



Fairfield County Trails

Volume 1, Issue 2

The Fairfield Heritage Trail Association

December 2003

TALK (from page 2)

fast we can barely keep up. We are currently in the early stages of planning the construction of Phase II.

As one of several concurrent biketrail projects, we are continuing our efforts to bring a trail to Amanda. With the progress we've made in 2003, I believe that things will really start happening on that trail in 2004.

Last month, for the first time, we walked a stretch of old rail bed in Fairfield County that may be donated to our group. This piece of land was fantastic and appeared to be almost ideal for a beautiful stretch of recreational trail. We must have looked like kids on Christmas morning as we walked along the rail bed.

As you can see, things are happening for FHTA at an amazing pace right now. So hold on tight, this train has left the station !!!

As our projects begin to branch out, there are growing opportunities for people to get involved and take charge with certain segments. If you would like to be a part of this process, there is no doubt that we could use your help. Please contact us to see how you can get involved and help us make what was once merely a dream...recreational trails in Fairfield County...a reality !!!

Who or What is the FHTA?

The Fairfield Heritage Trail Association (FHTA) is a grass roots organization of concerned members who support the development of trails. The term, trail, is used throughout our literature to describe a system of greenways for use by non-motorized vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Other names or concepts may include bike path, hiking trail, nature walk, jogging trail, greenway or linear park. The goal of FHTA is to bring together existing and potential users of trails with civic leaders to facilitate the creation of a trail system for Fairfield County that will someday link with similar trails in neighboring counties across Ohio.

The establishment of trails will create a safe, peaceful and effective environment for providing important recreational opportunities for young and old alike. We invite you the reader to join us in this effort.

The Fairfield Heritage Trail Association is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 corporation.

President Jim Barrett
Vice-President Jeff Vandervoort
Secretary Ira Weiss
Treasurer Dave Scheffler
Newsletter Rick Holt

Website: www.Lancaster-oh.com/heritage

Membership applications are available on the website, along with meeting times, minutes and all relevant information. We welcome your comments. E-mail us at Heritage@Lancaster-oh.com



Fairfield Heritage Trail Association

c/o Plante & Moran
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Lancaster, OH 43130

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Help move the McCleery covered bridge into the future Moving Into The Future

The McCleery Bridge was built in 1864 by Jacob Brandt, who went on to construct many bridges in Fairfield County and the rest of the state of Ohio. This was the first large bridge built by Mr. Brandt, 97 feet long at a cost of \$12.50 per linear foot. It carried Leonard Road across Walnut Creek about 2.5 miles southwest of Baltimore (Basil). The bridge was near the bed of the Ohio and Erie Canal, and just south of a mill operated by William Gear. Walnut Creek ran through the McCleery (or McLeery – both spellings have been used) Farm, and the bridge was named for the family. The design of the bridge is a Single Span, Multiple Kingpost Truss. In 1983, the bridge was moved to the Jim Walter property on Pleasantville Road, just west of State Route 158. Approximately 48 feet of the bridge was lost to dry rot, and the remaining section is 50 feet long. The bridge is currently supported at the corners, and supports its own weight. The McCleery Bridge is the oldest standing covered bridge in Fairfield County.

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Phase I Is Under Way

Groundbreaking for the first 1.6 miles of the Lancaster City Bike Trail was held on June 5, 2003 next to the John Bright #2 covered bridge on the campus of Ohio University-Lancaster. Numerous city and county officials, including Terre Vandervoort, city prosecutor and grant writer for the trail project; Dave Bogear, Lancaster parks superintendent; and city council president, Steve Davis, attended the ceremony.

