

Economic Impact of Tourist Train

Stuart Draper, owner of the Draper Fuel Co. and Wilton Telephone Co, starts the Wilton Scenic Railroad

Draper dies of a heart attack. The scenic train closes and the two diesel cars are sold within days.

Another 10 businesses are lost due to lack of foot traffic.

2003

2004

2005

2006

2007

2008

2009

Hundreds of visitors come to Wilton to ride the Scenic Railroad, shop and dine.

23 of Wilton's retail establishments are lost to Milford or go out of business.

“Bring Back the Tourist Train!”

“Reinstating the seasonal tourist train to run between Wilton and Greenfield is a game-changer for Wilton and the town’s along this rural rail.”

- Jennifer Beck, Chair, Wilton’s Economic Development Team

“Bring back the Tourist Train!” took the top resident and business votes in the Brand Survey conducted by the Wilton Economic Development Team in 2016. “

- Dick Putnam, Putnam’s Clothing, Wilton, NH

“The former operation brought hundreds of tourists in to ride the rails and infused our small businesses with much needed foot traffic, the number one challenge in sustaining a customer base in Wilton now that 101 bypasses the downtown. “

- Representative and Wilton Select Board, Kermit Williams

Nelson's Candies

11/15/18

To all parties concerned, when the scenic railroad came into town, it changed the tone of the entire town of Wilton. It brought people in from far & wide. It seemed everyone wanted to ride the train. They had boxed lunches to go along with the scenic ride. On board they passed out little green cards that gave 10% off at any of the stores. It worked well for all the store fronts. It caught on very fast and before we knew it, there were people of all ages, young & old. It was exactly what town needed, it was great. In this complex world we live in today, it's nice to know you can relax and go for an old time ride on the rails

Nelson's Candies



Doug Nelson, owner of Nelson's Candy Store, a family-owned business and anchor attraction, remembers what the tourist train did for his business.

From: Ray Cilley <rcilley@aspe-nh.com>
To: nhrealtykat <nhrealtykat@gmail.com>
Cc: prleishman <prleishman@aol.com>
Subject: Milford to Bennington Passenger Train Returns to : Greenfield ?
Date: Sun, Dec 30, 2018 7:07 am

Kathleen Carpenter
Chairman of Greenfield EDAC

Hi Kat,

The thought of the passenger train possibly returning to Greenfield is exciting news !

Years past when the Milford to Bennington Scenic Train made trips to Greenfield, we at Spring Pond Farm provided a destination stop for the train and their passengers. We have been a host farm for the past 10 years for the WOOL ARTS TOUR held on Columbus Day Weekend where several farms in the area open their farms to the public.

We would have 15 to 20 local artisans and vendors who display there wool products and people come to shop, visit our Alpacas and other farm animals, or get a horse drawn hayride. Just gave people another reason to get out and enjoy the beautiful fall season.

In past years when the train used to come to the event, it was a huge draw ! We would have 600 to 800 visitors over the weekend. Many would come by train while others would visit just because they knew the train would be coming.

Besides the Wool Arts Tour Event, The train would make other stops here at SPF over the Summer and Fall months where passengers would

get off to visit our Farm Store, or just visit with the Alpacas. Was always an exciting time for us as well as the public..

Back in 1879 the Town of Greenfield appropriated \$10,000 in support of the Railroad coming to town. Maybe the Greenfield EDAC might consider warrant article to the town for similar support of bringing the train back again.

Maybe if an organized group were to be formed such as “ Friends of the Wilton to Bennington Railroad “ and the Town’s of Wilton, Lyndeborough, Greenfield and Bennington all showed some support, business, individual donors and organizations might also get behind making this a reality.

I can envision where if the train were to return to Bennington and Greenfield, that many others might find a way to benefit from it and help support the Milford Bennington Railroads business.

