



Community Built

*Stories of Volunteers Creating
and Caring For Their Trails*



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rails-to-trails
conservancy

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Project Team

Steve Schweigerdt

Julian Bobilev

Volunteers across the country have dedicated millions of hours envisioning, planning, building and caring for the trails they love. Thanks to their hard work, we have these stories to tell.

Do you have a trail story to share? Send it to us at western@railstotrails.org.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Yves Zsutty, City of San Jose Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services

Mollie Tobias, City of San Jose Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services

Steve Stuebner, Valley County Pathways

Claire Robinson, Amigos de los Rios



Community Built



INTRODUCTION

Are you tired of hearing that resources are limited for your trail project? That it will take decades and cost millions of dollars to complete, or that you'll never be able to maintain the corridor when it's opened? Take heart, trail champions—around the country, stories abound of trails getting developed, extended and cared for with minimal resources! With a lot of passion, creativity and elbow grease, local groups and volunteers across America are using their community strength to create incredible trails, from short neighborhood pathways to lengthy cross-state routes.

While reading these stories, you may note some similarities among the trails: strong boards of directors with varied skill sets, substantial membership bases, materials and time donated by the community, partnerships with local agencies, and successful engagement of retirees to volunteer. Each project is different, and we include a variety of models that range from fully volunteer owned and operated, to agency maintained and volunteer monitored. Gain inspiration and wisdom from these groups to learn how you can make your own project happen. Depending on your local resources, available funding and political climate, these stories may provide a guide for how to implement and manage your trail project, and to achieve your community's goals for its trail system.

Along with other resources in RTC's Trail-Building Toolbox, we hope this report helps spur you to action. RTC is always available for support at every stage of trail development, from



securing rights to an abandoned corridor, to making sure everyone in your area knows about and uses your trail. No matter how daunting a project seems—from escalating costs to community opposition—there's always a solution. Explore our Trail-Building Toolbox today at www.railstotrails.org/our-Work/trailBuilding/index.html.





CASE STUDIES

Northern Rail Trail — Merrimack County, New Hampshire

GENERAL TRAIL INFORMATION

The Northern Rail Trail is located in rural New Hampshire and is the longest rail-trail in the state. The corridor follows the right-of-way of the former Northern Railroad, which discontinued service in 1970. It is currently 49 miles long and will eventually cover 57.5 miles when completed. The trail is divided into two different segments by county, one in Merrimack County and one in Grafton County. This analysis will focus on the 34-mile Merrimack County section, as it has some important characteristics that distinguish it from its sister segment. So far, 25 miles have been developed into a four-season trail that travels at a gentle 1 percent grade from West Franklin to the Danbury/Grafton town line.

The original railroad was built differently in the two counties. The Grafton County segment features a cinder base, which is relatively smooth and amenable to trail use once the railroad ties are removed. After the ties were removed and the right-of-way was graded, the trail was basically in a finished state. The Merrimack County segment, on the other hand, was built on stone ballast consisting of 1- to 1.5-inch base rock. While this base provides a more stable surface for railroad ties, it is completely unsuitable for cycling, riding horses or even walking. After the right-of-way was abandoned, the trail was only usable in the winter, when a layer of snow allowed snowmobile users to ride on it. It was maintained as a one-season trail for many years until the Friends of the Northern Rail Trail was founded in 2004 to convert it into a year-round pathway.

The first step was to resurface it. The ballast was left in place because of its excellent drainage properties; however, it was graded and rolled to a smooth consistency. The subsurface was now in place. After several years of experimenting with different mixtures of granite stone dust, the friends group hired the engineering firm Vanasse Hangen Brustlen (VHB), whose experts developed the specifications for a crushed granite stone mix that would be laid on top of the ballast. This layer had to contain different sizes of stone in order to bind the mix together. The resulting surface is smooth and ideal for recreation. Additionally, any irregularities that form through trail use smooth themselves out in a substantial rainstorm.

Due to New Hampshire's low regulatory burden, permits were easy to obtain. Although the trail was built on a state-owned right-of-way, all that was required was a letter from the state's Bureau of Trails permitting the friends to begin construction. The group also had to obtain a permit and hold one public hearing due to the trail's location within 100 feet of major wetlands.

MANAGEMENT

The trail is officially owned by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation (NHDOT), which acquired the right-of-way in 1996 using federal Transportation Enhancement (TE) funds. Since then, NHDOT has transferred management to the Department of Resources and Economic Development's (DRED) Bureau of Trails. New Hampshire is rather unique in that the state government espouses a "no taxes/no services" philosophy, and county governments often lack the financing or authority to take on large projects without a clear funding source. Therefore, the state lacked capacity to further develop the Northern Rail Trail. As a result, as the department of transportation provides an engineer who administers TE grants, everything else is done by the Friends of the Northern Rail Trail.

The friends group has a good relationship with the three snowmobile clubs that use the Northern Rail Trail as a "corridor trail." The Andover Snowmobile Club, Lakes Region Snowmobile Club, and Town Line Trail Dusters originally removed the railroad ties when the right-of-way





A idyllic winter scene: cross-country skiers and an equestrian peacefully using the trail side by side.

was acquired. Currently, the snowmobile clubs help to maintain the trail in the winter by grooming the snow. The Northern Rail Trail serves a vital purpose for snowmobilers because it functions as an artery connecting a multitude of side trails. The snowmobilers perform regular maintenance on the bridges, since snowmobile use causes significant wear to the deckings. These snowmobile clubs also installed bridge railings; unfortunately, the railings within the eight-mile trail section funded by TE grants had to be augmented because they did not comply with TE requirements.

The board of directors has been instrumental to the success of the Friends of Northern Rail Trail. A group of 10 members with diverse skills was assembled by Alex Bernhard. For example, Bernhard himself has a legal background, the president of the board has good connections to the state government, and Charles Martin, another board member, is the author of *New Hampshire Rail Trails*. The board meetings, conducted inside a fire station, are businesslike, and there is an annual potluck dinner for the members to get to know each other in a more

relaxed atmosphere. Because of the large size of the board and the commitment and expertise of its members, the friends group has been able to create a first-rate rail-trail. In addition to the dedicated long-term volunteers and board members, occasional volunteers are highly valuable for the success of the trail. They are willing to do substantial work, but they do not have to attend meetings or commit to long-term tasks.

FINANCIAL

The majority of the friends groups' funding comes from the federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and TE grants. The Friends of Northern Rail Trail received an RTP grant of \$25,000 to \$35,000 every year until 2012, when the Federal Highway Administration canceled New Hampshire's funding for the program. The TE funding consisted of a one-time grant of \$270,000, plus \$60,000 raised locally to satisfy the match requirement for the TE funds. Annual mailings to their membership list generate the second-largest amount, between



CASE STUDIES

Northern Rail Trail — Merrimack County, New Hampshire

\$6,000 and \$10,000 a year. There are a few fundraising events, such as a bicycle raffle and a relay race, but they do not contribute a substantial amount.

The two federal grant programs, RTP and TE, were used to finance the construction of the trail. The section financed by TE funds runs from the Danbury Highway Department site down to Potter Place (about 8.3 miles). The 17-mile segment south of Potter Place was constructed entirely using RTP funds, starting in 2005.

With little paid labor, the Friends of the Northern Rail Trail in Merrimack County was able to keep the construction costs down to \$15,000 per RTP-funded mile. The sections that were funded by TE funds, by contrast, cost double that amount (\$30,000 per mile), largely due to additional engineering required by the TE program. The friends group was fortunate to have a great project leader from VHB, who tried to minimize costs on the project. Otherwise, the total expense might have spiraled to \$60,000 per mile, which is typical for other trails in New Hampshire.

Most of the budget is allocated for the costs of purchasing and trucking stone dust to the trail. A grader and roller are generously loaned to the friends group as needed by the family lumber business, Durgan & Crowell. This donation was originally initiated by Peter Crowell, an active bicyclist who was excited about the possibility of a long-distance trail separated from traffic. Since Crowell's passing, the equipment loans have been continued by his sons. In addition, Durgan & Crowell haul the grader and roller to and from the site using a low-bed truck. An expert driver is employed for the operation of the grader.

He is only employed during trail construction, which generally lasts for one week a year. All other work is performed by volunteers, who take care of the paperwork, clear out brush before construction, and even operate some heavy equipment such as the vibratory roller.

The friends group completed all the necessary regulatory clearances themselves. No Environmental Impact Statement was needed, as the trail was eligible for a Categorical Exemption for NEPA clearance.

No paid staff are employed, so the group's budget is spent almost entirely on materials. The group's 990 tax form shows that about 97 percent of their funding is allocated to the construction of the trail, and only about 3 percent goes to various overhead expenses such as mailings.

MAINTENANCE

Maintenance is carried out by volunteers on a regular basis. Although there are a few planned volunteer work days, most of the work is done by volunteers who go out as needed. Their tasks include removing fallen trees from the trail, clearing brush, picking up spikes and painting mileposts. In general, maintenance needs are very modest on a crushed-stone trail. The Merrimack County section is five years old, and so far no work has been needed. The only exception was some water damage caused by blocked culverts. The culverts caused a portion of the trail to be flooded, which DRED and NHDOT subsequently repaired. The friends group additionally points out that the crushed-stone surface has advantages for them



Volunteers preparing for the Independence Day Trail Run event.



Northern Rail Trail volunteers proudly operate the vibratory roller.

over asphalt, including lack of graffiti and improved drainage.

The Friends of the Northern Rail Trail created the first rail-trail maintenance plan in New Hampshire, which was agreed upon in cooperation with the state government. This plan enumerates the kinds of tasks volunteers will be performing. Prior to the creation of this document, the friends group had to ask the state government for permission every time a new task was to be performed by volunteers.

The organization relies on New Hampshire's Recreational Use Statute for protection from liability. This statute limits liability of the organization and volunteers unless there is misconduct or gross negligence on their part. As a result, the friends group does not carry insurance, though the directors would be covered through their personal and homeowners liability policies.

