



Greenwords: Safe routes to school

Here's a pop quiz: Did you walk or ride a bike to school when you were a child? Do your children or grandchildren walk or ride bikes to school?

These questions are frequently posed at greenway seminars. In response to the first question all hands go up. Very few answer that their children or grandchildren walk or ride bicycles to school.

Should we care about this change? After all, we're busy. Driving our children to school or putting them on the bus saves us time. Many of us live too far away from school to make walking or cycling reasonable. There are no side-walks for kids to walk. The streets are busy and dangerous for children on bicycles. Finally, our kids hate us when we force them to walk to school.

Childhood obesity in the U.S. is rising at an alarming rate. The number of overweight children has increased by 63 percent over the past 30 years. Many studies give us reason to make the connection between childhood obesity and lack of resources for pedestrian travel. Kids have fewer opportunities for physical activity and more choices for sedentary pastimes than we did.

Some communities are responding to this trend by creating "walking school buses." Parents take turns walking with small groups of children to neighborhood schools. The children love it. They arrive awake, ready to learn, and more alert than their classmates who arrive by bus or car. After a walk with their children, the parents have a better day too.

Greenways can provide safe pedestrian connections to schools. In Coventry, for example, the East Coast Greenway passes close to Western Coventry, Washington Oak and Coventry Middle Schools. The East Bay Bike Path has become an accepted school-to-home route for children to walk and cycle to school over the last 14 years. As the South County Bike Path is completed from Kingston, through Wakefield and Peace Dale to Narragansett it will provide pedestrian access to the schools along the way and to the University of Rhode Island. As parents and interested citizens let's make sure that our communities provide resources for our children to be physically active. Then we can join them and all use the sidewalks, greenways and trails as a means to good health.

Sue Barker, GARI chairwoman

A Great Year for GARI

Icy rain and a nasty wind couldn't keep greenway enthusiasts at bay this winter at the first annual meeting of the Greenways Alliance of Rhode Island in late January, capping a very successful year.

More than 40 people attended the event, which took place at the West Valley Inn in West Warwick. Aside from good food, those attending were treated to reports on GARI's progress as well as the various greenways and trails courtesy of two excellent guest speakers.

Each GARI board member offered a brief update on committee activities. Advocacy committee chair Ray Alexander led off, talking about the need for all bicycle supporters to pay close attention to developments in state projects and to advocate for better cycling systems. He also noted

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Don't head out without your Trail Mix

The Greenways Alliance of Rhode Island has been mailing numerous copies of its newsletter to introduce as many people as possible to the group and the work we do. The high cost of production and mailing requires us to cut back on this distribution. If you're a member, sit back and relax, you'll keep getting the newsletter four times a year, at the start of each season. If not, please consider joining so you don't get dropped from our mailing list.

GARI membership form is on page 4

that Department of Transportation Director William Ankner has been a strong supporter of cycling and greenways. Since this position is appointed by the governor, and there will be new leadership in the State House next year, he encouraged people to support Ankner by telling potential candidates that he should remain in his position.

Julie Wright, chair of the events committee, brought people up to speed on the many events GARI participated in during 2001. These included leading a bicycle tour for the Narragansett Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club along the South County Trail bike route and the South County Bike Path. Wright noted that GARI participated in Warren on Wheels and hosted the first Paper Derby Challenge. GARI members had a hand in planning the first Blackstone River Greenway Challenge, a 40-mile adventure series from Worcester, Mass. to Pawtucket. GARI also hosted the national meeting of the East Coast

Greenway Alliance, and planned special events and activities for conference attendees. GARI published its first brochure, Wright said, and noted the good press that the organization got throughout the year including mention in an editorial in the Providence Journal.

Charles St. Martin, GARI webmaster and newsletter editor, offered reports on the progress of both of these ventures. GARI's first newsletter, *Trail Mix*, was published in September. Another edition was published in December, and increased to eight pages from five.



Both had a press run of 1,500 copies and were distributed by mail and by placement in bicycle shops across the state. GARI is seeking donations and sponsorships to help finance future newsletters, St. Martin said. He noted that copies of the newsletters have been placed on GARI's web page.

