

BECKET LAND TRUST NEWS AND EVENTS 2005


HISTORIC QUARRY DAY CELEBRATED

Highlighting a year's worth of Becket Land Trust accomplishments was the dedication in August of a stone monument honoring the late John Guaccione whose extensive pro bono efforts created the quarry's Gateway area. Also celebrated was the inauguration of the new Historic Quarry Walk. The occasion was further marked by an accounting from Ken Smith, Land Trust president, of all the many trail and site improvements made during the year. In his remarks, Smith made special mention of Dorothy Napp Schindel's vital role in the work that was done to develop the museum and the historic quarry walk.

Following Ken's talk, Dorothy spoke about the development of the new Walk, the narrative signs, sculpted posts and artifacts of significance. How to best view and enjoy this new quarry attraction was discussed, and maps were given out so that participants could explore the exhibit with guides nearby to answer questions.

The event was capped off by a festive wine and cheese reception at Quarry function, starting point of all the trails. Many new faces were seen and a grand time was had by all!





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REPORT



Above left: Celebration Day reception.

Left: Listening to Celebration Day speakers at the "Gateway".

Above right: Sculpted granite post with narrative sign.

BECKET LAND TRUST HISTORIC QUARRY MUSEUM UPDATE 2005

by Dorothy Napp Schindel, Museum Director

Each fall when I write this column anew, I begin by reviewing the prior year's Newsletter. It is always heartening (and impressive) to note the progress made over the past months. Once again this year I am happy to report that two major projects begun in 2004 are now a reality in 2005. The first phase of the Self-Guided Historic Walk and the Historic Quarry Brochure have both been completed.

Presently, the Self-Guided Historic Walk contains fourteen posts topped with narrative signs. Many visitors and hikers have already commented on how much they enjoy this special exhibit. The beautiful granite posts, designed and sculpted by Allan Williams have been installed at strategic points. These sites were chosen to focus on objects of significance and/or places where the quarry's story could be highlighted. Atop each of the posts are narratives designed to appeal to people of all ages. The signs can be updated periodically as we discover new information through on-going research. Featured on some signs are interactive questions for children to inspire them to look for companion objects, describe them and in some cases compare them to more familiar 20th century items.

Among the objects on the self-guided historic walk are wooden "guy" and "stiff arm" derricks, grout piles (picturesque hills of jagged rock composed of the waste product of the quarrying process), bullwheels, drills, winches, a grout pan, rusted trucks, compressors and an electrical generator shed that is thought to have been constructed from a Sears kit. The defining "signature piece" of the quarry, is a reconstructed "guy derrick" that looms over the quarry pit site. This derrick boasts a wooden mast of 55 feet and a wooden boom of 50 feet. The mast was originally rotated on a "bullwheel," measuring 10-12 feet in diameter.

Special thanks go to Neil Toomey, Steve Schindel and Eve Cholmar, for working with me on this project and lending their expertise and endless hours of dedicated time.

No doubt you have already come across a copy of our new brochure. The brochure was designed in collaboration with Shirley Sparks at Your Color Connection in Lenox. We printed 5000 copies of this colorful and informative pamphlet. Brochures can be found at the quarry kiosk, area general stores, town halls, Berkshire Visitors' Bureau in Pittsfield and Adams, in addition to other places, such as the Stockbridge Visitors Center and at local arts venues and tourist attractions.

We had two very special extensive articles with photos in the Berkshire Eagle this past summer. These articles brought us scores of new visitors and many new participants in Quarry Celebration Day. You will also note that the Berkshire Eagle is printing a daily paragraph about the Historic Quarry under the Museums listings.

