

# Farmington Valley Trails Council *Greenway News*

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

Nov. 2023 — Volume 23, 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, newsletters, folding maps, and informational papers.**
- **Volunteer opportunities like Clean-Up Day.**
- **Regular rides.**

**And so much more!**

## FVTC Focuses on Safety of Cyclists

**By Barbara Collins, President, FVTC**

It seems like every week there is a pedestrian, or a cyclist being injured or killed while walking or riding on a street in Connecticut. Far too often the driver just hits and runs. Each incident brings to my mind that safety is an issue that must be discussed repeatedly and often.

I appreciate that injury and death is not a warm and fuzzy way to start a FVTC newsletter, but we on the FVTC Board are just heartsick about these accidents and determined to fight for improvement. One of the core reasons that FVTC was formed nearly 40 years ago was to create a safe place for pedestrians and cyclists to do what they enjoy: be active outdoors but away from cars. That goal continues to this day.

With your dues and contribution dollars, FVTC continues to push not just for the completion of the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail from New Haven to the Massachusetts border and beyond (so it can truly be called the New Haven and Northampton Canal Greenway), but also for feeders from the trail to New Britain, Bloomfield, Hartford, and Windsor. In all cases, we attempt to keep the trails independent from the roads where cars travel. Where that isn't possible, we work to ensure as much space as can be created to separate users from automobiles.

If you attend our Annual Meeting on Nov. 10, you will get an update of the status of the trail along with the various connectors that are in the works. The information will include references to maps so you can see where the various trails will go. The discussions regarding safety in those trail developments are not always obvious from the maps but can be gleaned from the location of the various trails being developed in Connecticut.

With regard to personal safety, I have been disheartened to see many cyclists riding the trail without a helmet. Helmets are not a 100% guarantee of safety, but I can personally attest it does protect the brain. With your FVTC membership, many bike shops give a discount on items purchased. Use your member discount to purchase a new helmet.

If you have a helmet, please remember that a second important safety item is anything that enhances your visibility - a jacket, a light (or two or three), anything that makes you stand out, especially when riding at dusk or dawn. Again, there are many wonderful products that our supporting bike shops would love to show you and allow you to use your membership to obtain at discount. Your dues and contributions are what allow FVTC to continue its mission. While we push to finish the trail, we are also working with the adjoining towns to add amenities that enhance your trail experience. Many of the benches on the trail have been provided through a donation from a member

(See "Safety" on page 2)

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

Helmets can not only protect you from death, but also disability should a crash happen to you. Head injuries are no joke and can create lifelong problems. You never know what can happen – you're doing all the right things and then BAM! A squirrel, a stick, a car, a patch of sand... the hazards are endless.

For this reason, everyone on the trail should wear their helmet, regardless of age. Find the right helmet for your activity and personal style and wear it correctly EVERY time. Helmets aren't just for kids. They protect us at every age as we navigate the hazards of trails, roads, and anywhere else we explore on wheels. Set an example for others while protecting yourself, and strap on your helmet!

Check out this link from REI on selecting a helmet and ensuring a proper fit:

<https://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/bicycle-helmet.html>

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.

## Supporters Boost FVTC at American Flatbread Fundraiser

By Laura Russotto

Thank you to all of our supporters for coming out to see us on Tuesday, July 25th as we held our third Farmington Valley Trails Council Benefit Evening. It was great to see and talk to so many people. We want to give a big shout-out to all of the staff at American Flatbread for being so helpful and accommodating to everyone that came through the door. There were raffle prizes and other giveaways.

Raffle prizes included:

- Bicycle themed bookends & cookbook (Nourish) signed by and courtesy of Terry Walters, Avon.
- A handlebar bike bag, bicycle socks, and other bicycle themed items, FVTC long and short sleeved high visibility shirts, and bicycle jersey
- Thule hitch mount bike rack
- Gift certificates and other swag courtesy of Benidorm of Canton, Suburban Ski & Bike of Berlin, East Coast Greenway Alliance, Watch for Me CT, and Bicycle Express of Simsbury
- Passes and discs courtesy of Tower Ridge in Avon, and vegetable basket courtesy of George Hall Farm in Simsbury

All proceeds from this event will benefit the FVTC, its members and all trail users.

Officers and board members in attendance included: Barbara Collins: President, Laura Russotto: Vice President, Tony Russotto: Treasurer, Norm Berg: Secretary, Bruce Donald: East Coast Greenway Alliance, Fran Gurtman: Bike Walk Avon, Tim Bowman: Bike Walk Canton, Ron Goralski: Bike Walk Farmington, Alan Blasenstein, Joy Himmelfarb, David Kinkead, Diana Moody, Dwight Weed and volunteer Sherry Dwyer.

The FVTC is a local non-profit and is an all-volunteer organization. We are always looking for board members and volunteers to assist with the many tasks that exist. The board meets monthly via Zoom and our meetings are open to the public. We encourage all to attend.

The FVTC mission is to build, maintain, beautify and connect off-road multi-use trails throughout central Connecticut communities. We offer annual rides and events throughout the year to highlight the trail and to educate the public on safety while being a pedestrian, bicyclist, or motorist.

If you are interested in finding out more about the FVTC, visit our website at <https://fchtrail.org> or send an email at [info@fvgreenway.org](mailto:info@fvgreenway.org).

### Safety (continued from page 1) -

or family and the adjoining town. Some of the older wooden ones have reached the end of their life so will be replaced by FVTC.

And you have told us that what many of you are most interested in is tree root incursions. Although we cannot physically perform the work ourselves, FVTC is encouraging towns to repair them ASAP including providing grants where possible. Your contributions allow us to provide that direct assistance.

