



Putney Mountain Association

A volunteer non-profit conservation organization

P.O. Box 953, Putney, VT 05346

Newsletter, Fall 2002

How Much is Nature Worth?

By Norman Solomon

Can you put a price tag on nature? Dr. Robert Costanza, the noted economist who will speak at PMA's annual meeting in December, thinks you can. In 1991 Dr. Costanza established the Institute for Ecological Economics at the University of Maryland. This year, thanks to a \$7.5 million grant from the Gund Family Foundation, the Institute moved to the University of Vermont as the Gund Institute for Ecological Economics (www.ecosystemvaluation.org).

The Institute's primary purpose is to bridge the gap between what Costanza refers to as "nature's household" (ecology), and "humankind's household" (economics). He notes that the words "ecology" and "economics" both stem from the Greek word "oikos" or household. Traditional economists focus on property rights, often ignoring their linkage to natural systems. Ecologists tend to limit their inquiries to ecosystems, with little attention to how economic behavior impacts humanity. To improve the management of our global "household," an interdisciplinary application of ecological and economic knowledge is essential. This new interdisciplinary approach builds upon the concept of "nature's services," and calls the

value of these services "natural capital".

Examples of nature's services include storm protection, erosion control, soil formation, nutrient cy-



Dr. Robert Costanza, Director, the Gund Institute for Ecological Economics, University of Vermont, Burlington.

pling, pollination systems, water supply services, recreation, and numerous cultural and scientific amenities. One of the most important services is climate regulation, with an estimated value of 18 to 61 trillion dollars, an amount close to the gross economic output of the

globe. On average, an intact ecosystem is worth 82% more than the same parcel clear-cut, drained, paved or otherwise developed. Costanza argues that the planet's ecology contributes significant economic output to world markets, and that the price we pay for environmental resource destruction is measured in trillions of dollars. Thus "for every dollar spent on conserving the world's remaining intact natural habitats, society will get at least a 100-fold payback in nature's services." Putting a price on nature's services alarms many traditional economists, who determine a property's value by what one is willing to pay for it, period. They challenge Costanza's view that leaving a parcel undeveloped increases the net value of the property as a whole. He responds that while this may have been true in the past, we're now "running out of nature," so what's left has a higher marginal value.

An important message that emerges from this movement to link ecology and economics is that the life-supporting outputs of global ecosystems have a huge impact on our well-being, and even our existence. In fact, these systems determine our capacity to sustain socio-economic development on the planet earth.

Putney School: A Long History of Cooperation

By Kristin Dawley

The 1955 Putney Town Report records that Ms. Carmelita Hinton, founder and director of the Putney School, along with students from the Putney School planted one thousand trees (presumably red pine) near the summit of Putney Mountain, and had plans to plant a thousand more in the coming year. This early work is but one chapter of the relationship between Putney School and Putney Mountain.

Students and faculty at the school, located approximately two miles from the summit, has always valued

Putney Mountain

as a site for day hikes or picnic lunches. For the last two years, Putney School students have been offering their time to work on trails and summit clearing.

Work is an important part of Putney School life. Students help to craft the school's buildings and furniture, plow and plant its fields, milk and care for its cows, and cook and clean in its kitchen. Helping to maintain the Putney Mountain Nature Reserve blends well with this value.

At the start of each school year, Putney School offers new students an orientation that incorporates on-campus activities as well as an off-campus hiking and camping. This fall, students helped build a new trail that will

the trail was done on the school's Work Day, November 5th. The new trail will soon be open to the public.

In the fall of 2001, students completed work on the Ridgeline Trail that runs from the "Five Corners" at the end of Banning Road, to the Pinnacle Summit. In the spring of 2001, students helped work on the recently opened Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association Headwaters Trail that connects the ridgeline with the Holden Trail. The Putney School also has helped by providing tools for Putney Mountain Association use on these projects.

link the summit of Putney Mountain to the new West Cliff Trail, traveling along the Brookline side of the ridge. Roger Haydock, a board member of both the Putney Mountain Association and Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association, has been coordinating their efforts. Faculty leaders Glenn Littledale, Abby Mnookin, Joe Holland, and Shana Frank worked with twenty students over two days to clip, rake, and clear the new trail. More work on



Shown here is part, but not all, of the crew from the Putney School that has worked on trail maintenance and summit clearing on Putney Mountain.

