Proposal for work and use of land

**TO:**

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (MassDCR)

**From:**

Massachusetts Hang Gliding Association (MHGA)

Gary Trudeau

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**Location:**

MassDCR Property, Mount Greylock Reservation Summit, Adams Vista area

**Proposal:**

To trim obstructions (bushes, grass and weeds) in an area known as the Adams Vista on the summit of Mount Greylock State Reservation, as shown in attachment A. This area would be utilized for the continued to safe launch of hang gliders and paragliders that fly from Mt. Greylock State Reservation and the spectacular views from the summit of Mt Greylock.

**History:**

The Massachusetts Hang Gliding Association (MHGA) and fellow hang glider pilots have been flying from Mt. Greylock State Reservation since 1973. In the 1990s the sport of paragliding developed and soon got the support of the MHGA and MassDCR to utilize Mt. Greylock State Reservation as part of the flying community like hang glider pilots had for many years. During the entire history of hang gliding and paragliding at Mt. Greylock State Reservation, we have maintained an excellent safety record and excellent relations with MassDCR. Hang gliding and paragliding has been such a big part of Mt. Greylock history that the MassDCR Visitors Center at the base of the mountain on Rockwell road has a large display of hang gliders and paragliders in the building. Within the last 20 years MassDCR refurbished the summit including installation of new walkways, building of walls and planting of new grass including the area known as the Adams Vista. The MHGA has a friends group status with MassDCR due to the proposal we submitted to MassDCR and the town of Adams in 2017 to create the area known as the Greylock Glen Meadow on MassDCR land in Adams MA. MHGA performed all the work in the proposal and the continued maintenance of the meadow as written in that proposal, all while keeping MassDCR management informed. The MHGA has worked with the park supervisors to maintain the growth and erosion in our launch area of the Adams Vista. In Recent years MassDCR designated the whole top of Mt Greylock State Reservation a Priority Habitat. At this time the park management and personnel stopped doing most maintenance (mowing of the lawn areas and trimming of brush) on the top of the mountain. This lack of maintenance has led to the top of the mountain and the Adams Vistas becoming over grown and weather related damage, as shown in attachment C, D, E. This over growth has created issues for hang gliding and paragliding pilots to safely launch our hang gliders and paragliders. It also has created a safety issue for the general public visiting the summit of Mt Greylock. Since the Adams Vista is the premier area on the summit of Mt Greylock for the public to enjoy the spectacular views, this over growth is taking away an area where people like to sit on the rocks to enjoy the views. The continue over growth of the Adams Vista will lead to the loss of hang gliders and paragliders from Mt. Greylock and the public losing the best location on the mountain to enjoy the spectacular views.

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**Facts about hang gliding and paragliding at Mt. Greylock State Park**:

Hang gliders and paragliders are foot launched unpowered aircraft flying Mt Greylock for over 50 years. Both hang glider and paragliders launch by the pilot running to provide the air moving over the wing surfaces to gain flight.

Mt. Greylock is the only east facing mountain flying site for both hang gliders and paragliders in New England.

The MassDCR visitor center located at the base of Mt. Greylock on Rockwell Road has a prominent display showing the history of hang gliding and paragliding at Mt Greylock

Mt Greylock is flown by hang gliders and paragliders an average of 6 times a year. Mostly limited due to wind and weather conditions

The most hang gliding and paragliding pilots that have flown from Mt Greylock in a single day is 75

Hang gliding and paragliding has always been a large attraction for the state park. Mass DCR employees have told me that they receive phone calls almost daily when the park is open asking if the hang gliders are going to be there

My Greylock is one of the premier flying sites for hang gliders and paragliders in the Northeastern United States

Hang glider and paraglider pilots will travel from all over the northeastern United States to fly at Mt. Greylock when the conditions are right for our sport

Only unpowered hang gliders and paragliders are allowed to fly from Mt. Greylock

Only recreational use of hang gliders and paragliders are allowed at Mt. Greylock. No guided flights or competitions take place there

Hang gliding and paragliding from Mt. Greylock brings in revenue to the state and local businesses including the restaurant on top of Mt. Greylock

**Scope of Work:**

**Location:** Mt Greylock State Reservation summit in the area known as the Adams Vista

**Description of work proposed:** The Adams Vista area was chosen due to our 50 year history of using this area to safely launch our hang gliders and paragliders and the minimal amount of changes required to reclaim this area. Also this proposal of the Adams Vista area will benefit the public by enhancing their experience of visiting the summit of Mt. Greylock.

