



The Rivanna Trail and the Route 29



Several recent designs of the Route 29 Bypass suggest that the road's "Southern terminus" where it connects with the 250 Bypass has the potential to impact negatively the Rivanna Trail from Barracks Road to Old Ivy Road, and possibly to close off access to trail users permanently.

The RTF Board is working to keep the entire 20-mile Rivanna Trail loop open and connected. We are grateful to the many generous landowners who have given the public permission to walk on trails on their land, and the RTF includes in our list the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). Over the years VDOT has been a cooperative partner to the RTF and granted permission to build a public trail on this particular piece of land in 2005. The RTF is hopeful that this spirit of cooperation will continue.

In August of 2012 VDOT made public its Environmental Assessment of the proposed Bypass. Maps, information, updates, and this report can be viewed on VDOT's website: www.virginiadot.org/projects/culpeper/rt._29_bypass.asp.

Noting that the Rivanna Trail was not mentioned in the Environmental Assessment, and responding to VDOT's invitation for comment, the RTF Board submitted the following comments to VDOT:

- The Rivanna Trail is a system of citizen-led, -funded, and -maintained rustic footpaths and multiuse trails encompassing the City of Charlottesville and extending into parts of Albemarle County.
- The entire Rivanna Trail has been designated as a National Recreation Trail since 2002 due to its importance in providing outdoor recreational opportunities for residents in the Charlottesville-Albemarle urban area.
- Portions of the Rivanna Trail have been incorporated into the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail system since 2004.
- This section of trail has been open to the public since 1998 thanks to permissions from the University of Virginia and a previous landowner.
- This section of trail is one of the most heavily used portions of the entire trail

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Coming Events

Work Parties

The second Saturday of every month, RTF volunteers meet to work on a section of the Trail. **Led by an RTF board member**, we meet at 8:45 at the RTF tool shed on Morton Drive (behind the English Inn).

Check the calendar on our web page for details of each month's location.

- December 8, Rip Verkerke
- January 12, Jay Endahl
- February 9, Nick Hamblett
- March 9, Robert LeHeup
- April 13, Jeff Wilbur
- May 11, Michael Barnes
- June 14, Alec Lorenzoni
- July 13, Todd Niemeier
- August 11, Ned Michie

Teddy Bear Hike

Saturday, January 5; River-view Park, 11:00 A.M.

Dress yourself and your favorite stuffed friend or toy warmly for a fun-filled winter hike on the Rivanna Trail. Discover how our City forests help real animals stay warm in winter.

For kids of all ages and their families or caregivers.

Event held rain or shine—or even snow!

Volunteer opportunity:

We are looking for volunteers to supervise preparation and serving of hot chocolate. We have camp stove, hot chocolate, and cups. We need people to staff the drink table from 10:30 A.M.-NOON. If available, contact Diana Foster, dfoster@newventure.com.

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RTF and the 29 Bypass

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system and is utilized for transportation, recreation, and athletic training by the general public and by students, faculty, and staff of local schools (UVa, St. Anne’s Belfield, Albemarle and Charlottesville Highs).

- This section of trail is used as an experiential educational resource by students of local schools (UVa, Village, Tandem).
- This segment is a vital link in making the Rivanna Trail a complete loop around the City of Charlottesville and in developing a regional network of trails throughout the City and the County.

The RTF furthermore asked that any portions of the Rivanna Trail displaced by construction of the Bypass be relocated in a fashion that maintains the integrity of the trail.

What can RTF members do to help? Please encourage VDOT to include the Rivanna Trail in their designs of the Bypass, to accommodate hikers and bikers in the region of the Bypass, and to protect trails throughout the region. Contact information is posted on the VDOT project web page, or you may email Route29BypassEA@vdot.virginia.gov.

In addition, encourage city and county officials to include trails, and in particular the Rivanna Trail, in their ongoing updates of their Comprehensive Plans. Public support for trails is critical in maintaining and increasing trails throughout our communities.

Your support can make a difference!

Reconnecting—and Renewing

The theme for the Rivanna Trails Foundation for the past eighteen months has been one of reconnecting—not only reconnecting the various trail segments that have been closed or interrupted by various projects, but also reconnecting with our membership. A key component of those outreach efforts has been a complete revamping of our web presence at www.rivannatrails.org.

The new site, which went live in the summer of 2011, allows us to better communicate news and information about the trails, post news and photos, track registrations for special events, and accept on-line memberships and renewals. If you haven’t seen our updated web site, you owe yourself a visit!

