

TRAIL TRACKS



Fall, 2012

Winter Photo Contest

This year's Rail Trail photo contest is now open! As soon as the snow flies, get your cameras out there on the Trail. We would love to see your winter photos taken of, on, or from the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail. The deadline for your submissions is April 15, 2013. For more details, see the entry form on our website, www.mvrailtrail.com, or call Amy at 524-5958.

Fit Family Day

The Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail Council shared in a fun-filled day on the Rail Trail for the second annual Fit Family Day. On Saturday, July 14th, over two dozen children biked, walked, ran, and one even tried roller blading, on the Trail. Their efforts were rewarded with healthy snacks and prizes. The event took place at the Franklin Park West parking area in St. Albans and on Pleasant Street behind Bates Farm, Home and Garden in Enosburg Falls.

The day was made much more successful by the partnering of Fit & Healthy Enosburg, Hull Insurance, the Enosburg Business Association and Safe Routes to School while they hosted the first ever Enosburg Family Fun & Safety Day to compliment the Council's Fit Family Day activities on the Enosburg section of the MVRT. A raffle was held for each participant and Debra Hastings of Enosburg won the



Fit Family Day participants in Enosburg Falls

Photo credit: Melissa McKinstry

grand prize of a \$100 Kevin Smith's gift certificate.

Alisha Sawyer

Electronic Contact

With more and more communications being done electronically these days, the Council is slowly moving in that direction. We are now offering two options for interacting with us electronically:

PayPal – for those of you who wish to pay your membership dues or make donations electronically, you can now submit your payment on our website www.mvrailtrail.com using PayPal. Thanks very much to Amy and Emily at the Northwest Regional Planning Commission for setting us up with PayPal!

E-mail – if you would prefer to receive mailings from us (newsletters and meeting agendas/minutes) by e-mail, please get in touch at (802) 524-5958 or e-mail aadams@nrpcvt.com. Let us know your e-mail address and which mailings you would like to receive electronically.

Of course, if you would prefer us to continue communicating with you via the US Postal Service, that is not a problem. You need not do anything. We are happy to continue sending you paper versions of our mailings.

Thanks very much to Friend of the Trail Ed Holm for these suggestions!

Seymour Road Crossing

With the approval of Walmart in St. Albans, the developers are required to make traffic improvement to Route 7 in the vicinity of the new store. One of the intersections to be addressed is Route 7 and Seymour Rd. Seymour Rd. is the short street that connects Route 105 to Route 7; it separates the MVRT's St. Albans parking area from the start of the Trail. Trail users have to cross Seymour Rd. in order to start their outing on the MVRT.

A 2007 US 7 Corridor Study Update by VTrans looked into the best way to improve the Route 105/Route 7 intersection and rejected the use of Seymour Rd. due to safety concerns for users of the MVRT. The recommendation in this study was to align Route 105 with Rewes Drive (located south of Seymour Rd.) and installing a traffic light there. Seymour Rd. would have been closed off from Route 105, making it into a dead end at the MVRT parking area. However, the findings of this study were disregarded when Walmart was permitted, and plans now call for a stop light at the intersection of Route 7 and Seymour Rd.

The Council is very concerned that this traffic light will result in increased traffic on Seymour Rd. and create a safety issue for Trail users crossing Seymour Rd. between the MVRT's St. Albans parking area and the start of the Trail. Although these concerns have been raised with VTrans, it seems that there is no chance that this plan will be overturned. The Council is

now making every effort to have VTrans install calming devices to slow motorists' speed as they go through the Trail area crossing.

Trail Maintenance

Council members looked after many trail maintenance issues this past summer. Mark Bushey and Dave Stanley replaced the shingles on the roof of the North Sheldon kiosk and removed the overhanging branches which had caused the shingles and underlying wood to rot. Jane Williams and Don Mueller spent



Mark Bushey (left) and Dave Stanley repair kiosk roof at MVRT's N. Sheldon parking area

