



Friends of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, Inc.

Post Office Box 995, Morrisville, VT 05661

March 2007

You're Invited! Upcoming Events On & About the Trail

The rails have been removed from the trail and the trail is now open to the public to use at their own risk (where lack of bridges does not prohibit access). The trail is rough and uneven but walkable and mountain-bikeable. VAST will be making improvements to the trail in the years ahead. If you haven't already done so, get out on the trail and enjoy Vermont's latest, greatest recreational pathway! All-terrain vehicles are prohibited from using the trail.

Please join the Friends of the LVRT for our first outing on the trail!

Sat. May 19 • Bird Walk on the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail

Join an early morning bird outing along the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail. On Saturday, May 19th, bring your binoculars and hiking shoes to Morrisville. We will bird along the Morristown to Hyde Park stretch of the Rail Trail. This section of the trail passes along the east shore of Lake Lamoille away from the highway. The early spring warblers should be back! About 1.5 hours.

Level of birding: beginning on up. For more info & meet details, contact: Steve Rae at 253-4896.

Slideshow: 800 km / 500 miles by Bicycle across Quebec • 6:30 pm

Thurs, Apr. 26 • Hardwick Town House

Mon., May 7 • Swanton Town Hall

Tues., May 22 • Smuggs Resort

(Directions on page 5)

Trail advocates need look no further than our neighbors to the north to see wonderful models for long-distance trails. Quebec's "La Route Verte" includes 3,600 km of trails and bikeways. Last summer, Becca Roof and her sweetheart Tom Good pedaled 800 km on a designated route that linked three rail-trails and a canal towpath-trail, with sections of bikeway, road shoulders, and even a dirt road or two. Their trip went from the Laurentians to Montreal and then on to Quebec City via the Eastern Townships. Becca will present a slideshow of their journey, show how ...

continued on page 5...



Quebec's La Route Verte, near Farnham.

Annual Meeting: "The Longest Rail Trail in New England..."

That's what Craig Della Penna called the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, as he foretold dollar signs and economic development for communities along the trail. Craig, who is Executive Director of Northeast Greenway Solutions, was the featured speaker at the Friends of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail's first annual meeting on November 15, 2006 at Hilary's Restaurant in Morristown.

A former New England Field Representative to the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, Craig's presentation showcased the economic aspects of rail trails in the Northeast. His slide show featured scenic photos of rail trails in New England, New York, and Canada, and was peppered with both history and humor.

Northeast Greenway Solutions is a non-profit consulting firm specializing in bringing communities, engineers, and grass roots organizations together to find common ground in rail trail and greenway development. For more information visit www.greenwaysolutions.org.

The Friends elected and welcomed five new Board members that evening. Leon Whitcomb and David Polow from Morrisville, Robert Ide from Peacham, Bill Bartlett from Hyde Park and Roger Damon from St. Johnsbury all of whom share both enthusiasm, and commitment to seeing the trail completed for the enjoyment of all.

— article by Laural Ruggles

We invite you to connect with the Friends of LVRT:

- *Send us your email address to help us save on postage! Email FriendsLVRT@aol.com to get on the list!*
- *Join one of our working groups – see page 3.*
- *Volunteer to lead a walk or ride on the trail! Contact Laural Ruggles at 748-7590*

Hope to see you on the trail!

Rail Trail Lease Signing: Beginning the Next Steps

A lease agreement between the State of Vermont, Agency of Transportation and Vermont Association of Snow Travelers, Inc. (VAST), was signed in the Governor's office on October 2, 2006 – the culmination of lengthy negotiations between the State and VAST regarding use of the State-owned railroad corridor between St. Johnsbury and Swanton, formerly known as the Lamoille Valley Railroad. The purpose of the lease is to allow VAST to develop and govern the former railroad corridor as a year-round, multi-recreation path.

The initial term of the lease is from October 2, 2006 until June 30, 2016, with two additional ten-year renewal terms thereafter. The trail is intended to be primarily for non-motorized users, with the addition of snowmobiles.

There will be multi-uses of the trail. For example, during the winter, there will be snowmobilers, cross-country skiers, walkers, a few crazy mountain bikers, dog sledders, horseback riders and snowshoers. Summer uses include bicycling, walking, running, horseback riding, roller-skiing, and dog-carting!

VAST is granted exclusive control and management of the trail subject to approval of a management plan by the State. The management plan will address the governing structure, trail management (including law enforcement), and operations for the State's review and approval every two years. The State and VAST are required to hold joint public meetings to review and receive public comments on the trail management plan every two years. The current interim management plan is still being negotiated by the State and VAST, with the state asking for several clarifications after the public comments last fall.

The lease is subject to its first renewal on July 1, 2016, only if VAST performs all of the agreements mandated by the lease terms and the management plans required by the State. Clearly, the management plan is an integral part of the lease agreement.

The lease signing is both an end and a beginning. It represents the end of the long process to enable VAST to develop and use the trail. It was way back in 2002 that the Vermont General Assembly authorized the State to enter into this lease with VAST.

