

Quabbin Voices

The Friends of Quabbin Newsletter



Summer 2012
Vol.25 No.2

We must hear and listen to all of Quabbin's many Voices. Voices of the Past, as well as Voices of the Present and of the Future. Voices of the Trees, the Sky, the Rain that falls, and all the Wild Things; Voices of the People who depend on this valuable resource for their daily needs of clean water, and Voices of those who draw upon it for deeper needs of the Soul.

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There are Moose on the Loose in Quabbin

By Staff of the Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Water Supply Protection, Belchertown, Massachusetts

After being extirpated from southern New England for over a century, moose (*Alces alces*) have been re-colonizing Massachusetts from areas further north for the past 3–4 decades. To date, no one is sure how many moose are in Massachusetts, but best guesses range from 800–2,000 or more individuals. Reproduction is occurring, with twin calves often reported. DCR land in the Quabbin and Ware River watersheds represent some of the best moose habitat in the state and given their tremendous size and appetites (moose can eat 40–60 pounds of browse daily), the Division of Water Supply Protection is interested in how many moose are present on Division lands, their life histories, and their ecological role. In order to address these questions, the DCR has been involved in three methods to gather information.



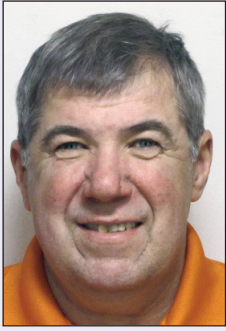
GPS Collars

A cooperative study was initiated in 2006 to try to capture moose and attach GPS collars around their necks. Researchers from the University of Massachusetts–Amherst and the US Geological Survey's Massachusetts Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, with support from MassWildlife and DCR,

have captured and collared 25 (13 male: 12 female) moose in Massachusetts, including 9 on (or near) the Quabbin watershed. To date, 20 recovered collars have provided about 1,000 to 10,000 locations per animal. The moose research team has begun to analyze these large data sets to investigate how moose move within the landscape (including road crossings), as well as habitat use. Early results indicate that moose cross public roads often, over 100 times in 11 months. Most road crossing occurred at night. When habitat use was examined, the researchers found that moose used regenerating forest more than any other habitat. Wetlands were also used often by certain individual moose.

Quabbin Hunter Survey

The Quabbin Reservation controlled deer hunt takes place each year as hundreds of hunters take to the woods in search of deer. In the past, DCR staff noticed that in addition to deer, hunters often saw a lot of moose. In order to capitalize on this excellent source of information, the DCR has handed out a formal moose sighting survey to hunters since the 2006 hunt. Hunters are given survey cards the first day of the hunt and asked to keep an eye out for moose. When a moose is sighted, the hunter fills in the time of the sighting, their location, and what kind of animal they saw. Hunters then turn in their cards at the end of the day. Survey information is then compiled and mapped for each block. The location of moose reported by hunters are mapped, and information such as age, sex, and time of sighting is used to eliminate multiple sightings of the same individuals. Based on the data, it has been estimated that the moose population on the hunted zones of the Quabbin Reservation is *Continued page 3*



Gene H. Theroux

President's Message

The Memorial Day Service conducted at Quabbin Park Cemetery was well attended. It was a great program, and each speaker did an excellent job. The legislative delegation included State Senator Steve Brewer, Representatives Todd Smola and

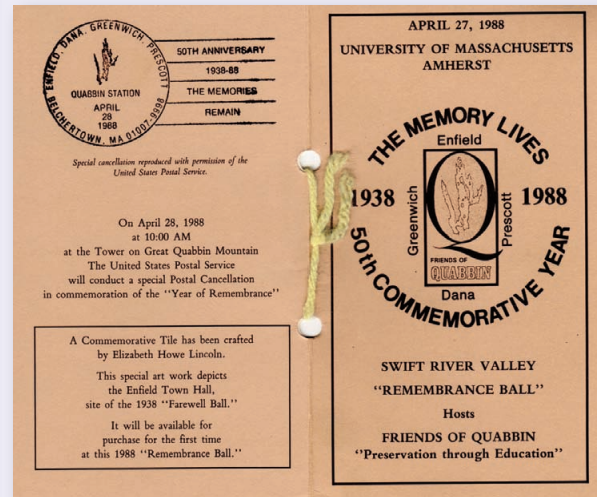
Denise Andrews. Each conveyed an appropriate message for the occasion. I particularly appreciated the message from Senator Steve Brewer and applaud him for all the work that he's done for Massachusetts veterans.