The web page, at www.geocities.com/rigreenway, has undergone a significant reconstruction in 2001, St. Martin said. The web site features information about the organization, information on trails, news and events listings and a virtual photo album. The page had just crossed the 1,000-hit threshold by the time of the annual meeting.

Guy Lefebvre, trail management committee chair, and head of Parks and Recreation in Coventry, talked about the progress of the trail in his town. He noted that the state recently awarded the town \$35,000 for equipment to maintain the trail. Also, the

town is considering a town bike network and use of a bridge over the north branch of the Pawtuxet River to allow walkers to access the full length of the Phenix-Harris Riverwalk and the Arkwright Riverwalk. A business controls land that would make the path continuous, and has refused access.

David Perry, education committee chair, talked about the progress of the West Warwick Greenway and the placement of a caboos on the trail. He noted that GARI has been working on an educational brochure, covering tips and suggestions for bike riders as well as etiquette on the greenway and usage rules.

GARI chair Sue Barker hosted the event and noted that membership has steadily increased and that the organization's finances are in good shape thanks to some significant donations.

The evening also featured a talk by Steve Devine, program manager the state Department of Transportation's office of Intermodal Planning. He presented a PowerPoint demonstration highlighting the progress of construction of bike paths and improvements planned for pedestrians and bicyclists. He noted that the state is well on its way to having a comprehensive bicycle network, and is exploring ways to enhance this. That also means providing means for maintaining the paths once complete. The recent resurfacing of the East Bay Bike Path and plans to re-deck two large bridges in Warren are evidence of this.

"Without the East Bay Bike Path, I don't know where we would be," he said.

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Trail Mix is the quarterly newsletter of the Rhode Island Greenway Alliance (GARI).

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Help Make Greenways in Rhode Island Happen:

Dear Dr. Sprocket,

Dr. Sprocket will answer questions in each issue of Trail Mix. This edition's question is important for all frugal-minded folks who like to keep their old set of wheels alive.

Q I have an old bike – what can I do to fix it up so I can go faster on the greenway?

Sincerely, Huffing along on a Huffy

A Dear Huffing:

There are many facts I need to best answer your question. Is it "old," as in last year, last decade, pre-20th century? You want to go "faster," but is your goal to exceed a certain speed, or go faster than a friend/ride buddy? Without knowing your use of those terms, let me present some ideas on the issues you have raised.

Before you ride a bike of any age, you should be aware of safety issues, and perform a basic check of essential components. Riding any vehicle to its maximum speed necessitates having a thorough inspection of wheels, spokes, brakes, and other key components. Bike tires that are more than five years old may need to be replaced, depending on how they were maintained and used.

Assuming that you will be riding on a greenway that is relatively flat, the major factors that determine how fast a bike can go are: One, the maximum power you can generate and transfer to the bike, and two, the rolling resistance and wind drag of the bike/rider assembly.

Your maximum power output, of course, is determined by genetics, age, and conditioning. Since we haven't yet learned how to change genetics and age, the only thing left is to improve your conditioning.



There are many sources of information for doing this, and most of them recommend riding more frequently and more vigorously. To maximize the amount of power you can transfer to your bike, you need to adjust the seat to allow optimum extension of your leg muscles. Most recommend that you be able to straighten your knee while positioning the pedal at the arch of your foot. Toe clips will help position your foot on the optimum location on the pedals (ball of the foot on the pedal). Toe clips also will enable you to pull up on the back stroke with one leg, while pushing down on the front stroke with the other, thereby engaging more muscle groups, and delivering more power to the bike. Be careful to adjust the tie straps so they're no too tight. You want to make sure you can get your foot out quickly when you need to.

Because most of the rolling resistance of a bike comes from its tires, you might want to see if new, higher-pressure tires can fit your current wheels. In general, the higher the maximum allowed pressure, the lower the rolling resistance. Your best bet in getting more suitable tires is to visit a good bike shop and talk with their repair guru.

Probably the most important factor in improving speed is reducing the wind drag of the bike/rider combination. Because drag is proportional to the square of wind speed, it becomes much harder to increase speed as you ride faster. Remember that headwind speed is the determining factor in drag, not the ground speed that is indicated on your speedometer.

