

ADOPT-A-TRAIL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



DUTIES & DATA

Spring, 2016

R. Bruce Donald, President

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Why an Adopt-a-Trail Program for our Communities?

- The Farmington Valley Trails Council (FVTC) set up this program 15 years ago to help our communities to cope with the cost and staffing requirements of continuing light maintenance on the trail system, which includes over 32 miles of completed (paved) Farmington Canal Heritage Trail (FCHT) and the Farmington River (loop) Trail (FRT).
- Provide clean-up services on the trails by removing detritus and trash. If necessary light pruning and clearing of sections may be required to hold back encroaching greenery.
- To act as eyes and ears on the trail, identifying any maintenance problems, actual or potential criminal activity such as graffiti or defacement of property, and to report any such condition, activity or other issue to the proper town authority.
- As a secondary role, to act as informal guides for trail users.

Background

A national push for the construction of new bicycle and pedestrian facilities began in the early 1990s. The results were notable: an 80-fold increase in new construction spending (between 1988 and 2002), the designation through the White House Millennium Initiative of more than 2,000 local, shared-use Millennium Trails, (including the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail (FCHT) and close to 5,000 state-driven trails projects in progress by 2002. The over eighty miles of the FCHT and the nineteen miles of the Farmington River Trail (FRT) constitute one of the most picturesque and historic greenways in New England. *The Connecticut section “spine trail” from New Haven to Suffield runs fifty four miles through eleven towns* and connects with many more biking and walking trails. The FCHT has been designated a Community Millennium Trail under the federal Millennium Trails Initiative based upon its special value to the communities it serves. It is also a major part of the East Coast Greenway from New Haven to Route 315 in Simsbury. The ECG runs 2,900 miles from Florida to Maine. *The FRT and 11 miles of the FCHT constitute the Five-Town, 28-Mile Loop Trail, one of the few in the United States.*

How Have the Trails Been Built?

Trucks and automobiles almost completely replaced the freight and passenger rail service of the Canal Line and Central New England, and most services ended by the late 1980s. As rail lines around the country fell into disrepair groups of creative individuals explored the idea of converting abandoned rail beds and canal towpaths into recreational trails and the “rails-to-trails” movement was born. Congress provided funding through the Transportation Enhancement (TE) portion of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and the FVTC was formed soon after in 1992 to promote and support the conversion. Six town governments in the Valley cooperated in the creation of the trail development committee and in providing the 20% of funds not supplied by federal TE funds. The first sections of the “Farmington Valley Greenway” were paved in Simsbury and Farmington beginning in 1993/4. Raising the 20% matching funds is difficult for many towns as CT has been reluctant to provide any State funding in the past. Much of the trail system is complete with the exception of a 9.1-mile piece running south from southern Farmington, through all of Plainville into northern Southington. Farmington is designed and funded and

will be complete by early 2017. As the railroad abandons use of the rails south of Farmington, it is expected that we will be joined to trails already paved from Southington to New Haven, with only a 2.5-mile gap in Cheshire to be built in 2016 and a smaller gap estimated for 2017. Southwick, Massachusetts is completed, with only 6 miles of Westfield (much of which will be elevated) and all of Southampton remaining to the north.

Why Build Multi-Use Trails At All?

41.3 completed miles of the multi-use (asphalt surfaced) FCHT bisect Connecticut from New Haven to Suffield. Its sister loop trail, the FRT boasts an additional 10.1 miles. They have proven to be a remarkable success. By connecting 13 towns, they allow point-to-point off-road travel providing a safe system of linear parks that can be accessed at multiple points by both able and handicapped users. The trails serve multiple positive purposes for their communities and the surrounding region. Unfortunately large gaps remain in both these trails.

The case for multi-use trails in Connecticut has been proven. They are used as recreational facilities for physical activity and health, as tourist destinations and sources of economic development, as an abatement of pollution and noise by replacing automobile trips, as a significant community amenity where people congregate and interact, and as a growing form of alternative transportation through commutation. Intermodal opportunities through connections with bus lines and other mass transportation are expanding and are slowly and steadily increasing in use.

