

rails *to* trails

Green.09

Inspiring Movement

A Quest *for* Greener Pastures

California's
RICHMOND GREENWAY

PLUS

- Point of View
- David Dionne: Startup Star
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- Geocaching

Third grader Reshanya with fistfuls of mustard greens from the trailside Lincoln Elementary School Farm in Richmond, Calif. (photo by Bryce Hubner)

The magazine of Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC), a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating a nationwide network of trails from former rail lines and connecting corridors to build healthier places for healthier people.

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The Spirit of Innovation

I believe it was Plato who said “necessity is the mother of invention.” Then there’s the oft-repeated Chinese proverb asserting that “in crisis there is opportunity.” And more recently, I’m fond of the aphorism that “when life gives you lemons, make lemonade.”

All of these sayings underscore one fundamental truth to me: in this economic crisis we must look for innovative ways to do more with less. This Green Issue is exactly that—our effort to provide our members and supporters with even more content at a lower cost to our budget and to our environment. The less we spend on postage and printing, the more we can focus resources on our core mission of trail building. So in this issue of *Rails to Trails*, the words you are currently reading are ‘written’ by electrons in cyberspace, rather than soy ink on recycled paper.

This spirit of innovation represents a longer-term investment by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy in “new media” to provide better services to trail users and trail advocates. For example:

- Our TrailLink.com site (powered by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy) now provides online digital maps for more than 12,000 miles of rail-trail in communities across America. We expect as many

as 100,000 monthly visitors to the site during the peak of the season this summer.

- The steady development of our online Trail-Building Toolbox makes this free resource chock full of information, supplementing the expert, one-on-one technical assistance our trail-building staff provides daily. Last month we logged more than 2,000 visits to the Tool Box, extending our services tenfold.

- The growth of our electronic Rail-Trail Network allows us the capacity to inform and mobilize thousands of trail advocates. The power of this network was recently demonstrated when we gathered 15,000 names on a petition urging national leaders to include funding for ready-to-go trails, walking and biking projects in the economic stimulus package. With this dramatic show of support, we helped secure \$800 million in the legislation for the Transportation Enhancements (TE) program—the largest source of funding for trail development since 1991.

We know how popular our traditional magazine is among our membership, and we have no plans to produce an electronic version more than once a year. But if you are a long-time magazine reader making your first visit to our Web site, I encourage you to explore everything RTC has to offer online—and to share your Green Issue with friends and family. If you like what you see, please consider making an extra donation, and together we can grow RTC’s outreach and influence. Lemonade, anyone?

RTC’s inaugural online issue allows for eco-friendly publishing and outreach.

BYRCE HUBNER



Happy Trails!

Keith Laughlin

Keith Laughlin
 RTC President

EYE ON: Camp Chase Trail

Since the early 1990s, trail advocates in Ohio have dreamed of building a continuous, off-road pathway from Lake Erie south to the Ohio River. This far-reaching project, known as the Ohio to Erie Trail, has the potential to link more than 300 miles of trails—some built on rail corridors, others along canals—between Cleveland and Cincinnati. About 70 percent of the pathway has been completed in sections. The Camp Chase Trail segment, a key 11.5-mile stretch just outside Columbus, is now set for construction this year.

The Columbus and Franklin County Metropolitan Park District, or Metro Parks, turned its attention to this segment in 1998. One of its first challenges was negotiating with the Camp Chase Industrial Railroad Corporation, which still operates trains on all but 1.5 miles of the corridor. After a slow start, the short-line railroad company has become an active partner in the rail-with-trail

project, says John O'Meara, executive director of Metro Parks.

"Since the folks at the Camp Chase railroad decided it would be a good deal for both of us, we've worked closely together," he says.

The city of Columbus is an enthusiastic partner as well, and trail planning has finally been fast-tracked on the Camp Chase. When completed during the next few years, the rail-with-trail will run west from Sullivan Avenue on the outskirts of Columbus to Wilson Road in Lilly Chapel, connecting to existing and emerging trail systems at both ends. The route's scenery alternates business and industrial areas, farming communities and park land.

