



# THE BAY CIRCUIT TRAIL

## The Bay Circuit Revealed

An Oral History

Based on Interview Transcripts

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*In memory of Mary French*



*“I am convinced,” said Thoreau, “both by faith and experience, that to maintain one’s self on this earth is not a hardship but a pastime....Let not to get a living be thy trade, but thy sport.” We have here the essence of the meaning of living: to maintaining ourselves on this earth not as toil and hardship but as a sport and quest.<sup>1</sup>”*

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<sup>1</sup> MacKaye, Benton. "Living vs Existence." *The New Exploration; a Philosophy of Regional Planning*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and, 1928. 120. Print.



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## INTRODUCTION FOR INTERVIEWS

Having requested - and been granted - a leave of absence from a menial part-time job so I could focus on my passions of writing and the outdoors, the opportunity to do this oral history project almost simultaneously arose; it seems to be the same serendipity that has accompanied the progress of the Bay Circuit; veiled as a sleeping beauty fairy tale, the Bay Circuit laid dormant until awoken with a kiss. Then, glacier-like, this immortal greenway concept moved forward in fits and starts through a mix of chance and persistence. It took people to warm to its idea, and subsequently be feverishly inspired by it, and then pursue its completion with a burning passion.

The Appalachian Mountain Club initiated the opportunity for me to do this oral history project as a volunteer internship with the intention to capture and archive the stories on the early beginnings and any other relevant historical information of the Bay Circuit Alliance. They kindly reimbursed my travel expenses, while I gained personal knowledge about the Bay Circuit.

Most interviewees gladly consented to have their Bay Circuit memories digitally recorded, and I transcribed their words as literally as the sound recording and my perception of it allowed. All have clearly displayed how much the bay Circuit concept inspired them, and it is a mystery to me why such a good idea could earn the nickname The Bay Secret. It is my hope that this work helps to reveal this string of hidden gems.

Some interviews contain additions at my discretion, either to describe the vibe at the time of the interview, or to expand upon fragmented data, such as giving more background information, or the complete poem when a quote was cited. Likewise, while

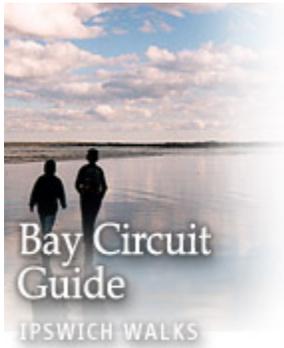
transcribing I discretely omitted the passages I considered too personal or irrelevant for the topic at hand.

The interviews occurred as they could be scheduled, after which I ordered them in a more or less chronological succession; following the evolutionary history of the Bay Circuit Greenway, Alliance, Trail – and ultimately the intended Greenway again.

## Larry Eliot - Transcript

March 18, 2013

Phone call with Larry Eliot in Ipswich



- [1:15] ...AMC is trying to put together an Oral History project about the beginnings of the Bay Circuit. There are several moments of beginning; the Eliots started very early on...

[2:36] As I understand it, the Bay Circuit was established in fifty-six? I think, do you know?

- *Fifty-six was an important year, but the words "Bay Circuit" had been mentioned before by the landscape architect Charles Eliot.*

I don't think so, but I'm not sure. I always thought my *father* was involved with that, and the Trustees of Reservations. As I understand it, he started, eh they got the Bay Circuit passed in 1929.

- *Yes, that's when it appears on a map*

Yes, and my father made the map, and everything was fine until the crash [Wall Street crash, October, 1929] and of course there was no money, so that kind of prevented it. It went into hibernation [...] In the 80s, the State Department of Environmental Management tried to put it into existence, but there was very little money, and she

[Susan Ziegler] organized the Bay Circuit towns to try to create the connections, and we – ehm, the towns people met, and that's when the Open Space Committees in those towns were to come up with a plan. I was on the Committee for Ipswich, that's how I was involved; that's my connection.

- *Well, that's not your only connection; your last name says a lot about another connection! May I ask you to explain how? I've had trouble understanding the family tree.*

Yes, well that [Charles W. Eliot II] was my father. Charles Eliot was my great-uncle, and he had one brother, Samuel Eliot, and my father was born to Samuel, and when my great-grandfather Charles W. Eliot heard about it, he came to the house - **according to my father's story - he looked at him and said, 'he is going to be known as Charles W. Eliot the second, and will be a landscape architect', so he kind of had that from birth you could say.**

- *That's so interesting, because in the Olmsted family there was a similar incident...*

**...Wait a minute... Who is this?**

- *Charles Eliot was a landscape architect with the Olmsted brothers...*

**That's right.**

- *...and the Father Olmsted, who started the business when he was forty-five, his oldest son was named Henry Perkins at birth, but at the age of seven a name change to Frederick Law Olmsted was decided upon, as well as that his career should be in landscape architecture – to continue the family firm and its name.*

**Oh my!! That's interesting!**

- *I've learned a lot these past few weeks.*

If you have, that is wonderful. But my point is that I wasn't in any way connected with the organizing of the Alliance; I got there by working with Al French. I became the chairman of the Ipswich Bay Circuit Committee." [8:50 And he still is at the time of writing this paper].

- *When did you first hear the words Bay Circuit and what drew you in?*

**Well I grew up with it [the words "Bay Circuit"], because my father was involved with it."**

But if you wanted to look up Charles W. Eliot II, there should be, through Harvard, some autobiographical stuff, some of which was actually written by my father.

- I have it on loan from the public library; a 770 page volume: *Charles Eliot Landscape Architect.*

Ok, the one thing you have to keep straight is Charles W. Eliot was President of Harvard. He had two sons, Charles Eliot and Samuel. Then the next generation from Samuel is Charles W. Eliot II. So many people confuse Charles W. Eliot and Charles Eliot and Charles W. Eliot II altogether as one.

[11:08] There were a few highlights: One was that at the establishment of the Bay Circuit, my father was recognized by the Trustees [of Reservations] as the founder of the Bay Circuit with a meeting on Crane Beach. Since that was supposed to be one of the Terminals for the Bay Circuit; Duxbury. Another highlight - for me - was the creation of the Bay Circuit Trail through Ipswich. We produced an Ipswich Bay Circuit Trail booklet in which we described the trail, and also added on information about other trails.

We published it and sold it for a number of years, and we're revising it now. That was a highlight; to get that out so that people would be familiar with it. A third highlight is that we managed to officially make the entire official trail through Ipswich off-road. We may cross a road, but we don't walk the road at any point in the trail.

[passage about difference of opinion regarding the location of termination 13:45] Al French has pushed for it to lead from Willowdale to Crane Beach. I've been kind of the 'cog in the road' or whatever, because there is no trail that connects all the way through[...] The official Bay Circuit terminus now, is at Plum Island, not Crane beach in Ipswich. Al French holds that there is a termination at Crane Beach; Al and I disagree [1:33] at this point. There is a disconnect from Ipswich to Newbury. Rowley does not have an actual trail. You can walk along roads, but as far as I know it's not established as trail that everybody knows and uses. The town has trouble getting together a committee.

- *Negative experience?*

The low point in a sense is knowing that since this idea started in 1929 and there wasn't enough money, that the actual concept of having open space around Boston from Duxbury to either Ipswich or Newbury never got off the ground. [4:10] **That is my discouragement; my father always said that that is main purpose of the Bay Circuit: Open space, all the way around.**

- *Do you think that that purpose is lost now?*

It's lost in the sense of there being actual park all the way along. The trail has established the idea, and the Alliance and other groups have tried to establish open

space along that, but [4:54] **it's not of the concept of the real Bay Circuit. That's what I'm saying.**

- *So the original idea was lost because of the 'hibernation'?*

Yah. During that time development of the area that encompassed the Bay Circuit ...

- *I read somewhere that the space that was part of the idea of the Circuit was then used for baseball diamonds, ice-rinks, even industrial parks. In that sense you lose the picturesque.*

Right.

- *Is there anything else you'd like to share in this interview?*

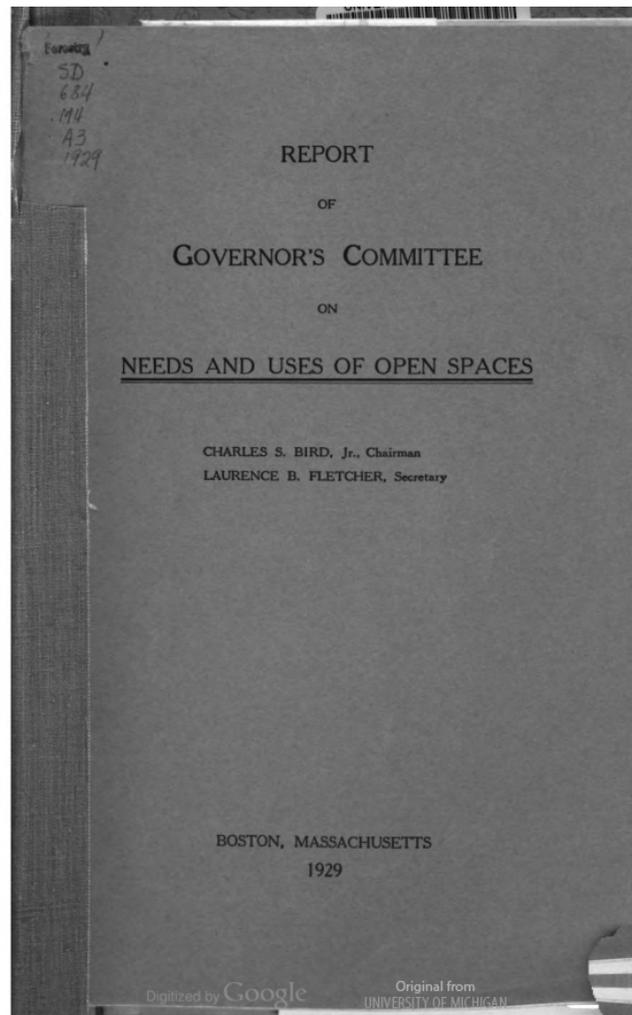
**[6:25] That's the part that my father would insist that I say. That's what I know. I've told you; that it should be open space from Duxbury to Newbury, or Ipswich. Yah.**

..help people imagine the idea and the value of it..

I want you to understand that I have great respect for Al French and for the work that he did during the time of the legislature finally funding the Bay Circuit, and his taking that on to develop the actual trail is almost ..eh..we never seem to be able to see it completed [chuckles]...it was a tremendous influence in getting most of it organized to where it is now.



## **INTERMEZZO - Report of Governor's Committee on Needs and Uses of Open Space**



From page 6:

### **I. *The Bay Circuit.***

As 3,500,000 of the 4,150,000 people of Massachusetts (1925 Census) live within forty miles of the State House, we give emphasis to a series of connected reservations in a semicircle about midway between Worcester and Massachusetts Bay, and suggest a wide parkway beginning with Duxbury Beach on the south, via Charles River Narrows, Walden Pond, Bed-



## Larry Anderson - Transcript

April 9, 2013

AMC library, Boston, MA



[from FTP site link] “My name is Larry Anderson - I am talking about the Bay Circuit and the Bay Circuit Trail - primarily due to my background as a biographer of Benton MacKaye, [who is] probably best known as the originator of the APPALACHIAN TRAIL, but someone who also was involved with the Bay Circuit in different iterations especially during the 20s and 30s. My interest is somewhat historical and biographical. I lived a good part of my life in the terrain that’s traversed by the Bay Circuit, so I do have some personal background and knowledge of the actual places.”

- *When did you hear the words Bay Circuit for the first time / when did Benton hear them – or even coin them?*

“I probably first heard of the ‘Bay Circuit’ during the course of my research of Benton MacKaye and that would have been beginning in the mid-1980s when I began my research on MacKaye in earnest and right away came across that connection of Benton MacKaye’s involvement with the Bay Circuit. I grew up in towns right next to Shirley where Benton MacKaye lived; I grew up in the town of Townsend, Pepperell, Harvard,

MA, my parents lived in Groton, three of those few towns about Shirley, so I grew up in that terrain; in the same landscape, the same watersheds, the same vistas, Mount Monadnock, Mount Watatic [2:37] that MacKaye had known since his childhood, beginning in the late 1880s when his family first came to Shirley. I lived literally 5 miles from them for 10 or 15 years, I've never met him, he was an old man when I was a young person, and didn't get interested in MacKaye really until the early 80s when I was working on another writing project, working for the Newspaper for the Town of Harvard next to Shirley, began to bump into MacKaye again and again and learned that his papers had become available in the early 80s and got the idea of writing a book and finally launched into it. In the course of that research I came across his involvement with the Bay Circuit. This is debatable, but my opinion is that he did not conceive the term or the idea for the Bay Circuit; he came into a project that had already been conceived by these other fellows, who were part of what was then the Trustees of Public Reservations. MacKaye became connected to the project after the conception of the Bay Circuit. I personally don't believe that it was he who coined the term and the concept, but it was shortly after, either Henry Channing or Charles Eliot 2<sup>nd</sup> – and there is still dispute about that; I was just reading a footnote about that in a recent edition of a biography of Charles Eliot, one written by his father, where Charles Eliot 2<sup>nd</sup> claims that it was his idea. In his old age he was quite definite that he conceived of the idea and the name. That's Charles Eliot II, Charles Eliot 2<sup>nd</sup>. We may never know. But I don't think it was Benton MacKaye, but he came into the project at a couple of stages; first through his involvement with the so-called Governors Committee on Needs and Uses of Open Spaces, which was sort of instigated by the Trustees of Public Reservations; he had

connections with some of the personalities involved with Trustees at the time and was recruited to participate. So that was his first involvement, in 1927, 1928. The Bay Circuit concept had already been launched. He was part a an Open Space effort in Massachusetts that was already underway.”

- How did Larry get connected to the Bay Circuit in the 80s? Alan French?

“Well, the way I got connected; I had another connection to the Bay Circuit. I worked on this book for many years, so my research and my thinking about my awareness of the Bay Circuit was 80s onwards. Sometime around...I was looking ... early 90s, another affiliation I have is as a ... I’m involved with a small foundation. It’s called the Bruce J. Anderson Foundation, which is founded in memory of my brother; of a late brother of mine, and one of the things (it’s a very small foundation) but one of the interest areas that we have provided funds for is environmental and conservation projects, and we have a very narrow geographical scope, that are related to my family’s background and my late brother Bruce’s background, which is the area around where we live – those towns I mentioned; which is where MacKaye lived, and also Cape Ann, the Gloucester area, where my family had a property from the early sixties onwards. So somewhere around the early 90s...I can’t remember exactly what prompted the connection, but we became involved with funding a few small projects that were affiliated with the Trust for Public Land, and at that time. Peter Forbes was the Vice President of the Trust for Public Land and he became connected in the early 90s with Alan French with the Bay Circuit Alliance, and our Foundation funded a study which the Bay Circuit Alliance undertook to sort of identify some of the issues and problems....”

10:31 good video smile... "...and plans that they would need going forward...so it was around then, I remember there was an event at Crane beach in Ipswich, what we walked ..we had a little event at Crane Beach, then took a walk from Ipswich, sort of set on the Bay Circuit and I stayed, I walked with that crowd, I think... I connected with Alan French at that time. 1993, or twenty years ago. Partly as a funder, through this foundation and we may have given one other small grant after that I can't remember, **but:** I've been in touch with Alan ever since, in different ways. And Alan became enthusiastic about Benton MacKaye and MacKaye's connection with the trail, and on a couple of occasions Alan has instigated what he has called I think a Benton MacKaye Symposium. We had one in Shirley about 15 years ago where we hiked around some of MacKaye's old sites; some of MacKaye's acquaintances, and Alan reconvened another meeting, which he called a Benton MacKaye Symposium out in Andover just about a year ago. So I've been in touch with Alan ever since, but I've never really been involved in the project per se – I've never been involved in any of the on the ground work of the project..."

- *You did a kick-off speech, once.*

"Yah..."

- *Was it the first or second trek?*

"I want to say it was the second one, but I can't remember to be honest with you. I probably did too long of a talk. I was so full of MacKaye stuff, that I, I can't... see, when people ask me to talk about Benton MacKaye, it is hopeless so..."

- *Let's do that!* "

\*...laughs...\*

- (01:55) *The Appalachian Trail goes through 14 states for thousands of miles; the Bay Circuit trail is 200 miles and runs only in the state of Massachusetts; it was not a trail from the beginning, but is that the only reason why it's not established while it was almost conceived at the same time?*

“That’s an interesting and complicated question...”

- *I'm sorry*

“No that’s ok. The Appalachian Trail story is so unique in terms of an idea coming along at just the right moment in history. It might be that it couldn’t have happened at any other moment ...everything aligned for the Appalachian Trail and it was the right moment, the right idea, and there was just this reservoir of people, and not necessarily other resources; not financial resources: people, throughout that whole landscape, who were inspired by the notion which was very easy to understand by virtue of MacKaye’s map that accompanied in his original 1921 article. It was just as simple as could be; just a big slash of ink along the mountain ridge line in the East [*\*snaps fingers\**]. It just clicked. People could understand it instantly; the picture just told the story. And then the beauty of the project was that it could be linked together in small pieces all along the route by different groups, agencies, organizations, just working on their small section and if a lot of people are doing that at once - I can’t remember the quote MacKaye puts it... one big job: many people working on these small jobs makes one big job, so even though it was much larger in scale, the pieces were in place. There’s a logic to the Bay Circuit. It’s also possible to understand it, 04:33 MacKaye called the geography, “hub, spokes and rim” geography. Other people may have used the same term, but he did at least one map that depicted it in that way: the hub in Boston, the spokes were the roads

and rail lines out from the city, and the rim was the Bay Circuit itself, the trail, or as he conceived it – he didn't really conceive it as a trail – he conceived it as a belt of open space with a trail; as part of it.”

- *A Parkway?*

“...In 1930, after he had worked with the Governors Committee of Open Spaces and opposed the State's policy. **The very ambitious policy of land acquisition** [5:38] along geographic features; rivers, mountain ridgeways and so forth; at the time that was just too much for the powers that be to accept those; too ambitious an approach to conservation. So he didn't last long with the Governor's Committee on Needs and Uses of Open Space, partly because they had some business oriented types on there. Charles Eliot 2<sup>nd</sup> was part of that commission and there's some evidence in diaries and correspondence that he didn't buy MacKaye's ideas at all, and that MacKaye and Eliot were only appointed, they weren't friends that I can tell...or at no sustained relationship... but in just a few glimpses of correspondence and diary entrees, it's clear that Eliot didn't like MacKaye's approach to conservation and land, and what they would have called planning. They were just on different planning planets. So I think Eliot had some influence on separating MacKaye from this Governor's Committee on the Needs and Uses of Open Spaces, MacKaye was a free-lancer in any case. Around this time, the late 20s, he had come up with this other idea that he called “Townless Highways” because what troubled him, and what he was working on in that period – the late 20s, and what he wrote about extensively was the impact the automobile was having on the landscape. He called it the metropolitan invasion, what we would call sprawl, that the cars were coming out from the cities, the influence of the automobiles obliterating the

physical open characteristics of the landscape and affecting the communities in rural areas. So, the conception that he had for the Bay Circuit; as he took the root and he was trying to come up with a way of building highways that were less destructive. Townless Highways didn't go through the middle of town. The centers of town were on their own controlled access routes that were designed not to blast through existing communities. What his conception was, I think in 1930 he called it a "super by-pass" for Boston, and his idea was to have a North Bound Highway and a South bound Highway, with about a ten [sic. See page 220: *two* mile?? Slip of the tongue: See email correspondence. **Edit; delete**] mile strip in between them, which would be open space with trails and canoe paths in the middle. So he wanted this belt apart-land that was bounded by the North and Southbound Highways and all the area in the middle as parks. That idea went nowhere [8:37] but it was his approach that he would depict these idealized landscapes, and hope that people would pick up some ideas from them, so his own conception of Bay Circuit, such as it was, was perhaps somewhat different from what Eliot and others were thinking."

- *Ten miles?* [9:11]

"Well the other thing about MacKaye was that he would draw maps and tended not to put things on the maps that were already there; like towns and roads that were already there. He would depict these ideal landscapes that had very selective information on the maps to get an idea across. To go back to your original question: The remarkable thing about the Appalachian Trail, which he also conceived as one element of a larger planning conception, which also in his original idea included, not just the trail, but a beltway of land surrounding it. The trail, as it evolved in the 20s and 30s and 40s, what

people could work on was the trail itself. [10:15] But if you look at a map of the trail today, you can see that the Appalachian Trail has become the access for what is essentially a belt of open space in many areas that came along *after* the Appalachian Trail was already on the ground. National Parks like the Great Smokey National Park, Shenandoah, National Forests, other privately conserved land along the trail. The trail was there before much of the open space grew around it, so some of the same people working on the Appalachian Trail were also advocates for acquisition of other conserved lands around it. So for him, he had a broad sense of landscape and of time. Sort of forced on him by circumstances,; he had to learn to be patient, but he lived long enough to see that an idea that you promote today may take decades to be realized. It may be realized in a form different than you conceived it but it can still retain the spirit or some of the aspects of the original scheme, so the fact that the Bay Circuit is now 80 years since the term and the idea was first floated [1929 – 2013; 84 years]. Or longer...

12:11] ...that it's being promoted as a trail...but the reason that it is promoted as a trail...if you look at a map, is that over time some of these open spaces have been, you can say saved or created – depending on how you want to look at it – over that period of time, so that there are open spaces or protected spaces that are conserved by State government, the Federal government, by private land trusts, by municipalities themselves, that have been protected over that period of time. They weren't necessarily protected in the 20s and 30s when these people started out with this idea but they're there to work with as the trail is being built, so it's being connected but in a sense the work was going on along the Bay Circuit all that time [13:16], and now the pieces are there and you can link the trail through those pieces. I think you could say that even

though it wasn't going on officially, that the pieces were being put in place all throughout those years.”

- Do you think Benton MacKaye focused on the trail, or on the preservation of land?

“He was always promoting...he was a proponent of public ownership of spaces that the government should protect these properties; he had no philosophical opposition to groups like the Trustees of Reservations or private groups who were doing the same work, but he had what I have called a ‘**seamless**’ approach to these things; for him the smallest conservation project in a town; a little conservation area around a pond - two acres – was just as important as a two-thousand mile long beltway of parks and greenbelts from Maine to Georgia. I believe it sincerely, as far as he was concerned, it was all part of the same effort, all part of the same project. Scale meant nothing to him because as far as he was concerned, it was the personal, **the human connection to the landscape that was the key element of everything he did.** [05:31] So it boiled down to a person and a place no matter where, and that person can be interacting with that place, in that place as part of a path or a journey that would take you through a place after place, day after day, week after week, so it was a seamless project for him, and I think that was the case throughout his life; he was just sort of born that way.”

- *Highlight? Two way question; with regard to self / Benton MacKaye*

[16:28] “For me it has to be...I’m so invested with Benton MacKaye; it has to be this connection to the project through his vision of it, and as I said, that intersects with my own lifelong intersection, traversing this landscape – not necessarily hiking the Bay Circuit as a project, but just throughout my whole life I’ve been living in / traveling

through / visiting places throughout the whole expanse of the Bay Circuit, especially in the Western and Northern parts of it, but now I live outside of Massachusetts, in Rhode Island, so I traverse some... I've actually observed / experienced [during] the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, through my own eyes and experience, the changes in much of that landscape during that time – I mean I can remember when Rte 495 was not there; I watched it being built – so that the interesting thing is – MacKaye was reading something he described the 'Bay Circuit as the outer rim of the original Rte 128 – before 128 was what it now is - the Bay Circuit was beyond that. Now, of course, the Bay Circuit is in between two major highways...so I've had the personal experience watching that landscape become both intensely developed, but I've also observed, as I said, some of the conservation efforts that have gone on throughout Massachusetts in this region, all throughout that period as well, so there is that push and pull between development and conservation that have taken place during my lifetime on this terrain. So you have that perspective, it's not just a literary one; it's personal as well."