- Every dollar spent building multi-use trails returns a multiple of that yearly.
- Immediate successes when built, indicating heavy demand, they attract thousands of users. *In 2015 the FVTC conservatively recorded 326,050 trail users in the Farmington Valley.*
- Those local and out of town users add significantly to the economy;
- Residents are overwhelmingly positive about them, communities that have them are more desirable, and properties near trails sell faster at higher prices.
- These repurposed rail corridors are retained permanently as improved community open space.

Helping Our Communities

The explosion of multi-use paths brings increased health and recreational opportunities for users, and new planning challenges for trail managers. While the majority of Indiana's trails have been built with a mix of state and federal funding, the funding options for non-construction activities are comparatively few: in addition to the RTP (Recreational Trails Program), the FHWA lists only the "STP (including the enhancement set-aside), the Highway Safety Improvement Program, and the CMAQ Program (23 U.S.C. 217(a)). State and Community Highway Safety Grant Program funds (Section 402) are to be used exclusively for non-construction activities." Additionally, it is far easier to find technical support for design and construction matters than for maintenance concerns. Recent funding mechanisms in CT include DOT's "Let's Go CT"

program and a much bolstered Recreational Trails Program administered through DEEP. Which finally address some of these issues.

Deferred trail maintenance is a nationwide issue. As our leading expert in parks and preservation services, the National Park Service, approaches its 100-year anniversary in 2016, it faces a multibillion dollar backlog of deferred maintenance. The problem of securing funding for maintenance is not unique to trails: Smart Growth America states that, between 2009 and 2011, annual state spending on expanding and constructing roadways (accounting for 1% of the total state-owned road network) was at \$20.4 billion, while annual state spending on maintenance and preservation (caring for the other 99% of the network) stood at only \$16.5 billion. Such spending priorities do not reflect that nearly a quarter (21%) of the national road network was rated in poor condition in 2011. In 2011, INDOT estimated the cost-per-mile of constructing new separate-alignment, shared-use paths at \$775,000, and the cost-per-mile of building out and maintaining an existing separate alignment, shared-use path at \$115,000. Costs in Connecticut have averaged (with engineering) approximately \$1 million per mile for 10' paved multi-use trail.

Despite the difficulties with comparing collected cost data, which is compiled by different agencies on varying criteria, it is clear that initial construction costs dwarf the costs of routine maintenance and enhancement of existing facilities; however, we must note that deferring maintenance can dramatically increase maintenance costs and invert that cost balance. The FVTC has been extremely pleased on the whole with the general state of the trail system in our area. However, we must continue to be proactive. As trails age without appropriate maintenance, opportunities for substantial cost-savings through early intervention shrink. Our communities are obligated to maintain federally-funded trails in accordance with standards for public safety and access rights.

FVTC Maintenance Standards and Schedule

Each April the FVTC sponsors a trail-wide clean up day, currently taking place in eight towns with four trash collection areas. The day is an enormous success with over 200 volunteers and sets the tone for the park-like beauty of the system during the season.

The FVTC continues to research best practices in trail maintenance and stewardship. Safety is of paramount importance. ***We will strive to keep our trails clean and garbage free.*** Each town will provide standard maintenance such as mowing, weed control, edging, drainage control, heavy cutting, sand removal, trees down, etc. We will provide:

- Trail Sweeping
- Trash Removal
- Light Tree & Shrub Pruning
- Informal Guide Duties

Trail clean-up responsibilities should be undertaken every two weeks at a minimum during the season of March through November. We urge you to go out after storms and with more frequency during fall leaf drop periods. Carry some maps and be ready to answer basic questions about the trails.

Gear

The FVTC will provide you upon request with hats and neon “staff” shirts. Additionally, we have garbage bags, trash sticks, and other materials in our storage unit in Simsbury. Please let your Coordinator know if you need anything.

Reporting

Keep your eyes open! It is very important to know where you are on the trail system when reporting. The nearest cross street should be identified and any mile-marker should be noted. Hand held device GPS is reasonably good but still cannot pinpoint your location.

There are three levels of reporting. The first is for an *active* situation requiring immediate assistance in either a criminal or medical emergency. These situations demand both police and/or ambulance services. **In such cases dial 911** and describe your exact location and the situation to the dispatcher. This includes suspicious activity.

