

Warner Rail Trail Opening

Saturday September 27th saw a great turnout to formally celebrate the opening of the Warner Rail Trail at Bagley Field and thank those who helped with improvements on this section of the railroad grade. We hope trail becomes a treasure for the residents of Warner. If you have not yet taken a walk on this section of trail please do so. Its flat and offers beautiful views of the Warner River and wildlife habitat. The trail begins at the Bagley Field driveway and proceeds for ½ mile. At the end there is a 600' path to the left which will bring you back to the main trail.

A year ago the town applied for, and was awarded, a \$5000 biking and walking grant from HEAL-NH. Thank you, HEAL-NH for administering the grant process and selecting the Town of Warner as a recipient. Thanks also to the NH Charitable Foundation Anonymous Fund for providing the funds.

The grant required a similar amount of matching funds. The trustees of the Nancy Sibley Wilkins Trust generously contributed \$2000 to the project. Thank you trustees for your willingness to support a grand vision at its earliest stage.

Donations from residents provided another \$2000 towards the match. Thank you supporters!

Warner Parks & Recreation provided \$1000 to complete the match amount. Thank you, Parks & Recreation for your support. Your Parks & Recreation Department builds and maintains the park and recreation infrastructure in Warner for the enjoyment of all residents. Frequently the users of these facilities are youth programs run by WYSA and others, but it's important to realize these are your facilities as residents. Parks & Recreation's adopting the Rail Trail as a project to build and maintain is another example of how these facilities serve all of us.

Warner Parks & Recreation staff and volunteers did an incredible job cutting brush, trimming branches, removing dead wood, chipping and re-discovering the rail grade in the forest. Thank you again Warner Parks & Recreation: Alan Piroso, Griffin Manning, Joe Herr, Corey Heiligmann, Mark Allen, Kristen Riley, Alan Brown, Tim Blagden, and many others.

We needed to re-grade the surface before putting down stone dust and were having difficulty getting a contractor in when needed. The selectmen authorized DPW to come in and provide assistance. A huge thank you to the DPW crew for squeezing the work in and doing a great job. Matt, Nate, Tim the whole team thank you.

Thanks also to the Selectmen for their support. From their approval to apply for the initial grant to their help behind the scenes at many points along the way they deserve our sincere thanks. As town leaders the Selectmen have to balance many interests. Their support of a long term vision of a multi-use trail usable by all citizens shows leadership. Where the town owns

sections of the rail grade they are allowing the surface to be improved. Their actions set the example we hope others will follow when they consider if a trail being developed across their property is a benefit.

Much of the former rail grade is owned privately. Establishing a multi-use rail trail through town in many places is dependent on land owners choosing to participate. We hope that any residents who own part of the rail grade will like what they see at Bagley Field and want the trail to become passable across their property. Some have already decided to take that step. Thank you!

This trail will be developed in sections over time as landowners say yes and as we are able to raise the funds. We are working to open up another section at Bagley that will take residents over the river and offer a nice picnic spot on an old bridge abutment with a view up the Warner River.

The town has also applied for Transportation Alternative Program funds that would ultimately pay for 80% of the cost of a section connecting downtown Warner to the businesses Exit 9. While there is no guarantee Warner will prevail in that very competitive TAP application, fundraising is beginning now to raise the 20% match.

For more information about the rail trail please visit the Warner Parks & Recreation Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/WarnerParksAndRecreation> or visit the www.concordlakesunapeerailtrail.com website.