

March 2014

Dear Friends:

I'm writing to **thank you for all you've done for the Berkshires** over the last year.

I also want to ask you for some help – and no, I'm not talking about money.

**Your gifts in 2013 conserved 543 acres ...** you built the Brothers Trail on Yokun Ridge ... you invited the public to enjoy the beautiful Hollow Fields Reserve in Richmond.

(Don't worry if you didn't make a financial gift last year – you'll get a chance in 2014, and we're going to need it!)

So here's the first thing I want to ask you:

**Please join us for a daylong birdwatching party at Hollow Fields.** Come spring, bobolinks will fill the fields, perched on tall swaying stalks of grass, calling to each other with their odd metallic song.

They're calling you, too. Come and go as you please – we'll be there all day, with tips and refreshments. If groups make you shy, that's fine – go alone.

**We're tentatively planning on May 31.** Watch for your invitation.

With or without us, you'll soak in the views and listen to the birdsong.

And if you've never heard the song, it sounds like this: Thank you.

## **Here's why BNRC will need your support in 2014 ...**

By the time you read this ... or maybe a few days from now ... **your gifts will have paid for the purchase of another 65 acres on the Hoosac Range** in North Adams.

That means you'll have protected another section of the Mahican-Mohawk Trail. By Columbus Day, **25 continuous miles of this path** between the Hudson and Connecticut rivers will be finished and open to walkers.

Forever. And **you helped build it** ... take a bow.

Along with that project, nearly 1,600 acres of conservation gifts inch toward closing. I say "inch" because when a 2014 title examiner discovers that someone in 1807 forgot to file an important document, things slow down.

Finding and fixing these problems so that conservation is done right is just one of the jobs your gifts make possible.

**And once the land is conserved, it's conserved for good.**

**That's our first promise. Your support guarantees it.**

The second promise? Taking care of the land, and sharing it with the world.

Come spring, our contractor will rebuild the driveway into our new Housatonic Flats Reserve in Great Barrington, so we can open officially.

Directional signs will go up on the Brothers Trail when the frost thaws.

And for the fourth straight year, BNRC and Greenagers will partner in 2014 to create new opportunities for walking and learning – with your help, **new trails are coming to Alford and Sandisfield.**

Your support makes the outdoors accessible to all – those with the time, money and strength to explore everything from Patagonia to the Pyrenees, and those for whom a Berkshire mountaintop is the highest summit.

Your gifts – past and future – will make it all happen.

### **And now, an exciting word about ... membership database management**

This month, we trade in our 1989 database for something new.

Why do I bore you with this news? Because we need your help.

First, we rely on you for quality-control. You're getting three copies? ... you're "Dr. Jones," not "Ms. Jones"? ... tell us!

Second, our new database understands something our old one never could ... if you make a donation you are a member, and you are a member if you make a donation.

Third, if you'd like to **keep closer track of how your support helps the Berkshires**, sign up for our monthly e-news, with its notes, photos, free field trips, and other happenings. Send me a note at [tames@bnrc.net](mailto:tames@bnrc.net) with the addresses you'd like to add. **We do not share our list with anyone.**

### **Last, we need your eyes and ears ...**

Here's my last request: If you see something, say something.

This isn't about Berkshire homeland security. **It's about making conservation land more accessible and inviting.**

I'm grateful to our member-donors Mark and Jennifer Shapp, for instance, for pointing out that the stepping stones at Basin Pond are a challenge (still not perfect, but at least *partially* fixed now) ...

I'm grateful to the handful of member-donors who have asked why our signs say "BNRC.net" when we are conservationists, not dot-commers ... (\*)

I'm happy to know that you've seen a moose on the Hoosac Range ...

... and I love hearing about the pileated woodpecker who drummed away overhead while you sat in a deer stand.

**I'm guessing some of your memories live in these hills. And some of your hopes and dreams live here too.**

**These are your Berkshires.** Your joy – and your constructive criticism – inspires and helps us. BNRC and the Berkshires need you!

Feel the trail under your feet. Hear the bobolinks. Smell the spring ephemerals blooming next to the unfurling fern. Watch the clouds moving in from the west.

And **tell us all about it.** That's one way that we'll make this great place even better, together.

Yours truly,



Tad Ames  
President

*(\*) BNRC.net ... it's on our signs because we hope you'll visit our (newly revised!) website and discover more places to go and new ways to get involved. But the point is taken, and we're keeping it in mind.*