

Farmington Valley Trails Council

Greenway News

Dedicated to building, maintaining and beautifying multi-use trails

Oct., 2012

Volume 12,

Issue 2

President's Letter



Inside this issue:

President's Letter Bruce Donald	1
Trail Etiquette & Safety J. Cassidy & B. Donald	1
Trail Etiquette & Safety, Cont.	2
EMS Avon's Trail Clean Up Day	3
President's Letter, Cont.	3
About Us and Membership Form	4

Fall has come to the Farmington Valley and with it a sense of satisfaction that things continue to move forward for the trail system. While no large projects were finished in 2012, a few smaller ones have, and many have been set in motion.

The incredibly successful Farmington River Trail (FRT) has had sections in service since 1996. The last piece from Collinsville Center was completed up to Route 44 two years ago. It was greeted with much fanfare including a visit and opening speech by CT Governor Dannel P. Malloy. The Town of Burlington is aware of the serious deterioration of the trail in their town, and we are glad to report that they are the recipient of a grant of \$250,000 to help defray the costs of root remediation, cutting back the shoulders, regrading and repaving. There is every chance that there will be a shortfall in this funding, and the FVTC stands ready to help the town if needed. As soon as I have more information I will post it on the Website.

Completion of the rest of the FRT north will be more troublesome. The railroad right of way has unfortunately been mostly lost north of Route 44 in northern Canton and Simsbury. Acquisition of land to build out the trail will be piecemeal, with connections to parcels of Town-owned open space creating a somewhat patchwork trail. Recently, Konover Corp. has graciously offered to build out the FRT at its new CVS site on Lawton Road and RT 44 in Canton, providing for a 500' gateway to the northern part of the loop trail across a very active Route 44. We salute them as model corporate citizens for their willingness to take on this work. The Church of Latter Day Saints that abuts this brand new trail directly to the north is in negotiations with the Town to build the trail on their parcel, extending the FRT further toward the Simsbury town line. While the final off-road build-out of the Farmington River Loop Trail continues, (cont.

Trail Etiquette & Safety

By Jim Cassidy & Bruce Donald

Have you ever wondered what it was like to ride as fast as Susan Notorangelo or Greg LeMond in one of their amazing races? Welcome to the club! Many of us have had these moments and have found ourselves a little or a lot encouraged by our efforts. It's probably how Greg and Susan first started out. But unlike most of us, they got their start on empty country roads with limited traffic.

One option, for sure, is to head onto a road and ride like the wind, or pedal until you come to an empty road. You might be able to find a time when the trail is not full of other users, but that is getting harder as more folks discover the joy of using it at any hour.

*These signs went up in Simsbury in September
On the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail* ➡



Did You Know?

*Your FVTC
is now the
largest not-
for-profit
rail-trail
advocacy group
based in New
England.*

2012 FVTC Annual Meeting

Friday, November 16th
at 7:00 pm.

The meeting will be held at the Avon Senior Center at 635 West Avon Road, (the Sycamore Recreation Area) Avon, CT 06001. Admission is free, and refreshments will be served.

The program will consist of FVTC President Bruce Donald giving the year-end business report and updates on trail construction and other initiatives and news. Mr. Donald and the Officers and Directors will take any questions from the public.



Following the business portion of the program we are delighted to present a talk by long-time members MaryEllen and Rick Thibodeau on their 325-mile bicycle trip from Pittsburgh, PA to Washington, DC. Five years ago they made an informative and entertaining presentation at the Annual Meeting about their bike trip across America in celebration of their 35th wedding anniversary, and we are pleased to have them back.

Trail Etiquette & Safety, Cont.

The unavailable option is to ride like a Tour de France competitor at any old time. We heard some reports of just such behavior during our recent Trails-in-Motion, but especially during the start of the half and metric century rides; reports of walkers being startled by cyclists flying by them on both left and right, without any advance warning. Even other cyclists, who were not participating in T-i-M, reported the same thing, and some lost control and fell. This was a bit surprising given the reminders before the start

Announce Yourself When Passing!!