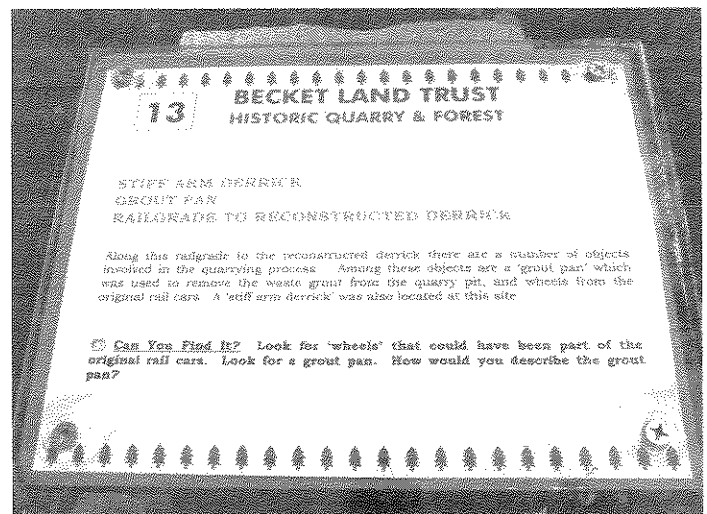
Remember to access the Becket Land Trust web site to find lots of information about the historic quarry and the nature preserve. Our webmaster David Stein, is doing a fine job keeping the public informed about our educational and recreational

opportunities. You will be able to download maps, the brochure, find out about on-going and new programs, see photographs of favorite sites, and learn about quarry objects and history.

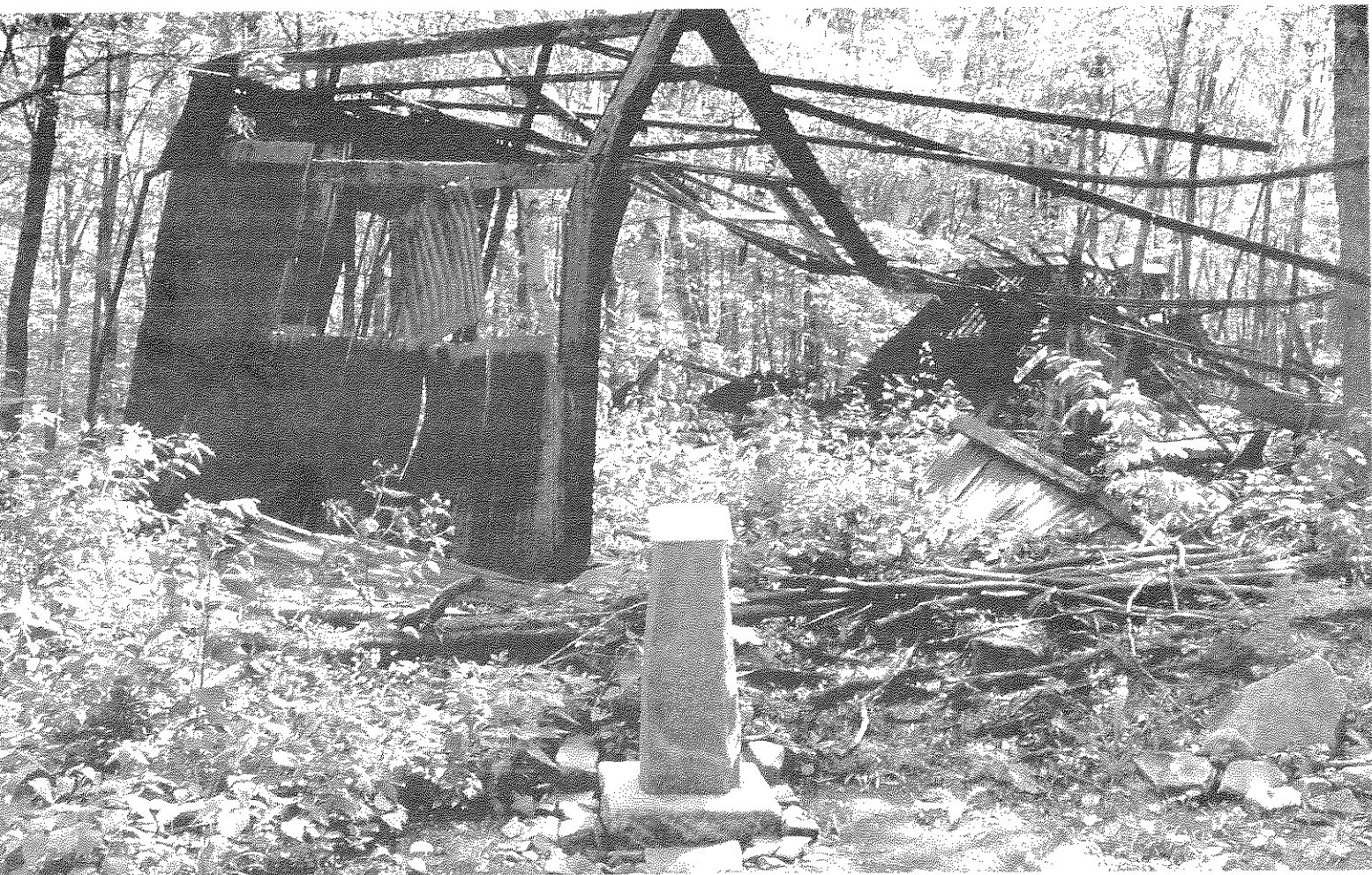
One of our on-going projects is our Oral History initiative. Please contact Eve Cholmar at oralhistory@becketlandtrust.org if you know anyone who may be able to shed light on the history of the Hudson-Chester Quarry and/or quarrying in the Berkshires. We are indebted to those who have thus far been interviewed, and feel privileged to have met them and been privy to their rich stories. Many of these same individuals have donated priceless primary objects and memorabilia relating to the quarry. Also, should you have any information about foundations that offer grants to organizations such as ours, please contact Ann Connell Smith, email to: landtrust@becketlandtrust.org

