

**From:** sandi and tom stowe  
**Sent:** October 13, 2006  
**To:** Todd Chadwell  
**Subject:** GE Resource Damage Funds

My first and only involvement with this process was at the single Pittsfield public meeting back in the Fall 2003. I was concerned that much of what had occurred up until that point had happened outside of real public scrutiny. Yes, many interest groups had been involved, but the general public was essentially left out of the process. While noting the meager public turnout at the only meeting planned for Pittsfield in 2003, I cautioned, "This kind of discussion needs to be brought to the broader population. There has to be a way for the people of Berkshire County to say 'this is what we want'. Something this big needs to be in front of the average person" not just the special interest groups. Nevertheless, since 2003, while complying with the letter of the law, the subcouncil has neglected to really engage the general public. Even fewer people today know what has been going on as evidenced by the almost total lack of non-stake holders at the "score report" meeting in Pittsfield. Even I, in spite of my clearly expressed interest at the 2003 meeting, have been in the dark for the past 3 years as to what has transpired. It is very regrettable that the general public will not have any say in how this money is spent. I hope that the second round of funding will be a more open process where the Subcouncil will actually reach out to the general public. I have reviewed the current proposals and the evaluation summary very carefully. My philosophy is well stated in the 2003 Plan Update where I made the following statement, "(Multi-use) trails are an enlightened and progressive way for communities and individuals of all abilities to come together. There is a broad contingency of individuals who would like to see some of these beautiful, wild sections opened up to the public with a linear multi-use trail . . . segments of a north-south trail and segments of a Pittsfield route could and should be sited along the Housatonic River in part because it is flat, less developed and in part because it is beautiful. Individuals and families who use the route will become good stewards of the river:" Nowadays, it is possible to create good surface trails without asphalt. I take issue with those who feel that multi-use trails should not be sited in "sensitive areas". Fish and Wildlife have a proposal to acquire and preserve these areas. If I am not mistaken that means that these areas will be open to hunting for ducks, pheasant, deer etc. Hunting is a special interest and certainly a noisier, more intrusive activity than hiking, walking and biking. I see no reason why a multi-use trail could not be closed down during hunting season and be opened to the public the rest of the year. There is no better way to get the general public invested in the well being of a river and teach river values than to invite the public canoe the river, to stroll, bike, and wheel along its banks. With this round of funding, I would like to see wholesale purchase of large swaths of river corridors by some of the stake-holders currently submitting proposals with the provision that multi-use paths will be sited along and near the river with the next round of funding. In other words, acquire the land today; put a linear environmentally friendly path along it in the near future. A linear multi-use trail will be a true treasure that will engage the imagination and curiosity of generations to come. Please dont waste this money on tiny projects. Another point. The 3 projects that were scored the highest were in South County. Keep in mind that the city of Pittsfield was grievously injured by PCB pollution more than any other locality in the County. If the projects proposed by the city have not risen to the top of the pile, then I think you should put everything on hold rather than award huge amounts of money to South County. I dont really understand the rush. It's back to the idea of buy land now, then get all the communities together to put together a north-south path. It can be done and what a legacy! Sincerely, Sandra M. Stowe