

Friends of the West River Trail, WINTER NEWSLETTER 2013
by Board member & editor, Kathleen White



HOW DID IT GET TO BE FEBRUARY ALREADY?

We hope your holidays were happy and that your new year is going well so far! Reports say that since the snows fell, both the upper and lower sections of the trail has been very nice for skiing and snowshoeing, (depending on the freezes and thaws, of course). I hope some of you have had a chance to get out there and enjoy this beautiful trail during the winter season!

AN INVITATION TO AN OPEN HOUSE Doings at the Depot! The public is invited to attend an Open House and social hour, with refreshments provided, hosted by the Friends of the West River Trail (FWRT), to be held on Tuesday, February 12, from 6:00 to 7:30 PM, in the South Londonderry Depot on Route 100. At the Open House, visitors will be updated on the current projects involving both the West River Trail (South Londonderry to Brattleboro when completed) and the Depot itself. Recent significant advances in trail development in the Brattleboro area by the Southern Section of the Friends will be recognized. During the social hour, the latest prize of memorabilia at the Depot will be formally introduced: a locomotive bell generously donated by William and Agnes Peele. It is believed that the bell came from one of the last regularly operated steam locomotives on the Santa Fe Railroad. Tim Lawrence will also be on hand to present a narrated video depicting his recent experience hiking on a rail trail, one of a series he is producing, and will also, as a rail historian, update us on the status of his "Forgotten Railroads" project. Timothy W. Lawrence is Founder and Videographer, I.M.R. Films, created in 2003. Since that time, he has worked on numerous projects from online advertising for Coca-Cola and Comcast to corporate videos for companies such as Skyhorse Publishing, Living WRAP and more. He resides locally, in Windham, VT. The Open House will be preceded at 5:30 PM by a short business meeting of the FWRT Board, which visitors are welcome to attend if they choose. Please plan to join your friends and the Friends of the West River Trail for an enjoyable and informative evening.

BIG NEWS! We have met our Phase 1 fundraising goal! The Thomas Thompson Trust agreed to grant us \$10,000 once we raised \$35,000 from the community— which we have done!!! Hurray! Many, many individuals, grant-making organizations and businesses helped make this happen. Thanks to everyone who contributed!

SO, WHAT ELSE IS NEW? Some of you may have noticed that fine crushed stone was spread on the trail late fall, starting just past the I-91 bridge and continuing for the next mile north. The material was donated by Mike Cersosimo, and the spreading and rolling was nicely done by Jason Evans. If you were able to walk or ride on that section of trail before the snow fell, you would have noticed that it's a nice improvement to a section that was fairly bumpy due to exposed tree roots and holes. In the spring, we will see how the new surface withstood the winter and will welcome feedback on it. If the feedback is positive, we will explore whether other areas of trail could benefit from the same treatment.

We have two beautiful kiosks in place! They were built and installed by Morse and Mindell builders. One is at the Marina trailhead and the other at the Rice Farm Rd trailhead. Many thanks for this donation from Jonathan Morse, Stephen Mindell and their crew. Thanks also to Home Depot in Keene, NH for selling us the supplies at a discount.

We received a grant from the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps! We'll be getting a crew of youth for 4 weeks this summer. They will focus on building the new section of trail from Rice Farm Rd to the quarry on Quarry Rd, and on installing bridges.

SAFETY ON THE TRAIL The Brattleboro Police Department Bicycle Patrol has been patrolling the lower section of the trail two to three times weekly (when it is clear enough of snow) to look for any safety or maintenance issues. We encourage all trail users to notify us of any safety or maintenance issues you encounter, by emailing at lowersection@westrivertrail.org.

PHOTO GALLERY Check out the Gallery on the FWRT website for great photos from the trail. You'll also see how you can send in your photos to be included in the Gallery. If the trail has been your muse and you have writings or artwork inspired by your experiences, we would love to post them on the website. Please send them in! We also welcome your blogs or comments!

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES: Spring Workdays on the lower section: when the ground is workable and the weather is amenable, we'll be starting these up again. Watch for an email with dates or check the website. Volunteer Workday Coordinator: We need a volunteer or two to help Jason Cooper plan, and lead work groups on the lower section. If you are interested, please email us at: lowersection@westrivertrail.org Website updating: We need someone with website skills to help us keep the website updated. Do you have skills you could offer? Contact us at lowersection@westrivertrail.org Posting information on our new kiosks: We need a volunteer to fill our kiosks, by posting signs, maps, announcements, photos, information of interest.

Enjoy the winter, and we look forward to seeing you on the trail!
Best, Kathleen, for the Friends of the West River Trail