



The rail bed as it crosses Horseshoe Pond, one of the most scenic spots between Blackwater Park and Switch Road.

Photo: Bob Bussey

Rail Trail Awarded \$30,000 For Blackwater Park To Switch Road

By Myra Mayman
FNRT-MC

The Friends of the Northern Rail Trail in Merrimack County held its May meeting on Wednesday, May 17.

Bob Ward reported on work to complete the trail begun last fall from Blackwater Park west to Potter Place.

On Friday, May 12, the Andover Snowmobile Club's Norman LeMay donated his time to run the road grader donated by Chris Bentley. George Burdick donated his time running the vibratory roller. They worked from 7 AM to 7 PM and completed three-quarters of a mile of new construction as well as half a mile of filling in gaps in last fall's construction. There is a third of a mile left to finish. It should take part of one more day to complete.

Concern was expressed about recent evidence (tracks) of illegal ATV use of the trail (illegal without snow cover) that can damage the ledge pack surface. It was agreed that more signs about proper usage will be posted, and an effort will be made to disseminate more information about legal and illegal use of the trail.

Recreational Trails Program 2006

It was announced that FNRT-MC has been awarded a 2006 Recreational Trails Program grant of \$30,000 to continue the rail trail from Blackwater Park east to Switch Road, or Plains Road if possible. Plans are underway

for construction and it is hoped that, barring additional floods and other natural and unnatural hindrances, this segment of trail will be completed by October 1.

TEA Application Update

Bob Ward reported the good news: our \$206,000 application for federal Transportation Enhancement Act funds to extend the trail from Potter Place to the Danbury Department of Public Works and connect it with the Grafton County Northern Rail Trail has passed the final hurdle of approval. We have not yet received a letter, but the process is complete.

Having been ranked #1 in the Lakes Region review, our proposal was ranked #4 out of 52 New Hampshire applications. However, the \$206,000 won't be available until 2010 or 2011 and must be matched by \$50,000 that we will have to raise.

Outreach

Bob reported the possibility of his making a presentation to the Merrimack County Commissioners in June. The entire rail trail we are building lies within Merrimack County.

In addition, we have been invited to give an overview of our plans to the Franklin City Council on July 3. We hope in the future to connect the Northern Rail Trail with the Winnepesaukee Trail in Franklin.

FNRT-MC plans to have an infor-

mation table at Andover's Fourth of July celebration, the Andover Historical Society's fair at Potter Place on August 6, and the Danbury Grange Fair in September.

October 1: Artists on the Trail

Plans were discussed for Artists on the Trail, an event being planned for Sunday, October 1, from 1 to 4 PM. It will comprise an exhibition and silent auction of artists' works that are relevant to the Northern Rail Trail, from Lebanon to the Boscawen/Concord line.

Artists on the Trail will take place at the Andover Elementary/Middle School gym. It is hoped that this event will coincide with the opening of the rail trail

from Blackwater Park, just behind the school, east to Switch Road.

Food, drink, music, a bike raffle, on-site photographs taken and exhibited that afternoon by kids and families, and a foot race on the rail trail are being planned. The purpose of this event is two-fold: to increase the community's awareness and appreciation of the rail trail and the beauty of its environment, and to raise money for our work to create the rail trail itself.

The next FNRT-MC meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 21 at 7 PM at the Andover Elementary/Middle School's Science Room. The meeting is open to the public.

"Make The Move" Walking Club

On May 6 a group walk on the Winnepesaukee River Trail kicked off a series of walks offered by the Healthy Heart for Life Project of the Caring Community Network of the Twin Rivers (CCNTR).

During the months of May through October, a "trail of the month" will be highlighted from the trails listed in the Walking Guide for the Greater Franklin Area. The walking club will meet at that trail throughout the month.

Join the walking club at the Franklin Falls Dam during the month of June. The club will meet every Saturday morning at 8:30 AM at the parking lot off

of Route 127 in Franklin. Walk along a paved surface to the Dam and back for a 1.5 mile roundtrip walk. All fitness levels are welcome. The walking route for July is River Road in Franklin.

Club membership is free to all and the first 100 walkers will receive a free Walking Club t-shirt. Register at one of the walks, or by contacting Melissa Rizzo at 934-2060 ext. 369 or mrizzo@lrgh.org.

To download your copy of the Walking Guide for the Greater Franklin Area or to learn more about the club, visit ExperienceThreeRivers.com. To learn more about the Healthy Heart for Life Project, visit CCNTR.org.



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