



Greenwords: Setting priorities

As we begin to deal with the cold, dark winter weather here in New England, we are able to reflect on how much we have accomplished during the past year. Through our involvement and participation we overcame a number of federal, state, and local challenges to the continued development of bike and walking paths in Rhode Island, and saw the completion of more segments of our existing greenways.

Survey after survey has clearly shown that public support for biking/walking paths remains at an all-time high. It's easy to understand when you consider how many benefits they bring us. The presence of paths for biking and walking make possible all of the following and more:

- Allow ready access to natural places to help us reconnect with the natural world.
- Promote physical activity, thereby positively treating obesity and other health challenges caused by inactivity.
- Reduce motor vehicle congestion by promoting activity that uses human power rather than petroleum.
- Bring a spirit of community by allowing people to encounter each other directly, rather than driving by in their autos.
- Allow people of all ages and abilities to enjoy physical activity, from kids to elderly, wheel chair-

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State issues \$2.5 million in grants for land preservation and trails

The state Department of Environmental Management and the Department of Transportation this fall announced the award of \$2.5 million in grants to local communities, land trust groups and others to build a number of new trails and purchase open space throughout the state.

About one fifth of the total grants, about \$400,000 worth, were awarded by the R.I. Trails Advisory Committee. The group, which awarded GARI a major grant this past year to aid in the funding of Trail Mix, appointed a subcommittee to look at some 44 submissions totaling \$2.1 million. The group then reviewed all the applications and pared down the list to include the projects listed below. The entire \$2.5 million package was funded largely by a 1998 open space bond with \$40,000 in federal dollars contributed through the TEA-21 program.

The biggest award was to Richmond for \$100,000 to build a trail to serve as a buffer for a new age-restricted housing project. The trail is a major boon to the North-South Trail, which no longer will have to rely on local roads to pass through this part of Richmond.

Other major grants were given to Newport, Cumberland and the Pawtuxet River Watershed Council. The money will result in the resurfacing of the first 1,200 feet of the Cliff Walk (\$50,000), construction of new trail segments to link to a Native American site called Nine Men's Misery Monument in Cumberland

(\$49,715), and purchase of an easement and construction of a bridge over an old mill raceway (\$46,000) to allow the Pawtuxet group to link its two Riverwalk trails along the northern branch of the Pawtuxet River in West Warwick and Coventry.

Other projects selected by the Advisory Committee include:

- \$40,000 to Groundwork Providence to build a 2,000-foot handicapped accessible trail along the Woonasquatucket River and adjacent to Button Hole Golf Course. The organization also received \$710 to purchase hand tools.
- \$30,000 to Pawtucket to improve existing stone dust trails in Slater Park and add signage to mark all park trails and "Walk a Mile" routes.
- \$22,000 to the Foster-Glocester Regional School System to create a handicapped accessible trail loop off an existing 3-mile trail network located behind Ponagansett High School.

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bound, and other mobility-challenged people.

➤ Reduce noise pollution.

➤ Lure kids away from TV and video games.

➤ Provide a safe, free place for families, children, and adults to bike, walk, and rollerblade.

➤ Provide alternative transportation to and from school, work, shopping, etc. when weather is good.

➤ Provide places to cross country ski during winter.

➤ Reduce demand for imported petroleum.

As we notice the extra amount of time we spend in our cars due to

continuing increases in automobile traffic and congestion, both in our

cities and even where we always thought were rural areas, it becomes ever clearer that we need to continue to emphasize our commitment to developing alternate transportation and recreational facilities.

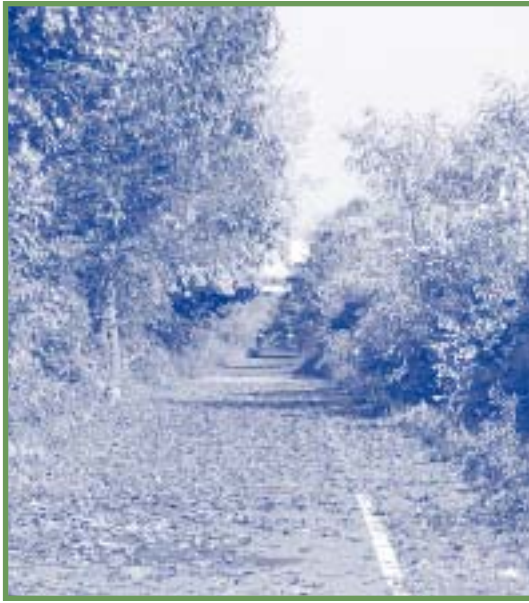
In the coming year, we need to increase our efforts to deal with maintenance issues, vandalism, and other abuses that we anticipate coming.