Of the \$9.4 million estimated project budget, Metro Parks has secured \$4.63 million through a combination of state grants and donations from organizations. Preliminary engineering and design work is under way, and Metro Parks expects to finalize the corridor easement this spring. The Camp Chase Trail will

be built in three phases, beginning this year with a six-mile section from Wilson Road to the 6,700-acre Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park. "It's one of the more spectacular parks around," says O'Meara.

Steve Brown, chief landscape architect for Metro Parks and project manager for the Camp Chase segment, agrees. "I think [the park] will be a big draw for people," he says. "We're connecting to some neighborhoods in Columbus, so some [residents] will be able to get out to the creek without a car."

How the segment fits into the overall Ohio to Erie Trail, though, may be the most persuasive selling point for the project. "I'm inspired by the fact that the [Ohio to Erie Trail] will be the nation's longest continuous off-road trail in the country," says O'Meara. "That's kind of an exciting thing to start with."

For more information on the Camp Chase project, contact Metro Parks at 614.891.0700. To learn more about the Ohio to Erie Trail, visit www.ohio-to-erie-trail.org or call 614.267.2915.

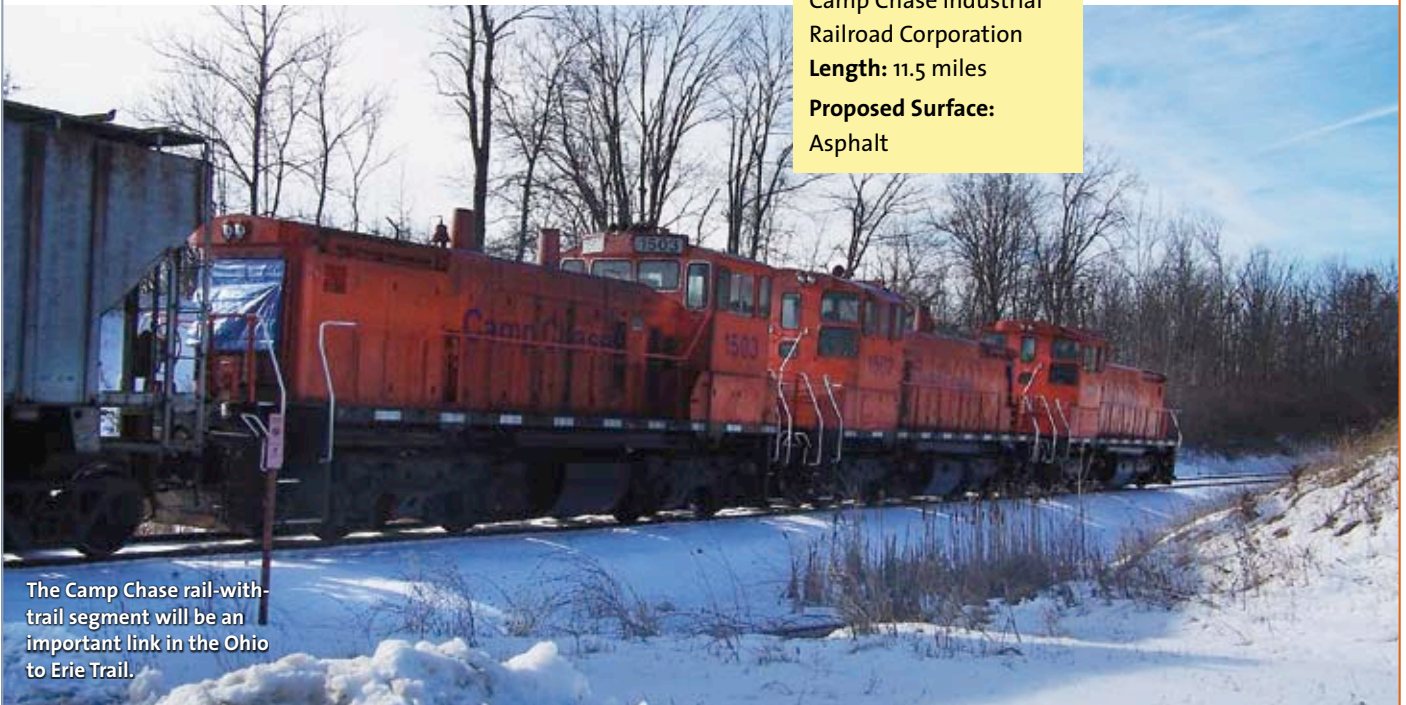
Trail Under Construction:
Camp Chase segment of
the Ohio to Erie Trail

Location: Columbus,
Ohio

Used Railroad Corridor:
Camp Chase Industrial
Railroad Corporation

Length: 11.5 miles

Proposed Surface:
Asphalt



The Camp Chase rail-with-trail segment will be an important link in the Ohio to Erie Trail.