The lease signing represents a beginning because it will take a great deal of effort on the part of VAST, the State and the general public to complete the trail so that it can be used by everyone as a year-round, multi-use non-motorized trail. It is important for as many people as possible to get involved so the trail can be completed as quickly as possible.

– article by David Polow



Bicyclists on the Missisquoi Valley Rail Trail –which intersects with the LVRT in Sheldon.

The Missisquoi is our most local model for the LVRT of the future!

“The VAST committee’s focus for 2007 will be to fix washouts and prevent further erosion of the rail bed and initiate a capital campaign...”

VAST’s Rail-Trail Committee Has Friends on Board

The Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Committee (LVRTC) is charged with the responsibility to oversee the development and conversion of the 96 miles rail bed from St. Johnsbury to Sheldon to a multi use recreational trail. Although a committee of VAST, its membership includes both snow mobile enthusiasts and non-motorized interests.

The committee's focus for 2007 will be to fix washouts and prevent further erosion of the rail bed and initiate a capital campaign to raise the required \$1.5 million to match the \$5.8 million federal grant. Volunteer work and in-kind donations, as well as cash, may be used as match.

A project manager, Mr. Alan Robertson, has been appointed to manage the rail-trail project. The committee has also prepared the management plan.

Two members of the Friends of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail board of directors are also on the trail committee. The Friends are also in regular communication with the other members, including non-motorized co-chair Zeke Zucker and motorized co-chair Ted

continued next page...

...continued from p. 2

Chase. The following list identifies each of the individuals and their interests.

- Co-Chair: Ted Chase, W. Danville (Snowmobile)
- Co-Chair: Zeke Zucker, Jeffersonville (Non-Motorized)
- 4 Snowmobile members: Mike O-Hara, St. Johnsbury; Pat Poulin, Williston; Peg Bowen, E. Calais; Daniel Favereau, Enosburg
- 1 ATV/VASA member: Daniel Hale, Hardwick
- 4 Non-Motorized members: Laird McDowell, Jeffersonville; Dan Zucker, Danville; Red Goodman, Waitsfield; Ken Hoepfner, Jeffersonville
- 3 Members of the Regional Planning Commissions (Franklin, Lamoille & Caledonia)

— article by Ken Hoepfner and Red Goodman



Help us expand FLVRT membership

Please help us recruit additional members by sharing the attached membership form with your friends and those whom you think will be interested in being kept informed as the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail is developed over the next several years. This is important, the more members we can recruit, the stronger voice the non-motorized users of this Trail will have as important decisions are made. Please take the few minutes it will take to encourage new members to join at \$10 per person.

Help develop a FLVRT website

We are in the preliminary stages of designing and developing a FLVRT website to more effectively share information with Trail users and our members. If you have experience with website design or development please contact us immediately at FriendsLVRT@aol.com.

Members-At-Large Invited to Join Committees

The FLVRT Board of Directors has recently established a number of committees to work on specific aspects of our work plan for 2007. The structure we envision is to have a couple of Board members on each committee supplemented by additional participation from dedicated FLVRT members.

1. **Outreach and Membership Committee** – Responsibilities include but not limited to publishing our Newsletter; communicating with members; interested municipal officials and Legislators; membership building activities and education via public meetings about the LVRT specifically and the experiences of similar trails regionally and nationally.
2. **Trail Management Committee** – Evaluating trail development design criteria, helping to open sections of the LVRT as soon as possible, trail maintenance, dealing with safety, noise, and enforcement from both a Trail user and adjacent landowner perspective.
3. **Fundraising Committee** – Soliciting funds from potential donors and submitting grant applications to help fund the actual development of the LVRT and its associated amenities such as signage, parking areas, etc.
4. **Executive Committee** – At this point this Subcommittee consists of the Board officers: President, Vice-President, Secretary & Treasurer.

If you would like to help our fledging organization grow and develop in order to ensure that non-motorized users of the LVRT have a strong voice in the many decisions that will be made in the next few years, please indicate committees you would be interested in serving on and any special skills or experience you would bring to FriendsLVRT@aol.com or in writing to FLVRT PO Box 995, Morrisville, VT 05661.

— articles by Bill Bartlett

“The structure we envision is to have a couple of Board members on each committee supplemented by additional participation from dedicated FLVRT members.”

Friends of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail

PO Box 995
Morrisville, VT 05661

FLVRT Temporary e-mail
address –
FriendsLVRT@aol.com

Board of Directors

Heidi Krantz, *President*
Morrisville, 888-1731
trg@pshift.com

Ken Hoepfner, *Vice-President*
Jeffersonville, 644-5771
kenandsue@hoepfner.com

Bill Bartlett, *Treasurer*
Hyde Park, 888-5591
pairfarmbb@aol.com

Laural Ruggles, *Secretary*
Glover, 748-7590
l.ruggles@nvrh.org

Roger Damon, St. Johnsbury
748-3630
rogdor@sover.net

Red Goodman, Waitsfield
224-6514
president@vtmushers.org

Robert Ide, Peacham
592-3995
robert.ide@state.vt.us

Cynthia Lyon-Hill, Morrisville
888-2074
clyon-hill@luhs.k12vt.us

David Polow, Morrisville
888-7707
polowlaw@aol.com

Leon Whitcomb, Morrisville
888-7716
lawhitcomb@aol.com

Board of Directors' Report FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Growing an organization is tricky work – bringing together people with different skills and goals is challenging. Just finding a night that 10 people have free is a major chore! The members of the Board of Directors of the Friends have met this challenge though and from the beginning have worked hard to create a strong organization that represents the members well.

