

Welcome to the Friends of Northampton Trails and Greenways paper-free Spring 2010 Update. Our community's expanded trail network is bustling with activities, and I hope you can participate in some of the wonderful events. Spring is ideal to explore the expanding trail network in Northampton and surrounding communities. We promise more developments to come, and what to hear your ideas for improvements and suggestions. As always, more information can be found on the Friends of Northampton Trails and Greenways website.

See you on the trails!

Nick Horton, President

Friends of Northampton Trails and Greenways, Inc.

PO Box 60643 Florence, MA 01062-0643 <http://www.fntg.net>

**TRAIL PURCHASE IN WILLIAMSBURG** I'm pleased to report that the Friends of Northampton Trails and Greenways contributed \$5000 to help pay for purchase of a public access path from the Northampton trail heading towards Williamsburg center. While this very pretty path currently dead-ends, there are hopes that it can be extended into Haydenville in the future. Thanks to the many FNTG members and supporters who made generous contributions to allow this purchase to move forward. Our community support of efforts to expand the trails, and to create opportunities to make the trails more accessible has an impact, and this purchase is just one example. Thank you! We're hoping to organize some walking tours of this new segment soon. (See also "Volunteer opportunities" below).

**UPCOMING PLANNING MEETING** All are encouraged to come attend our planning committee meeting on Wednesday, May 26th at 7:00pm (location TBD). We'll be brainstorming for the future and hear updates on trail developments, and we welcome all to participate.

**BIKE WEEK ACTIVITIES AND TRAIL NEIGHBOR AWARD** Bike Week

(<http://www.massbike.org/aboutus/pioneer-valley-chapter/pioneer-valley-bike-week>) is happening May 15th through 23rd. We'll be presenting our trail neighbor award at the Bike Breakfast on Wednesday the 19th (7-10am on the Courthouse Lawn). I encourage you to stop by your way to work or school and enjoy a meal. Other Northampton activities include the Baystate Village Bike Bonanza on Saturday, May 15 1-4pm at Maines Field, 570 Riverside Drive for tuneups, bicycle decorating, trailers to try out, safety clinic, games, and prizes (see also "Volunteer opportunities" below). There's also movie nights on Thursday, May 20th and Saturday, May 22nd, plus a bike commuting and repair clinic on May 22nd from 11-3pm at Pulaski Park.

**LEEDS RIDE FOR HOTEL BRIDGE** Another exciting activity planned for Bike Week includes a fundraiser. Help save the historic Hotel Bridge in Leeds! There's a ride for everyone: a family fun ride at 10am, a 25 mile scenic ride at 9am, or a 50 mile challenge ride at 8am. All rides begin at ChartPak, Inc, 1 River Road (across from the Leeds Post Office) and end at the Leeds Hotel Bridge for food and fun! Registration begins at 7:30am, or contact Alice Badecker ([AliceBadecker@comcast.net](mailto:AliceBadecker@comcast.net)) or Stephy Cho at (413)341-3830.

**SMITH COLLEGE MAPPING PROJECT: Hidden Local Public Walking Trails** Stephanie Greenlaw and Hannah Kegley from Smith College have been working with Jon Caris (Spatial Analysis Lab) and Nick Horton (Department of Mathematics and Statistics) to develop new and updated resources for public walking and hiking trails in Northampton. We hope to be able to display the fruits of their labor on our website in the not too distant future, including maps, photos, and walking trail notes.

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES** Looking for a chance to help out, but don't have much time to spare? No worries. There are a number of ways to get involved without making a long-term commitment. Volunteers are needed for one-time or short-term projects. These include:

- Helping to staff a table for a couple of hours at one of the Farmer's markets
- Helping to staff the Bike Bonanza in Baystate Village on May 15th
- Helping to lead a walking or biking tour of the trails
- Submitting an article for our newsletter
- Meeting to brainstorm the creation of a "graffiti-squad" to help with quick response when tagging occurs
- Helping set up a one-time edging project for a few hours on a weekend along the segment between downtown and Veteran's field
- Contacting businesses about purchasing an ad for our upcoming reprinting of our map and brochure
- Working with the city to identify a way to encourage abutters not to dump yard waste behind their properties and along the trail
- Attending our planning meeting on May 26th

**TRAIL CONSTRUCTION UPDATES** I was able to bike to Easthampton last weekend to watch Derrill's Race (the Friends of the Manhan Rail Trail's annual fundraiser). Along the way, I poked my head along the trail construction from Earle/Grove to Route 10 and continuing to Ferry Street in Easthampton. The skim coat has been applied to much of this path, and it is looking great. The contractors started work pounding the sheet steel so that when they excavate for the bridge footing the rail bed doesn't collapse. The planners are still optimistic that the bridge will go in this year. Work proceeds as well on the Jackson Street on-ramp and associated sidewalk reconstruction. It is hoped that this will be completed this summer as well.

**FRIENDS OF THE SCHELL BRIDGE** Yesterday I had the pleasure of participating in the wet but fun 17 mile ride organized by the Friends of the Schell Bridge. Spirits were high despite the weather, and a committed group made the bi-state loop as well as made their way to the bridge. Other rides on Saturday included a 30 mile tri-state loop and a family friendly 2 miler (plus letterboxing and face-painting). Often called the most beautiful bridge over the Connecticut River, the Schell has been closed for several decades and is in danger of being demolished (though it has great potential as the nexus of tri-state rail trails and other paths). More information can be found at [www.schellbridge.org](http://www.schellbridge.org).

**ARCADIA AUDUBON EVENTS** As always, our colleagues at Mass Audubon have a number of interesting activities planned for the coming months. These include birding walks along the Norwottuck Rail Trail in Amherst (June 5, July 18th, and August 14th), birding the Mill River by canoe (May 22nd), summer wildflowers (July 10th), and intro to dragonflies (July 15 and July 17th). More information can be found at [www.massaudubon.org](http://www.massaudubon.org).

**BROAD BROOK COALITION EVENTS** The stewards of the Fitzgerald Lake Conservation Area have planned walks, talks, invasive plant removal days, and other events. In addition, they continue to work with the city and other partners to augment greenspace in Northampton. More details can be found at [www.broadbrookcoalition.org](http://www.broadbrookcoalition.org).