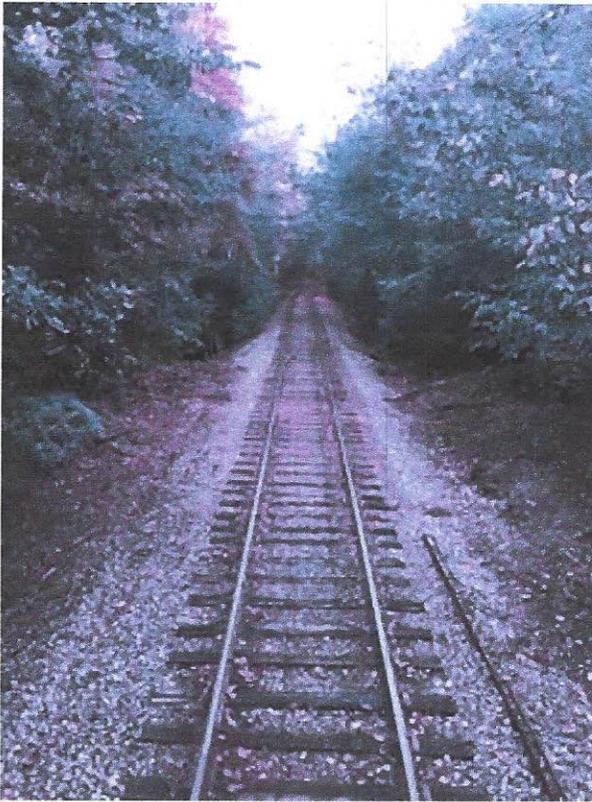
Most people love to see a train traveling along the tracks and many more love the chance to get a ride on one !

Please keep me posted and let me know if anything else I can do to help “Bring the Train Back”

Ray Cilley
Spring Pond Farm
81 Muzzey Hill Rd.
Greenfield, NH 03047

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Save Wilton's Rail line?



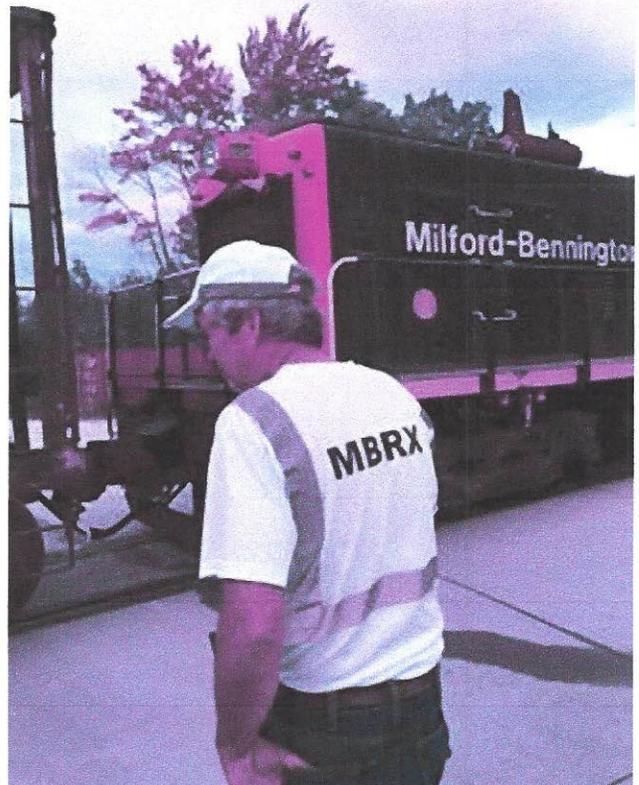
The railroad has been a rich part of Wilton's history. For many years, the rail line in this part of New Hampshire ended in Wilton, making our town an important hub for shipping out farm and forest products and bringing in manufactured goods. Our mills prospered because the train was here to take their products to market. You could hop on a train in Wilton and step off in Boston, or go even farther.

Much later, Stewart Draper created a tourist train, with a ride through the scenery of Wilton, Lyndeborough, and Greenfield – especially beautiful during leaf season. That service ended with Stewart's untimely death. Today, the only train that runs through Wilton is the Milford and Bennington Railroad, which hauls crushed

stone from the Granite State Concrete quarry in the northern part of town to the Granite State plant in Milford.