- *Are we on the positive side on this tug of space-war between industrial development and conservation?*

[18:40] "Well, I think that...I'm philosophical enough to try to be optimistic, but I think there are reasons to appreciate the fact that there are enough people in this region who continue to work on and are committed to this kind of experience and work, and the support of the organizations – Appalachian Mountain Club and others - who provide the support and do this work that there are reasons be hopeful that it will continue but we're always wondering and worrying about the rest of our impact on the landscape, and that will continue as well, so it's always a push and pull, but I think that what I'm interested in

- and this may anticipate one of your other questions [??] - is related to what you were asking before; the concept of the Bay Circuit; the geographical idea and the physical presence of it will take hold beyond the organizations and the people who've been involved in it because I don't think if you asked many people who are lifelong residents of this region; who may drive across the Bay Circuit trail; some intersection or some trail sign every day – if you asked people about it, many people wouldn't have a clue about it [I whisper, Not yet...]. By contrast...you could say that about the Appalachian Trail as well to some degree, but the Appalachian Trail has a cultural presence that many people, even if they don't...if they aren't hikers, know what you mean, or could say what the AT is, even if they never set foot on it, so with the AT is **established not only in the landscape, but in the culture**, the interesting thing to see will be whether the Bay Circuit can achieve a level of cultural acceptance and awareness like that. That will be an interesting test in the future – I don't know the answer to that.”

- *Downside in the experience /*

[21:37] “I don't have a stake in the work, so I haven't been in the situation where I have been frustrated or disappointed by anything that hasn't happened, I haven't invested myself in that kind of work; in looking for money or looking for a political decision, or trying to get something concrete done; I haven't been involved in the project in that way, so in that way I've been lucky, because I can't be disappointed when I don't get approval for a route or don't get a grant or don't...”

- *And Benton MacKaye; many disappointments came his way*

[22:35] “He also had, probably just by virtue of his longevity (because he lived so long), and partly by virtue of stubbornness and a... he had enough troubles and wasn't a

wealthy person and he had plenty of reasons to be disappointed and frustrated, but **somehow, constitutionally, he could just keep plugging away with these ideas that many people either ignored or dismissed** and he lived long enough to see many of them happen. Both physically and politically and so forth, so I...I am so invested in this person's head; there is a lesson there that one learns: That if you have the choice between despair and optimism, and you have to keep going the next day, then you might as well be an optimist; keep plugging away, because something might come of it, who knows."

- *Which question did I not asked, that I should have?*

"I can't think of anything other than what I've said. What I was saying earlier about the future:

[24:08] What success will the Bay Circuit have becoming a true feature of the physical and the cultural landscape in this region?

That's the question, for me, that I hope I can get some sense of it, but I may never know, I think there is a chance that it will succeed in that respect, but that depends on a lot of things, it depends on the organizational framework going forward; on other political things; on environmental things; on the economy of this region and there are so many variables. It's just an ongoing experience. I can't think of another question that you didn't ask me that I could dream up.

It sounds like you're coming up with a lot of information from different people, so you have plenty to work with..."

[25:36] Questions Marc:

- *Introduction name / author:*

[25:46] “My name is Larry Anderson, I’m the author of a book called *Benton MacKaye, Conservationist, Planner and Creator of the Appalachian Trail* that published about ten years ago; a biography of Benton MacKaye.”

- *Marc: And what would be the shortest way possible to explain the connection between the AT, Benton and the Bay Circuit?*

“...Benton MacKaye had proposed the Appalachian Trail in 1921. His home was in Shirley, Massachusetts. After he proposed the Appalachian Trail in 1921, he was essentially unemployed, he was a freelance writer, planner... he came back to Massachusetts in the mid-1920s, the Appalachian Trail was underway as a project – he was only tangentially involved in the work that went on, but when he came back to Massachusetts in the mid-20s, he reconnected with some of his personal and professional acquaintances in forestry, conservation organizations in Massachusetts and New England and by virtue of that he was connected to Trustees of Public Reservations, Massachusetts Forestry Association and other groups that were taking a role in launching or in trying to promote the Bay Circuit project in the mid and late 20s. So, it was his reputation as having been a working forester in the 10s to some degree in New England; his reputation as the conceptualizer of the Appalachian Trail in the 1920s; his availability for work in the 20s; his skills as a writer and mapper and conceptualizer, and his personal and professional connections in some of these Mass[achusetts?] groups that connected him to the Bay Circuit project in the mid 20s. And then in a second sort of promotional effort in the late 30s, some Trustees of Public Reservations where he was friendly with Laurence Fletcher, who was the Executive Secretary of The Trustees of Public Reservations...so it was that personal connection,

that network of planners, conservationists in Massachusetts to whom he was connected, that connected him to the Bay Circuit – through a project that was directly connected to his own thinking about linear landscape design and conservation.”

- *Marc: Talk a little bit about how the trails, the greenways of today exist as a patchwork of conservation history.*

“Well, the thing that interest me about the [29:07] Bay Circuit and the individuals and the landscapes and the organizations that have been involved in it is that they sort of provide a connector / a template for this sort of evolution of thinking about conservation and landscape architecture in Massachusetts and New England, but that some of those personalities tell a story about conservation on a larger landscape. So, many of these people either personal connections or professional connections that linked...so, you have a character like Thoreau, who was located in Concord, which is sort of the central part of; it's in the center of the Bay Circuit – so you have a character like Thoreau, but then you have people who came a long way, who were working on early versions of linear and what we would now call green belt or greenway planning. So, Frederick Law Olmsted and many young landscape architects who were educated...who worked for Olmsted, so Olmsted who conceived things like our Emerald Necklace in Boston, which was a recreated greenway preserve in an urban environment, so then *his* protégés and students, some of whom were connected with all these organizations; for instance with the Appalachian Mountain Club, or The Trustees of Reservations; Charles Eliot Junior the Landscape Architect [son of the President of Harvard Charles W. Eliot], conceptualizer of the Metropolitan Parks Commission [31:18][and conceptualizer] of the Trustees of Public Reservations, had worked with Olmsted, so he, they expanded that

Olmsted vision on a wider regional scale outside of Boston. MacKaye's close friend [James] Sturgis Prey was a Landscape Architect. MacKaye in the late 1890s, early 1900s had gone on epic hike with Sturgis Pray in the White Mountains. Sturgis Pray went on to become a Landscape Architect working in the Olmsted office; went on to teach Landscape Architecture at Harvard and Sturgis Pray was also very involved with the Appalachian Mountain Club, was for a time counselor of improvements with building trails in the White Mountains in the early 1900s; MacKaye was helping him up there. Then along the way you have other planners; Charles Eliot 2<sup>nd</sup>, who was involved later on as an active planner in many of the suburban towns – he wrote about half of the community plans for all the towns in the suburbs through which the Bay Circuit developed, so – I'm going to jump ahead over the 20s and 30s – but, what I know about it, you get into the 50s and the 60s when you had the development of Conservation Commissions in Massachusetts, town by town. Charles Eliot II was involved in many of those suburban towns developing their master plans at a time when towns were creating Conservation Commissions, when there was money available from the State to buy local conservation lands all throughout those towns, many of which are now linked through the Bay Circuit.”

“You could jump back into the 20s...[33:17].it'll get blended, but then you have later types of land; you have federally protected land; in the Concord Lincoln area, the National Parks and Wildlife Refuges in there that came along somewhat later; Federal presence. You have now throughout this area local Land Trusts that are ancestors of The Trustees of Reservations; the original private land trusts. So now all throughout this region you have private land trusts active acquiring land, again, linked to the Bay

Circuit. So you can trace / literally connect dots of people along the line who knew each other, who had overlapping memberships and professional affiliations; there's a ... you know there are people who are involved in the ...probably not too many ...we will... just last year...Marion Stoddart, who is friendly with Alan French, was the moving force behind the Nashua River protection [34:22] effort in the Fitchburg area, the Nashua River Watershed, which was MacKaye's own area, there are people around still who knew Benton MacKaye, and others who were active on this on this. Going back: So, there's a dense web of people in [grassroots] organizations that is only a few generations long, but it's – or longer if people had personal or professional connections, that are part of this Bay Circuit story.”

- [34:58]Marc: *Can you put yourself in his head and speculate what he would have thought about what the Bay Circuit has become today?*

[35:13] “Well, I always try not to speak *for* Benton, but the thing I observed in terms of his own commentaries, for he lived long enough that he was often asked in his later years to reflect on things that had happened. For instance, to talk about the Appalachian Trail: By the time he died, in the course of just over 50 years from the time he proposed it, till the time he died, had been completed; had become [a] federally protected 2,200 [miles] long National Park unit; had been used by millions of people, and was politically and culturally established, in less than his lifetime; in half a century. He got to see that happen. So he could always, and even if it didn't evolve exactly as he had conceived it, or might have ideally wished it had, he could say, “Look, you can do this; we've proven it.” And the thing about the Appalachian Trail is, this is **one of the reasons it could only have happened that way at that time, is that it started out as**

**a totally unofficial project; people just started doing it; they didn't ask for permission; they didn't ask for legal...they just started doing it. [And then they sort of pres...]They had support from people within official agencies, [but they didn't...] because they needed have access to public spaces, there weren't political obstacles / oppositions, that had developed by then, so they were able to just do it, and then present an almost fait accompli [something already done and beyond alteration] and had a large political constituency behind them for political support. So, he could always find a positive way to describe anything that showed hope. So, he would surely find reason to be hopeful and optimistic about the fact that there is a low key citizen's group and some government officials and local people working in their own towns had been able to make real progress and realize it on the landscape, so, I wouldn't speak for him, but I think that he would've found positive things to say – I'm sure – about what has developed."**

- *[38:20] Marc: You said you did meet him?*

"No I didn't. I lived for almost twenty-five years down the road. I knew who he was, I was a young person while he was old person, so I'd read about him in the papers and I had a little bit of an idea of who he was, he got awards and so forth, and it turns out as I did my research, looking through his letters, living in that area - and my parents didn't know him for instance; their network, even though it was close in region, it didn't necessarily intersect with his , but over the years as I looked through his correspondence, again and again I would find people, you know, one or two people I knew, or a family who knew him, and for instance Marion Stoddart , a legendary conservationists in her own rights, still around and active, who was friendly with my parents, knew Benton, and knew my

family knew Marion, and so on. I know a lot of people who knew him, but I never knew him, even though I may even have literally bumped into him sometime at some public event, but if I had I...In fact I learned in the course of my research: I know that I was in places where he was at, because he was a meticulous diary keeper. and you know he went to the band concerts in the Town of Townsend that [page 3!] I lived on a certain day; I lived right next to the Town Common and I would certainly have been there. So, I know that I was right next to him, but I never met him.”

- *Marc: [40:02] How do you think the younger conservationists (children; college students) will remember Benton, in terms of inspiration?*

“You know, I’ve ...so Benton MacKaye...a street test...go around asking who Benton MacKaye was. I walk around the Boston Common, asking 100 people who Benton MacKaye was, I might get one hit, and that might be an Appalachian Trail hiker or it would have to be someone of the AMC flock, I’m sure I’d increase my percentage if I’d hang around here, but the ...of people who have written about MacKaye is that it’s...especially ...I’m not an academic, I’m not affiliated with a University or anything like that, I’ve never been a teacher, and one of the things I decided to do even though this book is published by [John Hopkins]University Press, and meets its scholarly standards, is that

The writing about Benton MacKaye falls into two places: His academic reputation, his historical reputation, especially from the 60s on – there was a lot of writing going on; he’s either in the specialty of Environmental History, which is an historical specialty, and there are biographies of other contemporaries, you know Leopold, and Robert Marshall or other contemporaries of his, so that would put him in the very middle of Conservation

History, and the other area where he's known and studied, is more rarified than that: the History of Regional Planning and Landscape Architecture, and he gets discussed usually in a list with other planners; people talk a little bit about the Appalachian Trail, his book *The New Exploration*, some of his planning ideas for greenway planning, belts and so forth. He gets pigeonholed. That's why the publishers kept adding all these subtitles. I was trying to put it together from his point of view, because as far as he was concerned, there were no boundaries to these disciplines. I've had occasion to talk to a lot of hiking groups: [ALDHA] Appalachian Long-Distance Hikers [43:25] Association; the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, and there's a whole history of internal politics of the Appalachian Trail: Who's gets more credit [43:36], who's more responsible, is it Myron Avery's trail, is it Benton MacKaye's trail - I'm not interested in those arguments, but: Most Appalachian trail hikers are interested in *hiking!* They're not really...especially if you're out there hiking; you're not studying history of the trail, you're not going to haul this thing around [his book], you're going to keep going! But they'll bump into Benton MacKaye, they'll hear about him, but there aren't too many even hard core Appalachian Trail users who...they know, it's in their guide that Benton MacKaye proposed the Appalachian Trail in 1921. That's what they know. What interests me is, I can be wrong about this: Now these days, there's a Benton MacKaye Trail, which originates at the Southern Terminus of the Appalachian Trail but as far as I know...- that's something named after Benton MacKaye -...but in New England, except for the little plate on his house, his cottage in Shirley, there's no place, no trail shelter, no Benton MacKaye side trail, there's no... - There's a Myron Avery Peak in Maine on the Appalachian Trail - there's no Benton MacKaye Mountain, there's no Benton MacKaye Center for the Study

for Environmental Studies: Of all these other guys of his generation there's something somewhere for them, but there's a fairly new plaque up on Stratton Mountain, with him and - but he's not alone, he's with James Taylor there, the originator of the Long Trail [VT]. I've seen it years ago, but I haven't been up there since...There's one memorial up there about Benton MacKaye. So, his own writing is either rare enough or tough enough to read; he wrote a ton, during his lifetime, but he didn't leave anything that ...And his book, *The New Exploration* is in print, but how many people buy it? I find it quite readable, but that's because I know every story behind it. A contemporary like Aldo Leopold writes a classic conservation book that everybody who considers themselves a conservationist... it's very readable; it's not too long, everybody's going to read that, or picks up something of Thoreau...something. What I find is that there is a cult of MacKaye, and it's people like me, and other scholars and writers who have perhaps gone to Dartmouth, or begun to track down and read through his things, and the more they get into it, the more interested and obsessed they get, but it is almost a cult, because you have to...That's why I wrote the book, hoping that people ...A one-stop place where people could get a picture of him. And it's not a good sell, but people read it and it gets cited in other books now, so it's been around quite long enough, so people do find...and thanks to the internet and to Amazon, you know, you search 'Benton MacKaye' these days, and Amazon -it owns the world and spurts out all kinds of connections to this book – not that it sells too many!"

[47:34][Struggles to find words] "I don't know about the younger people... other than related to the Appalachian Trail, and if they're not (academically) reading...if they can and there are all kinds of timeless ideas that are very inspiring... I was told a story, a

fellow who works at the Lincoln Institute at Cambridge, he's a well known Landscape planner and activist and he described – this would be fifteen years ago – being **asked to go the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce to give a speech about planning. He took a talk that MacKaye had given to the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce in 1927, read it to them, and then at the end told them that it had been written by Benton MacKaye in 1927!** I could do that exercise myself: You could go to his papers, take out a few references to the times, read some of his things, and you would have no idea that it was written in 1925; it would be perfectly appropriate to... and it would be written in a ....especially because he was from a family of playwrights, actors, he understood rhetoric and he was not writing for the [49:15] ages, he was writing for audiences; he was trying to get things done. That cult, that small cultness, had been drilled into MacKaye, remain interested in him, because his...we think those ideas are quite expansive and really sort of timeless, still relevant, and I would say the Bay Circuit demonstrates that and the persistence of the popularity of the Appalachian Trail and any number of other conservation initiatives, so: Long answer.”

- *The remainder of the recording is pretty much irrelevant.*
- *Ryan: Thanks*

*Marlies asks Marc about TToR Fletcher movie presentation in 1945 @ MFA Boston about expanding the Bay Circuit.*

\*

*Cacophony until “...Oops”*



## Bob Yaro Transcript

June, 2011

[Based on notes Senior Editor AMC Marc Chalufour took of a phone call in June 2011 with Robert Yaro who is, at the moment of writing this oral history, President of RPA, Regional Plan Association]



Bob Yaro: “I was a big fan of Benton MacKaye’s. I’d read a series of his essays, including one on the Bay Circuit. In 1925 Benton wrote about it in ‘Survey Graphic Journal’<sup>1</sup>, and I knew Charles Eliot II.... there was this tension between Benton and Charles over whose idea it [the Bay Circuit name] really was....” [Yaro thinks it was Benton’s idea, then picked up by Charles]...

[Yaro read this stuff<sup>2</sup> in late 70s] “My job at DEM was to be the advocate for Open Space protection in the Commonwealth, so I was really intrigued by this idea. It’s one of these **principles that are embedded in regional planning -- creating green edges for urban areas... though that concept hadn’t really taken off**.... We put together in 1983-84 this big Open Space bond -- at the time, in the office, it was known as the ‘*Big Bang*’. The thought was that we could dramatically expand the Commonwealth’s

<sup>1</sup> **Mackaye**, B. (1925).The New Exploration: Charting the Industrial Wilderness. *The Survey Graphic*, 65, 153.

<sup>2</sup> Sussman, Carl. *Planning the Fourth Migration: The Neglected Vision of the Regional Planning Association of America*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1976. Print.

approach to Open Space protection...” [had a lot of modestly funded projects that they wanted to inject with money from bond; heritage parks, etc., etc....] “... the federal government was barely in the Open Space business at that point, and the State didn’t have the money needed.... I’d been in the business for a while, and this ‘*Big Bang*’ came up... One of the things that came up is that there was this farm in Chelmsford, a dairy farm that had come on the market<sup>3</sup>, and there was a proposed sub-division...” [got call from legislator asking to put that into Open Space bond] “I knew that Chelmsford had been part of the Bay Circuit so we had a staff person compare it to Benton’s original proposal, and, bingo, it was one of the missing links!” [so Yaro told legislator to include it, but not as a one-off, but rather as part of Bay Circuit] “...This thing had disappeared from people’s offices... the state house only kept written copies of laws for 20 years or so....” [1956 legislation established the Bay Circuit as ‘a system of privately and publicly owned open spaces, including parks, forests, reservoirs, wildlife preserves, scenic and historic sites and other properties or reservations.’ The legislation goes on to say ‘In order to preserve said open spaces and make them available for the use, enjoyment, exercise and recreation of all people..., said spaces, (etc) established by and designated by the Department of Public Works...’<sup>4</sup>] “We already had an authorizing statute, so all we needed to do was add the appropriation...”

“Charles [Eliot] was very involved. ‘An inspiration’, he was tall and had a booming north shore accented voice [advocating for a] long-forgotten [concept]”

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<sup>3</sup> Great Brook Farm State Park [addition Marlies]

<sup>4</sup> From letter by Susan Ziegler, written in 1996 to Jennifer Howard in a failed attempt to correct factual inaccuracies in a publication by Charles Little: *Greenways for America*. Nevertheless a title highly recommended by Al French.

**“The stars lined up.** We had a wonderful group. Mike Dukakis was governor, and I had a great relationship with Michael....”

“It didn’t capture their imagination, but they let me pull this thing off.”

“It was an amazing point in time.”

“There had been bond issues, usually for specific projects, for an acquisition for a specific parcel of land, or for... very sporadic, very localized. But this was the first time -- and there have been others [Yaro left DEM in ‘84 to teach at UMass]... but this was the first time that this had been done in the Commonwealth.” The legacy of that bond was that : “vast” land was acquired; entire AT corridor along Berkshires was purchased (the remainder of what wasn’t not already on state land); Yaro mentions Upper Goose Pond -- great wilderness camping area -- acquired 1200 acres; Cape Cod rail trail (he thinks) was acquired -- most travelled tourist spot in Cape; “It was the last opportunity to acquire large quantities of coastal property – Nickerson [State Park and a parcel by] Edgartown.”

“It was very clear to me that we couldn’t protect the landscape of the Commonwealth through acquisitions alone,” but “it was an opportunity to create a linked network of connected properties around Boston.... I’d hoped that it would've been followed by a broader commitment to landscape preservation in the western suburbs, which I’m not sure that it was. But what we found when we did the original survey of the Bay Circuit...the thing that was surprising to me was that half of it had been protected already.... The surprising thing was that the other half, even though it wasn’t protected, was still open. **There was this extraordinary opportunity to protect it....”**

[Thus, 'Bob Yaro was cannily instrumental in getting a legislator to slip the Bay Circuit into the bill'<sup>5</sup>].

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<sup>5</sup> From letter by Susan Ziegler, written in 1996 to Jennifer Howard in a failed attempt to correct factual inaccuracies in a publication by Charles Little: *Greenways for America* - nevertheless a title highly recommended by Al French.

## Wes Ward - Transcript

March 21, 2013

Interview at The Trustees of Reservations Doyle Center in Leominster



“I’m Wesley Ward, and I’m Vice President for Land and Community Conservation at the TToR. I can’t remember my title in the early nineties, but basically, I was a Conservation Specialist for the TToR.”

“It was probably 1983, when we were reading Open Space Bond that Bob Yaro had put together in his capacity at DEM and he had inserted a number of innovative provisions to provide funding and other incentives for conservation of various kinds and the “Bay Circuit” was one of them, and we were amazed – I think it was \$3M – right there in front of us, in this proposed bond bill, so we all scurried to look up our history – which I didn’t know well at the time – and then I learned that The Trustees of Reservations had actually **invented** the term ‘Bay Circuit’”.

[Although TToR is not a government entity] “We could all see that the State money would start a ripple effect and there would be private money that could be raised as well. It was a very small amount of State money and I was very skeptical at the time that such a small amount of State money could have much of an effect, but Susan was a

very smart person and Bob Yaro was a very smart person and they figured out how to use that little bit of money strategically. The other innovation that wasn't as clear to me then, but became clear when I went to a series of meetings on the Bay Circuit program: the trail became the focal point rather than a broad corridor. My concept of the Bay Circuit was that it had been a utopian dream – protecting a broad corridor like the British greenbelts – and I thought it was quite impractical and the amount of money certainly wouldn't do the trick / make a bit of difference. Once the focus was on the trail, which had been very much a secondary feature in 1929, it began to make sense. If people got interested in protecting the Open Space along this abstract trail route – which would no longer be abstract once you could see how it would work through your town, so it was a brilliant chance of focus. Now we do know that Charles Eliot II who was the board member of the Trustees committee that invented the Bay Circuit concept with Benton MacKaye's help. Charles Eliot II must have been in his late seventies or early eighties at the time was very upset about the trail which had been a secondary focus, and he was still thinking in terms of protecting broad swaths of green through the suburbs.”

“The initial sort of group experience of pulling the Bay Circuit Alliance together, led by Al French was very important and he chose to do this in a way that symbolized his belief in volunteering and pulling together under an **umbrella** a broad range of organizations. So we all arrived on the front porch of the Buttrick House, on Liberty Street in Concord, facing the \*chuckles\* Shot Heard Around the World, facing the battlefield below us and Al stood up and explained the structure of the Bay Circuit Alliance and how it was going to perform all this work through the energy of twenty or so people who were gathered together; that was really quite inspiring.”

- *So that was your **Shot Heard Around the World**?*

“Yes, in a way, yeah! **It was Al French’s shot**; he really had the ability to pull people together, and he still does.”