California's
RICHMOND GREENWAY

A Quest for Greener Pastures

Written and photographed
by Bryce Hubner

1 ACT I: Setting the Stage

Richmond, Calif., is not among the Bay Area's destination hot spots. Entire neighborhoods live below the poverty line, and the city's public health and crime battles have riddled newspaper headlines for decades. Oil refineries from Richmond-based Chevron scar a surrounding landscape otherwise notable for its natural beauty. It's also a town with few parks and just three acres of open space per 1,000 residents (the National Recreation and Park Association recommends as many as 15 acres per thousand).

Enter Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) and Friends of Richmond Greenway (FORG), driving an initiative to bring a three-mile strip and nearly 32 acres of green space to the heart of Richmond via renovation of an unused rail corridor. Over the past decade, RTC, FORG and other community organizations—like Community Youth Council for Leadership and Education (CYCLE)—have raised millions of dollars to landscape the Richmond Greenway and pave a trail through it. With 11 acres, about a third of the greenway has been completed.

"The Richmond Greenway is an incredible pathway traversing Richmond and helping in the overall transformation of our city," says Richmond's Green Party mayor, Gayle McLaughlin. "It's a [tangible] indication of how our community is coming together to grow our own food and create a healthy, walkable, bike-friendly and sustainable city."

Richmond is sandwiched between two major, well-traveled trails. The San Francisco Bay Trail (the Bay Trail) snakes along the water to the west. To the east, the Ohlone Greenway cuts through the city of El Cerrito. When complete, the Richmond Greenway—sometimes called the RG, or simply "the Greenway"—will connect the two, making a vast network of popular trails larger still.

Because the RG will link other parks and trails, I decide to get to know it by exploring the greater region. The February weather has been brutal for two weeks, pounding the East Bay with much-needed rain and even a few hailstorms. At the moment, though,



Danielle and Jesse of Wagalong Dogwalkers out with the troops, with Mt. Tamalpais in the background; (below) third graders from Lincoln Elementary School show off their dinner harvest from the community garden, just off the Richmond Greenway; (opposite page) a hiker heading down the Crest Trail, a short trip from Richmond.

golden shafts of sunlight steal through parting clouds and illuminate the quiet hamlet of Point Richmond, a beautiful, brick-laden old neighborhood that's distinctly unlike Richmond proper, a stone's throw away on the other side of Interstate 580. I'm anxious to take advantage of this fleeting break in tempestuous weather.

My journey begins at the old Santa Fe trainmaster's building—now a bank—where I jump on abandoned tracks leading through a tunnel to Ferry Point, formerly the storied Santa Fe Railway's western terminus. I'm walking land that's played major roles in our nation's history—first as an end point for the transcontinental





A cyclist near Keller Beach along Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline; (at left) a family returns with the day's catch near Ferry Point in Point Richmond; (below) Timothy Escobar casts out from Ferry Point.

railroad, later as a leader in World War II industry, where thousands of African-American and “Rosie the Riveter/Wendy the Welder” workers led labor movements while building ships for the U.S. Navy.

Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline, featuring a section of the Bay Trail, sits by the “ruins” of Ferry Point. The tracks look almost as though they drop into the sea, and dilapidated warehouses rest wearily nearby. It seems few others have responded to the just-shining sun; I see only a scattering of folks walking dogs. The park is deep emerald, peppered by coniferous trees. It smells of evergreens—an intoxicating elixir.