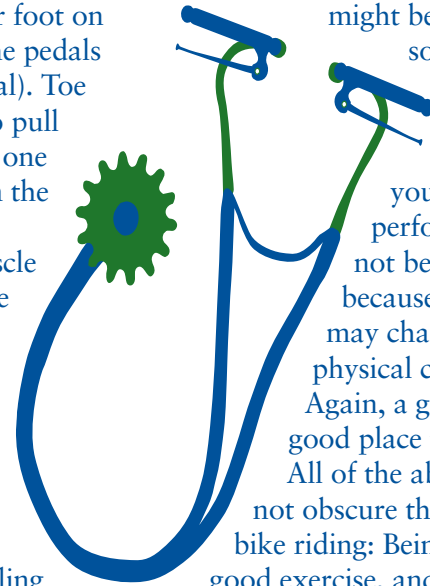
You might be able to get a little more speed by removing all things that increase drag, such as

fenders, large mirrors, etc. A potential improvement might come from different handlebars that allow you to bring your torso to a more horizontal position.

Another potential improvement can come from using the proper gear ratio. If your bike has a derailleur gear system, and its current gear assembly doesn't allow you to pedal near enough to your maximum rate, you might be able to change

some of the sprockets to more effectively match yourself to your bike/speed performance. This may not be easy to do, because your "best" gear may change as your physical condition improves. Again, a good bike shop is a good place to begin.

All of the above ideas should not obscure the primary lures of bike riding: Being outside, getting good exercise, and having fun.



Send your Dr. Sprocket questions to gariweb@hotmail.com

Generous businesses wanted!

If you own a business or know someone who is and is a bike enthusiast, please consider making a donation or sponsoring an edition of *Trail Mix*. This quarterly newsletter is distributed throughout the state by mail and dropped off at key locations, such as bike shops. All the work that goes into the newsletter is strictly done on a volunteer basis, but it does cost money for printing and mailing. A wide range of opportunities for helping out exist. Please contact GARI Chair Sue Barker for more at (401) 423-2623 or send e-mail to sueb4@cox.net.

Thanks!



Join the Greenways Alliance of Rhode Island Today!

Getting back on the Greenway

by J.Wright

Spring is near when the greenway begins to fill up with those of us who have put aside an exercise routine for the winter waiting for the first crocus. But some of us find it takes much more than a flowering bulb to get us moving again. Finding the motivation to start and maintaining a regular exercise program can be challenging. Here are some suggestions that can help you ease back into it.

Go gradually - Too many people make the mistake of starting off where they left off 20 years ago. Muscles, tendons, and ligaments need time to strengthen and increase flexibility. It takes at least two weeks for your body to adjust to a new routine. (It also takes about two weeks to lose most of the fitness you gained.) Gradually adding time and intensity to your routine can help you reach your health and fitness goals and avoid injury.

Go consistently - Practice saving a time slot in your day for exercise. Keep that time slot sacred even if you can only do five minutes and not your usual 30. Many of us forgo exercise on a busy day because we think that doing 10 minutes is just not worth it. Stop thinking this way and start

thinking that every little bit counts.

Go easy - There will be days when you are exhausted or your body involuntarily revolts. These times can put you at the most risk for slipping back to the couch. Instead of skipping, stick with the routine by toning down the intensity. For example, if you run, walk instead. If you cycle, go slowly or take a shorter ride. Again, start thinking that it is better to do something than nothing.

Go painlessly - Everyone experiences soreness about 24 hours after the first intense session. Delayed onset of muscle soreness (DOMS) is a fact of life for active people. However, if you are experiencing muscle soreness after the third day out, you may be over doing it. If you are continually experiencing pain, you may want to have a fitness expert, physical therapist or trainer check your posture, technique, and equipment. A lower intensity along with proper technique can reduce your risk of injury.

"It is better to go easy on the Greenway, than to not have gone at all."

You may mail your comments or suggestions to:

jsar2509@postoffice.uri.edu.