“Thinks, sighs...7:27 Well, I can’t think of a downer, because Al’s eh...my relationship to it for these twenty years has basically been...going to...I mean, doing a certain amount of office work, and a certain amount of work on Beacon Hill, but our work as the BC Executive Committee, which served as the Board, was every quarter or so. We would gather either at Al’s house in Andover or at the National Park Service Headquarters in Concord or another place and Al would always bring cold cuts, beverage and the fixings and we would have sandwiches and we’d have our meeting, with wonderful people, and it was always interesting, we were always moving forward. I can’t really think of a negative...I suppose the only downer was before the Bay Circuit Alliance got started; it was when the DEM 9:00 money ran out and when that [Bay Circuit] concept was not refunded – that was a downer, and nobody knew how the transition was going to be managed, but they had reached out to Al and he was energized to form this volunteer Alliance.”

- *So the downer led to a positive, as challenges may lead to progress.*

“Everybody wants to focus on getting that trail completed, so there’s actually a continuous trail. They want to get the boring parts of the trail moved off sidewalks and roadsides, and into the woods or into the fields, and that in itself is a huge challenge for the Bay Circuit Alliance and the Appalachian Mountain Club and for The Trustees. Even though only 20% of the trail is on sidewalks or roads, still, with a 200 mile trail, that’s a lot of miles, and that’s going to be expensive in some cases - and difficult. People don’t

always want a trail in their back yard. That's enough to keep everybody focused, but I also want to look beyond and think about how that idea of a greenbelt, a broad corridor of protected green space, how that can be salvaged in this era of sprawl, because the suburbs, in some spaces they are not growing much, in other spaces they are still sprawling, are still growing within that corridor. What can we salvage of that greenbelt. And I know that AI is very much concerned about that.”

[Not just land conservation for the sake of a trail, but also a trail for the sake of land conservation].

“So that's one thing and the other thing is: The inter-connections of the Bay Circuit Trail with other trails, and the potential of a regional network of trails serving the cities and suburbs and small towns and villages in the greater Boston area is really quite exciting. And since the Bay Circuit is the single longest and most inclusive trail, it can be the renewable generator of interest in these local connections at a time when more people seem to value outdoor recreation – it's a growing interest.”

“The truth is: the 200 miles concept is symbolic; the true value is in the connections within communities that enable people to enjoy the outdoors on a safe trail and to encourage their kids to be out on a trail that is still adventuresome; not a playground, not a sidewalk. When I was growing up on Cape Cod, we had a trail that was called the Sidewalk, and we walked from our house to the village; about half a mile. Which was good and healthy, but what we really liked doing was, in the off season when the golf course was not used, nobody kicked us off the golf course, that was the exciting thing; to ramble the golf course. Sidewalk walking is ok but it's not really as interesting as walking through nature.”

“I think people had an idea, when suburbs developed; everybody would have their acre or two and who would need anything beyond that? And a lot of communities allowed themselves to develop without requiring sidewalks, thinking, “Well, everybody’s got a backyard, they have a car, so what do they need a sidewalk for?” So now we’re kind of building these amenities back into our communities, but not as sidewalks, but trying to find these natural routes that will serve neighborhoods and we find that people want to be able to get out.”

*- Extra question 18:30 Toxic Superfund site. Landfill. Middlesex Canal. Iron Horse Park:*

“Write the Town Manager; this is America. There are very good examples of trails and parks on landfills. In North Cambridge where I live there was a huge (1981) toxic sticking landfill [closed in the 1970s]. That is now something called the Danehy Park, which is the largest municipal park in Cambridge [50 acres]it has soccer fields, softball fields, baseball fields, a bike path that goes around it and a walking path, playgrounds for kids, lots of grass, there’s a natural wetlands. Beautiful! It’s not a superfund but it’s the same principles to cap that in a way that the natural process could happen without endangering people; it was innovative and it’s over twenty years old now. It is kept beautifully, it was designed to be low maintenance, it’s not prissy, it’s always full of people.”

“So that’s one. The other one is similar, but much larger: Pope Paul Park on the SE expressway. That used to be a drive-in movie. The other part was a huge landfill. They know how to do it. Trails are easier to develop on a landfill than on ball fields, there have been problems with ball fields because whatever compaction they manage is

insufficient and over time the surface settles unevenly and over time makes for a little bit wavy field, which people don't like. But it doesn't matter if a trail is a little wavy."

## Susan Ziegler - Transcript

March 15, 2013

Northborough (Susan's home)



*A high pitched barking duet announces my visit and when the door swings open, two excited poodles jump around me, continuing their welcome song. Then, above me sounds, “Hi, I am Susan”, which jolts me up from the white little thunder clouds at my feet and I face the objective of my trip to Northborough: The acclaimed Susan Ziegler; she ran the State project to get the Bay Circuit out of the mothballs, when funding was appropriated for the first time, now almost three decades ago. The house serves as gallery for a stunning collection of huge-scale photographs, printed by her husband, artist John J. Wawrzonek. “The New England Landscape” photographs grab my attention, until Susan points at an impressive stack of neatly labeled files. On the phone, she had mentioned her “little box of archives”. I am here today to learn more about the days when the Bay Circuit Alliance was called into being.*

[0:31] “Soooo”, Susan starts, “have you talked to Bob Yaro? ... [0:54] HE,” she emphasizes, “ is a historian in some part of his brain, and that’s actually how the State

program came about; it's that he knew the history from the 20s and the 30s, and then there was this opportunity for funding in '84 and he got the Bay Circuit funded, and he is JUST ...I haven't seen the man for thirty years probably...because he left, went to UMass to teach and then went to the [Regional Plan Association for NY, NJ and CT. Planning the Metropolitan Area]. He's a genius ...He just is...you've got to talk to him, plus it'll be so...you should DRIVE down there...it would be worth a drive if you could, I mean, if you have to do it by phone, it makes much more sense, because that's a long drive, but, **he is just not to be missed**. He's got to be horribly busy.... So...I would push.

*I mention the Mass Bay Commons report from 1998.*

*I talk about DEM becoming DCR, and Susan says,*

[3:23] "But I was gone by that time. I left before it changed."

*[It changed in 2003]*

"We called it the Bay Circuit Program, and a part of it was grants."

[5:25] "I will tell you what I know from the beginning of what I know and then from the beginning of the DEM program." *Takes the files, and sorts through them: "I had a volunteer intern at one time...who went and searched of everything she could find, anywhere. And she came up with this chronology and some of these things, all I know is what she typed here. Others I have. So, for instance, the 1926...it starts in 1919, well, there was a Department of Conservation which I think became DEM. So then in 1926*

there was this Governor's Committee on the Needs and Uses of Open Spaces, and I think the Trustees of Reservations - they were called Public Reservations at that time - were instrumental in getting that going; I have a few little excerpts from that time when they had this committee... that map...and I don't have a whole lot from that report. But the whole idea of the Bay Circuit got started....AMC was involved.... back in 1926...somewhere in there it says Bay Circuit...but their report included this map of their proposed area of interest / protection..."

*\*she hands a shrunk color print of the 1929 Map of Existing and Proposed Open Spaces Massachusetts; it shows red and yellow sections and a continuous swirl which embraces the Boston Bay area like a C-shaped golden ribbon, indicating 'the proposed general location of THE BAY CIRCUIT'\**

"Those were areas that they felt needed concentration [7:49] [Bay Circuit was one of the proposed Open Spaces]. 1929 The Trustees of Public Reservations reported on their work and they included this map, and talked about the Bay Circuit.

That same intern that came up with this chronology, went through all the annual reports of Trustees of Public Reservations and noted what they had to say about the Bay Circuit from '25 to '60, by which time they had stopped talking about it, but... anyway"

- *When did the intern do this?*

"It was probably 1985 - '86 that she did this."

"When we first started the state program in 84/85, a woman, Christine [Chinlund], who was a cub reporter for the Boston Globe - she is now one of the Vice Presidents - she

came and did an article and it was on the front page of the Globe; there was a lot of interest and I think this young woman came in... She may have gotten college credit for it...

Then, there is the [1931] Benton MacKaye "*HIGHWAY APPROACHES TO BOSTON, [A WAYSIDE SITUATION AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT]*", so there's a copy of that in here...

And in 1937, Trustees of Public Reservations handed out a copy of a map.

**[10:55] "In 1945, the MFA [Museum of Fine Arts] had an exhibition of Post War Planning and the agenda... ...somebody had made movie, a motion picture and lecture, "The Bay Circuit and the Advantage of enlarging the Metropolitan Park System."** The intern could not find more about that."

**"Then in 1956 there was legislation authorizing 'a system of privately and publicly owned Open Spaces including Parks, forests, reservoirs blablablah... at a distance of about 25 miles from Boston, to be called Bay Circuit'.** They talk a lot about the land, but they – well Benton MacKaye - envisioned a new highway, but there was a lot of talk about a highway...

*"Parkways..."*

There's this mysterious sign in Sudbury along the side of the road [Rte 20]...I don't know if it still exists, I think it has come down..." (she pulls out a file with slides and photographs), "...indicating a left turn [*A designated Bay Circuit scenic motor route*] [*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Metropolitan District Commission, Development Program, Parks – Reservations – Recreational Facilities, Metropolitan Parks District 1956, page 83-4 includes "Regional Base Map 1956" with proposed Bay Circuit.*

Page 35 “Significant Developments.” “The Bay Circuit”point board consisting of Division of Planning in Dept of Commerce, DNR, DPW, MDC, TToR, Mass Forest and Park Association & Mass Audubon Society – cites report of Legislature June 1956 “Suitable signs identify route” using “existing roadways”... “to provide a semi ? of a parkway [from wiki] DCR lands and roads formerly belonged to the Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) and the Department of Environmental Management (DEM). Under Governor Mitt Romney, the MDC and DEM were merged to form the DCR].

[13:44] “Then, in 1967, Charles Elliot [Charles W. Elliot 2nd] as a member of the TToR, wrote this paper: ‘PARKS AND OPEN SPACES FOR METROPOLITAN BOSTON, Historical Background of the Boston metropolitan Park and the Bay Circuit’. But there is no evidence of anything really happening.

“Charles Eliot was aging and became very infirm while I was involved....”

*\* Irrelevant and embarrassing guesswork about the Eliot family tree - I sound like the proverbial head severed from the chicken \**

[15:54] “They had enough for a very big house...on Brattle Street or so...[Tory Row] ...there must have been money somewhere...I’ve seen his home...”

“So then, in 1984 - after a big gap since 1956 - that’s where **Bob Yaro comes in. He was a wheeler dealer**; saw the need for funding of Parks and he was ...head of planning or something at the time at DEM, and just schmoozed with all these legislators

and came up with this enormous amount appropriated for all kinds of Open Space and recreation funding and he got the Bay Circuit specifically funded in that legislation. And it was the first time that it had ever been funded. There was this 1956 legislation, but nobody was given any money to do anything with it, which helps it fall apart.”

“So we started it in 1984, I and two other people: Leslie Luchonok and Christina Dierker. Andrea Lukens and Gail Yeo worked at DEM longer than I did. Leslie worked for me, as did Christina. I worked for Andrea. And then after...it got handed over to the Park Service and to Alan [BCAlliance?] 1989/90?

I've got some stuff dated 88, but it's not the last thing we did. We did more, but I didn't date it... We started and put together a program with an Advisory Committee and Charles Eliot was on the Advisory Committee. When we started, we were calling it the Bay Circuit Greenbelt, so the very first little brochure... [pulls it out of the file]...is entitled '*The Bay Circuit Greenbelt*' and, paying homage to the 20s, we put that on the cover [the cover shows an illustration reflecting the Art Nouveau period].

Then we put this Advisory Committee together to say, How are we going to spend this money, what is it going to be used for, what's this program going to be. So together with them we came up with...

...and one of these Advisory Committee meetings... is so vivid in my mind... All these much bigger wigs than I am are sitting around, talking about what it should be and what it shouldn't be and there is lots of heated argument, you know...people defer to Charles Eliot to some degree, but other people had very different ways of thinking about it, he's

very much the patrician. And one of the members, Larry [Lawrence] Susskind, who ran, maybe still runs, a team on negotiation - and he is a professor at both Harvard and MIT [Department of Urban Studies and Planning] - and he is sitting there and seems to be putting down a lot of people's ideas, you know, like: 'that's not feasible'.... and he's on the Southborough's Open Space Commission, and there's all this stuff going around [20:13] and finally Larry just comes up **and I swear, there was sarcasm in his voice, but I'm not completely sure, "What you people are saying is, you want a network of parks *and* Open Spaces that are connected by trails and waterways and scenic touring routes and blablablah..."** and they're all going, **"YES, yes, yes, that's what we want!"** So it felt like he wanted it to be very narrow and focused... but nobody else did. So he said, **'Well, ok, if that's what you want then, write that down. And that's what it was, and the money was primarily used on grants to people in cities and towns to plan mostly for Open Space preservation.**

There was, and I have a big folder here of letters, mostly from Charles Eliot to me, telling me how I have it wrong. But occasionally I wanted to respond to him. And so ...here I wrote to my boss and said, '[Charles Eliot] is so concerned... 'he has consistently maintained that acquisition should be the primary means of protection, and public access is far less important than general land protection. The other Advisory Committee members feel that we need to focus on non-acquisition techniques wherever possible, using acquisition as a last resort'. What I didn't put in here is, 'everybody else wanted public access – big time'. You know, he, the patrician of Essex County Greenbelt and of the Trustees of Reservations: You know, just protect the land, it doesn't matter...riffraff...come... [23:00]...and maybe they shouldn't anyway, they should

be playing on their own estates or something, I don't know. But there is a great deal of his not liking the way things were going – as I recall; I didn't go back and read these, in fact, you know these letters would come just a couple of time a year and I just stopped reading them because they just were very critical of the job I was doing. But, there they are: People can read them!"

So anyway, [23:46] we had this grant program. We organized a small group of people in every town, and the towns to work with had been named in our 1984 legislation. That's where I met Alan French. My recollection is...the first meeting...I was thinking, 'he's not into this at all', but we were talking a lot about land acquisition, land protection, with a minor emphasis on any kind of trail use. I was floored when the Park Service got involved, I think they saw the writing on the wall with State funding; there was not going to be any more. And without state funding none of us would be working on it. That's when Steve [Golden]...and I don't know what his view on this is, but my sense of it is: He saw the State as not being able to maintain this; that it should be maintained, and he was in a position to encourage a non-profit, which was brilliant. Or else it would be something historical that remains in my fedex box here. But my shock that it was Alan French that was going to take this on, and my continuing shock at how this man just made it happen, you know, first impressions can be really wrong. Plus, I think also, our focus was different from his focus. He wasn't all that excited – I think – about trying to protect land and in however many, I think fifty-five towns and cities – I forget how many we had. It was a daunting task. But I'd be curious to see.

So this is just miscellaneous planning documents over the years, I don't know if anyone else cares:

This I think was one of the last things we put together, which was sort of a report of what we were doing in every city and town and ... [26:32]

..banter..

29:54 Oh, I made such a good friend. Do you know Crystal Card? She was on the Town of Billerica Conservation Commission and we worked very hard with her. Trying to preserve...her husband was a bee-keeper... I thought about her so often, I made a number of – I won't say good friends, because it wasn't the kind of thing that lasted past that time, but I would do stuff past work, you know, usually Open Space related, but not necessarily strictly on the job, with women, that I met through these little Committees that we had in each town. I'm particularly fond of Crystal Card.

[31:15] Irrelevant up to [48:10]

- *Most positive moment:*

"My goodness, I never thought about that"

- *Or you can mention the most negative moment, many have difficulty with that.*

*Susan thinks for a while.*

"The most negative was dealing with that Advisory Committee and particularly Charles Eliot. I am not a forceful person. And this Committee was a herd of wild elephants. I was not particularly up to the task..."

- *How old were you then?*

“Well, we can do the math. I was born in 1948. So in ‘88 I was 40. So it was in my late thirties, early forties. Yeah, just not a real forceful person; easily cowed, so working with them was tough.

- *Positive:*

“I’d say the various acquisitions, where we protected a lot of land, and.....No: It was the working with these people on the individual committees. **Making the relationships**, in particular with some women in Wenham, and Chrystal in Billerica, and ultimately Alan in Andover, and there were some people in the South Shore too, a man who taught geography at Bridgewater State.

[50:3]7

Irrelevant

[51:33] “Yeah, I would say, the relationships with the people.”

- *Volunteers?*

“**Oh, TOTALLY volunteers, yes**”

- *The interviewees seem to all have in common that their voices are calm and friendly: Is it the influence of nature, or it their age; the generational difference?*

“I suspect, age maybe, when younger a voice can be more excited / vivacious in the tone of your voice. But the people that I worked with at DEM, were just amazing, you know, state office, state bureaucrats, people that work for the state don’t have a good rep[utation], but MAN the people I worked with at DEM – just three of us worked for the Bay Circuit, but there were probably twenty in the office, and everybody had their own

project. They were all passionate, dedicated, and fun. It was a great workplace to work” and she quickly adds, “And most of the people I worked with at DEM are now at the various non-profits. So they’re still, you know, I’m the only one that’s not doing it anymore.”

- *Treks are always mentioned as the highlight.*

“Alan and I had a going argument. He was always trying to get me out hiking, and I would say to him, “I’ll work my tail off, for you and everybody that loves to hike, to be able to do it, to preserve the land, but ... I did a couple. But see, I garden.

[55:03]

*Irrelevant - gardening*

Ziegler (2)

“I wrote a memo in 1996, so I had been totally reassigned, but still was the...I knew the Bay Circuit history. Charles Little had written a book Greenways for America. He had come and interviewed me and Leslie, and then he sent us a draft of what he was gonna write. He had not recorded what we had said and hardly taken any notes, just sort of chatted. There were all kinds of errors in it, so I wrote back and pointed out the errors. And I remember this as well as I can because I wrote a memo, that I just read this afternoon, and he just disregarded completely anything I had requested that he would fix and he just replied, ‘This is for the mass market, this is not for professionals.’ I guess...I can’t remember, if it puts us in bad light or missed the mark or what it was, but there is that book and there is also a big article in the New Yorker about Greenbelt Planning and one of the ones he talked about was the Bay Circuit. And Tony Hiss came and interviewed us and we took him around various places. So there is a New Yorker

article somewhere that includes stuff about the Bay Circuit [August 28, 1989]. I don't remember having any problems with that one."

## Charlie Tracy - Transcript

June 17, 2013

Phone call with Charles Tracy



*Phone call coming in...*

"Hello this is Charlie Tracy"

- *Let me put it on speakerphone...*

"Okay, sure."

- *I was told I could talk to either Charles Tracy or Steve Golden, but as I went on with all the different interviews - and I had talked to Steve Golden early on – I thought that I still wanted to talk to Charlie Tracy too. Because you were mentioned often.*

"Oh yeah, I mean, in all honesty, I think it would be a big hitch not to include me. I was really key at the beginning of the project [1:33-1:35].

- *You were mentioned all over the place and when I talked to Carl Demrow, Ron McAdow – everybody was always mentioning you, so I thought, 'how can I not talk to Charles?'*

Yes! I mean those are two people that I brought into the project, and even Al French; I was involved, eh, Steve and I recruited him to be the sort of citizen leader. And I could send you a Globe editorial which talks about my role right at the beginning too; it was

the first mention in the print about really getting going with this trail. And I worked on it for a number [2:42] of years, but one of the things is, part **of our Park Service role is: We need to develop local capacity and organization. There is a certain art to it; we want to be there and be a catalyst, but we don't want to be perceived as managing everything, because in the long run that's not good.** By design we know how to work with people, but also keep a low profile too.

- *I think what you're describing is a non-autocratic way of management, bla bla bla [4:00]...all interviews have been very interesting – for me. **Overview of the four questions...** First question: When did you hear about Bay Circuit for the first time and what about those words drew you in? And the second question asks for a highlight. The third question asks about a low point; or a negative or a bummer...And the fourth question is about, when I asked to interview you, what did you think should really be mentioned and it hasn't been touched upon during the interview.*

Those are great questions; I think that's a really nice approach!

I first heard them [the words Bay Circuit] at a presentation given by Bob Yaro at UMass [Amherst] when I was a student studying Landscape Architecture. And what drew me in was the history, and even more than that the strength of the concept; this idea of an arc of open space and recreation around Boston.

- *When was that?*

Probably 1986.

- *Nice! So Bob Yaro had already procured the bond?*

Yes, he had already procured the bond because he was interviewing for a position; he was moving from his work with the State to a teaching position at UMass, correct.

- *[About getting in touch with Bob Yaro. [6:39 – 7:30]*
- *What was an absolute highlight for you?*

**[7:43] ...I would say: Completing the first Bay Circuit trek. That was a definite highlight for sure. In terms of moving the whole project forward, because not only was it a seminal<sup>6</sup> event, but it also set a really great pattern; it involved all the towns, it was definitely grassroots, it was fun, we got lots of press, and we used it as a tool to further our network and contacts, and really build momentum.** In many ways it really helped to set the tone for the project; of being all of those things we talked about: Participatory fun, celebrating incremental progress; all those kinds of things.

- *So should we just continue to organize thru-hikes? [9:18]*

**I don't know – that's up to the people... I think we may need different kinds of events now. I'm not saying we have to stick with that, but definitely at the start-up it was key.**

- *Ah, so not remain stuck in the past but move forward...*

**Right, I've seen many projects where they get one good event and at a certain point it can get ... it needs to change.**

- *And then, what would you consider downer?*

**[thinks] ... Hm...Gee, that's...I don't really...ehm..hm... Nothing really comes to mind as a downer... ehm ... and I don't really... sorry, I don't have anything on that one.**

- *That's a GREAT answer and you're not the only one who answers it like that.*

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<sup>6</sup> strongly influencing later developments

Oh, okay, good! Well that says something about the way we approach this project.

- 4<sup>th</sup> question...what should really be recorded for posterity, something we haven't touched upon yet.

The Boston Globe editorial that I'm going to share with you: It was prophetic in many ways. I loved the story about it, because I was there – we were having a ribbon cutting in Boxford and this guy showed up, very unassuming, just saying he was a Globe reporter and wanted to get a few details and he didn't let on to us that he was actually part of the editorial board. And a week or so later we got a really wonderful editorial about the Bay Circuit trail and I know it energized a lot of people and early on it added some sparkle to the project.

- *Which year was that?*

I believe it might have been from November, 1989 [actually November 21, 1990]. But I'll dig it out for you and send it.

- *And in Boxford, that's where the trails happened early on thanks to Nancy Merrill, who was an grassroots activist for bridle paths; horse trails?*

[12:18]It was basically my idea to get started and get the trail on the ground by working with **Boxford**; I picked **the town that** I thought **was the best candidate**, and I worked with Nancy Merrill, who later became part of the Board [of Directors of the Bay Circuit Alliance]. We really worked together; we did a guidebook and we also had an event to 'dedicate the very first section of the trail as the Bay Circuit trail', and that was even prior to the trek.

- *Nancy Merrill! With Bob Yaro the last two on my wish list of interviews; two opposite ends of the scale between grassroots and top-down government.*

Yes, well put, Marlies: Nancy very much the grassroots; on-the-ground organizing, and then Bob was much more 'Big Picture'; Planning Genius, Large Opportunity for the region. I think they really are in many ways two ends of the spectrum.

- *Yes! And another person from the grassroots' side was Liz Tentarelli.*

Oh yeah! She was a little bit later, and I think she was good; I wouldn't see her as dynamic as Nancy, but she certainly had a good impact and was a long time supporter.

*[13:55-16:02] (Irrelevant) Concord River Greenway; a Lowell-Billerica blue trail.*

... I'm not involved right now with the day to day kind of planning for the Bay Circuit.