Trail enforcement issues are fairly infrequent. Unauthorized ATV operation is the most common problem. ATVs only cause modest damage to the trail; however, their presence can be detrimental to the enjoyment of non-motorized users. The New Hampshire Department of Fish and Game deals with this enforcement issue.

CONCLUSION

Friends of the Northern Rail Trail have capitalized on the freedom from regulation in New Hampshire to take on the trail project as a volunteer construction project. Their passionate and diverse board of directors brought different skills to the table and maintained good relationships with other volunteer groups, such as the snowmobile clubs. The availability of donated equipment and manpower from nearby businesses and residents is leveraged so that grant funds go almost entirely to construction materials. The Friends of the Northern Rail Trail are poised for continued success with a membership program, events on the trail, and committed volunteers who maintain and use the trail.



The Northern Rail Trail sees many different kinds of recreational uses, ranging from bicycling in the warmer seasons...to cross-country skiing in the winter.



Visit Friends of the Northern Rail Trail at
<http://northernrailtrail.org>



CASE STUDIES

Weiser River Trail — Idaho

GENERAL TRAIL INFORMATION

The Weiser River Trail in Idaho is operated by the nonprofit Friends of Weiser River Trail, Inc. (FWRT). This organization took title to the rail corridor in August 1997 through a donation by Union Pacific Railroad with an appraised value of \$12 million. The width of the corridor is between 100 and 200 feet. Boise, the largest population center in Idaho, is a little more than 100 miles away. The trail is 85 miles long and contains 60 trestle bridges (which are inspected yearly), as the corridor crosses the river, roads and highways numerous times.

The trail surface consists of native material or ballast packed with crushed stone. Originally, the trail surface was ballast; however, this surface proved too coarse to tolerate recreational use and was graded and mixed with crusher fines before being rolled and compacted. Through the towns of Weiser, Cambridge and Council, the trail has been paved using Transportation Enhancement (TE) grants. FWRT has a grant request pending to pave the section in the town of Midvale. The paving and trailhead projects cost \$275,000 within Weiser city limits and \$150,000 each in Cambridge and Council.

Various events take place throughout the year involving running, equestrian, cycling and a wagon train ride. FWRT earns about \$7,500 net profit from sponsoring these events, and they have a “permit application form” for group use. FWRT has an annual relay run at the end of April between Council and Midvale, counting nearly 220 participants in 2012. A new event called the Ponderosa Pine Relay is coming in summer 2012 and will include 12-person teams on a 190-mile route. Events are used as an opportunity to recruit new members and introduce the trail to a wider audience. The trail is considered underutilized, although no trail use counts have been conducted. Weekends see the heaviest use. The trail was designated a National Recreation Trail on May 3, 2010, by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar. All towns supported this nomination, but the two counties did not.

During the first running event, all motels and restaurants were fully booked. Each of the three chambers of commerce supports the trail due to its economic benefit, and the few sponsored events during the year do bring in significant local investment. The trail development and maintenance budget is approximately \$125,000 a year, most of which is spent on local vendors, businesses and contractors.

The trail corridor is railbanked with the federal Surface Transportation Board. Some segments cross Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management or state lands. Railbanking is a federal statute permitting interim public trail use that does



The Weiser River Trail traverses Idaho's beautiful semi-arid landscape. However, many sections of it take users through forested habitats. Winter storms sometimes make it necessary to clear the trail of fallen branches.

not require any state, county or city permits for use (under railbanking, should rail service be deemed necessary at a future point, the rail line can be reactivated). Two counties and the town of Midvale considered requiring use permits for public access but relented after reviewing the federal statute with their legal counsel. A permit was needed to develop non-railbanked property for a new trailhead and campground and provide a 3,000-foot access road to the site.

MANAGEMENT

Due to budget limitations, Friends of Weiser River Trail does not have an office location. There is also no formal strategic plan, though one goal is to fully connect the trail to the town of New Meadows as a northern terminus to provide additional economic benefits and facilities to trail users. Additionally, there is potential to link into a larger network that would include the Valley County Pathways; however, large gaps would need to be filled for this plan to become reality. Valley County Pathways projects could tie into the northern terminus of the Weiser River Trail at New Meadows, creating a potential loop of approximately 180 miles of off-road trail.

FWRT has about 650 members in the United States and Canada, and nine members on the board of directors. Membership fees range from \$15 to \$1,000, with other donations being optional. Members are contacted four to six times a year, but they are only asked for donations or membership renewal two of those times. A printed newsletter is sent out three or four times per year, and there is an annual members' meeting at which pizza is served to thank supporters.

FWRT experimented with having a part-time, paid executive director and grant writer. This plan did not generate enough additional revenue to continue the employment of the executive director. For a trail of this length, it is critical to have a committed board of directors, whose members live near the trail and represent different user groups. Either the board members or volunteers now write FWRT's grant applications. Grant searches continue expanding to include a variety of foundations.

Former Rails-to-Trails Conservancy attorney Charles Montange recommended that FWRT open the trail to public use as soon as possible after railbanking. The corridor was announced as an undeveloped trail opportunity and users assumed their own risk; there have been no injuries in the past 15 years of

trail use. FWRT has two insurance policies—general liability coverage (\$2 million) and an umbrella policy with Union Pacific Railroad as additional insurance (for \$5 million). Annual premiums are \$8,000. The insurance premium for the two maintenance trucks is \$1,779 per year.

FINANCIAL

The board of directors devotes an entire day to strategic planning. They develop their annual work plan and a line item budget. The previous two years of budget expenditures are used as a guideline in developing each budget line amount. The annual budget is roughly \$125,000 including grant funds. Most grant funds are identified as contingency funds. Annually, FWRT spends about \$7,000 for fencing, \$2,000 for repair of washed-out sections of trail, \$10,000 for weed treatment, and \$16,000 (\$90/hour) for a heavy equipment operator.

Membership dues bring in around \$25,000 annually. FWRT is a participating charity in the Albertsons Boise Open Golf Tournament and raises about \$25,000 to \$30,000 annually selling golf tickets. Ridley grocery stores' Home Town Advantage program donates another \$6,000 a year. All trestle repairs and most trail development have been funded by grants from the Idaho Recreational Trails Program with a 20 percent match required by applicant. TE grants funded the paving of trail sections that lie within the three cities. Other than grants, membership fees are the largest consistent sources of revenue. Cities and federal agencies support the trail, but they have not helped financially to date. County governments have supported use permits for campground and trailhead facilities and building a 3,000-foot access road, but they have not supported designation as a National Recreation Trail.

Trailhead improvements are also funded through TE and Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants, with a trailhead now existing in every town. Two additional trailhead facilities were completed in remote locations, using primarily RTP grants. A master plan for a trailhead with full-service RV utilities (water and power) has been developed and is being completed through grants.

FWRT has started a trail endowment fund administered through the Idaho Community Foundation, which currently holds \$240,000 and has a goal of \$1 million. Every year FWRT receives a 5 percent distribution; in 2012 this amount was \$7,729 and was used for trail operations and maintenance.



CASE STUDIES

Weiser River Trail — Idaho

FWRT sells a guidebook to the Weiser River Trail; the first printing sold out. The second printing has been completed, and the sale price covers printing costs while still yielding a net profit.

FWRT has learned several important financial lessons that are applicable to any community-supported trail. The first is to have members renew on the anniversary of their joining date. This timing will spread out the membership income throughout the year and spread out the workload of the membership administrator. Additionally, members should be thanked every time they renew or donate. FWRT recommends starting a membership list even before the acquisition or development of a trail—it's never too early to recruit. A robust membership list functions as a strong show of support for the viability of the trail even before the title is transferred and can help with the solicitation of grants.

MAINTENANCE

FWRT does not have a trail maintenance plan or any trail maintenance handbooks. The staff consists of two individuals: one volunteer trail director from the board of directors, who supervises the second worker, and a maintenance contractor who clears rock fall with a backhoe and front-end loader. FWRT owns a roller, grader, spray truck and spray equipment, maintenance truck and brush chipper, all of which were acquired through grant funds. Volunteers, contractors or the board trail director operate the roller and grader. Typical annual trail maintenance consists of clearing rock and tree fall, rolling and grading twice a year, eliminating invasive species (weed control), and inspecting, repairing and replacing the planking on trestles. There is also a paid, seasonal weed warrior who is contracted to remove invasive species. Volunteers include FWRT members and some Boy Scout troops. NW Youth Corps was hired in 2011 to do maintenance on the corridor, including fencing, clearing brush under trestles, and trimming brush back from trail corridor.



A volunteer operates a roller to smooth a section of the Weiser River Trail.

TRAIL CONFLICTS

One of the challenges of a volunteer owned and operated trail is enforcement of rules, since there are no county ordinances that local law enforcement officers can cite. There are trail rules and etiquette guidelines published in the trail brochure and posted at all trailheads, but there is no meaningful way to enforce them since they are not backed by the force of law. The only remedy FWRT has is civil action or fencing. The largest enforcement issue is the unauthorized use of the trail by ATVs, farm tractors and cattle that are driven on the trail. FWRT has installed fencing and gates with pedestrian/bike bypass to deter motorized use and prevent encroachment by adjacent landowners. Service and emergency response vehicles are allowed on the trail; the relevant agencies have gate keys. There have also been some minor littering and vandalism incidents at trailheads along Highway 95. One new FWRT-owned, Forest Service-designed vault toilet at a trailhead was damaged and the offender paid restitution. There are now three concrete vault toilets on the trail at separate trailheads in the towns. The maintenance worker/weed warrior does occasional patrols, and board members who are in the field working on projects are available to address immediate issues.

There have been four significant lawsuits related to the trail. Believing they owned the property, three landowners sued FWRT after the trail was railbanked. A settlement was reached regarding fencing and cattle guard agreements for one of the cases, and FWRT prevailed in the other two. In another case, FWRT sued one landowner who constructed a fence within the 200-foot rail corridor and stored hay bales on the railbed. FWRT prevailed in this case as well. The total spent on attorney fees for all cases was \$100,000 during the first eight years. Legal fees have been significantly smaller in the last four years (roughly \$2,500/year). Philip Gordon, FWRT's attorney, charges half his normal rate. There have been no reported negative impacts from users on adjacent landowners.

