



Update

F.O.P. Newsletter, Spring 2005, V. 19, No. 2

Annual Picnic – Save the Date

September 17, 2005 at the Park Visitor Center

From the President

Dear Friends,

This Spring things were not working as they usually do. First, the sugaring season didn't pan out as well as in past years for most operators. Then, Spring was having a hard time breaking through the real cold nights with balmy days.

But for the Friends of Pisgah things are looking up as summer approaches. Our newly erected and restored barn, featured at the Annual Meeting and in the Winter Update, now has the main floor doors installed, with locks. A little track work is left on the big door. On May 12, the concrete floor was poured in the basement. The overhead door in the basement should be installed soon. The electrical work (lights and outlets) also will be done soon. The barn is about ready for use by the Park for storage and education. A teacher's program scheduled for early July may be the first use of the barn for an educational meeting.

In connection with the barn, I asked for a work bee to be held on June 4th to clean the inside and outside of the new building. That project will not be necessary as the Wednesday Volunteers (thanks guys, great group) helped us install the big door, cleaned the main floor and straightened the basement in preparation for the concrete. There is no need for a work bee at this time.

Our other big project is the continuation of the Natural Resources Inventory. Unfortunately the NRI is moving more slowly than anticipated but hopefully it will pick up speed. After an Executive Council Meeting in February at which Prof. Jon Atwood and others discussed the NRI, it was voted that the Friends purchase a Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) locator device. John Summers studied a number of the various available devices and a unit is now being purchased. The GPS device will be used by Dr. Atwood and his students to better locate the NRI areas being studied. This device will be of use to the Park Staff as well.

We wish you would take time to stop in at the Visitor Center as you travel. Norma Reppucci is the Park Manager and Diane Steeves is the weekend Ranger. The Park also now has a new summer employee, Dan Ford. (see Norma's report on p. 2). Day to day operations in the Park are Norma's responsibility and she generally is available between about 8 and 8:30 a.m. and again around 3:30 to 4:00 p.m. on weekdays at the Park Visitor Center. Diane is in and out of the Visitor Center on weekends. Stop in and visit the Staff sometime, see the new stove installed this past winter season as well as view the various furnishings now in the parlor.

Please note that FOP continues to look for suitable furnishing donations to display in the Visitor Center. All donated items are controlled by the Friends of Pisgah and all such items are being insured. Any old household or farm equipment will be considered. Please call either Bill Roberts at 603-336-5462 or Jan Carpenter at 603-399-7075.

We plan to have an appraisal done soon on the donated articles that are in the Visitor's Center but we are awaiting some expected donations so as to have all articles in FOP's possession appraised at one time in order to reduce costs.

Have a fine summer. We look forward to seeing you in the Park and at the Annual Picnic.

Bill Roberts

From the Park Manager

General

We seem to have gotten through the winter and “Mud Season” without any major problems. All the work that was done on the roads and ditches last year helped a lot. There is still a lot more that needs to be done and we are planning to continue with the various projects and working on problem areas this summer as soon as the equipment arrives. Cliff Struthers has already volunteered many hours working on the roads and has fixed what few minor washouts there were. The roads are looking great thanks to his efforts!

Owing to some concerns about the rules for Pisgah Park, signs will be posted at trailheads clearly indicating that Pisgah is a day use area.

Midweek Workdays

Our midweek (Wednesday) workdays began May 4th. This very dedicated team of volunteers is Gil Cameron, John Larson, Gerry Goslant and Kim Nielson. They already have helped open back up the scenic view at Horseshoe Road Trailhead in Chesterfield looking south over the Park. Along with keeping the trails cleared, our goal this year is to reclaim all the scenic vistas throughout the Park. It’s amazing how fast the trees grow.

Personnel

I am pleased to have recently been able to hire Dan Ford as my summer assistant to work with me during the week. Dan comes to us with a lot of experience working for NH State Parks. For the past 18 years he has been a seasonal employee for Greenfield State Park and has been through all the training and certification courses to run power equipment and drive the state vehicles. Dan has been a great help in just the few weeks he has been working here. I hope you all will get a chance to meet him. Diane Steeves is still working weekends and has been a great asset to the Park, helping with signs and whatever else needs to be done. She plans to stay on and work weekends throughout the summer.

This past year NH State Parks have undergone many changes in the Concord office. In January the Director, Rich McLeod, retired after 33 years of Park service. Appointed to take his place was Allison McLean who was the Supervisor of Parks Operations. On April 1st Allison was officially sworn in as the new Director. She has been in the Park system for 15 years and has lots of experience out in the field. Congratulations Allison!