Please note that we welcome you to visit our office at the Mullen House Education Center. We look forward to the day when this building, which is presently under renovation, will house permanent and on-going rotating exhibits (the first of which was installed for the summer of '05), archival storage, a library and meeting facilities. And, of course, volunteers are always needed. We would love your support and participation.

The Becket Land Trust Historic Quarry office phone number is: 413 623-2100, e-mail (Dorothy Napp Schindel, Museum Director): historicquarry@becketlandtrust.org; e-mail (Ken Smith, BLT President and Ann Connell Smith, Secretary and grants): landtrust@becketlandtrust.org; mailing address: 12 Brooker Hill Road, Becket, MA 01223, website: www.BecketLandTrust.org (click on Historic Quarry).



Above: Sign interpreting objects near reconstructed Stiff Arm Derrick.
Opposite page: The Generator Shed with new granite sign post.



PRESIDENT'S LETTER STATE OF THE TRUST

Ken Smith, President

December 2005



As you will read in this newsletter, this year has seen a continuation of growth and improvement both on the Trust's Historic Quarry and Forest property as well as our general presence as an organization. From the inauguration of the Historic Quarry Walk to the opening of our office and exhibit space in the Mullen House Education Center across the street from the Becket Arts Center, we have not only matched pace with previous years' successes, but also exceeded our own goals as set forth in the five year plan we articulated in 2000.

I take great pleasure in being part of such an ambitious and effective group. While a board meeting doesn't pass without good laughs and heated discussions, we have been able to get a great deal accomplished and this is possible only with the dedication and hard work of the board members.

While the Trust itself was founded fifteen years ago, the acquisition of the Quarry property in 2000 marked the beginning of a new era for us. We are maturing past that point of newness; we have an established presence in the community. The organizational infrastructure we have put in place through

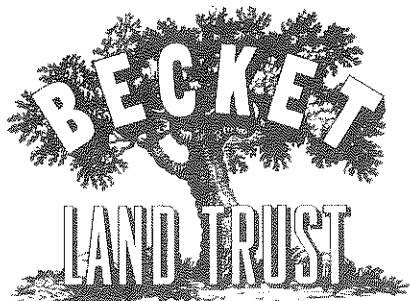
the help of numerous grants totaling several tens of thousands of dollars along with the hard work of our volunteers has helped to create a resource frequented by hundreds of people a year.

