



Greenwords:

Support for trail development in Rhode Island

The Rhode Island Recreation Trails Program, facilitated by the Department of Environmental Management in cooperation with the RI Department of Transportation, is meant to encourage development and maintenance of recreational trails and trail related projects. Funding for the program is provided by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), which authorized the Recreation Trails Program.

DEM and DOT recently invited state, local and non-profit agencies to submit proposals to fund trail development, improvement, and equipment through the Recreation Trails Program. Six municipalities and one land trust were chosen from a field of 26 applicants. The funds will be used to build or improve trails for all Rhode Islanders to enjoy. This year's recipients have exciting plans to create or restore trails and bridges on town or land trust property.

This issue of Trail Mix highlights the plans of four grant recipients. The Town of Bristol received funds to restore old paths so residents and visitors can enjoy trails laid down long

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Burrillville Greenway will connect villages in Northern Rhode Island

By Thomas J. Kravitz

Before the days of highways and truck transport, cargo trains moved product to Burrillville's manufacturers which were located within numerous, small village centers that popped up adjacent to watercourses. The main railroad of interest was the former New York, New Haven and Hartford rail road, which traversed westerly through Burrillville. For quite some time,

Burrillville's historic planners had always envisioned converting this right of way into a pedestrian trail. The 1965 Comprehensive Plan referred to the right of way as a future scenic trail.

A 6,200 linear foot portion of the right of way remained intact over the years, thankfully, not having been subdivided or built upon. It

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New bridge to be built in the Grills Preserve

By Harvey C. Perry, II

The Westerly Land Trust and the Hopkinton Land Trust have recently been awarded a Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management Trails Enhancement Grant to construct a pedestrian bridge over the Pawcatuck River to connect the trails of two conservation areas on opposite sides of the river.

The approximately 70 foot long bridge will be constructed at the site of the former historic Polly Coon Bridge, with its large granite block abutments. The bridge supports will be built within the existing stone and gravel ramps that approach the abutments, to avoid altering wetlands or the historic structures.



Land Trust board members visit the site of Polly Coon Bridge.

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Greenwords

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ago in their community and allow access to forgotten historical sites. The Town of Warren will use grant funds to complete a town owned stretch of the old Providence-Fall River railroad right of way. Both these projects will eventually connect with existing bike paths nearby.

The Westerly Land Trust will restore an old bridge over the Pawcatuck River in the Grills Preserve to allow visitors to cross from the Westerly to the Hopkinton sections of the preserve.

Fall and winter are great times to enjoy the changing landscape in Rhode Island. We hope you will take the time to do some hiking and biking on our community and state maintained trails. From Burrillville to Westerly, there are many fine trails in Rhode Island to enjoy. Make sure check out the dates of Rhode Island's hunting season at <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/fishwild/pdf/datesbag.pdf> and wear orange.

Future issues will highlight those who use a bicycle, boat, or their feet in their daily lives to commute to work or travel around their communities. We invite you to tell us how you or your friends use alternate forms of travel to conduct your business and your life. Your story will help us inspire others to leave their cars at home and substitute healthier ways to travel. Email your stories to Sueb4@cox.net or janice.velozo@yahoo.com

Sue Barker Editor



Warren Spur opens new bike route to Massachusetts

By Davison Bolster

In 1987, Warren's Grant Administrator Fidele Incollingo asked me to go look at a piece of property that had just been given to the Town. The Town was interested in creating a recreation park with a playground, ball fields, pavilion, etc. I asked Jay Barry of the Warren Recreation Board to accompany me and we set out to walk through the 20-acre parcel. About two thirds of the site was fields lined with stone walls and the other third was forested wetlands. Running along the northern edge of the property was a path through the woods. As we walked along this path, we discovered an old concrete marker post with a big 'W' on it. We quickly realized that this was the abandoned bed of the Providence to Fall River Railroad line. The 'W' signified the approach to Warren, and this line tied into what is now the East Bay Bike Path.

