

# Farmington Valley Trails Council *Greenway News*

*Dedicated to building, maintaining and beautifying multi-use trails*

Nov. 2022 — Volume 22, Issue 1



## **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, news-letters, folding maps, and informational papers.**
  - **Volunteer opportunities like Clean-Up Day.**
  - **Regular rides.**
- And so much more!**

## **Donations and dues support the trail**

**By Barbara Collins, President, FVTC**

Covid is finally moving to our rear-view mirror, so we have been able to hold rides and now our Annual Meeting will be in person after an extended lapse. Getting together with people, even if they are still wearing masks or maintaining 6 feet is a wonderful thing. COVID has made me appreciate how enjoyable it is to spend time together.

We in Connecticut have been lucky during COVID to have access to our trail system which is improving and expanding every day. The value of having a safe place to walk and ride was not truly appreciated until we were forced to look for activities to be done outside and with social distancing. The number of people using the trails in the last few years has clearly mushroomed, especially some parts of the trail.

The goal is to finish the trail from New Haven to Northampton with branches off the trail, such as in Simsbury to Tariffville/Bloomfield, and in Plainfield to the Express Bus to New Britain. This will allow even more people access to the trail and enable safe bike-to-work commuting.

So that all may have access and information, the Farmington Valley Trails Council (FVTC) has worked with town and supportive entities such as local Rotary groups to add kiosks, repairs stations and water fountains, so that the trail is accessible to all, including those in wheelchairs or pushing strollers or just enjoying a leisurely walk, ride or roller blade. FVTC also provides grants to towns, when we can, to assist with maintenance and repairs.

That is what your dues money and donations are spent on. With all the use the last few years, the trail is showing its age, so even more maintenance funds will be needed. We know that and are trying to plan for the bills that will come due.

Unfortunately, we have also had to spend money on vandalism repairs. I personally do not understand why anyone would destroy a kiosk, as happened in Unionville, or a tool station in Suffield, but both have happened this year. Money was spent for these repairs which would have been better spent on potholes.

I know no member of FVTC would vandalize anything on the trail and I probably do not need to say this but please remember: if you see something broken, report it to us and/or the town. All the phone numbers and emails one needs is on our website.

As the trail matures, the amount of maintenance needed will continue to increase. Therefore, your dues and contributions are even more important than ever. We have upgraded our website, so that dues renewals will be sent near your anniversary. When the email comes, please respond. Of course, you can donate anytime. I can assure you that your money will go solely to support the trail.

## Be Seen and Be Safe: Wear Bright Colors; Use Lights

It's that time of year again, when the days get shorter as the darkness creeps earlier and earlier. With the earlier onset of darkness comes a rise in both bicyclist and pedestrian deaths. While it is certainly the responsibility of drivers to look out for other road users, there are steps you can take as a walker, runner, or cyclist to keep yourself safer.

For walkers and runners:

- Wear fluorescent colors during the day. Fluorescent material reflects non-visible ultraviolet light back in the visible spectrum, making it look about 200 percent brighter in daylight than conventional colors.
- At night, wear reflective gear. Keep in mind that fluorescents simply don't work at night when there's no natural sun for the fabric to reflect.
- Attach a blinking light to your jacket, dog leash, or other article of clothing.
- Whenever possible, use sidewalks. If there are none, walk facing traffic so you can see what's coming and react.

For bicyclists:

- Like walkers, wear fluorescent colors during the day and switch to reflective material at night. Put reflective gear on the moving parts of your body and bike (knees, feet and pedals) to increase visibility through motion.
- Don't forget your wheels. "Reflective-sidewall tires are more effective than clothing in some cases," the article below reports.
- Use white lights on the front of your bike and red lights on the back. Flashing lights work well even during the day, because they convey both brightness and a sense of motion. Connecticut law requires that any bicycle operated at night (one half hour after sundown to one half hour before sunrise) use a white headlight that can be seen 500 feet and a red rear reflector that can be seen 600 feet.
- Think about where you are placed in the road. Avoid being in vehicle blind spots longer than necessary. Take the lane when needed, signal turns, and ride predictably.

For further reading, check out this great article on bicyclist visibility:

<https://www.bicycling.com/bikes-gear/g20017365/the-science-of-being-seen-a-guide-to-safer-riding/>

*Amy Watkins, MPH, is a board member and the manager for the Watch for Me Connecticut bicycle and pedestrian safety campaign. Visit [www.watchformect.org](http://www.watchformect.org) for more info.*

## Member Appreciation Ride and Picnic Was Successful

We are thrilled that the summer season stayed in full swing and we were able to hold some of our annual rides again this year. Thank you to those that were able to join us for the Member Appreciation Ride and Picnic that was held at Granbrook Park in East Granby, on Saturday, June 11.

