a private, non-profit conservation organization whose mission is to conserve the land, trails and natural resources of Connecticut. Founded in 1895 as the Connecticut Forestry Association, the organization was created during a nationwide surge of interest in conservation. Connecticut at that time was a barren, treeless landscape, and the organization set out to reforest Connecticut through legislation and the establishment of state forests. The Association was founded in the town of Simsbury, the birthplace of Gifford Pinchot, first Chief of the U.S. Forest Service and founder of the Yale School of Forestry. Mr. Pinchot advised the Association in its early days.

To help support Connecticut’s fledgling state park movement, the Association changed its name in 1928 to the Connecticut Forest & Park Association. An organization of generous landowners, the Association itself created many of the state parks and forests in Connecticut. The Association’s directors and members selflessly gave their lands to the state for the benefit of the public, and pooled their funds to buy other lands of public importance when these properties came on the market. In 1929, the Association created the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail System as a means of connecting the many small cities of Connecticut to the outdoors just beyond their doorsteps.

The Association today is headquartered in Rockfall, Connecticut. It employs a staff of six, soon to be nine, is overseen by a Board of Directors and enjoys the services of hundreds of volunteers. The Association owns, holds restrictions over and manages conservation lands, in particular working forest land. We advocate for conservation policies at state and federal levels and conduct environmental education programs, in particular those associated with the Project Learning Tree curriculum. The Association has published the quarterly magazine *Connecticut Woodlands* since 1936, the *Connecticut Walk Book* since 1937, and now in its 19<sup>th</sup> Edition, and the tree identification guide *Forest Trees of Southern New England*. The Association continues to maintain and expand the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail System, which now measures over 800 miles.

## **Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails**

The Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails are part of the 800-mile Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail System established and maintained by the Connecticut Forest & Park Association. The Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail System is a network of about three dozen hiking trails that traverse the hinterlands of many Connecticut towns. All of these trails are open to the public, free of charge. The trails are overseen by the Association's Trails Committee and are maintained by Association volunteers. For over 75 years, each of the trails within the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail System has been blazed with paint that is a distinct shade of light blue. Rev. Edgar Heermance, first chairman of the Association's Trails Committee and founder of this trail system, chose the color of light blue because he found it to be the color that was most visible at dusk.

Both the Metacomet and the Mattabesett Trails were established in 1931 by the Association's Trails Committee. Each trail is divided into sections, and to each section the Trails Committee assigns a volunteer Trail Manager. The Trail Manager blazes and maintains the assigned section. He brings any concerns to the attention of the Association and submits an annual written report of his hours and efforts. He may work independently or may be assisted by additional Association volunteers. The Association replaces Trail Managers that voluntarily step down from their posts, and removes Trail Managers when necessary.

The Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails traverse the trap-rock ridges that, along with the Connecticut River, are the defining features of central Connecticut. Trap-rock is basalt, an igneous rock that extruded from the surrounding landscape millions of years ago as massive sheets of magma. As the magma cooled, it crystallized and fractured into great, step-like columns of basalt. The trap-rock ridges run through central Connecticut from the town of Suffield, on the Massachusetts border, south to New Haven. In many places, the ridges run for miles, with sheer drops of several hundred feet. Though the Metacomet Ridge is essentially one geologic feature, it does consist of several distinct sub-ridges, each one bearing its own name (Talcott Mountain, Ragged Mountain, etc.).

The Metacomet Trail measures 57 miles in length. From its northern terminus in Suffield, the trail runs south along the trap-rock Metacomet Ridge from Suffield to the Hanging Hills of Meriden and Berlin. The Metacomet follows a north-south direction along what is generally a straight line. The Mattabesett Trail measures 53 miles and exhibits the shape of a horseshoe. The Mattabesett Trail begins along Lamentation Mountain in Berlin and Middletown, runs south atop ridges to Durham, turns southeast, and reaches its southernmost point around Bluff Head in Guilford. Turning northeast, the Mattabesett crosses the Broomstick Ledges and a number of rugged hills, and terminates at the Connecticut River in Middletown. As it turns to the northeast, the trail leaves the igneous trap-rock and travels upon metamorphic gneiss, schist and pegmatite.

The Metacomet-Monadnock-Mattabesett Trail Study Act of 2002 that authorized the National Scenic Trail Study of these trails called for the Mattabesett Trail to be extended to Long Island Sound. The New England National Scenic Trail Designation Act calls for this extension to be made through the Town of Guilford. The Town of Guilford, the Association, and the National Park Service have found a route that takes the trail south through most of the town, and these parties are actively working on completing that direct connection to Long Island Sound. This connection would add an additional 14 miles to a New England National Scenic Trail.

