



Greenways Nova Scotia

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Greenways Are the Future

Greenways promote **health**. Greenways mean **business**. Greenways mean **higher property values**. Greenways mean **tourism, culture, and heritage**. Greenways **revive rural economies**. Greenways mean **connections**. Greenways mean **emission-free transportation**. Greenways mean a **Future** for our trails, and for all of the above.

Points of Interest:

- **Greenways all around– we visit some of the best in the world.**
- **How you can help**

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The Blue Heron Bridge, Newton Massachusetts

(photo courtesy of East Coast Greenway)

In this issue, we visit some of the best Greenways in the world, some right beside us, and some not so close. All are testament to the vision and will of dedicated volunteers and forward-thinking decision-makers.

We hope that Just hearing these stories may encourage our own decision-makers to move into the future.

Greenways are clearly just that– the future. Read on.

The East Coast Greenway Alliance

Twenty-two years ago, an idea was born at the 1991 East Coast Bicycle Conference in Cambridge MA. Later that year, ten trail advocates met at a hostel and established the East Coast Greenway Alliance. Today, ECGA is a green, non-motorized trail system spanning nearly 3,000 miles from the Maine-New Brunswick border to Key West, Florida. The off-road trails are gradually replacing interim on-road routes. This is all because of a diverse roster of staff and volunteers : cyclists, cardiologists, transportation planners, administrators, environmentalists, watershed managers, recreation directors, and all the ordinary citizens who build the trails in their own communities.



Two-Cent Bridge, Waterville, Maine
(courtesy of East Coast Greenways)

The Vision (from ECGA website)

“Trail Surface

Our vision is for a **continuous firm-surfaced route**, mostly paved, but some of it on packed stone dust tread, all of it suitable for walkers, wheel chairs, and road bicycles. In the future, a continuous route serving equestrians and in-line skaters is envisioned, as well. Some sections of the Greenway already accommodate those users.

Route Selection

While seeking a relatively direct connection between 25 major eastern seaboard cities, the route has been chosen to offer a **traffic-free travel experience** so we’ve *applied routing crite-*

ria where existing or potential trails can be identified.

Our route has also been chosen to provide the traveler with an ever-changing, interesting, and scenic landscape (urban, suburban, small town, industrial, rural) and to provide access to public transportation and other points of interest like downtowns, public parks, and nature preserves. It links with a host of other greenways, trails, and on-road bicycle routes within the region, providing the north-south spine artery for a vast east coast network of bicycle and pedestrian routes.” (<http://www.greenway.org/vision.aspx>)

The Plan

Simple. Begin a section at a time. Use on-road on an interim basis and keep closing the gaps.

The Result

A stunning inter-state trail system, characterized by quiet beauty in rural areas, safe passage in cities, and unique bridges on the old rail lines , including covered bridges- just because!



Calais Maine Riverwalk and Covered Bridge
(courtesy of East Coast Greenways)

It’s a treat to see safe entrances for cyclists, and preservation of the rail bed’s grade at bridges especially. Some are grand, but all are intriguing- and safe. Who wouldn’t want to go?

The Funding

The East Coast Greenway is funded by a massive array of foundations, individual donors, and corporate sponsors, and presumably, public funds, as some of the trails pass through parklands. Greenways generate donors because the cause is so clearly in public interest.

A favourite “tale from the Trail” was the story of Dan McCready and his dog Sadie, who travelled 850 miles from Annapolis Maryland to Portland Maine, Sadie in her “limo” hauled by Dan on his special bicycle. Sadie blogged! Their goal was to raise \$10,000 for the trail. There are countless stories of great adventures undertaken to celebrate life’s milestones, to raise funds for the trail or other worthy charities.

“End to Enders” get a special certificate. Locals get to stay healthy. Children learn to cycle. Families walk together. Seniors are active. Tourists come. Business booms. People commute to work and to shop. Nature breathes. Communities flourish.

The Politics

Imagine a world in which politicians understand the value of Greenways. In Florida, the ECG is reviving hard-hit rural economies. A plan is underway to have mass tours by Bike Florida in the northern districts to celebrate wildflowers, much as we have fall tours in Nova Scotia.



