Sharing Space in a Crowded World

The Emergence of Rails-with-Trails

Rail~Volution

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Rail-with-Trail (RWT)

A trail (shared use path) on, or directly adjacent to, an active railroad corridor.
I. RWT Basics
II. State RWT Trends
III. Transit and Trails
IV. Resources and Research
V. Share Your Story
National Railroad System
Prairie Path Trail
Illinois

High Line
New York City
Rails-with-Trails: A Growing Trend

Increase in Rails-with-Trails

- Number of miles
- Number of trails

Year

Number

Number of miles

Number of trails
Current Statistics

• ~180 Open RWTs
• >1,600 Miles
• 44 States

(CA gets a ★)
Characteristics

- Longest Trail: 57 miles (Railroad Trail, Michigan)
- Longest continually next to tracks: 22 miles (Railroad Trail, Michigan)
- Fastest Trains: 150 MPH (Southwest Corridor Park Trail, Mass.)
- Slowest Trains: 5 MPH (West Orange Trail, Florida)
- Widest Corridor: 1,500 Ft. (Rose Canyon Bike Path, California)
- Narrowest Corridor: 18 Ft. (Seattle Waterfront Trail and Duwamish Trail both in Washington)
- Closest to tracks: 2 Ft. (Railroad Trail, Michigan)
$$ One of the Most Expensive $$

San Clemente Beach Trail
California
Characteristics of Adjacent Rail (RTC California Study, 2009)
Rails-with-Trails: Safety and Liability

- Railroad company’s main concerns
- Trails may reduce trespassing
- Liability safeguards: Recreation Use Statutes, Insurance, Indemnification
Rails-with-Trails: Design

- Design can address the majority of safety issues
- Key safety factors:
  - Adequate distance between track and trail
  - Fencing, barriers or grade separation between track and trail
  - Safe rail crossings
  - Long site lines
  - Trail-user warning signs

White Rock, BC (south of Vancouver, BC)

San Clemente Beach Trail, CA
Rails-with-Trails: Benefits to the Railroad

- Corridor beautification
- Improved community relations
- Improved safety
- Reduced crime and trespassing
- Improved access for police and maintenance vehicles
State Trends -- RWT Legislation

- SB 546 Passes — Paving the Way for Virginia’s Outdoor Future

- State of Maine Amends Recreational Use Statute
Trolley Trail (Charlotte, NC)

Seattle, WA

Cal Park Tunnel – Marin County, CA
California Rails-with-Trails
A Survey of Trails Along Active Rail Lines

Rails-with-Trails Conservation
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy serves as the national voice for more than 10,000 individuals and organizations. We help develop and maintain over 1,500 miles of rail-trails throughout the country, and thousands of miles of potential rail-trails waiting to be used. We have helped to transform the unused and underused land into a valuable resource for everyone.

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Resources:
- Trail building
- Access
- Transportation
- Etc. trails
- Equipment
- For the next

Support Rail-trails with every purchase

Rails-with-Trails: Lessons Learned
Environmental, Economics, Practices, Guidance

Photo Collections
- Trails with Rails - John Lutan's Flickr site: Lutan is a member of the Society. His impressive collection of rail-trails shows how rail-trails can be developed from abandoned rail line.
- Capital Bikeway - Trail-with-Trails Photo Gallery: This gallery includes photos from rail-trails in California, Oregon, and Wisconsin.
- Schuylkill River Park Alliance - Rail Trails: The Schuylkill River Park Alliance (SRPA) is a group of organizations that work to protect and enhance the Schuylkill River Trail. The group is committed to providing a safe and enjoyable experience for all users.
- The Virginia Bicycling Federation: The Virginia Bicycling Federation is a nonprofit organization that promotes cycling in Virginia. They work to create new trails and improve existing ones.
- Capital Metro Transportation Authority: The Capital Metro Transportation Authority is a joint rail and bus transit agency in the Austin, Texas, metropolitan area. They are committed to improving transportation options in the region.
- Metrorail Branch Trail: The Metrorail Branch Trail is a regional trail in Washington, D.C., that connects with the Capital Beltway Trail and provides a direct route from the Capital Beltway to the Metrorail system.
What’s Your Story?
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