The increased marketing and sales of motorized vehicles, scooters, and ATV's will inevitably impact our trails and walking paths, particularly in rural areas. We need to be aware and diligent in stopping the proliferation of these vehicles on our paths.

State and local budget constraints will likely result in challenges to funds slated for path and trail development and maintenance. We need to be ready to contact our elected representatives at town meetings and budget hearings to let them know how important those facilities are to us.

We at GARI need your continued help in promoting these wonderful resources for everyone to use. The GARI board of directors and I extend our best wishes for a prosperous, peaceful, and healthful new year to all.

Richard F. Santopietro
GARI Chair



Cranston bike path in the fall.

North Kingstown begins bike path planning

A process that has been stalled for the last four years to examine a possible bike path from Wickford to Quonset Point in North Kingstown got off the ground in November, although it may take that much longer before anything is built.

The major task is to determine if the 2.5-mile path could be built. Consultants from Pare Engineering of Lincoln have recommended using portions of an abandoned trolley line that roughly parallels Route 1 as much as possible. There are numerous ownership and wetlands issues, though.

The consultants oversaw three meetings, examining with the public how the path could be laid out. Aside from the ownership issues, there are some big logistical ones such as how the path would cross the entrance to the busy industrial park at Quonset Point and how it would move through Wickford village.

Those attending the meetings offered numerous suggestions, some of which were deemed unique but would carry a heavy cost. These include building a boardwalk over a small cove. Plans do call for running the path along the east side the North Kingstown Free Librar property. The waterfront area there is not well used and the property abuts to a footbridge that riders could use to work their way further north to a large park.

North Kingstown Library path.



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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.

Q Dear Dr. Sprocket, I followed some of your advice on increasing my riding skills this summer and fall, and I am now able to ride much faster and longer than I ever did. My extra energy seems to make me better able to resist eating extra helpings of food, and I'm noticing that I'm slowly losing some of the weight I've gained over the years. I'd like to continue my riding, but don't know how safe is it to ride during the winter. What's your take on it?

Frigid in Foster

A Dear Frigid: Hurray for you for embarking on your new lifestyle! The simple act of adding extra aerobic activity to your daily routine can have profound impacts on your physical and emotional health and well being.

Riding during the winter months is a challenge here in Southern New England. Winter weather usually means frigid temperatures, messy roads, and snow. Obviously, riding during those conditions is unwise. However, it is possible to do quite a lot of riding during winter months, both indoors using a stationary bike and outdoors when weather conditions are less challenging.

The most important issues to consider when thinking about riding outdoors are the temperature and road/path conditions. My own experience has led me to create the following rules and categories:

Cold weather riding rules:

1. Pay particular attention to the temperature and condition of the road or bike path.



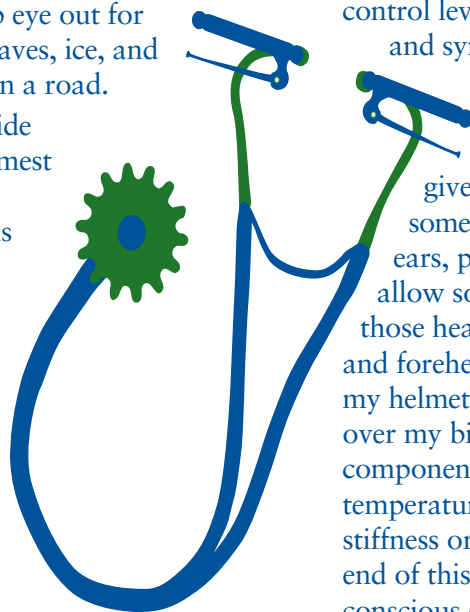
2. Protect your body from extreme temperatures by wearing proper clothing, especially for your hands, head, and feet.

