

Farmington Valley Trails Council Greenway News

Dedicated to building, maintaining and beautifying multi-use trails

July, 2013—Volume 13—Issue 2

President's Letter



www.fvgreenway.org

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On June 19th two dozen riders including Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection Commissioner Dan Esty met near the plaque commemorating bicycle inventor Pierre Allemande at Chapel and Church Street in downtown New Haven. They pedaled away with the intent of highlighting both the successes and the remaining gaps in the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail. I personally think it was the single best day for public relations that the FVTC has had. *Channel 8 News* was there filming and getting interviews for that evening's news, and we got a lot of great press, not the least from Tom Condon of the *Hartford Courant*, who did the ride and wrote on July 3rd: "Let's Close the Gaps in the Canal Trail". Thanks Tom. The whole thing was also being filmed for a college project. We held press conferences in Cheshire and Plainville with Dan's wife U.S. Rep. Elizabeth Esty showing up in their hometown of Cheshire telling the story of how their daughter learned how to ride on the trail. She's genuinely interested in completing the trails and highlighting them at the national level. Arnett Talbot from the Town welcomed us and reminded us that Cheshire was one of the first towns to build a section of trail, and the subsequent ups and downs of trying to finish it. Commissioner Esty himself was an earnest speaker on marshaling forces to close these two remaining gaps.

(cont. page 3)

The "Esty Ride" June 19th. From L to R: Commissioner Dan Esty of DEEP, Pattie Jacobis, Simsbury Free Bike, Steve Mitchell, National Board Member East Coast Greenway, and Bruce Donald, president, FVTC.



Bicycle Friendly Status

Simsbury and South Windsor already are Bronze Bicycle Friendly Communities as awarded by the League of American Bicyclists. Farmington, as well as a number of other communities that the FVTC follows are taking the LAB's advice and forming town Bicycle Advisory Committees and are getting serious about incorporating bicycle and pedestrian planning into their communities. Other areas that the LAB encourages are expansion of bike networks and connectivity; offering traffic skills classes; asking police officers to enforce both motorist and cyclist infractions; install or update bicycling wayfinding signage; increase bicycling parking at popular destinations; consider bike lanes and/or sharrows on popular roads; and make intersections safer. We applaud these and other recommendations from the LAB and look forward to the process.

The European Cyclists Federation reported this year that the Netherlands was still #1 in the percentage of population using bikes as their main mode of transportation:
32%

Bicycle Care: Lubrication

TRAIL AMBASSADORS

The FVTC Trail Ambassador Program will be starting in August. We have had about a dozen people express interest in being a Trail Ambassador.

FVTC approved Ambassadors will act as guides, keepers of historical and modern facts, provide handouts such as rules and etiquette info as well as maps, blinkies, bells and water bottles that have real value as well as acting as branding aids and importantly, to generation of new members.

They will increase awareness about the FVTC, including funding for construction, maintenance, amenities and encourage volunteerism in our organization.

But most importantly, they will promote the **SAFE** use of the FCHT and the FRT through proper trail etiquette.

Meet the Trail Dude, who can be found on the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail somewhere near Sperry Park in Avon.



Eventually every bike will fail in some way if not properly lubricated. First clean (yes you can use WD-40 except in cable housings) then re-lube. Every component shown below (except the chain) can be lubricated with a dot or two of light bicycle oil. Note the derailleur pulleys and brake pivots and their cables. Brake/shifter levers need a drop or two. Also note the point where your pedals screw into your crank arms. But of all the things to watch, you must dote on your chain. It is the critical moving component of a bicycle. Take a look at yours right now. If it is seriously bad you may have to take it off and soak it in solvent. At that point, I'd just buy a new one. To clean a "normally" dirty chain, remember to never throw away an old toothbrush—they are your best chain cleaning friend. Shift the bike to the largest chainring and the smallest sprocket in back. Next find a solvent like WD-40 or an alcohol-based product. Over newspaper, on a



stand, run the pedals and liberally scrub with a toothbrush and rag until the chain runs smoothly. When no more black grease comes off on your rag you have a clean chain. You can save some time and buy chain cleaning machines (I have one from Park Tools that is nifty). Now comes the critical part. The best wrenches will tell you that your choice of chain lubricant is critical. There are many, but use a specified chain lubricant only. Lube the inside of the chain as it attracts the least dirt and interacts

with the sprockets. Run the chain backward and put a *thin* line of lube on the rollers using a drip applicator, not sprays. Let it sit so it can soak in for a number of minutes then wipe away excess with a clean cloth. Do not do this right before a ride unless you want oil all over your frame. Note also that many pros will use a wax-based lube particularly if they know it is going to rain. It doesn't last long though. IMHO, the best lubrication products are by Pedro's, Dumonde, White Lightning, Pro-Link and Chain-L.

