

Farmington Valley Trails Council

Greenway News

May, 2011
Issue 1

Volume 11,

President's Letter



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Welcome to our first electronically disseminated newsletter. In an effort to save money and trees, we have gone the route that many organizations have already chosen. This past year has been one of notable success. Farmington and Canton are finishing the gaps in the River Trail, both of which should be done no later than early fall. South of us, Southington finished a huge part of their total mileage of the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail. The large remaining gap in Farmington, Plainville, and Southington is moving toward design phase, with Plainville and Southington waiting on the acquisition of abandoned pieces of the railroad right-of-way by the Connecticut DEP.

After a year of work, The FVTC Board has adopted a new Business Plan and has begun to implement it. One of the significant changes is a commitment from each board member to a higher level of participation. Due to this change, we regret the loss of Larry Bulgier, Dolph Fusco, Dennis Mayer, Gary Miller, and Anthony Napolitano from the board. The good news is that we will see them continuing to volunteer and help the organization. Please join me in honoring their past service and thanking them for all of their work on behalf of the FVTC. Another change is that we will have a much more decentralized structure with Committee Chairs controlling large sections of our ongoing initiatives. At this date, the committees and their chairs are as follows: Membership and Volunteer Committee: Jerry Ledger and Mary-Jane Gately; Advocacy and Outreach: Bruce Donald; Maintenance and Enhancement: Al Ryan; Publicity: Nancy Anstey; Electronic Communications: Joy Himmelfarb and Gary Miller; Finance: Steve Noble; Safety and Education: Scott Myrick and Kathy and Steve Cole; TiM Committee: Ron Coleman and Bruce Donald; Strategic Planning: Jim Cassidy and Dwight Weed. *I urge any reader of this Newsletter with specific skills, particularly in media and marketing, fundraising, grant writing, civil engineering, or just a thirst to help, to get in touch with a Committee Chair to ask about volunteering.* Other new initiatives under the Plan include mandatory dissemination of funds from the FVTC's accounts above a reserve amount of \$30,000. This demands of us a pro-active funding stance with which we can positively affect building, maintenance and beautification of the trails,

(See page 3)

Really?

Helmets are 85% effective in preventing head injury in bicycle crashes. Studies have proven that tripling the number of bicyclists on the streets cuts motorist/bicyclist accidents in half.

Volunteer Interview: Larry Linonis

Mary-Jane Gately

Larry Linonis of Simsbury does about five thousand miles a year on his bike, logging two-thirds of that on the Greenway. Larry is the official "adopt-a-mile" volunteer for two miles of the trail in Weatogue, and he generally rides the entire Farmington Canal Heritage Trail weekly from Farmington up into Massachusetts, keeping an eye on the condition of the trail. He says that he likes to think of the trail as a garden, and so, in addition to picking up trash and sweeping the trail, he also trims back encroaching brush and tree branches, and tries to conserve trees along the trail by cutting down vines that encircle them, and he has saved many in this way.

(cont. page 2)

Volunteer Interview, Cont.

14th Annual Trails in Motion

Please join us at Iron Horse Blvd in Simsbury on June 5th for a 10, 30, 50 or 62-mile ride. Or if you want you can walk, skate or run. See www.fvgreenway.org for more information.

- Metric Century (8:00AM)
- 50-Mile Bike Tour (8:00AM)
- 30-Mile Bike Tour (9:30AM)
- 10K Walk/Run/Skate (9:30AM)
- 5K Walk/Run/Skate (10:30AM)
- 10-Mile Bike Tour (10:30AM)



*Fun for the whole family!
Proceeds go to the trails.*

Larry has ridden on other greenways throughout the United States, and he thinks that our Farmington Valley trails compare very favorably with all of them. He emphasizes that although volunteers can monitor the trail and do some clean-up, it is essential that the towns maintain the trails and the enhancements, such as the split-rail fences. Another need he identifies is safety education for cyclists and trail users, such as encouraging cyclists to wear helmets and to make their presence known when passing. He thinks that the yellow line down the middle of the trail, as on the Massachusetts section, is a good reminder for users to stay on the proper side.

In the many hours that Larry spends on the trail, he has made passing acquaintances with “regulars” on the trail and has found trail users to be helpful and friendly. As a tribute to the type of persons using the trail, he recalls an incident when he lost his watch while he was working on the trail. Five days later he found the watch, which had been



placed by someone on a fencepost alongside the trail. Larry has been fortunate to have viewed many kinds of wildlife along the trail, such as deer, bears, turkeys, bobcats, and coyotes. His most memorable wildlife experience was when he actually touched a doe that didn't realize he was coming up behind her.

When we talked in mid-April, Larry was looking forward to getting out on the trail on his new custom-built bicycle, but he was also getting his fishing gear ready for the opening season. I asked him when he found time to go fishing, and he replied that he thinks of fishing as a “rainy day activity.” In fair weather or foul, both the FVTC and Simsbury benefit greatly from the stewardship and hard work of Larry Linonis.

If you are interested in volunteer opportunities with the Farmington Valley Trails Council and the Greenway, please contact Mary-Jane Gately, mjmarmee@comcast.net or Jerry Ledger, jldjr@ieee.org.

NEWS!

Congratulations to Simsbury for being picked as the site for the East Coast Greenway Association's National Meeting, April 30th—May 1st. The public meeting is April 30th, 9AM at Eno Hall. There is a ride from New Haven to Simsbury on April 29th of 45 miles starting at 12 noon. For more information, see www.greenway.org or call 401-789-4625.

