

## Introducing the Greenways Alliance of Rhode Island

**W**elcome!

You hold in your hands the inaugural issue of *Trail Mix*, the newsletter of The Greenways Alliance of Rhode Island (GARI for short). We envision *Trail Mix* to be a resource for those interested in greenway development, those wishing to get involved to help build paths, and those who simply like to bike or walk without competing for space with motorized traffic.

The Greenways Alliance of Rhode Island began as the RI state committee of the East Coast Greenway Alliance in 1992. Since our beginning, we have successfully supported the development of greenways and trails connecting Rhode Island to Connecticut via the Washington Secondary through Cranston, Warwick, West Warwick and Coventry and via the Blackstone River Bikeway through Pawtucket, Central Falls, Cumberland, Lincoln, and Woonsocket to Massachusetts. Those greenways are well on their way to completion.



GARI supports greenways for everyone on wheels and legs: bicyclists, wheelchair users, rollerbladers, walkers, hikers, and horseback riders.

We still have lots to do. We recently expanded our mission to support greenway development outside the East Coast Greenway Corridor in Rhode Island.

We want to spread the word that greenways are good for everyone. Greenways provide safe biking, skating and walking routes for school children, pleasant and scenic settings for friends to meet, walk and catch up on news, convenient resources for commuting and exercise, and great places to take family strolls.

We hope you will enjoy this first GARI newsletter

and invite you to submit your opinions and articles to us for publication. If you have burning greenway questions, send them to Dr. Sprocket. He's ready to tackle any knotty problem about greenway and trail use.

We meet on the last Wednesday of every month at 5:00 PM at the Pawtuxet River Authority Office in Warwick. We welcome you to join us!

Sue Barker, chair

## Trestle Trail Project Moves into Design Phase

By Charles St. Martin

**P**lans for the completion of a major section of the East Coast Greenway are getting underway, as three public meetings in the past nine months have set a course of direction for the state Department of Environmental Management that will allow its engineers to move forward to actual design work.

By November or December, DEM officials plan to convene a meeting in Coventry to discuss the plans at the 10 percent design stage for the Trestle Trail in western Coventry. When complete sometime in the next three to four years, the path will allow a wide variety of users to traverse 10 miles of wooded terrain from the end of an existing paved path to the Connecticut border.

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## Take The Blackstone River Valley Greenway Challenge!

**September 29 & 30, 2001**

Join us in the Valley for a full range of greenway activities!  
There will be something for everyone!  
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# Trestle Trail Project Moves into Design Phase

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The estimated cost for completing the trail is between \$7 million and \$8 million, according to DEM Associate Director Frederick J. Vincent. Before a roomful of 70 people at a meeting in late May at Western Coventry School, state and local officials described the project and special accommodations made to include path features for equestrian use. The plan was well received.

As it sits on the drawing board today, the path would provide separate paths along the 100-foot abandoned railroad right of way. A paved surface would stretch from the Coventry Greenway to the Nicholas Farm Management Area, a couple of miles from the state border. An unpaved gravel or other surface path would run along the paved portion except for bridge crossings where all users would share the paved surface. The remaining few miles in the management area would not be paved, but constructed with some form of hard-packed surface to limit

erosion and provide a suitable riding surface for most uses. DEM officials are pilot testing a plastic grid system that can be buried to provide a solid base for path users.

The entire right of way in Coventry is in public control with DEM

owning the Trestle Trail and the Town of Coventry owning a five-mile portion to the east. The rails and ties have long since been removed, but the



GARI members check out the trestle bridge.

graded "hump" on which the trains rode is mostly intact. The path is essentially flat and will provide a straight and level riding surface.

The path has been abandoned for dozens of years. The line's history dates back to the mid-1800s, when the Hartford, Providence and Fishkill Railroad operated trains between Providence and Fishkill, N.Y., carrying upwards of 320,000 passengers annually. With the advance of automobiles and good roads to drive them on, the railroad became obsolete and the line was abandoned. The Penn Central Railroad Co. sold off the corridor to Narragansett Electric in 1969 with the plans that it may be used as a major corridor for high-voltage electrical wires. The idea never came to fruition though, and in 1993,

the trail moved into public ownership with DEM taking title to the property.