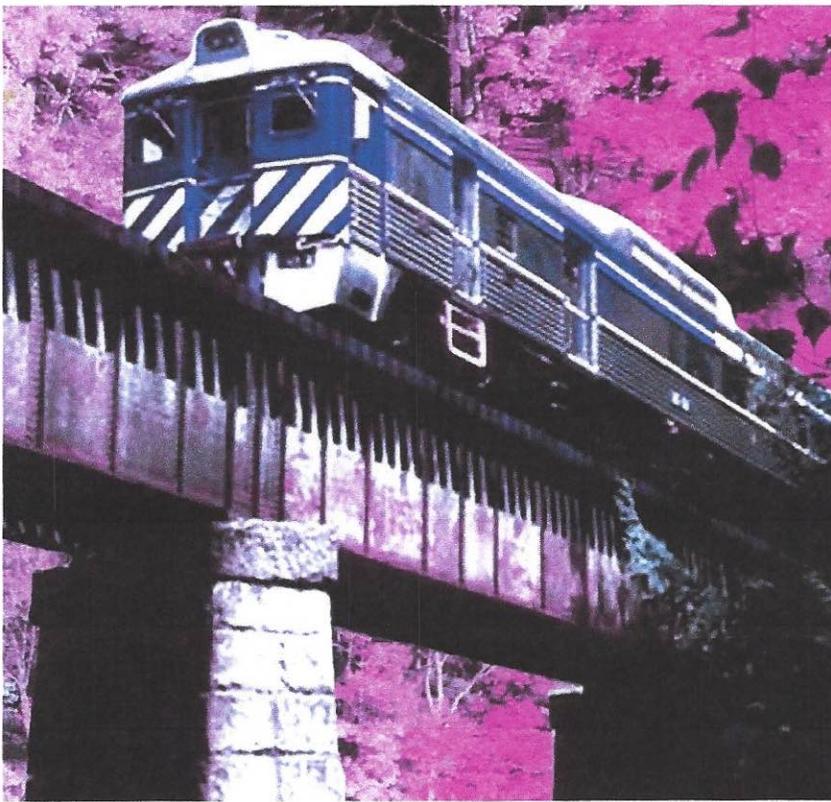
The rail line in Wilton, starting behind the Post Office and running to Milford and beyond, belongs to Pan Am Railways. Pan Am, formerly Guilford Transportation, is owned by the Mellon family, and in the 1980s bought much of the rails in New Hampshire from bankrupt railroads for pennies on the dollar. While some of the lines continue to operate, much of Pan Am's profit recently has been made by pulling up the rails and selling off the land.

The town has recently been notified by the Surface Transportation Board, the Federal agency that regulates railroads, that Pan Am wants to discontinue the line in Wilton.



This would put the Milford and Bennington Railroad out of business and stop the rail transport of crushed stone through the Town of Wilton.

Whatever you think of the crushed stone business, closing the rail line would not stop the operation of the Granite State quarry. Instead, product would be moved from the quarry to the processing plant in Milford in heavy trucks, 80 or more a day during construction season. These trucks would come down Forest Road, cross the Stony Creek bridge by the police station, and go up Island Street to 101. Heavily laden trucks, making hundreds of trips a week, would put a severe strain on the bridge, which is already in rough shape. If the bridge had to be rebuilt, the trucks would go down Main Street. Many students walk the same route daily going to and from The Wilton-Lyndeborough Cooperative school.



Losing the rail line would also end the dream of someday reviving the tourist train. Once rails come up, it's far too expensive to put new ones down. Wilton would lose the last piece of its railroad history.

The decision to allow Pan Am to take this action is up to the Surface Transportation Board, but they are required to listen to input from all those who are affected. Pan Am says that only the Milford and Bennington railroad and Granite State would be affected. The purpose of this flyer, and the short discussion which will take

place this evening during the "Other Business" part of the Warrant, is to give the town a voice in this process. While not a warrant article, a straw vote taken at Town Meeting and captured as part of the minutes will reinforce the position that Wilton would be adversely affected by the loss of our rail line.

Please stay if you can to voice your opinion on this subject. If you can't stay that late, you can make your opinion known by sending an email to tow@wiltonnh.org.