*[16:09-16:21]* One other cool, just one other memory that came back to me - I don't know if anybody else shared this with you – but after the first trek we had a meeting of all the partners to form the Bay Circuit Alliance, and we had the meeting at Minuteman National Historical Park in Concord, and I just remembered as another wonderful time where we were sitting out on this porch and we said, 'okay, we are starting it right now.' It was in the wake of the success of the trek, it was very nice to have all the partners together... anyway, that was just another really nice moment; that initial meeting. I remember it vividly: Sitting on the porch outside of the Buttrick House. I'm not sure if it is irrelevant or not *[17:11]*.

- *No, no, I think that is a definite highlight, with the speech by Al French, quoting a poem – it's in my notes.*

Oh good!

- *Wes Ward mentioned it as well, saying "That was Al's shot", to which I added, "...the shot heard around the world".*

[Laughing out loud] Right!



## A WOODLANDS NECKLACE

[THIRD Edition]

Boston Globe (pre-1997 Fulltext) - Boston, Mass.

Date: Nov 21, 1990

Start Page: 14

Section: EDITORIAL PAGE

Text Word Count: 685

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### Document Text

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The first section of the Bay Circuit Trail, an innovative conservation and recreation proposal, was dedicated Saturday in Boxford. This 61-year-old idea, still fresh today, deserves the strong support of private conservation groups and state government during the next decade.

In 1929, architect Charles Eliot and the private Trustees of Reservations pressed for the creation of the trail, which would run through protected open space from Plum Island to Kingston.

The Depression and World War II intervened, but the idea lived on despite the development boom that transformed the towns 30 miles from Boston after the opening of Route 128 and Interstate 495. The trail would run for 120 miles between these two superhighways.

During the boom years, many of these communities safeguarded forest and riverfront land, and these protected areas form the skeleton of the trail.

The section that was dedicated is a 12-mile linking of a wildlife sanctuary and state forest in Boxford with other state forests in Georgetown and Ipswich. The trail concludes at Willowdale Mill in Hamilton, owned by the private Essex County Greenbelt Association.

The trail received a boost when the National Park Service decided to help with the planning. Charles Tracy, a landscape architect for the Park Service, has been working with groups along the route to specify land to be saved from development and to build an alliance of conservation and recreation advocates.

"It's catching on," he said. "The Boxford group is getting folks interested in Topsfield, Middleton and Georgetown. Andover, too -- that'll be the next section to be dedicated."

The Park Service can do only preliminary work on the Bay Circuit. It lacks funds to buy land or do the long-term planning needed if the trail is to be connected through all 50 communities.

Since there is more contiguous green space north of the city, this section of the trail is easy to lay out. Work on the southern section, between Abington and Duxbury, will be much harder.

The state Department of Environmental Management, which helped purchase land in the mid-1980s to be included in the circuit, has been hobbled by budget cuts and a lack of high-level support for the concept. The department asked the National Park Service for help last year when it became clear the state role would diminish.

Private groups have also been slow to get behind the project, although the Appalachian Mountain Club has expressed an interest. The AMC experience in preserving and maintaining trails in the White Mountains would be put to good use on the Bay Circuit.

Tracy hopes the informal Bay Circuit Alliance will take up work in behalf of the trail after the Park Service bows out. Its goal is to have the circuit in place by 2000.

The 1990s are an appropriate time to complete the trail. The aging of the baby-boom generation has made walking, instead of jogging or aerobics, the exercise of choice for thousands of people who live near its path.

The recession has stabilized the value of land along the trail and reduced the pressure for development. There will be no better time to purchase additional land before the economy rebounds.

When development booms again, the Bay Circuit will be a unifying symbol of the need to preserve woodlands in the belt

of towns around Boston that are no longer rural but not quite suburban.

Tracy and two other hikers trekked the Bay Circuit last June, after a send-off from Charles Eliot, still hale at 90. "The places we hiked were just beautiful," Tracy said. "And roads in the way aren't going to be our main problem; it's getting communities organized to plan the trail."

In the late 19th century, the creation of the Emerald Necklace in Boston, from Boston Common to Franklin Park, guaranteed that a magnificent stretch of green space would continuously refresh the city.

In the late 20th century, state government and private groups have the opportunity to create a semicircle of green over a far wider area. They should grasp the opportunity to enrich the lives of people in eastern Massachusetts for generations.

**[Table]**

GAGEN ;11/19 NIGRO ;11/21,08:12 ECIRCUIT

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**Abstract** (Document Summary)

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Tracy and two other hikers trekked the Bay Circuit last June, after a send-off from [Charles Eliot], still hale at 90. "The places we hiked were just beautiful," Tracy said. "And roads in the way aren't going to be our main problem; it's getting communities organized to plan the trail."

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## Nancy Merrill - Transcript

August 8, 2013

Interview at Nancy's house in Boxford, MA



*Nancy at the Kelsey Arboretum*

*From tape 'Intro':*

[My Name is] "Nancy Merrill. I first became interested in preserving trails through being a 4-H leader – a horse club leader. A group of adult equestrians and involved 4-H leaders got together to save the trails in Boxford from development, back in 1978. We formed the Boxford Trails Association (BTA). I was probably a Secretary or Treasurer in the beginning. I've held the Secretarial and Treasurer positions, and actually became President of BTA, and we grew into a land trust [Boxford Open Land Trust (BOLT)]. We became interested in the Land Trust movement in the 1980s, and became an individual member of LTA, before BTA/BOLT became an organization member. I have been President for ten years of BTA/BOLT, and now I am Vice-President, in charge of trails, but my interests are both in Land Trust preservation and trail preservation. We are now in the maintenance mode of maintaining these numerous trails and the Bay Circuit, and I still am vitally interested in the trails (1:35).

*From tape 'Interview':*

(00:39) [The first time I heard the words Bay Circuit] "...was back **in 1989**. The State was going to pull together fifty-six towns to connect open spaces, and for the trail, and **I heard that the Selectmen had appointed two women, and one of them wasn't me...to go to this meeting. And since I had been working with the trails, and saving trails since 1978... I didn't like the fact that they had passed me over, so I went down [to that meeting] myself, so the three of us went – so, that's when I first heard about it.** One of the women dropped out – she wasn't interested in the trail, or in the concept. She's been on the Board of Health ever since. She's a Board of Health person. And ever since then, I have become very motivated to save the Bay Circuit. I was appointed by Al French. I don't know when Al French came on. I don't think he came on right away; we worked with Charles Tracy from the National Park Service, and he invited him out to meet with us, and they offered to do most of the cartography, and they hired a woman to write the first Bay Circuit information. I signed on as a town that wanted to have ... I looked at all the maps, and I found where the [Bay Circuit] trail should go pretty much, so I asked if we could write a guide book, so our first guide book was sponsored by the National Park Service; they hired a cartographer and a writer. I had a Committee of about six or seven people... [Nancy gets up to get the guide book and proudly lays out several editions. She points out the names of cartographer Cathy Corcoran and writer Julie Nagazina]

(3:06 – 4:31) "This was [by] the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program. We changed the name [of the committee] a couple of times. It started out as the Boxford Bay Circuit Program Committee, which was a town committee. We changed that, because I couldn't handle so many committee meetings,

so BTA/BOLT...I'll give you a brochure [(5:02 – 5:30) See appendix]. We keep updating this. (5:40) The main thing I didn't want to say right in the beginning is: When I looked at maps...we were supposed to connect open spaces, and we needed a way to get across I-95, and the Federal government had put in a bridge to connect Georgetown-Rowley state forest – it was one open space which had been divided when they put in I-95 in the 1960s, so the two were separated. And then, when they widened I-95, they built... the man who ran the equestrian stable there at the corner of MA Rte 133 and I-95, he petitioned the State and the Federal Government too, to connect Pingree Farm Road with a bridge over I-95 so the two parcels were connected. That was our only way of getting across I-95 with the trail. Not for cars, except for emergency vehicles. It still is that way. We should have such a bridge here for the B-to-B [Border to Boston]! But they say we don't have enough money - only that's because we spent too much money on the Big Dig..."

"So I told the State that we should include Georgetown as part of the fifty-six towns, and they finally did. So ... that's one accomplishment..."

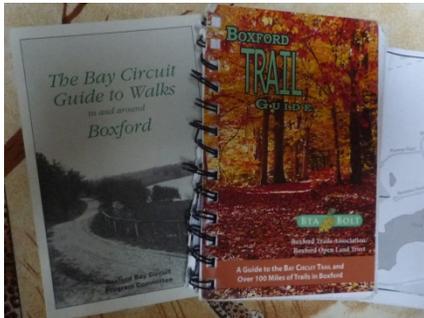
[To summarize the answer to my question, Nancy concludes (7:56)], "When Susan Ziegler put out the call for towns to send a couple of representatives, and she gave out these big, big huge maps, and I went through it and ... I know where everything is in this town, all the trails, all the open spaces ..."

- *Because you ride or you walk...?*

"I like to study maps. I like to know where I'm going. My children had horses; that's why I was interested in saving the trails in '78. A group of 4-H mothers; horse leaders and the adult equestrians who were riding at the time, got together and saved BTA, the

Boxford Trails Association. Then we started protecting land, and we grew into BTA/BOLT – Boxford Trails Association, slash Boxford Open Land Trust. Our logo and our official name ... [papers rustle] ... here: the oak leaf, two acorns and BTA/BOLT. And we incorporated as BTA/BOLT, inc. - that's our official name".

- *And it started out as the Bay Circuit?*



"No, it started out as the Boxford Trails Association, founded in 1978. The guidebook was the *Bay Circuit Guide to Walks in and around Boxford* and we have since changed the name of this guidebook to [she shows me a copy] *The Boxford TRAIL Guide*".

- *It looks well used!*

"Well, it fell off the top of my car" (10:04 – 10:21)

- *So, because you were already in the business of saving trails, the Bay Circuit appealed to you?*

"Yes ... yes".

- *Do you ride on horseback yourself too?*

"I do ride, but don't have one now. I'm too busy walking the trails, taking care of the maintenance. We have Tuesday and Thursday morning walks; Tuesday is a led hike and scheduled the fall, winter and spring. During the summer some dedicated people still continue walking, and do light maintenance on Thursday. And we meet for lunch.

That's our social life (11:02 – 12:16). Would you like to join us?

- Today?

Yes, today.

- Yes, I'd like that!

- *What would be the highlight of your Bay Circuit experience?*

[She thinks, for a considerably long time] “Well I guess, to see that we’ve ... that BTA/BOLT has taken on the Bay Circuit, and we now have a very extensive trail guide. We’ve saved trails throughout Boxford. As Al French says, a lot of the open spaces that we have off the Bay Circuit trail are really part of the Bay Circuit *Greenway* – that’s a new concept. This was supposed to be a necklace *joining* open spaces, but he’d like to see ... and we, we could work on trails that connect all these different open spaces. It might be a little difficult now because of all the developments going on, but we might be able to do that.”

- *The original concept was to have open space and then the only way to bring it about was a trail, so maybe now that we have trails, we can go back to the concept of the greenways?*

“Yes.”

- *Would there also be a low-point in your Bay Circuit experience?*

“Oh dear (13:35). I do tell this, but it is a low-point: **I’m a volunteer. I’ve been a volunteer even though I worked full time. I was a single mother and I went back to work in Boston, but I kept up the 4-H group and the trails.** My children rode horses. Al French had asked me to join the Executive Committee. There were five or six of us. Susan Ziegler was there. I looked around the table ... **I saw all these people who were being paid and I wasn’t. Not that I want to be paid, but it suddenly hit me.** I was dedicating myself to the trails... (14:31 – 15:00)... but if I were paid here in town, I’d have a boss. And I much prefer being my own boss - up to a certain point. I’ve been lucky; the nice things that have happened to me on this is, in taking care of the trails I

got Lockwood Forest: I worked with Dunbar Lockwood who owned this property and he was very pleased with the way BTA/BOLT was taking care of his property and his trails. His mother lived on the front. As a young boy, he moved here in the thirties with his family. They had about three, four hundred acres, and as we developed as a trails association, and having horses we ran horse shows, and we used his field and his trails to hold two horse shows, and we maintained the trails; we spent money improving the trails, and I think because of that he was very pleased; he could see that it had the preservation effort that he did [*had*] so he made his land available to the town to buy. That was a highlight; to be able to see all these works come [to fruition]. And then we had a lot of good people who volunteered to come out to purchase of this property; to sponsor a fund-drive. When we buy land, when we, I should say the town or BTA/BOLT ... usually it is done through people promoting the parcel when BTA/BOLT raises money as a fund-drive and then the money they contribute is deductible, and then we go to town meeting and vote for the other portion. And since the CPC has come into being we have used a lot of that CPC money.”

- *CPC is?*

“Community Preservation Act . CPC is the Community Preservation Committee. The town voted to to raise our real estate taxes with a 3% surcharge, and then the State matches it up to a point. And we’ve been very lucky, because we joined in the very beginning and we’ve had a lot of 100% matches in it.” [CPA funds may be used for projects in the areas of open space, recreation, housing and historical preservation].

- *So that creates a fund, and then you can buy property...*

“You don’t know about that?”

- *No. But I’m learning.*

“Any town can do it. Not all the towns have wanted to. Some towns have voted, have gone to Town Meeting to see if they wanted to do it and the Aldermen didn’t want to...”

- *Some folks shrink back as soon as tax hikes are mentioned!*

“Right, but you know: What happened at the time was that they raised the fees at the registry, so if you bought a house and had to register your deed for \$45.00, they raised the fee to \$70.00, so the other \$25.00 went to the CPC fund. The money that the State collected on those extra fees ... there are only two fees at the registry that are not taxed: That’s the homesteaders act [Homestead Protection Act] and I think there’s one other, and for everything else that’s registered at the registry, the fees were doubled. The extra money went to the CPA fund and then at the end of a fiscal year that money was divided up proportionately among the towns that requested [to participate in] the CPC. For many years towns received the full allotment [100% matching amount] because there was enough money to fund it. When the Real Estate market went down, everything went down; not as many houses were registered.”

- *So, in a sense, while we were talking about a low point (19:46), you already mentioned a highlight again!*

[Laughs] “I know. I did! I got to stay positive on this.”

- *I see that a lot with these interviews; when I ask for the low point, the conversation turns to highlights anyway. Maybe that’s because of the kind of people that stay with it.*

“**We helped lead the first trek.**” [Yet another highlight!!] “It went from Crane’s Beach, through Ipswich and Hamilton – **and I took a day off from work to do this.** In the afternoon I had to lead them through Boxford. And I had not trained for this. I think I

walked twenty-two miles that day; had a few blisters. And they stopped here in Boxford on Middleton Road at the ... We had ...Boxford has two of the open spaces. State forests: Boxford State Forest, which straddles Middleton, North Andover and Boxford, and on the other side, going East, we have the Georgetown-Rowley State forest.

(21:24) so we were able to connect the trail between those two bookends.”

- *And that’s where you also used that trail which crossed over I-95?*

[Nancy nods affirmatively]

- *You said you took a day off. May I ask what your occupation was?*

Yes, I worked for Keane Incorporated as a Computer Analyst Programmer.

- *Opposite ends of a spectrum! Computer Programming and (22:00) walking trails*

[(22:48) Nancy folds open a QLF (Quebec-Labrador Foundation) map and points out the route].

- (23:09) *[I’m puzzled] How did you get in touch with QLF?*

“Well, not anymore since the Director lives in Boxford. And he’s the owner of open spaces; one is Witch Hollow [Witch Hollow Farm; a 300 acre property saved from development by the Trust for Public land] ... and a lot of this Bay Circuit through Boxford goes through the historic district, so some of it is on the road, but then we went, now here’s open space, here’s the Lockwood Forest; here’s Boy Scout Park; here’s the Town Center, that’s the Boxford historic district, where “The Store”<sup>7</sup> is. And then we have the French Family Woodlot, which is the first parcel of land BTA/BOLT purchased, then it goes along here; Old Chapman Lane, up to here, Round Top...”

- *So the BTA/BOLT even had a Treasury, or was it the Town that bought it?*

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<sup>7</sup> “The Store”, a community convenience store and eatery, in a landmark building, housing a post office, a bank and several offices upstairs, one of them for BTA/BOLT

“The French Family Woodlot? We were a Land Trust. The Land Trust purchased it. We had a person, who was walking with us at the time, and she was very dedicated to the trails, and she gave us the money; that was back when this whole thing cost \$10,000.00, but at that time it was a lot.”

[Nancy continues to show the Bay Circuit on the QLF map:] “... and then the trail goes out to Georgetown Rowley State Forest and is coming back into Boxford through Willowdale. Willowdale continues all the way through Ipswich and across Route 1; but then it goes up into Rowley and Plum Island, and then it goes out to Crane’s Beach.”

(24:56 – 25:39) [Nancy points out where the map mentions all the Land protected or owned by BTA/BOLT, or for which BTA/BOLT helped raise the funds to protect land; 1200 acres since 1978 to date, and growing].

- Did the Land Trust already own property as the Selectmen appointed the Bay Circuit Committee?

[Nancy digs up data to look up when the first parcel was purchased (25:47 – 26:23)] “It was in 1991. So in 1978 we were just a trails association. At the point we started French Family Woodlot, we had to incorporate in order to hold land. We incorporated about that time, back in the eighties ...’89, ’88. We were protecting land through s, and we have since become accredited with the Land Trust Alliance – you know about the Land Trust Alliance?”

- *[I shake my head, stupefied].*

**“No? The Land Trust Alliance started in the early eighties. It’s a lobbying organization in Washington [DC] to promote Land Trusts, and the fact that the s are a good document to use in saving land; it allows people to preserve land and not have to pay taxes on what they have preserved, or it’s a reduced rate. So**



**when they're doing their family planning, when they retire land from the development angle, then you reduce the value of property, but you get a tax deduction.** But the IRS is trying to do away with that. [under her breath] They don't have any more money I

think. So LTA has worked all these years to bring all the Land Trusts across the United States into compliance, making sure we keep good records; that we monitor the properties, and we have become accredited [she shows the seal of distinction verifying that BTA/BOLT meets the National high standards of excellence]. That means we've gone through an extensive review process. We are now being re-accredited; every five years we have been re-accredited."

- *Oh! I think I've heard about it with the Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust! Jane Calvin was very busy with the 'accreditation' [I pronounce the unfamiliar word with difficulty].*

[Nancy explains patiently] "That's a lot of work! (29:44) ... We [BTA/BOLT] were the first organization among seventeen who wanted to go through this [accredited status application] that first year. And we are a completely voluntary Land Trust; most ... here again: Most ... the other small Land Trusts (like the one in Marion, MA) have a part-time Director who is able to do this work, that they pay. When we did it ourselves... (30:18)

- (30:44) I haven't interviewed anyone who told me more about the government part of it than I now learn from from you.

"Really? Well, see, in Massachusetts, TToR [The Trustees of Reservations] is the oldest Land Trust, besides AVIS [Andover Village Improvement Society] ... Massachusetts

passed a very strong – we call it – an Conservation Restriction<sup>8</sup> Anybody else in the United States calls it an ‘Conservation Easement’ and we have to go through an approval process with the State. The ‘Restriction’ document gets filed with the Registry [of Deeds. Nancy shows an example] ...[inaudible due to papers shuffling] ... with an explanation why the land is important; the prohibited activities – you can’t build, you can’t do construction, you can’t just ...

- [I interrupt: (32:50 – 34:21) It helps me understand a situation in Billerica...]

(34:21) “Perpetuity is very important.”

[the discussion seems to bog down in details, when Nancy picks up where she left off at (30:52)] Massachusetts passed a very strong document – we call it – an Conservation Restriction<sup>9</sup> which protects land. Anybody else in the United States calls it a ‘Conservation Easement’... (34:59)... which is not as strict, and it doesn’t have much of an approving authority. We (Massachusetts) have an Approving Committee in the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). It reviews all the Conservation Restrictions that we submit. First you work with the land owner, get their wording - what they wish to do, then you send it on to the State, for their review, they may send comments back, and then you confer with the land owner, negotiate, and then finally, if it’s private land, that’s it, but if it’s Town land ... well usually the Conservation Restriction is written after the Town has purchased the land but it still has to go through the signatures of the Selectmen (35:55 – 36:17).”

“You’ve got to find out how land is protected, or something will happen to it in the future, when the second person owns it. We’re having more problems with second owners, and

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<sup>8</sup> The conservation restriction was introduced to Massachusetts by Chapter 666, Acts of 1969.

<sup>9</sup> The conservation restriction was introduced to Massachusetts by Chapter 666, Acts of 1969.

this is one of the things that the LTA is helping us with. You can go on their website: lta.org. They have a huge book: *Practices and Procedures*. Massachusetts has many small Land Trusts, whereas the bigger states seem to have an organization for the whole state, or a whole large area. In Massachusetts, because of our history, and starting at a village, we're much more protective of what we have ... and so when LTA came up with this accreditation, they didn't think we needed to be accredited, because Massachusetts has such a strong Conservation Restriction policy, and it's expensive to do it; we have to pay this Committee the fee of \$5,000.00 to spend hours and hours reviewing every land trust, to see if it's up to their standards – that's their job."

- *You have to pay to be accredited for your volunteer work?! What is the value of that?*

"It's very good to have this, because hopefully the IRS will see this and respect our organization, and they won't question the land owners that have saved their land and have taken tax-deductions."

- *So you're also protecting the landowners?*

"Yes."

"A couple of Land Trusts – maybe in Colorado and Wyoming – ran into some difficulty about this [easement audits]. (39:42)

- *And maybe the landowners support you in return, because you protect them?*

"If they want to, they can become very strong in this movement. Our landowners have supported us in the fund-drive that we've been doing. One of them, our president has bought an APR [Agricultural Preservation Restriction], so she's active. I don't think

anybody else on the land trust has a Conservation Restriction. These are just dedicated people who love the land, love the trails. Check out our website: [btabol.org](http://btabol.org)!” (40:34)

- *My last question asks what hasn't been discussed – if at all.*

“Right now I can't think of anything. My mind is spinning...”

“First of all, Al French came on board a year after the Bay Circuit really got started, and he's been a wonderful person to carry it forward. He's been as dedicated as I have been. He put me on the Executive Committee along with Wes Ward, Ed Becker, and one person ... and Susan Ziegler was on it for a while. And then some other people. Sudbury Valley Trust sent a representative... One night we decided to ... Al always wanted to find somehow to make the Bay Circuit to continue after he had gone, so after many years of struggling with this concept, Wes Ward and the State – we also added a member from the AMC, and Carl Demrow was the first one to get out on the trail show us how to mark the trail... still thinking...and then when AMC and TToR decided to form an organization partnership to keep the Bay Circuit going – and you understand the difference between the two... they had an Advisory Committee and they asked me to be on that, so I said I would do that. We meet four times a year. Part of keeping the trails maintained, Al French and a group of people put together a Maintenance Advisory Committee: TMAC [Trail Maintenance Advisory Committee] and many of those members are part of that Advisory Committee.”

- *I think they call it BCTC [Bay Circuit Trails Committee] now.*

“Yes, it's a different name – of course. We in Boxford are in the second unit, which comprises of Andover, North Andover, Boxford, and maybe Georgetown, and Liz Armstrong is going to be a very dynamic person.”

[(44:49) After forty-five minutes of grilling] **“So I’m still volunteering at the ... but [ sigh ] it’s getting a lot ...”**

- *You are such a source of...*

“And I do have all these trails in my head – or most of them.”

