

Fisherville and Contoocook sections of Concord-Lake Sunapee Rail Trail are open

By DAVID BROOKS
Monitor staff

Published: 12/11/2019 4:20:56 PM
Modified: 12/11/2019 4:20:46 PM

The Concord and Contoocook sections of what will eventually be a 34-mile rail-trail from Fisherville to Lake Sunapee are now open for use. Well, mostly.

“We haven’t put signage up yet in Concord,” said Tim Blagden, board president of the Friends of the Concord-Lake Sunapee Rail Trail, and the parking lot doesn’t exist yet and some fencing still needs to be erected.

But aside from that, the 2 ½ miles of 10-foot-wide flat trail stretching from Fisherville Road to Carter Hill Road is ready for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing when the snow returns.

Meanwhile in Contoocook, a 2-mile stretch of trail has been completed and is all ready for visits, including a detailed map online.

These two will eventually be part of a planned family-recreation corridor along a section of what was once the Concord and Claremont railroad line.

“Our slogan is ‘Ice cream every 45 minutes,’ ” said Blagden. That’s the amount of time that a family on bicycles can make it from one town center to the next, he said.

Separate sections of the trail already exist in Bradford and Warner.

The idea for this rail trail has been percolating since 2013 and took shape in 2017 when the non-profit Friends organization was formed. Progress hasn’t been too speedy because the former railroad line property doesn’t have a single owner.

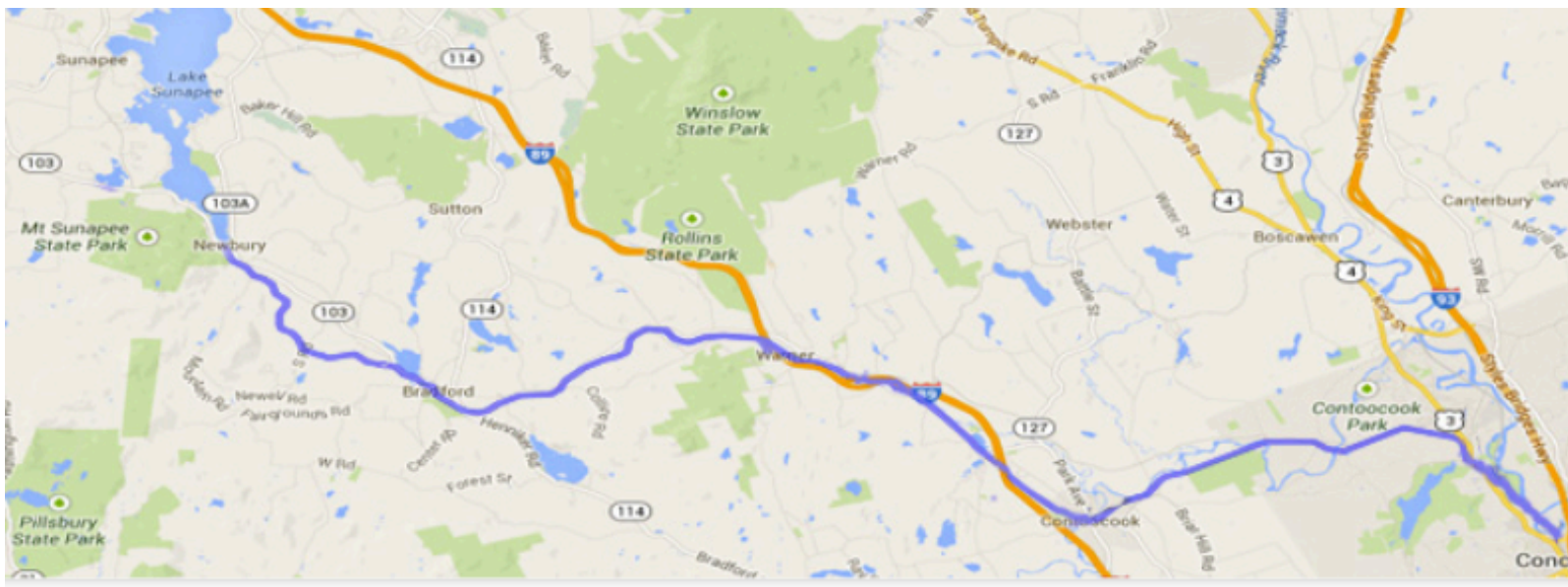
“What we’ve done so far is in separate sections because the railroad grade is owned by private citizens, municipalities, the state, the federal government,” said Blagden. “We are literally knocking on doors and people are giving us access to land ... through easements.”

The Friends of the Concord-Lake Sunapee Rail Trail is raising money to expand its work.

“If we can raise \$50,000, an anonymous donor will put in another \$50,000. We’re less than \$4,000 from hitting that goal,” said Blagden.

For details and maps, check the website:
ConcordLakeSunapeeRailtrail.com

(David Brooks can be reached at 369-3313 or dbrooks@cmonitor.com or on Twitter @GraniteGeek.)



Meanwhile in Contoocook, a 2-mile stretch of trail has been completed and is all ready for visits, including a detailed map online.

These two will eventually be part of a planned family-recreation corridor along a section of what was once the Concord and Claremont railroad line.

“Our slogan is ‘Ice cream every 45 minutes,’ ” said Blagden. That’s the amount of time that a family on bicycles can make it from one town center to the next, he said.

Separate sections of the trail already exist in Bradford and Warner.

The idea for this rail trail has been percolating since 2013 and took shape in 2017 when the non-profit Friends organization was formed. Progress hasn’t been too speedy because the former railroad line property doesn’t have a single owner.