



Greenways Nova Scotia

Volume 2 Issue 1

BUILDING COMMUNITIES THROUGH GREENWAYS

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A report card on trail development in Nova Scotia over the past decade would indicate that trails in our province have been managed by inflicting serious conflict and negative impacts on our communities, rather than building them up and promoting health, environmental stewardship, and neighbourhood cohesion. Zoom in to the current Government policy of shared or multi-use (motorized by default) trails, managed by fossil fuel burning trail builders and you have the answer. The notion that only those organizations have the capacity to build trails is grossly misrepresented. I know of no fossil fuel trail builder that has built an exclusive human or muscle powered trail asset. As an experienced Greenway trail builder, I have found no shortage of volunteers ready to line up and work on a Greenway.

Now zoom in again to the Trans Canada Trail Leadership Round Table (Nov. 23/25, 2010) that engaged all stakeholders through collaboration from coast to coast. At the invitation of TCT, I attended this event to represent NSPACTS. A fuller report on this event will appear in our next newsletter.

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McTavish and the Trestle Trail.

Barbara Bishop

Our Sheltie puppy was getting the hang of it, a nice prancing trot beside us as we strolled the beautiful Trestle Trail in Liverpool. Robert, McTavish and I were spending two days in Liverpool while I did a wedding for a young couple at White Point Beach Resort, and we had the morning free. After breakfast we decided to check out the trail; we had read about it, and I had seen it from the car when we first drove to Liverpool to pick up McTavish, 8 weeks of fluff at the time. We knew this trail had been singled out by recreational ATV users as an appropriate route for motorized traffic. I was interested to see

what the issues might be, and really wanted a brisk morning's walk, so around 9 a.m. we left the hotel and walked to the trail head. It is a stunningly beautiful trail, everything a community trail should be. The entrance was nicely designed with an interpretation plaque and thoughtful details like the bonus doggie-doo bags. The 2-mile distance is a perfect match for walkers seeking either a vigorous fitness break or a quiet stroll. As soon as we entered the trail we noticed a few adjacent properties with homes in close proximity to the trail, some with

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The NSPACTS Chair's message (continued)

Trans Canada Trail Greenways: Vision and Core Principles Vision

The Trans Canada Trail is a multi-use recreational trail, stretching from coast to coast to coast.

- The Trail is designed to accommodate six preferred activities: walking/hiking, cycling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, snowmobiling and canoeing.
- Made up of hundreds of local trails which are being joined together to form the world's longest and grandest trail, the Trans Canada Trail offers a multitude of trail experiences from wilderness pathways, rail trails, forested trails, rural tracks, historic canoe routes to paved urban walkways, downtown streets, country roads, logging roads, and secondary highways.
- The goal is to maximize greenway trail segments.
- The Trans Canada Trail continually strives to deliver a quality trail experience that is recognized as being best in class. We seek to be one of the world's pre-eminent long distance trails.

The Trail offers Canadians and international visitors a unique way to get outdoors, explore major cities and small towns; experience our ever-changing landscapes; and discover Canada's rich history, and diverse cultures, communities and people.

Core Principles

The Trans Canada Trail is committed to:

- provide a safe and enjoyable trail experience on high quality trail
 - promote an active and healthy lifestyle
 - preserve green space, encourage active transportation, and protect the environment
- as a priority, develop a greenway trail that promotes non-motorized uses in summer (walking, hiking, cycling horseback riding, and canoeing on water routes), as well as cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiling on some trail segments, in winter

Board Approved March 28, 2009

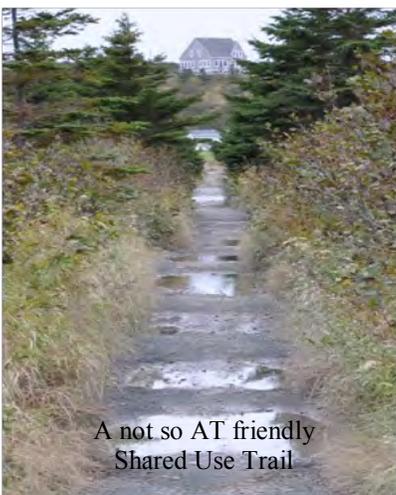
Have a quick look at our sister provinces and indeed the global trail building world, and you will find that elsewhere, they separate fossil fuel burning trails from muscle or human powered trails. Even the City of New York has engaged the value of Active Transportation and separating cyclists from motor vehicles. What's good for our health and the environment is good for the future of sustainable communities.