- *What about the word ‘bridle paths’ which your name tends to get associated with?*

**(45:30) No. Don’t use ‘bridle paths’ because that’s the bane of my existence...**the developers...Oh this is an important thing: We’d sit at the Planning Board, as soon as a subdivision was announced, we’d go and sit at the Planning Board meetings twice a month, Wednesdays, to encourage the developers to put a trail. And unfortunately, the main trails that we were using for paths, which were the paths that the settlers had used to go out into their woodlots, or they were old roads. These were very good, they were away from the wetlands, they were well-established; probably eight, nine feet wide; firm, because they’d been used hundreds of years. But because of the wetlands situation in Boxford, these wood trails became the subdivision rows, and I compromised and said we could relocate the trail, but now one of the Selectmen, instead of having a trail dedicated that went between house lots, because Boxford has two acre zoning, developers didn’t want to lose that much land, so one of the Selectmen at that time made a compromise and said we don’t have to give a dedicated stretch of land, but make a trail easement on the house lots that they’re subdividing. So a lot of people in town had trail easements, and when they buy their house, they buy it with the trail

easement. And developers like to say bridle trail. I think that gave it some exclusivity; 'just [posh] horse trails'. But it's not. It's for passive recreation<sup>10</sup>."

- *So how did the word bridle trail come in?*

"That's the old term; an old English term. Roads, for horses, but people could also walk on them."

**"I never wanted Boxford to be an exclusive town. People who move here, they have made it that way...They wanted to... It wasn't my intention. My intention was for people to share their land."**

- *I'll make sure that gets bold faced!*

*From tape 'Intro':*

- *(1:36 - 2:49) Do you feel like the next generations are equally interested or more interested?*

"Eh... Some of them are, some aren't... People will come forward, I think, to continue this. I don't see quite the dedication that maybe I put to it. I was a single mother in '78, I was commuting to Boston, working [full time]; my children had horses – that's how I came into trail preservation. And that's not happening now. I felt that the horses were their nannies, and I felt very comfortable with having them come home from High School, going out to the barn, clean their stalls, to ride around town; be able to ride on these trails. I took the bus at 6:30 in the morning, and I came home at 6:30 at night. A parent is not doing that these days; it's all very organized, but it was ok back then.

*From tape 'Extra':*

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<sup>10</sup> From Web definitions: Passive Recreation is recreational activities that are commonly unorganized and noncompetitive, including, but not limited to, picnicking, bird watching, kite flying etcetera.

“...the trail preservation back in the seventies started with the equestrian community, and we did have the time, and some of us who did not ride all the time had the time to break the trails, and find out where they should go, and attend the planning board meetings to work with developers, **that’s when the trails had to be saved**, during that development ... **Massachusetts had a strong development period, end 70s, into 80s**. And **the towns who didn’t do that**; equestrians who were too busy riding their horses, and taking care of their horses, **suddenly woke up twenty years later, and found they didn’t have any trails**. So I’ve had to go out and speak to a number of towns about this situation and how to go about saving trails now. The other thing I did was ... one of the things I can do is that I know what needs to be done; it comes to me. You don’t have to write a protocol; nobody has to tell me what to do. When we first started BTA and they told me where the trails were; who owned the trails, I put them all on a trail-list. And made them part of our BTA membership list. We sent out monthly one-page newsletters. Membership dues are \$25 now for an individual. I really felt strongly that if people own a trail, they should be part of the organization. All these people that we got permission from could be added to a database, and when you come out with a newsletter - monthly or quarterly – include them, and talk about this trail walk that you did. And maybe get some people who did go on a trail walk to make a comment about how much they enjoyed it (2:39 – 3:58).”

- *[I’m talking about The Whiffle Tree Country Store, Indian Springs] “...watering hole, and the land is protected, with a type of accreditation process by the EPA about the water quality. He doesn’t want any developments behind his ...*

“You’ve got to find out how it’s protected. If not in perpetuity, when he dies, it goes to his family, his children, they might have different ideas. And then you have to have an understanding after that; what are the successive owners going to do with the property.”

(4:41 – 5:07) *[regarding Sunrise Development, VA]*

“He [the owner] can protect the trail; he can make a trail easement for the property owner that eventually does buy that parcel of land. That’s one of the things that me and Al French were working on, that business / manufacturing companies along the Bay Circuit trail, that have parcels of land ... all the gaps [in the Bay Circuit trail] have to do mainly with companies that own land. They have enough land, and they have made trail through it, but they haven’t actually protected it. It’s the problem with the lawyers. We have **Chapter 21 Section 17 C. If you have a recreational trail and you don’t charge a fee, then you cannot be held liable.** It’s a Massachusetts jungle law (6:05?). It’s very important.

(6:18) But you see, lawyers don’t accept that. If you meet a lawyer, ask them about it. They don’t think it’s going to hold up. It’s never gone to court. People that I know who got hurt on the trail understand this. They do so at their own risk. Horseback riding is a dangerous sport, and we’ve had families go out on horseback, and one of them has hit a limb and fallen off their horse or something like that. And they haven’t done anything about it [didn’t sue]. They realize it’s their responsibility. People have to take responsibility for themselves on the trail [(9:08 - end) more talk about responsibility during equestrian cross country and stadium jumping events].

After the recordings Nancy and I went to the Eatery of The Store via a trail easement across from Nancy’s house and had lunch with three other trail enthusiasts. Nancy showed me around;

the post office, the upstairs offices. I actually bought a sign for \$5 "No Spraying". Proceeds from the sale of these signs goes towards BTA/BOLT, and the movement hopes to save the bee-population threatened by spraying against mosquitoes. The town of Boxford displays many of these signs!



## Steve Golden - Transcript

March 15, 2013

Phone call with Steve in Boston (National Park Service: River, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program)



- *Phone ringing*

“Hello, National Park service, this is Steve Golden.”

- *When did you 1<sup>st</sup> hear about the Bay Circuit?*

“Well, I think probably from when Al French got involved I wasn’t long after I’m afraid; so my roots are in there deep. Wonderful project. Tell me..etc.”

“Tell me what the product is and the audience.”

“Ok. Let’s chat for a little while.”

“When did I first hear about the Bay Circuit? Let’s see, I think it was probably, I was on a hike with Al French in NH – don’t remember the year, but it preceded the initial Bay Circuit meeting at AMC at Cabot Auditorium, which year was that meeting?”

The meeting was held in 1990, at the Cabot Auditorium on 4 Joy Street. It marked the first time money was appropriated to the Bay Circuit State project, the implementation of which had been called for in 1956, through State legislation. (*really?*)

“Al French had at that point been appointed as the Andover representative to the Bay Circuit Advisory Committee that was established by Mass D.E.M. Susan Ziegler was managing the program, and Bob Yaro was the one at the Headquarters level.”

“After meeting Al and talking with him in Andover about what he was doing, I started to think gosh, maybe it would be nice to include not just research on land use and planning issues, but developing a continuous foot path that might develop a stronger constituency for accomplishing some of the broader goals that the state had been working on. We presented the same idea, the same thought to Susan Ziegler who concurred that the two could complement each other. At the time the National Park Service, through its Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program was working with the Appalachian Mountain Club on a number of projects throughout the country in mainly the North-East supporting citizen based efforts to develop trails, protect rivers and Open Space. This seemed to be a good fit ... the key person at the Appalachian Mountain Club, said, ‘yeah we’d be willing to host the meeting, let’s invite’, and he had some ideas, we thought of course the Trustees, and a number of others that were in the [Bay Circuit]corridor, we of course included the State Department of Environmental Management (DEM) I think that the meeting resulted in a couple of things, one is that there ought to be a coalition that would continue to locate a continuous trail that would go from Ipswich to Duxbury, which was how we described it at the time and that we should try to launch an initial trek. It took us about a year or two to do that, I forget, **when was the first trek; you probably know that...**”

- ***“June, 1990”***

***this is where his tone gets lively***

**Momentarily dumbstruck, “Was it... was it that long ago? Well, ok, so... when push came to shove for the initial trek,** and we discussed who we were going to get to participate, I thought it would be a terrific way for *me* to get involved,” he chuckles, “So I got in. We recruited Ron McAdow, who was at the time, was he a SVT? Can’t remember, is Ron on your list?”

“*He is...*” and Steve goes on, “So it was Ron, Al and myself who with [logistic] help from local people, help from some of our Park Service staff did a continuous walk - bike - paddle throughout all the twenty-somewhat towns. And one of the things that happened as a result of that was that it was a certain insidious way of doing early planning, because it got everybody thinking about, well how can we have a continuous route; where are the best locations. So, I think it did launch some initial planning. The event also convinced me, and perhaps Al and the others that this is not just sort of a short cut connecting back yards, but this is a high quality recreation experience. It’s not too late as some may have thought. This still has enormous resources and recreational values.” He quickly adds, “The other thing that I think we learned was that the only way, and the best way to make this happen was through a network of committed volunteers of community after community. A top-down approach, you know, based on legislation that state or federal level wasn’t going to make this successful. What was needed really was a way to help empower the groups in each community that shared and were excited by this vision. Soon after that, Al started devoting a lot more of his time to creating the Bay Circuit Alliance, and to developing ehm I think we did the trek a few years after that I believe was entirely walking and I think we brought in through Al’s effort more and more assistance. The State during that period was forced to cut back on a lot of its programs.

I think that Bay Circuit was one that passed by the wayside, but what of course remained was this very vital idea: The continuous Bay Circuit Trail.”

“Al did the heavy lifting, he was on the road non-stop, going back and forth to communities and the Park Service and the Appalachian Mountain Club provided some staff assistance. Charlie Tracy from our staff [NPS] worked a lot more than I did with Al in developing community based organizations, and then the Appalachian Mountain Club hired a guy named Carl Demrow<sup>11</sup>, who worked also, we felt like we wanted to start getting people to visualize this by having sections of the trail that were completed, it could get more people excited. And so that ehm Al was working with Carl Demrow and integrate Charlie from our staff to get things up marked on the ground developing the infrastructure that would be be critical. Not that it would be continuous, but we weren’t going to wait for it to be continuous the whole route, we were going to get it established where we could.”

- *So you are the man behind the concept that a trail would support the greenway?*

“Right, [sighs] I think that Al held on to the original vision, which was this greenway. My sense had always been that the way to get to that greenway was by developing a trail that would give it both; recreational users and advocates, as well as some identity, instead of just a corridor. The two are not inconsistent, but my thought was to give priority to establishing the trail first.”

I heard others say that they thought Al French was the genius behind the trail to promote the greenway.

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<sup>11</sup> He did a lot with urban trails around Boston for AMC. He now lives up in Vermont and owns a consulting business: **Seven Oaks Consulting**, 202 Mason Rd, West Topsham, **VT**. Tel: 802-439-6773.

No, I think Al grasped straight away how important it was to empower people in each community to develop both trail, and then as a result of that, the greenway. And I think the trail was sort of the excuse for Al to work on that greenway, but I do feel that the two completely complementary and they both need to come at about the same time. I don't think it was genius, I think it was pretty obvious [laughs] Just, we...we had the time to do it."

- *Who came up with the name "Bay Circuit"? Was it Charles Eliot?*

"Yeah, I believe it was Charles Eliot. Frankly, I'm not sure when I first heard "Bay Circuit". I think I knew of the State program, but then it was Al when he mentioned what was going on in Andover and his involvement there, and feeling the frustrations that he felt and then I guess I felt with developing a plan, developing an exciting program. We both convinced each other that perhaps there was a need to really think through the potential of a continuous 200 mile trail that would connect all these communities, both through existing open space and be a strong argument for new open space. Then actually after we did the trek it became exceedingly clear that there is high potential for the region to develop this, *and* that there is enormous capacity in the communities and excitement about this."

- *You met Al during a hike in NH. Was that totally coincidental?*

"We both lived in Andover, but did not know each other. I even shopped at his store, at Moor & Mountain; I was there because of professional involvement through the National Park Service and had the opportunity to meet and walk with Al, and sometimes that is the best way to hatch a plan, isn't it, when you're walking."

- *What was a highlight? What stands out?*

“What stands out? That initial trek was a very important highlight in that what we learned was how feasible this concept was of a continuous recreational corridor, and how palpable the excitement was for it in the communities that it would pass through.”

“Seeing the dedication of AI through the years and then a certain way now the emergent role of the AMC and the Trustees of Reservations two of the strongest conservation organizations in the country; their embracing of this idea is very exciting.”

- *Even if everything is mostly positive, can you picture a dark moment, a low point or a **negative side**?*

**After a long silence, Steve determinately proclaims, “No,” and then, “It all looks good to me. It’s all meant to be. It may take a while, and I’m sure there are setbacks, but overall, we’ll figure it out.**

## Alan French - Transcript

March 20, 2013

At home in Andover [with video footage]:



“[laughs] ...I’m Alan French and I first became involved in the Bay Circuit approximately halfway [chuckles] in its history...it’s going on its **eightieth year as a project** and I first became involved in the late eighties, when it was a State Program, that was run by the Parks Department, or the Forest Department, now called DCR (Department of Conservation and Recreation) and at that time it was called the Department of Environmental Management (DEM), and they had been given the administration of the first funds that were appropriated for the project in the eighties as part of the State Open Space Bond issued. They had about \$ 3.5M to administer ...and the principle use, is a wonderful use, was acquisition, which I wasn’t involved in, but the southern terminus of the Bay Circuit trail, which is something called the Bay Farm in Duxbury, which is a salt marsh that was threatened with development and thanks to the Trust for Public Land and a woman a woman called Pine Dubois [Executive Director @ Jones River Watershed Association] whom I hope you’ll meet sometime; a wonderful volunteer down in Kingston. In Duxbury the State spent a good two thirds of that money to buy a property. I don’t

know how many acres it is but is right on the waterfront and so at the end of the Bay Circuit Trail you're right there on Kingston Bay, so..."

"Eh, the rest of it was put out in planning grants to the 50 towns...not everybody signed up...about 25 towns signed up for 2 or 3 thousand dollars to use ...sort of a carrot-and-stick; you got the money if you would include the Bay Circuit Program in your Open Space plan and many towns 25/28 or so towns did that so today you find them gathering dust all over the place but...for instance you found it in both Tewksbury and Billerica that were / are Bay Circuit communities. I got involved, because I live in Andover, which is a BC community, and I and a woman were the two representatives and went to a series of meetings that the State had sponsored. It was a **Top-Down** program at that point. The trail was a minor factor if any. I would say it was an exercise in land-use planning with a pretty heavy emphasis on open space zoning, which is quite frankly the original intent of the program when it was first proposed in 1929, etcetera etcetera, there is a long history. So it was really in the 80s when I became involved that the concept of a long distance trail emerged. So, actually, the next thing that happened is the State ran out of money for the program, totally...and in, I think February of 1990, there was a meeting at the Appalachian Mountain Club where the Commissioner Kendall of the State, essentially, he said he invited in the National Park Service Rivers and Trails program, I think to some extent they invited themselves in a little bit – which is alright - and he pretty much turned the program over to what the Park Service recommended as a grassroots **Bottom-Up** program with the emphasis on a long distance trail to build constituency for the program, as well as for its own right, but it wasn't really until 1990 that the idea being on a walk from Plum Island to Duxbury

emerged. Actually, I attended the meeting, not because anybody knew that I had been involved representing Andover. I was invited because I had an outfitting store and as everybody knows, you try to have a diversity of people in meetings, they wanted to have somebody of the corporate world and I am listed in the minutes of the meeting as Moor & Mountain proprietor, but in the mean (5:39) time I met a man named Steve Golden who works for the Park Service program, and we discovered ...serendipitously that we lived in the same town and he started talking about the Bay Circuit...trail, so by the time I attended the meeting I was interested and when we left the meeting, I remember them talking about the thing to do was to walk the Circuit.”

- *“Did you meet Steve Golden at your store?”*

“No! I met him at the Old Man of the Mountain in New Hampshire! [...] I remember standing by Echo Lake, when the Old Man of the Mountain was still the Old Man of the Mountain – he’s gone... I attended an event at which the Governor of New Hampshire held sort of a stump speech (about how wonderful the White Mountains I guess were) and I was just by chance standing next to Steve Golden and we (both were kind of bored and) started talking to each other, and discovered that we lived in the same town. That’s when I met him. So **that’s where it started** and during the meeting at the AMC, at the Cabot [Auditorium] and I have all chapter and verse; I have the letter inviting me... There were probably 30 organizations at that meeting, the same ones that had been invited by the State... [flaps hands on armrests of the Adirondack chair he sits in]... till the changeover was made [from DEM or Park Service to Alliance?], but during that meeting they started talking about a hike. At the end of the meeting I thought there’d be 20 or 30 people signing up, as it sounded like an interesting thing to do, which was to go from

[8.01] one end to the other, at that time, by bike, by canoe, by shanks mare – which is walking...and I remember going up afterwards to Steve asking, **“Is there any room for an old geezer on this...”**, and it turned out, **there were only three of us that signed up**, and one was Steve, and the other was me, and the third was Ron McAdow. Charlie Tracy [NPS] was involved, but strictly speaking, he was more on the support although he walked a lot of the trek, so I remember the last day, the four of us, Charlie and Steve and I and Ron, walked in Duxbury to Bay Farm, where a big tent was set up. I also have the video 9.01...of that whole trek, which was organized by Ron McAdow. He was at that time in the video field... and also wrote a wonderful guide, still in print, about the Sudbury and the Assabet River, and also the Charles River, there are two of them... but he narrated this video, and on that DVD you’ll see Mary, my wife and my kids and me, but really not in a very prominent [way], because at that point I wasn’t very involved except that I was going on the trek, so there’ll be shots, but Ron narrated it all, he got several cable TV guys to do it in sections, and it was well done.”

“So, that’s how I got involved. And then, at the end of trek one, it was in June 1990, ten days I think, whatever. Again: There was no knowledge of the route; sometimes we would canoe down the rivers in the opposite direction. It wasn’t geographically...eh... and I remember a lot of it was by bike. But afterwards people would come out of the woodwork and say, “We thought the program was dead”, so Steve Golden and Charlie [Tracy] were absolutely right. **Just getting out in the field [the trek] provided the spark that revived people’s interest and talk that “the program is not dead” and at the end of it, people said, “Hey, this is something good, and fairly soon they said, “Let’s create an organization”**, I think for a while it was informal, I think the 2<sup>nd</sup> trek

was the next year, fairly soon they thought that it should be formalized as an organization. After about a year of being an informal group of individuals largely shepherded by a Park Service who contributed a full man year for three years of support in the person of Charlie Tracy basically. I just remembered at some point people said Wow we got to incorporate a committee and at that point somebody asked me to do it. The Alliance, in March, May (?)1992. I did start a business with a partner, which is Moor & Mountain, but I never incorporated [a corporation as a legal entity that is effectively recognized as a person under the law. The corporation may be a business, a non-profit organization, sports club, or a government of a new city or town]. Fortunately I had a lot of help. Wes Ward handed me the bylaws of the Boston Green Space Alliance, which doesn't exist anymore now but had some of the similarities with the grassroots organization, you know; Not a lot of centralized aspects to the bylaws. So I took those bylaws and just started and we had a...I was able to secure pro bono legal help from a prominent law firm in Boston, which certainly is a big help if you haven't done it before. So they took me through the process of applying for tax exempt status; the IRS, and... We had the first meeting, I remember the incorporators met in Concord at the [13.20] Buttrick house, 'by the rude bridge that arched the flood...'

[On Independence Day, July 4, 1837, the memorial was dedicated, an event for which Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote his "Concord Hymn". The first and best known, of the four stanzas of this poem is:

*By the rude bridge that arched the flood,  
 Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,  
 Here once the embattled farmers stood  
 And fired the shot heard round the world.]*

**“And we sat out on the porch of the Buttrick House and did the incorporation, and then from then it just took off.** Our first annual meeting was at the Cabot Auditorium – I think, maybe not. I lose some of the details, although I have plenty of back-up. I have a truck load of files - But that’s pretty much how I got involved.”

- *So when did you hear the words ‘Bay Circuit’ for the first time?*

“You kind of assume you’ve always known about the Bay Circuit. I don’t think I did really until the 1990s, until the formation of the Alliance, which led me into...at some point I heard about Larry Anderson for example. I got interested in Benton MacKaye and I’ve always been interested in history. I know that fairly early I must have known about it because I invited Larry to give an address at the kickoff of a trek. It might or might not have been the first one, [14.59] it might have been trek two, we had an average of one a year for quite a while, of various formats, not always the full route, sometimes two ends to the middle – but he did give that address; concentrated on the role of Benton MacKaye in the concept of the Bay Circuit, and he actually had more than just a conceptual role. His role was to some extent eclipsed [diminished / obscured / surpassed] by the Boston Brahmins, the Eliots, all three of the Eliots, which were very prominent in the original concept. The Trustees of Reservations, in 1937, when they proposed the ehm...there’s a lot of history, which...But Benton MacKaye himself has [15.58] a fascinating history and Larry not only did that address but is the definitive - in my opinion - biographer of Benton MacKaye, I have a copy, so I didn’t know, but the Bay Circuit must have been a very easy name to pick; it already existed, you see, it was an entity that was created legislatively in 1956. Now we can spend all morning on history, but basically, that’s when it was an entity, called the Bay Circuit of fifty towns, and we

have the legislation which is available...so by the time Steve Golden and Charlie Tracy got involved it was a natural not to throw away that. The fact that the State was no longer administrating the program didn't mean that the Bay Circuit ended as a program, so it was a no-brainer that the name of the Committee would be the Bay Circuit and then... but instead of 'Committee' we picked 'Alliance'. I think that's important because there are different committees... An alliance implies a group of organizations; a coalition would be another ... we could've called it the Bay Circuit Coalition, but to differentiate it from other conservation organizations, which are termed membership organizations... and right in the beginning that was an issue to be resolved in order to make it easy for the existing conservation membership organizations to participate (18.07) in a new effort and not feel threatened by another competitor for funds, So, that was very much in the minds when we founded the Alliance that we'd make it clear that the Alliance members - not only the four State wide members of the Appalachian Mountain Club, The Trustees of Reservations, Mass Audubon, and the Trust for Public Land; if they backed this new group would not feel threatened in terms of competition for membership – a very real and understandable concern. I remember the first time I met Wes Ward: He came over from the Headquarters, which were over in Beverly at that time and he came over to my store and he tells me afterwards, he used the term the New Boy on the Block, nobody knew who this Bay Circuit, who was this Al French, you know. He came into the store and became a very wonderful friend, an advisor and mentor of the whole project. We [The Bay Circuit Alliance] had individual members, because some of the individuals really pulled their weight, like Tom Horth, for instance, was not representing a particular

organization but had a tremendous amount to offer, so we had the ability to have the individual members but we didn't stress that."

[Bay State is the nick name of Massachusetts because of its proximity several large bays. The "Old Colony State" refers to the original Plymouth colony].

"Bay has always been associated with Massachusetts; Bay State. But I would just have to surmise [guess]... I'm sure Larry Anderson might have the answer to that, but it would seem to me very likely that when Benton MacKaye and Charles Eliot...Ask Larry - the son. I bet they included 'Bay' just because of Bay State, but they didn't want to say the Bay State Trail; they wanted the Circuit, that's very much an idea which was part of the greenway idea and so they came up with Bay Circuit; it was not a trail, it was The Bay Circuit. Not a 'band of Open Space' – I wish it were all open space. **A band of – initially - fifty towns that included a lot of farmland, but with an expanding population was threatened with development. If not preserved as much as possible of the farm land and the open land, there'd be no place for the people in the, what you might call the (inner) Emerald Necklace system, a place to recreate, which was the original kernel of the concept, which goes back to Olmsted and people working in his office; the Eliots,** and there are other people – I don't have their names right here. That's in the history, the Governor's Committee on the Needs and Uses of Open Space, back in 1929 – that's where 'Bay' came in."