The work will be divided into 3 phases.

Phase 1

Trim all grass and bushes in the designated area down to a height of about 6 inches. This will allow the grass and brush to survive and continue to grow while providing ground cover to help prevent erosion issues. This will also make it user friendly for the hang gliding/ paragliding pilots to safely launch and provide the general public an area to safely enjoy Mt. Greylock spectacular views.

Estimated Time Frame: 1 day Page 2

Equipment required: String and blade trimmers, hand operated loppers

Work to be performed by: MHGA and/or MassDCR employees

Phase 2

Repair washout areas of the launch areas with MassDCR approved materials (growing soils, gravel, stone, grass seed, straw mats) to meet MHGA standards needed for a safe launching area. This area of the lower launch will be slightly elevated (approximately 6 inches) and will be crown to help prevent future erosion. This will be similar to what we had in 2009, as shown in attachment B.

Estimated time frame: 1 day

Equipment required: wheelbarrows, shovels and rakes, except for the delivery of materials to the Adams Vista area.

Work to be performed by: MHGA and/or MassDCR employees

Phase 3

Long term Maintenance: Trimming of vegetation that grows in designated area as needed, estimated to be 2 times a year. MHGA recommends (weather permitting) late June so that it will be freshly trimmed for the July 4th weekend and late August so that it will be freshly trimmed for Labor Day weekend. The MHGA believes this schedule will best benefit the Hang gliding/Paragliding pilots’ safety while best benefiting the public visiting Mt Greylock. After a few years we (MHGA) along with MassDCR could reevaluate the future needs for trimming times per year. Repair any weather related washouts as needed to maintain a safe launch area

Time Frame: 1 day each time

Equipment required: String and blade trimmers, hand operated loppers,

Work to be performed by: MHGA and/or MassDCR employees

Repair future erosion in the Adams Vista as needed to maintain safety.

Time Frame: 1 day each time

Equipment required: wheelbarrows, shovels and rakes, except for the delivery of materials to the Adams Vista area.

Work to be performed by: MHGA and/or MassDCR employees

**Estimated Cost of Proposed Work:**

No Cost to MassDCR if MHGA does all the work

All work if performed by MHGA will be completed by the Massachusetts Hang Gliding Association members and volunteers from the hang gliding and paragliding community. All tools and equipment will be provided by the members of the Massachusetts Hang Gliding Association.

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**Start Date of Work:**

As soon as possible (weather permitting) so we can safely flying hang gliders and paragliders from Mt. Greylock

**Benefits of this proposal to MassDCR and local communities:**

Hang glider and paraglider pilots will have a safe place to launch when flying from Mt Greylock while providing a long term positive experience to the visiting public

Keeps open a spectacular viewing area from the summit of Mt Greylock.

Minimal impact to land

Continued attraction at Mt. Greylock bringing in more visitors and revenue to the area

Little or no cost to MassDCR

Little or no long term maintenance cost to Mass DCR

**Summary:** The proposed work will have little or no negative impact on the area. It will not cost MassDCR anything to maintain if MHGA does all the work. This will benefit MassDCR by keeping hang gliding and paragliding at Mt Greylock and that will help to bring in needed revenue to the area. Many visitors will be able to utilize this this area for their recreation.

**Attachments:**

Attachment A: Mapping showing the area of proposed work

Attachment B: Picture showing hang gliding launch area from 2009 and the trimmed vegetation

Attachment C: 2023 picture of the area showing weather related damage to hang gliding launch

Attachment D: 2023 picture of the area showing the over growth of the Adams Vista area

Attachment E: 2023 picture of the area showing the over growth of the Adams Vista area

Attachment F: Petition in support of this proposal

Respectfully submitted

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