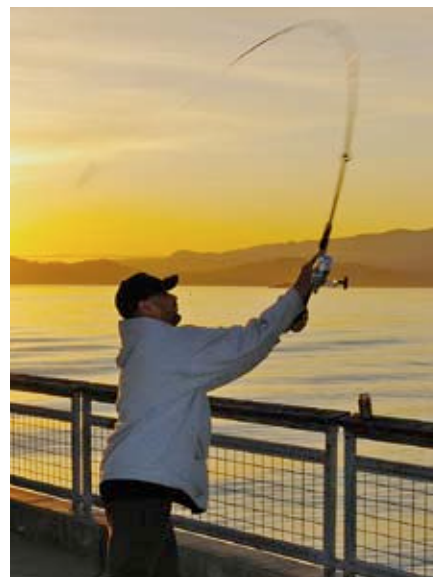
I note grassy hills behind me and decide to gain a little altitude by way of the short, steep Crest Trail across from the Miller/Knox South Entrance. Twenty minutes later I’ve topped out on a ridge. The views are breathtaking. One traces the Berkeley-Oakland Hills to the Oakland skyline, across the first half of the Bay Bridge to Treasure Island, which then asserts itself on downtown San Francisco. Angel Island leads my eyes to the iconic Marin County hills and finally to an imperious Mt. Tamalpais.

Looking west, I remember that Jack London spent his youth bouncing around the bay waters below, harvesting fruits of the sea alongside “French Frank” and “Mamie, Queen of the Oyster Pirates.” Looking north, I believe I can see where Sonoma County begins, a place where London spent the twilight of his life roaming hills and nibbling on vine-ripened grapes.

Behind me are Chevron’s oil refineries and the neglected Richmond flats. The Richmond Greenway is down there somewhere.

Just a half mile from the endearing center of Point Richmond—on the other side of I-580—I arrive at Second Street and Ohio Avenue in Richmond proper, the westernmost end of the RG’s completed portion. Rundown houses, barbed-wire fences, broken glass and other refuse line the path. The trail itself is nice, though: mostly clean, and bordered with grass, fresh mulch and beautiful lampposts. Soon I see what looks like a row of garden beds.

“Lincoln Community Garden,” reads the first sign. A bit farther, another sign: “Welcome to the Lincoln Elementary School Farm.” It’s an edible garden, planted with well-tended vegetable beds and baby fruit trees. A multicolored mural somehow complements graffiti-tagged log benches.



I’m enjoying my walk toward the distant El Cerrito Hills. Other than pedestrian bridges over roads, there is no elevation change on the trail. It’s a straight, one-mile shot to the easternmost end of the completed RG at 23rd Street and Ohio Avenue.

A few flowers peek at the sky and ladybugs buzz clumsily about. My view on the return trip is dominated by Mt. Tam, a scene I’m digesting when I meet a middle-aged man who tells me not to be on the trail after dark because the lamps don’t turn on. (I later learn that sophisticated thieves arrived one day in uniform to strip the copper wiring used for the RG’s lights and automated irrigation system.)

Act II: The Greenway’s Star Players

“I have a crew that goes out and trims trees all across Richmond,” says Tony Norris, Richmond’s superintendent of parks. “[That] material is then repurposed and used for things like mulch on the Greenway or log benches [made from fallen trees], as you see near the Lincoln Elementary School Farm. We’re trying to create a model of sustainability and environmental accountability.”

Norris has overseen the project’s transition from capital construction to utilization of space for park-like purposes. While he’s tremendously proud of work completed on the RG to date, he is prouder still of the community’s commitment to it.

“I think the greatest existing component of our efforts has been the mix of different local groups who are investing in the



With the San Francisco skyline in the distance, a runner works through the trails of Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline; (at left) Point Richmond residents Debbie Fox and Julie Lester strolling near Ferry Point.



greenway and sponsoring sections of the project,” he says. “Beyond RTC, Friends of Richmond Greenway is made up of folks like Park Guthrie at Urban Tilth; our councilman Tom Butt, who has been a tremendous champion for the greenway; a bicycle coalition; and even the county health department, because [the greenway] represents a truly helpful regional improvement.”

Mayor McLaughlin echoes Norris’s sentiments. “Over 500 people [volunteered] in the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service activity at the greenway this past January, preparing soil, planting and tending community gardens. It was testimony to our

collective commitment to the greening of Richmond ... and we’re just beginning!”

Norris says many challenges remain in the quest to complete the RG. “Of course,” he adds, “we’ll have to get very imaginative about ways to fund the [expensive] construction of a pedestrian bridge across the complex array of roadways and rail tracks at 23rd Street.”