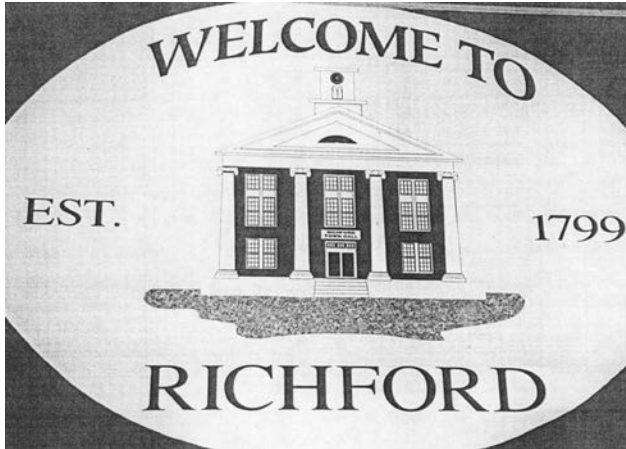
time cabling benches and picnic tables into the ground. Dave Stanley and Don Mueller replaced all the Town boundary signs with freshly painted signs. And Dave Stanley worked with an adjacent landowner to improve signage for the Rail Trail at a confusing intersection in Sheldon Junction. Thanks Dave, Don, Jane, and Mark for your hard work in keeping the MVRT looking cared for. It's thanks to your efforts that we receive so many compliments on the condition of the Trail!

Richford Named Trail Town

The Board of Directors of the Northern Forest Canoe Trail (NFCT) has designated Richford as the official Trail Town in Vermont. The designation allows Richford to apply for grants and be advertised on the Canoe Trail

brochures and maps. The other trail towns are Old Forge, NY, Erroll, NH, and Stratton, ME.

A local committee has been working with officials from the NFCT to focus on economic development linked to recreational assets. Primary benefits are in the form of tourism. In addition, the goal is a healthier community, connecting residents with the outdoors and youth engagement in community resources.



At the last meeting, the group identified positive features in the town including the Missisquoi River and the proximity to Jay Peak, the Long Trail and the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail. They also cited the historic downtown and international connection to Canada. Richford has the potential to become a recreation hub.

Some of the ideas the group brainstormed as potential projects are: a local map that showcases Richford and its assets, and additional boat access in town, various

beautification projects including planting flowers along the river and increased rental options for canoes and bicycles.

The select board is looking into a grant from Fish & Wildlife to add a canoe access behind the bank.

Linda Collins

Updates

MVRT Parking Areas

Our efforts to construct a parking area at Greens Corner (just past MVRT mile 3 where Route 105 crosses the Trail) continue. The funds remaining from our original grants are insufficient and several permits need to be obtained. We have been working with VTrans on viable options and VTrans has offered 2 alternatives. The Council will be discussing these at its next business meeting.

Lamoille Valley Rail Trail

The Act 250 permit has been issued. Construction can now begin. But because VAST does not have adequate matching funds to construct all of Phase 1, the Lamoille section (about 17.5 miles) will be constructed first. When more matching funds are raised, more federal funds can be accessed and the remaining Phase 1 sections (Swanton to Sheldon and West Danville to St. Johnsbury) will be constructed.

Friends of the MVRT

Thank You to all of our returning friends for your continued support of the Trail and the Council:

Scott Christiansen

Barry Levine

David Stanley

Gary & Cindy Rutkowski

Edwin Holm, Jr.

Linda Lothian

George & Virginia Lewis

Don Mueller

Madeline McDermott-Miller

Nat & Nini Worman

Marian Fritz

Marilyn Takefman

Vaughn & JoAnne Rock

Marie Brouillette

Lorraine Bertrand

Paul & Grayce Anderson

Become Involved!

If you value the MVRT and would like to become involved in keeping it the treasure that it is, the Council would welcome your input!

Council Meetings: We hold regular business meetings on the third Monday of every other month (January-March-May-July-September-November) from 6-8 pm. and would love to hear your ideas on ways to improve the trail user experience. The meeting location rotates between several towns along the MVRT corridor. See our website www.mvrailtrail.com or call (802) 524-5958 for more information on

upcoming meetings. Our meetings are open to the public; join us, we'd love to have your participation.

Town Reps: Our Council presently has openings for a representative from Sheldon and one from St. Albans Town. If you live in Sheldon or St. Albans Town and would like to be the liaison between the Council and your municipality, please get in touch (www.mvrailtrail.com or call (802) 524-5958). We'd like to hear the views of all our Trail communities.

Northwest Vermont Rail Trail Council
c/o Northwest Regional Planning Commission
155 Lake Street
St. Albans, VT 05478

The Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail

Farms, Forests, Fields, and Communities: Come Harvest Our Agricultural Heritage!