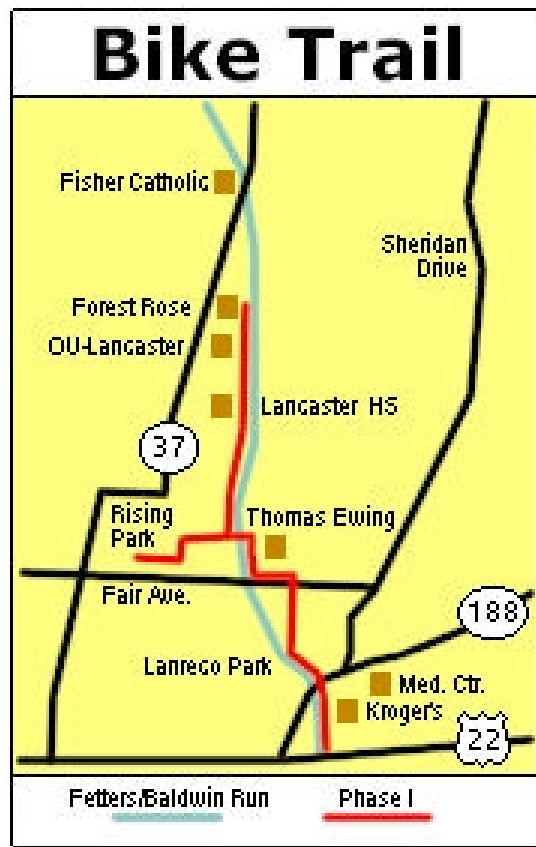
Phase I will connect the schools along Feters Run, starting at Forest Rose, with Lanreco Park and the Kroger shopping center on East Main Street. The trail is being funded by a grant from the Recreational Trails

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Phase II Receives Major Grant!

The second phase of the city trail project received a major boost when Governor Bob Taft announced \$6.25 million in Clean Ohio Trails fund grants on October 9, 2003. Lancaster received a grant of \$420,000 to design and construct 5.2 miles of urban trail. The grant requires a 25% matching contribution from local funds, which can be in the form of labor, materials, or donated land. The purpose of this fund, approved by Ohio voters in November 2000, is to promote community-directed investment in revitalizing urban areas, protecting rivers and watersheds, preserving green space and farmland, and expanding Ohio's system of recreational trails. These trails

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The Fairfield Heritage Trail Association has received the endorsement of these groups:

- Adventure Cycling Association
- Amanda-Clearcreek Board of Education
- Amanda Village Council
- Bremen Area Historical Society
- Christ Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hamburg
- Dum-Ford House Bed and Breakfast, Amanda
- Fairfield County ADAMH Board
- Fairfield County Commissioners
- Fairfield County Historical Park Commission
- Fairfield Union Board of Education
- Hocking Township Trustees
- Lancaster Board of Education
- Lancaster City Council
- Ohio University - Lancaster
- Progressive Referrals Group of Lancaster
- Rushcreek Township Trustees
- Fairfield County Mental Health & Recovery Service Board
- The Friends of Clear Creek
- The Friends of the Hocking River

Enough Talk, We're Building !!!

Jeffrey K. Vandervoort
FHTA President

Soon after I got involved with the Fairfield Heritage Trail Association in 2000, I learned that there was a lot of planning and preparation that goes into the trail building process. With every element of progress come challenges and the occasional setback. In the early going, when you haven't broken ground and you have nothing to show for your efforts, there are times that you wonder whether or not there is ever going to be a trail. You begin to ask yourself....will all this work pay off ?

Well, I think I speak for all the active members of the FHTA, when I say that in 2003 we got our answer...YES, it is worth it !!! We've been told by leaders of neighboring trail groups that once you break ground, hold on tight, because things will really take off. As we look back on the past year, we can certainly attest to the accuracy of that statement. We received our first large grant, \$130,000, of state funding in the fall of 2001. Ever since then, things have taken off like we were shot out of a cannon. With the help of many volunteers, contributors, and government officials, we have made giant strides toward our goals. On June 5th of this year, FHTA was very proud and excited to participate in its first groundbreaking ceremony, as we kicked off the work on the Lancaster City Trail. We have now paved approximately 2/3 of Phase I of the Lancaster Trail, and can see the finish line of that Phase. To our pleasant surprise, people have already begun to use the trail in significant numbers.

In 2002, we were also very fortunate to receive an offer from Jim Walter to donate a historic covered bridge to our trail. After some fast-paced grant writing, we were able to fund the move and restoration of the bridge to incorporate it into Phase I of our trail. We anticipate a move of the bridge in early 2004.