I ask Norris to tell me more about gardening on the RG. He points me to Urban Tilth’s Guthrie. Norris says Guthrie and his organization are key players in FORG (Guthrie also organized the King Day community service projects), and I learn Lincoln Elementary School’s garden on the

RG is largely maintained by its students with the help of Urban Tilth.

A nonprofit organization, Urban Tilth works with the community to develop a local, sustainable, healthy food supply. It’s a small organization, run primarily by Guthrie and spawned from his experience at a charter school, where he built a community-supported agriculture service called Organic Opportunities.

Guthrie suspects less than 0.01 percent of the food that Richmond residents eat comes from the county. “We have kids—30 to 50 percent of whom are slated to get diabetes in their lifetimes—facing real challenges. When I see something like the greenway,

it's an absolute no-brainer to me: We've got one of the best growing climates on the planet, and these kids could have a daily walk to school lined by berry bushes, fruit trees and countless other types of greenery. [Meanwhile], the USDA [Department of Agriculture] and all kinds of other funding streams are trying to encourage kids to eat fresh produce. In my mind, [cultivating the greenway] is a much more direct, simple way to encourage kids to eat healthily."

Act III: The Garden of Eatin'

When I arrive at Lincoln Elementary School's farm for a second visit, the first person I meet is Jessie Alberto, a 19-year-old college student and Richmond resident who first met Guthrie when he volunteered at an RG community service event. Since then, Alberto's been working with Guthrie and the Lincoln kids to nurture their edible garden. Moments later, Guthrie arrives in a pickup truck. He's every bit the constant gardener: soiled work clothes, boots, a flannel shirt and sun-faded baseball cap.

I help Alberto bring a sapling orange tree from Guthrie's truck to a space a yard from the RG's path. This is a replacement tree, one of many. Someone has been stealing the trees. Alberto and Guthrie unrelent-

TRAVEL FACTS

GETTING THERE: Richmond's Point Richmond neighborhood is an ideal starting place for exploring the area. Though it's been known as the "Hidden City" since the 1940s, Point Richmond is not difficult to find. It's just a 30-minute drive from Oakland's airport, north on I-880 to I-580 W/I-80 North, exiting at Canal Boulevard. You'll immediately notice the early 20th Century feel when you roll into town—the quiet streets with brick buildings are charming and well appointed.

"A lot of people who've been living in the Bay Area for years don't even know about it," says Kevin, a longtime bartender at the historic Hotel Mac. "Locals often are pleasantly surprised by what a beautiful little nook this is."

Using Point Richmond as a base, you can access stretches of the Bay Trail, Miller/Knox Regional Park and Richmond Greenway. You can even organize a loop that encompasses all of the above.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Great eateries include Hotel Mac—a saloon-style bar, restaurant and hotel built in 1911—and Hidden City Cafe, a local favorite featuring a California cuisine menu and a stellar brunch. In the mood for fine Tai food? Kao Sarn is the place for you.

Other attractions include the Golden State Model Railroad Museum, at 900 Dornan Drive, just across from Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline, and Masquers Playhouse, a community theater.

Richmond has completed almost 25 miles of the San Francisco Bay Trail, more than any other city on this multipurpose trail network that eventually will encompass 500 miles around San Francisco Bay and San Pablo Bay. Most of the system is bike-friendly.

More information about Hotel Mac and other Point Richmond attractions can be found at www.pointrichmond.com. For maps and more on Miller/Knox Regional Park, go to www.ebparks.org/parks/miller_knox or call 888.EBPARKS. For more information about Urban Tilth, visit www.urbantilth.org or call 510.691.5051.



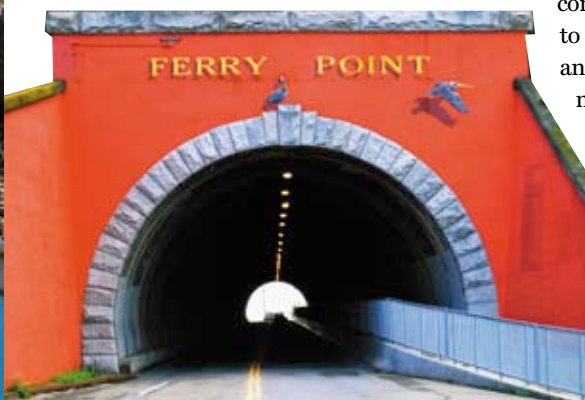
The Bay Bridge makes an impressive backdrop along Miller/Knox Regional Shoreline; (at left) paddlers near Keller Beach; (above) sunset on the Crest Trail, overlooking Ferry Point and Angel Island.



ingly plant and replant at the sites where trees have been stolen. Soon Guthrie leads an exuberant group of young students to the garden. The kids are bright, smiling, happy to be outside. I ask them which crop is their favorite. Without hesitation they respond, “Peas!” I can hardly believe my ears. How many third-graders love peas?

