

July 16, 2010

Dear MDC Commissioners,

As soon as we heard about the \$2.9 million jury verdict against the MDC, we were concerned for several reasons:

- As users of the West Hartford Reservoir, we feared the MDC would consider closing access to protect itself against future lawsuits;
- As recreation advocates, we were concerned about the impact that this decision might have on other municipalities and municipal entities like the MDC; and
- As citizens, we were frustrated that our state's Recreational Liability Statute had been so eroded by court cases over the past 15 years that it was no longer adequate to protect the MDC and other municipalities against personal injury lawsuits.

So, after some discussions on strategy between ourselves and some fellow advocates, we decided to launch the website www.savethemdctrails.org as a place for providing solid information on the issues surrounding this situation, and as a place to encourage others to join with us to ask the General Assembly to fix the Recreational Liability Statute.

We realize that we are extremely fortunate to enjoy the wonderful recreational resources that the MDC provides for the benefit of the public, and at the same time, we believe you appreciate that having public benefits like the West Hartford Reservoir system is one of the reasons why people in the MDC member towns voted to support the Clean Water Project despite incurring additional, significant costs in a fragile economic environment.

We are hopeful that you will consider the public health benefits, the public relations benefits to the MDC, and the intense interest of the residents of your member towns when you consider this important issue. Speaking of the intense interest, we started an online petition with a goal of 1,000 signatures just two weeks ago, and we have already received almost 3,500 signatures.

After weighing the input from the upcoming public meeting on July 20th before your Water Bureau, we encourage you to keep the MDC lands open for recreation both as your appeal proceeds, and as we ask the General Assembly to fix the Recreational Liability Statute.

Sincerely,

Eric Hammerling and Charlie Beristain

www.savethemdctrails.org