The trails are often located near the edges of trap-rock cliffs. The cliffs create an environment that is quite unique. As the cliffs form sheer walls of rock, stretching hundreds of feet into the air, they create updrafts upon which soar vultures, hawks and other birds of prey. The vegetation on ridge tops can also be quite different from that of the surrounding forest. Drought-tolerant trees such as chestnut oak, pitch pine, and red cedar characterize the cliffs, the trees' forms stunted by an ever-

present wind. A number of rare and endangered plants find their habitat atop trap-rock cliffs. Beneath the cliffs lie talus slopes, piles of broken basalt that have accumulated over the years. Among the talus are found “cold vents,” shafts yielding air much colder than the ambient temperature. Near these cold vents grow plants that are generally found only further to the north.

The trails pass near a number of historic sites. The Metacomet passes near a feature known as Hospital Rock, a rock upon which those quarantined for smallpox inoculation inscribed their names in handsome script. There are towers along the trail, such as Castle Craig in Meriden and the Heublein Tower in Penwood State Park. The Mattabesett Trail crosses the route of George Washington in several places, with bronze markers in Durham and Wallingford marking Washington’s passage. The trails pass through quintessential New England villages, with white-steeped churches, town greens and clapboard-sided colonial homes.

Since 1937, the Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails have been mapped and described in the *Connecticut Walk Book*. For many years the trails were depicted in the *Walk Book* on elegant maps drawn by talented volunteers. Now, the trails are mapped by volunteers with Global Positioning System equipment, assembled by staff into a Geographic Information Systems computer database, and mapped for the *Walk Book* by a professional cartographer. The *Walk Book* is now in its 19<sup>th</sup> Edition and is divided into two volumes, *East* and *West*. As the Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails are in central Connecticut, they are described in both *East* and *West* volumes.

### **Ownership, Roads and Use**

The Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails exist by permission of the landowner. The Association seeks permission to establish new sections of the trail and to reroute existing sections. If a landowner requests that the Association close the trail on his property, the Association honors that request and closes the trail. Although there are a few cases in which the Association or other parties hold easements that allow the Metacomet or Mattabesett Trail to remain in place in perpetuity, these instances are very few. For the majority of its length, the trails exist entirely through the good will of the landowner.

The Association has been able to maintain the Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails for 76 years without the need for any takings. If takings were used to protect trails, such actions would severely hinder the creation of new trails and would jeopardize the integrity of the existing trail system. The Association also opposes using the trail – or National Scenic Trail designation – as a means of restricting the private property rights of trail landowners. Landowners have always been free to manage their properties as desired, and when quarrying or forestry operations have come too close to the trails, we have moved or closed the trails on a temporary or permanent basis.

The Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails cross the properties of a range of different types of landowners. The types of properties crossed by the trails include state parks and state forests, lands of electric utilities, municipal water utility properties, land trust properties and other private conservation lands, quarries, municipal lands, other corporate lands and lands of private individuals. Some 13.6% of the overall length of these two trails is located on the lands of private individuals, yet these individuals constitute 74.5% of the total number of landowners. For the most part, these properties are rugged, wooded backcountry properties, although no property is ever very far from a population center.

Certain sections of the trails are located on roads. In some places, these road walks occur on earthen woods roads, which are not undesirable for hiking. In other cases, road walks occur on paved local roads and state highways. Certain road walks are unavoidable. For example, roads provide the only connection between the Metacomet and the Mattabesett Trail, and walking the road is the only

means of crossing a thoroughfare known as the Berlin Turnpike. Other road walks have occurred in more recent times due to trail closures by landowners. In Suffield, the Metacomet Trail is located along a state highway as it makes its way to the Massachusetts line and its junction with its sister trail, the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail. This road walk occurred because a landowner at what had been the northern terminus of the Metacomet Trail asked that the trail be removed from his property. The Association honored his request, and several miles of trail to the south had to be closed to avoid a dead end at the property boundary. Given that the trails are often located along the edge of a cliff, and that the cliff edge is often the property boundary as well, road walks often result from property closures because the cliffs severely constrain reroute possibilities.