We reported to the administrator that at least one third of the site was undevelopable wetlands, but that the old rail bed running along the northern edge of the property could be an access route to the recreation park. Mr. Incollingo informed us that as a child, he helped deliver produce from Warren to Fall River on that very railroad line. He then asked me to come up with some schematic drawings for the proposed recreation park. It was clear that the rail bed was

going to be a key aspect of developing the site and I pushed the idea of a bike path. In 1992, with approval of the town, I wrote an ISTE [Intermodal Surface Transportation Enhancement Act] grant application for the bike path, and we were awarded \$500,000 through RIDOT. This was for the engineering and construction of as much of the path as possible.

I knew Bill Napolitano at SRPEDD [Southeastern (Mass) Regional Planning & Economic Development District] in Taunton and explained the project to him. He was able to get it included in the SE Mass regional bike path plans, which we then sent to RIDOT, so that each state would know what the other was planning. This regional context has been important to the path's funding and development.

In 1997, the Warren-East Bay Bike Path Extension Feasibility Study was completed by

Keyes Engineering with Jane Weidman Planning Consultant for RIDOT. After 10 years of patient vigilance, we thought this would finally spur the construction of the path. However, the town was reluctant to move forward due to private ownership of a section of rail bed that would be needed in the future. Around the year 2000, with the Town not moving forward on the project, RIDOT took back the remaining grant funds and the project appeared dead.

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A bench overlooking the Kickemuit River invites bike path users to rest awhile.

Dear Dr. Sprocket,

In the last issue, Dr. Sprocket addressed the issue of instructing inexperienced and young riders on staying safe while riding on the road. This issue presents additional techniques that will be useful for all on-road riders. Dr. Sprocket recommends rereading the first half of my two part article to refresh and further instill basic safety behaviors (available at <http://www.rigreenways.org>).

A Dear Apprehensive, Congratulations on coming back into the cyclist fold, for being a good role model, and sharing important time with your kids. Although riding on a bike paths is a great way to get health-promoting physical activity and reconnect with the natural world, few bike paths provide access to many of the destinations (stores, schools, work, etc.) that can be reached only by using our cars. Because of the greatly expanded territory that is available, the open road holds a special lure to beginners and experienced riders.

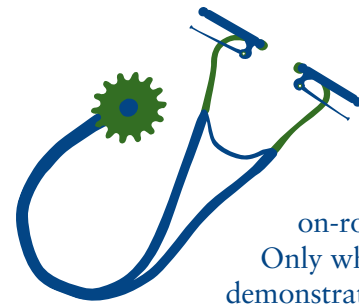
When approaching parked cars, keep a watchful eye out for drivers who might open their door directly into your path. When I see a driver sitting in a car, I always assume they will open it, and I stay far enough away when passing to allow clearance. Intersections pose special hazards. Many drivers fail to use directional signals especially when making right turns. If you happen to be riding next to them (often in their blind spot) and assume they will be going straight, you'll have a hard time avoiding being hit.

The standard safety rule of using extra caution when you see a ball bouncing or rolling into the street applies especially to cyclists, since a child that is running to get it may not even hear your bike approaching. Any collision will likely cause you much

harm even when it's not with an automobile. Dogs, deer, skunks, squirrels, and pedestrians often cause cyclists to take evasive action, which in itself can cause you to get in trouble.

All of the above hazards become more dangerous when traffic is heavy or when you're riding on a road that has small or no shoulders. Vehicular noise can mask any sounds that come from your bike or horn, and motorists may be paying even more attention to other cars, and not notice a bike. When possible, try to avoid heavily traveled roads entirely.

As a parent, you know most about each child's developmental level, maturity, and capabilities. When you feel confident you understand and have dealt with most of the above hazards, you can begin to give your children



instructions and some limited on-road experience. Only when each child has demonstrated to you his/her capabilities should you allow them to venture out unsupervised.

