



FNRT volunteers and contractors were hard at work in August finishing the rail trail between Switch Road and Potter Place, where work had been interrupted repeatedly over the past year by flooding rains. Photo: Charlie Darling

Friends of the Northern Rail Trail

By Alex Bernhard

Friends of the Northern Rail Trail

The New Hampshire Department of Transportation (DOT) is working on a complete redesign of the intersection of Routes 4 and 11 in Potter Place, with a goal of eliminating the existing overpass bridge because of its poor physical condition. Because the rail bed currently runs under the bridge that is to be removed, the Friends of the Northern Rail Trail (FNRT) are concerned that the redesign take into account FNRT's plan to convert the rail bed into a four-season rail trail. FNRT was recently awarded a \$206,000 Transportation Enhancement Grant by DOT to construct this conversion, with preliminary engineering to start in 2008.



This box culvert on the rail trail in Grafton is what FNRT would like to see in Potter Place. Photo: Alex Bernhard

A level crossing of Route 11 and the trail would be dangerous and inconvenient, so DOT has been working on the idea of passing the rail bed under Route 11.

On July 24, Alex Bernhard, Vice President of FNRT, met with bridge and highway design engineers at DOT's Concord offices. The purpose of the meeting was to brief the engineers on the interests of snowmobilers, bicyclists, and walkers in the design of the new underpass at the rail bed's intersection with Route 11 in Potter Place.

Alex pointed out that the snowmobile grader requires at least a 12' by 12' underpass opening and that the other

users need to have no change in grade or in surface composition through the new underpass. In addition, in order to allow future work around this new underpass, it would be helpful to have at least 12 feet of trail at each side of the underpass finished with the same four inches of stone dust that will top the rest of the new rail trail.

Alex provided photographs of "good," "acceptable," and "bad" underpasses already on the trail. These were the underpasses at Grafton Center, Enfield, and Canaan, respectively.

The DOT officials noted that no design conclusions had yet been reached, but they were receptive to the suggestions and appeared willing to try to incorporate them in the final design.

5K Fun Runs For FNRT

By Mike Silverstein

Andover Elementary/Middle School

Calling people of all ages to get outside, get some exercise, and support the Northern Rail Trail. On October 1 at Blackwater Park there will be fun runs taking place for kids of all ages. And for people with lots of energy, there will be a 5K run/walk.

All the events are part of the Friends of the Northern Rail Trail's Sunday Fun Day and will be conducted informally, meaning they will be hand-timed. The focus is on getting people out on the rail trail and having fun.

What will make this event fun? A lot of people will make it fun. So we are asking you to form a group of three or more people and come out together. You can even dress up your group in some sort of costume if you want.

If you register as a group or if you dress up, you will be entered into a drawing to win a pizza party for your group. If you register as a group and your group dresses up, you will be entered twice into the drawing to win the group pizza party.

The Friends of the Northern Rail Trail and the Andover Elementary/Middle School are putting on these events to help bring attention to a great cause – converting rails to trails that

travel throughout our state. If you like to snowmobile, cross-country ski, walk, or bike, you should be excited about this cause. This trail will be a great resource for our community.

When the trail is complete, we will be able to bike/snowmobile/ski for almost 60 miles! And how great will it be when we connect this trail to others like it in the state?

If this sounds like something you want to happen, get your family, your children's boy or girl scout group, or a group of friends to come on October 1 to Blackwater Park off Lawrence Street in the village of Andover.

If we are lucky, maybe it'll rain, because nothing is more fun than running in the rain with a group of people all dressed up in costumes!

I'm looking for Middle School student volunteers to help manage the kid fun runs and the 5K run. It is possible to participate in the run and volunteer. Adult volunteers are also welcome. If you are interested in volunteering, e-mail me at msilverstein@andover.k12.nh.us.

Please register early, so we can make t-shirts which help spread the word. The registration form is available at the Town Office, at the AE/MS office and on the *Beacon's* Web site at AndoverBeacon.com.

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