Road crossings are also a feature of the Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails. Road crossings are clearly indicated in the maps published in the *Connecticut Walk Book*. Where the trails cross state highways, the Connecticut Department of Transportation marks the crossings with distinctive blue oval signs bearing the name of the trail. With Association encouragement, the Department has lately installed crossing signals and hiker crossing signs at some of the busier crossings. The Association is currently working with the Connecticut Department of Transportation to make safety improvements at certain crossings along the Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails.

The Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails are footpaths, designed and maintained for hiking. The Association manages the use of these trails, and indeed all of the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails, in accordance with its policy entitled "Use of the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trails." Essentially, this policy establishes that these trails are to be used for walking, and are not established for multiple trail uses. Ultimately, however, the allowed use of these trails is determined by the landowner. Some landowners do indeed allow other uses along the trail or elsewhere on their properties, and it is their right to do so. Yet we, as an organization that maintains a trail that crosses land that we do not own, must limit what we ask of landowners to the trail use of the lowest impact, hiking. Without this policy, a trail user might conceivably ride from one property where riding is allowed onto one where it is not. This would defy the landowner's wishes and would increase the likelihood of trail closure.

There are occasionally deed restrictions or conservation restrictions that limit use. The deed granting Penwood State Park to the State of Connecticut, for example, prohibits equestrian use. In other state parks and forests, state statutes, regulations and policies establish the Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails as designated hiking trails, except where these trails coincide with woods roads or multiple-use trails maintained by the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. On public water supply lands, trail use is governed by regulations of the Connecticut Department of Public Health.

### **National Scenic Trail Feasibility Study**

The Metacomet-Monadnock-Mattabesett Trail Study Act was signed into law on December 16, 2002. The Association strongly supported the passage of this law, and Association Trail Conservation Coordinator Ann T. Colson offered supportive testimony before this committee in July 2001. Once Public Law 107-338 was enacted, the Association entered into a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service and helped complete much of the work of the study in Connecticut. I participated in the regular steering committee meetings and the many meetings with landowners and municipalities held in various locations across the state, as did Ms. Colson and many Association volunteers.

The study employed a very collaborative process. First, a statewide steering committee was created. The steering committee was chaired by James Mahoney, Economic Development Director for the Town of Berlin, and the committee met quarterly. Through extensive research in town halls, we identified all the landowners on or within 250 feet of the trails. Each landowner was contacted, advised about the study, and invited to join the steering committee. Each landowner was also invited

to public informational meetings, landowner-specific meetings, and meetings of the steering committee. We created a GIS database that depicts the trail and the properties that it crosses, thus allowing us to quickly identify trail landowners and possible alternative routes should a trail need to be moved. We offered to meet with each of the 20 towns that host the trail, and did meet with 17 of these 20. Landowner surveys were conducted and the ownership of the trail was analyzed. An ecologist completed a detailed ecological study of the trail and its environs.

The interaction between the Association, the National Park Service, towns and landowners that occurred during the study proved beneficial to the trails. We communicated with all towns, and in some cases were able to have consideration for the trails included in the town's plan of conservation and development. The Association moved the trail off of several properties when landowners indicated to us that they did not desire the trail on their lands, and also conserved several sections of the trail through land purchases, donations, and trail easements when opportunities arose. Better knowledge of the land ownership surrounding the trails has also enabled the Association to eliminate certain road walks and to find routes around properties on which the landowner has closed the trail. The study also resulted in the creation of a Management Blueprint for the trail system.

The National Park Service completed the trail study in 2006. At its final meeting, the Steering Committee expressed its support for National Scenic Trail Designation. In the autumn of 2006, the National Park Service issued an Executive Summary of the findings and conclusions of the study as well as a comprehensive draft report entitled "Metacomet-Monadnock-Mattabesett Trail System: National Scenic Trail Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment." The preferred alternative of National Scenic Trail Designation, with a significant reroute in the Belchertown-Leverett area of Massachusetts, was endorsed unanimously by the Connecticut Forest & Park Association's Board of Directors and its Trails Committee.

### **Support for the New England National Scenic Trail Designation Act**

HR. 1528 and the identical Senate bill, S. 923, would designate the Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails in Connecticut and the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail in Massachusetts, with a significant section rerouted, as the New England National Scenic Trail. The Connecticut Forest & Park Association strongly supports this designation.