## A bumpy road

The extent of paving hadn't been ironed out until the meeting this spring, as prior meetings in the

winter and last fall featured a sharp division among those who wanted the completed path and those who wanted the trail left in its existing state. This dicey situation left DEM officials in a position where if they did nothing to improve the

path, they may have had to close it off for safety and liability concerns.

Much of the "horse riders vs. bike riders" theme present at earlier public meetings dissolved at the May meeting. Among the handful of objectors to the plan were residents who live in close proximity to the old rail corridor. Vincent and other DEM officials told these residents their situations would be handled individually and the state would work with them to settle any encroachment issues. A number of residents reported that certain landowners have been the ones encroaching on the rail corridor. Vincent noted that more detailed land surveys should clear up these issues.

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Trail Mix is the quarterly newsletter of the Rhode Island Greenway Alliance (GARI).  
Editor Charles St. Martin  
Contributors Sue Barker Julie Sarkin Richard Santopietro, PhD.  
Graphic Design and Layout Nelson-Lee Communications  
Please send your comments to GARI, 31 Stanchion Street, Jamestown, RI 02835 email: sueb4@home.com www.geocities.com/rigreenway



Help Make Greenways in Rhode Island Happen: Join the Gre

Aside from these legal issues, there is much work to be done on the trail. The existing trail surface is poor, but has been enjoyed for years by hikers, horse back riders and all-terrain vehicles. These latter users have contributed to trail degradation and are seen as a prohibited use on the trail. The result of this unwanted use is a "washboard" surface for much of the trail, with a top layer of sand and gravel that makes walking and bike riding on the trail very difficult.

Lack of maintenance has led to other problems, such as washouts, blow down and impassable bridges. DEM officials label four of the trail's six bridges as being in serious disrepair, and one bridge is out completely with only the stone abutments remaining. The project's goal is to upgrade all bridges with new decks and railings and at least one tunnel. DEM also will provide small parking areas at key access points

The trail's completion will result in a major recreational feature for residents of western Coventry, who have few places to ride bikes safely. Many of the roads in this part of the town are narrow with little or no shoulders, making it hazardous for riders of all experience.

The path also will provide a major connection of the East Coast Greenway network in Rhode Island. It will connect existing, yet undeveloped paths in Connecticut to a planned 50-mile network of inter-connected paths. Riding in from the west, the Trestle Trail would take a rider completely through Coventry, as the town expects to complete its portion of the path in time - if not before - the DEM project is complete. The East Coast Greenway spine then moves through

*continued on last page*



## Dear Dr. Sprocket,

*Dr. Sprocket will answer questions in each issue of Trail Mix. The question answered in this issue has been heard throughout the greenways of Rhode Island, especially during blue moons.*

**Q** I ride only for recreation and very rarely venture off the greenways. Why should I waste my time worrying about bike safety? Isn't bike safety a problem only for cyclists who use the road? Do you have any tips I should follow that won't take a lot of the time that I could spend riding??

Sincerely, Greenway Rider

**A** Dear Green: Anyone who's ever jumped on a bike has heard all about how to be safe on one's bike, but reviewing the basics such as the rules of the road, maintenance and protective gear can't hurt because accidents can happen to everyone.