3. Keep a sharp eye out for wet sections, leaves, ice, and sand if riding on a road.

4. If possible, ride during the warmest part of the day, when sunlight is brightest.

5. If riding on the road, be aware that drivers may not be able to see you.

6. Avoid riding when wet road salt and deicers can get on your bike.



Winter Riding Categories I Find Helpful:

Condition Caution: Temperature above 55 degrees – Whenever I ride on roads after the first snowfall, I'm constantly on the lookout for road sand. Having taken a few bad falls by not being watchful enough, I've learned the hard way that a pleasant outing can quickly turn into a nasty happening. In general, it's a good idea to stay alert to road surfaces, but during the cold weather months, it's even more important. Otherwise, riding during the winter season can be a wonderful experience, if only because we think of it as a special treat, rather than something we take for granted.

Condition Cool: Temperature between 45 and 55 degrees – Whenever I ride at temperatures between 45 and 55 degrees I wear protective clothing, best accomplished by layering lighter-weight clothes. I protect my hands by wearing gloves that allow good finger movement so



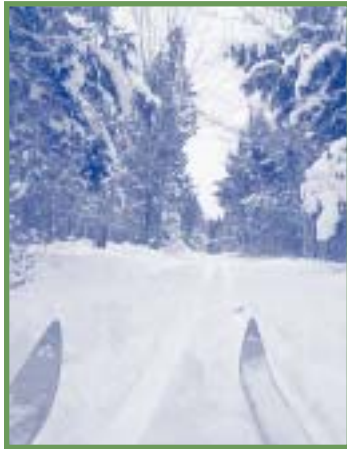
I can safely control the braking and shifting levers. I also try to keep my hands from getting so cold that they become too stiff to operate the bike's control levers. Leather (both natural and synthetic) serves as a pretty good windbreaker, and new insulating materials are so efficient that a thin layer gives lots of warmth. I also wear some kind of covering over my ears, preferably something that will allow sound to pass through. I like those headbands that cover only ears and forehead better than a hat, because my helmet is already struggling to fit over my big head. Although most bike components will operate well at these temperatures, you may notice some stiffness or delay in shifting at the lower end of this region. Be sure to stay conscious of these changes.

Condition Cold: Temperature between 35 and 45 degrees – Riding in this condition requires more aggressive measures. In addition to the efforts detailed for the above conditions, clothing needs to provide more insulation, and you will need some kind of covering to keep your feet warm if you plan to ride for any length of time. Bike components become stiff, and some gear shifters may not work well, and need different lubricant. Most brake pads become stiff and may not give full braking power. Gloves need to be warmer and not be too bulky or stiff. I try to stay very alert for patches of ice that can form even when the air temperature is above freezing, because the ground can stay very cold if the temperatures have been far below freezing for an extended period, and there isn't much direct sunlight to heat it. Water from ice melt can refreeze and pose a serious hazardous, especially if you are not on the lookout for one. In

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Places for 'skinny skiing' in Rhode Island

Rhode Island is not a place synonymous with winter sports, but the state is, after all, part of New England and if last year's cold and snowy winter is any indication of what to expect this year, things are looking good for cross-country skiing close to home.



Areas north and west of Providence generally get the most amount of snow, as they are located at the southern edge of a southern New England snow belt that stretches north of Worcester. Still, all areas of the state can get enough snow out of storms to allow for cross-country skiing - the early December blizzard was evidence of that.

Of course the snow usually doesn't stick around here long, so it's good to get out as soon as possible after a fall. Many trails are quickly trampled by hikers, snowshoers and in some cases illegal ATV and snowmobile usage, so don't waste any time if you want virgin snow. This is what personal days are made for.

The following is a list of some places to cross-country ski. All bike paths are naturals for cross-country skiing, but with the asphalt base, you need some deep cover to avoid damaging your skis. Their flatness and arrow-straight designs also may not appeal to folks used to wooded trails up north. Hiking trails can be a better option, but some are notoriously rocky, steep and with tight-radius curves. All these can make for tricky, if not dangerous skiing conditions. The trick is finding the best terrain with the best

snow, a challenge in a state better known for sailing and beaches than snow sports.

> Pulaski Park in

Burrillville: - Perhaps the best place to cross-country ski in Rhode Island as it is the only machine-groomed touring center in the state. Terrain ranges from beginner to tight, hairy expert trails through the woods. There are about five miles of trails. Pulaski Park is located in the George Washington Management Area, a place where hunting is permitted, so an orange vest and hat is advisable.

