

Farmington Valley Trails Council *Greenway News*

Dedicated to building, maintaining and beautifying multi-use trails

March 2020 — Volume 20, 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!**

President's Letter: Trail Events Planned in 2020; Some Events Canceled Due to Coronavirus

By Barbara Collins, President, FVTC

I certainly hope you have enjoyed this incredibly mild winter and have continued to use the trail on a regular basis. Spring is just about here and so once again we will be asking you to renew your membership.

Our Bike Expo on using the trail safely scheduled for March 21 at the Farmington Library has been canceled due to the coronavirus. Likewise we have had to cancel our Annual Cleanup Day that had been scheduled for April 18. These are important to help us maintain and improve the trail for the use of all, but we will adapt and work in other creative ways to protect and enjoy the trail.

As I have mentioned before, all the money FVTC collects goes towards supporting the trail, ensuring that potholes are fixed, benches are replaced and the trail remains as accessible as possible. The Bike Expo which we expect to hold next year is free to all and is a wonderful way to learn all about using the trail in a safe manner at all times whether riding or walking. Vendors give their time so you can learn about many products that enhance your safety and your pleasure on the trail. As bike shops have closed to help protect all of our health, it will be important when they reopen to support them as they, like so many small businesses, are taking an economic hit because of the virus.

The Annual Clean Up will be held next year because it is when we are reminded, yet again, that some people do not show their appreciation for the trail by keeping it clean; however I am pleased to report that every year we are picking up less and less trash. As the Cleanup is not being held, I ask all our members to be extra vigilant on the trail to report problems and when possible pick up any trash that you see.

If you were able to attend our Annual Meeting in November, you heard an exciting story of cycling in Cambodia. But perhaps even more exciting was listening to the extensions of the trail that are being planned or built: trails into Tariffville extending to Bloomfield or the trail moving off the FCHT to New Britain or the new bridges in Westfield, Mass., which will make the trip to Northampton that much easier.

Recognition of the value of the trail and the need to fund extensions of the trail would not exist but for your support of FVTC. Towns hear from us regularly regarding the popularity of and potential goldmine that is the trail. When they learn how many members we have or how popular our events are, the towns give us a level of attention we would not have otherwise. Thank you.

You make the work of the FVTC that much easier and it is much appreciated.



Trail Etiquette

- Ride, walk, run and skate on the right side of the trail and pass slowly on the left. Before passing, alert persons by bell, horn or verbally.
- When stopped, please move off the trail. Please ride, walk, run or skate to allow others to share the limited trail width.
- Cyclists should stop at intersections and carefully check traffic before crossing the road. The trail intersects with heavily traveled roads.
- Wear appropriate safety gear. Approved helmets could save your life. Trail users are responsible for their own safety.
- Keep your bicycle in good operating condition. Be prepared for a flat tire.
- Keep the trail clean and safe. Bring out what you carry in. This helps the volunteers who keep the trail clean.
- Please keep dogs leashed and close to you. Clean up after pets and take the litter with you.

Trail Construction Narrows the Gaps

By Bruce Donald

Tri-State Coordinator, East Coast Greenway

The biggest news in the Farmington Valley in 2020 is the imminent construction of the first piece of Tariffville (East Simsbury) from Main Street to the new trailhead at Rt. 189 in Bloomfield. This 0.82 mile section has an estimated cost of \$1.16 million. Construction will begin in April with completion by the end of the year.

With this trail in place the East Coast Greenway can re-designate the on-road (and off-road) route to once again go through Simsbury up to Rt. 315 and down into Tariffville. It had previously been moved because of the dangerous speeds on the “divided highway” of Rt. 189. Known as the Hartford Connector, this trail system is being steadily built out in a very difficult corridor.

Other projects of interest are the remaining pieces of the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail (FCHT), starting with Phase IV of New Haven from Yale down to Long Wharf (1.6 miles). Initial bids came in way too high, but another round got the project awarded. Ground will be broken this April.

The northern part of Southington is designed and now in permitting. We hope to see this 2.4-mile stretch go to bid later this year. Finally, Plainville is in design at CT-DOT, and Phase I will be Townline Road to Norton Park (1.3 miles) with a groundbreaking next year.

The northern part, Phase II, from the current parking lot at Northwest Drive, is in design and should be ready for construction in 2022, 2.1 miles down to the Town Center. Finally, Phase III will fill in the remaining 1.9 miles by 2025.

This will complete the FCHT after a long battle that started back in 1988. We look forward to it being a tourism magnet and a bright jewel in bicycle and pedestrian facilities, not just in Connecticut, but regionally.

