



There is a new bike rack attached to the Northern Rail Trail informational kiosk at Potter Place, thanks to RP Johnson and Son's "We Build It Forward" community workday. FNRT is delighted and grateful to have its trailhead amenity chosen as one of the jobs this year. Photo and caption: Lindy Heim

## Friends of the Northern Rail Trail

### June 20

**Present:** Alex Bernhard, Steve Darling, Tom Frantz, Lindy Heim, Craig Heim, Charles Martin, Myra Mayman, Steve Rayno, Peter Southworth; guests Ed and Becky Hiller

**Treasurer's Report:** Steve Darling was commended for his excellent work and for filing yearly tax reports.

### Old Business

**Maintenance:** Steve Rayno has been posting historical signs and has secured a promise from Franklin to brush hog all of the trail in Franklin. Peter will contact the Andover Snowmobile Club to see if they will contribute to the mowing costs and then will proceed to contract with John Schoeller to cut the sides of the trail from Chance Pond Road to the Ford Mill Crossing in Danbury.

**Technology:** Steve Darling is happy with the new Web site calendar.

### New Business

**Valley Road drainage:** Tom informed the Board that the Andover selectmen are concerned with the future erosion of the bridge. Charles, Tom, Town Administrator Marj Roy, Bob Ward, and the Hillers met with Road Agent Jon Champagne and Selectman Vicky Mishcon at the bridge. There was no

evidence that there was any damage to the bridge abutment, but the issue seems to be that the selectmen are unhappy that our drainage work was not done to the proper specifications. There are differing opinions on this.

Alex recounted the history of recent repair when Dick Edmunds added to the berm and added rip-rap to the drainage. The work was done in '09 with the OK by the selectmen and Jon Champagne. Alex will write a letter to the Andover Board of Selectmen reviewing the history and facts of the work done at Valley Road.

**Business listings on Web site:** We will take up promotion of the trail on our Web site after we finish building trail.

**Blue state signs:** Alex will look into the cost of the signs. Tom questions whether there is a problem with people finding the trail. He will include a question about this in his trail user survey later in the summer.

Lindy noted that the RP Johnson "We Build it Forward" program will build a bike rack and will repair the kiosk.

Tom mentioned that he is considering shifting the Fourth of July's Firecracker 5K race organization to another person (to be considered in the future).

## How To Bike Safely With Your Dog

By Dee Ganley  
Dee's Dogs

Those of us lucky enough to live in Andover know about the rail trail for biking. Here's how to teach our four-legged friends to run next to us while we ride. There are many devices, including Springer Pole, Walky Dog, and K9 Cruiser, that attach to the bike to keep dogs and humans safe.

Riding a bike while you are also holding your dog's leash in your hand is not safe. The devices mentioned above attach to your bicycle to allow you to control your bike while your dog is safely attached to the bike behind the pedal and away from the tires; sort of a canine sidecar.

**Step 1:** Find a bike leash which



Dee's dog Jax and Shawn LaFlamme of Critter Sitters of Franklin take a break during their walk on the Rail Trail in East Andover.

Photo: Dee Ganley

suits your needs. An online search is usually the best way to find this item at the best value. You may also wish to inquire with your local bicycle shop.

**Step 2:** Attach the bike leash to your bike. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for what type of harness to use for your dog while he is attached to the bike leash. Some of these attachments come with an adjustable harness.

**Step 3:** Introduce your dog to the bike leash slowly. Start by placing her harness on and clipping her to the bike leash attachment. Offer her praise and treats for being calm.

**Step 4:** Before you get on the bicycle to ride with your dog next to you, walk slowly while holding onto the handlebars. This will allow your dog to acclimate to the bicycle moving with her. As she seems more comfortable, pick up the pace until you are both doing a slow trot.

**Step 5:** If your dog is comfortable with trotting with you next to the bicycle, you may now get on the bike and pedal slowly with your dog walking by your side. Remember to go slowly at first. Practice riding with your dog

at a slow pace and shorter distances of 1/2 mile at first to build up strength and toughen paw pads for at least several sessions, then slowly increase the distance. Stop and rest the dog often.

**Step 6:** Once you and your dog have trained together at a moderate pace and your dog is able to keep up for a longer distance than a mile or so, you can pack up some water bottles and portable bowl and hit the rail trail here in Andover – it's a perfect place to go for a bike ride with your dog! If you don't live right near the rail trail, you can park on Channel Road in East Andover or in the big parking lot in Potter Place. Head in any direction, but remember to take along a backpack with water for the dog and for you. In East Andover, you could let your dog

take a dip in the lake, too – but not at the Town Beach.

### Tips & Warnings

- Go slowly. Build your dog's confidence and stamina.
- Examine your dog's paw pads for signs of rawness or injury after each ride.
- Take water and maybe even some snacks for you both for the longer rides.
- Be sure your dog's harness is fitted properly and is designed correctly for your dog. Check for signs of rubbing and chafing.
- Take breaks on long rides. Bring lots of water, or stop at a lake or stream to allow your dog to wade in and cool off.
- Begin each run at a slower pace to allow for your dog's muscles to warm up.

• Keep your dog off hot surfaces, as you can blister their paws easily – running on hot pavement is not safe or fun for the dog.

- Be prepared to stop and check that your dog partner is doing OK and enjoying the outing. Be sure their ears are forward and that the dog is eagerly participating.
- Walk slowly for several minutes after a hard run to allow your dog's muscles to cool down properly
- Carry spray or an umbrella you can "pop" open quickly (make sure your dog is OK with this first) as a deterrent for dogs that might try chasing you.
- If possible, unhook your dog from your bicycle if you encounter a dog that is threatening to charge you, or slow down and walk past, talking calmly, keeping you and your bike between the dogs. (Tossing some yummy treat at the other dog and giving one to your dog will help, too.)
- Never hook an inexperienced dog to a bicycle and just take off. It takes preparation, training, conditioning, and experience for your dog.
- If your dog is frightened of the bike, do not force him to run.
- Keep an eye on your dog's breathing and stride while biking.

## Dog Training & Behavior Consultant

Author of *Changing People, Changing Dogs*

### DOG TRAINING CLASSES

Sundays at Dee's house in East Andover

10 AM • Puppy Kindergarten

11 AM • Level 1: Beginner Life Skills

12 PM • Level 2: Life Skills Continued

1 PM • Level 3: Nose Work for Fun, Agility

Classes being held on Saturdays at SAVES in Lebanon at 10 AM

Private consultations

Call for times & fees! • 603-735-5543



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