Many participants chose the 30-mile ride to the Westfield River and back. We were able to see the new bridges and progress being made in Westfield. A few participants chose the shorter 14-mile ride which took them south on the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail to the Drake Hill Flower Bridge in Simsbury. The bridge is absolutely beautiful in the spring. If you weren't able to join us this time, we look forward to your joining us next year.

## Lobster Fest Benefited the Canton Fire Department and FVTC

The Farmington Valley Trails Council (FVTC) once again partnered with the Canton Volunteer Fire Department, Canton Street Station as they celebrated their 40th Lobsterfest, which benefited both these non-profit organizations. The FVTC hosted a 30-mile trail ride, which started and ended at Canton Volunteer Fire Department on Canton Springs Road. At this Aug. 20 event, 50 bicyclists rode the Loop, riding the Farmington River Trail and the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail through Simsbury, Avon, Farmington, Burlington and back to Canton. Upon their return, riders enjoyed a delicious lobster meal. A great time was had by all. If you were not able to join us this year, we hope to see you next August.

# Trail Construction Projects Move Ahead in 2022-2023

By Bruce Donald and Scott Bushee

Trail construction projects continue to progress, moving the trail closer to completion.

New Haven Phase IV is well along, to be completed by December of this year. This project had its groundbreaking ceremony on Sept. 13, 2021. This 1.6-mile-long project includes a tunnel from Yale University south.

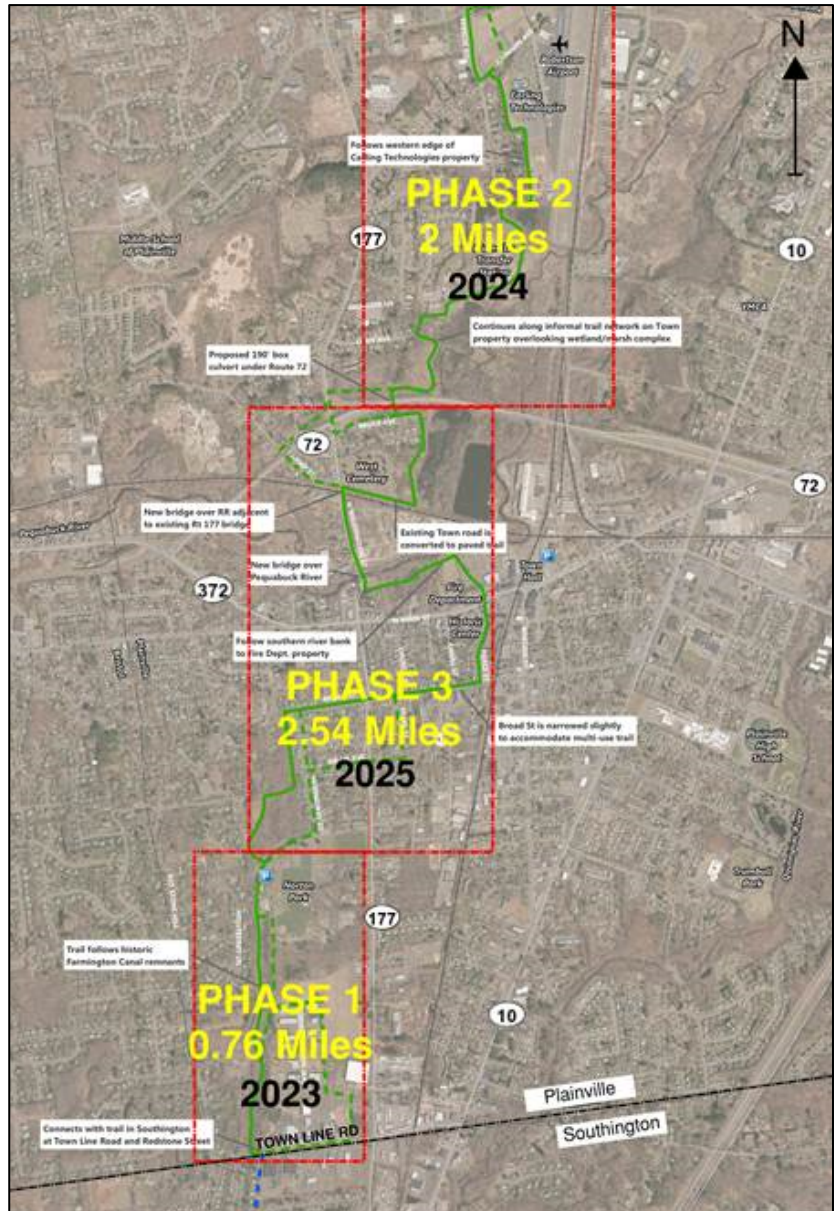
Completion of the Southington section is out of permitting, but part of the trail is held up by a lawsuit filed by Yarde Metals that is holding up half of the project. The 1.3 miles from Lazy Lane to Aircraft Rd. will go to bid this fall for construction in 2023. The remaining mile will hopefully be ready to go to bid later in 2023. This project was originally supposed to go to bid in fall 2021 for construction in 2022.