While all of the inherent hazards may seem overwhelming, it is still possible to enjoy riding on the road, and begin to incorporate a bicycle into your recreation and transportation options. Many cities in the US and most European cities have made great strides towards making their cities bicycle friendly. Take a look at this site to see an example of one city's progress: <http://www.flixxy.com/netherlands-rush-hour.htm>

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

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William C. O'Neill Bike Path nears completion

Crews have started working on the next segment of the bike path from Route 108 in Wakefield to Mumford Road in Narragansett. The length of the new section is just under one mile and will increase the total length of the trail to 6.6 miles.

Completion of this last section will create a direct route to the beach in Narragansett and eliminate the often hazardous trip around the rotary on Route 108 now necessary to bike to the beach. Tourists will soon be able to leave their cars at home and bike safely on the bike path from the Kingston Station to the beach in Narragansett.

RIDOT projects that the new section will be completed by June 2011.

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Legislative update

Good news, bad news, on national bike-related legislation

By Barry Schiller



The good news is that there are positive developments in Washington! For example, bills have been introduced (HR4021, S1156) to reauthorize and expand the "safe routes to school program," "promote complete streets" (HR1443, S584) and "active" transportation (HR4722) which is biking and walking. Under the leadership of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood the USDOT has been promoting the idea of livable communities where folks can walk or bike to many destinations and avoid the car-dependence for even simple tasks. They have indeed emphasized this in much of the competitive grants they have awarded under aspects of the stimulus program. This can be particularly helpful to Rhode Island where we have compact core cities, traditional town centers, a sense of history, and a strong "smart growth" movement. The USDOT has also taken a leadership role in calling attention to the dangers of distracted driving and there are bills (HR3535, S1536) that would penalize states that do not take action to combat this.

Since there is a big backlog of needed road and bridge repairs, it would seem that adequate funding for the bike/pedestrian programs will be generally dependent upon increasing the funding for transportation infrastructure. So the Obama administration has sensibly proposed a \$50 billion program for transportation infrastructure paid for in part by reducing subsidies to fossil fuel industries. While

this is a modest start on a problem estimated (by the American Society of Civil Engineers) to be about \$2.2 trillion in infrastructure needs, it is a start. It is especially important for Rhode Island as we reportedly have the worst roads and bridges and an already weak transit system facing cuts just as there is a long wish list for new transit services and for new bike facilities - along the Blackstone, in Narragansett, Cranston, Tiverton, Aquidneck Island, Coventry, Warren, even Providence!

It is also a good time to invest in transportation because due to the recession, interest rates are low and costs are down, reportedly about 18% below estimates.

So what is the bad news? It is that traditional bi-partisan support for transportation investment has broken down. Congress has not acted on the President's proposal that the Republicans have opposed, apparently thinking that blocking an Obama accomplishment would be good politics. Republicans in Congress have taken aim against the safe-routes-to-school and transportation enhancement programs that help fund bike projects, and their candidates around the country, running to reduce spending, sometimes single out bike/ped and rail and transit for targets. This is a disappointment for someone who grew up as I did with strong Republican leaders (e.g. Nelson Rockefeller (NY) Tom McCall (OR) Frank Sargent (MA) and John Chafee (RI)) who saw the value of public investment in transportation.

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A dedicated bike

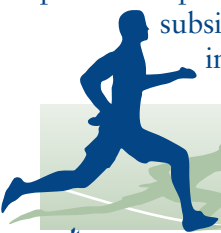
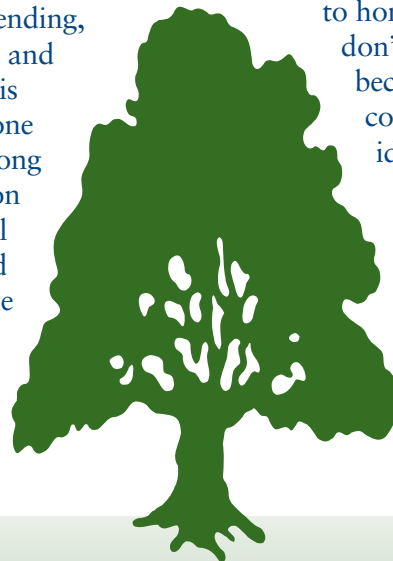
We did not have to look far to find our featured commuter for this issue. We asked Matt Moritz to give us a short history of how he came to be a dedicated bike commuter. His story will inspire you.