Take Rte. 44 west from I-295; look for sign on the right a couple of miles before the Connecticut border.

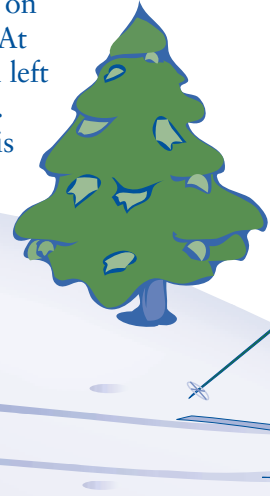
> Goddard Memorial State Park in Warwick:

A great place for beginners, with a mix of gently rolling hills and sheltered hiking/horse trails through the woods, some with gorgeous views of Greenwich Bay and Greenwich Cove. The diverse terrain allows for skiing in all sorts of conditions. For example, a light dusting with cold conditions (a.k.a "fast grass") is enough to allow use of the open picnicking fields and the fairways of a 9-hole golf course. Deeper, but wetter snow may mean the shady woods are the place to be, especially if it's a bit warm and the snow is sticky and slow in the sun. There are some good hills, and the "bowl" on the golf course's ninth hole is fun. Take I-95 to Rte. 4 south to Exit 9 (Division Street). Go right at ramp's end. Follow 3-4 miles to Rte. 1 (Main Street). Take a right, go a mile or so and take a left onto Forge/Ives Road (there is a sign). Park is about 2 miles on the left.

> Warwick City Park in

Warwick: Sometimes called

Buttonwoods Park because of the part of the city it's located in, the park features dirt trails and a three-mile bike path for exploring. Together, one can cover the entire park and even ski out to a good-sized beach. Take I-95 to Rte. 117 east. Follow through village of Apponaug to Job Lot shopping center. Take a right on Buttonwoods Ave. At four-way stop, turn left onto Asylum Road. The park entrance is about a quarter mile on the left. The park's main gate is usually shut for the winter, so you'll have to ski in from the front parking lot.

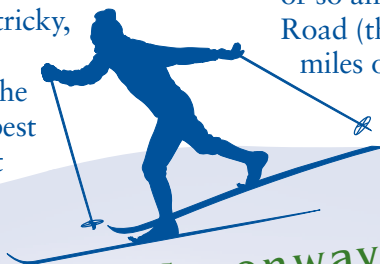


> Sachuest Point

in Middletown: The snow's especially lean here because of its proximity to the ocean but the trails are wide, gently rolling and the ocean views are spectacular. There's also a great new visitor's center that recently opened there. Take Rte. 138 to Downtown Newport exit. Follow to left on Memorial Boulevard; bear right on Purgatory Road (after Easton's Beach) until road ends (past Sachuest Beach).

> Fisherville Brook Wildlife Refuge in

Exeter: This is a property of the R.I. Audubon society that allows cross-country skiing. The best loop follows the edge of a meadow, plunges into a hardwood forest and crosses a dam on an elevated platform. Other paths are passable for skiers, but are tight and winding and are best for hiking and snowshoeing. Take Rte. 4 south to Rte. 102 north or I-95 Exit 5 to Rte. 102 south. Turn onto Widow Sweets Road (near Town Hall); take quick right onto Pardon Joslin Road. Refuge on both sides of road.



Help Make Greenways in Rhode Island Happen: Join the Gre

What's Happening on Our Trails:

Rhode Island Greenways and Blueways

Winter on the Greenway Calendar of Events

As to be expected this time of the year, the number of organized events dwindles for outdoor activities. They still can be found, and some groups based here arrange for trips where winter outdoor recreation is king, in northern New England. The Narragansett Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club organizes numerous outings throughout the year, and this winter is no exception with

many opportunities for cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Visit their web page at <http://users.ids.net/~amcri/gazette.htm> to learn more. Be sure to check out

the web sites of other outdoor groups (posted on GARI's web site at www.rigreenways.org/glinks/links.htm) for their activities. Winter is too long around here to spend it waiting for



warmer weather and too pretty with snowy landscapes to commit yourself to a gym for the next three or four months.

As always, if you have an event you'd like listed here, please send e-mail to rigreenways@rigreenways.org.