We are still waiting to hear who will be filling the Supervisor of Parks position. I had a chance to meet a few of the new people filling the various positions in the Concord office when I attended the Annual Managers Meeting over at the Seacoast Science Center at Odiorne Point State Park.

Norma Reppucci

Hikes and Trail Workdays

Hikes

We have a number of hikes scheduled this summer and hope that many FOP members (non-members welcome too) will join us. All hikes except the mushroom walk will start at 9:00 a.m. from the indicated location; travel times for each hike will depend on the group’s abilities. Please bring a light lunch plus water or juice to keep up your fluids. Don’t forget the bug repellent! Rain cancels any hike.

John Herrick is the leader for the first 4 hikes. You may call him at 603-256-6301 with questions.

June 11 Climb the highest peaks on the west side of Pisgah from the Kilburn Trailhead on Rte 63.

July 9 Hike to the Harvard Forest from the parking lot on Rte 119 in Winchester.

Aug 13 Bushwhack through the woods to Pisgah Mtn. from the Kilburn Trailhead on Rte 63.

Sept 10 Trek to Daniels’ Mtn. from the Madame Sherrie's Parking Lot on Gulf Rd in Chesterfield.

Sept 24 Mushroom Walk with Al David, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 PM. Meet at the Park Visitor Center on the Old Chesterfield Road in Winchester. Bring your baskets or paper bags, field guides and a lunch, etc. as noted above. We will return to the Visitor Center to identify our collection.

Trail Workdays

Our trails are always in need of improvement. We can use your help on the following Saturdays starting at 9:00 a.m.

June 18 Dort property. We will brush out the view from the parking site off Rte 63.

July 16 Davis Hill Trail. We will work on a west view. Meet at the Dort property.

Aug 6 Hubbard Hill View. We will cut the highest trees. Meet at the Dort property.

Oct 1 Pisgah Mtn. View. Meet at the Kilburn Trailhead on Rte 63.

See page 7 for information on the canoe/kayak outing on pristine Pisgah Reservoir. To get to the Dort property, go south from Chesterfield Center on Rte 63, past Crowning Shield Rd and the last of 2 houses on the left side. About 300 to 400 yds past the second house (which is white), note a dirt road on the left entering the Dort property. Park off the shoulder on the right side of the road.

John Herrick

From the Treasurer Concerning Annual Dues Payments

We realize that new members join the Friends of Pisgah at various times throughout the year and, thereafter, tend to renew yearly at that same time. Renewals spread out during the year make tracking and notification about renewal dues payments difficult and costly for FOP. Consequently, although yearly membership dues are accepted anytime, we encourage renewals by the end of February each calendar year. FOP operates on a calendar year. If payment is made prior to the Annual Picnic (mid to end of September), dues are credited to the current calendar year. Dues paid on or after our Annual Picnic are applied to the new calendar year.

The Fall and Winter newsletters carry notifications of the need to pay your Annual Dues. In fact, the Winter newsletter contains an explicit reminder of your membership status by appending the letter 'P' for Paid or 'N' for Not paid as part of the mailing address label. If a person has not renewed when it is time for the Summer newsletter to be mailed, no newsletter is sent. We depend on you folks to send your renewals in during the Fall or early Winter and to use the mailing label for the Winter newsletter to verify your status.

Unfortunately, FOP receives little if any notification from or about people who are not renewing – whether because they have moved, have lost track of the need to renew owing to an oversight, have developed other interests, or whatever. It is uneconomical of funds and time for FOP to mail a reminder letter to people who have not renewed. We only produce three newsletters a year (Winter – February, Summer – late May or early June, Fall – late October or early November) and two of them contain reminders of the need to renew and all of them contain membership applications. We therefore encourage you to renew each year at or after the Annual Picnic. If you still prefer to pay your annual dues in April, June, or some other time, then please feel free to do so – your contribution always will be accepted. This note is to inform you of what we are doing to ease our record keeping efforts (we are volunteers) and reduce our newsletter costs.

John Larson

Construction & Demolition Debris Burning Pose Great Concerns for Pisgah Park

Recently there has been a great deal of public interest in the planned construction of a trash to energy plant in Hinsdale, west of Pisgah Park. Specifically, the desired plant is a construction and debris (C&D) burning unit. Plants of this sort (C&D or other trash) can emit considerable pollutants. Existing power plants in New Hampshire already exhaust 8,354 lbs of lead and 351 lbs of mercury every year (2002 state inventory) into the atmosphere. Lead, mercury and other pollutants are extremely detrimental to humans as well as to the flora and fauna of the affected areas. Pisgah Park stands squarely downwind of the planned C&D plant in Hinsdale.

