



Manhan Rail Trail

Easthampton, Massachusetts

Fall 2009

Work begins on connector to Northampton by Wayne Feiden, Northampton City Planner

Construction has begun on the Manhan Rail Trail connector between Easthampton and Northampton! The baseline has been surveyed and tree and brush removal is underway. The contractor is working on the waterline relocation necessary to allow construction to begin on the abutments for the bridge over Route 10.

We are hopeful, but not positive, that work on the bridge abutments will progress enough this fall allowing the contractor to do much of the bridge installation during the winter. If that happens, the project will largely be complete by the end of 2010.

The design for the Manhan River Bridge, which is not part of the Manhan Rail Trail contract, is underway. Assuming no problems come up, we expect that this will be advertised in early March for 2010-2011 construction.

By the end of next year, there should be one continuous



This newly cleared trail along Lovefield Street is part of a link that will connect the Manhan Rail Trail at Ferry Street in Easthampton to the bike path at Earle Street in Northampton.

trail from southern Easthampton to Northampton, Florence and Leeds and, with one small surface street connector, to Amherst and UMass.

Probably a few more years before you can ride all the way to New Haven and Boston, but not as many as it used to be!

Sinkhole repair completed under deadline



Before (November 2008)



During (September 2009)



After (October 2009)

In just over one year's time, the house-sized gaping hole in the rail trail just south of the Route 5 trailhead has been repaired and the trail is now open.

The washed out culvert, which caused the hole to form, has been replaced, and tons of soil have been added and compacted. The final work involved paving the bike path and replacing the broken fences.

A broken sewer line below the trail embankment was fixed by Eastampton Department of Public Works shortly after the initial washout.

The sinkhole repair was done by Gomes Construction for \$220,000, an amount paid for by the city with a low interest loan from the state. Approximately \$12,000 for the paving and fencing was funded by the Friends of the Manhan Rail Trail Committee.

City Council has recommended that all other culverts

along the rail trail be inspected regularly to prevent a similar situation from occurring elsewhere.

The old stone culvert at the site of the sinkhole was probably clogged and as a result, water built up around it until it finally broke through the embankment.



Rail Trail Tidbits

Trail Merchandise for Sale

The Garden Sweet Pea scented Yankee Candle with our very own "Save the Trail" label is still for sale. Discounted to \$15, the candles are available at the City Clerk's office.

Southampton Moves Ahead

The Southampton Greenway took a step ahead Oct. 13, when the town held a workshop as part of a \$25,000 feasibility study. Residents made suggestions, registered concerns and got some information about the proposed project. The Greenway, if approved, would be built on the rail line from Coleman Road to Sheldon's Ice Cream shop.

Trail count shows high volume

Ever wonder just how many people are using the Manhan Rail Trail in Easthampton? On Sunday, Sept. 13, 2009, the Trail participated in a statewide day-long count of trail users. From 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., volunteers counted every person that passed by them on the trail between Union Street and Payson Avenue.

A total of 841 trail users were counted – up from 495 counted in 2008 and 519 in 2007! The weather was similar for all three days (sunny and seasonably warm). The information from the state-wide trail count is used by planners to help support rail trail projects across the commonwealth.

We'd like to thank the following volunteers who counted this year: Marcia Morrison, Eleanor Kwolek, Karen Foster, Ruth Laliberte, John Losito, Lydia & Laurel King, Betty Burnham, Susan Boss, Ann Hallstein, Carla Katz and Sue Donnelly.



The brand new band shell at Millside Park along the Manhan Rail Trail near Ferry Street, drew lots of folks to free weekly concerts this summer.

Friends of Manhan Rail Trail thank supporters for donations

The Friends of the Manhan Rail Trail committee would like to thank the people of Easthampton for rallying to assist the trail in a time of crisis. Our fifth anniversary year began with disaster when a washed out culvert caused a massive sinkhole, closing the Route 5 end of the trail. The community responded to this civic emergency in a number of significant ways.

The city obtained a low interest loan from the state to rebuild the culvert, necessary because of a sewer line that runs under the embankment. The Friends agreed to fund the re-paving of the trail and the replacement of fencing.

A major fundraising milestone was reached when the organizers of **Derrill's Race** committed a large portion of this year's proceeds to the repair of the trail. Our gratitude to **Dr. Shelley Wilton** and the 2009 Derrill's Race Committee, as well as the volunteers and race participants for this significant and generous contribution.

Another important fundraising success was our annual bike breakfast, held for the first time at the **Apollo Grill** at Eastworks. The restaurant's reputation for fine food resulted in an overflow crowd and an early sellout. Our thanks to **Casey Douglas** and his staff for donating and cooking the delicious meal and providing the venue. We also thank everybody who attended and apologize to anyone turned away at the door.

In addition, **Yankee Candle** and **Avon** both developed fundraising programs on our behalf, and **The Massage School** generously donated an entire day's proceeds to the trail.

Our citizens responded generously to fundraising letters and online appeals and some hard working new volunteers have brought energy and creative ideas to the committee. And once again this year, dozens of volunteers spent hours cleaning and improving the trail during town clean-up day.

So in a very short time, disaster has been replaced with opportunity. We thank everyone who has contributed to the trail over these past few months and we look forward to your continued support.

Stephen Donnelly

Clerk, Friends of the Manhan Rail Trail

This newsletter is published by the Friends of the Manhan Rail Trail and edited by Wendy Hammerle. Comments or questions may be directed to: (413)529-1460 - info@manhanrailtrail.org or visit our web site at: www.manhanrailtrail.org Donations may be sent to: Manhan Rail Trail Easthampton Municipal Office Building 50 Payson Ave. Easthampton, MA 01027