RIGreenways: What inspired you to begin bike commuting and give up your car?

Matt Moritz: A combination of factors led to me not having a car. I moved to Rhode Island and downsized to a one-car family, then a divorce and lack of a job decided the issue of not having a car. Moving to Providence and having a bike made it a no brainer and I got deeply interested in sustainability issues and how we use energy to keep our society running. It didn't make sense to me to use gas to go a few miles to work or the grocery store when I was perfectly capable of doing so without. When I was job-hunting, I made it a priority to be able to use transit, as I didn't want to own a car just for the purpose of getting to and from work.

RIGreenways: How regularly do you commute on your bike?

Moritz: Almost daily. I commute about four and a half miles each way from the Summit Neighborhood on Providence's East Side, to Valley Street in Olneyville. The ride takes 20 minutes to work and 25 minutes to home. On days I don't ride, it's usually because weather conditions aren't ideal. I don't ride in the rain, or just after a snowstorm before the roads are sufficiently cleared. I figured it out at one point that I ride about 180 work days a year.



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commuter – Matt Moritz does not own a car

RIGreenways: What is the best thing about bike commuting?

Moritz: The chance to clear my head on the way home is great. Even if it was a stressful workday, I don't remember it when I get where I'm going.



Matt Moritz, NBW advocacy chair, feeling good after his morning commute.

If I'm a little bit sleepy in the morning, I'm pretty much energized and awake by the time I get to the office. The flexibility to explore side streets without really making any long

trips makes it possible to have a different commute everyday without making it much longer. Honestly, I like almost everything about bike commuting except for the occasional inconsiderate driver or people hurrying past me in their cars. Occasionally, when the refrigerator is empty and it's raining, I just want to get in a car and go to the store and get the trip done with. After three years though, I don't really think about it much, it's just a way of life.

RIGreenways: Do you wear specific bike clothing and change at work?

Moritz: Almost exclusively I commute in whatever I'm going to wear that day, a polo shirt, button down, and khakis. During warm months, I'll wear normal shorts and change to pants at the office. During the winter, I wear extra thermal layers that are too warm to keep on all day, so I change in the locker room at the office. If I'm

heading to a friend's house after work, I'll take a change of clothes and wear bike clothes during the trip. If I'm meeting someone for a social occasion and won't have a chance to change, I'll just take it easy and wear whatever is appropriate for the event.

I was surprised recently to show up at an upscale establishment in Providence, which I had ridden to in a sports coat, button down and slacks. I was walking past the hostess stand and let her know that I was meeting friends at the bar. She immediately asked if I wanted to check my helmet at the coat check. She proceeded to

walk with me back to the coat check niche, get me a number from a hanger, and place the helmet and matching number on a table in the room. I was pleasantly surprised to have someone think of taking the helmet and to offer the service was great. I'll have to

remember that from now on to look for coat checks when I don't want to keep track of my helmet and bag.

RIGreenways: How would you convince a friend to commute on a bike?

Moritz: Imagine not paying for gasoline or car repairs, arriving awake and refreshed at the office, arriving home completely de-stressed and happy. The best part of my commute is the emotional pick-me-up it gives me and it doesn't take me much longer than driving would, and with very little of the frustration of sitting in traffic, and it's a lot faster than transit for short trips in the city.