Sat. April 18th Trail Cleanup is Canceled

The Farmington Valley Trails Council had planned hold its 11th annual Trail-wide Clean-Up Day on Saturday, April 18, 2020, but the event has been canceled due to the coronavirus and the need to avoid groups. This event normally provides volunteers an opportunity to improve the trail.

In 2021, plan to join the Trails Council in getting 35 miles of trails in the Valley ready for what will be a busy season of trail use! The FVTC greatly appreciates the support we receive every year from all of its volunteers.

Volunteers will cover a specific 1-mile stretch of the trail starting from one of six staging areas: Red Oak Hill Road in Farmington; Brickyard Road in Farmington; Sperry Park in Avon; Iron Horse Boulevard in Simsbury; Copper Hill Road in East Granby; and the River Trail Pavilion at Rt. 4 in Unionville.

Volunteers will be asked to bring gloves, brooms, rakes, shovels, clippers, protective clothing and sunscreen. Those without tools are welcome to come and share tools with others. All volunteers are expected be invited to a free picnic after the Clean-Up at Flamig Farm in Simsbury.

Please contact cleanup@fvgreenway.org with questions.

FVTC Trails Safety Expo-CANCELED

The Farmington Valley Trails Council (FVTC) has canceled its third annual Trails Safety Expo, scheduled for March 21st, from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Farmington Library Community Room, 6 Monteith Drive, Farmington, due to corona virus concerns.

Over recent years, we have seen an increase in the number of adults and children using the trails for walking, running and cycling, and by those with limited mobility, each raising their activity level in pursuit of a healthy lifestyle.

The Trails Council has worked tirelessly to complete 85 miles of the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail and 26 miles of the Farmington River Trail. With close to 100% completion, we are very pleased that these multi-use trails are being enjoyed by an expanding and varied population of friends, neighbors and visitors.

When this event returns in the future, expect the following:

It is open to the public and is free of charge. There will be door prizes and refreshments. Our goal with this expo is to promote safety for all who use the trails we treasure and work hard to improve.

Please stop by the Expo and visit local vendors and other organizations to see what they have to offer.

Here you'll be able to:

- * Find out about upcoming events and bike rides for the 2020 season.
- * Learn about local programs and groups whether you like to take your activity to the trails, the road, or an indoor location.
- * Learn how to properly fit a helmet (bring your own) and how to change a tire or fix a flat.
- * Visit with local vendors to see the latest and greatest in active wear, safety equipment, footwear, and nutritional supplements.
- * Find out how to become a FVTC member or volunteer.

Seventh Annual "Ride the State" Event

The Farmington Valley Trails Council, Farmington Canal Rail to Trail Association and the East Coast Greenway Alliance are teaming up to host a 56-mile bike ride to draw attention to the remaining gaps in the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail on Saturday, June 27 from New Haven, Conn. to Southwick, Mass.

The majority of the ride will take place on the extensive trail system with only a few sections on carefully selected local roads. On-site registration will start at 7:30 and the ride will begin just after 8:00 am from the southwest corner of the New Haven Green, at the corner of Chapel and College Streets at the Pierre Lallement Memorial Stone. The ride is scheduled to end at 3:00 pm in Southwick, Mass. with bus connection back to New Haven. Registration details to follow.

Registration information will be posted on the FVTC website as the event nears.

Trail Friends



East Coast
Greenway®

THE FARMINGTON CANAL
HERITAGE TRAIL



FVTC DIRECTORS

Barbara Collins,
President

Vacant, Vice-President
Robert Kazior, Treasurer
Vacant, Sect'y

Norm Berg
Bruce Donald
Lisa Fernandez
Joy Himmelfarb
Jerry Ledger
Gary Miller
Diana Moody
Walter Rochefort
Laura Russotto
Amy Watkins
Dwight Weed

Founder:
Preston Reed
(1916-2013)

Together We Can Change Safety Culture on the Trail

By Amy Watkins, Master of Public Health (MPH)

Safety while walking, running, or bicycling has never been more important. With the ever rising numbers of pedestrian and bicyclists deaths, we all need to be more mindful of the behaviors that contribute to injuries to ourselves and others.

Our recent trail safety survey highlighted various situations in which trail users feel unsafe. Many common themes arose, including people moving too fast for conditions, not thoughtfully sharing space, and coming upon someone unexpectedly. Interactions with vehicles at intersections was also an often-voiced concern. Though we can't control the actions of others, we can be aware of our own behavior that contributes to or detracts from our safety.

Here are some simple things that we can do to minimize the chance of injury for ourselves and others:

Slow down

Whether pedaling on your own or using an electric-assist bike, keep your speed down. Many crashes have resulted from cyclists moving too fast amidst other trail users or around blind corners. Save your time trials for the road, and slow down on the trail.

