HISTORY OF VERNON RAIL TRAILS

Hop River Linear Park Extension

This multi-use greenway consists of 3.10 miles of trail along an abandoned railway (Hartford, Providence, and Fishkill RR) from the Vernon/Manchester town line easterly, then southerly to the Vernon/Bolton town line. From Bolton, the railway has been re-graded 15 more miles to Willimantic and is identified as a Connecticut State Trail named the “Hop River Linear Park Trail”. In Willimantic, it joins the Aetna Linear Park Trail which is approximately 40 miles long. These trails are permitted on Connecticut D.E.P. property.

Rockville Spur

This multi-use greenway consists of 4.1 miles of trail along an abandoned railway which splits from the Hop River Linear Park Trail at Warren Avenue and heads westerly into the historic center of Rockville, Connecticut. The trail includes a footbridge over the Tankerhoosen River that was completed in 1998 and was funded by the TTRLP Grant.

Phases of the Project

The original railroad was completed in 1849 and ran for over 100 years. The Rails to Trails project was designed and engineered by the Town of Vernon Engineering Department. Phase I of the project runs from Tunnel Road to the Bolton Line and was dedicated in 1995 (2.43 miles). This section in Vernon was re-graded by the Connecticut National Guard-Bravo Company of the 244nd Engineer Battalion and was then covered with stone dust by the Town of Vernon. The trail was named “Route Sapper” in honor of the Bravo Company in Vernon. The funding for this project was obtained by the Vernon Hockanum River Linear Park Committee from the State via ISTEA funding, grants and the Boulder Ridge Subdivision sidewalk fund. The trail provides to the public a route for biking, hiking, cross-country skiing, and horseback. Handicap usage is encouraged. The trail is maintained by the Vernon Parks and Recreation Department and by volunteers. Phase II of the project, which was dedicated in 1998, runs from Tunnel Road to the Manchester town line and from Phoenix Street to the Tankerhoosen Bridge (2.61 miles). This phase was funded by the State and Federal STP enhancement programs and HRLP funds. Phase III of the project runs from the Tankerhoosen Bridge to West Road and was dedicated in 2000 (3.19 miles). This part of the trail was constructed by the Town of Vernon Department of Public Works with National Recreation Trails Program grants and State LOCIP funding. Phase IV completed in 2004. The trail runs for .82 miles from West Road to Vernon Avenue. It was funded by a Recreational Trails grant from the State of Connecticut DEP.

What is a Trail Manager?

All members are Vernon Greenways Volunteers. You may also elect to be a Trail Manager who takes ownership of a trail segment. A Trail Manager is responsible for maintaining their segment to the best of their ability and reporting those things which are beyond their capabilities. The duties include but are not limited to: removal of trash and debris; cutting back encroaching vegetation; graffiti removal; maintaining trail map dispensers, if appropriate; maintaining dog litter bag dispensers and receptacles, if appropriate. Heavy duty trash bags and a trash picker will be supplied, if requested.

What Trails Do We Service?

-  Hockanum River Linear Park
-  Valley Falls
-  Vernon Center Middle School
-  Walker’s Reservoir
-  The Braille Trail

*Main Road, Rail Road Brook and Valley Falls Loop Trails, only.