

Andover Naturally

Wildlife Along the Rail Trail

By Lee Carvalho
Beacon volunteer

Once again the rail trail turns out to be a reliable place for observing wildlife. Kit Norris sighted a moose in the wetlands near the trail between Dyers Crossing and the East Andover fire house.

Also, a young bear walked across the trail about 50 feet in front of her on the section between Potter Place and Eagle Pond. Kit took immediate action by singing and shuffling loudly and reports that in reaction "the bear of course paid no attention and just walked into the woods."

More recently, Kit, Suzy Norris, and I had a staring contest with a deer ahead of us on that same section of trail.

Larry Chase wins the "eagle eye" award for spotting a tiny grey tree frog posed on a milkweed plant by the side of the rail trail. Whether you are seeking wildlife or exercise or beautiful views or solitude, the rail trail is a safe bet. How fortunate we are to have this terrific resource running through our town.

Frank Baker told me about his recent bear encounter as we walked around the pond at Fenvalle. Frank was alone and

moving along the path near the beaver dam when he noticed a bear cub scrambling up a nearby tree. The mother bear was beyond the tree, pacing back and forth as she assessed the situation. She was making a noise similar to the

howling of a monkey. Frank moved on down the trail and when he circled back later the bears were gone.

I was fortunate to spend some time in the woods with Frank, as he knows a lot about mushrooms, and I'm trying to learn. The conditions were excellent due to recent rain; the forest floor was studded with fungi and we must have looked at over 30 species during our brief walk. By the time we left he had gathered plenty for his dinner that night.

Loons

It has been a successful summer for the loon population of Andover. On Highland Lake a pair of loons has, for the first time in eight years, incubated and hatched a pair of eggs. Those two chicks, the youngest in the state of New Hampshire, are diving and learning to feed themselves.

The pair of chicks on Bradley Lake, See Naturally on page 19



Grey tree frog

Photo: Larry Chase

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Working with FNRT-Grafton County: Bob reviewed some of the issues surrounding the Golden Spike Celebration and shared his experiences coordinating with Grafton. We discussed ways to build our working relationship for future joint endeavors that will include the trail in both counties. Bob will write a letter to the Grafton board looking to continue effective collaboration on future projects.

Friends of the Northern Rail Trail

August 17

Condensed from draft minutes

Present: Alex Bernhard, Steve Darling, Craig Heim, Lindy Heim, Mike Loomis, Charles Martin, Myra Mayman, Peter Southworth, Nita Tomaszewski, Bob Ward, and member Mark Davis.

Treasurer's Report: Steve reported that some of the Google donations are not included in his figures, and Alex shared figures for what we've received from the last few annual appeals. The raffle earned almost \$1,000. The Treasurer's report was accepted.

Correspondence: Two letters about the Golden Spike Celebration were received. Councilor Burton lauded the FNRT efforts in regard to the rail trail's contributions to the community, and Senator Houde wrote a letter apologizing that he was unable to attend.

Old Business

July 31 Golden Spike Celebration: Mike thanked all those who contributed to an incredibly successful celebration due in large part to Mike and Bob's superb organization, publicity, and efforts. The gold-plated spike plaques were greatly appreciated and expanded the impact of our accomplishments and celebration. The Associated Press article on the rail trail was run in numerous national newspapers.

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Recreational Trails Program 2011: Nita noted that late September is the target date to begin trail building. The start of the trail requires extensive trash clean-up that will ideally occur before the trail building (but may not, as the New Hampshire Correctional Work Program cannot schedule before November). Peter will follow up with Nita and Chris about the date of the clean-up as well as blocking vehicle access from the road.

Nita will talk with the Franklin Po-

lice Department about monitoring the trail for trash and ATV use. She has identified Holy Cross Road as a possible area for parking to access the rail trail.

Maintenance: Peter expressed reservations about the use of herbicides in regard to public reaction, the time needed to communicate and explain herbicide use to trail users, and our desire to investigate other vegetation suppression (e.g., brush hog). He moved that we do not proceed with herbicide use at this point, and the motion was passed.

Technology Report: The spraying statement is posted on the FNRT Web site, and Steve D. suggested we use the site to acknowledge and thank our major foundation donors. Peter recommended we also look into posting pictures of volunteers (with permission) to highlight their contributions and possibly spur more volunteerism.

The Board voted to continue the use of the FNRT Facebook page.

New Business

Upcoming Meetings and Events: The September meeting is on September 21, with the long-range strategic planning meeting a week later on September 28.

Link Requests: We discussed including links to Six South Street and to Ragged Mountain on our Web site. We discussed an (annual) fee of \$50, and listing all accommodations on our site would be included under "Lodging near our trail." We decided to postpone discussion.

Trail User Survey: Charles was contacted about doing an economic benefits study. It was noted that a more general user survey (including user trends) would be valuable, especially in grant applications.

Toilet in Danbury: Since the trail has been opened, the Danbury general store has seen increased requests (from rail trail users) for a toilet. Alex moved that we expend up to \$200 to split the cost of a porta potty with the store. The motion was approved.

Enfield Bridge: There is a proposal to remove one of two bridges and subsequently to bring the trail down to grade for a road crossing in Enfield. This is part of a trend to remove bridges that erode the integrity of the rail trail. Both FNRT-Merrimack and Grafton oppose the bridge removal. Alex's considerable time on this matter was recognized.

Larry Chase and Alan McIntyre Bird Walk: FNRT decided to sponsor the event – a great opportunity for an organized event on the trail.



SNOWPLOWING WANTED!

The Andover Snowmobile Club is accepting sealed bids for plowing of the parking lot in West Andover. All applicants must be fully insured. Questions: Leon Nelson, 934-9972

Please submit bids prior to October 7 to:

Andover Snowmobile Club, PO Box 332, Andover NH 03216

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