

Friends of the
Mohawk-Hudson
Bike-Hike Trail



The Canalway Trail Ambassador program has been generously supported with grants from Assemblyman Bob Reilly, L.L. Bean and the Schenectady Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club.

For more information on the Canalway Trail Ambassador program, contact the Friends of the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail at

141 Willowcreek Ave.,
Schenectady NY 12304

Phone: 518-372-8478
E-mail: mhbway@yahoo.com

or Parks & Trails
New York at
Phone: 434-1583
Web: <http://www.ptny.org>

CANALWAY TRAIL AMBASSADORS

2009 Report

The Canalway Trail Ambassadors program was launched in Niskayuna in 2008 as a two-month pilot with 10 ambassadors. In 2009, more ambassadors were recruited to the program, making a grand total of 18 patrolling in Rotterdam, Schenectady, Niskayuna and Colonie.

Of the 10 ambassadors who signed up in 2008, eight submitted reports of at least one of their rides. In 2009, 13 ambassadors filed reports and two ambassadors provided anecdotal information about their patrols. Ambassadors were not asked to ride at specific times or on specific sections of trail. Rather they were asked to wear the ambassador vest while doing their regular activities and to stop if it looked like someone was in need of assistance.

Altogether, the 13 ambassadors submitting reports in 2009 logged more than 250 patrols from May through October. The number of contacts with trail users (with “contacted” loosely defined as “exchanged greetings with”) topped 2,000. In addition, ambassadors reported providing assistance to 21 individuals on 12 different occasions. Assistance included:

- Helping with a loose chain
- Assisted a cyclist with a bent rim
- Assisted cyclist whose tires needed air
- Checked well-being of child who fell from bike
- Gave distance info, bathroom info
- Answered trail questions
- Gave directions to Cohoes Falls
- Gave directions on continuing west from trail end at 5S
- Gave directions on navigating through city of Schenectady
- Gave historical information
- Showed and/or gave map
- Provided allen wrench to biker so he could fix his mirror
- Discussed trail with thru-cyclist

In addition, seven ambassadors participated in a trail count survey conducted by Parks & Trails NY, contributing a total of more than 30 hours of time to the effort (see next page for results). Several ambassadors were also involved in maintenance work along the trail, including organized clean-ups in the city of Schenectady and at Old Lock 23 in Rotterdam, and on-going individual efforts to keep the trail clear of debris.

Summary

	2008	2009
Trips logged:	58	260
Contacts with trail users:	166	2312
Times direct aid provided:	12	24

Trail Count 2009

The Canalway Trail Ambassadors participated in a trail user survey conducted by Parks & Trails NY along the Mohawk section of the Mohawk-Hudson Bike-Hike Trail in August. Counts were conducted for an hour on weekday evenings at four different locations over a six-week time period, with each day of the week at each location getting counted at least twice. Using this data, Parks & Trails NY was able to estimate the following:

Location	Median week day peak hour traffic	Average week day daily traffic	Average week-end daily traffic	Annual traffic
Kiwanis Park, Rotterdam	30	219	350	56,715
Niskayuna train station	92	672	1,074	173,927
SCC trailhead	56	409	654	105,869
Colonie Town park	50.5	369	590	95,471

Action items

When ambassadors reported a problem along the trail, the volunteer coordinator would contact the appropriate municipality to inform them of the issue. Ambassadors also provided suggestions for improvements along the trail where there are ongoing issues:

Colonie

- Conduct an education and enforcement campaign to make sure dog owners keep their pets leashed while using the trail. This could be useful all along the trail, but sections in Colonie and Niskayuna seem to get the most use from dog owners.

Niskayuna

- Conduct an education and enforcement campaign to make sure dog owners keep their pets leashed while using the trail. This could be useful all along the trail, but sections in Colonie and Niskayuna seem to get the most use from dog owners.
- A culvert under the trail behind the GE training facility (between the entrance opposite Orchard Park and Balltown Road) is repeatedly getting clogged. Debris coming down the hill (mostly mud) then washes over the trail.
- Pavement on a portion of the same section – from the bottom of the steep hill to Balltown Road – is deteriorating, with the sides of the trail sinking in some areas.

Schenectady

- Glass is an ongoing problem at intersections where the trail crosses local roads. Routine maintenance could help keep these sections clear.
- Better signage is needed to help cyclists navigate from the end of the trail near SCCC to where it picks up again off Jay Street.
- We eagerly anticipate the long-delayed repaving of the city section of trail, particularly the reconstruction of the trail between Seneca Street and Maxon Road. The detour of this section has contributed to the confusion of cyclists attempting to travel through the area on the trail.

Rotterdam/Schenectady County

- Trash bins at the SCCC entrance to the trail have a tendency to overflow on heavy use days. Establishing a carry-in, carry-out policy could help eliminate this issue.
- Signage for the Canalway Trail is intermittent. Marking the route through Rotterdam Junction and Pattersonville not just with bike route signs but also with Canalway Trail signs would be helpful. There is some confusion for long-distance cyclists travelling through the area on how to continue on the trail, particularly where it dead ends in Rotterdam at the train crossing. More signage would be helpful here, also.

Sections patrolled

Begin	End	# trips 08	# trips 09
Downtown Albany	Lock 7 Road	1	-
Latham	Albany	-	4
Latham	Colonie Town park	-	1
Latham-Shaker Creek	-	-	3
Route 9	GE Global Research	-	79
Colonie Town Park	Dunsbach Ferry Road	-	1-2x/week
Shaker Creek	Lock 7/Union College	1	-
Shaker Creek	Train station	3	-
Shaker Creek	Nisky town line	1	-
Train station (Lions Park)	Shaker Creek (Colonie)	1	1
Train station	Blatnick Park	1	
Train station	Maxon Road	-	2
At train station	-	1	-
Lock 7 Road	Twin Bridges	8	9
Blatnick Park	Train station	2	-
Blatnick Park	Colonie town line	4	-
Blatnick Park	Forts Ferry Road	1	-
Blatnick Park	Rexford (East St)	1	-
Blatnick Park	Cohoes	-	3
Blatnick Park	Island View Road	-	4
GE traffic circle	Island View Rd (Colonie)	9	10
GE traffic circle	Nott Street	1	-
GE Global Research	Balltown Road	-	18
GE Global Research	Route 9	-	69
Orchard Park	Train station	2	-
Orchard Park	Rexford	5	-
Balltown Road	N. Jay Street (Sch'dy)	10	-
Balltown Road	GE Global Research	-	9
Aqueduct Road	-	-	1
Aqueduct Road	Anthony Street	-	2
Aqueduct Road	Seneca Street	-	4
Peek Street	Aqueduct Road	-	1
Seneca Street	Peek Street	-	1
SCCC	Rice Road	-	2
SCCC	Rotterdam J.	1	4
SCCC	Kiwanis Park	-	3
890 Park N Ride	Kiwanis Park	-	2
Kiwanis Park	SCCC	-	1
Pattersonville	Colonie Town Park	-	1