Lenape Park, New Jersey
(courtesy of East Coast Greenways)



End Marker in Key West, Florida
(courtesy of East Coast Greenways)

One Congressman has said of the 260-mile, five-county River to the Sea Loop, that it is “in the forefront of trail programs that improve how Americans live.” He has committed to work with county and state to complete the paved off-road trail this year.

A Missed Opportunity

by Paul Kelly

(The Strawberry Line)

I arrived in Bridgetown with my family during July 2012 and one of the activities we were particularly looking forward to was walking and cycling the old railway line paths running through Annapolis County as we had done on the Strawberry Line in the United Kingdom.

We were extremely disappointed to find that these paths are not developed for cycling, walking and family use.

The Strawberry Line is a network of paths created from the old railway line that ran from Clevedon to Cranmore in the south west of England.

The aim of the project was to create a system of safe paths for walkers, cyclists, families and



residents to enjoy. This was partly achieved by removing all motorised vehicles from the paths.

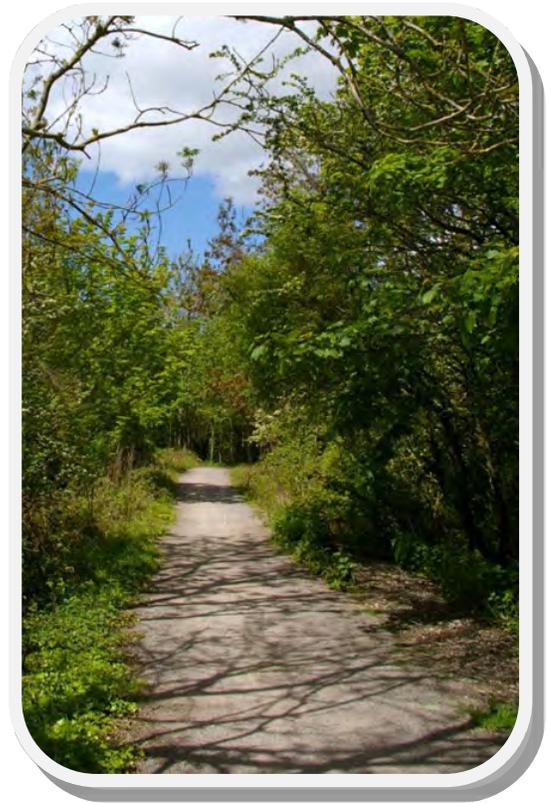
The paths are maintained by volunteers and local residents and have become a great tourist attraction all year round. Any time was a good time to visit the Strawberry Line but Sundays were my favourite day as it was busy with people enjoying family time whether it was on foot or bicycle.

There was an abundance of wild fruit such as apples and blackberries; you would see happy children with baskets of fruit looking forward to blackberry and apple pie.

It is a great disappointment to me that the old railway lines here in Annapolis County have not been given the same treatment as the Strawberry Line: the cultural, economic and social

benefits of a Greenway like the Strawberry Line are great. Not only do local residents have something to be proud of, but they also have a national attraction injecting increased tourist revenues to the local economy.

A large number of people travel from outside the local area to visit the Strawberry Line and these visitors usually come back to sample the understated charm it offers.



I hope that one day the Annapolis County Green Way will emulate the Strawberry Line.

The Strawberry Line is probably the one thing I have really missed since arriving in Annapolis county.

- Paul Kelly was born in Scotland and grew up in Glasgow; working and living all over the United Kingdom. He currently lives in Bridgetown (Nova Scotia) with his wife, Fiona and their two children, Finn & Grace.

<http://www.thestrawberryline.co.uk/>
<http://www.strawberryline.org.uk/>
<http://www.thestrawberryline.co.uk/media/pdf/thestrawberrylineleaflet.pdf>

Prince Edward Island: The Confederation Trail

But then, we don't have to go far at all to find trails that are worth travelling. PEI's famous Confederation Trail has been a reason to visit the "gentle island" even before its groundbreaking achievement in 2000– the first province in Canada to complete its section of the Trans Canada Trail. The idea of a tip-to-tip "shared Use" walking and cycling trail quickly caught on, and has never looked back. In the winter, in PEI, snowmobiles use the trail.