CONCLUSION

The Weiser River Trail highlights the benefits and challenges of creating a trail with no significant municipal or county backing. Friends of Weiser River Trail (FWRT) did all of the hard work themselves, encountering opposition from both county governments and private property owners along the way, several of whom filed lawsuits against the friends group. FWRT also had no meaningful way of enforcing trail regulations since they were not backed by ordinances. Despite the adversity, they wisely leveraged equipment and volunteer operators to help them create and maintain the 85-mile trail—a trail so beautiful that it was designated a National Recreation Trail. Much of the credit goes to their hard-working board of directors, who represented many different user groups and helped to involve those groups in the trail-building process. Strong membership, support from multiple growing events, and an endowment will keep FWRT strong in its pursuit of improvements on the Weiser River Trail.

Visit Friends of the Weiser River Trail at www.weiserrivertail.org.



CASE STUDIES

North Coast Inland Trail — Huron County, Ohio

GENERAL TRAIL INFORMATION

The envisioned North Coast Inland Trail system in Ohio consists of 90 miles of trail that begins in Toledo and ends in Lorain (about 75 percent of this route is currently complete). The trail is managed by three separate organizations. Lorain County Metro Parks manages the east end, Sandusky County Parks District manages the west end, and Firelands Rails-to-Trails, Inc. (FRTTI) manages the middle portion, which lies in Huron County. This discussion will focus on the area managed by FRTTI, which consists of 14.8 miles, about 12 of which are currently completed. Advocates are working to fill some gaps in the envisioned trail corridor at an impressive rate. The trail is 10 feet wide with eight feet of grass on either side. All motorized use is forbidden, including snowmobiling. The trail is open to hikers, cyclists, equestrians and cross-country skiers in the winter. A wide variety of landscapes can be observed from the pathway, ranging from thick woodlands to vast fields of corn and soybeans.

The trail surface consists of crushed limestone with limestone fines on top. The base is ballast that remains from the original rail line, which has been graded to allow for recreational use. The surface is packed hard enough that horses do not cause damage to the trail. FRTTI hopes to pave the trail at an unspecified future date.

The right-of-way was acquired from Penn Central Railroad in 1998. The property is now owned by a consortium of park districts from surrounding counties. FRTTI builds and maintains it on their behalf. The Huron County Park District opted out of the project shortly after its inception.

This rail line was the original transcontinental route between New York, Chicago and the West Coast, and was completed in Huron County in 1853 by the Toledo, Norwalk and Cleveland Railroad, later part of the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railway.

The trail-building process was fairly arduous at the beginning. Huron County did not want to be involved with the creation of the trail because there was entrenched opposition to the idea from area residents and adjacent landowners, so they handed over the management to FRTTI. The communities surrounding the trail did not want to pay additional taxes to sponsor its creation and defeated a proposed trail tax. As a response, FRTTI formed and decided to use volunteers, grant money and donated equipment to build the trail. Although opposi-



Cyclists and walkers enjoy the finished trail near Monroeville.

tion to the trail was extensive and vocal at first, FRTTI slowly changed minds once construction began. Some of the trail's fiercest opponents eventually became vocal supporters and regular trail users.

Joe Mantey of FRTTI believes that most initial opposition comes from fear of the unknown. "The keys to building a trail are writing letters and being a good neighbor," he says. "Opponents are afraid of trespassing, property values plummeting, drainage problems and similar issues. It is important for trail builders to be good neighbors and address people's concerns and fears. Firelands operated in a respectful way, building the trail in small pieces once concerns were addressed. In many sections of the trail, we did not own the right-of-way and had to obtain easements from landowners. We attended Rotary Club meetings, held open houses whenever a new section of trail was opened, and sent letters to adjacent landowners when building a trail segment. FRTTI also purposefully disassociated themselves from more strident proponents of the trail, whose zeal to implement the trail failed to consider adjacent owners' concerns and alienated them. We always think before we act, then think again and bounce it off our board. We aim not to make anyone mad."

MANAGEMENT

FRTTI is fully responsible for management of the Huron County section of the trail. They are independently operated and incorporated as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. FRTTI has its own board, a roster of members and an office. Lorain County Metro Parks assists with grant applications. There is an informal agreement between FRTTI and the five counties through which the trail runs; FRTTI manages this section of the trail on behalf of the counties.

The board of directors has been instrumental to the success of FRTTI. It has a meeting on the first Thursday of every month. The board consists of a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and eight to 10 additional members. Some of them actively work in the field, doing tasks such as mowing and weed whacking. Others perform office duties such as maintaining the website. The diversity of the board is its great strength; there are nature lovers, birdwatchers, railroad history buffs, cyclists and people who simply enjoy volunteering. Every new member brings an additional set of skills to the table. Although the perception exists that the North Coast Inland Trail is exclusively a cycling trail, it actually serves many additional functions. For example, when an Audubon Society member joined, FRTTI was able to hold guided birdwatching walks. There is also frequent equestrian use; the only drawback is horse droppings, which are slow to biodegrade and typically have to be shoveled off the trail by volunteers.

FRTTI uses the former Monroeville Railroad Depot as its headquarters. This historical depot was constructed in 1863 and still has its original ticket windows. The building is made of wood and rests on a sandstone foundation. A new metal roof was donated for its rehabilitation. The depot provides FRTTI with a highly relevant and unique office space. It also features interpretive displays on railroad history, which attract many railroad history buffs from throughout the state.

FRTTI owns only a few pieces of equipment, including a tractor and a donated pickup truck. FRTTI is a member organization of Friends of Metro Parks in Lorain County. It is insured against liability claims through this organization. Directors and officers also have personal insurance against lawsuits.

FINANCIAL

The yearly budget of FRTTI is \$70,000 to \$100,000. Most of the money is allocated toward trail construction, purchasing crushed limestone, as well as the rehabilitation of the Monroeville Railroad Depot. About \$1,500 per mile is allocated for trail maintenance. There is also a paid officer who patrols the trail in his off-duty hours. Other expenses include utility bills, telephone bill, herbicide application, equipment maintenance and ink for newsletter printings. Road signs and mileposts are a big expense, as they need to be added and replaced on a regular basis. Additionally, using the railroad depot as an office location adds to the overhead costs.



Volunteers constructing a garden near the rehabilitated Monroeville Railroad Depot.



Local General Contractor Jim Wasiniak pulls out old ties and blazes trail with an excavator loaned by contractor and farmer Mark Schaffer. Jim Wasiniak is a former Navy Seabee, one of many veterans who bring a multitude of skills to the construction of the North Coast Inland Trail.



CASE STUDIES

North Coast Inland Trail — Huron County, Ohio

Membership fees help to cover small expenditures such as gas for the tractors. FRTTI has 170 to 200 members. Membership fees are due once a year and range from \$15 to \$50; members may also donate additional amounts. Sometimes, businesses award FRTTI small grants for bridges and other amenities. Several fundraising events contribute additional sums of money to FRTTI's budget. There is a yearly 5K race that brings in \$2,000 to \$3000. Additionally, local organizations such as schools and churches hold fundraisers independently of FRTTI to support the trail.

FRTTI has been awarded economic stimulus money from the federal government for the construction of the trail. Another \$100,000 for trail construction was received from the Clean Ohio Fund. The depot's restoration has been funded by private donations. All funds for the depot's major capital expenditures were kept separate from trail operation and construction money.

In 2012, very little state funding has been available. Most work is being done by volunteers; and a retired teacher is operating the grader. Another retired farmer is working on drainage issues, and actual railroad employees are volunteering at the depot. So even with the funding shortage, two additional miles of trail are scheduled to be built this year.

MAINTENANCE

Organized work days are held on the first Saturday and third Sunday of each month, although volunteers are out on the trail every day. There are four or five volunteers who maintain the trail on a regular basis. Most of the volunteers are retirees, as they have the time to dedicate themselves to the trail on a regular basis. A unique and financially efficient system has been created to address maintenance needs without purchasing lots of equipment. Many of the volunteers who work on the trail are employed in farming or light industry. Some of them own rollers, excavators and graders and gladly volunteer to operate their equipment in order to construct or maintain the trail. FRTTI compensates them for their gas and supplies. There is no maintenance manual.

A few years ago, the Road Soldiers Cycling Club from the Ohio Veterans Home adopted the Huron County portion of the trail as their 'home trail.' These veterans organize work days on the trail to trim brush, pick up debris and work on the depot. "We even had a WWII vet out picking up twigs in Collins," says Mantey. "They have been a real asset and a joy to work with."


The Huron County section of the North Coast Inland Trail features a unique patrol program. In the summer, four officers from Norwalk each patrol the trail on bicycle for 10 to 15 hours a month (40 to 60 hours total). Most of the officers work night shifts at their regular job, so they patrol the path in



Norwalk Kiwanis constructing a massive overlook at the 1871 Stone Viaduct. Everything was donated, including equipment, materials and labor. After the conclusion of the project, the Kiwanis adopted a one-mile section of the trail.



Rebuilding Meggison Creek Bridge.



the daytime. As soon as another 10 miles of the trail are completely connected, FRTTI would like to add a volunteer patrol program. In the winter, one officer patrols the trail part-time in a vehicle.

By far the biggest trail enforcement issue is ATV use. Typically, ATVs are a serious problem within the first two to three months of the opening of a new trail section. Once the new section becomes widely known and people start using it, ATVs cease to become a problem because people start reporting them. The second biggest issue is loitering at bridges and trailheads.

According to Mantey, the patrol program is highly beneficial in encouraging trail use. Recreational users like trails that are well-maintained and feel 'safe.' The trail has no weeds, and maintenance is done regularly. As a result, the trail is heavily used, especially west of Norwalk. The trail officers keep a log of the amount of trail users they see while on patrol. During a summer of bicycle patrol, one officer spent 131 hours on the trail, rode 1,658 miles and saw 1,445 people. Aside from five somewhat unruly individuals, all of the trail users were clearly enjoying themselves. Mantey believes that once the trail is finished, linking three towns (Norwalk, Monroeville and Bellevue), the amount of users will rise dramatically.

