

Conservation Questions for Rail Trails

phone interview with Ellen Fisher, Conservation Agent, Town of Pepperell

Nashua River Rail Trail

Bridget Hanson Interviewer 10/16/07

Was concom of Pepperell involved in permitting process of Nashua River rail Trail? yes, shortly before Ms Fisher started working in Pepperell (2000). A negative Determination of Applicability was issued for the project, allowing it as a limited project as defined in the Rivers Protection Act. MGL 310 CMR 10.53 (6) "Notwithstanding the provisions of 310 CMR 10.58 the issuing authority may issue an Order of Conditions for the construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of footpaths, bikepaths, and other pedestrian or nonmotorized vehicle access to or along riverfront areas, provided that adverse effects from the work are minimized and that the design specifications are commensurate with the specified use and are compatible with the character of the riverfront area. Generally, the width of the access shall not exceed ten feet of pavement, except within an area that is already altered (e.g. railroad beds within rights of way). Access shall not be located in vernal pools or fenced in a manner which would impede the movement of wildlife."

Was a NPDES permit required? presumably not

Anything else you'd like to add

rails and ties were "long gone" before project started

joint use with horses "pie in the sky." Horses are spooked by the bikes. They have a 5 foot gravel equestrian path, on the river side of the trail. She thought this a bad idea, would like to separate horse traffic from the resource.

As part of process to update Open Space Plan, town of Pepperell surveyed residents about their favorite recreation areas. Nashua River RT ranked higher than anything else (including organized recreation, conservation lands) . The survey was done in 2002, before the trail was officially open.

Merchants originally concerned that trail users would take up parking spaces, this has not proved to be a problem.

Has been many years since she's had any complaints about trail.