

# Farmington Valley Trails Council

# *Greenway News*



## President's Letter

With the coming of fall we start to look back at the events of the summer, and I can state that 2008 has been a remarkable success story. Our biggest victory, the re-building of the Salmon Brook Bridge, would take too long for this update, so it is printed separately below.

The Farmington River Pavilion at the RT 4 parking lot in Unionville is finished and came out exceptionally well. Our thanks go out to our partners, the Town of Farmington and the Rotary Club of Farmington. All of the kiosks on the trail have been cleaned and the interiors repainted. In Simsbury we have delivered a new kiosk for the trail head at RT 10 and Sand Hill Rd. where the new trail starts north in Weatogue. New mile-markers have been delivered to the towns and are either up or will be soon. I'm proud to announce that REI has become a corporate sponsor of the FVTC and will be the sponsor of Trails-in-Motion 2009. We look forward to a long relationship with this forward-thinking outfitting company. Our new 30+ page, spiral bound Trails Guide will have 12 fold-out map plates and extensive area information. We are producing it in conjunction with Farmington Valley Visitors Assoc. and the Simsbury Main Street Partnership, and it is moving along at a fast pace. We have delivered all of the data and are now working on design. It should go to print in the late fall. As always our Adopt-a-Trail volunteers have done fantastic work, and we have added some new ones to the list – thank you all. (cont. page 3)



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## The Salmon Brook Bridge Saga

Construction has begun on the 300-foot long Salmon Brook Bridge, a disused railroad trestle only a few yards south of RT 189 overlooking Granbrook Park in East Granby, CT. It is one of only two major gaps left in the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail stretching 21 miles from southern Farmington to the Massachusetts border. The story of this success is a 12-year odyssey. Funding was in place over six years ago but after years of shuffling paper ConnDOT finally approved a design to rehabilitate the bridge in the spring of 2007. The paving of the trail was approved and finished this spring by King Construction, but the bridge was so over budget that the March 20 bids were rejected. At this time, the Farmington Valley Trails Council initiated the Salmon Brook Bridge Fund and raised about \$18,000 which we matched from our treasury for a total of \$36,000.

An insidious pattern of receiving the 80% federal funds and then waiting years for design and approval from DOT has kept Farmington Valley towns behind the eight ball as costs rise and their 20% portion balloons. The bridge redesign took a year. It essentially approved the deletion of the seating bump-outs and changed the fancy fencing into black chain link. It did include \$100,000 additional funding that DOT kicked in, but much of that went to the redesign itself. It went to bid once again on April 9, 2008. The low bid was from NJR at \$590,000. Inflation and time insured that this new bid came in, once again, higher by approximately \$170,000 than the \$36,000 we had originally pledged to the town. That shortfall was 29% of the project cost and \$36 for every citizen of the town. This amount was an impossible per capita expenditure for a small town. We met with First Selectman Jim Hayden, former First Selectman David Kilbon and Town Engineer Charlie Francis. According to State regulations, the town had 45 days to accept or reject the bids. Working with the low bidder, East Granby was able to extend the deadline to August 1, 2008. We all knew that if we could not come up with the shortfall the project would likely die.

Our local politicians and agencies went to work to try and find money. Kudos to Tom Maziarz at the Capital Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) who has been a stalwart fighter for the trail system. He met with the City of Hartford and got them to agree to re-direct some federal STP (Surface Transportation Program) grant money that would have gone unused in calendar 2008. Suddenly the town had 80% or \$136,000 toward the goal. We once again opened the Salmon Brook Bridge Fund and our board voted unanimously to augment from our treasury (cont. page 3)

### Members and Friends

Join Us At:

The Annual Meeting

A Wine Tasting

A Ride with the East Coast Greenway

*More Inside!*



## Hard Headed Facts About Safety

By Dwight Weed

### WINE TASTING

Once again we will hold our **Hidden Gems in the Farmington Valley Wine Tasting** on Friday, October 17 at the Farmington Gourmet, 230 Farmington Ave. Farmington from 6:30 - 9:00PM.

