

Farmington Valley Trails Council *Greenway News*

Dedicated to building, maintaining and beautifying multi-use trails

August 2025 — Volume 25, Issue 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!

Ride to the Farmers Market on Sept. 7

Join us for a scenic ride along the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail and Farmington River Trail as we make our way to the Collinsville Farmers Market on Sunday, Sept. 7, 2025. Plan to arrive at least a half hour prior to the start of the ride to get yourself set and ready to go at the 9:30 a.m. start time.

The 21-mile ride will start and end at the trail parking lot at 99 Thompson Road in Avon, CT, 1.6 miles west of Route 10. Enjoy a visit at the market, where riders can grab a bite to eat and purchase goodies from the local farmers and vendors. Take a walk through the small shops surrounding the Farmer's Market. The purpose of this ride is to support local!

This is a casual ride, mostly on the trail. Helmets are required, and it is suggested to dress in visible clothing. A SAG wagon will be available to carry your purchases back to your vehicle if needed. SAG will remain at the market until 12:00 pm and will then return to Thompson Road parking lot where riders can collect their purchases. Riders can return to the Thompson Road parking lot on their own. Keep in mind, SAG will be there until 1:30 pm for you to collect your purchases.

There is a \$20 suggested donation.

Click here to let us know you are coming:

[Ride to Collinsville Farmers Market](#)

American Flatbread Events Raise \$1,074

The Farmington Valley Trails Council (FVTC) hosted its 5th Annual Benefit Evening at American Flatbread in Canton! Thank you to all of our supporters for coming out to see us on Tuesday, July 22nd as we held our FVTC Benefit Evening. It was great to see 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:

Disc golf pack and gift card to Tower Ridge Disc Golf, Avon

Cookbook (Nourish) signed by and courtesy of Terry Walters, Avon

Gift certificates, bike light, helmet and other swag courtesy of Suburban Ski & Bike of Berlin, East Coast Greenway Alliance, Watch for Me CT, Benidorm

(See "Flatbread Events" on page 2)

Enjoy a 15-mile Summer Weekly Trail Ride

For the first time ever, the Farmington Valley Trails Council (FVTC) has hosted a weekly meet-up ride. This is a casual 15-mile ride along the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail and the Farmington River Trails. It has been a great opportunity for riders that want a slower pace, a smaller group, getting back into cycling or don't want to ride by themselves.

The rides took place each Wednesday in July and August. The group met by 5:30 pm for a 5:45 pm start. Each week the group met at a different trail parking lot for the enjoyment of riding different sections of the trail. Sadly, we had to cancel three times due to poor air quality, high heat indexes or the threat of thunderstorms.

FVTC would love to have you join us for a meet-up or destination ride. Helmets are required and all participants are required to sign an event waiver. No registration or advance notice is needed. Just show up.

Also, FVTC held its first destination breakfast ride. Riders met at the New Britain Avenue/Coppermine Rd trail parking lot and rode to Small State Provisions in Avon. The group enjoyed breakfast sandwiches, fresh coffee and good company. Thank you to Kevin, owner of Small State and his staff for the great hospitality.

Even though our weekly rides have come to an end, we plan to hold them again next summer. Check out our website or Facebook page for updates on the ride schedule, start locations or for any cancellation details due to weather. We look forward to seeing you on the trail!

Volunteers Always Needed to Help the Trails Council

The Farmington Valley Trails Council 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.

Some of the volunteer opportunities can include:

Adopt-a-Mile, Trail Ambassador, Kiosk Manager, Repair Station, Trail Date Collector, or volunteers for specific events.

If you are interested in finding out more about the FVTC, visit our website at fchtrail.org or send an email to info@fvgreenway.org.

Flatbread Events – (Continued from page 1)

Bike of Canton, US Horse Welfare and Rescue of Avon, Bicycle Cellar of Simsbury, and Bike Walk, Farmington CT. Rain Hat, Candles, Bicycle Earrings, and a Car Wash Supply pack.

The proceeds from this event were \$1,073.50 and all proceeds 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; Sherry Dwyer, Membership; Fran Gurtman, Bike Walk Avon CT; Tim Bowman, Bike Walk Canton CT; Ron Goralaski, Bike Walk Farmington CT; Alan Blasenstien, Joy Himmelfarb, David Kinkead, Diana Moody, Dwight Weed, and Amy Watkins, Watch for Me CT.

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 fchtrail.org or send an email at info@fvgreenway.org.

Electric Bicycles Grow in Popularity and Injury Risk

Over the past few years, electric bikes (e-bikes) have exploded in popularity among kids and teens. But with that rise has come a sharp increase in serious injuries – and it's putting children in the hospital at an alarming rate. The American College of Surgeons' Committee on Trauma recently issued a national statement on e-bikes, recognizing the growing threat they pose to children and calling for a coordinated public health response.

Not long ago, e-bikes were expensive and mostly used by adults. But now, with prices dropping and more models on the market, kids and teens are hopping on – often without fully understanding the risks. Many e-bikes today resemble small motorcycles and can reach speeds of 20 mph or more. Some can even go faster if modified, blurring the line between a bicycle and a motor vehicle.

Adolescents are still developing the ability to assess danger and make safe decisions – especially when it comes to speed and traffic. Younger kids face an even greater challenge because their cognitive and motor skills are still maturing.

The human brain doesn't fully develop until around age 25, and the parts responsible for impulse control and risk assessment are among the last to mature. That makes high-speed riding particularly dangerous for children and teens.