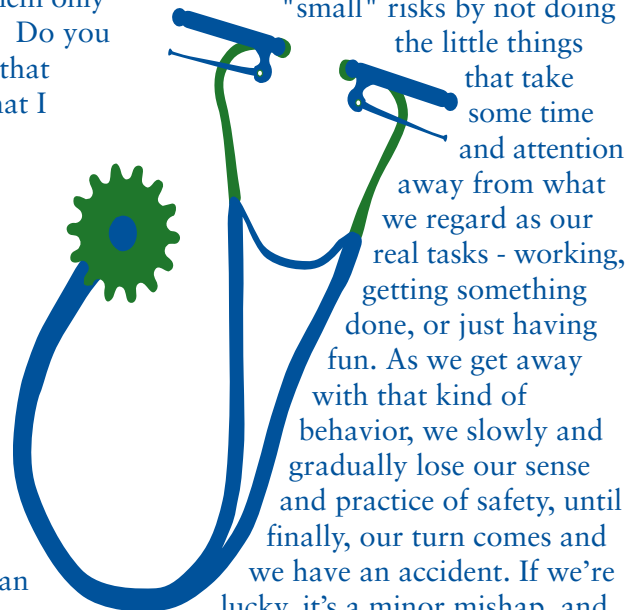
Sure, as riders we make ourselves believe that "it won't happen to me," that "I don't need to find and use that helmet since it's just a short ride anyway." We continue this line of reasoning placing other people as not being as smart, capable, or lucky as we are. Our turn at bumps and bruises may come nevertheless, so here's some things to keep in mind to avoid, or at least postpone, your turn at the accident game.

Bike safety is largely a matter of attitudes and behavior - attitudes about how much you value your body, and the behavior you follow to

parcel your valuable time and attention. If you're old enough to realize you are not invincible and/or immortal, then you can easily give lip service to arguments for paying attention to things that promote safe biking.

For most of us, though, the real test of our commitment to being safe comes when we choose to take those "small" risks by not doing the little things that take some time and attention away from what we regard as our real tasks - working, getting something done, or just having fun. As we get away with that kind of behavior, we slowly and gradually lose our sense and practice of safety, until finally, our turn comes and we have an accident. If we're lucky, it's a minor mishap, and if we have some wisdom, we again go back to being attentive. If we're not so lucky, we have the kind of event that makes the local paper, get some sympathy from our friends, and a broken body for ourselves.

*Send your Dr. Sprocket questions to [gari\\_web@hotmail.com](mailto:gari_web@hotmail.com)*



### Dr. Sprocket's Favorite Websites

The Turner Fairbank Highway Research Center

[www.tfhr.gov/safety/pedbike/pedbike.htm](http://www.tfhr.gov/safety/pedbike/pedbike.htm)

The National Bicycle Safety Network

[www.cdc.gov/ncipc/bike](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/bike)

the bike safety page of the Illinois State Police [www.state.il.us/kids/isp/bikes](http://www.state.il.us/kids/isp/bikes)

more bike safety tips

[www.pedaling.com/tips/safetyTips.asp](http://www.pedaling.com/tips/safetyTips.asp)

## Webmaster's Corner

By Charles St. Martin

In this the debut column in **Trail Mix**, we'll start off by tooting our own horn. Information about the Greenways Alliance of Rhode Island can be found at [www.geocities.com/rigreenway](http://www.geocities.com/rigreenway). There you'll find information about special events, meetings, news, maps and information about the existing network of greenways in Rhode Island. Expanded information about the effort to build a 2,600-mile Maine to Florida bike path can be found at [www.greenway.org](http://www.greenway.org), the home of the East Coast Greenway Alliance. Future editions of the Webmaster's Corner will highlight interesting web pages related to cycling and greenways. Your input is welcomed and desired. Just drop a line to [gari\\_web@hotmail.com](mailto:gari_web@hotmail.com). Happy trails!



## Greenways Alliance of Rhode Island



### Trestle Trail Project *continued from page four*

suburban and urban areas of West Warwick, Warwick, Cranston, Providence, Lincoln, Cumberland and Woonsocket to connect to greenway paths that someday will lead to Worcester, Mass.

The trail also bisects state designated bicycle routes such as Route 117 and Route 102. These roads provide connections to many parts of the state.

Any comment about the process or questions about the project can be directed to DEM engineer Lisa Lawless at 222-2776, ext. 4312. Written comments can be sent to RI Department of Environmental Management, Division of Planning and Development, Attention: Lisa Lawless, 235 Promenade St., Providence, RI, 02908.



The Greenways Alliance of Rhode Island supports trails for wheels and legs in both city and rural areas.

