

Farmington Valley Trails Council *Greenway News*

Dedicated to building, maintaining and beautifying multi-use trails

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www.FCHTrail.org

President's Letter: Members Make a Difference

By Barbara Collins

The Farmington Valley Trails Council was formed over 30 years ago by the late Preston Reed because he had a dream to create a space where bikers and walkers could enjoy the outdoors without the worry of cars. Although the dream was always to get a trail from New Haven to the Massachusetts border and beyond, it often felt like FVTC would be lucky to get a trail from Farmington to Simsbury.

But through the hard work of many, many people the dream is nearly a reality. One may walk or cycle from New Haven past the Connecticut border to Westfield, Mass., mostly on a trail away from cars and exhaust fumes. Yes, there

(See President's Letter on page 2)

Membership Benefits

The FVTC is only as strong as its membership.

If you are not a member, please consider joining us today.

Why join the Farmington Valley Trails Council? Here are a few reasons:

- Tireless advocacy for new trails and connections.
- Maintenance and beautification of existing trails.
- Website, newsletters, folding maps, and informational papers.
- Volunteer opportunities like Clean-Up Day.
- Regular rides.

And so much more!

Clean-Up Day Planned for April 13, 2019

The Farmington Valley Trails Council will hold its 10th annual Trail-wide Clean-Up Day on Saturday, April 13th from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. (The rain date is Sunday, April 14th).

Previous years' events have drawn more than 200 volunteers. In prior years, volunteers have removed as much as 12 cubic yards of trash from the continuously paved miles from Plainville, Conn. to Southwick, Mass.

FVTC President Barbara Collins has attended most of the Clean-Up Day events and is always impressed with the number of volunteers and the efforts they make to pick up every last piece of trash along the trails. In these years of tough budget decisions she knows that this event, along with continuous year-long efforts of our Adopt-a-Mile volunteers, is appreciated by the towns and the many users of the trails (more than 300,000 a year).

Volunteers will cover a specific 1-mile stretch of the trail starting from one of six staging areas: Red Oak Hill Road in Farmington; Brickyard Road in Farmington; Sperry Park in Avon; Iron Horse Boulevard in Simsbury; Copper Hill Road in East Granby; and the River Trail Pavilion at RT 4 in Unionville.

Volunteers are asked to bring gloves, brooms, rakes, shovels, clippers, protective clothing and sunscreen. Those without tools are welcome to come and share tools with others. All volunteers are invited to a free picnic after the Clean-Up at Flamig Farm (www.flamigfarm.com) in Simsbury from 12-3 pm.

See <http://fchtrail.org> for volunteer registration, donations and membership. Please contact cleanup@fvgreenway.org with questions.





Trail Etiquette

- Ride, walk, run and skate on the right side of the trail and pass slowly on the left. Before passing, alert persons by bell, horn or verbally.
- When stopped, please move off the trail. Please ride, walk, run or skate to allow others to share the limited trail width.
- Cyclists should stop at intersections and carefully check traffic before crossing the road. The trail intersects with heavily traveled roads.
- Wear appropriate safety gear. Approved helmets could save your life. Trail users are responsible for their own safety.
- Keep your bicycle in good operating condition. Be prepared for a flat tire.
- Keep the trail clean and safe. Bring out what you carry in. This helps the volunteers who keep the trail clean.

President's Letter, Cont.

(Continued from page 1)

are still gaps in Plainville and Southington and yes, some parts of the trail are on road, but truly the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail (FCHT) is a wonder to enjoy. That is why, according to our counters, there are well over 200,000 Trail users each year.

What is equally exciting is the many other trails that been created since FVTC began including several branches off the FCHT. In the planning stages are connectors to the New Britain CTfastrak station from Plainville and a feeder from Simsbury to Bloomfield with an extension to Hartford. In Middletown, there is discussion to connect several town trails to the southern part of the FCHT. Beyond the FCHT there are paved and unpaved trails in Manchester, Bolton and Windsor, to name a few, used daily by walkers and riders alike. The success of the FCHT and the economic benefits it brings to adjoining towns allowed other municipalities to see the value, economic and esthetic, of supporting trail creation in their towns.

Why am I giving this shout out? Because it could not have happened without the dues and time that FVTC members have donated through the years to support the Trail. Without our members, the bridge over the Salmon Brook in East Granby would not have been built, the railings along the trail would not have been replaced, tree root incursions would not have been repaired. So thank you from every member of the FVTC Board. Spring is coming soon so get out and use the trail but do remember how important your support remains to keeping this trail the wonder that it is.