- *What was a highlight?*

"Yes, there...it is hard to... there are two highlights I remember and I will prioritize. Both of them are times when I walked the whole circuit, and the one that I remember most is when my wife Mary retired from the school system in Andover, where she was Special

Needs Director. I didn't have to urge her, I remember her saying, "now that I'm retired I'd really like to enjoy the Bay Circuit with you", and I just, it was wonderful, so in 1997 [later corrected as 1998] I think we just planned and took off for 14 [21?] days or so, by our selves, and did the whole thing and I have **notes of the trip** and so forth and that stands out in my mind as the best thing that ever happened to me with the Bay Circuit; to have fourteen days or more or whatever it was, with somebody you love so deeply with no telephones [or other distractions]. We had hoped to be able to do it without cars, but it didn't work out that way, so we ended up doing a lot of car-spotting 23:50, but even so, we stayed in B&Bs and with friends, relatives, but I just remember them... we'll never ever forget it, and something that by projection **I hope that recounting this will encourage other people that as close to Boston, near where you live, that is available to people of any income level** really, although you do have to find the vacation time but you can even do it on pieces and so forth...that's it, that's number one."

"Number two would be when I did it in 2007 I did it by myself, and that certainly was a very memorable experience. 25:05 And again something that hopefully could be a model...and I think it is already, I can tell from all the emails and telephones and letters that I've fielded over the twenty years, not the whole twenty-five years, but I'd say in the last ten years when the trail has been virtually available to be used... people react favorably to that."

- *The only person I talked to so far, who claimed not to care for walking yet embraces the Bay Circuit, is Susan Ziegler.*

“Susan Ziegler led the program with Leslie Luchonok and, particularly when the State took over, she reflected the original intent of the Eliots: that it would provide space for recreation, but that it essentially was Land Use Planning. Susan Ziegler and Leslie Luchonok were in the Long Term Planning for the State and so it’s not unusual that they made great contributions, and still do. I haven’t talked to Susan in probably twenty years. She did a lot of the original mapping; she was a pioneer in the electronic mapping and she did the **original GIS** for the DEM and was very helpful when I needed maps...she would figure it out how to get them. I have a lot; she did them through her department.”

- *Oh. I talked to her, but we didn’t discuss GIS mapping...*
- *What would you consider a negative experience or low point?*

“That’s a real hard one, because I’ve been so fortunate. I would say, not by my doing, but by serendipity, the Bay Circuit for me has been a so much more getting out of it than what I put into it. It’s a part of my life I’m very grateful for ...if I look back on it ...downers, there weren’t very many. I do remember one, and I do have a regret; I’ve associated myself with a lot of people who have done land protection, and I wish almost if I had another career that I might do that because I think it’s so satisfying to be able to say that you have preserved a piece of land either because you own it and preserve it, or because you have the skills to do the negotiations, and as I look back I have not been able to do that, I think the Program and to some extent my work in the Program has helped in the preservation of land, over 4,000 acres near the trail 28:51, but I can’t say... I got close one time with 11 acres, in Andover, but that’s another story. However, I had a downer: There was a cranberry bog in Hanson that Phil Clemens knew about and

it was in the early stages of trying to get the Bay Circuit trail through what we called the Terra Incognita, the Southern tier of towns, the Bridgewater, Hanson, Halifax, and so forth, and in the Town of Hanson, right behind Town Hall is a 29:33 beautiful lake and then south of that before you get to 106 there was a cranberry bog and it got acquired by (a man named Mr. Ritter who is still alive and he owns a lot of golf courses in the area) a wealthy man, and before he acquired it, there was an opening for it being purchased for the Bay Circuit. It was in the hands of the bank. A local bank had foreclosed on the cranberry bog owner, and I thirsted after that property – and so did everybody. And I went to both the Trust for Public Land, and The Trustees of Reservations. Wes Ward came down, and I believe the asking price was \$1.5M that the bank wanted for it and I think we all thought that there was room in there, but... TPL [the Trust for Public Lands] and Wes [TToR], they went down there and - bless them, they're professionals, and they evaluate values and they said, "Al, we know you want this for the Bay Circuit, but... far too much money...", and I did everything I could to 'sell' it, you know, promote it. And in the end it went for \$600,000 to Mr. Ritter."

- *Did you have a good contact with him?*

"No! I had foul language on the telephone from him, I tried to contact him, "he's \*Al, mumbles audibly, but under his breath\* "he's a tough son of a gun, he cussed me out when I tried to talk to him". I don't blame him; I didn't have the money. He's still alive. And, now, the good news! That was the downer, but the good news is, it's still in play; it hasn't yet been built on. So every time I see Wes Ward and David Santomenna, I remind them of the bogs there, because I think that's still a possibility. Those cranberry bogs are no longer operating."

“Although it’s recovered now, for a while the whole cranberry bog industry went south [went down] due to the price and competition from the Mid West bog owners, which turned out good for the cause of land protection and the Bay Circuit trail. ..a lot of family owned bogs were going out of business.”

“I had I tried going to the Cape Cod cooperative, you know [32:31](#), the Ocean Spray. Worming my way into a Directors’ meeting and I made a presentation, did my dog and pony show, and tried to get them to work with the Alliance in negotiating if not purchase at least easements for the trail, and for very good reasons, as business people, they were polite, but ‘No Way’. But then the industry went south and all of a sudden they wanted to get rid of the land and what happened was, because of the water rights that are involved in cranberry [culture], the municipalities in the area began snapping them up. So while I couldn’t make it happen, a lot of the bogs have been preserved and whether it’s in Hanson or the Bridgewater, Duxbury: Beautiful trails for the Bay Circuit go through there. The biggest one was when the largest cranberry bog in the world, it came on the market, owned by the Northland Cranberry company,...probably about 8 years ago, and I remember Phil Clemens and I and people did a tremendous organizational effort. We didn’t have the money, but it was controversial: The State came in to negotiate, but then the local officials, particularly the Assessors who thought they would lose tax revenue, it got bound up and we were able to, not dictate the terms, but I remember meeting in a church, in Phil Clemons’ church; it was like the days of the Sit-ins in the South [non-violent protests against segregation in the 60s]. A whole group of wonderful people figuring out, “how can we get a thousand signatures in a week or two”, which we did, not telling them how to do it not saying, “settle, settle, this is

important”, and they did and it’s now a park called Burrage Pond Wildlife Management Area. The Indian Crossways, which is a dike, built...- you couldn’t do it these days with environmental regulation...and the Bay Circuit goes right through the middle of this 1,600 acre cranberry bog. The Division of Fisheries and Wildlife [mass.wildlife] is managing it as a demonstration. A section is leased out to demonstrate the cranberry culture. It’s really funny; back in the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> trek, Charlie Tracy and somebody from the AMC (Sarah) got down into the Bridgewater and Hanson area and somehow got on the dike and they reported back, “I don’t know how we can possibly include this in the Bay Circuit; it doesn’t seem to go anywhere, but wouldn’t it be wonderful, and that’s in 1991 I think. And here, 20 years later, it happens – that’s a good one.”

- *“So you’re trying to tell a downer, but it’s really not.*
- *What haven’t I asked yet?*

“Not just you, it’s important for anybody to ask – not just me – but all the people involved in the new... past, present, future to say, what, it’s been now 60 years... let’s double it: In 50 to 100 years: What will be, or what would we / they like the impact of the Bay Circuit to be. Look back all the way to 1929. Looking at the whole program; with its first emphasis on land protection and zoning...whatever, the whole schmear up till the day, up until a hundred years: a) if somebody would care to predict, or instead of predict, to say, ‘This is what I would like’. I don’t think it should be just me, but I do have an answer for it, which is not new to anybody that knows me, I don’t think, but I think it should be said that the legacy of the program, if it is the best legacy, would be not as a recreational trail available to mostly suburban and well-off people for recreation, for all of its benefits of [physical] health and mental health, and so forth, but that the legacy

would be that the trail *and* the associated greenways – somebody just added an ‘s’ to greenway, which I think is a wonderful thing to imply that there is no such thing as one Bay Circuit greenway, because a lot of it is pavement, but it can be a series of greenways, which is one of Benton MacKaye’s concepts, **that the associated protected space in all the towns, not just the 39:01 34 towns that are connected, but even in the towns that don’t host the Bay Circuit Trail, or are only connected to it, like the Inner Emerald Necklace, that it’d be used by people of all income, but mostly as a way to be close to nature.** And I think that’s the question that needs to be asked everybody. I answer it my way. Others answer it other ways.”

- *40:00 I ask about seeming disagreements among Olmsted / Eliot / MacKaye, even though together they are at the root of the Bay Circuit idea (example: Benton calls landscape architects ‘pompous’.*

[irrelevant - about an irreverent book (40:23 – 41:07)]

“...To get into the meat of your question: It’s more Benton MacKaye, because there’s a real dichotomy; he was a tragic character due to his family life and his politics and his career, but he rose above that – that is why he *is* my hero. But he was regarded by the Eliots and the people who were more accepted in the Landscape Architecture area Olmsteds (Boston Brahmins) were more accepted and they regarded him as ‘far out’ [weird / unconventional], a communist, and at some point he and his wife probably were. People involved in conservation were primarily well educated, high income, well motivated to use their income and their philanthropy which is wonderful, but **Benton MacKaye was kind of a renegade and he rubbed a lot of people the wrong way and it’s natural to resist. So occasionally you will find him lashing out**

**but...because they didn't buy his ideas that were too far out. And in fact the ideas of the Eliots were too far out for a long period of time. That's why you have to be patient. Look how many years just went by and thank goodness for Charles Eliot II who kept pushing pushing pushing, but he didn't get results for many many years.** The people with the money and the power would listen to him and say, "nice guy Charley" and so forth, and eventually he worked on them so hard that in 1956 they gave him what he wanted, but they didn't give him any money. From '56 All the way to 1980! If it hadn't been for Charles Eliot II we wouldn't have had... and actually Robert Yaro, when you talk to him...it turns out that the money, the \$3.5M. It looks like Yaro was working for the State on the inside and pretty much slipped it into the Open Space Bond bill, which does happen...so you had professionals working for the State that were well motivated...I'm getting off your question except to say that he [Benton MacKaye] was marginalized by them. I will say as a matter of opinion that most of his ideas, while they were far out, are damn right, and there are many examples: Look at Rte 128. In 1930, Rte 128 was first proposed. I have the Boston Globe with an article on the proposal; instead of it being just a congested highway, it would be a wide belt with highways, but surrounding open space, and if that had been adopted at the time, how much better would things be today. He had other ideas, not related to the Bay Circuit, that were controversial when he worked for Roosevelt [FDR] in the Brain Trust. He eventually was fired by Roosevelt, because he was so abrasive. Anyway, he's a hero of mine. I've had a wonderful opportunity of seeing a video of him several months before he died, and he was just as smart, just this crackerjack and he rose above the tragedies in his life. His wife committed suicide by jumping in the East River. I mean, we can go...And he took a

lot of heat, but he didn't let it get him down. His concept for the Appalachian Trail was far different than the result, [46:09?] although it's coming back to it, his concept was a belt of protected space, not just a trail, but he didn't let that get him down, and he retired to Shirley Center, and I've been there. And he participated in things, right up to the very end."

- *You met him?*

[46:34-46:55 about meeting others at so-called pilgrimages, with for example Marion Stoddart, who preserved the Nashua River and knew him personally]

"I did not meet him. But I met people who knew him. But he died in 1975. I did know Charles Eliot II. I met him, because he died in 1992, and I have a lot of letters from him criticizing the concept of the trail \*chuckles\* I kept trying to get back and he did listen to me, but didn't respond, because I was not the only one saying that the trail is going to create what you want, because it'll create voters constituency for protecting the space. But he was very forceful as everybody will tell you [chuckles]."

- *I mention that Susan Ziegler's 'low-point' was the intimidation she experienced from Charles Eliot II. But he was so passionate!*

Al laughs, and says, "Well yes, but he had a sense of humor too: I remember at the kick-off, there was a little bit of a controversy between where is the terminus of the Bay Circuit in the North; is it Plum Island or Crane Beach, but he gave a talk at the kick-off of one of our treks, at Crane Beach or it was when he spoke in Concord during the same trek as we went around, but I remember him saying: 'You got to get going, I'm 90-whatever years old, I want to get this thing done before I die.'"

“He spent most of his life working for The Trustees. He was the third secretary; the first was another Eliot, who died in his thirties, and then the the President of Harvard Eliot took over briefly as the secretary of the Trustees, and then Charles Eliot II moved into the slot.”

“I call them in my history: Professor Eliot, which is actually Charles Eliot 2<sup>nd</sup>; Landscape Architect Eliot, which is the first Charles Eliot, who was a professional working for Olmsted; and then President Eliot, who was President of Harvard University, whose involvement in the Bay Circuit was less, than the other two. It’s hard to get them straight. There’s also something about Charles Eliot 2nd; he was ready to kill people that used the term ‘junior’. There is no Charles Eliot Jr. He doesn’t exist. People kept trying to say that.”

*- My questions are done. [Marc Chalufour has some more. He explains his preferences, including asking for AI to **introduce himself** briefly (50:06-51:24)]*

*- What drew you in, to become as involved as you became in this project?*

[Initially lost for words, AI ponders the question; tries two (totally different) starts and opts for yet another, third answer]:

“(52:10)I’m a fugitive from the corporate world; was trained as a business man, but in 1968, with a partner left the large scale corporate world and founded a business that wasn’t exclusively to do with trails, but had to do with ‘small’, with leisure time, and ultimately concentrated on the enjoyment of the outdoors, and I was conditioned therefore to become interested like Steve Golden and others, when I heard about the Bay Circuit first, and it sucked me in [chuckles] .”

- *Marlies' comments: "Twenty years after you fled the corporate world?! '68 – '88?"*

“(53:04) Well in '68 I founded Moor and Mountain, yes. I left the corporate world maybe three years, because we moonlighted [to have a second job in addition to one's regular employment] for a while. I had a partner until 1975. We were both employed in, what you might call the conventional medium to large scale corporate world, and we were dissatisfied with what it did to our life style, and we wanted a form of business, which would satisfy our objectives, and strong in those objectives was leisure time combined with the outdoors, so, to start we quickly chose the Outdoor Equipment retail business from among four, five product lines. And I think I was conditioned by that when I heard about the Bay Circuit and decided to become involved”.

- *(Marc) And how much time would you say you physically spent on the trail, or paddling, on the Circuit, over those 25 years?*

“(54:39) In the time that I spent, I would include not just physically being on the trail, paddling or hiking, but I use the term 'Halftime' as a great average, because you can't be working on this kind of project on a very constrained basis; it can't be scheduled, but since 1990 I spent half my working hours on the program.”

- *(Marc) **What about in terms of recreating; of actually just enjoying...?***

**[laughs] “Ha! I don't separate the two.”**

“Obviously a lot of what's done is not particularly...I think I've been able to interface with a lot of different forces in addition to recreating myself and being with people who like to recreate. I've also been able somehow to **interface** successfully, I believe with people who have no particular interest in the outdoors but have the power to help a project like

the Bay Circuit, such as State legislators, corporate leaders, town and community leaders, Boards of Selectmen – I've served as a member of the Board of Selectman in my town, so I have some experience. But to answer your question: At least half the halftime is not out on the trail; you spend a lot of time going to meetings...but how can you separate it, often when you go out to meet with someone, you walk, and you enjoy it. I still do that.”

- *[interruption by Marlies, quoting ““I am convinced,” said Thoreau, “both by faith and experience, that to maintain one’s self on this earth is not a hardship but a pastime....Let not to get a living be thy trade, but thy sport.” We have here the essence of the meaning of living: to maintaining ourselves on this earth not as toil and hardship but as a sport and quest. (Benton MacKaye in the New Exploration)”]*

“It certainly is fun, and Charles Tracy has one I remember: He continually emphasizes that when talking to volunteers or other people: ‘It’s got to be fun,’ and he’s right: It is fun.”

- *(Marc) Could you describe your personal favorite spot on the Bay Circuit Trail?*

“I cannot select one spot. I but I will select one spot, but it’s not legitimate: the Ward Reservation in Andover, for a number of reasons. Not just because of its Bay Circuit associations. It’s a total mix of: My life, my family, my wife ... *and* the Bay Circuit. It happens to be the first, highest point of the Bay Circuit; and the trail goes through that”.

- *(Marc) And you spoke of what you hope the legacy of the Bay Circuit will be. What do you think the legacy of the Bay Circuit Alliance’s two decades of work is at this point?*

“Isn’t that the same question? (58:33) No, rephrase it”.

- (Marc) Well, *In my mind, there's still work being done. When you look at a snapshot of where it is now, how would you characterize the legacy of what the Bay Circuit Alliance has done up to this point.*

"Ah! What has been done, rather than what it will do in the future. The Bay Circuit Alliance conceived of by a number of people other than myself for sure, has more than pulled its weight, in terms of advancing the ideals and the objectives and the dreams of the Bay Circuit Program".

- (Marlies) *You've been a real recruiter? No? You meet somebody and you put them to work... Well, it's good, it's inspiring.*

[After a full hour inquisition-like grilling, Al refrains from replying, apart from offering an apologetic chuckle]

- (Marc) *On that note, I'm curious to know, when you come across someone who's not familiar with the Bay Circuit, how do you introduce it to them?*

"... Very poorly. I over... [he hesitates; laughs] ... I know what I do wrong. I gush. I come on too strong. I may have gotten better over the past 25 years, but I still have a problem with that. On the other hand, I stand by what I said earlier: I don't know why, but I'm not a star salesman, I never was in the corporate world, I mean my field is finance and stuff like that. I think when you have a product as saleable as the Bay Circuit, then, if you're motivated, which I have been, it's easy, and I think that comes across to people. And the second thing I would say is that I have the facility to be like a chameleon; I can be friendly with a wide variety of people from different backgrounds, so that somehow **I'm able to get across what I'm trying to [say], but it's always too verbose [chuckles again].**

## Ron McAdow - Transcript

March 18, 2013

Wolbach Farm, Headquarters Sudbury Valley Trustees in Sudbury, MA



Executive Director of the Sudbury Valley Trustees<sup>12</sup> and also the President of the Bay Circuit Alliance Board of Directors.

“My Name is Ron McAdow, I live in Lincoln, Massachusetts which is right on the Bay Circuit trail it goes right by, into my driveway. In about 1989, I finished writing a book for Sudbury Valley Trustees – I didn’t work here at that time, but I was doing various writing projects for them as a free lance writer and member of SVT [gets up to grab a copy of *The Concord Sudbury and Assabet Rivers*] and we produced a guide to canoeing the Concord, Sudbury and Assabet Rivers. **I had turned in the manuscript and my phone rang one day, and a person who worked here in the office; a woman who had done the maps for this book said, “Ron have you heard about the Bay Circuit?” and I said “No!” – so I remember it pretty clearly even with allowances for the fog of the past...and this is how I remember it: She said, “Well there’s a Bay Circuit,**

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<sup>12</sup> Until August 1, 2013

**and they're about to have a trek. It goes all around Boston, and they're going to have this trek and we think you ought to go.** I guess that must have been early 1990, because I think I heard it not too long before the actual trek in 1990. June. It might have been a couple of months before that. And I was given to understand what that trek was like and I didn't have anything else particularly in my calendar...maybe my guide book writing thing would come in handy with the Bay Circuit, or it seemed kind of up my alley, so I was signed up to more or less represent Sudbury Valley Trustees on that Bay Circuit trek. I was told to go on to the North Shore, we were at Crane Beach; there was an opening ceremony and various dignitaries were there and a pretty big crowd of people, and then we just marched off and we walked all day long, starting on our North to South route. That day was a North to South hike; a pretty long hike and...the next day I showed up for the next segment too. After that there were canoeing segments, ...and it was known about my book coming out, so I was the guide for the canoeing segment was, it went with the current of the river, so it started farther down this way here in Sudbury and ... we paddled up to where it ended the day before. The next day was bicycling and finally reached the South Shore after, I don't know, five or six days into this trek. At the end, it was only three of us that had done the whole thing. Charlie Tracy was helping with the Park Service – I count Charlie as the fourth. **History should record Charlie as the fourth. He was supporting the end-to-end-ers; it was Al French and me and Steve Golden.** The first few days I didn't really know, talk to Steve or Al much, but as time went on I got acquainted with them – so that was my introduction to the Bay Circuit.

I don't remember how the logistics were handled. I don't remember it being something that I had to deal with, but maybe people did their own shuttles, I did a lot of paddling in those days and so canoe shuttling wouldn't have been any ... I don't remember.

- *From then on you've always been heavily involved?*

"No! It's been more intermittent than that. I wouldn't say I've always been heavily involved. Al ended up organizing the Bay Circuit Alliance, and I was involved as a founding incorporator at the founding of the Bay Circuit Alliance. He produced the paper that showed that I was. So I was involved early on, but then I got swept up in my career which was then in education and I wasn't heavily involved for some years and then I came to work for Sudbury Valley Trustees, ten years ago, and then I got back involved. Because of my previous history it was something that I didn't delegate; I did it myself in terms of going to the Executive Committee meetings and I was at a series of Executive Committee meetings that tried to come to grips with Al's question about permanence of the Alliance, and how things could be set up so that it would continue after Al wasn't really keeping it going anymore and now I'm the most involved than I have been in a long time. I'm the Chair [on the Board of Directors]."

- *[I chuckle] Yeah! You are very involved! [7:14] ...And from all the time that you've been involved with the Bay Circuit, what would you consider the highlight; or the one thing that kept you going...*

"I don't think it's a concrete thing. It's the way that the idea of a pedestrian way and a belt of green space... A pedestrian way that connects conservation spaces in that arc around the metropolitan area catches people's imagination – it caught my imagination, and then it catches other people's imagination. ...The fact of having been on that trek [in

1991] made me feel connected to it, but I noticed in such good years, that it gathers unto itself people who want to make it a reality because in this hi-tech age of mechanical transportation and automobiles, people really like that idea that, ‘if I wanted to, I could walk all that way.’ [laughs].” [8:27]

“ At the time of the trek there was no trail of course, there were only pieces of things that could be a Bay Circuit trail, and the Bay Circuit Alliance brought the trail into reality. The Park Service pointed the way to some extent, and Al picked up and led a process and I do feel that – and this is probably an answer to your question: Another connection I feel with the trail is – and I don’t want to make a grand claim here, but I’ll confess since you asking me: I think that I have had a part in the root of the trail; I moved at that time to Southborough which is...the Mass Turnpike goes through Southborough, and I was on the Southborough Open Land Foundation; in the local Land Trust there, and the President of that was a wonderful man, since deceased, named Peter Kallander. Peter had lived in Southborough forever. He was an airline pilot; he had a distinguished career as a commercial pilot and he was also a private pilot, so one of the pleasures of – when I was working on the river books, Peter took me up ... (he was the President and I was his little staff person for some time, so he and I were making the Southborough Open Land Foundation happen) ... It was really a pleasure to work with Peter Kallander, everybody always...Well, he would take me up in his plane ... Now, I’m...I would be a scaredy cat about going up in small planes, but Pete had the stuff...of this manner of competence and soothing, so from his house we walked over to his little hangar, and he raised the door and rolled out this little plane and then he went up the drumlin that was his runway and he turned around and he took off of this drumlin and he flew me so that I

could take areal pictures of the river that I was – for my slide show that I used to promote my guide books – I did one of the Charles River too - and so I got this birds-eye view of the world with Pete and it was just fantastic, and I got all these great pictures that would supplement other pictures from on the water. There was no Google Earth at that point so this was the best. So Pete knew the world from the sky and he knew Southborough pretty well, so when I told him about this Bay Circuit thing it got to work in his head, and he figured out and showed me from his plane where he thought the trail could cross... it had to get across this horrible corridor of Rte 30, Rte 9 and the Massachusetts Turnpike, and he knew of a discontinued town way, called Lamb Hill Road on the corner of Southborough that you could get on from Rte 30, and walk up to ... near the overpass over route 9, and then he and I worked out a transit of this gully, of **this little canyon which is now at the Staples Headquarters, but there was no Staples Headquarters then; it was a piece of open land** and when you came out the other end of this gully, you were right by the Turnpike, right by a street crossing with a sidewalk, so I proposed, I had the privilege then of proposing this transit and that became the reality of the crossing ... so Al French then, I helped, I met with the Staples when they took that property, but gradually, bit by bit, over the years that has become a reality and we had a dedication of that stretch of the trail, a few years ago, that was a culmination of that. We're in the middle here – if the Bay Circuit is capital letter C, we're right in the middle of it on the Western part of the thing and it's the major East-West routes that had to be crossed, so that was a challenge; the routing of it.”