# Study Group Seeks to Close Two Gaps in Greenway

By Dwight Weed

In April, the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) held three in-person workshops in East Hartford, Hartford and Bloomfield to solicit public comments regarding proposed routes, destinations, amenities and screening for multi-use trails which will form a part of the East Coast Greenway (ECG). In Connecticut, the ECG will consist of a 200-mile route between the Rhode Island state line at Sterling and the New York border at Greenwich.

According to the CRCOG website, the East Coast Greenway study consists of two distinct gaps. The first gap runs between the Tunxis Avenue and Day Hill Road intersection in Bloomfield to the Simmons Road and Nutmeg Lane intersection on the Charter Oak Greenway in East Hartford.

The second gap is between the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail at the intersection of Routes 10 and 315 in Simsbury and the Tariffville connector trail between Tariffville and Bloomfield which is partially completed from Day Hill Road to Route 189 just south of Tariffville.

At the Bloomfield workshop two primary alternative routes were proposed, each commencing at Day Hill Road. The first alternative proceeds generally south along Tunxis Avenue (Rt. 189) to the town center and on to the University of Hartford. Part of this route would utilize the flood control berm on the east side of Tunxis Avenue. The remainder of the route would parallel the existing railroad track and street with a paved trail being built to keep the project off road.

The second primary alternative would also start at Day Hill Road with a connection using the right of way of the existing rail line, popularly known as "The Griffin Line" which also connects to the town center and continues south to Hartford.

In addition to the Griffin Line route, the Hartford workshop discussed three additional routes to carry the ECG across the river to East Hartford.

The first route identified as the "Connecticut River Corridor" would begin at Keney Park and proceed east to the soon to be completed section of trail connecting Windsor Meadows Park to Riverside Park in Hartford.

The second route also includes Keney Park running from its border in Bloomfield and running south to Albany Avenue or Homestead Avenue before turning east toward the Connecticut River.

A third route dubbed the "Western Corridor" would run along the border of Hartford and West Hartford on Prospect Street to Warrenton Avenue before turning east to the river.

Each proposed route in Hartford and Bloomfield presents challenges, including environmental permitting and buy-in from residents and businesses, but funding for the design phase has been secured.

The Capitol Region Greenway Study will be completed in four phases throughout 2023 and 2024 with further opportunities for public involvement during each phase. Additional information on the project may be found at <https://crcog.org/capitol-region-ecg-study/>.



**Lee Sinkwich on his recumbent bicycle is ready for the Lobsterfest Ride on Aug. 19, 2023 in Canton.**  
(Photo by Diane Moody)



# Lobsterfest Ride and Dinner Benefits FVTC and Canton FD

By Laura Russotto

The Farmington Valley Trails Council once again partnered with the Canton Volunteer Fire Department, Canton Street Station, as they celebrated their 41st Lobsterfest on Friday, Aug. 18 and Saturday, Aug. 19<sup>th</sup> 2023. This was a fundraising event that benefited both these non-profit organizations with a fully supported bicycle ride and lobster dinner.

With the weather ideal for riding on Saturday, FVTC hosted a 30-mile trail ride. The ride started and ended at Canton Volunteer Fire Department on Canton Springs Road. Fifty-seven bicyclists rode the “Loop” riding the scenic Farmington River Trail and the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail through the towns of Simsbury, Avon, Farmington, Burlington and back to Canton. Upon their return, riders enjoyed a delicious lobster meal. A great time was had by all.

A big shout-out to all the volunteers that came out to assist us (route marshals, SAG support, registration sign-in, lead and sweep riders).

If you were not able to join us this year as a ride participant or as a volunteer, we will hope to see you next August.



Laura Russotto (left) and Barbara Collins give instructions to riders gathered for the Lobsterfest Ride on Aug. 19, 2023 at the Canton Volunteer Fire Company field. (Photo by Norm Berg)



## 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 Kinkad

Alan Blasenstein

Diana Moody

Amy Watkins

Dwight Weed

Ron Goralski

Fran Gurtman

Founder:

Preston Reed

(1916-2013)

## Annual Meeting is Friday, Nov. 10 in Avon

The Farmington Valley Trails Council will hold its Annual Meeting on Friday, Nov. 10, 2023 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 speaker this year is Scott Bushee, Principal Engineer leading the State Highway Design Unit of the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CT DOT). He has also led the design for several miles of multi-use trail completed in Cheshire, Conn. on the Farmington Heritage Canal Trail and is currently leading five miles of design on the same trail network in Plainville, Conn.

Registration is not required, but registering helps the FVTC with planning the meeting. Register here:

<https://fchtrail.org/event/fvtc-2023-annual-meeting/>

## Flower Bridge is Closed for Renovations

The Town of Simsbury is undertaking a large scale renovation of the Old Drake Hill Flower Bridge that began in October 2023 and likely go through the end of the summer in 2024.

There will be no flowers on the bridge in 2024 and the park adjacent to the bridge will not be open to the public until the construction is completed.

See complete information here <https://www.simsbury-ct.gov/culture-parks-recreation/pages/the-old-drake-hill-flower-bridge>



A dog was among the participants in the Lobsterfest Ride on Aug. 19, 2023 in Canton.

(Photo by Diane Moody)

## ABOUT THE FVTC

This publication is written 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.

© 2023, all rights reserved.

### Contact Information:

Barbara Collins, President  
Farmington Valley Trails  
Council

P.O. Box 576

Tariffville, CT 06081

Email: [info@fvgreenway.org](mailto:info@fvgreenway.org)

Website: <https://fchtrail.org>

## 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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

**Non-Profit Org.**

**U.S. Postage**

**Paid**

**Avon, CT 06001**