

Farmington Valley Trails Council *Greenway News*

Our mission is to build, maintain and connect multi-use trails throughout Central Connecticut communities.

May, 2016—Volume 16—Issue 1



www.fvgreenway.org

EVENTS

- May 14 - Kevin Adorno Ride
- May 20 - Bike to Work Day
- June 2/3 - Bike Walk CT Summit
- June 3 - CGC Annual Greenways Day
- June 4 - FVTC Nat'l Trails Day Ride
- June 25 - FVTC/ECGA Ride the State
- July 16 - FVTC Northern Exposure
- Aug 20 - FVTC Members Ride/Cookout
- Sep 10 - FVTC Farm Tour
- Oct 20 - CGC CT Trails Conference
- Nov 11/13 - ECGA Annual Meeting
- Nov 18 - FVTC/FCRTTA Annual Meeting

Visit the website for more information.

President's Letter

April's Clean-Up Day was a great success. About 200 volunteers manned 5 collection areas, picked up trash, cleaned the trails, and identified problems and areas of concern for 38 miles in 8 towns. On behalf of our Board of Directors I thank coordinator Susan Mitchell and all for a great job. We had a great barbeque at Flamig Farms afterward, (thanks to Larry Linonis & crew) and I was surprised by Rep. John Hampton, (16th Dist.) with an "Official Citation" from the CT General Assembly, which thanked me for my years of service with the FVTC, and for my "tireless efforts to close the gaps" in the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail (FCHT), Farmington River Trail and East Coast Greenway. It was sponsored by 11 Senators and Representatives. In my remarks I noted that while deeply honored, there have been many advocates before me and some in the audience that have been at this for much longer than I. This is a team effort, and one that I am proud to be a vocal part of.

On corporate matters, our new business plan meetings took place over the winter and resulted in solid three, six and twelve month plans that include closer ties with the Farmington Canal Rail to Trail Association, with special attention paid to branding the FCHT as one entity. Additionally, we have a newly augmented Board of Directors with Doug Gerlach, our new Secretary, replacing Mary-Jane Gately who has left the board after many years, (thanks MJ!); Rob Kazior, who will be taking over as Treasurer in 2017, replacing Steve Noble, who has been Treasurer since our inception; and Laura Russotto who is taking on the Safety & Education Committee Co-Chair.

The national Rails to Trails Conservancy held a summit in Madison, CT last month. Participants came from nine area states to discuss both trail development and policy. I was pleased to be invited, and the list of topics included interstate trail connections, trail development issues, and on the second day federal, state and private funding initiatives. I was invited to speak on the very positive changes in CT. My presentation included:

"Bicycle and pedestrian advocates rejoiced when Governor Dannel P. Malloy released his visionary 30-year transportation plan including investment of \$101 million of the \$100 billion budget for ten years of bicycle and pedestrian projects starting in 2015. Subsequently, CTDOT set up a bike/ped fund called "Let's Go CT!" Designed to augment federal TE dollars, it provides a much broadened scope. In 2015, the first major project was announced in Farmington: \$5.1 million for the construction of the FCHT, part of the East Coast Greenway in CT. This marked the first time that the state funded 100% of a rail-trail project.

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FVTC Memorial Benches

Memorial benches first started to appear along the trail as early as 1996. Those earliest benches were constructed by St. Pierre Lumber on Lovely St. in Canton. In 2001, the FVTC moved the construction of our benches and kiosks to Wm R. Hartigan & Sons in Burlington. He has continued to be our sole provider of these amenities.

Most of the towns along the trail have siting requirements to prevent trail obstruction, limit the number of benches, and obtain necessary approvals in wetland and other restricted areas. We recommend that benches are spaced at least half a mile apart except where groupings make aesthetic or practical sense. People wishing to make a bench

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What's at Trail's End?

Ever wonder what the State is planning for the head of the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail in New Haven? Currently it's just a newly built concrete platform sitting on piers above the waters of the harbor. However, we hope to soon see a building much like this rendering. Let's hope that the builders will provide sufficient bike racks for the many cyclists that are likely to visit here as they start or end their rides. The building is part museum, part community space, with great views of the harbor from the surrounding decks. It has been an uphill battle to get it built, what with a shortage of funds to say nothing of the massive road construction project at the I-91/I-95/Q Bridge intersection just across Long Wharf Drive. The project was bid last year with a hopeful completion date of mid-2017. Stay tuned at: www.canaldock.org, or www.facebook.com/canaldock/.
Jim Cassidy

TRAIL AMBASSADORS

The FVTC Trail Ambassador Program will be starting up again in May. We have 14 volunteers on 38 miles of trail .

