

Farmington Valley Trails Council *Greenway News*

Dedicated to building, maintaining and beautifying multi-use trails

March 2026 – Volume 26, 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 Helps With Trail Maintenance

By Barbara Collins, President, FVTC

Dear Trail Friend,

Welcome to 2026! It has been a very snowy winter, so I suspect many of you have felt the lack (albeit temporary) of the Farmington Canal Trail for non-ski activities because it has not been cleared or cleared enough. Each trail segment is owned and maintained by the town through which it passes. Some plow and some do not. The reason varies: cost, staff, time, and inaccessibility to plowing equipment to name a few. But spring is coming and soon you will have all the access you desire. However, this present absence of the trail is a good reminder of what a valuable asset it is.

The Farmington Valley Trails Council (FVTC) was formed 40 plus years ago to fight for the creation of a multi-use trail. Since then, the trail has become continuous from Farmington to the Mass border. We are hopeful that within the next few years it will be continuous from New Haven to the Mass border. All this has been possible because of loyal members of FVTC who joined and supported our efforts to get the trail built.

Now our focus has turned to promoting maintenance and improvements by the towns. I am sure you have seen at least one of those improvements, such as the water fountain in Farmington, or the many bike repair stations, or the information kiosks along the trail. I hope you have also noticed other improvements such as the Avon tunnel under Rt. 44 or the many areas where the trail has been repaved. Maintenance is an ongoing obligation and we enthusiastically support the towns to see that it is done.

Maintenance is the reason your support through donations and dues is so important. Your support allows us to ensure our Adopt-a-Mile volunteers have the tools needed to care for their sections of the trail. It also allows us to provide grants to towns which lack the funds for maintenance or improvements.

Support strengthens our voice when we lobby the legislature for funding so the trail through Plainville may finally be completed. And support helps pay for the creation and printing of maps of the trail and will allow us to place mileage markers and location signage from end-to-end of the trail so users can easily place themselves.

FVTC has no paid staff, so you can be assured that your contribution is used for the Trail. Please renew your membership and consider giving an additional contribution. We are a 501(c)(3) so your contributions are tax deductible.

Enjoy a 15-mile Summer Weekly Trail Ride

Join the Farmington Valley Trails Council (FVTC) again this season for a weekly casual ride along the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail or the Farmington River Trail. Rides will be about 15 miles long, but can vary depending on start location and number of participants. No registration or advance notice is required. Just show up! Helmets are required. All participants will be required to sign an event waiver at the ride start.

Rides will take place each Wednesday from June 17th through September 2nd. Rides meet at 5:30 pm for a 5:45 pm start time. Start locations may be subject to change, so check the website or social media for updates or cancellations due to weather.

The schedule lists the date and starting location.

June 17: Rt. 4 Unionville, trail parking lot

June 24: Thompson Road, Avon trail parking lot

July 1: Lordship Road, East Granby parking area (dead end street across from Simsbury Airport)

July 8: Sperry Park, Avon, trail parking lot

July 15: Dept. of Public Works trail parking lot, River Road, Canton

July 22: Iron Horse Blvd, Simsbury, parking lot at Jim Gallagher Way

July 29: Northwest Drive Trail parking lot, Plainville

Aug. 5: Iron Horse Blvd, Simsbury at Jim Gallagher Way

Aug. 12: Northwest Drive Trail parking lot, Plainville

Aug. 19: Arch Road, Avon Trail parking lot

Aug. 26: TBD

Sept. 2: TBD

Breakfast Destination Ride in Avon Rolls on June 20

Join us on Saturday, June 20, 2026, for a breakfast destination ride to Avon Country Deli right off the trail in Avon, Conn. The ride will start from the Rt. 4 Unionville trail parking lot and will ride the 30 mile "Loop" along the Farmington River Trail and the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail.

The ride will stop mid-way at Avon Country Deli for the food and good company. Plan to arrive by 7:15 am for a 7:30 am start.

Visit the FVTC website for a link sign up for the ride and to visit to the deli's website for a look at its menu: <https://fchtrail.org/event/breakfast-destination-ride/>

American Flatbread Fundraiser Planned for July 21

The Farmington Valley Trails Council (FVTC) Board of Directors will host its annual benefit evening on Tuesday, July 21, 2026, from 5:00 to 9:00 pm at American Flatbread in the Shoppes at Farmington Valley, 110 Albany Turnpike, Canton. American Flatbread will donate a portion from each large or small flatbread sold during the benefit hours and all proceeds will benefit the FVTC, its members, and all trail users.

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 Farmington Canal Heritage Trail and the Farmington River Trail and to educate the public on safety while being a pedestrian, bicyclist, or motorist.

We also assist towns in maintenance of their portion of the trail. Raffle prizes and other giveaways will be available. The FVTC is an all-volunteer organization.

We will be showing our appreciation to any current member who attends the benefit evening with a small gift. At the event last July, members received a special edition FVTC shirt.

We are taking this opportunity to introduce the Board of Directors of the FVTC, many of which will be present at this benefit evening.

On Which Side of the Road and Trail Do You Ride?

By Amy Watkins, MPH

Ever find yourself second guessing which side of the road or trail you are supposed to ride your bicycle on? You're not alone – many people are unsure about where exactly they should be. We're here to clear things up, whether you're on the trail or on the roadway.