"Habitat and Heritage" and "Nature and Culture" are the hallmarks of this trail system. The quiet green route attracts hikers and cyclists,



The "Gentle Island" via Confederation Trail

Photo by Louise Vessey
Courtesy of Tourism PEI

birdwatchers and nature lovers. The rural communities enroute are not places to drive through, but pleasant stops to explore, each with a culture and heritage to be respected. Cycling tourists bring welcome business to these communities.

The Confederation Trail is a linear park that runs as the railway did through woodlands, beside rivers, and farmlands, and through picturesque communities. It respects the cultural integrity of communities, brings economic and health benefit, and has been a leader in the Atlantic Provinces in visionary trail building.

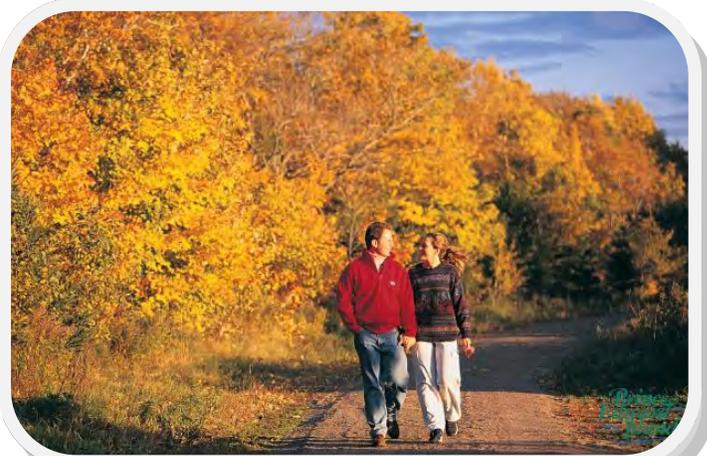
Cyclists flock to the trail, both in large touring groups, and for casual outings.



Perfect for Cycling

Photo by Louise Vessey
Courtesy of Tourism PEI

As for walking, it's been well established that walking in calm, quiet natural surroundings restores body, mind and spirit. Welcome to PEI!



Fall on the Confederation Trail

Photo by John Sylvester.
Courtesy of Tourism PEI

The Route Verte-Green Way

How Quebec got with the program and made a bundle for provincial coffers (and saved cyclists' lives).

When the cycling community in Quebec presented its government with the potential of a safe, green route for cyclists throughout the province, the government of the day listened. In 1992 Velo Quebec hosted the worldwide cycling conference, *Conférence Vélo Mondiale*. They “seized the day” and presented the government with a bold plan, the *Plan du Québec cyclable et des corridors verts de l'an 2000*.

To its credit, the government has deferred to the expertise of the cyclists. A green bikeway has been developed over 4,000 kilometres which



links all regions of the Province of Quebec. As of 2009 about 1600 km were off-road trails. The Ministry of Transportation has taken the lead in collaborating with Velo Quebec. Investing \$88.5 million over ten years, it has easily recouped this amount. By 2006, the amount spent annually by various types of cyclists, e.g. athletic, tourist, or local, was expected to rise to \$134 million, generating \$38 million in tax revenue and helping to support 2,861 jobs. In addition, this focus on cycling has built a significant cycling industry in Quebec, generating sales over \$181 million.

Sentier NB Trails

is dedicated to the development and support of quality non-motorized trails in the province of new Brunswick.



When the railway abandoned this corridor, Fredericton visionaries decided not to tear down the bridge linking the north and south banks of the St. John River. At 581 metres the Bill Thorpe bridge is considered the longest such conversion of a railway to pedestrian bridge in the world. In the springtime it is populated by throngs of walkers, all at once! A great way to promote health and community pride.

A Report on Tourism Trends in Nova Scotia

By John Hawkins

I recently attended a two-day Tourism Innovation conference hosted by The NS Economic and Rural Development and Tourism Department. As the result of an extensive exit survey by Nova Scotia Tourism, its marketing initiative has turned to outdoor enthusiasts, who stay longer and spend considerably more than most tourists - about \$2,000 per person compared with \$1,300. They are inquisitive about culture and enjoy culinary experiences. Most are first time visitors while about 80% of all tourists are return visitors.