I witness Guthrie and Alberto help the group plant a tree, learn about soil, transport a dead thief (a gopher) from the grounds and harvest salad ingredients for each child to take home for dinner. The kids are earnest, excited at the prospect of chowing down on their homegrown greens. More than anything, though, they seem elated to have a safe space in which they can play, get their hands dirty and run around a little.

The following day, I e-mail Guthrie with



(Clockwise from top left) Proud students with the ‘fruits’ of their garden labor; tunnel leading from Point Richmond to Ferry Point; Jessie Alberto of Urban Tilth tends the Lincoln Elementary School Farm.

a link to photographs from my visit. I can’t believe his response: The Lincoln program has been terminated due to financial problems in the school district. “We’ll still keep the site going on a skeleton staffing basis and with volunteer help, but our capacity to do much programming with kids in the near future is going to be tiny,” writes Guthrie.

I taught literature for years, and I can honestly say the learning I observed at Lincoln’s garden far exceeded what went on in my classroom and the classrooms of my peers. The kids weren’t merely studying plants: They were learning about the cycle of life, the advantages of being outside in

a healthy, protected green space, and the joys of eating well and taking care of their bodies—all in a community where such opportunities are too rare.

Epilogue

Since my initial visit, I’ve been back to the Richmond area nearly a half dozen times. I’ve seen people happily participating in activities ranging from fishing and crabbing at Ferry Point to hardcore sprint workouts on the trail to professional dog walking on the hills above. I’ve seen people from all walks of life take safe, enjoyable strolls down the Richmond Greenway. I’ve even returned with my wife and dog to watch the sunset from Crest Trail’s highest point.

No one has been able to give me a concrete indication of when the RG will be completed. It’s taken more than a decade to renovate just a third of the corridor, and this progress has been possible primarily because of dedicated organizations like RTC. I hope for the city and people of Richmond that the next phase is completed as expeditiously as possible.

Tony Norris tells me the city is immersed in a complex feasibility study for what he calls the Groundwork’s Trust for Richmond. If realized, it will seek federal funding through the Environmental Protection Agency and the National Park System to support the greening of brownfields land—“contaminated or former industrial lands available for redevelopment—like the greenway,” he says.

I’m saddened by the county’s decision to nix Urban Tilth’s work with Lincoln Elementary School, but I remind myself that the existing RG is a ray of light. I hope someday the students I met at Lincoln’s farm will be able to stroll along a completed Richmond Greenway, a path lined with ripened berry bushes and boundless fruit trees, perhaps even grapevines like those Jack London knew.

Bryce Hubner is a freelance writer and photographer as well as a contributing editor at *Ski Racing* magazine and the San Francisco travel journal *Weekend Sherpa*.

David Dionne:

Startup Sta

By Mark Kelly

Photo by Owen Stayner

It's a cloudless day in early March, and David Dionne is standing on a wooded ridge about 10 miles southwest of the heart of downtown Birmingham. A rare Alabama snowstorm swept through the day before, and its fading remnants dot the shady hollows as Dionne shows a small group around the future site of the Red Mountain Park visitor center.

As executive director, Dionne is overseeing the startup of the 1,100-acre park, an urban green space larger than New York City's Central Park that will feature hiking and biking trails, picnic areas and other recreational amenities. Along with the existing Ruffner Mountain Nature Center in eastern Birmingham and a park being developed in the downtown railroad district, Red Mountain Park will make Birmingham the nation's leading city in green space per capita.

This is not Dionne's first experience with a startup. In 1987 he became the first superintendent of Maryland's Baltimore & Annapolis Trail Park, a 14-mile rail-trail. As chief of trails and natural areas for Anne Arundel County, Md., he led development of a trail system recognized nationally and internationally as a model for operation and safety. From 2001 to 2005 Dionne chaired the East Coast Greenway Alliance, working to link local trail projects between Maine and Florida into a continuous 2,900-mile route.

