

I support passage of SB 1015 – An Act Concerning the New England National Scenic Trail. Last year I hiked the entire length of the trail from Guilford to Suffield one small section at a time (my blog for the hike is at [www.boxingthenet.blogspot.com](http://www.boxingthenet.blogspot.com)). I found this trail to be very different from other trails in Connecticut because it follows the top of the Metacomet Ridge, a volcanic trap rock ridge which has unique geology and climate. I photographed native cactus along the trail, for example. Also, most of the trail goes back to the 1930s (as the Metacomet and Mattabesett Trails). Even though I was hiking in the most populated parts of the state, there was an illusion of wilderness because of the rugged ridgeline the trail follows. Sadly, I did encounter many areas where the trail was in serious jeopardy:

\*There were survey flags for new subdivisions. In one area a new subdivision road had obliterated the trail and I spent a few hours trying to find it so I could continue my hike.

\*Many sections of the original historic ridgeline trail (1930s) had been closed off and the new trail sections were inferior, especially the extended road walks

\*ATV damage to the trail was so serious it made some sections nearly impassible to hikers (on occasion I had to bushwhack through the forest parallel to the trail because the churned trail mud was too deep to walk through), and the noise from the ATVs was so bad I made a point to take time off of work to walk the trail during school hours to avoid ATVs.

\*A wide new utility road was routed right on top of the trail for about a quarter mile, destroying it, although there seemed like other feasible routes for the utility road.

I work for a town where we proactively contact property owners and ask if they would be interested in selling their property for open space. This is something I believe the State should be doing for the New England Trail, because this trail and the Metacomet Ridge it follows are part of our heritage.

Thank you for your consideration,

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