> Friends of the Pawtuxet Winter Walks: This annual event is set to kick off at 1 p.m. on Jan. 25 and will feature a 3-mile walk on the loop trail along the river in Cranston and Warwick. Touted as a "sure cure for cabin fever," the event will feature some doses of history on the local area and possibly a visit to a local eatery for hot chocolate. The walk leaves from the trailhead at the lower parking lot of the Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet, 60 Rhodes Place, Cranston. To get there, take I-95 to Exit 16 (Elmwood Ave.) Follow south to Park Avenue. Take a left. Follow Park

Avenue to the end and turn right onto Broad Street. About a 1/4-mile down Broad Street is a gazebo on the right, turn here and the hall is at the bottom of the hill.

> Rhode Island RV & Camping Show:

OK, so it's not a recreational event, but like the flower show for gardeners, this "virtual trip" at the R.I. Convention Center in Providence is a great way to get excited for better weather to come and future trips in the wilderness. The show runs from Feb. 27-29 and features the priciest and fanciest motor homes down to folding campers.

Information on area campgrounds can be found too. Call 800-332-3976 or visit www.macevents.com.



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Get on the trail!

Our recent accomplishments:

- > Organized a grassroots effort to support the extension of the South County Bike Path in the face of NIMBY opposition.
- > Organized walking and cycling events with organizations including the AARP and the International Rails to Trails Conference.
- > Developed a cycling map of the Blackstone Valley area in conjunction with the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council.
- > Continued to serve as the state representative of the East Coast Greenway Alliance.

Join the only organization dedicated to statewide advocacy of bike path and greenway development in Rhode Island. Your membership dues help make publication of this newsletter possible and will enable us to continue our mission of working with state and local leaders to ensure Rhode Island has an integrated, well-maintained network of alternative transportation and recreation corridors.

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.

Please return membership form with check payable to the Greenways Alliance of Rhode Island to GARI, 31 Stanchion Street, Jamestown, RI 02835

www.rigreenways.org

All GARI memberships expire on Dec. 31 each year.

Winter 2004



Trail Mix Profile: Narragansett Bay Sled Dog Club

With this edition of Trail Mix, we are starting a new series of profiles on outdoor recreation groups, advocacy groups, land trusts or any other organized group dedicated to enhancing the state's rich collection of trails and greenways. We have a number of groups already planned for 2004, but if your group is interested in being profiled here, drop a note to rigreenways@rigreenways.org.

If you spend enough time traipsing about the Arcadia Management Area in Exeter and West Greenwich in the winter, you'll catch a glimpse of a sight one might never expect to see in Rhode Island - but one that's been part of the outdoor recreation scene here for more than 25 years.

The running of sled dogs is something people may only expect to find in northern New England, or on some television program made in Alaska. Yet, the sport is alive and well with the well-organized Narragansett Bay Sled Dog Club.

The group regularly practices and races in Arcadia and Freetown State Forest in Freetown, Mass. The group of 60 people meets roughly every other Sunday from November through February and has wheeled sleds it uses if snow conditions are sparse.

All events are open to the public and the group asks prospective new mushers to leave their dogs at home, according to Salt Philla, the group's corresponding secretary. They can be very distracting and have led to accidents. The club's remaining event dates (which are posted online along with all sorts of information on the club at www.eteamz.com/nbaysleddogclub) include Jan. 4 and Feb. 1 in Arcadia and Jan. 18 and Feb. 15 in Freetown. Call 401-737-3390 after 6 p.m. the Saturday before the scheduled race to

confirm the race is on. Icy or muddy conditions may force a cancellation.

The group has been in existence since 1974 and was formed by a small group of sled dog racers from Rhode Island who regularly traveled to New Hampshire for races. The gas crunch of the 1970s prompted the group to consider venues closer to home and they began hosting events in Arcadia. The group consists of 38 families now, Philla said, and the sport is very family-oriented with kids taking to the trails in one-dog sleds.

"Our races are really more for fun than for competition," Philla said. "It's a stepping stone where you get ready to race in bigger events."



All members own their dogs, and there are different categories based on the number of dogs one has. Northern breeds such as Siberian huskies and Alaskan huskies are the most popular. The equipment costs of the sport are

roughly equivalent to that of alpine skiing, and a decent sled can cost about \$700 to \$800. The cost of feeding and providing shelter and veterinarian care for multiple dogs is not included in that, but unlike a pair of skis you toss in the basement in the spring, this "equipment" provides year-round enjoyment and doubles as a pet.