In addition, two students worked with Putney School faculty member Cathy Abbot and staff member Mick Baisley to design and illustrate a new nature trail guide. This will be available soon with some technical help from the PMA board. Through their work on Putney Mountain and the surrounding ridgeline, students give the public easier and more scenic access from Putney Mountain to the Pinnacle.

New Trail Markers Define Pathways

By Steve Anderson

The new trails that have been created in the Putney Mountain Association holdings have been marked to distinguish them from each other, and to prevent new hikers from going astray. Board member Roger Haydock, an experienced outdoorsman and trail builder, came up with the trail marking plan. Roger and the Stewardship Committee have begun putting up the markers, which are easily seen by those looking for them, but don't otherwise intrude on the

New trail markers distinguish trails and prevent new hikers from going astray.

natural loveliness of our forested reserve.

The markers are small plastic discs, about two inches in diameter, fastened to prominent trees at head height and within sight of each other. Each trail has its own color. When the trails meet or turn, two discs, one above the other, make the junction or turn obvious.

Where there are no trees, as on the peak area of Putney Mountain, discreet paint markings on rock outcroppings indicate trail directions or turns.

So far, only the Main Trail and

the West Trail have been marked. The Main Trail, which is marked with white discs, starts at the Putney Mountain parking area off Putney Mountain Road, and heads north almost to the summit of Putney Mountain (a side trail goes on to the summit). It then turns east down to Banning Road, follows the road to the end of the maintained portion, and continues on the Class 4 road to "Five Corners" where Banning Road meets Holden Road. From there, a well marked path through the lands of the Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association leads north to the Pinnacle, and on to the North Kiosk and parking area on Old Athens Road.

The West Trail, which is marked with yellow discs, also begins at the Putney Mountain parking area. It then bears left at the start of the path and tracks through the western hemlock-forested slope before climbing gradually to the summit of Putney Mountain.

Other trails will receive their individual identities before long, and a trail guide identifying all our trails and their distinctive colors will soon be available.

Julie Rosegrant, Local Heroine

By Jacquie Walker

If it hadn't been for Julie Rosegrant, the Putney Mountain Association would have lost a good portion of its land and we wouldn't be where we are today.

The Association was officially formed in 1946. PMA bought the first parcel of land for \$500 in 1947. Donald Watt, Sr. was president until 1949, when Bill Darrow was elected president. Every year until 1976, the hat was passed at town meeting to collect money for taxes. Then, as Laura Heller puts it, "good intentions went awry" and even though Putney voted that the PMA property should be tax-exempt, everyone forgot that some of the land was in Brookline and was still taxed there. Over time, the PMA board grew inactive, moved, died, and aged. For a while the

taxes were paid from money in the Credit Union, but in early 1983 the part of the PMA lands in Brookline was sold to a developer for \$3,600. There was only one year to redeem it. This required coming up with the purchase price plus 12% interest.

Julie Rosegrant, who is still active today at 98, realized the situation and agitated with some of the younger people in town (Laura Heller, Dick Richardson and Doug Wilson) to "do something". A new board was formed. They located the original papers by noticing the name of the PMA lawyer in the 1953 Putney History, and raised the \$3111.27 due to Brookline. The land was reclaimed on August 15, 1983.

The information in this article was obtained from Laura Heller and the Putney Historical Society archives.

Call for Monitors

As snow season approaches, the tracking monitors of the Putney Mountain and Windmill Hill Pinnacle Associations will again take to the woods. A tracking workshop led by Margo Guia, a naturalist from the Grafton Nature Museum, will be held in early winter. All are welcome. If you're interested in joining the group this year, please call 387-5387 or 387-2152.

Putney Mountain Association Membership Form

Date: _____

Name #1: _____ Name #2: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ email: _____ fax: _____

 I enclose \$20 per person lifetime membership fee, payable to Putney Mountain Association. I am making an additional contribution of \$ _____ for on-going projects.
Any amount over the membership fee is a tax deductible gift and very welcome. I am enclosing \$20 each for the following gift memberships:
_____**Mail to:** Claire Wilson, PMA Membership; 26 Spring Hill Road; Putney, VT 05346**ANNUAL MEETING!****HOW MUCH IS NATURE WORTH?****SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER
DR. ROBERT COSTANZA**Director, Gund Institute for Ecological Economics
University of VermontDECEMBER 8, 2002, 7pm, Hooker-Dunham Theatre
Brattleboro, VT

Short business meeting Refreshments Hawk news

Please let us know if your address changes.

Address Service Requested

The Putney Mountain Association
P.O. Box 953
Putney, VT 05346