Along with his experience, Dionne brings to Birmingham a contagious enthusiasm. Visiting with him, it doesn't take long to understand—and share—his vision for Red Mountain Park.





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Working on his fourth park startup, David Dionne wants to make Red Mountain Park the first place people take visitors in Birmingham, Ala.

You've been involved with some major park and trail initiatives. How significant is the creation of Red Mountain Park?

We plan for it to be one of the nation's premier urban parks. Beyond the trails and other recreational components, I'm really excited about the historical aspects of this site. Red Mountain was the primary source of iron ore for the steel mills that were the basis of Birmingham's economy for so many years. At its peak, 5 percent of the nation's iron ore came from Red Mountain. During World War II, those resources made Birmingham one of the top wartime manufacturing centers. The tanks and artillery shells and other military materials made here were critical to winning the war.

Strictly from an African-American perspective, those mines and mills were the first places where black people in Birmingham learned to organize and negotiate. In my five months here, I've found that Birmingham does a great job of telling the story of its involvement in the Civil Rights Movement—but a largely untold chapter is that a lot of the knowledge and skills that made the movement successful had their beginnings on Red Mountain.

I think Red Mountain is as significant nationally as Ellis Island or Gettysburg or Valley Forge. It's a fascinating story, and I'm looking forward to having people come to our park to learn about it.

How soon will that happen? When will the park open?

That's one of the hottest questions in Birmingham right now, and a hard one to answer at the moment. We're finishing up some design work that is critical to finalizing our funding and development strategy, so we're not quite ready to set a firm opening date. We'll be much closer to that within the next couple of months.

In terms of the trail system, where are you and what is the plan?

You can easily take an eight-mile hike with the trails we have open now. Ultimately we're planning for 18 miles of hiking and biking trails, fully accessible. Our goal is to have a trail system that 98 percent of the citizens of Birmingham can use on day one.

It's really wonderful, too, the way these trails are going to be configured in relationship to the old mining structures. There's a whole network

of abandoned rail lines that spans the site. We have old L&N tracks, the Birmingham Mineral Railroad and a whole series of utilitarian switchbacks that served the mines themselves. All of these trails fit the rail-trail model, converting abandoned rights-of-way for public use.

Speaking of which, your relationship with Rails-to-Trails Conservancy goes back a long way, doesn't it?

Almost to the very beginning. When we started building our first trail in Anne Arundel County in '87, I had RTC staff come in and take a ride with us and talk about what we wanted to do. They were impressed with our goals and plans, and I certainly was—and still am—impressed with their vision. It has always been a great relationship, a great collaboration and a very natural one.

How is the community responding to the concept of Red Mountain Park?

One of the reasons this project has such potential for success is that citizens, businesses and philanthropic groups have embraced it. Almost everyone I talk to has this sense of excitement that the park is happening in Birmingham—and not just because of the recreational resource. Everyone seems to see that this park can become a catalyst for dealing with a whole range of issues, from transportation to community development to public health. I'm very hopeful that we can have that kind of community role.

What is your biggest challenge going forward? How will you know you've been successful?

This is the fourth park startup I've worked with, and there is always a huge learning curve. There is so much enthusiasm for this park in the community, but we only get one chance to get it right.

The bottom line is going to be how people embrace the park. Yes, I want this to be the first place people in Birmingham take visitors, but I also want to establish a real sense of physical connection, with the park as a hub for activities that help expand the concept of what it means to live in Birmingham. I want to make people wonder what they ever did without Red Mountain Park.

Mark Kelly is an author and freelance writer in Birmingham. His next book, *Back to Nature: A History of Birmingham's Ruffner Mountain*, will be published this fall.

TFTC (Thanks For The Cache), RTC!

Spoilers! Hitchhikers! Muggles! Oh my! Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) is speaking a new language these days, and if you're already a savvy geocacher, you might be able to translate. For those who haven't caught the geocaching bug (you'd be dubbed a "Muggle," by the way), here's your chance to be part of the high-tech treasure-hunting craze from the comfort of your backyard rail-trail.