The Executive Council of the FOP is concerned about the potential for degradation of the Park environment and for health risks to its users. Consequently, the Council wishes to call your attention to the planned C&D plant and to encourage each of you to familiarize yourself with the issues.

Most New England states are not permitting the construction of C&D plants. New Hampshire is the target of C&D plant proponents who hope to populate the state with many such plants to handle the debris from other states. If the C&D power plants that currently are proposed in Hinsdale and Barnstead are built, then by federal law our state cannot refuse to take any amount of C&D that other states, who have banned the burning of this substance, wish to send here. Hundreds of tons at first, followed by thousands of tons of this material will be shipped here from Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Delaware, and Vermont among others. This is a crucial issue for local residents and for the future of Pisgah Park. It is important to place a moratorium on C&D plant construction until all issues have been resolved. Once a plant is in operation, there will be little or no opportunity to prevent the expected pollution. Plant construction requires state but not local permission. It is critical to the Park (and to citizens of the affected areas) that the state be empowered by the legislature to prevent a hasty approval of planned C&D units.

In an effort to minimize any additional air pollution in our state, the New Hampshire House of Representatives and many citizen activists worked long and hard this spring to pass HB315 and HB517 together as complementary legislation. These two bills will control and study the increase in emissions of lead and mercury from burning construction and demolition debris under a moratorium that would prevent any C&D plants from being grandfathered in before a study is completed. Unfortunately, as of the time of publication of this newsletter, it was indicated that the Senate wants to weaken the control called for in HB315 by amendment. If HB315 is weakened and if HB517 is canceled, Pisgah Park our state and the towns of Hinsdale, Chesterfield, Winchester and other towns downwind of the C&D plant in Southwest New Hampshire are on the way to becoming the C&D waste dump of the northeast. You may wish to contact Senator Tom Eaton to see that the House Bills get a fair hearing in the Senate. Call, FAX or e-mail the Senator in your district to tell them her/him how important clean air is to our health, the health of the wildlife and plant life in our state and to the health of our economy.

(with input from information provided by Dan Carr & Julia Ferrari)

Matt Donachie

Natural Resources Inventory

The Natural Resource Inventory work in support of the development of a Master Plan for the management of the Park will again continue this summer. A number of Antioch New England Graduate School student/interns will be conducting various studies that will be added to the information which Prof. John Atwood has compiled. These interns will be collecting data on vegetation communities, old growth stands, plant diversity and also will be making overall forest health observations, e.g. beech blight frequency, etc. Other studies will include but will not be limited to: further studies of vernal pools, bird inventory and breeding counts along with mammal inventory work at various levels. Tom Sintros, FOP Council Member, will be working with David Moon, Director of the Ashuelot Valley Environmental Observatory, helping to coordinate an effort which also will include faculty and students from Keene State College and Franklin Pierce College. Studies on bat species have already been completed in some areas of Pisgah at Franklin Pierce College. More plant community and wetland studies are being planned.

Tom also will be helping on one or more days with a teacher workshop involving Hinsdale school staff and the Co-Seed program. The day or days will be part of an effort to demonstrate the potential of studies within the Park for students of elementary, middle and high schools. The Doolittle trail will be one of the primary training sites for this event.

Continued talks also are leading to some early work/training with volunteers and Lionel Chute of the Natural Heritage Department of the Department of Resources and Economic Development (DRED) for the establishment of a "citizen based protocol for data collecting" which the state can use as in the development of the Master Plan for the management of the Park. This protocol effort will be a long term project but will begin this summer. Lastly, Tom, along with Marshall Davenson, an Earth Science teacher from Keene High School, will be offering a two week summer institute on Forestry and Wildlife for high school age students. The goal of this program will be to further assist in data collecting within the Park and to produce a number of self-guide nature trail "booklets" that may be used by students and visitors. These "booklets" will have various "stations " that will describe topics such as: wildlife, vegetation, geology , etc. The creation of these self-guide booklets will be the final project for the students engaged in this program. One or two overnights are planned to allow the students to see many aspects of the Park life.