CONCLUSION

The North Coast Inland Trail points the way toward a peaceful coexistence between property owners and trail builders. The majority of property owners have understandable fears about public access near their property, which must be respectfully addressed. By listening to people's concerns and acting as good neighbors, FRTTI converted strident opponents into dedicated supporters, and was even able to obtain easements from landowners. FRTTI garnered a large amount of community support as they established a diverse board of directors that represented every user group, from hikers to equestrians to birdwatchers. Regular workdays, events, patrols and strong partnerships with local park districts help make the North Coast Inland Trail an inviting place with steadily increasing use.

Visit FRTTI at www.firelandsrailstotrails.org.



CASE STUDIES

Ohio to Erie Trail — Madison County, Ohio

GENERAL TRAIL INFORMATION

The Ohio to Erie Trail is a shared-use path that stretches across Ohio from the Ohio River in Cincinnati to Lake Erie in Cleveland. The Madison County section totals about 16 miles. The surface is asphalt and in good condition. Most of the trail in Madison County is owned by the Madison County Metropolitan Park District. About two miles are owned and leased by the city of London. The Columbus and Franklin County Metro Park District leased about 3.5 miles of railroad right-of-way in Madison County and extended the trail to Franklin County. The trail was acquired or leased by sections between 2000 and 2010.

Many further trail connections and improvements are planned. A third trailhead was added after the trail was built as part of the ongoing London Nature Preserve being designed along the trail corridor. Madison County Metro Park District and Friends of Madison County Parks and Trails (FMCPT) plan several extensions to destinations including bison pastures and a new nature center at Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park, Prairie Oaks Metro Park, Madison Lake State Park, and the Choctaw Lake subdivision. Also, there is a multi-phase development project planned along the trail on the east side of London.

ORGANIZATIONAL

FMCPT is a nonprofit that was first formed in 1999 when it became known that the Ohio to Erie Trail was going to be passing through Madison County. At the time, there was a large court case forming against the trail in Madison and Clark counties, and there was no trail support group in Madison County. Wayne Roberts, the current executive director, began the group, which became incorporated in the state of Ohio and eventually became a certified 501c3 nonprofit. The group's bylaws state that they were formed to support the Madison County Metropolitan Park District and the city of London with their parks and trails. Some of FMCPT's earliest activities were to publicly support the Madison County Park District Commissioners and the London City Council during the court case and against negative press, and also to help deal with a few angry local residents. As soon as possible, FMCPT received permission to start clearing a section of future trail for construction vehicles. That seemed to be the turning point in the "war for the trail." The park district commissioners held their ground and FMCPT continually supported them publicly through the court case, trail construction, ribbon cuttings and trail maintenance. After many volunteer work operations, and



Wayne Roberts, executive director of FMCPT, proudly points at a newly installed trail sign on the Ohio to Erie Trail.

with the successful completion of the various trail sections, resistance eventually waned, and they won community support for the trail.

FMCPT has a board with 12 directors and an executive director, all of whom are volunteers. They hire a local attorney when needed, and sometimes services are donated. They keep a roster of dues-paying members, and a membership renewal campaign is launched once per year. Visitors to the FMCPT website can download a membership form and pay using PayPal, credit card or by sending a check.

FINANCIAL

FMCPT has an annual budget of \$22,000 to \$26,000. Of that, about \$14,000 is used directly for trail maintenance. FMCPT occasionally even donates funds to the park district and the city of London to help with mowing expenses. Much of the remaining amount is used to fund activities to generate further revenue, including several small fundraisers (i.e. annual pancake breakfast, family bike tours, etc.). FMCPT has donation pipe safes at four locations, and a fifth pipe safe is portable and used at various events throughout the year. Aside from the fundraising events, the rest of the money is generated through membership fees, donations and occasionally grants for specific projects. FMCPT and other organizations sponsor bicycle tours that use parts of the trail during the riding season.

FMCPT maintains several amenities on the trail, including a memorial site at one trailhead, a quiet area with flowers, benches and a memorial stone. There are two rain gardens, a shelter house, restroom and drinking fountain at this trailhead. A potential campground is part of the future London Nature Preserve project.

A University of Cincinnati study on the Little Miami Scenic Trail in Ohio has shown that single-family home sale prices increase by \$7.05 for every foot closer a property is located to a trail. Roberts agrees, noting that many adjacent residential lots in London did not sell until the trail was built. As soon as the trail was in existence, many large homes were constructed on these lots. These findings could potentially be used to persuade trail skeptics of the economic benefits that accrue when a trail is built.

MAINTENANCE

FMCPT commits to a high level of trail maintenance quality and requests the park district and city of London to do the same. The group references other active trail maintenance park districts for guidance.

Since most of the maintenance is done by volunteers, letters of approval had to be issued by the city and county agencies in order for FMCPT to work on the trail corridor. Inexperienced volunteers learn the various tasks through a brief mentor program, where they are taught by more experienced volunteers. Volunteer Trail Sentinels go through classes on first aid, CPR, trail security and bicycle repair.

FMCPT owns and operates a towed commercial blower, a brush hog and a weed trimmer. The maintenance responsibilities are divided between FMCPT and the government agencies. The city of London and the Madison County Park District arrange to have the trail mowed regularly. The park district has applied for grants to reseal the trail asphalt about every five years. The maintenance responsibilities of FMCPT consist of removing fallen trees and branches, assisting other groups in picking up trash, and blowing the trail with a commercial blower. FMCPT will occasionally brush hog five to 10 feet alongside the trail to keep the tall weeds down so the park



Trail users pose in front of the Ed Honton Bridge.

district mowers can keep the grass cut four to five feet from the side of the trail.

TRAIL CONFLICTS

In order to discourage illegal behavior, FMCPT has posted signs with rules and trail etiquette at the trailheads. Volunteer Trail Sentinels patrol the trail and are the “eyes and ears” for the local law enforcement agencies.

The biggest trail enforcement issue is unauthorized vehicle use. There have also been rare instances of vandalism (i.e. graffiti, litter, items stolen, damage to displays or signs.), as well as one assault. Safety concerns have prompted discussions about liability, but no claims have been filed. The Madison County Park District and the city of London are self-insured, and FMCPT carries liability insurance for its board of directors.

Much of the property adjacent to the trail is farmland, with residential single-family homes on most of the remaining area. An occasional tree falling across property lines will generate a phone call to the trail managers; however, no serious conflicts with landowners have occurred.

CONCLUSION

The Ohio to Erie Trail is a good example of a balance that can be reached between volunteer support and municipal involvement. Friends of Madison County Parks and Trails was originally formed to support Madison County in the creation of the Ohio to Erie Trail, which was coming under heavy attack from property owners and residents. With the park district commissioners and FMCPT banding together, they were able to overcome the opposition and turn the trail into a reality. The trail maintenance responsibilities were split up; as a result, neither FMCPT nor the municipalities must shoulder an excessively heavy burden. Again, a strong and diverse board of directors, membership, and use of volunteers for maintenance activities sustains the trail project and friends group.

Visit FMCPT at www.fmcpt.com.



CASE STUDIES

Sacramento Northern Parkway — California

GENERAL TRAIL INFORMATION

The Sacramento Northern Parkway (also known as the Sacramento Northern Bikeway) is a 9.8-mile urban rail-trail that crosses through neighborhoods and parks connecting downtown Sacramento with rural Rio Linda. The trail runs along the former right-of-way of the Sacramento Northern Interurban Railway, which carried passengers between Sacramento and Chico until the line closed in the mid-1940s. Many of the bridges and structures originally built for the railway still remain.

The trail is fully paved and suitable for activities such as cycling, inline skating, running and equestrian use. Due to its urban location, the corridor offers a multitude of connections to various trails, neighborhoods, schools and businesses. These

connections include the American River Bike Trail, Discovery Park, Rio Linda Chamber of Commerce, and Rio Linda Community Center. As such, it is used both for recreation as well as commuting by everyone from grocery shoppers, residents going to work, and children riding their bicycles to school. The trail has widespread support and significant buy-in from the community. Businesses value the trail for the increased pedestrian and bicycle traffic it attracts. Although they have not been quantified, the economic benefits of the trail are likely to be substantial to those businesses located near the trail. Property owners near the trail commonly use the route and have reported few instances of trespassing or other undesirable activities. Trail use is constantly increasing, especially since the city repaved it with a fresh layer of asphalt two years ago. Overall, the Sacramento Northern Parkway is a well-loved and highly popular trail.



Welcome to the Sacramento Northern Parkway!

MANAGEMENT

The trail itself is owned and maintained by the city of Sacramento, but the bulk of maintenance work consists of landscaping and managing green space around the trail. This work is especially crucial due to the urban nature of the trail; without regular maintenance, invasive species, trash and vandalism could soon degrade the parkway and greatly weaken its aesthetic and recreational qualities. Sacramento also has a warm inland climate where shade trees are valued and make walking and bicycling tolerable on hot summer afternoons. For this purpose, the city of Sacramento awarded a contract to the Sacramento Tree Foundation (STF), a nonprofit whose mission is to “grow healthy, livable communities in the Sacramento region by building the best regional urban forest in the nation.”

STF functioned as a connector between the city and the community, helping to engage the neighborhoods around the trail and create a sense of ownership within the residents. STF went



The trail runs through a quiet residential neighborhood in the Sacramento area.



door to door in the area to solicit ‘captains’ who would form the core of a budding volunteer group. The captains would then solicit their friends and neighbors to add even more volunteers to the group. This volunteer organization was known as the Sacramento Parkway Stewards. While the Stewards no longer meet as a group, a few remaining volunteers continue to maintain sections of the parkway.