There are numerous categories and age limits for mushers, with larger teams of six and eight dogs reserved for those 16 and older. The larger teams have the longest runs too, with a 4.7-mile circuit for six and eight team sleds, a 2-mile route for four-dog teams and a half-mile for one-dog sleds.

Philla said that those interested in sled dog racing should attend a few races first to get a feel for the equipment and what it might be like to own a team of dogs. It's not a sport people join casually.

State issues \$2.5 million in grants

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- > \$20,496 to Warwick to restore 1.3 miles of old farm roads at the historic Dawley Farm property, between Route 2 and Route 95.
- > \$20,000 to Charlestown for construction of a small parking lot for the South Farm Trail, which serves hikers and equestrians.
- > \$9,600 to the Hopkinton Land Trust to build a wetlands crossing along the Tomaquag Trail. The group also received \$1,720 to purchase a brush cutter.
- > \$2,400 to the South County Bridle Association to install trail markers on hiking and horse trails.
- > \$1,724 to the South Kingstown Land Trust to buy a trailer and chain saw.

The other projects funded include:

- > \$250,000 for East Greenwich to buy 47 acres in a National Register Historic District.
- > \$250,000 to the Foster Land Trust to acquire 283 acres to be added to the North Greenway.
- > \$250,000 to the Norman Bird Sanctuary in Middletown to acquire 23 acres on the Sakonnet River.
- > \$250,000 to Providence to be used toward the burial of overhead electric lines in India Point Park.
- > \$250,000 to Scituate for buying 189 acres near the Potterville Town Forest.
- > \$250,000 to the Tiverton Land Trust to protect 500 acres of coastal forest next to Weetamoo Woods.
- > \$200,000 to the Gloucester Land Trust to buy 126 acres at Seldom Seen Farm.
- > \$137,500 to the Westerly Land Trust for acquiring 14 acres along the Pawcatuck River.
- > \$125,000 to Smithfield for construction of the Stillwater Reservoir Pedestrian Path and Bridge project.
- > \$80,000 to

Newport for the development of the Sunset Hill Trail.



Well known RI cyclist profiled in national publication

George Redman, a dedicated advocate of bike paths in the Ocean State, was recently featured in an article in the Christian Science Monitor on national bike path development.

Redman, 79, was one of the earliest and most vocal supporters of the East Bay Bike Path and often can be found on the 14.5-mile path from Bristol to Providence. In the dead of winter last year, Redman made the drive to Narragansett (bike on the back of the car and all) and participated in a meeting in which a bike path extension was nearly defeated.

The article also notes how bike paths are used for practical reasons and aren't solely recreational outlets.

"The shift is an acknowledgment that trails must integrate with everyday lives," wrote staff writer Ross Atkin. "Otherwise they serve a relatively small constituency of Lycra-clad cycling enthusiasts and suburbanites out for Saturday fun or exercise rides, which begin by driving to the trail."

The full text of the article, which appeared on Nov. 19, was recently removed from the company's web site. Inexpensive copies are available at www.csmonitor.com.



Calendar of Events

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➤ **North-South Trek:** Anyone can walk this 75-mile trail along the western edge of Rhode Island, but here's a chance to do it with a group of people who will break up the feat over six weekend days this spring. The hikes, 11 to 17 miles in length, begin at the Atlantic Ocean in Charlestown and will take one all the way to the Massachusetts border in Burrillville. The hikes start on March 30 and generally run every other Sunday with the exception of two back-to-back weekend hikes in May. The other dates include April 4 & 17 and May 1, 15 & 22. The cost for the entire series is \$12. For more information, contact Ginny Leslie at 781-8117. Maps of trail segments can be had by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope with 60 cents postage, and a \$1 donation, to N-S Trail Hikes, 27 Post Road, Warwick, RI 02889.

➤ **Waters Farm Sleigh Rally:** Watch horse drawn sleighs compete in a variety of events at the annual Waters Farm Sleigh Rally on Feb. 1 in nearby Sutton, Mass. Witness a glimpse of what winters were like in days gone by. For more information call 508-865-0101 or visit www.watersfarm.com.



Hunting season continues

In the last edition of Trail Mix, we included an article on hunting regulations and how hunters and non-hunters can recreate without conflict on public lands. Since the season continues into the winter months, the following is an update on what people need to think about until spring.