Step back for a moment and ask yourself: given the current direction of Nova Scotia, what's in it for our population, given our leading rate of chronic disease and the cost of health care, and not even factoring in the economic impact of marketing a destination Greenway? We would benefit hugely from a Greenway, not only for our own health and well-being, but as a province with every potential for serious tourism dollars. With Destination Trails and cycling tourism increasingly popular, we could make this happen.



The dog friendly Trestle Trail

preserve green space, encourage active transportation, and protect the environment as a priority



A not so AT friendly Shared-Use Trail



Biking on the Liverpool Trestle Trail

Then consider this extracted from Nova Scotia Trails Federation Newsletter, February, 2010:

“As the TCT’s Provincial Partner in Nova Scotia, NS Trails will carry forth the message of a “Greenways Vision” and national vision of the Trans Canada Trail, but as recognized in our MOU with the Province and the TCT ,we are clearly committed to maintain our provincial community trail development model where in which we support the community’s decided trail type, route and sustainability plan.. We genuinely want to ensure that those community trail groups that are currently recognized as managing or planning on completing TCT in NS have every opportunity to be so. We are also committed to continue requesting TCT “National” to recognize NS TCT Phase 2, “The Western Loop”.

Chair NS Trails Trans Canada Trail Committee

Extracted from the MOU reported above:

“Whereas the Province and NS Trails encourage the principle of inclusion regarding uses on shared use trail within the Province”

The message delivered here is simply one of maintaining the “status quo” while the rest of the trail building world engages all stakeholders. Now zoom in once again to the Trans Canada Trail Leadership Round Table (Nov. 23/25, 2010) that engaged all stakeholders through collaboration from coast to coast. Nova Scotia still reports their community conflict model works just fine. The most important thing that hasn’t been mentioned is that the Trans Canada Trail will not fund any other trail use not included in their Greenway Vision beyond March, 2011.

Quote, “On existing trail with off-highway vehicle (or OHVs) use that was registered before December 31, 2009 and where motorized use occurs, the TCT will continue to recognize this as the Trans Canada Trail and categorize it as **Yellow Trail**. The long term goal is for all sections to be Greenway Trail – over time the TCT will seek to work collaboratively with its partners to achieve this goal. This will require discussions with provincial partners and local trail groups to plan for either alternate routes for motorized use, removing motorized uses from TCT, or exploring alternate routes for the Trail”.

Trails which have not been registered with TCT before January 1, 2010, such as “Phase II” in Western NS, can never be part of the Trans Canada Trail as long as they permit ATV use.

Remember that the railway was built to run through the heart of our communities, as a good thing. And that the railbeds still run there.

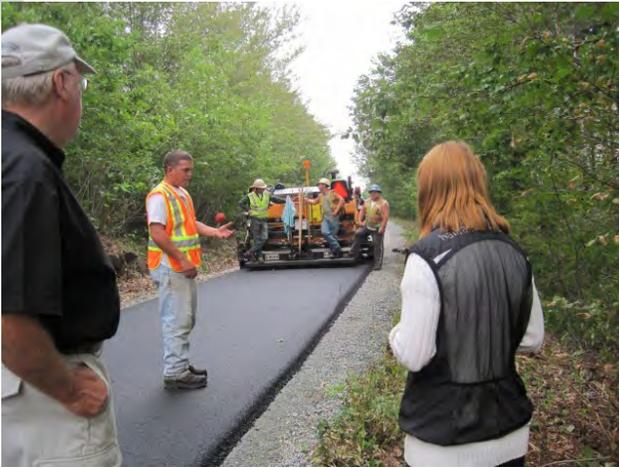
So where does that leave **Greenways** in Nova Scotia Communities? Without.