The Stewards were instrumental in establishing 3,500 trees and shrubs along the trail and controlling invasive weeds with regular mowing. The first three years are critical for trees to be properly watered and maintained for them to survive in the long term. The Stewards were empowered to fix minor irrigation issues, distribute mulch around tree wells, weed and mow large areas of the parkway. For several years after the initial installation of the trail, a group of 12 captains would meet on a monthly basis to discuss the needs of the parkway. Several of the Stewards were retired and spent considerable time volunteering, so it was rare to visit without finding one of them on a riding mower or distributing mulch. The Stewards worked with STF to recruit volunteer groups to help with replacement tree planting, mulching, pruning and other larger tasks they could train one-time volunteers to do. When AmeriCorps NCCC located its western base at nearby McClellan Air Force Base, the Stewards occupied many of the AmeriCorps teams in big clean-ups and workdays, and also worked with AmeriCorps teams that would spend off-weeks from their rotation in Sacramento.

Unfortunately, STF and the Stewards had difficulty recruiting new members to the group, and the Stewards group declined to two members as a result of various causes (death, relocation, etc.). Due to the diminished number of Stewards, a management plan that would allow businesses to adopt sections of the trail was considered. However, funding was redirected to maintenance staff instead. In 2002, the city of Sacramento decided to put the maintenance contract up for bid. All of the bids came in at more than \$100,000, so the city resumed limited maintenance with staff. The southern section, which includes some turf areas and other more natural landscapes, is now under the maintenance of the city of Sacramento. The more rural northern section is still maintained by the remaining Stewards. There is a marked contrast between the two sections: the northern part is generally clean, free of trash and well-mowed. The portion without volunteer support, on the other hand, does not get taken care of as frequently and is showing signs of decline.



CASE STUDIES

Sacramento Northern Parkway — California

VOLUNTEER LIABILITY

Since volunteers do most of the maintenance for the STF, liability issues are taken into consideration. All volunteers must receive certification and sign a volunteer release form before operating any power tools; however, safety training is provided for volunteers even if they are only using hand tools. The STF considered issuing certification cards to the volunteers. The intent was for volunteers to have a form of documentation they could show to city officials, but this plan never materialized.

FINANCIAL

The budget of the Sacramento Parkway Stewards was \$43,000 a year. This amount was divided between equipment expenses, irrigation, a half-time salary to the STF volunteer coordinator, and a small stipend to the captains. There were certain restrictions attached to the stipend that prevented its misuse. For example, a captain would become ineligible for the stipend if he/she missed more than a certain amount of monthly meetings.

The funding was received through an annual grant from the city of Sacramento Recreation and Parks Department. There are no other sources of funding, and no fundraising efforts were organized.

Water Rite, a plumbing supply company located along the parkway in Sacramento, at times has donated irrigation equipment to the trail.



A dog walker strolls through a pleasantly shaded section.

MAINTENANCE

Maintenance equipment is owned by the city of Sacramento, even though STF used to store it while they were still under contract. All of the equipment was bought with funds from the \$43,000 annual budget. The Stewards equipment was kept inside of Conex shipping containers in the northern section of the trail. The city of Sacramento keeps its own maintenance supplies in a yard in the southern section. Due to the distance of the trail, it would be impractical to use the same equipment throughout its entire length.

Maintenance activities consist primarily of mowing, pruning and mulching. Mowing is done every two weeks during the growing season, approximately from late April until July or August. The primary objective of mowing is to eradicate the noxious and invasive star thistle. Pruning is performed on an as-needed basis every couple of weeks. Dead or broken tree limbs are removed from the trail throughout the year.

No trail improvements are planned at this time. In 2011, a corporate group went out and did some cleaning and replacement work along the trail. Otherwise, the trail is in relatively fine condition.

A possible suggestion for the managers of other rail-trails would be to create a detailed GIS map of the trail with multiple layers for each feature. This map would allow maintenance issues to be more easily spotted, leading to greater cost and time efficiencies.

TRAIL CONFLICTS

The biggest enforcement issues on the trail are vandalism, graffiti and illegal dumping. The Sacramento Parkway Stewards go out on the trail as soon as possible after being informed of a problem and remove any graffiti or vandalized property. They follow the 'broken windows' theory, which states that fixing broken windows or graffiti will discourage further vandalism by sending strong social signals about the unacceptability of such behavior. If graffiti is not immediately removed, often additional graffiti and vandalism occurs around the affected area until cleaned or repaired. Vandals on the Sacramento Northern Bikeway usually 'tag' the asphalt surface of the trail and utility buildings, as well as the backsides of property owners' fences. Private property damage is not a major concern. There are not that many houses abutting the trail, as most of the adjacent land is open space.

CONCLUSION

The city of Sacramento awarded the contract for the Sacramento Northern Parkway to the Sacramento Tree Foundation, a nonprofit that created the volunteer group responsible for the maintenance of the trail. While the city constructed and maintains the trail, much of the work happens in the greenway along the trail where trees need to be planted, mulched and watered, and open space areas weeded and mowed. Municipalities are increasingly reliant on volunteers for trail construction and maintenance as the cost-effectiveness of this approach has become apparent; nonprofits and volunteer organizations should take advantage of this mutually beneficial relationship and explore opportunities for involvement. The program was effective at working with a core group of Stewards that could recruit and train one-day volunteer groups to tackle the big projects. But as other trail groups have discovered, it is difficult to keep momentum going without active membership, new construction projects and events occurring.



CASE STUDIES

Guadalupe River Trail — California



Urban trail work along the Guadalupe River in downtown San Jose.

GENERAL TRAIL INFORMATION

The Guadalupe River Trail in San Jose, Calif., is distinct from the other trails examined in this report. As an urban river corridor managed for flood control and recreation, opportunities for volunteer construction are limited, and the city has had to be more creative in involving community members in the trail. Volunteers can fill in the gaps when city budgets are stressed through the innovative Trail Watch and Adopt-a-Trail programs. San Jose's Green Vision, Greenprint and General Plan mandate a 100-mile interconnected trail network with 36 individual trail systems by 2022; as a result, development of the trail network has been prioritized and 54 miles have been completed. The Guadalupe River Trail functions as a "core system" within this interconnected trail network. It supports both recreation and commuting and will ultimately extend across the entire city, with numerous connections to other core and edge trails.

The northern reach of the trail begins in downtown San Jose, runs through the 250-acre Guadalupe River Park, and extends

northward as it flows to San Francisco Bay. The trail is nine miles long; three miles are currently paved, and the remainder is to be paved starting in the summer of 2012. An additional two miles are open in south San Jose, with a plan to connect the trail system as flood control work is completed during the next several years.

Planning of the flood control channel began in the 1940s. From those early days, city leaders were clear that San Jose's Guadalupe River would have a more natural and park-like quality, unlike the Los Angeles River, which was built in the same timeframe. The Guadalupe River Trail has developed slowly. A public celebration of the greenway occurred in 2005 as a continuous paved trail was completed through the downtown area. The six miles that go from downtown to the bay were opened in 2008 by entering into a joint-use agreement with the Santa Clara Valley Water District, which operates the levee maintenance road along the river. The trail is used by more than 1,000 people on weekdays, with more than 50 percent reporting they use it to commute to and from Silicon Valley employment centers. During construction slated to

begin in summer 2012, the San Jose Parks Department will fully pave the trail and install five interpretive stations as well as a large public art piece to recall discovery of mammoth remains along the river several years ago.

MANAGEMENT

The trail system is a defined recreational amenity for the city, and as such is maintained by the parks department. A joint-use agreement with the local water district permits recreational use on the lands it owns along the waterway, and clearly defines roles, responsibilities and liabilities. In short, the arrangement permits the water district to allow public passage to its property by having the city assume liability for recreational use and for upkeep of the recreational facilities.

Development of the trail system has been funded through many sources, including local redevelopment agency funds, park trust funds, developer fees, state and federal grants. Planned trail construction represents a major construction project that must be competitively bid and contracted. The project scope, project permits, defined grant objectives, legal constraints and adherence to numerous permits prevent the city from employing volunteers for this type of project. Many of the tree plantings and landscape elements are required for mitigation and must be maintained by city staff or contractors due to the liability for loss of plant material.

Property ownership has not prevented trail development but does require careful management of the site for recreational purposes. About half of the trail corridor is owned by the Santa Clara Valley Water District, and the entire system is or will be

managed for flood control. The city of San Jose's Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services manages the recreational facilities on water district lands under a 25-year joint-use agreement, and also manages the remaining property, most of which is owned by the city of San Jose. The agreement provides an easy renewal clause since the city intends long-term operation of the trail network as part of the its transportation network.

FINANCIAL

The city of San Jose's annual maintenance budget for one mile of trail is \$12,050. An additional \$2,200 will support the future hiring of park rangers. Park rangers are typically paid \$50,000 a year, and the city envisions four full-time rangers for the 100-mile trail network. The parks department's maintenance budget is sourced from the city's general fund, and allocation of funds can be reduced during challenging economic times.

There is one gardener dedicated to maintaining the trail's landscaping and plantings. The parks department staffs a part-time volunteer coordinator for the trail network. The coordinator has access to an annual budget of approximately \$25,000, which permits purchase of supplies and equipment. The coordinator has access to a special account to draw from for additional expenses such as overtime of city staff for one-day events.

The city has recently supported development of the San Jose Parks Foundation. The foundation's mission is to establish innovative vibrant parks, trails and recreation programs by building a permanent charitable endowment that will provide sustainable resources in perpetuity for San Jose.

MAINTENANCE

In general, the parks department is responsible for maintenance of the trail and landscape elements of the Guadalupe River Park, while the water district maintains the functionality of the flood control system. As noted earlier, volunteers are not permitted to participate in the construction process, but San Jose does see an important role for volunteer trail maintenance support.

San Jose has a very active Adopt-A-Trail program. Working in conjunction with the Adopt-A-Park program, volunteers spend two hours per month helping to maintain their adopted section. After committing to the program for a year, volunteers are



Young adult volunteers make the trail clean and green.



