

**TOWN OF LEVERETT
COMMUNITY PRESERVATION COMMITTEE**

(Short Form)

**Project Application for Community Preservation Funding
(For \$25,000 and Under Only)**

Project Name: Rattlesnake Gutter Road Preservation

Project Location/Address: Rattlesnake Gutter Road

Applicant/Project Sponsor or Organization: Rattlesnake Gutter Trust for the Town of Leverett

Address: P.O. Box 195

City: Leverett State: MA Zip: 01054

CPA Category/Purpose: (Please check all that apply)

☐ Open Space ☐ Community Housing ☒ Historic Preservation ☒ Recreation

Project Budget:

Amount of CPA Funds Requested: \$ \$25,000

Amount from Other Funding Sources: \$

Project Budget: \$ \$25,000

Please check which of the following is included with this application:

☒ One Paragraph Project Description* ☒ Detailed Project Budget*
☒ Map/Site plans, Architectural plans ☒ Timeline/Project Schedule*
☒ Photographs ☐ Letters of Support

*Required Documentation

Contact Person/Authorized Representative for this Project: Dan Williams, Co-Chair RGT

Address: P.O. Box 195

City: Leverett State: MA Zip: 01054

E-mail: d.h.williams@ieee.org

Phone: 413-549-3525

Signature of Applicant:  Date: 10/3/2022

Rattlesnake Gutter Road Preservation CPA Proposal

Overview: The future of the historic Rattlesnake Gutter Road is in serious danger due to erosion, which is creating washouts and, in some places, has caused the foundation stone wall to collapse. Based on detailed discussions with a regional landscape architect and historic preservationist, the Rattlesnake Gutter Trust is proposing that the Town allocate Community Preservation Act funds to document the existing conditions as the first of two steps designed to provide the Town with a comprehensive assessment of options to shore up and preserve the road. The first step (2023-2024 fiscal year) would include a detailed survey of the road, including the grade, contours, location of current drainage apparatus, and areas of road degradation, etc., as well as a forestry inventory of current growth of trees. Based on the completed surveys, the second step (2024-2025 fiscal year) would include assessments and a cost evaluation from professionals including a civil engineer (looking at drainage design, etc.), a structural engineer (looking at the condition of the road and what can be done), a forester (who can contribute the knowledge of what trees pose danger, etc.), and a landscape architect (who would assist in integrating the plans to arrive at an esthetic result). The second step would result in recommendations and a draft request for proposals (RFP).

Brief History: On the 16th of June, 1834 at a legal meeting of the Inhabitants of Leverett, the town voted to lay out the road that we now call Rattlesnake Gutter Road¹. On a petition on behalf of the Town of Leverett, Alpheus Field, and others, the County Commissioners set out the specifications for “making a hard durable road” to be built by September of 1836.² The road was constructed using oxen to move rocks to make a stone wall, which was then backfilled to level the road. It linked Moores Corner with the southern part of Leverett and historically has been used by logging trucks and commuters, as well as those enjoying the scenic wonder of the ledges.

Rattlesnake Gutter was maintained by the town as a road for vehicular travel, although not plowed in the winter, until after the “100 year flood” in 1993, when part of the road was undercut by water and part of the stone wall collapsed. There was conversation in town about seeking State funding for rebuilding the road, but the consensus at the time was that State funds would require rebuilding in a manner that could destroy the historic nature of the road. After 1993, a barrier was put up where the stone wall and road collapsed and gates at both ends were installed. The gates limit vehicular access to emergency vehicles, access that is now further limited by deterioration of the road. Drainage pipes to funnel runoff water from the uphill side of the road have been added by the Highway Department in an effort to protect the road, and the Department has periodically re-graded the surface when heavy rains turned the road into a brook in spite of best efforts. The road is now a popular hiking destination, with trail links though both Town and

¹ Leverett Book of Records, 1807 - 1841, pages 241-241. Digitally accessible at <https://archive.org/details/townrecordstownno1807zebi/page/241/mode/2up>

² County Commissions Records are available at the Franklin County Council of Governments in Greenfield. See Book 2, pages 273-275.

Rattlesnake Gutter Trust lands. During the pandemic, it became a place where townspeople could walk and socialize outdoors within the beautiful and dramatic landscape.

Goal: To preserve the historic rural character of Rattlesnake Gutter Road and to ensure its continued integrity and use primarily as a hiking and biking destination while allowing limited emergency vehicular use.