The Problem With Poo

Dog "waste" or "leavings" ... however you want to describe it, is a menace on the whole trail system. Walkers, bikers, and inline skaters are continually assaulted by the stuff. When left unattended, it becomes a health hazard, an unwelcome visual sighting and a disgusting addition to shoes, tires and roller blades. This is a problem across America and some communities have done wacky things to control it. In some areas owners are required to register their dog's DNA and if waste is found that matches, they are fined. In Connecticut, dog owners are responsible for the control of their dogs by state statute. However that does not really include what comes out of them. Towns have difficulty enforcing the removal, containment, and disposal of dog waste on the trail and parking lots of both the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail and the Farmington River Trails. This would seem to be a common sense responsibility for any dog owner. In a weird twist, we find many carefully bagged items on the trail system, perversely creating *non*-biodegradable garbage.

The FVTC proposes an education and awareness program to address this problem. This

The Problem With Poo, Cont.

program would include letters to our towns defining the problem and recommending solutions. Firstly, our towns should consider ordinances that directly ask for control of dogs through leashes, if not already on the books, and also the removal of their waste from the trails. Signs will be posted on the trails and parking lots outlining owner's responsibilities. We will also print a responsibilities handout card and distribute them on the trails. Lastly, you can help by using your right to *politely* shame an owner you see leaving dog excrement on our trails.

President's Letter, Cont.

Standing next to him I thought back on all of the years when we didn't even get a response from various CT commissioners and realized how far we've come as a state - finally getting real political interest in bicycle and pedestrian needs! In Plainville, 22nd District State Rep. Betty Boukus (Chair of the State Bonding Commission) was there along with Plainville Town Council Chair Katherine Pugliese. Both reiterated their support of the project. It was a great day and I want to specifically thank Pete Salomone, Steve Mitchell from the East Coast Greenway, Lisa Fernandez from the Farmington Canal Rail to Trail Assoc., Kelly Kennedy at Bike/Walk CT, Cyndy Chanaca at DEEPs Office of Communications, members of our BOD who rode and helped out with lunch and other local organizations like Simsbury Free Bike.

In answer to the most asked question we get: Yes, the River Trail in Burlington will be re-paved soon. ConnDOT has bumped the project from \$300,000 to around \$800,000 and the initial funding received by the Town will be augmented by a STEAP grant received just recently. We thank the Town, ConnDOT, DEEP and the Central CT Regional Planning Authority for their perseverance. This trail was one of the earlier pieces and issues of root incursion, shoulder width and grading were not addressed properly. They will be now, and we all look forward to the re-engineered trail re-opening. You may have noticed that we have put up a warning on fvgreenway.org to be extremely careful or actually avoid that area entirely. The next most asked question is what's going on with Plainville? Negotiations for the railroad ROW in Plainville are now through their fifth year with no end in sight. The Town is therefore focusing on the southern section running through Norton Park to the Southington line. They have put in the paperwork for the necessary grants and await news on funding. We have pledged to both towns our support in raising the money to fill the gap in the local 20% match of the federal construction grants and we'll start that process as soon as we get concrete news on the funding amounts.

Trails in Motion went well with over 200 riders and lots of fun was had by all. We are looking at the possibility of doing other rides, perhaps seasonally. Going forward, we will have our usual booth presence at the various town festival days in the Valley. You will see "Trail Tables" every few weeks on various parts of the trail system, staffed by our Board members. Stop by for a handlebar bell, a blinkie, some water and a map or just a talk. We're getting our Trail Ambassador Program up and running shortly as well, and you will see them out on the trail in the near future.

The 20th Anniversary FVTC greeting center in downtown Collinsville is sited and construction should start soon, providing a new FVTC information kiosk and bike racks. The parking lot at Phelps Road in Suffield will be constructed in 2013. The design is completed and it will go out to bid soon. It will include a kiosk and has been expanded to 36 spaces. Email me at info@fvgreenway.org and as always my thanks to our BOD, volunteers, members, allies and friends. Without you we couldn't do it.

FRIENDS



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* All positions expire in 2013



FVTC GREENWAY NEWS

This publication is written and formatted by volunteers. The Farmington Valley Trails Council is a 501 (c)(3) CT not-for-profit corporation dedicated to advocacy, education, beautification and building multi-use trails in the Farmington Valley of Connecticut. Contributions to the FVTC are generally tax-deductible. This newsletter is available electronically, or printed and distributed by our friends at FAVARH.

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