CASE STUDIES

Guadalupe River Trail — California

trained, supplied with a t-shirt for identification as a volunteer, a litter pick-up stick, trash bags, gloves and tools to enhance their particular section of the trail, such as brooms and rakes. Many volunteers enjoy their time outdoors because they are free to volunteer when their schedule permits. This arrangement makes helping the community an easy and convenient opportunity for individuals, families, service organizations, corporations and youth groups. Unfortunately, just a fraction of the trails throughout the city have been adopted. The Guadalupe River Trail's maintenance is also supported by the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy, which independently organizes volunteer activities, and also provides educational programs and functions as an important project champion. Through the city's Adopt-A-Trail efforts, there is currently one adopted section. The city is seeking volunteers for the greater majority of the downtown area. Parks department staff believe that the number of volunteers may be impacted by the trail's location in the city. The trail system is bordered primarily by commercial and industrial uses. Some high-density housing communities exist along the most northern reaches of the trail system. Because of this land use, parks staff perceive that not enough people have an emotional investment in the trail. Volunteer maintenance can be sporadic, as bursts of intense activity occur during the volunteer events and subside the rest of the year. The North San Jose Guidelines support the transition of low-density commercial to high-density residential and

mixed use. It is anticipated that volunteerism will increase in time as the character of North San Jose transitions.

A second volunteer opportunity exists with TrailWatch. This new program targets volunteers who do not have time on the weekends or evenings or may not want to get their hands dirty, but often commute on the trail and can function as an extra pair of eyes. By locating problem areas, TrailWatch members reduce the amount of time that maintenance workers have to spend surveying the trail; TrailWatch participants notify the city park staff of concerns so they can respond directly. Another function of TrailWatch is to politely remind people of the rules of the trail. The trail manager has an interesting idea for improving trail etiquette. He envisions volunteers wearing t-shirts that feature trail signage such as "slow for pedestrians." This program could be an effective method of reminding trail users to follow the rules without being overtly aggressive. San Jose's Trail Signage guidelines seek to be informative and memorable—they can be viewed at www.sjparks.org/Trails/documents/TrailSignageGuidelines_3-23-12-low-res.pdf.

The city also has many one-time volunteers for special clean-up events. The tasks performed consist of weeding, picking up trash, installing new mulch, etc. Volunteers are recruited through Hands On Bay Area and other channels. Kiwanis clubs and student groups have given the best response, with up to 200 volunteers signing up to maintain the trail due to its



value as a commuting corridor. This is one of the advantages of the trail's urban setting—it can draw from a large and highly diverse population.

An annual trail count also provides a one-day volunteer commitment. The city establishes several count stations along city trails (with two occurring along the Guadalupe River). The count and survey of trail users provides the city valuable data to support better planning and a tool for competitive grant writing. Volunteers commit to one- or two-hour shifts at a count station, where they document the number of pedestrians and bicyclists, and provide a postcard inviting trail users to take a survey online.

The nonprofit Guadalupe River Park Conservancy functions as a champion for the park and trail, as well as for citywide trail development. Their headquarters is situated adjacent to the river, and they have an active board, corporate involvement and a membership roster.

SAFETY ISSUES

Generally, trail users report feeling safe while using the trail. The parks department conducted a survey of trail users, and 99 percent of respondents said they felt 'very safe' or 'relatively safe' on the trail network.

Due to the urban nature of the Guadalupe River Trail and the dense riparian corridor, there are a number of homeless encampments along the Guadalupe River. Volunteers are instructed to leave the homeless alone. They are not expected to be police enforcers due to the potential hazards involved. Some of the encampments are very well established. Many are in riparian areas, where thicker tree cover along water allows for more shelter and privacy. It is not a highly visible issue, but trail users definitely notice it. In the past, park rangers had established good relationships with the homeless population. For example, the rangers would ask them to throw garbage into the provided bins, and the homeless generally complied. Now that there are fewer rangers due to budget cuts, the level of cooperation and outreach may deteriorate.

Another safety issue that often gets brought up in community meetings is the conflict between cyclists and walkers. Many people are concerned that cyclists go too fast and endanger pedestrians. The city's signage guidelines include signs that encourage better behavior, ie. Slow for Pedestrians, Pass to the Left.



Some weeds are hard to pull!

CONCLUSION

San Jose has been highly successful at incorporating trails into the 10th-most populated city in the country. There is a broad vision to build a 100-mile trail network within the city and extend access to trails to almost every resident, a truly exciting prospect that will firmly put San Jose on the map as one of the bike-friendliest cities in the United States. San Jose's method of trail development is much more expensive compared to other case studies in this report, but it is necessary in this case due to the trail's dual function to support recreation and commuting, as well as legal and external agency constraints. San Jose has shown significant progress in developing its trail network in spite of the high costs and regulatory environment.

Citizen involvement is critical to support the city's large investment in the network. Volunteers won't have an opportunity to run machines or grade a trail, but the mere presence and eyes of volunteers can transform a disconnected trail into a neighborhood gathering spot and regional travel resource. The San Jose Parks Foundation has dedicated significant funding and staff resources to the trail network and augmented with volunteer monitoring and maintenance wherever possible, while the Guadalupe River Parks Conservancy has been a strong advocate for the trail. As a result, the Guadalupe River Trail is becoming a heavily used and community-embraced trail.



CASE STUDIES

Reedley Community Parkway — California



A bench surrounded by lush landscaping creates a sense of calm and relaxation.



A group of school volunteers proudly gathers around a newly planted tree.

GENERAL TRAIL INFORMATION

Reedley Community Parkway in California is a shared-use path for cyclists, pedestrians, inline skaters and other non-motorized uses. The trail is built along a railbanked right-of-way next to existing tracks and provides an alternate route to access some of Reedley's busiest arterial streets. The 2.6-mile path largely traverses Reedley's industrial part of town, although there are some cultivated fields on the southeast end. The corridor ranges in width from 75 to 100 feet. The trail begins at Buttonwillow Avenue and ends at Kings River next to the Reedley College campus, making its way diagonally through the entire city. Hundreds of walkers, cyclists and runners are estimated to use the Reedley Parkway daily.

The history of this trail began in 1997 when the Tulare Valley Railroad announced its intention to abandon its railroad tracks. From its inception, the trail-building process was driven by a coalition of citizens and volunteers who had a dream of a non-motorized trail in the heart of Reedley that could be used for commuting and recreation. At the time of abandonment, the city had possession of the downtown right-of-way, which they planned to relinquish to adjacent landowners. However, a grassroots coalition of citizens approached the city government and asked for it to be transformed into a trail. A Rails to Trails Committee ("Trails Committee") was formed to engage in fundraising, organize volunteers to help with the construction process, and act as a forum for public input into the design of the trail. The Trails Committee has been the driving force in maintaining the trail and incorporating new amenities into it. In recent years, the city of Reedley has played a greater role in trail maintenance and management, and volunteers have taken a backseat. However, the early years of the Reedley Parkway still serve as a great example of a trail that was built from the ground up through grassroots effort.

MANAGEMENT

In a city of Reedley's small size (pop. 24,194), the Trails Committee's success in engaging the community has been stunning: more than 75 different organizations have been involved with the trail. Volunteers have planted more than 840 trees and 150 shrubs, and the Trails Committee was given significant autonomy by the city council to utilize volunteers as needed for the beautification of the parkway.

The first tree plantings took place in 2000 in the section between North Reed Avenue and 11th Street. A contractor performed the necessary work, as the city government at the time thought the tasks involved were beyond the capabilities of volunteers. In 2002, 80 dedicated citizens planted the section from 11th Street to 13th Street with 200 trees. The city then agreed that volunteers were capable of performing work beyond simple maintenance. This approach reduced costs and created a sense of 'community

ownership' that arose as a result of citizens enhancing their own trail. The fourth tree planting took place in early 2004 and featured an impressive list of organizations: the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Elkhorn Correctional cadets, Pacific University students, CSUF students, RC Upward Bound, RC Forestry Club, and RHS Generation Green.

The Trails Committee's membership has fluctuated throughout the years based on need. It has been as high as 30 members and as low as only one. Currently, Dale Melville performs all of the committee's functions: collecting donations, ordering new benches and tables, installing new donor tiles, and coordinating with the city regarding financial status and recognizing new donors on the website. There is no formal organizational structure; although the committee functions as a fairly independent entity, in theory it is merely an advisory body to the Reedley Parks & Recreation Commission.

FINANCIAL

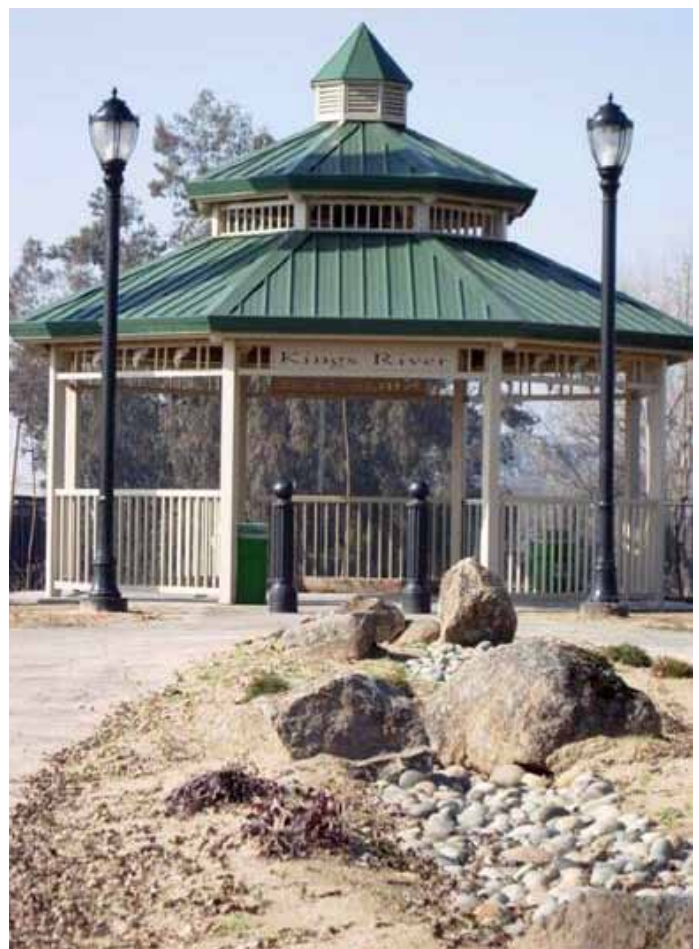
Construction of the trail began in 2000; through 2008, the total amount of money spent on all trail operations and construction was \$3,048,311. Funding for construction of the parkway came from multiple sources. Three different grants were given by the federal government: Community Development Block Grants, the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program, and Transportation Enhancements. Additional funding came from Fresno County's transportation tax (Measure C), as well as Reedley's park development impact

fees. The PG&E Safe Tree Program and Tree Fresno contributed generously to the tree-planting effort.

