

RECREATION/CONCERT EVENT PRESS RELEASE

RELEASE DATE: June 1 2024
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Folk Troubadours trek through Hampden County offering Daily Hikes and Free Community Concerts

Holland, Brimfield, Warren, Palmer, Wilbraham - June 21-25 2024 - Since 2010, singer-songwriters Mark Mandeville & Rianne Richards have organized a grassroots bipedal trek annually to raise awareness of recreational greenspace throughout the state and create folk coffeehouse-style musical events in each town. This June, sponsored by the *Massachusetts Cultural Council* and *Blackstone Valley Music & Performing Arts Collaborative*, the **13th Annual Massachusetts Walking Tour** will offer a series of daily public hikes and free community concerts, while walking with their backpacks and instruments from Holland to Wilbraham. Hiking properties featured include Westville Dam, Stevens Brook Sichel Community Forest, Lucy Stone Park, Midura Family Conservation Area and Rice Preserve/Sunrise Peak. Most days include an option for a short hike with the group and then each evening a free community concert. The concert venues include the Holland Community Center, Hitchcock Academy in Brimfield, Lucy Stone Park in Warren, Second Congregational Church in Palmer and Wilbraham Public Library. For complete details visit www.masswalkingtour.org.

The Massachusetts Walking Tour has performed over 135 concerts in 120 towns across the state, partnering with the National Parks Service, Mass Audubon, Trustees, DCR, Freedoms Way and AMC to hike sections of the Appalachian Trail, Mid-State Trail, New England National Scenic Trail, Bay Circuit Trail, Cape Cod Rail Trail, South Coast Bikeway and many of the region's smaller recreational greenspaces. In 2017, Senator Ed Markey officially recognized the Massachusetts Walking Tour in the congressional record for an annual commitment to promoting trails, arts and culture throughout the state.

“Our intention is simply to help people understand the importance of greenspace in our busy lives by inviting them out for a walk, to see younger and older folks hiking together, sharing thoughts on a nice day out in the woods,” states co-founder Mark Mandeville. “As for the concerts, we do our best to create a respectful listening environment which highlights local performers, artists and folks with good work to announce – in that way, each concert is unique.”

Aside from organizing the Massachusetts Walking Tour, performing and recording their original compositions, Mandeville and Richards have served for over a decade as music teachers in central MA and this year in 2024 the couple helped form the nonprofit *Blackstone Valley Music and Performing Arts Collaborative* to assist the operation of their music school, continuing all the great programs there such as individualized music lessons, Rock Band Camp and Community Coffeehouse nights.

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June 21 2024

Daily Hike: Westville Recreation Area *9 am*

125 Wallace Rd. Sturbridge, MA 01566

Concert: Holland Community Center *6 pm*

40 Brimfield Rd, Holland, MA 01521

June 22 2024

Daily Hike: Stevens Brook Sichel Community Forest *10 am*

Blodgett Road Holland, MA 01521

Concert: Hitchcock Academy *6pm*

2 Brookfield Rd, Brimfield, MA 01010

June 23 2024

Daily Hike and Concert: Lucy Stone Park *3 pm*

199 Old West Brookfield Rd, Warren, MA 01083

June 24 2024

Daily Hike: Midura Family Conservation Area *12pm noon*

568 Old Warren Road Palmer, MA 01069

Concert: Second Congregational Church *6pm*

1080 Pleasant St, Palmer, MA 01069

June 25 2024

Daily Hike: Sunrise Peak/ Rice Preserve *12 pm*

Concert: Wilbraham Public Library *6pm*

25 Crane Park Dr, Wilbraham, MA 01095