In Connecticut, bicycles are considered vehicles. This means you should ride in the same direction as you would in a car – on the right side of the road. It's the same on the trail; ride right and pass left. Don't forget to announce yourself when you're passing someone on the trail. Ringing a bell or saying "on your left" makes other trail users aware of your presence, prevents surprises, and keeps your path free and clear.

In addition to traveling in the same direction as cars on the roadway, bicyclists should ride as far to the right-hand side of the roadway as is safe. However, bicyclists may move to the left of the right-hand lane if they are making a left-hand turn, are taking the lane for safety reasons (for example to prevent close passing or increase visibility), or need to avoid hazards such as debris along the roadway's edge. Bicyclists are allowed to do this, and motorists should be patient and respectful.

Things are a bit different for walkers. On the trail, all users stay to the right unless passing. However, on the roadway, walkers and runners should be on the left side, facing traffic. Of course, if there is a sidewalk, use it! The sidewalk is the safest place, and it matters less which side of the road you are on.

For both bicyclists and those on foot, be aware of how much space you are taking up, and be courteous of other road and trail users. Don't walk or ride so many abreast that others can't pass. Dog walkers should keep leashes short so other trail users can safely pass. On the roadway, bicyclists are allowed to ride two abreast. However, if moving to single file at times helps the traffic flow, do so.

Just remember: on the roadway, ride right and walk left! On the trail, everyone stays right. Together we can keep things moving safely!

Amy Watkins, MPH, is Director of Safe Kids Connecticut, which is a program of Connecticut Children's Injury Prevention Center.

Thompson Shelter Improved

Cleaning, repairs, and painting of the Thompson Shelter in the Thompson Road parking lot adjacent to the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail in Avon were successfully completed in November 2025.

Project work included repair of the shelter stairs, power washing of the bench, shelter, and picnic table, removal of graffiti, refreshed landscaping, repainting of the shelter, and installation of new signage. The work focused on improving the safety, appearance, and long-term durability of this rest area.

This project was made possible through funding and volunteer support from the Farmington Valley Trails Council and the Avon-Canton Rotary. Guidance was provided by the Town of Avon Recreation and Parks Department. These partnerships help maintain and enhance the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail for the enjoyment of all users. Thank you to everyone who supports the care and stewardship of our shared trail resources.



The Thompson Shelter adjacent to the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail in Avon has a fresh look, following renovations in November 2025.

Photo by Fran Gurtman

Trail Friends



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Greenway®**

**THE FARMINGTON CANAL
HERITAGE TRAIL**



Trail Construction Starts in Plainville

By Tom Ebersold

Construction has started on the first of three phases to route the Farmington Canal Trail through Plainville. There is currently a gap in the trail from Aircraft Road in Southington to Northwest Drive on the Farmington-Plainville border.

The Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) announced in a press release that construction of a 0.76-mile-long section of trail between Town Line Road and Norton Park in Plainville is planned between December 2025 and May 2027. This section will follow the path of the historic canal. The 12-foot-wide paved trail will include amenities, including benches, picnic tables, and parking. Genovesi Construction is the contractor for the \$3.7 million project.

Town Line Road is 0.8 miles north of where the trail currently ends at Aircraft Road in Southington.

According to the DOT, Phase 2 will stretch from Route 72 in Plainville to Northwest Drive with construction planned to start in Fall 2026.

The 1.7-mile-long Phase 3 will connect Norton Park to Route 72. The DOT hosted a public hearing in Plainville on Nov. 20, 2025, with 140 people in attendance. Residents expressed concern about the effect the trail would have on their homes and properties, as the proposed path would go along residential streets. As a result, the DOT is exploring alternatives to Hemingway Street and plans to conduct a meeting in the spring to review revised plans. Construction of the \$28 million project is expected to start in spring 2028.

Phase 3 documents are available on the DOT website at

https://portal.ct.gov/DOTPlainville0109-0173?language=en_US

FVTC DIRECTORS

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Founder:

Preston Reed
(1916-2013)

Stay Visible, Stay Comfortable, Stay Safe Get Your FVTC Safety Yellow T-Shirt

With Daylight Saving Time bringing longer evenings, it's the perfect time to get outside for a walk, jog, hike, or bike ride. Are you visible? Make sure you are on your next outing with the FVTC High-Performance Safety Tee.

At the Farmington Valley Trails Council, promoting safety on and off the trails is one of our key priorities. One of the simplest ways to stay safe is to stay visible.

Our high-visibility safety yellow performance T-shirts help ensure you can be seen whether you're on the trail or around town.

These lightweight, high-performance shirts feature:

- Superior moisture-wicking fabric
- Ultra-tight knit for exceptional comfort
- Stain-release and odor-resistant technology
- Cooling performance to keep you comfortable on the move

Perfect for walking, jogging, hiking, and biking, these shirts are soft, breathable, and built for active use. Available in men's and women's sizes with a regular fit.

Purchase your safety yellow T-shirt here: <https://fchtrail.org/shop/>

Your purchase helps support the Farmington Valley Trails Council and our efforts to promote safety on and off the trails throughout our community.

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 _____

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.