Scope of Planning Grant 2023-2024:

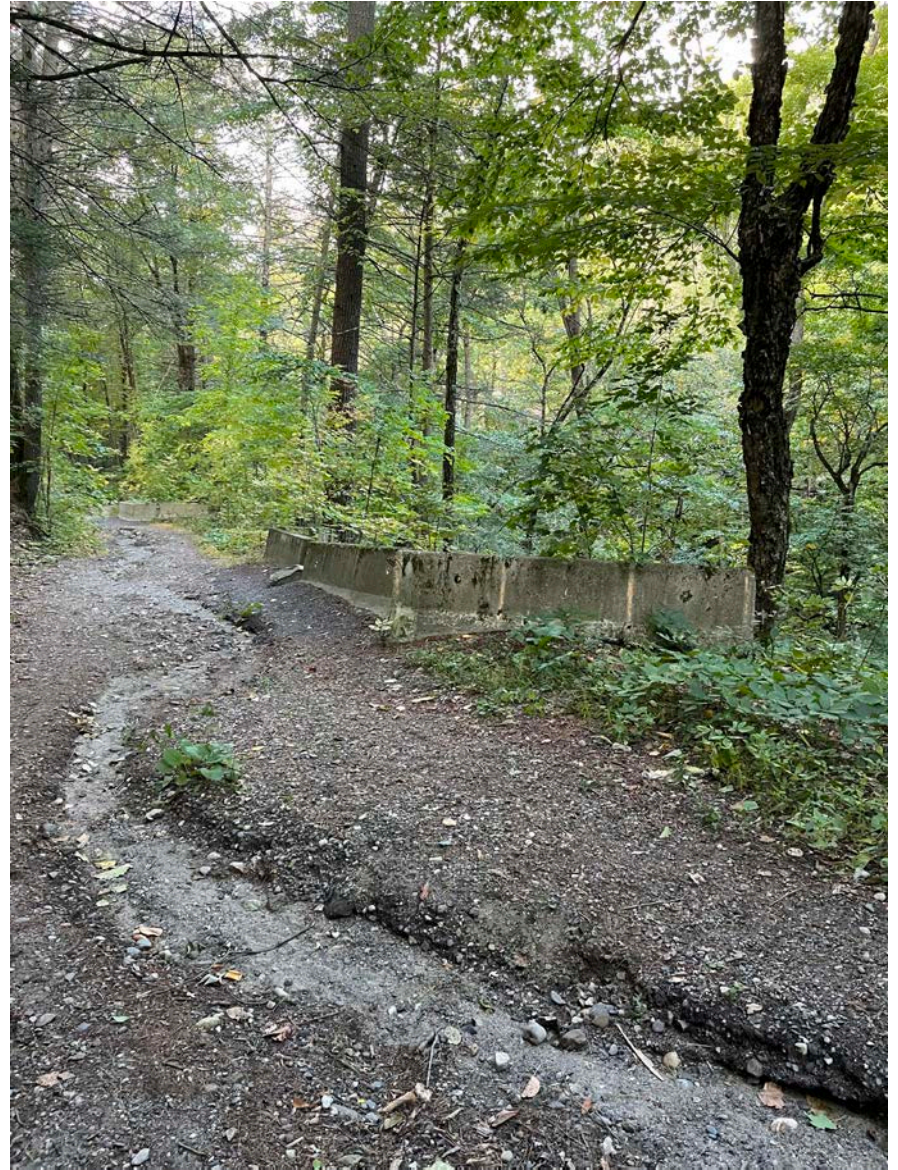
1. Exploration and clarification of the current relationship between the Town and County relative to Rattlesnake Gutter Road, including but not limited to exploring the possible assistance/involvement of FRCOG in developing an engineering plan for preservation of the road, culminating in a report including recommendations for next steps.
2. Completion of a comprehensive survey and documentation of the current conditions of the road, including but not limited to elevations, contours, vertical and horizontal grading, and assessment of the underlying stone wall base of the road and existing disturbances/collapses.
3. Completion of a forestry and native/invasive plant inventory that includes the species, size, and health of the trees along the road, including an assessment of the impact of tree and plant mortality on the road itself.

Expense Item	Total	CPA	Timeline
1. Town/County Cooperation Exploration	\$1,000	\$1,000	July 2023
2. Comprehensive Documentation Survey	\$20,000	\$20,000	July 2023
3. Forestry/Plant Inventory	\$4,000	\$4,000	July 2023





Rattlesnake Gutter Road was built circa 1834. Using oxen to move rocks, they built a stone wall and then backfilled it with dirt to make the road. During the “100 year flood” of 1993, a small section of the road was undercut and the stone wall breached. It has grown larger over the years and the town has put up three barriers at the edge.



The stone wall foundation of the road has fallen into the ravine in three places. Two barriers have been put at the edge of the road and a third location fenced.