

## FNRT Celebrates National Trails Day On June 4

### FNRT press release

Saturday, June 4, is National Trails Day. The Upper Valley Trails Alliance and the Friends of the Northern Rail Trail (FNRT) in both Grafton and Merrimack Counties are organizing six rides along the 46-mile length of the Northern Rail Trail between Lebanon and Franklin to celebrate the joining of the Grafton and Merrimack sections of the trail.

Each ride will be organized individually by different leaders but will add up to cover the Rail Trail that connects Franklin, Andover, Wilmot, Danbury, Grafton, Orange, Canaan, Enfield, and Lebanon. All rides will start at 10 AM.

As of this writing, the round-trip rides include:

- John Taylor of the Upper Valley Trails Alliance will ride from Enfield or Canaan south.

- Alex Bernhard will lead a ride from Potter Place to Danbury.
- Lindy and Craig Heim will ride from Wilmot to the north and south.
- Tom Frantz will cover from Potter Place to Webster Lake.
- Mike Loomis will lead from the Congregational Christian Church in West Franklin to the Highland Lake Inn.

We are looking for Danbury and Lebanon ride leaders.

Plan to celebrate this wonderful resource on National Trails Day with your friends and neighbors along its 46-mile length on Saturday, June 4.

Ride departure times and places can be found at [FNRT.org](http://FNRT.org). Find the time and place that suits your schedule and join in!

Rain date: Sunday, June 5, same time, same places. 

## Rail Trail Benefit Re-Scheduled For May 5 At Rockwell's

### FNRT press release

Don't miss the next Friends of the Northern Rail Trail (FNRT) event coming up in May. Our annual fundraising dinner is scheduled for one night only on Thursday, May 5, at Rockwell's at the New London Inn in New London. Originally scheduled for April 14, the date has been changed to May 5 because the New London Inn, under new ownership, will be doing renovations.

Chef Jerrod Rockwell will offer the restaurant's regular menu, which is varied and outstanding, in both dining rooms. There is no set time or set menu – you decide when you want to have dinner and with whom. Just make reservations, go, and enjoy yourselves as you do on any evening out. The atmosphere promises to be festive as the dinner crowd tends to be made up of exuberant FNRT supporters!

Chef Jerrod allows half of the

night's profit to benefit the rail trail effort. Please make reservations before they are filled by calling the New London Inn directly at 526-2791. Dinner may be enjoyed as early as 5 PM in the Tavern (reservations not necessary) or 5:30 PM in the main dining room.

Besides coming to our dinner on May 5, another way you can help the rail trail effort is to become a member of FNRT. In return for your membership dues you will get updated information on progress and meetings. Membership categories range from \$15 to \$100 and can be processed securely online at [FNRT.org](http://FNRT.org). And you can lend a hand at any one of the upcoming FNRT events promoted on our Web site and our Facebook page at [facebook.com/FNRTnh](http://facebook.com/FNRTnh).

On our Web site you'll also find more information on organizational activities, three printable trail maps, membership, and giving opportunities. 

## Friends of the Northern Rail Trail

April 20

*Condensed from draft minutes*

**Present:** Alex Bernhard, Steve Darling, Tom Frantz, Craig Heim, Lindy Heim, Mike Loomis, Myra Mayman, Nita Tomaszewski, Bob Ward, and guests Chuck Hoheisel, Ricker Miller, and Allen Hansen.

After the minutes of the March 16 and the Treasurer's Report were approved and accepted, Mike Loomis reported on planning in conjunction with the Upper Valley Trails Alliance and the FNRT-Grafton County for two celebrations of the Rail Trail this summer. [See article to the left for details about the National Trails Day celebration.]

In late July or early August there will be a Golden Spike Celebration in Danbury to mark the joining of the Grafton and Merrimack County portions of the Northern Rail Trail. More to follow on that.

Regarding the repairs needed to the decking on the Ford Mill Bridge in Danbury, Alex reported that the Mount Cardigan Snowmobile Club will apply for grant in aid to re-deck the bridge this summer. He will let us know when that work will take place so that we can join in and support the snowmobilers.

Myra reminded everyone to go to the Thursday's Child Dinner on May 5 at Rockwell's Restaurant at the New London Inn. We need to raise at least \$7,500 to extend the rail trail to the Webster Farm in Franklin, and this dinner, if well attended, could raise upwards of \$1,200. Call 526-2791 for reservations.

### New Business

Although we have enjoyed meeting in the delightful new Community Coffee House, we decided that we should return to the Andover Fire House for our meetings because we can meet there free of charge. It was reiterated that we want to spend our limited funds on building and maintaining trail and not on administrative expenses.

Alex talked about the need for signs at the start and end of the rail trail, and we need someone to take ownership of the project—to ask the state about getting brown signs, or develop cost estimates for other signs whose cost esti-

mates could be a target for fundraising.

We should consider signage as we proceed in our strategic planning. If we want to increase rail trail usage, signs could be most strategic. We could also probably use GPS and coordinates better. Lindy needs help in creating a sign with rack cards in Danbury. Ricker Miller offers to help.

Alex reported on plans regarding the old railroad bridge in Enfield. FNRT-Merrimack and FNRT-Grafton have been working to keep the bridge from being removed and replaced by an at-grade crossing. Our concern is maintaining the grade of the trail. DOT has been largely influenced by the desires of the town of Enfield, which wants the bridge removed, and it looks as though it will be removed.

Mike reported that in the third week of May there is a state-wide challenge to "commute green" to work. The goal of Commute Green is to reduce fossil fuel consumption. This is a good opportunity to promote the Rail Trail as a means to commute to work, go shopping, etc. Mike would like to put a link to Commute Green [[CommuteGreenNH.org](http://CommuteGreenNH.org)] on our Web site. All agreed.

Lindy was authorized to have 5,000 new rack cards printed. They are put in holders at trail heads, and they seem to be very popular; our supply is dwindling.

Tom Frantz reported on a new financial arrangement with the Andover Fourth of July Committee. FNRT will give 20% of profit to Fourth of July Committee, rather than 50%, and no longer ask the Committee to provide up-front costs.

Bob reported about the possibility of trail work being done through Merrimack County prisoners' program. He was urged to continue his investigation. This program could be very helpful in rail trail maintenance.

### Strategic Planning

Liz Lawrence led us in a discussion about the next phase of our organization. We can't just create the Rail Trail and then walk away from it. We're working on a strategic sustainability plan for FNRT-MC. We're developing a new vision of why we exist: health, safety, community, recreation, transportation – the well being of the community. 



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