- *You see that as a highlight?*

“Mhm.”

- *You mentioned that the idea that you can ‘walk’ it catches the imagination. Why don’t we go back to the triathlon; canoe / bike / walk – since it solves problems such as crossing wetlands and highways?*

“Well, I don’t know about the canoeing part, but I think that the cycling ... that having a cycle route option - it already exists - I think that would be a good idea, because then you really could go from one bed & breakfast to another and do an end-to-end thing that would be fun for a lot more people who probably wouldn’t hoof it [=walk] the whole way, and as you say, because of the nature of the infrastructure here in suburban Boston, there are always going to be challenges with the foot. The utilities don’t all want to give permission; there are always going to be some complications for the foot path that the bikes would be a way around – or a canoe.”

“When we look into the future about different ways to experience the Bay Circuit, keeping in mind other modes of transportation, other than pedestrian, is probably important.”

- *The story of Staples Headquarters sounds familiar; I was told it as being an example of how business entities can be very helpful with securing easements.*

[15:57] “Good!... It took a long time...”

- *[About whether Tom Horth flew planes] (irrelevant)[16:40]*
- *Lowpoint?*

[Long silence]...” I think it’s a little negative when you’re trying to follow the maps to walk a Bay Circuit segment and you find yourself on roads or on the edge of a road for a long time, or longer than you wish and it just seems long [17:25] until you get back to a place that goes into the woods. So, for me a negative is ... Wouldn’t it be nice if you could –

like the Appalachian Trail - virtually be in natural land the whole way, or mostly all the way...it's hard not to compare - say - your Appalachian Trail experiences with the Bay Circuit Trail, and obviously you don't have the same kind of situations. Too much exposure to automobiles is a negative; I haven't had a kind of emotional type of negative experience – it been very positive.”

*[18:20] [irrelevant. I mention Ziegler's negative experience – no reaction.]*

*[18:45]* “I think he [Charles Eliot II] spoke at the first, at that Bay Circuit step-off thing, he was there, and I think I have seen him a couple of times before he died. I get the impression that there was certain amount of elitism there.”

*[19:12] [irrelevant. I seek information about Larry Eliot. Ron researches on his computer..].*

“Al organized a retreat last year, and a guy there showed a **slide presentation** about the history of all this and he sent that to me – so he might know...Larry Anderson is his name.”

*[24:14]* “Al has done multiple treks in between, one time he stayed here in Wolbach Farm; he stayed at my house in Southborough. Those treks symbolize the unbelievable energy and enthusiasm that he has brought to this project. I was so glad that they dedicated the plaque to him last year, he has ... I mean I worked with Susan Ziegler back in those times around the first trek and Steve Golden and Charlie; a lot of people have been involved at the level of mine or greater than mine: Ed Becker... all the people you're talking to, but as far as I know, Al just is head and shoulders above everybody else, and his determination to make this happen in a way that everyone honors ...that's huge and then his companionship with his wife and her involvement in it, and his wish to

have her memory honored...I mean his nest egg is being dedicated to the perpetuation of this. It's so total and Al is inspiring, because as a businessman he did Outdoor Clothing I just know that the people that traded at his store were getting absolutely good value, they were dealing with an honorable person who really probably just saw his merchandise like we do here at the Sudbury Valley of Trustees; trying to find a way to make it possible for people to connect to nature, Al felt the same way about his merchandise in his store and then the Bay Circuit Trail was another outlet for him, so he's an inspiring person in his dedication to this cause."

[26:44]

## Carl Demrow - Transcript

May 30 , 2013

Phone call with Carl in West Topsham, VT



*Phone ringing*

“Hello this is Carl...(introduction)... [1:48]...So what do you want to know?”

- *I have the four questions which I mentioned, but it's basically about talking to the people who were instrumental during the inception of the Bay Circuit Alliance, and I think you were involved a little bit sooner than that.*

“Yeah, I got involved before the Alliance was incorporated; I think that my – let's see, I'm trying to get the chronology right here...I got hired by AMC in February of '91, and my job at that point was – well I had a couple of different parts; one was doing Bay Circuit stuff, and the part with Bay Circuit at that point was organizing a Bay Circuit trek. I did that, and the trek that year was a lot of fun. For me, the thing that was so great about it was that it was – I'd been a school teacher and I wanted to do trail work full time, and I wanted to work for AMC, and I'd been trying to get work - I was renting

condos to people up in Vermont at the time. They asked me to come down there and take that job – **it was sort of out of the blue, and it was perfect.** And then they said, ‘So we want you to work on the Bay Circuit trail, and you’re going to work for this guy from the Park Service, named Charlie Tracy’, and I already knew Charlie, I’d known Charlie for six years, we were already friends, and I didn’t even know...it was just completely out of the blue. So I got to work with Charlie and with Steve [Golden] who was great and Al French lived in my home town – his daughter Hillary and I went to Elementary school together... and it went through my home town, kind of through the back yards of where my aunt and uncle, where my grandparents lived in Boxford; through all these old stomping grounds in Essex county and then I got to know these other great places in Eastern Mass that I didn’t even know about. So that was great, and Greenways were really ‘hot’ at the time, it was everyone seemed to be interested in funding, so it was the thing to do, for sure. So, I organized the trek in 1991 and I organized it also in 1992 and I didn’t get a chance to spend about as much time on it in ‘92 as I did in ‘91; I hiked a lot of it in 1991. Certainly the first five days, from Ipswich to Acton.”

“I was one of the founding directors of the Alliance, and I remember having a meeting for that, the meeting was in Concord, it was at Minuteman [National Historic Park] and we signed all the incorporation papers. Maybe even Chester Atkins was there; he was a congressman in that area and gotten money that funded my position through the Park Service, it was kind of an earmark, back when those things used to happen, and then the Park Service asked AMC to find someone like me to get involved. We spent that first year talking about how to deal with marking and how to deal with management, talking

to partners I did some of that, Alan surely did a lot of it. There was just a lot of excitement around the trail; the Trustees of Reservations was excited about it; the Sudbury Valley of Trustees were excited about it; the AMC? was excited about it: It seemed like a really good time for it, so. The funding from DEM was seed-money – I don't think AMC got any of that money, but the first chunk of money that revitalized it, was DEM money and that was probably in ... ehm”

- *That was '84; Bob Yaro slipped it into a state bond...*

“Right, and DEM was beginning to do Lynn acquisition at that point again, based on Bay Circuit being a priority. All that money dried up when the State sort of went belly up in the late 80s, when the sort of Massachusetts' miracle ended and there was no more money for any of that sort of stuff, and what I think ended up happening – I'm not entirely sure about this – but congressman Atkins thought it was a compelling story and wanted to bring some money home to the district so he – he was on the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee [The House Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies] , so he was able to get a ... I think it was a two hundred thousand dollar earmark in for Bay Circuit, and also for the Merrimack River Trail, which was another thing that I worked on; both of those things were funded through the Park Service, to AMC. The money went to AMC and I did ... I was doing three things at the time; I was doing Merrimack River Trail, which was another Greenway concept along the Merrimack River and the Bay Circuit and the Merrimack River Trail shared some mileage together. And the third thing I worked on was some youth opportunities programs (YOP) in the [inner] Emerald Necklace, particularly around Wards Pond; just

North of Jamaica Pond - in that part of Boston. Those were my three projects for that first year.”

- *When did you first hear the words Bay Circuit?*

[9:46] “Not until I ... I might have heard about it at a staff retreat in 1990. The summer of 1990, I worked on Greylock leading volunteer trail crews, and AMC had a staff retreat



up there. I think I remember talking to someone there about Bay Circuit. There was definitely some interest at AMC, that it was a greenway project; urban trails; it all sounded really good – it might have been on Greylock, but I can’t say that for sure. I didn’t really understand what it meant, I wasn’t aware of Charles Eliot’s knowledge or concept until I started the job. But it was a funny thing; I don’t even think they even interviewed me; they just decided. It was very strange, because I’d been looking for work for about nine months in the trail world and I’d been around AMC for a while; I’d worked at the seasonal and I’d done some other stuff for them ...it was just the oddest thing; I was literally lying on the couch up here in Vermont, expecting to be laid off in a couple of days, and I got this call from Boston saying, ‘We have this job here and we want you to take it’ and it was really just, for me it was the perfect thing to be working in those hometowns; working with people that knew my grandparents; working, ‘in my backyard’ in Andover getting to know other parts of Massachusetts that I didn’t know all that well; it was just a dream come true.”

- *It’s so often that Al French mentions the word ‘serendipity’...*

“Yeah, for me **it was completely serendipitous. I hope it was as serendipitous for everyone else as it was for me.** I haven’t kept in touch with Al very well over the years,

but we stayed in touch a little bit. I did bring Steve a turkey last Thanksgiving and I stayed in touch with Charlie. I see him usually a couple of times a year.”

- *Steve Golden mentioned your name. It was a phone interview and I didn't know how to spell the name. Becky Fullerton recognized it, but she didn't realize you had a Bay Circuit connection!*

“I think what I brought to it was ... Steve had all that experience with the AT acquisition program; and Charlie is very good with the community organizing and urban planning stuff, but neither of them were really trail guys, so they weren't necessarily sure how to find the best route or how to deal with things like marking or drainage, so they had me for that. I brought some practical skills and knowledge that they didn't necessarily have at the time. I was leading volunteer trail days on sections of the trail. We might have done some on the Bay Circuit; oh yea we did! We did some marking days in Boxford with the Boxford Trails Association; they were farther ahead than a lot of the other communities.”

- *There was a lady who rode on horseback?<sup>13</sup>*

“Yeah. And in Andover there was a town trail ... ehm ... improvement association called, ‘The Andover Village Improvement Society’ and they were interested in having the trail come through; they had folks at the trail work there, but the Boxford Trails Association didn't, so I did lead a couple of trail days up there to get sections marked and then I distinctly remember doing a trail in Haverhill, MA; the Merrimack River Trail during the Clarence Thomas Hearings [Oct 1991?] which really stuck in my mind.”

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<sup>13</sup> I based my question on hear-say; before I knew of Nancy Merrill's aversion to the misconception that bridle paths are associated with wealthy classes only.

- *In Billerica we're still 'exploring' so if you ever want to relive anything, you can just start all over here!*

"I hear good things about the Bay Circuit moving ahead in fits and starts – I know that stuff is really slow, but it's an idea that's out there now, and it seems good."

- *What would be the one big highlight of the time...how many years were you involved? 1991 – 1992 and then?*

"I don't remember if there was a trek in 1993. [16:08] **I still have my t-shirt from the '91 trek somewhere.** What happened was; I worked at Joy Street my title was 'Eastern New England Trails Assistant' from February '91 until May '93, and in May '93 I went to Pinkham and started working with trails programs up there."

- *Is that where Larry Garland knows you from? He is the cartographer who – he might just be finished with that – he went through the whole Bay Circuit with his backpack with the GPS unit...*

"With his Trimble? No kidding! Wow. Larry was at Pinkham when I was there; I left Pinkham in '98. Those were great years and great fun and for me, Steve Golden is still **my idea of the perfect government bureaucrat, you know? Motivated... well not a bureaucrat at all; he was extraordinarily good at finding ways to get things done; really really creative and enthusiastic** and for example if someone proposed a meeting he'd be like, 'can we have a meeting on the trail?' – he didn't want to sit in a room somewhere, talk about stuff, he wanted to be out on the trail: Look at maps. And I love that; I'm right with him on that. He's a great guy and so is Charlie and so is Al. The trek we did in '91 was so much fun; the day we walked from Lowell to Minuteman, we were just walking for miles down this old railroad bed that goes from Lowell down to

Concord and it was just miles of poison ivy – just straight up poison ivy. I'd been doing a fair amount of research on poison ivy so I actually brought this stuff called *Tecnu* which was pretty new back then, and I was wearing shorts and I scrubbed my legs down with the Tecnu after we finished it and I just left it on - it's like a lye soap. I got a rash from the soap, which went away in a day and I never got any poison ivy from that [trip]. We were talking about poison ivy quite a bit and Duncan Donuts. Every time I'd have any kind of a trail day or volunteer day or something I'd always show up with three dozen donuts and they'd always get eaten, but Steve and Charlie would always give me a hard time because of that, they thought it was hilarious that I would show up with all these donuts.”

- *Whether I talked to Ron McAdow, or Steve Golden, as soon as they start talking about that trek – they came alive.*

“It was just a really fun time. And there were all sorts of people who joined us along the way; it was like a real community hike; I met Peter Forbes for the first time on that hike. He was the head of TPL [Trust for Public Land] for New England. Fred Stott hiked with us; he was “an old old hutman” [retired secretary at Philips Academy, advocate for land conservation] who died about five years ago [December, 2006]. He wore his Limmers [NH custom made hiking boots] and he had to take them off, they gave him blisters, because we were walking on pavement a fair amount. He – I have this funny gait, almost like a lope – he walked with us that day and from then on he would always comment on my gait, and it was always very good natured; funny. But he was a neighbor of Steve's too. The folks from Boxford joined us, the folks in Andover joined us, the folks in Concord and Acton joined us – it was really fun.”

- *Do you remember Liz Tentarelli?*

“Oh yeah! From Andover. ... [23:22] We were along the river from Deer Jump all the way up to the Concord River Sewer Connector and then I think we somehow went to Lowell Heritage Park and then we went down that railway, somewhere downtown, before Rte 495, all the way to Acton I think.”

- *So walking the trek was the highlight for you?*

“The trek was a highlight, and working with all the folks from the communities too, and working with my friend Charlie, and Steve, and Al. It was the perfect job for me at the perfect time. [26:05] **The point of the trek was to do a little route finding, and to get the communities excited.**”

- *What if you were to have to come up with a downside of your Bay Circuit experience?*

“The biggest bummer for me was that – and you can look at it two ways; there is so much of a state park system in Eastern Massachusetts, particularly around Essex County where we sprang up around the original 1920s concept of the Bay Circuit, but there are a lot of places on the South Shore where that didn’t happen, and I think what was a bummer for me was to see the amount of development, particularly on the South shore, and to see that it would be really tough, like in Easton and in some of those towns down there. The bummer for me was that more hadn’t been done at a time when it would have been easier. You can always build a trail, but protecting land is a whole ‘nother ball of wax.”

- *When I made the appointment to have an interview with you; what did you consider was something that definitely needed to be remembered?*

[29:24] “Oh, I was really psyched when I got your email; I was like, ‘I can’t wait to talk to her. I think about those days not infrequently; certainly not all the time or every day – but when I’m down in that part of the world or when I’m down in Boston, then I do think about it and I still visit some of those places and I’m still excited to be down there because of that [the Bay Circuit memories], and **I still have great hope for continued progress; I mean I expect we’ll keep on ticking along.**” [30:11]



## Liz Tentarelli - Transcript

March 30, 2013

Newbury, NH (Lake Sunapee)



[00:20] “My name is Liz Tentarelli, and I’ve been a Bay Circuit supporter since about 1991, which was one of the early treks, and I was...I loved hiking and I knew many of the people in town who also enjoyed hiking, and I was asked to help lead a section of that Bay Circuit trek in 1991, and that kind of got me hooked, and then I became a member of the Andover Trails Committee. My job on that – I ended up chairing that committee – was to make sure that the Bay Circuit trail could go from one end of Andover to the other; a distance of between 15 and 17 miles – it has varied a little bit over the years. So, the Bay Circuit part of the Andover Trails Committee, we worked on that, I was involved with that of course, and involved with some of the other things to do with the Bay Circuit, particularly the publicity, because we realized early on that if people didn’t know about this as easy hiking trail; easily accessible to many people and the wonderful lands that have been protected, we didn’t stand a chance of finishing the trail. We needed support from a lot of people; not just hiking nuts like us. It was one

thing for us to go roaming through the woods, it's quite another to get people excited about, 'I can do just this three mile walk where there are historic buildings; where there's a pretty park with a little woodland, that I won't get scare in,' we needed those people to be proud of our support system too. So Al French got me to do a **slide show** for the Bay Circuit, which we then ended up presenting in many places; everything from a big AMC meeting to local garden clubs, to school groups. We even did some house parties, we did it for Town Conservation Commissions, wherever we spread the word by showing pictures of the existing trail, that included some history of it; showed people on it having fun [02:42]; show the beautiful lands, the animals, whatever. That was a lot of fun for me. When I started collecting pictures for that - we have a few historic pictures that we made into slides, and then I got my husband Ken to come with me and take some pictures of some pretty areas; key areas that I had become aware of that we needed a great picture of. And other local people were giving us slides too. The next step after the slide show was **developing these maps** that now exist. Tom Horth was the map-person who actually did the maps, but I was writing a lot of the trail description, and part of it was coming from local trails committees, so I did the Andover section of course. One thing we did early on was **develop these little trail guides** for some of the first towns that had the trail, so I was the co-editor of the first version. This was the second edition [shows a sample] and it takes the trail section by section through the different properties: it gives a little history of the property; [mentions] who owns it; describes the trail; and then has this little fold out map. These are little black and white maps. A lot of the towns had nothing like it, so we had about five towns that produced little books like this, and then realized that we need color maps of the entire trail with a

complete description of every portion of the trail, including the places that didn't exist. We would then talk about off the road bypasses that you would take and so on. I worked on that; I worked on the trail descriptions for a number of years using books like this – where they existed, any kind of town trail map; anybody I could talk to in the town who had worked on where the trail was going to go, or it possibly was going to go and we got all of those things written up. Of course there was a process of updating it constantly in those 1990s, because things were happening very fast there. One year we had 85 miles of trail, by the next year we had a 110 miles, and all of a sudden we had to have that all blazed and in trail descriptions and so on, so we started those maps and accompanying trail descriptions as a paper project. We didn't have a website at that point. Now, of course, they're all on the web, we can update them much more easily and quickly, but we were selling those maps to interested people. For a while I was also the one in charge of getting those printed and keeping Al's stock up to date setting them out as people ordered them, so I'm glad they're on the website now. And then in 1999, I moved out of Andover, but I kept doing this trail description and map project. Ken has been working on the website up until just recently when it got transferred over to the AMC and to the TToR, up until November 2012. Denny Nackoney is now gathering most of that information since I've lost touch with them, with those people in Massachusetts, and he was updating the text and he put it on the website. I made sure that the description was consistent. We also decided it shouldn't just be a trail description; it's one thing just to walk along a trail, but there's history in every single one of these places: How did that land come to be conserved? Why was it conserved? What is important about this property? What are some of the natural features? So, we think of them as the jewels

along the Emerald Necklace, and that became part of it, so have not only the trail description; the paper map trail description; these jewels, these particular properties, and information on them, and also for more information, where we are constantly cross-referencing town conservation groups. Things like Andover Village Improvement Society, which is a Land Protection organization; other organizations in town, such as a bike riding club that may have permission to use some of the trails. We wanted to include all of that and it got included in these original little books, and now it is also on the website, so we feel that it's a very thorough piece of information now about the Bay Circuit.

- *At that same time you were an English teacher?*

"I was. I taught at Merrimack College."

- *A busy life!*

"It was! I also was a Girl Scout volunteer all that time; I had a Girl Scout troupe for many years. And then I started serving in a more of an administrative capacity for the Girl Scouts. And then I was involved in the League of Women Voters down in Andover. I got involved in that through the Bay Circuit. They called me in as a guest speaker; an expert so to speak. And that started a project in that town, something called **Community Paths**. In many towns there is lots of open space, but people can't get to it, and they may live on this cul-de-sac, and there are woods over there, but there is no public access path to the woods. So the League of Women Voters tackled this Community Paths Project to make sure that from every neighborhood there was access to nearby open space; just a simple walking path, with a sign that said 'Community Path', so people would know it existed, so neighbors wouldn't plant flowers on it to keep you off of

it. We wanted this to be public. Very much the way in England; you could walk along the edges of fields to connect one village to another – that’s just the way it is. We thought neighborhoods should be like that; children should be able to walk from their neighborhood to their friends on the next street without being driven a mile and a half around all these busy cul-de-sacs and developments and so on. So that was related to the trail project because it connected with open space. [9:58] and increasing people’s appreciation of and knowledge of the open space close to home. So I worked on that in Andover through the League of Women Voters, and we got it to the point where the **Planning Board was asking developers, when they came in with a new mini-development** to go in, ‘Where is your Community Path?’ ‘Where are your Open Space connections?’ That made us feel good.”

- *Did these paths go through town property?*

“In general, when a developer was putting in one of these small developments – they were all small at this point, because Andover was almost all built out – There was some green space as some part of the developer’s plan, and what we’re saying is that from the street in your little development there must be a walking path to that open space that will be marked and forever preserved. Don’t let the neighbors keep butting up against it...It’s something every town should have thought of back in the early stages. Now it doesn’t work in every place because the property lines are now touching each other; they haven’t left these connectors. As new plot developments were going in – we did this probably about 1996-1997 that we got this project going. And there had been some paths like that in some neighborhoods, but they weren’t marked, so the neighbors didn’t know. They thought, ‘I can’t go in there, I know the woods are back there, but I

can't go there, because Mr. 11:49 Smith lives here and Mr. Jones lives here and we're not aware that there is actually a ten foot wide strip; in between there's public access."

- *Like paper roads? The legislation around them In Billerica became something like: Half of it is from this abutter, and the other half to the neighboring abutter, so one still has to negotiate with all abutters for permission to go through. But we have a paper road next to the house, and we actually cleared it, so kids can walk through. If we didn't clear it, they'd walk through our yard.*

"So you might as well have something that looks like a good walking path so nobody feels like they're intruding."

- *You were the first chair of the Andover Trails Committee even before the Bay Circuit Alliance came into being?*

"I'm not sure. I think they happened almost at the same time. The Bay Circuit concept had been going on for a long time and then it formed the Alliance in 1990. And we started the Trails Committee in 1991- very close together."

- *How did you know Al French?*

"He's also from Andover. He actually lived a quarter mile from me, but I knew him through his shop; everybody knows Al French through his shop. If you hike or cross-country ski, you know Al French. Then I knew some other people in town who also knew Al who were into the hiking, so I really met Al when he was doing that 1990 or 1991 trek and they were looking for local people in each town to meet Al and his buddies at a certain point and escort them through a section of the town. **An interesting concept; most people are never going to walk the Bay Circuit from one end to another. Al has done it numerous times but if you can get the local people excited about**

**those people who are doing the through-track and join them even for this four, five or ten miles section, you're sharing the excitement of the through-hike even if you're not either physically fit or don't have the time** or not interested enough to do the whole thing; you feel you're a part of it. So Al was using that strategy and pulled me in as part of this [14:59](#) starting Trails Committee; to lead that little section of the hike. I remember being up on top of Holt Hill; a beautiful place in Andover with a view of Boston and waiting for Al and the other hikers to come up over the hill, and come up to the top, and I had a group of people waiting there; we were going to walk with him for ten miles or so. We're waiting...and we're waiting...and they're late... [laughing] these things happen! And we're saying, "What shall we do? Shall we go look for them? Did they get lost?" We knew there was a tricky stretch of trail before they came up over the crest of the hill. "Yea! Alright, we can do this!" We enjoyed the rest of the hike through Andover that day. It was cool. It was exciting."