My biggest thing is that it isn't necessary to have anything other than a bicycle and a bag to carry a change of clothes and some front and rear lights. Find a good route, and go as often as you can, even if it's infrequent. If work doesn't have showers, make sure to have wipes and/or towels at the office (action wipes are highly recommended) to dry off. In winter, a good set of gloves, and face protection from the wind, but just a normal coat is good, even into fairly cold temperatures.

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Warren Spur

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For the next several years, I stayed in touch with RIDOT in the hopes that funding may return for the project. Then around 2005, we were informed that the funds could be available, so Warren reapplied for funding. This time it was for \$2,200,000, and with a renewed commitment from the Town, the grant was awarded and the project was back on track. In 2008, the engineering was done for the first one-mile stretch that the Town already owned in the middle of the 2½ mile proposed path. This past summer, construction of this phase was completed, running from "Broken Bridge" at the Kickemuit River, along the new recreation park, east to Long Lane near the Swansea line. Like many area bike paths, it is a beautiful linear park with stone walls, split rail fences, a wooden bridge and benches.

Nearby, Swansea's bike path awaits, all completed several years ago, thanks to funding through SRPEDD and Dave Webster and his crew at the Swansea DPW. This past month, Warren's Town Planner Caroline Wells, announced that she had secured a \$400,000 grant towards replacing the 'Broken Bridge' to bring the new bike path across the Kickemuit River. Once this is built, the momentum will grow to complete the ½ mile connection to Swansea and the one mile connection to the East Bay Bike Path. Eventually, bikers will be able to ride from the East Bay Bike Path, and all points north and west, through Warren, Swansea, Somerset, over the new Taunton River Bridge into Fall River, and through the many towns along the south coast to Cape Cod.

A bike path is also being built along the Taunton River, connecting Somerset north through Dighton,

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Burrillville

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connects Burrillville's two most populated villages neighborhoods of Pascoag and Harrisville.

Currently, planning consultants Horsley Witten are nearly finished with a plan to improve this railroad bed as a multi-functional pedestrian path. We expect to have construction drawings in hand by November 1st and bids, thereafter, during December. Depending on the pricing associated with the bid process, we may begin construction on the path during the spring of 2011.

By connecting Pascoag to Harrisville, town residents will have a safer, more picturesque means of walking between these two neighborhoods. Enticing people to walk to Pascoag on foot or via a bicycle is a good thing because folks will be more apt to spend money in the Pascoag business area. The same goes for Harrisville which contains the Stillwater Mill Complex and a new Town Library. There's also other institutional offices in Harrisville along with a few eateries that people can frequent. I deliberately used

the word safer because currently pedestrians must traverse through a narrow section of State Route 107 when leaving or entering Pascoag, which cannot be widened for sidewalks due to graveyards being on each side of the roadway. It's

very dangerous due to topographical changes in this area of the road which is also an "S" curve. RIDOT supported the development of this path as a safer means of pedestrian travel to and from the villages.

In addition to the railroad right of way, two other parcels came with it; each totaling 18 and 24 acres respectively. One parcel encompasses a pond locally known as Duck Pond, as the

pond is shaped like a duck if viewed westerly from the air. An existing hiking trail bisects the railroad bed southerly to Duck Pond, which will make for a brief mountain bike trip for those using the path. Currently, cross country skiers use the path during winter. This will not change as the path will not be plowed during the snow season.

Thomas J. Kravitz is director of Planning & Economic Development in Burrillville, RI



Narragansett Bay Wheelmen members explore the proposed greenway.

Warren Spur

Taunton, Mansfield into Boston. This could become a major section of the East Coast Greenway, connecting Providence to Boston through the East Bay. As more of these bike path sections get completed and connected,

momentum will grow to complete the entire regional system.