About the Farmington Valley Trails Council

We are a CT 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation founded in 1992 to advocate for multi-use "rails-to-trails". **Our mission is to build, maintain, beautify and connect off-road multi-use trails throughout central Connecticut communities.** The political advocacy and economic strength of our organization stem directly from the vibrancy of our membership. Please consider becoming one.

We are a major grantor in Connecticut for construction, maintenance and trail amenities. The major goal is to connect communities by "closing the gaps" in the 82-mile Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, the 16-mile Farmington River Trail, and the designated East Coast Greenway system. Check out our publications, events, initiatives, and information on <http://fchtrail.org>.

Other Bike Trails Continue to Grow

The Hop River State Rail Trail has connections! The paved Charter Oak Greenway finally made its extension to the natural surface Hop River Trail at Bolton Notch in December 2018. A deck is being installed on the Hop River Trail bridge over the Willimantic River in Willimantic. When the decking project is finished later this year, the trail will connect directly to the natural surface Air Line State Park Trail. The Air Line Trail was extended 2.4 miles into Portland in June 2018. East Hampton is finalizing plans to connect to the Portland section with only a small gap remaining in spring 2019.

Trail Projects Continue to Close the Gaps

By Tom Ebersold

Gaps along the Farmington Canal Trail continue to close with completed construction projects from 2016 to 2018, and designs to potentially complete the trail by 2025. The Cheshire section was officially completed on Sept. 9, 2018 when the new 0.6-mile section opened between Cornwall Avenue and West Main Street (Routes 68/70). This portion includes a concrete boardwalk that winds its way through a wetland, and a parking lot with restrooms at Routes 68/70. This final section connects to a longer stretch from West Main Street to the Southington line that opened in 2016. This 4-mile section has a large parking lot on Jarvis Street, along with restrooms.

The Farmington section reached completion thanks to the July 2017 installation of a new bridge over Route 6, which was dedicated in May 2018, work that extended the trail 2.4 miles from Red Oak Hill Road to Northwest Drive on the Farmington-Plainville border. This included a parking lot at the trailhead on Northwest Drive.

In 2018, Southington realigned the trail crossing at Hart Street and Curtiss Street, making it safer for trail users to cross these roads. Southington had extended the trail 0.6 miles from Curtiss Street to Lazy Lane in fall 2017.

Southington is working on the design for the completion of its unfinished portion of the trail, a 2-mile stretch from Lazy Lane to Town Line Road on the Southington-Plainville border. The estimated cost is \$3.3 million with construction anticipated to start in spring 2020.

The other major gap remaining in the trail is from the Town Line Road on the Southington-Plainville line to Northwest Drive on the Farmington-Plainville border. Since the rail line in this area is active, Plainville studied a variety of options before choosing a 5-mile mostly off-road option that winds its way through Plainville, as compared to the 3-mile distance of the rail line.

The State Bond Commission approved \$3.8 million to design the Plainville section. The project will be constructed in two phases: Phase One construction might start in 2022, extending from the current trail at Northwest Drive south to West Main Street. Phase Two construction might start in 2023-2024, and would extend from West Main Street to Town Line Road at the Southington border.

There are also plans for a 3.9-mile connection to the CTfastrak station and path in New Britain. The CTfastrak multi-use path is a 5-mile long, 10-foot paved path that parallels the CTfastrak bus corridor, extending from the downtown New Britain station to the Newington Junction station. Information on the Plainville section may be found on the Gap Closure Study website at <http://www.gapclosurestudy.com/>

There is still a gap of about 1.5 miles to close in New Haven between Temple Street where the trail currently ends and Canal Street at Brewery Street. At this location a 0.4-mile bike path called the Vision Trail along Brewery Street and Sargent Drive connects to the Canal Dock Boathouse on New Haven Harbor, which opened in September 2018, where the trail officially starts. In its 2019-2023 Capital Improvement Plan, the state DOT indicated the project cost would be \$7.5 million.

TRAIL FRIENDS



rails-to-trails
conservancy



East Coast
Greenway

THE FARMINGTON CANAL
HERITAGE TRAIL



Bike Walk
Connecticut

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Founder:
Preston Reed
(1916-2013)

ABOUT THE FVTC

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.

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**On your handheld device:
www.FCHTrail.org**

Become a Member!

Check desired box(es) and enclose membership fee:



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- \$25 Single
- \$40 Family
- \$100 Friend
- \$500 Sustaining Member
- \$1,000 Lifetime Benefactor
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Name _____

Address _____

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

P.O. Box 576, Tariffville, CT 06081

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