

Beacon Hill Byline by REP. MARY ROGENESS

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### **Climbing Monson's Peaked Mountain**

Last week I received an invitation to attend a press conference in a Monson meadow. Peaked Mountain, a 1,100-foot promontory in Monson, is to become a sanctuary, and the ceremony would formalize its preservation. Monson is on the way to a previously scheduled meeting in Worcester, so I decided to stop in to see what was happening.

In describing this new reserve, let me first specify the correct pronunciation of the reservation. "Peaked" has two syllables, as in "you look peaked today."

The impetus for the new reservation came from property owners Leonard and Roslyn Harrington and Richard Elliot, who donated more than half of the land involved. Additional acreage will be purchased once a fundraising goal of \$193,000 has been reached.

The Trustees of Reservations is a private conservation organization that will oversee preservation and the ancillary fundraising effort to sustain the forested land for public use. The Trustees, a private conservation organization, oversee more than 20,000 acres throughout the state. They are working in partnership with the Norcross Wildlife Foundation to complete this project.

My visit turned out to be more than a typical press conference experience. As I have stated. I was en route to a business luncheon so I was dressed for the city and I was surprised to find out that a hike of the peak of Peaked Mountain was on the agenda, and my high heels would have had a tough climb. Fortunately for me, the Harringtons were prepared for city slickers like me, and I was allowed to ride behind Len Harrington's tractor.

We ascended on a former logging trail, and I walked only the last few yards to the top of the mountain. The climb had given no hint to the vista that was suddenly before me. The western approach to the peak is a slow, easy ascent by the old logging trail, but the eastern face is a sheer cliff. The highest point in Monson, it overlooks a vista that extends for miles. The valley and several ridges are arrayed on three sides, and New Hampshire's Mount Monadnock is visible on the north. The day was overcast and misty. Even with questionable weather, the view was spectacular.

Hiking trails are open daily from 8 a.m. to sunset, and trail maps are available. Additionally, Norcross Wildlife Foundation has scheduled guided hikes for each Sunday in October. I urge you to take the drive to the meadow and see for yourself the wonder that you will see on the other side of the mountain.

Directions: From Laughing Brook, drive half a mile on Scantic Road. Turn left onto South Monson Road. After 2.5 miles, turn right onto Butler Road. The parking area is 1.2 miles ahead on the left.