Myra Mayman and Peter Crowell check a load of stone dust as it is delivierd to the newest section of the Rail Trail. Photo: Alex Bernhard

Work Begins To Extend Rail Trail East To Webster Lake

By Alex Bernhard and Lindy Heim
Friends of the Northern Rail Trail

On Monday, July 20, the Friends of the Northern Rail Trail in Merrimack County (FNRT) started work on extending the rail trail from Dyer's Crossing in East Andover to Webster Lake at Chance Pond Road in West Franklin.

The first step in this process was grading the abandoned rail bed to make it level. The graded rail bed was then compacted with a compactor operated by volunteer Ed Hiller. The grader was operated by Ed Larpenter of Candia. Then stone dust from Colebrook Gravel in Boscawen was spread by the grader and compacted again by Ed and Ed.

Use of the brand new 12-ton Volvo compactor was donated by Dave Libby of Chadwich-BaRoss of Concord.

This year a new specification for stone dust is being used which it is hoped will produce a surface that is smoother and easier for walkers and bicyclists to use.

Use of the grader was contributed by Durgin and Crowell Lumber Company of Springfield. Numerous FNRT members, coordinated by Lindy Heim of Wilmot, volunteered their time to log in the stone dust trucks and coordinate the work. Trail workers include John Benoit, Rosie Best, Steve Darling, and Susan and Larry Chase, all of Andover, and Mark Lorenze of Webster Lake.

The work was planned for completion by Friday, July 24. When completed, the rail trail will extend 10 miles from Potter Place in Andover to Chance Pond Road in West Franklin.

The new two-mile segment travels on a high berm overlooking Webster Lake. The elevated dirt berm was designed to bring the old rail line down from the heights of East Andover to the lower Merrimack River Valley in West Franklin.

Information on the rail trail is posted at the new kiosk in Potter Place and on the Friends of the Northern Rail Trail Web site at FNRT.org.

Volunteer compactor operator Ed Hiller at work on the new section of Rail Trail. Photo: Mary Hiller

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