Behind the scenes is a new membership database that lets us acknowledge and communicate with our friends, but our old records were incomplete at best, and we are missing email addresses for many of our members.

If this printed copy of this newsletter is the first you’ve heard from us in a while, please go to the Join Us page of the web site and complete an on-line membership and give us your email address. If you prefer to update your records by mail,

that’s okay too—make notes on the back page of this newsletter and send to us at PO Box 1786, Charlottesville VA 22902.

If you have been receiving our monthly emails, log into www.rivannatrails.org using your email address. Click the “forgot password” link on the home page to generate an initial password.

Membership Renewal

The Rivanna Trail can’t survive without the commitment of the community, both in the form of volunteer work and financial support. Your membership in the RTF helps build and maintain our network of trails in the Charlottesville area, and provides support that is critical for the expense of supplies and materials to equip work parties, build bridges and river crossings, print trail guides, secure trail access and rights-of-way, and pay our insurance. Being a member also allows you to receive our annual newsletter and email notices about upcoming events and the latest Trail news.

If you’ve renewed your membership or donated in the past year, we thank you! If not, won’t you take the time to do so now? Membership can be renewed on-line at www.rivannatrails.org, or by mail using the form on the back page.

How does your membership help build the trail?

- \$5-\$10 ⇒ fills a gas can for a chainsaw or weed trimmer
- ⇒ provides a volunteer with gloves and safety gear
- ⇒ restrings a weed trimmer
- ⇒ supplies volunteers with bottled water
- \$25-\$50 ⇒ buys a new shovel, rake, pickaxe, pruning shears, or handsaw
- ⇒ replaces the chain on a chainsaw
- \$100-\$300 ⇒ installs signs and trail maps at trailheads
- ⇒ repairs weed trimmers, mowers, and chainsaws
- ⇒ buys a new chainsaw or weed trimmer
- \$500-\$800 ⇒ protects a lowland wet area with a raised walkway
- \$1000-\$2000 ⇒ constructs a bridge over a small creek
- ⇒ covers our annual liability and volunteer insurance
- \$5000 and up ⇒ invests in large infrastructure projects like bridges over streams and rivers

New on the Trails

Following construction of the Warner/Meadowcreek Parkway and the sewer interceptor replacement, projects which closed various sections of the loop trail for the past couple years, RTF and our volunteers continue to expand and improve the trail network. Explore what's new on your Rivanna Trail!

- The River North segment of the Trail received two new bridges in 2011, thanks to the effort of **Ben Cosgro**. As an Eagle Project for Boy Scout Troop 241, Ben built two bridges behind the soccer fields in Dunlora.
- Our trail adopters for the trail spur that runs north through Belvedere, **Leigh and Jim Surdukowski**, built two bridges through their section this past spring.
- In August, students from the **Village School** built a bridge in the segment

behind the Barracks Road Shopping Center. Their efforts even garnered them a feature story in the Daily Progress.

- In October, another Eagle Scout project, spearheaded by **Andrew Heatwole**, replaced a deteriorating bridge on Observatory Hill.
- A new bridge is also coming to fruition in Quarry Park. Owing to structural issues, the existing bridge must be replaced. The **RTF teamed up with the City** to purchase the pedestrian bridge that had been used during the Jefferson Park Avenue bridge project, which will be installed later this year.
- November 2011's monthly work party was an especially ambitious project, completing what has long been a "missing link" in the trail loop. This **new section of the Trail**

bypasses the long road walk along Stribling and Sunset. In addition to clearing and signing the new trail, we built a new stream crossing.

- RTF partnered with the **Charlottesville Area Mountain Bike Club (CAMBC)** in March 2012 to reroute a much-used and very muddy section of trail from Ivy Road to the base of Observatory Hill. Thanks to an exceptional turnout of volunteers from both organizations and the expert trail design skills of several CAMBC board members, this portion of trail is now high and dry and on more stable ground.
- Check the photo albums and News blog on the RTF web site, **www.rivannatrails.org** for photos of these and other projects and links to contribute in support of these and similar projects.

Thanks to Our Volunteers

The Rivanna Trail depends on the support of its members in many ways, financial and through time and effort. In addition to our monthly work parties, we're fortunate to have volunteers building bridges, clearing trails, and helping keep the trails open.

Local business that support the trail include **Blue Ridge Mountain Sports**, who sponsored the Teddy Bear Hike, **Dominion Power**, who helped relocate some huge poles salvaged from an old bridge, and Neal Gorman and **Specialized Insurance Services** who reviewed and updated our insurance coverage.