135 Main Street  
Wakefield, RI 02879-3511

[www.geocities.com/rigreenway](http://www.geocities.com/rigreenway)

Nonprofit Org.  
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WAKEFIELD, RI

## Two for the Path

(How to help your family and friends exercise)

The majority of people using greenways can recite at least two health benefits of exercise. They are the believers, the choir so to speak, who know 30 minutes of moderate exercise most days of the week will decrease their risk of heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, and some cancers as well as improve their mood and give them the energy they need to conquer the day. Taking time to exercise is part of their daily regimen.

What these people do not know is who they can help someone they care about reap the rewards of exercise too. In fact, you probably know someone who gets up every morning at the crack of dawn to walk no matter how ominous the weather. You might wonder how they do it. Most likely they have an exercise partner. Think about how much easier it is to keep a commitment when you share it with others. Few people can maintain an exercise program on their own and even fewer got started on their own.

Consider the people in your life that do not have anyone supporting their efforts to exercise. The first step is a huge step that is not easy to take. It is much easier to get started when you have someone there saying, "I'll meet you at 7," or, "call me to make sure I am up," or, "I know it is cold outside but we'll feel so much better when we are finished."

If you are a regular exerciser, consider reaching out to someone who might need a hand getting started or staying with it. Show them a map of the greenways, invite them to discover a new one with you, and consider participating in one of many regular events. Simple words of support along with your company can get someone you care about started on the right path.

## What's Happening on Our Trails: Weekly Events on Rhode Island Greenways and Blueways

**Mondays Providence:** Walking Group for all Ages on the Woonasquatucket River Greenway. Meet at Donigan Park at 9:30 AM  
More Information: 455-8880

**Warren:** In-line Skating on the East Bay bike Path. Meet at your Bike Shop, 51 Cole Street, at 6:30 PM  
More information: (401) 245-9755

**Tuesdays Blackstone Valley Paddle Club.** Each week the club explores a different waterway in the Blackstone Valley. Information: (401) 762-0440

**Wednesdays Warren:** Cycling on the East Bay Bike Path. Meet at your Bike Shop, 51 Cole Street, at 6:30 p.m.  
More information: (401) 245-9755

**Thursdays Thursday Night Walkabout:** Interpretive Walking tours of the **Blackstone**. More Information: (401) 762-0440

**Saturdays Haines State Park:** Saturday Morning Muffin Ride. 18 mile ride on the East Bay bike Path to Bristol and back. Meet at Haines Park in East Providence at 9 a.m. Refer to [www.challengecycling.org](http://www.challengecycling.org) for directions

**Everyday** Two handcycles are available on a first-come, first-serve basis at **Colt State Park in Bristol, RI**, for use in the park or on the **East Bay Bike Path**. For more information, call Colt State Park at 401-253-7482.

### Take The Blackstone River Valley Greenway Challenge!

**September 29 & 30, 2001**

Join us in the Valley for a full range of greenway activities!

There will be something for everyone:

On Saturday, September 29, teams of cyclists, runners and canoeists will ride, paddle and run from Union Station in Worcester, MA to Slater Mill in Pawtucket, RI.

All weekend groups along the Blackstone will hold local walks, boat and bicycle rides, special events, and tours of scenic and historic spots in the Valley that will appeal to people of all ages and interests.

For more information call 401-762-0250. Or visit our web sites: [www.nps.gov/blac/home.htm](http://www.nps.gov/blac/home.htm) or <http://geocities.com/rigreenways>

## Please Join Us!

To become a member, please complete the following form and return with your membership donation to GARI, 31 Stanchion Street, Jamestown, RI 02835

Please make checks payable to: Greenways Alliance of Rhode Island

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_  
Fax \_\_\_\_\_  
Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Membership enclosed  
 Individual \$15.00  
 Family 25.00  
 National\* 50.00  
 Supporting Organization: 100.00  
 Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\* Dual membership in the East Coast Greenway Alliance and GARI.

Questions? Contact Sue Barker, state chair 401.423.2623 [sueb4@home.com](mailto:sueb4@home.com)  
<http://www.geocities.com/rigreenway>