In the meantime, the fundraising and grant writing continues. 2002 taught us how competitive the grant writing process can be, as we learned that we did not make the list of grant recipients from the 2002 Clean Ohio Fund. But that news did not dim our spirits for long, and we were soon looking for ways to make our 2003 grant application more competitive. With the help of our trail-building friends and advisors, we were soon ready to submit our 2003 application. And we are delighted to announce that in October of this year, we received word that we would be the recipients of \$420,000 in Clean Ohio Funds, which was the second largest grant given in the state, and should be enough to construct Phase II of the Lancaster trail. Now that we have broken ground, it seems like things are moving so

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UNDERWAY (from page 1)

Program, private corporations and foundations including the Fairfield Medical Center, the Fairfield Foundation, and the Columbus Foundation, the 2002 State Capital Budget, and the Lancaster City Parks Department.

Spearheaded by the Lancaster Parks and Recreation Department and FHTA, the trail will be constructed by the both the Lancaster City Street and Parks Departments, and maintained by the City Parks Department. This will be the first "linear park" for Lancaster. When completed it will allow people to walk, bike, jog, or skate around town from schools to parks and not interact with traffic.

Construction of the trail is well underway, and there are numerous reports of cyclists and joggers already using the recently completed portion, suggesting that pent up demand for this type of facility is strong here in Lancaster, and many are eager for the opportunity to exercise on trails right in our own county. Ω

Donated Bike Racks Ready & Waiting

Fairfield County Community Action has donated 8 -10 all-weather bike racks to the FHTA for use with future trail projects. The racks are in storage until locations are determined, probably in the spring of 2004.

Amanda Trail Update

Under the direction of Amanda residents, Claude and Anna Ford, the county portion of the Heritage Trail is continuing. The Fairfield Heritage Trail Association has permission to use portions of the right of way of the old Pennsylvania Railroad roadbed in Amanda and Amanda Township. Support for a bike trail includes the Fairfield County Commissioners, the Village of Amanda, Hocking township trustees, Amanda Clearcreek Schools, and Fairfield County Parks.

In March of 2002, a public meeting concerning the trail was held at the New Hope Assembly of God church. In January 2003, a meeting on the use of the US 22 right of way for a bike trail was held with the ODOT district engineer, the ODOT environmental specialist, officials from the village of Amanda, and members of the FHTA. In May of 2003, Claude Ford and Dave Scheffler presented a day of assemblies concerning the bike trail for students of Amanda Clearcreek High School. Ω



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enhance wildlife habitats, and provide access to Ohio's great outdoors, improving the quality of life for all Ohioans.

The Phase II portion of the trail will connect with the existing Fox Trail at Cenci Park, making it possible to cycle, walk, skate or jog from the Olivedale Center all the way to Forest Rose School, away from dangerous traffic. It is the vision of the Fairfield Heritage Trail Association, and the Governor, that these trails will someday become part of a network of interconnected trails across the entire state, and all Ohioans will be within 10 minutes of a recreational, multi-use trail. Ω

BRIDGE (from page 1)

Mr. Walter has graciously agreed to allow the Fairfield Heritage Trail Association (FHTA) to move, preserve, and include the McCleery Bridge in its plans for the Phase I Lancaster Trail. The group plans to locate the bridge over Fetters Run between Thomas Ewing Middle School and the practice field just south of Fulton Field. Before the bridge can be moved, abutments will have to be built on the banks of Fetters Run, tall enough to support the bridge above the level of the floodplain. For temporary support, two large I-beams will span the abutments, to hold the bridge while repairs are made on the bottom chords. The bridge will then be braced, jacked onto dollies, and carefully moved from the Walter property. The nine-mile journey from Pleasantville Road to Arbor Valley Drive will take approximately one hour. When it arrives at Arbor Valley Drive, it will be jacked onto smaller dollies and eased onto the I-beams. After the bridge is secure in its new location, one bottom-chord beam and a few kingposts and diagonal braces will be replaced. The total cost of the move, abutments, and structural rehabilitation is approximately \$75,000. The Fairfield Foundation has generously donated \$20,000 toward the project. The FHTA is encouraging additional community involvement in the move. Since the bridge needs to move about 9 miles, FHTA is asking folks to donate a dollar a foot to help pay for the move. If the entire distance is paid for this way, about \$47,000 will be generated towards the project. Donors pledging \$50 or more will receive a certificate of appreciation from the FHTA. Donors pledging \$500 or more will also have their name inscribed on a plaque mounted on or near the bridge. Donors pledging \$5000 or more will be memorialized on individual "Golden Miler" plaques. Ω

Donations may be sent to:

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McCleery Bridge
c/o Plante & Moran
PO Box 765
Lancaster, OH 43130