What's Happening on

Spring on the Greenway

The Greenways Alliance wants you to enjoy all four seasons on our greenways. Generally on the first Saturday of each month, our "Meet the Greenway" series of events will explore the entire East Coast Greenway network of trails from Connecticut to Massachusetts border. In February we tried a cross-country ski, but Mother Nature didn't cooperate. Instead we hiked to the Connecticut line and back. In March, we covered some of the same trail, but ventured onto the North-South Trail in the Nicholas Farm Management Area and around Carbundle Pond in western Coventry. Future activities will begin at 10 a.m. and conclude close to noon. Check the GARI website for any updates or changes

(www.geocities.com/rigreenway). Please let us know if you're coming (call 423-2623 or e-mail gariweb@hotmail.com). Come and explore the greenway with us!

April 13 We will gather at the Station Street parking area on the Coventry Greenway for an update on the progress of the greenway through town. Cyclists, roller bladers and walkers will start here and head in different directions along the greenway. Cyclists and roller bladers will head west to the end of the paved trail, about three miles. Walkers will tour the Whipple Conservation Area, Hope Meadows and Sandy Acres along the South Branch of the Pawtuxet River. There will be many opportunities to view wildlife and discover new connections to the greenway.



Help Make Greenways

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
- Family \$25
- National* \$50
- Supporting Organization: \$100
- Other: _____

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

Questions? Contact Sue Barker, state chair (401) 423-2623 sueb4@cox.net

www.geocities.com/rigreenway

Our Trails:

Rhode Island Greenways and Blueways

Calendar of Events

May 4 We will meet at the caboose at River Point Park in West Warwick for coffee and donuts then head west on the paved section of the greenway across the Bradford Soap Works Bridge to the Warwick line. Heading back past the caboose, we will explore the greenway to be to the Coventry town line. Returning to the caboose, we will be treated to clam cakes and chowder courtesy of the Friends of the West Warwick Greenway.

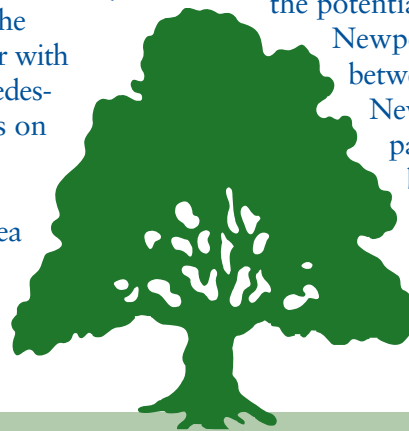
June 1 We'll plan on riding on the Cranston Bike Path and

portions of the Cranston Cross-City Bike Route. This will be somewhat of an exploratory venture, with the distance set depending on the comfort and ability of the group as a whole. Rough distance will be 15 to 20 miles. Bicyclists meet at Bicycle Joe's on Oaklawn Avenue. Also, a 4-mile walk begins from the Oaklawn Grange.

Also on tap ...

North South Trail Trek A cross-state hike is underway through May from Charlestown to Burrillville. The NST links eight state management areas and one state park, and is on scenic back-country roads in between. Remaining dates: April 20, and May 4 & 18. For information call Ginny Leslie at (401) 781-8117.

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in Rhode Island Happen: Join the Greenways Alliance of Rhode Island Today!

Greenways Construction Update

DOT study & development projects

DOT is advertising for consultant services to conduct feasibility studies for these projects.

- > **The Pontiac Secondary Path**, a 3.5-mile bike path from the Auburn section of Cranston to Garden City, with possible connection to the Cranston Bicycle Path.
- > A 1.5-mile section to link the link **Pawtuxet River trail system** to the proposed Pontiac Secondary Path
- > A 2.5-mile trail from **Wickford Junction** to Wickford.
- > A nearly two-mile trail in

the **Quonset-Davisville Industrial Park** from Post Road to a new passive recreation area called Calf Pasture Point.

- > **The Narrow River Bicycle Path**, a two-mile path along the east side of the Narrow River from Sprague Bridge to Mettattuxet.
- > **Promenade Street/Providence Place** Kinsley Avenue Corridor - Providence.
- > **City of Providence** requests study and development of rights-of-way near I-95 bridges over the Woonasquatucket River with regard to bicycle and pedestrian movement. Focus on the potential of recreational and commuter use of the area and determine the need

for reconfiguration of pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular movements.

