
Farmington Valley's MMM Trail Protection Bill Approved

Tuesday, 24 March 2009

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, Connecticut's Metacomet Monadnock Mattabesett (MMM) Trail moved closer to becoming a "National Scenic Trail," as legislation pushed by Senator Chris Dodd (D-CT) and Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) to designate it as the ninth scenic trail in the country passed the House of Representatives as part of a package of environmental and land protection bills.

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"The MMM Trail provides countless hours of recreation and relaxation to the people of Connecticut," said Dodd. "Today, we move one step closer to gaining access to federal resources for the protection and preservation of this precious natural treasure. I welcome today's recognition of how valuable the trail is to the residents of Connecticut."

"People in central Connecticut enjoy the endless recreational opportunities this trail provides. For decades, the MMM Trail has been maintained through the generosity of private donors, nature groups, and the landowners who have allowed the trail to pass through their properties. This bill will give the trail access to grants and resources to help in its maintenance and preservation, all while maintaining its cooperatively-managed character," said Murphy.

This legislation, the New England National Scenic Trail Designation Act, was included in HR 146, the Omnibus Public Land Management Act, a bipartisan collection of more than 160 public lands bills that enjoy wide support in Congress. Many of these bills have previously passed through the House of Representatives, including Murphy's MMM legislation, which would provide an opportunity for long-term viability of the trail by protecting against increasing pressures from residential subdivision growth.

Two million people live within ten miles of the trail and thousands of Connecticut residents enjoy the recreational opportunities provided by it. Currently, the entire system is predominantly managed and maintained by volunteers, and much of it relies on the generosity and commitment of landowners who voluntarily allow it to cross their lands.

Senator Dodd has been a longtime supporter of this bill, and Congressman Murphy has been pushing it since he came to Congress. Murphy has testified before the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands in support of it. And he has asked Natural Resources Committee Chairman Nick J. Rahall and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer to bring the legislation to the full House for a vote.

The legislation now goes to President Obama's desk for signature.

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