Most trail amenities were funded by \$63,000 in donations that were received from businesses and citizens. Twenty-three benches at a value of \$1,500 each were donated. Two drinking fountains, two bicycle racks, a kiosk for posting community events, three picnic tables, two donor boards with more than 100 tiles, and one art sculpture (*Railroad in the Sky*) were all funded by the community. An ornamental fountain was donated by Buttonwillow Nursery, and the brick foundation surrounding the fountain was donated by Reedley Lumber. Three dog waste dispensers, affectionately known as Mutt Mitt stations, were donated by Dr. John Gray from Reedley Veterinary Hospital. To commemorate their 100-year anniversary, the First Mennonite Church planted an olive tree in 2006. A beautiful mural depicting the 200-year history of Reedley was painted by the Fresno County Workforce Investment Board



This hand-painted mural depicts scenes from the history of Reedley.



A beautifully constructed gazebo provides peace and rejuvenation for visitors.



CASE STUDIES

Reedley Community Parkway — California

Youth Commission. Finally, a gazebo was built in 2008 by Beckenhauer Construction, using materials the city government had purchased with a grant. Funding for the construction itself was provided partially by the city and partially by the Rails to Trails Committee. Landscaping was completed by student volunteers from Reedley College under the supervision of Ron Nishinaka, the landscape horticulture instructor.



A missing plaque on a trail bench reflects some of the vandalism trail supporters have had to manage.

graffiti removal and replacing vandalized plaques and signs. Unfortunately, vandalism has increased in recent years. Bronze plaques have been broken off from benches and monuments such as the *Railroad in the Sky* sculpture. The Trails Committee has already replaced the bench plaques multiple times. But aside from these chores, there have been very few safety and trail enforcement issues.

To celebrate the contributions of generous donors, a donor board was started in 2000. The structure was built by Immanuel High School students under the direction of Bill Olinger. Reedley High School students made the tiles by hand under the supervision of Jim Gregory. In total, 69 tiles were filled in 2003. A second donor board was started in 2003 after additional donors requested it. The tiles were made commercially until 2006; afterwards, Reedley High students made them by hand.

The unbelievable amount of time and money contributed to the Reedley Parkway by volunteers is a great example of the benefits that can accrue when a tightly knit community “buys in” to the vision of a trail. Reedley Parkway is the only non-motorized trail running through the small town of Reedley, and it connects the entire town from northwest to southeast; it is likely that these factors have made the residents proud of their trail and presented them with a sense of ownership.

MAINTENANCE

The city of Reedley is responsible for general maintenance of the trail. In 2004, the volunteer trail committee inaugurated an Adopt-a-Parkway program, which is meant to supplement the city-provided maintenance. A dozen individuals, businesses and organizations volunteer for a year or more to provide maintenance to certain sections of the parkway, mainly consisting of weeding and litter pick-up. Their contributions are recognized by signposts similar to ‘Adopt-a-Highway’ signs. Many trail users also pick up litter as they walk along the pathway; as a result, the trail appears well kept.

Ongoing maintenance tasks include repainting mileage markers, replacing Mutt Mitt bags, tree trimming, removing tree stakes,

CONCLUSION

It seems that almost every resident of Reedley has been involved in the creation of the Reedley Parkway—an outstanding example of a community built trail. The diversity of support may be attributed to Reedley’s small size and the location of the trail running right through downtown; it truly is a small town with a big heart. Of particular note is the heavy involvement of school and youth groups such as the Scouts, high school students and Elkhorn Correctional cadets. The teachers, scout leaders, and other youth mentors who came forward and volunteered their students made an impressive contribution to the creation of the trail. One challenge exhibited by the Reedley Parkway is the difficulty in keeping engagement going long after the construction ends. As the projects reach completion, programming on the trail and adding additional amenities can keep the excitement alive and continue to involve new supporters.

Visit the Reedley Parkway at www.reedley.com/PDF/09-May-parkway.pdf.



ADDITIONAL CASE STUDIES

Iron Horse Preservation Society — Crocker Park Trail — Massachusetts and California

The Iron Horse Preservation Society is a unique non-profit organization that removes spikes, bolts, rails and other track materials in exchange for salvage value (at approximately \$325/ton). The removal process is environmentally friendly and all railroad ties are either reused or burned in biomass power generation plants. After the track materials have been removed, a surface of crushed stone .75 inches or less in diameter (in some cases reground asphalt) is spread and compacted. The best part is that this service comes at absolutely no cost to the associated municipalities. On the Danvers Rail Trail in Massachusetts, Iron Horse removed tracks from a 4.5-mile railroad corridor and covered about 3.5 miles of it with gravel for no charge. In fact, the salvage value of the scrap iron was high enough that Iron Horse offered to install stop signs at road crossings. However, Iron Horse specializes strictly in the removal of rail ties and tracks, so the right-of-way must be legally owned by the appropriate agencies, and all necessary permits granted before Iron Horse can begin its work.

The city of Brisbane, Calif., was ecstatic when it found out it could get a trail for free by using Iron Horse Preservation Society's services. Brisbane, located near San Francisco, had an existing railroad track in place around the Crocker Business Park; however, the corridor was heavily overgrown and the track had fallen into disuse. Iron Horse Preservation Society

was able to remove the tracks and ties for salvage value and repair, grade and compact the roadbed. The city of Brisbane got an unpaved 2.5-mile walking trail with signage, benches, garbage bins and even dog waste bag dispensers at no cost. The city then handled improvements at the street crossings.

Iron Horse Preservation Society has completed additional rail-trail projects in Massachusetts and California and is eager to work with new partners. To learn more about Iron Horse Preservation Society or avail yourself of their services, check out their website at www.ironhorsepreservation.org.

Sources: http://baycolonyrailtrail.org/IHPS_FAQ

www.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2012/03/11/danvers_celebrates_progress_on_rail_trail/ironhorsepreservation.org



A bridge in Danvers after the Iron Horse crew installed decking and railings.



Two Iron Horse employees transport a rail using a forklift.



ADDITIONAL CASE STUDIES

Valley County Pathways — Idaho

Residents of Idaho's rural Valley County are surrounded by mountain bike, hiking and cross-country ski trails that attract tourists and provide popular recreation opportunities. However, the region still needed pedestrian-friendly multi-use trails that could attract additional users such as equestrians, inline skaters, etc. In July of 2003, a citizens' group banded together and formed Valley County (VC) Pathways, committing themselves to developing pedestrian infrastructure using volunteer efforts. This nonprofit formed as a response to the evident need for additional trail infrastructure and was driven by a sense of urgency due to a new wave of development that threatened to cover possible trail corridors.

In October 2004, VC Pathways organized an open house to measure public sentiment about a network of pathways. Without exception, everyone present was highly supportive of the notion, including government officials. Empowered by this strong show of support, VC Pathways created a master plan that would develop 100 miles of pedestrian pathways between Cascade and McCall. The master plan is comprehensive and

consists of several different sections. It identifies multiple possible trail corridors, while cautioning that field work to gauge community and landowner support is necessary. The master plan was adopted by the Valley County Planning and Zoning Commission and the Valley County Commission in 2005. VC Pathways brought a number of businesses and recreationists to those meetings and showed strong public support for the master plan. Surprisingly, there was no opposition. Thirteen overarching goals are listed; impressively, several of these goals actually make recommendations to the Valley County Planning and Zoning Department. For example, Goal 3 states that the "Valley County Planning and Zoning Department should require individuals and developers who propose new developments and subdivisions to blend their proposals into the vision for a valley-wide pathways system." This language ensures that no developments are approved that would allow construction over the top of key pathway corridors. Since the plan's adoption, several new developments have provided an easement to VC Pathways in order for their development plans to proceed. The master plan also identifies funding sources such as grants and impact fees.



Volunteers use power tools in the decking of the boardwalk on the Boulder Creek Trail.



A pair of cyclists enjoys a marsh view along the newly constructed North Valley Rail Trail.

One of the priorities of VC Pathways is the conversion of a 25-mile railroad right-of-way from McCall to Cascade. Unfazed by the fact that the corridor is now owned primarily by adjacent private property owners, VC Pathways has been tirelessly working with those owners to develop the right-of-way into a trail. "We know this is a slow-moving process, but so far we are batting 100 percent in our landowner relations program," says Steve Stuebner, chairman of VC Pathways. "We have been very successful in obtaining easements for new trails from every owner we've dealt with. We feel very fortunate that this is an area with a lot of very fit runners, hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders. They want more trails."

VC Pathways has a nine-member board of directors. They are constantly engaged with new projects such as the development of the McCall-to-Cascade rail-trail, fundraisers and developing a pathways master plan for the city of Cascade. Most of the work is done by volunteers. In recent years, a number of accomplishments can testify to the success of this dedicated organization. "The Strand," a 2.2-mile pathway along the Payette River, was opened in spring 2011 and relies on mixed land ownerships that include the city of Cascade, easements from Kelly's Whitewater Park, and pieces of state and federal Bureau of Land Management property. VC Pathways also opened the 3.5-mile North Valley Rail Trail, which was made possible by generous trail access agreements with Judd and Diane DeBoer, Lake Irrigation District, River Ranch and a property donation from the Martin Whiteman family. VC Pathways held a volunteer work day to brush out the trail and install 15 new signposts and signs.