This tasting will comprised of remarkable wines and hand-crafted brews from around the world. Patrons attending will be able to order these items at a special price for this evening only. A portion of all sales will be donated to The FVTC.

Admission is \$10 for members, or \$15 per person. For tickets and more information, please contact Nancy at 860-680-5298.

As a frequent visitor to the rail trail, I've recently noticed a disturbing trend: more and more "helmetless" cyclists. Not just adults, but children as well. My favorite scene is mom, dad and the kids out for a ride. The kids have helmets, but mom and dad don't because there's no chance they'll fall off their bikes. You would think that people wouldn't need to be reminded that a moment's distraction, theirs or someone else's, could send them to the traumatic brain injury unit of their local hospital.

According to the Insurance Institute for Highway safety 770 bicyclists were killed in crashes with motor vehicles in 2006. Of that number only 5% were wearing helmets. The Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute summarized a number of studies and reported that about 540,000 bicyclists visit emergency rooms with injuries every year. Of those, about 67,000 have head injuries, and 27,000 have injuries serious enough to be hospitalized. Bicycle crashes and injuries are grossly under-reported since most are not serious enough for emergency room visits. 44,000 cyclists were reported injured in traffic crashes in 2006; again a very low number because police reports are infrequently filed. 1 in 8 of the cyclists with reported injuries had a brain injury and two-thirds of the deaths were from traumatic brain injury.

Studies have also reported that helmet laws lead to fewer bicycle related head injuries. On September 3, 2008, the Toronto Globe and Mail reported that Ontario's bike helmet law for children under 18 helps save one life every two months. The Canadian study found that the number of children who died in the province every year fell by 50% since the mandatory helmet law came into effect in late 1995. While Connecticut has a helmet law for children under 15, the statute only requires helmet use for children riding on the traveled portion of the highway and provides no sanctions for its violation.

Clearly helmet use is a vital element of safe cycling. In addition, helmeted riders are more visible and seem to be accorded more respect from motorists. And they're much cheaper than a visit to the emergency room.

## 2008 Annual Meeting

Please join the Farmington Valley Trails Council for its annual meeting on Friday, November 14 at 7:00 p.m. at the Avon Senior Center Community Room, 35 W. Avon Road, Avon.

Bruce Donald, our President, will give a year-end report on the FVTC, trail construction and other initiatives and news of interest to our members, followed by the presentation of the Annual FVTC Community Service Award. There is no admission charge and light refreshments will be served.

Following the business portion of the program we are delighted to present a talk on bicycling the Lewis & Clark Trail by Stratford resident Al Galletly. Prior to retiring as vice president of public affairs from GTE Corporation (now Verizon) in 1992, Al had already begun planning for his first cross-country bicycle ride. Initially, he had intended to simply fly to Los Angeles with his bicycle, dip his tires in the Pacific Ocean and begin the ride back to Connecticut. A co-worker asked if he would consider turning the ride into a nationwide fundraiser, and so was born PAAAR, Pioneers Across America for Alzheimers Research. After the 4,791 mile ride – from Newport Beach, CA, to Washington, DC – was concluded, the effort had raised over a quarter million dollars. The following year, Al cycled from Jacksonville, FL to Connecticut. In 1999, Al organized another cross-country bicycle trip, this time with his wife, Jan, and a group of 20 "over-50's" who made the 3,100 mile trip from the west coast to St. Augustine, Florida. More recently, in 2006, Al and Jan and another couple cycled portions of the Lewis & Clark Trail, covering some 880 miles of the 3,200 mile route. Cycling through portions of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Montana, they finished their ride cycling the Katy Trail in Missouri and the levee river trails in Illinois. It is this excursion that will be the basis of the talk Al will give at our November meeting.

### NEWS!

We are pleased to announce that REI, one of the premier outdoor gear and equipment outfitters in the world has become a major contributor to the FVTC and will become the sponsor of next year's Trails in Motion event on June 5th 2009. We look forward to great things from the relationship.



