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News Front Page December 9, 2010 Search Archives Search

- Front Page
- Holden News
- Paxton News
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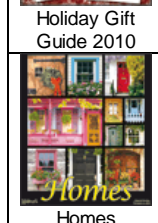


Question of the Week

Who do you think has the right of way in the woods, runners and walkers, or hunters?

- Runners and walkers
 - Hunters
 - They both have equal right to enjoy their hobby outdoors
- View results

Special Sections



THE Landmark PHOTO GALLERIES Reprints and photo gifts from Landmark photographs. Many shots that didn't make the paper.
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Rail trail jogger hit by buckshot

BY MELISSA MCKEON MMCKEON@HOLDENLANDMARK.

A Sterling man jogging on the Rail Trail in Holden was slightly injured by buckshot, probably from a hunting gun, on Wednesday, Dec. 1.

Holden Police received a report of the incident after Raymond Duda ran the nearly three miles back to his car, parked in the West Boylston parking lot, after hearing several shots and feeling a sting that turned out to be buckshot hitting his face.

Holden Police Chief George Sherrill and West Boylston Detective Marcello Tavano said the individual was not badly hurt and was treated at the scene.

"By the time [Duda] ran back to his car and called West Boylston and they notified us, considerable time had elapsed," Sherrill said. "We were in the area where the shot came from, and could not locate the hunter."

Police questioned several hunters in the area, but found their guns were not of the type used to shoot the buckshot that hit the jogger, Sherrill said.

The trail is posted with signs advising those who use it that hunting is allowed around the trail. In Massachusetts, shooting is prohibited within 150 feet of a roadway and 400 feet of a residence; the rail trail is neither, so shooting is allowed near and around it.

Sherrill said he advises those who use the trail to wear reflective clothing, keep a cell phone handy and travel in pairs.

Tavano also has a recommendation for hunters: "You've got to be sure of your backstop."

Backstop is what might be behind the animal being stalked, in this case, a jogger. Hunters are taught to try to be sure that they're shooting safely in the state's hunter education courses.

Though the rail trail is in an area where hunting has always been allowed, and is heavily used by walkers and joggers, such events are still comparatively rare, Tavano said. He's never heard of this happening before, and hopes he doesn't hear of another event. What might have happened is all too clear to him.

"It's fortunate that nothing worse happened," Tavano said.

The Holden Police Department sent out an alert to those on the town's alert list that included advice on how to be aware of hunters near the rail trail where two recreational activities meet, and such incidents can happen.

Buckshot is usually used to hunt deer, and shotgun deer season in Massachusetts runs until Dec. 11.

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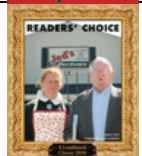
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Reader's Choice



Summer 2010



Gardening & Landscaping



Hey Kids



Home Improvements 2010



Who's Who in Business 2010



Mission of Hope: A La Romana Diary

West Boylston EMS treated Duda and the state Environmental Police assisted with the investigation.

Duda did not return calls to The Landmark by press time.

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