The Trestle Trail, Liverpool



Chain of Lakes Trail: A New Active Transportation Greenway Corridor for Halifax Jessie Debaie



Construction of the Chain of the Lakes

This significant piece of urban greenway infrastructure has been made possible by HRM's forward looking plans to get residents active, moving and fit.

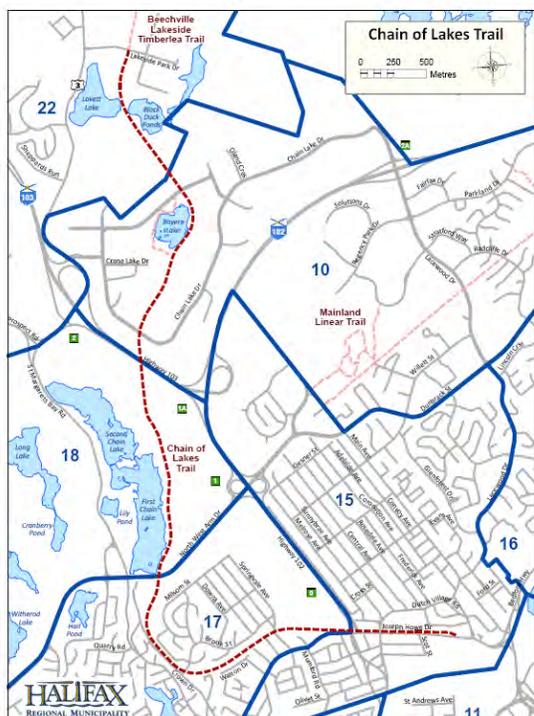
HRM residents are excited and anxious to be using the new Chain of Lakes Trail in Halifax now under construction. The new 7.25 km active transportation corridor fits perfectly into the Halifax Regional Municipality's Active Transportation Plan and Phase 2 of the Trans Canada Trail Greenway Vision. This significant piece of urban greenway infrastructure has been made possible by HRM's forward looking plans to get residents active, moving and fit.

In June 2006, when CN announced that they were going to discontinue operating the Chester Spurline HRM made plans to acquire the line. HRM and CN reached a purchase agreement of \$ 2.7 million for the abandoned line in 2009. Knowing that it wanted an active transportation greenway corridor, HRM applied to The Canada - Nova Scotia Infrastructure Stimulus Fund and was awarded funding to develop the line. The total cost for this first phase is 1 million dollars.

Since all trails in HRM are planned and developed under the community development model, the Chain of Lakes Trails Association (COLTA) was formed in December 2009. The COLTA group which is a member in good standing with the Halifax Regional Trails Association has been working in cooperation with the community and with HRM Regional Trail Staff and HRM Design and Construction Services throughout the process of planning and construction. An official trail opening is being planned for the spring of 2011.

The trail is paved at both the Joseph Howe and the Beechville ends with a crusher dust surface in the middle section through Halifax Watershed lands. Next budget season the COLTA group will be commissioning a Greenway Corridor Development Plan to plan some of the finishing aspects of their new trail such as trailhead signs, rest areas, buffer vegetation, amenities etc.

Even though the trail is still under construction, walking, hiking and biking activity is already evident on weekends. This exciting new trail opportunity is an important piece in HRM's vision for a connected greenway system along all its rail line corridors and into the urban core. Watch for further developments.



The Trestle Trail—Continued

gates allowing residents access from their properties. Then we entered a quiet lightly wooded section.

As we walked along in the fragrant woodsiness, breathing in the quiet, stress just slid off. Weddings have lots of detail, lots at stake for everyone there, and our walk had become a calming prelude for me. Robert and McTavish were enjoying the same feeling. Then it got even better; we noticed a woodland trail branching off and followed it to the edge of the Mersey River where we found benches. We sat for a moment enjoying the view of the river before we rejoined the trail. The walking experience on the main trail was great, its surface even with hard-packed gravel, kind to my old knee injury. We picked up our pace.