In general, outdoor recreators should use a minimum of 200 square inches of fluorescent orange. An orange hat normally will do, but an orange

vest is a good idea too. Inexpensive hats and lightweight vests are available in many department stores.

Bike path riders traditionally haven't had to worry much about wearing orange, but given that the South County Bike Path in South Kingstown and the future Trestle Trail Bike Path in western Coventry pass through portions of state management areas, where hunting is permitted, wearing orange is a must. Even on

Dear Dr. Sprocket,

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spite of these obstacles, I've had some of my best (short) rides during these conditions.

Condition Frigid: Temperature below 35 degrees – Although many cyclists ride throughout the winter, I generally avoid riding in temperatures below 35 degrees. If you decide to try it, you should exercise much care and awareness. It would be a great idea to talk with a trusted bike dealer or friend who has personal experience with that type of riding before undertaking significant riding yourself. There are a number of biking groups that hold winter sporting events that use specially-equipped bikes, and they are usually happy to welcome newbies.

By following these guidelines, I've had some of my best-ever rides during the cold season that we seem to get every year in this part of the planet. Rather than lament at the loss of all that wonderful warm weather, I've found that I could adapt to at least part of its challenge. The freedom I feel, and the reconnection with the natural world nurtures a special place in my spirit.

So - by carefully using these guidelines, you'll be able to enjoy quite a lot of cold weather riding, and be ready to further expand your riding when the warmer weather arrives in a few short months.

Send your Dr. Sprocket questions to righnways@righnways.org

lands where hunting is prohibited, a hunter could inadvertently or willingly cross over into a restricted area. The best bet is to keep an orange hat and vest in the car.

Shotgun season may be over, but archery season runs until the end of January. There are numerous special season hunting dates of wild birds and waterfowl throughout the winter and early spring. More information can be had at www.state.ri.us/dem/programs/bnatres/fishwild/h-dates.htm.

Webmaster's Corner

Near and far for greenway adventures

By Charles St. Martin

The frigid days of winter are a good time to plan future biking trips and to busy ourselves with volunteer and advocacy work by promoting future greenway development. This edition's featured web sites allow you to do a little of both.

Close to home is a chance to get involved in a great greenway effort, the Woonasquatucket River Greenway Project. Unlike other bike path projects in the state that have touched suburban and rural areas, this would be an urban path that calls for development of a bicycle path, restoration of parks, and the reclamation of contaminated lands for public use. According to information posted on the web site of the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council (www.woonasquatucket.org/ongoingprojects.htm#greenway), 52 acres of



public land have been restored for active and passive recreational use, and construction will begin on the off-road bicycle paths in 2004.

More information can be found at www.providenceplan.org/river/index.html. There one can learn about the many working-class neighborhoods that will be connected (such as Manton, Hartford, Olneyville, Valley and Smith Hill neighborhoods). A path along the greenway would provide a direct link into downtown Providence, ending behind Providence Place Mall.

In the travel category, a serious vacation of cycling can be planned by visiting the website of the Lake Champlain Bikeways. This is a network of bike routes and paths exceeding 1,100 miles in the Lake Champlain Valley of Vermont, New York, and Québec, Canada. There are 27 loops and tours ranging from 10 to 47 miles in length. The granddaddy of them all is the Champlain Bikeway, a 363-mile route around the entire lake.

The web page provides all sorts of information on routes and what to see in the area. Many inexpensive, hard-copy maps can be purchased through the site as well.

Road overlay causes problems in bike lanes

The repaving of just the travel lanes of a road may seem like a step toward saving some money, but it also is problematic given that the areas that are left behind are designated bicycle lanes.

Such was the case this fall with numerous state roads, including a stretch of Rte. 117 in Coventry. The "chip seal" overlay only extended a few inches past the travel lane so a white line could be painted on the new surface. This not only left the bike lane with an older surface, but a collection of asphalt bits that broke free from the edge of the new pavement.

The loose stone was swept up four times, according to the state Department of Transportation, and by now it was supposed to have stopped shedding debris into the bike/breakdown lane. DOT Bicycle Coordinator Steve Church noted that DOT is formulating a paving policy for state roads that are signed as bike routes.

Members to the Narragansett Bay Wheelmen listserv commented extensively on the issue. One quipped: "Share the Road ... with gravel."

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