Davison Bolster is a Warren resident and recipient of the "Friends of Bike Paths" award

Legislation

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But current deficits have understandably spooked folks into thinking that now is not the time to borrow and build, even though deferring projects costs more in the long run. Tea party activists rail against government spending and with their talk radio allies, have convinced much of the public that they are overtaxed, that public works are wasteful, and they shouldn't have to pay for maintenance and improvements. Actually, the Federal gas tax has not been raised since 1993, indeed USA Today reports the gas tax burden is the lowest in inflation-adjusted dollars it has ever been, it is just half as costly per 1000 miles driven as it was in 1975. However, no-one dares proposing raising taxes for transportation as they know they will be relentlessly slammed, as running against taxes that pay for infrastructure seems to be good politics. But it puts the future at risk since if our transportation systems crumble, so does the economy.

Fortunately, there are diverse leaders in business, labor, public health, and the environmental movement that see the need for infrastructure investment to grow the economy in a more sustainable way. Bicycle programs are intrinsically sustainable and generally popular. And, as anyone attending the recent bike summit can attest, our community is pretty well organized, both in Washington and around the region. It is up to us to encourage the President, our new Congress, Governor, and the public generally, to give the support needed for our bike programs.

Barry Schiller, is the RI Bicycle Coalition legislative chair

Grills Preserve

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Westerly Land Trust maps are made possible through the generosity of the Voss Hutton Memorial Fund.

The Grills Preserve offers facilities for canoers, hikers, even scientists.

The approximately 550-acre Westerly Grills Preserve has an extensive network of walking trails. It also includes canoe landing sites along the River that could become parts of a designated Blue Trail. The Hopkinton Land Trust's Grills Wildlife Sanctuary consists of approximately 430 acres across the River. A network of trails is being developed using existing laneways and paths wherever possible. A conservation and pedestrian easement has been obtained for land where the Sanctuary is bisected by private property.

The officials of the two Land Trusts believe that the bridge connecting the two Preserves will

significantly enhance their recreational value to Rhode Island residents and visitors. The families and other hikers use the walking paths for passive enjoyment. They are also used for study by students and scientists. Portions of the existing trails are currently used as a course for Cross-Country Meets by the Westerly High School. When it is completed, it is possible that the course will be reconfigured to include the pedestrian bridge, and be used by both the Westerly High School and the Chariho Regional High School.

Harvey C. Perry, II is the president of The Westerly Land Trust

Proposed fitness trail will lengthen the path to health in Bristol

By Walter Burke

The Town of Bristol is currently renovating their town beach and sports complex to include a fitness trail. The town plans to increase the trail to about nine miles in length. The planned route will extend around the sports fields, basketball court, tennis courts, and wooded areas on the property to connect to the East Bay Bike Path. The trail will take users through forested areas, open fields, protected salt marshes, and beautiful coastal areas. Hardy walkers will enjoy climbing challenging hills. All will enjoy scenic sitting areas and two exercise fitness stations.

As visitors travel along the trail they can follow a stream created by “daylighting” an existing storm drain to demonstrate part of Bristol’s clean water project and the town’s commitment to environmental

responsibility. This section of the trail will include kiosks to help visitors understand the value of daylighting storm drains. Further along the way one might encounter historic stone walls and a historic bridle trail that will tie into the new trail system.

The surfaces will vary depending on the proposed use. A large part of trail surfaces will be wood chips. Stone dust and compacted blue stone will comprise the surface of other areas. Concrete ADA ramps in various locations will make the entire trail handicapped accessible.

Bristol has partnered with the Newport Woman’s Resource Center to build a peaceful serene overlook in recognition of women’s issues such as domestic violence. The overlook is meant to provide a place for quiet contemplation. The location will be



A historic bridle path links into the new trail.

on the shoreline overlooking the Town Beach.

Future plans include construction of a bridge over the East Bay Bike Path to connect the planned Community Center to the Bristol Town Beach and Sports Complex. The estimated completion date for the new Community Center is September 15, 2011.

Walter V. Burke is the director of Bristol Parks and Recreation