We believe that National Scenic Trail designation is the best means of enhancing the long-term viability of these trails as a continuous, open-to-the-public resource. If the National Scenic Trail study offers a glimpse of some of the benefits that National Scenic Trail designation may bring, then National Scenic Trail designation will be very beneficial indeed. Through the study, the Association was able to identify all the landowners on or near the Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails. Although the Association maintains 800 miles of hiking trails, the only trails for which we have identified all the landowners are the Metacomet and the Mattabesett, and this occurred because of National Park Service assistance. While the Association strives to know all of its trail landowners and does know many, if not most, land ownership and trail volunteers do change over time. With trails that have been in place for decades, this sometimes results in the landowner not knowing that the trail is on his land, and the Association not knowing whose land the trail is on. For the Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails, this problem was corrected by the study and would be eliminated by National Scenic Trail designation.

National Scenic Trail Designation will be a collaborative effort, just as was the study. Collaboration during the study benefited all interested parties. Landowners, for example, learned more about the organization maintaining the trail, expressed concerns and asked questions. In some cases, landowners asked that the trail be removed from their land, in other cases, landowners asked that the trail be located onto their land. Landowners were also able to learn about conservation options for

their properties and means of protecting the trail. Prompted by the study, a Durham landowner gave a portion of his land containing the trail to the Town for conservation, a Meriden landowner entered into a revocable trail license agreement with the Association, and a Middlefield landowner developed part of his land that did not contain the trail and gave the Association a permanent trail easement on the part that did contain the trail.

Towns also benefited from this collaborative effort. By learning about the location of the trails and its importance in their community, some towns included the Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails in their plans of conservation and development. By knowing where the trails are and recognizing their public importance, town planning and zoning commissions can place conservation set-asides on the trail when trail properties are subdivided and developed. If the collaboration that occurred in the study yielded such benefits, the collaboration that will continue under National Scenic Trail Designation will yield even greater benefits.

The Stewardship Council proposed in the Management Blueprint would prove valuable to the trail. With seats for landowners, town representatives, the trail maintaining organizations, user groups, agencies and other parties, the Stewardship Council would be a sizeable, yet inclusive, guiding organization. I found the Steering Committee that was created during the trail study to be quite effective. It provide a forum for the discussion of issues, it kept interested parties informed, and it facilitated cooperation between our organization and others. For the National Park Service, the Stewardship Council would be very helpful as it would continually enable the Park Service to ascertain whether its work was aligned with the public and community interest.

I believe that a major reason that the New England National Scenic Trail proposal has garnered such public support – and generated so little opposition – is that it would not change the fundamental nature of the trail system. The trail will remain primarily a footpath. The trail will continue to exist at the good will of the landowner. Private property rights will be respected. The trail will continue to be maintained by volunteers of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association and the Appalachian Mountain Club, the organizations that have maintained these trails for decades. Federal condemnation will not be used to take land along the trail. Although the trails are footpaths, even the use of the trail is ultimately determined by the landowner, and will remain so if the New England National Scenic Trail is created. Likewise, the trail will still exist at the good will of the landowner, even if designated a National Scenic Trail.

If a trail is to last, it may not be imposed upon a landowner or a community. If a trail is to last, it must be the result of cooperation between the landowner, the trail maintaining organization and the community. The Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails have always been cooperative efforts, and the New England National Scenic Trail will be a cooperative effort. That the trail will remain a footpath, maintained by the hard work of volunteers and the good will of civic-minded landowners, is a major reason that New England National Scenic Trail designation has enjoyed support.

Though the fundamental nature of these trails will remain as is, the future prospects for these trails will brighten markedly if the New England National Scenic Trail Designation Act is passed. The prospects will brighten because the amount of positive, beneficial trail activities will soar. In particular, willing-seller land conservation opportunities will certainly increase if the trail is designated.

It must be noted that the Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails are located in a rapidly developing section of Connecticut. Since 1985, the amount of developed land in the 20 Connecticut towns hosting the trail has increased by 14%. Land values have risen, open land has grown more scarce, and land once marginally suited to development is no longer so. The study revealed that only 33% of the trails in Connecticut are fully protected due to their location on conservation land, and a further



10% considered “partially” protected. The majority of these trails, therefore, are entirely unprotected. Due to development, sections of unprotected trails have had to be routed onto roads. Absent designation, the long-term future of these trails is clouded with doubt, despite the trails’ decades of existence, despite their importance to millions of people.