Trail Adopters walk their section periodically, clip vines and roses, mow grass, pick up branches, make minor repairs, and generally keep the trail open. They are also our primary "eyes on the Trail" for reporting problems and maintenance needs. We are grateful to the following individuals and groups for helping with this very important task:

- John Potter and the Locust Grove Neighborhood Association
- Gordon Laurie

- Spencer Pushard and the Woodhaven Neighborhood Association
- Jim Barnes
- Charlottesville High School Boys and Girls Cross Country teams
- Rick Seaman
- Jeff Wilbur
- Steve Russell
- Carl & Khabira Wise
- Marty Roddy
- Andrew McCann
- Covenant School Cross Country Team
- Dan Monahan
- Karen Siegrist
- Ted Heneberry
- CRC/CTRC and Genevieve Zanoloff
- Jay Endahl
- Judy Thomas
- Liz Montgomery and Judy Bartlett
- The Belmont Neighborhood Association
- The Joint Enlisted Council - Rivanna Station
- Dunlora Trail Committee
- John Holden and Tom Harvey
- Leigh and Jim Surdukowski

Future Projects

A major objective for RTF in 2013 is to update and improve our **trail signage** throughout our trail network. We've completed an inventory of signage needs, and have begun installation of new signs at key trail heads. We are also planning directional signs and new informational placards at key junctions. We welcome suggestions for improvement of way-finding along the trails.

The City has contacted Southern Railroad on our behalf to request an **easement for the Rivanna Trail** through the culvert that connects the Warner Parkway and Greenbrier Park segments. An unofficial passage on a large pipe that previously ran through the culvert disappeared as part of the sewer replacement project. Virginia law was recently modified to indemnify railroads for trail projects such as this, which we're hopeful will enable building a permanent connection through this key point soon.

If our year-end fundraising appeal is successful, look for **new trail guide brochures** in early 2013. Our supply at various businesses, visitor's centers, and trailheads is completely exhausted, and we're overdue for printing more.



RIVANNA TRAILS FOUNDATION

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***Never Underestimate What a Few
Volunteers Can Do***

**Join or donate at
www.rivannatrails.org**

**or return the top half of this page with
your updated contact information and
e-mail address**

Loop de Ville 2012

In down, wool, and fleece sixteen hikers set off before dawn for the 11th annual Loop de Ville, an almost 20-mile journey through Charlottesville and Albemarle County on the Rivanna Trail. The group included faithful repeat participants, a dedicated trail adopter, a proponent of new trails extending outward from the Rivanna Trail, and newcomers to the area.

After seeing footbridges, rock hops, sawn trees, new signage, and miles of trash-free open trails, newcomers repeatedly marveled:

“You built and maintain all of this with volunteers?”

“You have this many supportive landowners?”

“You do all of this without public funding?”

Yes, yes, and yes!

Because of the work of hundreds of vol-

unteers over the years (maybe thousands by now), the 2012 Loop de Ville hikers were able to see first-hand the life, history, and possible future of the Rivanna Trail. Gorgeous, varied, and preserved landscapes exist right in the midst of our urban community. This explains why local real estate agents and homeowners place value on being “located near the trail.” The Rivanna Trail’s winding path through parks, forests, streams, culverts, commercial districts, and neighborhoods can enlighten trail users about their role and geographic place and role in this community.

Local residents were exercising on the trail, students from UVa’s Madison House were clearing on Observatory Hill, and hikers stayed dry on footbridges built by scouts, students, and loyal RTF members. The friendly folks of Belmont offered hikers congratulations for their efforts and offered water. Hikers even supported the local economy by stopping at trail-

friendly establishments such as Bodo’s, Hardees, and the Fifth Street Market.

Loop de Ville participants also had the opportunity to see for themselves some of the challenges and opportunities the RTF has faced and still faces from regional policies and infrastructure projects:—railroad crossings, sewer replacements, stream restorations, and the proposed Route 29 Charlottesville Bypass.

In response to hikers’ comments about the beauty and uniqueness of the Rivanna Trail, the RTF invited them to support the trail in any way that strikes their fancy. We extend the same invitation to all users and lovers of regional trails. Among other ways, please consider becoming a dues-paying member of the RTF, donating funds for a specific aspect of its work, participating in a Second Saturday work party, or voicing publicly your support for the creation and permanent protection of trails.