"I probably walked about two-thirds of the trail by myself - in pieces. And in 1997, my grandson was born. My daughter was living down in Waltham, MA. And I needed both some pictures and some trail descriptions of some places not far from there. I actually took a Leave of Absence from work to be a nanny for him for a while, so he wouldn't have to go to daycare, this wee little baby. So I plunked him in a backpack, with the camera and my notebook, taking notes on this trail section - somebody just had described it to me and I didn't like that trail description; they know what they're talking about, but nobody else is going to be able to follow it - so I was rewriting the trail description, and I knew I was going to take some photos. So, he was on my back, and we're doing that. We did that a number of times over the course of about eight months,

in that kind of Western section of the Bay Circuit. There was one day, when we were hiking through the woods, and I was doing this, he sat in my backpack, and I got the photos I needed, I amended the trail description, and the little kid is getting heavy at this point, I mean he's still a little kid, but I was tired! Off through the trees, I could see this house, and there was a woman in the back yard taking clothes off the line, so I walked over to her, and I said, 'Is that street in front of your house Such-and-such Street?' – I was trying to get back to my car. And she said, 'No, it's not, that's some other street,' and I said, 'Oh, ok, thanks,' and I turned around and I went off. I've got the baby in the backpack, and afterwards I thought, 'What a strange experience that must have been for her; seeing this woman come out of the woods with a baby who is really lost!' I was a little surprised she didn't try to stop me and say, 'Do you need help?' Anyway, that's the kind of adventure we had.

- *First time you heard the words Bay Circuit / what drew you in?*

"I think it came later that I was drawn in. I probably heard about the Bay Circuit about 1990; about the same time I got involved. And what intrigued me is that at that point in my life I was thinking, "Someday I'd like to hike the Appalachian Trail; **the idea of a long distance thru-trail**. And when I heard that the Bay Circuit was a projected 200 mile long trail in Massachusetts, it was like a doable version of the Appalachian Trail, and that's what got me intrigued, and when I was asked to work on the Andover section, I said, "Of course, I think this is what we need," because I had also come to realize that the Appalachian Trail is almost being loved to death; there are so many people who want to use it, and are ignoring places closer to home. And I would like to be part of making Massachusetts people realize that they can do the similar thing."

- *Were you also involved with the DEM; the individual local entities?*

“I didn’t do that. Al was doing that. Now, I heard a lot about it. Obviously, we talked a lot and as we kept updating the slideshow I would get information from him and incorporate it to the slideshow; the slideshow was not a static thing either because we kept saying, “Right now we’re in negotiations for instance with the cranberry bog owners in the South or with the...the long-term negotiation was with the Mass Turnpike Authority, trying to get that little section of trail in Framingham, and because I was working with the Andover Trails Committee, we were working locally on the same thing that Al was trying to do on the long distance thing, because there were places where I had to try to work with property owners; everything from a cemetery for instance, “Could we mark a trail through the backland of your cemetery?” And it was only maybe a few hundred yards, but if we didn’t have it, we’d end up walking a long road [21:08], it would be longer, so I was doing that kind of negotiation in Andover, while Al was trying to make it happen on the larger entity. Other Trails Committees in the other towns were doing the same thing I was doing; just trying to nail down that [...] quarter mile section that would get it off road and connect this beautiful park with that beautiful forest land that were already open.”

- *In Billerica we’re at that stage, because Billerica is far behind.*

“Yeah, because we never had an active group there. You get a couple of people and they do something, and get a little bit done, and then it would fade out again.”

- *...Superfund...blablabla. And what was the most positive experience?*

“For me, presenting the slideshow to groups that didn’t know much about this, was absolutely thrilling. As a teacher, I love to get people excited about things. That’s what I

was doing with the slideshow. I didn't wander very far from the script; I think it's important to have a well written script, and I worked very hard to keep it to the point and well done. I would use that script, but by presenting it with enthusiasm, and these wonderful images people were seeing, I could feel the excitement in the room. Afterwards as we did Question & Answer sessions I could see that people were eager to get out there, and were appreciative of the whole concept of a long distance trail and protecting the land to make it possible. So that to me was probably the best excitement."

- *I hope to adopt some of that. What would be your most negative experience?*

"Ohhhhh [sigh, long silence... and under her breath she mumbles, "Negative experience..." and then: "It was when we'd lose a section of the trail, when suddenly a home owner was not going to let it happen, and there was one section in Andover we were working on. Andover has wonderful properties. Some of it was wetland, and in order to have the Bay Circuit go from one property through this wetland area to another, if we had been able to have about fifteen feet to the backwoods of a particular homeowner's land, we would have been able to connect those sections. And my colleague Steve Golden and I – from the Trails Committee – made an appointment to talk with the property owners; we presented them information; we explained exactly where we wanted to go. It would've been slightly visible to them from their house in the wintertime, looking through the [bare] trees, and at first they said, 'we think we can agree with this,' and we said that would be wonderful. We'll try it out, and we had a trek coming up – in a few months – [for which] they gave us a one-day permission to go through that property, and I don't know what happened, but they then changed their

mind. So we lost that. What happened now is, there is a beautiful boardwalk going through that wetlands – which was an expensive boardwalk to build. So getting close; thinking you've got it negotiated; thinking this for everybody's advantage, and it's not really hurting these property owners; it's just on a few feet of their woodland, and then they said no. That was devastating. Then you have to find a way around it. Which involves either relocating the trail or in this case an expensive boardwalk.”

- *Whenever I ask the question of a negative experience, nine out of ten have to think very long, and then they come up with a negative experience - and how they solved it!*

Well that's true; you've got to solve it! You can't let it sit there. Right.

- *With hindsight: It's just a dip, that's all. Which question did you hope I'd ask, but I didn't? Or: Which topic hasn't been discussed, but needs to be preserved for posterity?*

I wanted to talk about the slideshow and the fact that you need to get that public support for a project like this. I know that some of the people that attended the slideshow are never going to walk on the property; they're older - ladies perhaps at the garden club, but they like knowing that those lady slippers are out there and being protected. And that some of the animals that we took photos of, have a habitat out there, so you get support for the project from the broadest possible audiences; never assume that this has no relevance to somebody. Find a way to make it relevant, and find a way way to make it very visual to them. So you talk about it, but you show them. So that is why I thought about the slideshow – which now of course would be PowerPoint. We did this in

the mid-nineties. But that kind of personal contact; personal presentation with a visual part plus a story is the key to get that support.

- *I'll take it to heart!*

“Okay!” [28:27]

- *Blablabla*

[29:40] The slides are of the entire Bay Circuit, as we had it. Some of the properties we didn't have slides of, because we hadn't actually gotten permission to include them. So there are some beautiful nature slides in there. It goes through beautiful forest land, and marshes. What we tried to do in the slideshow was make sure that each community that was at that time part of the Bay Circuit is represented by several slides. This box holds a carousel, it's nearly full, and the last slide is number 135...there are a couple of slots there and there's probably something that needs to be moved. And there's the script, and it went fast. Some of these are historic ones; have you seen photos of the founders; Frederick Law Olmsted, Eliot... I've got all kinds of notes; change this replace that; this was an ongoing project...[31:23] – shows slide of a sign in Sudbury dating back to 1956; blablabla; taking a picture of the slideshow box and trail book [35:50] Denny Nackoney was part of this trail maintenance manual; you've interviewed him on that [...] He wanted to standardize the marking and even the condition of the trail. My frustration with parts of the trail was poison ivy, and there was one part of the trail that I got so uppity about, that I refused to write the trail description because no human being can walk through that far. I refused to say, 'It goes through there,' and Al said, 'It does!' and I said, 'No, it doesn't; nobody can go in there: You'll die of poison ivy before you get out!' So he said,

'I guess we need to work on that, don't we.' [Liz giggles] And then we did; we relocated the trail briefly and then they worked on killing off the poison ivy."

- *[I'm going through slides] Even aerial photos! Today Google Satellite is helpful.*

"Tom Horth was the one who figured out all these maps, my goodness. And then Denny took over some of it with the AMC-help and the maps have evolved...[...]...Tom and I were often on the phone; emailing back and forth about how to update this section, and where that trail is exactly going."

- *[I'm going through slides] Sudbury Valley of Trustees...*

"I think some towns were way ahead of others, years ago, in terms of understanding that they need to protect open space. We moved up here [Newbury, NH] in 1999 and there are a lot of woods around, as you can tell. There is an attitude in this part of the country about 'You don't have to do...we've already got a forest there; a state park here; that's fine. But they're forgetting

this whole notion that if development comes in, access to those properties is lost. There was a wonderful little trail that we walked when we first moved here, called the Newbury Cut; the railroad was cut through a rocky



area; they'd blasted out the rock, and the coming of the railroad is really what turned the Sunapee area into a tourist attraction in the 1880s; people could get here finally, before the days of cars. **This Newbury Cut with this abandoned railroad track going**

**through it was a wonderful hiking trail; cross country; snowmobile trail, but it wasn't protected**, and just about eight years ago, the property owner [39:05] said at one point, 'no, I don't want anyone going across that.' Blocked off. So it's been lost to public use!

(Ken) "And that trail goes all the way from Concord to Claremont. It's a long trail – it's a shame." (Liz) "Some things have been built along it, but it doesn't all exist anymore, it was a property owner it was actually a commercial entity that didn't want the liability – you always hear that..."

[39:35] – [40:10] (delete) Ken brings up four points / anecdotes; a camping trip; a Phillips Academy Campus trail-blazing tale; how much the impetus of the Bay Circuit was related to the contagious enthusiasm of Alan French; the Blue Trail System in CT.

"Connecticut has something called The Blue Trail System, they call it the Connecticut Four-hundred – it's actually closer to 500 miles at this point, and it's a unified system of hiking trails. Not connected; it's not one trail. The state has marked these all with blue blazes, just as we use the white one, and published a guide book too. Starting around 1985 I started hiking this CT blue blazed trails using that guide book, and seeing just how important it was just to have a guide to trails – to find them, and to discover new trails [42:02] personal [42:51] What Ken mentioned in terms of a camping trip; one of the Bay Circuit annual meetings was held at King Philips Reservation in Sherborn [Rocky Narrows, TToR] and it was an overnight; we got permission to camp on the property, and there were maybe ten of us there ... it wasn't a big group...It was bigger than that, people had come during the day; we had a nice hike on this beautiful

property; King Philip's Overlook overlooks the Charles River, and it's where Metacomet [called "King Philip" by the English; King Philip's war 1675-1676] stood, supposedly, and planned his attack on the settlers and all, so it's a historic area, and we got this permission to set up a campfire there and we cooked dinner there, and a lot of people did the day-hike and stayed for dinner, some people went home, but it was a chance to meet some of the key people from these other towns in that part of the state. We stayed there overnight; did another hike in the morning – that was [all] very exciting. [King Philip's War: 1675-1676]

[44:09 - 45:09] my own chit chat. Sudbury, near Sudbury Valley Trustees Wolbach Farm; by an old four-arch stone bridge, a memorial stone reads, "...over this the Indians were forced in King Philip's invasion..."

#### A trail blazing anecdote:

We were blazing the Bay Circuit and had to get through Phillips Andover Academy [established in 1778 by Samuel Phillips, Jr], which is not a place that you typically think of as blazing, so we had to talk to the Phillips authorities, "How can we put markers on key places, so people can go through your beautiful campus - connect the woods up here with the woods down here [motions with hands] - but go through the campus. These were very subtle blazes in places. And in some of the other places in Andover where I was blazing...(Ken explains, "Well there weren't trees..")...No, so there's this white blaze on the corner of a building that they let us put up. You had to get creative; one on the ground; we negotiated each one of these. If you're trying to negotiate every single blaze, especially where you're going a little along the road for a short stretch between properties: If you ask permission of the utility company to put a blaze on a telephone pole, you could probably spend years trying to get permission. So I thought, "Apologies are easier than permission", so one Sunday morning at about 5:30 AM, I put on sunglasses and my baseball cap and a baggy sweatshirt; I'm carrying a blue paint bucket in my hand, my paint brush, and I just thought I'm going to blaze that section of

street. Nobody is going to see me. Nobody will know what happened, but it's going to get people from point A to point B. So I went out and did that. And suddenly, a utility truck comes down the road. Now, they didn't see me painting, so I just kind of kept walking. It turned around and came back and now they caught me at the pole, and I'm really too old to be cute at this point, but I'm going to try, because the guy stops and he said, "I'm just curious: What are you doing?" Okay, we'll go for cute [in a wide-eyed manner]: 'Ah! I am blazing the *Bay Circuit Trail*. Have you heard about that? It's this wonderful 200 mile long trail; we come out of the woods down there; see where that red house is? And we go into the woods right down there, and I just need a few white marks along here so people can follow it. Isn't that a great idea?' I'm like this nutty person, you know; [47:46] I'm hoping he doesn't ask my name. I deliberately left any ID in the car, I really tried to get away with something there. And he said, "Oh, that does sound interesting." And he drove off...[48:02]

We did find this hard; trying to do it along streets, through a property like a campus, but you can do it, I mean, you find a way. We got permission down at the campus; every single blaze we got permission for. We had somebody walk out with us, and we'd mark it with a piece of tape, "Can we put it here?" and 'Okay', they okayed it.

- But the road was a public road; it was...

We were trying not to walk along the road. You could do it, just a long road, but through the campus, it's a historic campus, and then along the road it is just a matter of letting people know that you're still on the trail; you haven't lost it; you haven't missed the turn-off. The road and the campus event were two different experiences, but they all occurred within about six months of each other, while we were trying to blaze this whole trail [49:15]

## **Tom Horth**

Newburyport, February 10, 2013

Based on transcripts of digital recordings



*Tom Horth, Member of the Bay Circuit Alliance Board of Directors; Map maker until 12/31/2012*

In the Bay State, I visit Newburyport. A ravaging blizzard blanketed the area yesterday, but drift ice floats idly under today's blue sky. Nature claims innocence. From his historic home, built in 1656 at the mouth of the Merrimack River, Tom Horth shares remembrances of the early Bay Circuit days, when he lived in Burlington, Massachusetts:

“I worked for Hewlett Packard’s Medical Products Group. The office building was located on the Merrimack River, west of Route 93 in Andover. A trail ran down to the river, and hiking at lunchtime, I noticed Bay Circuit trail markers. Visiting an outdoor equipment store in Andover, I connected with Alan French. This must have been before 1990. He had partitioned off part of his store to house the headquarters of the Bay

Circuit Alliance – all a privately funded endeavor. It's truly amazing what you can achieve with just volunteers. Shortly after meeting Al at his store, I volunteered to do the mapping for the Bay Circuit, which I did from then on, until I handed everything over to the Trustees of Reservations in the summer of 2011. Sixteen maps all together. Although my maps were very detailed in the trails shown - I jotted down every path I came across - they were not always accurate. The Trustees maps don't yet show all, but they are very precise and other trails are being added as data become available.”

Tom understates the precision and reliability of his own maps. GPS may be a household name today, but not before many satellites had been launched into orbit to support this new technology. Starting out as strictly military instruments, Global Positioning Systems soon became standard equipment on aircraft and marine vessels. During the first Gulf War ground soldiers were outfitted with handheld devices. Not until the early 2000s were GPS devices produced for recreational purposes. Tom laid the foundation for a set of excellent maps based on his natural navigation and computer skills; the scale and the legend he chose, appear the same on today's charts.

In many other ways, Tom has been instrumental as a member on the Board of Directors for the Bay Circuit Alliance. He was appointed to this Board around the time of his retirement from HP, in 1991. Until Tom and his wife Nel moved to Newburyport, he spent much of his time “just looking for trails in general”. He combed and scoured local maps; subsequently bushwhacked the woods and wetlands, and created proposals for paths from Andover, through Tewksbury and Billerica to Bedford. “Walking around, you can find lots of places, where you can legally walk”. Thus, he spent more time walking the talk than talking the walk; “It was not exactly an active Board; we met once a year.”

He recalls the ever resurfacing issue whether to push for greenways or for trails. Having been a fervent hiker himself, Tom opines that “a trail does motivate folks to get involved”, but the overarching emphasis for him is to preserve greenways. His environmental foresight drives a concern: Climate change pushes plants and animals north, and green corridors are vital for the migration of flora and fauna.

Repeatedly Tom returns to the conversation of global warming; higher average temperature of ocean waters, and rising sea level. This is obviously a hot topic in the coastal town of Newburyport. We take a tour of Plum Island to check out the Bay Circuit northern trailhead, only to be held back by yellow police tape and a law enforcement officer who patrols the road, preventing public access to the beach, because endangered real estate hangs teetering over the edge of the remaining barrier dune, threatening to crush tourists underneath. Those are not the first houses to be claimed by the ocean, nor will they be the last. Construction equipment removed the Bay Circuit terminus sign years ago during previous - futile - attempts to prevent further erosion.

Tom claims, “Every now and then, the causeway gets flooded due to high waves, high tide and a wind direction pushing the water in. Plum Island is an eroding sand dune and we will lose it. In the 1880s, it was essentially unoccupied, except for one hotel at the center. The company which owned the island leased lots to people who put up simple little cottages to be used in the summertime. Then the company decided to quit the business of leasing. Cottage owners could either buy the lot – for a reasonable price, or give it up – and lose the cottage, unless they moved it elsewhere. One house got towed across the Merrimack River by oxen on the ice; an unthinkable feat today,

since the bay no longer freezes up. Recently, property owners have been building large permanent homes, and that is a big mistake.”

“The rising sea level will eventually flood the causeway at high tide. Then the trail terminus must move further inland. Alternatives should already be in place; the original Bay Circuit Terminus was envisioned at nearby Crane Beach, but some key local residents continued to object, so an alternative was found. Tom also suggests a different spur starting at Halibut Point. Which brings us to another frequently debated issue while he served on the on the Board of Directors: Whether the Outer Emerald Necklace ought to be one single string, or one with multiple branches and spokes; part of a more or less ‘frayed’ trail, allowing various termini, increasing the accessibility to all towns in the region. Tom favors the latter and illustrates his view with “the extra spur near Easton, which ends up at Stonehill College. Professor Emeritus Chet Raymo published ‘The Path’, a collection of philosophical musings about his daily walk to work along a path, the very path which could be the meaningful conclusion of a trail-tangent; a dead end with cultural and historical value. However, Tom admits, “the idea of multiple branches hasn’t sold well.”

Although he never walked the entire length, the most memorable and emotional experiences for Tom were the end-to-end journeys. Being the Bay Circuit representative near the northern terminus, he led the last part of a South-North trek. After a three week thru-hike, a champagne toast was made; state officials showered them with speeches; and a celebratory dinner was served at a Plum Island beach restaurant. “A fiddler led the way to it; Andy Woolf - also now dead”, muses Tom momentarily disheartened, before he regains himself and continues, “Working on the trails is really very rewarding

– most of the time. But one has to be patient”. The original timeframe for completing the BCT was ten years, then the goal was set to 2010, and by now they shoot for 2015”.

This, while knowing that within months of its inception in 1990, a Bay Circuit North-South end-to-end trek from Crane Beach in Ipswich to Bay Farm in Duxbury was successfully completed in June, a small team traveling by foot, canoe, and bicycle.

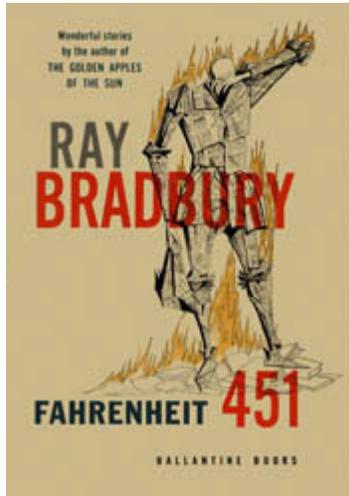
“Working on the trails, you always run into a ‘nimby’ (Not in my back yard)”, Tom chuckles, but assures “it’s a difficult attitude, but if you treat it correctly, it is curable! First there’ll be doubt whether trails are a good idea. Few people have the ability to imagine the advantages. Once a trail has been established, it sparks the rebirth of a run-down neighborhood, and suddenly folks recognize the revitalizing properties of a trail, and serious opposition dissolves.” Tom also points out a general misconception about junk-littered areas: Once included in the trail, an area visibly improves within a year. He’s seen it happen more than once. Still, the ‘nimby’ remains an obstinate obstacle in completing the projected trail, and alternatives are sought. Most residents rightfully take pride in allowing passage to thru-hikers, some however doggedly perceive motorists less threatening than pedestrians; anyone on foot is suspicious, as if it were easier to carry loot on foot, rather than by car.

Not that Tom is ill-disposed towards motor vehicles; he jogs my memory of the vision of Nineteenth century landscape architect Olmsted for Boston’s Inner Emerald Necklace: A chain of parks linked by *parkways* and waterways. Tom wishes the American Automobile Association would add bicycle maps and pedestrian maps to their product range, and “that they’d care about bicycles instead of preventing them.” He reiterates that green corridors are truly vital - for the environment, and for our mental

and physical health. Trail committees must collaborate with the medical community; promote bike paths for school going children! - Tom Horth, a visionary man providing his insights and observations to enrich an open mind.

## ***INTERMEZZO* – A quote from Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury**

Ray Douglas Bradbury (August 22, 1920 – June 5, 2012) was an American fantasy, science fiction, horror and mystery fiction writer. Best known for his dystopian novel Fahrenheit 451 (1953).



In the 1966 introduction Bradbury describes the genesis of short stories; “short stories hit and run, astonishing me with the way they grab, shake me, and let me go... My novels invariably surprise me in another way with the fact they have been around so long and I have been blind to the fact of their existence (page 23).”

**“...I was stopped by the police for walking at night and, in anger, wrote a story, “The Pedestrian,” carrying the entire ridiculous episode one step further, into a future where all pedestrians are suspect and criminal (Page 24).”**

In his 1993 Introduction he wrote: **“Some forty-two years ago, give or take a year, I was walking and talking with a friend in Mid-Wilshire, Los Angeles, when a police car pulled up and an officer stepped out to ask what we were doing. “Putting one foot in front of the other,” I said, too much the smart-aleck.**

**That was the wrong answer.**

**The police man repeated the question.**

**Too big for my britches, I replied, “breathing the air, talking, walking.”**

**The officer frowned. I explained:**

**“It’s illogical, your stopping us. If we had wanted to burgle a joint or rob a shop, we would have driven up in a car, burgled or robbed, and driven away. As you see, we have no car, only our feet.”**

**“Only walking, eh?” said the officer. “Just walking?”**

**I nodded and waited for the obvious truth to sink in.**

**“Well,” said the officer, “don’t do it again!”**

**And the police car drove away. Enraged by this Alice in Wonderland encounter, I ran home to write “The Pedestrian,” concerning some future time when all walking was forbidden and all pedestrians treated as criminals.**

The author expressed resistance to conformity in this work based on an experience which took place in the 1950s. For the novel, he described a future dystopia. As far as the negative image of anyone not driving a motor vehicle in the United States today, I think this story illustrates the ‘nimby’ mentality as described in several interviews.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Kristen Sykes from the Appalachian Mountain Club for thinking of me to do this oral history project, and I thank all interviewees for their patience with me, as I slowly grew more comfortable with the interview process. I apologize for all the times it turned into an inquisition, just because I knew so little before I began this intriguing project and indefatigably launched questions above and beyond the four I intended to ask:

1. When did you first hear the words “Bay Circuit” and what drew you in?
2. What was an absolute positive experience?
3. What was a real downer?
4. What did you wish I’d ask that you wish you could share?

Without the encouragement of my family, I might have gotten bogged down in digital recordings; I found out by trial and error that it took me eight times as long to transcribe what had been discussed at an interview.

After the ninety day leave of absence had ended, I decided to resign from the part-time position as a package handler at UPS, and try my luck in the fields of writing and of the outdoors!



## ADDITIONAL READING

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