Their most recent accomplishment is the quarter-mile Boulder Creek Trail in Donnelly, which was completed by a group of 16 volunteers building a 255-foot-long boardwalk across a wetland. This project was completed in just one weekend using loaned generators, power tools and hand tools. Tim Swanson of Swanson Construction and Art Troutner of Troutner Construction directed the project for free; students at Donnelly Elementary assisted with bank stabilization and the installation of interpretive signs; and Idaho Fish and Game volunteers planted some 500 shrubs next to the creek. The right-of-way was granted by Hugh L. and Georgia Ann Fulton of Donnelly and Melba, who donated a pathways easement to VC Pathways and seven acres of wetlands to the city of Donnelly. Grant funds totaling \$83,558 came from the Wittenberger Foundation, Forest Service Resource Advisory Committee, and the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation.

VC Pathways is truly a story of the astounding trail-building success that can be achieved as a result of community support. Numerous individuals in Valley County helped to make these trails a reality, whether by donating sections of land or easements, volunteering or lending their voice in support of this initiative.

For more information about VC Pathways, visit their website at www.valleycountypathways.org.



ADDITIONAL CASE STUDIES

Amigos de los Rios — California

With its channelized rivers and massive freeways, Los Angeles County isn't commonly associated with green infrastructure. But since greenways hold part of the solution to water scarcity, pollution and many other challenges, there is momentum building to restore the urban waterways in L.A. County.

Leading the movement in the San Gabriel Valley is the non-profit Amigos de los Rios. Amigos developed a wide-ranging vision to create a multi-benefit system of river parkways along the San Gabriel Rio Hondo and Lower Los Angeles river channels in the San Gabriel Valley and Gateway Cities of East County. Sometimes a striking name can add an inspirational touch to a project, so they dubbed the area the Emerald Necklace – something it was certainly not at the time. The name connects with both a historical Frederick Law Olmstead vision for Los Angeles and the famous Emerald Necklace string of parkways in Boston. Amigos' vision for the Emerald Necklace is to provide a string of parklands along Los Angeles County's channelized rivers that would provide all of the following benefits:

- Urban Biodiversity and Habitat Restoration
- Natural and Cultural Heritage: Highlighting the history of the barrios, the Mexican Americans, and the Native American peoples.
- Public Health and Recreation Opportunities: Opportunities for residents suffering from chronic diseases such as hypertension, asthma, diabetes and obesity.
- Environmental Health and Restoration: Cleaning up blighted areas, improving air quality and addressing brownfields.
- Access to Nature/Multi-Modal Learning for Underserved Youth: Natural settings make for a dynamic learning environment which has been strongly linked with better performance at school.
- Youth Job Training: The Amigos de los Rios 'Green Jobs Corps' program not only creates much-needed jobs, but is able to give youth the skills and experience to fill those positions in the new emerging green economy.



These shade structures in Rio Vista Park are designed to imitate the *kich*, an example of the homes the native Tongva people lived in.



Amigos volunteers planting and weeding at Peck Water Conservation Park.



A beautiful bridge on the San Gabriel Canyon Forest Gateway.

- Water Resource Management: NPDES and stormwater treatment (by the use of: swales, porous pavement, recycled water, water recovery and recharge).
- Transportation Corridor Alternative: Trails connecting riverside parks allow comfortable bicycling and walking routes to school and work separated from traffic.
- Climate Change, Heat Island Mitigation and Community Forestry Opportunities

Amigos took their vision to local cities and gained massive support for the Emerald Necklace Accord through formal resolutions, which could then be used to attract resources. Since the accord was signed in 2005, Amigos has been able to attract \$15 million in funding, which has resulted in key segments of a continuous 17-mile trail loop around the Emerald Necklace being implemented, the development of four new parks along the rivers, and the development of multiple joint restoration and interpretive elements in school grounds that border the river parkways. Amigos secures the funding with the partner agencies that own the underlying land. They then lead the design and outreach process to develop the plans and orchestrate construction of the parks, trails and amenities—partnering with community volunteers, the San Gabriel Valley, California and Los Angeles Conservation Youth Corps, as well as private contractors. Amigos is training youth for “green collar” jobs in the emerging green economy.

Amigos is led by a small core staff with regular groups of student interns and fellows assisting on focused projects. Although Amigos has secured a large amount of capital for improvements through grants, it is always a challenge to sustain the organization and build capacity. To keep these restoration projects on track, Amigos leads regular volunteer workdays on first and third Saturdays to provide ongoing care for native trees and shrubs, educate the community, and involve school groups in caring for the environment and help urban residents enjoy the “Great Outdoors.”

Amigos is expanding its vision to the Lower San Gabriel and Los Angeles rivers in an area that will include 68 miles of interconnected greenways through 62 cities, offering trail access to more than 2 million residents. With their track record of success and compelling vision, they have great tools to achieve it.



ADDITIONAL CASE STUDIES

Richmond Greenway — California

Built on a former Santa Fe rail line through a tough residential and industrial neighborhood, the Richmond Greenway corridor was originally mostly weeds and trash. The city of Richmond constructed a paved trail starting in 2006 and planted some trees, but problems with vandalism and maintenance kept the area from being a real community magnet and attraction. Thankfully, an active nonprofit, Friends of the Richmond Greenway, was able to start the greening of the greenway. The city of Richmond developed an “Adopt a Block” program for which community organizations can develop projects in their segment of the greenway. In response, a number of organizations have stepped up and transformed the area.

Urban Tilth is a community farming organization that runs multiple school farms in Richmond and has adopted several blocks in the greenway. They have constructed raised-bed gardens that are tended by community volunteers and are available for harvesting by anyone who walks past the garden. The adjacent Lincoln Elementary School maintains the garden with Urban Tilth. They expand the garden every year and have great support getting youth working on the gardens with the Summer Youth Employment Program. Additional sections developed by Urban Tilth include Berryland, where trail users can pick their own raspberries, strawberries and blackberries, an herbal healing garden with medicinal plants, and an Edible Forest filled with fruit trees.

The Watershed Project constructed a two-block-long bioswale in their adopted area, which uses landscaping modeled after



Many volunteers come to the Greenway on Martin Luther King Jr. Day to assist with the bioswale construction and maintenance.

natural watersheds to address stormwater and flooding issues and improve the quality of the water draining into San Francisco Bay. According to Harold Hedelman, the project manager: “The bioswale is designed to capture and filter stormwater from the immediate neighborhood, reducing the impacts of urban runoff from the area. We incorporated native plants that attract beneficial insect and bird species as well as break up the soil and allow water to drain deeper into the soil.” The project will include posting a number of interpretive signs, providing an opportunity for the public to learn about native plants and how a bioswale works, as well as the site’s history.

Just across 8th Street from the Watershed Project and Urban Tilth’s projects is Gompers Garden, built and cared for by students from nearby Gompers High School. The students created a huge mural on the adjacent building that was the center of some controversy. The city code enforcement was concerned the style was too much like graffiti and had it painted over—but then supported the repainting by the students after they protested. There are also raised beds in this section and large planters that a nearby concrete casting company donated to the project.

The multiple groups get together for monthly workdays on the greenway every second Saturday and also have special events, such as the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service that drew 350 volunteers in January 2012. The city of Richmond mows the undeveloped areas but in spring 2012 was awarded a state Proposition 84 Urban Greening grant of \$5 million to develop the remaining sections of the greenway as a park. The city also provides logs from trees removed from the city parks and streets to the greenway for use as benches, retaining planter beds and mulch to help with weed control and improve the soil.



Although the city of Richmond was initially concerned about the graffiti-like style of the mural, its beauty eventually convinced them it was a worthy addition to the trail



CONCLUSION

Are you ready to jump on a grader and get to work? These stories of amazing trail groups and their projects show just a few of the ways we can build the network of trails across our country. Ingredients such as an active board with diverse members, membership base, recruitment of retired volunteers with time available, events and programming to bring in new partners, and donations of equipment and materials combine for success and trails that people love. Will your project be the next success story?



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's Trail-Building Toolbox—
From inception of the idea to the finished trail and beyond, we provide reports and tools to help you on the way!
www.railstotrails.org/ourwork/trailbuilding/toolbox/index.html

American Trails National Trails Training Partnership—
A complete library of resources for trail building and volunteer development. www.americantrails.org/resources

California Environmental Stewardship Resources Catalog—
The catalog identifies public and private organizations in California, and a few examples from other states, that facilitate programs in environmental stewardship.
<http://community.railstotrails.org/media/p/26266.aspx>

National Park Service RTCA (Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance) Program offers free technical assistance with organizing your trail group to tackle the big challenges. The RTCA program provides technical assistance to its project partners by: building partner relationships; helping partners define goals through consensus; developing conceptual, strategic and workable project plans; helping the public participate in defining community goals; identifying potential sources of funding for project implementation; and teaching “hands-on” conservation and other technical skills necessary to successfully realize conservation and outdoor recreation projects.
www.nps.gov/ncrc/programs/rtca/index.htm

PHOTO CREDITS

We thank the following groups for sharing their photos for this report:

Northern Rail Trail photos courtesy of Peter Southworth, except vibratory roller picture courtesy Friends of the Northern Rail Trail. Weiser River Trail photos courtesy Friends of the Weiser River Trail. North Coast Inland Trail photos courtesy Firelands Rails to Trails, Inc. Ohio to Erie Trail photos courtesy Wayne Roberts. Reedley Community Parkway photos courtesy Blossom Trail Photography. Sacramento Northern Parkway photos courtesy Sacramento Tree Foundation and Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. Guadalupe River Trail photos courtesy City of San Jose Department of Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services.



Western Regional Office / 235 Montgomery Street, Suite 769 / San Francisco, California 94104
tel 415.814.1100 / fax 415.989.1255 / www.railstotrails.org

National Headquarters / 2121 Ward Court, NW, 5th Floor / Washington, DC 20037
tel 202.331.9696 / fax 202.223.9257 / www.railstotrails.org / www.TrailLink.com