The FVTC has handed out thousands of handlebar bells over the last two years and will continue the program to help cyclists make themselves known to pedestrians before they are passed on the left. But you can always yell or use a horn to make your point.

about trail safety ("ride at a speed reasonable for trail conditions"), and etiquette ("ride right, except when passing. Alert those being passed with a bell or yell 'passing on your left'").

The truth is that pedestrians have rights that bicyclists do not have. Bicyclists must respect them, but it goes both ways. Obstruction of the trail is a common complaint from cyclists and with a little thought is easily avoided. So, some reminders about trail use that will make our experience both safe and pleasant:

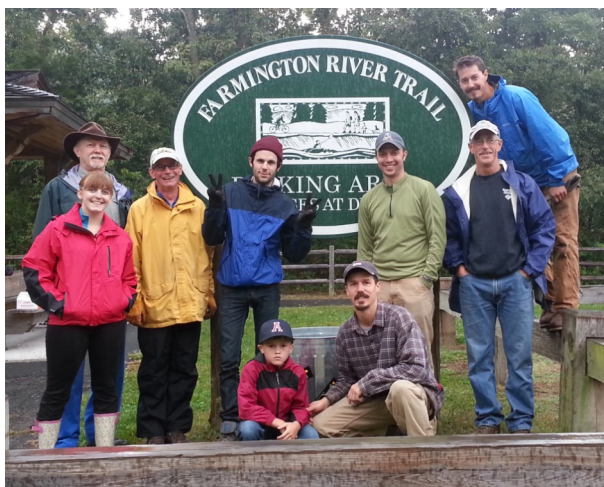
- Ride at a speed reasonable for trail conditions. If there are other users present, slow down. Disconnect from your "inner racer" and remember you can always speed up on those empty roads, where all you need to worry about is a few cars and even fewer cyclists.
- Ride right, except when passing. Pass at reasonable speed, with a cushion of space (calculated to not scare those passed), and with notice of your intent; such as a bell, whistle, horn, or yelling: "passing on your left" loud enough, if possible, to be heard by others who choose to wear headphones.
- Get off the trail when stopped so others can safely use the narrow trail safely.
- Stop at road crossings. Look left, right, and left again for oncoming vehicles before crossing. Walking is the safest way to cross busy roads like Route 44 in Canton, or Route 20 in East Granby. Sorry if that offends your inner racer, but we want you be able to use the trail again.

In a serious effort at etiquette education, the FVTC is in the process of sending our area towns a draft "rules of the road" to be posted at major trailheads. We hope that they will be adopted, and we will help towns with the fabrication and installation of signage.

In another effort, early in 2011, the Valley Collaborative, composed of the Towns of Simsbury, Avon, Burlington, Farmington, Granby, East Granby and Canton, approved a plan to place a dashed line along the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail. So far only Simsbury has marked a portion of their trail. The marked trail, partially funded by the FVTC, runs from Wolcott Road to Iron Horse Boulevard. Last summer we asked our members how they felt about the project. The 93 responses were divided into 5 categories: Very positive, Positive, Indifferent, Negative and Unsure. Of the responses 59 were positive (63%) and 19 (20%) negative. With a majority of respondents believing the line is necessary, we believe the project should be completed on all of our surfaced trails.

We are very interested in your thoughts on these initiatives. We will continue to work with our towns and pursue educational programs to address this issue. Get in touch at [info \(at\) fvgreenway.org](mailto:info(at)fvgreenway.org).

EMS Avon's Clean Up Day



On Tuesday September 18th, 2012 Eastern Mountain Sports in Avon shut down on a rainy day and its managers and staff met near the lower Collinsville Dam and Route 4 Parking Lot to clean up the trail up to the pavilion at the lot in Unionville. It is rare that any corporation would give up a whole day of business while paying its employees for such an event and the FVTC recognizes their community-conscious work. Manager Mike Lloyd stated: "We filled up 3 pickup trucks with trash, got a bit wet, and had a great time."

