

Milford gem perfect for family

While Main Street motorists roar past the granite posts that mark the start of the paved pathway, users of the Milford Upper Charles Trail head north toward the Fino Field recreation area and beyond for a few miles of seclusion.

The downtown density is obscured only a few hundred yards away as trees envelope the 12-foot-wide path, turtles can be seen making their way near the wetlands, then Canada geese and their goslings appear at the nearby lake.

"I think it's excellent. I didn't think it would be as isolated as it is," said **Dave Ryan** of Medway, who was recently riding the trail with his wife, **Donna**, and daughter, **Nicole**. "Kudos to Milford, they have a jewel here."

The 3.4-mile Milford Upper Charles Trail truly is a gem, perfect for family cycling.

After more than nine years of plan design and construction, the \$1.6 million trail will be celebrated with a grand opening on Saturday. The daylong celebration, which kicks off with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 10 a.m., will include giveaways, presentations, bike raffles, entertainment, bike decorating, a bike safety workshop and a fun run.

The Milford trail is part of a five-town, 24-mile project that has yet to be built in any of the other communities. Milford also is actively planning two sections for Phase 2 of the project, connecting one end of the completed path to Holliston and the other to Hopkinton.

Construction on the second phase is expected to start in the spring of 2009, and the project will add about another 3 miles of paved path.

"I feel good about it every time I visit the trail," said

'Reno Deluzio has been a big part of it for a long time. Reno has really taken this on, without him it wouldn't have kept going.'

BOB BUCKLEY

CONSERVATION COMMISSION CHAIR
AND MEMBER OF TRAIL COMMITTEE

Reno Deluzio, who began working on the project as the Milford town planner soon after it was conceived in 1993.

Deluzio, chairman of the Upper Charles Trail Committee, has continued to work on the project long after his retirement and is considered by many as the driving force behind the project in Milford.

"Reno Deluzio has been a big part of it for a long time," said **Bob Buckley**, chairman of the Conservation Commission and a member of trail committee. Buckley also helped give the initial push for the project as a member of the Upper Charles Conservation Land Trust. "Reno has really taken this on, without him it wouldn't have kept going."

The Upper Charles Trail was initially conceived as a 27-mile trail that looped through Framingham, Ashland, Sherborn, Holliston, Milford and Hopkinton.

However, Framingham has not embraced the project, and only Holliston and Hopkinton, in addition to Milford, are actively engaged in getting trails built.

Holliston, which was the first town to receive funding for the trail, is negotiating land acquisition with CSX Corp., and hopes to close the deal this year and put part of the project out to bid.

According to Deluzio, federal money funded about 80 percent of the project, the state funded 10 percent, and the town paid the remaining

10 percent.

"What Milford did for our neighboring towns is show that it can be done," Deluzio said.

The Milford trail starts at Main Street near Fino Field, with a horseshoe-shaped path that wraps around the recreation area. There is parking at Fino Field or the commuter lot on Main Street.

From Fino Field, the paved path rolls past Cedar Swamp Pond across Dilla Street to Louisa Lake about 1.5 miles down. Louisa Lake is a recreational area that offers picnic tables, barbecue grills and parking.

The trail then heads northeast toward Interstate 495, with a parking lot accessible behind Wendy's restaurant on Route 85 about 2.8 miles from the start. From there, the path joins Route 85 for a short distance while traveling under I-495, then heads away toward Deer Street, and ends.

The paved trail has a yellow line down the middle, providing about 6 feet of pavement for users going in each direction.

A fence guards the shoulder on bridges and raised areas, and signs indicate upcoming hills. There are several pull-offs along the way, which are marked by signs, and the shoulders have been landscaped.

"We usually come every Sunday," Ryan said. "When it's nice out there are so many people here. You have people biking, rollerblading, walking. They're out here."

According to **Jeff Johnson**, owner of Milford Bicycle located about 100 yards away from the trailhead, the paved path has triggered additional business. He said recreational riders, especially families, have come into his shop looking for hybrids or comfort mountain bikes to ride on the trail.

"The trail is very nice, it's pleasant," Johnson said. "It's like being in Vermont. It winds through the trees."



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