Our meetings are informal, productive and open to everyone. We are committed to finishing the work in two hours, but often find ourselves hanging around and having more conversation – the meeting after the meeting. These folks are hard working, thoughtful and committed to the trail – and lots of fun!

January: Our meeting was the first gathering with our new board members elected at the annual meeting in November 2006. At this meeting we spent some time getting to know each other, discussing our “mode of operation” and bringing the new members up to speed on old business. Bill Bartlett provides us with membership and financial updates at each meeting. We also review any grant writing efforts – we decided to wait on some grant opportunities because the timing was tight and we agreed we’d like to be fully prepared for any grants we target.

We also tackled our meeting schedule and Dave Polow agreed to work on our application for non-profit status. Bill Bartlett will head up an effort to publish a newsletter in March – with articles from Board members and others. We also divided board membership into three terms – so at the annual meeting in November 2007 the terms of three current Board members will expire; Red Goodman, Ken Hoepfner and I – and we’ll need to elect three people to the Board. I’d encourage anyone who would like to get more involved and/or may be interested in running for the Board to consider volunteering to participate in

one of the committees listed below or attend our Board meetings.

February: The meeting focused on the election of officers for the year – Heidi Krantz as President, Ken Hoepfner as Vice President, Bill Bartlett as Treasurer and Laural Ruggles as Secretary. We also worked out the timeline for the newsletter, and agreed on a committee structure:

- **Public Relations /Outreach/ Membership** – Laural Ruggles and Bill Bartlett.
- **Trail Management** – Red Goodman, Leon Whitcomb, Dave Polow, Cindy Lyon-Hill, Roger Damon, Rob Ide.
- **Executive** – Heidi Krantz, Ken Hoepfner, Bill Bartlett and Laural Ruggles.
- **Fund Raising** – Heidi Krantz, Ken Hoepfner, Bill Bartlett, Laural Ruggles & Cindy Lyon-Hill. (*See also page 3 for how you can join a committee!*)

In February we also joined the VAST Trail Committee meeting to listen to a presentation by Barry Calhoun of the Agency of Natural Resources to learn more about some flood mitigation work he is overseeing on the trail – this work will lower the profile of the trail in several areas to allow flood waters to flow unimpeded. It was great to meet with VAST’s Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Committee, chaired by Ted Chase. We are all excited to see this moving forward.

March: Our meeting in March was focused on committee work and identifying goals for the coming year. The goal document is available upon request – via email or U.S. Mail. We’ll also discuss the creation of a website and up-coming programs – check out the calendar in this newsletter for more details and plan to attend one of our programs!

Please feel free to contact any of us with questions or concerns. Thank you for your support of the Friends and we’ll see you on the trail!

– *article by Heidi Krantz*

About the Friends of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail

The mission of the Friends of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail is to support the development, maintenance, and promotion of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail as a public resource offering a tranquil and scenic year-round multi-use recreation and transportation corridor; and especially to represent the interests of non-motorized trail users. We are a membership-based organization.



Help us communicate with you more easily & cheaply

If you are receiving this newsletter by US Mail and you have an e-mail address, please send your name and e-mail address to FriendsLVRT@aol.com so that in the future we can communicate with you via e-mail, which is much quicker and cheaper for us. The FLVRT will never share your e-mail address with others.

Also please let us know what you'd like covered in our next Newsletter tentatively scheduled for June.

Thank you!



800 km Across Quebec Slideshow –

continued from Page 1

Lamoille Valley Rail Trail will connect to the Quebec paths, and discuss how we can learn from these examples.

Becka is the founder and principal of Going Green, a bicycle & pedestrian consulting firm based in Montpelier (www.goinggreenvt.com); the former director of the Vermont Bicycle & Pedestrian Coalition; and a founding board member of the Friends of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail.

All showings start at 6:30 pm!

- **Thurs., April 26 • Hardwick Town House** – 127 Church St.: from Jct 14 & 15, north on Rt 15 to left on Main St., right on Church St., and look for it on your right.
- **Mon., May 7 • Swanton Town Hall** – I-89 Exit 21, left on 1st St., 1/4 mile to left on Robinhood, right on Elm – and look for the Town Complex, a large brown building.
- **Tues., May 22 • Smugglers Notch Resort** – Rt. 108 to main parking area, follow signs for the 3 min walk to Nordland Library.

This event is free, but donations in support of the Friends of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail are very welcome!