- > **East Bay Bicycle Path Intermodal Bike Path Connector/Colt State Park** is a proposed half-mile path from the East Bay Bike Path to Colt State Park Bike Path, along with improvements to 3 miles trials of within Colt Park.
- > **Route 2 Bike Lanes in East Greenwich** may be created by the restriping of travel lanes on Route 2 from four lanes to two lanes from the North Kingstown town line to Frenchtown Road. North Kingstown just submitted a TIP request to do the same on its stretch of Route 2 to Route 102.
- > **The Town of Coventry** proposes to create connections to the Coventry Greenway through the designation of on-road bike routes and bike lanes.

Other projects in the works

Hope Spur Design Study Report DOT has submitted project to the Transportation Improvement Program for funding. The report studied three alternatives to construct a bicycle/walking trail along the abandoned Hope Spur rail line between West Warwick and Scituate.

Aquidneck Island Passenger Rail Study/ Bicycle Path Project A conceptual design study is underway to determine the potential for shared-use of the Newport Secondary Track, between Tiverton and Newport, for possible passenger rail service and a bicycle path with-in the existing right-of-way.

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Greenways an all season asset

By William D. Ankner, Ph.D.

Director, Rhode Island Department of Transportation

Winter has been very kind to Rhode Islanders this year. Not only haven't we needed to unearth our snow shovels from last year's storage, but we also haven't had to put our bicycles in mothballs either. And the ever-growing network of bike paths in Rhode Island has been the perfect place to go for a ride on a 55-degree day in February.

The Rhode Island Department of Transportation (RIDOT) has been building a system of interconnected trails and bike paths that will become a viable alternative of transportation. The scattered approach of the past, of putting pathways hither and yon, does not provide an alternative for livable communities and their transportation needs.

By working with organizations, such as the Greenways Alliance of Rhode Island, RIDOT can continue to build support for non-motorized transportation throughout the state. Gathering your ideas and suggestions is a critical tool for RIDOT to make progress in greenway development.

Seeing that the East Coast Greenway route through Rhode Island is completed is a priority not only for RIDOT, but for Governor Lincoln Almond as well. Governor Almond's commitment, and what will most likely be a part of his legacy, is this network of improved and expanded bikeways.

When construction is completed, Rhode Islanders will have approximately 70 miles of interconnected bike and pedestrian paths on which to enjoy themselves. Today, close to 30 miles of independent bikeway projects have been completed. Another 40 miles are currently under design and construction.

From Coventry north through Providence and up to Woonsocket, the

East Coast Greenway incorporates the Coventry Greenway, the West Warwick Greenway, the Warwick Bike Path, the Cranston Bike Path, and the Blackstone River Bikeway. Approximately 20 miles of the East Coast Greenway will run between Coventry and Providence, while a full 18 miles of the East Coast Greenway is along the Blackstone River Bikeway.

The new bike and pedestrian path that will be located alongside the Washington Bridge eastbound will also help make this route a dream for cyclists, walkers, in-line skaters and those in wheelchairs. The new linear park, to be located on the Bridge's south side, will be built for the enjoyment of all Rhode Islanders. Bike racks, benches, and decorative lights will also create a comfortable and scenic gathering place.

Whether you are commuting to work or spending the day with family and friends, Rhode Island's greenways have a lot to offer. Beauty and

functionality have grown out of abandoned railroads and right of ways. Once free of the confines of automobiles, cyclists experience the joy of the elements and have the knowledge that what they are doing is not only a benefit to their health, but to the environment as well.



So, although the seasons might appear to be confused, walkers and riders shouldn't be. As the poet Robert Browning once wrote, and I must agree with his sentiment, "Sing, riding's a joy!"

A "Guide to Cycling in the Ocean State 2001" bike maps are available from the Rhode Island Department of Transportation by calling Steven Church, RIDOT's Bicycle and Pedestrian Program Coordinator, at (401) 222-4203 x4042.

Serenity in Gloucester

By Lorraine Frazier, Director,
Friends of the Gloucester Land Trust

The Friends of the Gloucester Land Trust extend their invitation to you to visit Sprague Farm, a beautiful 900-acre tract of woodland owned by the Town of Gloucester Land Trust.

