The Trustees of Reservations Aim to Open New Reservation at Mt. Warner

April 1, 2009 -

Hadley, MA – Rising above Hadley’s flat, fertile farmland, Mount Warner is visible for miles around, but the mountain has long been inaccessible to the public. The Trustees of Reservations hopes to change that, for the public to enjoy, if the statewide land trust and nonprofit conservation group can successfully raise funds to purchase the western 159 acres of Mount Warner this spring.

The landowner, Carolyn Hayes, has offered the land to The Trustees for $125,000 – significantly less than the property’s fair market value. “The mountain has been in my family for generations,” said Hayes. “It feels good to think that The Trustees will watch over and care for it long into the future.”

The land, located on Mount Warner Road, is forested, with sweeping views of the Connecticut River Valley to the north. Several vernal pools grace the property, providing critical breeding habitat for frogs, salamanders and other amphibians.

Although legally protected from development, all of the land on Mount Warner is privately owned, and thus not currently available for public use. “With the potential purchase of the Hayes property, we will look forward to welcoming hikers and outdoor enthusiasts to Mount Warner for the first time,” said Jocelyn Forbush, Pioneer Valley regional director with The Trustees. “We also hope to work with neighboring conservation owners to create an interconnected, community trail system in North Hadley, something that will greatly benefit quality of life in the surrounding communities,” Forbush added. The Trustees are presently reaching out to community members to ask for help in acquiring the land.

If The Trustees are able to successfully raise funds for the purchase, Mount Warner will be The Trustees’ first reservation located between the Connecticut River and the Quabbin Reservoir. The Trustees’ 11 existing reservations in the Pioneer Valley include Dinosaur Footprints in Holyoke, Peaked Mountain in Monson, and the Bullitt Reservation in Ashfield, which was donated to The Trustees in March. The Trustees also conduct outdoor educational programs for young people in Holyoke, and operate the Highland Communities Initiative (HCI) in the Hilltowns, a program created to protect the natural and cultural character of the 38 rural
communities located between the Connecticut and Housatonic Rivers.

Contributions toward the purchase of the land at Mount Warner can be mailed to: The Trustees of Reservations, 193 High Street, Holyoke, MA 01040.

More About The Trustees in the Pioneer Valley
Since 2001, The Trustees have been working to build a stronger presence in the Pioneer Valley region through educational and grassroots community outreach programs and the pursuit of significant land conservation opportunities. Currently, The Trustees own and manage 11 properties in the Valley including: Notchview, the Bryant Homestead, Dinosaur Footprints, Chapel Brook, Bear Swamp, Chesterfield Gorge, Petticoat Hill, Glendale Falls, Little Tom Mountain (to open 2012), Bullitt (not yet open to the public) and Peaked Mountain, with a few more reservations pending. The Trustees also operate the Highland Communities Initiative (HCI), a program created to protect the natural and cultural character of the 38 rural Hilltowns located between the Connecticut and Housatonic Rivers. To find out more about HCI, please visit www.highlandcommunities.org. To reach The Trustees of Reservations Pioneer Valley regional office, located at 193 High Street in Holyoke, please call 413.532.1631.

More about The Trustees of Reservations Statewide
The Trustees’ 100,000+ members and volunteers are people who love the outdoors and the distinctive charms of New England, and believe in celebrating and protecting them for future generations. Since 1891, The Trustees have held in trust and cared for special places called “reservations.” From working farms to historic homesteads, formal gardens and barrier beaches, open meadows, woodland trails and mountain vistas, The Trustees own and care for more than 100 reservations in Massachusetts – nearly 25,000 acres in more than 70 communities, all of which are open to the public.

In addition, The Trustees hold conservation restrictions protecting more than 16,000 acres of privately owned land and have worked with communities and other conservation partners to assist in the protection of an additional 16,000 acres. A member-, donor-, volunteer- and endowment-supported organization, The Trustees also provide hundreds of year-round programs and events that inspire people of all ages to enjoy the outdoors and appreciate and care for natural, scenic and cultural landscapes and landmarks across the Commonwealth. Most events are free-of-charge or heavily discounted for members. As land is being developed and open space is being fragmented at a rapid pace around the state, time is running out to save the best of Massachusetts’ landscapes and landmarks. To find out how you can help, consider becoming a volunteer and/or member by calling The Trustees at 781.784.0567 or emailing membership@ttor.org. For more information about The Trustees, please visit www.thetrustees.org.