We came to the trestle bridge, and it was beautifully decked, again with benches, immaculate and scenic. A cyclist crossing the bridge smiled and waved. Robert enjoyed it so much he took McTavish again in the afternoon. He took pictures of some women enjoying the benches on the bridge, who made friends with McTavish.

The trail exits to a main thoroughfare at the other side of the river.

It was a brilliant sunny morning that Saturday in August, and we met a number of other walkers on the trail. We talked to some of them, and also some business people in town. We ended up making some purchases quite unexpectedly; we happened on a store selling high

-quality shoes at great prices, and a very fine pet store that was also not a chain store. Both merchants provided superb service to us. We asked the hotel staff about the trail (puppies make instant friends for you, and we talked to lots more people than we otherwise would have), and we chatted with two residents who lived in a modest home near the trail and said that they walked it almost daily for their exercise. Our strong impression was that people feel pride and pleasure in Liverpool's Trestle Trail.

Take a walk or a cycling trip to this Trestle Trail and you will have a clear idea of why NSPACTS recommends that this government make the right move and create such Greenways on the rail beds that run through our communities. It's obvious and it's right there: a green, peaceful corridor encouraging healthy, active transportation and exercise on a regular basis for the residents who live on or near the trail. It's also an attraction for cycling tourists and other visitors. Voila, as the TV ads say, "That was easy!"

As I reflect on that golden morning, I think about how Nova Scotia's railways built the rail beds as close as they could to each town and village centre. It made it better for everyone to use the trains. And I had an "aha" moment thanks to the Trestle trail and it is this. Many of our communities were, historically, founded beside the rivers, again on purpose for transportation reasons, and we have recklessly thrown away the incredible gift of these river views on our rail beds, and the chance for quiet moments beside those rivers, moments that rural Nova Scotians could enjoy on their way to school, or work, or on their daily fitness break.

In our community, Paradise, the riverside section of the rail bed has been a sad mess for some years now due to the collapse of the banks exacerbated by years of unchecked motorized use and the makeshift repair a few years ago. It is now an unsightly thing.

Each community loves its river, and even unpoetic souls will acknowledge the mystic bond with "my river", as Heggi Luxey, the last Mi'kmaq in Paradise, called the Annapolis River that runs

There is every reason in the world for Nova Scotians to insist on their Greenway, to bring us in line with the rest of the country, and to protect such precious treasures as the Trestle Trail in Liverpool.

through it. No wonder the people of Liverpool are proud of their riverside trail, their bridge with its benches for visiting and viewing, their opportunity to commune with the Mersey, it is so much a part of life in their community.

Nova Scotians Promoting Active-transportation on Community Trails Society

E-mail Address:
admin@nspacts.ca

Create Active, Healthy and
Sustainable Community Trails
and Pathways for all Nova
Scotians.



We're on the Web
<http://nspacts.ca/>

NSPACTS Purpose is to:

1. Promote and create sustainable trails and pathways that accommodate all forms of Active Transportation including mobility aids.
2. Actively advocate and promote people powered trails.
3. Challenge trail policies within government that fail to embrace and promote active living.
4. Advocate for policies that protect the health of our communities by promoting laws that prohibit excessive noise and other forms of pollution.
5. Promote the use of trails and pathways in active living educational programs.
6. Support affiliated organization, groups, towns and municipalities that advance the above goals.
7. Establish a library of reference material.
8. Support the development of trails and pathways through the community development model.
9. Recognize human powered forms of travel.
10. Support each other, share information, and develop strategies to create a common voice for our goals.

NSPACTS Provincial Policy Statement for the Rails to Trails Corridor Goal Statement:

The goal of NSPACTS is to promote the development and maintenance of an Active Transportation (non-motorized) trail network on the former rail lines of Nova Scotia. We think this non-motorized status should be formally designated under the provincial trails act.

Consistent with other Maritime Provinces, NSPACTS envisages the Rails to Trails, Trans Canada Trail, AT Corridor as the principle alternative transportation trail corridor connecting Nova Scotia Communities.