Sprague Farm is a rich and important "greenbelt" of second-growth woodland that is as mature as any in Rhode Island. It is a serene and diverse environment of incredible natural beauty, with numerous unpolluted streams and small ponds. Because much of this land has been wilderness for at least 150 years, not cultivated, and fortunately spared from forest fires, its splendid forest canopy approaches 100 feet in height.

The farm also has picturesque stone bridges and interesting old stone foundations. The property is home to a 24-acre Atlantic white cedar swamp, a lovely waterfall, a grove of striped maple, an abundance of floral species, vernal pools, sphagnum moss bogs, and a unique 5-acre sedge fen. The black throated blue warbler, once extinct in the state, now breeds in this forest.

There is a loop trail now in place, and we will be cutting a new connecting trail soon between that trail and Route 44. It will provide hours of meandering, or a really good stretch of brisk hiking. There's also snowshoeing, and cross-country skiing on the property, provided there's snow!

Some of these treasures are in the thick of the woods, but over time, we hope to make them accessible by trails. Ultimately, when the Land Trust realizes its goal of building a greenway from one end of the Town to the Connecticut border, Sprague Farm will form a union with the North South Trail. If you are interested in assisting with trail work, particularly the upcoming trail from Route 44, please call Lorraine at (401) 568-9124.

Construction Update

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Jamestown/Verrazano Bridge Study completed examining several route alternatives for this project. Working with towns of North Kingstown and Jamestown on preferred alternative, with construction not beginning until old Jamestown Bridge is demolished in 2004.

Wickford To Quonset Point Bikeway Conceptual Design Study The Town of North Kingstown is working on hiring a consultant to consider a bike path/route along an abandoned rail corridor from Wickford to the Quonset Davisville Port and Commerce Park.

Statewide Bicycle Route/Lane Striping DOT will be evaluating additional roadways for bike route and bike lane striping as part of a spring 2002 study and development consultant contract.

GARI Annual Meeting, *continued*

A number of design projects are in the works, including the possible connection of bike systems and green-ways to rail systems. A rail line in Newport is being examined for possible introduction of a commuter rail and a bike path in the same space. More details about the state of the trails under construction can be found on page 5.

The last speaker of the evening was Ginny Leslie, who offered a slide presentation on the North-South Trail. The group is now involved with the 11th annual trek on the trail, hiking its entire 77-mile length every other Saturday from March to May. The trail begins at Blue Shutters Beach in Charlestown, and after a ceremonial dip of toes in the ocean, the group begins the long journey north.

The North-South Trail makes use of state management areas where possible to follow the western spine of the state. Numerous back roads make up missing pieces. The path

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Calendar of Events

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Biking and Birding An event sponsored by the Audubon Society of Rhode Island's Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge. This will take place on the South County Bike Path on **May 5** at 10 a.m., with a chance to combine exercise with a search for spring migrating birds. There is a fee for this activity (\$4 ASRI members, \$6 non-members). Call 295-8283.

New England Greenway Symposium This conference is set for **April 27** at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, Mass. The goal of this year's symposium is to continue to make connections between the New England states by focusing on trail and greenway projects that have the potential to connect across state borders. It's geared toward greenway planners, activists, and enthusiasts with an opportunity to learn from each other through state and regional updates as well as through a workshop session. For more information, contact greenway@larp.umass.edu or call (413) 545-6619.

Third Annual Pawtuxet Riverfest This event, set for **June 15** from noon to 4 p.m., is a celebration of RI Rivers Day with canoe rides, educational exhibits and a picnic. Go to www.pawtuxet.org/riverfest.html for more information.

Blackstone River Valley Greenway Challenge Planning is in the works for the second annual challenge, set for **Sept. 28**. Organizers promise that the event, a bike, run and paddle adventure from Worcester, Mass. to Pawtucket, will be bigger and better than last year. Check the GARI web page and the summer edition of *Trail Mix* for more information as it becomes available.

Spring Railway Tour - Set for **May 18**, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., this six-hour train trip from Cumberland to Worcester and then to Putnum, Conn., provides a glimpse of the industrial heritage of the area and its scenic resources – much of which can

be explored on existing and future trails along the Blackstone River. Call the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, (401) 724-2200, for ticket information.