## President's Letter, Cont.

In conjunction with the good news regarding the Salmon Brook Bridge, ConnDOT also instructed the Town of Suffield that suddenly there was additional money with which to augment the re-bid of the .37-mile Suffield project, which if you recall was designed with two \$150,000 bridges over tiny brooks. We don't know how much money would become available to the town, and they have still not received a letter of authorization to re-bid the project. As you know, time is our enemy, and we hope that DOT will allow the bids to take place as soon as possible. The new "approved" DOT budget for this one-third of a mile of trail has now ballooned to \$660,000, with the substantial portion being the two bridges and DOT and consulting engineers' fees.

At the Board of Directors request, I will take on two more years at the helm of the FVTC. I've enjoyed the last four, and with so many projects brewing, I felt that I would help best to provide continuity and stay on. Thank you all for your support, it is much appreciated. Please join us at our Annual Meeting at the Avon Senior Center on November 14<sup>th</sup>. As always you can find me at 860-677-9462 or at rbd1414@hotmail.com. My regards to you all. — Bruce.

## Salmon Brook Bridge, Cont.

any additional funds that we could not raise from donations up to \$34,000. We have had some very large donations and have only \$7,000 to go to meet our goal. This makes our total promised to the town \$70,000. The town had two budgets and a school voted down, and it was unlikely that even a referendum on partial funding would have passed. Our President, Bruce Donald was proud to write a letter confirming our intentions to East Granby.

In the middle of July the project engineers at DOT sent an email to Charlie Francis stating that the concrete subcontractor specified by low bidder NJR was not certified to install rebar. There would be no letter authorizing the Town to award the contract. This after DOT had all the documents since late April. Everyone knew that the bureaucracy of credentialing and endless foot-dragging at DOT is such that the project was once again in serious peril. With only 2 weeks left, we contacted Sen. John Kissel, Rep. Ruth Fahrbach and Rep. Richard Ferrari of East Granby, Rep. David McCluskey of West Hartford and Simsbury Rep. Linda Schofield; all dedicated to getting the trail built. CRCOG and other parties were also involved on putting direct pressure on the bosses of the project engineers at DOT.

If there was ever evidence that political pressure works on a bureaucracy this is it. On the 27<sup>th</sup> of June, the subcontractor was suddenly certified for rebar, and DOT's authorization letter also appeared. East Granby held a Special Town Meeting on July, 16<sup>th</sup> on the project, and with 100% of the funding in place, unanimously approved the project to go ahead. The final cost of 5.57 miles of trail (of which 1.2 miles are in Granby) including the Salmon Brook Bridge, will be \$1,775,520. In a letter to the FVTC, Jim Hayden, the First Selectman of East Granby said: "I would like to thank you, your board and your members for the phenomenal support which the FVTC has given East Granby on the Greenway Project ... Simply said, without the Farmington Valley Trails Council covering the 20% town share of the last \$170,000, the project would have been abandoned or postponed until better economic times."

The Farmington Valley Trails Council's Board of Directors wishes to thank all of you who have donated, helping to build the bridge and make the Farmington Valley one of the very few regions in the Northeast traversed by a world-class multi-use greenway.



The Salmon Brook Bridge stripped of old decking and ready for new construction in the first week of September.

The Town of East Granby estimates that the project will be complete in December.

### FVTC—ECG Ride

Join us on Saturday October 11th at 10:00AM at Mitchell Auto Group, 84 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, CT for an easy-going 22-mile ride with FVTC and East Coast Greenway representatives who will talk about recent accomplishments and some future plans and challenges.

A dutch-treat lunch will be held after the ride.

RSVP with Kitty Carter at (401) 789-4625 or [kitty@greenway.org](mailto:kitty@greenway.org)

### FVTC DIRECTORS

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 Dennis Mayer, Vice President  
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**FARMINGTON VALLEY  
GREENWAY NEWS**

This publication is written and formatted by board members. We thank Data Management Inc. for contributing the printing of this publication. The Farmington Valley Trails Council is a 501 (c) (3) 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.

**Contact Information**

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**We're on the Web!**

**[www.fvgreenway.org](http://www.fvgreenway.org)**

# Your Support is Important!



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Would you like to be contacted for volunteer opportunities? Y / N

Comments?

Detach and mail to FVTC, P.O. Box 576, Tariffville, CT 06070

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