My wife and I spent the remainder of the day at Quabbin Park. We were just taken away with the amount of work accomplished in the Quabbin Park Cemetery in repairing headstones that were damaged by the falling trees from the storms prior to the 2011 Memorial Day Services. It was quite obvious to us, that the DCR had placed a priority on restoring Quabbin Park Cemetery and that they expended a lot of resources to repair the damaged headstones and are to be commended for their efforts. Prior to going to the Quabbin Visitor Center to attend the program, "*Morning Glory - Cemeteries as Historic Landscapes*" presented by Wendy Pearl, Planner of the DCR Historic Landscape Preservation Initiative, we had an opportunity to visit with Les Campbell at his home.

Les informed us that next year "2013" will be the 75th Anniversary of the disincorporation of the Swift River Valley Towns. Les explained in detail what activities occurred during 1988 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the disincorporation of the Swift River Valley Towns. The Friends of Quabbin Board of Directors has begun planning for the 75th Anniversary and the FOQ will be reaching out to all the respective historical societies and seek to partner and to collaborate with them to plan and sponsor events

throughout the year. Our thought is to have many of the same events that were held during the 50th Commemorative Anniversary. The most important event would be the 75th Quabbin Remembrance Ball, a homage to the original event held on April 27, 1938 at the Enfield Town Hall.

The FOQ is looking at the possibility of holding a reception for the historical societies that comprised the Swift River Historical Association on September 15, 2012, so that we



may come together, have a guest speaker and generate ideas, plan and build a schedule of activities to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the disincorporation of the Swift River Valley Towns. Once the schedule of events is completed, we will be forwarding press releases and ensuring widest dissemination of the schedule of events. We will use the *Quabbin Voices* newsletter and the Friends of Quabbin website to post updates as we move towards 2013.

Because creation of a viable and sustainable water supply for the Boston metropolitan area made necessary the dislocation of former residents of the Swift River Valley and of the 7500 bodies interred in the cemeteries, it is our solemn duty that their sacrifices never be forgotten.

Call for Member Participation

This is your organization. We invite members to fully participate in the organization. We invite you to attend Board Meetings. The FOQ Board of Directors meets on the second Thursday in the months of February, March, April, June, September, and November at the Quabbin Visitor Center at 7:00 PM. We encourage you to send stories, articles, reminiscences, and photos about the human or natural history of the Swift River Valley and Quabbin Reservoir. We especially invite you to visit the Quabbin and the Information Center where the latest news, books, memorabilia, and directions are available.

Please send e-mail to Paul Godfrey at godfrey@tei.umass.edu or mail items to: The Friends of Quabbin, 485 Ware Road, Belchertown, MA 01007.

Moose on the Loose continued from page 1

about 100 (SE = 17) individuals, or 0.6 moose per km². This is a moderate density compared to many other parts of the moose's geographic range in North America, but is an indication of the relatively large number of moose in and around this watershed.

Exclosure Study

Given the potential impact moose can have on forests in other parts of their range, the DCR wanted to learn more about moose and forest dynamics in Massachusetts. Therefore, in addition to the GPS study, Umass-Amherst and the USGS also initiated an experimental study to investigate moose ecology and forest dynamics in southern New England. Six 20m x 20m fenced exclosures were erected in 2007 (2 on Prescott Peninsula, 2 inside Gate 40, and 2 at the Ware River). At each site, one exclosure had fencing that extended down to the ground preventing both deer and moose from entering. The other exclosure at each site had fencing that started approximately 1.5 feet above the ground, allowing deer to duck under the fence and enter, but preventing moose from entering. Vegetation and browse is being measured within all the exclosures as well as in adjacent control plots (same size but without any fencing). In addition, remote cameras were installed at

some sites to monitor wildlife movement. Work will continue to examine how vegetation grows and responds both within and outside each exclosure.