Stay in your lane

Walk, jog, or cycle on the right side of the trail. Do not take up more than half of the trail. This is especially important to remember if you are in a group, walking a dog, or have children with you. In addition to people coming from the opposite direction, there may be faster moving people behind you who need room to pass. Be mindful that there are others enjoying trail, and stay to the right. If you need to stop, move off of the trail.

Cyclists and runners indicate when passing, walkers keep alert

If you are coming up behind someone, alert them to your presence before passing. The more advanced the warning, the better. You can say "passing on your left" or ring a bell if you are on a bicycle. Walkers should stay alert for passers and keep headphone volume at a level where you can still hear others.

Be careful at intersections

Intersections where the trail crosses the road can be particularly dangerous and require extra care. Drivers may not see a person waiting to cross, or unfortunately may see but still not stop. Be cautious when approaching an intersection, and don't attempt to cross until you know cars in all directions are stopping.

Whether you are on the trail or on the road, be safety-minded and courteous to others. Keeping some simple guidelines in mind not only can improve safety, but can enhance everyone's enjoyment of the trail.

Plans in Design for Westfield River Levee Multi-Use Trail

Plans for a multi-use trail are under design through the city of Westfield, Mass, and being reviewed by MassDOT. The project includes a 2 mile multi-use trail on the Westfield River Levee from Ellsworth Street on the west end to the Williams Riding Way Flood Control Pump Station off Meadow Street at the east end.

The trail provides an east-west off road connector for the neighborhoods along the levee to downtown destinations including the Columbia Greenway Trail. In addition to downtown destinations the trail also provides active recreation along the Westfield River including connections to Chapman Playground, Whitney Field, multiple parks adjacent to the Great River bridges, and the Esplanade.

To see the current Design Plan, go to the city website at <https://www.cityofwestfield.org/449/Westfield-River-Levee-Park>

Volunteer Plows the Way

By Jerry Ledger

Who is keeping the E. Granby / Suffield trail clear in the winter? For a many years, someone has been plowing the trail north of Copper Hill Rd, East Granby and past Phelps Rd, Suffield.

Many of the trail users have delighted in the opportunity that the open trail has offered during the winter and wondered "Who can we thank?"

The man behind the wheel in the snow plow truck is Granby resident Ed Ferrin. Ed has been plowing the trail south of Phelps Rd for more than 14 years and when the trail was completed to Copper Hill Rd. he extended his effort. Ed is retired yet he has a professional snow plowing route for many customers. When he finishes his route he then takes on the snow covered trail.

After a 20+ inch snowfall several winters ago, it took Ed three and a half hours to do the 1.7 miles of trail. It took three passes at different depths for the entire length of the section. Ed also keeps the parking spaces north of Copper Hill Rd cleared. You may see Ed walking with a long hiking pole almost every day south of Phelps Rd. Ed was walking the old railroad before it was "improved".

Trail Extension Begins in Mass.

The Farmington Canal Trail continues into Massachusetts with a name change to the Southwick Rail Trail, which extends north from the state line for 6 miles. From there the name changes to the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail, which is 2.4 miles.

Work has begun on the final section of the latter trail in Westfield, which will add 0.65 miles to the trail. Plans are available on the Westfield city site at

<https://www.cityofwestfield.org/407/Columbia-Greenway>

A detailed story is available from the Westfield News. Be sure to click on the link within the story for additional construction details. Link at

<https://thewestfieldnews.com/railroad-bridges-to-come-down-for-rail-trail-construction-beginning-monday/>

Friends of the Columbia Greenway Rail Trail:

<https://www.columbiagreenway.org>

Friends of the Southwick Rail Trail:

<http://southwickrailtrail.org>

Trails Calendar 2020

March

Saturday, 3/21/2020

FVTC Expo Event: CANCELED

Farmington Library

6 Monteith Drive, Farmington

11 am-2:00 pm

April

Saturday, 4/18/2020

FVTC Trail Clean-up and Picnic:

CANCELED

June

Sunday, 6/7/2020

FVTC Trails Day Ride

Start/end at Iron Horse Boulevard/

Rotary Park, Simsbury

No Rain date

Saturday, 6/27/2020

Ride the State Ride

July

Tuesday, 7/28/2020

Fundraiser evening

Flatbread, Canton

5:00-9:00 pm

August

Saturday, 8/15/2020

FVTC Ride/Canton Lobster Fest

No Rain Date

November

Friday, 11/13/2020

FVTC Annual Meeting

Avon Senior Center, Avon

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).
© Farmington Valley Trails Council Inc. 2020, all rights reserved.

Contact Information:
Barbara Collins, President
Farmington Valley Trails Council
P.O. Box 576
Tariffville, CT 06081
Email: info@fvgreenway.org

On your handheld device:
www.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