President's Letter, Cont.

in order to encourage the public's safe usage of the route, Canton and Simsbury have approved an interim system of painted, on-road "sharrows" helping to ensure the safety of bicyclists and warning motorists of a mixed-use road. Finally, a coalition of the Town of Canton, the FVTC, and other stakeholders are requesting a "Trail Head" parking and information area at the Shoppes using the overflow parking near Kohl's.

Our Website continues to be very popular, averaging over 55,000 visitors this season. We are creating a hand-held application to view our Website and our mapping with a "you are here" feature built in. Final build out with a new e-commerce section is taking place. Look for the stylish FVTC Jersey and other items. Incredibly, it appears that we have gone through 20,000 folding maps in the last 18 months. We will update them and print more. The 15th Annual Trails in Motion sponsored by St. Francis Hospital took place on the rain-date of September 8th. Over 200 participants helped us support the trails and raise over \$4,000 on our 20th Anniversary! We continue to work with the Farmington Canal Rail to Trail Association, and are helping with a number of initiatives such as starting Adopt-a-Trail programs in Hamden and Cheshire. Boy Scout Eagle projects include the stenciled road names in yellow at trail/road intersections in the Valley. Avon native Aaron Gladstein is responsible for that project, and Farmington native Zak Ruh completed an updated trail head at Red Oak Hill Road in for his Eagle project.

Some other ongoing projects:

An FVTC \$7,500 matching grant to Farmington for fencing repair. RFP's are in and construction will take place soon. A \$5,000 grant from the Rails to Trails Conservancy in Washington to the FVTC for a greeting center in downtown Collinsville. We will add \$5,000 to create an area with a new information kiosk and seating. A \$3,000 grant from us to Bike/Walk Connecticut to help them with their lobbying and educational efforts. The \$55,000 Coca-Cola grant for the parking lot at Phelps Road will finally be used.. Suffield is designing the lot and it will be constructed in early 2013. It will include an information kiosk donated by the FVTC. A granite state line border crossing monument will be installed at that time.

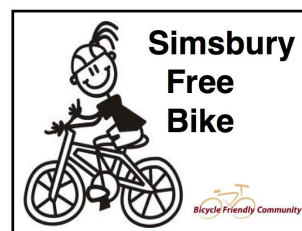
As you can imagine, there is so much more to talk about, and we shall do so at our Annual Meeting on November 16th. (See the information on Page 2). We can't do all of this without you, and once again I thank all of our members, volunteers and friends.

Some Friends:

**THE FARMINGTON CANAL
HERITAGE TRAIL**



**Friends of
Southwick
Trails**



FVTC DIRECTORS

Bruce Donald, President
Jim Cassidy, Vice President
Steve Noble, Treasurer
Mary-Jane Gately, Secretary
Nancy Anstey
Steve Cole
Ron Coleman
Barb Collins
Joy Himmelfarb
Erich Kronschnabel*
Jerry Ledger
Susan Phillips*
Scott Myrick
Rich Rowlenon*
Allen Ryan
Dwight Weed

**New Board Members*



FVTC GREENWAY NEWS

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 FAVARH.

© Farmington Valley Trails Council Inc.
2012, all rights reserved.

Contact Information:
R. Bruce Donald, Editor
Farmington Valley Trails Council
P.O. Box 576
Tariffville, CT 06070
Phone: 860-202-3928
Email: info@fvgreenway.org

We're on the Web!
www.fvgreenway.org

Your Support is Important!



Check desired box and enclose membership fee:

- ☐ \$10 Senior 65+ / Junior under 18
- ☐ \$20 Single
- ☐ \$30 Family
- ☐ \$100 Friend
- ☐ \$500 Sustaining Member
- ☐ \$1,000 Lifetime Benefactor

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (days) _____ (eves) _____

E-mail _____

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

Comments?

Detach and mail to FVTC, P.O. Box 576, Tariffville, CT 06070

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

Non-Profit
Org.
U. S. Postage
Paid
Tariffville, CT
06081
Permit No. 3