It is not surprising then that Nova Scotia's tourism brand guide for 2013 identifies the primary target audience as the outdoor enthusiast. They are travelers by heart more interested in the journey than the destination, seeking out engaging and memorable experiences. It is not where they have been to them that is so important as the experience they take away. Many of the places our rail trails wind through in Nova Scotia provide that experience whether the journey is on foot or meandering along with friends

and family on bicycles. Even as hills and waterways often dictated the route the rail line took they always arrived at a destination where people lived, where they worked and where they lived their lives. There is a story of people in each of those places - a story of from where they came and why they did and how their culture and livelihood evolved. While some of those places have changed, their history remains to tell its story. It may be an Acadian village which retained its spirit and culture in the midst of surrounding cultures which might have overwhelmed it. Around a bend may lie a secluded lake or a vista of fields or ocean offering a treat to the eye and here and there hints of the ocean forest and fields may tease the nose. The ears may be treated to the sounds of the ocean, a running brook and even the deep silence of secluded forest.

Few places enjoy the variety of surroundings that we have in Nova Scotia, but there is strong competition. The nearby New England states, PEI and Quebec offer excellent trails surpassing ours in many ways. To compete we need to offer a higher quality trail experience, one from which people take away the best of memories. Greenways Nova Scotia promotes such non-motorized trails. Much of the reason for that is that the sensory experiences-sight, sound and smell - created by off highway vehicles motor vehicles just don't go along with the trail experience that can be taken from the best of trails. There is no arguing that the people of Nova Scotia are friendly and that applies to everybody. It doesn't matter if they are on foot, a bicycle or an ATV. We do not argue against motorized vehicles as such but that there are appropriate uses for different venues. For Tourism- it's Greenways.

Let's strive to make the trail experience in Nova Scotia the best it can be.

- John Hawkins is a director of Greenways Nova Scotia and Chair of HRTA (Halifax Regional Trails Association).



Greenways in Nova Scotia

Do we have any? Yes. Just not enough, and not as a provincial trail system.

- ◆ HRM has supported “Active Transportation” (e.g. walking and cycling) as a priority. Most HRM trails are non-motorized Greenways. www.halifax.ca/trails; www.halifax.ca/cycling
- ◆ Kings County is well on the way with a plan to have a Greenway stretch from Wolfville through to Cambridge Road. See the Transportation report in www.kings2050.ca
- ◆ A few Nova Scotia towns have pathways within their limits or trail systems that are excellent, such as Kentville, Annapolis Royal or Liverpool. Cambridge has a great trail:



Cornwallis River Greenway

May 8, 2013

A rare and welcome walking and cycling path on the DAR rail bed in the valley. Note crusher dust surface and original grade, preserving the rail bed. It's used a lot! On May 5 valley residents enjoyed the Hike for Hospice fundraiser on this trail. For photos, information and location see www.cornwallisgreenway.ca.

Nova Scotia is an unhappy rarity in giving over the valuable asset of abandoned rail beds to Off-Highway Vehicle use, cutting off Greenway development at the knees. This must change. There are five things that could help:

1. Insist that the government abandon its “stakeholder” model of consultation and go directly to the people when questions of Off-Highway Vehicle use on trails or elsewhere arise. OHV interests count as major “stakeholders” in government eyes, even though their numbers are small, while hundreds of adjacent homeowners, community members, walkers and cyclists, never even know most of the time that consultations on trail usage are taking place. Or if they do, feel intimidated or avoid the inevitable conflict with vocal OHV advocates, and tend to stay away.

2. Write to your MLA, write letters to the editor, talk to your municipal councillor . Use your so-

cial media connections if you have them. Be “out there” and silent no more.

3. Follow the example of [The Shore Active Transportation Association](http://www.shoreat.ca) on the Eastern Shore. They recently formed a community group to support the growing AT movement in their area. See <http://shoreat.ca/>.

4. Learn about trailbuilding and how other jurisdictions do it. You will soon find that the “Nova Scotia difference” doesn't wash.

5. Contact us and join us. We need you. (trails@greenwaysnovascotia.ca)

Can you write letters, serve on our Board, or organize your own community? Let us know!

We're on the web! Join our movement:
<http://greenwaysnovascotia.ca/>