Tom Sintros

Earth Week Celebrations Lead to Hikes in Pisgah Park

Chesterfield and Hinsdale school students recently celebrated Earth Week with a series of hikes in Pisgah Park. On April 19th, 15 students and several advisors traced the route from the Park Visitor Center on Old Chesterfield Rd in Winchester north down the hill toward the Benjamin Doolittle homestead and the Doolittle Trail to view the remains of a settlement from the 1800s. Cliff Struthers, a Park volunteer, explained several aspects of the old farm houses, the orchard and the cider house which stood on the site from around 1800. Cliff made certain that the children were informed about various old foundations as they went along the old Doolittle property. At each stop, Cliff covered a bit of the history of the Park by describing aspects of the lives of the Doolittle family.

Several other history and nature hikes were held in addition to the trip to the Doolittle farm area. There was a hike from the Kilburn Pond Trailhead to see the remains of a building set up by the Arthur B. Little Research Company during World War II to research explosives. Another hike was to the Habitat (Nature) Trail from Horseshoe Rd parking lot. The students hiked downhill from the parking lot to the Trail.

Pisgah is a great place for enjoying nature, getting some exercise, tracing history and doing so in all seasons. There are many old foundations and homesteads to explore along Old Chesterfield and Broad Brook Roads The Park is a wonderful resource for educators and we encourage folks with all sorts of interests to spend some time in the Park this summer and fall.

Don't forget that suitable clothing always is required for the weather and trail conditions. Water or juice and a snack are recommended even for a stroll. After all, you might get so absorbed with the insect life, birds and animals, a beaver pond, the rushing waters of Broad Brook or the still waters of Pisgah Reservoir or Fullam Pond, perhaps even with the views from vistas, that you will wind up staying beyond your intended time. The snacks and water will be quite refreshing if you do spend extra time in the Park. Maybe you will see some of the moose, bobcat, beaver, bear or coyote that spend time in the largest state park in New Hampshire.

Matt Donachie/Kathy Thatcher



The “New” Old Barn Opposite the Visitor Center on Old Chesterfield Rd in Winchester. Now With All Doors on It.
(Photo courtesy of Matt Donachie.)

Rail Trails Under Attack Again in Cheshire County

Curb Cut Requested by Developer at Intersection of Route 101 and the Ashuelot Rail Trail in Keene.

On Wednesday April 27th, the city of Keene Municipal Services Committee was presented a proposal by Jim Phippard representing local developer Emile Ledgere. Mr. Legere wants to open up access on the south side of Rte 101 to a 70 acre corn field he owns there and is requesting a curb cut at the intersection of Rte 101 and the Ashuelot Rail Trail. What this means is someone wants to put a road on the Rail Trail, a very disturbing idea!

According to a letter written to the Council by Legere, he said, “the State has agreed to allow a curb cut if the City is in agreement.” He also stated that, “I am not asking the city to build a road (on the Ashuelot Rail Trail) I am simply asking for a curb cut.” However, in essence the curb cut would result in a road on the trail footprint! In fact, in Phippard’s presentation he stated that Legere is asking the council to examine the concept of laying out a new highway on the footprint of the Ashuelot Rail Trail as an alternative route to the airport while at the same time, providing another access to Legere’s 70 acre cornfield, zoned industrial. Land use at increased rates is driving this request although, according to Phippard, Legere “is not developing his land, he’s simply asking the council to endorse the concept.” One can reasonably assume that a curb cut is a precursor to the next step which is to lay out and build a road. However, a city road or street can only be laid out on property deeded to the city of Keene.

There are many reasons why this proposal is not feasible. The major reason, however, is that the deeded owner of the Ashuelot Rail Trail is the New Hampshire Department of Transportation. This 26 mile long rail trail was acquired in 1994 - 95 at a cost of over 5 million dollars and included 160 additional miles of abandoned railroad corridor, some 76 miles of which are located here in Cheshire County. Federal funds were used to make this acquisition of contiguous corridors for future rail use by DOT. After the purchase DOT leased these corridors to the New Hampshire Trails Bureau. This lease is not permanent. If DOT wants to use these corridors they can revoke the lease and tear out any infrastructure and improvements without compensation. Nor are they obligated to provide an alternative corridor.

Furthermore, allowing a curb cut and any road building at the intersection of Rte 101 and the Ashuelot Rail Trail would segment the 26 mile long rail trail that starts in Keene and passes through Swanzey, Winchester, Ashuelot and Hinsdale. This trail provides alternative and recreational transportation opportunities for people who don’t drive cars, buses and trucks.