The Plainville project will be in three phases to close the 5.4-mile gap. The phases will allow for continued progress in construction while the design and environmental permitting is being resolved for the future phases. The Plainville section is designed around the existing right of way, which is an active rail line.

Phase 1: Town Line Road to Norton Park – Final design and permitting is nearly complete. The Rights of Way (ROW) process has been delayed due to the Yarde Metals suit, and the Connecticut Attorney General's Office putting up obstacles for the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) to pursue acquisitions. The project includes a significant portion of raised boardwalk, a unique routing on top of the original canal towpath, and a 50-space trail parking lot is planned off Red Stone Hill. Construction hopefully will start in fall of 2023.

Phase 2: Route 72 to Northwest Drive – 75 percent designed. Alignment is along Northwest Drive, past Carling Technologies (a significant property owner along the trail) through Tommasso Nature Park and under Route 72. Public involvement was planned in fall of 2022. Note that because of the ROW acquisition delays, CT-DOT had cancelled, and this puts construction behind another year.

Phase 3: Norton Park to Route 72 – Alternate city streets are being reviewed at the request of the council to determine the best alignment. Converting city streets to one way traffic is under consideration to make room for the trail. Flood way limitations have been identified in the vicinity of Route 177 and the Pequabuck River. The survey from Broad Street to Route 72 has been completed. There is ongoing coordination with the town. Design completion is likely in early 2024.



This map shows the Plainville section with construction dates from plans in 2019, dates that have changed during the planning process for Phase 2.



## Bruce Donald to Retire from FVTC Board, Will Remain Active



Bruce Donald, a great friend of the Farmington Valley Trails Council (FVTC) and inspirational leader in bicycle and pedestrian advocacy, is retiring from our Board of Directors at the end of the calendar year 2022.

Bruce became a member of the board in 1999 and served as president for 14 years. Although officially retired, Bruce will remain as an advisor to the board and ex-officio director.

During his presidency, the organization's membership grew 500 percent and the audited annual budget went from \$7,100 to \$62,000. Also, the FVTC successfully converted over \$163,000 in grants for various projects and donated more than \$315,000 in targeted grants for trail-related projects.

Donald carries forward his advocacy work in Connecticut, Rhode Island and Central Massachusetts as the Southern New England Manager of the East Coast Greenway Alliance. In this role, Bruce has

region-wide responsibilities for all aspects of greenway development, State Committee/volunteer engagement, and fundraising tasks.

Since his initial involvement in 2016, Bruce has had expanding responsibilities in the activities of the East Coast Greenway Alliance. Impressively, in 2014 Bruce was legislatively appointed chairman of the Connecticut Greenway Council. In 2016, Bruce was recognized by the Connecticut General Assembly in an Official Citation as a regional force in pedestrian advocacy.

As chairman, Bruce helps guide the Connecticut Greenway Council as it coordinates all stakeholders in planning, implementing and funding the greenway system. He supports the grant program run by the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection focused on Connecticut bikeway, pedestrian walkway, recreational trails, and greenway network. This CT Recreational Trails Program made grants across the state totaling more than \$11 million.

Bruce holds a bachelor's degree in political science from Middlebury College, and a master's in history from Trinity College. He is the author of many financial, investment, and historical articles and the book, *Manhood and Patriotic Awakening in the American Civil War*. He worked for 17 years in investment brokerage, management, and banking with international companies in Boston, Hartford, New York, and Beijing.

## Support from Sponsors Raises Funds for Trail Improvements

The Farmington Valley Trails Council (FVTC) Board of Directors held another successful benefit evening at American Flatbread in the Shops at Farmington Valley in Canton, which took place on July 26. It was great to see friends from the cycling community and FVTC members.

We enjoyed talking to community members about our organization. American Flatbread graciously donates a portion of all flatbread sales to benefit organizations like FVTC. We want to thank all the staff at American Flatbread for their continued support.