More details of both the survey results and the exclosure project can be found on-line at:

<http://www.umass.edu/moose/Moose%20Exclosure%20Report%20Winter%202009.pdf>

<http://www.umass.edu/moose/Moose%20Progress%20Report%20-%20February%202009.pdf>

STUDY CONDUCTED BY: Kiana Koenen¹, Stephen DeStefano², Dan Clark¹, Ken MacKenzie¹, Jillian Pereira¹, David Wattles², and Justin Compton²

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: We thank MassWildlife for their continued cooperation, those who volunteered to hand out and collect cards, and the sportsmen and women who took part in the Quabbin hunt.

Tuesday Teas

Remember family gatherings when stories were told that made you realize that **history** was your family's story, too? That is Tuesday Tea! Come learn about the Swift River Valley from those who lived there. Come reminisce about times past or help the Friends of Quabbin Board develop a 75th anniversary event list that properly commemorates the disincorporation of the Swift River Valley towns. In the past two months attendance has been booming, but there is always room for newcomers. The next Tuesday Tea is August 7 at 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM. Future Teas will be held on September 4, October 2, and November 6—that is, the first Tuesday of each month.



Hank's Place, site of Annual Tuesday Tea Picnic

Do you have old photos, slides, negatives or other documents relating to the Swift River Valley towns and residents? Bring them to the Tuesday Tea where an FOQ member will scan them to make a digitized copy while you wait. With a digital image, you can easily and inexpensively make copies for other family members and, with your permission, the FOQ will save copies which you might see in future Quabbin Voices. Help keep the memories alive!

Photo Club Meetings

The Quabbin Photo Group meetings are on the 4th Monday at the Quabbin Visitor Center beginning at 7:00 PM. The Pioneer Valley Photographic Artists meet on the last Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM at the Visitor Center.

Tuesday Tea Annual Picnic

A special event for all Tuesday Tea participants and all Friends of Quabbin is the annual Tuesday Tea Picnic. It will be held on Tuesday, August 28, 2012 at Hank's Place from Noon to 3:00 PM. The rain date is September 4th. Bring a picnic lunch and something to share if you would like. Boat rides will be available for former residents and descendants at 10 AM and 2 PM. Call for reservations and questions at (413) 323-7221.

Memorial Day Commemoration at the Quabbin Park Cemetery



Like communities all across the United States, the towns of the Swift River Valley commemorated their war dead each year on Memorial Day until their own demise in 1938. Afterward, Quabbin Park Cemetery (QPC) became the center of Memorial Day services for the towns, for here, along with loved ones, also lay buried the very essence of the four towns and several villages that perished with the creation of Quabbin Reservoir. In the 1980s there was a renewed focus on the ceremonies held at Quabbin Park Cemetery which coincided with the major efforts around the Year of Remembrance to observe the fifty year anniversary of the disincorporation of the Swift River Valley towns. When the Schmidt Trust was formed in the early 1990s it included a provision for support to Quabbin area historical societies if they participated in the QPC Memorial Day Services by carrying a banner in the parade. Communities that participate in the event include Athol, Barre, Belchertown, Hardwick, New Salem, Orange, Palmer, Pelham, Petersham, Shutesbury and Ware. The Belchertown Veterans Council, the Friends of Quabbin, Inc., and the Swift River Valley Historical Society also take part.

The Memorial Day Services are a collaborative effort planned by the DCR, the Friends of Quabbin, the Belchertown Veterans Council and the Belchertown Community Band. Combining traditional Memorial Day Services that recognize our Veterans and the sacrifices made for their country, with the observance of the disincorporation of the towns of Dana, Enfield, Greenwich and Prescott for the greater good of the Commonwealth, the event offers a truly unique event. The participation of the historical organizations and representatives from the State House and Senate add to the special nature of the day.