Currently, state law requires all e-bike riders to wear helmets, regardless of age – which is a good start. But the typical bike helmet may not be enough... It's important to remember: Head injuries are the most common reason children end up in the ER after an e-bike crash.

In Connecticut, riders must be at least 16 years old to legally operate a motorcycle or a Class 3 e-bike. But with more injuries happening among younger kids, many are asking: Should we raise the minimum age for all e-bike use?

Currently, state law also requires all e-bike riders to wear helmets, regardless of age – which is a good start. But the typical bike helmet may not be enough. Given the speeds e-bikes can reach, a motorcycle-rated helmet (which provides added neck and skull protection) may offer better safety.

It's important to remember: Head injuries are the most common reason children end up in the ER after an e-bike crash.

Here's what parents and kids need to know about riding e-bikes in Connecticut:

- **Speed limits matter:** Class 2 e-bikes (the ones with a throttle) are capped at 20 mph. Class 3 models can go up to 28 mph – but only if they're not throttle-powered.
- **No passengers unless built for two:** Most e-bikes aren't designed for a second rider.
- **Stay off the sidewalk:** Unless otherwise posted, e-bikes are considered vehicles. They belong on the road, in the right lane.
- **Be courteous and cautious:** If riding on sidewalks or shared paths, yield to pedestrians.
- **New in 2025:** Class 1 e-bikes are now allowed on bike and multi-use trails statewide, unless a town says otherwise.

Some cities are already taking action. In San Diego County, the Chula Vista City Council recently passed an ordinance prohibiting anyone under 12 from riding an e-bike – citing the sharp rise in preventable injuries. Measures like this may seem strict, but they reflect the growing concern from parents, doctors, and community leaders alike.

As e-bikes become more common, it may be time for Connecticut and its local towns to consider similar protections – before more children get hurt.

The bottom line for parents: E-bikes can be fun, eco-friendly, and convenient – but they're not toys. Understanding the risks and setting clear safety expectations can go a long way in keeping your child safe. Talk to your kids about how to ride responsibly – and make sure they're wearing the right helmet for the ride.

This article is published courtesy of the Connecticut Children's Medical Center: Kevin Borup, DrPH, JD, MPA, is the Executive Director of Connecticut Children's Injury Prevention Center.

Christine Finck, MD, FACS, is Surgeon-in-Chief at Connecticut Children's. Dr. Finck is one of six women surgeon-in-chiefs at 45 children's hospitals around the country. Amy Watkins, MPH, is Director of Safe Kids Connecticut, which is a program of Connecticut Children's Injury Prevention Center.

Trail Friends



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(1916-2013)

Pollinator Garden Beautifies the Trail

By Kim Rees

The Art For A Cause (AFAC) Pollinator Garden located just off the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail in Southington was created in 2018 by Southington residents Clare Bean and Kim Rees, who lead an afterschool art club at Kelley Elementary School. Their vision was to blend students' artwork with a garden that the community could enjoy, while raising awareness about the urgent need to create habitats for pollinating insects, birds, and mammals. Finding a suitable location initially proved challenging, and they were grateful when the Southington Water Department offered a parcel of land just south of the Mill Street parking lot for the trail.

The 2,500-square-foot garden features 86 plant species, chosen specifically to attract pollinators. Approximately 40 percent of the plants are native to Connecticut, supporting local wildlife that rely on these plants for food, shelter, and breeding. The garden is designed to provide a continuous supply of nectar from early spring to late fall, offering visitors an ongoing visual feast of beauty. More than 1,000 spring blooming bulbs such as tulips, muscari, and daffodils (including non-hybridized varieties) start off the season. As spring fades, displays of vibrant flowers such as black-eyed Susans, coneflowers, bee balm and hyssop take over, creating a colorful panorama.

Strolling the garden's pathways invites an opportunity to witness the insects at work, with as many as two dozen species on a single plant. Take in the sight of a caterpillar munching on milkweed, preparing for its magical metamorphosis into a butterfly. Observe a natural form of pest control as ladybugs enjoy a buffet of aphids. Early evening visitors can even watch bees sleep off a hard day's work under leaves of mountain mint.

The garden also features art integrated among the flowers, including painted peace poles with inspirational quotes, butterfly puddlers constructed out of painted pottery, and a "rainbow river" of painted rocks. At the center, a structure with wooden beams and painted cans filled with hollow tubes serves as a "bee hotel" for mason bees. An important area not to be missed is "Michaela's Garden", filled with four o'clock flowers, in memory of Michaela Petit. A wooden bench built by students provides a spot to sit and take everything in.

The AFAC garden engages with the community in various ways. Adjacent to the informational sign at the entrance is a mailbox containing a scavenger hunt for all ages, as well as books to enjoy while visiting. The garden hosts seed-planting events, shares seedlings for public enjoyment, and holds an annual Easter egg hunt. Collaboration with a nearby school offers hands-on learning opportunities in the garden for students with developmental disabilities and autism.

As a stop along Southington's official "Pollinator Pathway", the AFAC garden offers nutrition and habitat for pollinators traveling through town. For more information about the pathway, visit www.pollinator-pathway.org/southington

The AFAC garden has 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, allowing it to accept tax deductible donations. As a volunteer-led organization, it depends on donations for maintenance and improvements. One of its key goals is to raise funds to enhance accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

To learn more, visit www.facebook.com/artforacausepollinatorgarden

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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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 _____

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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.