Greenway development public meetings – The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor is beginning a planning effort to develop a vision for trail and greenway development throughout the National Heritage Corridor. This effort will lay the foundation for the future of trail, greenway and open space planning throughout the Blackstone Valley. Contact Mark Jewell for more information at (401) 762-0250 or mark_jewell@nps.gov. Schedule is as follows (all meetings are from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.): April 24, Gloucester Town Hall for Burrillville, Gloucester and Smithfield; May 1, Northgate in Lincoln for Cumberland, Lincoln, Central Falls and Pawtucket; May 15, Millbury Senior Center, Millbury, Mass. for Leicester, Worcester, Millbury, Grafton and Upton; May 29, Northbridge Town Hall, Northbridge, Mass., for Sutton, Douglas, Uxbridge, Northbridge, Mendon and Hopedale; and June 5, Woonsocket City Hall for North Smithfield, Woonsocket, Millville and Blackstone, Mass.

Other events on the greenways, trails and roads in Rhode Island and New England can be found directly at the following web pages:

- Narragansett Bay Wheelmen
www.nbwclub.org/ride-table.html
- Friends of the Pawtuxet River:
www.friendsofthepawtuxet.org
- R.I. Canoe and Kayak Association:
www.ricka.org
- Appalachian Mountain Club, Narragansett Chapter:
<http://users.ids.net/~amcri/gazette.htm>
- Blackstone Valley Visitor Center:
www.tourblackstone.com
- GARI website:
www.geocities.com/rigreenway

Webmaster's Corner

By Charles St. Martin

This month's trip in cyberspace is a quick one, just a short drive over the line in southeastern Massachusetts. There a group of people are laboring under intense opposition from abutters to establish the Mattapoissett Multi-Use Trail in Mattapoissett, Mass. A lengthy summary of the project, including maps, drawings and the history of the project can be found at

 **greenways**  search: http://nbwclub.org/announcements/Matta_bikepath. The page chronicles the benefits of the path for connecting schools and neighborhoods as well as providing people with a viable alternative to the busy Route 6 strip.

The proposed bike path is 4.5 miles in length, and is part of a tri-town project for a "regionally connected" mixed use trail system with Fairhaven's completed 3.5-mile Phoenix Bike Trail, and a bike path network in Marion. Such paths could help make a link to the Cape Cod Canal, home to twin 7-mile bike paths.

The trail project is in trouble because abutters have cried foul to their selectman, saying they fear decreased property values, increased crime, and soaring project costs. The selectmen voted in December to halt all land-taking and in May two petitions will be put forth to voters to rescind previous land-taking – yikes!

Greenways Alliance of Rhode Island



GARI Annual Meeting,

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passes many pieces of Rhode Island's past, including stone walls, churches, one-room school houses and interesting scenery.

One of the more interesting places Leslie talked about was the old village of Rice City in western Coventry. Plainfield Pike (Rte 14) was a popular stagecoach route and as a consequence a number of taverns opened their doors along the trail. One of the most notorious ones was the Rice Tavern, well known for its rowdiness.

"If you were looking for gambling, loose women and hard liquor, this was the place for you," she said.

The tavern opened in 1796 and on its opening night, at midnight, Mr. Rice climbed to the roof, smashed a bottle of liquor against the chimney, spread his arms out and proclaimed "this is Rice City!" The place really didn't last long as the introduction of passenger rail (now the Trestle Trail, part of the ECG network) put an end to stagecoaches and the Rice city "just kind of went to sleep," Leslie said.



Meetings on the move

In keeping with our mission to advocate for greenways throughout Rhode Island, GARI is taking its show on the road. While we have had meetings in other parts of the state, we plan on periodically departing from our main meeting place, the office of the Pawtuxet River Authority in the Pontiac Mills Complex in Warwick (near Warwick Mall off Route 5). Our meetings typically take place at 5 p.m. on the last Wednesday of the month, with the first hour for business of the GARI board and the second hour for public sessions. Tentatively we plan on meeting at Kingston Station in May, on the East Bay Bike Path in August and in Pawtucket at the Blackstone Valley Visitor Center in October. Check GARI's web page, www.geocities.com/rigrreenway for up-to-date meeting information.

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