Also, we would like to thank those that donated raffle prizes and other giveaways. Prizes included a gift certificate from Benidorm Bike of Canton, trail guide books from the East Coast Greenway Alliance, front and rear light set from Ridgeline Bikes of Avon, a Clean Start cook book and virtual cooking class certificate from Terry Walters of Avon, swag from Watch for Me Connecticut, fresh vegetable basket from George Hall Farm of Simsbury, pet goodie basket from WAGS of Avon, gift certificate from Coffee Trade of Avon, a Thule bike rack, a bicycle and tool bag set, and other bicycle themed goodies.

We have been very happy to be able to hold events this year. Other successful events were the Canton Lobster Fest Ride on Aug. 20. Unfortunately, we had to cancel the Farm-to Farm ride, but we hope to hold it in 2023. Please check the website for details on all our events: [fchtrail.org](http://fchtrail.org). We hope to see you soon!

## Trail Friends



THE FARMINGTON CANAL  
HERITAGE TRAIL



## FVTC DIRECTORS

**Barbara Collins,**  
**President**

**Laura Russotto, VP**  
**Tony Russotto Treasurer**

**Norm Berg, Sect'y**

**Bruce Donald**

**Lisa Fernandez**

**Joy Himmelfarb**

**Tim Bowman**

**David Kinkead**

**Alan Blasenstein**

**Diana Moody**

**Amy Watkins**

**Dwight Weed**

**Ron Goralski**

**Founder:**

**Preston Reed**  
**(1916-2013)**

## Annual Meeting is Friday, Nov. 11 in Avon

The Farmington Valley Trails Council will hold its Annual Meeting on Friday, November 11, 2022 at 7:00 pm. at the Avon Senior Center, 635 West Avon Road, Avon. We look forward to seeing you all there. Admission is free, and refreshments will be served.

Our speakers this year are Shan Riggs and Joshuaine (Josh) Grant.

Shan is a 43-year-old ultramarathon runner and sponsorship marketing professional. He's completed 46 ultramarathon races – winning several – and, has more than 20 years of sponsorship consulting experience, working with major brands and properties of all types.

Josh is a 50-year-old adventure-seeking cyclist, runner, and scientist. She studied biophysics and biochemistry and currently works for Applied BioMath, providing quantitative systems pharmacology modeling support to pharma and biotech clients.

She has ridden in many parts of the country, on both country roads and mountain bike trails. Some of those adventures are captured on her blog page at <https://www.joshuaine.com>.

## Volunteer Spotlight: Maryanne Krajcik

The Farmington Valley Trails Council (FVTC) relies heavily on the help of volunteers, so we like to recognize at least one volunteer in each newsletter. This issue we are recognizing/honoring one very hard-working volunteer who helps keep our membership data in tip top shape.

Maryanne Krajcik began working with FVTC in 2007 as an Adopt-a-Mile volunteer in Granby, a position she and her husband kept until 2017 when they moved to West Simsbury.

In 2013 she became our Membership Database Administrator.

It may be hard to remember, but our technology was way behind the times and much of what Maryanne had to do was with pen and paper. Membership reminders would go out in bulk and then renewals would arrive at various times. Maryanne would sort and characterize and notify the board each month. Our membership numbers were in the hundreds, so it was not an easy task in any way.

Over the past year, as we have upgraded and updated our website, the entire membership process has been altered. Maryanne has cheerfully devoted many hours to the migration of our old database to a new, more modern and dynamic system. We don't think we could have done it without her!

She handled all these duties while being a mother of four, grandmother of two-year-old twins and two grand-dogs and also working full time for The Hartford for 30 years and then part-time for Foodshare and Bay Path University. Before she retired for good in 2020, she somehow also found time for gardening, yoga, and knitting.



### 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.

This newsletter is available electronically, or printed and distributed by our friends at The Arc of Farmington Valley (FAVARH).  
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<https://fchtrail.org>

**Farmington Valley Trails Council**  
**P.O. Box 576**  
**Tariffville, CT 06081**

## Become an FVTC Member!

Check desired box(es) and enclose membership fee:



- ☐ \$20 Senior 65+
- ☐ \$25 Single
- ☐ \$40 Family
- ☐ \$100 Friend
- ☐ \$500 Sustaining Member
- ☐ \$1,000 Lifetime Benefactor
- ☐ Corporate Matching Donation

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (cell) \_\_\_\_\_

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

Detach and mail to FVTC, P.O. Box 576, Tariffville, CT 06081

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