Second is a non-emergency police event. This would include any *non-active* report that the local police station would want to know about. Working with police is an important part of ensuring that a trail is safe to use. Areas like trail crossings and parking lots could generate such reports and would include such things as vandalism or the identification of transients. Use your common sense. If you think the police should be notified but it is not an emergency, call the station:

Police Station Local Numbers

Avon: 860-409-4200

Burlington: Troop L Litchfield, 911

Canton: 860-693-0221

East Granby: 860-653-4956

Farmington: 860-675-2400

Granby: 860-844-5335

Simsbury: 860-658-3125

Suffield: 860-668-3870

Third is a maintenance event or “inspection event” that is beyond our stated scope of services. Please report NEW heavy maintenance and any safety concerns i.e. asphalt condition, fencing falling down, issues with abutting landowners, etc. that cannot be addressed by our Adopt-a-Trail Volunteers.

Maintenance Contacts: Town Level

Avon: Bruce Williams; 673-6151 – bwilliams@town.avon.ct.us

Burlington: Scott Tharau; 673-6789 – stharau@yahoo.com

Canton: Robert Martin; 693-6863 – rmartin@townofcantonct.org

East Granby: Edward Hubbard; 653-6822 – info@egtownhall.com

Farmington: Scott Zenke; 675-6789 – zenkes@farmington-ct.org

Granby: Kirk Severance; 653-8960

Simsbury: Gerry Toner; 658-3255 – gtoner@simsbury-ct.gov

Suffield: John Cloonan; 668-3280 Mark Cervione; 668-3340

Basic Trail-Wide Trail User Guidelines

- Please stay on the designated trail, be courteous, and respect the rights of adjacent property owners.
- The flow of traffic on the Trail is similar to road traffic. Always ride or walk single file on the right and before passing on the left alert others by bell, horn or voice.
- Stop, look and listen before crossing roads. Obey all traffic signs and regulations.
- The bicycle speed limit on the Trail is 12 mph.
- All bicyclists are encouraged to wear protective headgear. Make sure your bicycle or other equipment is in safe operating condition.
- Please do not litter. In consideration of others please keep dogs on a short leash at all times and clean up after your dog.
- Report Trail maintenance problems to [see list].
- Report accidents on the Trail directly to Police: Dial 911. Report your position using the mile markers or road names at crossings.
- Motorized vehicles (except wheelchairs), horses and livestock are prohibited.
- The trail is open for recreational use from sunrise to sunset.
- No alcoholic beverages.
- No fires, hunting or trapping.

Adopt-a-Trail Volunteers

AVON

BOB FISH

DEMETRIOS and CAROL TSAYCOYEANES & FAMILY

GOLDBERG FAMILY

BORTOFF FAMILY

TERRI WILSON

TEAM LEO of FAVARH, c/o Michael Lawrence

RICHARD ROWLENSON

JOHN COWAN

FAVARH'S LEADERSHIP BRIGADE, c/o Todd Christopher

MARY-JANE GATELY, Coordinator, mjmarmee@comcast.net 860-543-1898

SIMSBURY

GREG FISH

JOE OROSZ

ED COX

ART HURST

ROGER PRESTON

LYNDA & BILL COOK

RED STONE PUB, c/o Marc Lubetkin

THE BICYCLE CELLAR, c/o Dave Bishop

JAY EVANS

LARRY LINONIS

DIANA MOODY

ROSEMARY & DOLPH FUSCO

STEVE NOBLE, Coordinator, steve.cris.noble@comcast.net 860-658-4065

FARMINGTON/UNIONVILLE

STEVE AND DIANE NELSON

UNIONVILLE VILLAGE IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION, c/o Mike Festa

UNION SCHOOL PTO, c/o Kerry Laberge

DONALD SVENSK

BICYCLE FRIENDLY FARMINGTON, c/o Ron Goralski

BRUCE DONALD, Coordinator, president@fvgreenway.org 860-202-3928

COLLINSVILLE/BURLINGTON/CANTON

HEALTHY GEARS VOLUNTEERS, c/o Glenn Kohrs

LEE SINKWICH, coordinator emeritus

GARY MILLER, coordinator, garymiller_fvtc@mac.com 860-690-1008

EAST GRANBY/GRANBY/SUFFIELD

RON DUNCAN

RON CARLSON

BECKY MIKUS

GERRY PALMER
MARYANNE KRAJCIK
JIM DEVOE
SKIP ESTEE
BENGT WENBERG
NORM SMITH
JOHN BLINGLING
JOHN SUTTON
DAVE TOLLI
SCOTT HOHENSCHUTZ
ED FERRIN
PATTY SANSONE
JERRY LEDGER, Coordinator, jjldgr@ieee.org 860-653-3042