FVTC-approved Ambassadors act as guides, keepers of historical and modern facts, provide hand-outs such as rules and etiquette information as well as maps, blinkies, bells and water bottles.

Ambassadors increase awareness about the FVTC, including funding for construction, maintenance, amenities and encourage volunteerism in our organization.

But most importantly, they will promote the **SAFE** use of the trails through proper trail etiquette.

Look for the green vests, and ride or walk to the right and announce yourself when passing!!!



FVTC Memorial Benches, Cont.

Expect ongoing monthly seasonal project updates:

- **Tariffville/Bloomfield/Hartford ECG Spur;**
- **Plainville Trail Study;**
- **FCHT work in Farmington;**
- **Cheshire; and**
- **New Haven**

donation should select several possible locations and then meet with the FVTC town coordinator, who will coordinate with a public works department and facilitate the siting. We have one approved design for the nearly 40 miles of completed trail in our area. The cost is \$1,250 which is a donation to the 501(c)(3) not for profit FVTC. Depending on the availability of materials and the number of pending bench orders, the finished product is typically ready for installation in 4-6 weeks. Once the bench is made, the town public works crew picks it up and installs it in the designated spot. The main structure is 6x8 inch pressure treated lumber with vertical members embedded 4 feet deep. The back and seat are 2x10 inch pressure treated lumber with a 4x4 supporting them.



The FVTC provides the dedication plaque, which can be installed on either the front or back of the backrest. They are zinc with bronze plating and are 4x8 inches. They have the FVTC logo and allow for 2-3 lines for the dedication. Procurement takes 3-4 weeks and they are installed last in the process. We can provide sample dedications for anyone wishing to donate a bench along the FCHT or FRT. *Gary Miller*

New FVTC Amenities



Collinsville Kiosk



Burlington Kiosk



3 New Fix-It Bike Repair Stations

The FVTC continues to add useful additions for our trails. We installed 11 benches in 7 towns in 2015. In Collinsville alone, we have spent over \$13,000 for a kiosk, half of the new drinking fountain, and a bike repair station. It is our intent to put a drinking fountain in a new town every year, and Farmington is next on the list. Bike repair stations will be installed in Farmington, Collinsville and Suffield. We continue to work for good wayfaring signage, a unified commercial signage plan, and painted center lines on the whole of the trail system to promote safety and etiquette.

President's Letter, Cont.

The Farmington Project extends southward into Plainville. It will go from Red Oak Hill Rd. crossing New Britain Ave. and running about 2.5 miles inside Northwest Drive into Plainville. The proposed alignment includes a 135' prefabricated bridge on new abutments over Route 6, (with the FVTC logo on it!) an at-grade crossing of Hyde Road and a parking lot with a pavilion adjacent to Northwest Drive. The winning construction company will be announced soon and break ground shortly.

The second State initiative is our unique Recreational Trails Program. We are the only state in the union not accepting federal program funding, instead creating our own. The reasoning was simple: we got about \$800,000 dollars plus lots of red tape from the feds. Dozens of backlogged "shovel ready" trails projects existed across the state. So a new program was initiated to fund more projects through CT State Bond Commission issuances, with a corresponding streamlined process. For its first fiscal year ending June, 2016, this program granted \$5.8 million to over almost 20 projects this spring. I was pleased to help in this process as the appointed Chairman of the CT Greenways Council by helping to approve the final list. This was made possible with legislation passed in October of 2015, allowing the new "Act Providing Continued Funding for the Dept of Energy & Environmental Protection's Recreational Trails Program." And *none* of this was possible without the visionary leadership of Governor Malloy, the Connecticut Legislature, and the conviction of Commissioner of DOT James Redeker and Commissioner of DEEP Robert Klee." It is now my 12th year as president, and I am continually amazed at the positive attitude of our 910 members and 338 registered volunteers. We are blessed. As always get in touch at president@fvgreenway.org.

FRIENDS
of the
rails-to-trails
conservancy

**East Coast
Greenway**

**THE FARMINGTON CANAL
HERITAGE TRAIL**

**Bike Walk
Connecticut**

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GREENWAY NEWS

This publication is written and formatted by volunteers. The Farmington Valley Trails Council is a 501 (c)(3) CT 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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Check desired box(s) and enclose membership fee:

- \$15 Senior 65+ / Junior under 18
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Name _____

Address _____

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

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