This year's event drew another huge crowd, estimated at hundreds by the *Hampshire Gazette*, who gathered at 10:00 AM for refreshments under mostly clear skies. The food and beverages were donated from local businesses including from Belchertown: Stop&Shop, Bell and Hudson Insurance Agency, and North Brookfield Saving Bank, and Country Bank for Savings of Ware. The March formation began to organize at 10:45 and the contingent set off at 11:00 sharp for its route around the main cemetery loop. The Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance, Recitation and Response of "In Flanders Fields" were followed by the placement of wreaths at the four town monuments and the Memorial Bench honoring Eleanor

Schmidt. Taps was played beautifully by Joseph Brozek and Aaron Funk, followed by Raising the Colors by the Color Guard. Belchertown resident and Boy Scout, James Desjardin, read the Gettysburg Address before yielding the microphone to Senator Steve Brewer, Representatives Todd Smola and Denise Andrews, and Clif Read of the DCR.

Notable Quotes of the Speakers

On the submerged towns, "This is the last legacy that we have of that event." —Senator Stephen Brewer, D-Barre.

"Here lies buried the essence of these towns, along with the loved ones that lived and died there." "We remember those whose lives were changed forever and we pray that we will keep their sacrifice known in the public eye."
—Keith Poulin, Commander of American Legion Post 239

On the importance of state and community organization, "We have to make sure to pay it forward in our own communities."—Rep. Todd Smola, R-Palmer

On his original home in the Quabbin watershed, "You can still walk to the green, but there aren't any buildings there anymore. Still I like to go there and just sit and reflect."
—Earl Cooley, 87-year old former resident of Dana

On Quabbin, "It seems like such a permanent feature of our landscape, but in fact this is all still very recent."
—Chris Gould, Pelham Historical Society

This year's large turnout was bolstered by record numbers of local Boy and Girl Scout Troops who participated in the March and the other ceremonies. It was a fine day and special thanks goes out to all those who helped make the day so special.



Written principally by Clif Read, DCR with addition of quotes as reported in the *Daily Hampshire Gazette*, May 30, 2012.



Interpretive Services Report

Summer 2012

By Clif Read

Despite the forecast for overcast skies and showers all day on June 5th, optimism ruled among the Amherst Area Amateur Astronomy Association (5A's). The group had collaborated with the DCR-Quabbin Section to set up a special Venus Transit Observation Party for the public at the Quabbin Lookout Tower to observe the rare astronomical event where Venus passes between the earth and the sun. Despite the dismal forecast, the 5A's agreed to set up telescopes at the Quabbin Tower and be ready to observe the Venus Transit should conditions miraculously change. Well, change they did! After light intermittent showers between 4:30 and 5:30 PM, a break in the clouds was spotted to the northeast, headed directly towards the Tower. Just as the transit commenced at 6:03, the sun emerged from behind the clouds providing unobstructed views of the sun to the west. For the next hour and a half the group's 15 telescopes equipped with special filters that allow viewers to safely observe the sun, were trained on the sun as Venus made its six-hour journey in front of the sun. By 7:30 the cloudy skies had returned, obscuring any views of the transit for any unfortunate late comers. It was a remarkable astronomical event combined

with extraordinary meteorological conditions that provided a magical experience for those who attended, especially since the rain date was scheduled for December, 2117! A special thanks goes out to the 5A's for their enthusiasm, expertise and unwavering optimism despite the gloomy forecast.

This year has been a difficult one for Quabbin's nesting eagle population. Following an exceptionally mild winter, the resident birds began nesting earlier than usual with many pairs sitting on eggs by early March. The cool, wet spring created difficulties for the chicks that did hatch. Additionally there seemed to be several instances of predation, which further reduced the survival rate of the eaglets, resulting in a poor year overall. There were only four successful nests with a total of seven chicks among them. While this year was a poor one from a chick production standpoint, it is part of the natural fluctuation that occurs with wildlife populations. Hopefully next year will be a robust year for eagle nesting and there will be a greater number of fledglings at Quabbin.