SOUTHWICK, MA

NEIL DENOWITZ

KIOSK KEEPERS

MIKE BEATTY
JENNIFER DECKER
GARY MILLER
MATT GRAEBER
TERRI WILSON
JEFFERY DOWNES
SHARON & PAT DAVIES
SKIP ESTEE
JIM WATSO
RICH ROWLENSON Coordinator, rrowlenson@gmail.com 860-729-0015

TRAIL COUNTERS

DAVID TOLLI
SCOTT HOHENSCHUTZ

Who Are We?

Corporate Background:

- The Farmington Valley Trails Council, Inc. is a ***CT 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization*** founded in 1992 by Preston Reed of Farmington to advocate for multi-use “rails-to-trails” in the Farmington Valley.
- We are now the largest such organization in New England with over ***840 members***. We fully recognize that the political advocacy and economic strength of the organization stem directly from the vibrancy of our membership.
- Every cent (except our very low administration costs) goes to the trails, ***we are all volunteers***.

- Spending on construction, maintenance and amenities has averaged *over \$37,000 a year over the last 7 years.*

Officers 2014-16:

Bruce Donald, **President**, Farmington
 Jim Cassidy, **Vice President**, Plainville
 Steve Noble, **Treasurer**, Tariffville
 Doug Gerlach, **Secretary**, Farmington

Directors:

Nancy Anstey, Avon, Barbara Collins, West Hartford, Lisa Fernandez, New Haven, Joy Himmelfarb, Simsbury, Rob Kazior, Farmington, Gary Miller, Canton, Susan Mitchell, Simsbury, Rich Rowlenson, Avon, Laura Russotto, Burlington, Al Ryan, Suffield, Dwight Weed, West Hartford.

What Does the FVTC Do?

Broad Corporate Activity:

- Advocate for the completion of (1) the FCHT (2) the FRT and (3) the ECG in Connecticut.
- Promote the benefits of this multi-use trail system as the 82-mile Farmington Canal Heritage Trail and the 30-mile Farmington River (Loop) Trail.
- Help our area towns through funding trail construction, enhancements and maintenance.
- Build alliances with federal, State, town and advocacy organizations.
- Educate the public by providing maps (20,000 a year), information and events that promote safety and proper etiquette on the trail system.
- Provide up-to-date information on a high quality Website and through timely communications such as a Newsletter and email list.
- Publish papers on trail advocacy, policy, maintenance and safety.
- Hold events like monthly rides, trail-side tables, and our annual Clean-Up Day in April.
- Increase membership and volunteer coordination, renewal and retention.
- Manage FVTC activities requiring assistance from members/volunteers.

FVTC Trail-wide Initiatives:

- FVTC Maintenance Matching Fund: Recent projects for Avon and Farmington.
- Targeted Funds: Salmon Brook Bridge Fund granted \$70,000 to East Granby for completion of the Bridge. To date over \$300,000 has been passed through to our towns.
- Our Adopt-a-Trail Program helps our eight towns keep the trail clean and safe with over 100 volunteers.
- Rules and Etiquette Signage
- Safety: Handlebar bell Program, Free blinkies, Laser Counter Program
- Painted Center Lines

- Unified Design Policy
- Commercial Signage Standards
- “You are Here” Trail Program
- Trail Ambassador Program
- Boy Scout Eagle Projects (T.J. Taylor, Coordinator)

Selected National Standards

ADA.gov. Information and Technical Assistance on the Americans with Disabilities Act
http://www.ada.gov/ada_req_ta.htm

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. Guide for the Planning, Design, and Operation of Pedestrian Facilities, 2010 (AASHTO Pedestrian Guide)
<http://www.railstotrails.org/resources/documents/ourWork/trailBuilding/DraftBikeGuideFeb2010.pdf>

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, 1999 (AASHTO Bike Guide)
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/guidance/manuals.cfm#aashto

Federal Highway Administration. Program Guidance.
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/guidance/manuals.cfm#links

Federal Highway Administration. A Guide for Maintaining Pedestrian Facilities for Enhanced Safety. http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/tools_solve/fhwas13037/