A goal we have set forth for ourselves this coming year is to develop a stronger support base within the community. We need to find a way to get the many people who enjoy the Historic Quarry to feel a stronger connection to the Land Trust as an organization, to participate in and contribute towards our efforts. As you will read in this newsletter, we have repositioned the status of membership and ask that, for those of you who haven't donated recently, to reconsider the nature of your financial support.

I hope you enjoy reading about all that has been done this year as much as we enjoyed doing it. Don't forget, this is your Land Trust; we invite and depend on your participation in our efforts and cannot survive without your financial contributions. Thank you for all that you have given in the past and thank you even more for your continued support for this and many years to come.

Kenneth Smith

President, Becket Land Trust



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OFFICERS

PRESIDENT:
Kenneth Smith

VICE PRESIDENT:
Neil Toomey

TREASURER:
Allan Metrick

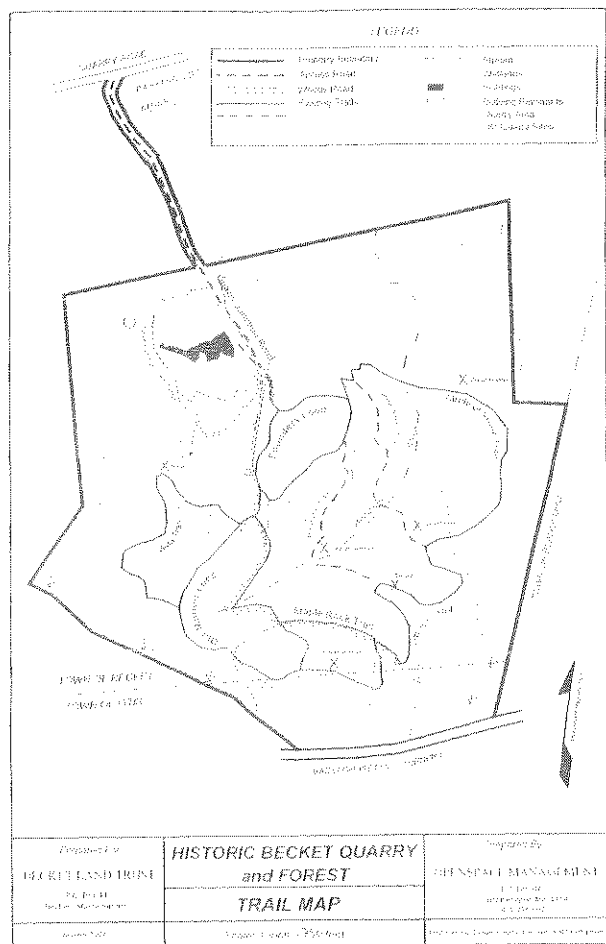
SECRETARY:
Ann Connell Smith

MUSEUM DIRECTOR:
Dorothy Napp Schindel

TRUSTEES

Eve Cholmar
Sid Cholmar
Giles Falcone
Gerald Goldman
Sharon Hughes
Barbara Mandler
Jonathon Nix
Stephen F. Schindel
Martin Schlienger

Leo Seligsohn
Alice Shabecoff
Philip Shabecoff
Waino Tuominen
Daniel Woiski
Gretchen Woiski



MULLEN HOUSE EDUCATION CENTER RENOVATION

We have begun necessary improvements; such as, installation of a new slate roof, replacement of rotted wood floors, shoring up, leveling and reinforcing the building from the basement up. This work should be completed this winter.

Below: Laying out the slate roof pattern.

Bottom: Mullen House Education Center under reconstruction.



Map of the Becket Land Trust Historic Quarry and Forest.

DIRECTIONS TO THE QUARRY:

Take Route 20 to Becket. At the intersection of Route 20, Route 8 North, and Bonny Rigg Hill Road, turn onto Bonny Rigg Hill Road. At a 4-point intersection, turn left onto Quarry Road. Continue on Quarry Road, until you come to our signs and parking area on the right.