Yet if a New England National Scenic Trail is created, the future will be bright. Willing-seller land conservation opportunities will increase. The presence of these trails on a property already gives that property a higher-ranking in the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection’s Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition program; we expect the presence of a National Scenic Trail on a property to rank that parcel even higher. With a designated National Scenic Trail in town, we expect that land trusts and town conservation commissions will focus their conservation efforts on properties that contain –or could contain – these trails. Although the acquisition of land by the National Park Service is not expected to occur for a New England National Scenic Trail, if it does occur, it will be through willing-seller transactions only. Even if a trail property is developed, with National Scenic Trail designation, and the better knowledge of the trail system that will result, the local Planning & Zoning Commission would be more apt to place the conservation set-aside on the property in a manner that will protect the trail.

Brightened prospects include the potential for greater use of these trails. National Scenic Trail use would increase the wholesome, desirable trail use that is welcome. With more walkers on the trail, more families enjoying the scenery, more visitors to the region, undesirable uses such as destructive, unauthorized all-terrain vehicle users will decrease. A greater number of walkers in the area will also bring an economic benefit to the trail communities. Trail visitors will stay in local lodging, eat and shop at local establishments, and contribute to the activity of the community. Tourism already has a large and beneficial economic impact on Connecticut, and the presence of a New England National Scenic Trail will make this impact greater.

Designation as a New England National Scenic Trail can help landowners with liability concerns. Landowner liability is an issue that arose frequently in landowner meetings during the trail study. In 1971, through the efforts of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association, Connecticut passed a very strong landowner liability law. The landowner liability law protects landowners from liability if they allow people to use their land for recreational purposes, free of charge. While landowners are aware of this law, many still have concerns. We found that many landowners had a strong interest in the protections offered through the National Park Service “Volunteers in Parks” program, through liability programs in effect on other National Scenic Trails, particularly the North Country Trail, and in the possibility of creating a fund to defend landowners from liability claims if need be. While we have a good law in Connecticut, landowners would be even better served by the additional options possible through National Scenic Trail Designation.

The Draft National Scenic Trail Feasibility Study and Environmental Assessment included a proposed annual operating budget of \$271,000.00. The budget would cover such items as part-time staff, with one half-time person for each of the two states, a small grants program, signage and kiosks, clean-up activities, mapping and landowner database upkeep, website maintenance, printing and the like. All of these expenditures are worthwhile, valuable, and more than either trail-maintaining organization has been able to devote to these trails thus far. While such funding would be of great assistance to the trails, we do not believe it would be a major impact on the federal or National Park Service budget. Considering the millions of people living near these trails, these federal funds will have a great impact when considered on a per capita basis.

New England National Scenic Trail Designation will benefit the trail itself and will improve the Association’s ability to maintain it. National Park Service funding can leverage additional funding, and can better enable our organization to seek private, matching contributions. We will have a

greater ability to post signs, establish trailhead parking sites, make available hand-held maps and the like. We can create guide books and maps specific to this trail and post information at key locations in trail communities. With additional staffing, we will have a greater ability to coordinate with conservation law enforcement and search and rescue personnel, thus improving safety and security for hikers and landowners. National Scenic Trail designation will also enhance our ability to create universal access opportunities along the trail.

Connecticut's recently completed State Conservation and Outdoor Recreation Plan revealed that residents run, walk and hike more than they engage in any other recreational activity. The Plan also revealed that residents greatly desire trails as recreational amenities. If designated, I believe that the presence of a National Scenic Trail in town will become a strong source of civic pride. As a resident of the trail town of Durham, Connecticut, and one who lives in the shadow of the Mattabesett Trail as it crosses Mount Pisgah, I find it thrilling to think that that familiar trail, the one I hiked as a child with my father, the one I've hiked with my own children, may become the nation's ninth National Scenic Trail.

In conclusion, I return to the National Trails System Act, which states that "trails should be established...primarily, near the urban areas of the Nation." Two million people live within ten miles of these trails. Forgetting even the nearby metropolises of Boston and New York, the presence of two million Americans within ten miles of these beautiful trails is remarkable. With two million people within ten miles, a New England National Scenic Trail clearly meets this policy goal of the National Trails System Act, and does so strikingly.

We believe that the New England National Scenic Trail Designation Act is clearly consistent with the National Trails System Act. A New England National Scenic Trail will be a collaborative, cooperative effort between landowners, trail maintainers, towns and the National Park Service. A New England National Scenic Trail will benefit the Metacomet, Mattabesett and Metacomet-Monadnock trails and will greatly enhance their long-term viability.

We urge you to join the Connecticut Forest & Park Association in support of HR 1528, the New England National Scenic Trail Designation Act. Thank you for your consideration of my testimony, and thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Adam R. Moore". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Adam R. Moore  
Executive Director, Connecticut Forest & Park Association