This curb cut request was put on “more time” on April 27th and is on the agenda for the Municipal Services Committee on Wednesday, May 25th, at 6:00 p.m. This issue of the Update is going to press at meeting time and you may not have an opportunity to attend the meeting. If you have not already provided your input to the Committee and/or did not have an opportunity to attend the May hearing, please contact the Chairman of the Committee, Mitch Greenwald, at 603-357-3035. Also you may wish to contact your representatives and Senator Tom Eaton and ask them to take a stand against this unwarranted attempt to bypass the protection afforded rail trails and the important current and future benefits such trails can and do provide.

John Summers

Message from the Weekend Ranger

Until I moved to New Hampshire so many years ago, I never knew that there were really seven seasons: summer, autumn, winter, frost heave, mud, spring and black fly — in that order. Working in Pisgah as the weekend Park Ranger brings new meaning to all of them. In all honesty, this will be the first spring which I am truly experiencing in the Park because I have always sat out the black fly season. I know that they are a very important part of the food chain., but I really dislike qualifying as the bottom of their pecking order. It seems to me, however, that creatures higher in the food chain will be very well-fed this year due to the super-abundance of black flies. In fact, looking out the window of the Visitor Center, I can see clouds of the little buggers flitting about as though they are waiting for me ... shudder! So be warned, come prepared with bug repellent and netting. Gloves and long sleeves are good deterrents, also.

During the winter, while I was based at the Visitor Center, I found plenty of work in painting and lettering the many signs needed for the summer. I also have been painting hundreds of trail markers that Cliff Struthers designed and cut and whose colors Norma determined for the various trails. There is still much to be done, but as Cliff sometimes quips, “We’re gaining ground.” Depending on the trail conditions, the Visitor Center would very often be busy with both snowmobiles and ATVs coming and going, as well as stopping in for questions and directions. Although things generally quieted down when the gates were closed for mud season, hikers and visitors were constant.

Since the last newsletter, Cliff has been cutting and cleaning ditches, as well as grading the Old Chesterfield Road after it had drained enough to support the undertaking. In that endeavor, he has repaired three culverts and replaced two as needed. He has been diligently seeking wood stock to cut for the trail markers and signs, then laying the signs out for me to letter and paint prior to being cut by Norma using a router. In the meantime, Dan Ford contributes greatly by applying additional coats of paint to any project found on the “paint rack” in the cellar.

Recently, Cliff and I had an opportunity to help a hiker and dog that had passed by the Visitor’s Center earlier in the day. No sooner had we finished lunch and gone out to the garage to put tractor and tools away when I noticed a dog standing next to a car parked near the barn and nosing the door handle and window. Not seeing the handler walking up the road, I was concerned and I asked Cliff if he recognized the animal as the same one that had passed by earlier. Remembering that the woman had gone into the Park prepared with both a raincoat and leash attached to the dog, caused us great concern as it seemed surprising to us that the Border Collie was now loose. Worried, we gathered slickers and extra gear, hoping to follow the dog in search of its keeper in the pouring rain

We caught sight of the woman almost immediately after losing sight of the skittish canine at the top of Doolittle Trail. She explained to us that the Collie belonged to her sister who was away on a trip. After hiking up the Snowbrook Trail, the animal seemed dependable enough to her for her to allow it off-leash with supervision. Like any dog, however, it wandered away as scents and scenery led, nevertheless finding its way back to the car. Needless to say, the woman was stricken to have let her sister’s pet loose in the park, even though she had been assured that the dog “would not run away.”

After discussing the situation by the woodstove at the Visitor’s Center, a plan was made. Cliff chose to look for the dog on the Doolittle Trail where he had last seen it, to either persuade the Collie to let him catch it or be driven to Broad Brook Road and back to Old Chesterfield Road where the canine’s handler would wait in case the dog took a bearing back to the Snowbrook Trail. I stayed up on the road near the top of the Doolittle Trail in case the Collie decided to double back to the car. Walkie-talkies in hand, we parted and hoped that evening would not find us still looking for the pretty Border Collie. Fortunately, she was found in the end due to Cliff’s efforts and fortitude in driving the animal more than three and-a-half miles.

Such a story serves as a good reminder that a leash law exists within Pisgah as well as out and, although it may seem to have negative connotations, the rule is just as often a safeguard. Fortunately, no one was lost or hurt after all, and a search and rescue effort was not required. “All’s well that ends well,” and Cliff and I were glad to be of service in whatever way possible. Remember always to be careful. See you out there.

Diane E. Steeves

Concerned About the Use of ATVs on Public Lands?