RTC has partnered with Geocaching.com, the global headquarters for geocaching, to offer members and trail enthusiasts a new way to play on rail-trails. Beginning on Earth Day, April 22, 2009, users of both TrailLink.com (powered by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy) and Geocaching.com will be able to search for geocaches along a trail from either site.

To take part, participants locate outdoor hidden containers (called geocaches) using handheld GPS units and then share their experiences online. Geocaches are placed and found all over the world and the activity is enjoyed by people of all ages and abilities, making it an ideal, family-fun, rail-trail activity.

Geocachers are also giving back to trails. They're helping support RTC's mapping initiative by collecting new trail data for TrailLink.com, plus submitting trail reviews and photos of their geocaching hunts (of course, without giving away a "spoiler" of where the cache is located). The multi-year RTC mapping initiative has already provided—free to the public—interactive maps for more than 12,000 miles of rail-trail across the country.

Visit www.geocaching.com to find geocaches along a rail-trail near you (and decode more of the geocaching lingo), or log in to www.traillink.com to scope out nearby rail-trails for your next geocaching adventure.

RTC Highlights

■ In February 2009, Fetzer Vineyards—representing sustainable and environmentally responsible wine production—began a year-long partnership with RTC, supporting the 2009 Greenway Sojourn and RTC's Trail of the Month program. Contact: Andrea Brock, andrea@railstotrails.org.

■ On March 12–13, RTC hosted a forum in Washington, D.C., for communities in the western United States engaged in the 2010 Campaign for Active Transportation. **At the two-day meeting, RTC disseminated campaign progress on the federal level, and the forum culminated in briefings to congressional staff on Capitol Hill.** Contact: Benjamin Gettleman, benjamin@railstotrails.org.

■ Laura Cohen, director of RTC's Western Regional Office, spoke at the dedication ceremony for California's newest rail-with-trail, the 2.3-mile San Clemente Coastal Trail. **Sandwiched between an active rail line and steep bluffs, the popular pathway is a model for solving a number of track-**

FAST FACTS

The recent American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided **\$800 million** for the Transportation Enhancements (TE) program, the nation's largest federal source of funding for trails, walking and bicycling. From 1991–2008, TE money has provided **\$626 million*** for **1,272** rail-trail projects ranging from depot renovation to trail construction. During the same time period, TE provided another **\$2.9 billion*** for **7,654** projects involving on-road and off-road bicycle facilities.

*These figures represent only the federal investment in projects. Most TE grants require matching local funds as well.

safety and beach-access challenges. Contact: Laura Cohen, laura@railstotrails.org.

■ Cleveland's George Gund Foundation awarded RTC's Midwest Regional Office a one-year, **\$30,000 grant in support of their work on Cleveland's 2010 Campaign for Active Transportation**, and their partnership with the city of Cleveland on various transportation initiatives, including the city's future Bike Station. Contact: Rhonda Border-Boose, rhonda@railstotrails.org.

■ On Tuesday, March 24, **RTC President Keith Laughlin delivered the keynote address at a luncheon hosted by the Greenways Foundation (www.indygreenways.org) in Indianapolis, Ind.** At the fundraiser for Indiana trails and greenways, Laughlin made the case for increased federal investment in creating safe places to walk and bicycle in America's communities. Contact: Rhonda Border-Boose, rhonda@railstotrails.org.

■ In March, **Rails-to-Trails Conservancy named the Monon Trail in Indiana to the Rail-Trail Hall of Fame.** The 15.7-mile trail, which runs from Indianapolis north to Carmel, is the 10th trail to receive the honor. Contact: Karl Wirsing, karl@railstotrails.org.

■ In December, **The Kresge Foundation awarded a leadership grant of \$975,000 over three years for RTC to start work on its new Urban Pathways Initiative**, which aims to encourage opportunities for healthy activity in urban communities. This grant marks the largest single award to RTC in the organization's history. It will help fund on-the-ground community engagement by RTC in seven cities across the country and a national learning network of urban pathway professionals and advocates. Contact: Jeff Ciabotti, jeff@railstotrails.org.

Thank you for reading the
2009 **Green Issue** of *Rails to Trails*,
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Thoughts about how we can improve next year's Green Issue?
Let us know at magazine@railstotrails.org.