FVTC Maintenance Fund Organized

The Board of Directors is pleased to announce that the FVTC has established a fund that will help our towns to replace fencing and fill potholes as well as complete other necessary repairs as the trail system ages. The FVTC board voted to spend all funds in each calendar year ending March 31st, above a \$30,000 reserve on this and other projects. We envision the maintenance grants will be packaged as 50% matching funding. The Finance Committee will review all of the requests and put them in order of priority for funding, and the whole board will vote up or down on each project.

The first grant will be to Avon to assist with the repair, replacement, or in some cases deletion of the fences along the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail. An FVTC/Boy Scout study is underway to chart every inch of the fencing on the trails, assigning a condition to each part. We look forward to working with all of the towns that contain the FCHT and the Farmington River Trail. We welcome donations of any size to this initiative.



The Mystery of the Phantom Plowman

Jerry Ledger

For a number of years, someone has been plowing the trail north of Copper Hill Rd, East Granby and south of Phelps Rd, Suffield. Many of the trail users have delighted in the opportunity that the open trail has offered during the winter and wondered aloud: "Who can we thank?" We searched for months and ... do you know who it is?

The man behind the wheel in the snow plow truck is Granby resident Ed Ferrin. Ed has been plowing the trail south of Phelps Rd for over six years and when the trail was completed to Copper Hill Rd. he continued up that. Ed is over 70 and has a professional snow plowing route for twenty five customers. When he finishes his route he then selflessly takes on the trail. After the massive 20+ inch snowfall this winter, it took Ed three and a half hours to do the 1.7 miles of trail. It took three passes at different depths for the entire length of the section. Ed also keeps the parking spaces north of Copper Hill Rd cleared.

The Farmington Valley Trails Council Board of Directors has thanked Ed and given him a life membership to the FVTC for his work. Thanks to Jim Devoe, one of our longtime adopt-a-trail volunteers for the section north of Copper Hill Rd. for solving the mystery.

President's Letter, Cont.

as well as education and other initiatives. One such important initiative is the Maintenance Fund noted in an article on Page 2.

The FVTC is proud to give East Granby \$8,000 toward the 20% local match in funding for crossing lights and signs at RT 20 and RT 189 – both of which have proven to be dangerous intersections. East Granby approved the project in March. We have also granted \$3,000 to Simsbury for materials to paint a centerline on the trail, and the new sharrows on connecting roads to the trail system. The centerline initiative is designed to delineate travel paths and increase safety for all trail users and we expect all of our area towns to eventually adopt it. Dovetailing with these safety initiatives, we have bought \$1,800 worth of handlebar bells which we will be getting out to trail users to make sure that bicyclists are heard BEFORE they overtake other trail users.

Other activities of interest include the fabrication and installation of a granite column at the State line in Suffield with bronze plaques denoting the Canal Companies and the communities trail users are passing into. We are also in the final design of a new folding map that will not only have "our" trails on them from Farmington to Suffield, but also Plainville south to New Haven on the other side. This is a big undertaking, and we thank the Farmington Canal Rail-to-Trail Assoc. for their help.

Many of you will have noted our new Website, which was the largest internal project undertaken in 2010. Our thanks to 4Biz in Plainville and the Website Committee who rebuilt the site. It has excellent information and mapping, is easily accessed and used, and we will steadily expand it. You will shortly be able to get all the information and maps on your hand-held devices due to a new application that we are working on.

Please use our new Website to be in closer contact. Report unsafe conditions, sign up to volunteer, or just put forward your ideas on subjects that affect the trail system. I really value input from our members, the community and the municipalities that own and operate this incredible linear park and alternative transportation corridor. Thank you all for your continued support, and lets make 2011 a great year. - Bruce Donald



2nd Clean-Up Day

On May 1, 2011 the FVTC will hold our second annual trail-wide Clean-up Day. We expect over 90 volunteers at four separate staging areas cleaning the entire 30+ miles of the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail and the Farmington River Trail. This effort is spearheaded by Rich Rowleson, who developed, planned and runs an excellent effort. *Thanks to Paine's for the dumpsters!* Additional thanks to our staging area managers: Dwight Weed, Larry Linonis and Norm Hausmann, Lee Sinkwich and Jerry and Jean Ledger. It's amazing the amount of trash we find, and it is a great pleasure to be helpful to our trail users and the towns the trails run through.

FVTC DIRECTORS

- Bruce Donald - President
- Jerry Ledger, Vice President
- Steve Noble, Treasurer
- Mary-Jane Gately, Secretary
- Nancy Anstey
- Jim Cassidy
- Cathy Cole
- Steve Cole
- Ron Coleman
- Barb Collins
- Joy Himmelfarb
- Richard Kramer
- Scott Myrick
- Allen Ryan
- Dwight Weed
- Preston Reed - Founder

**FARMINGTON VALLEY
GREENWAY NEWS**

This publication is written and formatted by board members. The Farmington Valley Trails Council is a 501 (c) (3) not-for-profit corporation dedicated to advocacy, education, beautification and building multi-use trails in the Farmington Valley of Connecticut. Contributions to the FVTC are generally tax-deductible. This newsletter is available electronically, or printed and distributed by our friends at FAVARH.

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We're on the Web!

www.fvgreenway.org

Your Support is Important!



Check desired box and enclose membership fee:

- \$10 Senior 65+ / Junior under 18
- \$20 Single
- \$30 Family
- \$100 Friend
- \$500 Sustaining Member
- \$1,000 Lifetime Benefactor

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (days) _____ (eves) _____

E-mail _____

Would you like to be contacted for volunteer opportunities? Y / N

Comments?

Detach and mail to FVTC, P.O. Box 576, Tariffville, CT 06070

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