The potential for expanded ATV use in many of the NH state parks prompted a lot of discussion last year, particularly about Pisgah State Park (see Update, Summer 2004, V 18, No. 2). A grass roots organization, ATV Watch New Hampshire, was formed at that time. If you would like to track ATV issues in the Parks, check out their web site at www.ATVWatch.com or email them at Andrew@ATVWatch.com.

From the Chair of the Committee on History/Archaeology

The FOP has received several more items to add to our collection of "old things". Among them are a very nice Treadle Singer Sewing Machine, a sign which reads "Chesterfield 6 miles", some strap-on ice skates, an iron pot, coal scuttle, and horse collar. These were donated by Allen & Frances Boucher, Clifford Struthers and Earl Beaman and will be added to our growing collection of antiques.

At the recent Council Meeting it was voted to purchase \$15,000 worth of insurance to cover our collection. Two local appraisers will be hired to put a current value on each item.

Jan Carpenter

Canoe and Kayak Outing on Pisgah Reservoir

August 27 Canoe and kayak outing on pristine Pisgah Reservoir. Meet at the Rte 119 parking lot at 9:00 a.m. Bring a lunch, water or juice, and your canoe, kayak, PFD and paddles. Summers Backcountry Outfitters will have a few canoes and kayaks available for guest use on a first come first served basis. Please make reservations for the canoes and kayaks by calling John Summers at 603-357-5107. We expect to return to the Rte 119 parking lot by 3:00 p.m.

Leaders will be John Summers and John Herrick. Canoes and kayaks will be transported from the Upper Reservoir Parking Lot to the Reservoir by the Park Staff and Summers Backcountry Outfitters. We hope to see you there.

Membership Note

Please use the form below and send to the address shown if you wish to join FOP or renew your membership.

The Friends of Pisgah maintain a nominal dues structure with the intent being to encourage as many individuals and families as possible to join. Over half of the single address dues provides for printing and mailing the Update and the Annual Picnic notice, as well as for the fine food you are provided at the picnic. Dues are \$10 to cover all persons at the same address. Group (club) memberships are \$20.

Cut here -----

If you are joining or renewing, please use this form. Your dues support our Park efforts.

Date: _____	Category <i>(Check applicable boxes)</i>	Willing to Assist On Committee for:
Name(s): _____	◇ New	◇ Annual Picnic
Address: _____ _____ _____	◇ Renewal	◇ Educational Programs
	◇ Single Address (\$10.00)	◇ History/Archaeology
Phone: _____ (Home)	◇ Group (\$20.00)	◇ Membership
Phone: _____ (Work)	◇ Donation \$ _____	◇ Newsletter Articles
E-mail: _____		◇ Planning & Strategy
		◇ Public Relations & Park Information
<i>Questions? Call Bill Roberts (603- 336-5462) or Matt Donachie (603-239-6590)</i>		◇ Rails to Trails Advisory
		◇ Trails/Maintenance
<i>Send form and check to:</i> Friends of Pisgah, Inc. PO Box 134 Chesterfield, NH 03443-0134		◇ Wantastiquet-Monadnock Greenway
		◇ Other _____

Rail Trails in Danger at National Level

Congressman Jim Ryun (KS) has launched another attack on railbanking. (Railbanking is a voluntary agreement between a railroad and a public agency or trail organization to use an out-of-service rail corridor as a trail until a railroad might need the corridor again for rail service.) Railbanking is a win-win situation! Certainly the rail-trail system in Southwest NH is a tribute to the program. Now Congressman Ryun once again has proposed changes to the National Trails System Act that, by creating insurmountable hurdles for trail builders, would paralyze a process originally intended to preserve valuable corridors. Ryun's bill, if passed, would render a good law unattractive for trail organizations and rail companies. A current win-win statute would become useless, unused law. Congressman Ryun has been bringing attacks against railbanking since 1997! With every new attack that Ryun brings against railbanking, his voice gets louder and his tactics more devious. If he finds a way to push this bill through it would destroy railbanking and the 53 new trails now in railbanking negotiations.

For 22 years, as the nation's transportation industry has changed, the federal railbanking program has provided an effective tool for preserving the vital (and costly) railroad corridors while supporting communities and rail companies. In 1983, when Congress enacted the railbanking provision of the National Trails System Act, the specific intent was to keep vast rail corridors intact. Please consider contacting your Congressmen and Senators and request them to reject Congressman Ryun's attempt to destroy the federal railbanking program.

(modified and edited from information provided by the Rails to Trails Conservancy)

Matt Donachie

Update is published occasionally during the year by Friends of Pisgah, Inc.

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