This past spring a Stone Conservator was hired to provide special training to DCR personnel on the protection, repair, and restoration of headstones and monuments in the Quabbin Park Cemetery. In addition to hands-on workshop sessions which repaired a number of stones damaged in storms over the past couple of years, the consultant provided training to DCR staff that will enable them to continue this work in the future with the proper skills and knowledge. This contract continues the recent efforts to address issues in the cemetery, including active vegetative management work and the development of a long term cemetery management plan. A grant for \$12,000 has been awarded to the DCR for plantings in the cemetery to replace trees damaged by storms and to use vegetation to recreate the original landscape design created by renowned architect Arthur Shurcliff. These plans were recently discovered as part of the research work on the Cemetery Management Plan being developed as a component of the larger Quabbin Park Management Plan.



Viewing Venus Transit July 2012

With the busy spring school program season behind us, the Interpretive staff is shifting to summer mode with more field oriented projects. In July the Quabbin hosted another crew from the Student Conservation Association (SCA) who continued the work on the Swift River Loop Trail by improving the portion of trail in the Stewardship Forest between Blue Meadow Road and the Swift River. This trail offers a two mile loop through diverse forest and offers some scenic vistas along the way. Come check it out next time you visit Quabbin.

Ware's Silver Mine

Extracted from an article by Stan Obrzut in the *Springfield Sunday Union and Republican* October 4, 1981

A century ago, a scarcely remembered silver mine was rumored to have existed on the Greenwich road, about 2¼ miles from the town. About 1816, strange noises and rumblings were heard coming from the ledge where the silver mine came into being. Settlers of that area decided to consult with Reverend Hosen Ballou of North Dana, who was believed then to possess wonderful powers of prophecy. He possessed a stone he called the philosopher's stone. When consulted, he would place the stone in his soft hat, bury his face in the hat and, he claimed, see visions of the future.

The farmers, anxious about the strange noises from the ledge, told the clergyman of the noises and that a straw placed on the ledge would soon burst into flame from no apparent cause and that the rumblings caused the dishes to rattle in nearby farmhouses. The clergyman, after his ritual process of visioning, told the farmers that the ledge contained vast deposits of a metal, probably silver. He also told them that if they worked the mine they would first find small grains of silver but these would become larger as they dug deeper. In a trial dig, the farmers,

now part-time mine workers, found such a vein. Placing considerable faith in the visions of the clergyman, they banded together to form a company. They started small with hand drills and with great difficulty. Many residents of Ware, Hardwick and Dana worked the mine for several years and, according to oral history passed down eventually to A. Holman Hoyt, the prophecies about the silver mine were true.

One day, the great uncle of Mr. Hoyt and member of the mining company, Isaac Burt, was visiting the minister. The minister performed another visioning ritual and prophesied that a boulder above the ledge would fall and kill workmen below. Mr. Burt went to the ledge and climbed to the top to find just such a boulder weighing about 25 tons, dangerous but impossible to remove. However, that was not the disaster to befall the mine.

The miner's worked for some time and finally collected about a keg of the metal. One morning, they discovered that their keg had been stolen in the night. Discouraged, the miners stopped working for a time, but despite an offer to buy, they decided to keep on. Another prophesy by Mr. Ballou predicted that the men would, one by one, give up, even though he was convinced that great wealth lie in the ledge. That prophesy did come true; no one since then has sought the riches reputed to be in there.

Another property was claimed for the ledge – that of miraculous restorative spring water that would cure any case of vegetable poisoning known, including ivy and dogwood. Apparently this promise also lacked takers.

Today, the ledge does not trumpet this history and looks totally unremarkable. It awaits modern-day entrepreneurs and modern science and technology to reveal whether the original prophesy was true or hogwash.

Abridged from an article in the *Springfield Sunday Union and Republican*, October 4, 1981. A copy of the newspaper page was provided by a member of the Ware Historical Society.



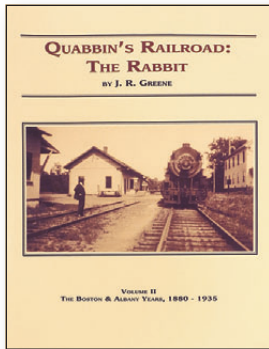
Photo by Stan Obrzut showing condition of the mine in 1981.

Quabbin Memorabilia

It may be a secret that is too well kept! The Friends of Quabbin has an impressive list of items about the Quabbin Valley history and lore. Souvenirs of your visit, maps, old and new pictures, calendars, and other goodies are all available at the Visitor Center. If you are a member, as you are if you received this newsletter, you are eligible for a discount. Be sure to mention that when you purchase any of these items. Unfortunately, the Friends do not do mail-order at this time. In upcoming issues, we'll pick a few and highlight them with a photo and a commentary.

BOOKS

Accidental Wilderness	\$14.55
Bibliography	10.50
Cookbook	5.25
Creation of Quabbin Reservoir	15.70
Fact Booklet	3.15



**Quabbin's Railroad:
The Rabbit, Vol I —
The Independent Years,
1869-1880;
Vol II — The Boston &
Albany Years 1880-1935**

A history in two volumes of that quirky little railroad that ran from Springfield to Athol and most of whose right-of-way now lies under the Quabbin. It went through

places like Red Bridge, Smith's Village, crossed over Indian Leap, went beside Lake Neeseponsett, and went by Slab City. It also served the people and factories of Springfield, Ludlow, Three Rivers, Bondsville, West Ware, Enfield, North Dana, New Salem, and South Athol. It was the local means of transportation before major roads and cars. Its name may have come from its habit of making short hops from town to town. Like many railroads of the time, its history is surrounded with political controversy, its share of accidents, fires, breakdowns and delays, and became a part of the lives of local residents. That story is told in these books by J. R. Greene.

Four Towns Died	12.55
From the Valley to Quabbin (Greene)	15.70
From the Valley to Wachusett (Burk)	21.00
Going Wild	18.85
Henry Smith: Controversial Spiritual...	10.45
Historic Hikes	12.60
Letting Swift River Go	5.25
Letters from Quabbin	15.75
Lost Towns of the Quabbin Valley	21.00
Lost Towns: People and Places	21.00
More Strange Tales	12.55
No Simple Wilderness	10.50

North of Quabbin Revisited	24.10
Prescott Years	31.45
Quabbin: A History & Explorers...	19.90
Quabbin's Railroad, Vol. 1	21.00
Quabbin's Railroad, Vol. 2	26.20
Someday	15.75
Strange Tales	12.55
Trail Booklet	3.15
Wachusett: Boston's 19th Century...	23.10
Wildlife Viewing Guide	9.40

CALENDARS (J. R. Greene)

New	15.40
Old	1.00

LITHOS

360 Degree	4.20
3 Views	4.20
Black & White	4.20

MAPS

Park	2.10
Ryan/Tyvek	7.30
Relief (Paper)	10.50
Relief (Laminated)	12.60
Historic	5.25

NOTECARDS

Zephyr (New)	3.50
Zephyr (Old)	2.05

PEWTER PINS

Small	2.10
Large	5.25

POSTCARDS

Singles	.45
Packet of Six	2.25
Les Campbell	3.50

CD/Cassette

CD/Cassette	11.55
T-Shirt	12.00
Hat	15.00
Magnets	10.00
Mug	10.00

MEMBERSHIPS

Family	20.00
Individual	12.00



Mug – 4" tall, 10 oz. capacity. Friends of Quabbin logo in blue and black. The blue is thermally sensitive so that it appears black when empty and turns blue when a hot beverage is added. Dishwasher safe.

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Call for Member Submissions

This is your newsletter. We invite members to submit stories, articles, or reminiscences about the human or natural history of the Swift River Valley and Quabbin Reservoir.

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Quabbin Voices is the periodic newsletter of the Friends of Quabbin, Inc.

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